

PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH DEGREE (MPhil / PhD)

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETION OF RF1

Please read this document carefully and in conjunction with the RF1 Application form. Once you have completed your application, and attached your research proposal, it should be sent to:

Jane Walsh (Jane.Walsh@falmouth.ac.uk)
Admissions Administrator, University College Falmouth
Woodlane, Falmouth, Cornwall, England, TR11 4RH.

We cannot guarantee that your application will be considered if you send it to any other address.

2. Residential information

This section is very important for assessing fee status and also for assessing eligibility should you wish to be considered for the AHRC Doctoral Award competition. To be considered for a full AHRC studentship award, a student must show that they have a relevant connection with the UK. This is usually determined through residence and means a physical presence in the UK. Further guidelines regarding residential eligibility can be found on the AHRC website;

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/DoctoralScheme.aspx>

For the UCF Studentship competition, Home and EU applicants are eligible to apply. To be eligible as a Home student you should have had 3 years prior residency in the UK, to be eligible as an EU student you should have had 3 years prior residency in the EEA.

Note: a number of the studentships (those supported by the European Social Fund) require residency in Cornwall.

3. English Language ability (if relevant)

The minimum English Language requirement for UCF research degrees is IELTS 7.0 (with a 7.0 in Writing). Other English Language testing systems or completed Advanced English courses may be regarded as equivalent however you must check this with the Research Support Office. We will need to see proof of your English Language ability and the test score or course undertaken should be a recent one (i.e. within the last year)

4. Employment by UCF

Please tell us more about your employment status within the College. This will also help us to assess your application properly and determine the most appropriate mode of study.

5. Additional Learning Needs

We would like to offer you as much support as we can should you be offered a place to study at UCF, therefore as much information as possible as to what your individual needs may be would be very helpful even at this initial stage in your application.

6. Qualifications (*higher education & professional qualifications*)

A master's degree in an appropriate subject is considered to be a particularly valuable preparation for a research degree, although the normal minimum entry requirement for a research degree is an upper second class honours degree of a British University or recognised institution of higher education.

Please make sure that you outline clearly your previous and current education qualifications and attach copies of certificates or transcripts wherever possible. If you do not know the result of a course you are currently taking, please also indicate when you expect to know and what result you are expecting. If your course was undertaken overseas then please state clearly the name of the course (in the original language) and as much information as possible about the institution (including the country where the qualification was undertaken). Wherever possible UCF will endeavour to compare your overseas qualification in relations to the UK academic requirements to study a higher degree however there may be instances where we will require your qualifications and transcripts to be formally translated.

7. Employment

Please give full details of your past and current employment. This is particularly important if you do not have the minimum academic qualifications outlined in Annex A usually required for doctoral study.

8. Other Experience

Please give full details of any relevant experience you may have had which you have not already outlined on the previous section. Again this is particularly important if you do not have the previously stated minimum academic qualifications usually required for doctoral study.

9. Research Theme

The University College hosts a number of research groupings that can also provide a focus and support for research degree activity. If you feel that your proposal would fit in with any of these groupings (or with a particular member of staff) then please do let us know.

11. Source of Funding

It is very important that you specify clearly here if you wish to be considered for a funding opportunity at UCF. Further information regarding the UCF Studentship and the AHRC Doctoral Award competitions with regards to the academic entry criteria, the selection criteria can be found in **Annex A** at the end of this document

Please note that for either scheme, you need to have been offered a place by UCF to be eligible to apply for funding and applications can only be submitted through the College.

13. Outline of Proposed Research

When you apply to enrol as a research student you will need to prepare an outline proposal. This will be used as the basis for discussion at your interview. It will also be used as the starting point for preparing your submission to register the programme with UCF's Research Degrees Management Group.

The outline below is a guide to the headings it would be wise to cover in your proposal. Some, like the section on theoretical context, may be open to a very wide range of approaches and interpretations and may not – especially in a mainly theoretical based proposal – be really distinguished from the historical or contemporary context. Others, like the survey of the contemporary context, are essential to all submissions.

You should use the headings below to define the sections of your proposal.

- **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 of the project. You should avoid over-long or technical words, and phrases such as 'an investigation into...'
- **Subject Area, Aims and Objectives:** Define briefly your subject and the main concerns of the investigation, including a set of aims and objectives that will guide your research. If your proposal is primarily practice based, you should also use this section 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 your 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 the answer. The aims and objectives are important because they, in a sense, declare the criteria for your investigation, against which the success or failure of your project can be assessed. If you find it difficult to articulate your aims and objectives you might find it helpful to think of your aim as the most significant questions or problems you hope to tackle. Your objectives are the steps by which you will meet this aim. Your proposal should normally have one or two aims, followed by a series of around 6 objectives. The idea is that by the time you have met all your objectives, you should have achieved your aim.

