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## POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT (PGT) MASTERS' ADMISSIONS POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) is an innovative international university based in the World Heritage city of Suzhou. XJTLU is a leading University located in the SIP area of Suzhou, and specifically, Suzhou Dushu Lake Higher Education Town, which is one of the Chinese government's key projects. XJTLU takes a unique approach to international education that combines, encourages and develops the teachings of its two founding institutions, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China, and the University of Liverpool, UK.

XJTLU continues to develop its taught master's programmes portfolio and is committed to attracting and recruiting an even more diverse student body both from China and the rest of the world.

XJTLU delivers taught master's programmes that lead to a degree awarded by the University of Liverpool. The principles behind this Policy are in line with and equivalent to those in place at the University of Liverpool.

The University's admissions policies and procedures are designed to help the University to maintain its core values of academic excellence by setting clear standards for entry, which are fairly and consistently applied. The University is committed to providing admissions services that is professional, transparent and responsive. The University is committed to providing comprehensive and up to date information about the programmes on offer and the opportunities available to students if they are admitted. The University strives to help students to understand how the admissions process works and to know what they must do to maximize their chances of being offered a place on one of our programmes.

The University endeavours to treat all applications fairly and according to the principles and policies set out in this Policy document. Our admissions practices are designed to ensure that applications are considered on the basis of the applicants' achievements and potential to complete successfully their chosen programme of study.

### 2. Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to applications for all Postgraduate Taught Master's and Master's by Research (MRes) programmes at XJTLU, which lead to a University of Liverpool award and for all Home (local, Chinese) and International applications. The Policy also applies to postgraduate diploma or certificate programmes for which admission is permitted (as opposed to solely offered as an exit award).

This Policy does not apply to postgraduate research programmes such as PhD and MPhil, nor to programmes offered by any of XJTLU's partner institutions, including the University of Liverpool.

Some institutional agreements with partners (either organisations or institutions) may include specific terms for admission. Reference to this Policy MUST be made when drawing up specific institutional agreements to ensure that principles and standards adopted in this Policy are not compromised within individual agreements.

### **3. Purpose of the Postgraduate Taught Master's Admissions Policy**

The Postgraduate Taught Master's Admissions Policy ('the Policy') is intended to provide information for applicants and University academic and professional services staff with responsibilities for admissions, on the principles and procedures which the University applies to applications for taught postgraduate study. It outlines the approach to a number of matters relating to the processing of applications and the decision-making process in making offers of a place, and explains the internal and external context within which the admissions function operates.

The Policy should be read in conjunction with other material published by the University, both in hard copy and online, including the University's 2017 Postgraduate Prospectus, which can be accessed online at: <http://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/assets/files/prospectus/2017-prospectus-postgraduate.pdf>

The University's Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for updating and publishing the Postgraduate Prospectus.

### **4. International and Legal Context**

As a new international university, uniquely placed in China, offering cutting-edge and relevant Master's programmes in the global higher education market place, XJTLU strives to adopt and adhere to recognised international standards in providing equality of opportunity, fairness in process and decision-making and efficiency of service.

As applicants apply for and would be accepted for entry onto a programme of study leading to a University of Liverpool award, recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the context within which this Policy is set is guided by the principles which support the equivalent admissions policy of the University of Liverpool. These are set out in the UK's Equality Act 2010, the 'Schwartz Review', published in September 2004, and Chapter B2 of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education on recruitment, selection and admission to higher education.

The Schwartz Review is available online at: [www.admission-review.org.uk/](http://www.admission-review.org.uk/).

The Quality Code is available online at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>.

As the University is also governed by the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Co-Operation in Running Schools, this Policy is also guided by terms and conditions as set out in these Regulations: [http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-06/29/content\\_10930.htm](http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-06/29/content_10930.htm).

The University is committed to promoting an environment which:

- Recognizes and values people's differences
- Supports all staff and students in maximizing their potential to succeed

## **5. Governance of Postgraduate Student Recruitment and Admissions**

- a) Responsibility for this Policy lies with the University's Senior Management Team under delegated authority to the Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee and its relevant sub-committees.
- b) This Policy should be reviewed and formally approved on an annual basis and the terms of the Policy should be published in such a way as to be accessible to all prospective students, registered students and to all staff.
- c) All decisions relating to the admission of students to Master's programmes must be made in accordance with this Policy. Exceptions may ONLY be authorized by the relevant Vice-President (or nominee).
- d) Authority to admit a student to a Master's programme, within the published academic and English language criteria in Section 6 (b) rests with the relevant Programme Director. This authority can be delegated to appropriate persons.
- e) Where consideration of a candidate involves evaluation of non-standard academic qualification, authority to admit rests with the Vice-President Academic Affairs (or nominee) – see note above.
- f) Where consideration of a candidate involves evaluation of non-standard English language qualifications, the Director of the Language Centre (or nominee) must be involved in the evaluation (see Section 7(c) below).

