

## Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy

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### 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1.1. Admission to Postgraduate Taught Programmes at Imperial College:

- 1.1.1. Consistently rated amongst the world's top universities, Imperial College London is a science-based institution with an international reputation for excellence in both teaching and research.
- 1.1.2. We provide rigorous and intensive Master's, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate programmes in science, engineering, business and medicine. These Master's level programmes are designed to produce graduates for fast-track graduate employment, business, or research. They are intended to benefit students of high ability, whatever their ethnic or national origin, religion, politics or gender in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy. In order to cope with, enjoy and succeed on these programmes, our students need to be extremely well-qualified on entry, see Section 3. This Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy is approved and monitored by the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and is considered in line with the [Quality Assurance Agency's \(QAA\) UK quality code. Advice and Guidance: Admissions, recruitment and Widening Access](#), as published in November 2018.
- 1.1.3. This policy includes MRes programmes which, although they form part of the postgraduate research provision of the College, are treated for admission purposes under the postgraduate taught admissions policy as they are deemed FHEQ Level 7 both at the point of application and intended exit award level.

## **1.2. Equal Opportunities Statement**

- 1.2.1. The College's mission is to maintain excellent standards of achievement in teaching and research in order to attract and admit students of the highest calibre, and its national and international reputation relies on the people who make up its diverse and high-achieving community. In pursuing its aim of excellence, Imperial adheres to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities which ensures that it does not discriminate against any individual, from the first point of contact through to graduation. Selection for entry is based on consideration of academic ability, motivation for study, interest in the subject area and the potential both to benefit from the experience and to contribute to College life while on programme. All applications are considered and evaluated on the basis of individual potential.

## **2. APPLICATION ROUTES AND DEADLINES**

### **2.1. How to Apply:**

- 2.1.1. All applications for admission to our Master's, PG Cert and PG Dip programmes should be submitted online via the Imperial College website: [www.imperial.ac.uk](http://www.imperial.ac.uk). Master's applications will be subject to an application processing fee and these fee rates will be set annually by the College and made publically available at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/fees/application-fees/> with the relevant terms and conditions along with guidance on the procedures for requesting a waiver to the application fee. Receipt of an application will be acknowledged, following which an initial assessment will be made by Admissions. The application will then be forwarded to the relevant department who will consider suitability for a place. Applicants are only permitted consideration for two programme choices in one application cycle. These will be processed in series according to the stated preference of the applicant. Some first choice programme selections may limit or prohibit the selection of other second choice programmes in certain circumstances. Where an applicant's second choice programme is closed by the time the second choice is due to be considered, the second choice will not be processed or considered, but an applicant may replace the second choice by notifying the relevant admission team accordingly.

### **2.2. When to Apply:**

- 2.2.1. The majority of our taught postgraduate programmes start in September or October each year. There are some variants to this which can be found in the prospectus: [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/). Applications usually open in October prior to the year of entry (though some programmes may open for applications earlier or later than this). The majority of our programmes are oversubscribed and are closed to new applicants as they become full. Scholarships may be available for some programmes, therefore applicants are advised to check the relevant department's study page for further information and in particular, where a scholarship deadline may be in place. International applicants should note that an application submitted after 31 May may leave insufficient time to fulfil the admission requirements of any offer made and to obtain a student visa prior to the start of the programme in September/October.

### **3. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1. Academic Requirements:**

3.1.1. We welcome applications from those who already possess the required qualifications or those who expect to obtain them before the degree programme commences. Candidates will be required to have satisfied both the College general entrance requirements and the programme requirements before they can join their chosen degree programme. Applicants should consult the individual programme study pages on [www.imperial.ac.uk](http://www.imperial.ac.uk) for more specific guidance. The following paragraph outlines the College's minimum general entrance requirements for entry to our postgraduate taught programmes:

- The College normally requires at least a lower Second Class Honours Bachelor degree (although in practice most successful applicants have at least an Upper Second Class Honours degree) or a taught Master's degree awarded by an approved UK university / institution, or a degree approved by the College as of a comparable standard awarded by a recognised overseas university / institution in a subject deemed appropriate for the programme to which admission is sought.

