

## 11. Postgraduate Admissions

### 11.1 Introduction

1. This section provides a set of guidance notes for all those involved in postgraduate selection. It outlines policies relating to postgraduate selection as well as procedures for dealing with applications. This section is also a reference point for applicants.
2. The AQH section will be reviewed at the end of each postgraduate admissions cycle and updated to reflect policy and/or procedural developments.
3. The Postgraduate Admissions Office is part of the Academic Registry and is located on the first floor of the Cledwyn Building.

Postgraduate Admissions Office, Academic Registry  
Cledwyn Building  
Aberystwyth University, Penglais Campus  
Aberystwyth  
Ceredigion, SY23 3DD

Generic contact details:

Tel: 01970 622023

E-mail: [pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk](mailto:pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk)

4. The Postgraduate Admissions Office is open 9am – 5pm Monday-Thursday and 9am – 4pm on Friday (excluding public holidays and university closed days). Enquiries can be made in person, over the phone or via email. The office does not have dedicated social media platforms.
5. The Postgraduate Admissions Office processes applications for postgraduate study (including distance learning and PGCE).

6. The Postgraduate Admissions Office also develops and maintains benchmarking for the comparison of international qualifications, and procedures for verifying the qualifications and fee status of applicants.
7. The focus of the Postgraduate Admissions Office is with postgraduate applicants, and specifically with the admissions process. Enquiries relating to course content, reading lists etc. should be directed to the relevant academic department, who are best placed to respond. More specific enquiries relating to research projects and proposals should be directed to departmental research leads or potential supervisors.

## 11.2 General Principles

1. Aberystwyth University, in conformity with the general intention of its Charter, confirms its commitment to a comprehensive policy of equal consideration for all applicants to the University.
2. No applicant for a place, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, should receive less favourable treatment on grounds such as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, or parental status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any comparable grounds.
3. The University aims to provide opportunities for prospective students who are capable of benefiting from, and successfully completing, a postgraduate degree or other scheme irrespective of their background.
4. The University is committed to operating efficient and effective central admissions procedures in accordance with legislative requirements and nationally agreed best practice.

5. The University is committed to the five core principles of fair admissions as defined in the Schwartz Report (2014): An admissions system based on transparency, selection based on the applicants achievements and potential, adopting assessment methods that are reliable and valid, minimising barriers to entry, and professional in every respect and underpinned by structures and processes.

### 11.3 Internal Structure

1. The Recruitment and Marketing Board, which reports to Senate, is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the development and implementation of the University's marketing and recruitment strategies that drive recruitment of students to the University. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that the University meets the expectation of UK Quality Code Section *Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access*.

### 11.4 The Application Process

*Further information about the application process and required documents can be found at [www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/howtoapply/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/howtoapply/)*

*Additional considerations relating specifically to full-time research in an external place of employment (PhD or MPhil) are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).*

1. The vast majority of applicants should apply for their postgraduate course (excluding PGCE – see 11.4.4) via our online portal. Supporting documents (e.g. transcripts, CV, personal statement, reference(s), research proposals) can be uploaded using this system.

2. Paper application forms are only currently used for the following courses:
  - Short Courses in Information & Library Studies
  - Professional Certificate in Education and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PCET)

Copies of application forms for the above are available on request from the Postgraduate Admissions Office or can be accessed via [www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/howtoapply/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/howtoapply/). If applying by paper, applicants may submit their completed postgraduate application form and supporting documents by email, in person, or by post.

3. Members of AU Staff wishing to apply for postgraduate study may do so via the online portal. If applying for the Staff Scholarship Scheme, they must also submit the Staff Scholarship Scheme approval form, authorised by their Head of Department, at the point of application. Further information about the Staff Scholarship Scheme is available on the Human Resources website at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/>.
4. Applicants for PGCE courses should apply online via the UCAS Teacher Training website (<https://www.ucas.com/teaching-in-wales>). Please note that UCAS charge an application fee.
5. All intending postgraduate students, including members of staff, are required to apply via the Postgraduate Admissions Office. This should be done at least four weeks in advance of the intended start date, although applicants are encouraged to apply at the earliest opportunity. Applications received after this point will be processed at the discretion of the relevant academic department. Non-UK applicants who require a Student Visa are advised to ensure that their application is completed at least two months prior to the commencement of their course. Applicants for Postgraduate Research courses that are subject to ATAS are advised to apply four months in advance of the proposed start date.
6. PGCE candidates are advised to apply as early as possible as places are limited.

