GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE HDR APPLICANTS

Thank you for your interest in postgraduate research at RMIT University. The School of Architecture & Design includes the discipline areas of Architecture, Industrial Design, Interior Design and Landscape Architecture. Our postgraduate programs are offered as research degrees, where the candidate undertakes their own research contributing to and often extending these disciplines under the supervision of academic staff. The degree is not delivered by coursework. Research degrees in the discipline areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture are only offered at doctoral (PhD) level.

The School focuses on creative practice research undertaken through practice-led and project-based approaches, however a thesis mode of research is also supported. Through one's supervisors, a candidate's research may be aligned with a research-oriented laboratory or group in the School, such as D__lab, SIAL, the Invited established practitioner program, AELab, Pflab.

The School of Architecture & Design's Higher Degrees by Research program culture is underpinned by an iterative process of twice yearly Practice Research Symposium (PRS) presentations, review-panel discussions and candidate reflection. These biannual Symposia serve as the unique format and process for fostering the critical development and evaluation of HDR candidate research progress, as well as for the examination of completing candidates' research. Presenting at every PRS is necessary to support the steady progress of candidates' creative practice research. This process prepares candidates for conveying the knowledge contribution of their creative practice research PhD under examination via the unweighted combination of three elements: an exposition of creative work, a dissertation, and a live presentation and discussion with examiners. Practice Research Symposia (PRS) are held twice a year in each of three regions: Australia, Europe & Asia. A candidate enrols in one of these regional cohort groups, but may be eligible to visit the PRS of a different cohort to present their research in progress.

Potential applicants are expected to familiarise themselves with the School research culture. Please visit our School website to find out more about our School and our research degrees. You can also watch several videos on creative practice research by Professor Richard Blythe, Dean, School of Architecture & Design here. An outline of our creative practice research (CPR) culture, including videos of past candidates' examinations, is available at the CPR portal here. General information on postgraduate research at RMIT University such as how to apply, scholarships, fee help and more can be found by following the links starting here.

We ask serious prospective applicants to attend a PRS in order to be informed of our research culture, to determine whether it suits you, and to meet prospective supervisors. Further information and dates for the PRS series can be found online here.

The School of Architecture & Design does not accept applications to its research programs before an applicant has satisfied pre-application presentation requirements. The pre-application process must be completed before a successful applicant will be invited to lodge a formal application. Please do not apply directly to RMIT's School of Graduate Research, or with RMIT International.

If you are interested to pursue higher degree research in the School of Architecture & Design, please follow these steps.

STEP 1. GAIN THE SUPPORT OF A PRIMARY SUPERVISOR

A potential applicant must firstly establish the interest and availability of a School staff member willing and able to supervise your research. Familiarise yourself with the research interests of potential supervisors in the School of Architecture & Design online here. In order to convey your interest, you should email specifically targeted staff that you are interested in being supervised by. Email them a brief description of your interest in undertaking postgraduate research, and attach a CV and a concise folio or link to relevant work. You may also contact the HDR Coordinator at the School of Architecture & Design for advice on possible supervisors via email, via mick.douglas@rmit.edu.au and ad.hdradmin@rmit.edu.au

If you are interested in applying to the AUSTRALIA cohort:
- You must obtain the agreed support of at least a primary supervisor to proceed further.

If you are interested in applying to the ASIA or EUROPE cohorts:
You must obtain the agreed support of your region's PRS Chair to proceed further.
- For Europe, contact: Dr Marcelo Stamm, marcelo.stamm@rmit.edu.au, PRS Europe Chair.
- For Asia, contact: Professor Sand Helsel, sand.helsel@rmit.edu.au, PRS Asia Chair

STEP 2. ATTEND A PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION INTERVIEW

Once you have the confirmed support of a primary supervisor and/or PRS region Chair, and have discussed a possible associate supervisor, you will then be asked to make a pre-application presentation to your prospective supervisors and the HDR coordinator or PRS Chair.

We schedule pre-application interviews to coincide with our Practice Research Symposia (PRS) dates so as to assist you in attending, and gaining an appreciation of the research culture of the School.

While face-to-face presentations are preferred, skype-based sessions are possible where required. Potential applicants should prepare a pre-application presentation under the guidance of the supervisor supporting your interview. This potential primary supervisor, and a potential associate supervisor, must indicate their in-principle interest and availability to supervise the proposed research, and attend as panel members of the pre-application presentation.

