

PhD in Humanities and Communication Information for future applicants

Dear prospective applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our doctoral program in Humanities and Communication at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). We are honored that you are considering to join us and carry out your doctoral project among our faculty, groups, and research community.

Before you continue with your application, please make sure to consult all the requirements in the web. For specific questions about this, you can ask your tutor at the *aula d'acollida*.

At this point, please be sure to also take a moment and reflect deeply on your decision to embark on a doctoral project. Allow us to share with you a few considerations that may help you in this personal mediation. The following thoughts are based on our experience as the program's academic commission as well as on the feedback provided by our current PhD students and graduates. Please do not take these points as a way to discourage you from your goal—and from applying to our doctoral program. Quite the opposite! We do care about you and your project, and we want to make sure that you are applying to our program with a realist view about the expectations and realities involved in a doctoral project.

As the program's academic commission we will evaluate your application. Here are some of our expectations for and aspects we will pay attention to in the application process:

- We expect candidates with a solid academic background but, above all, we expect candidates for whom embarking on a PhD is a coherent and reasoned decision within their academic and/or professional trajectory. If you have decided to sign in for a PhD out of sudden, recent impulse, please take a moment to reconsider your idea.
- We expect candidates who have prepared a solid proposal of a research project to be developed in our program. To be sure, this is only an early draft and will be subjected to change in the future. But we expect this preliminary exercise to be carefully conceived and including all the relevant sections that characterize a serious academic proposal. You can find all specific formal indications about this on the web.
- We expect candidates who have already started a dialogue with their future supervisor. As you probably know, it is compulsory that the future supervisor submits a confidential letter in support of your candidacy. But we expect a recommendation that goes beyond a simple acknowledgment of interest. Be sure to contact your future supervisor well in advance to establish a preliminary dialogue, share your project, see how your project may fit in your potential supervisor's projects and interest, etc. And be sure to summarize the extent and early fruits of this early interaction in your application. As you can imagine, this cannot be done in a few days or weeks. Please allocate enough time to build that preliminary relationship. (Let us remind you that, as a program, we

do not assign supervisors to applicants who haven't found one. In fact, getting in touch with potential supervisors, introducing yourself and your background, and starting this future relationship is an important first step in any academic career—and, as such, it is for us an important sign of proactivity, commitment and determination.)

Once you are admitted to the program, as the program's academic commission we will also survey the development of your project. Here are some important considerations to bear in mind for that later stage:

- Bear in mind that a PhD project is a long-term commitment—particularly if you are working on it part time. A PhD project implies an important effort at many levels (intellectual and otherwise) to be sustained during many years. The average time for graduation is more than three years for full-time students and more than five years for part-time students. Before applying, then, please take a moment to make sure about your priorities—which should also take into account your work and family.
- While you will be working very closely with your future supervisor and may form important bonds with peers and research group members, writing a dissertation implies a high amount of individual work and initiative. It may be the case that, given your educational background, during your BA or MA degrees you were exposed to a rather reactive dynamic or methodology—professors regularly told you what to do, when to submit your assignments, etc. As a PhD student you will also have to turn drafts and updates on a regular basis. And, besides your supervisor, different people and groups within the institution will be more than happy to provide support and orientation to your research. But you will have to show a degree of autonomy and proactivity that may be quite more intense compared to your BA or MA days.
- As part of their academic training, PhD students should also be capable of and willing to get involved in different academic activities and events. We will expect you to connect with other students in the program, other doctoral peers, as well as with other circles: your supervisor's research group, other scholars at UOC, other scholars at a local and international level in your field of study. Our program has been designed as a first stage in a future academic career and all these activities and interactions are also part of this formative preparation.

We will assess your application very carefully and will pay special attention to any evidence that helps us figuring out whether your profile, interests, and ambitions fit within all these aspects. We hope these considerations will help you pondering about your decision to embark on a PhD project. We look forward to reading your application!

Academic Commission
PhD program in Humanities and Communication
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya