

PhD - Health and Life Sciences

Become part of a world-leading research community by studying for a PhD in Health and Life Sciences at Aston University, Birmingham. We offer a range of specialist projects in subjects from biomedical sciences to health sciences and neuroscience. We offer October and April start dates.

Course type

Full-time / Part-time

Course format

No placements

Duration

3 years

UCAS code(s)

N/A

Start date

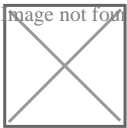
Overview

- [94% of our Allied Health Professions research was rated as internationally excellent or world-leading \(REF, 2014\)](#)
- [Study with leading academics](#)
- [Enables professionals to enhance their knowledge and to be at the forefront of their academic discipline](#)
- [Access a range of support, guidance and facilities through our University wide Graduate School](#)

[More research degrees](#)

PhD - Health and Life Sciences

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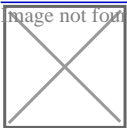


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Teaching Excellence Framework Gold award logo

About

PhD programmes are for those who are seeking to develop greater in-depth knowledge in a specific area. Completing this level of study is about making an original contribution to knowledge, making new discoveries and developing lifelong skills.

At Aston University, our Health and Life Science PhD programmes will provide all the support and facilities you will need to develop into a leading researcher in your chosen field. You will be welcomed into a supportive community with a shared enthusiasm for original research, where diversity and multidisciplinary is championed.

Support

In addition to the support provided by your supervisory team and the wider research community, the Aston University Graduate School provides a range of support services for both applicants and current research students. This includes:

- **[The Student Charter](#)**: a summary of the aspirations and expectations of the University and its students.
- **The Postgraduate Mentoring Scheme**: supporting the integration and student experience of newly arriving postgraduate students by matching them with more experienced postgraduate students who act as peer mentors.
- **International Student Support Unit**: providing help and advice to students from overseas, both before you join Aston and once you have arrived.
- **Committee representation**: our School Research Committee and the University's Graduate School Management Committee has a student member from each School of study.
- **Facilities**: in addition to the specialist facilities you will use, we also have a Graduate School Office and Training Room, as well as a Postgraduate Student Common Room, a space designated for you to meet, relax and socialise.

Career prospects

Studying a PhD is great route into academia and industries that are centred on research and innovation. Areas with a demand for very high level and specialised research skills often demand PhDs.

In addition to this specialist knowledge, PhD education will help you to develop a set of valuable transferrable skills. The very nature of studying an intensive research degree will enable you to become a team player, develop problem-solving skills, analytical thinking, and advanced presentation and communication skills.

The variety of PhD project topics at Aston means that the destinations of our graduates vary substantially. Some choose to continue into academia, at either Aston or other leading institutions, while others go onto use their newly acquired skills in a range of research, healthcare, industry or charitable fields. When selecting your chosen PhD path at Aston, your supervisor will be able to provide you with relevant career opportunities that could be

available to you in your specialist area.

Research projects

We offer both self-funded and funded studentship PhD opportunities here at Aston. The information below will provide you with more details on how our PhD offerings work.

Funded studentships

Each year we offer a range of fully or partially funded studentships covering a range of specialities. The adverts including full project details, can be found on [our vacancy management page](#). If there are no available studentships open, please check back regularly, or you can set up a job alert email by using the link above

We are also proud to be partner institutions with several leading research training programmes. Find out more about these projects and studentship opportunities:

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) Midlands Integrative Biosciences Training Partnership (MIBTP)

[MIBTP](#) is a BBSRC funded Doctoral Training Partnership between the universities of Aston, Birmingham, Harper Adams, Leicester and Warwick. The MIBTP has an ambitious vision to deliver innovative, world class research across the life sciences to boost the growing bioeconomy in the Midlands and across the UK.

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland (EPSRC-SFI) Joint Centre for Doctoral Training in Engineered Tissues for Discovery, Industry and Medicine

The [lifETIME](#) (Engineered Tissues for Discovery, Industry and Medicine) CDT is a partnership between the University of Glasgow, the University of Birmingham, Aston University and CÚRAM – Science Foundation Ireland. Set up with a purpose to train innovation leaders in drug discovery and regenerative medicine through development of bioengineered humanised 3D models, microfluidics, diagnostics and sensing platforms.

