



## MScR Research Degree Application Guidance

If you wish to apply for MScR programmes at Edinburgh College of Art please follow the below guidance.

### 1. Applying for MScR

On the University of Edinburgh [Degree Finder](#) page you can navigate to the programme that you wish to apply to. You will find information on the programme, entry requirements, tuition fees etc on this page. Check the 'Application Deadline' and the 'How to Apply' information for the programme. Check that you meet the 'Entry Requirements' for the programme. Follow the 'Apply' links to understand the layout of the online application form at an early stage. You can follow this link without committing to an application.

General information on how to apply and what documents are required with your application can be found in the ['Applying – Your Information'](#) webpage.

You will be required to complete the online application form and upload relevant documents. The 'Programme' section of the online application form asks for a [personal statement](#). This should describe your suitability for and your expectations of a degree here with us. You are also asked to detail your qualifications and relevant prior experience, to give a summary of your proposed research project, and to name your proposed supervisors.

#### Documents required include:

- a copy of the [degree certificates](#) for the qualifications you hold
- a copy of the [academic transcripts](#) for the qualifications you hold, or interim transcript for any degree not yet completed,
- two [references](#) – at least one of which must be an academic reference, preferably relating to your most recent qualification,
- [certified translations](#) of any degree certificate, academic transcript or other relevant document not in English must be provided
- proof of meeting [English language entry requirements](#) must be provided by applicants, regardless of nationality of country of residence
- a [research proposal](#) which outlines your intended research topic (see guidance 2. below)
- some practice-based programmes may also require a portfolio (see guidance 3. below)
- some theory-based programmes may also require a writing sample and other additional documents (see guidance 4. below)

Once your application has been received by the University it will be processed by the Admissions team and will then be sent to the Selection Panel for review. If any essential documents are missing from your application the Admissions team will contact you about this. Applications without a research proposal will be classed as incomplete and cannot be reviewed by the Selection Panel until this is received.

#### Finding a Supervisor:

You should search for a potential supervisor for your research topic prior to submitting an application. Please refer to the University guidance on [how to find a research supervisor](#). Staff lists of Edinburgh College of Art staff can be found [here](#), and can be filtered by Academic Staff by

individual School. Each member of staff has a profile page which gives a summary biography and research information along with their contact details.

It is recommended that you contact potential supervisors to discuss your research proposal and seek willingness to supervise. If you begin a dialogue with a potential supervisor before applying, they may ask to see your draft research proposal and 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. After this discussion if they have confirmed that your proposed research is within their expertise/supervisory remit and they are interested in working with you can list their name on your application as your proposed supervisor.

Your Principal Supervisor will normally be based in the Subject Area you are applying to. Assistant Supervisors can be based in the same subject area, or in the wider Edinburgh College of Art and University of Edinburgh.

The Selection Panel will consider the proposed supervisor you have named on your application and discuss your application with them and/or with other supervisors that may be relevant for your application.

### **Interview:**

If the Selection Panel feel that your application is of the required quality and there is supervisory expertise available you will be invited to attend a short interview, normally with the Programme Director and/or the proposed supervisors, to discuss your application and research proposal. The interview will normally be online (eg via MS Teams) but can be in person where relevant.

## **2. Research Proposal Guidance (all programmes)**

A research proposal identifying the objectives and scope of the research and stages necessary for successful completion is a necessary and important part of your application. The proposal should indicate the nature of the outcome, for example whether it will be a full thesis, or a smaller thesis and body of creative work. In the case of practice-based research, applicants are advised to give an indication of the kind of creative work they intend to undertake, and how it will engage with and further the research aims and process.

Your research proposal is the key that allows staff to understand your intentions and readiness for a research degree. The best research proposals are developed through several drafts

The proposal may well later evolve and even change radically through the research process, but the initial proposal is required to help identify the particular research question(s) or areas of concern prompting this research and for staff to help identify suitable supervisory expertise if invited to interview.

The research proposal must be uploaded with your online application. Applications cannot be fully considered until an adequate research proposal has been received.

