



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Applying to do PhD Research in the School of English, Media and Creative Arts at the University of Galway

We have a vibrant and large community of PhD researchers in the [School of English, Media and Creative Arts](#) (SEMCA) at the University of Galway, several of whom hold prestigious research awards. We are based in the [College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies](#) (CASSCS).

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 the School of English, Media and Creative Arts**
- 2. Types of PhD funding**
- 3. Pre-Admission Evaluation Process**
- 4. Structure and Outline of Expression of Interest (EOI)**
- 5. Considerations for preparing your EOI**
- 6. Formal Application to the University**
- 7. Expression of Interest Form**

Your primary point of contact for 2024-2025 as a prospective student is the PhD Coordinator of the Discipline in which you hope to register:

- Centre for Creative Technologies: Dr Conn Holohan (conn.holohan@universityofgalway.ie)
- Drama and Theatre Studies: Dr Charlotte McIvor (charlotte.mcivor@universityofgalway.ie)
- English: Dr Frances McCormack (frances.mccormack@universityofgalway.ie)
- Film: Dr Tony Tracy (tony.tracy@universityofgalway.ie)
- Journalism and Media: Tom Felle (tom.felle@universityofgalway.ie)
- Music: Dr Amanda Feery [semester 2] (amanda.feery@universityofgalway.ie)

PhD pathways

You will have the option of undertaking a [Structured PhD](#) in English, Media, and Creative Arts. PhDs may be conducted using research (cultural history, literature and media, communication, etc.) or practice-as-research (applied theatre, playwriting, direction, devising, etc.; creative writing; Digital Arts and Humanities projects; documentary; investigative journalism reports; film and media production; exhibition, 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](#).

Structured PhD

The **Structured PhD** is a four-year programme that 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.

Practice-Based Research/Practice-as-Research (Structured PhD)

Practice-Based Research/Practice-as-Research PhDs may vary among Disciplines and in accordance with the requirements of the work itself. While some such PhDs may culminate in a traditional 80,000 PhD, perhaps accompanied by a portfolio, others may comprise a combination of outputs, including a critical component (mandatory) and one or more non-traditional outputs appropriate to the project. In accordance with University Policy (QA245) only practice-based research undertaken while the candidate is registered for the PhD is admissible.

1. Types of PhD funding and fees

Prospective SEMCA 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. 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](#).

2. Pre-Admission Evaluation Process

Entry to our PhD programmes 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. These are the dates when your EOI will be considered and a potential supervisor identified.

2025-2026 Expression of Interest Pre-Admission Evaluation Deadlines

Round 1: Monday 2nd December 2024

→ Outcome: Notified by 20 December

Round 2: Friday 16th May 2025

→ Outcome: Notified by early to mid-June

Round 3: Friday 15th August 2025

→ Outcome: Notified by early September

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 individual Discipline's PhD programme board.

You are matched with supervision by the relevant discipline's 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 School 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 areas of expertise 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.

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

You will be able to apply for 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) Structured PhD (monograph style):

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)
8. Contact details of two academic referees

2) Practice-as-Research Based PhD:

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
8. Sample of Creative work
9. Contact details of two academic referees

This document should be submitted in a .doc or .docx format to the PhD Coordinator of your intended discipline, along with a current CV by the above deadlines in section 4.

Decisions on supervision/support of application will be communicated only AFTER these have been received and considered by the Discipline's PhD Programme Board.

4. 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 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 a specific Discipline, 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 the University of 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?

Please note that the School's informal response to your EOI is not an official offer of a place on the university's PhD programme. It is merely an indication that your

proposal is feasible and that you are a credible applicant. You still must apply formally to the University and you may or may not be offered a place after a formal review of your application.

5. Formal Application to the University

If you have received a positive response to your EOI and been provisionally assigned a supervisor or supervisors, you can then start the formal application process. Remember that the application for funding (which you will work on with your prospective supervisor/s, is a separate process). The application process itself is online. For further information on the application process, and the link to the application online portal: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/postgrad-admissions/>

Once you have formally applied, the PhD Programme Board in the Discipline to which you are applying will convene to consider your final application.

Once a decision has been made you will be notified. If you are successful, you will be made a formal offer of a place on the PhD programme. When you accept the offer (on the assumption that you are self-funded or have been successful in your funding application), you will then be informed of the steps (e.g. fees, registration, etc.) that you need to take. Once you are fully registered, you will have an orientation session and will meet with your supervisor/s to plan a schedule of work and further meetings for the first year.



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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

School of English, Media and Creative Arts, University of Galway

PhD Expression of Interest Form

The completed form should be emailed to the PhD Coordinator in the Discipline to which you are applying:

- Centre for Creative Technologies: Dr Conn Holohan (conn.holohan@universityofgalway.ie)
- Drama and Theatre Studies: Dr Charlotte McIvor (charlotte.mcivor@universityofgalway.ie)
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- Journalism and Media: Tom Felle (tom.felle@universityofgalway.ie)
- Music: Dr Amanda Feery [semester 2] (amanda.feery@universityofgalway.ie)

Applicant Details

Forename

Surname

Telephone No.

Email

Postal Address

Programmes/Discipline(s) you are applying to:

Centre for Creative Technologies _____

Drama and Theatre Studies _____

English _____

Film _____

Journalism and Media _____

If we cannot accommodate you in your preferred discipline or we deem your project to be a better fit for another discipline, do we have your permission to forward your application?

_____ Yes _____ No

Proposed Academic Supervisor

Please enter details for a primary University of Galway supervisor in the Discipline, and if applicable, for a second academic supervisor in University of Galway, having first secured their agreement:

	Primary University of Galway supervisor	University of Galway Supervisor 2
Title (<i>Dr., Prof., Mr. Ms. etc.</i>)		
Forename		
Surname		
Telephone No.		
Email		
Department/School		

Proposed Research topic/project title:	
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Start date:		End date:	
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For Structured PhD (Monograph-Style)

Explanation of research question (150 words)

Description of proposed research (500 words)

Critical context (500 words)

Methodology (500 words)

Sources and archives (300 words)

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)

Contact details of two academic referees

Title and Name	
University	
Telephone	
Email	
Postal Address	

Title and Name	
University	
Telephone	
Email	
Postal Address	

Applicant: _____

Date:

For Practice-as-Research PhD:

Title of project

Name(s) of prospective supervisor(s)

Description of proposed practice-based project, including an account of both the creative/practice-based portion, and the critical/scholarly/academic portion (500 words)

Critical context (500 words):

Methods/theory/approach (including a methodological reflection on the particular methods/theory/approach you intend to take using practice) (300 words)

Sources and archives (300 words)

Explanation of your reason for wanting to do your PhD at the University of Galway

Sample of Creative work (attach separately)

Contact details of two academic referees

Title and Name	
University	
Telephone	
Email	
Postal Address	

Title and Name	
University	
Telephone	
Email	
Postal Address	

Applicant: _____

Date: