

# THE ORGANISATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES AND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AND THE PROCEDURE FOR DEFENDING DOCTORAL THESES AT THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE

## I. General Provisions

1. This regulation sets out the particulars for commencing and conducting doctoral studies at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereinafter ‘the Academy’) as compared to other levels of study, the requirements for doctoral theses and the terms and conditions of and the procedure for defending a doctoral thesis. For the general principles regulating admission to the Academy and the organisation of studies, see the Admission Rules and the Regulation of Studies of the Academy.

2. The standard period of doctoral studies is four years and during this period the doctoral student has to earn 240 credits of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The standard period of study of a doctoral student may be extended:

- in cases specified in the individual study plan, by up to four academic years;
- by the period of time the person is absent from doctoral studies for taking care of a child of up to three years of age;
- by the period of time of during which the person performs compulsory military or alternative national service. *[13.06.2022]*

Doctoral studies end with the defence of a doctoral thesis. *[13.06.2022]*

3. Doctoral studies are based on the doctoral study programme, which has two paths:

- musicology path;
- artistic research path in the field of music or theatre. *[13.06.2022]*

3<sup>1</sup>. A doctoral student can participate in doctoral studies

- as a junior researcher with whom the academy signs a fixed-term employment contract to complete the doctoral study programme and who has the status of both an employee and a student at the academy;
- as a doctoral student who finances his or her doctoral studies him/herself and has the status of a student at the academy;
- as a knowledge transfer doctoral student whose doctoral thesis or artistic research project is completed while working in another organisation; the academy signs a cooperation agreement with the relevant organisation, and the knowledge transfer doctoral student has the status of a student at the academy. *[13.06.2022]*

4. Doctoral studies shall be organised by the Centre for Doctoral Studies, the protocol and leadership of which are established according to the rules of the Academy. The Doctoral Council and the Doctoral Study Programme Council are attached to the Centre for Doctoral Studies. The Doctoral Council evaluates the progress the doctoral candidates and decides their degree status upon completion of the defence of the doctoral thesis. The Doctoral Study Programme Council advises the Centre for Doctoral Studies in the continued advancement of its curricula. The Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies presides over the Doctoral Council and also oversees the research component of the doctoral programme. The Vice Chairman of the Doctoral Council oversees the creative component of the doctoral programme and is selected by the Rector.

4<sup>1</sup>. In addition to Chair and Vice Chairman, the Doctoral Council includes five permanent members, each of whom is required to have either a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification as an academic staff member. Candidates for these positions shall be proposed by the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies and confirmed by the Rector. The latter may select up to three temporary members of the Doctoral Council to preside over a doctoral evaluation or the defence of a doctoral thesis. Decisions of the Doctoral Council shall be considered binding when at least five of its members are present, three of whom must be permanent. The documentation and formalities of the work of the Doctoral Council shall be overseen by the Secretary of Doctoral Studies, who is not a voting member of the Council. *[13.06.2022]*

4<sup>2</sup>. The Doctoral Study Programme Council consists of both the Chair and the Vice Chairman of the Doctoral Council, representatives of the academic staff and doctoral candidates, as well as two experts from outside the Academy. The Doctoral Study Programme Council is convened annually at the invitation of the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

5. Doctoral study places are filled by open competition on the basis of the results of the entrance exam. The status of the student mentioned in clause 3<sup>1</sup> will be agreed with the candidates who have successfully completed the competition. The order of the interviews is determined by the ranking of candidates based on the results of the exam. A study place for a knowledge transfer doctoral student may also be filled without the need for a public competition. *[13.06.2022]*

6. The Centre for Doctoral Studies shall appoint a supervisor for every doctoral thesis, taking into account the doctoral student's preferences, if possible. Doctoral students in the musicology pathway are generally assigned one supervisor, while doctoral students in the artistic research pathway have two supervisors. One supervisor may also be from outside the Academy. Supervisors of academic doctoral theses or the research parts of artistic research projects must hold a doctorate or an equivalent academic degree. The artistic parts of the doctoral projects are generally supervised by a professor, an emeritus professor or a senior lecturer in the relevant field of specialisation; in this case a doctorate is not required. *[13.06.2022]*

6<sup>1</sup>. Within a month of matriculation to doctoral studies, the doctoral student prepares a formal individual plan for the entire period of doctoral studies in cooperation with the supervisor, the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies and the Secretary of Doctoral Studies. For each academic year, the doctoral student prepares a detailed individual plan, which includes the activities necessary to complete the curriculum and achieve the required learning outcomes.