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities for Central Functions and Processes**

Roles and responsibilities for student recruitment and admissions for Master's programmes are as follows:

- Marketing of Master's programmes is co-ordinated and led by University Communications and Marketing in consultation with Heads of academic departments and other relevant offices, including Student Admission and Career Development Office (SACDO) and the XJTLU Global (XGLO);
- Responsibility for the recruitment of international postgraduate students rests with XGLO, which includes an advisory service and support for international student visas;
- Recruitment of local Chinese students to Master's programmes rests with SACDO;
- Responsibility for processing postgraduate taught master's applications rests with Registry. This includes making offers and recording acceptances following decisions taken by Programme Directors.
- All offices receive enquiries and refer to the relevant area, where necessary.
- Programme Directors act as key contacts for postgraduate admissions and are responsible for making decisions on applications within the scope of their authority as set out in this Policy.

## **7. General Admissions Principles and Entry Requirements**

### **a. General admissions principles**

The University believes in treating all applicants as individuals and making offers which are appropriate to their personal circumstances and background. For this reason, the following academic and non-academic factors will be taken into account, in assessing applicants' merit and potential, and discretion will be used to make offers that may differ from the typical offer indicated in the Postgraduate Prospectus.

### **b. Academic and English language entry requirements**

Whilst the University normally expresses its entry requirements in terms of UK degree classifications or their equivalent, we welcome applications from students from all over the world. International students can find information about the equivalence of their qualifications on the UK NARIC website which can be found at: <http://ecctis.co.uk/naric/>

The University reviews its academic and English language entry requirements each year and publishes these at: <http://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/study-with-us/admissions/entry-requirements>

Entry requirements are also summarized as Appendix 1 to this Policy.

A table of English language qualification equivalents is provided as Appendix 2 to this Policy.

The normal entry requirement to a postgraduate taught master's programme would be a level of attainment equivalent to a UK upper second-class degree, although in exceptional circumstances, offers may be made to students with a lower second-class degree or equivalent, under the following criteria:

- a) Where an applicant who has a recognized (according to the UK degree classification system) lower second-class (2:2) degree classification in the range of 55 – 59%, this would make the applicant eligible for automatic entry;
- b) Where an applicant has a recognised lower second-class degree classification below 55%, but has work experience, the relevance and equivalent experiential value of the work would be assessed by an interview panel of at least three people of which one must be independent to the programme team involved. The panel will decide whether the additional evidence compensates for the degree grade;
- c) Where an applicant is offering a Chinese or other international degree (outside the UK degree classification system), advice on the equivalence in standard of this degree must be sought from XJTLU Global or Registry.
- d) Where equivalences are established the same criteria and processes would apply as (a) and (b) above.

These criteria would normally be applied and assessed by the relevant Programme Director.

### **c. Entry criteria to professional and part-time programmes**

Where a candidate applies for the following professional programmes:

- Part-time International MBA
- Part-time MSc Project Management
- Part-time MSc Operations and Supply Chain Management
- Part-time MSc Urban Design
- Part-time MSc Sustainable Construction

and is applying with work-based qualifications and other relevant experience without necessarily having recent previous Higher Education study, they will normally be required to take a formal interview whereby the panel, normally constituted by the Programme Director or the Deputy and an independent member, will evaluate the candidate's analytical and strategic thinking capability and will investigate the extent of their use of English in the workplace.

Where a candidate could not provide an IELTS (or equivalent) certificate meeting the entry criteria, or a letter from their employer confirming that their working language has been English for the recent three years or more despite a first degree or above, the interview panel should comprise a third member from the Language Centre who will make an initial judgement of the candidate's English level. A written test is normally required following the interview to evaluate the candidate's academic writing skill.

#### **d. Entry with Prior Learning or Prior Experiential Learning (APEL, APL)**

Under normal circumstances it is not permissible to admit a student onto a taught Master's programme with advanced standing based on prior learning or experiential learning on account of the requirement to complete Additional Learning Activity (ALA) on the XJTLU programmes.

