

GUIDANCE NOTES: APPLYING FOR PhD STUDY AT WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART

‘A doctor’s degree historically was a licence to teach – meaning to teach in a university as a member of faculty. Nowadays this does not mean that becoming a lecturer is the only reason for taking a doctorate [...] The concept stems, though, from the need for a faculty member to be an authority, in full command of the subject right up to the boundaries of current knowledge, and able to extend them.’ (Phillips & Pugh, *How to get a PhD*, 4th ed., 2006).

Doctoral research leading to the award of a PhD degree is a major undertaking. For a full-time student the PhD is a minimum of three years, and very often students request an additional fourth year for ‘writing up’. For part-time students the PhD is likely to take between five and six years. Inevitably, it is important you genuinely wish to commit yourself to this level and duration of study, and that you are sufficiently motivated to explore your own specific research topic.

For the award of PhD, research students must demonstrate:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, or of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or an area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualize, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.¹

Given the importance attached to ‘original research’, the School wish to support PhD candidates who have the potential to achieve high quality research, and who can evidence informed and innovative thinking, as well as possess strong motivation and an ability to manage research independently. Support is of course on hand. All research students are assigned a minimum of two supervisors. Meetings with your supervisors

¹ For more details see: [Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#)

See also: [Regulations for the degrees of Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Business Administration](#)

take place on a regular basis, month by month, throughout the candidacy; and often with greater frequency at the beginning and end of the research process. Nonetheless, it is the student's responsibility to pursue their research independently and with a view to becoming an 'authority' on their chosen topic in the future.

All research students at the University are initially registered for MPhil/PhD. Over the course of the first year you will refine your research focus and scope, working closely with your supervisors. Within the first 18 months of registration you will then be invited for 'upgrade', which involves an internal viva with an member of staff at your School, but who is not directly involved in the supervision of your work. Upon successful completion of the upgrade you will then proceed to full PhD registration to complete your research and to submit your final thesis for examination at viva with an internal and an external examiner, both of whom with specialisms pertinent to your area of research.

Winchester School of Art offers an interdisciplinary, research-led environment for full- and part-time postgraduate research students from a range of areas of art, design and global culture. We welcome proposals for both practice- and non-practice-based MPhil/PhD research in Fine Art, Graphic Arts, Media, Fashion, Textiles, and Art and Design Management. As part of a vibrant research-intensive University, cross-disciplinary engagement is encouraged and many of our PhD students extend their research across academic disciplines and collaborate with researchers in related areas of the creative arts, and in fields as diverse as archaeology, psychology, biomedical sciences, nanoscience, social sciences and sound engineering.

Application process

Before making a formal application it is often useful to prepare an initial proposal and to look carefully at the information provided on the School's website regarding [research degrees](#). We strongly advise you to view the profiles of current research staff to consider who might provide suitable supervision. Please feel free to contact us to discuss your research interests.

All applications for PhD research need to be submitted via the University's [online application form](#). The form is part of the University's Student Record System. Upon successful application, you are able to continue to use the system to apply for all central University services as part of formally enrolling as a student at the University of Southampton. NOTE: Winchester School of Art is a School within the University's Faculty of Art, Business and Law.



Online Application Form: https://studentrecords.soton.ac.uk/BNNRPROD/bzsksrch.P_Search

To proceed with your online application:

- Select 'Research' for programme type.
- Select either full- or part-time as required.
- Use the drop down menu to select the academic year you wish to start in. NB. There is no specific deadline for PhD research applications. You should select the year of study that best reflects when you wish to start, but exact start dates can be negotiated later on.
- Select 'Faculty of Business and Law' for faculty.

Having made the above selections, click on 'Search for Programme'. You will be provided with a list of course titles within the Faculty. You can currently study for the award of Doctor of Philosophy at Winchester School of Art via either the MPhil/PhD Design or MPhil/PhD Fine Art programmes. These are generic course titles. We accept PhD proposals related to a wide range of research areas, subject to appropriate supervision within the School, and which includes both practice- or non-practice-based research across the areas of art, design, media, fashion, textiles, and art-based management subject (such as luxury branding). For full details of appropriate subject areas consult the Winchester School of Art homepage and/or contact research staff at the School. To proceed with your application click on 'Apply online' and follow the on-screen instructions. (For further guidance please consult the University document [Applying for Postgraduate Study \[PDF\]](#), which provides detailed explanation of how the online application system works.

As well as completing the application form on-line, applicants need to upload various supporting documentation. All documents should preferably be in PDF format. You will need to provide: a research proposal; academic transcripts and degree certificates; CV

and personal statement; two reference letters; and a portfolio of work (if applying for practice based research). International students need to provide an English language certificate (IELTS or equivalent).

Research Proposal

In addition to your CV and the documents required for the faculty admissions procedure, a crucial component of your application is the Research Proposal, which will outline the project you wish to pursue for your PhD study. Practice-based research proposals must also be accompanied by a folio of images of previous work, around 12 images, in PDF format.

A research proposal will typically be of between 5-10 pages and should demonstrate the following three key features of your research (which echo the requirements of PhD study noted above):

- **Originality:** how does your project contribute to human knowledge? How does it provide new knowledge, new tools, or new ideas?
- **Significance:** what implications does your research for other researchers, professionals or the general public? Can the findings be used by others, and in what fields?
- **Practicality:** can your project be completed in three to four years of full-time study (or equivalent part-time)?

Your proposal should include the following elements:

- The **research question** you seek to answer
- **Literature review**, showing how your research fits into existing knowledge and how it adds to it
- **Methodologies and theoretical understanding:** how do you plan to undertake your research? Examples might include archival, market or textual research; studio or experimental practice; interviews or ethnography. As appropriate to your research interests, you should explain what methods and theoretical approaches you intent to pursue.
- **Resources:** will you need access to specialist equipment or training, including training in other languages in other languages or in software? Do you need to travel to conduct your research, and if so how often or for how long? Do you plan to exhibit or publish elements of your research during your candidature?
- **Timeline:** Create a month-by-month plan of the research and writing-up.

Joining the PhD Programme

If your application is successful you will receive either a conditional or unconditional offer. You will receive a 'reply to offer' form. It is important you fill in this form, sign it and return it to us as soon as you decide to accept our offer. This is because:

- We can expect your arrival and keep you informed of the activities organised for new students, such as international induction programme update, international welcome party, etc.
- You will be authorised to access services such as accommodation booking, meet and greet booking, etc.

In joining the PhD programme at Winchester School of Art we expect all doctoral candidates to play an active role in the research community. You will gain expert support from your supervisors and have access to dedicated study resources, both on-site at the School and at the University's main campus in Southampton. Your training will cover research project management, preparation for examination and publication, as well as technical and practical skills appropriate to your project. You will also take part in regular research seminars, and you will be encouraged to be proactive in developing exhibitions, events and research outputs.

Contacts

For all administrative queries, including admissions information, please contact:

PGR Student Administration Team

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For academic enquiries, including preliminary discussion of research proposals contact:

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