

RESEARCH DEGREE (MPhil / PhD) APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES 2018-19

DEADLINE*: 6th June 2018, 17:00 (GMT)

Applications received after this date will not be considered for 2018 entry.

**Please be aware that studentship funding schemes will normally have their own set of deadlines and application procedures, so please be sure to check the deadlines that you are working towards.*

Guidelines for completing the Research Degree Application Form

Section A

1. Personal details

Please complete this section as fully as possible.

2. Residency status

This section is very important for assessing your tuition fee status, and will be used to assess your eligibility for any studentship that you intend to apply for. If you have not been ordinarily resident in the UK or EEA for the three years preceding 1st September 2017, you would normally be liable for the University's Overseas tuition fee rate, which is higher than the fee charged to Home or EU students.

Section B

1. Type of degree that you intend to complete

Falmouth University awards research degrees, in partnership with University of the Arts London, as either MPhil or PhD. Please indicate which level of research study you intend to complete. The degree type that you are ultimately examined for will be decided at your Confirmation, but please note that the University does not guarantee that you will ultimately complete the research degree level that you intend to.

2. Intended mode of study

Please state here whether you intend to study for your research degree full or part time.

3. Research Theme(s) and Research Programme

Research at Falmouth is organised in three strategic research themes, namely: Digital Economy/Digital Games, Smart Design, and Creative Connected Communities. There are also ten [Research Programmes](#) that reflect and explore these three broader themes. The Falmouth University Research Themes and Programmes operate across the University's Academic Units, providing a focus for excellent research in identified areas of strength. They support groups of researchers in a range of activities that extend beyond the remit of individual projects, creating an environment where debate can flourish, providing a sound foundation for future work. **All Research Degree proposals must align to one or**

more of these research themes and programmes. Further details on the themes can be found online at: <https://www.falmouth.ac.uk/research>

4. Funding

Please indicate in this section of the form how you plan to fund your research degree studies. If you are planning on applying for a particular studentship opportunity please name it in this section. Any opportunities available at Falmouth will be advertised here: <https://www.falmouth.ac.uk/phd>

5. English Language proficiency

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 Falmouth-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 (Distinction only) level course of study 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 2 years prior to 1st September 2017. 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.

Each applicant is assessed on an individual basis and if you are offered a place on the Research Degrees Programme, then depending on your level of English language proficiency as demonstrated through your application form and interview, we will let you know whether we would require a new IELTS result before you can begin your PhD studies. Please note that we cannot accept TOEFL test results for this purpose.

If English is not your first language, please indicate on your application form if you have not yet fulfilled the English language proficiency requirements as stated above; if you are offered a place on the Research Degrees Programme then you will need to provide evidence of having done so before you can enrol.

6. a) Outline of Proposed Research

The below guidance notes are to assist you in writing the outline of proposed research. A full application requires a 1000 word proposal and needs to follow the outline below. The research proposal should be uploaded on the 'Personal Statement' tab of the online application form as a Word or PDF document.

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 application to register on the programme with the Falmouth's Research Degrees Committee and the University of the Arts London's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

The schematic outline below is a guide to the headings you need to address 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.

Full Application proposal – 1000 words maximum (not including bibliography)

- **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 or Design.

- **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 consider 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 UAL 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 UAL then you will address any ethical issues formally when you apply to register your research proposal in your first year. In broad terms, the University expects all research to respect participants' rights (commercial, intellectual and civil, dignity (including privacy and confidentiality), safety and wellbeing.

A Research Ethics information Pack can be downloaded from

<http://www.falmouth.ac.uk/phd> under the Downloads tab of the course page.

- **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?

The following sections are not included in the 1000 word count:

b) Indicative bibliography:

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. Citations must be consistent and adopt a recognised standard system, for example, Harvard (with or without footnotes) or Numeric.

c) Visual evidence:

If it is applicable to your research you may include up to 8 captioned images, but please ensure that your application form does not exceed 1MB in size. You may also provide URLs for audio or video pieces (5 minutes maximum).

7. Academic 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 academic 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 provide as much information as possible about the institution (including the country where the qualification was undertaken).

Wherever possible Falmouth will endeavour to compare your overseas qualification in relation 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.

8. Employment history

Please provide details of your relevant employment history in the table provided in **8a**, listing the most recent ones first. The University will consider all relevant information provided here when assessing applications, but it is particularly important to provide as much information here as possible if you do not meet the minimum academic qualifications as outlined above. If you are currently employed by Falmouth University of the Arts London in any capacity, please provide details in **8b**.

9. Other relevant experience

Please provide details here of any other relevant experience which you have not already included in your application. If you do not meet the minimum academic qualification requirements outlined above then the University will also take into account any other relevant experience that you have when assessing your application. You may provide here details of any publications, exhibitions, teaching, research or other professional experience that you consider to be directly relevant to your application.

10. References

As detailed on the application form, two references are required. It is your responsibility to ensure that the references are provided to us by 17:00 (GMT) on Wednesday 6th June 2018. Referees must use the separate Academic Reference for a Research Degree at Falmouth form and return their completed form to research@falmouth.ac.uk

Section C: Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Completion of this section of the form is optional but we would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete it so that we can learn how to improve the services that we offer. This page will be retained by Falmouth's Research & Development office and will not be made available to those preparing the shortlist for interviews. Any information that you provide will be held in the strictest confidence.