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Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
Curriculum
Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.)

The curricula commission responsible for the doctoral studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, has agreed on the following program, approved by the Senate on June 1st, 2021.

§ 1 Objectives and Qualification Profile

(1) According to § 51 (2) Number 12 Universities Act 2002, doctoral study programs have to provide graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake independent academic work beyond the education for occupations requiring the application of academic knowledge and methods, and to promote the education, training and career advancement of junior academic staff. The educational aims and tasks of universities, listed in § 1 Universities Act 2002, are to be particularly fostered. Doctoral studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, serve to deepen candidates' understanding of history and theory, and support them when engaged in carrying out experimental research in art history and cultural studies, or of the respective social contexts of the artistic/cultural field involved. The dissertation shall meet international scholarly and academic standards of the respective subject area.

(2) This program is part of the studies of the humanities and cultural studies according to § 54 (1) Universities Act 2002.

§ 2 Admission and Duration

(1) For admission, a Master's or similar degree (*Diplomstudium*) in the fields of the humanities, cultural studies, fine arts, or a secondary school teacher accreditation in a relevant school subject, is prerequisite.

(2) Admission is also possible if the doctoral candidate has completed an equivalent course of studies relevant to the subject at a recognized Austrian or international institution of post-secondary education.

(3) Furthermore, the doctoral candidate is to submit a Dissertation Agreement (*Dissertationsvereinbarung*) no later than one year after admission, as specified in § 4 of this curriculum.

(4) The duration of study is 6 semesters, comprising 180 ECTS points.

§ 3 Structure of the Study Program and Course Work

Doctoral candidates enrolled in this program are required to submit evidence of the following achievements:

(1) Candidates are expected to attend courses comprising a minimum of 20 ECTS points. Candidates need to attend at least two of the courses specifically offered to PhD candidates: *Dissertant_innenseminare* (3 ECTS points each), and two *Privatissima* (individual tutorials for selected participants of 2 ECTS points each). All other courses can be freely chosen from the range of courses

offered by the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, or by other Austrian or international institutions of post-secondary education; such courses must, however, in form and content be relevant to the candidate's dissertation, or complement the respective field of studies. These electives are to be included in the Dissertation Agreement.

(2) Research findings concerning the dissertation must be publicly presented at least once during the doctoral program at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (e.g. in the course of the Graduate Conference) or at national or international conferences.

(3) Doctoral candidates and their supervisors are expected to meet at least once a year to give and receive feedback, respectively, on the study progress. It is recommended that such discussions be recorded in writing.

(4) After all requirements have been fulfilled, the study program is concluded with a public Thesis Defense (cf. § 8) and the publication of the doctoral thesis (*Dissertation*) (cf. § 9).

§ 4 Submission of a PhD Proposal, Dissertation Agreement (*Dissertationsvereinbarung*)

(1) In the course of the first year after admission, the doctoral candidate is to apply to the relevant university body (*studienrechtliches Organ*) for the authorization of the Doctoral Proposal (*Dissertationsvorhaben*) together with the Dissertation Agreement, the latter of which comprises the confirmation of supervision and the Dissertation Agreement.

(2) In the Dissertation Agreement, which is to be concluded in either German or English, a qualified faculty member (with *venia docendi*) of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna according to § 94 (2) Number 1 Universities Act 2002 undertakes to supervise the respective dissertation. Should, as far as content is concerned (especially owing to the dissertation's transdisciplinary nature), two supervisors be required, this must be determined in the Dissertation Agreement, and a supervision confirmation by the second supervisor must be submitted.

(3) In addition to the above-mentioned supervision confirmation, the Dissertation Agreement shall comprise the following:

- a. Doctoral candidate's name(s), matriculation number, date of birth
- b. Supervisor's (Supervisors') name(s)
- c. Title of the dissertation
- d. Language of the thesis and the Thesis Defense
- e. The exposé underlying the authorization of the Doctoral Proposal
- f. List of optional courses (i.e. those courses the doctoral candidate may choose freely)
- g. Key data of supervision, especially the frequency of feedback sessions planned between candidate and supervisor.
- h. Formal commitment by the candidate to adhering to the rules of Good Practice in Research and Scholarship.

(4) During the course of studies, the Dissertation Agreement can be supplemented by the doctoral candidate, subject to the supervisor's (supervisors') approval, with e.g. the records of said feedback sessions (see § 3 (3)). Should either party to the Dissertation Agreement wish to terminate or substantially amend the same without the other party's consent, authorization by the relevant university body responsible for study matters is to be sought.

