TRINITY LABAN

CITY ST GEORGE'S UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMME APPLICANTS

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Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance www.trinitylaban.ac.uk
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MPhil/PhD Programmes

Thank you for your interest in Research Degree Programme (RDP) at Trinity Laban. In addition to the information we give at https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/courses/research-degree-programme/, the following should assist you in developing your application. Our research degrees are validated by City St George's, University of London.

Research Degree Programme

We offer the following programmes of study:

EITHER	**MPhil/PhD in Creative Practice: Dance/Music/Collaborative Arts (CPM/CPD/CPCA)**
OR	**MPhil/PhD in Dance Studies/Musicology/Collaborative Arts Studies (DS/Mus/CAS)**
OR	**MPhil/PhD in [Dance and/or Music] Science (DSc/MusSc)**
OR	**MPhil/PhD in [Dance and/or Music] Pedagogy (DPed/MPed)**

All programmes are research degrees, which include shared elements, such as induction, research skills training and occasional seminars, but mainly focus on regular one-to-one supervisions with two allocated members of Trinity Laban staff or one member of Trinity Laban staff and one supervisor from another institution.

The options in creative practice are suitable for those whose main focus is in composition, choreography, performance, or any related activity which embodies practical components, including those whose research incorporates interdisciplinary collaborations. In addition, historical research projects that utilise archive resources at Trinity Laban are also admissible under this option.

The following indicative research topics could be accommodated under the fully-written dance studies/ musicology/ collaborative arts pathways:

Musicology Topics within: music theory; music analysis; historical musicology; historical performance practice; music history and historiography; philosophy of music; sociology of music; music and gender; music and politics; music performance studies;

Dance Studies Topics within: dance theory and studies; dance history and historiography; philosophy of dance; sociology of dance; dance and gender; dance and politics; dance performance studies;

Collaborative Arts Topics within: intersectional studies between music and/or dance and other artforms; choreomusicology; projects studying historical collaborative practice; case studies of transdisciplinary arts projects; collaborative arts and mediatization.

The remaining awards are available for those specializing in empirical approaches to topics in music and dance research and those who wish to concentrate on educational and pedagogical aspects.

Trinity Laban offers an integrated PhD degree, although students can exit with a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) award. All research degree candidates register initially for Master of Philosophy (MPhil), giving time for students to develop methodology and refine their topic. This leads to an assessment of the project 1-2 years into the course of study when candidates are considered for transfer to PhD. This transfer is assessed by written and verbal presentation.

Modes of Study and Durations

All programmes are available in full-time or part-time modes of study. Visa students can usually study full-time only. Students can opt to begin their studies via two separate intakes a year, one in January, and one in September. For Trinity Laban staff members only, a pathway for PhD by publication is also available - please address queries about this option directly to the Head of Research. The minimum and maximum durations for research degree programmes are shown in the following table.

	Period of Registration		Period before transfer to PhD		minimum before 'writing up'
	Minimum	maximum	minimum	maximum	
PhD Full-time	2 years	4 years			2 years
PhD Part-time	3 years	7 years			3 years
PhD by prior publication (part-time)	1 year	2 years			--
MPhil Full-time	1 year	3 years	1 year		2 years
MPhil Part-time	2 years	5 years	2 years		4 years

Research Degree Personnel

The MPhil and PhD programmes are led by Prof Jonathan Clark, Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange at Trinity Laban (J.Clark@trinitylaban.ac.uk). Enquiries from prospective applicants to the RDP programme should be addressed to RDPAdmissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk in the first instance. The Administrator for the Research Degree Programme is Sara Pay (S.Pay@trinitylaban.ac.uk). Enquiries about fees/deadlines and other questions about the RDP can be addressed here.

Research at Trinity Laban

Trinity Laban supports a wide range of research-based activity, including choreography, composition, sound-art, music/dance performance, dance theatre, scenography, music/dance science, as well as encouraging collaborative work, for example between music and dance, film or technology. Some researchers pursue interdisciplinary work, combining practice with theoretical perspectives, for example looking at the cultural context of the creation and performance of work, or education and pedagogically based work. Practitioners/researchers from Trinity Laban are developing innovative, collaborative projects which aim to push the boundaries of the art forms and promote the development of new artistic media. Detailed information on research at Trinity Laban: RDP, projects, events and staff

Library Resources

Trinity Laban is a specialist Higher Education Institution with two libraries, the Laban Library & Archive for Dance and the Jerwood Library for Music. To access materials relating to other disciplines, our students can register with other libraries including those at City St George's who validate our research degrees, and the British Library. For an insight into which resources are available at Trinity Laban, access the Laban and Jerwood library catalogues via the following links:

