POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE APPLICATIONS

Application Guidance and Process
Norwich University of the Arts welcomes postgraduate research (PGR) degree proposals leading to MPhil or PhD qualifications. The validating body for PGR degrees undertaken at Norwich University of the Arts is the University of the Arts London (UAL).

Having successfully applied and enrolled, you will also be required to register your study with UAL. You will undertake your programme of study at Norwich University of the Arts, with some seminars and presentations taking place at UAL as part of your PGR training. The University currently has one point of enrolment at the start of each academic year.

Deadlines for Applications
Preliminary applications with supporting documentation should be submitted by the following deadline to researchdegrees@norwichuni.ac.uk.

Deadline: Friday 13 March 2026

There is one point of entry to the PGR programme in 2025-26 in September.

Applicants will normally receive feedback within 4-6 weeks following each deadline.

Entry Requirements
A Master's degree in an appropriate subject is considered to be particularly valuable preparation for a research degree, although the normal minimum entry requirement is an Upper Second-Class Honours degree in a relevant discipline. Candidates who do not meet these entry requirements may also be considered if they can demonstrate alternative appropriate qualifications, professional experience and an understanding of research methodologies appropriate to their proposed area of study.

Applicants should be aware that meeting the University's minimum entry requirements does not guarantee entry. This is only one of a number of factors taken into account when the University makes its decision, including the quality of the proposal, suitability for research study, relevant experience, references, and the availability of suitable supervisors and resources. **See the Guidance on Writing a Preliminary Proposal below.**

International Applicants
All international applicants will need to apply for a Student Visa as we do not offer distance learning programmes. Please note that it is not possible for international students to study on a part-time basis if you need a Student Visa to enter the UK. The University's International Officer can provide advice and guidance on the visa application process. However, students should defer to the UKVI Student Visa Website for official advice and guidance.

The University has a responsibility for ensuring that it meets its reporting obligations under the Student Visa

Sponsorship License. This includes monitoring student attendance and engagement through key academic points during each year of study to support the University's Student Visa Sponsor status, and to meet the requirements set by the UK Government, while continuing to provide a good student experience.

If you apply and are offered a place on a course, you will need to pay a deposit of £2,000 to secure your place.

English language
If English is not your first language, you will 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 the following:

- A recent 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;

By 'recent' we mean that your English Language Test score needs to have been awarded no more than two years prior to the date that you would first enrol in the Research Degrees Programme. We cannot normally accept evidence that is older than this.

Please note that having lived or studied in an English-speaking country does not necessarily constitute sufficient proof of language proficiency and an IELTS test may still be required if the conditions noted above have not been satisfied.

You may submit an application for a place on the Research Degrees Programme before you have obtained your IELTS or equivalent test score but if you are offered a place then you would need to provide evidence of having satisfied this condition before we can enrol you. You will be required to present the original certificates confirming your qualifications before enrolment.

Please note that we can no longer accept TOEFL test results for this purpose.

Application Process

Applications are initially assessed by a panel led by the Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Chair of Research Degrees Committee. This assessment is based on a *Preliminary Application to Study for a Research Degree* form, which includes details of your qualifications and research experience and a 1,000-word outline of your proposed programme of research. We may also require examples of your creative work in an appropriate format, if relevant to your proposed research.

The initial assessment takes account of the strength and appropriateness of the proposal for doctoral level study, the experience and academic record of the applicant, the availability of supervision and resources to support the project, and any ethical questions that would need to be resolved in the early stages of devising the programme of research. After this assessment, you may be invited for a formal interview with an interviewing panel comprising academic staff including, where possible, potential supervisors for your programme of research.

The interview assessment takes account of the candidate's relevant qualifications, motivation for undertaking a research degree, experience of research, clarity of the research aims and objectives, feasibility of the proposed study, level of articulation at interview, understanding of the context of the proposed research, the strength of the candidate's own practice, and the references. The panel will

recommend the outcome the interview which will be reviewed and approved by University Research Degrees Committee.

If you are successful in gaining a place on the postgraduate research degrees programme, the University will appoint a supervisory team for your project. The team will normally be made up of a Director of Studies and a Co-Supervisor. If appropriate, a second Co-Supervisor may be added if a particular area of expertise is needed for the project. The Director of Studies will be a member of the University's research supervisors and, wherever possible, the Co-Supervisor(s) will also be drawn from the University. If the required supervisory expertise is not available internally, it may be possible to appoint an external Co-Supervisor. It is the University's responsibility to ensure a suitable supervisory team is in place which meets the criteria of the University of the Arts London so, if there is a member of staff who you would particularly like to work with, you may certainly note this in your proposal, however, it is the University that ultimately appoints and approves the team.

If your application is successful, you will be invited to enrol as a PGR student at the University. The enrolment process includes research training at NUA and as part of the Research Network of University of the Arts London (RNUAL) organised by the University of the Arts London.

Working and Studying
We recognise that embarking on a research degree is a significant financial undertaking. It is important to note that full-time students are expected to commit an average of 35 hours a week to their research and to ensure that the number of hours engaged in any form of paid employment is not excessive. During term time no more than six hours a week (including time needed for preparation) is acceptable.

Part-time students are expected to commit an average of 17.5 hours a week to their research. Paid employment may be undertaken within reason and such that it is not detrimental to your studies, normally no more than 23.5 hours paid work per week during term time.

