Overview


In the same way as a traditional PhD, the primary aim of the Practice-based PhD is to contribute new knowledge to the field through systematic investigation. It is expected that the candidate will generate a new body of ideas-based/creative work (the Project) and a written work (the Dissertation) that together will make an original contribution to knowledge within the field.

The Project may take one of a number of different forms, for example: architectural design, urban design and planning, construction methods and technologies, industrial design, interior design and landscape design. It could also cross a number of disciplines. The chosen medium can also vary, for example it might take the form of objects, drawings, plans, prototypes, models, creative text, digital fabrication, film, virtual reality or a combination of these. The requirement, however, is that the Project can be fully documented in electronic form for the purposes of examination.

The Dissertation is a substantial research-based academic essay, of between 40,000 to 50,000 words, that bears a direct relationship to the Project. Together the Dissertation and the Project comprise the PhD thesis.

In order to assist commencing students in developing an appropriate research methodology, all PhD candidates are required to undertake a course in their first session - BENV7020 Research Seminar. Candidates undertaking a Practice-based PhD will also be required to undertake a specialised Thesis Writing Workshop run by UNSW Learning Centre.

See UNSW Higher Degree Research Learning Outcomes.
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Admission Requirements

Entry Requirements

As a general guide, the minimum requirement for admission to a PhD degree is an appropriate undergraduate degree with first or upper second class honours or a completed Masters by Research degree in a field represented within UNSW Built Environment faculty or another relevant discipline.

Candidates may be admitted to the PhD program after one year’s full-time enrolment in a Masters by Research program, with the approval of the Faculty Research Committee. In exceptional cases an applicant who submits evidence of such other academic and professional qualifications as may be approved by the Committee may be permitted to enrol for the degree.

English language requirements also apply: English Language Requirements

For full admission, application and enrolment requirements: How to Apply and Enrol Research Degree

Also, see the Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure

For more information about admission requirements for various UNSW programs, visit the following website(s):

Domestic Students
International Student
Professional Outcomes

Career Opportunities

Architects and Landscape Architects, Industrial Designer, Interior Designer, Construction Managers, Construction Project Manager, Urban and Regional Planner, University Lecturer
Additional Information

If you are considering applying for enrolment in a PhD, it is a requirement that you contact prospective supervisors to determine in advance if they are in a position to supervise your research topic. It is recommended that you make initial contact via email. If you are local, you should then arrange a face-to-face meeting; if overseas, ideally arrange a SKYPE interview.

The Faculty of Built Environment also requires that every Higher Degree Research applicant submit an Expression of Interest, prior to applying to the university via the central online portal. For more information, please see: Built Environment Future Students

For further information on policies, procedures and forms, see the Graduate Research website
Program Fees

At UNSW fees are generally charged at course level and therefore dependent upon individual enrolment and other factors such as student's residency status. For generic information on fees and additional expenses of UNSW programs, click on one of the following:

- Domestic Students
- Commonwealth Supported Students
- International Students
Pre-2019 Handbook Editions

Access past handbook editions (2018 and prior)

Pre-2019 Handbook Editions