



2024-25 MRC LID Studentships

Online Application Guidance for Prospective Applicants

This document is to provide guidance and information to prospective applicants applying for the 2024-25 MRC LID Studentships. Applicants should read through the information provided on the [MRC LID How to Apply](#) page and this document before and during the application process.

This document covers the questions that are asked in the application form, and provides some guidance on what we are looking for from applicants. Please also look at the MRC LID Applicant FAQs and Guidance before completing and submitting your application.

The link to the application is on the [MRC LID How to Apply](#) page.

Save and Return

Applicants do not have to complete our application in a single visit. The system allows for 'Save and Return' as long as the applicant saves the code provided **before** they close the application.

REDCap Surveys – the system we have used for our application form – can send an email out with the application URL (you will be prompted for this) but it will not send the code by email. **Applicants need BOTH to return to their application.** MRC LID cannot provide this information for you.

General Information

The application has been divided into separate parts with multiple subsections.

Part 1

Responses will be sent out to various academic panels for assessment and scoring.

Part 2 and Part 3

The answers in this section of the application form will be kept separate from the rest of the application form, and stored securely with access limited to a small number of administrative staff. An individual's data will not be available to the assessment and review panels.

Information provided by applicants will be anonymised and aggregated by the funding administration team, with totals that fall below the data threshold of 10 further aggregated

before being shared (to avoid identifying data). The data will be kept for the duration of the studentship scheme.

This anonymised and aggregated data is provided to the MRC LID Board and DTP partner institutions (LSHTM and SGUL) to allow an overview of cohort trends, and to support year-on-year comparisons. It is used only to monitor and improve our equal opportunities policies, and to assess and deliver appropriate support. It will be used to assess and determine how we can alter our policies and procedures to be more equitable and provide better support to applicants and students.

Post-submission administration

All applications will be collated after the deadline and processed in a single batch. As an initial step administrators will check that all documents that should be submitted have been, and that they are readable. Applications that are assessed to be complete will progress through a number of review panels for scoring and shortlisting. Following a panel meeting to finalise the interview list, the MRC LID Manager will contact every applicant to provide an outcome.

Application Form Questions

APPLICANT NAME & EMAIL (Q1-3)

First or Given Name and Last or Family Name

Please give us your name as you like to be called.

For example, if your name is Katherine but you prefer people to call you Katie please note Katie under the 'First or Given Name' section.

In Part 2 of the form applicants are asked to provide their full, formal name as it shows on official documents (for example, a birth certificate or passport).

If you only have one name please type '-' in the First or Given Name section and your name on the Last or Family Name section.

Email address

Please type this very carefully, as this is only one of two instances where we are collecting contact details from you. The Application (survey) has been set up with as much anonymisation as possible, which means we have no way to identify and contact you in the system outside of this.

If there is a typing error in this section it may be that we are unable to communicate with you and will therefore have to withdraw your application, which would be unfortunate.

Please take a minute to double-check this has been entered correctly. If, after you have submitted your application you realise you've made an error and can't update it (for example, because the application deadline has passed), please send an email to MRC LID (mrclid@lshtm.ac.uk) to explain, and to advise that your email address needs to be updated/corrected on your application. (Please include your full name, as you've used on the application form, and date/time of submission in your email).

PART 1: STUDENTSHIP, PROJECT, AND CURRICULUM VITAE INFORMATION

STUDENTSHIP MODE OF STUDY & ROUTE (Q4 & Q5)

Proposed Mode of Study

All projects offered are offered at full-time mode. Some projects are not suitable for part-time study, due to the nature of research. Please see the web page for your proposed project, which will highlight whether it is available for part-time study or not.

Full-time (FT) = 40 hours per week (equivalent to a full time, 5-day-a-week job)

Part-time (PT) = exactly 50% of FTE (approx. 20 hours, or 2.5 days, per week).

No other variations are available.

Proposed Studentship Route

MRC LID offers two routes: 1+4 and +4.

1+4 years – MSc and PhD Programme

1+4 awards may be made to applicants showing potential, who require a Master's qualification. Students will apply for a research project, but will undertake a Master's programme before beginning their research degree. Students on this scheme are required to pass their Master's programme in order to progress to the PhD programme. The Master's programme will be based at either of the partner institutions (LSHTM or SGUL). Usually, the Master's programme offered will be of direct relevance to the research project and MRC LID themes.

