



School of Music, Drama, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies (incl. Heritage and Museum Studies)

PhD Researcher Subject Handbook

(Last Updated October 2020)

ulster.ac.uk

Welcome and Key Information

Welcome to your PhD studies in music, drama, film or heritage/museum 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, including Irish, nursing, education, computing and peace and conflict studies.

Key Contacts and Points of Reference

Your key contacts for subject-specific administrative matters are the subject team, Dr Brian Bridges (Research Director) and Ms. Leona O'Neill (Administrative Support).

Research Director and Postgraduate Tutor

Dr Brian Bridges

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28 7167 5407

bd.bridges@ulster.ac.uk

Administration/support:

Ms. Leona O'Neill

MH208, Magee campus

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l.oneill@ulster.ac.uk

Academic Excellence administrator: Ms Caroline Elvin, MH208, Magee campus

PhD researchers within this unit are registered at Magee campus.

The Head of the Doctoral College at Magee and Coleraine is Prof. Alison Gallagher

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/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/doctorscollege/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 in Foyle Arts (MQ) building; rooms MQ215 and MQ205 are currently set aside for PhD researchers. 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 film/cinematic arts students).

Research Community and Research Seminars

Research seminars generally take place every two weeks on even-numbered weeks of the autumn and spring semesters. We will also arrange a number of PhD-focussed seminars and other events, which will be notified by research unit staff at the start of the relevant terms. Other open-forum meeting will be convened by the PG tutor with PhD researchers, generally once per semester.

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 Magee campus is Janice McQuilkin. j.mcquilkin@ulster.ac.uk



Assessment details

Initial assessment

- Expected timeline: c.100 days after initial registration (full-time) c. 200 days after registration (part-time)
- Requirements:
- c.15 minute presentation on progress to dates
- submission of some initial writing (early-stage literature review, perhaps developed from the original proposal document); c.2000 words plus early-stage creative practice or c.4,000 words without creative practice
- revised project aims/research questions (developed from those submitted in proposal)
- Initial project timeline
- Indication of whether ethical approval is required and why
- Issues to consider in the presentation:
- Aims and research questions
- Context: references to key research literature and/or practices
- Discuss methodological issues, including the *form of practice, and supporting practice-based materials which will be required* • Discuss progress since registration

Confirmation assessment:

- Expected timeline: 9 months to 1 year after initial registration (full-time), 18 months to 2 years after initial registration (part-time)
- Requirements:
- 15–20 minute presentation, including details on progress to date
- submission of *representative sample of work, to include sample chapter* (indicative maximum 8,000–10,000 words; indicative minimum 4,000 words including practice or 6,000 without practice) and, in the cases of practice, representative samples of practice (e.g. substantive creative studies of a particular technique or equivalent to 1/5 to 1/3 of the overall creative portfolio) such that the candidate can demonstrate that they address the project's stated research questions; in the case of practice, it is also permissible to submit two shorter sample chapters/sections (one lit review, one analytical discussion of practice)
- revised project timeline and progress report (c.1500 words)
- where relevant, draft ethical approval documentation
- Issues to consider in the presentation
- Restate aims and research questions
- Context: discuss updated literature review/review of practices
- Update on methodology, including *the form of practice, and supporting practice-based materials which will be required*
- Discuss other progress since initial assessment
- Discuss how the project will proceed towards completion, with timeline

Final assessment

Expected timeline: within third year of research (full-time) or fifth year of research (part-time)

Requirements: assessed 20-minute research seminar presentation (where relevant, incorporating elements of practice) to a group consisting of the Research Director/Postgraduate Tutor, one other member of academic staff that is not the researcher's supervisor, and members of the PhD community.

This presentation should summarise the main *contribution to knowledge* and *significance* of your PhD to your chosen discipline (or, in the case of interdisciplinary work, combination of disciplines). It should also provide outline details about *methodology and structure* of the project and you should also use this presentation to *reflect upon any challenges associated with this work*.

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 Brian Bridges
- Computer/maintenance issues: Leona O'Neill (who will inform appropriate technical staff)
- Expenditure, materials and travel expenses (if scholarship-funded): Leona O'Neill
- Research seminars and events: Dr Brian Bridges and Leona O'Neill
- Conference hosting queries: Dr Brian Bridges
- Sourcing research literature: Janice McQuilkin, Subject Librarian
- Requests to access to specialist facilities: Leona O'Neill (who will liaise with appropriate staff)
- Health and Safety matters: Billy Scampton
- **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 in MH building, Magee campus, where staff will be able to direct your query)**

Facilities

The creative/performing arts within the School of Arts and Humanities are housed in the Foyle

Arts (MQ) Building. This houses the following specialist facilities which *may* be accessed by PhDs by prior arrangement if appropriate to their project, and with consideration for other users of these facilities.

Agreement on access to the following facilities will need to be provided by appropriate staff in advance of using facilities. Please contact Leona O'Neill in the first instance.

(Please note that many of these facilities require specialist knowledge or training to utilise properly: we may not be able to grant access to facilities unless you are able to demonstrate appropriate experience and knowledge of how to operate them safely and with appropriate consideration for equipment and other users.)

A/V Mac labs: MQ209 and MQ219 (Foyle Arts): audio and video software

Music: Recital Room, ground floor of Foyle Arts (small concert room with grand piano and PA)

Music practice rooms: basement of Foyle Arts

Cinematic Arts: 'green screen' studio

Drama: Studio A ('black box' studio), ground floor of Foyle Arts

Drama: Studio B ('white box' studio), ground floor of Foyle Arts

Drama: Dance studio (with sprung floor)

Music: Recording Studio 1 (stereo): basement of Foyle Arts

Music: Recording Studio 2 (surround/spatial audio): basement of Foyle Arts

Specialist portable media equipment (e.g. portable audio recorders, cameras, etc.) is available from Billy Scampton in MQ122, ground floor of Foyle Arts (please note that certain specialist or delicate equipment may not be available for borrowing unless staff are clear that you have the relevant skills, experience and/or training.)