Further information on the studentships and details of how to apply can be found on the [lifETIME CDT website](#).

Self-funded projects

In addition to our fully or partially funded projects, we also accept self-funded students (i.e. not funded by Aston University and their partners). These include students who choose to pay their own fees, are sponsored by their government, employer or any other external funding provider.

Advertised projects

Research groups at Aston sometimes choose to advertise specific projects that are open to self-funded students. When available, these will be listed below. For students who want to complete a PhD in a specific field, or with a certain researcher, we encourage you to reach out to these academic research groups, or individuals, to discuss the availability of projects.

The role of shadows in 3D vision: a computational approach.

School: School of Psychology

PhD type for application: PhD in Health Sciences

Main Supervisor: [Dr Andrew Schofield](#)

Project: Humans generally ignore shadows. We are largely insensitive to them when identifying objects, and we don't try to pick them up or walk around them. However, we do use shadows - at least implicitly - to tell us about the 3D layout of scenes. The position of a shadow can tell us if an object is close to the ground or elevated. Shadows also tell us about the positions of objects relative to the light source.

Based in the [Aston Laboratory for Immersive Virtual Environments \(ALIVE\)](#), this project will use virtual reality and computational modelling approaches to consider what shadows tell us about 3D scene layout in the presence and absence of other 3D cues such as those provided by perspective and the two eyes.

Additional application criteria: Applications are invited from those with a background in psychology, virtual reality, and computer science. Suitably qualified candidates will be encouraged to apply computational methods to model human perception.

Apply: Please contact [Dr Andrew Schofield](#) directly for more details and to discuss your research proposal before submitting an application.

Find a PhD project

For students who want to complete a PhD in a specific field, or with a certain researcher, we encourage you to reach out to these academic research groups, or individuals, to discuss the availability of projects.

At Aston, within the area of health and life sciences, PhDs can be completed within the:

- Applied Health Research Group
- Biosciences Research Group
- Cognition and Neuroscience Research Group
- Optometry and Vision Science Research Group
- Pharmaceutical and Clinical Pharmacy Research
- Pharmacology and Translational Neuroscience Research Group
- Translational Medicine Group

You can find out more about these [research groups](#), or discover researchers at Aston by specialism using [Research Explorer](#). You may submit an application, including a research proposal, for consideration, but this will need to be agreed with your potential supervisor.

If you are interested in completing a research project in an audiological or optometry/ophthalmic topic, you may want to consider our [Doctor of Hearing Therapy and Doctor of Optometry](#) / [Doctor of Ophthalmic Science](#) programmes.

Fees

UK students (2023/4)

Annual full-time fees: £4,712

International students (2023/4)

Annual full-time fees: £19,050

Home students, including EU students with settled or pre-settled status, living in England may be eligible for a non-means tested, low interest, loan towards tuition costs and living expenses. Find out more about the [Doctoral Loans Scheme](#).

Tuition fees are reviewed annually and may increase in subsequent years in line with inflation linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) to take account of the University's increased costs of delivering the programme.

Entry requirements and how to apply

Entry requirements

Qualifications: All candidates should have been awarded, or expect to achieve, a Masters degree in a relevant subject with a 60% or higher weighted average, and/or a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree (or an equivalent qualification from an overseas institution).

Your degree will need to be in a relevant field which will either be stated in the PhD vacancy advert, or can be confirmed with your potential project supervisor when you discuss your proposal if you are taking a self-funded PhD.

English Language: Non-native English language speakers will be required to meet the University language requirements. This is normally via an approved test, although there are exemptions for students who completed their undergraduate degrees or masters degree in a UK university. Full details can be found on the [Aston English Language requirements page](#).

How to apply

All PhD applications should be submitted using our online form, more information on the step-by-step process for this can be found in the 'Making your application' section of this page.

For funded studentships or advertised self-funded projects, please ensure you have checked through the vacancy advert for full details on entry and project proposal requirements. You will also need to make note of which PhD options you should choose in the application form.