The 1+4 route is only available to those who need it for their selected research degree programme. All applicants whose prior studies and trajectory would allow them to start their PhD without further study should apply for the +4 route.

Applicants who select the 1+4 route should select the potential Masters programmes they would consider applying for (if their MRC LID application is successful). Please discuss suitable options with your prospective supervisory team before making your selection.

There is no limit to the number of options you can select. Be wise – choose those where you will need the skills for your proposed project and don't yet have them.

The 'Other' option on the list is to allow for any LSHTM and SGUL Master's programmes that we may have missed in our list. Programmes at other institutions are unlikely to be considered for funding.

+4 – PhD Programme

The 4-year PhD programme is for students with relevant Master's or equivalent training. Students will apply for specific research projects at the outset and will be expected to take some taught modules (usually during Year 1 or 2), to widen and deepen their knowledge and understanding of their field.

All students, regardless of route, will also have opportunities to gain new skills to allow them to undertake multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research, and are required to undertake a required 3-month placement or internship which is not directly related to their PhD research (ideally in Year 2 or 3), as part of this programme.

Studentship routes are shown at FTE (time for full-time studies). Part-time study may be available, depending on the nature of the project chosen. If part-time study the route name remains the same, but the time taken would be at the part-time rate. For example, the 1+4

route taken part-time would be the equivalent to 2 years to complete a Master's + 8 years to completed a PhD.

PROJECT (Q6-12)

First choice project

Further information about each project is available on the [MRC LID Projects page](#).

Applicants to this scheme must select a project from the available list on the MRC LID pages only. The 'Other' option here is only to note a project we've advertised but is not showing on the application form list (as there was the possibility that a few late projects might be added to the Projects page after the application form went live).

If you select 'Other' you will be asked to provide the names of the supervisory team and the project title. Please use the same format as is used in this menu.

Project Research Proposal

Aim for approximately 1,500 words in total (which is equivalent to 3 pages of A4 with Arial Font 11).

In order to be considered for MRC LID Studentship funding applicants must submit a project proposal for their first-choice project.

Applicants can get further information about this from

- MRC LID Applicant Guidance & FAQs (link available on the How to Apply page)
- Applicant Workshop recordings (link available on the How to Apply page)
- Prospective Supervisory Team.

We suggest that you draft your research proposal outside of the application form and paste the final version into the online application text box when you are ready to submit. This will allow you to share it with your proposed supervisory team, and to make as many amendments as you need to (following discussions etc) more easily.

Project proposal upload (optional)

The online application form includes this option so that an applicant to upload supplementary research proposal information, alongside their research proposal. It is intended to support those who wish to use graphs etc. to allow for a single A4 sheet to be uploaded. If you choose to use this, there should be a commensurate reduction in the word count of your proposal. In other words, you should bear in mind that the entire proposal – including any supplementary information should not exceed the equivalent of 3-3.5 pages of A4.

If you upload a document here please make sure that your name is clearly labelled at the top of the document for easy reference.

CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

MRC LID is committed to recruiting a diverse student cohort. We value the academic and non-academic experiences people bring to our community, and appreciate that a standard scholarship application may not address the personal and professional progression routes of our applicants. Please use the questions below to tell us more about yourself: your skills, professional and lived experience, personal attributes, motivation, and any other relevant information which makes you suitable for PhD study. We are particularly interested in any information that is not collected elsewhere on this application, or details that will enhance and highlight other information provided.

Why have you selected this project?

Approx 100 words maximum limit, so you will need to be clear and concise.

This is a contextual question. The assessors want to know why this project is the right project for you? What makes it a good match?

How will this PhD prepare you for your intended future career?

Approx 100 words maximum limit, so you will need to be clear and concise.

This is a contextual question. The assessors want to understand better your potential and the trajectory of your learning and career (and how this project might fit into that).

Is there anything else you would like us to know that may help us better evaluate your application?

Approx 100 words maximum limit, so you will need to be clear and concise.

This is a contextual question. Applicants can choose to skip this question. However, if you think there is information that the assessors should know, and are comfortable sharing it, then please feel free to use this space.

Second and/or third choice project options

In the event that a number of excellent candidates are short-listed for the same project the MRC LID Board may consider other project options. Please indicate up to 2 other projects you would be interested in below. Please consider your choices carefully as these cannot be changed once projects have been awarded. Please be aware that applicants will only be short-listed on the basis of their first-choice project (noted above).