7. The fulfilment of the doctoral student's individual plan is evaluated by the Doctoral Council during the annual progress review. The procedure for the evaluation shall be established by the Senate. *[13.06.2022]*

8. Subject to the terms, conditions and procedures established by the Senate, a doctoral student or a candidate for doctoral studies may apply for recognition of his/her prior learning and professional experience in relation to the admission requirements and to the fulfilment of the study programme. The respective applications shall be reviewed by an RPL panel, which must include the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

9. A doctoral degree may also be obtained as an external student. In order to defend a doctoral thesis as an external student, a person must have completed the doctoral study programme. *[13.06.2022]*

## **II. The Artistic Research Path of Doctoral Studies in the Field of Music or Theatre**

10. The doctoral study programme in the artistic path consists of an artistic research project and core studies in support of the project, as well as additional studies and practical experience. The artistic research project consists of the doctoral concerts or other artistic performances and a written doctoral thesis. In the course of their studies, doctoral students of the artistic research path are required to participate in international artistic projects or gain international recognition for their artistic work by other means. [13.06.2022]

11. Doctoral concerts and other artistic performances shall be open to the public (announced in the media, public domain and on the homepage of the Academy). They can be organised by the Academy's Concert and Performance Centre or other such organisations. The concerts and other artistic performances shall take place in Tallinn, or in other locations subject to the consent of the Centre for Doctoral Studies. The Centre for Doctoral Studies may also accept artistic performances submitted as recordings of public performances or recordings issued by a reputable producer (one programme in music performance and drama specialities, up to two programmes in the composition speciality, up to three performances for audiovisual composition, film music and other justifiable special cases).

12. Doctoral students shall register their doctoral concerts and other artistic performances with the Secretary for Doctoral Studies at least two months in advance, submitting a formal application endorsed by the supervisor. The supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the programme of the doctoral concert meets the applicable requirements. A programme with introductory notes (minimum 3000 characters with spaces) must be sent to the Secretary for Doctoral Studies one month before the concert/performance.

12.1. Doctoral students are required to make arrangements for audio or video recording of the doctoral concerts or other artistic performances and to submit two copies of the recording to the Secretary of Doctoral Studies within two months after the performance. Doctoral students may order the recording from the Academy's Technology Centre. In this case all recording costs shall be covered by the Academy. The recordings shall be kept in the library of the Academy.

13. The doctoral concerts and other artistic performances shall be evaluated by a commission of at least five members, each of whom are confirmed by the Rector at the suggestion of the Vice Chairman of the Centre for Doctoral Studies. For each performance, the panel shall include at least one internationally recognised artist from outside the Academy. A closed meeting shall be held after the performance. The artistic supervisor of the doctoral student shall also participate in the meeting and shall be given the opportunity to comment on the student's performance. The panel may also decide to invite the doctoral student to the meeting. The discussions of the commission shall be recorded in minutes. At the end of the meeting, all voting commission members shall grade the performance according to the standard grading scale of the Academy. In the case of the performance assignment, any positive grade shall be sufficient for a pass. The final grade shall be the rounded average of the grades given by the members of the panel. If the average grade is exactly at the mid-point between two grades (e.g. 4.5), the grade shall be rounded up or down based on the grade given by the chair of the panel.

14. The doctoral thesis in the artistic research path is an independent research paper with a length of 80,000 to 100,000 characters, excluding annexes. The subject of the thesis should be a relevant issue in the area of specialisation, and the thesis should support the artistic part of the doctoral project, either as a whole or in specific parts. In the doctoral thesis, the student should demonstrate

comprehensive knowledge of the relevant literature, use a scientifically justified method, and present original solutions or additions to existing knowledge. The format of the thesis should comply with the approved format requirements for the degree theses of the Academy. In order to defend the thesis, the doctoral student shall submit the manuscript to the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies. The Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies shall appoint a reviewer for the thesis. After review, the reviewer shall make a recommendation to accept the thesis for defence, to accept it after revision, or to reject the thesis.

15. A doctoral thesis in the artistic research path shall be submitted for defence in four bound copies (including two hard-cover copies) at least one month before the date of defence and shall be displayed in the library of the Academy. Together with the bound copies, the doctoral student shall submit to the Secretary of the Doctoral Studies an electronic copy of the doctoral thesis (in PDF format), which shall be made available through the electronic library catalogue, unless electronic publication is restricted by copyright. The language requirements and defence procedures shall be the same as for the doctoral thesis of the musicology path (see clauses 20, 22 and 23). Information concerning the defence shall be posted on the homepage of the Academy.

### **III. The Musicology Path of Doctoral Studies**

16. The doctoral study programme in the musicology path consists of a doctoral thesis and core studies in support of the thesis, as well as additional studies and practical experience. [13.06.2022]

17. A doctoral thesis in the musicology path is a comprehensive study of an important topic in a specific research area. It should demonstrate the student's broad knowledge of the literature addressing the issue, describe and analyse the source material on the basis of scientifically justified methods, and present an original solution to the problem. A doctoral thesis may be submitted as (1) a self-standing, independent work published as a thesis, (2) a series of publications accompanied by a summarising overview article (an article thesis), or (3) a monograph published in print. The length of the doctoral thesis shall be between 160,000 and 450,000 characters. The format of the doctoral thesis shall comply with the approved format requirements for the degree theses of the Academy.