We will assess your proposal against the following criteria:

- (a) **AIMS:** Identify a clear gap in existing knowledge. Succinctly and clearly explain your aims and objectives. Provide a title, identify a particular research question or area of concern prompting this research and convey its significance. For Art and Design programmes, please state if you are applying for a Theory Based or Practice Based PhD.
- (b) **CONTEXT:** Demonstrate excellent knowledge of the field and preparedness to undertake 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:** Your proposal must be original and innovative, substantively and/or methodologically. Explain the research processes and methods that you will apply. Indicate why they are the most appropriate and, if relevant, most innovative methods.
- (d) **IMPACT:** The potential impact of the research must be explicit, with realistic and appropriate plans for maximising the impact identified (e.g. engaging possible non-academic partnerships.) Explain how your research will have academic and artistic impact and/or social and economic impact.
- (e) **CLARITY:** Writing and presentation must be of the highest standard. Ensure that your proposal is succinct, clearly written and free of jargon (it should be readily understood by a non-expert).

Type 1 MScR programmes - MScR Architecture, MScR Cultural Studies, MScR Music:  
Required word count 1,000 words

Type 2 MScR programmes - MScR History of Art, MScR Collections and Curating Practices, MScR Sound Design:  
Required word count 500-1,000 words

Ensure that you do not write more the specified word limit. Context, methods and sources must be well thought out and clearly expressed in your Research Proposal.

Further information on how to write a research proposal can be found in the [How to Write a Good Research Proposal guide](#).

You may also provide a bibliography of relevant scholarly literature and other key research resources (not mandatory, no word count limit).

### 3. Programmes requiring a Portfolio

Applicants for the following programmes cannot be fully considered until an adequate portfolio has been received:

- **MScR Music** (practice based research only) (*not required for theory based research*)

If you are applying for a research degree within Music that involves Composition or Creative Music Practice you must submit a portfolio containing three pieces of composition or examples of work related to your proposed field of study.

- **MScR Sound Design** (all applicants)

You should submit a portfolio introducing us to some recent work that you are proud of. Your portfolio should include at least three pieces of work and can include a range of items such as an essay on sound, a small collection of sound recordings, performances or documentation of a sound-based project, such as an installation, film or animation.

Whatever you include, it should be your own work. A short explanation of your role in collaborative projects is required. Your portfolio is best uploaded with the application as a PDF file with explanations about the projects and links to the work hosted on a reliable space online.

#### 4. Programmes requiring a Writing Sample and Additional Documents

Applicants for the following programmes should also provide a writing sample:

- **MScR Cultural Studies**
- **MScR History of Art**

We ask you to submit a writing sample with your application so that we can gain a clear sense of your research and communication skills. You should select a piece of written work – whether published or unpublished – that best represents your values and approach. This might include:

- An essay or conversation piece written for a critical audience.
- A selected chapter from your dissertation for a Masters degree (do not submit an entire dissertation.)
- A conference paper, or professional report, whether published or not.
- A published essay or journal article.

Please do not submit more than 5,000 words. A shorter, more focussed essay, or case study is usually a better indication of your abilities.

**MScR Cultural Studies** applicants should also submit a statement of interest related to the specific programme and its focus (this could be accompanied by an electronic portfolio that supports your claim on the fit into our programme and its specific academic profile) plus a detailed CV.

**MScR Collections and Curating Practices** applicants should ensure that the 'Personal Statement' section of the application tell us why you feel you are qualified to enter the programme and how you think it may affect your career prospects. How has your first degree prepared you for this programme? What has led you to specialise in your chosen area? In the 'Relevant Knowledge/Training Skills' section tell us about your relevant professional experience to date (this might include paid roles as well as internships). Describe your skills and highlight any curatorial, project management and critical thinking experience you may have gained previously. Your statements must demonstrate an awareness of the potential for engagement with Edinburgh's collections and considerable research resources.

**If you have any questions 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](mailto:ecaresearchdegrees@ed.ac.uk)