Research Degrees
Student Recruitment Guidelines
(Affiliated Research Centres)

Contents

What this document is for?

To provide guidance to Affiliated Research Centres (ARCs) in the recruitment and selection of research students, and to aid the completion of the relevant Applicant Recommendation Form. The information in each section should be used as a reference when completing an Applicant Recommendation Form, or at other stages in the recruitment process as appropriate. The section numbers correspond with the sections of the Applicant Recommendation Form.

These guidelines have been compiled with reference to the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

This document provides advice and guidance for staff to ensure that the processes for attracting, recruiting and enrolling research students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied, in line with the expectations of the UK QAA. Once the student is registered, the Research Degrees Regulations and Research Degrees Handbooks are the main points of reference for students and staff.

All Research Degrees documents referred to in this guidance can be downloaded from the Forms and Guidance section of the Graduate School Network (GSN) at: http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance

Who should use this guide?

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection of research students.

Roles and responsibilities

Faculties are responsible for managing the recruitment and fair selection of research students in accordance with the QAA Quality Code and the Equality Act 2010 and local legislation in the country in which the ARC is based. The guidance covers:

- Advertising specific studentships.

- Giving candidates access to academic staff to discuss research proposals and ideas prior to application and providing information that will help candidates make an informed decision about applying for a research degree at The Open University.

- Ensuring that staff are trained in fair selection procedures, understand their obligations in relation to Equality and Diversity and are supported in upholding Equality and Diversity principles in their ongoing relationships with students.

- Logging applications and recording whether the applicant was offered an interview and/or registration with The Open University. When appropriate, the data should be anonymized in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

- Arranging interviews, informal visits and meetings with appropriately trained staff in accordance with the institutional framework determined by QAA Quality Code, and the fair selection process in place in the faculty.

- Agreeing which department will lead in the management of a student, where the research topic spans two or more departments.

- Assessing candidates' eligibility to study against the standard regulatory requirements and/or those specific to the research discipline or studentship, fairly and consistently and against other candidates wherever possible.

- Checking evidence of qualifications, residency and visa status.

- Obtaining academic references.

- Ensuring that students are made aware of policies relating to ethics review and intellectual property, and capturing any potential issues relating to ethics and/or Intellectual Property Rights on the *Applicant recommendation form*.

- Ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to support the student, including supervision, facilities and any contract /funding arrangements.
- Checking any contracts relating to a studentship and ensuring that the relevant information is relayed with the *Applicant recommendation form*.
- Checking that that proposed supervisors have the right to work in the UK (if applicable) and are adequately experienced and meet the academic standard detailed in this guide.
- Completing and submitting the *Applicant recommendation form* at the end of the selection process, if a candidate is successful, or advising the Research Degrees Team (RDT) in the Graduate School if a candidate is unsuccessful.
- Sending rejection letters to unsuccessful applicants.
- Ensuring that the correct HECoS codes are assigned to the research.
- Confirming whether or not ATAS is required for overseas students (UK ARCs or where any students is likely to visit the UK to undertake any research).
- Arranging supervisor payments where such payments lie outside of the norm.
- Updating the ARC content on the online prospectus.

In this process, the RDT is responsible for:

- Handling general enquiries from applicants.
- Supporting and advising the ARC in handling applications.
- Supporting and advising ARC staff in making adjustments for meeting the needs of students with disabilities/additional needs.
- Conducting ENIC (The UK national agency for international qualifications and skills) checks.
- Verifying SELTS (Secure English Language Test) and IELTS (International English Language Test) scores provided by applicants.
- Ensuring that all *Applicant recommendation forms* are completed prior to consideration by the Graduate School Director.
- Sending offer letters to successful applicants.
- Ensuring that the appointment of supervisors is approved by the Graduate School Director.
- Ensuring that any contractual information relating to a studentship is relayed to the student in the offer letter.
- Keeping the central student record up to date throughout the recruitment process.
- Providing general advice and guidance to ARCs on Student Route visas for applicants where applicable.

