

## **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 principle method of communication used throughout the admissions process will be email so applicants should ensure this information in particular is correct at all times.*
- To update the PPD Administrator ([ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk](mailto: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 Cambridge University 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 Masters 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/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.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 Masters 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 Masters 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.

## 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. On completing 90 credits students will be offered one of two options:

- a) Exit with a qualification of Postgraduate Advanced Certificate in Educational Studies;
- b) 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, option (a) 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.**

#### 5.2.1 The Application form

Applicants should apply online using the [PPD application form](#). All sections should be populated as incomplete applications may not be considered. 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.

#### 5.2.2 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.

In the case of our Counselling Diploma course, one reference should be from the applicant's current Senior Manager. For example, an applicant working in a school should provide a reference from the Headteacher of that school. If providing a second reference from an

employer, this should also be from the Senior Manager or Headteacher, and should relate to employment within the past 5 years.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that references are sent on headed paper, with an attached business card, or from a professional email address to the PPD Administrator ([ppd@educ.cam.ac.uk](mailto: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;
- In the case of applicants to our Counselling Diploma course, referees should comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children and whether or not they have any reservations about the applicant in this regard.

### **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.

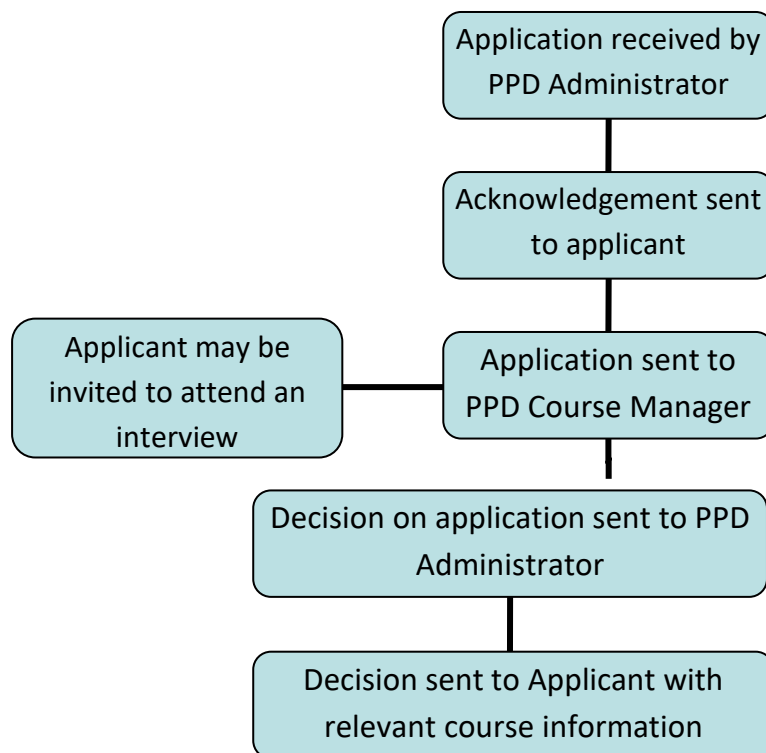
Particular courses may have specific points they would like applicants to address in their personal statement. These will be stated on the course website or related web pages.

#### **5.2.2.1 Application Deadlines**

Application deadlines are published on the website [here](#). 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.

#### **5.2.3 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 Introduction to Counselling) may require attendance at an interview. In these cases, applicants will be notified of the interview arrangements by the PPD Administrator.

## 6 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.

Applicants who are offered a place will be informed 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 informed 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.

## **7 Deferrals**

Applicants who have been offered a place on a PPD course may request that their offer can be 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.

## **8 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](#).

## **9 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.

The University's [Accessibility & Disability Resource Centre \(ADRC\)](#) provides advice, guidance, and resources to disabled students. We will send information about how to access ADRC support to students who accept an offer of a place on one of our courses.

## **10 Equality and Diversity**

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

## **11 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](#).

## **12 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.

## **13 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](mailto: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

