ARTISTIC RESEARCH PHD PROGRAMME (PhD in Art)
University of Applied Arts Vienna

Guidelines

Version: Winter Semester 2026/27
Legally binding are only the most recent versions of the Curriculum and the Statute.

> *"Artistic doctoral programmes" mean degree programmes which develop students' ability to undertake independent artistic work and further the training of junior artistic staff, building on the basis provided by diploma and master's programmes. They provide an artistic qualification beyond the artistic diploma and master's programme and are aimed at the in-depth study of artistic questions. In addition to the preparation of the artistic doctoral thesis according to (13a), artistic doctoral programmes shall include accompanying courses with an artistic, scientific-artistic and scientific focus. Artistic doctoral programmes are not divided into stages.*
> *(§ 51 Abs. 2 Z 12a UG)*

> *Drawing on artistic methods and techniques, artistic doctoral theses shall include the development of an artistic, original, concrete research project that results in an independently and autonomously produced artistic creation.*
> *(§ 51 Abs. 2 Z 13a UG)*

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Support Art and Research
Doctoral Centre
sdkf@uni-ak.ac.at

Artistic Research PhD Programme
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phdinart@uni-ak.ac.at

List of Contacts

- **Artistic Research PhD Programme** (phdinart@uni-ak.ac.at)
- **Doctoral Centre** (sdkf@uni-ak.ac.at)

Entrance phase

Application procedure and admission to the doctoral programme

Admission to the doctoral programme in Artistic Research (PhD in Art) takes place by submitting a project in **response to an annual call** for proposals, published on the University of Applied Art's and Artistic Research PhD Programme's each year. The call contains all important information, including dates and deadlines.

A university committee evaluates the submitted project and proposes a **suitable supervisor** with an artistic venia docendi (see infosheet Admission Procedures). Candidates may name possible supervisors in the application. After a formal confirmation of the candidate's general qualification for the programme by the Office of Student Affairs and once the Rectorate has confirmed the appropriate allocation of supervisors, the result is **communicated to the candidates** by the Artistic Research PhD Programme. This also serves to establish initial contact between the candidate and the supervisor.

After successfully completing the admission procedure, candidates are given **three semesters for enrolment**, but can only begin their studies in autumn. If a candidate is accepted in summer 2027, for example, they can start their studies either in autumn 2027 or autumn 2028.

The Office of Student Affairs admits candidates to the doctoral programme after the admission procedure: this must happen **within the** admission period for the respective semester.

Confirmation of Doctoral Agreement

The supervision of the research project is formalised through the form "**Doctoral Agreement**": This is an agreement that is concluded between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor assigned during the application process (see above). In addition to information about the candidate and the supervisor, it contains the following information:

- Which courses must be taken within the scope of the degree programme (regulated by the Curriculum)
- Further information on the supervision process
- Further information on the reflective documentation
- If applicable, information about planned research stays at a different university

After successfully completing the admission procedure, candidates will receive the contact details of their supervisor together with their acceptance letter from the Artistic Research PhD Programme. After admission, candidates must contact their supervisor and fill out the form "Doctoral Agreement" together. The completed and signed form must then be submitted by email to the Doctoral Centre (sdkf@uni-ak.ac.at) and cc to the PhD in Art Programme (phdinart@uni-ak.ac.at). The Doctoral Centre will forward it to the Vice-Rector for Science, Research and Digitality for approval. Afterwards, if it is approved, the Doctoral Centre sends the form to all involved parties as well as to the Office of Student Affairs which stores it in the student file.

Amendment of the Doctoral Agreement

It is possible to change the Doctoral Agreement. Candidates must explain and justify the planned changes together with their supervisor(s) in a letter. The letter must include the following points:

- Information on the doctoral candidate (name, matriculation number, email address)
- Specification of the doctoral programme
- Information on the initial project (working title, date of the short presentation)
- Details and justification of the amendment
- Date, declaration of consent and signature of the supervisor and the candidate

At the same time, the Doctoral Agreement must be redrafted by the candidate and supervisor and sent to the Doctoral Centre (sdkf@uni-ak.ac.at) together with the letter of amendment. The Doctoral Centre forwards everything to the Vice-Rector for Science, Research and Digitality for approval and forwards the result to all parties involved.