18. In order to defend the doctoral thesis and have it printed in the Academy's series of dissertations, the doctoral student shall submit the manuscript to the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies. The Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies shall appoint two reviewers. After review, the reviewers shall make a recommendation to accept the doctoral thesis for defence, to accept it after revision, or to reject the doctoral thesis. The final decision on accepting the doctoral thesis for defence shall be made by the Centre for Doctoral Studies. Previously printed publications may also be submitted to the Centre for Doctoral Studies of the Academy as doctoral theses, and these shall be similarly accepted or rejected on the basis of an evaluation by two reviewers. In the case of an article thesis, the printed articles should be bound together, supplied with an introduction, and submitted to the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies, who may decide to appoint one reviewer if deemed appropriate.

19. A doctoral thesis in the musicology path may be accepted for defence only if the results of the research have been previously published. In the case of an article thesis, the prerequisite is publication of three articles in internationally distributed peer-reviewed journals or collections. In the case of an independent thesis or a printed monograph submitted as a doctoral thesis, the prerequisite is the publication of three research articles, including at least one article presenting the findings of the doctoral thesis in an internationally distributed peer-reviewed journal or collection.

A doctoral thesis may also be accepted for defence if the relevant articles on which it is based have not yet been published in print but have been officially accepted for publication.

20. If the doctoral thesis is not in Estonian, the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies may request the evaluation of a linguistic expert before accepting the doctoral thesis. A linguistic evaluation is not required in case of article thesis if the respective articles have been published in peer-reviewed journals or collections. Doctoral theses shall only be accepted for defence if they are in a language which the members of the Doctoral Council are able to read and evaluate. The language of the defence procedure may differ from the language of the doctoral thesis. A doctoral thesis shall be accompanied by a summary describing the goals, methods and findings of the research. The summary shall be written in Estonian if the doctoral thesis is in a foreign language, or in English or German if the doctoral thesis is in Estonian.

21. A doctoral thesis shall be printed as a book in at least 70 copies and must be published at least one month before the defence. At least twenty copies of the doctoral thesis shall be distributed on the basis of a list held by the Secretary of Doctoral Studies, accompanied by a notification of the place and time of the defence and the name of the opponent. An article thesis shall be submitted in four bound copies at least one month before the date of defence and will be displayed in the library of the Academy. Together with the printed copies, the doctoral student shall submit to the Secretary of Doctoral Studies an electronic copy of the doctoral thesis (in PDF format), which will be made available through the electronic library catalogue, unless electronic publication is restricted by copyright. Information concerning the defence and a link to the summary or full text of the doctoral thesis shall be posted on the homepage of the Academy.

22. After accepting a doctoral thesis for defence, the Head of the Centre for Doctoral Studies shall appoint an opponent, or two opponents if necessary, who must be scholars with a doctorate or an equivalent qualification (in the defence of a doctoral thesis in the artistic research path, one opponent may be a recognised artist without a doctoral degree). One of the opponents must be from outside the Academy. Before the defence of the doctoral thesis, the Registry and Student Affairs Department shall submit to the Centre for Doctoral Studies all the necessary documentation to confirm the fulfilment of all academic requirements. The defence procedure consists of the following parts: the candidate's presentation, the opponent's opinion and questions, a debate between the opponent and the candidate (plus another opinion and debate in the case of two opponents), a general debate between the participants and the candidate, and the closing statement of the candidate. The defence shall only take place if the candidate and at least one of the opponents (the opponent from outside the Academy) are present.

#### **IV Evaluation of the Doctoral Thesis and Presentation of the Doctoral Degree**

23. The evaluation of the doctoral thesis and the subsequent completion of the doctoral requirements shall be determined by a meeting of the Doctoral Council. At least five members of the Doctoral Council holding a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification must be present, including at least one from outside the Academy. The latter may also serve as the appointed opponent from outside the Academy. The discussions of the Doctoral Council shall be recorded in written form. At the end of the meeting, all voting Council members shall grade the doctoral thesis on the standard six-point scale. The final grade shall be the rounded average of these grades. A positive grade will result in the award of a doctoral degree.

24. The documents confirming the award of a doctoral degree shall be finalised by the Registry and Student Affairs Department within two weeks after the decision of the defence panel is announced. The formal presentation of doctoral diplomas shall take place at the annual graduation ceremony of the Academy.

### **V Contestation of a Doctoral Degree**

25. A decision to award a doctoral degree may be contested if the defence of the doctoral thesis is found to breach of the regulations of the Academy, if false data have been presented in the doctoral thesis, or if plagiarism is found in the doctoral thesis. Contestation may be initiated by a written application to the Rector of the Academy. The Rector shall forward the application to the Doctoral Council, which shall issue a reasoned opinion within one month from the date of receipt of the application.

26. Based on the opinion of the Doctoral Council, the Rector shall make one of the following decisions:

- a. Reject the application as unjustified and uphold the decision to award the degree;
- b. Accept the application as justified and cancel the decision to award the degree.

27. Upon cancelling the decision to award the degree, the Rector shall choose one of the following options:

- a. Permit a repeat defence of the doctoral thesis;
- b. Permit submission of a new doctoral thesis;
- c. Permanently revoke the candidate's right to apply for a degree at the Academy.

### **VI Implementing Provisions**

28. For a doctoral student who was matriculated before academic year 2022/23, the doctoral study regulation that was valid at the time of his/her admission to doctoral studies shall be applied during the nominal period of study. *[13.06.2022]*

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