7. Upon successfully submitting an application via the online application portal, applicants will receive an automated acknowledgement to confirm receipt.
8. Staff in the Postgraduate Admissions Office will notify an applicant should vital materials be missing which prevent a decision from being made.

### 11.5 Internal Processing of Applications and Offer Making

1. All applications are initially received and processed by staff in the Postgraduate Admissions Office. Receipt, and each stage of the subsequent admissions process, is recorded on the electronic admissions system.
2. Postgraduate Admissions staff conduct the initial assessment of each application to ascertain the applicant's eligibility for matriculation, ability to meet specified academic and English language entry requirements, comparability of non-UK qualifications, fee status and UKVI compliance issues. A note of the above is made on the electronic admissions system, and can be viewed by Postgraduate Selectors and authorised staff as appropriate.
3. Designated staff in the Postgraduate Admissions Office have authority to make offers on behalf of academic departments for the majority of taught postgraduate courses according to agreed criteria. Applications for all PGCE courses, and taught Masters courses offered by the Department of English and Creative Writing, and the School of Art are sent directly to the relevant Departmental Postgraduate Selector for their review and decision.
4. Any application falling outside of standard admissions criteria will be referred, via the electronic admissions system, to the Postgraduate Selector(s) within the relevant academic department for their review and decision.

5. All applications for postgraduate research courses are referred to the relevant academic department for review and decision via the electronic admissions system.
6. The University has a defined set of responsibilities for all Postgraduate Selectors who are based in academic departments (see Section 11.23 below).

## 11.6 Entry Requirements

1. The University operates an inclusive admissions policy, and applicants are selected on their individual merits.
2. Academic Departments, in consultation with the Postgraduate Admissions Office and Planning Department, will be invited each autumn to submit details of their proposed Postgraduate entry requirements for the next application cycle. This information will be collated by the Postgraduate Admissions Office in the form of an offer making strategy, presented to the Recruitment and Marketing Board and forwarded to the University Executive for their approval.
3. Approved minimum entry requirements for each study scheme are published on the University's website and in the postgraduate prospectus.
4. Enquiries relating to the University's postgraduate entry requirements should be directed to [pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk](mailto:pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk)
5. Postgraduate applicants are generally required to demonstrate current or prior study at a minimum of UK Bachelors (Honours) Degree Level, or international equivalent, from an institution recognised by Aberystwyth University at a level that satisfies 11.6.3 above.

6. The University accepts a range of non-UK qualifications for admission onto postgraduate programmes. Qualification equivalences are set by the University in consultation with UK ENIC and sector approved standards.
7. Applicants who do not possess a degree qualification may be considered for admissions on the basis of at least 24 months relevant work experience.
8. At the University's discretion, an applicant may be considered for a place on their chosen postgraduate study scheme without the required level of academic qualifications or relevant experiential background, by means of a 'Special Case' review. This generally applies only to those with non-UK qualifications. Evidence pertaining to 'Special Case' applications is compiled by the Postgraduate Admissions Office, who advise and consult with the relevant academic department before seeking approval by the Recruitment and Marketing Board.
9. It is the responsibility of an applicant to inform the University of any circumstances that may have unduly affected their previous or current study. This information should be submitted to the Postgraduate Admissions Office at the point of application or at the earliest opportunity if the special circumstances arise post-application.
10. Special circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the relevant Postgraduate Selector where these have not already been taken into account by the relevant examination board.
11. The University's Student Support and Careers Service offers pre- and post-application information, advice and guidance to students with additional learning needs. Further information is available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/>.
12. The University's policy on the admission of disabled students can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

## 11.7 Transfer of Credit

1. Applicants wishing to apply to transfer credits for taught modules onto Aberystwyth University taught Masters schemes must submit the standard course application, and specify how many credits they wish to transfer. Applicants must submit a transcript for the relevant studies to be transferred, together with the relevant syllabus (either as a pdf document or provide the relevant URL).
2. Applicants wishing to claim credit for prior learning are advised to review our rules and regulations in respect of Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme. Please see: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/learning/#>
3. Requests for credit transfer will be considered by the relevant departmental Postgraduate Selector, or subject expert, who will determine whether or not credit transfer is appropriate. The Credit Transfer Authorisation Form (see [Appendix 8](#)) will need to be completed and authorised by the relevant Postgraduate Selector in each case.