OR

- A registrable qualification in Medicine, awarded by an approved UK university / institution, or a qualification approved by the College as of a comparable standard awarded by a recognised overseas university / institution in a subject deemed appropriate for the programme to which admission is sought.

OR

- A professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the College for admission.

3.1.2. The College Registry, including the Senior Directorate of Academic Registrar, Director of Admissions and Student Support (Financial and International) and Head of Admissions, are responsible for publishing clear and definitive guidance to departments regarding the comparability of international qualifications and academic standards. This guidance will be reviewed annually based on best practice and established sector norms.

#### **3.2. Special Cases**

3.2.1. The College will consider applications where the individual's qualifications are at the required level, but where the grades achieved do not meet the College's normal minimum entry requirement. In such circumstances, it will be at the discretion of the admitting Department to make a special case, which will only be valid for someone who has considerable work experience that compensates for the degree grades being below the minimum requirement. If the Department wishes to offer a place to such an applicant, the Programme Director (or equivalent) will make a case to the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or department equivalent) for consideration. Once a decision has been made it will be conveyed to the Programme Director (or

equivalent) and department administrator, who will submit the decision to Admissions for approval. Subject to these requirements being fulfilled, Admissions will then issue the offer.

### **3.3. Special Qualifying Examination (SQE)**

3.3.1. An applicant with qualifications which fall below the College's minimum entry requirement may be considered for a place at the discretion of the Department, and will be required to sit a Special Qualifying Examination (SQE). Such applicants follow the normal application process and in the first instance are considered by the Department in the same way as all other applicants. If after consideration the Department decides that the applicant should be invited to take an SQE, it will submit a case to an independent panel of academic staff. If the panel supports the Department's case, the Department is informed and makes the necessary arrangements for the SQE. The SQE is marked by the Department and is sent to the external examiner(s) to moderate. The external examiner(s) will then advise whether an offer should be made on the basis of the SQE result. The result of the SQE and recommendation of the external examiner(s) is sent by the Department to Admissions, who will then confirm the decision to the applicant.

### **3.4. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**

3.4.1. The College has the discretion to grant a candidate credit towards the award of a Master's level degree for study undertaken at the College or another institution when admission is sought for a part-time mode of study and subject to the following conditions:

- a) Acceptability for credit transfer of work undertaken at the College or another institution does not confer right of entry to any programme;
- b) The work accepted for credit must be sufficiently contemporary and appropriate in range and quality to form a coherent whole with the proposed programme of study;
- c) A candidate granted credit transfer may be exempted from not more than 30 ECTS credits of a Master's programme of study, 20 ECTS from a PG Diploma or 10 ECTS from a PG Certificate;
- d) A candidate may not be granted exemption from the dissertation element of the programme.

3.4.2. Full details are available at: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/apl/Guidelines-for-the-use-of-accreditation-of-prior-learning.pdf>

### **3.5. English Language Qualifications:**

3.5.1. All programmes in the College are taught in English. To obtain maximum benefit from studies at Imperial College **all** students must fulfil the College minimum English general entry requirement (referred to in the published English requirements as the Standard Level) from a College approved test. Some Departments may:

- a) Operate a Departmental English entry requirement above the College minimum (referred to in the published English requirements as the Higher Level). Applicants should view the departmental pages for specific information regarding the required English level.
  - b) Not accept the 'exemptions' to English entry requirements published by the College.
  - c) Not accept the College's pre-sessional English programme as a route to fulfilling the English entry requirement.
- 3.5.2. All applicants coming to the College for postgraduate study must normally have a minimum of grade B (pre 2017) or grade 6 (post 2017) in GCSE English Language or an acceptable alternative English Language qualification accepted by the College before admission can be confirmed. Full details of our English language requirements can be found here: [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/requirements/english/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/requirements/english/)

## **4. SELECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **4.1. Timetabling of Selection:**

- 4.1.1. The selection process for taught programmes is continuous from October, when the first applications are received, until August, except when programmes become full. All applications are given careful consideration. Applicants can normally expect to receive a decision on their application within 8 weeks of submission, however we advise applicants to check the relevant department's web page for specific information.

### **4.2. Selection Criteria:**

- 4.2.1. While the specific selection criteria vary by programme there are, however, certain general points which are equally applicable to all departments.

