

Please note that this is a translation of the original German version of the curriculum. It is provided to facilitate understanding of the curriculum and is not legally binding.

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Curriculum for the Study Program PhD in Practice (Doctor of Philosophy in Practice)

Regulatory framework

§ 1 (1) The doctoral program “Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Practice” (hereinafter: *PhD in Practice*) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna is based on § 54 (4) Universities Act 2002.

(2) The study profile has been granted legitimacy through the educational objectives and tasks of universities (governing principles and duties); artistic and scholarly studies are considered to be of equal value and their interlacing is strongly desired/called for, as reflected in the Austrian Universities Act of 2002 § 2 Number 2 and § 3 Number 3 Universities Act 2002.

(3) This curriculum was agreed upon at the senate meeting of April 28, 2020.

Preamble

§ 2 (1) *Topics and participants:* The *PhD in Practice* of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna is a postgraduate degree program of combined scholarly and artistic research. The program addresses artists as well as other cultural producers who engage in arts-based research. This program assumes that research is productive work on and with a variety of materials aiming at a negotiation, reflection and critique of knowledge as well as knowledge-generating institutions. The core subject of this program is the specific productivity of artistic processes and strategies *as research* as well as the participants' critical reflection of their own artistic practice, which can be both method and subject matter of artistic research. Here, the PhD program makes use of a long tradition of research-based artistic practices developed in dialogue with activist, sub- and pop-cultural as well as academic fields.

(2) *Context and necessity:* In the 21st century, knowledge is the central factor of renewal and reproduction; for visual artists it is therefore crucial to critically reflect and actively shape their own positions as e.g. producers, agents, creators, archivists, or mediators of knowledge. Given that the necessity of conducting theoretical research on this matter has been sorely neglected so far, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna has implemented its *PhD in Practice* program in order to further explore the role of visual art in the so-called knowledge-based society within a framework of international research. The idea of artistic research is based on the premise that art can be understood as a space for social, political, cultural and economic conflicts, in which claims to knowledge as much as truth are negotiated. Such an understanding of artistic practice rests on critical epistemologies, which have recently been developed in the contexts of feminist, queer, postcolonial, ecological, post-Marxist and other political and emancipatory projects. In the examination of such propositions, the conditions of artistic knowledge production themselves are turning into a subject matter of basic research.

(3) *Objectives:* In the course of these studies, participants learn how to reflect and deepen their respective cultural, subject-related and professional experiences in an artistic-research manner. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to use experimental modes of artistic production that traverse and reconfigure established disciplines of knowledge, to write analytical-theoretical texts as well as to conceptualize their own artistic research and put it into practice. As artistic and scholarly forms of reflection and production are closely entwined, graduates will have acquired the skill to

research, produce and communicate independently in the context of a dynamic, transdisciplinary space. Understanding artistic research as a process of negotiating boundaries also counters a dichotomic order of knowledge (theory/practice, science/art, art/politics, subjectivity/objectivity, etc.) and thus opens up new dimensions of research-based practice. The doctoral program *PhD in Practice* enables participants to pursue their artistic research projects within an environment that cherishes productive collaboration of everybody involved. In turn, participants are expected to play an active role in shaping the program and contribute to the coursework and its agendas (organization of workshops, guest lectures, symposia, exhibitions, screenings, excursions, etc.). Participants are also expected to take part in international discussions, for instance by publishing their work in relevant journals, or presenting at exhibitions, festivals, symposia etc.

Objectives

§ 3 (1) The doctoral studies program *PhD in Practice* (Doctor of Philosophy in Practice) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna has been initiated to enable PhD candidates to further develop their independent scholarly and artistic skills and to promote the emerging talent in the field of arts-based research.

(2) Candidates of the doctoral program *PhD in Practice* are qualified to embark on an epistemological and methodologically reflexive discourse of the mutually interwoven fields of contemporary art, culture and research. While the participants further develop their arts-based research interests and skills in a multi-dimensional, inter- and transdisciplinary research context that is supported by an international network, this postgraduate program signifies the Academy's response to the challenge that research carried out at art schools has been awarded a new status, thus creating new educational and professional profiles.

Qualification Profile

§ 4 (1) The program *PhD in Practice* is concerned with both artistic and scholarly issues and methods, which are interlinked and further developed through exemplary artistic research projects. The program has been integrated into the diverse university research and teaching structures of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

(2) The program *PhD in Practice* has been allocated to the humanities and cultural studies according to § 54 (1) Universities Act 2002.

Admission Requirements

§ 5 (1) Requirements for admittance to the doctoral studies program are as follows:

1. A degree (Magister, Master or Diploma Studies) from a recognized Austrian or international institution of post-secondary education,
2. A positive outcome of the selection process,
3. English language skills as required for a successful continuation of studies, to be tested in the course of the admission process,
4. The submission of a PhD project agreement no later than one year after admission, as specified in § 12 of this curriculum.

