PHD/MPHIL HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY 2024-5

PUBLISHED BY THE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AT UCC

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Philosophy (www.ucc.ie/en/philosophy/) invites prospective students to apply for its currently offered Postgraduate Programmes in Philosophy. Faculty expertise includes, but is not limited, to the following fields: Political Philosophy, Phenomenology, Moral Philosophy, both theoretical and applied (esp. to climate change policy), Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Economics, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy and Public Policy, Social Ontology, Feminism, and Environmental Philosophy.

2. THE STRUCTURED PHD

During their programme of study students will normally take course work to the value of 30 credits, at least 20 of which must be taken from an approved list of modules by the Department of Philosophy, which can include, but does not require, taking PH7001 and other approved modules. Generic skills modules (e.g. as offered by the CACSSS Graduate School) or other relevant modules may be taken to the value of the remaining credits depending on departmental approval (see also UCC Calendar: https://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Doctor/page001.html)

Students are also encouraged to discuss their work with faculty members other than their supervisors and, in particular, to actively participate in various formal and informal academic activities of Postgraduate students in the Discipline, the School of Society, Politics, and Ethics, and the University as a whole.

In addition, all students will be supervised by a supervisory team, or have a sole supervisor and a PhD advisor.

If you are currently registered as a student and wish to take discipline specific academic modules in 2024/25, please complete the Discipline Specific Module Form (available at https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/currentresearchstudents/modules/).

Generic skills modules (e.g. as offered by the CACSSS Graduate School) or other relevant modules may be taken to the value of the remaining credits depending on departmental approval.

3. NOTE ON OTHER POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES INVOLVING PHILOSOPHY:

In addition to the PhD and the MPhil programmes, there are currently

- Other taught postgraduate programmes in Philosophy:
  - MA in Philosophy; PG Diploma in Philosophy; HDip in Philosophy
- Postgraduate programmes involving coursework in Philosophy
  - MA in Health and Society; LLM in Human Rights Law and Public Policy; MSc International Public Policy and Diplomacy

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES (PHD & MPHIL)

A) Contact

Research Postgraduate Degree Programmes in Philosophy include the PhD and MPhil degree programmes. All Candidates applying to research degree programmes need to contact the Director of Graduate Studies (Dr Bengt Autzen: bengt.autzen@ucc.ie) and their Prospective Supervisor to discuss their proposed area of research prior to making a research application. It is not possible to make a research application without having a research topic naming a supervisor.

B) Apply Online

Visit https://www.ucc.ie/en/apply/

5. WRITING A PROPOSAL FOR A PHD IN PHILOSOPHY

A) GENERAL POINTS

It is important to remember that the principal criterion for the award of a PhD is that the submission constitutes an original contribution to knowledge. To establish your project in these terms you need to determine the area of philosophy into which you are contributing.

Having established the field of inquiry and what is 'known' about your topic already, you then need to demonstrate how your thesis will add something original and significant to the field.

It may do this in a variety of ways - for example, by redressing a bias or oversight in the existing literature, or by applying a new method (such as a practice-based approach) to yield new insights to an established field, or by simply being the first to systematically study an important phenomenon.

There is no need to make your research conform to a rigid 'scientific' model. Think about how and why your work is innovative and important (e.g. culturally, socially, environmentally, historically, or in terms of a technical breakthrough or an aesthetic or conceptual development within a field of practice) and try to articulate this clearly, making reference to other significant research.

B) STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL/SYNOPSIS

i) Length: Approximately 1500 words.

ii) Working title: Give a working title that describes the nature of your project. You may use a 'poetic' title, but it is useful to indicate, after a colon, the nature of the study or your approach.

iii) Statement of topic and aims: Identify the general subject area and outline how your topic relates to the field. Establish why it is a significant topic and what contribution your work will make.

iv) Review of literature and relevant practice: The 'literature review' is a major part of a proposal. In order to demonstrate that your project makes a significant contribution to the field, you need to show that you are aware of the traditions and 'state of the art' research in that field.

The literature review should not be approached like an undergraduate essay, surveying a broad field. Its purpose is to set-up your particular research project, and it should therefore be focused and evaluative, rather than general. For example, if you are researching a topic such as 'body image', do not give a general account the work of Foucault, Freud, feminist theory etc. Try to focus on key concepts from earlier work and be aware of the way in which these have already been applied in your area. Indicate where earlier work – both theoretical and practical - has taken us and what remains to be done.

Do not provide a reading list (though it may be useful to do this with your supervisor at some point). The proposal should demonstrate that you have a grasp of existing work – and that you know enough about the field to determine an area of inquiry or a starting point for research. (NB. The literature/area review will become more detailed and sophisticated in the synopses that you develop in the course of a PhD, and may form the basis of an introductory chapter.)

v) Method/ Approach: Outline how you will approach your topic. Your aim should be to demonstrate that your chosen method or approach will serve to advance your thesis or argument.

There are many established research 'methodologies'. In an initial proposal you need to give some indication of how your project will be realized.

Some theses take up a particular theoretical position, inspired by key philosophers, thinkers or practitioners. Rather than adopting an entire philosophy, you may propose to borrow specific concepts from certain writers and apply them to a particular area or within a particular practice. If you are doing this, identify which concepts are useful and how you will apply them in order to achieve a particular result.

6. SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR PH.D. APPLICANTS

see: https://www.ucc.ie/en/cacsss/grads/future_postgrads/research_courses/phds/

In addition to the information included in this section, see also:
http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Doctor/page001.html

A) ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration for entry to a programme of study and research for the Degree of PhD, a candidate must have obtained a standard of at least Second Class Honours, Grade I, in an approved primary degree, or other such other evidence under the University's policy for *Recognition of Prior Learning for Admission to Research Degrees*.

B) APPLICATION DATES

Applications for PhD programmes are accepted throughout the year. Prospective students are advised to complete their applications at least two months in advance of their desired start date as all applications go through two different stages of approval: Department and College.

The four start dates during the year are January, April, July and October.

C) DURATION

Candidates normally pursue research for a period of three years full-time from the date of first registration for the programme.

7. ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW FOR PHD STUDENTS

A formal research progress review is held annually.

PhD students must complete a Research Learning Plan by month 3 of year 1, which outlines the plan for their training and research that year, as agreed with their Supervisory Team. PhD students must submit a progress report by the end of month 9 of year 1, and every year thereafter until submission of their thesis (including beyond their approved period of study).

A Progress Review Panel (PRP) is appointed for each PhD student. The PRP comprises of two members of staff (at a minimum), one of whom will normally be a member of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). These members of staff are independent from the research of the student under review.

The progress review includes a meeting between the PhD student and PRP.

The PRP will make one of the following recommendations:

a) The PhD student's progress is satisfactory, and that the student may progress to the next stage.
b) That there were some concerns/shortcomings. The student is required to undertake a re-review within 3 months from the date of recommendation.

Full details on the UCC policy on Progress Reviews for Research Students can be found here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/gs-policies/uccpolicyonprogressreviewsforresearchstudents/#:~:text=All%20Students%20at%20UCC%20must,has%20with%20their%20Supervisory%20Team.

8. FEES AND GRANTS

A) GENERAL INFORMATION

For updated information on fees and grants see:

https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/studytaught/apply/

On acceptance to a postgraduate programme, students are liable to pay tuition fees to the University. University fees are set each year and include the registration fee, tuition fee and examination fee. For full time programmes, membership of the Mardyke Arena Sports and Leisure Complex is also included in the course fee. (www.mardykearena.com)

A student's classification as EU or non-EU will be determined by the Fees Office. For further information on how fee status is determined, please contact the Fees Office.

In addition to programme fees students should budget for their own living costs, including accommodation.

The Postgraduate Fee Schedule by programme is available to view (https://www.ucc.ie/en/financeoffice/fees/).

The fee quoted refers to the cost of attending a programme on a full-time basis. Fees for part-time study are normally charged at half the full-time fee.

B) STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

As part of an initiative to tackle educational disadvantage, an European Structural Fund aided Student Assistance Fund has been made available to University College Cork by the Department of Education and Science. The Student Assistance Fund is funded by the Department of Education and Science, with assistance from the European Social Fund. All full-time registered students, undergraduate and postgraduate are eligible to apply for assistance from the fund. Resources will be targeted at those disadvantaged students most in need. In order to be eligible to apply for student assistance, you must be registered on a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate course of not less than one year's duration in a participating college. Unlike the maintenance grant schemes, you cannot be considered for Student Assistance prior to registering in a participating college.

For further information please contact:

Finance Office, University College Cork

Tel: +353 21-4903929/2365

Email: fees@fin.ucc.ie

C) CURRENT FEES FOR PHD CANDIDATES IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS, CELTIC STUDIES, AND SOCIALS SCIENCES

For details on current fees, see https://www.ucc.ie/en/financeoffice/fees/schedules/feeschedules202425/.

9. FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Philosophy Department strives to support its student with several different kinds of funding opportunities. Many students are supported throughout their PhD experience through studentships paying part or all of their tuition and fees.

A. FUNDING FROM OUTSIDE OF THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

There a number of internal and external funding opportunities available. See:

https://www.ucc.ie/en/scholarships/postgraduate/artspg/

http://www.research.ie/

http://www.findaphd.com/funding/

http://www.scholarshipportal.eu/

http://www.jpf.org.uk/japanesestudies/funding.php

for details on Irish and European funding opportunities including the Erasmus Mobility Scholarship Scheme, the William J Leen Postgraduate Scholarships, and IRC scholarships.

Students from countries other than Ireland are strongly encouraged to look into possibilities to be funded through scholarship programmes in their home countries (such as Fulbright Scholarships, Chinese Government Scholarships, Canadian Postgraduate Scholarships, etc.)

We also strongly recommend that you join the PHILOS-L list serve. http://listserv.liv.ac.uk/archives/philos-l.html. It is based in Europe, and serves as the largest notice board for all events and opportunities in Philosophy internationally.

B. TRAVEL AND RESEARCH FUNDS

The department has a limited amount of funds to help students pay for travel to and from conferences where they are presenting, or to perform similar kinds of professional-development activities.

10. FAQ'S FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

https://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/faq/