If you indicate that you would be interested in selecting second and third choice options you will see the project list again (as it was under 'First choice project'. The same information applies (including limitations with 'Other' option).

CV: QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS (Q13-46)

UKRI, which funds MRC LID, is moving towards narrative CVs for grants. This may be something you wish to investigate further as you progress through your research career. However, MRC LID is using a more standard Curriculum Vitae format to support all applicants at this early research stage to share their history, trajectory and potential with the assessment panels.

MRC LID has offered studentships to a wide range of applicants, with very different study opportunities and experiences. To accommodate the variety of options this section of the application form is quite large. Please do not be overwhelmed by it. It is the only way we can provide a standardised Curriculum Vitae format which can accommodate a variety of experiences (from prospective applicants at the very start of their journey through to those with more qualifications and/or different work experiences).

Pre-University Education

This section should briefly note qualifications at the level used to enter Higher Education at undergraduate level (for example, A levels or International Baccalaureate). Please do not enter any other details of qualifications and subjects studied before university.

The format to use is:

Award Year; Qualification, Subject & Grade/Score, School/College, Town/City, Country

Undergraduate Qualifications (Bachelor's or equivalent)

MRC LID Funding is for postgraduate research (PGR) study at LSHTM or SGUL. PGR study at either of these partner institutions requires applicants to hold, or expect to hold, an

undergraduate qualification, or equivalent by 1 September 2024. Therefore, to meet institutional minimum eligibility criteria, this is the only qualification that must be completed by all applicants.

Please note that for some projects and institutions other formal qualifications will also be required. See your selected project's web page for more details.

The information you submit here should only be for qualifications leading to an undergraduate degree, not another qualification level eg diploma.

Stage: Ongoing = if you are still registered for the programme of study, with more study and assessments to come, and the course end date is in the future.

End Date: Any current study programme should be completed before the start of the MRC LID Studentships in September 2024.

Subject (official degree programme name): Should show the name as it would be on an official transcript or certificate (for example, History of Fine Art).

University/Institution Name: Should show the full, official name of the institution (for example, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

University/Institution Location: Should show the town/city and country where you were based and registered.

Final result: If you are currently registered for ongoing studies please leave this section empty until it is confirmed by your university on the transcript. Please do not use anticipated final classification or grade.

Additional information for assessors: Please use this section for any additional information, including but not limited to

- Context for your final result (for example the total maximum CGPA from your institution or a NARIC equivalence).
- Briefly highlight key modules/skills/grade(s), if appropriate.
- And contextual information or mitigating circumstances that should be considered in relation to this record.

There is room to enter details for up to two undergraduate qualifications on the application form. Please use the same guidance notes as above for completing a second record (if appropriate).

Undergraduate Qualification Uploads

Applicants must upload at least one undergraduate transcript or interim transcript.

Where an undergraduate programme has been completed MRC LID expects that both the transcript and certificate will be uploaded (and a translation where the original documents are not in English, or the translation is not integrated).

Please don't upload documents that have not been requested (for example, certificates for attendance on courses; diplomas; references etc). These will be removed from your application before it is sent off for assessment. Any unrequested uploads will not help your application, but they will cause unnecessary administrative work. Please only upload what has been requested here.

Postgraduate Qualifications (Master's or equivalent, or higher)

If you have started a research degree that you have not completed (and it isn't ongoing), please provide the MRC LID review panels with more details. The information to provide for each occurrence is:

- University/Institution (with location as Town/City, Country)
- Proposed qualification you were working towards
- Research project title
- Dates of study
- Reason(s) for withdrawal/non-completion.

See Undergraduate Qualification section above for further details on how to fill in each section.

There is room to enter details for up to two postgraduate qualifications on the application form.

CV: EMPLOYMENT (Q47-57)

This page can be skipped over if you have not had any formal employment before, unless you wish to provide details of voluntary posts or research experience in the question at the bottom of this page.

There are up to 7 records available for applicants to use to note down their employment.

When an applicant has more than 7 employment records they should use this section to show the most recent and most relevant. Ideally, we'd be looking for your Qualifications and Employment records to cover the past 4 years in detail, including periods out of study and work noted.

Please help those assessing your application by ordering your employment history logically as you enter in on the form (ideally working chronologically from now going backwards). To (End date): This should be left blank for ongoing roles (unless the contract is fixed term and you have a future end date set already).