### **8. Provision of Information**

Information provided by the University to prospective students must be regularly, consistently and accurately maintained. This includes information about the following:

- The University – its mission and activities and information about the learning environment and facilities
- Programme and module information including modes of study, intended outcomes and degrees awarded<sup>1</sup>
- Curriculum details including options
- Reading lists
- Teaching techniques and assessment methods
- Supervision arrangements for projects and dissertations
- Expectations for student attendance, including fieldtrips
- Professional accreditation, where applicable
- Academic and welfare support available to students

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<sup>1</sup> Where the name of a programme which is advertised on the University's website is different from that which is finally validated and on which students will be registered, this must be noted and drawn to the attention of applicants.

- Extra and co-curricular activities available to students
- Living accommodation
- Living costs whilst studying
- Entry requirements including language requirements
- Tuition fees, scholarships (including criteria and any processes for application), additional costs associated with studying
- Opportunities for study abroad and any costs involved, including tuition fees at partner universities (where applicable)
- Opportunities for work placement and/or internship
- Information about the application and registration processes including expectations of timescales for responses and further engagement

## 9. **Applications for Study**

### a) **Applications process**

- An online application system is in place to accept applications to study on postgraduate taught master's programmes at XJTLU. Applications in other formats will only be accepted where there have been technical problems which cannot be resolved in the short-term.
- The online application system is available for use by prospective students and recruitment agents, acting on behalf of applicants.
- Access to the online application system is provided through the XJTLU website at: <https://jlu.hobsonsradius.com/ssc/aform/KEx75kG0SA70x67f3m8.ssc>
- Queries from prospective students about the applications process are handled by the PG Admissions Team in the Registry.

### b) **Supporting documentation**

- Applicants must submit the following supporting documentation with their application:
  - Personal statement
  - Certificates and transcripts verifying academic qualifications
  - Certificates of English language qualifications
  - Two reference letters
  - For international applicants a copy of their passport
- All documents must be in English. Where original documents are in other languages, translated and certified copies must be submitted. Reference letters must normally bear the official letterhead of the referee's workplace (where appropriate) and his/her signature, unless the reference is provided directly via email.
- Processing of an application will only commence after the University has received at least the applicant's personal statement and certificates and/or transcripts.

- iv. The University reserves the right to request other documentation or for an applicant to attend an interview in order to evaluate an applicant's suitability to embark on an academic programme at the University.

**c) Application deadlines**

- i. The deadline for applications to be received by the University from Chinese applicants is 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- ii. The deadline for applications to be received by the University from non-Chinese applicants is 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- iii. These deadlines are set to allow time for successful applicants to apply for accommodation and for international students to obtain visas. The University does consider late applications on a case by case basis.
- iv. The latest time that any student could defer their arrival at the University to start their programme is normally deemed to be the first week of teaching of a semester. Students who cannot start their studies by this time will have to defer their entry.
- v. Where an applicant wishes to apply for a scholarship (see Section 10(b) below), the application to study on a programme at XJTLU and the application for a scholarship MUST be received by 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**d) Application tracking**

- i. Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement of their submitted application from the online system. They will be able to track the progress of their application through the system and may upload any remaining documents.
- ii. The PG Admissions Officer will undertake an initial check that relevant documents have been submitted and will contact applicants if essential documents are missing. An initial check will also be made on the level of English language that an applicant has achieved.
- iii. All completed applications will be considered by the relevant Programme Director who will make decisions in accordance with the entry criteria set out in Section 5 of this Policy.

**e) Offers and responses**

- i. All offers (with or without conditions) will be referred to as 'offers' in letters to applicants. Offers are made subject to additional registration conditions. These must be set out in the offer letter. The additional registration requirements will include satisfactory completion of a degree programme at the required level and/or further English language proficiency.
- ii. Wherever possible, offers of a place on a programme at XJTLU will be issued alongside confirmation of an award of a scholarship, where the student has made a successful application for the scholarship.

- iii. Only approved offer letters shall be sent to applicants by the PG Admissions Team in Registry.
- iv. The normal response time for applicants to receive a decision from the University is normally 10 working days from the submission of a completed application.
- v. For applicants who receive an offer, they should confirm acceptance of the offer within 30 calendar days from the date of the offer letter. Should no response be received by the University by this time, the application would normally be deemed as expired, unless the applicant has requested a longer period, in which case the acceptance period may be extended.
- vi. All applicants must receive a response to their application, including those whose application is not accepted. The PG Admissions Team in Registry is responsible for sending confirmation to all unsuccessful applicants.

