



# **Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships 2012 Policy**

## **1. Overview: Doctoral Development @ BU**

BU is committed as part of Strategic Plan BU2018 to investing in the postgraduate researcher community, increasing student numbers and to create a vibrant and stimulating postgraduate research environment within our key areas of outstanding, or emerging, research strength. During February and March 2012, BU will advertise 100 doctoral opportunities. This will be guaranteed annually thereafter as part of BU2018. These postgraduate research students will contribute to world-class research in recognized areas of academic excellence and societal impact. BU has a twin track approach to funding doctoral students, the two elements are outlined below however this paper focuses on the Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships:

- **Fully-funded and Match-funded BU Studentships** supported via central investment from RAE QR Funds. In 2012, we have 44 BU Studentships to allocate and a competition for Studentship Projects is currently in process (Deadline 29 Feb 2012, detailed information can be found on the Research Blog). Successful projects will be advertised from March 2012 on-wards. Existing and established principles apply to these full time studentships including fee waivers, student bursary (including match-funded student bursary) and bench fees. To be clear, students apply to approved/funded projects, with an emphasis on attracting outstanding research talent. UET and Graduate School approval of all candidates remains in place to secure BU's investment
- **Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships** provide outstanding students wishing to study with a particular supervisor or research team the opportunity of applying directly and developing a project with the supervisory team. These Scholarships provide a fee waiver only and will be allocated by School's to outstanding applicants on the basis of merit. Projects are developed and approved post-award, and within 3 months of the award, or the offer of a Scholarship will be withdrawn. They are eligible for full-time

study (and exceptionally part-time) by both UK/EU and overseas students, and those with industry/business/government sponsorship are particularly encouraged to apply. Allocations will be approved by the relevant School Dean, Graduate School and UET to secure BU's investment. Schools are not required to accept candidates on this scheme if they choose.

This paper outlines the policy and procedures around the Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships.

## **2. Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships**

We are delighted to announce the launch of the **2012 Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships** which will offer support to up to 60 **outstanding** postgraduate research students. The Scholarships will provide a full fee waive for up to 36 months in the case of full-time students and exceptionally 48 months in the case of part-time students.

The focus of the **Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships** is on the outstanding nature of the candidate who must meet the eligibility criteria set out below. This programme of Scholarships may be used to support: (1) Supervisor or industry/sponsor proposed projects; (2) Student proposed projects; or (3) a hybrid model. Stipends (to cover living expenses) are not included in the scholarships and these must be provided by the student themselves or by a sponsor. Further information is provided below.

The scholarships will be awarded, via the process set out below, to candidates who meet the eligibility criteria, have the support of their supervisory teams, are accepted by the relevant Academic School and must be approved by the School's Dean and UET. The process will be managed by the Graduate School.

**Only the most outstanding candidates will be supported. Full details and criteria are set out in this policy document. Staff and potential postgraduate research students are asked to check the eligibility criteria carefully before applying.**

The Vice-Chancellor Doctoral Scholarships applications (on the appropriate application form downloaded from the Graduate School website) should be submitted to [Dr Fiona Knight](#) (**Graduate School Academic Manager**) no later than **30 June 2012** who will circulate to each School for approval.

### **3. Details for all Scholarships**

The **2012 Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships** programme will open on 1 March 2012 and will roll until 30 June 2012. There are up to 60 scholarships available, which are nominally split evenly between the 6 Academic Schools. However, individual schools may take up more or less than their allocated 10 scholarships as available. There is no requirement for a School to accept candidates.

The Scholarships are open to **outstanding candidates** who meet the eligibility criteria outlined below. This programme of Scholarships may be used to support:

- **Supervisor or industry sponsor proposed projects;** in this case the project is provided to outstanding candidates once they have received a scholarship. In the case of projects specified by industry or sponsor this must be with the full agreement in advance of the supervisory team.
- **Student proposed projects;** the research project would be developed by the candidate under guidance from a potential supervisory team within an Academic School.
- **Hybrid model;** supervisors, sponsor and candidates may work together to develop an appropriate project proposal.

The Scholarships will provide a full fee waive for up to 36 months, and exceptionally to a maximum of 48 months in the case of part-time students. Fees will be charged after 36/48 months respectively. To be clear about the '48 month exception': this is included so that in some cases a sponsor or employer may continue to provide students with part-time employment, effectively releasing them for doctoral study part-time. Please note these scholarships will only be allocated to part-time students in exceptional circumstances.

Stipends, to cover living expenses, are NOT included in the scholarships and students must demonstrate at application stage that they are able to support themselves as part of the application process. Financial support for stipends must be sourced privately by the student (self or family funding) or by an external sponsor such as an employer, industry, or government.

