# Guidance for Prospective Applicants: PhD/MPhil Programme

## 1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying to the PhD/MPhil programme at the University of Gibraltar. Join our vibrant, ambitious, and expanding research community as you embark on your doctoral journey. Experience a personalised study environment designed to enrich your academic interests and career aspirations. At the University of Gibraltar, you have the opportunity to pursue research topics that interest you. Our PhD programme is committed to fostering innovative research, critical thinking, and academic excellence. Our mission is to equip you with the skills and knowledge necessary to make a meaningful contribution to your field of study. Further information on the research areas we offer can be found on our PhD Programme Page. In addition, you can find our detailed programme specification PhD Programme Specification.

**Recommendation:** We strongly recommend that new applicants contact the Research Office (researchoffice@unigib.edu.gi) to arrange a meeting to discuss their prospective research. This preliminary check for feasibility can serve as an opportunity to pre-screen the prospective research project and provide guidance before students begin to develop their proposals.

## 2. Application Process for Prospective Students

- Initial Steps:
  - ◊ The first step to apply for a PhD is to submit a PhD proposal, a cover letter, and CV to the Research Office (email: researchoffice@unigib.edu.gi), outlining the research you wish to undertake. Further guidance on PhD proposal development can be found here: link to PhD application proposal guide.
  - ◊ Fee details can be found on our PhD Programme page.
  - ◊ Contact the Research Office if you have any further questions

## 3. Eligibility Criteria

- Academic qualifications required:
  - Hold a UK-aligned Master's degree, or an equivalent overseas qualification in a relevant area, including research training and a research project; or
  - Have a good honours degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline, plus postgraduate research or professional experience, evidenced by published work or reports.

- English language proficiency requirements for non-native English speakers[1]:
  - IELTS: 6.5 with a minimum of 5.5 in each sub-test
  - Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE): Grade C
  - Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE): Grade B
  - Pearson Test of English (Academic): 60 with 51 in each component
  - IBT TOEFL: 90 with no sub-test less than 17

## 4. Developing Your Research Proposal

[1]if you do not meet these English language criteria, please contact the Research Office (email: researchoffice@unigib.edu.gi) before undertaking any of the requisite assessments.

Following submission, the Research Office will review your proposal to assess the feasibility of your proposed research against our six research hubs[2].

- ◊ Natural Sciences and Environment
- ◊ Gambling/ Gaming
- ◊ Education
- ◊ History and Culture
- ◊ Business, Management, and Law
- ◊ Health and Sports Sciences

## 5. Supervisor Matching Process

- ◊ A primary supervisor will need be assigned from our core faculty or associate researchers, thus ensuring the capacity to support the project is evident.
- ◊ A secondary (specialist) supervisor can be identified later after the feasibility of your research is established.

## 6. Initial Review Process

The internal review of the proposal is involved with academics within the Research Office doing an initial screen for feasibility of proposal[3]. This is also involved with ensuring there is adequate research capacity at the University to support the study prior to taking this further to external review (see point 7).

## 7. External Review Process:

If the proposed work and the candidate's experience is deemed suitable, we will send your proposed research, cover letter, and CV to two expert academic reviewers who will evaluate:

- ◊ The proposal's potential to frame research questions.
- ◊ The originality and validity of the research questions.
- ◊ The soundness and relevance of the proposed methodology.
- ◊ The candidate's ability to write academically.
- ◊ Consideration of relevant academic foundations and key literature.
- ◊ Suitability of qualifications and experience for PhD study.

- Reviewers will recommend one of the following outcomes[4]:
  - ◊ Acceptance into the PhD programme.
  - ◊ Acceptance with recommendations for modifications based on feedback.
  - ◊ Request to reconsider the research focus/methodology or to elaborate on the proposal before resubmission.
  - ◊ Proposal considered lacking academic merit or feasibility, with suggestions for alternative pathways.
  - ◊ Proposal deemed not to show academic potential, along with feedback on reasons for non-engagement in the PhD programme.

## 7. Research and Research Degrees Committee review

[2]It is essential that your proposal aligns with these hubs, and we need to ensure that we have adequate supervisory and resource capacity to support your research.

[3]This process can take up to three weeks (longer in certain circumstances), as it requires an analysis of capacity and resources required for the study.

[4] this process can take up to six weeks (or potentially longer), as it may require identifying suitable reviewers and allowing time for their assessments. The process may also be iterative (i.e., requiring modification and re-review) depending on reviewer comments.

Once the candidate has been recommended for admission onto the programme via the external reviewers, documentation must be submitted to the Research and Research Degrees Committee (RRDC) for final approval[5].

## 8. Formal application

- ◊ Once entry into the programme is confirmed, candidates **must** upload the required documents through the application portal, which will be provided by the Research Office
- ◊ The Student Services Office (SSO) (SSO@unigib.edu.gi) will send an offer letter that **must** be acknowledged promptly.
- ◊ Upon acceptance, students will receive details regarding their enrolment, be assigned an email address, and gain access to Canvas, our virtual learning environment and repository containing all information relevant to the PhD programme, library, and other important resources[6].

## 9. Orientation and Induction

- ◊ Students will be invited to an induction session (usually held in October) designed to inform you about the PhD programme and what to expect.
- ◊ This session also offers an opportunity to meet fellow students and more experienced researchers. If students enrol throughout the year, the Research Office will organise a separate induction for those students.

## 10. Timeline Summary

- ◊ Initial Submission: Submit your PhD proposal, cover letter, and CV to the Research Office.
- ◊ Internal Review: Up to 3 weeks.
- ◊ External Review: Up to 6 weeks.
- ◊ RRDC Approval: Up to 2 weeks.
- ◊ Formal Application: Usually completed within 1 week after confirmation of entry into the programme.

**Estimated Total Processing Time**: Approximately 12 weeks (or longer during busier periods). Delays can occur if any required documents are omitted from the application.

## 11. Contact Information

- ◊ For further assistance, please contact the Research Office (researchoffice@unigib.edu.gi) or the SSO for details surrounding formal application procedures.

[5]This process can take up to 2 weeks (or longer during busier periods) and does not guarantee admission onto the programme. Additionally, with respect to PhD Programme applicants, if the RRDC does not consider the candidate to have the appropriate academic trajectory/experience, candidates may be approved to enter our MPhil programme with the opportunity to transfer to a PhD.

[6] This process is usually completed within a week of document submission. However, delays may occur if applicants omit any required information.