# How to Apply for PhD Programmes at University of Reading Malaysia

1. **When should I apply for a PhD programme?**

We accept PhD candidates year-round, but you are encouraged to join us at the start of an academic semester (in September for the start of the first semester; and February for the start of the second semester).

In order to give us sufficient time to process your application, we recommend submitting your application at least 3 months (local applicants) or 5 months (international applicants) before the programme start date.

You will need to have received a formal offer of a place from us before you apply for some scholarships. Therefore, make sure you allow enough time for us to process your programme application so that you can still meet the scholarship application deadline.

2. **How do I find the relevant school or department?**

Once you have a suitable research topic in mind, you will need to find the most appropriate academic school and PhD programme that could support your area of research. The best place to start is to visit the dedicated webpages for our schools and departments. Here you will find information about:

- the main areas of research for that school or department
- entry requirements
- English language requirements
- specific fee and funding arrangements

You can find our school and department webpages via Find A PhD – Doctoral Research Areas.

3. **How do I make an initial enquiry?**

For informal inquiries regarding the PhD programme, please contact pgrs@reading.edu.my

4. **Do I need to submit a research proposal?**

Yes. All applicants for a PhD programme are required to submit an initial research project proposal as part of their application.

Your proposal should outline the research topic you intend to investigate, the key research questions or objectives, the proposed methodology, and the significance of the research. The proposal helps us assess the feasibility and originality of your proposed study, identify suitable academic supervisors, and determine whether your research aligns with the University's expertise and research priorities.

An initial project proposal is not expected to be a final or fixed research plan. With feedback from a potential supervisor, you will revise your initial proposal which will be the basis on your PhD interview. Following admission, you will work closely with your supervisory team to once again refine and develop your research proposal during the early stages of your candidature.

5. **How do I write a research proposal?**

To maximise the likelihood of a successful application, we strongly recommend that all applicants read the following guidance before finalising their research proposal and submitting their online PhD application.

How to write a research proposal?

6. **What are the academic requirements?**

To be accepted to study for a PhD, applicants will normally need to have an undergraduate degree of at least a 2:1 (or equivalent) and a master's degree of at least a Merit (or equivalent), in a subject related to the proposed PhD topic.

In some exceptional cases, applicants who hold a first-class honours Bachelor's degree (or international equivalent) without a Master's degree may be considered.

Please check the ‘Entry Requirements' section of the relevant PhD programme website for any programme-specific requirements.

7. **What are the English language requirements?**

The normal entry requirement for research degrees is a score of 7 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test or an equivalent test accepted by the University. Exceptions to such a requirement may arise where the candidate has recently (last two years) studied for another degree or worked in a country where English is the native language.

IELTS: 7.0 overall, with no element below 6.0

8. **How do I submit my application?**

Once you are ready to make a formal application, you can apply through our online application service. This allows you to include electronic copies of your academic transcripts, certificates and other supporting information.

[Apply Now]

9. **What happens after I've applied for a PhD programme?**

Here’s what to expect after submitting your application:

i. Academic Requirements Screening: Your application will first be reviewed to ensure that you meet the necessary academic requirements.

ii. Initial Review by Head of School (HoS): If the requirements are met, the HoS will review your application to evaluate the strength and academic quality of your proposal, as well as to determine whether a suitable potential supervisor is available in your proposed area. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to submit research proposals aligned with the School’s research priorities and staff expertise. Proposals outside these areas are less likely to be considered.

iii. Research Proposal Presentation (Optional): You may be invited to present your initial research proposal to the School.

iv. Refinement with Potential Supervisor: Once a potential supervisor with relevant expertise and interest is identified, you will have the opportunity to work with them to refine your proposal and develop it into a novel research project that will make significant contributions to your field.

v. Submission for Review: After your supervisor approves the refined proposal, it will be submitted to the DPGRS and the HoS. This version will form the basis of your PhD interview.

vi. PhD Interview: You will be invited to give a presentation of your refined research proposal, followed by a Q&A session. This allows the panel to assess the rigour of your research, your understanding of the topic, and your suitability for the PhD programme.

vii. Decision Notification: The outcome of your application will first be communicated via email, followed by the official decision on RISIS.