The supporting Academic Schools are responsible for providing each scholarship holder with a guaranteed grant of between £3k and £5k, depending on the nature of the project, over 36/48 months for use by the student to support fieldwork, consumables and conference travel. Normal studentship terms and conditions will apply.

The Scholarships are open to Home/EU or International candidates who may wish to study their research degree full time. The Scholarships may NOT be used to support professional doctorates. Nor may they be used to support BU staff to complete doctoral programmes.

#### **4. Candidate Eligibility Criteria**

Candidates for a Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarship must demonstrate truly outstanding qualities and be motivated to complete a PhD in 3 years full-time or 4 years part-time.

- All candidates must satisfy the University's minimum doctoral entry criteria for studentships of an honors degree at First Class (1) and/or an appropriate Masters degree or equivalent .
- An IELTS (Academic) score of 7.0 minimum is essential for candidates for whom English is not their first language.

In addition to satisfying basic entry criteria, BU will look closely at the qualities, skills and background of each candidate and what they can bring to their chosen research project in order to ensure successful and timely completion. It is important to consider that in most cases the interpretation of 'truly outstanding' is likely to be those candidates with a First Class (Hons) degrees and/or a distinction at Masters, with clear documented evidence of drive, commitment and relevant skills.

#### **5. Supervisor Eligibility Criteria**

Supported candidates proposals should have a balanced supervisory team, with no supervisor supervising more than 6 PGR students including this project. The first supervisor must be a permanent member of academic BU staff. They must be an experienced supervisor (defined as having a current “certificate of supervision”) and be research active, and be in consideration for the REF submission.

## **6. Scholarship Process**

The Scholarship process will be managed and overseen by the Graduate School and will involve 5 key steps:

- a) *Scholarships Advertised.* BU will promote the Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarship opportunities within the generic market place and with particular emphasis on overseas. This marketing campaign will commence in late February and continue until June 2012. Key to this process will be directing potential applicants to staff profiles on BU website. We anticipate that interested staff will be pro-active in disseminating the call and opportunity within specialist sector specific media and by targeting interested students both within the UK and overseas. In all cases potential applicants will be encouraged to contact academics directly and in advance of any application. Potential applicants will be required to evidence discussion with potential supervisors as part of the application process.
- b) *Candidate Selection.* All applications should be submitted to the Graduate School which is responsible to pass them on to the relevant Academic School. Recruitment should be undertaken by Academic Schools in line with BU policy. This will be conducted in two clear steps. (a) When applications are received they will be evaluated for eligibility and suitability by the Deputy Dean for Research or delegated authority, for example the Associate Dean for Research Students. (b) Candidates who meet the criteria and for whom there is a potential interested supervisor an interview panel will be convened. This interview panel will normally comprise the supervisory team, an independent member and be chaired by an independent Professor from the host Academic School. In the case of overseas students this interview will normally take place via Skype or some other conferencing facility or during an in country interview with the panel giving designated authority to one or more individuals to conduct the interview. It is important

that the interview panel assure themselves during the interview process, however it is conducted, that a candidate has the means of financial support to undertake the course of study. Supporting evidence will be required as part of the applications process. Interviews should refer to the interview form and person specification available from the Graduate School. Interviews should last no more than 30 minutes and where possible all students should be given a tour of BU and School facilities by a PGR Student. In the case of UK students Academic Schools are responsible for paying interview expenses (normally second class rail travel) to candidates.

- c) *Scholarship Approval.* Approval by Dean of School and UET of each candidate is required before a scholarship can be offered. Once accepted by the Academic School, full details of the candidate should be sent to the Graduate School. In order to make this a swift and trouble free process supervisors should make it absolutely clear on the nomination form how the selected candidate demonstrates (with evidence) that they are 'truly outstanding' and will justify the investment being made. Once approved, the standard conditional offer letter (offering the place on a research degree programme subject to project development) will be sent by the Graduate School as per the usual process. Appeals should be made to the PVC (Research, Enterprise and Internationalisation) via the Graduate School.
- d) *Project Development.* This may be by the supervisor or candidate (working with the supervisor). The Scholarship cannot be taken up by the candidate until a full project proposal is accepted by the supervisory team and approved by the Deputy Dean Research (or delegated authority). A copy of the approved project, signed by the relevant Academic School authority should be sent to the Graduate School. We would normally expect the project approval to be completed within 4 weeks of a scholarship offer being made. The offer of a Scholarship will be withdrawn if an agreed project is not approved within 3 months of the offer made.
- e) *Unconditional Offer.* Once the project has been formally approved and lodged with the Graduate School, an unconditional offer will be made by the Graduate School. This will enable international students to apply for a visa for entry into the UK.

