Maynooth University School of Business

Doctoral Application Process

Overview

A PhD is the most advanced degree awarded by the university. It is an enormously fulfilling, engaging, and challenging programme. Those who complete it earn the use of the designation Doctor as a mark of accomplishment, but much more importantly develop their intellectual capacity to examine the world around them at the most advanced level. Many who complete the process describe it as a life changing experience that opens up their minds and their opportunities in ways they had never considered.

A PhD research programme is different from other types of academic programmes as the process starts long before you are formally accepted onto the programme. It is important that before a) you commit as a student to an extensive programme of work and b) the university commits the resources to supervise your work, that this programme is right for you at this time.

To help you and the university make this judgement we have a process in place to help you explore your interests, strengths, and commitment before embarking on the exciting journey of a PhD. The process is not one where we primarily seek to pass or fail applicants for entry, but where we get to know the student and their interests and come to a common understanding of whether this programme is appropriate for them.

How to Get a PhD by Phillips and Pugh (Published by Open University Press) is a useful book for potential (and active) students to read. It provides a good overview of the process and some of the personal challenges associated with completing a PhD. There are a range of other books that also address similar topic and are available in most major bookstores.

PhD Application Process

Stage 1: Application Form and Proposal

The PhD process begins with submitting an application form and a draft proposal in ONE pdf document to the following email address: business@nuim.ie. A proposed structure for the proposal is given in this document.

You may wish to contact a potential supervisor in advance to informally discuss the research proposal with them or you may wish to contact the PhD Director. The School's website http://business.nuim.ie contains details of the full-time academic staff and their research interests.

Stage 2: Receipt by the School

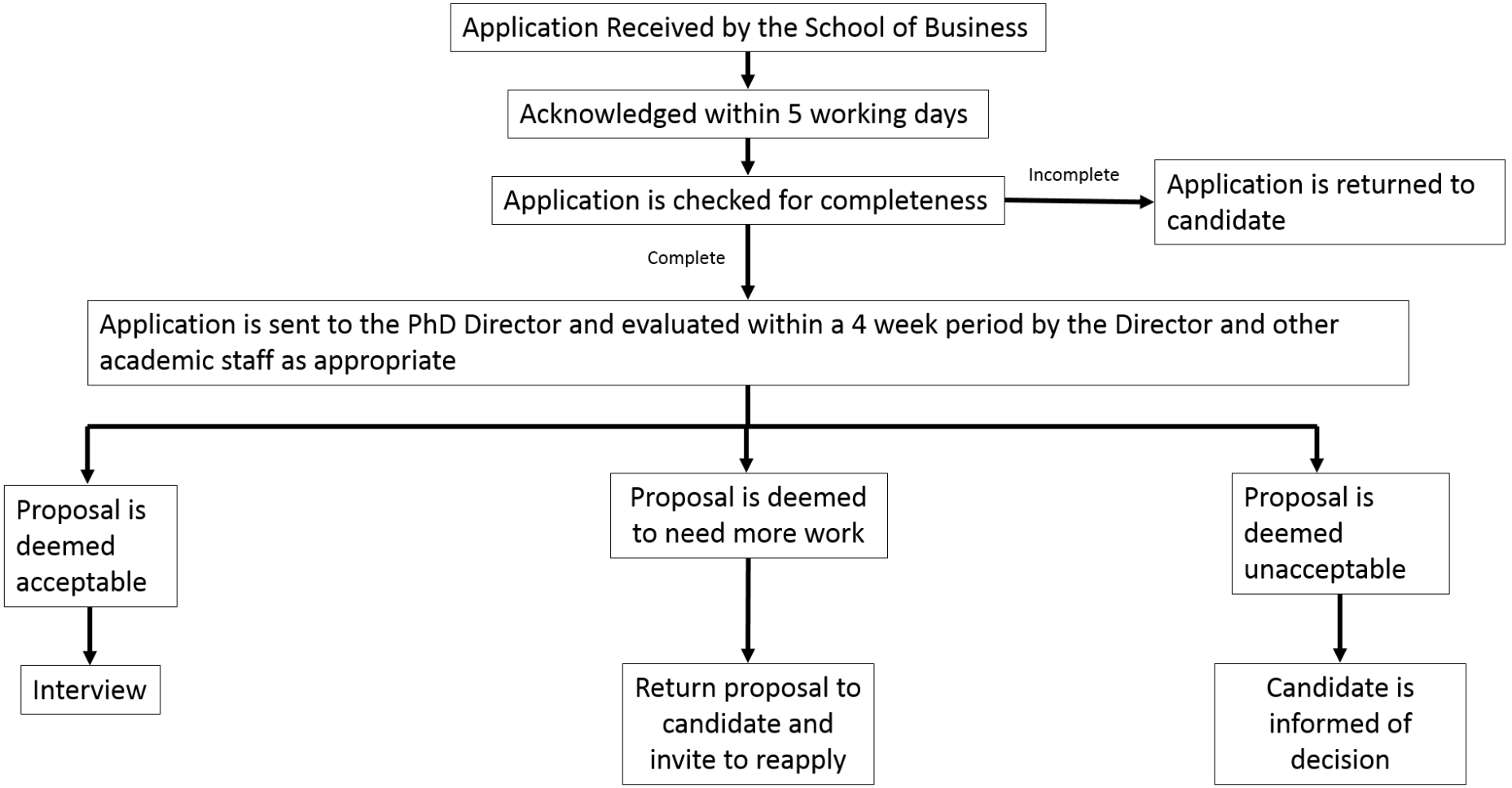
Your application will be acknowledged within five working days and passed to the PhD Director for evaluation once it is complete. The PhD Director will initially assess your application, and consult with colleagues, including the Head of School, as appropriate. At this stage, there are a number of different outcomes as per the PhD Application Process flowchart Figure 1). We interview all candidates with acceptable research proposals.

