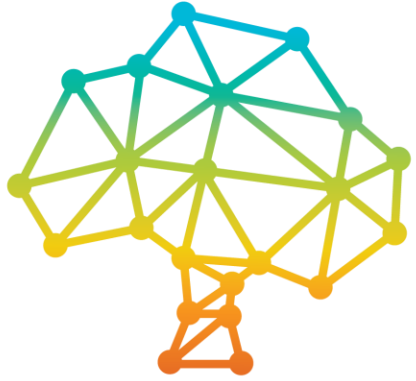




trees

Training, Research & Equity
in Environmental Sciences

Application form: Guide for prospective students

www.trees-dla.ac.uk/

trees.admissions@ucl.ac.uk

trees@ucl.ac.uk

TREES

TREES is collaboration between **10 Hosting Partners** (7 universities and 3 environmental science research centres) and **79 Collaborative Partners** (e.g., industry, NGOs, and the public sector).

10 Hosting Partners



Universities

- Birkbeck, University of London <https://www.bbk.ac.uk/>
- Brunel University of London <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/>
- King's College London <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/>
- Queen Mary University of London <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/>
- Royal Holloway, University of London <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/>
- University of Portsmouth <https://www.port.ac.uk/>
- University College London <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/>

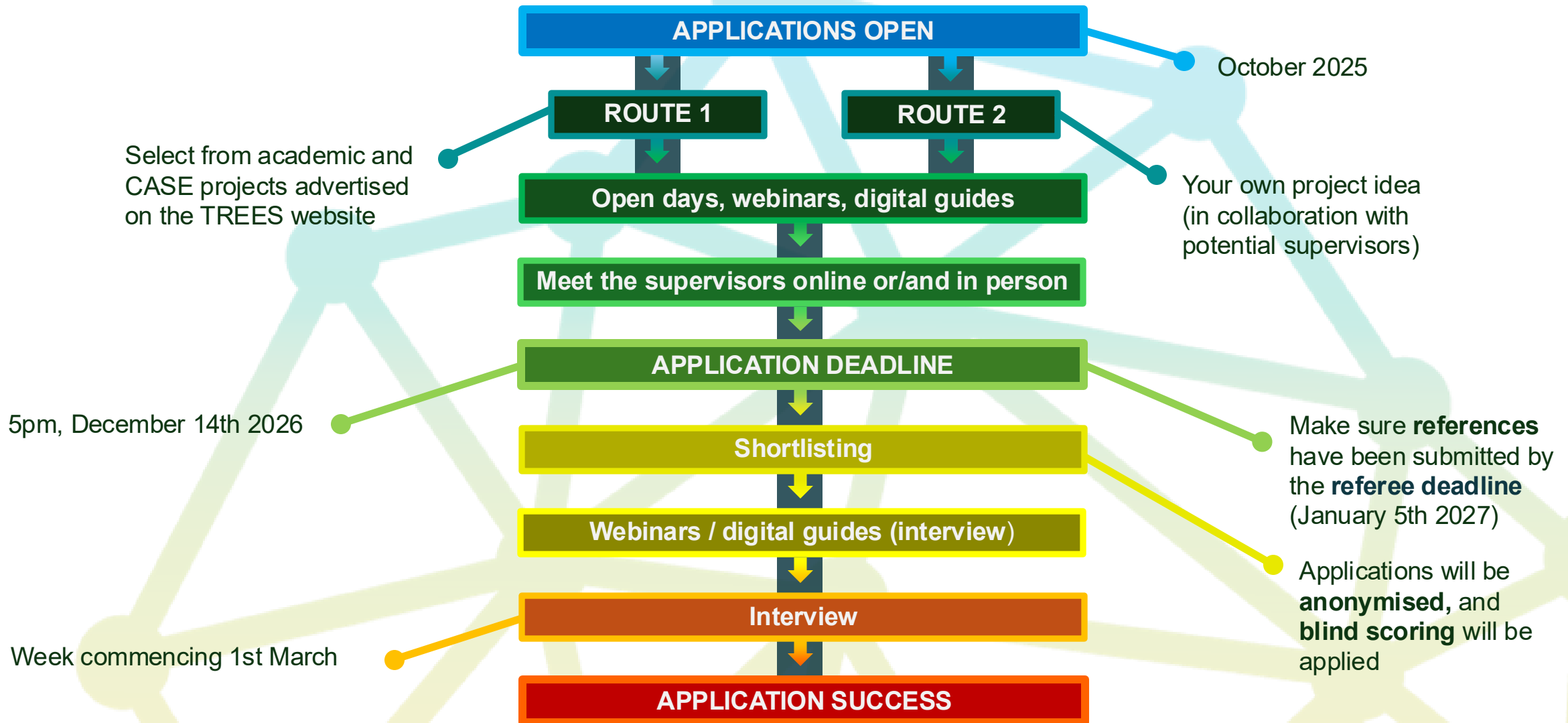
Environmental research centres

- Natural History Museum <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/>
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew <https://www.kew.org/>
- Zoological Society of London <https://www.zsl.org/>