For students who are seeking a specific self-funded project, please ensure you have completed the following before submitting your application:

- Made contact with your potential PhD supervisor to ensure there is a suitable project opportunity for you that will be supported within the research group.
- Discussed any specific entry requirements related to your qualifications.
- Agreed your project proposal.

You will also need to confirm with your supervisor or the PhD admissions team at pgr_admissions@aston.ac.uk which PhD application option you will need to select when submitting your form. As standard, this is normally:

- Research Biomedical Science: any projects with our biosciences team and researchers
- Research Health Science: any projects with our optometry, pharmacy or psychology teams and researchers
- Research Neuroscience: any projects with our neuroscience team and researchers

Making your application

Making an application can be split into the following steps:

1. Use the 'Select Online Application Form' below to access the online application form. Then click "Apply for selected Degree Programme" (this will open in a new window)
2. Complete the online application form, uploading the necessary documents
3. We'll review your application and contact you if we require any additional information/documents
4. If you have applied for one of our research projects, and your application is successful, the supervisor will contact you to arrange an interview.
5. If you have submitted your own project, and your application is successful, a supervisor who is interested in your project will contact to arrange an interview.

How to Reduce Process Time

- Contact academics at Aston University and find someone who would like to supervise your research. Name them in your application.
- Provide all the documents required. Make sure that these are high-quality scans and (if applicable) certified English translations
- Be aware of the degree programme fees and explain clearly in your application how this will be funded.

Select online application form

Application guidance notes

The following guidance notes will aid you in completing the online application form. We advise keeping this page open while you apply as a useful point of reference.

Making your online application

When progressing through the application form please use the hyperlinks/buttons at the bottom of each page and not your web browser back and forward buttons.

Existing Aston Students: Please note: You will need to Create a New Account to start a new application please do not log in with your student username and password.

When creating your new account please ensure that you provide us with a valid and accurate email address as most of the correspondence from Aston will be sent via email.

You will be automatically logged in after this and be able to start your application immediately.

You can elect to 'Save and Return Later' at any point of the process, at which point you will be emailed details on how to return to your application later.

There are guidance notes available through out the application to assist you in completing the form.

Names

Please input your first names and family name as stated in your passport or other official documentation.

E-mail addresses

E-mail address. This is your personal email address - the email address used to register an online application account with Aston University.

Alternative contact e-mail address. If you are an Educational Agent, working on behalf of an applicant, please insert the Educational Agent email address in this box.

Addresses

Please provide information on your address. The permanent address is usually your home address. This is the address we will use to contact you unless you specify a correspondence address.

If the correspondence address given is temporary, please ensure that you notify the relevant Admissions Office of any changes.

Disability/additional support needs

This section is included for the purposes of monitoring equal opportunities and to ensure that students with a disability know about and have access to appropriate facilities and services. Applications are judged solely on academic merit. The University is committed to equal opportunities in its admissions policy and considers applications from candidates with disabilities on the same academic grounds as apply to all candidates.

Find out more information about the facilities and support available contact:

The Enabling Team
Aston University
Aston Triangle
Birmingham
B4 7ET
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)121 204 4700

E-mail: enablingteam@aston.ac.uk

If appropriate, please choose the code most relevant to you from the drop down menu, when completing the online application form. Please also give any details of any special requirements or additional support needs you might have.

Educational details

Please include **all** qualifications obtained or anticipated (post compulsory education only).

Please make sure that the names of the educational institutions are written in full and not abbreviated to initials – also state the country in which the institution is located. Please indicate the type of award for which you have studied e.g. BA, BSc or MA and the title used on the degree certificate/transcript. Give the grades you obtained e.g. degree classification, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) score and state what it is out of i.e. 80/100.

Please note that the authenticity of your qualifications will be checked by Aston with the awarding institution/examination board and that submission of fraudulent documents will disqualify you from studying in the UK.

Professional Qualifications

Please enter any professional qualifications received or memberships of professional institutions that are relevant to your application e.g. the Chartered Institute of Marketing Professional Diploma or any other non-academic qualification e.g. GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test).

Your Academic Qualifications, to a maximum of 14

The most important qualification to include is the qualification you are currently studying, or if you have completed all qualifications, the highest qualification that you have achieved.

