

Communication,
**Cultural and Media
Studies, Library and
Information Systems**

**PhD Researcher Subject Handbook
(2019/20)**

Welcome and Key Information

Welcome to your PhD studies in Communication, Media and Cultural Studies. We are a vibrant multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary unit, covering the subject areas above, in addition to interdisciplinary topics which engage with other subject areas within and beyond the faculty.

Key Contacts and Points of Reference

Your key contacts for subject-specific administrative matters are the subject team, Dr Robert Porter (Research Director) and Mrs Claire McAuley (Administrative Support).

Research Director and Postgraduate Tutor
Dr Robert Porter
r.porter@ulster.ac.uk

Administration/support:
Mrs. Claire McAuley
c.mcauley2@ulster.ac.uk

PhD researchers within this unit are registered at Coleraine campus.
The Head of the Doctoral College at Magee and Coleraine is Prof. Alison Gallagher
<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/contact>

See also below for information for PhD researchers, including Doctoral College forms and processes and for regulations for the PhD degree:
<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/current-phd-researchers>
https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/152200/Regulations-for-the-Degree-of-Doctor-of-Philosophy.pdf

Office Accommodation

Desk space is available across all campuses at UU (depending on projects and supervisory team). Computers are available for research writing and web-based research. More specialist facilities are also available on request, including an Apple iMac for high-end video production/post-production (with particular reference to practice research).

Research Community and Research Seminars

It is expected that all PhD researchers will make a contribution to the research community through *regular* attendance on campus at research seminars, presenting at PhD-led seminars and other events, and also through their engagement with their peers around training events, in addition to engagement with supervision meetings. (There are some additional requirements for international students holding Tier 4 visas; please see Doctoral College website for details.)

Subject Librarian

Our Faculty Subject Librarian for is Janice McQuilkin.
j.mcquilkin@ulster.ac.uk

Assessment details

Initial Assessment (around 3 months FT)

Two things are required here:

1. **Power-point presentation** to a subject panel and peers (20 mins)
2. **Annotated bibliography**(between 1000 and 2000 words).

In the annotated bibliography you need to provide a compelling rationale for the choices you've made regarding key sources.

In your PowerPoint, you need to address the following:

- Overarching themes/key research questions
- Key Literature/Disciplinary Context
- Key Methods/Methodological Issues
- Evidence of refinement and development of the project since registration
- Originality/Contribution to knowledge

Confirmation Assessment (10 - 12 months FT)

Two things are required:

Progress report (between 2000 to 2500 words). This report will detail your work under the following headings:

- a) Overarching themes/key research questions,
- b) Key Literature/Disciplinary Context,
- c) Key Methods/Methodological Issues
- d) Evidence of clear refinement and substantive development of the project since registration

2. **Draft chapter** or some other significant sample of written work (8000 to 10000 words).

Final Assessment (30 months)

One thing is required:

1. **Detailed, Illustrated and Public Seminar/Lecture** to be delivered to an audience with relevant subject expertise. In the presentation you will need to explicitly speak to:

a) the originality of your project and its specific contribution to knowledge within a clearly identified and delineated field of enquiry;

b) the key challenges and/or risks associated with the project going forward; and

c) a reflection on what might be the broader cultural, social or political significance of your project beyond the academy.

Submission and viva

Details on processes, including Notification of Intention to Submit, and Approval of Examination Arrangements (including internal and external examiners), can be found on the Doctoral College website:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/current-phd-researchers/forms>

Thesis requirements

A PhD must make a *substantive, original contribution to knowledge*, which is embodied within a research study which has both *breadth* of coverage (e.g. within the context of a literature review or a similar survey of practice) and *depth* of engagement with a particular problem/issue.

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/152200/Regulations-for-the-Degree-of-Doctor-of-Philosophy.pdf

Especially in cases for which practice is involved, the length and format may vary. The following are *indicative* guidelines:

- **Dissertation-only PhD** ('traditional' form): university guidelines state the *maximum word count* to be *100,000 words*
- **Practice-led PhD** (PhD in which practice forms a part of the investigatory process, which is examined *for the most part* through the dissertation): *indicative word count 55,000–80,000 words, plus documentation of practice*
- **Practice-based PhD** (PhD in which the major contribution is to be found in the portfolio of works, thematically related, illustrated by a *supporting thesis*): *indicative word count 30,000-45,000 words, plus portfolio*; see further discussion here:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/pdf/handbooks/The-PhD-with-practice-at-Ulster-University.pdf>

For practice-based PhDs, discussions about the nature and scale of the practice, and the form which its documentation might take, should be discussed with your supervisory team at the earliest possible opportunity, in advance of the initial assessment.

Issues and points of contact

- Ethical approval: Dr Anne Moorehead
- Expenditure, materials and travel expenses (if scholarship-funded): Dr Robert Porter
- Research seminars and events: Dr Robert Porter
- Computer/maintenance issues: Claire McAuley
- Conference hosting queries: Dr Robert Porter
- Sourcing research literature: Janice McQuilkin, Subject Librarian
- Requests to access to specialist facilities: Claire McAuley (who will liaise with appropriate staff)
- Health and Safety matters: Claire McAuley
- General administrative issues (if none of the contacts above are immediately available: contact staff in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences administrative hub where staff will be able to direct your query)

Facilities

In order to support our internationally excellent and world leading research PhD candidates will have access to a range of high end production facilities and industry level equipment. PhD Researchers have access to both broadcast and black box television studios across the campuses, industry standard production equipment for film and televisual content (4K cameras, field recorders, lighting kits, outside broadcast equipment), immersive content (high spec edit suites, 360 cameras, VR Headsets), audio (sound studios, portable audio recording equipment) and access to high end edit and production computer equipment as well as the full Adobe CC suite.