

Please note that this is a translation of the German version of the curriculum approved by the senate on May 12, 2011. This translation is for information only, and not a legally binding document.

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna  
Curriculum for the Study Program  
PhD in Practice (Doctor of Philosophy in Practice)

Legal Basis

§1(1) The “Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Practice” (in the following: *PhD in Practice*) is a doctoral study program at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna which has been established in accordance with §54 Sec. 4 UG (University Law) 2002.

(2) The legitimacy of the profile of this program is based on the educational objectives and educational responsibilities of the Universities (guiding principles and agenda), the corresponding fundamental equality of artistic and academic studies, and the desideratum of intertwining them—as found in the contents of § 2 No. 2 and §3 No. 3 UG 2002.

(3) The resolution of this curriculum was passed in the senate meeting on May 12, 2011.

Preamble

§2(1) *Context and Necessity:* The *PhD in Practice* program at the Academy of Fine Arts is a postgraduate program of combined academic and artistic research. It provides the participants with an opportunity to realize their individual research projects within an environment that encourages all those involved to engage in intensive collaboration. One focal point of the program is the question of the intersections of art and knowledge and of the specific productivity of artistic methods and strategies in terms of the production and analysis of knowledge. These methods and strategies constitute the very *practice* contained in the program’s title. This practice is conceived to be interwoven in multiple ways in social, cultural, political, and economic fields of action, and it particularly applies to critical reflection on one’s own artistic practice, which can become both a method and a subject of research. The significance of knowledge as a factor of renewal is highly valued in societies and economies of the twenty-first century, and thus it is crucially important for fine artists to critically, reflexively, and actively adopt their own positions as producers, agents, designers, archivists, mediators, etc. of knowledge and to engage in a discourse on these positions. The program *PhD in Practice* at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna draws consequences from this necessity, which has previously seldom been addressed theoretically, and shifts the role of fine art in a “knowledge society” to becoming the focus of an internationally oriented research context. In this way, the conditions necessary for artistic knowledge to be produced themselves become the subject of fundamental combined academic and artistic research.

(2) *Topics and Participants:* In the doctoral studies program *PhD in Practice* those forms and practices of knowledge will be examined in particular which can be regarded as the result of artistic processes and the theme of artistic work. What is crucial for this conception of knowledge about art is the assumption that art can be understood as a space for social, political, cultural, and economic conflicts, in which claims to knowledge and truth can be equally asserted and criticized. Contemporary art is directly confronted with issues of localizing, accessing, and materializing reserves and forms of social knowledge. It is informed by critical epistemologies as they have been developed in recent times by feminist theories, gender and queer studies, postcolonial theories, and black and subaltern studies, among others. Artists (but also critics, curators, art historians, teachers, gallerists, and others active in the field of art) are increasingly proving to be specialists in dealing with different, often contradictory characteristics of knowledge and competence. They use aesthetic practices and discourses to reflect on and renew this highly charged juxtaposition of knowledge forms that are recognized and visible in society in different ways. For this reason, on the one hand it is important to grasp the specific emergence and figures in/of art, and on the other to explore the relationships between this artistic knowledge and other forms of knowledge.

(3) *Practices and Perspectives*: Within the framework of the *PhD in Practice* program, art/knowledge processes will thus be observed and actively shaped. The program enables the participants to reflect on and further develop their respective cultural, disciplinary, and professional experience in a combined academic and artistic practice. Experimental modes of artistic production that traverse and reconfigure the established disciplines of knowledge are fostered, as well as the ability to write analytical theoretical texts and to conceive, organize, and carry out one's own research. Intensively linking artistic and academic forms of reflection and production qualifies the participants to research, produce, and communicate independently in a dynamic transdisciplinary space. The emphasis on transdisciplinarity is linked with the idea of a fundamental transformation of the art/knowledge relationship, which counters a dichotomous order of knowledge (theory/practice, science/art) and makes different dimensions of knowledge-producing practice available. The participants are expected to play an active role in shaping the program and its programs (organizing workshops, guest lectures, conferences, exhibitions, screenings, excursions, etc.). Participants are also expected to take part in international discussions, i.e. to publish on their projects and topics in relevant journals and present their work in exhibitions, at conferences, symposia, etc.

### Objectives

§3 (1) The doctoral program *PhD in Practice* (Doctor of Philosophy in Practice) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna facilitates the further development of the capacity for independent academic and artistic work and promotes the development of emerging talent in this field.

(2) Participants in the doctoral program *PhD in Practice* acquire the preconditions for operating in the interlinking fields of contemporary art, culture, and research with a secure mastery of the critique of knowledge and methodology. The increasing importance of art as a mode of creating, conveying, and shaping knowledge requires specific critical reflective skills. It is intended that participants will further develop their academic artistic interests and capabilities in a multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research environment within an international network. This postgraduate program is thus a reaction by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna to the challenges associated with the increased importance of research at art universities and emerging new profiles of training and activities.

### Qualification Profile

§4(1) The program *PhD in Practice* conveys artistic and academic issues and methods that are paradigmatically linked and developed in artistic research projects. The program is integrated in the manifold research and teaching structures of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. It is aligned with the Academy's research focuses and simultaneously expands them.