## 11.8 References

1. All applicants for Postgraduate Taught courses are required to provide at least one reference in support of their application for study. All applicants for Postgraduate Research programmes are required to provide two academic references to support their application. In most cases these will be academic references. However, in some cases a work-based reference may be more appropriate, for example, in the case of experienced non-graduates.
2. Where submitted by the applicant as a document at the point of application, references must be provided on an official letterhead and signed by the referee. Alternatively, having obtained consent from the proposed referee/s, applicants may

provide the referee contact details as part of the application process, and the referee will be contacted automatically to request the letter of reference.

3. Offers may be made for postgraduate courses prior to the receipt of a reference. In such cases, receipt of a satisfactory reference will be a condition of the offer. Please note that PGCE applicants must submit a reference as part of their application via UCAS.
4. PGCE applicants who have graduated within the last 5 years are required to provide an academic reference which comments on their degree performance. This is an integral part of the application via UCAS. A second referee may also be named.

## 11.9 Interviews

1. The University does not typically require applicants for taught postgraduate study schemes to be interviewed as part of the admissions process. However, at the selecting department's discretion, applicants with non-standard qualifications, or mature applicants who do not meet the standard entry requirements for the course applied for, may be invited to attend an interview. In such cases, the relevant academic department will liaise with the applicant regarding the arrangements and nature of the interview.
2. Postgraduate research applicants should be interviewed by the prospective academic department as part of the selection process. Where a face-to-face interview is not possible, departments will endeavour to arrange a Skype/Teams or telephone interview as an alternative.
3. Applicants travelling to Aberystwyth to attend an interview may claim a contribution towards travel expenses incurred in accordance with the current approved criteria and rates. Details of these, in addition to the form to claim reimbursement for

postgraduate interview related travel expenses, are available from the Postgraduate Admissions Office.

### 11.10 English language requirements

1. Non-UK applicants will need to show evidence of a sufficient proficiency in English, which must be demonstrated before an applicant commences a course. Details of the required proficiency standards required for entry to postgraduate study schemes can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/apply/english-language/>
2. Applicants who have not achieved the required level before submitting their application will have a condition included with their formal offer. This will state the necessary English language requirements that need to be achieved before commencing postgraduate study. Applicants that do not reach the required level of proficiency will not be admitted.
3. Details of English language qualifications and tests that are currently accepted for postgraduate study are available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/apply/english-language/>. Please note that English language proficiency tests, including IELTS and TOEFL are only valid for a maximum of two years.
4. All non-UK applicants must demonstrate that they are competent in the use of the English language and satisfy the University's requirements as above. Please note that the required level of English proficiency for specific study schemes may be higher than the minimum of CEFR B2 (or IELTS 5.5) in each component (speaking, writing, listening and reading) which is needed in order to secure a Student Visa for study at degree level (<https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>).

5. Applicants who have been awarded a degree (i.e. Bachelors or Masters) from a UK University, do not need to take an English proficiency test.
6. Applicants from countries where English is recognised as an official language by the UK Home Office are exempt from providing proof of English Language proficiency. Please note that Canada is an exception to this as it is only considered to be majority English-speaking for Canadian nationals. Applicants who hold a degree from Canada, but who are not Canadian, will not be able to use their degree as evidence of their English language ability. Further details of countries where English is an official language as recognised by the Home Office are available at:  
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/apply/english-language/#is-english-your-official-language>

### 11.11 Criminal Convictions

1. The University aims to provide opportunities for prospective students who are capable of benefiting from, and successfully completing, a degree or other scheme irrespective of their background. The University also recognises that it has a duty of care in respect of students, staff and visitors.
2. It is the responsibility of individual students to declare any legal restrictions which may impact their own studies and/or present a risk to the safeguarding of University staff and students. Students have responsibility to disclose any legal reasons that limit or prevent them entering university property, and/or working with individuals, and/or working with groups, and/or accessing the internet via the University's systems and facilities. Please contact the Academic Registry for more information via the confidential e-mail address: [arconf@aber.ac.uk](mailto:arconf@aber.ac.uk). Failure to declare this information to the University may be deemed a breach of the University's Disciplinary Procedures and penalties may be imposed accordingly.