- QuickSearch for both Trinity Laban libraries: https://research.ebsco.com/c/a6rbxs/search
- Journal Finder (TL journal subscriptions): http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=guest&custid=ns071427&groupid=main&profile=pfi

Entry Criteria for the Research Degree Programme

Eligibility

Applicants wishing to undertake the RDP must have one or more of the following minimum qualifications before considering an application:

• an Honours degree in a related field (either 1st class or upper 2nd class) from a UK institution or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standing obtained after a course of study extending over not less than three years in a higher education institution, and in a subject appropriate to the proposed research project;

• a Taught Postgraduate degree in a subject appropriate to the programme to be followed;

• a professional or other qualification obtained by examination and approved by Trinity Laban as an appropriate entrance qualification for the MPhil/PhD degree in question;

• appropriate professional experience and a demonstrable reputation (as attested by suitably qualified referees) in the nominated area.

Applicants possessing alternative qualifications or relevant experience may also be considered.

In addition, for applicants whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of **6.5** (or equivalent, for non-visa students) **in each element** with certification attained no more than 2 years prior to application is mandatory. The IELTS requirement is a prerequisite for applying to Trinity Laban: the institution does not make conditional offers based on its future completion. Applicants with the required English qualification may be asked to provide additional evidence of proficiency in English.

Programme Objectives

Eligibility for the RDP is also contingent on the proposed project fulfilling the following broad objectives for the Programme:

• to expand the body of knowledge of and about music and/or dance and/or collaborative arts in a practical, intellectual, and scholarly way;

• to promote the development of research to the level of public dissemination, including performance, publication, and conference presentation;

• to enlarge the group of music and/or dance and/or collaborative arts scholars and contribute to ongoing debates in the wider fields of music and/or dance and/or collaborative arts.

Types of Submission and Word-Counts

Type of Final Submission	MPhil	PhD
Fully Written (including Dance Studies/ Musicology/ Collaborative Arts/ [Dance and/or Music] Science and [Dance and/or Music] Pedagogy Pathways)	c. 50,000	c. 100,000 words (maxima)
Creative Practice: Practical and Written A	Portfolio/Practical submission of 5-6 completed pieces, and be of (in total) approx. 50 mins in duration, to be submitted in hardcopy format (DVD/CD/score etc) c. 15,000 word project commentary to be submitted as softbound hardcopy	Portfolio/Practical submission portfolio of c. 6-8 completed pieces, and be of (in total) approximately 90 minutes in duration, to be submitted in hardcopy format (DVD/CD/hardcopy score etc) c. 20,000-25,000 word project commentary to be submitted as softbound hardcopy
Creative Practice:	Exceptional thesis (higher word count)	Portfolio/Practical submission of c. 3-4 completed pieces, and be of (in total)

Practical and Written B (Exceptional thesis)	Not Available	approximately 45 minutes in duration, to be submitted in hardcopy format (DVD/CD/hardcopy score etc) c. 50,000 word project commentary to be submitted as softbound hardcopy
Music and/or Dance Science: Empirical methodology, **quantitative data**/analysis only	c. 30,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy	c. 60,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy
Music and/or Dance Science: Mixed-mode methodologies, **qualitative and quantitative data**/analysis	c. 35,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy	c. 70,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy
Music and/or Dance Science: Qualitative methodology, **qualitative data**/analysis only	c. 40,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy	c. 80,000 words Submit softbound hardcopy

The decision of which written element to submit (project commentary or thesis) has to be taken with the guidance and agreement of the student's supervisors and the Head of Research.

Initial Application Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, applicants are expected to submit:

• An outline research proposal (of circa 2,000 words) detailing the nature and objectives of the proposed MPhil/PhD project and submission (to help you with this, see the section below entitled- Writing Your Research Proposal);

• A summary CV of relevant educational background and professional experience, including any performance, composition/choreography or other relevant artistic experience, a list of creative works produced either as sole author or contributor, and details of funding previously received including, grants, and prizes;

• Certified copies of all degree certificates;

• Copy of English Language certification (if required, for students whose first language is not English: an IELTS (Academic) score of 6.5 (or equivalent, for non-visa students) in each element with certification attained no more than 2 years prior to application);

• For proposals engaging in practical elements, a portfolio incorporating any other appropriate documentary evidence (e.g. pdf / weblinks) of the creative practice of the candidate, where relevant;

• An indication of sources of financial support; names and contact details for two satisfactory references, from persons who are eligible and appropriately qualified to judge the applicant's academic and professional competence to work at doctoral level.

