



School of Social and Community Medicine

FAQs for Prospective Postgraduate Research Students

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Frequently Asked Questions Prospective Student Postgraduate Administration

These FAQs are designed to provide brief answers to questions commonly asked by individuals wishing to study for a postgraduate research degree in the School of Social and Community Medicine (SSCM).

Additional information is available on the *SSCM prospective postgraduate webpage*.

Who should I contact for further information?

Queries about PhD, MD and MSc in research should be sent to the postgraduate administrator.

Sharen O'Keefe

Telephone: ++44 (0)117 9287274

e-mail: scm-postgrad-admin@bristol.ac.uk

Queries about the MSc by Research in Healthcare Ethics and Law should be sent to:

e-mail: postgrad-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

What academic qualifications do I need before applying?

The minimum entry requirement for a PhD or MD is an upper second-class honours degree (or equivalent) and/or a relevant Master's qualification, and/or evidence of equivalent prior learning or achievement.

The minimum entry requirement for an MSc by Research is an upper second-class honours degree (or equivalent) and/or evidence of equivalent prior learning or achievement.

Are there any English language requirements?

Yes. For applicants whose first language is not English, it is necessary to achieve a minimum score in an approved English language test specified in 'Profile B' of the *UoB Postgraduate language requirements* or attend the 6 or 10 week pre-session English course (*UoB Language Centre*) at the University of Bristol and achieve 75% overall, with no less than 70% in each element. The prospective student must cover the cost of the pre-session course, whether successfully completed or not.

Are there any visa or immigration restrictions?

Non-EU citizens may need a visa to study in Bristol. If there is doubt, the potential student must contact the *UoB International Office* to confirm requirements before applying.

How much will a postgraduate research degree cost?

There are two main expenses: tuition fees and living costs. Students typically cover these expenses either by: 1) Securing studentships or scholarships (for example, provided by Government, employer, charities, or research councils), or 2) Self-funding (for example, through part time work or savings).

It is important that you know your tuition fees and estimated living costs when planning your finances for your postgraduate study.

Living costs for a single student are somewhere in the region of £800 to £900 per month (please read the fees and funding section of the *UoB postgraduate study page*

). Any scholarship funding you receive is likely to be based on the cost of living for a single student, and will not cover the costs of families. Please ensure that you have sufficient funding in place for the full length of your programme.

Tuition fees depend on whether you are classified as a UK/EU or International student. In 2016/17, full time UK/EU tuition fees were approximately £4,121 per year and international fees were £18,100 per year. Please check current fees which are detailed in the *UoB postgraduate study page*

If you are in doubt about your eligibility for UK/EU tuition fee status, please contact the *UoB postgraduate recruitment and admissions office*.

How can I obtain funding?

Tuition fees and living expenses are typically funded through one of several routes:

- i. Students who apply for fully funded studentships available through SSCM. Please see the *SSCM prospective postgraduate webpage* for the latest opportunities.
- ii. Students who secure external funding through UK research funders, typically the *National Institute for Health Research, Medical Research Council, Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK, Alzheimer's Society, Arthritis Research UK, and the Multiple Sclerosis Society*. Please visit their webpages to view funding opportunities, eligibility criteria and deadlines.
- iii. Students who have secured other funding sources (e.g. International Government, employer, research grants). Information about how to search for other sources of funding can be found here *UoB Student Funding Office* funding database.
- iv. Students who self- fund their studies (through part time work or savings).

Many studentship funders restrict eligibility based on residence or citizenship. You should confirm with the funder whether you are eligible for a studentship before putting in an application.

However you plan to fund your studies, we strongly encourage you to contact a potential research supervisor (*SSCM prospective postgraduate webpage*) to discuss research ideas and possible sources of funding as soon as possible.

How do I apply?

Before submitting an application all students are strongly advised to contact prospective supervisor(s) directly to discuss research ideas and gain advice in developing a research proposal for their application. A list of supervisor research interests and potential research projects is on the *SSCM prospective postgraduate webpage*. Please state to the supervisor that you have already received this document and are seeking advice on developing a draft proposal.

