**Applying for PhD study at The University of Manchester**

**What is a PhD?**

A PhD is a fundamental contribution to knowledge & understanding within your field. You will become a world expert – on **a very specialist topic.**

During a PhD in Manchester, although you will not be attending lectures, and will work predominantly with only your supervisor(s), you will receive continual support and feedback/assessment. For example, it is common for PhD students to be required to provide an annual report on their research, for internal review. At the end of your project, you will then produce your final thesis, and have a viva examination from an external expert. Your PhD will be awarded if you have made a novel contribution to the body of knowledge in your research area.

**How to apply to a PhD at Manchester?**

1. **Make a note of the application deadline**, if there is one. We generally advise you to apply as early as possible. If you are applying to a specific programme with attached funding, application deadlines are often at the beginning of December, or even earlier for the start of the programme the following September.
2. **Prepare your CV** – this is required for certain funded or project-linked awards.
3. [**Prepare a research proposal**](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/research-proposal/)**:** guidance is available on our website below, and on the next page of this document:

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/research-proposal/

1. **Choose and make contact with your**[**potential supervisor**](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/choose-supervisor/) (providing them with your draft proposal and CV)
2. **Collate your documentation**: if your proposed supervisor is keen to proceed, make sure you have evidence of prior academic and English Language qualifications to hand – these will be certificates or transcripts to show that you meet, or expect to meet the entry requirements.
3. **Apply:** once your research is agreed and finalised, make your formal online application here:

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/

**How should I choose an appropriate academic to contact for requesting PhD supervision?**

In order to be sure of the most suitable academic to supervise your research:

* Read through their online profile and familiarise yourself with a couple of their publications.
* Compose a brief email highlighting your awareness of their research and how it aligns with your own research interests.
* Indicate your intention to apply for doctoral study and interest in working with them.
* Summarise your background and who you've previously worked with on research projects.

Please refer to our guidance on our website below:

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/choose-supervisor/

**How to prepare a research proposal?**

Your research proposal should:

* demonstrate evidence of intellectual purpose and originality;
* show that you are capable of communicating your ideas clearly, concisely and coherently;
* define the topic you are interested in and show good awareness of the research context.
* Typical proposals range between 1,000 and 1,500 words; however, we advise you to consult with your School/Department for specific guidance on word count.

Structuring your research proposal

Please check with the relevant School for the specific conventions and expectations of your research proposal. The following are general considerations that we deem important:

* Create a clear working title for your research project.
* Introduce your proposal, identifying the subject for research in terms of theoretical issues and relevant empirical applications, and highlighting why you wish to pursue this project.
* Review the relevant literature and theories relating to your proposed research area, showing that you clearly understand the key arguments that have been developed and the ideas and findings of key researchers working on the topic. This should demonstrate your familiarity with the subject area, and your ability to communicate clearly and concisely.
* Summarise the central aims and questions that will guide your research.
* Outline the research methods you will use, explaining how you will conduct your research. What form will the resources take? Where are they located? Any problems of access?
* Indicate your project strategy and timetable. What are the main project stages? What would the annual completion expectations be? What are the perceived challenges, and how will these be overcome?
* Explain why your proposed project is important. How will your research make an original contribution?
* Include a bibliography highlighting the key references that will support your research topic.

Before submitting your research proposal

Contact an academic member of our staff to discuss your research proposal and key objectives before you submit your formal application. This will enable you to fine-tune your proposal and check that we can identify a suitable supervisory team for you.

Refining your proposal

When you submit your research proposal for application purposes, you will not be committing yourself to the precise detail or methodology. Once we accept you onto a PhD programme, you can refine your original proposal following discussions with your supervisory team.

More guidance:

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/admissions/how-to-apply/research-proposal/