

DOCTOR OF FINE ART (DFA) APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2026

NATIONAL
ART
SCHOOL

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact our **Future Student Advisor** via email admissions@nas.edu.au or phone +61 (0)2 9339 8741.

HOW TO APPLY

All domestic and international applications for the **Doctor of Fine Art** are accepted via an online Application Form: <https://nas.edu.au/apply-dfa-2026>.

Please note: NAS does not accept applications via UAC for postgraduate degrees.

The Doctor of Fine Art degree is for applicants who hold a Master of Fine Art; an Honours degree in Fine Art with a First Class or Second Class Division I; or possess an equivalent level of professional expertise in contemporary fine art practice as outlined by the Alternative Entry Scheme and determined by the Admission Panel.

The DFA course is available full time (3 years) or part time (6 years). Studio space is only allocated for full-time DFA students. The 2026 DFA commences Semester 1, 2026.

All applicants are required to submit:

- Doctor of Fine Art Research Proposal (1000-1500 words) - *Guidelines below*
- Portfolio, consisting of 10-15 images of recent artworks
- Academic writing sample
- Curriculum vitae, including relevant professional experience

External and International Applicants must also submit:

- Proof of academic qualifications
- Contact details for two academic and/or professional referees
- Proof of citizenship status (e.g. Passport ID page, birth certificate)
- Evidence of meeting the English proficiency requirement (**International applicants only, if applicable**)
- Proof of visa status (**International applicants only**)

Applications open: 4 August 2025

Applications close: 21 November 2025

KEY DATES: <https://futurestudents.nas.edu.au/key-dates/>

FEES AND CHARGES

The domestic student fees for 2026 are **\$16,740 per year (full time) / \$ 8,370 per year (part-time)**. The international student fees for 2026 are **\$44,160 per year (full time)**.

The latest information about domestic and international fees are available on the NAS website: <https://futurestudents.nas.edu.au/fees/>. Fees are subject to change year-on-year.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for admission to the Doctor of Fine Art, applicants must:

- hold a Master of Fine Art degree, or cognate postgraduate degree with a Credit average **or**
- hold a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) (or cognate Honours degree) with First Class Honours or Second Class Honours, Division I, **or**
- hold overseas tertiary qualifications in Fine Art equivalent to AQF Level 9, **or**
- meet the requirements of an alternative entry scheme.

All applicants to the DFA are evaluated on their fine art practice and potential as professional artists. These qualities are evaluated by means of previous academic and professional achievement, DFA research proposal, portfolio, writing sample and interview.

DFA candidates must be advanced at communicating in both written and spoken English as evidenced by the minimum educational attainment and the application requirements.

Alternative Entry Scheme

In exceptional cases where applicants do not possess any of the qualifications outlined above, they may apply for admission to the Doctor of Fine Art. All applicants intending to apply for the DFA under the Alternative Entry Scheme, must discuss their eligibility with the Future Students Advisor and/or the Head of Postgraduate Studies prior to submitting their application.

DFA Alternative Entry Scheme eligibility requirements:

- Completion of a postgraduate degree at AQF Level 9 in another discipline, and
- Extensive professional experience in fine art practice.

Extensive professional experience may include an established record of production and presentation of artworks through industry/professional systems as evidenced by:

- Regular presentation of work for solo and group exhibitions in venues of industry standing and professional recognition.
- Inclusion of work in curated exhibition programs/projects and art prizes of industry standing and professional recognition.
- Inclusion of work in public and/or private collections of curatorial significance and professional recognition.
- Inclusion of work in professional publications of industry standing.

NAS also reserves the right to extend professional equivalence to meet the entry requirement without an AQF Level 9 qualification in exceptional cases where the applicant holds extraordinary levels of professional practice. The applicant must be able to satisfy NAS of their ability to meet the academic rigours of studying for a degree qualification at this level.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Admission into the Doctor of Fine Art is competitive, with selection based on **academic merit**, the **DFA Research Proposal**, **portfolio**, **writing sample** and an **interview process**. If you meet the requirements for admission, you will be invited to attend an interview by NAS Student Services via email.

Interviews are held on campus, normally in November-December. Applicants residing off-shore or interstate and unable to attend an interview on campus may be interviewed online. This option should be discussed with Student Services as soon as possible.

The interview panel will consist of the Head of Postgraduate Studies and at least one NAS academic staff from the applicant's intended area of studio research. The panel will ask questions relating to the applicant's DFA proposal, portfolio, and motivations for enrolling in the course. There will also be an opportunity to provide further information about DFA study, to discuss plans or goals and to answer course-related questions.

DFA Application Materials

The DFA application materials include, with further guidelines and instructions detailed below:

- **DFA Research Proposal** recommended 1000-1500 words
- **Portfolio** consisting of 10-15 images of recent artworks
- **Academic writing** sample
- **Curriculum vitae** including relevant professional experience

DFA Research Proposal

The DFA Research Proposal is a written proposal (1000-1500 words). The example headings below outlines the required content in a suggested structured format:

1. *Proposed Title of DFA Research Project*

2. *Introduction & Topic*

This is a brief description of your project which introduces your subject, your area of fine art practice, and your research field. The introduction may address such aspects as:

- the research question/problem/issue/topic to be investigated;
- the background/context of the topic;
- your own interest/involvement in the topic and your motivation/aims to pursue the project.

