

University of Brighton Doctoral College

Is a PhD for me?

A guide to doing a PhD at Brighton

This brochure has been designed to help you decide if you would like to study for a PhD at Brighton. We will explain what a PhD is, what qualifications you need to get a place, how to identify if we have the appropriate expertise to supervise your topic and how to make that potentially life changing application.

What is a PhD?



A PhD is the highest academic degree that can be studied in the UK. It involves carrying out an original and independent piece of research which is examined via the submission of a thesis and a Viva Voce (oral examination).

Undertaking a PhD is a huge challenge but you will be supported throughout your time with us. You will have at least two supervisors who have expertise in your area; and as a member of the Doctoral College you will have access to a team of specialists in postgraduate research, including both academics and administrators, who are responsible for the delivery of the research degree programme.

Louisa Buck, a part-time doctoral student, has benefitted from the support she received from the University of Brighton in achieving her goal of undertaking a PhD.

Louisa has been an artist all her life. But having taken a career break to start a family she found it difficult to get back in to the world of art. The University of Brighton has helped Louisa unlock a new world of creative and career possibilities.

“It's hard work and I spend a lot of time in the company of books but I've never loved something so much”.

Louisa Buck, PhD student, School of Art, Design & Media

Why Brighton?

You will join a university committed to delivering research which contributes to economic, cultural and social wellbeing, on a global scale. Throughout your time here you will be supported to think about how your research will impact upon people, their societies and economies.

As a member of the Doctoral College you will join a vibrant and diverse community of over 500 postgraduate research students from across a wide range of disciplines.

Research students are a key and valued part of our research environment and we strive to provide a supportive and encouraging environment. You will have access to a varied programme of research seminars, workshops and annual research student conferences.

You will have access to world class facilities, whatever your subject, from textile looms, human movement laboratories, molecular biology facilities, hospitals and more. The university is committed to investing in cutting edge facilities; our most recent investment includes a new £14m state-of-the-art Advanced Engineering Centre (AEC) at the university's Moulsecoomb campus.

We have strong links with industry, the public sector and many professions including organisations such as the National Health Service, Ricardo, Castrol, GlaxoSmithKline, Blond McIndoe Research Foundation, Biocompatibles, Action in Rural Sussex, Neater Solutions, NuDrive, Victoria & Albert Museum, and the English Institute of Sport.



Advanced Engineering building, Moulsecoomb, artists impression

Introducing the Doctoral College

The Doctoral College oversees postgraduate research at Brighton. The College is comprised of Research Student Administrators and Directors of Postgraduate Studies who are responsible for the delivery of research degree programmes. Our specialist administrators guide students and supervisors through the administrative processes required from admission through to examination. Directors of Postgraduate Studies are responsible for overseeing the well-being, progress and pastoral support of all the research students within the College.



Professor Neil Ravenscroft, Director of Brighton Doctoral College

“Doctoral research is the lifeblood of all universities; not only does it prepare the next generation of researchers and scholars, it also underpins our essential quest for new knowledge about the big problems facing us all”.

Our community of scholars

We have students undertaking PhDs at different stages of their lives, and they come from a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds. Our college is internationally diverse with more than 50 countries worldwide represented.

What you will all have in common is a passion for your subject and research. As your PhD will be your life for 3-5 years (depending on whether you are studying full or part time) you need to have the motivation to learn, to develop yourself as an independent researcher and of course an abundance of commitment and determination. Don't forget that it is also vital to maintain a good life work balance. At times this may seem impossible but this is when you need to remember you are not alone, you have your peers, supervisors, Doctoral College staff and the university's support services to help you during the harder times. We will also be there to celebrate with you when you complete your studies.

Routes to your research degree

<p><i>'Traditional' PhD</i></p> <p>3 year programme suitable for applicants with a Masters degree and/or the appropriate research training who are ready to engage with a major research project.</p>	<p>We normally require a masters qualification with evidence of appropriate research methods training. Exceptionally we may accept a good honours degree or equivalent where there is evidence of appropriate research skills</p>
<p><i>'Extended' PhD</i></p> <p>3.5 year programme for those who need some additional research training in order to engage with a major research project. The additional training, which will be assessed via the admissions process, will be integrated into your initial doctoral studies, allowing you to progress at your own pace.</p>	<p>A second-class honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject with some evidence of research skills appropriate to postgraduate research study</p>
<p><i>'Integrated' PhD</i></p> <p>A 4 year degree normally for students who do not have a Masters degree and/or the appropriate research training. During the first year students undertake taught and assessed modules which they are required to complete successfully before progressing to doctoral study. Your precise training requirements will be assessed via the admissions process and when you arrive at Brighton.</p>	<p>A second-class honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject.</p>
<p><i>Professional Doctorate (EdD)</i></p> <p>A 5 year degree intended for experienced, practising education professionals. Applicants will normally have at least four years of appropriate professional experiences.</p>	<p>A qualification, normally at Master's level in a relevant subject or appropriate research experience. An application made by someone with research experience but with no Master's level qualification will be considered on its merits and will normally require independent academic references.</p> <p>Applicants will normally have at least four years of appropriate professional experiences.</p>
<p><i>Professional Doctorate (EngD)</i></p> <p>A full-time 4 year degree for entry in October only. Applicants will normally have at least four years of appropriate professional experiences.</p>	<p>The normal minimum entry requirement is a 2(i) Honours degree in a relevant subject or a recognised equivalent. A 2(ii) may be acceptable if supplemented with a relevant postgraduate qualification and/or substantial industrial experience.</p>
<p><i>PhD by Publication</i></p> <p>1 year (available full time & part time)</p>	<p>The PhD by Publication is a route only open to those with substantial existing research publications, representing a systematic study in a single or related fields and a distinctive contribution to knowledge</p>

How do I know if you can supervise me?