Unfortunately, we are not always in a position to supervise good proposals and while we make every effort to do so, it is not always possible. In this case, we will endeavour to inform candidates as soon as possible.

Stage 3: Formal university application

Maynooth University accepts students through the PAC system. Once you have been accepted by the School, an application through the PAC system is required.

Figure 1: PhD Application Process



Research Proposal

An essential element of the application process for a PhD programme is a well defined research proposal. This proposal will normally form the initial basis of your PhD though it will most likely develop as the PhD work progresses, and you engage more with the extant literature and the available methods. As a result, we use the proposal to help us understand and assess your potential as a PhD student at the School of Business, Maynooth University.

A research proposal is by its nature somewhat individualistic and is tailored to the project that you are thinking about. We expect that a proposal will be clearly referenced from the academic literature and that a list of references used in the proposal is given. We also use the proposal to evaluate your attention to detail and written academic communication capabilities. In general we would expect that a proposal would have the following elements.

1. A clear **title** that is understandable to a non-specialist reader
2. A clear **statement as to which area(s) of Business** your research work falls into. Many PhDs are drawn from multiple areas within, and outside, Business but in this case we are looking for the main discipline area(s). As part of this section, you should clearly identify a potential supervisor and indicate if you have already made contact with them or not. Prior contact is not essential, but advised. The Schools website http://business.nuim.ie contains details of the full-time academic staff and their research interests.
3. An overarching **research question**: while your research may have different strands and elements, we require a single overall question to position your research. You may also wish to include sub-questions or objectives if you have them at this stage.
4. **Expected Contribution(s):** What is the expected contribution(s) that addressing this research question will make to the literature and to practice?
5. **A literature review**: A review of the academic literature is needed to address the research question. This should offer insights from this literature as to what is the state of knowledge about this question: what do we know; what are our gaps in knowledge?
6. **Research Design**: What research design (research methods) would you use to address this research question in your PhD? You should identify methodologies you have considered and explain which approach is best suited to your research question at this stage.

7. List of references

Indicative length requirement. The table below is a guide and your proposal may be more detailed but this would be the usual expectation.

Section	Number of pages
Sections 1 to 3	1 in total
Section 4	1-2 pages
Section 5	7-12 pages
Section 6	1-2 pages
Section 7	As required in Harvard style

Please note that the proposal should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 with 1.5 spacing throughout. The use of diagrams, tables and figures to summarise your research is encouraged.

Admission criteria

Candidates will normally hold a first class or second class grade one honours degree in a cognate discipline. A Masters qualification in a relevant area is very desirable but we accept applications from very high standard undergraduate degree holders. In exceptional circumstances, mature students with substantial experience at a senior level in an area related to the proposed field of study may apply for a waiver to these criteria.

English Language requirements

If English is not your first language, and you have not completed your third level education in an English speaking country, then we require independent certification of English.

Maynooth University accepts the following test scores for English.

IELTS of 6.5 or higher with at least 6.0 in each component.

TOEFL (Paper based test): 560

TOEFL (Internet based test): 92

PTE (Pearson): 59

Maynooth University's TOEFL code is 8850

Scholarships

For details of the Maynooth University scholarships and application process please refer to: http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/study-maynooth/postgraduate-studies/fees-funding-scholarships

Please note that if you are making a Scholarship application you need to also complete the School of Business application form.

Timing of Application

Students can apply for the structured PhD programme at any stage during a year, and if their application is successful, students are generally registered in the following September. We recommend that students register in September, as they will begin their programme of studies with a new cohort for that year across the School of Business and the university as a whole. Starting your studies with a new cohort of students can provide a degree of peer support and social networking with fellow students, and opportunities to attend research methods early on in your programme. Registration to begin at a different time may be possible on an exceptional basis.

Please note that the current closing date for PhD applications is **31 July 2017**. Shortlisted applicants will be informed shortly thereafter and called for an interview. Where a candidate resides outside of Ireland a Skype interview will be possible.