

## **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 via email to:

**Sharon Holley, Academic Quality & Research Officer:** s.holley@dartington.ac.uk

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

Further information regarding the European Social Fund (ESF) Studentships and the UCF Studentships with regards to the academic entry criteria and the selection criteria can be found in **Annex A** at the end of this document.

#### **2. Residential information**

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.

The European Social Fund Studentships usually require residency in Cornwall and all holders of full-time studentships are expected to be visible and active on a UCF campus.

#### **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**

Because we would like to offer you as much support as we can should you be offered a place to study at UCF, 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 (not originals) 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 Centre or Group**

Research at UCF is organised by research centres and groups that provide a focus and support for research degree activity. Please specify the closest fit with your own proposal.

**12. 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 University of the Arts London, the awarding body for UCF's research degrees. The outline below is a guide to the headings it would be wise to cover in your proposal. ***The word limit for your proposal is 1000 words maximum.***

**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...'.  
**Research Question:** Briefly state the question(s) you wish to address in your research.  
**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/Theoretical 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/Theoretical 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(s) 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

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.

**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?
- where the research is practice-led, what do you want to know, learn or expect to discover while conducting this experiment? How does it differ from a project?
- what is the theory for? How does it inform practice, can it be tested in practice?
- 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 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?

**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 centres and/or groups
- Academic references
- Evidence of capacity to complete the degree
- Academic attainment and professional experience (as appropriate)
- Availability of appropriate supervision and resources/facilities

For College studentships, applicants should reside within a reasonable commute to the Tremough campus at Penryn, 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. 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.

#### **European Social Fund Studentship Competition**

Applicants who wish to apply for an ESF Studentship should be aware of the specific criteria attached to this funding. Note: These studentships usually require residency in Cornwall. ESF funded students residing outside Cornwall must have substantive involvement with a Cornish based business.

The focus is closer collaboration between Higher Education, businesses and the public sector through strengthening and creating research capacity and Knowledge Exchange Networks/Clusters that will be of benefit to and support business growth and the further development of the Cornish knowledge economy through training of researchers and post-graduate studies and accessing world class research skills and knowledge. Priority will be given to activities that align with ERDF investment and will include:

- Research and post graduate studies linked to priority sectors and Integrated Investment Themes (see below)
- Strengthening existing networks/clusters (and, where appropriate building new ones)

and

- Accessing world class research skills and knowledge, technology markets, business process and skills to support the development of Cornwall's knowledge economy and that contribute to the Integrated Investment Themes.

The Five Integrated Investment Themes of the ESF framework are:

- Employment & Skills for Low carbon economic development
- Employment & Skills for Enterprise & entrepreneurship
- Employment & Skills for Key Sectors\*
- Employment & Skills for the Eco-town
- Employment & Skills for the digital economy

\*Note that this Theme includes the creative sector but the focus of this theme is under review not least in recognition that there are prospects in some areas that are too small to be recognised as a sector at the moment.