



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences PhD | Master of Arts (Research)

Application and Proposal Information for Prospective Students 2024

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BEFORE YOU APPLY

Start the process early. It can often take between three and six months before the application [deadlines](#) to get a good proposal together.

Research Your Faculty and School

All applications need to come in through the central university portal at the Graduate Research School (GRS). However, **all admission decisions and scholarship decisions** are made at the Faculty level based on the quality of your research proposal, your previous studies, your CV, and supervisor support. You can familiarise yourself with our FASS research areas and disciplinary specialisations by exploring our [research degrees webpage](#), our [Research Centres and Groups](#) and this [Faculty webpage](#).

Types of Degree

We offer PhDs and Master of Arts (Research) degrees.

A **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** is an internationally recognised graduate research program that will enable you to become an independent researcher. With the guidance of an advisory team, you'll undertake a research project, produce an 80,000 to 100,000-word thesis and develop advanced research skills and knowledge in your chosen field. The thesis is a substantial document that makes an original contribution to your field of research. Your thesis may involve an alternate format such as a creative practice or practice-led output. Students are allocated a candidature period of 4 years full-time or 8 years part-time, but scholarship durations may be 3.5 years (please see page 6 below). You will need to plan your research timeline with consideration of both the candidature and scholarship timelines.

You will need a strong academic background and you may need to submit a research proposal and other documents to support your application.

If you are already a professional and your organization is interested in supporting your research with agreed project deliverables back to the organization, you may consider an [Industry Doctorate Program](#).

A **Master of Arts (Research)** is an internationally recognised graduate research degree. With guidance from your supervisory team, you will undertake a significant research project and complete a 40,000 to 50,000-word thesis. In some circumstances, your thesis may involve an alternate format, such as creative works, with a word count in the 15,000-20,000 range. The MA (Research) will take you 1.5 to 2 years to complete full time and will enable you to develop advanced knowledge and methodologies.

MA (Research) work is done independently and you will need a strong academic background to apply. You will need to submit a research proposal and other documents to support your application.

These are the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences course codes:

C02097 Doctor of Philosophy

- 016018 PhD Thesis: Education

C02098 Doctor of Philosophy

- 51915 PhD Thesis: Communication
- 979114 PhD Thesis: International

C03066 Master of Arts (Research)

- 016017 Thesis (Education)

C03067 Master of Arts (Research)

- 51914 Thesis (Communication)
- 979113 Thesis (International)

If you are a domestic student, you will be expected to come to UTS for induction, some training and events throughout each research session (with the exception of time spent overseas doing fieldwork if relevant). Please check with your supervisor and HDR Coordinator if unsure about this on campus study requirement.

If you are an international student, you can choose between an on-campus PhD, for which you will be expected to move to Sydney, and a **PhD by Distance mode**, which is described as follows:

PhDs are available in distance mode, an option that allows you to follow your aspiration to be a PhD researcher without disrupting your lifestyle, family, and work. There is no need to apply for and obtain a student visa, and you will also save on accommodation, travel, and other relocation costs. You may also be eligible for a competitive tuition-fee offset scholarship, depending on your admission score. All other application processes are the same as for all graduate research degrees. For more information, visit the **PhD by Distance** webpage.

Workload and Time Commitment

Success in Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) depends on your scholarly capacity, but other conditions have a big influence too. You need to judge carefully if your circumstances will be favourable for the study you propose. Here are some things to consider:

FASS has a mandatory subject entitled **51913 Academic Research Practice** that you will need to complete in your first year. This involves 32 hours of class attendance and related work and assessments across one session. It is offered **online**.

Full-time students will need to be finished by 4 years (for PhD) and 2 years (for Masters). Scholarships may finish by 3.5 years, and you will need to plan with this in mind. Full-time means we expect you to dedicate 35 hours per week to your graduate research study. Up to one day per week (8 hours per week) pursuing relevant employment may be appropriate (subject to negotiation with your supervisor).

Part-time enrolment means half-time (so 8 years for a Doctorate, 4 years for a Masters). For part-time, you need to be able to dedicate an average of 17 hours to your academic study per week over the course of a session.