All applicants may be expected to show evidence of their skills and experience within the relevant field of study through interview, which will usually take place online.

Your application will consist of an application via **UCAS Conservatoires** with the additional information detailed above to be submitted via **Embark**. Please see the section on **How to Apply** below.

Writing Your Research Proposal

The Trinity Laban RDP places particular emphasis upon *practice as research*, which implies: research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of that practice and its practitioners; research that is borne out of, and engages with, studio/laboratory/community practice and the practice of scholarly writing, in which the written and practical elements inform each other and/or research that has its primary focus on developing an innovative conceptual, practice-based body of work, and that progresses knowledge within the project's designated field(s). In writing your research proposal, you should bear this in mind. In addition, the proposal should also include:

- a clear description of the field to which the work will contribute;
- an indication of awareness of existing research (both practical and theoretical) in the field;
- an outline of how the research project will manifest itself in both written and practical components including the relationship between such components;
- the analytical and critical questions that would be addressed in the accompanying written component;
- any plans for collaborative work and/or details of any access to special resources required- these might include access to rehearsal/performance facilities (dance studios, theatres and/or concert spaces) at Trinity Laban, the use of ensembles for recordings, studio-time for computer-based/electroacoustic music, specialist library/archive resources etc.;
- an indication of how the applicant wishes to benefit from particular staff expertise at Trinity Laban;
- a proposed timeline for completion;
- a preliminary bibliography.

Trinity Laban will NOT accept research proposal applications where the artistic component is a group-devised production/object. Trinity Laban does also not accept research proposals that are simple rewordings of proposals previously submitted for a Postgraduate Taught Degree (e.g. MA, MMus). Applicants must be the single or lead practitioner in their proposed creative component – i.e. primary performer, composer, choreographer for performance or lead researcher if the work falls within the fields of dance/music science or community outreach work. They must have primary responsibility for the research-relevant aspect of the work if it is collaboratively-based work.

Use of Generative AI in RDP Applications

GenAI must not be used in ways that substitute for the applicants own research and learning, misrepresent authorship or understanding, or otherwise compromise research integrity. Unacceptable uses include:

- Fabrication: Making up results, data, scholarship or citations and presenting them as real. For example, including AI-generated citations to sources that do not exist.
- Falsification: Inappropriately manipulating or misrepresenting results, research processes, data or consent. For example, presenting material generated by GenAI without investigating its validity and accuracy.

• Plagiarism: Using other people's ideas or intellectual property without appropriate acknowledgement. This includes presenting scholarship paraphrased by GenAI or AI-generated creative material as the researcher's own work.

• Misrepresentation: Making false or misleading claims about authorship or the research undertaken. This includes presenting GenAI-generated text, code, analysis or creative output without acknowledging its role where required.

Failure to acknowledge material GenAI use, or submitting GenAI-generated material in a way that misrepresents the candidate's own contribution will result in an application being rejected without further consideration.

Selection and Admissions

Policy on non-traditional entrants and overseas students

Each individual applicant is considered exclusively on their own merits, regardless of the nature of their prior experience, qualifications cited or home/ EU/ Overseas status. The principal criteria for consideration is evidenced potential to undertake the proposed programme of study, and a clear rationale for the reasons for undertaking study specifically at Trinity Laban.

Visa Regulations

Once applicants have formally accepted a place at Trinity Laban and can confirm that they have the funds to support themselves during their programme of study, further Visa guidance is available at the following link: https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/student-visa-applications/

Visa regulations do not permit postgraduate students to change from full-time to part-time status during their studies without also changing their visa. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they obtain the appropriate visa.

Registration

Students attend Trinity Laban from the UK (also known as internal or resident students). Attendance is required for tutorials, training and seminars, to conduct research and to give presentations on current research topics.

Selection and Admissions Process

Prior to submission of a formal application, potential applicants are invited to contact RDP Admissions (RDPAdmissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk) with outline proposals which may be shared with prospective supervisors. If the project is judged to be viable and the applicant to meet the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be encouraged to submit a full application.

Applications are initially considered by the Research Peer Review Panel, made up of senior research staff, led by the Head of Research. Subject to the recommendation of admission of the candidate to the programme, Trinity Laban will nominate two supervisors who will work with the candidate throughout their studentship, taking account of any supervisory requests from the candidate. There are two points of admission within the academic year – September and January.

There are two application deadlines for these entry points to the Programme- **30th April** and **1st October** (for September and January entry respectively); applications are considered during May and October.

