Research Proposal & Digital Portfolio

NCAD DUBLIN

National College of Art and Design

A Recognised College of University College Dublin

MA Communication Design, MA Design for Body and Environment, MA Product Design.

Introduction

The research proposal is central to your application to undertake a research masters in Design at NCAD. As a description of your proposed area of study, it should enable the selection panel to evaluate the scope and focus of your proposed design research masters. You should read the following guidelines carefully to ensure that your proposal includes the information we need to assess your application. The proposal should between 500 and 1,000 words in length.

The aim of the research proposal is to demonstrate that you have a suitable topic and area of research interest for which you are applying.

Guidance Notes

Please note that some of the sections outlined below will be easier to write than others at this very preliminary stage. The design staff at NCAD who will read your proposal know that it is a provisional statement and that your ideas, questions and approaches will change during the course of your design research. You should treat the proposal as an opportunity to show that you have begun to explore an important area of design study and that you have a question, or questions, that challenge and develop that area. It is also necessary to demonstrate that you can express your ideas in clear and precise language, accessible to a non-specialist.

The staff team do not expect you to know what your final outcomes may be for your proposed study. You might have some ideas about what the outcomes might be, but these may need to change and develop in relation to your investigation/study. You should be open to surprises and the unexpected, and you should expect your work to develop during the year and as such you will need to re-visit your proposal and, in negotiation with your tutor, revise some of the detail. The important first step is to identify a theme that can sustain your interest and curiosity during the masters, and that has the potential to generate a number of, as yet, unspecified design outcomes.

Proposal Format

Your research proposal should be in A4 format and can contain appropriate self-generated or referential visuals.

Your proposal should include the following elements:

- Proposal Title / Area of Investigation

A title summarising the proposed research. This should pose your research question rather than describe what you think you might design as a final outcome(s).

- Introduction:

Identify the proposed field of study in broad terms and indicate how you expect your design practice and research to contribute to the field. Use this section to introduce the questions and issues central to your proposed research topic.

Design Research background and questions:

Use this section to expand your introduction.

- What are the key texts and approaches in the field, and how does your proposal differ from existing lines of argument?

- What does your proposed research contribute to existing work in the field?

- How does it extend our understanding of particular questions or topics?

You need to set out your research questions as clearly as possible, explain problems that you want to explore and say why it is important to do so. In other words, think about how to situate your research in the context of your design discipline.

Research Methods:

This section should set out how you intend to achieve what you propose. This will depend very much on your research topic and will of course be subject to change during your study.

- What forms of design practice do you think you might use and why?

- How might you set about answering your research questions?

- How will the project build upon your previous experience and/or design practice?

- What resources might you use or need?

- Is your study interdisciplinary?

- What theoretical resources do you intend to use and why?

In addition to your proposal you are expected to submit a digital portfolio of previous work as part of the application process

Digital Portfolio:

This should demonstrate your background, experience and expertise and suitability to undertake the postgraduate degree you have applied for.

You can submit your portfolio by:

- Uploading a PDF during the application process *(maximum size 5MB)*

- Uploading a PDF containing a link to your online Portfolio. E.g. Google Drive, Dropbox

- Uploading a PDF containing a URL to a website containing your portfolio. Links to videos hosted on sites such as Vimeo or YouTube may be submitted, but please make sure that they are publicly viewable.

Review Process

All applications are reviewed by a team of design academics. Your application will be reviewed as follows:

1. Review of the application and portfolio of work. Selection panels assess applications in terms of quality of proposal and their readiness for study at this level.

2. Candidates are notified that they will be called for interview or that their application has been unsuccessful (please be aware that we do not usually offer feedback at this stage)

3. Interview: we usually prefer to interview candidates at the College as this offers the best opportunity to assure all parties that this is the best route to pursue at this stage. However, where necessary we can arrange live online interviews by arrangement with College Administrators.

4. Outcome: successful candidates will be sent a formal offer letter, unsuccessful applicants will receive a formal letter, and we will be able to provide feedback if your application was unsuccessful.

More Information
admissions@ncad.ie