Recruitment

Advertising Studentships

ARCs advertise specific studentships with clear reference to the Open University. Advertisements should be checked for any unintentional discrimination implications for the nine protected characteristics (gender, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation). Contact details should be given for requesting documentation in alternative formats, such as audio or large print.

Other Means of Recruitment

Suitable candidates may also be identified via direct contact with at other universities, institutes, both in the early stages of the recruitment campaign and after final degree results have been announced. Personal and professional networks and/or websites also provide effective recruitment mechanisms.

Fair Selection

To ensure that the Open University continues to meet its priorities for delivering world-leading research, it needs to be able to recruit the best quality research students from the wide range of applications it receives each year both directly and within the ARCs.

To achieve this there must be fair, robust and efficient recruitment and selection processes, which comply with the QAA Quality Code (https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance), and best practice principles. In accordance with the University's equality and diversity policies ([Equality Scheme & Objectives | The Open University Equality and Diversity](), [Open University Anti-Discrimination Statement | About The Open University](), [Open University Anti-Racism Statement | About The Open University]()), applicants for research degrees will be treated solely on the basis of their merits, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstance, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

The recruitment of research students is managed by ARCs. Decisions on selection are made at ARC level. A selection panel Chair is responsible for ensuring the procedural integrity of the whole recruitment and selection process. The baseline criteria for all applications are:

- Quality of the proposal / alignment with an advertised studentship
- Alignment with ARC research priorities
- Availability of supervisors with the appropriate levels of experience and expertise

It is recognised that selection activities will differ between ARCs, and that often, recruitment will be a 'matching exercise' to find the best fit between a candidate's proposed project, the research priorities of the ARC and the availability of supervisors with the necessary expertise and experience. In all cases, a clear audit trail is required, to demonstrate that fair selection has taken place.

Interviews

A panel chair will sit on all interview panels, as far as is possible, to provide consistency across the panels. Candidates must be interviewed by a panel comprising experienced staff and not exclusively the prospective supervisors. Candidates should be given an overview of the work of the ARC, which may take the form of an information pack, tour or talk, or units may put on an open day for enquirers prior to selection for interview. Where practicable, it is good practice to give applicants the opportunity to meet a range of academic staff and research students for informal discussion as well as the formal interview.

Applicants being interviewed for funded studentships should be made aware of any funder-specific Terms and Conditions relating to the studentship which would override the standard OU Terms and Conditions. This might include, for example, time off, payment arrangements, maternity / sickness policy etc. Please contact the RDT if you need advice on how specific terms and conditions might impact on the offer made to the successful candidate.

It is useful to identify any skills gaps or training needs at interview, to support the applicant in preparing for study in good time.

Disabled Applicants

Applicants who are disabled will not be treated less favourably than non-disabled applicants because of their disability or a reason related to their disability. Under the Equality Act 2010, the University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to enable a disabled applicant to compete fairly with other applicants. Applicants should be asked in the invitation to interview whether they require any adjustments to be made to enable them to participate fully in the interview.

Once an offer of registration is made, further assessment of the applicant's study needs, and possible adjustments will be required. There is no specific guidance on what constitutes a 'reasonable' adjustment – needs will vary according to individual students, their mode of study and type of research.

Guidance to aid supervisors, research degrees advisers and ARC staff with the referral of queries to specialist staff for advice and support is available on the GSN at:
http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance

Please contact the RDT for further advice and support.

Good Practice Model

ARCs are responsible for ensuring that all staff responsible for handling applications are trained in fair selection. Suggestions for good practice might include, but are not limited to:

- Screening advertisements for any unintentional bias towards or against certain groups of people.

- Asking interview candidates to indicate any reasonable adjustment required for interview in respect of any disability.