Abbreviations

- **DLA:** Doctoral Landscape Award
- **EDI:** Equality, diversity and inclusion
- **NERC:** Natural Environment Research Council <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/nerc/>
- **PTP:** Personal Training Programme. This is part of the TREES programme. Training needs for students are identified (regarding PhD and career), focusing on the next 6 months. This identification happens each 6 months. There are various activities a students may do (e.g., attending MSc modules, gaining university teaching experience, etc.). Activities are associated with **training points** which are noted in the Personal Training Record (PTR), and students have a set a target of how many points to achieve in the year. PTP also features a **3-month placement**, and student produces written content about their placement for the TREES website.
- **TREES:** Training, Research & Equity in Environmental Science <https://www.trees-dla.ac.uk/>
- **UKRI:** UK Research and Innovation <https://www.ukri.org/>

Application timeline



Application form

APPLICATIONS OPEN

<https://www.trees-dla.ac.uk/apply>

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ✓  APPLICANT TYPE
- ✓  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ✓  REFEREE
- ✓  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ✓  FUNDING
- ✓  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ✓  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ✓  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ✓  EDUCATION
- ✓  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ✓  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ✓  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

PROJECT PREFERENCES

Students are welcome to apply for a single route of entry, or submit their own for review.

Anonymised shortlisting

TREES uses an anonymised shortlisting process. Please do not include your name, contact details, age, date of birth, photograph or other unnecessary identifying information within any of the free-text responses or uploaded documents. Where identifying information is required for admissions processes or eligibility checks, it will be handled separately from the shortlisting process where possible.

Use of generative AI and writing support

You may use tools to support spelling, grammar, accessibility, translation or the organisation of your thoughts. However, the content, examples, experiences, achievements, motivations and reflections in your application must be your own.

Do not use generative AI to invent, substantially generate or exaggerate evidence, experience, publications, outputs, skills, motivations, achievements or ideas included anywhere in your application. You should be prepared to discuss and explain anything included in your application if invited to interview.

Because TREES receives and reviews a large number of applications, generic or heavily AI-generated responses can become very obvious across the applicant pool. Applicants may not realise that generative AI tools often produce similar phrases, structures and examples for many people responding to the same prompt. This can work against candidates, because it makes an application feel less distinctive, less specific and less convincing.

TREES does not assess personal statements on polished grammar or writing style. We are looking for specific, truthful examples, evidence and reflections. Your application will be stronger if it uses your own experiences, your own route into environmental science and your own reasons for applying to TREES.

Route 1 Projects

☐ Enter Route 2 Project Supervisor confirmation email sent on Application submission.

Save and Continue

Limits

You can submit **up to 3** applications in a cycle—the **maximum** is either:

- **3** Route 1s
- or
- **2** Route 1s + **1** Route 2

Route 1

ROUTE 1

Route 1: Through this route, the applicant selects a **project plan** from this the list of project plans on the TREES website. These project plans have been submitted by potential supervisors based at any of the **10 Hosting Partners**. The list of project plans can be found on the TREES website. On our website, you can see the project plans grouped by **research theme**. Click on a project plan for more information including the contact details of potential supervisors. You must contact the project supervisor(s) as part of your application and arrange to meet with them to discuss the project in more detail. We will check with the supervisor of your selected projects to check a meeting has taken place.

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☐ APPLICANT TYPE
- ☐ PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☐ REFEREE
- ☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☐ FUNDING
- ☐ DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☐ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐ APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐ EDUCATION
- ☐ RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐ RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐ INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐ PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐ APPLICATION PREVIEW

I AM APPLYING FOR

Students are welcome to apply for a single route of entry, or submit their own for review.

