

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE APPLICATIONS

Application Guidance and Process

Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) welcomes postgraduate research (PGR) degree proposals related to arts, design, architecture and media, leading to MPhil or PhD qualifications. The validating body for PGR degrees undertaken at Norwich University of the Arts is the University of the Arts London (UAL).

Having successfully applied and enrolled at NUA you will also be required to register your study with UAL. You will undertake your programme of study at NUA, with some seminars and presentations taking place at UAL as part of your PGR training.

Entry Requirements

A Master's degree in an appropriate subject is considered to be particularly valuable preparation for a research degree, although the normal minimum entry requirement is an Upper Second Class Honours degree in a relevant discipline. Candidates who do not meet these entry requirements may also be considered if they can demonstrate alternative appropriate qualifications, professional experience and an understanding of research methodologies appropriate to their proposed area of study.

Applicants should be aware that meeting the University's minimum entry requirements does not guarantee entry. This is only one of the factors taken into account when the University makes its decision. Many other factors are also important, such as suitability for research study at NUA; relevant experience; references; and the availability of suitable supervisors and resources.

International Applicants

All international (non-European Economic Area – EEA) applicants need to apply for an Adult (General) Student Visa under Tier 4 of the Points Based System (PBS) of immigration to the UK as we do not offer distance learning programmes. International applications are normally only considered for entry as full-time students.

The University has a responsibility for ensuring that it meets its reporting obligations under the Tier 4 Sponsorship License. This includes monitoring Tier 4 student attendance and engagement through key academic points during each year of study to support the University's Tier 4 Sponsor status and to meet the requirements set by the UK Government, while continuing to provide a good student experience.

If you apply to NUA and are offered a place on a course, you will need to pay a deposit of £2,000 to secure your place.

English language

If English is not your first language, you will normally need to demonstrate that you are suitably proficient in English before we can enrol you in the Research Degrees Programme. You can do this by providing

evidence of one of the following:

- A recent NUA-approved English Language Test (ELT) score which meets the University's requirements for the Research Degrees Programme: either an IELTS minimum overall test result score of 7.0 with a 7.0 in writing and with no other component score lower than 6.0, or an equivalent test score;
- Recent completion of an MA level course of study (Distinction only) in a majority English-speaking country.

By 'recent' we mean that your English Language Test score or MA level qualification needs to have been awarded no more than two years prior to the date that you would first enrol in the Research Degrees Programme at NUA. We cannot normally accept evidence that is older than this.

You may submit an application for a place on the Research Degrees Programme before you have obtained your IELTS or equivalent test score, or before you have received your MA certificate, but if you are offered a place then you would need to provide evidence of having satisfied this condition before we can enrol you. You will be required to present the original certificates confirming your qualifications before enrolment.

Please note that we can no longer accept TOEFL test results for this purpose.

Application Process

A flow chart of the application process is attached as **Appendix A**. You should submit a *Preliminary Application to Study for a Research Degree*, in which you will provide details of your qualifications, employment history, research experience, outputs, two academic references and a 1,000-word outline of your proposed programme of research. We may also require examples of your work in an appropriate format, if relevant to your proposed research. Further guidance on writing a preliminary proposal can be found in **Appendix B**.

A panel of academic staff with specialist understanding of your proposed research area will assess the suitability of your application and will also consider whether the University has the supervisory capacity and capability to support your proposed project, and if there are any ethical questions that would need to be resolved in the early stages of devising the programme of research. After this assessment, you may be invited for a formal interview with an interviewing panel comprising academic staff and/or potential supervisors for your programme of research. Following your interview, and if the interviewing panel considers that your application can be supported, your application will be referred to the University's Research Degrees Committee for formal approval. Normally, the PGR application process from start to finish will be completed within an 8-week period. This may vary depending on the preparedness of the applicant and the time taken to develop the 1,000-word outline of the proposed programme of research, and staff availability, particularly during University vacations and/or busy periods in the University calendar.

If the Research Degrees Committee approves your application, it will appoint a Director of Studies (first supervisor) for your programme of research. The Committee will also recommend potential co-supervisors.

If your application is successful you will be invited to enrol as a PGR student at the University. The University has one point of enrolment at the start of each academic year. The enrolment process includes a one-week Research Network of University of the Arts London (RNUAL) training activity organised by the University of the Arts London. This mandatory event takes place in London normally in September.

Studentships

Where internally or externally funded bursaries and / or studentships become available, they will be advertised nationally and on the NUA website with accompanying guidance on assessment criteria and terms. It should be noted that such bursaries and / or studentships may have specific applications deadlines which differ from those for entry to NUA (please see also **Deadlines for Applications** below).

