

eca

graduate research school

Student Handbook

2004-2005

Introduction

This handbook is a guide to the **graduate research school**. It is intended to supplement the handbooks you will be given by the College as a whole and also by your specific academic school.

The general requirements and regulations regarding the degree are contained in a separate **code of practice** for post-graduate study.

About Edinburgh College of Art

Edinburgh College of Art is one of the oldest art colleges in Europe. It can trace its origins back to 1760 and the Drawing Academy of Edinburgh. In its current form it first opened in 1906, when the main building in Lauriston Place was completed. Currently the College has some 1500 undergraduate and 270 postgraduate students. It has approximately 40 PhD students.

The College is located in the heart of the historic Old Town of Edinburgh, and many of its studios have breathtaking views of the spectacular skyline dominated by the castle.

The College has four sites. The main campus at Lauriston Place and the two Grassmarket Campuses are located in the centre of the city, within easy walking distance of Princes Street. The Inverleith Campus, which mainly houses studios for postgraduate students in the Schools of Drawing & Painting and Sculpture, is just a short bus ride from the main campus. Edinburgh's two railway stations, Waverley and Haymarket, are both conveniently close to the College, and while car parking at **eca** is limited, priority will be given to those with particular needs.

Edinburgh College of Art has an international reputation as one of the most successful independent art colleges in the UK. We have won that reputation by offering the highest quality of experience for our students, and by providing a learning environment, which is both supportive and challenging.

eca is known for its creativity, its co-operative atmosphere and its people. Our facilities are excellent, but the ideas which continually drive and refresh our education are even more important. Our staff are practising scholars, artists, designers, architects, curators and writers, many with international reputations. Our graduates move into an extraordinarily wide range of careers and make a real contribution to the social, cultural and economic life of Scotland, the UK, and many other countries.

eca attracts students from throughout the UK, Europe and the World; almost one in five of our students come from overseas. Over 40 different countries are represented in our student community. In Edinburgh they find a unique setting for research and study. They have access to world-class resources in a city celebrated for its vibrant creative and cultural environment.

Matthew Rampley
Director, Graduate Research School

About the Graduate Research School

The Graduate Research School (GRS) is an academic department of the College. It is responsible for the overall quality and consistency of the experience of research students across the College. This includes liaising with supervisors and other staff across the College regarding a range of issues concerning research students. More specifically, this includes: production and regular updating of the College code of practice for research supervision; provision of research training; administration of central research student study spaces; advising library staff regarding acquisitions; monitoring the progress of research students.

The School is located within the Grassmarket campus of the College in Building 4 (on the right after the main campus entrance). In this building are the offices of both Matthew Rampley, the Director of the School (Room 431, on the first floor) and Linsey Dickson, the GRS administrator (ground floor administration office shared with the Centre for Visual and Cultural Studies and also the OpenSpace research project). In Building 4 there is also a research student common room.

There is a noticeboard in the common room where general information relating to the graduate research school and to postgraduate research is posted.



Contact details for staff in the GRS are as follows:

Dr. Matthew Rampley

Office: Room 431 Email: m.rampley@eca.ac.uk Tel: 0131-221-6193

Linsey Dickson

Office: Room 414 Email: l.dickson@eca.ac.uk Tel: 0131-221-6286

You do not need to make a prior appointment, although it may be advisable since staff are not always in their offices.

MPhil and PhD Study

The College offers MPhil and PhD research degrees. Until September 2004 all degrees of the College were awarded by Heriot Watt university. From September, however, all degrees will be awarded by the University of Edinburgh. This will affect only new students beginning study in September 2004. Students already registered with the College will continue to study for Heriot Watt degrees.

The **MPhil** is a research degree awarded in recognition of a body of work that shows initiative and demonstrates a critical assessment of existing knowledge in the field or area of research. An MPhil must show independence of thought, rigour and understanding of its methods and context. It must be communicable and indicate critical awareness of the appropriate means of presentation/documentation and evaluation of the research process.

It may also be seen as a valuable Introductory experience in the preparation of and working on a PhD.

