

Masters by Research (MbR) 2018/19 entry

Leeds Trinity University will be offering up to six Masters by Research fee waiver places to alumni with a First Class honours degree, to begin in November 2018. A fee waiver place means there are no fees but you will be expected to provide your own maintenance.

Your application should consist of a completed application form, a research proposal and references, all of which must be submitted by the deadline.

The PGR admissions policy and application form are available via:

<http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/research/research-degrees>

The deadline for applications to be submitted to admissions@leedstrinity.ac.uk is by 4.00pm on Friday 1 June 2018.

Guidance for Applicants

The following document is intended to provide you with more information about how to apply for the programme, and how to succeed in gaining a place on it.

APPLICATION CRITERIA

Your application for the MbR programme will stand a better chance of being successful if you meet the following criteria:

- You have a strong proposal which looks well-focused and viable within the timeframe and other constraints;
- You are well-qualified to undertake this project, being a highly motivated, independent researcher with a first class honours degree (or at least predicted);
- You have a good proposed supervisory team which includes one Model 1 (experienced) supervisor;
- You have made, or are making, appropriate financial arrangements to support yourself during the period of study;
- You have a clear idea of the commitment you are making, and have considered scheduling and management of workload.

PERSON AND PRACTICALITIES

Undertaking a research degree is not like doing an undergraduate degree or a taught M level programme. You will be working largely independently, with an hour a month contact time with your supervisors. Therefore, you need to be highly motivated and capable of managing your time and workload without external structures. It can be an isolating experience, so you should have thought about the networks which you have or can develop to support you in your studies.

You should have a first class degree from Leeds Trinity University. This is academic work at a high level, and we are looking for mature and intellectually able candidates. If you have also done a taught M level programme here or elsewhere, that is naturally an advantage. If you have done well in dissertation work, highlight this – it is a good indicator to us that you are capable of undertaking independent research work.

You should think about how you will manage to fit your MbR with your other life and work commitments. Bear in mind that if you are full-time, you are expected to spend 37 hours a week on your research project – and if part-time, 20 hours. It is not possible to undertake a full-time job (or even a substantial commitment of .8) and a full-time MbR. If you can't spend five days a week on your MbR, you need to apply to be a part-time student.

This also means that you should think how you will fund your maintenance during the period of your study. You can take out a student loan for M level programmes. You also need to bear in mind that Leeds Trinity will not cover research expenses in the main (you can apply for small amounts of funding to the Research Office, but there is no guarantee): therefore you should think carefully about what the resource implications of your project are.

A MbR requires you to complete a substantial research project in a limited time-frame. For that reason, it is important to hit the ground running – and the more prepared you are, the better. It may well be worth considering undertaking a project which grows out of your undergraduate dissertation work (or, in some disciplines, has already been identified by your supervisor). It is important to have a well-developed project ready to go, and have potential supervisors on board – see below for more on both.

PROPOSAL

In addition to completing your application form, you are required to produce a short written proposal for your research project of between 1,000- 2,000 words. A research proposal needs to be genuinely worthwhile and challenging, but also achievable within the timeframe and resources available to you. The length of a MbR dissertation is 30,000 words – so your project needs to look more substantial than your undergraduate dissertation.

A strong proposal will:

- **Identify clearly the topic of research**, establishing chronological, generic, geographical, and other parameters;
- **Include clear and viable research questions** which are challenging yet possible to answer;
- **Situate the project briefly within contextual scholarly literature**, explaining how it might develop/add to/challenge/refine such scholarship;
- **Identify your critical approach**, and explain why you have chosen it;
- **Offer a methodology for your project** and explain how this will allow you to address your research questions effectively (eg are you using case-studies? Engaging in fieldwork and interviews? Using particular texts or primary sources?);
- **Consider the resource implications of your project.** Long distance fieldwork, or expensive resources might make your project difficult to pursue;
- **Give a clear sense of why this project is important, interesting, and/or relevant to current concerns (answering the question – so what?).**

Your proposed supervisor(s) can help you develop this project, or may even be able to suggest one for you! You do not need to look like you have already done the research and got the answers/results – but you do need to look like you know who to go about research.

SUPERVISORS

Your proposed supervisory team needs to include TWO qualified members of academic staff, including one Model 1 supervisor (these individuals will know who they are, but you can also ask the Research Office for guidance). A very junior member of academic staff (someone who has just completed his or her PhD, and/or has never supervised a dissertation above UG level) may not be appropriate. At least one member of your supervisory team should have carried out research in your general field.

Your proposed supervisors may be well-qualified, but already have a substantial number of PGR students, or heavy commitments elsewhere – **it is important to check that he or she has time to give you the attention you need and deserve.**

It is also important to make sure that you feel that you can work with your supervisors (and that they can work together). It is a good idea to ask for a joint meeting with both your proposed supervisors at some point, to check that you make a good team.

PROCESS

By now it will be apparent that, before you submit your application and supporting proposal, you should already have consulted at length your proposed supervisors.

Prior to submitting your application you should discuss your completed application and proposal with either the Associate Head of School for Research, or the Deputy Director Postgraduate Research Study (MbR), to make sure that all is in order.

Please submit your application, supporting proposal, and references by the given deadline. In the following two months, you may be called for interview with the Deputy Director for Postgraduate Research, a senior research-active academic, and one of your proposed supervisors. This interview is designed to further explore your suitability as a MbR student, and the viability of your project.

After the interview has taken place, we will aim to inform you within a reasonable timeframe whether your application has been successful.

Your application may be accepted and rejected as it is. In rare cases, you may be asked to submit a revised proposal in a specific timeframe. The decision given is not open to debate, although we will (on request) give you some short feedback on your application.

If you have any further queries, you can contact:

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The Research Office
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