- **Historical Context:** There is no single history that suits all investigations but you should identify the various strands of history that 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, Design, Media or Performance.
- **Contemporary Context:** As far as you are able, define the contemporary work that relates to your field of investigation. You must do this for the following reasons:

- to demonstrate that you are aware of the field in which you are working
- to demonstrate that your proposed research will have distinct feature which will make it potentially original
- **to form the basis of links with other research work to which you will contribute or on which you 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 your own work and that of others, and the sources you use to inform your evaluation. A theoretical context will help you 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 your proposal is entirely theoretical and critical, only the first and possibly the second might apply:

Critical Theory – definition of the critical concepts and terms you will use in order to evaluate or critique your experimental work

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.

Projective or Generative Theory – theory that is used to define intention and guide the experimental work you will do.

- **Methodology:** Your research method and approach will need to be defined 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 basic 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 you use?
- how will you record what you do and keep track of what you have done?
- **Ethical Dimensions of the Research:** If you feel that there are ethical considerations that need to be taken into account then you should address them briefly now. There is a comprehensive ethical approval process at UCF which is intended to safeguard researchers, participants and others on whom the proposed research might impact, directly or indirectly. If you are offered a place at UCF then you will address any ethical issues formally when you apply to register your research proposal in your first year. In broad terms, the College expects all research to respect participants' rights (commercial, intellectual and civil, dignity (including privacy and confidentiality), safety and well being.
- **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.
- **Prediction of the Form of the Final Presentation:** Think about the form of the final presentation, for example:
 - will it be a bound book with a CD-ROM or Internet element?
 - will it be a book with video tapes?
 - will it be an exhibition, a catalogue and a written thesis?
 - will it be a bound book with images?
 - will this be a wholly written thesis?
- **Main Study List and Bibliography (Harvard Method):** List the main reference works which you will use for your research (no more than 1 page of A4). 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 like paintings. Citation of works using the Harvard method is as follows: surname(s) of author(s)/ editor(s), initials, date of publication (in brackets) title and sub-title(if any), series and individual no. (if any), Edition (if not the first), place of publication (if known), publisher.

ANNEX A

Funding Opportunities – Academic Requirements

UCF Studentship Competition

Applicants who wish to apply for a UCF Studentship should be aware of the following criteria for selection;

- Quality of the Proposal
- Research Interests that match College research themes
- Academic References
- Evidence of capacity to complete the degree
- Academic Attainment and professional experience (as appropriate)
- Availability of appropriate supervision and resources/facilities

Note: a number of the studentships (those supported by the European Social Fund) require residency in Cornwall.

A master's degree in an appropriate subject is considered to be a particularly valuable preparation for a research degree, although the normal minimum entry requirement for a research degree is an upper second class honours degree of a British University or recognised institution of higher education. However, candidates without the minimum academic requirements may also be considered for an UCF studentship if they are able to demonstrate substantial equivalent and relevant experience that has prepared them to undertake their proposed course of study

AHRC Doctoral Award Competition

Applicants who wish to be considered for an AHRC Doctoral Award should be aware of the Research Council's Academic Eligibility Criteria;

- You should have gained a first degree (usually an Honours degree, such as a BA, BMus, BSc, LLB or equivalent) from a recognised HEI, or be an undergraduate expecting to graduate before **31 July in the year in which the studentship is being taken up**. Other qualifications may be considered only exceptionally.
- Candidates without a first degree may be considered for an AHRC studentship only if they are able to demonstrate substantial equivalent and relevant experience that has prepared them to undertake their proposed course of study.
- In addition, those nominated for a doctoral studentship should normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification. If a student does not have experience of formal postgraduate study, they may be eligible for a studentship **only** if they can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience beyond first degree level that is specifically relevant to their proposed research topic, and could be considered equivalent to Master's study. A student and their institution will need to be able to justify why this experience qualifies them **exceptionally** as prepared for doctoral research without prior formal postgraduate training.

Please also note that before you can be nominated for an award, you must have been **accepted** by UCF to undertake the programme of postgraduate study for which you are seeking funding.

Further information can be found on the AHRC website;

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/DoctoralScheme.aspx>