

Department of Design Guidance for MPhil/Ph.D. Applicants

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

You can make an application to study for an MPhil or Ph.D. with us at any time of the year. We would expect all applicants to have a good 2.1 or 1st class honours degree (or equivalent), to have ordinarily a masters degree in a relevant discipline (or equivalent research experience) and to be suitably proficient in English (speaking and writing). There is a simple process and we recommend the following steps:

1. In the first instance you should have a look at the staff research interests to see if Design is the right department for you and whether a member of staff matches your research interests. You should then contact appropriate staff members who you think match your area of research to enquire as to whether or not they are interested in supervising your research. The University of London requires that students have two supervisors and we prefer applicants to have identified two supervisors in advance.
2. At this point you should start to develop a research proposal which should include paragraphs on the general context and significance of your intended thesis (i.e. why this research and why now), your argument (a research question or a series of questions), a provisional discussion of relevant literature and prior art and an explanation of your intended research method(s). The proposal is typically between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length.
3. If the member(s) of staff you have contacted are interested in supervising you then the next step is to make a formal application via the Goldsmiths online application system. On your application you should name the supervisors who have indicated their willingness to supervise you. At this point your application goes to a central admissions department in Goldsmiths and is then sent out to the programme leaders for a first-pass review before it gets sent to the nominated supervisors.
4. We will email you a decision as to whether or not you have been selected for interview or if you have been accepted or rejected. Unfortunately, due to the number of applications we receive, we are not able to offer feedback on unsuccessful applications.

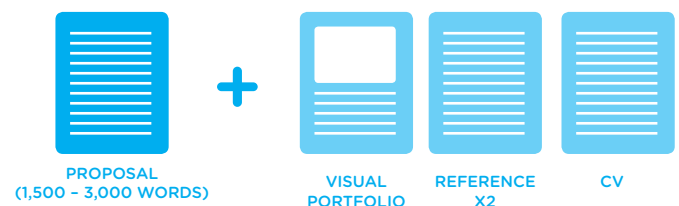
SOME USEFUL LINKS

- [Online application and accompanying material.](#)
- [Department of Design staff research interests.](#)
- [Postgraduate tuition fees.](#)
- [English Language resources – IELTS or equivalent.](#)
- [Design Star website.](#)

AT A GLANCE



WHAT YOU NEED TO PREPARE



& IF APPLYING FOR DESIGN STAR...



Your MPhil/Ph.D. proposal should describe the programme of enquiry and investigation you anticipate pursuing with us. We recognise that your research direction is likely to change and become more detailed as you progress, so the proposal should be considered a starting point. Nonetheless, it should demonstrate that you are capable of framing your own agenda for research and that you have a sense of the larger field to which you wish to make a creative and critical contribution. The proposal should be between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length. The key consideration in drafting the proposal should be clarity.

Your research proposal should be organised using the following headings:

1. TITLE

Be as concise and explicit as you can (we also know this is provisional).

2. INTRODUCTION

Use this section to introduce the questions and issues central to your research. Identify the field of study in broad terms and indicate how you expect your research to contribute to the field.

3. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND QUESTIONS

Use this section to expand your Introduction. What are the key sources, texts and approaches in the field? How does your proposal differ from existing lines of argument? What does your project contribute to existing work in the field? How does it extend our understanding of particular questions or topics? You need to set out your research questions as clearly as possible. Identify the problems that you want to explore and explain why it is important to do so.

Typically, applicants highlight the research questions and aims by way of three to four bullet points.

Please use this section to indicate how your previous studies, professional and/or other experience contribute to your understanding of the field and your preparedness for research. In other words, think about how to situate your project in the context of the university and its disciplines. If appropriate, you can also discuss the relevance of your research to non-academic institutions and audiences.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Give a brief statement detailing the methodology you will employ to achieve the aims set out in the previous sections. Your focus here will depend very much on your discipline(s) and research topic. You can consider the following questions (no one project will require you to answer them all): Does your project involve archival sources, particular databases or specialist libraries? Will you need access to facilities at another institution? Is your study interdisciplinary? How does your creative practice contribute to your research? What theoretical resources do you intend to use and why? Is your research based on the work of a single author or a group of writers or texts?

What forms of textual, historical, visual or material analysis are relevant to your topic? Is there a 'gap' in established approaches to your field of study that you want to explore? Are there ethical issues that you need to address in undertaking your research? Will you be involved in fieldwork?

5. SCHEDULE OF WORK

Use this section to show that you have a realistic plan for completion of the project within the period of the award. You may want to think here about dividing the proposal into sections (not necessarily chapters at this stage) with a timetable for researching and writing up each section.

6. REFERENCES

Include a list of works cited, in a standard format such as Harvard, listing any books and articles to which you refer in the proposal as well as prior art. This is indicative, not exhaustive (and is included in the character count).

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

- **Visual Portfolio:** for the purpose of the initial application it is recommended that you prepare a portfolio of material documenting your previous work. We typically ask for a ten-page annotated portfolio in the form of a PDF file which you can upload to the Goldsmiths application website.
- **Supervisors:** we recommend that you contact and liaise with prospective supervisors in order to develop your research proposal. If, for some reason, you are unable to do this, please indicate an appropriate supervisor from the Department's staff list. Nominating supervisors indicates that you have a good grasp of your research and helps us to direct your application to appropriate members of staff and in determining a good match between your research and the Department. Please see the description of Design staff research interests on the department's web page (see useful links above).
- **Referees:** should be individuals who have worked with you in a professional context (e.g. as a lecturer/tutor or as a manager/employer/commissioner) which would enable them to comment on your aptitude for further studies. The function of their comments is to provide the application review committee with a clear sense of the applicant's suitability for Ph.D. study in the context of the Graduate School (see [Goldsmiths' Graduate School website](#)).



Design Star additional application form

Include your name and answer the following questions (max 2 sides A4)

Which Design Star university have you applied to?

What is the provisional title of your thesis?

Who are your supervisors?

Are you studying part-time or full-time?

Why will being part of Design Star be important for you, and for your research?

Design Star has a strong student voice. What do you hope to contribute?

Which of our external partners is most aligned with your research topic and how might you engage with them to enhance it?

What would you hope to gain from a placement with one of our external partners?

Now please send your application as PDF to the Design Star contact at the relevant Design Star university.