



Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland Graduate School

Prize PhD Studentships - GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS) is offering seven fully funded PhD studentships, by open competition, to outstanding candidates from the UK and overseas. These "Prize" Studentships complement another 41 MASTS PhDs, which have been allocated across institutions and Joint Research Themes.

Each Prize Studentship will involve prolonged periods of research at more than one partner institution, and will benefit from specialized training and development programmes under the auspices of the MASTS Graduate School.

If you are a graduate of higher education or in the final year of your Bachelors or Masters programme and can demonstrate the achievement of academic excellence, please study the guidance below and complete the online application process at <http://www.masts.ac.uk/pgSchool.aspx>.

1. Identify a project area that fits within the general scope of one or more of the MASTS Joint Research Themes:
 - Biodiversity and ecosystem function: "the web of life in the oceans"
 - Coastal zone: "the land-people-sea interface"
 - Marine predators: "bellwethers of change"
 - Sustainable mariculture: "Scotland's largest agricultural export"
 - Genomics: "predicting effects and responding to change"
 - Fisheries: "sustainable harvesting from the oceans"
 - Physical oceanography: "the fundamental driver of change"
 - Modelling: "synthesising knowledge and building hypotheses"
 - Platforms and sensors: "observing the oceans"
2. You may wish to refer elsewhere on the MASTS website, or those of partner institutions, in order to gain an understanding of the expertise available in your area of interest.
3. You are expected to make contact with potential supervisors for your project - to discuss your ideas. You should be clear about this in your application.
4. Proposals involving formal collaboration with business/industry will be especially welcome.
5. The format for applications is given below.
6. Submit your online application form and supporting documents before midnight on **Monday 13th December 2010**.
[When you email any files to us (e.g. your *curriculum vitae*, university qualifications or transcript), please make sure that the filename begins with your last name (e.g. *Miller-certificate.pdf*.)]
7. Applications will be reviewed by the Selection Committee by the middle of January 2011.
8. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interviews taking place from 31st Jan to 4th Feb. 2011.
[Economy class travel and accommodation expenses may be reclaimed from the point of entry to the UK, up to a limit of £200.]

FORMAT FOR APPLICATIONS

The application process will require the following information.

1. To complete the online application form:
 - i. **Your contact details**, including an email address that will be checked over the application and appointment period.
 - ii. **Contact details of two referees**, who have already agreed to provide references to us online by the deadline for applications: **Monday 13th December 2010**.
 - iii. **Details of your higher education** (after high school) academic record.
 - iv. **English language qualifications** (scores and grades) - if applicable
 - v. **Details of your academic achievements**, prizes, awards and publications.
 - vi. **A brief statement** of what makes you a suitable candidate for a MASTS Prize Studentship within your chosen Joint Research Theme (approximately 250 words).
 - vii. **Your preferred MASTS institution(s)**, through which to undertake your research programme (indicate lead and additional preferences).

You will be required to indicate whether your supervisor has secured the necessary funding should your application be successful.

2. A scanned certificate and/or transcript of your first degree (after high school); to be emailed to MASTS@st-andrews.ac.uk. Please remember to use a filename that begins with your last name (e.g. *Miller-certificate.pdf*). *Individual files must be no greater than 5MB in size.*
3. A project proposal (maximum two sides A4, using text no smaller than Arial font size 11 and allowing margins of no less than 2.5 cm) to be emailed to MASTS@st-andrews.ac.uk to complete the application process. Please remember to use a filename that begins with your last name (e.g. *Miller-proposal.pdf*). *Individual files must be no greater than 5MB in size.* The project proposal should include:
 - i. **Project title**, your name, and the name of the Joint Research Theme(s).
 - ii. **Background** - the rationale for the proposed project
 - iii. **Hypothesis**
 - iv. **Objectives**
 - v. **Methodology**, including a timetable for the programme of research
 - vi. **Dependency** on any cruises, specialist facilities, software, high cost items, *etc.*
 - vii. **Bibliography**

You will be required to indicate what contribution your proposed supervisor/s had in writing your project proposal.

NB If any part of the application is missing your application is unlikely to be evaluated.

SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

Applications will be judged by a Selection Committee, drawn from across the MASTS partnership. It is expected that all member institutions will be represented on the committee. Following the criteria described below, the Selection Committee will take into account the quality of the candidate (judged by the *cv and references*) as well as the quality of the proposed research. They may suggest or require modifications to the research proposal if some elements are judged to be impractical or

inappropriate. The Selection Committee may also recommend changes to supervisory teams, according to the scope of the project and their knowledge of expertise across Scotland.

The Selection Committee will judge all applications, taking into account:

- Presentation of a project which fits well with one or more of the MASTS Joint Research Themes.
- The academic qualifications and scientific potential of the candidate, as based on the *curriculum vitae* and the academic references. [Credit will be given for students whom already have a background in the proposed topic; hold a masters qualification; who have prior experience of working in a research environment; and/or are authors on refereed publications.]
- The scientific quality of the proposed research. Original, innovative science will be favoured and the programme of research must be such that there is very high expectation of generating publishable results.
- Research involving periods at more than one MASTS institution will normally be favoured.
- The strict, anti-discriminatory, equal opportunities recruitment policy of all MASTS institutions.

The decision of the Selection Committee will be final.

CONFIRMATION BY INTERVIEW

1. MASTS 'Prize' studentships are valued as a mechanism of integrating supervisory capacity across institutions, thus providing exceptional teams to attract students of the highest international calibre. In order to provide a check on the selection process, the top candidates will be invited for face-to-face interview.
2. Interviews will take place in one of the MASTS institutions, but candidates will be encouraged to visit any other institutions where potential supervisors of their proposed projects are based.
3. The interview panel will be comprised of the MASTS Dean of Graduate Studies along with a sub-group of the MASTS Executive Committee/Science Board.
4. Under normal circumstances, candidates will be expected to start their programmes of research on **1st October, 2011**.
5. Successful candidates will be inducted into the MASTS Graduate School in addition to following their own institutional procedures.

For clarification of matters relating to the application process, please email the MASTS Dean of Graduate Studies, Prof. Axel E.J. Miller: axel.miller@sams.ac.uk.

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