Selection Process and Application Documents

§ 6 (1) Applicants are admitted to the program *PhD in Practice* after undergoing a two-step selection process.

(2) Applicants apply for the program within a publically announced period with an artistic research project proposal.

(3) The application documents contain a written part outlining the research project, plus a documentation of the applicant's previous artistic and scholarly practices.

(4) The application documents are to be submitted in English, including:

1. The completed application form,
2. A résumé (*curriculum vitae*),
3. A list of exhibitions the applicant has contributed to, of publications or other artistic and scholarly work that has been published (*portfolio*),
4. A research *proposal* to be developed and carried out in the course of the study program;
5. An abstract of the proposal.

(5) Further details on the application can be downloaded from the program website.

(6) If the selection committee ("Zulassungssenat") approves the applications documents, the applicant presents his/her artistic research project at a hearing of the selection committee.

(7) If the selection committee assesses the presentation positively, and if all legal requirements have been met, the respective student will be admitted to the program at the earliest possible date.

Working Language

§ 7 Course work is conducted in English.

Scope, Duration and Structure of the Program

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

(2) The program *PhD in Practice* is composed of two elements: the course work and the completion of the PhD project.

(3) Course work comprises 80 ECTS points. The PhD project covers 160 ECTS, 80 of which are allocated to the arts-based research project and to the written dissertation.

(4) The work in progress of the PhD project is to be presented publicly at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna at least once during the course of studies.

(5) Once all requirements have been fulfilled, the program is concluded with a public thesis defense (see §14) followed by a publication of the PhD project (documentation of the arts-based research project plus dissertation).

Course Work

§ 9 (1) Participants are required to complete the following courses:

1. Seminars for PhD Candidates amounting to 60 ECTS (15 x 4 ECTS)
2. 20 ECTS Privatissima (4 x 5 ECTS): Privatissima provide individual consulting for the PhD project, i. e., the art-based research project and the dissertation.

PhD Project

§ 10 (1) The PhD project, central to the studies and one of its main assessment criteria, is supposed to provide the candidate's independent contribution to artistic research. It comprises an arts-based research project and a dissertation.

(2) Format and/or medium of the arts-based research project are chosen freely by the candidate.

(3) The dissertation serves as proof of the candidate's ability to handle research issues independently.

(4) If the PhD project is based on joint work, each candidate's contribution is to be clearly identified and assessed separately.

(5) Until the PhD project is submitted, both the supervisor(s) and the topic can be changed. Any such changes, however, must be approved by the university body responsible for study matters ("studienrechtlich zuständiges Organ"), and a new PhD Project Agreement is to be made, while a change of topic is to be added to the existing PhD Project Agreement as an amendment.

(6) The PhD project has to be submitted to the university body responsible for study matters in the form of two printed copies (documentation of the artistic-research project plus dissertation) as well as electronically in the form of a pdf document. Furthermore, a list of three potential appraisers with teaching qualification (*venia docendi*) in the field of the respective PhD project or in a closely related field is to be submitted, as they could be commissioned with the appraisal of the respective PhD project by the relevant university body. For the selection of the external appraiser, an appraisal-board is established (composed of three members of the Curricula Commission, all of whom have a vote, the university body responsible for study matters and the first supervisor, the latter two only with consulting function). The board determines which person is first approached with regards to the appraisal, and the order of three potential appraisers to be approached in case of cancellations. The university body responsible for study matters is to submit the PhD project to the respective appraisers, who are to evaluate it within a maximum of four months.

Supervision of the PhD Project

§ 11 (1) The PhD project is supervised by a professor of the PhD Program.

(2) If the interdisciplinary nature of the respective PhD project requires a second supervisor, he or she can be appointed according to § 94 (2) Number 1 Universities Act 2002 subject to the latter's teaching qualification. Depending on the availability of the requisite funds, the university body responsible for study matters is also entitled to appoint a second supervisor, who is qualified to teach at another recognized Austrian or international institution of post-secondary education, provided that the latter's teaching qualification is equivalent to that specified in § 94 (2) Number 1 Universities Act 2002. Such second supervisors are to be chosen in accordance with the main supervisor of the PhD project in question.

Authorization of the PhD Project Plan, PhD Project Agreement

§ 12 (1) Until the end of the first year, the PhD candidate is to apply to the university body responsible for study matters for the approval of the PhD Project by handing in a PhD Project Agreement, which also has to include a letter of acceptance by the supervisor(s).

(2) In the PhD Project Agreement, which is to be concluded in English, a faculty member of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with the teaching qualification (*venia docendi*) according to § 13 of the Statutes ("Satzung"), part "Study Matters", agrees to supervise the PhD project in question. If the concept of the project, due to its transdisciplinary nature, requires the appointment of the involvement of a second supervisor, this has to be stated in the PhD Project Agreement, and the letter of acceptance by the second supervisor has to be submitted.

