



Doctoral College

The UK's top arts University for world-leading research

(REF 2021)

Why Should I Do a PhD at UCA?

UCA is the UK's top specialist art and design university for world-leading research outputs in the most recent Research Excellence Framework. We are the second highest-ranked specialist creative university in the UK for 2024, according to The Guardian. You'll be part of our imaginative, supportive research community at our UCA Doctoral College, where you'll have a regular base to design your own studies, explore your chosen field, make academic connections and develop unique and impressive work.

We offer an inclusive programme of PhD study, with intensive support to develop your research plan in the first year at our Doctoral College in beautiful Canterbury, an hour south of London in the UK. Thereafter, you may remain in our community in Canterbury or join one of our campuses in Farnham or Epsom to access specialist advisors and facilities, depending on your research project.

We encourage graduate students with a 2:1 or first to apply to study with us; you don't have to have a creative arts undergraduate degree, and many people come to us from a professional background. Our students are composers, animators, visual artists, historians, filmmakers, architects, game designers – we welcome everyone interested in undertaking cutting-edge work in an exciting, multi-disciplinary community

Our PhD programme has an emphasis on society and sustainability, supporting students to build their projects with our partners in industry, education, and the local community. Our students' projects have impact from the outset and engage with some of the most important questions and problems of our time.

Can I Do a PhD Part-Time, or with a Practice Component?

Over half of our student body is undertaking a practice-based PhD, which might include for example making films, sculptures, robots, garments, or games alongside writing a 35-45,000 word thesis. Other students write a full 65-85,000 word thesis. International students come to study with us on a full-time residential basis, and home students have the option of undertaking study part-time or full-time. All of our students have at least two supervisors, and monthly supervisory meetings take place online or in person.

What Kind of Financial Support Will I Get at UCA?

If you're from the UK or the EU, you may be eligible to take out a [PhD loan](#) from the UK government. We are delighted to offer [several scholarships](#) including full studentships (fee waivers and stipend), fee waivers, open scholarships, and a collaborative award. While you are most welcome to propose your own research topic in your application, you may wish to apply to one of the projects below, some of which come with funding and all of which come with pre-arranged supervision teams. If you do decide to apply to one of the projects below, please indicate this in your application and discuss why you are a good candidate for it.

UCA runs an additional student support fund for research degree students, providing up to £300 per student per year to support research costs such as specialist external training, writing retreats, materials, attendance at conferences, or the cost of staging an exhibition of practice work for your final examination.

What Kind of Support Will I Get at UCA?

We offer a warm social and educational environment that is tailored to support your study. The first part of the degree is face-to-face, at our Doctoral College in the heart of Canterbury. It is designed to help you develop your research plan, equip you with the skills you will need to succeed, and get to know your colleagues.

With this foundation in place, students will go on to build their creative practices, travel, and move if needed to be closer to their supervisors and facilities, if they are on one of our other campuses. At each campus there is dedicated space to work, and at the Doctoral College there are two floors of desks, surrounded by the research degrees support team and our research professors.

Throughout, you will have access to our year-round programme of workshops; writing retreats; field trips; a 'graduate forum' of lectures and outings; an international speaker seminar series; gallery spaces for exhibiting; monthly writing workshops, and an annual student-run conference. Most importantly, you will be supported by the wider UCA research community, with faculty members across all of our Schools actively engaging our students in projects, events and assistant teaching.

Where Will I Stay?

There is lovely accommodation at our 'PhD village', the Riverside in Canterbury, which is earmarked for some of our students. Others are renting privately; sharing rental houses in Canterbury, Farnham, Epsom, and London, and others still are in student accommodation on our Farnham campus.

How Do I Apply?

Our application portal is open now, and the first round closes on April 10th 2024, with interviews scheduled for the first two weeks of May. Applicants in this round will be prioritised for consideration for our studentships. There is a second round of applications that closes on June 10th, with interviews scheduled for the first two weeks of July. Applicants in this round will be eligible for consideration for any remaining unallocated studentships/fee waivers.

We have an inclusive application process. Applicants register first online and will receive an email with a link to our application form. The form requests personal (educational, employment) details, as well as a 2-minute video stating your motivation for study, a >3,000 word writing sample (which can be any writing, including an undergraduate essay), and a short 'project idea'. If you are offered a place to study with us, you will be supported to develop your project idea into a full research proposal and plan.