§ 5 Authority to supervise theses, supervisor

(1) Faculty members of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, who are authorized to teach university courses in accordance with § 94 (2) Number 1 Universities Act 2002, as well as senior faculty (i.e. those with habilitation) are qualified to supervise doctoral theses in their respective field of expertise.

(2) Should joint supervision be required, the additional supervisor is to be chosen from the persons listed in the above paragraph (1). In certain cases, which must be individually authorized, the university body responsible for study matters (*studienrechtliches Organ*) is entitled to commission holders of a teaching qualification issued by other recognized Austrian or international institutions of post-secondary education with the supervision and assessment of the dissertation, subject to the availability of funds required therefor, if the latter's teaching qualification is equivalent to the one defined in Section 1. The selection of additional supervisors is always subject to the main supervisor's approval.

§ 6 Dissertation

(1) To obtain a doctoral degree, doctoral candidates are required to write a thesis, which can be supplemented with any necessary or helpful material from other sources or media.

(2) The dissertation is equivalent to 160 ECTS points.

(3) The doctoral candidate shall select a thesis topic from the fields of art history and cultural studies, or one that is productively linked to the same.

(4) Candidates who wish to work cooperatively on a particular topic are permitted to do so, provided that their work can be assessed individually.

(5) Before the dissertation is submitted, doctoral candidates have the option to change either their supervisor or their respective topic; such changes must, however, be authorized by the university body responsible for study matters. In the case of a change of supervisor(s), a new Dissertation Agreement must be concluded, whereas a change of topic is to be added to the existing Dissertation Agreement as an amendment.

(6) Dissertations are to be submitted in two printed copies to the university body responsible for study matters, and as a digital copy deposited as a pdf file. Moreover, the candidate shall provide a list of three potential appraisers holding the *venia docendi* in accordance with § 94 (2) Number 1 Universities Act 2002 in the field of the thesis, or in a closely related one, who may be asked to compose an external appraisal (*Gutachten*) for the dissertation. 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 submits the dissertation to the appraisers, who are then asked to evaluate it within a maximum of four months.

§ 7 Appraisal and Assessment

(1) After thesis submittal, the supervisor is expected to write one of the two appraisals required. If there are two supervisors both submit an internal appraisal.

(2) The university body responsible for study matters commissions 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.

(3) Each dissertation appraisal must include its topic, the methodological approach used, a contextualization of the dissertation within the current state of research on the respective topic, and a summarizing assessment of the dissertation. Moreover, each appraiser is to grade the dissertation according to the Austrian grading system (very good, good, satisfactory, adequate, and insufficient/poor).

(4) The overall assessment of the PhD Project results from the mean value of the grades given by the (either one or two) internal and external appraisers.

(5) The dissertation appraisals will be communicated to the doctoral candidates and the examination panel (*Prüfungssenat*) by the university body responsible for study matters.

§ 8 Thesis Defense (*Defensio*)

(1) The course of studies is concluded with an oral presentation and Thesis Defense before an examination panel.

(2) The Thesis Defense takes place in public.

(3) To be entitled to hold the Thesis Defense, the doctoral candidate must provide the relevant university body with the following documentation:

1. The positive assessment of the candidate's participation in the courses stipulated in the Dissertation Agreement according to § 3 (1)
2. A positive overall assessment of the dissertation. (§ 7 (4))

(4) The examination panel shall be appointed by the responsible university body and comprise at least the supervisor or supervisors (if applicable), the external appraiser and one member of the curricula commission responsible for doctoral studies who has not been involved in the supervision and/or appraisal of the respective dissertation. One of the members of the panel is to be appointed chair as suggested by the curricula commission responsible. Furthermore, the exam panel is to assess the Thesis Defense by giving a grade.

(5) The overall assessment of the doctoral candidate 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*).

(6) The Thesis Defense can be held no earlier than two weeks after the appraisals of the dissertation have been submitted.

§ 9 Publication

(1) After the candidate's successful completion of the Thesis Defense, the dissertation shall be published by means of

1. Submittal to the university library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna
2. Submittal to the National Library
3. 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.

§ 10 Academic Degree

The academic degree is “Doctor of Philosophy“, in Austria abbreviated to “Dr.ⁱⁿ phil.”/“Dr. phil.”, awarded to doctoral candidates after the successful completion of their doctoral studies and the actual publication of their dissertation.

§ 11 Effective Date

(1) This curriculum comes into effect on October 1st, 2020.