3. Where disclosure of a relevant criminal conviction is made, a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether or not it is appropriate to proceed with the admissions process. All applicants for PGCE courses will be subject to a DBS check (or international equivalent) as part of the routine admissions process. This is administered by the School of Education.
4. The University's *Policy and Procedure for the Admission of Students with Criminal Convictions* can be found in full in [Appendix 3](#)

### 11.12 Offer Making

1. The decision to issue offer(s) for any course will be dependent on the admissions criteria defined for the course(s) applied for.
2. The Postgraduate Admissions Office aims to process applications as follows\*:
  - standard postgraduate taught applications within two working weeks of receiving the full and complete application.
  - postgraduate research and non-standard applications which are required to be sent to academic departments may require a longer turnaround.
  - where a pool of eligible candidates is required for a project studentship or a studentship competition, turnaround times may also be affected.
  - the processing of International applications which are incomplete or missing evidence may extend beyond the typical turnaround times.
  - it is a requirement that decisions on PGCE applications are made within 40 working days. Shortlisted applicants must attend an interview as part of the selection process which is included within this 40 working day period.

\* subject to the volume of applications received at peak processing times.
3. All postgraduate applicant decisions will be processed by the Postgraduate Admissions Office. These will be communicated to applicants in writing by email

attachment. In addition, PGCE applicants will be able to view the outcome of their application via the UCAS website.

4. Applicants who are made an offer for a place to study will receive an offer letter which will outline any academic conditions required for admission (including English language requirements), any outstanding documentation required, along with the steps needed in order to complete the admissions process.

### 11.13 The Applicant's Decision

Successful applicants will be provided with an Offer Reply Form to be returned to the Postgraduate Admissions office to indicate how they wish to proceed with their offer.

#### 1. Acceptance

Applicants intending to accept their offer should complete the Offer Reply Form in order to confirm the following:

- that they accept the terms of the offer made to them
- agree to us continuing to process their data; and
- that they wish to accept their offer of the place.

At this stage, acceptance of a place is not confirmation that the applicant will actually register. They may withdraw or defer at a later stage.

Applicants are required to meet all the conditions in their offer letter before being able to register. This includes the return of the Financial Declaration form, which all applicants must complete regarding the anticipated source of payment of their tuition fees.

Non-UK nationals must pay a non-refundable tuition fee deposit unless they have provided evidence of sponsorship to cover relevant tuition fees, or are exempted for any other reason (see [Appendix 4](#)).

Distance Learning applicants are not required to provide evidence that they can meet the costs of the course as most are in employment and opt to pay per module. Some students are sponsored by their employers. All distance learning applicants must pay a non-refundable Registration Fee.

As soon as an applicant has fulfilled all the conditions attached to their offer, they are regarded as "fully complete" and ready for admission. At this point they are allocated a Student Reference Number.

Applicants requiring a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) in order to apply for a Student Visa, must meet all conditions attached to their offer before the CAS can be issued. Where relevant, the Postgraduate Admissions Office will also be required to seek evidence that the applicant has sufficient funds (for themselves and also any dependents that they intend to bring with them to the UK) in their own account for the requisite 28-day period, as required by the UKVI.

## **2. Deferral**

Applicants may indicate that they wish to defer the start of their studies at the point of returning the Offer Reply Form, or at a later point by contacting the Postgraduate Admissions Office at: [pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk](mailto:pg-admissions@aber.ac.uk). All requests for deferral must be approved by the relevant departmental Postgraduate Selector, and the outcome will be confirmed with the applicant by the Postgraduate Admissions Office. Where deferrals are approved, a new offer letter will be issued to reflect the new start date. An applicant may request deferral for up to a maximum of two calendar years, in accordance with the Consumer Protection Act (see [Appendix 5](#)).

### 3. Withdrawal

The applicant may return their Offer Reply Form or e-mail the Postgraduate Admissions Office to notify the University should they wish to withdraw their application. In such cases, the Postgraduate Admissions Office will inform the relevant Postgraduate Selector, and the applicant's record on the electronic admissions system will be updated to reflect the withdrawal status. Following withdrawal, an applicant may be asked to complete the relevant Decliner's Survey.

