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**Guidance notes for Midlands4Cities Nottingham**

**Masters Studentship applicants**

Do not attempt to complete the application form until you have read these guidance notes. There is a lot of information so it is important that you allow yourself sufficient time to read these notes and to complete the form. Please note these awards are available only to outstanding students from the UK.

Applications are to be submitted to BR-RA-DTP-funding@nottingham.ac.uk

All sections of the form must be word-processedusing **Arial font no smaller than size 11. Please observe instructions on word limits or you risk your application being marked down or ruled ineligible.**

**Student Application Form**

Question 1 Contact details

Please ensure that these questions are answered fully.

Please ensure that you give the application ID for the online application you have made for a place to study at the University of Nottingham.

Question 2: Your Proposed Course of Study

Please give the name of the School and the Department (if applicable) in which you intend to study; the qualification to which your study will lead; the start and end dates of your proposed study; and the names of your intended supervisors, or course director.

Question 3: Career in Higher Education

Please provide details of the institutions you have attended (or are attending), the courses you have taken, and the sources of financial support you have received, at undergraduate and, if relevant postgraduate level. You should enter only **one** undergraduate and **one** postgraduate degree. If you have more than one qualification at the same level, please provide details of the one most relevant to this application (this may not be the most recent qualification). If you already hold a postgraduate qualification such as a PGDip or Masters you can only apply for an award **if you can make a case** in your application for a change in career path. Students who already hold a doctoral degree are not eligible for this Masters scheme. Please do not enter PGCE qualifications in this section. If you have other qualifications that you consider to be relevant, please include these under the ‘Proposed Study’ section.

Please note that if your undergraduate degree was completed outside the UK, tell us the name of your qualification in the **original language** (eg Maîtrise, doctoral), and **not the English equivalent.**

Question 4: Relevant Experience

Please provide information about any employment, work or professional experience relevant to your proposed programme of study. You should use this space to give details of any professional experience you wish the assessors to take into account.

Question 5: Description of Your Proposed Course

Please give the title of your proposed programme of study.

This section plays a key part in the assessment of your application. We recommend that you discuss the content of this section with the proposed supervisor of your programme of study or dissertation (if known) or the course Director. The assessors are looking for evidence of high quality and strong potential for postgraduate study. Enthusiasm and interest are important, but panel members are interested in:

* evidence of intellectual purpose
* details about your reasons for, and approach towards, undertaking your proposed study
* a good awareness of the field of study in which you intend to specialise.

You need to present your case clearly and concisely. Bear in mind that this is a tough competition. Set out as clearly as you can the study you intend to undertake. You must keep to the limit of 1 A4 side. If you exceed the one A4 side limit your application will be made ineligible as this would be an unfair advantage over other applicants.

**The expectation is that you will proceed to a course of doctoral study.** You should therefore say why you wish to proceed to doctoral study and include an indication of the likely focus of your doctoral studies. They do not guarantee subsequent doctoral funding, for which a separate application must be made.

If you have had a career change, it would be helpful to the assessors to say why you wish to pursue this new direction and provide any relevant information.

A. Preparation and previous experience

You should give a **brief** indication of any previous experience or preparation that is relevant to your proposed study. For example, any modules you have taken as part of your undergraduate degree that are particularly relevant. **This should not be an exhaustive list,** but a summary which demonstrates to the assessors that you are appropriately prepared to undertake your proposed course.

You should also include preparation that is additional to the formal undergraduate qualifications you have already listed. For example, if you have additional degrees or qualifications that you have not mentioned elsewhere on the form and these are relevant training and preparation, please include them, eg a PGCE. If you are aware of further training you will require to enable you to complete your studies, eg language skills or ICT training, please include it in this section. The fact that you need further training will not be regarded by the assessors as a sign of weakness. You will need to demonstrate clearly why Nottingham is the best environment for your developing research; for example, if there are there Research Institutes or Centres at the University of Nottingham that have a particularly good fit with your research, please name them.

