



Cardiff  
Metropolitan  
University

Prifysgol  
Metropolitan  
Caerdydd

## Before you apply for Doctoral Research at

**CARDIFF**  
SCHOOL *of* ART & DESIGN

# Hello

Thank you for your interest in studying for a Doctorate with us. We hope this guide provides you all the necessary advice you will need before you apply to Cardiff School of Art & Design : Cardiff Metropolitan University to study for Doctoral Study. A dedicated School Research Degrees website is available to support you and your application:

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/researchdegrees>

For the latest information on fees and other relevant details, you should also refer to the University Research Degrees website:

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Pages/Research-Degrees.aspx>

It is essential that you read the **Before you apply** section below.

**We receive a number of applications from potential students who do not follow the advice set out in this guide. At best their application is delayed but very frequently they are rejected**

## because their application is not suitable for our School or ready for a Research Degree application.

If you are thinking about studying for a research degree you have made the first step on a rich and rewarding intellectual journey. A research degree will transform you, it will reshape your understanding of the world and of yourself. It is an exciting and challenging prospect and we will do everything we can to support you on that journey. Please read this guide carefully and we hope to welcome you to our Research Community very soon.

We are highly supportive of our students and so our application process is very intense. We want to make sure we have the most creative and the best students who produce doctoral outcomes that can be directly compared in quality with any other University or Research Institute in the world.

We have **extremely limited** number of spaces for new doctoral students each year. Our students come from all around the world to study with us and so the competition for the limited number of places is exceptional. You will need to make sure you have done everything you can to help your application be successful. Please read the following sections to help you apply:

- Before you apply.
- Our supervisors and doctoral research communities
- What research programmes do we offer?
- When to apply?
- How to apply if you come from the UK/EU?
- How to apply if you come from outside of the UK/EU?
- What happens next?
- Why apply to us?
- Writing your Initial Research Proposal?
- If you still have any questions

**Dr Stephen Thompson**

Academic Lead of Graduate Studies : Cardiff School of Art & Design

# Before you apply

Before you start your application please make sure you have completed everything required in the Application One-Two-Three checklist:

## **One Have you done your research about us:**

Wherever you are from in the world, before you apply you must identify which supervisor or research group you would like to work with and consider how your research interests and expertise relates to the subject interests we can support. Throughout the course of your research, your supervisors will be your principal source of guidance and feedback in your PhD, so it is important to get this right.

Please approach the person or people you have in mind as supervisors informally to discuss your ideas and to gauge their interest in supporting you - they can help you to write your proposal and apply. If they do not reply to your first email, please try again. This will not be because they are not interested, it is simply because they get lots of emails every day.

A list of our supervisors and research groups can be found later in this guide. If you are still unsure of who to approach, please contact us for advice. When you make your first informal approach, it would be helpful if you could provide a short CV (two pages maximum) and a 1,000 word outline in which you set out:

- The research topic or question on which you are likely to focus.
- The debate or subject area of your research.
- Why you are considering Cardiff School of Art and Design as the place to conduct your research.
- Your professional and/or personal reasons for wanting to undertake MPhil or PhD research.

## **Two Are you qualified?**

Candidates applying for research study towards a doctoral award should normally have an upper second class honours (2:1) undergraduate degree or better from a recognised higher education institution or a postgraduate degree or a qualification deemed by the university to be equivalent to this level.

Depending on your prior research experience it is usual for you to be initially enrolled onto an MRes/PhD or MPhil/PhD.

- Applications to PhD will be considered from **all** candidates who have attained a 2.1 class degree or equivalent. This award contains an initial research training element prior to commencement of supervised research.

### **Three Is your English good enough?:**

Students whose first language is not English will need to provide evidence of fluency to at least an IELTS 6.5 standard (minimum 6.5 in the reading and writing components) or equivalent. However, we **strongly recommend** you study to attain **IELTS 7.0**.

The reading and writing on a Research Degree will be intense and so if you have anything less than this you will struggle to complete your doctorate. A Research Degree will be a huge financial and intellectual investment and if you are not able to speak and write English to a high standard you could end up wasting your time and money.

If this aspect of your application worries you, why not apply to the MRes first. You will be approaching fluency after a year in the UK and will be confident with English as an academic and technical language.

# CSAD Supervisors & Doctoral Research Communities

CSAD is home to a range of centres and groups engaged in cutting-edge, world-leading research. We have some supervisors who are clustered around common interest doctoral research and support communities:

- [CARIAD](#)
- [EBERE](#)
- [Metatechnicity Research](#)
- [The Fovolab](#)
- [FabCr8](#)
- [User Centred Design \(UCD\)](#)

Links to our six doctoral research groups can be found at this address:

- [www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/research-enterprise/Pages/Research.aspx](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/research-enterprise/Pages/Research.aspx)

We also have some supervisors who work outside of these groups, or across communities. Links to a complete list of all of our Doctoral Supervisors and areas of supervision can be found at this address:

- [www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/researchdegrees/Pages/Supervisors-and-areas-of-supervision.aspx](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/researchdegrees/Pages/Supervisors-and-areas-of-supervision.aspx)

# What Research Programmes do we offer?

CSAD provides four different research opportunities.

