



UCL

MPhil / PhD
Development Planning



Designed to support the formation of rigorous researchers by helping them strengthen their analytical skills whilst critically engaging with theoretical concepts and methodological tools

Programme Director

Dr Colin Marx

Programme Administrator

Michael Casey-Gillman

Core Modules

Doctoral Seminar

Research Methodology Seminar

MPhil / PhD Development Planning

Overview DPU's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research programme is a programme of self-selected academic study in the areas of international, national, regional and urban development, focusing on the political, economic, social and institutional dimensions of development. It embraces the range of areas of study that are central to DPU's interests.

The Programme takes an inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral approach to a range of fields such as urban planning, urban design, economic development, social development, housing, disasters and transport. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, culture, environment, poverty and governance are of central concern to DPU's researchers and therefore also to the Programme. Emphasis is given to research into topics that are at the forefront of development theory and practice in the context of trends such as globalisation, privatisation, climate change and increased socio-economic inequalities.

Between 35 and 45 students from around the world are enrolled at any one time for MPhil/PhD research. The first year cohort usually comprises a group of about ten students.

Structure All higher research degree candidates in University College London enrol for a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree that, subject to satisfactory progress, is transferred to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The programme starts in September of each year with a year-long period of intensive structured study. MPhil/PhD students should complete their research, submit their thesis and take the final examination within a period of 36 to 48 months of starting the programme. The minimum period of full-time registration for both degrees is two years.

The DPU programme, like all doctoral programmes in Britain, places great emphasis on a close one-to-one working relationship between the candidate and their supervisor. This is supported, in the first year, by an introductory two-term taught programme which is compulsory for all first-year students comprising a Doctoral Seminar series and a Research Methodology Seminar series. In addition, new participants must attend a two-term Specialisation Module selected from the broad range of MSc modules taught in the Unit. In some cases, supervisors may suggest that a candidate also enrolls in, or audits, an additional taught module.

Research A requirement of successful PhD research in UCL is that it should make a distinct contribution to knowledge. DPU's MPhil/PhD Programme is designed to support the formation of rigorous researchers by helping them strengthen their analytical skills whilst critically engaging with theoretical concepts and methodological tools. It provides them with a thorough knowledge of a particular subject area and an in-depth exploration of an empirical reality. This is achieved by giving equal emphasis to both the process and content of research, within the very highest standards of ethical and value-driven scholarship and academic input.

PhD research areas at the DPU embrace issues of direct and current relevance to development processes in a range of countries around the world. Most doctoral research includes a period of fieldwork in a country relevant to the research, during which the PhD candidate acquires a thorough knowledge of the context and collects primary data.

As additional support for their research, students have access, within walking distance of the DPU, to a large range of world-class libraries, including those in University College London and other universities, as well as the British Library.