



MPHIL / PHD PROGRAMMES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Which MPhil / PhD programmes does The Bartlett have?

We currently offer the following MPhil / PhD programmes:

- [Advanced Spatial Analysis MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Architectural and Digital Theory MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Architectural and Urban History and Theory MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Architectural Design MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Architectural Space and Computation MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Construction and Project Management MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Development Planning MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Energy MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Environmental Design and Engineering MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Global Prosperity MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Innovation and Public Policy MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Planning MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Sustainable Heritage MPhil/PhD](#)
- [Sustainable Resources MPhil/PhD](#)

Which of these programmes is right for me?

Please see the [UCL Graduate Prospectus](#) for information on which research areas each programme covers, along with the skills development and employability offered. You may also view our [department websites](#) to gain a sense of the different activities our staff and students engage in.

For advice on choosing the right programme, you are very welcome to contact the Built Environment Faculty Office by e-mailing Ms Lisa Cooper at lisa.cooper@ucl.ac.uk or telephoning +44 (0)20 3108 6686.

What is the difference between an MPhil and a PhD?

All students start with MPhil registration. After around a year of study, students undergo an assessment which must be passed in order to 'upgrade' to PhD status. The 'upgrade' involves a viva exam plus assessment of written reports from the student and supervisor. The purpose of the upgrade is to assess the student's progress and ability to complete their PhD programme in a reasonable time frame. The 'upgrade' assessment is not confined to the research material presented by the student but also considers the student's demonstrable academic and generic skills.

On rare occasions, students do not upgrade and are then registered as 'MPhil Only'. The length of programme, supervisory arrangements and fees for MPhil study are the same as those for PhD. The only difference between the two programmes is what is required of the thesis. For an MPhil award, the thesis must represent a contribution to the subject, either through a record of the candidate's original work or a critical and ordered exposition of existing knowledge. The requirements of a PhD degree are more demanding. For a PhD award, the thesis must represent a distinct and significant contribution to the subject, whether through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views.

Who studies for an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett?

We want a more diverse student community than we have and so are very interested to hear from people who would like to become part of UCL and are from currently under-represented groups. These include: Black and Minority Ethnic people; those that live in less advantaged areas; people who attended a state

school; those with a disability or a learning difficulty. Having a more diverse student community will help us produce better research and teaching.

At present about 72% of our Home fee-status PhD students are White and 22% are Black and Ethnic Minority. The Overseas fee-status PhD students at The Bartlett are around 16% White and 84% Black and Ethnic Minority.

We do not have statistical information on which of our PhD students are from less advantaged areas or what type of school they attended. For our undergraduate students, 25% went to an independent school and 71% to a state school. The other 4% do not have their school type recorded.

People with a declared disability or a learning difficulty represent about 7% of our PhD students in the Built Environment Faculty.

Around 22% of our PhD students study part-time. The average age of our PhD students is 31 (mean), 29 (median), 25 (mode).

Which qualifications do I need to apply for an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett?

You need to have at least an upper second-class (2:1) Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in a relevant subject. We sometimes admit students without a Master's degree but only if they have significant professional experience or they have published in academic journals.

I do not have British qualifications. Which international qualifications are required to apply for a PhD at The Bartlett?

Please visit the International Students part of the [UCL website](#) to see how your qualifications compare to a British upper second-class (2:1) Bachelor's degree and a British Master's degree.

English is not my first language. Do I have to pass an English test to apply for an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett?

Yes. Please visit the International Students part of the [UCL website](#) to see which tests we accept and how to take them. The test has to be passed within the two years before the start of your PhD. So if your PhD will start in September 2020, you need to have passed the English test after September 2018.

You will not have to take a test if you can prove that you have studied for at least a year – and been successfully awarded a qualification – in a country that UCL considers to be '[majority English speaking](#)'. Again, this study needs to be within the two years before the start of your PhD.

You will not have to take a test if you can prove that you have been employed for at least a year and a half in a country that UCL considers to be 'majority English speaking'. Again, this employment needs to be within the two years before the start of your PhD.

