

**KINGSTON UNIVERSITY LONDON
FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE
RESEARCH DEGREE APPLICATION GUIDANCE FOR THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE**

Entry Requirements

- A master's degree in an appropriate subject is particularly valuable.
- Minimum entry requirement normally is an upper second class honours degree from a British University or recognised institution of higher education.
- In some instances applications may be considered with appropriate qualifications, professional experience or previous research.

If English is a second language, applicants must submit copies of proficiency certificates(eg. IELTS), minimum score of 7.

Supervision

Normally a research student will be assigned a minimum of two supervisors including a Director of Studies based at the schools appropriate to the area of study, with whom meetings will normally take place twice an academic term.

Academic Support

Kingston University provides training in research methods and skills and support for research in progress throughout the year. A research student may participate in the wide range of lectures taking place in any of the faculties at the University and will have access to all libraries/collections.

Preparing a proposal for a research degree

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 should be no more than 1000 words in length.

The schematic outline below is a guide to the headings you should aim to cover 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.

You may, if you wish, replicate the headings below to define the sections of your proposal or you may just use them as a checklist for the contents of a proposal made in a different way.

Every time you use a word such as 'examine', 'test', 'investigate', 'analyse', you should give thought to how this will be done and as far as possible reflect it in the proposal.

Title: This should express the main area of enquiry, and, whilst remaining relatively brief, should imply the project's 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.

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. 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).

If your proposal is primarily practice-led, you should also use this section to anticipate the practice outcomes you will produce for your project and how it will be assessed as research.

After defining your subject, you might find it helpful to think about the main concerns of the project as questions you are asking, 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 4-5 objectives. The idea is that by the time you have met all your objectives, you should have achieved your aim. Breaking down your project into objectives should help you develop an initial work plan.

Contemporary Context: It is essential to define, as far as you are able, 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 a 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

Whilst discussion of context will almost always involve a literature review, it may also involve other media, such as design schemes executed or projected and other relevant precedents, so it is important to think about context in a holistic manner.

Theoretical Context: An element of theoretical context is important for every kind of project, though the degree of theoretical content will vary, particularly for practice-led 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.

Methodology: Your methodology is the means by which you generate supporting evidence for your claims and overall argument. You may need different methodologies for different objectives. Your research method and approach will need to be indicated 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-led 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 your methodologies require the participation of others, you will need to consider the Kingston University Code of Practice on Research Ethics in the Research Degrees Handbook carefully.

If you feel that there are ethical considerations that need to be taken into account then you must go on to complete the Research Ethics section of this form. The ethical approval process is intended to safeguard researchers, participants and others on whom the proposed research might impact, directly or indirectly. This part of the form prompts the researcher to address legal, moral, and/or ethical issues relating to the proposed research. In broad terms, the University expects all research to respect participants' rights (commercial, intellectual and civil, dignity (including privacy and confidentiality), safety and wellbeing.

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. In what order do the different objectives need to be approached?

Prediction of the Form of the Final Submission:

Think about the form of the final submission, for example:

Written thesis only Max 80,000 words in length

Scholarly edition / Catalogue + written component (30,000 words approx)

Creative, practical work + written component (normally 30-40,000 words approx)

- On what works will the examiners base their assessment?
- What will each work do?
- Is the research contribution in the process, the materials or the items produced?
- How is this recorded, documented and disseminated?

Main Study List and 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.