Scholarships & funding

Q: How much does it cost?

A: Annual costs include a tuition fee, additional programme costs and living expenses. The tuition fee differs between Home/EU and Overseas students, so you should carefully check your fee status. Additional programme costs (sometimes called bench fees or research costs) cover facilities such as basic consumables, equipment purchase, hire and maintenance, computing hardware and software. Tuition fees and additional programme costs are payable for each year of active study, typically one year for MSc, two years for MPhil and three years for PhD. Visit our pages online for more information:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/fees/overview

Q: I can’t pay that. What do I do?

A: For most research postgraduates we expect that their study will be supported by some form of funding or scholarship. There are many possible sources. Some are directly awarded by us; others require a separate application by you but we are involved in the decision process; some might be directly obtained by you (e.g. funding from your own country). Some will cover the entire cost of your studies, including a stipend for living costs; others may cover partial costs, such as fees only, costs for one year only, or the difference between home and international fees. See:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/fees/overview

Q: What can I do to increase my chances of getting funding?

A: Find out the funding sources for which you are eligible, and make sure you meet their requirements and application deadlines. Study hard, get good grades, give the people who are writing your references reasons to be impressed with your abilities, devote serious thought to your research proposal, and get in touch with potential supervisors. Submit your application as soon as you possibly can, including all supporting material (transcripts etc.).

Q: What are the deadlines for funding?

A: Each funding scheme has its own application deadline, so you will need to check. The earliest deadlines are usually in January or February for students expecting to start in September or October. Applicants are encouraged to apply with all supporting material by the end of December to be considered for these scholarships. The second main set of decisions, particularly for internal scholarships, require you to have applied by March.
**Q: Can I be considered for funding before making a formal application?**

A: No. Only applicants who have already been assessed as academically suitable, and as falling within an appropriate research area, can be considered for funding, which requires a formal online application:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/apply/overview](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/apply/overview)

**Q: I have been offered admission to a research degree but the letter says you cannot yet offer funding. What does that mean?**

A: Many funding sources require candidates to have already received a formal offer of admission. Therefore, we often accept a candidate for admission long before it is clear how funding will be handled. This should not be interpreted as a decision not to offer funding unless the offer makes it clear that no funding is available - you should hear later about the funding decision. You might be able to use this letter to apply for funding yourself.

However, if you do not receive a further, funded offer, acceptance of this offer means you are intending to come as a self-funding student (see below).

**Q: When will I hear whether I have obtained funding?**

A: Again, this depends on the funding scheme. In general we should be able to inform you about funding by May; wherever possible, earlier information will be provided. Often we have a reserve list for funding in case some applicants do not accept our offer, in which case the final funding decision may be in July or August.

**Q: I have received a funding offer from another University before hearing from you. What should I do?**

A: We are sometimes able to make early offers to exceptional candidates, particularly those who have received an offer from elsewhere and need to respond before our decision is due. Please contact us if you are in that position:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/about/contact](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/about/contact)

**Q: My potential supervisor has told me I will get funding. Is that official?**

A: No. Your supervisor may be able to advise you about what to expect, but only the formal offer letter from the University outlining your funding is official. You should ask your supervisor to contact the Graduate School to request that this letter is issued.

**Q: Can I come as a self funded student and assume I will find funding once I arrive?**

A: No. When you accept a self-funded place, you are agreeing to fully cover the costs of your study, which are clearly set out in advance, from your own resources.

Should we not be able to offer funding, our decision is not subject to revision. You may supplement your income by undertaking tutoring and demonstrating (see below) but this can only make a minor contribution to your overall budget.
There are some sources of funding for which existing students are eligible, and you will be encouraged to apply for these where appropriate, but you should not rely on success in obtaining such funding to continue your study.

**Q: Are teaching assistantships available to support PhD study?**

A: You may supplement your income by undertaking tutoring and demonstrating, and some of these jobs are called teaching assistantships, but such jobs will not suffice on their own to finance PhD study.

http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/admin/ITO/jobs/2010/

**Q: What is the difference between a ‘scholarship’ and a ‘studentship’?**

A: Different funding schemes use different terms - you may also see the term ‘fellowship’ - but there is no practical difference as far as Informatics at the University of Edinburgh is concerned.

**How to apply**

**Q: If I send my CV (resume) directly to you, will you admit me?**

A: No.

We are not able to consider an applicant's suitability or eligibility without a complete application, including all the supporting documents.

If you want to be considered for admission you must submit an application using the EUCLID system. See:


**Q: Is there an application fee?**

A: No, we do not charge a fee for you to apply for admission.