## 11.14 Student Visas

1. Aberystwyth University is a registered 'sponsor' under the Student Visa Point-Based Immigration system (PBS). This gives the University the ability to recruit and sponsor students who are nationals of countries outside the UK. The Home Office places responsibilities on students and universities to ensure immigration laws are adhered to.
2. Applicants from outside the UK will typically require a Student Visa (before they can enrol and study on a course at the University, except for those in receipt of settled or pre-settled status as part of the EU Settlement Scheme. In some cases, such as for those studying a short non-qualifying postgraduate (NQPG) programme or those needing travel to Aberystwyth for a short study school, a Short Term Study Visa will be required.
3. Applicants applying for a Student Visa will require a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from the University. Prior to issuing a CAS, the University will undertake a checklist which includes:
  - Evidence of how the academic decision has been made
  - A copy of the offer letter outlining full course title and course dates
  - A copy of final academic qualifications reviewed in reaching an offer decision, including certified translated versions where applicable

- Evidence of valid English language proficiency
- A copy of the applicant's current valid passport
- Financial evidence checks (where applicable)
- Confirmation that the applicant has supplied a financial deposit to the University (where applicable)
- Receipt of an Academic Technology Approved Scheme (ATAS) certificate (where applicable)
- Statement of satisfactory academic progression (where applicable).

Following successful completion of the CAS checklist, a draft CAS will be issued by the University and emailed to the applicant for their review.

4. When an applicant confirms the draft as correct, a CAS will be assigned and the Home Office will then issue a CAS number to the University. This number will be forwarded to the applicant. Please note that a Student Visa application cannot be made more than six months before the start date of a course.

Enquiries relating to the University's Visa, Immigration and Compliance policies should be directed to [compliance@aber.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@aber.ac.uk)

### 11.15 Partnership Courses

1. The University works in partnership with a number of external higher education providers to offer franchised postgraduate courses and dual degrees.
2. A franchise is a process by which the University agrees to authorise an external provider to deliver (and sometimes assess) part or all of one (or more) of its own approved programmes.

3. A dual degree is based on a formal partnership under which two or more degree-awarding bodies together provide a programme study leading to the award of two degrees with two certificates.
4. Typically, applications for franchised programmes and dual degrees will be processed in accordance with Section 11.5.
5. Enquiries relating to the University's current franchise arrangements or dual degrees should be directed to [collaboration@aber.ac.uk](mailto:collaboration@aber.ac.uk)

### 11.16 Admission to the University

1. The University will only guarantee the acceptance of a postgraduate applicant if the terms of an offer are met in full. Details of matriculation requirements can be found in [Appendix 6](#).
2. Where an applicant has narrowly missed the terms of their offer, their application will be reviewed by the relevant departmental postgraduate selector or their nominee, and a decision made as to whether or not to confirm the place.
3. As a condition of enrolment, all students are required to agree to abide by the rules and regulations of Aberystwyth University. These can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/regulations/>

### 11.17 Registration

1. All students are required to formally register at the start of their course and at the beginning of each subsequent academic year. All queries relating to registration

should be directed to the Student Administration Team within the Academic Registry (e-mail: [pgsstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:pgsstaff@aber.ac.uk)). Information regarding the postgraduate registration process can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/students/pg-issues/taught/reg-12-13/>

## 11.18 Tuition Fees

1. Fees for all postgraduate and distance learning courses are agreed by the University's Executive, following recommendations made by the Aberystwyth University Fees and Scholarships Group. In addition, major fees require approval by the University's Resources and Performance Committee (PRC). Unless stated otherwise, tuition fees are payable on an annual basis and are subject to an annual review. Please see [www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/all-fees/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/all-fees/) for a full list of tuition fees.
2. Programme Fees charged for Postgraduate Taught courses (both 'Home' and 'International students'), will not be subject to an annual inflation linked increase. This means that the Programme Fee charged in year one will remain at the same level for each of the subsequent years of the programme of study (where applicable).
3. Programme Fees charged to 'Home' Students for Postgraduate Research courses will be subject to an annual inflation linked increase as determined by the University.
4. Programme Fees charged to 'International' Students for Postgraduate Research courses will not be subject to an annual inflation linked increase. This means that the Programme Fee charged in year one will remain at the same level for each of the subsequent years of the programme of study (where applicable).