#### **f) Deposits**

- i. Where an offer is made with no additional registration conditions and the applicant accepts this offer, the applicant required to pay a deposit of 10,000 RMB. Under normal circumstances, this is a non-refundable deposit and secures the acceptance of the place.
- ii. Applicants who receive an offer of place with no additional registration conditions and who have paid a deposit are entitled to request a deferral of their entry date. This should be made to the PG Admissions Team in Registry who will liaise with the relevant Programme Director. Where the request for a deferral is approved this may only be for one academic year and any new fee level will apply.

#### **g) Discontinued or deferred opening of programmes**

- i. Under some circumstances the University may have to defer the opening of a new Master's programme or discontinue an existing programme. Where this is the case the PG Admissions Team in Registry will notify all applicants on the particular programme immediately. Those applicants who have already received an offer, with or without additional registration conditions, will be invited to either defer their entry (where applicable) or switch to another programme, provided they have the necessary qualifications. Applicants who have confirmed their acceptance of an offer and paid a deposit and do not wish to defer their entry or choose another programme, a refund of the deposit will be made.

#### **h) Applications from international students**

- i. Applications received from international students are handled as above. However, in order to study at XJTLU, international students must apply for the relevant visa. Once an international student has accepted an offer to study at XJTLU and paid the deposit, the PG Admissions Team in Registry will pass on relevant information to the XJTLU Global who will then contact the applicant to support them in the visa application process.

#### **i) Criminal records**



- i. Applicants are required to indicate on the online application form if they have ever been convicted of a crime. Where applicants indicate that they have a criminal record, the PG Admissions Team in Registry will refer the matter to the Director of the Centre for Academic Affairs who will consult with any relevant party. The applicant will be asked to provide further information and a risk evaluation will be undertaken. Information about criminal records, disclosed by the applicant, will be confidential and will not be seen by Programme Directors who are evaluating the application from an academic perspective.
- ii. The University takes seriously its duty of care to all students and other members of the University community and admission of an individual who has a criminal record will only be permitted if it is not considered that they pose a risk to others by studying at the University.

**j) Applications from disabled people**

- i. The University accepts applications from people with disabilities. Applicants are invited to disclose any disability or any other special need they may have in studying at XJTLU on the online application form.
- ii. The information will be retained confidentially and will not be disclosed to those who are making academic judgements on the qualification of the applicant to undertake a programme of study at XJTLU.
- iii. Whilst the University endeavours to support all students in their studies, there may be some support needs which cannot be met. Establishing the level of support that is possible by the University to allow an individual to study at XJTLU will be undertaken in discussion with the individual applicants.

**k) Fraudulent applications/documents**

- i. By submitting an application online or in hard copy, an applicant is confirming that the information they provide and any accompanying documentation is true, complete and accurate.
- ii. The University is not prepared to accept applicants who misrepresent or give false information about themselves. If the University suspects that an applicant has provided false or misleading information, we will carry out an investigation to determine whether these suspicions are justified and the University reserves the right to record an unsuccessful decision or withdraw any offer that might have already been made.
- iii. Should it arise after a student has started on their programme of study that their application was false, fraudulent or inaccurate, the matter will be referred under the University's Student Disciplinary Procedures. It is likely that if it is determined that the student gained admission to the programme using false, fraudulent or inaccurate information provided in their application, the University would terminate studies of the student.
- iv. International students who make an application through one of the University's representatives (agents) overseas should be aware that they are themselves

responsible for any information that the representative provides to the University on their behalf.

**l) Information security and use of applicants' personal information**

- i. By submitting an application, whether online or in hard copy, applicants give permission to the University to process their personal data for the purposes of managing the University's selection and admissions processes and for the University to use this data for maintaining its student records.
- ii. The University observes the highest standard of data security and it will not disclose applicant or student data to third parties without the express written permission of the applicant/student.
- iii. References submitted with applications are part of the applicant's personal data and could be released upon request to the applicant under some circumstances.