**PhD** A PhD is a rigorous and demanding research programme. A PhD is achieved through a sustained piece of supervised original investigative research leading to a thesis which can be theoretical or creative practice-based. This programme includes an initial research training period which is completed prior to commencement of the research.

**Professional Doctorate** A Professional Doctorate is a rigorous and demanding professional programme. The Professional Doctorate is a higher degree programme specifically structured to support a planned and/or implemented, step by step change within a professional context, informed by existing or emerging professional and academic knowledge, and/or theory.

If you don't feel ready for the high demands of an application for a doctoral research programme you may wish to consider the MRes first.

**MRes** is a taught Master of Research programme that can be used to prepare and apply for future doctoral study at any University. The MRes gives you the chance to start and to focus your research and then to continue directly onto an MPhil/PhD either with us or elsewhere at another University or Research Institute. The programme is designed to be suitable for students who have some experience of research in Art & Design and also those with little or no background experience of research at all from any field. The course starts with no preconception whatsoever with regards to where your project might start or how it might develop and has an open mind with regard to the possibilities of creative research practices in Art & Design. Application is based around a simple outline of your research ideas and ambitions.

More information on the MRes can be found online at this address:

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/artanddesign/courses/Pages/MRes-Art-Design.aspx>

# When to Apply?

## When to apply for a PhD.

Our PhD research degree programmes commences in September each year.

Applications **must** reach Cardiff Metropolitan University Admissions by the close of **30<sup>th</sup> April** each year to be considered for admission. Late applications may **not** be considered:

## When to apply for a Professional Doctorate

The Professional Doctorate programme has two starting points in the academic year: November and April. Applications must reach Cardiff Metropolitan University Admissions by close of **30<sup>th</sup> November** for enrolment in March or close of **30<sup>th</sup> June** for enrolment in October.

# How to apply if you are from the UK/EU?

Your potential supervisor will have helped you to put together an informal an PhD application proposal.

You will need to submit this together with your application by going to this address online:

- [studentselfservice.uwic.ac.uk/selfservice](https://studentselfservice.uwic.ac.uk/selfservice)

You can search and apply for your chosen course in our online system.

Please contact Admissions if you would like to complete an application form through the medium of Welsh.

Through Self Service, you are able to submit an application directly to the university. This also allows you to attach compulsory and other supporting documents such as qualifications (we advise that you upload qualifications, if completed, with your application).

In order to apply you must:

- Complete the University Application Form including details of your qualifications and the names and contact details of your academic and personal referees.
- Upload a CSAD **Initial Research Proposal**
- Upload two examples of previous **Academic Writing in English or Welsh**.
- Upload any additional [Supporting Documents](#) .

Once submitted, you are able to log in and check the status of your application.

We will process your application as quickly as possible, but please note it will not be considered until after the application deadline and may take up to eight weeks after that date.

If you are experiencing problems, do please speak to the University Admissions by telephoning: **+44 29 2041 6010**



# How to apply if you are from outside of the UK/EU?

We welcome applications from students all across the world and recognise a wide range of international qualifications. For information on making an application, including access to the International Student Application form and supporting documents, visit

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/international>

In order to apply you must:

- Complete the University Application Form including details of your qualifications and the names and contact details of your academic and personal referees. Please ensure that Section 12 of the International Student Application form addresses points 1-5 outlined in the Research Proposal section.
- Upload a CSAD **Initial Research Proposal**
- Upload two examples of previous **Academic Writing in English**.
- Upload any additional [Supporting Documents](#).

If you have any queries about your international application, contact us by email at [international@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:international@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

or telephone at **+44 29 2041 6045**.

Once your application form has been received, it will be sent to Cardiff School of Art and Design for consideration.

We will process your application as quickly as possible, but please note it will not be considered until after the application deadline and may take up to eight weeks after that date.

Applications for admission to doctoral awards is usually made by means of the submission of an initial research study application proposal together with a University application form and the identification of people who are willing to act as referees.

All applications for admission to doctoral awards are considered by the CSAD Research Degrees admissions panel. It is important to do some research first to be clear about where you think your application is best directed and the application deadlines for the award you wish to study.

You are strongly encouraged to make contact with potential supervisors or the specific doctoral programme to discuss your ideas prior to application.

# What happens next?

Once you make a formal application to study towards a doctoral award it will be considered by the Cardiff School of Art & Design Research Degrees Admissions panel, comprised of experienced doctoral research supervisors.

The panel will review every application very carefully. They will want to be sure that the applicant understands what is required of study at this level and that they are ready AND have applied to the right place to support their interests. They will want to make sure that you do not waste your time and money studying for something you seem unlikely to achieve.

Each individual application is considered in the following ways:

- An assessment from your application of your academic suitability and experience (including your English language skills).
- An assessment from your application of the viability or feasibility of your intended research project.
- An assessment from your application of the fit between your intended research project with the research expertise in Cardiff Metropolitan University and whether an appropriate supervisory team can be identified.
- Following up with academic and personal references.

