

The PhD in Creative Writing

The **PhD** programme in Creative Writing provides you with the opportunity to engage in individual research over three to four years of full-time study or six years of part-time study under the supervision of a member of academic staff who is a specialist in your field, leading to a dissertation that includes creative work and a critical commentary.

Creative Component:

Your research will be carried out through your own creative practice, and will lead to a novel, a collection of short stories, a book length poetry collection or other major piece of writing.

Critical Component:

Students will produce a critical commentary that meets doctoral-level requirements for literary scholarship, contextualises their own writing, and demonstrates a critical understanding of the writing process. This component of the dissertation has taken many forms in our School but is not limited to these:

- scholarly analysis of a particular genre, such as historical fiction or ecopoetics,
- a detailed study of one or more writers,
- an exploration of a particular concept or idea.

This work would usually take the form of a piece of critical writing of between thirty to forty thousand words. There can be exceptions to these word counts, depending on the nature, scale and ambition of the creative work, and these would be determined through the supervision process. We find that achieving the necessary research base for this work normally requires extensive reading in the range of 300-400 works of criticism, creative writing, and historical or formal contexts.

When working towards a PhD both the creative and critical components should be considered as research methods that address the questions identified at the start of your doctoral study (see guidelines for a proposal below). In both RSP advising sessions and STA or LSA examinations, these two parts of the dissertation will be read and considered together; the student will be required to put them into productive conversation.

In all cases, candidates for the PhD will be guided by your initial research questions and conversations with supervisors. The final composition of the submitted thesis will be a matter of negotiation between the supervisor and the candidate, but will be approximately 70% creative work and 30% critical work. The total writing count for a prose dissertation is normally 80-100K words, or a poetry equivalent as negotiated with the supervisor.

***Fuller information on requirements, resources, and coursework can be found in the “School of English, Drama and Film Information for Students: Structured PhD” form.**

The PhD vs. The MFA

While the one-year **MFA** is a studio qualification which focuses on the generation of a creative project or body of work, the **PhD** is an academic qualification which combines creative, practice-based writing with academic research. The **PhD** is completed with the supervision of a member of academic staff who is a specialist in the field, a Research Study Panel of critical and creative faculty, and examination stages that assess the project as a whole. The dissertation requires the student to place creative work and a critical commentary into sustained conversation over the course of the degree. The PhD candidate is also expected to engage fully with the research and writing life of the School by presenting work, attending research talks, and organizing events.

The Proposal

In order to be considered for the PhD programme you should produce a proposal. The proposal should include:

1. Title of PhD.
2. The research questions (probably between three and five) the PhD will seek to answer.
3. The research context in which you are working, including a bibliography of key texts (these should include both creative and critical works).
4. The creative and critical research methods you will use.
5. A schedule for the research process. You should include main chapter headings and a timeline for their completion as well as other key stages in the research process.
6. The outcomes of the research, that is a poetry collection, novel, short stories, creative non-fiction, critical writing etc
7. A writing sample of approximately 5000 words of creative prose or 10-15 pages of poetry. You should also include a sample of critical writing up to 3000 words.

Responses to 1-5 above should not exceed 1000 words.

Please note that PhD applications are now accepted for entry in September, January and May.

The UCD Structured PhD Programme

UCD offers a structured PhD Programme. The College of Arts and Humanities requires that all incoming PhD students obtain at least 30 credits in addition to the dissertation before a PhD will be awarded.

As part of your successful application your supervisor has finalised a **Research Studies Panel (RSP)**. The purpose of the RSP is to support the supervisor- student relationship, to monitor the student's progress during the course of their doctoral studies and to provide advice and support both to the student and supervisor. Research Studies Panels should will take place at *least* one a year (twice in the first year of full-time study).

Students are also required to submit written work and undergo assessment of their progress in the dissertation in a **Stage Transfer Assessment (STA)**, 18 months (upper limit) full time after beginning their studies and 27 months (upper limit) part time after beginning their studies.

An overview of the PhD structures and protocols is provided on the UCD Graduate Studies Website. Once enrolled, students are further supported by a Student Hub website and a local Graduate Administrator. <https://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/forstaff/doctoralsupervision/structuredphd/>

More detailed information on the School of English, Drama, and Film requirements, resources, and available modules can be found in the "Information for Students: Structured PhD" form.