- Including senior staff where practical and appropriate, and at least one academic or research fellow on the interview panel. Some ARCs include at least one of the proposed supervisors on the panel. Ideally, the Chair should be the same person throughout the process, and it is good practice to use the same panel members in a recruitment round, although in some ARCs, different specialist expertise will be required according to the proposed research project. All members of the interview panel should have undertaken fair selection and unconscious bias training.

- Asking similar generic questions of all candidates, focused on, for example, the academic suitability of the candidate for the research, the likelihood of timely completion and the design and process of the writing task. A scoring system may be helpful. It is recognised that different projects will require different lines of questioning, but evidence of fair selection will still be required.

- Keeping notes in case of further enquiry by the applicant.

Research away from the ARC

It is expected that students will be resident in the same country as the ARC through which they are registered (except when they are conducting research away from the ARC) and must spend the majority of their period of registration working at their ARC. Where research will be undertaken away from the ARC additional information should be provided . Details of time to be spent away from the ARC (for example, at another institution) must be included with the applicant recommendation form and must be accompanied by a clear rational and information as to how the student will be supported, what the health and safety details are, what the insurance policy is, visa requirements etc. Please note that the OU will not support a visa for a student to come to the UK if they are attending an institution other than the OU. If the intention is for the student to spend

time away from the ARC at another institution, then conversations must happen with the OU before registration. Please raise these potential arrangements as early as possible with the Research Degrees Team.

Enquiry Handling

Application Form

The RDT is responsible for publishing and updating the *Application Form* on the GSN and on the University intranet. Please use current forms as old forms will not be accepted as they may not include all of the required information.

Selection Outcomes

If there is any doubt about an applicant's suitability for postgraduate research study, whether on academic or administrative grounds, ARCs should contact the RDT early on in the process, and before submitting an Applicant recommendation form. Any applicant that does not meet all the entrance requirements, as set out in the Research Degrees regulations should be discussed with RDT who will pass on the relevant information for consideration by the Graduate School Director/Chair of the Research Degrees, as appropriate. This must be prior to any applicant being informed that the faculty will be making a recommendation to the University to offer a place.

If an applicant is successful in the selection process, faculties must complete and submit an *Applicant recommendation form* to the RDT. Please use current forms as old forms will not be accepted as they may not include all of the required information

If an applicant is unsuccessful, either before or after interview the ARC should contact the applicant in writing as soon as possible to advise the outcome, providing as much detail as possible regarding the reasons for rejection.

Candidates who have been unsuccessful may wish to ask for more information about why they were not offered a place, so it is helpful to keep a detailed record. A record of unsuccessful applications will need to be kept for a period of two years following the date of rejection. Following the two-year period, the data should be minimised, anonymised and kept for reporting purposes.

Fees

The registration fee for students in ARCs is payable annually as a single, composite fee. The fee is payable on initial registration and then yearly on 1 October up to and including the year in which a student submits their thesis for examination. An invoice for the fee will be sent to the ARC, as the institution is responsible for collecting the fees and transmitting payments to The Open University. The student, however, is liable for the amount due.

If the student registers part way through the academic year the ARC will be invoiced a proportion of the annual fee depending on the quarter in which the student registered. The proportion of the fee for which a student is liable, if registered within certain dates, is set out below.

> 1 October - 31 March: (100% fee)
>
> 1 April - 30 September: (50% fee)

For ARC students who submit their thesis part way through an academic year and meet the submission criteria, there may be a proportional fee reimbursement. Eligible ARC students, who submit their theses within the following dates may be entitled to a fee reimbursement as set out below:

> 1 October - 31 March: (50% fee)
>
> 1 April – 30 September: no fee reimbursement

Information about the current fee levels is notified annually to the Research Degrees Coordinator and can

be obtained from the Graduate School. Fees will increase annually.

Completing the Applicant recommendation form

Please ensure that the correct Applicant recommendation form is completed. Please complete the details in full. Most of the form is self-explanatory. Clarification as to what is needed elsewhere is given below. If you have any questions, please contact the RDT.