**Q: Is there an application deadline?**

A: You can apply at any time. However, to be considered for funding, you need to apply within the appropriate funding round; an early application is particularly important for overseas (non-EU) applicants. See the current funding round deadlines here:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/apply

**Q: Does submitting an application mean I am automatically considered for funding/scholarships?**

A: No. You need to check possible sources of funding here:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/fees/overview

For some funding sources you can indicate directly on your EUCLID application form that you wish to be considered for these awards. For many other funding sources you will need
to make a separate application. Sometimes these will have different deadlines to our application deadlines.

**Q: I need to address my application to one of your research institutes. Which one should I pick?**

A: Consult the following information about each of the institutes to learn about their work:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/research-degrees/researchtopics

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/research/institutes

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/postgraduate/fees/research-grant-funding

Information about other topics of interest to potential supervisors may be found in our research directory:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/research/directory

**Q: I am interested in two institutes / two topics. Which one should I pick?**

A: Pick the one that seems most appropriate and mention prominently at the top of your research proposal that you are also interested in topic X / in institute Y.

**Q: What documents do you need in support of my application?**

A: When you make an application online, via EUCLID, you would normally also upload:

A degree certificate and academic transcript for each degree you currently hold, or an interim transcript for degrees you are currently studying.

If your first language is not English, a language certificate showing evidence of your proficiency in English (see details below).

Two signed letters of reference on headed paper. Alternatively, you can indicate in your application that you want the University to contact your referees to ask them to upload their references.

**For Research degrees only (i.e. MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD) : a research proposal (see details below).**

You may also upload additional supporting documents that you think will help us to assess your application. If you do not have all these documents to hand when you complete the online application form, you can submit your online application without them and you will be asked to provide them later in the application process. However, you should note that we cannot consider your application for admission until all the documents noted above have been received.
Q: What if I don't have my degree certificate yet?

A: EUCLID may automatically ask you to provide your degree certificate but if your studies are not yet complete you will not be able to provide this. We can still consider your application without the certificate, so this will not delay processing. However, if your application is successful, your offer of admission will be conditional on you providing the certificate as soon as it becomes available, i.e., once you complete your degree. Meanwhile, you should include your interim academic transcript so we can assess your current progress towards your degree.

Q: What is an academic transcript, and how do I obtain it? What is an interim transcript?

A: An academic transcript is a list of all courses taken, all grades received, all honours awarded and degrees conferred.

An interim transcript provides similar information for degrees you are yet to complete (it may also show the expected grade or level of award if you are near the end of the programme of study).

The transcript is usually issued by the Registrar/Registry (or equivalent) of the relevant institution.

If the transcript is not in English you will also need to submit a certified translation (see next question).

Q: What if my documents are not in English?

A: Where your original degree certificate, academic transcript, or other relevant documents are not in English you must provide an officially certified translation. This means:

a translation certified as accurate by the institution that issued the certificate or transcript OR
a translation certified as accurate by the British Council, a British Embassy or Consulate OR
a translation certified as accurate by a professional translation service or an authorised agent of the University of Edinburgh

Q: What evidence of proficiency in English do you require?

A: If English is not your first language then you must submit a copy of a recent English language test certificate (not more than two years old at the proposed date of admission) or provide details of when you are going to take the test. Note that any offer of a place will be conditional on you obtaining a required score on this test:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/english/postgraduate/science-engineering

Q: What is a Research Proposal?

When you apply for a research degree (PhD, MPhil or MSc by Research) you will be asked to indicate a proposed topic of study, and to submit a research proposal describing your proposed research topic in more detail. This would normally be 1-2 pages long (and cannot be uploaded if it exceeds 4MB). What you write here is not binding on what you will finally
study, but will give us a useful impression of your background, interests and ideas. It is very important in assessing your application, and potential supervisors will be looking at your proposal for evidence that you have an appropriate background knowledge for the topic area and your own ideas about how research on that topic should best be taken forward. If you have not yet decided on a precise area of study, please tell us about areas of Informatics that you find most interesting and why, in as much detail as possible. Note that if you have contacted a potential supervisor before you make your application, they may be willing to advise you in the preparation of your research proposal. Also see this advice on how to write a proposal.

Writing a postgraduate research proposal

Q: What does 'first or upper second class honours degree or its equivalent' mean?

A: The University of Edinburgh requires all postgraduate research students to hold at least a first or upper second class honours degree or its equivalent before they can be admitted to a higher degree.

A first class honours degree is typically achieved by about 10% of candidates and an upper second class honours degree is typically achieved by approximately the next 30% of candidates.