#### **(i) Interviews**

- 4.2.2. Applicants for Master's, PG Diploma and PG Certificate programmes may be asked to attend an interview. You can find more information about a Department's interview process, including its policy on interviewing applicants based overseas, on the individual department websites via: [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/selection/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/selection/)

#### **(ii) The References**

- 4.2.3. References can be an important additional source of information of an applicant's suitability for study, experiences to date and verification of credentials for Selectors consideration. This may assist Selectors in determining who is called for interview and in determining whether an offer is made. The assessment of previous academic performance is of particular value, as are indications of the strength of an applicant's motivation to study the chosen subject at higher degree level. A professional reference can also be of use in establishing an applicant's postgraduate career development and is a requirement for certain programmes which stipulate relevant experience as an entry requirement. Departments reserve the right to process an unsuccessful outcome on an application prior to the receipt of references, where in their academic judgment the receipt of acceptable references would have no bearing

on that outcome. A referee's judgement on an applicant's English language competency for study at the College is beyond the purview of the reference and will not be considered, as this formal admission requirement must be satisfied in accordance with 3.5 of this policy. Additionally, any reference provided to the College will be considered data owned by the referee and not the applicant. As such, references are provided confidentially and will not be supplied or made available to an applicant, either directly, or under personal or subject access request. Additionally, any reference provided to the College will be considered data owned by the referee and not the applicant. As such, references are provided confidentially and will not be supplied or made available to an applicant, either directly, or under personal or subject access request.

### **(iii) The Supporting Statement**

- 4.2.4. The supporting statement should outline: the motivations for applying for the programme, relevant academic and professional experience to date, interests, future career aspirations, as well as the ability to gain from and contribute to the College community.

### **4.3. Applicants with Disabilities**

- 4.3.1. The College's policy is to consider all applications solely on academic grounds. Any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary will be put in place to enable all students to compete on an equal basis. It is important therefore that the College is informed of any disability well in advance so that early discussion can take place to determine the reasonable adjustments that it may be possible to put in place. Every effort is made to ensure that our programmes are accessible, but occasionally, due to the nature of the programme competency standards, it may not be possible to make the necessary adjustments to enable an individual candidate to study a particular programme. We therefore encourage those with disabilities to contact us as early as possible and preferably before making an application, indicating the programme or programmes they are interested in, together with the nature of the disability, so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss any adjustments that may need to be made. The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) works closely with the Registry, the Student Accommodation Centre and academic departments to provide a variety of support initiatives that enable students to access their studies successfully. The Disability Advisers are available to discuss on a confidential basis any issues of concern which people with disabilities may have and can advise on necessary documentary evidence that may be required.

- 4.3.2. More information can be found here: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/>

### **4.4. Criminal Convictions**

All initial decisions on an applications are based on the entry and selection requirements of the programme. Applicants who are made offers of admission to the College and who indicate their intention to accept that offer of admission will be required to declare whether they have any relevant unspent criminal convictions. While the College does not wish to penalise individuals with a criminal conviction the College does have a duty of care to its community and there may be occasions when

an academically suitable applicant may be denied enrolment at the College or have an offer of admission withdrawn. Any such cases will be reviewed by a panel of staff as set out in the Policy for Admission of Ex-Offenders.

- 4.4.1. The relevant Policy for the admission of applicants who disclose a criminal conviction can be found here: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/admissions/>

## **5. CHECKING THE STATUS OF AN APPLICATION**

- 5.1. The acknowledgment email sent to applicants following receipt of the application contains information regarding how to track your application via the College's online system.

## **6. ACCEPTING OUR OFFER AND CONTRACT OF ADMISSION**

- 6.1. All offers for a place on postgraduate Master's, PG Diploma or PG Certificate programmes are transmitted electronically via the College's applicant portal, subject to the details outlined in 5.1. Any offer of a place made by the College is made on the basis of the applicant's:

- Acceptance of the College's rules and regulations as published and amended from time to time. Acceptance of the following statement: *The College prospectus and website describes the programmes offered by the College. Further documents describe the educational services offered by the College, the regulations governing the conduct of students and details of registration and assessment. Further details can be found at <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/terms-and-conditions/>. The College takes all reasonable steps to provide the educational services described in the prospectus and in the documents listed, but it does not guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the College interfere with its ability to provide educational services, the College undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any resultant disruption.*
- Payment of the fees required for the programme and any other fees for services offered by the College and accepted, such as accommodation.
- Payment of the deposit (typically 10% of the total year one tuition fee).
- Ensuring that statements made in applying for entry are accurate, as the discovery of false statements or omissions may lead to the offer being withdrawn (or in the case of students registered, to their registration being terminated).