As part of the application process applicants will be invited to attend an interview (either face-to-face or at a distance). This offers applicants an opportunity to discuss their proposed project with members of the doctoral awards application panel.

One of the following five decisions will be made:

- **Accept** your application unconditionally
- **Accept** your application with conditions
- **Recommend amendments** to your application for immediate or future reconsideration or redirect your application to another School of unit in Cardiff metropolitan University.

or

- **Reject** your application as it is, but **accept** your application for postgraduate study on our MRes in order to develop your research for a future re-application.
- **Reject** your application completely because it is not of sufficient standard for doctoral study or is not supportable by the expertise of Cardiff School of Art & Design or another School at Cardiff metropolitan University.

You need to allow at least six to eight weeks for this process to be completed but in some cases it may take longer.

If a conditional offer of admission is made, applicants will need to fulfil any requirements that are stipulated and provide relevant documentary evidence before enrolment can commence. For more information please refer to [www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/howtoapply](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/howtoapply).

Once you are offered a place to study for a doctoral award you will be invited to enrol via the Universities online self-service facility.

# Why apply to us?

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Pages/default.aspx>

Cardiff Metropolitan University engages in research that is at the interface of new knowledge creation and its application. With an excellent track record of accomplishment in applied research, supported by a strong base of expertise and advanced scholarship, the University's research has direct application in business, industry, the professions and the community at large.

Cardiff School of Art & Design is an exceptional place to be a research student. Our world leading research expertise in the School ranges from the empirical and scientific to the poetic and speculative. In our research, we draw upon the Arts, Sciences, Humanities and Philosophies.

We have a highly supportive creative research culture which is both vibrant and rich. This is evidenced by the range of research groups operating within disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary fields. We actively collaborate where we can with academic, cultural and industrial partners as we engage with leading edge technologies and ideas in our studies and research in architecture, engineering, material arts, fine arts, and the histories theories and philosophies of art and design.

We have almost 100 Masters students and almost 60 Doctoral Research students in our School postgraduate community all of whom generate new knowledge and have an impact in the UK and around the world.

Our Research students have published research and exhibited in the UK and around the world.

Our Research students make full use of our Perceptual Experience Laboratory (PEL), our MIT-FabLab as well as our extensive and world-class artefact and image making workshops, specialist studios and our traditional and digital technologies.

Our Research students work in a multidisciplinary, co-disciplinary or transdisciplinary way with other research disciplines as well as commercial and community sectors in society anywhere in the world and with other research centres across the wider University.

Our Research students have a dedicated Director of Studies and one or two other supervisors to support them in their studies. Once accepted, we expect our supervisors to be highly supportive of our students and so our application process is very intense.

Our University was rated as the top Modern UK University in the most recent UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) review.

# Writing your PhD Initial Research Proposal

Your research proposal should be completed on the CSAD Initial Research Proposal form. That form sets out the number of words we expect. Sharper and clearer is better.

Your supervisors will have an influence on the direction your research takes, so before you submit your formal proposal, you must approach the person or people you have in mind informally to discuss your ideas and to gauge their interest.

Make it clear in your formal proposal who you have discussed your application with and how that discussion has guided your thinking.

## **Describe any previous research experience you might have.**

This may be formal research training (eg. MRes), Research skills training as part of a postgraduate degree, or research training associated with your professional career. This will help us to determine whether you will need our research training, your answer will not affect your application.

## **What are you aiming to do in your research? (Max 400 words)**

- What is your research idea?
- How do you think you will do this?
- How did you think of this idea?

## **Why do you want to do this? (Max 400 words)**

- Why is this research important to you?
- Why do you think this research is right for you and you are right for it
- What are your future ambitions.

## **Based on academic references to current ideas and knowledge, why do you think this is an important research to do? (Max 400 words)**

- What is different about your research?
- What ideas will you be referring to in your research?
- Why do you think your research is important?

Think about the challenge for which there is no clear answer at present (uncharted territory)? What questions could conceivably (if answered appropriately) fill that gap in knowledge, or partially fill the gap?

**Research References in relation to the questions above.** (Please use the Harvard format).

A good proposal draws or touches upon other people's work within the subject. You will need to have shown how these people's work is vital to shaping or informing your research question. List all those references in the Harvard format, preferably relating to existing recent research, for example, the last 5 or 6 years and any older research or texts as appropriate.



# If you still have any questions

You can find lots of help such as fees, visas and other relevant information on the University Research Degrees website:

- <http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/research/Pages/Research-Degrees.aspx>

We are here to help.

If you still cannot find an answer to your question, or for any other enquiries regarding research degrees, please contact:

Research Degrees Programme Administrator  
**Cardiff School of Art and Design**  
Cardiff Metropolitan University  
Lanndaff Campus  
Western Avenue  
Cardiff  
CF5 2YB,  
Wales, UK.

- **+44 29 2041 6291**
- [csadresdegrees@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:csadresdegrees@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

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