Route 1 Projects

- ☐ [View](#) Hominin brain evolution in a comparative context
- ☐ [View](#) Digging up the history of infection and symbiosis, fossilised in genomic sequence
- ☐ [View](#) Assessing the impacts of armed conflict on ecosystems
- ☐ [View](#) Microplastics on Sandy Beaches and Coastal Dunes
- ☐ [View](#) Building environmental records from arid Iraqi lake sequences using phytoliths
- ☐ [View](#) Endocrine Disruption in marine mammals: relationships between contaminant exposure and reproductive physiology in the common harbour porpoise
- ☐ [View](#) Neuroanatomical insights into the evolution and biogeography of alligatoroid crocodylians
- ☐ [View](#) Effects of forest diversification on floral reward production for pollinators
- ☐ [View](#) Changing life and changing ocean in the Oligocene icehouse
- ☐ [View](#) Testing Earth's weathering thermostat with novel isotope tracers
- ☐ [View](#) Evolutionary ecology of animal memory
- ☐ [View](#) Oceanic metal cycling at divergent and convergent plate margins: the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Santorini
- ☐ [View](#) The role of giant virus endogenizations in host adaptations
- ☐ [View](#) How is climate change reshaping insect biodiversity?
- ☐ [View](#) Quantifying the global human-wildlife interface
- ☐ [View](#) Advancing seismic risk assessments through consideration of detailed fault geometries and slip-rates
- ☐ [View](#) Extreme carbon cycles - deciphering key carbon-cycling microbes in acidic environments
- ☐ [View](#) Airborne microplastics and tire-wear pollution in Greece and the UK
- ☐ [View](#) Fruit bats in a changing world
- ☐ [View](#) Unlocking the potential of the large-scale participatory citizen science to the benefit of people and nature
- ☐ [View](#) Establishing temperature controls on the human occupation of Britain during interglacial periods

Click on **View** to see the details of a project

Route 2

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☐ APPLICANT TYPE
- ☐ PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☐ REFEREE
- ☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☐ FUNDING
- ☐ DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☐ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐ APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐ EDUCATION
- ☐ RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐ RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐ INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐ PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐ APPLICATION PREVIEW

I AM APPLYING FOR

Students are welcome to apply for a single route of entry, or submit their own for review.

Route 1 Projects

☒ Enter Route 2 Project Supervisor confirmation email sent on Application submission.

Project Title *

Project Description *

TREES Research Theme *

AI, Big Data & Geospatial Analysis in Environmental Science

Lead Supervisor *

- Select -

Second Supervisor *

- Select -

Save and Continue

ROUTE 2

In this route, the applicant, with their potential supervisor or supervisory team, submits a **project plan**. This route allows for greater flexibility in project choice. However, regardless of whether an applicant applies through Route 1 or Route 2, we want to cultivate researchers who can make independent contributions whilst being able to function well in teams.

You can find the full **list** of potential supervisors on the TREES website. On that section of the website, you can search for supervisors in different ways (e.g., by research theme or by keyword). The **email addresses** of the potential supervisors are on there, as are links to **webpages**.

Route 2

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☐ APPLICANT TYPE
- ☐ PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☐ REFEREE
- ☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☐ FUNDING
- ☐ DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☐ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐ APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐ EDUCATION
- ☐ RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐ RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐ INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐ PERSONAL STATEMENT
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- ☐ APPLICATION PREVIEW

I AM APPLYING FOR

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Route 1 Projects

☒ Enter Route 2 Project Supervisor confirmation email sent on Application submission.

Project Title *

Project Description *

TREES Research Theme *

AI, Big Data & Geospatial Analysis in Environmental Science

Lead Supervisor *

- Select -

Second Supervisor *

- Select -

Save and Continue

- **Project Title:** Straight to the point.
- **Project Description:** Consider the **aims** of your potential project, the **methodology**, as well as the **impact** of your research (e.g., in academia, applied contexts, or wider society).
- **TREES Research Theme:** Out of the **9 TREES research themes**, pick the one which best matches your project.
- **Lead Supervisor Name:** Select a name from a dropdown list. The contact details of name on this list, and the dropdown list regarding secondary supervisors, can be found on the TREES website: <https://www.trees-dla.ac.uk/route-2-projects>.
- Make sure that you have contacted the **lead supervisor** before you submit your application. Your application will not proceed to the interview stage if the lead supervisor does not **verify** that they are willing to supervise you.
- **Second Supervisor Name:** Route 2 projects **require** a second supervisor (at the application stage) if the lead supervisor is not affiliated with a degree-awarding institution. So, the Second Supervisor must be affiliated with either of **7 universities** within our 10 Hosting Partners.

Personal details

- During the **shortlisting process**, applications will be given **scores**. On the basis of the score their application received, an applicant will, or will not, progress to the **interview** phase.
- Scorers will **not** see the **personally identifiable information** of the **applicant**.
- TREES is using this approach in order to alleviate any effect of bias against underrepresented groups in the shortlisting process.

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

☒  APPLICANT TYPE

☐  PERSONAL DETAILS

☐  REFEREE

☐  ENGLISH LANGUAGE

☐  FUNDING

☐  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS

☐  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION

☐  EDUCATION

☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES

☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE

☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT

☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST

☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

PERSONAL DETAILS

First name(s) *

Surname *

Mobile *

Date of birth *

Nationality *

Gender *

Passport or ID number

Country of birth *

Country of ordinary residence *

References

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☐  **REFEREE**
- ☐  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☐  FUNDING
- ☐  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☐  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐  EDUCATION
- ☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

REFEREE DETAILS

Guidance on the TREES application process can be found here. Please read this application form overview for detailed information on how to complete each section of this form.