Employer Address: Please note the physical address, including town/city and country. The local address should be used where the employer has regional and/or multinational offices. Please do not use a postal-only address (eg PBag or PO Box).

Details of any other employment, voluntary posts, or research experience that you think the assessors should be aware of.

The next section of the application form deals with publications. However, it may be useful, in this section, to provide an overview of any research - mentioning the role you played and describing your research findings (as this is likely to be more useful to those who are reviewing your application than a list of publications).

CV: PUBLICATIONS (Q58)

Applicants should skip over this section if they have no publications, preprints or presentations to report. MRC LID expects that many applicants will do so, as publications are strongly dependent on education/career stage and level of opportunity.

Please give the full author list, title of the work and journal/preprint server in which it was published. If available, please also give an electronic link to the publication. Please do not

include papers in preparation, but you can list papers which have been submitted for publication, if available.

CV: REFEREES (Q59-65)

Please provide the names and contact details of two referees. Referees selected should be able to comment authoritatively on your academic performance and suitability for doctoral study. These should normally be from tutors on your undergraduate or postgraduate taught course who have direct knowledge of your work. Where appropriate, should be a current course director or tutor. It is strongly recommended that neither of the references be written by the applicant's prospective supervisor. It is accepted that some students may have undertaken relevant professional work where the referees would be better able to comment on their suitability for undertaking research instead.

You are not required to submit reference letters for this application. Instead, MRC LID will contact referees directly. Please note: Referees will be contacted *only* if/where an applicant is short-listed for interview, and accepts the invitation to attend. At that stage, MRC LID would expect you to have liaised with your referees so that they are aware that we may contact them for a reference for you (in preparation for interview). Please ensure that the email address you use for referees is their professional one (ideally linked to their organisation/institution).

Contact Telephone Number: If outside the UK this should include BOTH country and area codes.

Employer Physical Address: Please include Building/Number, Street Name, Town/City, Postcode/ZIP, Country

PART 2: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING, FEE STATUS ASSESSMENT, & FEEDBACK

The questions and answers in this section of the application form will be kept separate from the rest of your application form, stored securely with limited access, and will not be available to those on review and/or shortlisting panels.

The information shared only be used to monitor and improve our equal opportunities policies, and to assess and deliver appropriate support. Data will be collated by the funding administration team to provide anonymised cohort data to the MRC LID board and partner institutions as an overview, and year-by-year comparison, of the DTP. It will be used to assess and determine how we can alter our policies and procedures to be more equitable and provide better support to applicants and students.

The anonymised data will be kept for the duration of the studentship scheme.

Please check the 'Information Refused' option if you do not wish to disclose specific information in each section. Any sections left uncompleted will be considered as 'Information Refused'.

APPLICANT DETAILS (Q66-71)

This information will form the basis for your official studentship application record.

Addresses: Please provide Building/Number, Street Name, Town/City, Postcode/ZIP, Country

If your address changes over the time of your MRC LID application (or award) you should update it by emailing mrclid@lshtm.ac.uk to advise of the changes.

NATIONALITY & RESIDENCY (Q72-76)

Country of birth: Country of birth is the country in which a person was born. This is different to nationality which is the country or countries where a person can have a legal status, although they may not reside in that country. There are times when someone is not born in a country (for example, at sea). In this situation the country where the birth is registered is usually used. Country of birth does not change, except as a result of an international boundary change. For example, Czechoslovakia, where people could be born in Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic or Slovakia, but their nationality will be one of the last two as the first no longer exists.

Nationality: Nationality of a country is a legal status that usually gives a person a particular set of rights relating to that country. It can be possible for someone to have two or more nationalities, often referred to as dual or multiple nationality. Nationality can change over time if new citizenship is gained, meaning it is a changeable measure. Nationality reflects an individual's choice to become a citizen as well as their ability and eligibility to do so. (Citizenship is a status that identifies a person's formal membership of a state, entitling them to hold a country's passport.)

Residence: This is where you normally reside, apart from temporary or occasional absences. Please read up about ['ordinary residence' as set out on the UKCISA](#) pages, as this is what should be considered when you are completing this section of the form.

Permanent residence: This is where you have the right to live, work and study without time limit or visa.