Help with the Online Application Process

You can find detailed information about how to prepare your documents on [this webpage](#).

Email the UTS Graduate Research School (GRS) at grs@uts.edu.au if you have any questions about the online application process itself. This is not overseen by the faculty or your supervisor. GRS also run a [Zoom counter](#) every day from Monday to Friday at 2 time slots: so please feel free to drop in during these hours.

If you are an international student, you must comply with [English Language Requirements](#).

UTS has agents located worldwide, who can **assist you with information about UTS and our application process**. Our agents receive training and support from UTS, to ensure they have the right knowledge about UTS and UTS courses to assist you. You will find [on these pages a list](#) of our official agents, who can provide assistance to you on behalf of UTS.

Scholarships

Available UTS Scholarship and Australian Government Scholarships are automatically considered when you apply: there is no separate application for scholarships.

Students may obtain Research Training Program places supported by the Federal Government to help with tuition fees, even if they are not awarded a scholarship stipend. RTP places are available for both full-time and part-time students and is automatically taken into consideration with your application. Be aware that if you do not submit a thesis within your allocated candidature time, UTS may begin charging you tuition fees for the remaining time even, if you receive an RTP tuition scholarship for your original candidature time.

International applicants: Mention scholarships received (from home country or AusAID) or if applying for UTS Scholarships (this is just a box you tick on the online form; you do not need to specify which scholarship).

Domestic applicants: Mention if you will be applying for scholarships.

There is a scoring system for admissions and for scholarships. You should discuss this with your potential supervisor and School HDR Coordinator. Scholarships are allocated competitively through a ranking system, and hence will depend on the others who have applied in the same round.

Finding your Supervisors

Identifying potential supervisors

Do not send mass or bulk emails to FASS staff members. You can identify suitable supervisors through searching or browsing across UTS websites, such as the following:

- [Postgraduate research degrees in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences](#)
- [Browse our Research Centres and Research Groups to find your research home and supervisor](#)
- [Browse supervisors looking for students in specific areas](#)
- [Browse academic staff in FASS](#) (click on profile to find FASS staff that accept students for supervision)
- [Search for supervisor by research topic](#) (this is a university-wide search)
- [Search UTS Expert Profiles](#)

Do your homework. Look up what our staff have been publishing and researching, and read their work where possible. Only contact those with relevant expertise. Does the supervisor have expertise in the relevant focus area, theory and/or methodology to be used?

If you cannot find a supervisor above, email your CV and short Research Proposal to FASS.HDR@uts.edu.au, and the Faculty and School HDR Coordinators can help you find a supervisor.

Contacting your supervisor

You will need to obtain email approval from two potential thesis supervisors before you apply: the Principal Supervisor and the Co-supervisor. Contact the potential Principal Supervisor first, and they will help to find a suitable Co-supervisor.

In your email to potential supervisors please include: your proposal, your CV, a copy of your official transcripts, and if relevant, the English translation of your transcripts. Include any research-related subjects undertaken, training, or assessment you have completed.

Finally, send your potential supervisor a short (2 pages) rough **outline of your research proposal**, not just an email describing your topic. Supervisors need to get a sense of the kind of research you want to do and what you know about the existing scholarly literature in the field (including specific names and publications). Making clear reference to the potential supervisor's published work is a good thing to do, if you can. At the least, make sure that you are using language and ideas that clearly fit with what you know about the supervisor you are approaching.

Working with your supervisor

Once a supervisor has agreed to support your study, you may request that they provide feedback on a draft proposal. Embrace feedback from supervisors to improve your proposal. This is a taster for you and for the supervisor as to what working together will be like if you are admitted. We want to see that you respond positively and effectively to feedback, and that you're ready to send drafts that you know aren't perfect. Please make sure to have a couple of meetings in person or online with your potential supervisor to see if you can get along.

NB: Supervisors may indicate provisional support for your application, but their final decision will only go directly to UTS once your application is submitted. Admission decisions are made by a university committee and not by any individual supervisor.

