

Practitioner Professional Development (PPD) Admissions Guide

This Application Guide should be used to assist prospective students in preparing their application for the PPD programme offered by Cambridge University. It supports the work of admissions staff and partner organisations in relation to the PPD programme's admissions process.

All PPD applicants should read this document before submitting an application.

1 Admissions Statement

The University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education is committed to the highest standards of research and teaching and is a significant contributor to the improvement of educational policy and practice in partnership with schools, colleges and other educational agencies both in the UK and internationally. We welcome applications from those students who have the relevant work experience and/ or academic potential and motivation to succeed on the PPD programme.

For further details on the University of Cambridge's Admissions policy please see the [Graduate Admissions](#) website

2 Responsibilities of the Applicant

In order to process applications in a fair and effective manner, we place certain obligations upon the applicant as follows:

To provide complete and accurate information as required on the application form. *It should be noted that the principal method of communication used throughout the admissions process will be by email so applicants should ensure this information in particular is correct at all times.*

- To update the PPD Administrator (ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk) if any information provided should change.
- Where required, to attend an interview in order to assess suitability for the course.
- If offered a place, to reply promptly to positively accept or decline the offer no less than four weeks before the start of the course.
- To provide evidence of any qualifications/ experience referenced to support an application.

3 What the Applicant can expect from us

We aim to make our approach to the admission of PPD students:

- Transparent
- Fair
- Consistent
- Accessible
- Professional, and
- Timely

All personal data will be handled confidentially and in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

4 Admission to study on the PPD programme

4.1 The PPD Programme

The University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education Postgraduate Professional Development programme offers opportunities for education professionals to develop high levels of understanding and skills which relate directly to the policy and practice of the contexts in which they work. This programme involves studying at Master's level and it is therefore necessary that applicants demonstrate the potential to work at this level (see QAA Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf>). However, since the PPD programme is aimed at practising professionals, professional experience and engagement are recognised as alternatives to recent academic qualifications as indicating the potential for working at Master's level.

Entry requirements for the programme are designed to ensure that candidates have a good chance of successfully completing the programme while not limiting recruitment to only those with strong academic backgrounds.

4.2 Entry Requirements

Applicants should:

- 4.2.1 Have relevant experience of working in an education or related professional setting.
- 4.2.2 Demonstrate a reflective and enquiring approach to their work which supports improvement in professional practice and/or policy.
- 4.2.3 Demonstrate the ability to work independently and collaboratively with the support of Faculty supervision.
- 4.2.4 Demonstrate a willingness and ability to engage with academic and professional literature that will support empirical and/or literature-based enquiry into policy and/or practice.

It should be noted that Accredited Prior Learning (APL) (i.e. credits gained from other institutions) are not accepted to gain accelerated entry to the PPD programme, although these credits can be considered as part of an applicant's entry qualifications to support the application, if considered relevant.

4.3 Demonstration of Requirements

The PPD application form asks for information relating to the requirements specified above. Applicants are given the opportunity to demonstrate that they meet requirements 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 through a personal statement and a proposal for the intended enquiry. Demonstration of requirements 4.2.1 to 4.2.3 should be supported by a professional reference from a senior colleague in an education context.

Since work produced for the PPD programme will be assessed at Master's level, it is particularly important that candidates demonstrate requirement 4.2.4. This may be through the following academic qualifications:

- A good honours degree
- A PGCE assessed at Master's level

- Recent (within three years) completion of professional qualifications at level six or above
- Overseas qualifications equivalent to the above (For an assessment of overseas qualifications contact National Academic Recognition Centre for the United Kingdom)
- Non-English speaking overseas applicants may also require an IELTS qualification with a minimum score of 7 in each element.

Requirement 4.2.4 may alternatively be demonstrated through professional writing, for example:

- Professional documentation, e.g. policy documents for a school or group of schools, substantial reports on present practice within or between schools, etc.
- Publications in professional journals or other forms of professional communication.
- Reviews of education publications.

Demonstration of requirement 4.2.4 should be supported by production of the relevant certificates and/or by an academic reference from a course tutor, publication editor or senior colleague who is able to comment on academic capability.

We welcome applications from students who have applied to a PPD course previously and were unsuccessful, but in these cases applicants must be able to demonstrate a change in their circumstances that improve their suitability for the course, e.g. further qualification or experience in order to support their new application. The Faculty reserves the right to use information from a previous application in assessing a re-application and to seek further evidence of ability to follow this course if it deems necessary.

4.4 Students who have previously studied on the PPD programme

In 2012 the PPD Programme was re-structured. As such, students who have already completed either (i) two 60 hour Postgraduate Certificates in Professional Study or (ii) a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Research prior to October 2012 (and who will be able to complete the Diploma within the four year time frame) will be permitted up to 2 years from the start of the academical year 2012-13 to take the elements they need from the new awards to achieve a 90-credit Postgraduate Diploma. From the academical year 2014-15 all students are expected to be studying on the Faculty's new PPD structure and working towards the Postgraduate Advanced Certificate in Educational Studies. Applications from previous PPD students should be made in the usual way but applicants should ensure that their previous credits are clearly indicated on the application form.