English

All applicants are required to provide evidence of their ability in English. The minimum English language requirement varies between schools - please refer to the [English Language Requirements page](#) for the individual programme requirements.

Relevant Work Experience

Please include any relevant work experience to support your application by ticking the box and completing all the mandatory fields.

Please note that relevant work experience is a requirement for some programmes; please refer to the course entry requirements for further information.

Finance Details

Please provide as much information as possible about how you will be funding your postgraduate studies. If you have been awarded a grant/scholarship for all or part of your costs please send us a copy of the letter of the award you have received from the grant-awarding body. This can be uploaded at the beginning of your application.

Personal Statement

You are required to complete a personal statement.

The statement should add any further information which you think is relevant to your application e.g. personal suitability for research, career aspirations, possible future research interests, further description of relevant employment experience etc. Also include information about your leisure activities and interests.

Please do not include symbols in your text as the system may not recognise them.

Research proposal

A good research proposal is one of the most important aspects of your application to the Research Degrees Programme. When the University receives your research proposal, we use it to confirm the quality of your ideas, your ability to think originally and critically, to ensure that you really have understood the depth of investigation that your doctoral research will entail, and that you have a good understanding of the key theories and literature. Research Proposals should be in sufficient detail to enable the relevant research group or supervisor to decide if your experience is appropriate and if your proposed topic is relevant to existing research themes at Aston. The outline should be a substantial document, typically 6 to 12 pages in length. Please refer to 'How to Apply' section on the programme page for programme-specific requirements. **If applying for an advertised project or studentship, please refer to the advert for research proposal requirements.**

References

You must provide two official references. **Members of your family or friends cannot provide references.** At least one of your referees should be from the institution where you studied your last University degree. References must be provided on headed-paper and/or stamped by the institution and must be signed by the referee.

If you choose to enter an email address for either of your referees they will be automatically e-mailed to ask them to provide you with a reference if the 'Email this referee on application submission?' box is ticked. The referee's email address must originate from the referee's official university/professional e-mail address. Private e-mail references will not be accepted.

The referees will receive full instructions on how to complete the references and where to send once they have completed the reference. PLEASE NOTE: If you apply for more than one course at Aston but are using the same referee you do not need to tick the 'Email this referee on application submission?' box, for your second or any subsequent applications.

Those applicants who have chosen not to have their referees automatically emailed will need to contact the relevant PGR Admissions Office for more information on manually sending the references for your

application. Please include the Application Reference Number, emailed to you separately, on all correspondence.

If you are applying for an advertised Studentship please state the reference code. This can be found on the advertisement.

Please note that the authenticity of your qualifications will be checked by Aston with the awarding institution/examination board and that submission of fraudulent documents will disqualify you from studying in the UK.

Professional qualifications

Please enter any professional qualifications received or memberships of professional institutions that are relevant to your application e.g. the Chartered Institute of Marketing Professional Diploma or any other non-academic qualification e.g. GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test).

Your academic qualifications, to a maximum of 14

The most important qualification to include is the qualification you are currently studying, or if you have completed all qualifications, the highest qualification that you have achieved.

English

All applicants are required to provide evidence of their ability in English. The minimum English language requirement varies between schools - please refer to the Postgraduate prospectus for the individual programme requirements. These usually include: GCSE / 'O' Level English language, IELTS, Pearson Test of English (PTE) or TOEFL, although there are other acceptable qualifications. **Please note that IELTS and TOEFL results are only valid for 2 years.** Applicants who have already successfully completed, or are successfully completing, a full time university degree in the UK and other English-speaking countries may be exempt from these requirements. Applicants with less than the minimum English Language requirement may be rejected or asked to retake the relevant examinations. Alternatively, they may need to successfully complete one of the English language courses at Aston University before starting their programme of study. Applicants will be notified at the point of offer of any such conditions.

Relevant work experience

Please include any relevant work experience to support your application by ticking the box and completing all the mandatory fields.

Please note that relevant work experience is a requirement for some programmes; please refer to the programme listed in the prospectus or the website for further information.

Finance details

Please provide as much information as possible about how you will be funding your postgraduate studies. If you have been awarded a grant/scholarship for all or part of your costs please send us a copy of the letter of the award you have received from the grant-awarding body. This can be uploaded at the beginning of your application.

