Programme Director Guide

Postgraduate Application System
Table Of Contents

Introduction.............................................................................................................................. 3
What is PAC?........................................................................................................................................ 3
What does the Postgraduate Admissions Office (PGAO) do?...................................................... 3
Role of the Programme Director.................................................................................................. 4
How to access the PAC system................................................................................................... 7
How to look up applications ......................................................................................................... 8
How to get reports from the system............................................................................................ 10
How to process applications and record your decisions........................................................... 12
Introduction

This guide is intended for Programme Directors of Taught and Research Postgraduate programmes.

We hope this guide will assist you in using the PAC system and help you become familiar with the processes surrounding Postgraduate Admissions.

What is PAC?

PAC stands for *Postgraduate Applications Centre*. This is a separate entity to NUI Galway, and is located in Courthouse Square in Galway. Their function is to:

- manage the PAC computer system and their own website [www.pac.ie](http://www.pac.ie)
- provide a central point for all postgraduate applications, for a number of Universities in Ireland
- scan in all incoming hardcopy supporting documentation from prospective students e.g. birth certificates, transcripts, personal statements etc.
- storage of hardcopy files

When a student makes an application on PAC, they specify their active email address, so that notifications can be sent automatically. They also have in effect an *account* on PAC, that they should check periodically.

What does the Postgraduate Admissions Office (PGAO) do?

Student Assistance

The PGAO provides first line assistance to prospective Postgraduate students. We assist students with many types of queries including help with supporting documentation, VISA and entry queries from foreign students, assistance with accommodation enquiries, parking, fees and so on.

Application Management

The PGAO manages the application once it arrives on the PAC system. This includes:

- Acknowledgement of applications and request supporting documents if they are missing. (Applications that do not have all supporting documents can still be reviewed.)
- The PGAO update the PAC system when the relevant decision is received from the Programme Director e.g. Offer, On Hold etc.
- The system will then automatically inform the student to check their PAC account.

PAC Application Fee

Applicants have the option to pay via bank draft or postal order, allowing them up to 7 working days to submit their payment to PAC. This means that their application won’t be visible to you until payment is received. Your class list may therefore be incomplete on first view until these late payment applications are released into the system.

Applications on the system which have not paid application fee to PAC are called ‘Invisibles’. The PGAO will inform you (post closing date) if such applications apply to your area.
Offer Management

If the student accepts an offer, then the PGAO proceeds with the offer process. This involves:

- Management of deposits
- Monitoring of Conditional Offers

Contacting the PGAO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taught Programmes</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies</td>
<td>Tracey Uí Chonghaile</td>
<td>3065</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgarts@nuigalway.ie">pgarts@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences</td>
<td>Yvonne O'Hara</td>
<td>5446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgmed@nuigalway.ie">pgmed@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Yvonne O'Hara</td>
<td>5446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgscience@nuigalway.ie">pgscience@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Yvonne O'Hara</td>
<td>5446</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgeng@nuigalway.ie">pgeng@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informatics (IT)</td>
<td>Fiona Bohan</td>
<td>2102</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgit@nuigalway.ie">pgit@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Law</td>
<td>Marian Small</td>
<td>2103</td>
<td><a href="mailto:plaw@nuigalway.ie">plaw@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.E. Cairnes School of Business and</td>
<td>Fiona Bohan</td>
<td>2102</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgcomm@nuigalway.ie">pgcomm@nuigalway.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Research Programmes                     | Sinead Davis             |       | pgresearch@nuigalway.ie |