5. Programme Fees charged for distance learning courses will be subject to annual inflation linked increases as determined by the University.
6. An applicant's fee status (whether they are classified as being in the 'Home' or 'International' category) is determined by Postgraduate Admissions staff in accordance with UKCISA guidelines. Where the fee status is not clear from the submitted application form, further information will be sought from the applicant.
7. Information regarding the different payment options for tuition fees can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/study-with-us/fees/student-fees/how-to-pay/>

International applicants for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes are required to pay a non-refundable deposit in order to confirm their place, or provide evidence of sponsorship to cover tuition fees.

Distance learning courses are subject to a registration fee which must be paid when an applicant confirms their acceptance of their place on the course. Following this, distance learning students may opt to pay course fees either per year or per module.

## 11.19 Funding

1. A range of scholarship schemes are administered by the University's Scholarships Officer and by staff in the Postgraduate Admissions Office. These include UK Research Councils, Commonwealth Shared Scholarship Scheme, Aberystwyth University's AberDoc PhD Scholarship Competition and other Aberystwyth University awards.
2. Information regarding specific funding opportunities can be found at: [www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/). Applicants seeking funding are advised

to visit our Funding and Scholarship Calculator at:

[www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/calculator/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/funding-fees/calculator/).

## 11.20 Consumer Law

1. All higher education providers in the UK have obligations with regard to consumer law. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has produced the following compliance advice for providers which all admissions tutors should familiarise themselves with:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/428549/HE\\_providers\\_-\\_advice\\_on\\_consumer\\_protection\\_law.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf)
2. Information provided to applicants, including at the offer stage, should be accurate and not include false or misleading information.
3. Enquiries relating to the University's consumer protection responsibilities should be directed to the Academic Registrar.
4. The University's Consumer Protection Regulations can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

## 11.21 Data Protection, GDPR and Freedom of Information

1. Personal information will be held by the University in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, and other associated legislation. Personal information concerning applicants, or submitted by applicants, will only be accessed by those immediately involved in the processing of the application for postgraduate study.

2. Access to the Aberystwyth electronic admissions system (including Aberystwyth Student Records and Admissions System (AStRA)) is strictly controlled and only accessible to staff with approved authorisation.
3. Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, and in certain circumstances, the Freedom of Information Act, all individuals have a right to access to their own personal data as held by AU, and to correct this as necessary or to request 'to be forgotten'.
4. Data Access Requests and all enquiries relating to the University's data protection and GDPR policies should be directed to the Data Protection Manager (e-mail: [infocompliance@aber.ac.uk](mailto:infocompliance@aber.ac.uk))

## 11.22 Appeals and Complaints

1. Decisions on applications for study are made on academic grounds in the context of our general principles of fair and inclusive admissions, as outlined above in 11.2. These decisions are final, and there are no grounds for appeal.
2. In the event that an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint with regard to an aspect of the postgraduate admissions service, the applicant should write to:

**Academic Registrar**

**Email:** [agrstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:agrstaff@aber.ac.uk)

**Post:**

Cledwyn Building

Penglais Campus

Aberystwyth University

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

SY23 3DD

The Academic Registrar, or their nominee, will contact the applicant within five working days of receiving the complaint.

In the event that an applicant is not satisfied with the initial reply received, they should contact the relevant Pro-Vice Chancellor:

**Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)**

**Email:** [vcostaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:vcostaff@aber.ac.uk)

**Post:**

Visualisation Centre

Penglais Campus

Aberystwyth University

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

SY23 3BF

The Pro Vice-Chancellor will endeavour to respond to the complaint within five working days of receiving it. Should a delay be anticipated, the University will contact the applicant to explain the reason for the delay and indicate when they can expect to receive the response to their complaint.

### 11.23 Responsibilities of Postgraduate Selectors

1. The designated Postgraduate Selector(s) within each academic department is responsible to the relevant Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor for the management of admissions to that department. A Postgraduate Selector must be a member of the academic staff at AU. However, administrative staff can co-ordinate the selection procedure within their respective faculty/department.
2. Departments may have more than one Postgraduate Selector. In these cases, there will be one member of staff appointed to co-ordinate the operation of selection and

to liaise with the Postgraduate Admissions Office. Departments should ensure that there are back-up selectors in place for both Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research applications.