Once you have entered your referee's details you will be able to see the status of each reference request.

Submitted – This means that the reference has been received from this referee and no further action is required.

Pending – This means we have not yet received a reference for you from this referee. You can resend the request yourself by clicking 'Resend Notification', you will only be able to do this once a day.

We recommend contacting your referees to let them know to expect our reference request. The email request will be sent to them from trees.admissions@ud.ac.uk, it may take several hours to arrive to some email accounts.

Remember, both references need to be received by the closing date for your application to be considered.

Referee 1

Full name *

Position *

Relation to you *

Time period which referee covers *

Address *

Phone *

Email *

[Notify Referees and continue](#)

Two referees are needed, and they **must** be from education, paid employment, or volunteering.

After you click on the **Notify Referees and continue** button, an email is sent to the referee, requesting them to complete a reference by a deadline. Both of the references for your application must have been submitted by the **referee deadline** for your application to progress to the next stage.

- It would be a good idea for you to **notify your referees** of your intention to use them!
- Please be aware that you can use the TREES website to keep an eye on whether references have been submitted.

English language

- If your **first language** is **not** English, then you will need to provide evidence that your spoken and written English language ability is of sufficient proficiency for the TREES DLA studentship.
- You are not required to upload this evidence in the application itself, however, if an offer is made, you will need to provide us with **recent evidence**.

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

☒  APPLICANT TYPE

☒  PERSONAL DETAILS

☒  REFEREE

☐  **ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

☐  FUNDING

☐  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS

☐  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION

☐  EDUCATION

☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES

☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE

☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT

☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST

☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Is English your first language? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you been educated at degree level in English *

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Save and Continue](#)

Funding

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☒  REFEREE
- ☒  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☐  **FUNDING**
- ☐  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☐  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐  EDUCATION
- ☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

FUNDING

The UKRI has confirmed that all students meeting the residency requirements will be eligible for postgraduate studentships covering both the stipend to support living costs **and fees at research organisations UK rate**. UKRI funding will not cover international fees set by universities.

We can offer a **number of studentships** to applicants eligible to pay international fees. These studentships will cover overseas fees and pay the standard UKRI stipend but may be restricted to one, or a subsection of our partners, depending on funding availability. Any restrictions will be clearly explained at the point of offer. We also accept applications from international students with complementary funding in place to cover the difference between home and overseas fee rates.

What best describes your situation? *

- ☐ I am a UK student and I confirm I have read and understood the funding statement
- ☐ I am an EU student with settled or pre-settled status, and I confirm I have read and understood the funding statement
- ☐ I am an EU student without settled or pre-settled status, and I confirm I have read and understood the funding statement
- ☐ I am an overseas student and I confirm I have read and understood the funding statement

[Save and Continue](#)

- The TREES DLA studentships will cover university **fees** and provide a tax-free **stipend** for UK home students.
- Whilst UKRI funding does not cover international fees, TREES will be making available a number of studentships for **international** students. International students will still receive the UKRI stipend.

Disability/special needs

If you have any accessibility requirements, or wish for any reasonable adjustments to be made, you are more than welcome to contact us

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☒  REFEREE
- ☒  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☒  FUNDING
- ☐  **DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS**
- ☐  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐  EDUCATION
- ☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

Disability/special needs

Disability refers to a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For further guidance, please see the [UK Government's definition of disability](#).

Do you have a disability? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Save and Continue

Do you have a disability? *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Support During the Recruitment Process

TREES is committed to ensuring equitable access and inclusivity throughout the recruitment process. If you have accessibility needs or require reasonable adjustments during the application process (e.g., assistance with completing the form or alternative formats), please contact the TREES team directly at trees.admissions@ucl.ac.uk.

Some funds are available to support applicants with specific needs during the recruitment process, including costs related to adjustments or accommodations. If you require financial assistance to enable your participation in the recruitment process, please let us know when you contact the team.

Support During Your Studies

If you have a disability or accessibility needs that may require reasonable adjustments during your studies, you should independently contact your project supervisor in the first instance to discuss your requirements. The supervisor, together with the TREES team and the relevant services at your hosting institution, will work with you to identify, explore, and implement any necessary adjustments to ensure equitable participation and support during your PhD programme.

Some funds are also available to support reasonable adjustments during your studies. These funds can help address specific accessibility needs, such as the provision of specialist equipment, software, or other resources required to ensure your success in the programme. If you require financial assistance to enable adjustments during your studies, please contact the TREES team to discuss your needs.

TREES is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. If you have any questions or concerns about support during the recruitment process or your studies, please don't hesitate to reach out to the TREES team.