Research phase

Completion of courses

During the artistic doctoral programme, all courses listed in the Curriculum must be passed. This includes:

- Courses on the theory and practice of artistic research (4 ECTS, recommended at the beginning of the programme)
- Participation in the internal colloquium once per semester, at which candidates provide information about the state of their research (1 ECTS per internal colloquium per semester, a total of 6 ECTS in the entire duration of the study)
- Participation in the public colloquium once a year, where candidates present the progress of their project to at least one external expert (4 ECTS per public colloquium, a total of 12 ECTS in the entire duration of the programme)
- Completing additional courses to the extend of at least 2 to at most 4 ECTS credits, in concurrence with the PhD programme coordinator and the doctoral candidate's supervisor
- Completing privatissima or doctoral seminars offered by the doctoral candidate's supervisor (a total of 12 ECTS)

Research-related stays at other universities

For any planned stays at universities abroad, doctoral candidates are requested to record the planned activities in the Doctoral Agreement and to have them approved by the supervisor. For this purpose, the courses planned at the university abroad must be entered in the list of courses to be completed. The International Office of the University of Applied Arts Vienna is available for information on stays abroad.

Research infrastructure

Support Art and Research provides **temporary workstations and infrastructure** within the scope of available resources. For more information, availability, and access, please send an email to projektsupport@uni-ak.ac.at. The library of the University of Applied Arts Vienna can also be used. Furthermore, different research laboratories and workshops are established at the university. More information about contact persons and terms of use can be found on the university's website.

Preparation of the thesis

The thesis consists of two parts:

1) An artistic research project, or a thesis in form of a number of artistic projects connected to each other as far as the research issue is concerned (artistic complex of work, groups of work).
2) A demonstration of insights in the sense of a reflective documentation. The research outcome must be documented in a suitable media-specific manner, contextualised, and reflected upon. The conclusions of the artistic research are to be communicated in a comprehensible form. The reflective documentation must

therefore include a link to a project website and/or the research database on which the complex of work/the artistic groups of work are to be appropriately presented.

Final phase

As soon as the thesis is nearing completion, it is recommended to prepare the defence in consultation with the Artistic Research PhD Programme.

Final presentations should not be scheduled during lecture-free periods, i.e. February, July to September and between 24 December and 6 January.

The positive completion of the Artistic Research PhD Programme includes:

- positive assessment of completed **courses** according to the curriculum and the Doctoral Agreement,
- the confirmation by the supervisor that the thesis has been completed,
- the **submission of the reflective documentation**,
- a **public artistic presentation**,
- the **positive assessment of the thesis** during the defence in the form of a presentation and final discussion with the committee.

Formal requirements for the reflective documentation

Five copies of the reflective documentation must be bound with a **glued spine and hard cover**. The first and last name must be stated on the spine of the book. Other formats of reflective documentation must be agreed upon in advance with the supervisor, the library and the Artistic Research PhD Programme. The first pages of the reflective documentation should be structured in accordance with these guidelines (see Appendix 1: Cover sheet and Appendix 2: Declaration of good scientific practice). In addition, **abstracts** in German and English (max. 250 words each) must be included in the reflective documentation. The **print and digital versions of the reflective documentation must be identical**.

Confirmation of completed courses and colloquia

Candidates must obtain an informal confirmation via email from the Office of Student Affairs that all courses and colloquia specified in the Doctoral Agreement have been successfully passed. This confirmation has to be forwarded to the Artistic Research PhD Programme.

Examination committee

The thesis is assessed by an examination committee as part of the **defence** (see below). In addition to the supervisor, the examination committee consists of four other committee members,

- of which at least two, but preferably three, are external **experts from outside the university with appropriate artistic-research practice**, and
- at least one member is an **internal university expert with teaching authorisation** (venia docendi) in an artistic field close to the thesis subject. Doctoral candidates may provide two suggestions each regarding the two external committee members. For the third
- external member, a joint recommendation from supervisor and candidate may be submitted.

Instead of the third university-external expert with relevant artistic-research experience, a second university-internal expert with teaching authorisation from an artistic subject closely related to the topic of the thesis may be appointed in justified cases. One internal member, not involved in the supervision, **chairs the committee.**

Doctoral candidates may provide two suggestions each regarding the two external committee members. For the third external member, a joint recommendation from supervisor and candidate may be submitted. It is recommended to discuss the committee members with the Artistic Research PhD Team prior to contacting them.

Appointment of Examiners and Admission to the Defence

Doctoral candidates approach examiners themselves and agree on a possible date, place and time of the defence. The proposals of the members are to be submitted by the candidate **via the form "Application for the Appointment of Examiners and Admission to the Defense"** by email to the Artistic Research PhD Programme. The latter forwards all proposals to the **Dean of Studies** for approval. If the proposal is accepted, the dean then officially appoints the examination board. The Head of the PhD in Art Programme announces the defence publicly as soon as the examination committee has been appointed, and at least two weeks before the date.

