**PhD studentships School of Psychology**

**Applications**

* Application documents consist of transcripts, proposal and often a cover letter or personal statement; references (names of references are sufficient initially)
* Proposal requirements: 1000 words (introduction, research question/hypotheses, methods, time plan) plus references and names of supervisor(s)
* Degree minimum requirement: a 2:1 Bachelor’s degree or a Master’s degree in a relevant subject (convert non-UK degrees to UK grading system, if necessary)

**Selection panel**

* Usually consists of 3 members of staff (1 of which is PGR tutor), cutting across research fields in the school

**For scoring criteria see the next two pages.**

(Note that the criteria are partly adapted from the SWDTP ESRC shortlisting and interview scoring criteria)

**Scoring criteria for applications**

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| **Degree/relevant experience (Score: 0-5)** | |
| 5 (Very strong potential) | **Very strong potential to undertake PhD at the highest level.**  This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving (or on track to achieve) a strong first-class result (75% and above) in a relevant field and, ideally, some research experience.  Applicants with a strong academic record of a higher 2:1 or a lower first-class (~67%-74%) in a relevant field and *extensive*, relevant research experience can also fall in this category. |
| 4 (Strong potential) | **Strong potential to undertake a PhD at a high level.**  This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving or being on-track to achieve a higher 2:1 or lower first-class result (~67-74%) in a relevant field and, ideally, some research experience.  Applicants with mid-2:1 result (~62%-67%) in a relevant field and *extensive*, relevant research experience can also fall in this category. |
| 3 (Suitable potential) | **Potential to undertake PhD at the required level.**  This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving or being on-track to achieve a lower to mid-2:1 class result (60-66% average) in a relevant field and, potentially, some research experience.  Applicants with a Master’s degree with a pass grade in a relevant field and *extensive*, relevant research experience may fall in this category. |
| 2 (uncertain potential) | **Uncertain potential to undertake a PhD.**  Applicants will have or be on on-track for a lower to mid-2:1 class result (60-66%), but it is uncertain whether they have the relevant experience (degree or research) to undertake the proposed project.  Applicants with a Master’s degree with a pass grade and little relevant experience (degree or research) will usually fall in this category. |
| 1 (poor potential) | **Poor potential to undertake a PhD.**  Applicants will have or be on on-track for a lower to mid-2:1 class result (60 to 66% average), but have no relevant experience (degree or research) to undertake the proposed project.  Applicants with a Master’s degree with a pass grade and no relevant experience (degree, research) will usually fall in this category. |
| 0 (not suitable) | **Applicant does not fulfil minimum degree requirements.** |

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| **Research proposal (Total score: 0-5)** | |
| 2 (strongly evident)  1 (moderately evident)  0 (weakly evident/not at all) | **Original proposal that shows clear understanding of the field.**  A strong proposal will provide a comprehensive and accessible overview of the field and clearly map out the (original) contribution of the proposed PhD project.  Moderate proposals will summarize the field, but the contribution will be less clear.  Weak proposals will show poor understanding of the field and/or no clear contribution. |
| 2 (strongly evident)  1 (moderately evident)  0 (weakly evident/not at all) | **The proposal has clear research question(s)/hypotheses and outlines appropriate methods with sufficient detail.**  Strong proposals will clearly state their research questions/hypotheses, outline (and justify) appropriate methods, and provide sufficient methodological details.  Moderate proposals may state the research questions/hypotheses less clearly, may not sufficiently justify the chosen methods, appropriateness of methods may be less clear, and/or will not provide sufficient methodological details.  Weak proposals will not state the research questions/hypotheses, not justify the methods, describe inappropriate methods and/or only provide very few or no methodological details. |
| 1 (evidence)  0 (no evidence) | **Project is achievable in 3-year-period.**  Time plan with sufficient details, showing that the project is achievable in 3 years.  No or insufficient evidence that the project is achievable in 3 years. |

**Scoring criteria for interviews**

(scoring criteria based on criteria from ESRC SWDTP)

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| **Interview performance** | |
| 4 or 5  (Excellent or Outstanding) | Excellent or outstanding knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated.  Ability to articulate, with confidence and enthusiasm, the relevance of their proposed research to it.  Clear articulation of an appropriate research question, comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, articulation and discussion of relevant theory, awareness of methodological demands and needs and understanding of the demands of the project.  The applicant answers with conviction and insight, inspiring confidence in their ownership and understanding of the research. |
| 2 and 3  (Good or Very Good) | Performs well in interview but with some gaps in knowledge, understanding or wider framing of their research topic.  Demonstrates a good or very good knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated and are able to articulate, with limited uncertainty, the relevance of their proposed research to it.  There is articulation of an appropriate research question, broad comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, some knowledge and discussion of relevant theory, some consideration to methodological demands and needs, and understanding of the demands of the project.  The applicant answers with reasonable confidence, knowledge, and insight. |
| 1  (Adequate) | The applicant is adequate but does not excel in the interview, revealing some systematic gaps in their knowledge, understanding or wider framing of their research topic.  They demonstrate an adequate but limited knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated and are unpersuasive about the relevance of their proposed research to it.  There is some articulation of an appropriate research question, broad but not especially compelling comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, some knowledge and discussion of relevant theory, some consideration to methodological demands and needs, and understanding of the demands of the project but also some clear areas of uncertainty.  However, the case is not as well made as other applicants, likely lacking the same level of confidence, knowledge, and insight. |
| 0  (Weak) | The interview is unpersuasive in interview, raising concerns about their understanding of the research or research field, the suitability and/or viability of their proposed research theories or methods, and/or their suitability to undertake a PhD. |