3. Departments are asked to confirm the names and contact details of Postgraduate Selectors prior to the start of each admissions cycle, and should notify the Admissions Office promptly should this change during the course of the year.
4. New Postgraduate Selectors, or those returning to the role following a period of absence, are invited to contact the Postgraduate Admissions Office to arrange initial training on the current admissions systems and processes in place. Further training and support is provided by the Postgraduate Admissions Office to Postgraduate Selectors as required. Email bulletins are also circulated to admissions tutors, Heads of academic department and other stakeholders on various admissions related matters as required.
5. Departmental staff with admissions responsibilities are invited to attend the University's Recruitment Action Group, the minutes of which are reported to the Recruitment and Marketing Board. In addition to discussing recruitment activities and events, admissions training and information dissemination takes place on a regular basis.
6. In respect of the processing of postgraduate applications, Postgraduate Selectors have the following overall responsibilities:
  - (i) The Postgraduate Selector will give appropriate advice and will consult with the Postgraduate Admissions Office, as necessary.
  - (ii) The Postgraduate Selector will support the implementation of the University's admissions policies, and will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the Faculty / Department's stated policy criteria on admissions.
  - (iii) Where an application is forwarded for departmental consideration, the Postgraduate Selector will make a decision whether to accept or reject it on the basis of the information submitted, and in accordance with the

University's general principles of admission. The Postgraduate Selector will take the entire portfolio of application materials into account, and will request further information as necessary.

(iv) Postgraduate Selectors should base their decisions on academic grounds only. In the case of non-native speakers, Postgraduate Admissions staff will already have assessed English language proficiency, and included a note to the academic department, via the electronic admissions system, as to whether the applicant currently meets the required English language entry criteria. An English language condition will automatically be added to any offer made to an applicant that has not already met the required proficiency standards.

(v) The Postgraduate Selector should work within the University's deadlines to ensure prompt and efficient decision-making. Selectors should make their decisions within 2 weeks of receipt of the application for Postgraduate Taught applications and within 4 weeks for Postgraduate Research applications. Should this timeframe not be feasible, Postgraduate Selectors should liaise with the Postgraduate Admissions Office in order that an update can be provided to the applicant as necessary.

(vi) Postgraduate Research applications should be screened by the academic department's Postgraduate Selector within five working days of it being referred to them by the Postgraduate Admissions Office. Potential supervisors should be identified and consulted with regard to the application within two weeks.

(vii) At least two members of departmental staff must be involved in the decision making process for postgraduate research applicants. These should include the relevant Postgraduate Selector, and one of the prospective research supervisors or the Head of Department.

(viii) Shortlisted postgraduate research applicants should be invited to interview, either face-to-face or via Skype/Teams, to discuss the research proposal, associated costs and relevant funding opportunities, ethical considerations and any other issues associated with the proposed project.

This should take place within 4 weeks of receipt of application unless a gathered field is required, for example, for scholarship competitions.

(ix) Departments are advised to ensure that a log is maintained to monitor the progress of an application at Departmental level, and the date on which a decision is due to be confirmed with the Postgraduate Admissions Office.

(x) Postgraduate Selectors will notify the Postgraduate Admissions Office of their decision on an application via the decision form on the electronic admissions system. Postgraduate Selectors should not communicate the decision directly to the applicant.

(xi) At the point of accepting a postgraduate research applicant, the name of a proposed supervisor should be noted on the electronic decision form. The Postgraduate Selector should also confirm that the facilities and resources for the proposed research project are sufficient. Bench Fees are only applicable to specific research areas within IBERS. However, should it be anticipated that the proposed research project will incur additional research costs and/or require resources that the student will be required to provide themselves, Postgraduate Selectors should provide the specifics of these to the Postgraduate Admissions Office in order that they can be included in the applicant's offer letter.