## **7. FEEDBACK TO UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

- 7.1. The College receives a large number of applications for every place and as entry is very competitive, it is unable to make offers to all applicants. Imperial College acknowledges that it is important that unsuccessful applicants are informed as early as possible so that they can consider other options. We will provide feedback to all unsuccessful postgraduate applicants at their request, but we may not always be able to provide a level of specificity requested.

## **7.2. When to request feedback:**

- 7.2.1. Feedback can only be requested during the application cycle in which the application was made.

## **7.3. How to request feedback:**

- 7.3.1. Applicants should request feedback by emailing the appropriate admissions team, details can be found at [www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/contact/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/contact/) quoting their full name, College ID number and the programme applied for. Please note the College cannot provide feedback to third parties such as parents, guardians, teachers or referees without the express written permission of the applicant.

## **7.4. How you will receive feedback:**

- 7.4.1. Feedback will be issued via an email (normally within 15 working days of a request being made).

## **8. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

- 8.1. Please note that you may not appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making a decision but you may appeal the decision if you believe an administrative error has occurred in the processing of your application. For further information see: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/complaints-from-applicants/Procedure-for-dealing-with-complaints-by-applicants.pdf>

## **9. APPLICANT CONDUCT**

- 9.1 Imperial College London is committed to ensuring that any and all interactions with our applicants are conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner in line with Imperial Expectations. The College will also expect applicants to conduct their interactions with the College and its community in line with these principles.

The College will not tolerate inappropriate, offensive or abusive behaviour during the admission process or communications deemed to be malicious and that have the potential to bring the College's reputation into disrepute. Hostile or inappropriate behaviour, including excess levels of contact will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an applicant for admissions, an appeal or a complaint.

The College will normally warn an applicant if their behaviour, communication or interactions are judged to be inappropriate prior to taking any further action, but may in extreme cases take action with no warning. Such actions may include rejecting an application made, or withdrawing an offer made. Conduct that constitutes a criminal offence may also be reported to relevant authorities.



## 10. DATA PROTECTION

- 10.1 The College will process applicant data in line with the Privacy Notice for Students and Prospective Students, which can be access at: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/admissions/Privacy-notice.pdf> and in accordance with any applicable data protection laws in England and Wales, including from 25 May 2018 the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). The College is the data controller of your personal data. The College has appointed a Data Protection Officer, who can be contacted via email at [dpo@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpo@imperial.ac.uk), via telephone on 20 7594 3502 and via post at Imperial College London, Data Protection Officer, Faculty Building Level 4, London SW7 2AZ.

<b>Document Title:</b>	Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy
<b>Version:</b>	8
<b>Date:</b>	01/10/2020 with immediate effect
<b>Location and Filename:</b>	R:\7.Quality Assurance \3. Policy Framework\2. Admissions, Registration & Withdrawal\Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy
<b>Approved:</b>	QAEC 15 March 2016 / noted Senate May 2016 / QAEC Sept 2017 / QAEC Oct 2018 / QAEC Oct 2020
<b>Effective from:</b>	2016-17 and updated annually
<b>Originator:</b>	Registry Admissions
<b>Contact for Queries:</b>	Director of Admissions and Student Support (Financial and International)
<b>Cross References:</b>	Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) policy Policy for the recruitment of ex-offenders Applicant Complaints Policy General and Academic Regulations Privacy Notice for Students and Prospective Students Special Case Policy
<b>Notes and latest changes:</b>	General Updates Formatting changes made on 12 April 2016 Updates Sept 2017 (QAEC) Updates Oct 2018 (QAEC) Updates Oct 2019 (QAEC) Updates Oct 2020 (QAEC)