

## **Thesis requirements for practice-based MPhil/PhD projects – departmental guidance**

According to the Research Degree regulations section 14 para (2) to (5), if you've undertaken research in which practice forms a core methodology and mode of enquiry, the MPhil/PhD submission may include a body of creative work devised specifically for the degree together with a body of critical/theoretical writing.

The precise balance between the creative and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team. The following is a suggested breakdown:

- a) a substantial body of creative work;
- b) between 10,000 – 60,000 words of critical/theoretical writing.

Discipline-specific guidance on thesis requirements can be found below. Please read in conjunction with the [Research Degree regulations](#).

### School of Performing and Digital Arts guidance

- [Drama and Theatre Studies guidance](#)
- [Media Arts, Film, Television and Digital Media guidance](#)
- [Music](#)
  - o [Composition](#)
  - o [Performance Practice](#)

### School of Humanities guidance

- [Creative writing and poetic practice guidance](#)
- [History guidance](#)
- [Classics guidance](#)
- [Languages, Literatures and Cultures guidance](#)
  - o [Translation work](#)

### School of Life Sciences and the Environment

- [Geography guidance](#)

## **School of Performing and Digital Arts**

### **Drama and Theatre Studies:**

- Your MPhil/PhD submission may include a live performance (broadly defined) or a piece of creative writing (normally a play script) devised specifically for the degree, together with a body of critical/theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field. Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by your thesis as a whole.
- The relationship between the practical/creative and critical/theoretical components of the thesis will vary depending on the specific project.
- The exact balance will be decided between you and your supervisory team, however, the following is a suggested breakdown:
  - (a) a substantial body of performance or creative work;
  - (b) normally 30,000 – 60,000 words of critical writing.
- Live performance work submitted as part of your MPhil/PhD will be appropriately documented, and a retainable record of the performance(s) or other creative practices will be submitted in a form which has been approved by the School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

### **Media Arts, Film, Television and Digital Media**

- Your MPhil/PhD submission may include a body of creative work, including creative writing, undertaken for the degree together with a body of critical/theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the specific project but will be examined as an integrated whole.
- The precise balance between the creative and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team. However, the following is a suggested breakdown:
  - (a) a substantial body of creative work;
  - (b) normally 30,000 – 60,000 words of critical writing.
- In the case of creative writing the thesis may run to 120,000 words in total depending on the nature of the creative written work you are submitting.
- If an exhibition, live performance or other non-textual creative work is to be submitted as part of your MPhil/PhD, it will be appropriately documented and a retainable record of these creative practices will be submitted in a form that has been approved by your supervisory team.

### **Music**

- You can submit in either a written format, in accordance with the normal provisions for a Research Degree thesis, or in a practical format.
- If you are submitting a standard monograph thesis, it may be accompanied by illustrative material in the form of recorded and/or live performance, together with a retainable record of the performance in a form which has been approved by the School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. All components of the thesis will be submitted concurrently and examined as an integrated whole.
- Composition:

- You may submit a major work or portfolio of works of original compositions accompanied by a written commentary, components which together constitute the thesis.
- Your composition work should show artistic skill, coherence, and originality, should bear relation to the research questions outlined in the written commentary, and should include supporting recorded material of as many of the compositions as possible in a form which has been approved by the School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.
- Your written commentary should outline the compositionally driven research questions governing the submission as a whole and should reflect on the creative processes involved in producing the portfolio by employing intellectually rigorous analytical and critical techniques.
- The commentary should also make clear that you are well acquainted with the history and contemporary developments of the genre(s) in which you are working in the creative portion of the thesis, and the associated critical field or fields, and you are able independently to analyse, interpret and evaluate associated debates and theoretical positions.
- All components of your thesis shall together present an integrated argument and shall be submitted concurrently and examined as an integrated whole.
- The duration of the composition work and the length of the commentary will be decided between you and your supervisory team, however the guide durations are as follows:
  - PhD
    - between 75 and 100 minutes of original composition work;
    - 15,000–20,000 words of critical writing.
  - MPhil
    - between 45 and 60 minutes of original composition work;
    - 10,000–13,000 words of critical writing.
- Performance practice:
  - You may submit performance material, presented as one or more concerts, recitals or recordings, accompanied by a written commentary or study, components which together constitute the thesis.
  - The performances should show artistic skill, insight and technical mastery, and should bear relation to the research questions outlined in the written component.
  - All the performance material to be considered as part of the thesis should be made available to the examiners and recorded for archiving with the written component.
  - The written component should outline the performance-driven research questions governing the submission as a whole and make clear the significance of the performances by employing intellectually rigorous analytical and critical techniques.
  - The commentary should also make clear that you are well acquainted with the history and contemporary developments of the genre or genres in which they are working in the creative portion of the thesis, and the associated critical field or fields, and is able independently to analyse, interpret and evaluate associated debates and theoretical positions.
  - All components of your thesis shall together present an integrated argument and shall be submitted concurrently and examined as an integrated whole.

