

Glossary for Level 7 (MA) and ProfDoc Students

This glossary supports students from diverse backgrounds, including Chinese learners, by presenting academic terms in a culturally sensitive manner. It encourages viewing academic practices through multiple lenses to challenge colonial influences and foster equitable learning.

Academic Levels and Standards

- **Level 7** – Postgraduate taught study, such as a Master's degree. Emphasizes advanced knowledge, critical thinking, and independent learning across cultural contexts.
Example: An MA dissertation at Level 7 demonstrates the ability to design and conduct small-scale research, such as integrating Eastern philosophies like Daoism into Western art criticism.
- **Level 8** – Doctoral study (Professional Doctorate). Requires generating new knowledge and contributing to your field with originality.
Example: A ProfDoc student might research innovative professional practices, such as blending Confucian pedagogies with modern classroom strategies.

ProfDoc vs PhD

- **Professional Doctorate (ProfDoc)** – A Level 8 degree combining academic research with professional practice, applying theory to real-world contexts across global settings.
Example: A ProfDoc in Education might explore how traditional Chinese teaching methods enhance modern classroom engagement while continuing professional work.
- **PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)** – A Level 8 degree focusing on original academic research, often theoretical.
Example: A PhD in Education might develop a new learning theory, independent of immediate practical application.
- **Difference between ProfDoc and PhD** – Both are doctoral degrees, but ProfDoc contributes to both professional practice and academic knowledge, often bridging global contexts, while PhD primarily advances academic theory.

Learning and Assessment

- **Learning Objectives** – The intended content or skills a module or session aims to cover.
Example: "Understand diverse leadership theories from global perspectives."
- **Learning Outcomes** – Demonstrable skills or knowledge expected by the module's end.
Example: "Critically analyze and apply leadership theories to professional contexts, drawing on both Western and Eastern frameworks."

- **Assessment Criteria** – Standards used to evaluate your work.
Example: A 70%+ essay demonstrates strong critical analysis, originality, and clear structure, incorporating diverse perspectives.
- **Formative Assessment** – Practice work for feedback, typically ungraded.
Example: Submitting a draft proposal and receiving constructive comments.
- **Summative Assessment** – Final, graded work contributing to your degree.
Example: A completed research essay or project portfolio.
- **Marking/Grading** – UK postgraduate grading includes:
 - *Distinction* (70%+): Exceptional work showing originality and depth.
 - *Merit* (60–69%): Strong work with robust analysis.
 - *Pass* (50–59%): Satisfactory work meeting learning outcomes.
 - *Fail* (below 50%): Work not meeting required standards.

Teaching and Study Approaches

- **Lecture** – Large-group teaching delivering foundational knowledge.
Example: A lecture on global research methodologies.
- **Seminar** – Small-group discussions encouraging active participation.
Example: Debating leadership styles from both Western and Confucian perspectives.
- **Tutorial/Supervision** – One-to-one or small-group guidance with a tutor.
Example: Discussing a thesis plan with a supervisor.
- **Independent Study** – Self-directed learning through reading, research, or creative work.
Example: Researching traditional Chinese ink techniques for a design project.
- **Critical Thinking** – Questioning ideas, analyzing evidence, and forming reasoned arguments across cultural contexts.
Example: Comparing a Western design theory with Asian harmonious design principles to evaluate their relevance.
- **Referencing** – Acknowledging sources using a specific style (e.g., Harvard).
Example: Citing (Li, 2021, p. 15) to credit a scholar's idea.
- **Plagiarism** – Using others' work without proper attribution, a serious academic offense.
Example: Copying text from a journal without citation, even if translated, is plagiarism.

Programme and Structure

- **Module** – A unit of study within your programme.
Example: "ADAD7015 Art & Design Practitioner Research Proposal."
- **Credit** – The value of a module; MA and Part 1 ProfDoc total 180 credits.
Example: A 30-credit module requires approximately 300 hours of study.
- **Dissertation** – An extended piece of independent research.
Example: An MA dissertation (12–15,000 words) might explore global art trends; a ProfDoc (40–60,000 words) might integrate professional practice.
- **Supervisor** – An academic guiding your research.
Example: A supervisor advises on incorporating cross-cultural insights into your thesis.

- **Viva** – An oral exam, typically for doctoral work, to defend your thesis.
Example: A ProfDoc viva involves discussing your research’s global relevance with examiners.

Scholarly Practice and Process

- **Scholarly Practitioner** – A professional combining theory, research, and reflection to enhance practice in fields like art and design.
Example: An artist researching audience engagement with exhibitions, using insights from both Western and Chinese aesthetic traditions.
- **Practice** – Professional or creative activities in your field.
Example: Producing community art projects or digital designs inspired by global influences.
- **Process** – The steps in research or creative work, as critical as the outcome.
Example: Documenting sketching, prototyping, and reflection in design research.
- **Iteration** – Refining work through repeated cycles.
Example: A designer tests a prototype, incorporates feedback, and revises it multiple times.

Humanities-Based Approach in Art and Design

- **Humanities-Based Approach** – Studying art and design through global ideas from history, philosophy, cultural studies, and critical theory, emphasizing reflection and context.
Example: Analyzing how colonial histories and Asian aesthetics shape contemporary art.
- **Art and Design Research** – Combines creative practice and critical analysis to generate new knowledge.
Example: Creating a garment inspired by Chinese silk traditions and writing a commentary on its cultural significance.

Reflection and Reflective Practice

- **Reflection** – Reviewing experiences to deepen learning.
Example: Reflecting on a group project to identify strengths and areas for growth.
- **Reflective Thinking** – Analyzing experiences and decisions for deeper understanding.
Example: Considering how cultural values influenced your choice of research methods.
- **Reflective Writing** – Structured writing exploring experiences and learning.
Example: A journal entry analyzing challenges in a cross-cultural project and lessons learned.
- **Reflective Practice** – Applying reflection to improve professional or creative work, aligning with global traditions like Confucian self-cultivation.
Example: A designer reflects on user feedback through a lens of relational harmony to enhance a design’s community impact.

Comparative Insights: UK and Chinese Higher Education Systems

- **Teaching Style** – UK teaching often emphasizes interactive debate and student-led questioning, drawing from Socratic traditions. Chinese approaches may prioritize structured lectures and teacher guidance, rooted in Confucian principles of respect and collective knowledge-building. Both foster critical thinking in culturally distinct ways.
Example: UK seminars encourage open debate; Chinese classes value thoughtful preparation.
- **Assessment Style** – UK programmes use diverse methods like essays, reports, and projects to assess application and analysis. Chinese systems often incorporate exams to evaluate comprehensive knowledge. Each supports different learning strengths.
Example: A UK 3,000-word essay versus a Chinese exam on the same topic.
- **Class Participation** – UK systems value verbal contributions in class; Chinese contexts may emphasize attentive listening and preparation.
Example: Asking questions in a UK seminar or preparing detailed notes in a Chinese class.
- **Formality** – UK student–teacher relationships are often informal; Chinese systems may emphasize respect for authority.
Example: Addressing a UK tutor by their first name versus using a formal title in China.
- **Academic Integrity** – Both systems prioritize originality and proper referencing.
Example: Citing a translated Chinese source in a UK essay requires proper attribution.
- **Grading** – UK grading awards Distinction (70%+) sparingly to encourage improvement. Chinese systems often use higher numerical scores to reflect mastery. A UK 65% at Master’s level is strong, not directly comparable to Chinese scales.
Note: These comparisons highlight cultural adaptations, encouraging students to integrate strengths from both systems.

University Support and Services

- **Library Services** – Access to books, e-journals, databases, and research training.
Example: Using JSTOR for global academic articles.
- **Pastoral Support / Student Wellbeing** – Support for personal or emotional challenges.
Example: Consulting a counsellor for stress management.
- **Student Hwb (Student Support Services)** – Central contact for academic and wellbeing guidance.
Example: Seeking Hwb advice on enrolment or mental health support.

Student Responsibilities

- **Attendance and Engagement Policy** – UK universities expect active participation in seminars, independent study, and tutor communication.
Example: Engaging through discussion or consistent Moodle activity, even if absent.
Note: International students on visas are closely monitored for attendance and engagement.

Other Useful Terms

- **Timetable** – Your class schedule.
- **Semester** – The academic year is divided into three semesters.
- **Resit/Resubmission** – A second attempt at an assessment if unsuccessful.
- **Cohort** – Students starting your programme in the same year.
- **Distinction / Merit / Pass** – UK postgraduate degree classifications:
 - *Distinction* (70%+): Excellent originality and depth.
 - *Merit* (60–69%): Strong analysis and knowledge.
 - *Pass* (50–59%): Satisfactory achievement.
 - *Fail* (below 50%): Below required standards.

Note: UK marks above 70% are rare, reflecting a focus on ongoing improvement, unlike Chinese systems where higher scores are common.