Role of the Programme Director

The role of the Programme Director (PD) is to review applications relevant to their area on the PAC system and to progress the review process so that a timely decision is made for every application. Within each College, following initial review by PD, there may be further review processes. The following table illustrates the process for each College:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Decision Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies</td>
<td>PD is responsible for decision on application but must forward recommendations to School Administrator (or, depending on the programme, to the College Office) for final approval. Decisions are forwarded by email in Excel format by the School Administrator/College Office to the Postgraduate Admissions Office for formal issuing of decisions on PAC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School of law                   | - **Research:** Postgraduate selection committee is responsible for decision on application. AO (Des McSharry) informs PGAO of decisions.  
- **Taught:** PD is responsible for decision and for informing the PGAO                                                                                   |
| School of Business and Public Policy | PD is responsible for decision on application.  
PD responsible for informing the PGAO directly                                                                                                            |
| Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences | PD is responsible for decision on application.  
PD responsible for informing the PGAO directly                                                                                                            |
| Science                         | PD is responsible for decision on application.  
**Offers:**  
- **Research:** PD completes a graduate research proposal form (GRP) and returns it to the College Office in Word format by email (accepted directly from the Head of College. or College secretary only).  
- **Taught:** PD prints off and reviews the applications, then ranks the candidates and sends the recommendations to the College Office in Word format by email (accepted directly from the a Head of College. or college secretary only).  
- The College Office checks that students meet the minimum requirements and checks overseas applicants qualifications using NARIC (UK based database of qualifications and their equivalencies to UK degrees).  
- Decision to admit is made by Head of College and PD  
- The report is forwarded by email to Admissions who make/decline offers via the PAC system. The College Office does not contact applicants directly.  
**Regrets:**  
If a PD/Head of College does not wish to accept an applicant, they are obliged to inform the College Office and give a reason for not accepting applicant. This information is then passed to PGAO, who inform the applicants via the PAC system |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineering and Informatics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offers:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Research:</em> PD completes a graduate research proposal form (GRP) and returns it to the College Office in Word format by email (accepted directly from the Head of Dept. or departmental secretary only).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Taught:</em> PD prints off and reviews the applications, then ranks the candidates and sends the recommendations to the College Office in Word format by email (accepted directly from the Head of Dept. or departmental secretary only).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The College Office checks that students meet the minimum requirements and checks overseas applicants qualifications using NARIC (UK based database of qualifications and their equivalencies to UK degrees).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applications are copied to a report which is approved at Research Committee meetings and the College Meetings which are held every two months*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The report is forwarded by email to Admissions who make/decline offers via the PAC system. The College Office does not contact applicants directly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regrets:**

If a PD does not wish to accept an applicant, they are obliged to inform the College Office and give a reason for not accepting applicant. This information is then passed to PGAO, who inform the applicants via the PAC system.
How to access the PAC system

1. Open the NUI Galway home page
2. Click Online Services and then Staff Online Services
3. From Faculty and Staff Services click on Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC)**
4. Enter Username and Password

Username = staff ID
Password = Same password as for email

August 2009: All NUI Galway email accounts are now under UDS domain. There should be no necessity to type in UDS prior to your staff ID number. However, if you notice misdomain or acdomain appearing in the log in box (middle screenshot, right) automatically, delete it, or replace it with UDS.

Note: the format for staff ID number is 7 digits followed by s

If you get a message telling you that you are “not registered to use any MIS services” please contact the Deputy Admissions Officer (Postgraduate)

5. The PAC Administrative Access page will open
6. Click on the PAC Administrative Access Link
How to look up applications

Look up a specific application

This function allows you to search for a particular applicant either by
- individual PAC number or
- by surname

Look up a specific programme

- Select a programme
- Select a rating category or All ratings

See a list of all your programmes

The ‘Select Programme’ function gives a list of all the programmes you are authorised to view by clicking on the down arrow.

If you are missing a programme from this list, please contact the PGAO
How to look up only New or Updated applications

Enter a date range for Last Update

This will output a list of updated or new applications (i.e. when a new rating has been applied)
How to get reports from the system

Choose the report type:

- Default View
- Research Topics
- E-mail Listing
- E-mail/name listing
- Qualifications
- NUIG student number
- Addresses
- Nationality
- All Application Details

You then need to choose whether to output the details to

- the screen or
- an excel spreadsheet
Clicking on ‘Output to Screen’ will present the information in this format:

Clicking on ‘Submit to Excel’ will look like this.

When prompted, ‘Save’ to save the file to your computer, ensuring it is .xls type file.

Note: It is advisable to have Excel open first and save the file before opening it.
How to process applications and record your decisions

Obtain listing of applications on Excel spreadsheet (Please note for research applications it is not necessary for decisions to be forwarded in excel format)

The first step is to download a list of all the applicants from PAC. Follow instructions in previous chapter to produce a ‘Default View’ listing type, for the relevant programme, date range etc. Select the option to ‘Submit output to Excel file’.