Personal statement

You are required to complete a personal statement.

The statement should add any further information which you think is relevant to your application e.g.

personal suitability for research, career aspirations, possible future research interests, further description of relevant employment experience etc. Also include information about your leisure activities and interests.

Please do **not include symbols in your text** as the system may not recognise them.

Research proposal

A good research proposal is one of the most important aspects of your application to the Research Degrees Programme. When the University receives your research proposal, we use it to confirm the quality of your ideas, your ability to think originally and critically, to ensure that you really have understood the depth of investigation that your doctoral research will entail, and that you have a good understanding of the key theories and literature. Research Proposals should be in sufficient detail to enable the relevant research group or supervisor to decide if your experience is appropriate and if your proposed topic is relevant to existing research themes at Aston. The outline should be a substantial document, typically 6 to 12 pages in length. Please refer to 'How to Apply' section on the programme page for programme-specific requirements. **If applying for an advertised project or studentship, please refer to the advert for research proposal requirements.**

References

You must provide two official references. Members of your family or friends cannot provide references. At least one of your referees should be from the institution where you studied your last University degree. **For Research Applicants:** If you have completed your first Degree at a different University to your Masters Degree please provide a reference from both Institutions. References must be provided on headed-paper and/or stamped by the institution and must be signed by the referee.

If you choose to enter an email address for either of your referees they will be automatically e-mailed to ask them to provide you with a reference if the 'Email this referee on application submission?' box is ticked. The referee's email address must originate from the referee's official university/professional e-mail address. Private e-mail references will not be accepted.

The referees will receive full instructions on how to complete the references and where to send once they have completed the reference. PLEASE NOTE: If you apply for **more than one course** at Aston but are using the same referee you do **not** need to tick the 'Email this referee on application submission?' box, for your second or any subsequent applications.

Those applicants who have chosen not to have their referees automatically emailed will need to contact the relevant Admissions Office for more information on manually sending the references for your application. Please include the Application Reference Number, emailed to you separately, on all correspondence.

If you are applying for an advertised Studentship please state the reference code. This can be found on the advertisement.

Sponsored Students

You are a sponsored student if all or part of your tuition fees will be paid by an external organisation. This may be an employer, government body or embassy (not a family member). On receipt of an official letter purchase order, the University will send a tuition fee invoice directly to your sponsor.

Please specify in your application that you are a sponsored student. To confirm your sponsorship, please follow the instructions here: [Tuition Fee Sponsorship | Aston University](#)

What happens next?

Once you have completed your application you will be automatically logged out from the system and emailed with confirmation that your application has been received.

After this point, admissions staff at Aston will communicate with you via the email address you have provided regarding the outcome of your application and you will not need to log in to the Online Application form again.

If you have any supporting documents which you need to send to us please send these to pgr_admissions@aston.ac.uk.

Notification of decision

The University will make a decision based on the information you have provided and you will be advised of the decision within a few weeks. (If you do not hear anything after 6 weeks and you have completed your online application and provided all required supporting documentation, you can email the PGR Admissions Office as stated on your receipt of application email. Your query can be processed quicker if you can provide your Reference Number, as provided on the email sent you when you submitted your application form).

You will be contacted by the university with a decision to invite you to an interview, or that your application has been unsuccessful.

Following a successful interview, the offer of a place will be made. This may be subject to certain conditions which you have to meet before your admissions can be confirmed (conditional offer). You must satisfy these conditions by sending further evidence or completing additional documentation to the University.

If you have any more questions about the application process or the information you will need to provide the University, please contact us.

Technical problems

This section provides you with some simple solutions to technical problems that you might have whilst completing the online Application Form.

I can't create a new account, what should I do?

If you are unable to create a new account, please ensure that you are using a supported web browser (listed below) and that you are completing all of the required fields on the new account page.

You are unable to create an account twice with the same email address. If you need to apply for a second Degree Programme at Aston, you can use your existing account details to log in. If you have forgotten your original password, please follow the instructions below to receive a reminder of your password.

