

RESEARCH STRATEGY OF THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE



Introduction

The mission of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereinafter EAMT or the Academy) is to preserve, develop, and promote Estonian culture through high-level education in music and theatre, as well as through research and creative activity. Members of the Academy contribute to research of Estonian culture while actively participating in the international music and theatre field. As a public university, EAMT's strategic goal is to generate new knowledge of relevance to society and culture through academic research, including artistic research. In the field of artistic research, EAMT has been a pioneer in Estonia, opening a doctoral studies programme in this field in 2000 and, since 2021, contributing to the implementation of the Estonian framework agreement on artistic research.

This strategy sets out the principles and objectives of the Academy's research activity and outlines the actions and potential indicators achieving these until 2030. As such, the Research Strategy supports and specifies the EAMT Development Plan 2026–2030, especially strategic objective 3, aligns with the Organisation of Research and Development and Innovation Act (in Estonian TAIKS, 2025) and relates to the focus area 'A viable Estonian society, language and cultural space' in the Estonian research and Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy (TAIE) 2021–2035.

In recent years, several positive developments have taken place in the Academy's research and its organisation: more than half of doctoral candidates are employed as junior research fellows; a young researcher grant has been established; incentive measures for researchers (including principal investigators) have been expanded; and the visibility and societal impact of EAMT's research have increased both within the Academy and in society at large. Nevertheless, there is still considerable room for improvement.

In the coming years, the priority—alongside the continued support of traditional fields of research—is to identify opportunities for more effective deployment of EAMT's research potential through new research collaborations, the expansion of research fields, and the enhancement of the Academy's societal impact and knowledge transfer. Drawing on the academic staff's background and existing expertise, as well as the expectations of society and students, we aim strategically to broaden EAMT's competence in the social sciences by supporting the planning and publication of research in this field and by preparing for evaluation in the social sciences.

General Principles

- The Academy values the creation of new knowledge. Basic and applied research, artistic research, and practical creative activity are mutually supportive and contribute to fulfilling the Academy's mission as an integrated institution of research, education, and culture.
- As a university, EAMT works towards close integration of teaching and research and research-based teaching. This can be achieved through the active participation of teaching staff in research and artistic research, the involvement of students in research, and the rapid transfer of new knowledge to various teaching contexts.

- The Academy's competence as a research institution is based on traditional fields of study (music history, music theory and aesthetics, cognitive musicology, ethnomusicology, music and theatre pedagogy, applied music research, theatre and performance studies) and ensuring their continuity is crucial for EAMT as a university responsible for the development of music and theatre arts. At the same time, the Academy acknowledges and fosters the emergence of novel contemporary research domains, recognises significant potential in collaboration between research groups, in establishing partnerships with other Estonian and international universities and research institutions, and in knowledge exchange with the public, private, and third sectors. High-quality, international doctoral education serves as a breeding ground for researchers and artistic researchers alike and fostering a foundation for creative and critical thinking. It has a major impact on the development of the Academy, its international visibility and the renewal of Estonian music and theatre culture.

Strategic Objectives and Activities

Objective 1. Valuing research and providing institutional support

Research activity, including artistic research as a developing and strategically significant field for EAMT, is valued and supported across disciplines and academic levels. Research occupies a prominent position alongside creative activity in the Academy's strategic plan and in its internal and external communication. The core functions of the research support system operate effectively and are developed in response to emerging needs.

Activities:

- 1.1 Acknowledging and promoting the active involvement of academic staff, including creative faculty and junior research fellows, in applying for research funding and implementing projects, publishing, participating in conferences, undertaking research and its development.
- 1.2 Implementing the measures for the development of artistic research set out in the EAMT Development Plan 2026–2030.
- 1.3 Initiating open seminars and discussions introducing EAMT research.
- 1.4 Organising trainings to implement the principles of open science, prepare the necessary guiding materials and improve the accessibility of online trainings via the intranet.
- 1.5 Providing information on national and international funding opportunities; encourage and facilitate participation in project calls, including the assumption of the lead partner role by EAMT.
- 1.6 Providing institutional support services (e.g. counseling on budget and grant application, project management, research communication).
- 1.7 Upgrading research infrastructure and software as required, including the introduction of artificial intelligence applications that support research and provide guidance on their ethical use.
- 1.8 Developing a transparent system to ensure the more effective reinvestment of institutional overheads, derived from projects, into research activities.

Indicators:

- The annual number of new research projects and research publications remains stable or increases.
- EAMT researchers and artistic researchers participate in leading international conferences in their fields.
- Open research seminars have been launched and annual training sessions are conducted.

Objective 2. An active role in research on Estonian culture and the visibility of eamt research in society

- The Academy engages in research collaboration on Estonian culture and in societal knowledge exchange. The contribution of EAMT to Estonian studies is evident in the broader societal and media landscape, manifesting in the form of Estonian-language scholarly and popular publications, as well as other open-access project outputs (f.e recordings and audiovisual works). EAMT researchers play an active role in science policy discourse and research funding evaluation committees.
- EAMT Press operates strategically and is recognised as a mediator of contemporary Estonian-language music literature. The 1.1-classified yearbook *Res Musica* is being published in cooperation with the Estonian Musicological Society. In collaboration with the Estonian Theatre Union, the publication

Activities:

2.1 Continuing collaboration with Estonian universities, research and development institutions, and cultural and memory institutions in order to interpret Estonian culture, collect heritage, and advance discourse in the humanities and social sciences.

2.2 Contributing to the development of Estonian-language special terminology in music and theatre; involving creative faculty in discussions and recognising staff engaged in terminological work.

