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**Applying for a PhD at the University of Leeds**

The process of applying for a PhD is naturally more complex than applying for a taught programme. There are a number of things you will need to consider before you begin the application process.

You need to be up to date with related literature and news so you are ready to discuss the direction you intend your research to take with potential supervisors. If you are starting your own research project, **you need to identify the supervisors available to work with you**. They must be experts in the topic you are interested in to ensure that your research is accurate and adding to current knowledge.

You will also need to **develop a research proposal for your application**.

**Please note that this is intended as a general guide to applying for a PhD at Leeds. You must check with the relevant graduate school (details given below) for any particular requirements they have (deadlines, length of research proposal etc.) before you submit your application,**

**Developing a research proposal**

Applicants need to produce a document that outlines their proposed research topic and programme of research.

Your topic:

* When you are writing a research proposal, the subject matter, above all, must excite and be interesting to **you** – it has to maintain your interest for at least the next three years.
* However, that’s only the start – the subject matter must also excite a potential supervisor, and later, a wider academic and professional audience.
* You have to be able to sell your proposal to potential supervisors who will judge if it is timely and of interest. Your research proposal is your sales pitch – it really is worth the time and effort to make this as good as you can.

What is expected in a research proposal:

* **Title: A clear and succinct description of your research.**Although during the course of your candidature your research will undoubtedly develop organically, and this may not be the title of your final thesis, your research proposal title should give a clear indication to supervisors of the area you are interested in exploring. We often see titles of research proposals that are either far too vague or broad, or too narrow and niche.
* **Introduction: A brief explanation of what you propose to research, why the research is of value and how you propose to go about it.**Set the scene for your research – what you are proposing, and critically, why is it important, and to whom?
* **Literature Review: A thorough examination of key, recent contributions in research periodicals relating to the area of research in question. You should use the literature review to identify gaps in, or problems with, existing research to justify why further or new research is required.**This must be relevant and up to date, otherwise how will you know if what you’re proposing is original? Even if you are basing this on work that you may have done at Masters level, you should ensure that you have updated it with the latest developments in the literature since you wrote it. It is through the literature review that you lay the foundations for your research questions, by critically evaluating what has already been done, how it could be improved, where the gaps are, or what the new frontiers are that your research will address.
* **Research Methods: A clear description of your choice of methodology, including details of methods of data collection and analysis. A time schedule showing key activities would be useful.**We frequently receive feedback from potential supervisors that although they like the research idea, the applicant has not appreciated or understood the appropriate research methods to conduct the research. Although you will receive training on the programme about research methods, it is important that some awareness is demonstrated in the proposal, because this will determine if your project is feasible within the standard period of study (three years for full time students).
* **References: Any literature cited in the proposal should be listed at the end of the document.**

At the end of your studies, a PhD is examined for:

* originality; contribution to the field
* independent critical ability and
* suitability for publication

At the application stage, therefore, we are looking for candidates with proposals who demonstrate the *potential* to meet these criteria within the standard three years of full-time PhD study. Your acceptance and an offer of a place to study at the University of Leeds will depend on a number of factors (such as your qualifications, supervision capacity and current research priorities) but the better your proposal, the higher your chances of being accepted.

**Finding a supervisor**

As mentioned above, a good research idea is not enough; you need to write a good research proposal which attracts a supervisor. Even with an excellent, original proposal, it may not be possible to offer you a place of study if a suitable, available supervisor cannot be identified. It is vital that your project appeals to potential supervisors who are willing and able to supervise so make sure that you spend time identifying potential supervisor. Although you will be working on your original ideas, they need fit with supervisors’ interest/expertise in order for us to provide appropriate supervision.

**How to find a supervisor**

* **Existing research interests:**Browse the current [**research interests and activities**](http://business.leeds.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/) of the University to see if your PhD could contribute to an established area of research priority at Leeds.
* **Look at potential supervisors’ web pages:** Consult individual staff members’ or research centres’ web pages to see if they indicate areas in which they are willing to supervise PhDs, or whether they wish to hear from prospective candidates before application. You are more likely to excite a potential supervisor if your topic is close to their interests, and they feel able to offer appropriate supervision. **Please remember that each academic discipline will have slightly different expectations about what a good proposal includes**.