B. If you are applying for a Masters by Research, you should give a brief synopsis of your proposed research project. We recommend that you discuss this section with your supervisor or tutor, asking him/her to comment on a draft. How you make your case for support is crucial, so you should use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon. Bear in mind that the assessor might not be an expert in your particular specialist field. The main thrust of this section should be the research problems or questions you intend to address. These should be clearly defined in your proposal. You should describe:

* the research problem or question you intend to address
* the research context in which those problems or questions are located. In describing the context, you should refer to the current state of knowledge and any recent debate on the subject
* the particular contribution to knowledge and understanding in this area that you hope to make. You should explain why the work is important. The fact that an area has not been studied previously is not, in itself, a case for the work to be supported. We are also seeking a description of relevance beyond the development of your own skills or experience, eg wider contribution to the field.
* the methods and critical approaches that you plan to use to address the problems or questions you have set. We don’t just need to know what you are going to work on, we need to know how you plan to go about it.
* the sources that you will use, if appropriate. You will need to state where these sources and materials are located and how these will be accessed. For example, if you are undertaking an archaeological project, do you need a permit to access a particular site and how will this be obtained? It is sometimes helpful to include alternative strategies or approaches if you are aware that problems might arise
* you should say, as far as you can, how the project will develop over the period of the award.

C. Explain the course or programme of study you will be undertaking, including your dissertation

If you are pursuing a taught course, you should briefly describe the **individual pathway** you intend to pursue through it, the subjects and topics you will be studying, and the proportion of time you will spend on each of them. **You should not simply copy the structure of your course from the prospectus**. Remember, the assessors are interested in your reasons for taking this course; they do not need general information on the course structure.

You should identify your dissertation topic, showing that you are aware of the current state of knowledge and how the research will be pursued. In describing your dissertation, you may find it helpful to read the points above about the ‘research project’. Please note, however, that you are not required at this stage to have a fully worked-out plan for your dissertation. You should include any problems you foresee and say how these will be overcome.

Where there is a significant overlap between your undergraduate dissertation (if you completed one) and your proposed dissertation or research programme, you should demonstrate clearly how the project goes beyond your undergraduate work. The added value of continuing research in the area needs to be demonstrated.

**References**

If you are a new applicant the Admissions Office must have received two references as part of your application for a place to study. **These references have to be received by the Admissions Office by Thursday 29 April 2021** **in order for your application to be considered**. You should select referees who have the detailed knowledge required to appraise your recent intellectual development and preparedness for the programme of study you will be undertaking. To ensure that your references are satisfactory make sure that any referees have all the information required eg all your marks from your undergraduate course if you have them. They need to write details about your previous high performance, with evidence. Please allow plenty of time for your referees to complete the reference and provide them with a copy of your proposal to assist them even if it is still in a draft form.

If you already hold an offer of a place, and would like to arrange for updated references to be considered, please make sure that your referees send their updated references to BR-RA-DTP-funding@nottingham.ac.uk by noon (GMT) on **Thursday 29 April 2021** – using the following title ‘updated reference-candidate name’.

**Assessment Criteria**

Evidence of the quality of the student: this will be based on the case made by the student in support of his/her application, and evidence provided by the referees and School/Department about the student's performance at undergraduate level, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. It is important to note that by performance we do not mean only the final degree results but also any marks received to date. These should be available in the referees' report and in the School/Department support statement where appropriate. The assessors are looking for evidence of an ability to articulate a research project, a coherent and well-thought-out plan for the student's studies and evidence of an ability and well thought-out plan for the student's studies and evidence of an ability to articulate and undertake a research project.

Evidence that the student is well prepared for his/her proposed study and future career: this will be based on the student's description of how his/her previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared him/her for postgraduate study, and the student's description of how the course or programme of study will contribute to his/her long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees and the School/Department, particularly in terms of the student's ability to complete the programme of study. There must be evidence that the student intends to proceed to doctoral study.

Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposed study: this will be based on the student's account of and reasons for pursuing the proposed course or programme of study. The assessors will also consider the supporting information provided by the School/Department about the programme of study and how it relates to the student's current and long-term goals.

Evidence of the quality and appropriateness of School/Department support and resource: this will be based on the School/Department’s account of the preparation and training that will be provided to meet the student's needs, in terms of his/her course or programme of study and future career. The assessors will consider information provided on the resources and support provided for the student that will enable him/her to successfully pursue his/her studies. They will also look for evidence that there is appropriate expertise within the department relevant to the student's proposed study. Assessors will also be interested in seeing that appropriate procedures and processes have been put in place in relation to research ethics, health and safety and misconduct.

CHECKLIST

Please ensure that you have:

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| Completed all the sections of this form as fully as possible |
| Named the files in the following format: scheme-initial-surname-School/dept-application.doc (or.pdf) e.g. Smith-A-French-application.doc |

**The deadline for applications to** **BR-RA-DTP-funding@nottingham.ac.uk** **is Thursday 29 April 2021 (noon).**

**Deadline for references to Admissions in support of your place to study is also 29 April 2021.**