Organisation of the Defence

The defence and the corresponding preceding presentation must be organised by the candidate. They can be held at an adequate and suitable location in Vienna. Reservations for the premises Rustenschacherallee 2-4 must be made at least 12 weeks before the planned presentation via email to projektsupport@uni-ak.ac.at. As confirmation that the booking will go ahead, the candidate must send the complete form "Application for the Appointment of Examiners and Admission to the Defense" to the Doctoral Centre at least 8 weeks before the date of the defence. Otherwise, the booking will be cancelled.

Plagiarism check and declaration of completion

All written theses must be subject to a **plagiarism check using the "Turnitin" software**. This check is carried out by the supervisor. For this purpose, candidates either send the digital version of the reflective documentation to their supervisor or their supervisor provides them with a link to upload the digital version. Further information on the plagiarism check is available on the website of the University of Applied Arts Vienna at Graduation > Plagiarism check.

By signing the form **"Submission of the Reflective Documentation"**, the supervisor determines that the thesis has been completed and the plagiarism check has been conducted. The supervisor reports any problematic results to the Dean of Studies.

Submission of the reflective documentation

Together with the form **"Submission of the Reflective Documentation"**, the candidate submits a **digital version** and **five bound copies of the reflective documentation** to the Artistic Research PhD Programme (postal address: Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7, Room 219 & 220, 1030 Vienna, Austria). The reflective documentation is then forwarded to the five commission members (see below) for examination before the defence by the Artistic Research PhD Programme.

The reflective documentation (thesis) must be assessed by the examination committee in the context of the defence in accordance with the statutes of the University of Applied Arts Vienna (Statute of the Angewandte, "studienrechtlicher Teil, § 11 abs. 4").

Assessment and defence

The **reflective documentation** must be sent to all committee members no later than **8 weeks** before the date of the defence. The date for the defence must also be announced to all participants at least 8 weeks before the examination date. The **artistic presentation** must be **open to the public and accessible for three days before the defence** in order to allow inspection of the artistic research work.

In the **defence** (oral defence of the thesis), the thesis must be presented to the examination board in the form of a **presentation** lasting a maximum of **45 minutes** and defended in a discussion. The assessment takes all parts into account:

- The **reflective documentation**,
- the artistic **research work**,
- the public artistic **presentation**, as well as
- the **lecture and the discussion** in the defence.

The results are recorded in the **examination report** and the Chair of the Examination Committee sends the examination report to the Dean of Studies and to the Head of the PhD in Art Programme. The candidate has a statutory right to inspect and copy the examination report and the assessment documents within six months of being notified of the result.

Publication of the thesis

The reflective documentation has to be available in the library. The Artistic Research PhD Programme will, therefore, send one copy of the reflective documentation to the library of the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Austrian National Library. One copy each is kept with the Artistic Research PhD Programme Team and the Doctoral Centre.

Using the **Digital Asset Management System PHAIDRA**, which is provided by the University Library, the reflective documentation, equipped with metadata (= formal description such as author, title, supervisor, etc.), should be made available on the internet and be accessible via the search portal of the University of Applied Arts Vienna, supA. After the positive assessment of the defence, the candidates thus **upload the digital version** of the reflective documentation in PDF/A format via PHAIDRA. A detailed description of the workflow can be found on the PHAIDRA website. For technical questions, the team of the library may be consulted.

Graduation and award of the academic degree

The **doctoral viva** comprises the **successful completion of the defence**; all other academic achievements do not appear on the degree certificate. The doctoral programme is completed with the defence and publication of the thesis. The Dean of Studies will then award the academic title of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

A **graduation ceremony** is held at the end of each semester, and all graduates are invited to attend free of charge. More information including the pre-requisites for receiving an academic degree is to be found on the website of the University of Applied Arts Vienna via Graduation.

Annex

Appendix 1: Cover sheet

It is recommended to provide the following information on sheet 1 of the dissertation:

<title of the reflective documentation>
Reflective documentation

Part of the thesis project "<thesis title>"
Submitted by <PhD candidate first and last name>

PhD Programme Artistic Research (PhD in Art)
University of Applied Arts Vienna

Supervisor: <supervisor first and last name>
<institute>

Examination committee members:
<supervisor first and last name>
<examiner first and last name 1>
<examiner first and last name 2>
<examiner first and last name 3>
<examiner first and last name 4>

Vienna, Month Year

Appendix 2: Declaration of good scientific practice

On sheet 2, the following text must be quoted and signed:

Name:
Thesis title:

I hereby declare,

that I have independently written/produced the reflective documentation of my thesis in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice and have not used any sources and aids other than those indicated,

that this reflective documentation has not yet been submitted in any form for evaluation, neither in Austria nor abroad, and

that this version is identical to the online submitted and assessed version.

Date _____ Signature _____