We take the ranking of the university at which you studied into account in determining whether or not your degree is equivalent to a first or upper second class honours degree in the UK.

We will normally reject applications from candidates whose degrees are not of this standard, in the absence of highly relevant work or other experience. Note that this is a minimum standard, and a higher standard may be needed for your application to be competitive for admission or funding.

Q: Do I need a Master's degree to apply for a PhD?

A: No.

We may however suggest to some applicants that they study for a Master's degree before coming to do a PhD, if we consider that additional preparation is necessary.

Also, some funding sources (for instance some Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council awards) provide four years of funding covering an MSc followed by a PhD.

Q: How is my application handled?

A: Applications are first checked for completeness: you may be asked to provide missing information. They are then assessed by at least two academic staff members within the Institute to which you have applied. You may be invited for interview or interviewed by phone at this stage. Usually, a first decision is made about admission: students can potentially be admitted if they meet our high academic standards and a staff member is willing to act as their supervisor. Students eligible for admission are then further considered for funding; in general, we cannot offer funding to all admissible students but try to fund as many admissible students as possible. Admission decisions will be communicated to you through
the EUCLID system; most funding decisions will be communicated to you informally by email and formally by an ‘offer’ letter. We try to make most offers around March, but there can be many factors that delay a decision, in which case we will try to keep you informed about the status of your application.


Q: I am applying for external funding, and I need an offer from you to apply, but have not yet heard your decision. What should I do?

A: We are sometimes able to make early admission decisions for applicants who need this information to apply for funding. Please contact us if you are in that position.

Q: You have accepted me as a PhD student, but the letter says that you cannot yet offer funding. What does that mean?

A: As described above (see ‘How is my application handled?’) we may let you know about your admission status before we have made the funding decision. If a funding decision has been made, the offer letter should clearly state either the source of funding, OR that you are expected to fund yourself. If it does not state either, then the decision has not been made, and a further letter concerning funding will follow. In the meantime, you might well be able to use the offer of admission to apply for alternative sources of funding yourself.

Q: You have accepted me as a PhD student, but the letter says that you expect me to be self-funding. Can I assume I will find funding once I arrive?

A: No. When you accept a self-funded place, you are agreeing to fully cover the costs of study, which are clearly set out in advance, from your own resources. If we have not offered funding, our decision is not subject to revision.

General information about Postgraduate Study:

Q: May I transfer to the University of Edinburgh from another university?

A: Under certain, rare, circumstances it may be possible to arrange for you to transfer from another institution and for you to complete your PhD at the University of Edinburgh. You should apply in the normal way, via EUCLID, and contact us to explain your circumstances. When an application for transfer is accepted, the amount of "credit" allowed for study elsewhere is determined on a case-by-case basis

Q: What about "distance learning"?

A: We do not currently offer MSc degrees on a “distance learning basis”. PhD study involves you conducting a major research project under supervision, with little or no formal coursework. For this to work, the maintenance of close contacts between the supervisor and the student is essential. Therefore the University of Edinburgh requires students to be resident in Edinburgh or nearby for most of the period of PhD studies and "distance learning" is not an option. There are circumstances in which it makes sense for students to spend considerable periods elsewhere. One example might be if the student's research project
involves use of facilities at another research institute. Under all circumstances it will be necessary to maintain close personal contact with the supervisor.

**Q. Where will I live?**

A. Generally speaking, new single postgraduate students from outside the EU are guaranteed student accommodation, while those from inside the EU are not. Students from within the EU can be placed on a waiting list and allocated on a first come first served basis. Self-catered accommodation is also available.

For more information please see:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/accommodation-services/new-prospective/postgraduate

**Q. What is it like to live in Edinburgh?**

A. Edinburgh is one of the best cities in which to live - particularly for students. It is small enough for you to walk to most places you might want to visit and the public transport is frequent and fairly cheap. Edinburgh is a safe place to cycle with its cycle ways in the centre of town. There is something for everyone in Edinburgh, from cheap to expensive, cultural to sporty. There are plenty of restaurants and pubs, theatres, cinemas and art galleries, museums and parks, shops and sports facilities (e.g., golf courses, Olympic sized swimming pool, athletic track, football and rugby pitches, artificial ski slope, tennis and squash courts, gyms) plus all the clubs and societies you can join as an Edinburgh University student.

**Q: When will I start my PG study?**

A: Most PG students arrive and start in September although research students can apply and start throughout the year. Arrival information can be found here:

http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/student-services/graduate-school/for-research-students/settling-in/arrival-information-for-new-pgr-students

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