Equal opportunity policy

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☒  REFEREE
- ☒  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☒  FUNDING
- ☒  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☒  **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**
- ☐  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☐  EDUCATION
- ☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐  DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

TREES is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive research community. We are looking for motivated, curious, and capable environmental researchers who can bring unique perspectives to their projects and the broader TREES programme. We strongly believe that diversity in background, experience, and thought drives innovation, strengthens research culture, and enhances productivity.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are central to our eligibility and selection criteria. We assess candidates holistically, considering not only academic achievements but also work and life experiences, motivation, and potential. Our aim is to create a supportive environment where all researchers—regardless of their circumstances—can thrive and contribute meaningfully to environmental science.

To ensure that we uphold our commitment to inclusivity and equity, all applicants will be asked to complete a diversity monitoring form as part of the application process. This information will be used solely to help TREES assess and improve its practices and ensure compliance with EDI principles. Responses will remain anonymous and confidential, with no impact on the assessment of your application.

By joining TREES, you will become part of a community that values collaboration, inclusion, and positive research culture, while addressing some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. We are excited to work with a cohort of PhD researchers who represent a wide range of lived experiences and perspectives, enriching both their projects and the TREES programme as a whole.

Save and Continue

- Upon **submission** of your application form, you will be asked to complete an **equal opportunities monitoring** form.

Applicant's declaration

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☒  REFEREE
- ☒  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☒  FUNDING
- ☒  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☒  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☐  **APPLICANT DECLARATION**
- ☐  EDUCATION
- ☐  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ ☒ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

APPLICANT'S DECLARATION

I confirm that the information in my application is accurate and represents my own experience, skills, motivations, achievements and ideas. I understand that I may be asked to discuss any part of my application if I am called for interview.

I confirm that the content, examples, experiences and claims in my application are my own. I understand that I may use tools for spelling, grammar, accessibility or translation support, but I should not use generative AI to invent, substantially generate or exaggerate evidence, experience, motivations or achievements.

Data Protection (Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR):

I agree to TREES processing personal data contained in this application form, as well as any additional data TREES may obtain from me or other organisations during my application to the programme. I consent to the processing and disclosure of such data for purposes connected to my studies, health and safety, or any other legitimate purpose while engaged with the consortium institutions. TREES will ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Signature *

Date *

Save and Continue

The signature is your name **typed** out

Education

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ✓ APPLICANT TYPE
- ✓ PERSONAL DETAILS
- ✓ REFEREE
- ✓ ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ✓ FUNDING
- ✓ DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ✓ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ✓ APPLICANT DECLARATION
- EDUCATION
- RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- PERSONAL STATEMENT
- DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- APPLICATION PREVIEW

EDUCATION

(most recent ones, any further education please state in your CV)

University 1

University attended *

- Select -

University location *

Degree subject *

Degree classification *

- Select -

Start year *

- Select -

End year *

- Select -

Degree award *

- Select -

Year in Industry or Sandwich Year? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Module results

You must enter the grades from your transcripts. You need to enter the grade for each subject you took, not just your final overall grade for the degrees. If you do not do this, we cannot accept your application.

Year	Title	Grade
------	-------	-------

			Remove
--	--	--	--------

Add additional Module values

University 2

University attended

- Select -

University location

Degree subject

Degree classification

- Select -

Start year

- Select -

End year

- Select -

Degree award

- Select -

Year in Industry or Sandwich Year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Module results

You must enter the grades from your transcripts. You need to enter the grade for each subject you took, not just your final overall grade for the degrees. If you do not do this, we cannot accept your application.

Year	Title	Grade
------	-------	-------

			Remove
--	--	--	--------

Add additional Module values

Save and Continue

If you have more than two university qualifications, please list the **most recent two**.

Research and work experience

TREES values **equity, diversity, and inclusion**. This section is an opportunity to showcase your **research experience**, focusing on the aspects most relevant to your **future goals**.

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ✓  APPLICANT TYPE
- ✓  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ✓  REFEREE
- ✓  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ✓  FUNDING
- ✓  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ✓  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ✓  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ✓  EDUCATION
- ☒  **RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE**
- ☐  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐  DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

Research experience

Use this section to outline your research experience, focusing on its relevance to your future goals in environmental science. Briefly describe the project title, objectives, your role, and key outcomes. Highlight any skills gained, such as fieldwork or data analysis, and reflect on how the experience shaped your development. If applicable, mention dissemination activities, such as presentations or publications. For more detailed info, refer to the accompanying guidance document.

Project 1

Supervisor/institution *

Duration (in months) *

- Select -

Type of project *

Start time *

dd/mm/yyyy

Project details *

Max 300 words

Project 2

Supervisor/institution

Duration (in months)

- Select -

When describing your research, include:

- **Project Title and Summary:** Provide a brief title and outline the project's objectives and relevance to environmental science.
- **Your Role and Contributions:** Highlight your responsibilities, tasks, and skills or methodologies used (e.g., fieldwork, data analysis). Include teamwork or collaboration where relevant.
- **Outcomes or Learning:** Summarise the project's key outcomes and what you learned. Reflect on how the experience shaped your academic or professional development.
- **Dissemination (if applicable):** Mention dissemination activities (e.g., presentations, publications) or explain how the project prepared you for such opportunities.

