



The School of Art

PhD/MPhil – Research Degree Application Criteria & Guidelines

When to apply

We operate a gathered field approach to PhD/MPhil applications. This means that all complete applications which meet our minimum entry requirements will be held until the nearest deadline at which point the Admissions Panel will meet to consider all applications received. Following this, interviews with shortlisted applicants will be held after the outcome notifications of the first rounds have been issued. Deadlines are in November, January, and March each year. For deadline dates and more information see [our webpage](#).

All written documents must be submitted as one PDF document, using a sans-serif typeface in 12 pt. size.

What to submit

Please ensure that your application clearly addresses the criteria laid out below.

1. Research Proposal (1000 words)
2. Qualifications and/or Relevant Professional Experience (300 words)
3. Preparedness for Doctoral Project (300 words)
4. Personal Statement (1000 words)
5. Assessment of your Supervision & Training Needs (300 words)
6. Portfolio (applicants for research by practice only, see additional specifications below)

***** Please note that the online application form is the same across the University of Edinburgh. If you are having any issues with the word limits in the form, please feel free to provide the components above in one uploaded PDF document instead *****

1. Research Proposal (1000 words)

Please provide this as an uploaded PDF document. We will assess your research proposal against the following criteria:

- a) AIMS: Provide a title, research question(s) or problem prompting this research and convey its significance. State if you are applying for a Research or Practice PhD. Succinctly and clearly explain your aims and objectives. Identify an apparent gap in existing knowledge and what will be your original contribution to knowledge.
- b) CONTEXT: Demonstrate excellent knowledge of the field and, if relevant, the primary source research that you plan to undertake as well as the preparedness to conduct the proposed research project. Convey the intellectual, academic, artistic context of the research question(s) or concerns. Provide a bibliography of relevant scholarly literature and other key research resources.



- c) **METHODS & METHODOLOGY:** Your proposal should be original, innovative and substantively structured and showcase the particular relation between artistic work and intended methods. Indicate why the methodology is appropriate.
- d) **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT/IMPACT:** Explain how your research will have academic and artistic impact and/or social, cultural or economic impact. State how will it contribute to developments across and within the field/disciplines.
- e) **CLARITY:** Ensure that your proposal is succinct, clearly written and free of jargon (it should be readily understood by a non-expert). *Ensure that you do not write more the specified word limit.*

2. Qualifications and/or Relevant Professional Experience (300 words)

Provide the following information to evidence how you are prepared to undertake your proposed research (as is relevant):

- a) **Academic Qualifications:** Identity all accredited Higher Education qualifications; provide a classification of results. Place your results in context (e.g. summa cum laude; #2 in a cohort of 250, etc.). Outline your qualifications within SCQF (Scottish) or ECTS (European) qualification credit frameworks. If you are currently a student, then provide your Semester 1 results in the form of an academic transcript or signed and stamped academic reference.
- b) **Relevant Professional Experience and professional development:** Please contextualise this in relation to your proposed research. Provide strong evidence of independent research thinking and of high-quality research output.

3. Preparedness for Doctoral Project (300 words)

Building on the previous section, evidence how you are prepared to undertake your proposed research project, in at least one of the following areas:

- (a) Previous relevant study
- (b) Relevant professional experience
- (c) Professional development

4. Personal Statement (1000 words)

In this section outline how you are qualified to enter the programme and how you consider it will affect your prospects. What has led you to specialise in your chosen area. You must demonstrate awareness of the benefits, expectations and potential for engagement with the considerable research resources of:

- (a) The School of Art (wherein you will be based)
- (b) Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh
- (c) The Scottish Graduate School for the Arts & Humanities (SGSAH www.sgsah.ac.uk)
- (d) Our relevant non-academic partners and supporters



(e) Other appropriate research resources in or beyond Scotland.

NB: The Personal Statement *is not* an autobiography.

5. Assessment of your Supervision and Training Needs (300 words)

There are three components to this section, a) Self-Assessment b) Institutional Assessment c) Identification of Supervisory Team:

a) **Self-Assessment:** All PhD students need training, it is an ongoing process. You must provide a realistic account of the training you will need and the academic supervision you will require. If relevant, please explain if you require particular technical support (e.g. learning a language, learning to cast metals, etc.). If you have already completed a formal research training programme or pertinent technical training, please mention this here.

b) **Institutional Assessment:**

You must clearly address how *we* can provide *you* with the best possible support available in terms of research training and research opportunities by making reference to the most apposite resources and opportunities offered by:

- Academic Staff research expertise and Research Clusters
- The University of Edinburgh and its non-academic partners (UoE)
- Our partners in The Scottish Graduate School for the Arts & Humanities consortium and its non-academic supporters (SGSAH www.sgsah.ac.uk)
- Other training resources or opportunities specific or unique to Scotland

Checklist:

We recommend that you investigate the resources of UoE and the SGSAH to determine how your proposal fits with and contributes to relevant:

- Academic Staff research expertise
- Strategic research themes (3 years +)
- Research Groups
- Research Centres
- Non-academic partnerships, outreach programmes and knowledge exchanges (particularly relevant to the impact of your research)

c) **Identification of supervisory team:**

In this section you should identify your potential supervisors and why they are the right supervisory team for this research. This would be a Principal Supervisor in the School of Art and a further appropriate supervisor who is an academic member of staff in Edinburgh College of Art/The University of Edinburgh or one of its academic partners in the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities (SGSAH). It is recommended that you approach your identified Supervisors when you have a complete draft Research Proposal to



share, this will enable them to consider if your project is within their supervisory remit. They may offer you feedback. If they are willing to look at a further draft they may want to see how well you have understood and applied their advice.

6. Portfolio (research by practice PhD only)

If you are applying to undertake research by practice, please provide a portfolio of your work. This should include evidence of your recent creative work, relevant to the research proposal, whether personal, academic, or professional. Collaborative projects should be identified accordingly, and your role must be defined.

The portfolio will indicate the research values and methods of your work to date, and should engage with and further the ideas outlined in your Research Proposal. It will support your *Preparedness for Doctoral Project* statement by providing strong corroborating evidence of independent research thinking and of high quality research output. Since it is a professional resource, the portfolio may also provide corroborating evidence of your professional experience.

Portfolio specifications: Submit one PDF document, maximum ten pages, including documentation and/or images of your works. Include captions, such as title, artist, year, material and descriptions for each image.

For time-based material, submit up to ten minutes of material:

Video: High-quality QuickTime .mov files only. Audio: High-quality .mp3 or .aiff or .wav files only.

Material or online portfolios on personal websites *cannot* be considered.

Who to Contact

If you would like more information about submitting your application and the admissions process please do not hesitate to get in touch with the ECA Postgraduate Research Team ecaresearchdegrees@ed.ac.uk.