There are generally two ways in which you can join one of our doctoral programmes: by submitting your own proposal or by applying to study a subject proposed by doctoral supervisors. In the former case we will help to identify appropriate supervisors who can help you develop your work, while in the latter you will be expected to develop the subject that has been proposed into an independent piece of work that can make an original contribution to knowledge.

We advertise PhD projects, so unless you are applying for an advertised project you would normally be required to apply with a research topic of your own choosing.

If you are unsure if we can supervise your research topic, please get in touch with us. In some instances we may have to tell you that we cannot supervise as it would not be in your best interests to accept you if we are unable to provide the necessary facilities and supervision.

Currently doctoral research is organised into three broad areas of activity.

Arts & Humanities	Life, health & Physical Sciences	Social Sciences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts Practice & Performance; Design Research• Spatial Research, including architecture, interior architecture and Urban Studies• Media• Philosophy, Politics and Ethics• Memory, Narrative and Histories• Twenty-First Century Writings• Design History and Material Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pharmacy, Bioscience, Sports Science, Chemistry• Medicine• Health Professions, including Nursing & Midwifery• Civil Engineering, Built Environment and Urban Planning• Geography, Geology and Environmental Sciences• Computer Science and Informatics• Mathematics & Physics• Mechanical, Electrical and Design Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business & Management Studies• Service Management• Sociology and Psychology• Social Work and Social Policy• Education• Sport, Leisure & Tourism• Hotel and Catering Management• Retail Management

Will I get any training to support me during my research degree?

We recognise the importance of PhD students developing a broad range of skills to carry out their research and for those skills to be transferrable into a variety of workplaces and work environments.

All research students have access to the University Researcher Development Framework (URDF). The URDF delivers specially designed workshops which support you throughout the duration of your studies. The purpose of the programme is to support your intellectual and research development and to add value to your research degree experience.

Teaching opportunities may be available for research students within their schools and if this is of interest to you we advise you to speak with your supervisors about potential opportunities. Students who take up this opportunity are supported through the university's teaching and learning workshops.

Research-specific training will mainly be provided by your school and in agreement with your supervisors.



Nikolay Burlutskiy meeting with his supervisor Professor Miltos Petridis

"I am not sure what the future holds for me, maybe academia maybe research and development, but what I do know is that at the University of Brighton I am getting the right training to take me wherever I want to go".

Nikolay Burlutskiy, PhD student, School of Computing, Engineering & Mathematics

What are the annual fees?

Fees vary depending on the programme of study you undertake and whether you are from the UK, EU or from overseas. We publish our fees annually at

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/applying/index.aspx>

You may also be charged an additional consumable or bench fee. This will vary depending on your project requirements and this fee will be agreed with you and your supervisors before an offer is made.

Is there funding available?

Undertaking a PhD is both an intellectual and financial commitment, so before you make an application you need to consider how you will fund yourself.

Research Council Doctoral Studentships

The University of Brighton, in collaboration with a number of other universities, is recognised by a number of UK Research Councils (AHRC, EPSRC, ESRC) as a centre for doctoral training in arts, humanities, social science and engineering. Each year we advertise a number of funded projects in each of these areas, although there are restrictions on who is eligible to receive the awards. Details can be found at <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/funding-opportunities-and-studentships/index.aspx>

University of Brighton Studentships

Since 2012, the University of Brighton has committed nearly £1 million annually to supporting doctoral studentships. Other studentships are also sometimes available so we advise you to check our funding opportunities page regularly <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/funding-opportunities-and-studentships/index.aspx>

University of Brighton International Research Scholarships

We have two international research scholarships worth the full tuition fee (for up to a maximum of 3 years) which are available annually to outstanding international research students in all areas of study. There are some restrictions to who can apply, so please check your eligibility here www.brighton.ac.uk/scholarships/internationalresearch

For additional information on funding opportunities please visit our website here

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/funding-opportunities-and-studentships/index.aspx>

How do I make my application?

You can make an on-line application through our website here

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/applying/index.aspx>. During the application process you are supported by a Research Student Administrator (RSA) who will be administratively responsible for the programme to which you are applying. The RSAs can provide you with advice from your initial enquiry through to when a decision is made on your application, so help is always at hand.

To find out more, including what documentation you need to provide visit

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research-degrees/applying/important-for-your-application.aspx>

As long you meet our basic eligibility criteria your application will be circulated for consideration. We aim to make decisions on postgraduate research applications within 6 weeks, although this can vary depending on the area that you are applying to.



How to contact us

If you would like to speak to someone about postgraduate research Brighton, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Brighton-Doctoral-College@brighton.ac.uk

+44(0)1273 642915

We look forward to receiving your application.