The **PhD** degree is awarded in recognition of a body of work that represents a significant contribution to learning. A PhD is a rigorous enterprise and must show **evidence of Originality**. This may consist in the discovery of new knowledge, the production of a new understanding or interpretation. Whilst a PhD shares the same characteristics as an MPhil, it must demonstrate a greater degree of independent thought and research. A PhD must indicate how it appears to the candidate to advance study and understanding in the field or area of research. The University of Edinburgh regulations expect the following of a PhD:

The thesis must be an original work making a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study and containing material worthy of publication; show adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature; show the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the candidate's work and that of other scholars in the same general field; contain material which presents a unified body of work such as could reasonably be achieved on the basis of three years postgraduate study and research; be satisfactory in its literary presentation, give full and adequate references and have a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods and conclusions.¹

The Practice-based MPhil / PhD

Traditionally the PhD has resulted in a thesis of a maximum 100,000 words. However, the College also awards MPhil and PhD degrees by project or practice. The research degree by practice is a common mode of research in the area of art and design and has grown enormously over the past decade. This involves the exploration of a subject of enquiry through practical work accompanied by a related text. The relative weight of these elements varies for each project. The word 'related' may be interpreted in various ways, but a clear structural and Intellectual link **must** be established between the two aspects of the project.

There is no formal stipulation regarding the length of the written element, but for the MPhil this will usually be between 15,000 and 20,000 words, and for the PhD between 25,000 and 40,000 words. Both elements of the work should be taken as a whole and together they must reach the required standard of MPhil or PhD as outlined above.

¹ University of Edinburgh Regulations: Degrees by Research § 3.2.4 (b)

The practice-based component of the MPhil / PhD is expected to conform to the stipulations attached to all forms of research. The Arts and Humanities Research Board, a major funder of postgraduate research students, defines a research project as meeting the following requirements:

- it must define a series of **research questions** that will be addressed, or problems that will be explored in the course of the research. It must also define its **objectives** in terms of answering these questions or reporting on the results of the research project
- it must specify a **research context** for the questions to be addressed or problems to be explored, showing what particular contribution the research will make to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in the area concerned. It must specify **why** it is important that these particular questions should be answered or problems explored; **what other research** is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution this project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.
- it must specify the **research methods** for addressing and answering the research questions or problems. It should also explain the rationale for the chosen methods and why they provide the most appropriate means by which to answer the research questions.²

These can obviously be met in a variety of ways, and the College recognises this fact. Nevertheless, these stipulations set out expectations that are commensurable with research undertaken across a wide range of media, whether text- or practice-based. Common to all is the expectation of conceptual and methodological rigour and, in the case of the PhD, originality and a substantial contribution to knowledge.

² AHRB Guidelines for Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts, (http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/images/4_92662.doc)

The Research Environment

The Supervisor

Each research student works with one or more supervisor(s) The main supervisor is associated with the School or Department where the student is based. In some circumstances, you may have a supervisor from another Department or one who is external to the College.

Throughout the period of your study at the College, your supervisor[s] are expected to

- advise you on the aims, scope, and presentation of your research;
- identify any training needs and recommend opportunities for training and development;
- inform you of regulations and legal issues relating to plagiarism, copyright, data protection, health and safety, Intellectual Property, and research ethics
- assist in you developing an appropriate plan for successive stages of the research project, including writing-up the thesis;
- promote the use of external resources and expertise, and encourage participation in research activities such as attendance and presentation at departmental, College and/or external exhibitions, symposia, and conferences;
- require written or other drafts from you on a consistent and mutually agreed schedule; read and provide written comments within a mutually agreed and reasonable period from the time of submission;
- inform you of your progress or standard of work; assist in arranging essential administrative steps, such as preparation for Interim and final exams and transfer to PhD;
- complete an annual progress report for submission to the College registry
- notify you of any recommendations from examiners and help you prepare for any re-submission.

At your first meeting with your supervisor, which should ideally take place during the first week of term, you should cover the following:

- The location of your desk and/or studio space if applicable!
- The location of Information and Library Services
- The location of photocopying, fax, telephone and computer equipment
- Introductions to relevant staff
- Information about relevant health and safety procedures

At the first meeting you will also be given a copy of this Handbook. You might also wish to agree on a timetable of supervision tutorials.

The frequency of tutorials will depend very much on the stage of the project, the rate at which you are working and whether you are part-time or full-time. Normally, for example, you would expect to have tutorials more frequently at the beginning of the programme of study, and near examination.

Please note that at times you will be working at a different path from your fellow research students and it is likely that the frequency of tutorials and nature of the support you receive will vary from that of your fellow students. The College has agreed, however, that whatever stage the student is at, he/she has a **minimum** entitlement of 20 hours of supervisory contact time. These will be shared between supervisors; you may find that you are seeing two supervisors equally, or that you see a second supervisor only infrequently. This is to be negotiated with your supervisors depending on your needs at particular times in the progress of your research.

Supervision tutorials

At your supervision tutorials, your supervisor will help you plan your research programme, comment on your work and offer guidance on the standard that is required of you. Your supervisor will also provide you with general support, with advice on research methodologies, and with information about current research, relevant reading and conferences you may find of interest. When you submit your work to your supervisor prior to a tutorial, you can expect thorough, prompt and critical feedback on the progress you have made.