Focus on the **most relevant** aspects and ensure your response aligns with your aspirations in environmental science.

Research and work experience

Application steps

✓

APPLICANT TYPE

✓

PERSONAL DETAILS

✓

REFeree

✓

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

✓

FUNDING

✓

DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS

✓

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

✓

APPLICANT DECLARATION

✓

EDUCATION

RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL STATEMENT

DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST

APPLICATION PREVIEW

Research experience

Use this section to outline your research experience, focusing on its relevance to your future goals in environmental science. Briefly describe the project title, objectives, your role, and key outcomes. Highlight any skills gained, such as fieldwork or data analysis, and reflect on how the experience shaped your development. If applicable, mention dissemination activities, such as presentations or publications. For more detailed info, refer to the accompanying guidance document.

Project 1

Supervisor/institution *

Duration (in months) *

- Select -

Type of project *

Start time *

dd/mm/yyyy

Project details *

Max 300 words

Project 2

Supervisor/institution

Duration (in months)

- Select -

Type of project

This section is designed to highlight a **variety** of professional experiences, including paid roles, internships, volunteering, or any other relevant work, emphasizing how these experiences align with **your goals in environmental science**.

Relevant paid employment and professional experience, including paid internships

Please provide details of any relevant paid employment, paid internships or other paid professional experience that has helped prepare you for doctoral study in environmental science or related fields.

For each role, please include:

- organisation;
- job title or role;
- start and end dates
- whether the role was full-time, part-time (and specify % of a full-time role) or occasional;
- approximate hours per week, where relevant;
- a brief description of your responsibilities and contributions;
- how the experience is relevant to your TREES application.

Please do not include unpaid volunteering or unpaid internships in this section. Relevant unpaid activities, volunteering, outreach, citizen science, podcasts, societies or other evidence of engagement with environmental science can be included in the personal statement where relevant.

Max 300 words

Save and Continue

Research outcomes

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ✓ APPLICANT TYPE
- ✓ PERSONAL DETAILS
- ✓ REFEREE
- ✓ ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ✓ FUNDING
- ✓ DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ✓ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ✓ APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ✓ EDUCATION
- ✓ RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ✓ RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ✓ PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐ DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐ APPLICATION PREVIEW

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS (MAX 3)

Do you have any relevant research publications or formal research outputs?

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

Save and Continue

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS (MAX 3)

Do you have any relevant research publications or formal research outputs?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

You may list up to three relevant research publications or formal research outputs. For each item, please provide a full citation or description of the output, plus a DOI, URL or other web link where available. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all links are correct and accessible. TREES will not normally contact applicants to correct missing, private, expired or broken links after submission.

Citation or Description	Weblink	
		Remove

Add Citation values

Do you have any other relevant outputs or dissemination activities?

This may include conference talks, posters, public engagement activities, blogs, podcasts, newsletters, citizen science, policy briefings, society activity or other relevant outputs.

For each item, please include:

- date;
- title or brief description;
- type of output or activity;
- your specific role, for example presenter, poster author, organiser, writer, editor or contributor;
- URL or supporting link, where available.

Please do not use this section to list additional publications beyond the maximum requested above. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all links are correct and accessible. TREES will not normally contact applicants to correct missing, private, expired or broken links after submission.

Date	Description	Type	Role	Link	
					Remove

Add relevant values

Save and Continue

If you have engaged in relevant **dissemination activities** (e.g., you gave a poster presentation or an oral presentation at an academic conference), but you do not have any relevant research publications, then still select the **Yes** option. Selecting Yes will allow you to write about such activities in the second box. If you have no publications, you can write “**not applicable**” in the first boxes.

Personal statement

This section is your opportunity to tell us why you are **motivated** to pursue a PhD and why the TREES Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) programme is the right fit for you.

We are keen to understand your **research interests**, your **potential** to contribute to the programme, and how your **background, skills**, and **experiences** demonstrate your suitability for doctoral study.

Please do not repeat information provided in earlier sections of the form. Structure your response into the three parts described on the next pages:

1. **Motivation, fit and preparation**
2. **Your Background and Path to TREES**

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

- ☒  APPLICANT TYPE
- ☒  PERSONAL DETAILS
- ☒  REFEREE
- ☒  ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ☒  FUNDING
- ☒  DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS
- ☒  EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
- ☒  APPLICANT DECLARATION
- ☒  EDUCATION
- ☒  RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE
- ☒  RESEARCH OUTCOMES
- ☐  PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ☐  DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST
- ☐  APPLICATION PREVIEW

TREES PERSONAL STATEMENT

This section helps us understand your motivation, preparation and route to doctoral study. We are not assessing polished writing style or perfect grammar. We are interested in specific examples, evidence and reflection.