(2) In accordance with § 54 (1) Z 3 UG 2002, the PhD in Practice study program is being allocated to "künstlerische Studien".

### Extent, Duration, and Structure of the Program

§5 (1) The program *PhD in Practice* comprises a total of 240 ECTS credits for a duration of 8 semesters.

(2) The *PhD in Practice* program incorporates the development and realization of a combined academic and artistic research project (dissertation) and the completion of the modules listed in paragraph 4 as well as the oral doctoral examination (rigorosum).

(3) The dissertation consists of the documentation of the academic and artistic research project and an argumentation discussing the methods applied in the project. (160 = 2 x 80 ECTS points).

(4) The program *PhD in Practice* is divided into the following modules:

1. Theories/Methodologies (30 = 6 x 5 ECTS points)
2. Techniques/Procedures (10 = 2 x 5 ECTS points)
3. Communication/Education/Mediation (20 = 4 x 5 ECTS points)
4. Presentation Tutorial (*Präsentationsprivatissimum*) (10 ECTS points)
5. Optional Subjects (*Freifach*) (10 ECTS points)

(5) Modules are program units in which the participants choose—in agreement with their supervisors—from classes offered by the Academy’s program, and other recognized university institutions in Austria and abroad, so that they meaningfully complement one another in terms of fostering knowledge and skills relevant to the successful development of the dissertation.

(6) The module “Theories/Methodologies” (in total: 30 ECTS points) serves the in-depth exploration of theoretical and methodological principles and positions that are relevant in conjunction with the chosen research project. *PhD in Practice* candidates can assemble this module individually from the required elective classes of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna listed under §8 (32 ECTS credits).

(7) The module “Techniques/Procedures” (10 ECTS points) specifically fosters the development of capabilities necessary for the realization of the various sections of the dissertation. Classes on academic writing (PhD writing skills) and knowledge of artistic practice (PhD artistic production skills) are required subjects.

(8) The module “Communication/Education/Mediation” (20 ECTS points) fosters the independently conceived and designed task of communication, education, and mediation. This can optionally consist of holding classes or of organizing and realizing other formats of communicating art and knowledge.

(9) In the fifth or sixth semester candidates are required to attend the *presentation tutorial* (*Präsentationsprivatissimum*), concluding with an oral examination conducted by a commission, in which the interim results of the dissertation are presented (10 ECTS points). The commission to be appointed for the *presentation tutorial* is comprised of the PhD project’s two supervisors and one more person with a *venia docendi*.

(10) For the module “Optional Subjects” (*Freifächer*) (10 ECTS points) participants can choose from all classes at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna as well as from all other Austrian universities.

(11) The program concludes with the *rigorosum* (see §14).

#### Admission Requirements

§6 (1) Requirements for admission to the doctoral study program *PhD in Practice* are:

1. A degree (Magister, Masters, or Diploma course) from a recognized institution of tertiary education in Austria or abroad.
2. A positive outcome to the selection process.

(2) A prerequisite for admission to this study program is proof of outstanding language skills in English as demonstrated during the selection process.

#### Selection Process and Application Documents

§7 (1) Decisions regarding admission to the study program *PhD in Practice* are made in a two-phase selection process.

(2) Prospective participants apply for the study program within a publicized application period with an academic artistic project.

(3) If the application documents are given a positive evaluation by a jury from the Academy, the applicant presents her/his academic artistic project at a hearing before a selection commission of Academy and external experts.

(4) If the hearing is assessed positively by the selection commission and if all formal legal requirements are met, the applicant can begin the program at the next possible date.

(5) The application documents should include a written section giving a theoretical outline of the project and documentation of prior artistic and academic practice relevant to the prospective research project.

(6) The application documents are to be submitted in English.  
Required documents:

1. the completed application form;

2. a resumé (*curriculum vitae*);

3. a list of publications, participation in exhibitions, and other published artistic and scholarly work (*portfolio*);

4. a proposal of the research project to be developed and realized during the study program.

5. an abstract of the proposal.

(7) More details concerning the application can be found on an information sheet available for each respective date resp. on the program's website.

(8) The Academy explicitly welcomes applications from prospective students who can already provide evidence of an artistic career and preferably international recognition, who additionally want to reflect theoretically on their experiences and skills and further develop these in a research environment.

### Classes to be Completed

§8 (1) The progress of the individual dissertation proposal is supervised in the *communal tutorial* (Dissertant\_innenseminar) . This takes place within the context of the group of *PhD in Practice* candidates and the wider research area of the Doctorate School of the Academy of Fine Arts. New developments in artistic research are presented and discussed in a transdisciplinary perspective in the PhD candidate seminar.

(2) In the *tutorial* (Privatissimum) the academic artistic project is individually supervised and accompanied by the supervisors. Internal (at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna) or external experts with an artistic or scholarly *venia docendi* (right to teach) can be consulted if and when necessary (elective; 2 ECTS credits). A presentation tutorial will be held in the course of the fifth or sixth semester to provide information about the status of work on the dissertation. This consists of a presentation of the proposed research by the *PhD in Practice* candidate and concludes with an examination by a commission.