In order for RDT to have adequate time to process Applicant Recommendation Forms and complete associated activities.

Applicant details

Name of Applicant

Please complete the full name of the applicant as provided in their identification document. Where a student has changed their name such that it is different from the name on the qualifications, official documents supporting the change of name (e.g. a marriage certificate) should be provided.

Personal Identifier

The RDT will create a PI for each applicant if they do not already have one.

Overseas students due to study in the UK (only)

Biometric Number

All overseas students are required to have a Biometric Residence Permit. Where the student is already resident in the UK, they may already have a biometric number related to their visa.

Length of time spent studying in the UK

This information is required to ensure that there is no breach of Immigration Law. Overseas students are only permitted to remain in the UK for limited time periods. The total time allowed depends on the degree course.

Programme details

Please note that if the application for a PhD programme is accepted, students will initially be registered for an MPhil. Whether or not they are subsequently registered for PhD will be determined following a review of progress at the end of an upgrade period, (12 months for students registered to study full-time, and 24 months for students registered to study part- Page 6 of 14 Last Updated December 2021 time).

Proposed start date

MPhil/PhD students should normally start on the 1st of the month. Complete applications and all associated paperwork should be submitted prior to the proposed start date. Where applications are incomplete or where additional information is required start dates cannot normally be back dated.

Once an application for registration is approved by The Open University, the Research Degrees Team will notify the student and Research Degrees Coordinator by sending an offer letter. The student will need to complete and return the acceptance form before registration can be confirmed.

Proposed registration period

This relates to the registration period. The standard registration period for a full-time student is 4 years, and 8 years for part-time. It is recommended that research degrees be structured with the expectation of completion in the stated study period below:

	Minimum	Maximum
MPhil		

Full-time	15 months	48 months
Part-time	30 months	72 months
PhD		
Full-time	24 months	48 months
Part-time	36 months	96 months
PD		
Part-time	48 months	96 months

There are no exemptions from the minimum and maximum periods of study, and registration cannot be backdated to take account of any research applicants may have already done.

The registration 'clock' does not stop unless a student has taken a study break from their registration.

Where a student changes their mode of study, the time already spent studying will be considered when determining the new maximum registration date.

Unit of Assessment (UoA)

The UoA can be found in Appendix A.

HECoS codes

This information categorises the applicant in line with the University's statutory reporting requirements and enables us to gain an accurate profile of our student body, benchmarked against other universities.

It is important to use the most accurate code available that reflects the research topic.

HECoS codes are available from https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos

You can select up to three HECoS codes to accurately reflect the research topic. Where more than one HECoS code is selected then it is important to indicate the percentage of time allocated to each subject represented by each code e.g. 50%

If you can't find the appropriate code for the research topic, please contact RDT for advice.

Approved Technology Award Scheme (ATAS) (for students in UK ARCs only)

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) is to help stop the spread of knowledge and skills that could be used in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. The scheme is designed to ensure that those applying for postgraduate study in certain sensitive subjects do not acquire knowledge that could potentially be used in WMD programmes. UK, EEA and Swiss nationals do not currently need an ATAS certificate.

For applicants who are not UK, EEA or Swiss nationals, the CAH3 code you give us on the *Applicant recommendation form* will determine whether an ATAS certificate will be required. More information is at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-out-if-you-require-an-atas-certificate

The RDT is responsible for providing the electronic documentation students need in order to apply for ATAS clearance. The application process can take up to eight weeks. If an ATAS certificate is required, please include a 300-word summary of the project proposal and thesis title. Please note that when an applicant submits an ATAS request to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office it can take up to eight weeks to receive a reply.

Non-book thesis components

Some subjects may carry the opportunity for students to submit non-book components, and applicants may wish to discuss the regulations at interview. Where there is a possibility that a student will want to submit non-book components, it is vital that this is captured early, so that the

student can be advised appropriately throughout their studies.