How much does an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett cost?

The tuition fees amount for each programme is shown in the [UCL Graduate Prospectus](#). The fees vary depending on whether you study full- or part-time and whether you are a UK or an Overseas student. Full-time study for a UK student studying a PhD at The Bartlett is currently about £5,000 a year. Part-time study is about half that. Students starting in September need to pay at least one third of the annual fee before the end of October. The second third needs to be paid by early February and the last third before May.

Please see the UCL Students website for the [fee schedules](#), which provide details of the tuition fees for each programme offered by UCL. You can search for specific programmes and the fees shown are for full-time and/or part-time study. You can also find out how your [fee status](#) is determined.

Please note that students on certain degree programmes will incur some additional costs not covered by their tuition fee; for example, for specialist equipment, artists' materials, books or costs related to carrying out fieldwork. In the [UCL Graduate Prospectus](#), each programme has an 'Additional Costs' section which will give you an idea of how much students on that programme typically need to pay for things like design equipment or fieldwork. Please check this.

What if I can't afford it?

We recognise that there are prospective students with the potential and qualities needed to succeed academically, but who simply cannot afford the financial costs of studying for a degree. The Bartlett plans

to offer scholarships specifically for under-presented groups, including those of a lower-income background. We hope to put these in place over the next few years. In the meantime, there are sources of funding you can apply for. Also, some students are fortunate to be sponsored by their employer, while others may combine part-time study with part-time work. Competition for funding is intense, however, and most do not take into account financial need. They are awarded on the basis of academic excellence.

Please view the relevant [department website](#) to see if they offer a scholarship specifically for the PhD programme you wish to study. These will be advertised there, if they do.

Also, UCL has a [Graduate Research Scholarship](#) that covers tuition fees and pays for some general living costs. Applications open in October 2019.

Many other smaller organisations provide funding to PhD students. [Turn 2 Us Grants Search](#) database contains information on over 3,000 charitable funds offering welfare and educational grants, as well as other support and services.

[The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding Online](#) is a portal for alternative sources of funding - especially charities - which can make awards (fees, maintenance, research costs) to any student regardless of subject or nationality. UCL has purchased a licence to the Guide so it's free for all students and staff to use. If you are a prospective student who has applied to the university, please [email the Student Funding team](#) to access the PIN.

There are other sources of funding for graduate research students that you may be eligible for. Please see the [Fees and Funding](#) part of the UCL website for further information.

You are very welcome to contact the Built Environment Faculty Office if you want advice on funding your PhD studies at UCL, by e-mailing Ms Lisa Cooper at lisa.cooper@ucl.ac.uk or telephoning +44 (0)20 3108 6686.

How much does it cost to live in London?

An indication of the costs associated with studying for a PhD in London is given on the [Graduate Admissions website](#).

How long does an MPhil / PhD take to complete?

A full-time PhD is three years but students are usually permitted to take a fourth year, provided they meet certain conditions. The student must have successfully upgraded from MPhil to PhD status (by passing an assessment) and the Principle Supervisor must be convinced that the student will be able to submit their thesis within a year. The fourth year is known as 'Completing Research Status' and there are no fees for this year. Also, there is no supervision other than one review of the draft thesis.

Can I study part-time?

Yes, as long as your Principle Supervisor approves, you can register as part-time. A part-time PhD is five years and students are usually permitted to take a sixth and seventh year as 'Completing Research Status'. However, please note that UK law does not allow students with a Tier 4 study visa to be part-time.

Can I work while studying?

We understand that some students need to work in order to be able to afford their tuition fees. However, it is important to ensure that your studies will not suffer because of your work commitments. You will need to be sure that you are available for the timetabled elements of your studies, and that you allocate enough time each week for research. Your Supervisor will be concerned to ensure that you achieve your best in your academic work, but will understand that many graduate students have other commitments in their life, such as family.