(3) Apart from the supervision confirmation, the PhD Project Agreement is to comprise the following materials:

- a. names of the PhD candidates, student ID(s), date(s) of birth, b. names of supervisor(s),
- c. topic of the PhD project,
- d. the language used by the author of the PhD project, and that used for the thesis defense. e. the exposé underlying the approval,
- f. the schedule for the PhD project plan,
- g. the main supervision data, especially the number of feed-back talks between candidate and supervisor(s),
- h. letter of intent signed by the candidate, saying that the latter intends to comply with all the regulations concerning the code of good (artistic) research practice.

(4) The dissertation agreement is to be supplemented in the course of the study program by the PhD candidate and with his/her supervisor, e.g. with agreements regarding the curricular recognition of arts based research achievements. Any one-sided termination as well as any material amendments of the PhD Project Agreement are subject to the permission of the university body responsible for study matters.

Appraisal and Assessment of the PhD Project

§ 13 (1) The appraisal and assessment of the PhD project is carried out by at least two appraisers ("Gutachter_innen"). In case the dissertation is supervised by the two directors of the program, they may write one appraisal together; in case the dissertation is supervised by one of the directors of the program and also by an external person, the latter writes a second appraisal. In both cases, the appraisal(s) by the supervisors are complemented by an external appraisal, written by an appraiser who was not involved in the supervision of the respective PhD project. The appraisal is to comprise an account of the PhD project topic, the methodology used, a contextualization of the project into state-of-the-art artistic-scientific research on the respective topic, and a summarizing assessment of the entire work. In addition, the appraisal comprises a grading of the work (very good, good, satisfactory, adequate, insufficient/poor).

(2) The university body responsible for study matters is to commission the person with a teaching qualification ("venia docendi") selected by the appraisal-board to compose an external appraisal. In case all three appraisers decline, the appraisal-board hands the list of the three people back to the first supervisor. The appraisal is to comprise an account of the PhD project topic, the methodology used, a contextualization of the project into state-of-the-art artistic-scientific research on the respective topic, and a summarizing assessment of the entire work. In addition, the appraisal comprises a grading of the work (very good, good, satisfactory, adequate, insufficient/poor).

(3) In case one of the two appraisers grades the work with insufficient/poor, the Vicerector for Teaching / Promotion of Early Stage Artists/Researchers has to bring in a third appraiser, who has to be situated within the context of the respective field. This person has to appraise the

dissertation within two months.

(4) The overall assessment of the PhD project results from the mean value of the grades given by the internal and external appraisers.

(5) The appraisals will be communicated to the PhD-candidates and the examination panel by the university body responsible for study matters.

Thesis Defense

§ 14 (1) The study program is concluded with a public thesis defense.

(2) To be admitted to the thesis defense, the PhD candidate is to demonstrate the following:

1. positive completion of all required courses
2. positive assessment of the PhD project

(3) The examination panel ("Prüfungssenat") shall be appointed by the responsible university body according to the statutes. It comprises the respective supervisor of the PhD project, the second supervisor (if applicable), and at least one member of the respective curricula commission, who was not involved in the supervision and/or assessment of the PhD project in question. In addition, and depending on the financial means available, an external member can be nominated for the exam panel, if the PhD project so requires. One of the members is to be appointed chair as suggested by the curricula commission responsible. The exam panel is to grade the thesis defense.

(4) The overall assessment of the study program results from the mean value of both grades given by the two appraisers, and the grade received for the delivery of the Thesis Defense. If this result has any decimal places, numbers up to 0.5 are to be rounded down, whereas decimals above 0.5 are to be rounded up mathematically. For values of up to 1.5, the doctoral candidate graduates "with highest honors" (*mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg bestanden*), and between 1.6 and 4.5 students have passed (*bestanden*), whereas with a grade of 4.6 or lower, they have failed (*nicht bestanden*).

(5) The thesis defense can be held no earlier than two weeks after the two appraisals have been submitted.

Publication

§ 15 (1) After the candidate's successful completion of the thesis defense, the PhD project (documentation of the arts-based research project and dissertation) shall be published by means of:

1. Submittal to the university library of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
2. Submittal to the Austrian National Library

(2) In addition, an electronic file of the PhD project has to be submitted to the University Library of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in order to archive the work in the institutional repository of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. On explicit demand by the author, the PhD project can also be made accessible online.

Academic Degree

§ 16 The academic degree is PhD ("Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)"), awarded to the candidate after publication.

Effective Date and Interim Regulations

§ 17 (1) This curriculum comes into effect on 1st of October 2021.

(2) Candidates commencing their studies before this curriculum for the PhD in Practice program came into force are entitled to continue their studies according to the provisions stipulated herein by submitting a simple declaration on a voluntary basis. The curricula commission for doctoral studies is to determine individually or generally which of the courses successfully completed by the respective student or students will be recognized for this particular curriculum.

(3) Candidates subject to a curriculum valid before this curriculum was issued are entitled to complete their studies by 30.04.2024.