5 How to apply

5.1 Which PPD route?

Students can elect one of the four routes (see Appendix A) through the PPD programme. Students work through the modules and accumulate credit. They can then choose at which stage to exit and collect a qualification. The qualification awarded will depend on the amount of credit gained. The following table provides an overview of the options available.

Award	How to obtain credits (select one method only)					
PAES 30 credits = 4000 words total	1 x 4000 words assignment					
PCES 60 credits = 8000 words total	2 x 4000 words assignments	1 x 8000 words assignment				
PACES 90 credits = 12000 words total	3 x 4000 words assignments	1 x 4000 words assignment + 1 x 8000 words assignment	1 x 12000 words assignment			
PDES 120 credits = 16000 words total	4 x 4000 words assignments	1 x 4000 words assignment + 1 x 12000 words assignment	2 x 4000 words assignment + 1 x 8000 words assignment	2 x 8000 word assignments	1 x 16000 word assignment	

On completing 90 credits students will be offered one of three options:

- Exit with a qualification of Postgraduate Advanced Certificate in Educational Studies.
- Continue on the programme and complete a further 30 credit module and exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies.
- Use the 90 credits to apply to be admitted to the second year of the MEd (there is no automatic right to continue). If they are unsuccessful in their applications, options (b) and (c) above would remain available to them.

The Faculty requires that students wishing to obtain the MEd complete the full route within five years. **All awards are at FHEQ Level 7.** Research training is embedded within the modules (with the exception of the Counselling courses).

Please note that once a student has chosen to exit the PPD programme and realise their credit with the award of a qualification, they cannot then re-enter the programme and have their award revoked in order to use the credits towards a higher qualification. However, credit gained on the PPD programme remains valid for a four year period.

5.2 The Application form

Applicants should download the application form available on the Faculty website [here](#). All sections should be populated as incomplete applications may not be considered. Completed forms should be emailed to ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk. Applicants should note that the main method of contact throughout the application process will be email so it is important that email details are correct on the application form.

If application forms are handwritten, applicants should ensure that they are populated in block capitals and are legible.

5.2.1 References

Applicants are asked to provide contact details for two Referees (preferably at least one who is able to comment on the academic potential of the candidate). The Referees should be able to comment on the applicant's suitability to study on the PPD programme. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that references are sent on headed paper (or with an attached business card) to the PPD Administrator (ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk) independently to the application form.

References should include the following information:

- How long the referee has known the applicant.
- In what context the referee knows the applicant.
- Suitability of the applicant for the course applied for.
- If the applicant's native language is not English, the referee should comment on applicant's fluency and proficiency, particularly in relation to academic work.
- As PPD courses are part time, references should comment on the applicant's ability to manage different responsibilities.

5.2.2 Personal Statement

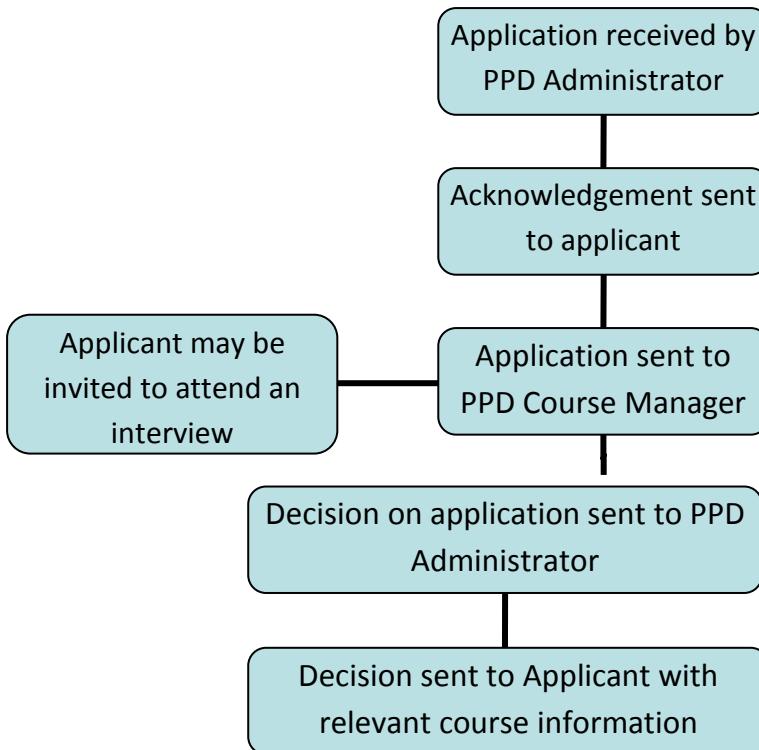
In approximately 500 words or less applicants should provide a statement outlining why they have applied for the course and what they hope to gain from it. This is particularly important when applying for a course of individual enquiry. In this instance, applicants should provide details of their proposed area of enquiry, why this interests them and how they intend to pursue these studies. This information can then be used to find a suitable supervisor for the individual study.