Rejected Applications

Applications may be rejected on any of the following grounds (N.B. This list should not be considered exhaustive, but rather indicative of typical reasons for rejection):

- poor 'fit' with the Programme objectives;
- application falls within a more traditional academic area that can more appropriately be supported by a university music, dance, or performing arts department;
- lack of supervisor expertise within Trinity Laban;
- lack of confidence in the candidate's ability to develop the project/topic in question;
- inadequate demonstration that a candidate has the necessary academic profile to undertake a research degree;
- lack of differentiation from a previously submitted PGT project proposal;
- resource requirements not agreed with student.

Acceptance Letters

Successful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application via UCAS and email. This together with relevant attached/linked documents set out the terms of the offer and includes information about:

- Fees and details of any waiver or studentship offered, including the requirements and/or conditions of funding or other related programme opportunities, such as teaching-related activity;
- the expected period of study for which the student is enrolled;
- supervisory arrangements and requirements with regard to attendance, progress reports and contact with supervisors;
- contact details for the Head of Research and the Research Administrator;
- clarification of the resources to be made available to the student;
- English language or any other necessary support the application panel considers the student will need to access in order to be able to complete the programme;
- arrangements for enrolment and registration;
- the responsibilities of the student for their studies and candidacy for the research degree.

The student will be directed to the Trinity Laban RDP Student Handbook and other relevant induction materials. Students with disabilities and/or other support needs are referred to Trinity Laban's Student Services department. Further information with regard to practical issues including accommodation, or travel information is provided automatically to all incoming students.

Studentships

Trinity Laban occasionally offers PhD studentships, in almost all cases relating to the successful awards from funding councils to facilitate staff research. All studentships are advertised at www.jobs.ac.uk. Trinity Laban

currently has no available internal studentship/bursary. No 'Block Grant Partnerships' funding is available currently for RDP students from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

All full and part-time research students who apply for a place on either the Trinity Laban MPhil or PhD programmes are eligible for the Principal's Fund, which aims to provide financial assistance to students in terms of fee waivers only (not studentships, bursaries or loans) for a maximum period of four years. See the Principal's Fund policy online at https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/courses/research-degree-programme/ for more details. The Principals' Fund is not expected to issue Fee Waivers in 2027.

Equality, Diversity and Access Policy

All staff involved in the recruitment of students are fully briefed and, where appropriate, receive training in relation to relevant institutional policies. Issues relating to the relevant legislation and guidance are monitored within Annual Research Programme Review procedures, including ensuring that effective support infrastructures are in place for students with special needs and that all students are made aware of opportunities to apply for additional or special funding. For more information go to https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/student-life/student-services-and-support/ and to https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/student-life/student-services-and-support/financial-support/.

How to Apply

See also the section on *Initial Application Requirements* above: your application will consist of an application via **UCAS Conservatoires** and additional information which has to be submitted via **EMBARK**: (1) an outline research proposal, (2) a summary CV, (3) certified copies of all degree certificates, (4) a copy of English Language certification (if required), (5) for proposals engaging in practical elements, a portfolio of your creative practice. Find links to both platforms on our RDP Study Webpage.

Notes on the application process:

Your complete application will consist of two separate online application processes, one via UCAS and another via EMBARK both of which have to be completed.

UCAS

The UCAS Conservatoires process registers you as an applicant for Trinity Laban with details requested following a standard, UK-wide format. It is not always entirely relevant to the specifics of the Research Degree Programme and it is on EMABRK that you will find the opportunity to state your detailed choices and upload all the necessary materials.

- Personal statement – you are encouraged to include summary information here but you will upload your research proposal on EMBARK.
- Audition location – not applicable.
- Reference section – you are welcome to add reference contact details here or we will request these later in the process as needed.
- MPhil applicants – this is a choice you can state within EMBARK.

EMBARK

This is where you state more detailed/relevant choices and upload all relevant materials which are part of your application: (1) an outline research proposal, (2) a summary CV, (3) certified copies of all degree certificates, (4) a copy of English Language certification (if required), (5) for proposals engaging in practical elements, a portfolio of your creative practice.

If you encounter problems with the UCAS or EMBARK application processes, please do not hesitate to contact the Research Administrator Sara Pay S.Pay@trinitylaban.ac.uk or RDPAdmissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk.

Feedback Prior to Application

We are sometimes able to offer feedback on Research Proposals prior to the application process. This can be offered to high quality draft proposals submitted to the RDP Admissions Inbox (RDPAdmissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk) at least one month prior to the application deadline. Draft proposals can include a preferred supervisor but it may not always be possible to receive feedback from a chosen supervisor. The offer of feedback prior to RDP application is subject to availability.