Once you have identified potential supervisors, **contact the relevant Graduate School (details given below)**. They will be able to offer guidance as to the necessary steps to take to successfully contact a supervisor.

All phone numbers: 0113 34 + extension (below)

## **Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science | prhs\_pgenquiries@leeds.ac.uk | 33263/ 33634 |
| School of History, Institute for Medieval Studies | historypg@leeds.ac.uk | 33610 |
| School of English | research-english@leeds.ac.uk | 37327 |
| School of Languages, Cultures and Societies | lcspgr@leeds.ac.uk | 37844 |
| School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies | fineartphd@leeds.ac.uk  | 37003 |
| School of Music | musicphd@leeds.ac.uk  | 38713 |
| School of Performance and Cultural Industries | pciphd@leeds.ac.uk  | 37813 |
| School of Design | designphd@leeds.ac.uk  | 33756 |
| School of Media and Communication | mediaphd@leeds.ac.uk  | 34192 |

## **Faculty of Biological Sciences**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| Faculty of Biological Sciences | fbsgrad@leeds.ac.uk | 38186 |

## **Leeds University Business School**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| Leeds University Business School | phd@lubs.leeds.ac.uk | 34596/ 32620 |

## **Faculty of Social Sciences**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| School of Education | courses@education.leeds.ac.uk | 34602 |
| School of Politics and International Studies | polispg@leeds.ac.uk  | 36843 |
| School of Law | lawpgadm@leeds.ac.uk  | 35009 |
| School of Sociology and Social Policy, or the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies | ssp-postgraduate-office@leeds.ac.uk | 38056 |

## **Faculty of Engineering**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| Faculty of Engineering | phd@engineering.leeds.ac.uk | 38000 |

## **Faculty of Environment**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| School of Earth and Environment | apply-phd@see.leeds.ac.uk | 31634 |
| School of Geography | geo-rpg-enq@leeds.ac.uk | 36531 |
| Institute of Transport Studies | phd@its.leeds.ac.uk  | 35326 |

## **Faculty of Mathematics and Physical Sciences**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| Faculty of Mathematics and Physical Sciences | maps.pgr.admissions@leeds.ac.uk | 37400 |

## **Faculty of Medicine and Health**

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| **School or department** | **Email** | **Phone extension** |
| Faculty of Medicine and Health | fmhgrad@leeds.ac.uk  | 38221 |

**Applying**

Before you apply you should contact your [graduate school](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/projectleeds/info/130206/applying/124/graduate_school_contacts) and ask if they have any special application requirements. When applying, it is important that you state clearly the intended project or programme.

The supporting documents your school needs to process your application may vary but you must provide copies of your academic transcripts or certificates.

You may also need copies of:

* your CV
* a research proposal
* certificates and transcripts of any academic qualifications
* English language qualification certificates
* visa and immigration documents

All documents should be in English or be accompanied by a certified translation into English. They can be sent via the [online application](https://studentservices.leeds.ac.uk/pls/banprod/bwskalog_uol.P_DispLoginNon) or can be emailed to your school or faculty admissions office after you have submitted your application. Your email should include your student ID number (emailed to you on submission of your application), full name and your intended course of study.

Original or certified true copies will need to be supplied separately when you register in Leeds. Please do not send original documents at the application stage (if you are an international students you will require these documents in your student visa application process).

**References**

You need to submit a minimum of two academic references in support of your application, please also check the requirements for your graduate school. The names and contact details of your referees should be entered in the referees section.

Download a [reference request form](http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/download/1484/reference_template-research_degrees) for your referees to complete and email to your chosen academic department. [Find out more about the reference process](http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22226/research_degree_admissions_and_registration/1157/references_for_research_degree_applications).

**After you've applied**

If you have applied online you will be able to [log in and track your application’s progress](https://studentservices.leeds.ac.uk/pls/banprod/bwskalog_uol.P_DispLoginNon) at any time. The school may contact you if they have any further entry requirements. For example, you may be invited for an interview.