Please note that students on a Tier 4 study visa may work for up to 20 hours per week, including paid or unpaid work.

UCL Careers advertise jobs for current students on their [website](#). Also, PhD students may be asked by their department to contribute to undergraduate and masters-level teaching as a [Postgraduate Teaching](#)

[Assistant](#) (PGTA). The Built Environment Faculty Office advertises posts for current students, each July. Many departments also advertise PGTA posts, on the UCL Human Resources [website](#).

What support does UCL offer disabled students?

UCL welcomes applications from disabled students. Our aim is to promote and implement an inclusive learning and teaching environment, allowing students to study as independently as possible during their time at UCL. Please visit the [Support and Wellbeing](#) part of the UCL website for information on the support available for students with learning difficulties, disabilities and long-term health conditions.

If you tell UCL Graduate Admissions about a disability on your application this will help them ensure UCL can meet your needs and will prompt them to send you more information about UCL services. UCL Student Disability Services are happy to arrange information visits to UCL so that you can find out more about the physical environment and facilities or discuss support arrangements with them in person. If you are a wheelchair user or are mobility-impaired it is important to visit, if you can, before you apply as the design of some of our older buildings may make access to some departments difficult. If you would like to discuss your individual needs or have questions about the support that might be available to you, you are very welcome to contact UCL Student Disability Services at any stage of the application process, by e-mailing disability@ucl.ac.uk or by telephoning +44 (0)20 7679 0100.

Where are the MPhil / PhDs taught?

The main UCL campus is located in [Bloomsbury](#), which is in central London. All of the MPhil / PhD programmes in The Bartlett are taught there.

We have a few undergraduate and Master's degree programmes based at [Here East](#). This is 5.5 miles (8.8 km) from our Bloomsbury campus and about 40 minutes by public transport.

How do I apply for an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett?

You can apply online via our [Graduate Prospectus](#) (there is an 'Apply Now' button at the bottom of the page of each PhD programme) but first you should find out if we have academic staff who are interested in supervising your research. It is also advisable to see if there is funding you can apply for, to pay for the tuition fees or living costs. UCL's online application portal is called Portico. When you submit an application you will be given a Student Number. You can then log into Portico any time, to see the progress of your application and if we have asked you to take any action.

How to I find out if The Bartlett has academic staff who are interested in supervising my research?

Please check our [department websites](#), which list our academic staff and their fields of expertise. You can also see our staff profiles on the [UCL Institutional Research Information Service](#). This lists their publications, research activities and achievements. When you have identified one or two (no more than that!) academic staff who you think would be a good supervisor for your research, send them an e-mail to introduce yourself and ask if they would be interested in supervising you. Please summarise your proposed research in about 500 words and say why you would like to be supervised by them (by referring to their work). Also, attach to your e-mail a more detailed summary of your research proposal (around 2,000 to 3,000 words) and your curriculum vitae, including information on your Bachelors' and Master's degree and relevant professional experience.

If the academic staff member is interested in potentially supervising you, they might suggest ways you can improve your research proposal or make it nearer to their interests and expertise. Having improved your research proposal so that they are happy with it, you can then apply [online](#).

If the academic staff is not available or is not interested in the research you want to do, they might suggest other UCL academic staff you can contact instead.

What should I include in the Research Proposal?

Your research proposal should be around 2,000 to 3,000 words long and should have a key question that you are going to answer. There should also be two or three 'sub-questions'. You will need to say why it is important to ask these questions: what are the cultural, ethical or practical benefits in finding answers to them? Outline the ways in which your research will be different from the existing work that has been done in the area. Say how you will be adding to existing knowledge and thought on the subject. Demonstrate that you have read the current literature in the area and have a critical view of it. Please include a methodology: how are you going to find the answers to your research questions? What are your source

materials? Are you using a particular approach? You should have references in your research proposal and provide a short bibliography. This should include at least one publication by the person you wish to be supervised by! For more information on writing a research proposal, please see the [UCL Graduate Prospectus](#).

