Research Application guidelines

The School of Arts welcomes research applications on a wide range of topics providing we are able to offer expertise which ties in with your research interests. Further information about staff research interests are contained within the Graduate Prospectus.

In the School of Arts, we are currently considering applications for the following research programmes:

- Drama: Research, PhD or MA
- Drama: Practice as Research, PhD or MA
- Film: Research, PhD
- Film: Practice as Research, PhD or MA
- History & Philosophy of Art: Research, PhD

Before you make your application, we would strongly recommend that you make contact with the School to discuss your proposed area of research. You will also find details about our academic staff and their research interests at https://www.kent.ac.uk/arts/staff-profiles/index.html

As part of the online application process you will be asked to explain your reasons for study, provide a research proposal, evidence of your previous qualifications, provide the names and contact details for two academic references, provide an academic writing sample and any other relevant supporting information.

If English is not your first language, you should also consult the language requirements which are available online here. For postgraduate programmes in the School of Arts, the minimum requirement is 6.5 IELTS (with a minimum of 6.0 in Reading and Writing and 5.5 in Speaking and Listening). It is not essential that you provide confirmation that you have achieved this level when you make your application however you will need to be able to provide evidence that you have achieved this level before you are permitted to register on a programme.

When considering your application, we need to be confident that we are able to provide you with suitable supervision, support and training as well as being satisfied that you have the necessary qualifications and experience.

There is no fixed deadline for applications for admission onto research degrees but we recommend that you apply no later than 3 months before your intended start date. We admit students to research programmes in both September and January each year.

Although there is no deadline for applying for admission onto a programme, if you are seeking funding, then most scholarship awards will have set deadlines and so you may need to consider these. Scholarship opportunities are published online here. A search tool is available to enable you to search for awards for which you may be eligible.
In the School of Arts, research students have their applications appraised by the staff in one or more of our Research Centres [https://www.kent.ac.uk/arts/research/centres.html](https://www.kent.ac.uk/arts/research/centres.html)

- Aesthetics Research Centre
- Art History and Visual Cultures Research Centre
- Centre for Film and Media Research
- Centre for Cognition, Kinesthetics and Performance
- European Theatre Research Network
- Popular and Comic Performance Research Centre

We recommend taking a look at the focus of each Centre and showing, in your proposal, how your work will link with that of the Centre you choose.

You should also investigate the research interests of our staff within the School of Arts [http://www.kent.ac.uk/arts/staff/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/arts/staff/index.html) and consider and explain how your ideas could connect with theirs.

The most important part of your application is your research proposal, its originality and feasibility. This is the main item we use to determine your suitability for joining us.

**Preparation**

- Conduct a thorough literature review
- Think about what your project is specifically trying to achieve and why this matters
- Think very clearly about the design of your project (how will you answer the questions you're setting? what are the key methods and sources you will use, and why?)
- Get feedback from your potential supervisor
- Give yourself time to write multiple drafts of the proposal
- Make clear claims not over-stated ones.

**An outstanding proposal will**

- Be both convincing to someone with expertise in that field whilst also written clearly enough to draw in a non-specialist
- Convey a strong grasp of the field to which it is contributing (clarity rather than over-statement)
- Be original and imaginative
- Convey a sense of intellectual excitement

Please find below some guidance on what to include in your proposal.

You should choose your two referees carefully: together they should have a good knowledge of your academic record to date, your research plans and your preparedness for doctoral study.
You should treat the proposal as an opportunity to show that you have begun to explore an important area of study, and that your research has the potential to challenge and develop that area. It is also important to demonstrate that you can express your ideas in clear and precise English, accessible to a non-specialist. The selectors who read your proposal know that it is a provisional statement and that your ideas, questions and approaches will change during the course of your research. You should include the following sections:

**Title**
Include a title, albeit provisional.

**Introduction**
Introduce the research issues or questions you intend to address, the context in which these are important, and the contribution your project will make to work in this field?

**Research background and questions**
- What are the key sources, texts and approaches in this field?
- What are the central issues or questions you will explore, why are they important and how do they relate to this existing work?
- How does your project differ from or extend this existing work, and what will its contribution to knowledge be?
- How has your previous study (and professional knowledge) prepared you for this project? What is the relevance of your project to the Department in which you propose to undertake it?

**Research methods**
- How will you achieve the aims that you have set for this project?
- What sources or methods will you use? (If relevant, where are these sources, e.g. archives). What theoretical framework or resources will inform the way in which you undertake this project? How will you analyse the material that you work on? Is there anything distinctive or innovative about the methods or approach you will use?
- Are there any ethical issues involved in conducting this project and how will these be addressed?

**Schedule of work**
Provide a realistic timetable for the project

**Bibliography**
Include an indicative bibliography.
Further guidelines for Practice as Research applicants

Practice as Research (PaR) differs from creative practice in that it emphasises the production of knowledge which, in the case of PhDs, must be new knowledge.

The proposed work should aim, through your practice, to illuminate or bring about knowledge and understanding in your discipline or in related disciplinary areas.

You must make it clear how your practice will contribute to answering the research questions you have set.

The emphasis is exploratory research and practice rather than pre-conceived outcomes. One of the terms under which PaR projects are permissible in a university setting is that they do not simply create content for a non-academic context. Nevertheless, your PaR project may well have a life (on stage or screen for example) beyond the university setting.

The practice component of your project may be (but is not limited to) a performance, film, a script, a series of workshops or exploratory screen-based exercises, or documentation of an exploratory creative process. If the practice component is a live performance or series of workshops, it must be recorded on video and submitted either on DVD or as a .mov file. Whatever form it takes, the practice in itself must be seen to address your scholarly research questions.

Practice will be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection.

Please ensure you do the following in your proposal:

- include the title of your research
- identify the aims and objectives of your research
- identify the research question(s), problem or hypothesis
- specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed
- explain why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what are the gaps in knowledge that you are hoping to fill?
- specify what other research is being or has been conducted in this area by referring to key performances/film/practitioners/theorists or key texts
- describe your proposed research methods and supply a rationale for them
- explain your role within the research (e.g. as actor, director, scenographer, producer, or what mix of these)
- explain the resulting research outcome and its presentation (e.g. on a DVD, as a .mov file, in live performance, as a web page, a rehearsed reading or a gallery installation)
- specify how you will document your output and your process
- indicate technical support you envisage you need and what will your budget primarily be used for
- PhD proposals should describe what particular contribution this project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.

Your research proposal should not exceed 2,500 words.