This section will also be used to determine whether you are eligible for an institutional fee bursary in addition to an MRC LID Studentship (only available to applicants who are nationals of and resident in low- to middle-income countries, as defined by the World Bank).

FEE STATUS ASSESSMENT (Q77-80)

This information will be used to make fee assessments. This is important because MRC LID is limited to making up to TWO awards per year to international applicants.

We will be using the information you provide here, and from the section above, to assess your information within criteria set by the UK government and UKRI

- [UKCISA Fee Status Assessment for UK](#)
- [UKRI DTP Studentship Awards assessment](#)

Fee assessment can be very clear (for example, for those who have lived in the UK since birth or those who have never lived in the UK). But it can also be extremely complex (for example, for UK nationals who have not lived in the UK for some time), and each applicant has a far clearer picture of their history than we can gather from a studentship application.

Where our assessment differs from yours we may need to contact you for more information and documentation to understand better.

DATA TO MONITOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & WIDENING PARTICIPATION (Q81-96)

Historically, MRC LID has not had a particularly good record of recruiting students from under-represented and non-traditional backgrounds. MRC LID created a new EDI strategy and has used a number of initiatives to rectify this. (More information is available on our [EDI page](#).) The data collected in this section will be used to review the interventions, and determine future policies and initiatives.

MRC LID has used standardised HESA categories for the first six questions. This data has been collected since the start of the DTP, so can be used to compare with DTP historic data and also potentially institution-wide Admissions data. This can be helpful when reviewing the effectiveness of our policies, systems and interventions.

Disability: Further information about disability support at both institutions can be found here via the links below.

- LSHTM: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/support/disability/index.html>
- SGUL: <https://www.sgul.ac.uk/study/life-at-st-georges/student-support> and <https://www.sgul.ac.uk/for-students/student-support/disability-service>

Students who may need significant adjustments or special arrangements for their studies should contact the Disability Support teams at their proposed primary institution well in advance of the start of their studies.

Research has shown that some equal opportunities markers (care experienced; carer; refugee; free school meals; estranged; homeless) are very clearly linked to increased barriers to higher education. Responses to this section will help MRC LID to monitor whether initiatives are helping to remove barriers or not (and therefore what we need to consider other actions to support applicants better).

Carer: This covers anyone who is (or was) either a parent or guardian and/or who cares (or cared), unpaid, for a friend or family member (who due to illness, disability, or a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without your support.)

It is more usual for children who have seen university study modelled by their parents and/or legal guardians to follow in their footsteps. We don't want to exclude applicants who have not had this experience.

We are aware that socioeconomic factors play a large role in whether people choose to undertake and succeed in postgraduate education. However, because this area does not fit under UK protected characteristics it is difficult to gauge the extent to which this is the case, and to put support into place for students. And historically this information has not been collected at postgraduate study level. Collecting data asked of those who went to School in the UK is the first step to measuring and providing context for future changes (and hopefully more scholarships offered). We do not ask the same questions of those outside the UK because experiences are not necessarily comparable.

Applicants with current and/or prior connections to our institutions, or other Russell Group institutions may have connections and hold knowledge currency (vocabulary, contacts etc) that other applicants do not, We'd like to start tracking and measuring this, to see the impact this has and consider what we can do to ensure a fairer scheme for all applicants.

EVALUATION & FEEDBACK (Q97-103)

These questions help us to work out the effectiveness of our advertising and of the applicant support measures we've put in place.

We would like any constructive feedback available here. It will help us to make this process better for the next round to know where there are issues or blips - that we may not have anticipated - from an applicant's perspective.

PART 3: APPLICANT DECLARATION (Q104 & Q105)

To submit an application, the applicant must agree to the declaration. Ticking the box is equivalent to a signature.

Please make sure that you type your email address correctly and check it carefully before you submit your application. This will help MRC LID verify this record against the entry on page 1.

Submit

Once an applicant has clicked 'Submit' a pop-up will allow you to

- Copy the code for returning to your application.
- Add an email address for the confirmation of submission email to be sent to.
- Download a PDF of your application.

This is the last opportunity you will have for these options. MRC LID cannot provide you with any of these after you have shut down this page. The PDF will not be included in your confirmation email (due to the personal and confidential data it contains).

We recommend you do all three.

The code provided should be saved. It can be used to return to an application and make amendments to it until the deadline (via the 'Returning' button at the top-right hand side of the Application Page 1).