The University's research degree regulations provide information for the submission of theses containing 'non-book' components in conjunction with the written ('book') part of a thesis.

The term 'non-book' refers to material of a non-printed text form, with the exception of a Creative Writing piece. This can include, but is not limited to, digital media, film, audio files, drawings, maps and software. Where possible, digital non-book components should comply with existing standards appropriate for the type of media (e.g. 3D, hypertext, image audio). The library can give advice on media standards.

Further guidance is on the GSN at http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance

Ethics review

At interview stage, applicants may not be aware of the significance and importance of ethical review, or if their research is likely to require it.

The level of detail will be at the discretion of the interview panel and potential supervisors.

Similarly, candidates may find the ARC policy on intellectual property (IP) useful, especially if they are being funded by a commercial organisation with a vested interest in the research outputs. Having these conversations at interview stage may help identify any ethical, contractual, or IPR issues which would need to be articulated in the offer letter to the student.

Record of Selection Process

This section is to confirm that the recruitment guidelines have been followed in the selection of the student.

Academic entrance requirements

The normal minimum entrance requirement is an upper second-class honours degree or Master's degree, relevant to the proposed area of study, from a recognised higher education institution in the UK (or equivalent).

Applicants should also have experience of academic research in the previous four years, normally in the form of either a Master's degree in research methods, an undergraduate degree with a research element in the final year, or work-related experience with evidence through research reports.

Recommendations for all applicants, and especially those who are not UK graduates or who hold other qualifications, must be supported by evidence (e.g. details of publications) and a detailed statement that the applicant has an adequate academic background, is capable of undertaking postgraduate level research, and has been assessed against clear criteria.

Applicants who hold no degree level qualifications will not be admitted to the PhD programme.

Please note that all applicants will be required to provide the original certificates of academic qualifications at registration. Where the qualification is from outside the UK, it is a requirement that the RDT undertakes a UK ENIC check. UK ENIC is the National Agency with designated responsibility in providing advisory services on comparing international qualifications. Any document that is not in English or Welsh must be accompanied by a certified translation. The translator's credentials should be given along with their official declaration that the translation is accurate.

English language requirements for academic assessment

Where English is not the applicant's first language, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the English language to support successful study at research degree standard. The requirement is IELTS scores that meet the minimum requirements of 6.5 overall score, and no less than 6.0 in any of the four elements (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Exceptions may be approved by the Graduate School Director upon the provision of equivalent evidence by the students.

Applicants who are applying for a Student Route visa must have achieved SELTS (Secure English Language Test) from a UK Visa & Immigration-(UKVI) approved provider. UKVI approved providers are listed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests

Applicants from a majority English speaking country (list a) or who have completed their degree in a majority English speaking country (list b) as detailed below, will not require IELTS. Please note that this list applies to students applying for a Student Route visa. Where a student is not applying for a Student Route visa the list of countries whose Higher Education system provides tuition in the English language is more extensive. In all cases academic staff should satisfy themselves that the candidate's level of English language is sufficient for Doctoral study.

a) They are from one of the following majority English speaking countries.

Antigua and Barbuda	Guyana
Australia	Jamaica
The Bahamas	New Zealand
Barbados	St Kitts and Nevis
Belize	St Lucia
Canada	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominica	Trinidad and Tobago
Grenada	United States of America

b) They have taken a degree in the UK or one of the following majority English speaking countries.

Antigua and Barbuda	Jamaica
Australia	New Zealand
The Bahamas	St Kitts and Nevis
Barbados	St Lucia
Belize	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominica	Trinidad and Tobago
Grenada	United States of America
Guyana	

Confirmation

The agreed signatory, e.g., the ARC Research Degrees Coordinator, will be asked to confirm that fair selection has taken place, that adequate arrangements will be in place to support the student throughout their studies, and that the candidate is suitable for postgraduate research. The ARC Research Degrees Coordinator is responsible for confirming whether or not ATAS is required.