What else do I need to include in my application?

Application fee

It is free to apply for an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett. No payment is required.

Academic transcripts

When completing the online application form, you will need to upload a copy of your Bachelor's and your Master's degree transcript, showing which modules you took and the grades you got. If you do not have these, you can request them from the university where you studied. If you are currently studying and haven't been awarded the degree yet, you need to upload an 'interim' transcript that shows the modules and grades you have so far. Please note that if your documents are not in English, you must also upload a full translation of each document - prepared by your university or a registered translator. You must not translate the documents yourself. Please see the Prospective Student part of the UCL website for further information on [academic transcripts](#).

English language requirements

You do not need to provide proof of English language proficiency at the application stage. If we want to make you an offer of study, we will request proof then.

Personal statement

The personal statement allows you to express your motivations and suitability for the programme you are applying to. Your personal statement should let us know: why do you want to undertake the research; what are your academic interests; why do you wish to study at UCL; what educational experience do you have; do you have any relevant work experience; have you completed any extracurricular and voluntary activities relevant to the programme; what are your career aspirations.

References

At least one of your references must be academic: from someone who has taught you at degree level. Ideally both references will be academic but one may be from a professional.

You will be asked to enter the details of your referees in your application form. When you submit the application they will automatically be sent an email asking them to write a reference for you and to submit it online. Please ensure you have spoken to your chosen referees prior to this so they are expecting the invitation and are happy to provide a reference for you online. Please note that we cannot consider your application until we have both references, so you will need to check in the application portal to see if your references have been submitted and to ensure that both references are received in good time.

When providing the email address for your referee please use an academic or professional one rather than a personal one, e.g. john.smith@university.ac.uk rather than johnsmith@hotmail.com.

You can use the application portal to check if references have been sent, to resend reference requests, and to change who your referees are.

Can I ask for help with completing the application?

One of the conditions of submitting an application to study at UCL is that you will submit your own application and are not using an agent to do so on your behalf. That is, you must write the application yourself. Of course, you may ask advice from others on what to include. If you completed a Master's degree fairly recently you may wish to ask the academic who supervised your dissertation, or one of the other academics who taught you, to take a look at a draft of your application, particularly the personal statement and the research proposal. If you do not know anyone who is able to offer advice on what to include in a PhD application, please be guided by the information in the UCL Graduate Prospectus on writing a [personal statement](#) and a [research proposal](#). When you approach potential supervisors at UCL, many will be happy to advise on how to improve your research proposal and/or make it more of a fit with their interests. However, they will need to see you prove your academic potential and so the application you submit must be primarily the result of your own efforts.

How long will it take for a decision to be made on my application?

UCL aims to make a decision within six weeks of receiving your complete application, research proposal and both references. *However and importantly*, please note that it often takes us three or four months to make a decision because staff have many applications to consider, as well as their teaching, research and managerial responsibilities. You are therefore strongly advised to approach potential supervisors and apply online well in advance of when you want to start your PhD.

How will my application be assessed?

UCL Graduate Admissions will perform some initial checks (references, transcripts, fee status, and any disability declaration) before passing your application to the Built Environment Faculty Office who will then check you have included a research proposal and that your references are from appropriate people. Your application is then passed to the Department Graduate Tutor. If we want to interview you, your potential Principle Supervisor and Subsidiary Supervisor will contact you to arrange this. Interviews may be in person or by Skype. The Department Graduate Tutor will then make a recommendation. The Built Environment Faculty Office will inform you of this by e-mail. Please note that only the Graduate Admissions Office is able to make you an official, binding offer. They will e-mail you when this has been confirmed.

The decision is based on an assessment of your personal statement, research proposal, academic record, references, interview performance and the availability of suitable UCL supervisors.

When does the MPhil / PhD programme start?

You can start an MPhil / PhD at The Bartlett any time of the year, as long as the member of academic staff who will be your Principle Supervisor approves. Most PhD students start in late September, as this is when we hold our welcome and induction sessions. It is also when most scholarships start.