**m) Complaints and appeals**

- i. Although the University strives to maintain the high standards we set ourselves in dealing with admissions, we recognize that things sometimes go wrong and that applicants may feel they have cause to complain.
- ii. Complaints can include expressions of dissatisfaction with the process of handling an application.
- iii. Appeals may be submitted by an unsuccessful applicant who wishes to request a review of the decision not to offer a place, but only if there is evidence of a material irregularity in the decision-making process.
- iv. An applicant may submit a complaint or an appeal to the Head of Registry who will investigate the matter. The Head of Registry will provide details of any complaint to the Director of the Centre for Academic Affairs who will decide whether or not the complaint is justified and determine what remedy is appropriate.
- v. The Head of Registry will provide details of any appeal to the Dean for Learning and Teaching who will determine whether or not a full review of the application should be undertaken and if so, will determine how this should be done to ensure independence from the previous decision.

**10. Fees and Scholarships**

**a) Tuition fees**

- i. Tuition fees for each Master's programme will be set on an annual basis by the Senior Management Team (the Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee will advise SMT, as recommended by the Fees, Scholarships and Academic Bursaries Sub-Committee) and will be published on the University's website.

- ii. Master's students are provided with the option to pay their tuition fees in instalments each semester.
- iii. Where full payment of the tuition fee is received at initial registration, a 5% discount will normally be offered.
- iv. Graduates of XJTLU, the University of Liverpool, or Xi'an Jiaotong University will receive a 20% discount of the tuition fee.
- v. The University offers a range of fee discounts for institutional partners as from time to time are agreed.
- vi. Specifically, however, the University offers corporate and association discounts:
  - a. For two or more employees from the same organization or company for the same start date, a 10% discount is offered on tuition fees, providing a letter of confirmation of employment is provided from the employer
  - b. For two or more employees working for a company or organization that has paid-up membership of an approved professional or industry association, a 10% discount is offered, providing a letter of confirmation of membership is provided from the employer or the association.

## **b) Scholarships**

- i. A merit-based postgraduate scholarship will be awarded by the University to outstanding applicants who have accepted an offer of a place to study at XJTLU.
- ii. The scholarship is available for all full-time postgraduate taught master's programmes. This excludes part-time programmes and the International MBA programme.
- iii. The Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee is responsible for awarding scholarships to applicants based on the rules of the scheme, as recommended by the Fees, Scholarships and Academic Bursaries Sub-Committee and approved by the University's Senior Management Team.
- iv. In determining the award of scholarships, the Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee will take account of:
  - a. The ranking or tier within that country of the University of the first degree
  - b. Grade average, Grade Point Average (GPA), or classification of the degree (at least 5% and normally 10% above the entry standard for the programme)
  - c. Work experience in where relevant
  - d. A personal statement or essay from the applicant
- v. The scholarship will be provided in the form of a waiver on tuition fees of up to 50%. The actual amount will be determined based on the number of applicants and the gradients of merit determined by the University's Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee and set out in the Rules of the Scheme.
- vi. Applicants will be considered for a scholarship only if they express their intention to be considered. Such applications can be submitted using the online application system

and will require the submission of a prescribed statement/essay which will be evaluated in equal weight with the other criteria mentioned above.

- vii. The Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee will consider the award of scholarships to applicants throughout the admissions cycle until the respective application deadlines.
- viii. Successful applicants who are awarded a scholarship will be notified by the PG Admissions Team in Registry. The offer of the scholarship is open to applicants for 30 calendar days or by the expiry date of their academic offer, whichever is the sooner. Should applicants not respond within this time, they will normally forfeit the scholarship.
- ix. Graduates of XJTLU, the University of Liverpool or Xi'an Jiaotong University, who have been awarded a merit scholarship will not be entitled to receive the 20% loyalty discount of the tuition fee in addition to the scholarship, unless the scholarship is below 20% of the tuition fee. Applicants awarded a merit scholarship will still be eligible to receive the 5% discount for early payment of fees as described in clause 10(a)(iii) above.
- x. A condition of accepting the scholarship is that the student will become an ambassador for the University throughout the period of their study. This will require recipients to be involved in promotional events for the University, supporting student activities and other such events.

**Appendices:**

- (1) PGT Admissions Requirements
- (2) XJTLU English Language Criteria

**Revision and Approval Log**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Revisions</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Admissions Review Group	Consideration of new PGT Admissions Policy
10 <sup>th</sup> August 2015	ULTC, under Chair's Action	Full approval of new PGT Admissions Policy
2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016	Administrative change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some URLs updated;</li> <li>• 'Scholarship Committee' replaced by 'Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee'</li> </ul>
16 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Administrative update	ISRS updated as "XJTLU Global"
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	Admissions Sub-Committee	Clause 7.c regarding entry criteria to professional and part-time programmes updated
31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017	SRMC Chair's action	Proposed revision approved to take effect in 2017/18.