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The Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki / Doctoral studies programme

Degree requirements for Doctoral studies programme

The purpose and goals of the Doctoral Studies Programme

Doctoral studies pursued at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki provide the means and opportunity to engage in the independent and creative activity of artistic research. Artistic research is multidisciplinary research grounded in the artists and their art. The doctoral programme at KuvA produces artist-researchers specialised in fine art.

Artist-researchers develop and renew the arts and their practice, research and instruction. They engage in pluralistic and critical dialogue with the various actors in society. As specialists in their respective fields they practice art and produce knowledge, skills and comprehension based on art practise that can be utilised and applied in both the arts and other areas of society. Doctoral studies at the University of the Arts develop the artist-researchers' ability to apply the proficiency he or she has obtained as an artist, researcher, pedagogue and specialist.

Degree objective and structure

Doctorate in Fine Arts (DFA)

K-Jo Doctoral thesis in fine arts	170 ECTS
K-Ji Postgraduate Studies in fine arts	70 ECTS
K-Ji-10 Artistic research seminars	48 ECTS
K-Ji-11 Theme seminars	16 ECTS
K-Ji-12 Research seminar	8 ECTS
K- Ji-13 Thesis circle	4 ECTS
K- Ji-14 Methodical studies	8 ECTS
K-Ji-15 Writing	8 ECTS
K-Ji-16 Interfaces of artistic research	4 ECTS
K-Ji-20 Research competency	12 ECTS
K-Ji-21 Introduction to Doctoral Studies	1 ECTS
K-Ji-22 Conference presentation	2 ECTS
K-Ji-23 Symposium	5 ECTS
K-Ji-24 Publication	4 ECTS
K-Ji-30 Optional studies	10 ECTS

The doctoral studies programme's degree objective at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki is doctorate in fine arts. The degree extends to 240 ECTS which corresponds to four years of full-time studies. The doctoral degree in fine arts consists of the Doctoral Thesis in Fine Art (170 ECTS) and Postgraduate Studies in Fine Art (70 ECTS).

Degree proficiency objectives

Persons who have completed a doctoral degree in fine art are specialists in their field of research who can:

- conduct independent artistic research
- realise an artistic research project based on a sound plan
- critically evaluate the various phases and end result of an artistic research project as well as engage in academic dialogue related to their research subject
- document artistic research processes and talk about their research in various contexts
- identify important current developments and evaluate them critically
- apply assimilated knowledge and engage in art and the research of art in an organized, informed and creative manner
- co-operate with actors in their own field as well as specialists in other fields
- understand the ethical implications of their research and activity and act in a fair and responsible way

K-Jo Doctoral Thesis in Fine Art (170 ECTS)

The doctoral thesis in fine art can include art exhibitions, exhibition curating, individual artworks, artistic processes, experimental arrangements and their articulation, conceptualisation and theorisation. Typically a doctoral thesis consists of one or several visual art components (a maximum total of 140 ECTS) and a written component (30-170 ECTS). In addition, the thesis must be documented and electronically archivable. The artistic components are public artistic research findings. The written component runs parallel to the visual art components and justifies the research approach and goals in relation to other research and practices within the field. On a discretionary basis the dissertation can also consist exclusively of a written study.

The doctoral thesis must demonstrate that the student has a profound understanding of their field and the ability to analyse, articulate and contextualise research questions critically. If the doctoral thesis consists of a separate pre-examined visual component and a written component then the recommended scope of the written component is 50-250 pages (Page = 2000 characters with spaces). If the thesis is entirely theoretical then the recommended length is 150-250 pages. The written component can be realised in various ways: as a monograph, web publication or other multimedia whole. It can also be article-based in which case it must consist of at least three peer-reviewed journal articles and a summarising chapter (15-30 pages).

The doctoral thesis can also consist of co-authored publications and projects provided that the doctoral student's contribution can be clearly identified. The aim, methods, structure and

findings of the research must also be clearly apparent in the doctoral thesis as a whole. The thesis can be published in Finnish, Swedish or English and by decision of the Academic Council in some other language. The language of the thesis submitted for pre-examination must be the same as in the final examined publication. This language must also be the main language at the public examination.

The credits awarded to the visual and written components are to be evaluated on a case by case basis in relation to coverage of the subject and number of components and scope in such a way that the written component comprises 30-170 ECTS while the artistic component corresponds to 140 ECTS at most.

K-ji Postgraduate Studies in Fine Art (70 ECTS)

K-Ji-10 Artistic research seminars (48 ECTS)

This module consists of several thematic seminars and as a rule should be completed during the first two years of study. The exception being the thesis circle which can be included in the final stages of studies.

Proficiency objective: The doctoral students familiarise themselves with a diverse range of artistic research within their field of interest. The student also explores various methods and reporting tools that can be applied to artistic research. He or she should also be familiar with the starting points of artistic, experimental and practice-based research and be able to apply these creatively in their own research. In addition, the student should be able to develop the most suitable approach for their research and argue its merits. The student should also be familiar with documentation and reporting techniques, as well as writing to the extent required by their research. The student should also be able to set up artistic arrangements relevant to their research.

K-Ji-11 Theme seminar (16 ECTS)

The theme seminars comprise a multidisciplinary and diverse cross-section of the arts with a yearly changing emphasis in which artistic research is viewed in a wider cultural context.