Being a research degree student, however, is different from being a student on a taught programme, and you will find that you will have to rely more on your own resources than perhaps at any other time during your education. While your supervisor(s) will, of course, provide you with the support outlined above, and will devote time to ensuring that you achieve what you hope to in your research, it is important that you understand that the work you do for the research project is primarily your responsibility.

Throughout their period of study at the College, students are expected to

- work conscientiously and independently within the parameters of guidance offered
- participate fully in the Research Methods Course and any other subject specific research training provision
- attend supervisory meetings on time, well-prepared and with a clear agenda,
- maintain progress in accordance with the timetable agreed with the supervisors
- present the results of practical work and written material in sufficient time for comment and discussion
- take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary or trivial they may seem
- alert their supervisors to any issues interfering with the successful pursuit of research

Each research student in the College is located in an academic School or Department, the principle being that. Each School / Department makes its own arrangements to ensure that students are integrated into the academic life of the College. While supervisors provide academic support, the Head of School / Department will provide additional pastoral and resource support.

Each Department has a responsibility to provide at materials / resource funding to MPhil and PhD students. As stipulated in the Code of Practice, MPhil / PhD students are entitled to an annual fund of £100 to support them in attending conferences or other events that will further their research.

At the initial stages, you will rely mainly on your supervisor for subject expertise. Later you may find that other academic staff will be able to help in offering guidance on your work. This is particularly the case when you are working in a relatively new, or interdisciplinary, area and will need advice from academic staff outside your immediate department.

If you discover a member of staff outside your School or Department who can advise you on your work, inform your supervisor and arrange a meeting. If you require intensive support from that member of staff it may be necessary to request that your relationship becomes formalised. You should discuss this with your main supervisor, the Head of your School or the Director of the Graduate Research School.

The Research Methods Course

The GRS operates a research training course. Through its lectures, seminars and workshops programme the course supports subject-specific departmental research supervisor with training in generic research skills. For the academic session 2004-2005 this will be delivered in conjunction with the School of Arts, Culture and the Environment of the University of Edinburgh, thus giving you the opportunity to interact with students with a wide variety of research interests.

Further details are given below.

Work in Progress Seminars

This year the GRS has introduced a work in progress seminar. This is designed to promote a sense of community amongst students and staff. Staff within the College and students who are already advanced in their research will give presentations about their research. There may also be visiting students and lecturers from outside the College. The seminars will also assist students in developing essential presentation skills.

The seminars are organised by research students of the College and students are encouraged to attend. This year the seminars will take place on Wednesday afternoons. Further details will be posted on the notice board of the Graduate Common Room in the Grassmarket.

Postgraduate Research Methods

School of Arts, Culture and Environment
College of Humanities and Social Science
The University of Edinburgh

Graduate Research School, Edinburgh College of Art

Course Coordinators: Matthew Rampley (ECA); Richard Coyne (UoE)

Description

This course is designed to support students in developing their research proposal and to assist them in defining their mode of enquiry. The course has been constructed to help guide students through a range of issues and considerations which should inform their general approach to research. This course will give students a general introduction to postgraduate research, its methodologies, its challenges and its organization, particularly in creative practice. Students will be introduced to a range of research tools and will be equipped to plan and organise their research, as well as to communicate their findings. Issues of acknowledgement, copyright, confidentiality and commercial exploitation will also be discussed.

This course aims to:

- provide an introduction to key aspects of MPhil / PhD research, including research tools, methods, ethics and legal questions.
- support students in the development of their research proposal
- encourage students to reflect critically on the process of research
- assist students in the articulation of a critical language appropriate to their research aims and interests
- encourage the development of a supportive research environment

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course students will be able to

- plan and manage a programme of MPhil / Ph.D. research
- make use of and evaluate a variety of research tools and methodologies
- address issues of copyright, confidentiality, data protection and other ethical issues
- articulate, reflect on and critically evaluate their chosen subject of research and its methods

Assessment

Assessment will focus on the preparation and presentation of a conference paper. The one-day student conference will take place on Wednesday 15 December.

Students will prepare a 400 word abstract on a topic pertaining to their PhD/MPhil research. This will be submitted by 12.00 noon on Friday 12 November, and will form the basis of a 20-minute conference presentation. Feedback will be provided through peer review from student colleagues.

You will also submit a 3,000 word written paper after the conference by 12.00 noon 10 January 2005.

Attendance at the conference is compulsory, and is required in order to pass the course.