All applicants (including those have already secured funding and SSCM staff) must apply online using the *UoB postgraduate study page*

Applications may be submitted at any time of year, although there will be specific calls and deadlines for some funded studentships.

Applications consist of:

- i. Academic CV;
- ii. Copies of degree certificates and transcripts, and other supporting documentation as required (for example English language test scores);
- iii. Two references;
- iv. The name of two SSCM academic staff members who would be the project supervisors (following discussion and agreement with them);
- v. Outline research proposal (up to 2 sides of A4, completed after consultation with proposed supervisor) and a personal statement.

In order for the application to be forwarded to the relevant people the student must enter "Social and Community Medicine" under the programme name and enter the source of funding secured or applied for under the funding name.

For MSc by Research in Healthcare Ethics and Law, student applications are assessed based on the project and the person undertaking it. If you wish to apply please send a draft proposal to postgrad-ethics@bristol.ac.uk. Please include a brief personal statement outlining relevant qualifications or experience of bioethics (including any relevant law), your research question, methods and a timeline for the project and your plans for obtaining funding. The draft proposal will be assessed to see if a full application can be made. Please allow two weeks for assessment of the draft proposal.

What will happen after I submit my application?

You will receive email confirmation that your application is under review.

When a decision has been made you will receive an email to advise you that a response has been published online. Applicants will need to login to their application to view this.

Successful applications will receive either a 'conditional' (e.g. conditional on an interview) or 'unconditional' offer letter. Within the body of the text will be a hyperlink to the 'Offer Response' page, where applicants will need to 'accept offer' in order for their application to progress.

Typically offers will not be made without interview unless applicants have already secured a nationally competitive studentship. Interviews are usually conducted by members of the postgraduate team and potential supervisors. Interviews assess the academic and professional potential of individual candidates and provide feedback on the research proposed. Interviews may include an oral research presentation.

Approximately one month before start date successful applicants will receive an email from the Faculty Office with full details of the registration process.

Can SSCM School staff obtain funding for a postgraduate research degree?

There is no funding specifically available to support members of staff within the School who wish to undertake a PhD. Staff are advised to contact their Line Manager to discuss whether there are any funding sources (other than those outlined above) that can be pursued.

Can I do a PhD by published work?

It is possible to undertake a PhD by published work. It is only open to experienced researchers with a strong track-record of first author publications, who are 6 or more years post-graduation, and who have been an academic staff member in SSCM for at least 3 years. Registration and submission fees are detailed on the *UoB Student Funding Office* webpages.

We recommend that you discuss whether an application for PhD by published work is appropriate with your line manager, head of section and a director of Graduate Studies. Prior to applying you should identify two supervisors to: a) help guide you in your choice of publications; b) in writing your substantial commentary linking the published work and outlining its coherence and significance; and c) helping to choose examiners.

For more information, please see the *UoB regulations for PGR students*.

Fees for 2016/2017

Home/EU students £4121 full-time £2061 part-time
International students £18,100

Key links

SSCM prospective postgraduate webpage

Contains information on research degree funding and how to apply

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/social-community-medicine/courses/postgraduate/>

UoB International Office

Support and advice on visas, living in Bristol, and fees for international students.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/>

UoB Language Centre

Provide courses in English language for prospective postgraduate students

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/english-language/>

UoB Postgraduate language requirements

English language requirements for postgraduate study

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/language-requirements/>

UoB postgraduate study page

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/>

UoB postgraduate recruitment and admissions office

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/fees-funding/contacts/>

UoB regulations for PGR students

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/pg/>

UoB Student Funding Office

For all information on tuition fees, financial advice, and funding

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/studentfunding/>

Potential funding sources

Medical Research Council

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/fellowships/>

National Institute for Health Research

<http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/fellowship-programme.htm>

Wellcome Trust

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/index.htm>

Alzheimer's Society

<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Arthritis Research UK

<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/research.aspx>

British Heart Foundation

<http://www.bhf.org.uk/research/research-grants-1/what-we-fund.aspx>

Cancer Research UK

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/our-funding-schemes>

Diabetes UK

<http://www.diabetes.org.uk/phd-studentship>

Multiple Sclerosis Society

<http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-research/for-researchers/types-of-grants>