CIT Crawford College of Art & Design | Postgraduate Research

Outline of the application process for prospective students

Applications are welcome from students wishing to pursue postgraduate research study at Masters and Doctoral levels. Prospective candidates must apply to be accepted onto the Postgraduate Research Register before commencing their studies. Below is a list of the steps involved in the formal application process and in most cases these steps are taken in the order they are presented here. It is important to bear in mind the timescale for the process outlined here is estimated at 3 months, or longer, so prospective candidates should account for this against their desired starting date.

- **Step 1**: Expression of interest by a prospective student is made to the college by emailing ccad.research@cit.ie and the initial formulation of a research proposal. You will then be invited to submit a 300-400-word statement outlining your research interests. This will be forwarded to the research committee who will contact you if your project can be supported within the institute.

- **Step 2**: If the proposed project can be facilitated within the college you will be linked with appropriate supervisors who will provide support through the following stages of the application. To establish whether you have the necessary entry requirements for a postgraduate programme of study at CIT, you may be required to submit appropriate certification and/or formal transcripts from previous awarding institutions. The funding of the research should also be clarified at this stage.

- **Step 3**: You work with the advice of the proposed supervisor(s) with a view to establishing a formal research proposal which is then appraised by a panel of internal and external reviewers. Templates for research proposals are available to support the structuring of the proposal and your supervisor will assist you in completing, or adapting the template, to your needs. See templates here http://www.cit.ie/prospectivestudents/postgraduates/templates

- **Step 4**: When the proposal is ready for submission an application/registration form is completed by both the applicant and proposed supervisor(s). Related documents such as CVs, certificates or transcripts of results from qualifying exams, letters of support, references, language certification, etc. should be included with the form. The registration form entitled 'CIT Postgraduate Research Registration Form' is available at http://www.cit.ie/prospectivestudents/postgraduates/templates

- **Step 5**: The candidate may be required to attend a pre-application interview with the relevant Head of Department and at least one proposed supervisor. This clarifies if there is a need for any additional information or resources to support the application.

- **Step 6**: The final proposal and application/registration form is submitted by the supervisor and/or relevant Head of Department to the Graduate School for final approval.

- **Step 7**: Registration of the applicant as a postgraduate student at CIT with an agreed starting date for the formal course of study.

Some notes on writing your research proposal

All applicants for postgraduate research degrees, at Masters or PhD level, are required to submit a research proposal before progressing to the formal application process. Within this you must describe the nature and quality of the intended research. It is essential that you identify a suitable supervisor to help you refine your ideas before submitting the proposal formally.

What is a research proposal?

The purpose of the research proposal is to aid the direction and focus of the proposed research, particularly within the early stages - typically within the first quarter. It provides your supervisor with a statement of intent and places the topic of research clearly within a field of a given discipline or recognised creative or professional

practice. Within the initial proposal you are expected to submit written statement that provides the concept, background and description of the intended work; this includes your intended research questions, aims, objectives, and research methodologies. The following may be helpful in assisting you to create a realistic and achievable proposal that demonstrates your knowledge of the general field and the areas that you are keen to explore and develop through your research. While it is recognised that each proposal will be different depending on the nature of the project or conventions within a particular academic discipline, you may find it useful to organise your proposal under the following generic headings.

These are adapted from the generic templates provided at:

http://www.cit.ie/prospectivestudents/postgraduates/templates

1. Abstract
The abstract should summarise in about 250 words everything that is to follow under the various headings in the research proposal.

2. The research context
You should demonstrate familiarity with the academic literature, theories and creative practice relevant to your proposal and show an awareness of the key discourses that have been developed in your selected field of research. You should present a clear statement of the state of current relevant scholarship demonstrating the gaps in knowledge or niche of interest that you will address.

3. The research interest(s)/question(s)/objectives
Following the overview of the research field it is important that you make a clear statement of the specific issues you propose to address through the research. Often this will take the form of a research question which infers a line of enquiry you plan to take. It is important that the research issue or question can be seen to emanate from the gaps in knowledge or specific niche identified by you in the previous section.

4. Research methodologies
The methods you intend to use to address the line of enquiry or research question should be outlined briefly here. In the initial proposal, the methods may be 'listed'; and in the case of practice-based research, where the artists practice provides a line of investigation for the research, it should be made clear how the creation of work will help generate knowledge within the boundaries of the proposed research. In effect, it is necessary for you to explain the way the data you collect, or produce, will enable you to address your research question(s).

Note: If your research is by creative practice you may need to include suitable samples of your work in photographic or digital form.

5. Research contribution
A short statement of what you believe will be your contribution to the field you specified previously in section 2.

6. Project work plan
It is very important to the success of your proposal that you provide a realistic breakdown of the course of activities that make up your research project. In the interest of successfully completing the project it is necessary for you to provide a project plan, in the form of an annotated Gantt chart, showing consideration for the path of research. Typically, this will need to be detailed for the first quarter with a more generalised plan for the remainder of the project. Since a research project cannot be fully determined from the outset you will be required to review the project plan at certain key points throughout the lifecycle of the project. With the project plan it is also important for you to describe the kind of activities you see as being dominant throughout the project.

7. Footnotes & bibliography
You should include in the document formal references to works, artefacts and literature that demonstrate you have a suitable level of knowledge of your field and know where the parameters of the project lie. While your

research proposal is evaluated on content, it must also be presented professionally. Use of appropriate language and standard referencing systems should be given due attention.