

# **RGU: RESEARCH DEGREE OPPORTUNITIES**

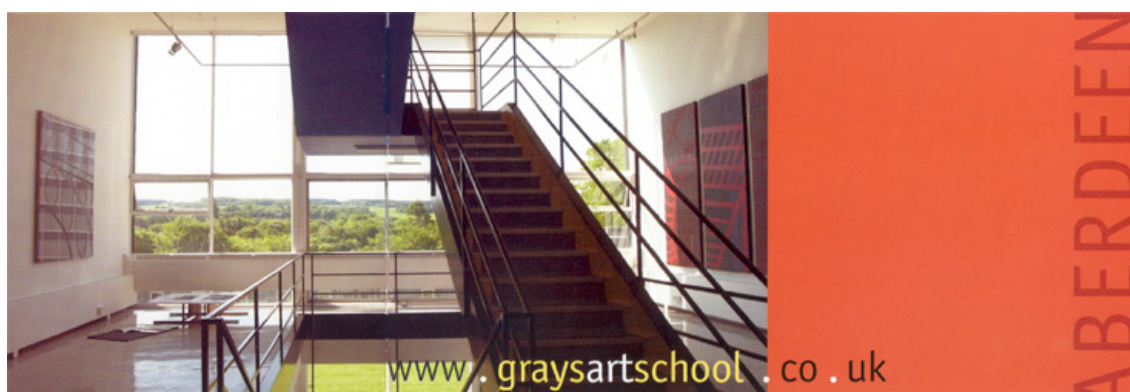
## **GRAY'S SCHOOL OF ART**

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### **About the School**

Gray's School of Art is one of four schools in the Faculty of Design and Technology, at the Robert Gordon University. It provides a highly challenging and stimulating place to undertake research and has a worldwide reputation for quality and distinctiveness. Situated in the beautiful parkland on the University's Garthdee Campus on the banks of the River Dee, the purpose-built facilities provides an exceptional environment in which to study.

The School offers a range of undergraduate courses in Art, Design and New Media, and at postgraduate level a Masters Programme with individual study routes leading to Master of Fine Art (MFA) or Master of Design (MDes) awards. All of the Masters routes are underpinned and

informed by the research undertaken by the staff of the School.

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### **Philosophy of Research Degrees**

Gray's School of Art has played an important role in the development of doctoral research in Art and Design in the UK and beyond since 1988. Through the supervision and subsequent completion of PhDs along with the development of research papers, journal articles and books, the School has developed a clear position on a PhD framework which includes practice as a central element in the research process. However, advanced practice alone is not regarded as research in this context.

Doctoral proposals are welcomed from suitably experienced individuals who can demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm for their own practice, and a clear

awareness of its critical context. We encourage an interdisciplinary approach to research. Proposals should be strategically focused (see Research Thematics). Candidates are required to produce a thesis – an argument - which may comprise a written text, a new body of work/artefacts, and other relevant evidence in appropriate media.

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## Research Thematics in the School

Research foci currently include:

- **Art and the Public Sphere**

which has at its core a set of experimental, aesthetic and formal research practices that explore 'public' as a construct through the creation of diverse intersecting 'publics'. This research is concerned with understanding the critical conditions and processes in art that lead to the development of cultural value and cultural meaning.

- **Challenging Making**

which captures the ethos of the 'makar', old Scots for 'poet' meaning the individual as maker. This research explores the poetics of form as defined and shaped by individual practices as these respond to change triggered by new technology or economic and ecological sustainability.

- **Design Research**

which aims to develop creative collaborations with SMEs and service organisations to help bring about ethical design-led change and innovation in processes and products, through research projects that encourage new thinking and test new approaches.

- **Art and Design Pedagogy**

which develops applied research in the teaching and learning of art and design. It places the autonomy of the learner at the centre of the experience of making art. This research develops philosophies and processes addressing the learner's needs in response to the changing nature of professional and academic practice.

These areas are not mutually exclusive and all impact on each other in various ways.

Recent/current initiatives include a major research programme *On the Edge*

([www.ontheadgeresearch.org](http://www.ontheadgeresearch.org)), an international conference *Challenging Craft* ([www.challengingcraft.org](http://www.challengingcraft.org)), research projects such as *IDEAS in Public Space*, refereed conference and journal publications, and books e.g. *Visualizing Research* ([www.visualizingresearch.info](http://www.visualizingresearch.info)).