(3) *Art class (studio)*: This practical class provides critical supervision, enabling the participants to further develop and supplement their artistic work in the context of the proposed research. The art class can be carried out in conjunction with the central artistic major (Zentrales Künstlerisches

Fach, ZKF) or individualized personal instruction (KE) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Assessment is an intrinsic part of the *studio* class (*prüfungsimmanenter Charakter*).

(4) *Lectures* convey theoretical, historical, and methodological principles and insights into academic disciplines that are relevant to the chosen research project. The PhD fellows can choose to take an oral or written examination.

(5) *Seminars* aim to provide an in-depth, transdisciplinary exploration of academic and artistic issues. The participants are expected to make independent contributions by applying critiques of methodology. Assessment is an intrinsic part of the seminars (*prüfungsimmanenter Charakter*).

### Language

§9 Classes will be conducted in English.

### Dissertation

§10 (1) The dissertation, which is the central project and the basis for evaluation in this study program, should make an independent contribution to artistic research.

(2) The topic (title) of the dissertation will be determined during the first year of the program. The *PhD in Practice* candidate must inform the supervisors of any changes in the topic, who must in turn inform the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching.

The change of topic (title) is considered accepted if the vice-rectorate in charge gives no formal notification of any objections within one month of receiving the information.

(3) The dissertation should contain a special section outlining the conceptual and methodological preconditions of the research project. This section is to be written in English.

### Dissertation Supervision

§11 (1) The dissertation is to be supervised by at least one professor from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with the appropriate qualifications (*venia docendi*) and by one other artist or one other academic, provided that these are qualified teachers or have corresponding artistic or academic qualifications. According to the constitution of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching is also entitled to appoint persons with teaching qualifications at a recognized foreign university or at another domestic or foreign institution of equal rank with universities to supervise and evaluate the dissertation, as far as financial resources allow, if the teaching qualification of these persons is equivalent to §94 Section 2 Z1 and §104 UG 2002 (see constitution, “Einrichtung des studienrechtlichen Organs” [“Establishment of an organ of statutory requirements (for university studies)”]), §13 Section 4).

(2) Supervision of the dissertation takes place within the framework of the tutorials. The names of the two dissertation supervisors are to be submitted to the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching for approval at the end of the second semester.

### Submission of the Dissertation

§12 (1) Once the work on the dissertation is finished and all the modules have been completed, the dissertation can be submitted to the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching.

(2) If the dissertation is based on joint work, the sections completed by each student must be identified.

(3) More detailed regulations for submitting the dissertation are to be found on the published information sheet and on the program's website.

#### Assessment and Evaluation of the Dissertation

§13 (1) The assessment and evaluation of the dissertation is carried out by the two supervisors and by an internal or external professor with a corresponding *venia docendi* (right to teach). This third assessor and evaluator is appointed by the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching in consultation with the supervisors. The assessors recommend that the dissertation be accepted or rejected, list their reasons for this decision, and suggest a grade.

(2) The assessments and proposals for evaluation must be made available three months after submission of the dissertation and will be sent to the *PhD in Practice* candidate and the examination senate.

(3) If an assessment with the proposed evaluation is not supplied in time, another assessor/evaluator should be appointed if necessary. The assessors and evaluators can make a joint proposal that the submitted dissertation be returned to the student for revision and then resubmitted. The requirements for the revision are to be clearly stated.

(4) The dissertation will be presented publicly within the university two weeks before the rigorosum. This is subject to confirmation by the supervisors. This confirmation has then to be forwarded to the Studienabteilung.

#### Final Examination/Rigorosum

§14 (1) The course of studies is concluded with a rigorosum, which evaluates the dissertation.

(2) For admission to the rigorosum, proof of the following must be provided:

1. The positive conclusion of all modules in the curriculum part of the study program.
2. Positive assessment of the dissertation.
3. Confirmation of the public presentation within the university.

(3) The rigorosum consists of:

1. An evaluation of the dissertation by the examination senate on the basis of the submitted assessment and proposed evaluation.
2. A discursive presentation of the submitted dissertation and its academic artistic context and a discussion with the examination senate.

(4) According to the constitution, the examination senate is appointed by the vice-rectorate in charge of teaching and is composed of both dissertation supervisors and at least one member of the curriculum commission for this curriculum, who has not been included in the supervision or assessment of the dissertation. In addition, at least one external member can be nominated for the examination senate, if the dissertation makes this necessary. One member is to be appointed chair.

(5) The rigorosum certificate contains the following information:

1. Grades from the modules 1 and 2.

2. Grade of the rigorosum (composed of: a. assessment of the dissertation and b. assessment of the discursive presentation)

### Publication

§15 Following the successful completion of the rigorosum the dissertation must be published, in addition to §86 Section 1 UG 2002. Further regulations regarding publication are to be found on the information sheet.

### Academic Title

§16 The academic title is PhD (“Doctor of Philosophy [PhD]”). The academic title PhD (“Doctor of Philosophy [PhD]”) will only be awarded following publication.  
Legal Validity

§17 The curriculum comes into effect on October 1, 2011.