Marks: abstract 30%; final paper 70%

Lecture Schedule

Time: 11.00-1.00 Wednesdays

Some of the two-hour lecture slots will incorporate break-out sessions with groups formed around research subject areas.

Date		Topic	
6 Oct	1	Introduction to PhD research: strategies, goals, planning	
13 Oct	2	Time management and personal effectiveness	Themed break-out session
20 Oct	3	Finding information; Library resources in Edinburgh	
27 Oct	4	Using archives and other research sources	Themed break-out session
3 Nov	5	The epistemology of research: discovery or invention? Research and value: positivism to critical theory	
10 Nov	6	Electronic resources; IT and databases	
17 Nov	7	Intellectual property, commercialization and ethics	Themed break-out session
24 Nov	8	Ethnographic study and interviewing	Themed break-out session
1 Dec	9	Creative practice as a research process; Design as inquiry	
8 Dec	10	Quantitative and qualitative paradigms and methods	Themed break-out session
15 Dec	11	9.00 am – 5.00 pm Conference	

Learning Resources

Computing and IT Facilities

All full-time MPhil / PhD students are entitled to access to a personal computer and desk. This may be in a single office or in a shared office space. Currently nearly all MPhil / PhD student offices are located in the Grassmarket. Students are entitled to dedicated desk spaces for a maximum of **3 years**. There is also a shared computing facility for part-time MPhil / PhD students.

The College has a number of further computer suites for student use. In the Grassmarket campus there is a computing suite on the first floor of Building 2 and in the Hunter Building on the main campus there are computing suites on level Q. These are shared open access suites.

The College Library Service

The Lauriston Place Library and the Grassmarket Library together make up the College Library Service.

The **Lauriston Place Library** is located on the ground floor of the Main Building at Lauriston Place. The books, periodicals and other material in the library cover the fine arts, most aspects of design, and photography, with an emphasis on contemporary practice. The **Grassmarket Library** is on the first floor of Building 6 in the Grassmarket Campus (accessible by lift). The library collection covers architecture, landscape architecture, interior design and furniture, film, theatre studies, and social sciences and cultural studies.

Opening hours

During term both Libraries are open from 09:15 to 20:30 from Mondays to Thursdays, and from 10:00 to 17:00 on Fridays. The college closes at 16:00 during vacations

The library web pages and the library catalogue

The library web pages form a one-stop service for access to the College Library catalogue, to our networked periodical indexes, and to the catalogues of other libraries and other online resources. To access the web pages, point your browser to <http://www.lib.eca.ac.uk>.

The library web pages, and the library catalogue, are accessible from within the library, from any personal computer connected to the College network, and from internet-enabled machines outside the College. Please note, however, that we have no control over restrictions which may be imposed by external Internet Service Providers.

The library collection - books and periodicals

The book stock of the two libraries consists of some 100,000 volumes. Most of the books are arranged on the open shelves according to their subject, in the classified sequence described below. However, due to space restrictions, some less-frequently used books are kept in the Grassmarket Library store and marked appropriately in the library catalogue. The retrieval of store material may be requested at the Grassmarket Library Issue Desk.

The College Library Service subscribes to around 400 current periodicals and has built up extensive back runs of many periodical titles. Current issues of periodicals and recent back runs are shelved on open access; older issues are housed in the Grassmarket Library store and can be retrieved on request. Our periodical holdings are included in the library catalogue, and printed lists of current subscriptions are available. References

to periodical articles can be traced through the major periodical indexes which are available online via the library web pages.

Slides

The library's extensive collection of over 150,000 colour slides is an important resource which is used for seminars and projects. Please note that the slide collection is not included in the library catalogue; however, printed indexes of the slide classification headings are available in the Slide Room in the library.

Other material

The Lauriston Place Library also houses the videocassette and DVD collection, with viewing facilities; there are also collections of artists books, and of reproductions of paintings and drawings. The Grassmarket Library has an extensive collection of nearly 4000 maps, and a collection of student work (final-year undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and theses).

Electronic Resources

The library subscribes to a number of electronic databases, including ARTbibliographies Modern, the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, Design & Applied Arts Index, and IBSS. The library also has a growing collection of e-journals, including both electronic versions of printed journals and online-only journals.

Facilities for readers with disabilities

CCD magnifying machines for readers with visual impairment are located in both libraries. Workstations suitable for readers with back problems are located in the Grassmarket Library. A chairlift is installed in the Lauriston Place Library to facilitate access to the upper mezzanine level.

College Student Services offer a referral scheme for students with disabilities or other specific needs in library use. To find out more about the scheme, get in touch with the Student Services helpdesk.