The School has had many successfully completed PhD and MPhil research projects since 1992. Click here to see to see the full list - Completed Research for Higher Degrees.

The School has had a number of Research Council funded studentships (EPSRC, AHRC) involving collaborations with relevant industrial and commercial bodies, and other regional organisations. The School continues to welcome research proposals that seek to collaborate with external organisations where relevant.

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## The International Perspective

The School has links with art institutions throughout Europe and internationally, involving staff and student exchanges and joint projects. Staff are involved in some of the most important international creative and critical platforms and networks e.g. Venice Biennale, Sensuous Knowledge, Korean World Ceramics Biennale, European Academy of Design, Material Thinking. They are regularly invited to give keynote presentations/papers at conferences and seminars both nationally and internationally.

The Guests@Grays lecture programme hosts significant international speakers that contribute to shaping our research agenda, such as Fred Inglis (a leading exponent critical cultural studies), Stuart Walker (an authority on sustainable design and craft), Helen and Newton Harrison (founders of art and ecology). Selected lectures are recorded, transcribed and published on the School's web sites (e.g. Inglis on [www.ontheadgeresearch.org](http://www.ontheadgeresearch.org)).

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## Future Developments

The School wishes to develop doctoral research that mirrors the creative nature of Art and Design. This embraces research that is directly relevant to current

professional contexts (extending PhD work completed to date) as well as research that challenges and anticipates future contexts and issues.

The intention is that doctoral studies should be aligned to the research thematics identified previously. We welcome research proposals from suitably qualified and enthusiastic creative and critical practitioners, with a commitment to contributing to research in the sector.



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## Academic Support

All research students are allocated a Principal Supervisor and additional second supervisors, drawing on appropriate experts in the University and also on occasions incorporating individuals externally. A great deal of importance is placed on the effective relationship between the research student and his or her supervisory team, in particular the Principal Supervisor. A School Research Student Co-ordinator provides organisational support to all the research students and supervisors. The School has some of the most experienced supervisors and examiners in the art and design sector, who have been at the forefront of developments in research and research student education.



Regular research seminars are held in the School to which students are invited to attend and make presentations. In addition the School offers a week-long Research Student Summer School in August each year, designed to provide subject specific research training and support.

The University offers research students a taught programme in research methods designed to develop the skills necessary to achieve an MPhil or PhD in the subject of their choice by independent study.

Research students are allocated a base as part of a community of researchers within a shared work environment. Facilities include a dedicated workspace equipped with networked computing access. The rest of the School's facilities are available to students as required, to support practice elements e.g. studio space and workshops. The specialist library, based at the Garthdee Campus, provides a full range of services to research students, including journals, interlibrary loans, access to library catalogues nation-wide and extensive indexing and abstracting services.

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## Research Degrees

For full-time candidates, the normal period of study is 12 months for MSc/MRes/MPhil, and an additional 24 months following transfer to PhD (36 months in total). For part-time study the minimum period is 21 months for MSc/MRes/MPhil and an additional 21 months for PhD (42 months in total).

Normally, a full-time student is expected to devote an average of at least 35 hours each week to their research studies. A part-time student is expected to devote 12 hours on average each week to their studies. All new students are automatically enrolled on the University's course in Research Methods training (unless exempted through prior experience/knowledge).

Before or during the first year of study, all candidates are required to submit a satisfactory research proposal detailing:

- The background to the research topic and an explanation of its significance.
- An summary of research already undertaken in the field and an indication of areas still requiring investigation.
- A statement of the aim and objectives of the research project.
- An outline of the methods and techniques to be used for gathering/generating evidence.
- A timescale for the estimated completion of the research.
- A statement of the likely originality of the research (for PhD candidates).

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## Application Procedures

Application forms for research students are available from the Research Degrees Office on request. Alternatively, an online version is available from:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/research/degrees/>

Applications should include a draft proposal or at least a short summary (approx 300 words) to indicate the potential area of research. Applications may be submitted at any time, but there may be separate deadlines for applicants for research studentships.

Completed application forms should be returned to:

Research Degrees Office  
The Robert Gordon University  
Schoolhill  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1FR

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## How to Contact Us

For all informal enquiries please contact:

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