

PhD Physics, and MSc by Research Physics

This Admissions Statement applies to applications submitted for entry to the programmes between 13 September 2025 and 11 September 2026.

It should be read in association with the [University Admissions Principles and Procedures](#) for Postgraduate programmes, the relevant [prospectus entry](#) and general [application guidance](#).

Admissions criteria

Academic and English language requirements

The academic and English language requirements for these programmes are displayed on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#).

For information on international equivalent qualifications, please refer to our [International Office website](#).

Non-standard applications

We welcome applications from those with non-standard qualifications who can demonstrate knowledge, experience and skills developed in the workplace, or elsewhere, relevant to the programme of study. Please use your personal statement to provide further details.

Non-standard applications will be considered by the Admissions Tutor(s) for the programme on a case-by-case basis.

Application process

Online application form

Applicants should complete the online application form, uploading all required documents directly. Further information is available on our [guidance for online applications page](#).

Applications will not be considered until **all** required documents have been uploaded. You must also state your preferred supervisors and the project title that you are applying for.

Required and optional documents

References: Required

We require two academic references, and it is informative if one or both referees can speak to the research experience of the candidate. References should comply with our standard requirements outlined on [our guidance pages](#).

Degree certificate(s) and academic transcripts: Required

From first and any subsequent degrees. Degree certificates and transcripts should comply with our standard requirements outlined on our guidance pages.

Personal statement: Required

Your Personal Statement should outline and describe why you wish to undertake a research degree, the type of research you would like to do, and how it fits with your longer-term plans.

Please explain your interest in Physics research and your motivation for taking on a research degree. Examples of this might be how you developed your interest in research, and Physics research in particular. Please do relate this to your own direct experience of conducting a research project, of any scale and in any field.

Feel free to point to your experience and level of expertise with particular methods, techniques, research protocols, etc.. This can be a more detailed description of experiments or other investigations you have conducted, complementary to the shorter more concise information in a CV, for example.

You must indicate the area(s) of Physics research at Bristol that you would like to work in and reference your research interests with those of potential supervisors in the School of Physics, explaining your choice. Please consult the School of Physics website for information on research themes and personnel.

<https://www.bristolphysics.org/>

Note that School of Physics staff are also part of the Centres for Doctoral Training in [Superconductivity](#) and in [Quantum Information Science and Technologies](#). You should apply separately to these programmes if interested in them.

Please feel free to describe how you see a research degree forming a part of your career plans, and what role it might play as you progress.

English language certificates/other evidence: Required

Evidence of meeting the English language profile as stated on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#) and specified by the [University English Language Requirements Policy](#).

Curriculum Vitae (CV): Required

CVs should include all your recent academic qualifications (e.g., details of Bachelors and Masters degrees) and details of other relevant work experience and qualifications to support an application. Brief headings of research experience and any experimental or theoretical techniques, methods, protocols and software/hardware used, with evidence of expertise, would be helpful.

Optional Documents

Research Proposal: It is **not** required that you submit a research proposal, although you may feel that such a document demonstrates your interest in research and motivation for a research degree.

You may submit a specific research proposal if you wish, although research projects are generally agreed in discussion with supervisors rather than proposed by applicants. Please check with your proposed supervisor if a Research Proposal is necessary.

If you are invited to submit a specific research proposal, please note that the primary requirement for a research proposal is to define and situate your research within an academic/disciplinary context. You should remember that people in the academic community are the primary audience/readership for postgraduate research. This means that you will need to identify:

1. The research questions or problems that you intend to address;
2. The research context for your project/programme of work, including a survey of the relevant literature
3. The methods and techniques you think you will use to pursue the key questions.

Selection process

Assessment of applications

All applicants are considered in line with the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures Policy. Once a complete application has been submitted with all required supporting documents, it is usually considered by at least two members of staff using the following criteria:

Decisions are made on the basis of all the available information, including the written application and references, and, if applicable, the performance at interview.

Interviews

Candidates may be invited to attend an interview. There is no set format for interviews, but they typically cover one or more of the following areas: the applicant's academic background, including training and experience that is of particular relevance to the programme or project; the applicant's motivation for applying, including specific research interests within the discipline and career aspirations; and potential research projects. Candidates will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

Interviews are used to assess whether the applicant has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue their chosen programme, and whether the programme is appropriate to their interests and aspirations. Candidates are evaluated on the basis of their academic achievement, understanding of research and self-motivation.

Interviewees based overseas will normally be interviewed via an online platform, or by telephone if necessary, at a mutually convenient time.

Decisions

Applicants will be notified by email when a decision has been made and decision letters will be available to view and print by logging into the application. If there is a deadline by which applicants must accept an offer of admission or pay a deposit, this will be stated in the offer letter.

Offers

Offers will typically be made in line with the academic requirements set out above.

Offers made may be conditional or unconditional. An unconditional offer will be made to applicants who have already met the conditions and provided evidence that conditions have been met. Where academic or language requirements have not yet been fulfilled, applicants will receive a conditional offer outlining the requirements that must be met.

Deferrals

Deferred entry is available for this programme, subject to agreement by the relevant Admissions Team. Please contact physics-pg@bristol.ac.uk to make a formal request.

Additional information

Extenuating circumstances

If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties within your studies, you can submit an extenuating circumstances form as part of your application.

The information provided will be treated confidentially and will help us to assess your academic performance fairly considering your circumstances.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

Applicants who will require a visa to study in the UK will also be required to gain clearance through the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). The Academic Technology Approval Scheme is a clearance process which affects overseas applicants for certain postgraduate science, technology, medical and engineering studies in the UK. Applicants to affected programmes are required to obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for a visa. For further details, please see: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/atas/>.

Visa

International students coming to the UK to study full-time may need to apply for a student visa. Further information is available from the University Student Visas team: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/>.

Fees and Deposits

Fees

Annual tuition fee information is available on the relevant prospectus entry for this programme.

Deposits

Deposits are not required for this programme.

Sponsored Students

Sponsored students will need to upload a copy of their sponsorship letter to the online application.