2.3 The publication of Estonian-language scholarly and popular works and the organisation of open research events, including the continuation of research cafés and the development of the EAMT Research School.

2.4 Improving researchers' science communication capacities through training and guidance materials.

2.5 Pursuing sustained media engagement and adopt new formats (e.g. the Cultural Reflector podcast and project-based outputs) to highlight the diversity, relevance, and societal connections of the Academy's disciplines.

2.6 Supporting the development and marketing activities of EAMT Press.

2.7 Establishing a knowledge transfer support structure within EAMT, raising awareness of knowledge transfer, and initiating collaborative knowledge transfer projects and externally oriented services.

Indicators:

– The number of scholarly publications in Estonian remains stable or increases.

– Researchers from EAMT take part in the Estonian Annual Conference of Humanities and regularly organise disciplinary conferences in cooperation with research and memory institutions.

– EAMT is a partner in the Estonian consortium, dedicated to digital humanities studies (2025–2029).

– A theatre terminology working group operates in cooperation with the Institute of the Estonian Language; a music terminology working group has been established.

– The circle of editors and compilers involved in EAMT Press is expanding; the visibility, accessibility, and dissemination of its publications is increasing.

– EAMT has established cooperation agreements with the Estonian History Museum, the Estonian Literary Museum, the National Library of Estonia, and other research and memory institutions.

– The concept of the Research School is under development; EAMT hosts a contemporary-format interdisciplinary spring conference for

Objective 3. Expansion of research foci and fields, new partnerships and international cooperation

- In view of the full potential of the Academy's researchers and creative disciplines, EAMT encourages research group leaders to initiate interdisciplinary research groups, in addition to traditional themes in musicology and theatre studies, defined by cross-disciplinary focus and composition.
- New and early-career researchers, including artistic researchers, as well as visiting scholars from other Estonian universities and research and development institutions, are involved in emerging research projects. Questions arising from research on Estonian culture are implemented within a broader framework, with due regard to opportunities for international collaboration and funding. EAMT plans to undergo evaluation in the field of social sciences.
- The Academy will develop expertise in data-driven music research in alignment with international standards and the demands of a data-intensive world. The knowledge generated through ongoing research projects will be integrated into curricula.

Activities:

3.1 Analysing ongoing and planned research topics in order to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration.

3.2 Establishing one or two overarching focus themes and appointing motivated leaders to initiate the formation of research groups, to systematically seek external partners and additional funding opportunities beyond EAMT.

3.3 Linking Master's and doctoral students to the focus themes and recruit new doctoral candidates to emerging projects through targeted calls.

3.4 In light of the necessity to incorporate SS(A)H (social sciences, arts and humanities) into the research process, informing researchers whose expertise and interests align with Horizon Europe and other international funding calls.

3.5 Engaging in a more active role in nationally commissioned applied research projects, thereby enhancing EAMT's contribution to knowledge transfer and evidence-informed policy.

3.6 Developing cooperation with the international catalogue of musical sources, Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM), in order to advance methodological approaches to digital humanities datasets and promote methods for the machine-readable digitisation of musical texts.

Indicators:

- At least one new interdisciplinary research group has been established and has submitted a proposal for project funding.
- New artistic and early-career researchers have been engaged, both internally and as visiting scholars.
- EAMT has been more proactive in its participation in applications for national and international funding, at times serving as the coordinating institution.
- A working model for data-driven music research has been developed.

Objective 4. Ensuring academic sustainability: valuing the doctorate, developing doctoral studies, and engaging doctoral candidates and early-career researchers

EAMT doctoral studies offer early-career researchers a variety of opportunities for development, research, and collaboration. The studies are highly regarded among scholars and creative practitioners in Estonia and abroad. Doctoral education fosters knowledge exchange and supports the development of Estonian as a language of scholarship and specialist terminology. Doctoral candidates and early-career researchers are involved in EAMT research, academic discourse, and decision-making, and are motivated to pursue academic careers.

Activities:

- 4.1 Implementing the measures for the development of doctoral studies and supervision, set out in the EAMT Development Plan 2026–2030.
- 4.2 Enhancing the integration of doctoral candidates into the Academy’s research projects and research teams and recognising research conducted within research teams as part of their doctoral thesis.
- 4.3 Involving younger academic staff, holding doctoral degrees, as supervisors of doctoral theses.
- 4.4 Continuing to establish knowledge transfer doctoral positions in cooperation with other research and development institutions and organisations in the public and private sectors.
- 4.5 Encouraging doctoral candidates and supervisors to engage more actively in academic networks beyond the Academy and to participate in seminars of the Estonian Doctoral School in other disciplines and universities.
- 4.6 Providing academic career counseling for doctoral candidates and encouraging doctoral graduates to undertake postdoctoral research abroad.
- 4.7 Motivating research group leaders to host and supervise international postdoctoral researchers (with corresponding positions planned within grant applications).
- 4.8 Addressing issues of academic sustainability at earlier stages of education, including cooperation with pre-university music institutions and to promote EAMT doctoral studies and research careers.

Indicators:

- New doctoral candidates in research-oriented fields and new doctoral supervisors have been recruited.
- The number of doctoral degrees awarded remains stable or increases.
- The number of doctoral candidates participating in research applications and projects remains stable or increases.
- Postdoctoral pathways have been delineated: EAMT graduates undertake postdoctoral research abroad, and international postdoctoral researchers are hosted at EAMT.
- The number of early-career researchers holding doctoral degrees within the academic staff has increased.