Registration

Once successfully enrolled at NUA, your supervisory team will assist you in developing a full proposal for submission to the University's Research Degrees Committee and the University of the Arts London's Research Degrees Sub-Committee, so that your research degree can be formally registered. In this submission you will indicate your intended degree (MPhil or PhD). The Research Degrees Committee will also consider the ethical dimensions of your project. If your project is considered to constitute more than minimal ethical risk, approval of your registration will also need to be sought from the University of the Arts London's Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Once these committees have approved your application for registration, you will be officially registered for an **unspecified research degree** with the intention to complete a programme of study for an MPhil or a PhD. The degree for which you are ultimately examined is confirmed at Confirmation.

The University normally expects students to complete Registration within twelve months of enrolment and reserves the right to discontinue any student who fails to do so, on a case by case basis.

Students must not undertake any 'field' research until the research degrees and ethics committees at both institutions have formally confirmed the approval of the application for registration.

Confirmation

After a probationary period (normally 12 to 18 months for full-time students and 24 to 30 months for part-time students), your supervisory team will assist you in developing your application to confirm the degree for which you will ultimately be examined.

For further information on University of the Arts London PGR regulations and procedures including criteria for confirmation, please refer to <http://www.arts.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/>.

Registration Period

You can study towards an MPhil or PhD either full-time or part-time. An MPhil will normally take at least two years to complete full-time and three to four years part-time. A PhD will normally take three to four years to complete full-time and five to six years part-time.

Typical registration periods			
MPhil	Minimum	Normal	Maximum
Full-time	1 year 3 months	1 year 9 months	3 years
Part-time	2 years	3 years	6 years
PhD	Minimum	Normal	Maximum
Full-time	2 years	2 years 9 months	4 years
Part-time	3 years	5 years	8 years

Research Supervision

PGR students at Norwich University of the Arts are entitled to the following contact hours with their supervisory team:

Full-time students: 20 contact hours a year
Part-time students: 10 contact hours a year

It is normally the responsibility of the student to request tutorials, with the exception of the annual review tutorial, which is scheduled by the Director of Studies.

Fees

Current information on fees can be found on the NUA website. Please note that fees will normally increase each year by inflation, using a recognised inflationary index from Her Majesty's Government, and will therefore not be the same for the duration of your course.

<http://www.nua.ac.uk/study/finance/>

Deadlines for Applications

There is a single entry point for PGR study at the start of the academic year. However, the University welcomes applications throughout the year.

Applications are considered by the Research Degrees Committee, which meets three times a year. During 2017-18, preliminary applications may be considered at the following committee meetings:

Preliminary Applications received by:	May be considered at the RDC meeting of:
23 August 2017	11 October 2017
29 November 2017	24 January 2018
28 February 2018	25 April 2018

Applications received after 28 February 2018 may still be considered for entry into the 2018-19 academic year if received before 29 June 2018. These applications will be considered by an extraordinary meeting of the Research Degrees Committee if deemed appropriate. Please note that late applications may not be eligible for consideration for internally or externally funded bursaries / studentships.

Further Information

For further information please contact research@nua.ac.uk.

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APPENDIX A: Application Process for Postgraduate Research Degrees

APPLICATION PROCESS for POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES		
STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
Response time: (the consideration process will normally be completed within 8 working weeks from the date of receipt of a fully completed preliminary application)		
Within 10 working days	Within 15 working days	Within 10 working days of the applicable Committee date
Consideration of preliminary application	Interview	Consideration by Research Degrees Committee
<p><i>Preliminary Application</i> form received. Assessed for suitability for research degree study at NUA. If considered suitable, applicant is invited for interview. Prospective supervisory expertise and capacity discussed at this stage.</p>	<p>Applicant invited to an interview at NUA (or via Skype if appropriate) to take place within 15 working days of the assessed <i>Preliminary Application</i>. If interviewing panel is satisfied that the proposed research is viable, the application will be forwarded for further consideration by the Research Degrees Committee.</p>	<p><i>Preliminary Application</i> approved by RDC and applicant made a conditional or unconditional offer of a place for PGR study at the University.</p>
<p>If the University considers that the <i>Preliminary Application</i> cannot be supported, it will not be progressed and there will be no further consideration of the application. Feedback may be made available to the applicant via the Research Office.</p>	<p>If the interviewing panel considers that the application cannot be supported, it will not be progressed and there will be no further consideration of the application. Feedback will be made available to the applicant via the Research Office.</p>	<p><i>Preliminary Application</i> not approved by RDC and applicant informed with no further consideration of the application. Feedback will be made available to the applicant via the Chair to the Research Degrees Committee.</p>

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APPENDIX B:

Norwich University of the Arts

Postgraduate Research Degree Applications

Guidance on Writing a Preliminary Proposal

Your preliminary proposal will be used as the starting point for preparing your application to register your research project with the University of the Arts London's Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The outline below summarises the guidance provided by UAL for submitting a full proposal. It is advisable to follow this format to ensure all aspects the committees will be looking for are covered.