Key Applications Documents

Curriculum Vitae

We need to know about your qualifications and past employment. You can find a CV template and information about the kind of content you can include in your CV under the "Prepare your documents" link [here](#). You can also use the list below to help you highlight relevant things about yourself:

- the application of knowledge in original ways to problems of acknowledged importance
- new expressions of knowledge or creative insight
- disseminating knowledge to a professional or academic community
- engagement in research projects
- involvement in research commercialisation
- service on committees or panels, in relation to research/professional activity
- contributions of a scholarly kind to the affairs of a professional organization, learned society or community group
- authorship, direction or execution of performances, productions, exhibitions, or designs appropriate to the discipline or medium concerned
- experience with collaborative projects

- participation in formulating or assessing funded research proposals
- invitations to act in an expert capacity
- editorial contributions to scholarly journals and other professional publications
- contribution to professional practice, acknowledged by appropriate peer recognition
- successful involvement in consultancy work in terms of its contribution to the advancement of knowledge and/or its applications, and of professional practice
- invitations to address scholarly or professional meetings and conferences etc.
- evidence of leadership, such as the ability to guide, inspire and influence others in the attainment of organizational and/or professional goals
- evidence of drawing on knowledge from a range of sources and applying it to professional practice

Research Proposal

Your research proposal will need to address the following criteria:

- Significance of the work as argued in the proposal
- Demonstration of preliminary engagement with the literature (this means demonstrating an initial capacity to summarise and synthesise academic ideas)
- Clear identification of research topic
- Evidence of postgraduate research capacity (as evident through your CV, including any professional esteem, awards, publications etc.)
- Originality of research topic (this means originality *vis a vis* existing scholarship in your field of research)
- Match with supervisor and match with [Faculty research priorities](#).

If you have academic research publications, creative outputs or other non-traditional research outputs, please list them in detail in your CV, and attach a copy to your proposal. If it is a commercially published book, please just give details of publication.

See below for an example template for a HDR Research Proposal, which should be roughly 3000 words in total.

Please note, UTS uses plagiarism detection software for all applications.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

A good proposal needs to be **at least 2000 words and up to 3000 is allowed**. Here is a template:

[The title of your research proposal should be a clear description of your proposed research project. NOT your research question.]

Your Name Here

Background Context and Significance

This section should explain the background and context of the proposed research work with an indication of the **main contribution to knowledge** that you wish to make. Indicate why this area is an important area for research (including creative practice research). What is your discipline or field of inquiry, and what is the broad significance of your proposed research within this discipline or field of inquiry? This could also be expressed as a research problem if needed. A research problem is the topic you would like to investigate through conventional scholarly research practices or through non-traditional forms of creative practice. You can also use this section to comment on some of the industry or professional outcomes you anticipate emerging from the project (e.g. applications of the research to specific challenges in an industry with which you are reasonably familiar).

Aims and Objectives

You should spell out your research aim and the objectives for your research to show what you want to achieve. A **research aim** is an intention or aspiration for your research: what you hope to achieve, in broad terms, at the end of the project. A **research objective** is a specific goal or a step on the way to meeting your research aims. Objectives use specific statements that define measurable or tangible outcomes.

Literature Review

This section is a review of the scholarly literature which should outline the most important research and/or creative work that has already been carried out in your research area, including any connections to your potential supervisors' research. For practitioners proposing creative practice research, the literature review could include a review of industry practice or reports. This literature review is not a simple list or a summary, but a synthesis of the available research and practice in your proposed area. This will be half the content of your proposal (so, around 1500 words). End the literature review with a **possible research question** that will contribute to building new knowledge in this area. A research question is a way of expressing your interest in a problem or phenomenon. There are many examples and suggestion in blogs such as [Nick Hopwood](#), [Patter](#) and [Thesis Whisperer](#).

If you are not currently affiliated with a university or do not have access to research literature, you can access them through various portals such as: [CORE](#), [DOAJ](#), [ERIC](#), [SSRN](#), [Paperity](#), [OpenDOAR](#). You can search for books on [DOAB](#), and also locate books in public libraries in your geographic through [WorldCat](#). Finally, you can access publications by UTS scholars (including your proposed supervisor) through UTS' Open Access Repository at [OPUS](#) and other Australian Universities via [AOASG](#).

