

Frequently Asked Questions

Studying for a Research Degree (MPhil or PhD) in the Faculty of Technology

What is a Research Degree?

The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is awarded to candidates who satisfactorily complete research training and completely 'master' a particular subject and the methods of research associated with that subject.

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) you must first master the subject and then produce original work that extends the frontier of knowledge in your subject. Some of this work will merit national or international refereed publication.

Earning a PhD requires considerable commitment, perseverance, creativity and, most importantly, hard work. You will need to handle pressure and develop excellent communication skills. It may be the most rewarding thing you do in your professional life, but it is certainly not easy. A full-time PhD normally takes three years (35 hours per week) to complete or six years part-time (15 hours per week).

What can I study?

The subject of your research must align with your previous academic qualifications - you will generally need at least a First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree. The Faculty of Technology is able to support a wide range of subjects in built environment, computing, design, engineering and marine environmental policy.

What teaching will I receive?

There is very little formal teaching. You will normally be required to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods at an early stage in your research programme. You will be guided throughout by a supervisory team comprising of a Director of Studies (DOS) plus one or more supervisors or advisors chosen to have skills and expertise of relevance to your project.

How do I apply?

You will need to produce an outline research proposal and this is best done in consultation with Faculty members who have expertise in your area of interest and will potentially supervise the work. You will need to consider the aims and objectives of your work, the research methodology, resource requirements and an outline time plan. For PhD the objectives must indicate how the work is likely to result in new knowledge or understanding. Your outline proposal must be submitted with a completed application form to the Technology Research Centre and will be considered by a scrutiny panel. If approved, you can be formally enrolled as a research student.

What is the transfer process?

Most PhD candidates register for MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD. Within 24 months of full-time study (or 48 months part-time) you will prepare a transfer report that is assessed to ensure you have made sufficient progress and the work is likely to result in the significant contribution to knowledge necessary for PhD.

How much will it cost?

Fees for postgraduate study vary depending on whether you qualify as a Home, EU or International student, studying full-time or part-time. There is no statutory system of financial support in the UK for postgraduate research students and the large majority of students fund their studies by means of personal savings or loans, or obtain support from their family or employer. You may also need to fund fieldwork necessary for your research. Support for some students is available through the Faculty of Technology Assisted Fee Scheme. The UK Research Councils and some Educational Trusts and Charities also provide financial support for postgraduate students, although competition for such funding is fierce.

How do I obtain more information?

Contact the Technology Research Centre.

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Subject area contacts:

Adaptive Optimisation Methods	Dr Kalin Penev	kalin.penev@solent.ac.uk
Built Environment	Dr Peter Gardner	peter.gardner@solent.ac.uk
Computing	Professor Margaret Ross	margaret.ross@solent.ac.uk
Design	Mark Jones	mark.jones@solent.ac.uk
Engineering	Professor Sean Wellington	sean.wellington@solent.ac.uk
Marine Environmental Policy	Dr Paul Wright	paul.wright@solent.ac.uk
Naval Architecture	Dr Robin Loscombe	robin.loscombe@solent.ac.uk

Further reading:

Estelle Phillips and Derek Pugh (2005). How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors. 4th Edition. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Vitae - researchers' portal [online] <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/> (Last accessed 15 July 2009).