## School of Humanities

### Creative writing or Poetic practice

- Your thesis will comprise a body of creative work devised specifically for the degree together with a body of critical/theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the specific project.
- Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis as a whole.
- The exact balance between the creative and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team; however, the following is a suggested breakdown, though in all cases the critical writing element must be a minimum of 20,000 words:
  - Fiction:
    - o The thesis is normally between 80,000-150,000 words in total:
      - 60,000–90,000 words of creative writing;
      - 20,000–60,000 words of critical writing.
  - Poetry and Poetic Practice:
    - o The thesis is the equivalent of normally between 80,000-150,000 words in total:
      - 45–60 pages of poetry or equivalent practice-based output;
      - 20,000–60,000 words of critical writing.

### History

- Your submission may include a body of creative and/or curatorial and/or archival work conceived specially for the degree.
- The practice element of your MPhil/PhD will be informed by research and appropriately documented.
- A retainable record of these creative practices will be submitted in a form which has been approved by your supervisory team, together with a body usually 30,000-60,000 words of critical and theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the project. Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis as a whole.
- The exact balance between the creative, theoretical and critical elements of your thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team.

### Classics

- Your submission may include a body of creative and/or curatorial and/or archival work conceived specially for the degree.
- The practice element of your MPhil/PhD will be informed by research and appropriately documented.
- A retainable record of all non-textual creative practices, such as an exhibition or live performance, will be submitted in a form which has been approved by your supervisory

team and the School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, together with a body usually 30,000-60,000 words of critical and theoretical writing.

- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the project. Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis as a whole.
- The exact balance between the creative, theoretical and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team.

### **Languages, Literatures and Cultures (French, German, Hispanic Studies or Italian)**

- Your submission may include a body of creative and/or curatorial and/or archival work conceived specially for the degree.
- The practice element of the PhD will be informed by research and appropriately documented.
- A retainable record of these creative practices will be submitted as a portfolio, together with a body usually 30,000-60,000 words of critical and theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the project.
- Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis as a whole, and should total between 80,000 and 100,000 words.
- The exact balance between the creative, theoretical and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team.
- If undertaking translation work:
  - o Your MPhil/PhD submission will consist of a body of translation work that is of publishable quality, and a critical commentary on the translation work which is informed by scholarly research.
  - o The precise balance between the translation and critical components of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team.
    - The length of the target text will depend on the nature of the source material, but will usually be between 20,000 and 50,000 words.
    - The critical commentary will usually be between 30,000 and 50,000 words.
    - The target text and the critical commentary should be submitted concurrently and will be examined as an integrated whole, which should be between 80,000 and 100,000 words. The source text will be included as an appendix and not counted in the word count.

## **School of Life Sciences and the Environment**

### **Geography:**

- Your MPhil/PhD submission may include a body of creative work devised specially for the degree together with a body of critical/theoretical writing.
- Both will show coherence, originality and intellectual rigour, illustrating knowledge and understanding of relevant practice and critical debates in the field.
- The relationship between the creative and critical/theoretical components will vary depending on the specific project.
- Taken together, they will demonstrate the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis as a whole.
- The exact balance between the creative and critical elements of the thesis will be decided between you and your supervisory team; however, the following is a suggested breakdown:
  - A substantial body of creative work;
  - Normally 30,000-60,000 words of critical writing.
- If an exhibition, live performance or other non-textual creative work is to be submitted as part of the MPhil/PhD, it will be appropriately documented and a retainable record of these creative practices will be submitted in a form which has been approved by the supervisory team and the School Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.