3. *Topic Statement & Project Aims*

- Describe the specific focus of your proposed DFA Studio Project and its potential to be developed through practice-based research.
- Clarify the objectives of the proposed DFA Studio Project. Be as specific as you can about what you wish to discover and achieve by undertaking this project

4. *Literature & Artefact Overview*

- Outline how your DFA Studio Project relates to any relevant artists, art movements, ideas, theories, etc. that have an affinity to your practice and research, including a brief discussion of key artists and thinkers.

5. *Studio Processes & Research Methodology*

- Describe your methods of investigation in sufficient detail so that there is clarity about:
- what method of investigation you are using in the studio and in your research; why you have selected this approach;
- what kind of information you will be using and where it is located;
- what resources you anticipate requiring for your project;
- what safety and ethical issues you have identified and how you propose to proceed.

6. *Significance & Expected Outcomes*

- Articulate the potential significance of the proposed DFA Research by describing how it contributes to contemporary discourse, advances critical practice, and/or offers meaningful insights within the chosen field.
- Indicate the anticipated outcomes of the final body of work in terms of the format and medium/s of presentation (for example, an exhibition of large-scale oil paintings; a live performance and photographic documentation) as well as your expectations regarding the anticipated contribution of the written exegesis.

7. Bibliography

- List any publications that you cite in your proposal. Also list any other key texts that have influenced your ideas and that you expect to inform your DFA Research Project.

Portfolio

Images of 10-15 recent artworks which best represent the applicant's current practice and support their intended DFA research. Submit your portfolio in a single PDF file, with full captions for each work including artist name, title, date, medium, dimensions, etc.

Academic writing sample

A sample of academic writing. This may be a written assignment you have completed during previous study, such as an Art History essay, research paper, literature review, or exegesis. The academic writing sample should indicate your ability to communicate ideas through formal academic conventions, and it does not necessarily need to be related to fine arts.

Curriculum vitae (CV)

A CV including academic history and relevant professional experience. Submit your CV in a single PDF file, including any previous qualifications and fine art background, such as previous exhibitions, publications, awards and residencies.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

You are considered an international student if you are **NOT**:

- an Australian citizen,
- a New Zealand citizen,
- a dual citizen of any country with Australia or New Zealand, or
- a permanent resident of Australia.

If you hold a permit for temporary entry to Australia, you are considered an international student. This includes individuals who are:

- Overseas students
- Permanent residents of New Zealand
- Diplomats
- Temporary residents holding a work permit
- Refugees
- Dependents of any of the above

Please note: FEE-HELP is only available to Australian citizens and certain categories of New Zealand SCV holders. For further information on FEE-HELP eligibility please visit www.studyassist.gov.au.

Applying to study in Australia

For information regarding studying in Australia, travel, and visa advice, please visit the following website: <https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/>

Evidence of meeting the English Proficiency requirements

All programs at NAS are taught in English. Applicants who are applying on the basis of qualifications that were not undertaken and assessed in English must provide evidence of their English language proficiency.

Applicants who have completed one of the following criteria may satisfy the English language requirement:

- tertiary qualification in Australia completed within the last 2 years
- tertiary studies in a country where studies were conducted in English within the last 2 years, confirmed with a statement or certificate from the Registrar's office (subject also to independent assessment)
- Australian matriculation score C or better (Pre-University Program such as AUSMAT)
- TAFE AQF Certificate IV in English for Academic Purposes, AQF Diploma or Advanced Diploma

NAS recognises several English Language tests and English Preparation Courses which can be undertaken to meet the English language requirements for admission. These are set out in the table below, together with the minimum results required. Test scores are not valid if the test was taken more than two years prior to the date of application.

International applicants are required to submit their test scores with their application or as soon as available. An offer of admission may be made pending the receipt of an English Test result if all other entry requirements have been satisfied.

Test/Provider	Minimum Test Score
IELTS (International English Language Testing System)	6.5 overall, minimum of 6.0 in each band
TOEFL (Paper) – Paper-based Test (PBT)	580 overall paper-based, plus 5.0 in TWE
TOEFL (Internet) – Internet-based Test (iBT)	92 overall internet-based, 24 in writing
Australian Centre for Languages (ACL)	65% overall in EAP Diploma with pass in all sections
UNSW English Entry Course (UEEC)	7.0 overall or C+ with minimum score 20 in Writing
Sydney English Language Centre (SELC)	Advanced Level EAP 1 overall score 75%
National Centre for English Language Training & Research (NCELTR)	Pass (P) in Direct Entry Programs
Australian College of English (ACE)	EAP 3 overall score 65%
University of Western Sydney English Language Centre	EDE overall score 75% and pass in each section
NAVITAS Academic English (Level 3)	Overall pass 65% in Academic English Level 3
Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) – prior to 2015	Pass with a CEFR Level C1 Grade (45+/100)
Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) – prior to 2015	Pass with a C Grade (60+/100)
Cambridge English Scale (CPE) – from 2015	Overall min. scale score of 180 (min.180 in each subtest)
Cambridge English Scale (CAE) – from 2015	Overall min. scale score of 176 (min.169 in each subtest)
PTE Academic (Pearson)	Minimum score of between 51-60

OFFERS

Applicants will be informed via email of the result of their application soon after the interview process, normally within 2-3 weeks of the interview.

ENQUIRIES

If you have any further enquiries about the interview or application process, please contact:

Future Student Advisor: admissions@nas.edu.au, +61 (0)2 9339 8741

Student Services: student.services@nas.edu.au, +61 (0)2 9339 8613 or +61 (0)2 9339 8651