Proficiency objective: The doctoral students should familiarise themselves with the ontological, epistemological and societal issues related to artistic research. The student must be familiar with the rudiments of theory and concept formation and capable of applying them to their own research. In addition, the student must also understand the connection between their artistic research problem and artistic research as well as other fields of research.

K-Ji-12 Research seminar (8 ECTS)

Each student must present a working seminar with a direct connection to their research demonstrating its progress once a year. The new components in the student's research will be

examined in group discussions. The feedback engendered by critical teamwork deepens and further develops the student's research. Supervisors and possible external specialists will be present at the working seminars. The research seminar requires at least two years of active participation that may include participating in the research days.

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- can analytically present their research progress
- can actively seek relevant feedback for their research
- can correctly apportion their artistic practice elements to the research as a whole

K-Ji-13 Thesis circle (4 ECTS)

During the preparation of their thesis students also participate in a thesis circle which serves as a peer support group for the completion of their theses.

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- can analyse large units of textual material
- can actively seek feedback for the analysis of their thesis as a whole
- can critically comment upon the written part of their colleagues' research
- gain the skills required to analyse writing as a process and creative activity

K-Ji-14 Methodical studies (8 ECTS)

This module is designed to familiarise the student with the methodological issues relevant to artistic research.

Proficiency objective: Doctoral students

- understand problems and solutions pertaining to knowledge formation in artistic research
- are familiar with the conceptual apparatus and international theoretical discussions within their field
- are familiar with current theoretical approaches within artistic research and can apply them in their own research in a suitable manner
- are familiar with the history of domestic artistic research and current challenges
- are familiar with the central channels and platforms for artistic research
- are familiar with the basic foundations of scientific theory formation and the ontological, epistemological, as well as societal problems related to artistic research
- can utilise central concepts in the contexts of contemporary art within the articulation of their own research

K-Ji-15 Writing (8 ECTS)

Students familiarise themselves with the various practices within research writing.

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- understand how concepts work and can formulate and use them in a coherent way
- understand the practices and preconditions of academic writing
- familiarise themselves with the possibilities that creative writing can unlock within the sphere of artistic research

K-Ji-16 Interfaces of Artistic research (4 ECTS)

This module familiarises the student with the societal impact of artistic research and the various aspects of artist-researcher agency.

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- understand the various aspects of societal agency related to the artist-researcher
- are familiar with the central thinkers, theorists, and philosophical currents in the field of visual art research
- understand the various links their own research has to related disciplines
- can place their own research within the inter-artistic field of artistic research
- can participate in the theoretical and societal discussion of contemporary art

K-Ji-20 Research competency (12 ECTS)

The studies within this module are compulsory (12 ECTS) and should as a rule be completed during the first two years of study with the exception of the symposium which can also be undertaken during the final stages of studies.

Proficiency objective: The doctoral student acquires the basic skills to function in a multidisciplinary and inter-artistic research community and is trained in the pursuit of artistic research in exchange with the domestic and international actors within their respective fields. The doctoral student is able to engage in academic debate and realise events related to artistic research. He or she is also able to seek the relevant academic connections for their own research. Furthermore, he or she is able to present their artistic research with guidance in such a manner that it can be accepted for publication. The study periods included in this study module can be realised as lectures, seminars, workshops or independent work.

K-Ji-21 Introduction to doctoral studies (1 ECTS)

Mode of study: Participation in the orientation week and the completion of its attendant exercises

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- are able to function in the environment and research community of TaiY and KuvA
- understand the requirements and objectives of the degree and curriculum and can draw up their own personal study plan (HOPS)
- are familiar with the practices and operating principles of KuvA
- can utilise student and research support services
- can seek information and advance their studies independently
- are familiar with the central research funding bodies and can apply for relevant financial assistance
- can act in accordance with good ethical research principles

K-Ji-22 Conference presentation (2 ECTS)

Mode of study: Appearances at conferences or symposia

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students:

- are familiar with the central conferences within their field of interest
- can apply to attend at conferences, as well as budget and finance their participation
- can structure and hold a conference appearance
- can publish their talk as a conference publication

K-Ji-23 Symposium (5 ECTS)

Mode of study: The student can plan and organise a public symposium with a view to disseminating new information about their research in the field of visual art. The symposium can for instance include the production of a publication, exhibition curating or some other co-operative auxiliary event/happening. The symposium can be compensated by at least three international conference appearances at the discretion of the Academy.

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- can arrange and coordinate academic symposia
- can actively participate in academic discussion
- can create and maintain contacts in support of their research

K-Ji-24 Publication (4 ECTS)

Mode of study: The formulation of a public research presentation

Proficiency objective/ Doctoral students

- can submit a publication proposal and formulate a research publication
- are familiar with the central peer-reviewed research channels and attendant research criteria
- are familiar with the peer-review process and understand its significance for research
- can accept critical feedback and use it to further one's own research

K-Ji-30 Optional studies (10 ECTS)

This module consists of optional studies supporting the doctoral student's own research which the student can complete as for instance JOO studies or in a reading circle. This module can also include teaching activities that support the student's own research. The maximum extent of these studies is 10 ECTS.

Proficiency objective: Doctoral students

- can complement their expertise by exploring specialist fields which support their research subject and/or various techniques and methods that can justifiably be employed in their own research.
- are familiar with the central contexts of their research and can independently acquire knowledge that deepens said contexts
- are familiar with the artistic and theoretical discussions within their specialist field
- can apply chosen theories and the content of artistic discussion in the treatment of their research subject
- can develop their capabilities to engage in artistic research in some other manner that is deemed significant