Research Methodology / Research Design

This section is a broad outline of the methodology (research design) you plan to use, including:

- Theories and theoretical frameworks. This may include theorists, concepts, or critical frameworks that have been often used for the topic or that you plan to introduce in your approach to the topic.
- The broad methodological approach, which should describe your underlying assumptions and orientation when acquiring or developing new knowledge. This could include qualitative and quantitative approaches in social research; ethnography and autoethnography; phenomenology; hermeneutics and interpretation; creative practice research; history and historiography; document studies, archival studies, and museum studies; design thinking, user experience, and mixed-methods; and so on.
- Context for how data, information, case studies or examples will be gathered during the project, and how you plan to analyse or interpret that data. For example, you might adopt as tools Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Content Analysis, Archival Analysis, Reflective Practice, Performative Research, Place-based methodologies, Design Methodologies, Narrative Analysis, Statistical Analysis, or Computational Analysis (this is not an exhaustive list).
- Ethical considerations. This is especially important if the research involves interaction with humans. Where applicable, consider how research participants may be approached and how consent from people might be obtained. Also think about how you will protect yourself from harm during your research, or from the consequences of any research dissemination. Ethical considerations may include online digital and social media research: just because you can see something on the Internet, does not mean you can use it as data for your research without explicit permission and clearance from the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee. You can have a look at the [Research Ethics](#) website, and state if you will apply for Ethics approval.

Resources Required

UTS will provide you a desk and computer (desktop or laptop), and regular office resources such as access to a printer, and also access to bibliographic and other databases through the university library, which is one of the best in Australia. If you require additional equipment (camera, audio equipment etc.) or fieldwork expenses, mention it here.

Note: No need to ask for the following in your application, but for HDR students, UTS provides a **limited** amount for fieldwork expenses if needed during your second-third of research candidature, some conference travel money related to publications from your thesis, and also limited thesis editing expenses, provided you are on track and performed satisfactorily on all your annual stage assessments.

Research Plan and Timeline

This section should summarise the steps and approximate timing within a six-monthly schedule over the number of years of candidature for your degree.

Below is an example timetable for PhD – 3.5 to 4 years full-time. The Master of Arts (Research) is 2 years full-time: it has a similar structure but instead of 3 stages there will be 2 Stages.

Activities	Timeline							
	January 2024 July 2024	August 2024 December 2024	January 2025 July 2025	August 2025 December 2025	January 2026 July 2026	August 2026 December 2026	January 2027 July 2027	August 2027 December 2027
Literature Review								
Develop Methodologies, Research Instruments, and Ethics application			Complete Stage 1					
Data Collection								
Data Analysis					Complete Stage 2			
Draft Dissertation							Complete Stage 3	
Final Dissertation								

You can learn more about the stages of your graduate research study [here](#).

Connection to UTS Research

This section should explain how the intended research fits with UTS research priorities. Talk to your potential supervisors for this section. You might also revisit the [FASS Research Groups](#) to consider how your project connects with different themes and strengths in FASS research.

Also look up [UTS 2027 Strategy](#) and identify where your research fits in and speak to it within your application.

List of Works Cited

This section is a list of all the sources that have been cited within your proposal. Do not include readings or resources that have not actually been cited in the text (this is a list of works cited, not a bibliography). Use a consistent style of referencing (e.g. APA, Chicago, Harvard etc.) and refer mostly to peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly monographs, and official documents or statistics, if any. If you are not familiar with referencing styles, please look up [this page](#).

The list of works cited should have at least 10-15 highly relevant references and also 4-5 references on the research methodology that relate to your proposed research methods, such as participant observation, creative practice, surveys, interviews, data analysis methods, and so on (see **Research methodology / Research design** above).

Once your proposal is ready and once you have received the approval of your potential Principal Supervisor and Co-supervisor, you can [apply online](#). Have a look at [this page](#) for more information.