



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Applying to do PhD research in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Galway

We have a vibrant and large community of PhD researchers in [Drama and Theatre Studies](#) at University of Galway, several of whom hold prestigious research awards. We are based in the [School of English, Media and Creative Arts](#) in the [College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies](#) (CASSCS). We are also closely connected to a vibrant international research community, having recently hosted the [International Federation for Theatre Research](#) at University of Galway in 2021.

You can read the full university guidelines for PhDs at the University of Galway [here](#).

This short guide introduces you to:

- 1. PhD pathways in Drama and Theatre Studies at University of Galway**
- 2. Types of PhD funding**
- 3. Drama and Theatre Studies Pre-Admission Evaluation Process**
- 4. Structure and Outline of Expression of Interest (EOI)**
- 5. Considerations for preparing your EOI**
- 6. Examples of recent PhD research in Drama and Theatre Studies and employment outcomes**

This guide is also available as a recorded presentation.

Your primary point of contact for 2023-2024 as a prospective student is Dr Charlotte McIvor, Head of Postgraduate Programmes in Drama and Theatre Studies (charlotte.mcivor@universityofgalway.ie).

1. PhD pathways in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Galway

You will have the option of undertaking one of two PhD pathways in Drama and Theatre Studies:

- [Structured PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies](#)
- [Research PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies](#)

These pathways allow students to undertake doctoral research in any areas related to Drama and Theatre Studies. PhDs may be conducted using research (theatre history, contemporary drama, etc.) or practice-as-research (applied theatre, playwriting, direction, devising, etc.) methodologies

Both are available full or part-time, but you CANNOT be funded to do a part-time PhD.

You can read the full local guidelines for PhDs undertaken in the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies [here](#).

The [Structured PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies in CASSCS](#) is a four-year programme which offers added value to the core component of doctoral training. Students on this programme are offered disciplinary or dissertation-specific modules, as well as generic and transferable skills designed to meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academe. The programme is flexible and student-centred, as candidates choose their own pathways in consultation with their Supervisor and Graduate Research Committee. All funded students must take the Structured PhD route.

The Research PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies [full-time and part-time] are self-directed research degrees undertaken in consultation with the supervisor and Graduate Research Committee without additional modular coursework.

2. Types of PhD funding and fees

Prospective Drama and Theatre Studies PhD students generally apply for two types of major national and institutional funding:

1. [Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarships](#) (national funding scheme, run in autumn, offers stipends, fees and research expenses per annum). As the deadline for 2024/25 has now passed, this scheme will only be relevant to applications for 2025/26 (beginning September 2025).
2. [Hardiman Research Scholarships](#) (institutional funding scheme, run in winter-spring, offers fees and stipends per annum). As the deadline for 2024/2025 has now passed, this scheme will only be relevant to applications for 2025/2026 (beginning September 2025).

Be advised that most funding schemes stipulate first-class honours or similar academic results in your primary or postgraduate degrees.

Students also have the option of self-funding and/or applying for other specialised local/national schemes for full or partial support (for example, the [University of Galway runs the University of Galway-China Scholarship Joint Scholarship for PhD study](#)).

For 2023-2024, PhD fees were €5,750 (EU) and €14,500 (non-EU) - the same fees for Structured and Research PhDs. DTP PhD students may receive paid hourly Graduate Teaching Assistant assignments as part of their training in years 2, 3, and 4, subject to skill level, budget and other considerations. You can read about the role of Graduate Student Teaching Assistants at University of Galway [here](#).

3. Drama and Theatre Studies Pre-Admission Evaluation Process

Entry to our PhD programme is necessarily limited. We have developed a pre-admission evaluation process that is open for formal expressions of interest (EOIs) three times per academic year.

2025-2026 Pre-Admission Evaluation Deadlines

Round 1: 13 September 2024 (IRC)

→ Outcome: Notified by early October

Round 2: 6 December 2024 (Hardiman)

→ Outcome: Notified by mid-December

Round 3: 6 June 2024 (Self-funded and other for beginning September 2024)

→ Outcome: Notified by late June 2024

If you contact us, you will be invited to submit an EOI as outlined below by the dates above and be notified of the outcome of your EOI by the corresponding round date. This EOI will be considered by the Drama and Theatre Studies PhD programme board.

You are matched with supervision by the Drama and Theatre Studies staff through this process and are asked to express preferences for supervision on your EOI.

Read about the [interests and research specialisms](#) of our academic staff on the Discipline website and follow up if you wish by reading articles/books/chapters by individual lecturers in your areas of interest and citing them within your EOI.

Programme Board considerations in assessing EOIs:

- The quality of the research project itself
- The strengths, academic record and potential of the applicant
- The availability of suitable supervision
- The feasibility of the project and the suitability of University of Galway as a location for the research

We will make one of the following decisions about each EOI submitted that will be communicated to each candidate:

1. That you should be mentored for the funding cycles above and are matched with a confirmed prospective supervisor.
2. If you intend to fund your own studies, that you have a confirmed supervisor and can proceed with a formal application to the university.
3. That your proposal is not yet ready to be mentored but that we would like to work with you in the future and provide feedback for development.
4. That we are not in a position to supervise your proposed project because of a mismatch between our skills and your proposed project.

Your EOI **MUST** be formally approved through this evaluation process for you to apply formally to the University of Galway and/or list any staff member's name on a formal funding application.

4. Structure and Outline of Expression of Interest (EOI)

You will be able to pursue a PhD with us using either 1) research-based or 2) practice-as-research based methodologies. Please choose the correct outline below for your intended project.