If you prefer, you can submit either section in an alternative format, for example video or audio. Please review the guidance document for detailed advice on completing this section and instructions for submitting alternative formats.

How to Submit an Alternative Format

If you choose to submit any section in an alternative format:

- Prepare your file in MP4 (video), MP3 (audio), or a similar accessible format.
- Ensure your recording is concise and addresses the prompts for the relevant section.
- Use a secure file-sharing platform to generate a weblink to your file, for example Google Drive, Dropbox or WeTransfer.
- Paste the link into the corresponding Alternative Format Link box below each section.
- Check that the link works before submission, including by using the application preview.
- Ensure the link remains accessible until the end of the recruitment process.

TREES will not normally contact applicants after the deadline to correct missing, private, expired or broken links. Files should not include your name or other directly identifying information unless this is unavoidable, as responses may need to be transcribed or anonymised for review.

For further details, refer to the guidance document.

Part 1: Motivation, fit and preparation

Tell us why you are motivated to undertake a PhD in environmental science and why the TREES DLA programme is a good fit for you. Include specific examples of your research interests, relevant skills, experience and preparation for doctoral study. If you are applying for more than one project, your answer should explain the common research interests, skills or motivations that link your choices. Where relevant, you may also briefly explain your fit to the projects you are applying for, but you do not need to write a separate statement for each project. *

Max 600 words

Alternative Format Link:

Part 2: Background and path to TREES

Reflect on your route to this PhD opportunity. You may include academic, professional, personal or other experiences that have shaped your research aspirations. You may also include relevant challenges, responsibilities, paid work, unpaid activities, outreach, volunteering, community work or other experiences that have contributed to your development and would help you contribute to the TREES community. *

Max 500 words

Alternative Format Link:

Personal statement

Motivation, fit and preparation

Max 600 words

Please explain your **motivation** for undertaking a PhD in environmental sciences. Share what excites you about pursuing advanced research and how this aligns with your long-term goals.

Describe why the TREES DLA programme is the **ideal fit** for you, highlighting how its strong commitment to **equity, diversity, inclusion** (EDI), and sustainability resonates with your **values** and **aspirations**. Provide details on your **research interests**, explain your choice of **research theme(s)**, and demonstrate how they align with TREES' priorities to tackle critical **global challenges** such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation.

Highlight evidence from your academic and professional background, skills, and experiences that explain your preparation for postgraduate research such as **academic performance, examples of creative thinking, challenges overcome, organisation and workload management**.

In this section, consider reflecting on how TREES' interdisciplinary training, collaboration across 10 Hosting Partners, access to world-leading research facilities, and the programme's commitment to open science and ethical practice will support **your growth as an environmental scientist**.

Personal statement

Your background and path to TREES

Max 500 words

As highlighted in our Equal Opportunities and EDI statement, TREES is committed to fostering a **diverse and inclusive** research community that values the **unique perspectives** and **lived experiences** of its members. With this in mind, we invite you to share your journey to this PhD opportunity.

Walk us through **your background**, reflecting on the path that has brought you to apply for TREES. You may wish to include:

- How your personal, academic, professional, or work-based experiences have influenced your interest in **environmental science** and shaped your **research aspirations**.
- Any **challenges or barriers** you have encountered and how you overcame them.
- The **unique** perspectives, motivations, and skills you bring to TREES and how they **align** with its mission to promote diversity, collaboration, and positive research culture.

We encourage all applicants to use this section to highlight how their **unique life experiences**—whether gained through education, work, volunteering, or personal context—will enrich the TREES community. This section is an opportunity to demonstrate how **your background** will contribute to **environmental science** and your potential to create **positive societal impact** through the TREES programme.

Personal statement

Alternative format submission

At TREES, we are committed to fostering an **equitable and inclusive** application process. We recognise that traditional text-based application formats may not suit everyone, particularly applicants who are neurodivergent, or have disabilities, or experience other barriers. To ensure that all candidates can showcase their potential in a way that works best for them, we offer the option to submit **any part** of the Personal Statement in an **alternative format**, such as a video or audio recording.

This option is designed to support applicants who find that alternative formats better enable them to communicate their skills, experiences, and motivations. Whether you choose a written, video, or audio format, all applications are assessed using the **same criteria**, and **no preference** is given to any specific format.

