

# The Cranfield MRes and PhD



The following information provides answers to frequently asked questions about the programme, including identifying a supervisor, admission requirements, funding opportunities and the application and selection process. This is intended to supplement the information provided on our website where candidates will find detailed information about the structure of the programme, the School's research strengths and individual faculty members' areas of expertise.

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## The programme

### How long does it take to complete the programme?

Full-time students are registered for 4 years (the first year being the MRes) and part-time students for 6 years. Depending on the amount of time they devote to their PhD studies, part-time students with a Masters degree may be able to complete in four or five years.

### How heavy is the workload?

As a guide, a full-time student needs to commit 45 hours of study time per week; a part-time student approximately 23 hours. This includes, in the first year, attendance on the MRes or Research Methodology Course.

### I am based overseas - can I attend on a part-time basis?

Cranfield does not provide any form of distance learning for its MRes/PhD programme and all students have to attend a Course Induction Week and the research training programme (MRes for full-time students or Research Methodology Course for part-time students) during the first year of study. For part-time students attending the Research Methodology Course this is on Mondays only; the MRes programme is generally taught on Mondays to Wednesdays. After the first year, attendance is not compulsory and visits to campus can be arranged by agreement with your supervisor. Six - eight visits per year is normal.

## Your Research Topic

### Can you provide supervision on my topic?

The doctoral web pages provide detailed information on the School's research strengths and faculty expertise. In addition, we advertise specific research projects on our 'Doctoral Opportunities' page. This is not an exhaustive list, and you may wish to study a different project; however, you must position your proposed research topic within the core research areas of the School.

If you are still unsure as to whether we could provide supervision, the Research Office may be able to help. You should submit, ideally, a research proposal (see below) or the following information as a minimum:

- What is the research question your proposed research will address?
- From what perspective – theoretical, disciplinary, thematic or methodological – will you approach the research?
- From the website, have you identified a member of faculty who has expertise in this area?

We are unable to respond to enquiries which are general expressions of interest or provide only a CV.

### Can I discuss my research ideas with someone before submitting an application?

The School welcomes enquiries from prospective applicants who wish to discuss their research interests with a member of faculty. Ideally, you should have a meeting or telephone conversation with the individual concerned (it is helpful for him/her to have a proposal in advance). If you live in the UK, you may also wish to consider attending one of our 3 annual Open Days, when there is an opportunity to discuss your research interests with a potential supervisor.

If you email the Research Office or a member of faculty requesting feedback on your proposed topic you must attach a research proposal (see below). This should be in sufficient detail to enable a potential supervisor to evaluate it and assess whether it lies within his/her area of expertise. Some supervisors may require a formal application, enclosing a research proposal, before responding.

Faculty and the Research Office are unable to respond to emails which are general expressions of interest or provide only a CV.

## Admission requirements

### Do I meet the admission requirements?

To apply for entry to the PhD programme you should have either a first or upper second class honours degree. Most students also have a master's degree.

### I have an overseas qualification – is it equivalent?

The Research Office is unable to respond to queries regarding the equivalence of international qualifications. If you email the University Registry at [admissions@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cranfield.ac.uk) however they should be able to advise you. You will need to provide them with full details of:

- where you studied – country and the full name of the institution
- the name of the degree awarding body, if different
- the title of the award in your own language (attach a scanned copy of your degree certificate)
- the year the qualification was awarded
- your work experience, in years

### What are the English language requirements?

If you are an international student whose mother tongue is not English and you have not previously studied in English you must enclose with your application form evidence of your English language ability. We accept:

- TOEFL—IBT 100; paper 600; computer 250
- IELTS (British Council International English Language Testing System) - overall results in band 7 and minimum writing score of 6.0 (See [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)) or:
- the University of Cambridge ESOL examinations: Certificate of Advanced English or Certificate of Proficiency in English grades A, B or C (See [www.cambridgeesol.org](http://www.cambridgeesol.org))

Cranfield's IELTS registration number is 0822.

### **Do I need work experience?**

Although many of our students have significant management experience it is not a prerequisite - it will depend on the nature of the research you intend to undertake.

### **Do you grant exemptions from the research training programme?**

Exemptions from the MRes (Master's of Research in Management Research for full-time PhD students) or the Research Methodology Course (part-time PhD) are extremely rare and are granted only in cases where there is documented evidence of the candidate having successfully completed training equivalent in depth and content to the Cranfield degree course; this might be the first year training provided by other UK providers of 1+3 structured PhDs. Other taught master's courses are unlikely to comprise sufficient research methods training.



## **Application**

### **When is the best time to apply for a place on the PhD programme?**

The School has only one annual intake, in late September/early October (please check website). Applications can be considered at any time up to the end of May; however, as places are limited we advise candidates to submit their applications as early as possible. If you are seeking funding from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission or other external agency you should allow sufficient time for the Cranfield application and selection process to ensure you can meet the application deadline for funding.

Overseas full-time applicants in particular should apply as early as possible; applications must be received by the end of May and all original, supporting documents by July. This should ensure that an unconditional offer may be made, for the purposes of securing a visa, in good time for the start of the programme.

### **What should I include with my application?**

You should upload a research proposal and details of referees whom you have asked to provide references for you. The application form and referee form are available online on the website. Ideally at least one of your references should be an academic reference or from a referee who is able to comment on your potential to conduct research. You also need to enclose copies of your certificates. If you are later offered a place you will be required to submit the originals of these.