If (after verifying that you are using a supported web browser and that you do not already have an account in the system) you are still unable to create an account please contact our technical support staff at it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk

I haven't received any emails from the application form, why is this?

Normally, you will receive an email once you choose to 'save and return Later' to your current application or when you complete an application form. You may not receive these emails if:

Your email software or provider has marked the emails as Junk or Spam. Please check your Junk / Spam folder to see if any emails have been directed there. Additionally, please ensure that you add 'aston.ac.uk' to your email account safe list so that any further emails sent to you by the Admissions team are received quickly and safely. You may also have entered your email address incorrectly when creating your account. If this is the case, please contact our technical support staff at it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk with your name, date of birth and email address.

How do I get a reminder of or reset my password?

To have your password reset [visit this webpage on MAP](#). You will be asked to provide the email address, surname and date of birth that you entered when you originally created your account. If these are accepted by the system, your password will be reset to a random value and emailed to you.

If you are unable to retrieve your password this way, please contact our technical support staff at it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk

The application form doesn't look right or doesn't work properly on my computer, what can I do?

The Aston application form has been tested to work with the following web browsers:

[Internet Explorer 8](#) [Firefox](#) [Google Chrome](#) [Safari](#) You will also need to ensure that Javascript is enabled on your internet browsing software. This is usually enabled by default.

If you are using one of these web browsers and are still experiencing issues, please contact our technical support staff at it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk

I've made some mistakes on my application form or supporting documentation, what do I do?

If you haven't submitted your application form, you can change any of the documents you have uploaded and any of the information you have entered simply by [logging into your application](#) and making the necessary changes.

If you have submitted your application form, please contact the relevant Admissions Office as stated on your receipt of application email with details of any changes you wish to make, along with any supporting documentation if applicable

How do I log back into an uncompleted application form once I have chosen to 'Save and Return Later'?

You can access any existing application form by simply [logging back into your application](#).

You can log in using the email address and password you used to create your account. However you cannot use this to start a new application.

Additional advice for international students

If you are an overseas student and require a student visa to come to the UK, you must also allow sufficient time to submit your visa application form to your local British Embassy/High Commission.

For some of our courses you may also be required to apply for an [Academic Technology Approval Scheme \(ATAS\)](#) certificate, which can take up to 4 weeks to be issued, please allow sufficient time for

this.

If you are applying as an international student, you should note that the terms and conditions of entry into the UK usually prevent you registering for a part-time programme. For more information, please refer to www.gov.uk/student-visa or www.ukcisa.org.uk.

Contact us

If you require any additional advice before you wish to submit your application, please contact us at pgr_admissions@aston.ac.uk

[Related courses and content](#)

[Related courses](#)

You might also be interested in...

[NEWS - 25/04/2023](#)

[Association between early childhood symptoms of common ear, nose and throat problems and autism – new research](#)

[Ear, nose and throat \(ENT\) problems are more common in young children with a subsequent diagnosis of autism, or who have demonstrated high levels of autism traits - finds new research published in BMJ Open.](#)

[NEWS - 06/11/2020](#)

[Aston researchers lead the way in creating VR training for university students](#)

[Birmingham startup FourPlus, with partners Holosphere and Aston University, have been awarded funding from Innovate UK to create and test a virtual reality \(VR\) training platform for university life science students.](#)

[More news](#)

[Events - 28/03/2023](#)

[A route to synthetic antibodies \(and their replacements\)](#)

[More events](#)

You might also be interested in...

No featured Event set to display.

Student Life at Aston

Accommodation

We provide award-winning accommodation on our small, friendly campus in partnership with Unite Students

Students' Union

Aston SU represents and supports around 14,000 students, providing a number of commercial and non-commercial services.

Birmingham life

Aston University is in a great, central location. Ideally positioned in the centre of Birmingham - one of the youngest cities in Europe - our campus is only a 10 minute walk to the city centre.

Clubs and societies

Joining a club or society is one of the best ways to get the most out of your time here at Aston. With over 130 student-led groups we have something for everyone.

Sports

Here's Sports at Aston. Discover what's happening on the Aston University campus at the Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre.

Student support at the Hub

The Hub is a central location on the Ground Floor of the Main Building where most of the student support services are located.

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