Applying for a PhD: Entry requirements of the School of Education

Many people aspire to a PhD qualification. Only some are accepted for this challenging degree. A PhD requires one-to-one supervision over a period of at least two years (full-time), more usually three to four years (full-time), depending on the individual circumstances of the student. To ensure that this study culminates in a successful completion, the School of Education of Flinders University requires that successful applicants to the degree meet stringent criteria. This document explains these entry criteria and gives advice for potential PhD applicants. Applicants who require information on scholarships and grants are advised to check the Flinders University website.

School of Education entry criteria

The School of Education of Flinders University requires that successful PhD applicants meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant meets the Flinders University requirements related to language proficiency.
2. The applicant meets one PhD entry criteria shown in the Flinders University policy.
3. The applicant demonstrates experience in the field of education.
4. The applicant shows evidence of research capacity.
5. The applicant has a viable research project.
6. An academic staff member sited in the School of Education who has the requisite qualifications, knowledge and interest in the project is willing to supervise the applicant.

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Further information on these criteria is given below.

1. **English language proficiency**

Minimum English requirements for all PhD’s is currently the same as for other programs (with a few exceptions), listed on the website:

http://www.flinders.edu.au/international-students/study/entry--and-english-requirements/english-language-requirements.cfm

IELTS: 6.0 with minimum sub-band of 6.0 in writing and speaking
TOEFL: 550 with a minimum Test of Written English (TWE) score of 4.5 (or CBT 213 with an essay rating of at least 4.5 or iBT 80 with a writing score of at least 20)

2. **Flinders University entry criteria**

Flinders University requires¹ that successful PhD applicants normally have achieved *either*:

- Honours class 1 or 2A or equivalent
- *OR*
- Masters by coursework with a Distinction average or better
- *OR*
- Successful completion of a Masters degree by research.

If a PhD applicant to the School of Education does not meet one of the above criteria, they normally will be advised that their application was not successful. If a PhD applicant to the School of Education meets one of the above criteria, they are then judged on a case by case basis according to the following criteria.

¹ See Flinders University Policies and Procedures (http://www.flinders.edu.au/calendar/vol2/pg/PhD.htm) for further details

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3. Experience in the field of education
PhD candidates are expected to have a background in the field of education. Applicants who have qualifications and experience in an unrelated area will not be considered suitable PhD candidates. Applicants should note, however, that education is a broad field of study that encompasses a range of disciplines. Potential PhD applicants are advised to check the School of Education research website\(^2\) to see the range of education research that is undertaken.

4. Evidence of research capacity.
PhD candidates are expected to have existing knowledge and experience in research. This could take the form of:
- a completed high quality research thesis/dissertation;
- a high quality synthesis of academic literature;
- completed one or more topics in research methods; or
- research studies undertaken as part of employment.

Applicants are advised to supply evidence of research capacity, for example, a copy of a research report, academic transcripts and/or a reference from an employer for whom they have conducted research. Please note, however, that evidence of existing knowledge and experience in research does not guarantee PhD entry.

5. A viable research project
A viable research project is a research project that:
- can be completed in three to four years of full time study (or part-time equivalent);
- has a sound theoretical basis;
- is sufficiently focused to contribute to a body of knowledge within the field of education; and
- can be completed with a reasonable level of resources.

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Applicants should take account of financial considerations before submitting their application, and, if necessary, apply for scholarships that will cover living and study expenses. Applicants are also advised to read other PhD projects and the academic literature to ensure that their proposal has a theoretical basis and is feasible within time and finance constraints.

No application will be accepted if the School of Education does not have the supervision expertise available.

6. A supervisor willing to supervise the project
PhD students are required to have a principal supervisor and a co-supervisor. The rules of Flinders University\(^3\) state that “The principal supervisor must have relevant knowledge, expertise and interest in the candidate’s research topic”. A PhD applicant is well advised to identify possible supervisors in the area of their research project and to write a specific proposal that engages with the supervisors’ areas of expertise. It should also be noted that potential supervisors will make judgements about the applicant's potential, based upon evidence of research capacity.

If a PhD application is not accepted
Where a PhD application is not accepted, the student will be advised either that:
- their application is rejected; or
- their PhD application is rejected but the student will be accepted for a Masters degree by research, with the possibility of upgrading to a PhD. It should be noted, however, that upgrading to a PhD is not guaranteed and occurs only upon sufficient evidence of progress being presented to an academic panel.

\(^3\) See Student research policies and procedures - Section 7: Appointment of supervisors ([http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/res.high.deg.htm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/res.high.deg.htm))

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Funding sources
Applicants are advised to search out funding sources for both living and research experiences. The following websites give details of funding available for PhD candidates, however other funding from external bodies may also be sought.
Flinders University Scholarships website:
http://www.flinders.edu.au/scholarships/main-display-postgraduate.cfm; and

Flinders University Education, Humanities, Law and Theology Research funding website:
http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/ehlt/rhd/rhds/forms/

International students from specific nations are also eligible for funding through AusAid. See details at http://www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar/default.cfm.

Submitting an application for PhD entry
PhD applicants should contact Flinders University as follows:
Australian nationals and permanent residents should contact the Flinders University Admissions/Prospective Students Office, Flinders University, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide SA 5001 or email admissions@flinders.edu.au.
International applicants should contact our International Office (http://www.flinders.edu.au/international-students/study/international-office/international-office_home.cfm)

Further information
Further enquiries relating to PhD entry should be directed to Dr Helen Askell-Williams, Research Higher Degrees Coordinator, (helen.askell-williams@flinders.edu.au).

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