Key Information

- **Voluntary Option:** This feature is optional and designed to provide flexibility for applicants who may benefit from non-traditional formats. There is no need or expectation to use the alternative format route.
- **Equal Assessment:** Neither format is favoured. All submissions—whether written, video, or audio—are evaluated solely on content, with no advantage or disadvantage based on the format or production quality.
- **Section Flexibility:** You can choose to submit one, two, or all three sections of your personal statement in an alternative format. Please clearly indicate which parts are being submitted in a non-written format.
- **File Requirements:**
 - Permitted formats: MP4 (video), MP3 (audio), or similar accessible file types.
 - Keep responses concise and within the equivalent word count (allow 2 minutes per 300 words).
 - Ensure your file is clearly labelled with your name and the relevant part title.

Personal statement

Note on Word Limits and Application Assessment

The screenshot shows the 'TREES PERSONAL STATEMENT' section of an application form. On the left is a dark sidebar with a list of sections, each with a circular icon and a checkmark. The sections are: APPLICANT TYPE, PERSONAL DETAILS, REFEREE, ENGLISH LANGUAGE, FUNDING, DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY, APPLICANT DECLARATION, EDUCATION, RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE, RESEARCH OUTCOMES, PERSONAL STATEMENT (highlighted in grey), DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST, and APPLICATION PREVIEW. The main content area is titled 'TREES PERSONAL STATEMENT' and contains the following text:

This section helps us understand your motivation, preparation and route to doctoral study. We are not assessing polished writing style or perfect grammar. We are interested in specific examples, evidence and reflection.

If you prefer, you can submit either section in an alternative format, for example video or audio. Please review the guidance document for detailed advice on completing this section and instructions for submitting alternative formats.

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- Ensure your recording is concise and addresses the prompts for the relevant section.
- Use a secure file-sharing platform to generate a weblink to your file, for example Google Drive, Dropbox or WeTransfer.
- Paste the link into the corresponding Alternative Format Link box below each section.
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For further details, refer to the guidance document.

Part 1: Motivation, fit and preparation

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Below the text is a large text input box with a diagonal line in the bottom right corner. Below the box is the text 'Max 600 words'. Below that is a label 'Alternative Format Link:' followed by a text input box.

Part 2: Background and path to TREES

Reflect on your route to this PhD opportunity. You may include academic, professional, personal or other experiences that have shaped your research aspirations. You may also include relevant challenges, responsibilities, paid work, unpaid activities, outreach, volunteering, community work or other experiences that have contributed to your development and would help you contribute to the TREES community. *

Below the text is another large text input box with a diagonal line in the bottom right corner.

Key Information

- The **word limits** for each section are designed to give you sufficient space to share the **most relevant** information about your motivations, background, and strengths. While the **second section** has a higher word limit, this does not mean it is weighted more heavily in the assessment process.
- All sections are assessed **holistically** and **contribute equally** to our understanding of your suitability for the TREES Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) programme. The varying word limits simply reflect the depth of detail typically required for each section. For example, the second section allows more space for you to provide **specific examples** and **evidence** of your skills and experiences.
- If you have questions about how to structure your statement or what to include, please refer to the detailed guidance provided or contact the TREES admissions team at **trees.admissions@ucl.ac.uk**

Documents checklist

APPLICATION FORM

Application steps

✓

APPLICANT TYPE

✓

PERSONAL DETAILS

✓

REFeree

✓

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

✓

FUNDING

✓

DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS

✓

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

✓

APPLICANT DECLARATION

✓

EDUCATION

✓

RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

✓

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

✓

PERSONAL STATEMENT

DOCUMENTS AND CHECKLIST

APPLICATION PREVIEW

DOCUMENT UPLOAD

Mandatory Documents

Please upload a concise CV of no more than two pages. Longer CVs are not permitted. Your CV should provide a clear summary of your education, relevant paid employment or professional experience, research experience, outputs, skills and any other relevant activities.

Please ensure your CV does not contain your name, gender, age / date of birth, sexuality, any disability, hobbies and interests, marital status or any photos. TREES operates a blind shortlisting stage. If your CV contains personal details of this nature, they will be removed from your application before review.

2 Pages CV *

Choose file

No file chosen

☐ Confirm Uploaded CV meets above requirements *

Passport or other ID *

Choose file

No file chosen

Transcripts

Please upload the transcript document for each qualification you have declared in the education section. You should only upload the page of your transcript which confirms the grades you have entered. Supplementary pages and additional information are not required. Please do not upload your degree certificate.

Transcript for: testt *

Choose file

No file chosen

Optional Document

English certificate

Choose file

No file chosen

Make sure that your **CV** is **anonymised**, e.g., it should not feature your name, address, date of birth, or age. EDI is crucial for TREES; we want to **minimise the bias** in the recruitment process which can unfairly disadvantage people who are from under-represented groups, and CV anonymisation is part of our approach.

If your CV is not anonymized, then we will anonymize it before it is seen by the individuals who will be scoring your application during the **shortlisting** process.

Your CV should be, at most, **2 pages long**.