Title

This should express the main area of investigation, implying its questions and potential argument or standpoint. While being a working title, which will inevitably change over time, it is important that you are as specific and precise as possible. The title should be brief, and reflect the main question or issue of the project. Unnecessarily over-long or technical words should be avoided, as should phrases such as 'an investigation into...'

Subject area, aims and objectives

You should briefly define your subject and the main concerns of the investigation, including a set of aims and objectives which will guide your research. If the proposal is primarily practice based, this section should also be used to describe your vision of your practice and the way in which you work in your practice on your preoccupations and concerns. It is worth thinking hard about this section, as it will form the basis of study for the next few years (though it will inevitably evolve as you make progress). After defining your subject, you might find it helpful to think about the main concerns of the project as questions you are asking yourself to which you hope to find answers. The aims and objectives are important because they declare, in a sense, the criteria for investigation, against which the success or failure of the project can be assessed. If you find it difficult to articulate your aims and objectives you might find it helpful to think of the aim as the most significant questions or problems which you hope to tackle. The objectives are the steps by which you will meet this aim. The proposal should normally have one or two aims, followed by a series of around six objectives. The idea is that by the time all the objectives are met, the aim should be achieved.

If you are intending to complete as PhD, you should indicate in your proposal what your original contribution to knowledge will be.

Historical context

There is no single history which suits all investigations but you should identify the various strands of history which relate to your particular research. It may be a history of ideas and concepts that have influenced the development of a particular area of art and design, the history of the medium or technology in which you work, or a particular part of the history of art or design.

Contemporary context

As far you are able, you should define the contemporary work that relates to your field of investigation. You must do this so as to:

- demonstrate awareness of the field in which you are working;
- demonstrate that the proposed research will have distinct features which will make it potentially original;
- form the basis of links with other research work to which you will contribute or on which your research will build.

Theoretical context

There is a great choice of options in this area; none of them exclusive. An element of theoretical context is important for every kind of project, though the degree of theoretical content will vary; particularly for practice based work. You should be able to demonstrate the ways in which you evaluate their own work and that of others, and the sources that you use to inform your evaluation. A theoretical context will help avoid simply asserting a position and support you in the reflective approach that is needed for a research degree.

Three different kinds of theoretical context are outlined below (but these are not exhaustive and you may prefer a different model). They are defined with a bias towards a practice-based proposal. If a proposal is entirely theoretical and critical, only the first and possibly the second might apply:

1. **Critical Theory:** definition of the critical concept and terms used in order to evaluate or critique experimental work;
2. **Parallel Theory:** definition of theoretical fields which may share concepts with your experimental work but there is no simple, direct relationship. This acknowledges that practice and theory are seen as distinct discourses;
3. **Projective or Generative Theory:** theory which is used to define intention and guide the experimental work that you will do.

Methodology

It is important to make a distinction between 'methodology' and research 'methods'. Methodology is concerned with the theoretical framing of the methods (techniques) used in a field of study: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods or techniques, which are sometimes described as research 'tools'. Methodology provides a theoretical underpinning for understanding which methods can be used in a particular project. Your methodological approach and the research tools which will be deployed will need to be addressed in all cases but in practice-based areas of study, methodologies are less well established, so you may like to think about the following:

- Try to describe the rationale for using particular methods and procedures you will adopt in discovering and recording research information.
- If it is a practice-based proposal, how does the theory relate to the practical experimentation?
- What is the theory for?
- What process of experimentation will be used?
- How you will record what you do and keep track of what you have done.

Work Plan

Make a prediction of the major stages of the work (probably not more than 5) and the minor subdivisions (if appropriate). Take care if aspects of the research will run concurrently.

Proposed Outcomes

Give an indication of the proposed outcomes such as exhibition of work, portfolio, DVD, written

thesis, etc. and their relationship with the research.

Main Study List and Bibliography (Harvard Method)

List the main reference works, which you will use for your research. These may be films, paintings, TV programmes, curated collections or websites as well as books or journal articles. Use the Harvard method, which can be adapted for non-literary references such as paintings.

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