Students requiring a visa in order to study at the University will need to check the terms and conditions relating to their eligibility to work. Depending on the type of visa, students may not undertake certain types of employment. It is not possible for international students to study on a part-time basis if they require a Student Visa to enter the UK.

Fees and Funding

Fees
Current information on fees can be found on the University website. Please note that fees may increase each year by inflation and may therefore not be the same for the duration of your course.
https://norwichuni.ac.uk/study-at-norwich/fees-funding/

Funding
Any internal funding opportunities will be advertised on the Research Degrees page of the University website.

Student Loans
If you're from the EU or the UK, you may be eligible to take out a postgraduate doctoral loan from the UK government. The loan is paid directly to you, and you can use it for your course fees and living costs. The loan will be divided equally across each year of your course. The full details, including eligibility criteria and repayment terms, can be found on the UK government website.

Registration

Once successfully enrolled, your supervisory team will assist you in developing a full proposal for submission to the University's Research Degrees Committee, so that your research degree can be formally registered with the University of the Arts London. In this submission you will indicate your intended degree (MPhil or PhD). The Research Degrees Committee will also consider the ethical dimensions of your project. If your project is considered to constitute more than minimal ethical risk, approval of your registration will also need to be sought from the University of the Arts London's Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Once your application for registration is approved, you will be officially registered for an **unspecified research degree** with the intention to complete a programme of study for an MPhil or a PhD. The degree for which you are ultimately examined is confirmed at Confirmation.

The University normally expects students to complete Registration within the first nine months of enrolment and reserves the right to discontinue any student who fails to do so, on a case-by-case basis.

Students must not undertake any 'field' research until the Research Degrees Committee and, where applicable, the University of the Arts London's Research Ethics Sub-Committee, has formally confirmed the approval of the application for registration.

Confirmation

After a probationary period (normally 12 to 18 months for full-time students and 24 to 30 months for part-time students), your supervisory team will assist you in developing your application to confirm the degree for which you will ultimately be examined.

Registration Period

You can study towards an MPhil or PhD either full-time or part-time. An MPhil will normally take at least two years to complete full-time and three to four years part-time. A PhD will normally take three to four years to complete full-time and five to six years part-time.

Typical registration periods			
MPhil	*Minimum*	*Expected*	*Maximum*
Full-time	1 year 3 months	1 year 9 months	3 years
Part-time	2 years	3 years	6 years
PhD	*Minimum*	*Expected*	*Maximum*
Full-time	2 years	3 years	4 years
Part-time	3 years	5 years	8 years

Research Supervision

PGR students at Norwich University of the Arts are entitled to the following contact hours with their supervisory team:

Full-time students: 20 contact hours a year in total
Part-time students: 10 contact hours a year in total

It is normally the responsibility of the student to request tutorials, with the exception of the annual review tutorial, which is scheduled by the Director of Studies

APPENDIX

Postgraduate Research Degree Applications

Guidance on Writing a Preliminary Proposal

Your preliminary proposal will be used as the starting point for preparing your application to register your research project with the University. We recommend that you consider each of the areas listed in your application, according to the subject and focus of your proposed project.

The proposal should be no longer than 1,000 words, excluding the list of references/ 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 or issue of the project. Unnecessarily over-long or technical words should be avoided, as should phrases such as 'an investigation into…'

Subject area, aims and objectives
You should briefly define your subject and the main concerns of the investigation, including a set of aims and objectives which will guide your research. If the proposal is primarily practice based, this section should also be used 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 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 answers. The aims and objectives are important because they declare, in a sense, the criteria for investigation, against which the success or failure of the project can be assessed. If you find it difficult to articulate your aims and objectives you might find it helpful to think of the aim as the most significant questions or problems which you hope to tackle. The objectives are the steps by which you will meet this aim. The proposal should normally have one or two aims, followed by a series of around six objectives. The idea is that by the time all the objectives are met, the aim should be achieved.

If you are intending to complete as PhD, you should indicate in your proposal what your original contribution to knowledge will be.

Historical context
There is no single history which suits all investigations but you should identify the various strands of history which 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 you are able, you should define the contemporary work that relates to your field of investigation. You must do this so as to:
- demonstrate awareness of the field in which you are working;
- demonstrate that the proposed research will have distinct features which will make it potentially

original;
- form the basis of links with other research work to which you will contribute or on which your research 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 their own work and that of others, and the sources that you use to inform your evaluation. A theoretical context will help 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 a proposal is entirely theoretical and critical, only the first and possibly the second might apply:

1. **Critical Theory:** definition of the critical concept and terms used in order to evaluate or critique experimental work;
2. **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;
3. **Projective or Generative Theory:** theory which is used to define intention and guide the experimental work that you will do.

Methodology

It is important to make a distinction between 'methodology' and research 'methods.' Methodology is concerned with the theoretical framing of the methods (techniques) used in a field of study: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods or techniques, which are sometimes described as research 'tools.' Methodology provides a theoretical underpinning for understanding which methods can be used in a particular project. Your methodological approach and the research tools which will be deployed will need to be addressed 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 rationale for using 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 be used?
- How you will record what you do and keep track of what you have done.

Proposed Outcomes

Give an indication of the proposed outcomes such as exhibition of work, portfolio, DVD, written thesis, etc. and their relationship with the research.

Main Study List and Bibliography (Harvard Method)

List the main reference works, which you will use for your research. 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.