Can I visit in person to talk to staff about my application and/or tour the facilities?

Unfortunately, we are not able to speak to prospective students in person, simply because we have such a large volume of applicants. You are very welcome to telephone the Built Environment Faculty Office to discuss any aspects of our MPhil / PhD programmes. However, academic staff are usually contactable by e-mail only, as they are engaged in teaching and researching. We do occasionally hold Graduate Open Days and you can explore the UCL campus by [booking](#) onto one of our guided tours or signing up for a self-guided tour. To find out the date of our next Graduate Open Day, please contact the Built Environment Faculty Office by e-mailing Ms Lisa Cooper at lisa.cooper@ucl.ac.uk or telephoning +44 (0)20 3108 6686.

If I cannot take up my offer of a place can I defer it to next year?

It is not usually a problem to defer your offer of a place to the following year. Applicants will need the authorisation of the Department Graduate Tutor and their Principle Supervisor. The Graduate Admissions Office will need to issue a renewed and updated offer letter. To request a deferral, applicants should e-mail their Principle Supervisor (who will be named on the offer letter) and copy in the Built Environment Faculty Office, lisa.cooper@ucl.ac.uk.

Do I need a visa to study at UCL?

If you are not from the European Economic Area or Switzerland (including dual nationals) and are coming to study in the UK for more than 6 months then you will require a Tier 4 Student visa. The Immigration and Visas section of the UCL website gives detailed instructions on how to apply. Please note that the earliest you can submit an application is three months before the start date of your programme. If you submit an application earlier than this you will automatically be refused.

Before you can apply for a visa, UCL needs to issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number to you. This is a unique 14 digit reference number which UCL Graduate Admissions will e-mail to you along with additional information you will need from UCL to make a Tier 4 visa application. A CAS number is valid for use for 6 months from the date it was issued. It can be used only once for a single application.

If you have a conditional offer, you must meet all the conditions before we can send you a CAS number. Once you meet all the conditions, UCL Graduate Admissions will issue an Unconditional Offer to you. When you accept this, we can send you the CAS number.

Please note that if you are made an offer of study for our Energy MPhil/PhD, you will also need to apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme ([ATAS](#)) certificate. An ATAS certificate takes at least 20 working days (4 weeks) to be issued so you need to apply for this well in advance of your Tier 4 application.

For further information on Immigration and Visas, please see the [UCL website](#).

Is there accommodation available at UCL?

Most MPhil / PhD students live in private accommodation rather than UCL accommodation. Information and free legal advice is available from the [University of London Housing Service](#). Also, UCL collaborates with a number of [independent organisations](#) offering private accommodation to students in London.

MPhil / PhD students only qualify for UCL accommodation if they are registered for full-time study, have Overseas fee status, have never lived in London before while studying at university, and apply before 30th June.

How do I find out what I need to do in my first week at UCL?

Over the summer (June to August), the Built Environment Faculty Office e-mails everyone we have made an offer of study to, with information on our welcome and induction events. Also, Graduate Admissions will send everyone who accepts an offer of study information on how and when to enrol at UCL. The New Students part of the UCL website has information on how to [pre-enrol](#) before you get here and how to complete [enrolment](#) once you arrive at UCL.

If I am studying an MPhil / PhD at another university, can I spend some time researching at UCL?

If you are registered as an MPhil / PhD student at a university outside of the United Kingdom, you can visit UCL for between three months and one year, to carry out research in London. You will need to check that The Bartlett has academic staff who are interested in supervising your work.

Please see the 'How to I find out if The Bartlett has academic staff who are interested in supervising my research' section of this guideline for further information.

Applications to our Visiting Research programmes may be made [online](#).

Who can help if I have other questions about MPhil / PhD study at the Built Environment Faculty?

You are very welcome to contact the Built Environment Faculty Office by e-mailing Ms Lisa Cooper at lisa.cooper@ucl.ac.uk or telephoning +44 (0)20 3108 6686.