Your PhD Proposal Expression of Interest **MUST** include the following information:

1) Research-based:

1. Title
2. Name(s) of prospective supervisor(s)
2. Explanation of research question (150 words)
3. Description of proposed research (500 words)
4. Critical context (500 words)
5. Methodology (500 words)
6. Sources and archives (300 words)
7. Statement of why you want to carry out the research in Galway and the relevance of your research to the proposed supervisor's work to date (300 words)

2) Practice-as-research based:

1. Title of project
2. Name(s) of prospective supervisor(s)
3. Description of proposed practice-based project, including an account of both the creative/practice-based portion, and the critical/scholarly/academic portion (500 words)
4. Critical context (500 words):
5. Methods/theory/approach (including a methodological reflection on the particular methods/theory/approach you intend to take using practice) (300 words)
6. Sources and archives (300 words)
7. Explanation of your reason for wanting to do your PhD at the University of Galway.

This document should be submitted in a .doc or .docx format to Dr Charlotte McIvor, head of Postgraduate Programmes in Drama and Theatre Studies, charlotte.mcivor@universityofgalway.ie along with a current CV by the above deadlines in section 4.

Decisions on supervision/support of application will be communicated only AFTER these

5. Considerations for preparing your EOI

- **Firstly, be advised that you will need to devote time to the development of your research proposal including review and immersion in relevant primary and secondary literatures.** Your PhD proposal must demonstrate that you are in conversation with the wider field and that your proposed project will advance rather than reiterate knowledge.

- **A successful PhD proposal will be focused on a coherent research area that gives rise to a viable research *question* or set of *questions* which are likely to generate original knowledge in the field of theatre and performance studies and its related subfields.** One of the ways in which your PhD will ultimately be judged in your viva is whether or not you have “made a significant contribution to understanding and knowledge” and you need to demonstrate this potential from the beginning in your proposal (though of course we expect your project will evolve over time as well)
- **Be cautious of conflating a research *area*** (such as “nationalism and contemporary European theatre”) **with a research *question*** (e.g. “has expansion of the European Union’s cultural policies and arts funding since the 1990s affected engagement with nationalist themes on European stages?). We all begin with a research area, but need to push on how our broad focus allows us to ask targeted questions capable of revealing more specific knowledge for the field at large.
- **Your PhD proposal should be ambitious but *feasible* within the four year time frame of the degree.** Funding applications require that you demonstrate a step-by-step four-year plan for the completion of your PhD. While this plan will not be completely binding if the funding application is successful, you must demonstrate that you are able to plan according to appropriate timescales. This planning also includes demonstrating awareness of relevant scholarly organisations and conferences, as well as the location of archives, networks of research informants and so on.
- **While you are applying to do a PhD within the very specific academic discipline of Drama and Theatre Studies, you will still need to clarify your research methodologies and justify them throughout your application.** If you are proposing a practice-as-research PhD, why can this question only be answered in part through practice? If it is a theoretical project, why is intervening in these particular theoretical discourses important in this way at this time? If it is an archival project, how will you access these resources and/or what does NUI Galway offer uniquely to you in this area? If you are doing ethnographic research or fieldwork in Ireland or internationally, are you aware of the ethical and practical implications of taking on this kind of work and how will you demonstrate your readiness and safeguard participants throughout the process?

6. Examples of recent PhD research in Drama and Theatre Studies and employment outcomes

Here is a list of recent completed PhD projects that have been undertaken in Drama and Theatre Studies at University of Galway. Finally, we have provided a summary of employment, funding and/or publication outcomes for graduates from our PhD programme in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Galway.

- Zsuzsanna Balázs, “Between the Queer and the Normative: Unorthodox representations of gender, power, and desire in W.B. Yeats’ and Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Drama”

- Jérémie Cyr-Cooke, “*Mise-En-Corp/Mise-Encore*: Mapping the Physical Theatre as a Methodology of Adaptation in Contemporary Performance
- Sarah Hoover, “Presence, Play and Agency: Investigating reflective engagement in larp-led participatory performance”
- Chris McCormack, “Flashes of Modernity: A Historical Analysis of Stage Design at the Abbey Theatre, 1902-1966”
- Emer McHugh, “Shakespeare, Gender, and Contemporary Ireland: Performing and Recreating Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity”
- Ciara L. Murphy, “Performing Social Change on the Island of Ireland 1972-2014”
- Justine Nakase, “Performing Scalar Interculturalism: Race and Identity in Contemporary Irish Performance”
- Mairead Ní Chroínin, “Hybrid Bodies/Haunted Bodies: mobile experiences, affect and theatre”
- Tricia O’Beirne, “Provoking Performance: Challenging the People, the State and the Patriarchy in 1980s Irish Theatre”
- Heidi Schoenenberger, “Deepening the Theatre Experience for Young Audiences: Mapping the Aims and Impacts of Extended Audience Engagement”
- Aisling Smith, “Re-directing George Bernard Shaw: Exploring Shaw’s Play-Texts for Contemporary Audiences Through Practice as Research”
- Melinda Szuts, “W.B. Yeats the dramaturge: Space Dramaturgy in *Four Plays for Dancers*”

Our graduates have gone on to find academic employment at institutions including but not limited to Dundalk Institute of Technology, Norwich University of the Arts, Technological University Dublin, Roanoke College, Queens University Belfast, University of Galway, and Portland State University. They have also gone on to receive highly competitive funding awards post-PhD from the Arts Council, Irish Research Council and the European Commissions’s Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowships and their research has been published as monographs by leading international presses including Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan as well as in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections internationally.