

Format of PhD by Practice in Archaeology and/or Ancient History

This PhD route seeks to satisfy the following objectives:

1. To meet the needs of the working professional normally studying at a distance who seeks to develop a direct relationship between research and practice.
2. To create a structured research journey, building incrementally towards completion, which meets the needs of the working professional.
3. To place the relationship between research and practice at the heart of the research process: research that deepens practice; practice that makes research impactful.
4. To not deviate from the defining values of the PhD in terms of research quality and individual creativity as assessed by the thesis and viva voce examination.
5. To support the development of advanced research and practice-based skills directly relevant to the student's professional context.
6. To give students the flexibility to weight and position the practice and research elements according to the needs and ambitions of the project.

The PhD by Practice differs from a normal PhD in being structured around two distinct elements that must nonetheless also form a coherent whole:

1. Research-based (critical/reflective) component
2. Practice-based component

There is some flexibility in the structuring of PhD by Practice projects, depending on the professional context and scope of the proposed research. The initial probationary stage is considered critical for fully defining the parameters of the project and the expected outputs to be delivered as part of the practice-based 'thesis'.

The PhD is designed primarily with people in archaeology/heritage employment in mind, where the research may be undertaken on a part-time basis and will likely build on their broader professional work or a specific project being undertaken as part of that employment. Where there is strong alignment of the project with a candidate's professional duties, we envisage that completion of the PhD may be achievable within 4-5 years part time, though the normal 7 year upper limit for part-time study will apply. However, in certain cases it may be possible for someone not in current employment to undertake a PhD by Practice on a full-time basis (NB there is a minimum registration period of 2 years FT/4 years PT).

There is also an MPhil by Practice route, which can either be elected for at the outset, or as an option if the project needs to be reduced in scale and scope as it progresses. In certain cases it may also be possible to transfer from the PhD by Practice route to the normal PhD route or vice versa, though this cannot be guaranteed given the very varied nature of PhD by Practice projects and the specific requirements of the Practice route outlined below.

Individual components of the PhD by Practice Thesis

The 'thesis' will be made up of a number of distinct elements, but must include both a research component and a practice-based component.

Research Component:

This component is usually around 30-50k words long and needs to outline the **research questions**, provide a **background to the research and a literature review** and outline **methodologies**. In this, it is important that it is clearly articulated why the practice-based component is needed and represents the best way of completing the degree (justify over other doctoral routes). There should also be a **self-reflective element** that considers the fulfilment of the practice-based component and its relationship to the academic field and the research aims. **Published research articles** can be submitted as part of the research component, but in such cases there should be a clear narrative in the Research Component that explains how the different elements fit together and address the research questions.

Practice-based Component:

The Practice-based Component can include several elements (normally totalling 20-30k words). It should document the **research process**, from project design and aspects of project management that the candidate has led on. An important part of many professional PhDs is the leadership and delivery of a significant project (whether survey, excavation, post-excavation programme or exhibition, etc) and this reflective piece will enable this component to be assessed. **Journal article(s) that relate to aspects of professional practice** can also be included under this head. Other potential materials for inclusion in the Practice component could include **archaeological reports** (including grey literature), **popular pieces, exhibitions, digital resources, audio-visual outputs, courses and training programmes, community engagement activity, policy work** – insofar as these can be related to the research questions and aims underpinning the project.

The weighting of the different components may vary and will be agreed between the supervisory team and the student in advance of the probation stage in the first year of the project.

As regards inclusion of published work, this cannot antedate the start of the PhD by Practice project and there is an expectation in any co-authored publications that the student will have played a demonstrably leading role in conducting the work and authoring the output. Note also: a practice-based thesis cannot simply comprise a collection of journal articles/popular articles, but needs the reflective/critical research and professional practice discussion elements mentioned above.

Timeline of a PhD by Practice in Archaeology and Ancient History:

To give an idea how the PhD by Practice may work, here is a possible format, showing how outputs relevant to the final thesis are developed and feed in to Probation/Progress Reviews. While recognising that each project will be different, we believe that the key to the success is to put in place a detailed plan and then work towards its completion. This makes the pre-probation stage in Year 1 particularly important. The plan is based around clear targets, milestones and incremental achievement. Review stages (Probation and then Progress Reviews) are embedded in the programme to mitigate risks that might affect quality and completion.

Year 1 FT (Years 1-2 part-time)

- Students will develop and hone their **research questions** or problem that they want to investigate. This will be the focus of their practice-based research.
- Conduct a **literature review** to identify existing research and knowledge related to their research question.
- Develop a **methodology** that combines their practical work with theoretical analysis, which will help inform the reflective commentary component.

- Conduct a risk analysis of the project's feasibility.
 - **Formation of the research questions, lit review, and methodology that outlines and justifies practice-based approach, identification of appropriate outputs/elements for the eventual thesis, risk analysis – all to be reviewed at the Probation Review.**

Years 2-3 FT (Years 3-6 part-time)

- Develop a plan and **undertake the practical component**
- **Document practice**, specifically in a way that allows reflection on process and communication of findings
 - Documentation of progress or **creation of early output** to be reviewed at first progress review
- Engage in **critical analysis of the practice component** to understand the implication of findings
- **Communicate research** in a way that is appropriate for the field of study and the practice component usually through tangible outputs like reports, articles, exhibitions or film.
 - **Output to be reviewed** at the second progress review

Years 3-4 FT (Years 6-7 part-time)

- Reflect on process to identify any insights that have been gained.
- Produce a **reflective commentary** on the practice-based component that places the research firmly within the context of the subject area or field of research, engages critically with relevant theory, and identifies the contribution that the study makes to either new knowledge or a new approach to research or communication.
- **Write a document** that incorporates: work from the probation year(s) (identifying the research question(s), literature review and methodology); the outputs; a summary of the practice-based component; the reflective commentary.
 - **Final document** and candidate assessed at a viva voce

It is envisaged that normally the **Probation Review will take place no later than 6 months of full time or 12 months of part time study**, so as to ensure that the viability of the project is established early on. Any necessary partnership agreements or intellectual property agreements needed with Third Party organisations should also be in place by the Probation Review. Subsequent progress reviews will assess how far the timetable and targets established in year 1 are being met. Depending on the nature of the project, some Practice based PhDs may require external advisors to be appointed to the supervisory teams.