(xii) The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) is a statutory requirement for visa nationals in specified science subject areas. Please see <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/apply/atas/>. Aberystwyth University currently has a number of postgraduate research courses where ATAS is applicable. In order that an offer can be issued in these cases, Postgraduate Admissions staff will require the Postgraduate Selector to provide the relevant HECoS code and a mini-abstract for the research proposal. The applicant will require this information in order to apply for ATAS clearance and obtain a certificate prior to applying for a visa. As this process can take several weeks, it is essential that this information is provided without delay, and submitted with the completed electronic decision form. Securing ATAS clearance will be a condition of any offer made where relevant.

(xiii) With the applicant's consent, the Postgraduate Selector will alert the Postgraduate Admissions Office in all cases where there are potential student support requirements that would benefit from being referred to other relevant sections of the institution. This information will be shared with relevant teams as consented to by the applicant.

(xiv) The Postgraduate Selector will liaise with tutors in other Faculties / Departments in the case of research applicants requiring inter-departmental supervision in order to make decisions jointly.

(xv) The Postgraduate Selector will return to the Postgraduate Admissions Office any application that is not relevant to their department, or that the initial department is unable to supervise. Where supervision by an alternative department is more appropriate, such applications should not be forwarded directly, but returned to the Postgraduate Admissions Office, noting which department may wish to consider the application. Where no alternative department is suggested, the Postgraduate Selector should provide feedback on why the project cannot be supervised in order that the Postgraduate Admissions Office can convey this to the applicant accordingly.

(xvi) Where an application is to be rejected, the Postgraduate Selector should provide detailed feedback which will be conveyed to the applicant by the Postgraduate Admissions Office.

(xvii) Under the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR, and under certain circumstances, the Freedom of Information Act, individuals both within and outside the University, have the right to access their own personal data as held by AU. Therefore, applicants are able to request access their files, including full details concerning reasons for not offering a place.

(xviii) If a departmental studentship is to be offered to the applicant this must be indicated on the electronic decision form in order that it can be noted in the applicant's offer letter. The Departmental Studentship form should also be completed and returned to the Postgraduate Admissions Office as soon as possible. This information is vital to ensure that invoices for fees are not issued inappropriately, and that maintenance payments are available promptly for the relevant students. The exact level of any award must be

communicated clearly to applicants, specifying the amount that will be paid towards tuition fees, and, where applicable, the level of the stipend. See [Appendix 7](#).

(xix) Should a PhD applicant be eligible for exemption from the probationary period, an application must be made prior to admission, and ideally confirmed at the decision stage. Exemption may not be sought post-registration.

(xx) Should a postgraduate taught applicant seek credit transfer, a transcript of the relevant studies, together with the relevant syllabus should be submitted at the application stage and forwarded to the Postgraduate Selector for consideration. Applications for credit transfer should be resolved at the decision stage, and communicated to the Postgraduate Admissions Office via the Credit Transfer Authorisation Form – PGT Schemes. See [Appendix 8](#).

(xxi) The Postgraduate Selector should not communicate with an applicant who has declined their offer of a place, or withdrawn their application, or with an applicant whose record has been cancelled. Postgraduate Selectors are advised to check the status of any applicant prior to making contact with them.

(xxii) The Postgraduate Selector will adhere to the Code of Practice in the use of the networked Aberystwyth Admissions System (AStRA and APEX).

(xxiii) Neither the University nor the Faculty / Department can take responsibility for advice given over the phone. Misunderstandings can often arise. It is therefore the responsibility of the Postgraduate Selector to ensure that advice proffered is not misleading or incorrect. Important advice should be followed up in writing.

(xxiv) The Postgraduate Admissions Office and the Postgraduate Selector will be vigilant to false statements, omissions or misrepresentations, and will alert the relevant Department/Faculty to any serious inconsistencies in application materials submitted.

(xxv) The Postgraduate Selector should ask their department to inform the Postgraduate Admissions Office of any prolonged period of absence e.g.

through illness. The Head of Department or Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor should nominate an alternative and inform the Postgraduate Admissions Office accordingly.

(xxvi) The Postgraduate Selector should ideally be in post for an entire admissions cycle to ensure continuity between offer making and decisions concerning acceptance. It is essential that the Postgraduate Selector is available during peak periods such as those relating to funding opportunities.

(xxvii) The Postgraduate Selector is responsible to the relevant Head of Department and Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor for ensuring best practice in admissions, and will look to identify applicants with the potential to progress and succeed at the University.