IT facilities

As well as terminals for accessing the library catalogue, both libraries have multi-media PCs (including an iMac in the Lauriston Place Library) which can be used to access a wide range of CD-ROM and other information sources. There are also public-access PCs which can be used to consult our range of networked and online periodical indexes.

A printing service is available from the library catalogue, from networked indexes, and from many of the CD-ROMs

Other libraries and Interlibrary loan

Edinburgh has a wide range of public, academic and special libraries, of which the following are of particular interest:

- The **Edinburgh Central Library** (George IV Bridge Street), with its specialist Fine Art and Music Departments, is open to all ECA students and staff.
- The **National Library of Scotland** (<http://www/nls.uk>: George IV Bridge Street) is a reference library and may be used, by arrangement, for research and other advanced study. It has a collection of about 8,000,000 books, 2,000,000 maps and some 20,000 newspaper and magazine titles. As a copyright library it receives, by right, copies of every book published in the United Kingdom. It also has extensive international collections.
- **Edinburgh University Library** (George Square) is a major research library, with a

collection of some 3,000,000 books and 9,000 journal titles. Students of the College are eligible to access the library as external borrowers, with borrowing rights.

The catalogues of these libraries, and others, are available online and may be consulted through the College Library web pages, which also give information about access to their collections.

Other books and periodical articles not available in Edinburgh can be borrowed on interlibrary loan. For further details consult the library staff.

Student Feedback

The College takes the views of students seriously, and students are involved in College activities on a number of levels. This can range from acting as representatives on programme committees, to acting as members of programme reviews committees. Your School or department should hold regular meetings when the views of students are elicited.

Each term the GRS also holds a forum to disseminate information to students, and for students to discuss issues related to academic provision within the College.

College Regulations

A full set of College and Programme regulations are available in the Student Handbook issued by the College registry. In addition, detailed regulations regarding post-graduate study are contained in the Code of Practice.

Dyslexia and Other Impairments

The College positively welcomes and encourages students with dyslexia and other impairments. It also recognises that such students have a variety of particular requirements and needs.

If you have dyslexia you are advised to contact Jay Kirkland in Student Services (0131-221-6202 email: j.kirkland@eca.ac.uk) to discuss the possible support available to you. The Student Services department is currently located on the ground floor of the Hunter Building in Lauriston Place.

You are also asked to notify your supervisor in order that a record can be kept of your particular needs. The College also recognises that there is a variety of other impairments that may affect students' ability to undertake research. Should you have any other form of impairment you are requested to inform Student Services in order that appropriate support can be arranged.

International Students

The College recognizes that international students face particular challenges when studying at a British university. These can involve not only studying in a second language but also cultural differences. At the GRS we are aware that one of the most difficult tasks for an international student can be adapting to the culture of academic study in Britain and understanding the expectations placed on students.

If you have particular difficulties in this regard you are encouraged to raise them with your supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Alternatively, you are equally welcome to contact Matthew Rampley.

The Student Services department can offer language support to international students, and you are advised to contact them to learn the kinds of services available.

The College has also recently appointed an international student advisor (Dr. Gayle Pringle,

0131-221-6201 email: g.pringle@eca.ac.uk) who will be able to offer you support and advice on a range of non-academic issues.

Further Reading

The experience of beginning MPhil and PhD research is extremely positive and liberating, and also quite daunting. A number of books have been published which explore some of the potential issues encountered as a PhD student, and suggest ways of dealing with them. You may find the following useful:

Becker, H	<i>Tricks of the Trade. How to Think about your Research while You're Doing It</i> (Chicago, 1998)
Birley, G	<i>A Practical Guide to Academic Research</i> (London, 1998)
Booth, W et al	<i>The Craft of Research</i> (Chicago, 1995)
Cryer, P	<i>The Research Student's Guide to Success</i> (Buckingham, 2000)
Graves, N	<i>Working for a Doctorate</i> (London, 1997)
Leonard, D	<i>A Woman's Guide to Doctoral Studies</i> (Buckingham, 2001)
Phillips, E	<i>How to get a PhD</i> (Buckingham, 2000)
Wisker, G	<i>The Postgraduate Research Handbook</i> (Basingstoke, 2001)

There are also numerous online guides on PhD study. You might find the following useful:

Stages of the PhD (Published by University of Queensland) -
http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/phdwriting/fr_phsta.html

Re-envisioning the PhD (Washington University)
<http://www.grad.washington.edu/envision/>

Questions to Ask When Thinking about Doing a PhD
<http://www.phd-survey.org/advice/advice.htm>

Survey on Doctoral Education and Career Preparation (An American survey conducted by Chris Golde and Tim Dore, 2001)
<http://www.phd-survey.org/advice/advice.htm>