Academic Language Terms

- **Academic Writing** – Formal writing using evidence and clear arguments.
Example: “Research indicates group work enhances engagement across cultures (Li, 2020, p. 15).”
- **Critical Writing** – Analyzing and evaluating ideas beyond description.
Example: Comparing Western and Chinese design theories to assess their strengths.
- **Argument** – A reasoned position supported by evidence.
Example: “This study argues peer support enhances learning, based on global survey data.”
- **Evidence** – Research, data, or examples supporting an argument.
Example: Citing a Chinese study on student wellbeing.
- **Paraphrasing** – Restating ideas in your own words with attribution.
Example: “Higher education requires self-directed learning (Wang, 2019).”
- **Summarising** – Condensing key points with attribution.
Example: Summarizing a Chinese article on education in three key points.
- **Cohesion** – Connecting ideas with linking words (e.g., “however,” “thus”).
- **Coherence** – Logical flow in writing, with clear paragraph focus.
- **Style Guide** – Rules for formatting and referencing (e.g., Harvard).
- **Abstract** – A concise summary of research aims, methods, and findings.
Example: A 250-word overview of a cross-cultural art study.
- **Conclusion** – Summarizing key points and their implications.
- **Signposting** – Guiding readers with phrases like “firstly” or “in contrast.”
- **Hedging** – Using cautious language to avoid overgeneralization.
Example: “Group work may enhance learning in diverse contexts.”
- **Nominalisation** – Turning verbs into nouns for formality.
Example: “Students learn” → “The learning of students.”
- **Analysis** – Breaking down ideas for deeper understanding.
Example: Examining an artwork’s cultural and material contexts.
- **Criticality** – Questioning and evaluating ideas, central to advanced study.
Example: Evaluating a design method’s global applicability.
- **Socratic Questioning** – Probing questions to deepen thinking, paralleled in global traditions like Zen koans or indigenous storytelling.
Example: “What evidence supports this? How might Asian aesthetics offer an alternative?”

Research Terms for MA and ProfDoc Students

- **Research** – Systematic investigation to answer questions or generate knowledge.
Example: Exploring how Chinese students adapt to global higher education.
- **Research Proposal (PG1 form)** – A plan outlining research aims, methods, and significance.
Example: A 2,000-word proposal on cross-cultural design practices.
- **Methodology** – The research approach and rationale for methods.
Example: Using qualitative interviews to explore personal experiences.
- **Methods** – Specific tools for data collection and analysis.
Example: Surveys, interviews, or visual analysis.
- **Qualitative Research** – Explores meanings and experiences.
Example: Interviewing students on cultural adaptation.
- **Quantitative Research** – Uses numerical data and statistics.
Example: Surveying 200 students on study habits.
- **Mixed Methods** – Combines qualitative and quantitative approaches.
Example: Surveys for trends and interviews for depth.
- **Literature Review** – A critical summary of global research on your topic.
Example: Reviewing Chinese and Western studies on student engagement.
- **Primary Data** – Data you collect.
Example: Conducting interviews with designers.
- **Secondary Data** – Data from existing sources.
Example: Analyzing global education statistics.
- **Ethics / Ethical Approval (PG2 form)** – Ensuring responsible research.
Example: Protecting participant confidentiality in interviews.
- **Data Analysis** – Interpreting data to address research questions.
Example: Coding interviews for themes like cultural identity.
- **Theoretical Framework** – Theories guiding your research.
Example: Using Confucian principles to analyze community engagement.
- **Conceptual Framework** – Organizing ideas and relationships in your study.
Example: A diagram linking teaching style to student motivation.
- **Research Question** – The focus of your study.
Example: “How do Chinese students experience group work in global universities?”
- **Hypothesis** – A testable prediction for quantitative research.
Example: “Regular seminar attendance correlates with higher grades.”
- **Thesis** – A detailed research argument supported by evidence.
Example: A ProfDoc thesis on how community art enhances global engagement.
- **Key Difference:** A thesis is the overall argument; a hypothesis is a specific prediction.
- **Sampling** – Selecting participants or subjects.
Example: Choosing 20 students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Validity** – Ensuring research measures its intended focus.
Example: A wellbeing survey reflects actual student experiences.
- **Reliability** – Consistency of results if repeated.
Example: A questionnaire yields similar results across studies.
- **Triangulation** – Using multiple methods to strengthen findings.
Example: Combining surveys, interviews, and cultural observations.
- **Dissemination** – Sharing research globally.
Example: Presenting at an international conference.

- **Peer Review** – Expert evaluation before publication.

Note: Research should incorporate diverse global sources to ensure inclusivity.