If you have submitted a research proposal (structured as described below) in advance of a formal application and have received expressions of interest from members of faculty, you will be advised to submit an online application form together with your proposal and supporting papers for formal assessment and consideration.

### **How much information should my research proposal include?**

We are unable to consider your application without a research proposal. This should be 4-6 pages in length and be structured around the following issues:

*Your proposed research topic:*

- the management issue or problem your research will address
- the question(s) your research will address
- what literature you have read in your topic area that might provide a theoretical background (approximately 6 references)
- why you consider the research is important; who will benefit from it, and what the gap in knowledge is that you hope to contribute to
- the data to be collected, and how it will be analysed

*Also, some personal information:*

- your previous experience of research
- your career aspirations on achieving the qualification

It is important for you to demonstrate that you have looked carefully into the issue you wish to research, that you have uncovered an interesting gap in the literature and that you have given some thought to how you might go about investigating that gap.

The research proposal enables us to identify a potential supervisor and, if you are shortlisted for interview, will be circulated to your interview panel. Your proposed supervisor may ask you to revise your proposal before the interview day.

### **I have seen a project on the Doctoral Opportunities web page. How do I apply?**

If you are applying in response to an advertised project you should submit an application form enclosing a research proposal which sets out:

- why you are applying
- your background and previous experience of research
- how these relate to the advertised topic
- evidence of the reading you have done around the topic
- any further information that supports your application to carry out this particular project

Your application cannot be considered without this proposal.

## **Fees and Funding**

### **Can you advise me on my fee status?**

This is not something the Research Office can advise on; however, the UK Council for International Student Affairs has a very useful website which provides advice and information for international students studying in the UK [www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk)

### **Is there funding available?**

The School is able to offer a small number of bursaries each year to outstanding, full-time students. These are awarded on a competitive basis at intervals during the recruitment cycle. A decision on whether you are to be offered a bursary may be made several weeks after your interview and the offer of a place.

International, UK and EU candidates are eligible to apply for a School bursary. These cover fees and may provide a maintenance grant (see website for current rate). Bursaries are reviewed annually and generally renewed provided the student has made satisfactory progress throughout the year.

To apply for funding, candidates should provide a letter of application with their application form.

### **Are there any teaching or other opportunities to help me finance my PhD?**

Although Cranfield is entirely postgraduate and does not offer the same opportunities for teaching as an undergraduate university might provide, salaried positions in the School occasionally arise. All positions are advertised on the University's website <http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/hr/jobopportunities/>

## **The Selection Process**

### **What happens after I submit my application?**

Your application will be formally processed by Postgraduate Admissions prior to consideration by the School of Management. A member of faculty who is interested in pursuing your application will contact you for an informal discussion and to determine whether to shortlist you for interview. This should ideally be a face-to-face meeting but for international candidates is more usually an in-depth telephone conversation. He/she may at this stage ask you to revise and re-submit your proposal. If the supervisor is interested in progressing matters further, he/she will recommend short listing for interview and the Research Office will contact you.

If there is no interest in your application, or if a potential supervisor decides against short listing you for interview, the Research Office will notify you of the unsuccessful outcome of your application.

### **How long does the selection process take?**

We should be able to advise you whether a member of faculty is interested in your application or whether we have rejected your application within 4 weeks of receipt of your application. Once a member of faculty has expressed interest, you may expect to have several exchanges with him/her about the proposal. This can take several weeks, depending on how quickly you are able to respond to feedback.

If you are shortlisted for formal interview the Research Office will contact you to offer a range of pre-arranged dates. You will receive confirmation of the arrangements in writing, including practice papers for two of the admission tests which are administered on the assessment day. You will be notified of the outcome of the interview as soon as possible. This can vary from 2 or 3 days to 10 working days during peak (Summer) times.

### **What does the assessment day involve?**

Candidates are interviewed by 3 members of faculty. The potential supervisor is not involved on the basis that he/she will have already had informal discussions with the candidate and recommended short listing. The panel, which may involve faculty whose expertise is outside the candidate's research area, provides an independent view in this second stage of the process.

Candidates are also required to take 3 tests:

- Watson-Glaser: to test critical thinking
- RANRA: numerical reasoning
- Journal test: involves drafting an abstract for a journal article

### **I cannot come to Cranfield for an interview. Is there an alternative?**

The School expects that UK/EU candidates attend for interview, whilst recognising that it may be difficult for international candidates from further afield to attend. For these candidates we can arrange interviews via the internet. Candidates are asked to arrange administration of the admission tests with the British Council or Embassy in their own country.



## **Accommodation**

The University website provides detailed information on accommodation available both on and off campus. You may apply for off-campus by contacting the landlord direct with your request.

On-campus accommodation is offered only to full-time candidates who have been offered a place on the programme and have applied for accommodation by the Accommodation Office's deadline (generally June of the year of entry). Application information regarding on-campus accommodation is enclosed with the University's offer letter. If you are likely to be seeking on-campus accommodation you should ensure we receive your application well before our closing date of the end of May to ensure you can meet the Accommodation Office's application deadline. <http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/doctorates/why/life/accommodation.asp>