Residency requirements

There is a strong correlation between students' experience and their research environment and location. The Open University wishes to ensure that any research student living at a distance from the ARC can engage fully with the research environment and have the best possible chance of success. A residency requirement is set to prompt full consideration of this intention before an offer of registration is made.

Applicants for full-time MPhil/PhD research study should live within easy commutable distance of the ARC, to ensure they can engage fully with their research and ARC life in general, that they have regular contact with their supervisor(s), academic staff and other students, and that they can participate in training activities. Typically, this means living within a radius of approx. 40 miles or 40 minutes travel time.

Applicants for part-time research study must be resident in the same country as the ARC through which they are registered for the duration of their studies. Students will still be required to make regular visits to the ARC at their own expense.

Exceptionally, where a suitable applicant lives outside an 'easily commutable distance' of the ARC, and needs to remain there while studying, for example to have regular access to certain facilities, libraries or services, a case should be made to the Graduate School Director to waive the residency requirement. The arrangements for integrating the student into the research environment must be set out in the Applicant recommendation form. Please note that Student Route students are not eligible for Residency waivers and no exceptions will be made.

Statistical Agency (HESA) Monitoring Form

All applicants are asked to answer these questions which will be used for reporting purposes by The Open University and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The information provided will not affect the applicant's access to OU courses and services, but they do need to complete this form in order to register. The Open University, like all UK universities, is required to collect information about its students for reporting to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The University also uses information about its students to ensure that all our services are accessible and that we achieve fair outcomes for all. HESA observes strict rules of disclosure required by the General Data Protection Regulations and will not give details to any third parties. Further information on the University's General Data Protection policy can be found in the Privacy Notice.

Proposed Supervisory Team

ARCs are responsible for managing the workload of supervisors in their faculty and for ensuring that students will be properly supervised. ARC Research Degrees Coordinators should satisfy themselves that adequate arrangements are in place to supervise the student, and that the proposed supervisors have the right to work. Supervisors of Student Route students in the UK who have breached UKVI reporting or failed to discharge their duties as a supervisor may not be able to supervise until they have undertaken the relevant training.

Applicant recommendation form.

The Graduate School Director is responsible for approving and confirming supervisor appointments. Proposed supervision teams and individual supervisors should meet the regulatory requirements as outlined in the Research Degree Regulations.

A Supervisor CV is required for all supervisors which outlines their supervisory experience to date. You should indicate the Director of Studies on the Applicant recommendation form – this is a requirement of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

To facilitate professional development where a member of staff needs to gain experience of supervision, or if a student's project goes across several areas, a third internal supervisor can be named. An 'industrial supervisor', i.e., a supervisor from an industrial or commercial setting, rather than an academic one, can be appointed in addition to the core team, to provide specific expertise.

The agreed signatory who submits the completed Applicant recommendation form (usually the ARC Research Degrees Coordinator,) is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate approval has been obtained for any proposed supervisor who is not based in their own ARC. The agreed signatory should not put forward any external person who has not provided a photocopy or scanned copy of proof of their right to work.

Right to work in the UK

The Open University is required by law to ensure that anyone appointed to undertake work on its

behalf has the right to work in the UK. External supervisors are asked to provide a copy (scanned copy or photocopy) of their passport or other form of documentation with their CV. Before confirming their appointment, we ask that the external supervisor also visit the RDT in Milton Keynes before their first supervision meeting to show us their original documents for checking. Alternatively, they can present their documents at any of The Open University's regional or national centres before the date of the first supervision meeting (an appointment is normally required). For UK citizens and EEA nationals, the preferred form of documentation is a passport; further guidance on acceptable forms of documentation, and who to contact, is on the Graduate School Network at: http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring our continued compliance with this requirement.

Fees and Funding for MPhil/PhD Students

This section should be completed as fully as possible to avoid any delay processing the application.