## **7. Timetable**

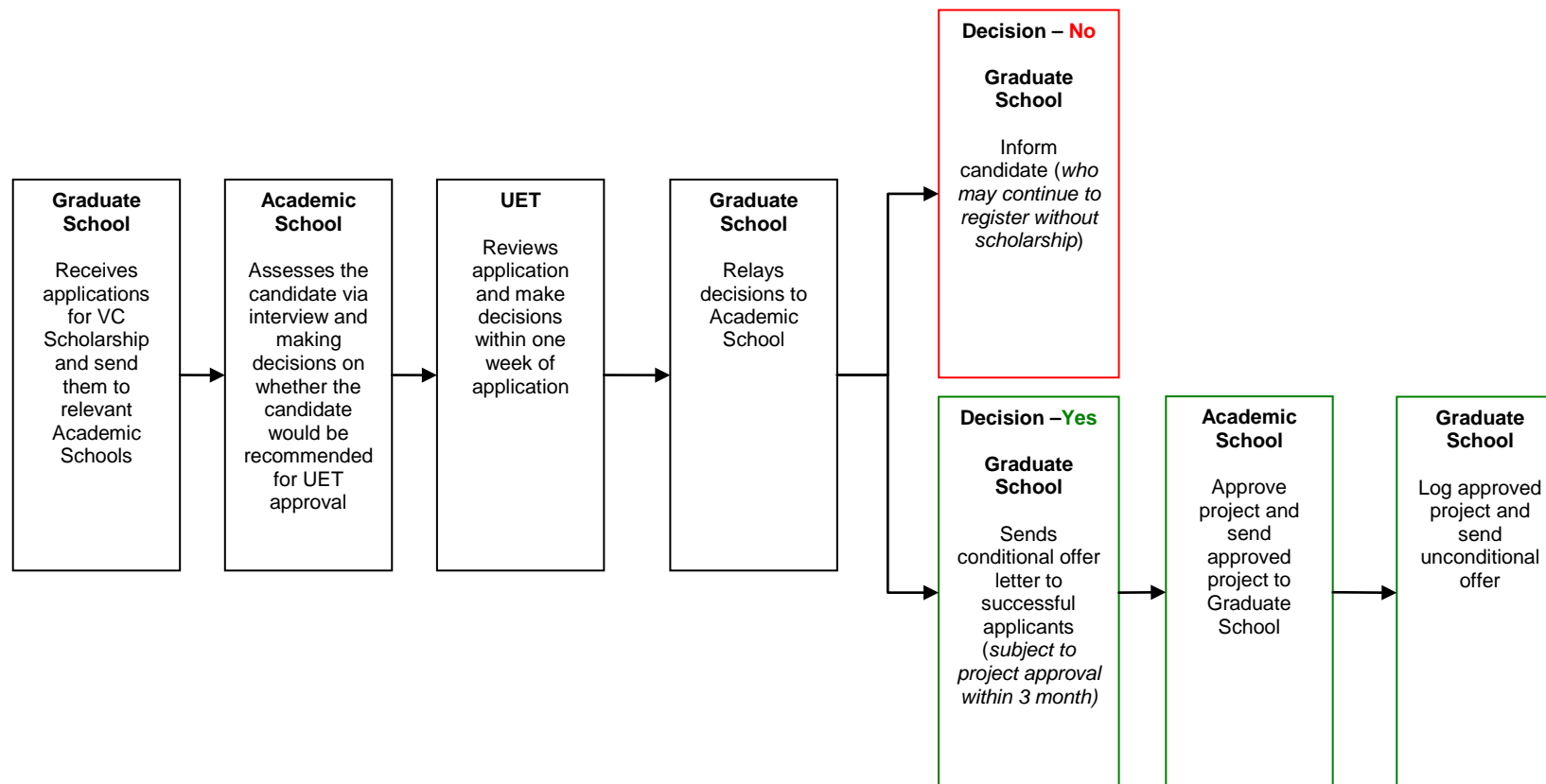
The Graduate School will manage the recruitment process along the following timetable:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>1 March 2012</b>          | <b>Information on 2012 Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships made available on Research Blog, Staff Portal, and via all-staff e-mail</b>                 |
| <i>March – June 2012</i>     | Ongoing review of applications, project development and offers   |
| <b>30 June 2012</b>          | <b>Final Deadline for submission of applications; this is a rolling deadline and applications can be submitted and processed at any time prior to this deadline.</b> |
| <i>July - September 2012</i> | Review of applications, project development and offers   |
| October – Dec 2012           | Scholarships start   |
| September 2018               | Scholarships finish  |

All of the forms and further information on the scheme is available from the BU Research Blog.

Process map is shown below:

# Vice-Chancellor Doctoral (Fee Waive) Scholarships 2012 Process



If you want to submit an application to the Vice-Chancellor Doctoral Fee-Waive Scholarships 2012, you must complete an application form (available from the BU Research Blog) and submit it to the Graduate School ([Dr Fiona Knight](#)) by 5pm on 30 June 2012