5.3 Application Deadlines

Application deadlines are published on the website. Please be aware that applications received after the course deadline may not be considered. Early application is advisable as PPD courses can be extremely popular and are sometimes full before the published application deadline.

6 What Happens Next?

The application process is outlined below



Course Managers are responsible for assessing all applications and making a decision on admission. Applications will be assessed on their own merit **and**, in some cases, in competition with other applications to the same course. As such there may be a delay in conveying application decisions to allow applications to be considered together. Some PPD courses (e.g. Counselling Diploma and individual enquiry) may require attendance at an interview, where an action plan is discussed. In these cases, applicants will be notified of the interview arrangements by the PPD Administrator. If applicants are overseas at the time of interview, Skype interviews may be arranged.

7 Our Decision

We aim to make a decision on an application within six to eight weeks of receipt of application, but where an interview is required or where applications need to be considered as a group, additional delays may be incurred. Applications will be assessed for suitability for the course applied for. In cases of individual enquiry, offers are also based upon the availability of an appropriate supervisor.

Applicants who are offered a place will be issued a formal letter by email. This will include further course information such as start date and fees (also available on the website). Depending upon the timing of the offer in relation to the start of the course, the letter may be accompanied by detailed course materials and starters information, or, if appropriate, these may be sent at a later date.

In some cases, the Course Manager may advise an alternative route for the applicant in the PPD Programme. In this instance the alternative course may be offered to the applicant for further consideration.

Applicants who are offered a place on the PPD Programme are expected to indicate whether they wish to take up the place offered in writing (by email) no less than four weeks before the start of the course. Any applicants who fail to do so may lose their place on the course.

In cases where the applicant is unsuccessful in their application to the PPD programme, the applicant will be issued a formal letter by email. The Faculty cannot give reasons for not offering admission, nor advise applicants how to improve an application. It should be noted that the Course Manager's decision on any application is final and appeals cannot be made on academic judgement. Appeals may only be made on procedural grounds where the applicant feels they have been treated unfairly during the admissions process.

The University reserves the right to withdraw any offer made if it is found that an application has contained fraudulent or misleading information, or which has omitted information likely to have affected the admissions decision.

8 Deferrals

Applicants who have been offered a place on a PPD course may request that their offer is deferred to the intake immediately after the one they were originally offered admission to. Such requests will be considered by the Course Manager. Applicants should not presume that an offer of admission for one intake guarantees an offer for a future intake. Students should also be aware that not all taught PPD courses run every academic year so deferrals are not always available. The decision of the Course Manager is final on matters of deferral.

9 Progression to MEd

PPD students who have successfully completed 90 credits on the PPD programme are eligible to apply to enter the second year of the MEd and to complete the MEd in a further year of part time study. MEd applications are dealt with separately and further information on this can be found on the Faculty website [here](#).

10 Disability Support

We welcome applications from students with disabilities and are committed to making reasonable adjustments where necessary, in order to provide an accessible and supportive environment for students with additional requirements. Further details of the University's Disability Policy are available [here](#).

11 Equality and Diversity

The University policy on Equality and Diversity is available on the website [here](#)

12 International Students

Although we welcome applications from International students all PPD courses are part time so we are unable to support applications for a Tier 4 visa. Therefore, international students are required to provide evidence of an alternative visa that would permit study on the PPD course applied for in the UK. Overseas fees are published on the website available [here](#).

13 Criminal Convictions

Applicants are requested to declare any criminal convictions on the application form. This information will be assessed for potential risk of harm to others (staff, fellow students and external parties where relevant) by the Course Manager with appropriate professional input, if required.

14 University Membership

Please note that as a PPD student you will be a member of the Faculty of Education with access to all Faculty services such as library membership and IT support. Successful completion of our PPD programme entitles students to a University of Cambridge award. You will not though, have College

membership, nor therefore do you pay a College fee. Use of some central university facilities may be restricted (for example sports clubs).

If you continue to our Masters programme, you will at that point be admitted to the central university, through the college system, as a full member of the university. You will also then be required to pay a college fee.

15 Complaints procedure

If the applicant feels they have been mistreated during the admissions process, they can put their concerns in writing to the PPD Administrator at ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk. We aim to deal with any complaint as quickly and sensitively as possible. Procedures will normally be completed within eight weeks of receipt.

APPENDIX A