Students must receive the full pay/stipend and any allowance(s) to which they are entitled as outlined in their terms and conditions.

Fee liability

When an applicant accepts an offer of registration, their fee liability will be recorded in CIRCE, either for internal accounting, or for invoicing purposes.

Funds for research costs

ARCs should ensure sufficient funds are available for the research project for which the student is to be registered, including any training grant of £200.

Supporting Statement

This section is for faculties to summarise the applicant's unique suitability for postgraduate research study, and to confirm that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the student, in terms of supervision, funding, facilities, training and support, and fit with research strategy. Please provide a detailed statement that relates directly to the applicant rather than simple confirmation of the points listed. You are asked to confirm that the applicant meets the minimum level of English required for all postgraduate study as described above. It is critical that the statement is a narrative tailored to the individual student and is not a generic statement.

If selection has been conducted against an ARC -specific checklist or set of criteria, please give details and/or attach copies of any relevant documents that provide evidence of fair selection. It is good practice to use a checklist to verify that fair selection has taken place.

If one or more of the student's supervisors belong to another faculty, a short statement from that faculty about supervision arrangements should be included in this section.

Research facilities

The University will agree in advance with prospective students what facilities the ARC will provide to support their research and what needs to be provided externally

Research training

Professional development is a vital part of a research degree, and it is important to think about development needs early on. Applicants should have a training needs analysis conducted to identify any significant gaps that need to be addressed, at the beginning of the student's registration. Training resources are made available to students on the GSN when they first register.

Submission and Approval

The [Applicant Recommendation Form](#) should be submitted to the RDT by the agreed signatory, usually the Associate Dean (Research), or their delegate, or Programme Leader. By submitting this form, the signatory is confirming that:

- The Research student recruitment guidelines have been followed in recruitment of the student

- The infrastructure, facilities and supervision to support the student are in place, if the student is to be based away from the ARC the ARCs must assure themselves as to the suitability of the research facilities to be used by the student

- The proposed supervisors meet the requirements as outlined in the *Research Degrees Regulations*

- The applicant meets the academic and residency requirements

- Any contract and funding arrangements are in place

- Any proposed external supervisors have provided copies of evidence of their right to work in the UK (where applicable)

- HECoS and CAH3 codes have been considered and any requirements for ATAS have been confirmed

The [Applicant Recommendation Form](#) is subject to the approval of the Graduate School Director.

Attachments

A checklist is provided on the *Applicant recommendation form*.

Proposal

The requirements for any proposal to be submitted as part of the application process must be stated in the studentship advertisement. Where a research proposal is not required it is expected that the student will provide evidence, perhaps in a cover letter, as to why their application for an existing project should be considered.

References

Two independent referees' reports are required and may be requested before or after interviews. References must be rated against clear criteria, including academic achievement, academic potential, originality, judgement, aptitude for postgraduate research and the referee's general recommendation.

Evidence for visa application

Please attach copies of all documents being used as evidence to support the visa application.

Resources

For advice and support before submitting a recommendation please contact the RDT on 01908 653806 or email research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk

The RDT can also advise on the recruitment of non-home applicants requiring a visa under Student Route immigration controls.

Application forms can be downloaded from the GSN at:
http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance

Appendix A: Unit of Assessment codes

A	1	Clinical Medicine
	2	Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences
	6	Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry
	9	Physics
	10	Mathematical Sciences
	11	Computer Science and Informatics
	12	Engineering
C	13	Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
	14	Geography and Environmental Studies
	15	Archaeology
	16	Economics and Econometrics
	17	Business and Management Studies
	18	Law
	19	Politics and International Studies
	20	Social Work and Social Policy
	21	Sociology
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies
	23	Education
	24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
D	25	Area Studies
	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics
	27	English Language and Literature
	28	History
	29	Classics
	30	Philosophy
	31	Theology and Religious Studies
	32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
	34	Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management