

Types of research degree

There are various postgraduate research qualifications that BU awards:

- Master's by Research
- Master of Philosophy
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Thesis/Practice-based PhD
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Publication
- Professional Doctorate.

None of these involve any formally assessed taught components.

An **MRes** can be completed in one year full-time or over two years part-time and involves undertaking a research project at Master's level. You'll conduct independent research which you will then write up as a thesis and present in an oral examination - also known as viva voce.

An **MPhil** takes a minimum of two years to complete. You will need to critically investigate and evaluate an approved topic, write a thesis and then present and defend this thesis by viva voce.

A **PhD by Thesis** is distinguished by delivering an independent and original contribution to knowledge on a given subject. It involves an advanced and complex project that results in a written thesis being presented and defended by viva voce. It takes a minimum of three years to complete a PhD.

A **PhD by Publication** is slightly different in that it is awarded based on publications or other practical elements, as well as an accompanying synthesis. Through this synthesis, you need to demonstrate a critical investigation, provide an original contribution to knowledge and show an understanding of appropriate research methodology for your chosen field. As with a PhD by Thesis, you must present and defend your thesis by viva voce. Normally, a PhD by Publication is only available to members of staff.

Professional Doctorates are designed to encourage professional staff to pursue formal qualifications by carrying out in-depth research related to activities performed in the workplace. In academic terms, they have the same standing as a PhD.

To be awarded a Professional Doctorate you need to critically investigate and evaluate either an approved organisation-centred topic that results in a fundamental improvement in performance, or a professional practice topic, with your work leading to a fundamental advance in theory and practice. You will also have to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate research methods, as well as present and defend your thesis by viva voce.

Our postgraduate research degrees are awarded based on the faculty they are delivered in. You can find out more information about the subject areas you could research in our [course search](#) section.

If you're interested in our postgraduate taught courses, you will find more information about these courses in our [postgraduate study section](#).

We offer several Professional Doctorate programmes:

Doctor of Professional Practice (DProf) for health and social care professionals

The Faculty of Health & Social Sciences offers a [Doctor of Professional Practice](#) that can be completed while in full-time or part-time work. This programme is suitable for a wide range of professionals, including lecturer practitioners who have completed a Master's; practitioners who are aspiring to be a nurse or therapy consultant; service leaders and managers from a variety of health and social care organisations, including those working as general practitioners, psychotherapists, counsellors and educationalists. For more information about Professional Doctorates in the health and social care sector, please contact [Dr Jen Leamon](#), HSS Academic Lead for Dr Professional Practice.

Professional or Engineering Doctorate (DProf/DEng)

This unique [doctoral programme](#) places you, as a researcher, into a company where you can work on projects across digital media, animation, games and VFX. The programme lasts for a total of four years, with 75% of the work being carried out within the company you are working for. We are offering this in conjunction with Bath University, under the Centre for Digital Entertainment. As well as conducting your research in-company, you will have access to a range of support and resources from Bournemouth and Bath's respective Master's programmes. The taught aspects of this doctorate will be tailor made for you, arranged in consultation with you, the host company and academic supervisors. Read more about the programme and how to apply on the [course page](#).

Research degree process

Postgraduate research degrees do not involve any taught elements, which means the process for completing this kind of qualification - as opposed to a taught course like a Master's - is very different.

There are several milestones throughout a postgraduate research degree, with each stage designed to assess and hone your research to help you produce a strong thesis. The following are the main milestones during a postgraduate research degree - you can find more information about all of these stages in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees \(pdf 2.6mb\)](#)