When list has been exported to Excel, it can be modified as you see fit. There is an empty column titled “Decision” which is used to record what your decision is in relation to each applicant.
Assess the application

Once you have the list of applications, the next step is to review each individual application. You can produce a report output to screen and then access each application by clicking on the ‘App No’:

To view the full application of a specific applicant you must click on their individual PAC number.

This opens up a window containing all the information regarding the applicant you have selected:

The PAC code section tells you what programme/s the applicant has applied for and also informs you of the latest rating that has been applied to the application.

If the Internal Notes contains a reference to the International Office this means they may be contacted for further details regarding the applicant you are viewing.
**Additional Info** shows you what the applicant has entered online with regard to their education, experience and references. The following screen appears when click this option:

![Screen Capture](image)

**Viewing online transcripts**

If an applicant is an NUIG student or graduate you can access all online results available for that person by clicking on their student number. If you have any difficulty accessing the results please contact MIS (email misops@nuigalway.ie)

![Online Transcript Table](image)
Scanned documents

The scanned documents link directs you to all the hard copy supporting documentation the applicant has submitted to PAC, allowing you to view documents such as the personal statement, birth certificate, transcripts or any additional requirements requested by a specific programme.

The first page is always a summary page generated by PAC. To view the scanned documents themselves use the Next page function on the toolbar of your imaging software.

The Scanned Documents Log shows when the documentation has been reviewed and by whom. If you have any questions about this section contact the relevant staff member in the Postgraduate Office responsible for your programme.

The Ratings Log keeps track of all ratings that have been applied to the application. You can find out exactly what each rating corresponds to by clicking on the actual rating itself.

Batch printing scanned documents

This facility allows you to print all of the scanned documentation applicants have submitted to PAC. When you have made your selection - i.e. when you have chosen the programme and a specific rating type, a link called Open All Scanned Documents will appear at the bottom of your selection list. Clicking on this will open all the documents relating to your selection. You then select the Print option.

If you wish to print all scanned documents for everyone who has applied to your programme, select All Ratings.

Note: Documents are printed in batches of up to 100 applicants at a time. If the file is large it will take a while to open and print.
Record the decision for each application

A decision **must** be recorded for each applicant.

One of following **must** be used when entering decisions on the spreadsheet: A, C, Q, W, H or R

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = Admit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a full, definite offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Director/Board have deemed candidate's suitability to Programme and minimum entry criteria has been fulfilled i.e. transcripts have been submitted and verified*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Please note that ultimate responsibility for checking validity of transcripts and qualifications lies with the <strong>Programme Director</strong>.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C = Conditional Offer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If a conditional offer, then the conditions of offer must be clearly stated on spreadsheet. Example conditions are: ‘Overall 2:1 required’, ‘2:2 required’, ‘GPA min 3.2 overall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional offers are only issued to applicants in the following instances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transcripts not yet available (pending final results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transcripts not submitted by time of review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students required to satisfy Qualifying Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Special Maths Exam (DQA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- International students who are required to submit evidence of English language proficiency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional offers <strong>cannot</strong> be issued in the case of any other missing supporting documentation i.e. missing references, personal statements, portfolios etc. This is because interpretation of these items once submitted, could be ambiguous and if the offer has already been issued, could be difficult to revoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Directors should follow up directly with applicants regarding these items if they are unable to make a full assessment on an application based on documents submitted at time of review. In this way, delays in the issue of offers can be avoided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q = Qualifying Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a conditional offer subject to successful completion of Qualifying Examination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W = Reserve/Waiting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate has been deemed suitable and qualified for the Programme, but the number of qualified applicants exceeds quota of places available. Applicants in this category may get an offer if future vacancies arise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Directors should monitor the uptake and (especially) non-acceptances of offers to their programme and duly advise PGAO of further offers to be issued if the need arises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H = Hold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application is on hold. Programme Director unable to make an assessment based on current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information available (and does not wish to make a refusal) and is actively seeking additional information.

R = Regret/Refusal

Applicant is unsuccessful.

Example of spreadsheet with decisions recorded:

Email the spreadsheet to PGAO  *(Research applications must go directly to College Office)*

Save the spreadsheet once the decisions have been recorded, and email to relevant contact in the PGAO.
For each application, staff in the PGO then apply a ‘Rating’ to the application based on the decision on the spreadsheet. This will be relayed to the student via their PAC account.