Following advice from the potential primary supervisor, the following should be supplied for electronic distribution to the panel one week prior to the presentation, which along with the interview, provides the basis on which we decide whether the School has the appropriate expertise and capacity to supervise your proposed program of research and whether to offer you a place.

1. A 1-5 PAGE OUTLINED RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND/OR OUTLINE OF DESIGN PRACTICE CONCERNS

The supervisor supporting your application can advise you on how best to provide a research proposal for the field in which you wish to work. The research proposal will usually include:

- Proposed title of study (Indicate the central theme you are exploring in one succinct phrase.)
- What do you want to research and with what end in mind? (What are the research questions you are asking? What is the material and area you want to study?)
- How will you conduct your research? (What research approach/method/structure will you use?)
- Attach a preliminary list of readings, references and precedents. (Is there an existing body of work which is relevant to your research?)

Please note that the research proposal is an important part of the selection process, but that approval of the proposal and an offer to enrol does not mean that the proposal is fixed. As the research project evolves it would be expected that the proposal would change in response. Within twelve months of enrolling, all candidates undergo a Confirmation of Candidature where the revised and expanded research proposal is reviewed by the School, and upon acceptance, the candidate's enrolment is formally approved.

2. A DESIGN PORTFOLIO OR PRACTICE WEBSITE

If you intend on developing your research through practice-led project work you will need to provide a portfolio of past and current work supplied in electronic/digital format as a PDF document or one specific relevant URL link.

The folio will usually include:

- A minimum of 4 recent projects, including your undergraduate / Masters work if relevant.
- A range of communication & presentation mediums as appropriate.
- A short text explanation for each project.
- Notes clarifying your involvement, authorship or role in presented projects.
- A sample of publications about your work, if any, and of your own writing about your work.

3. A CRITICAL REFLECTION

Please provide either:

- Approximately 1000 words of your own written reflections on an existing practice-based project of your own, with 5-7 relevant images, drawings or other visual material, if you are seeking to undertake practice research, OR
- A 1000-3000 word sample of writing, for non-practice led research applicants.

4. A CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Include education, professional experience, industry affiliation and/or partnerships, creative works, exhibitions, projects and publications, etc, with full reference details. Please also provide contact details of a referee that we may contact. Some potential supervisors may also request that transcripts of results from prior study be supplied before the interview. (Note: Transcripts will be required for formal application).

PRESENTATION & INTERVIEW

You are invited to make a 10-minute presentation addressing the following questions:

1. What is your research/practice history, and what motivates pursuing the proposed PhD research?
2. Through what kinds of approaches do you intend to pursue your proposal?
3. How and why is the program at RMIT's School of Architecture & Design an appropriate context for your research, with its strong emphasis on creative practice research and the PRS model?

Your presentation is followed by 10-15 minutes of discussion with a panel comprising:

1. The proposed primary supervisor
2. The Deputy Dean Research, HDR Coordinator, regional PRS Chair, or equivalent.
3. Potential associate supervisor/s or other registered supervisor.

Each pre-application presentation is followed by internal deliberations in the School. This can be a lengthy process, as the School PRS/HDR Executive discusses supervisor allocations based on availability and appropriateness of proposed supervisor, the strategic alignment of the research proposal with the School's (College's and RMIT's) research priorities and the ability of the School to provide adequate resources to enable you to conduct your research. This means candidates should be prepared for a waiting period. Potential applicants will be informed of the panel's decision whether the School of Architecture & Design will accept a formal application to the program via email.

STEP 3. SUBMIT A FORMAL APPLICATION FOR A HDR CANDIDATE PLACE

If your pre-application interview is successful, you will be invited to submit a formal application.

To formally apply, you will need to read the information about how to apply, and apply according to your residency type and location of study. Your application must include a copy of your brief Research Proposal, a folio and a CV, (as outlined above) as well as other material indicated on the form such as academic transcripts. All of these documents are submitted to RMIT Research Admissions. Applications without Research Proposals will not be considered.

Once your application has been logged by the RMIT Research Admissions Office it will be forwarded to the School for a final decision on whether you will be offered a place.

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We hope this information helps you explore pursing postgraduate research.

ad.hdradmin@rmit.edu.au
Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Administration Team
School of Architecture & Design
RMIT University
PO Box 2476
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia
Ph: +61 (0)3 9925 3505

Creative Practice Research Portal
PRS Practice Research Symposium 2017
AU Melbourne: 31 May-4 Jun / 18-22 Oct
ASIA Ho Chi Minh City: 7-9 Apr / 5-8 Oct
EU Barcelona: 28-30 Apr / 24-26 Nov