



# The PhD in the Arts at KASK & Conservatory

A practical guide



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## Foreword

With a steadily growing share of its faculty involved in some way in research in the arts or in design, this has indeed become an important part of the expertise of KASK & Conservatory, University College Ghent's school of arts. Visual and media artists, theatre makers, musicians, composers and instrument makers, designers and landscape architects all seize the opportunity offered by the school to extend their practice with a research component. They do this in doctoral or postdoctoral research, in practice-based research projects geared to the bachelor and master programmes or in public contract research projects.

Thanks to the efforts of its lecturers and researchers, the school has become a continuously developing top-level research environment where creativity, artistic expression, academic rigour and a strong awareness of the artist's and the designer's place in society are fostered.

In the field of research in the arts, our researchers actively help to stake out the terrain by forging their own discourse and trying their hand at new ways of conducting research and contributing to public knowledge, creating tomorrow's reference points in the process. If being a part of the further development of this area is an appealing prospect to you, this brochure hopes to answer some of the questions that you may have.

## 1. The PhD in the Arts

The PhD in the Arts programme is organized by University College Ghent's school of arts KASK & Conservatory, in close cooperation with Ghent University and within the institutional context of Ghent University Association. The six-year programme can lead to one of four doctoral degrees, broadly corresponding to the wide range of disciplines taught at the school: Doctor of Arts: visual arts, Doctor of Arts: music, Doctor of Arts: audio-visual arts, or Doctor of Arts: drama.

No matter which of the four doctoral titles you aspire to, a PhD in the Arts at KASK & Conservatory must always consist of both a 'practical' and a 'discursive' part, i.e. actual artistic production and a written component. Important to note is that this written component should also be written from the artistic perspective, which means that you will not be expected to shift to the role of art scholar while writing. The PhD in the Arts is thus a programme that is explicitly and exclusively aimed at practicing artists. In doctoral research in the arts, the individual researcher's artistic practice takes centre stage, and the artistic work in all of its facets is the natural focus and core of both research process and research output. Projects such as these naturally result in radically diverse forms of output: exhibitions, installations, artist's books, doctoral dissertations and other scholarly publications, software applications, musical compositions and drama performances can all become a part of a researcher's output submitted for evaluation at the end of the track.

Much of the international debate concerning doctoral research in the arts has focused precisely on this written component. Although all artistic practice entails a certain degree of research, we at KASK & Conservatory feel that the written component is indispensable in order to distinguish artistic research from the artistic practice as such. An artistic search, however valuable in its own right, becomes research in the academic sense of the word only when its methodology, aims and potential for knowledge generation and transfer are made explicit. Naturally, this does not mean that the discursive component of the PhD in the Arts should be considered an explanatory 'surplus' appended to the artistic work created in the context of the project. Rather, the two components should be regarded as complementary parts of a single process, in which ideally both are so intertwined that their kinship is evident to anyone who approaches them. Artists' writings – a long and rich tradition in which we explicitly wish to situate the discursive output of our artistic researchers – are not about explaining or interpreting the work so much as about artists developing a discourse to talk about their work with peers and public, and position the work, and themselves, in a society.

## 2. Preparing an application

### 2.1. Two types of calls

The PhD in the Arts programme at KASK & Conservatory has two options; you can apply either for a position as ‘artistic researcher’ (officially, ‘artistic assistant’) or for one as ‘guest researcher’. The difference between the two is that the position of artistic researcher is an appointment that includes at least 70% of research activities and up to 30% of teaching activities; and that the position of guest researcher is a non-funded affiliation. The entry requirements and selection procedure for both options are similar, and you will prepare the same application.

Openings for artistic researcher positions are announced annually through the KASK & Conservatory and University College websites, and applying for such a position is possible only through the university college applications page. For guest researcher applications, there is a deadline twice a year, announced on the KASK & Conservatory website, and you can submit your documents by e-mail.

### 2.2. Entry requirements

The PhD programme is open to holders of a master’s degree or of equivalent qualifications. Holders of foreign degrees should check well in advance whether their qualifications make them eligible for the programme with the school’s learning track counsellor, or ascertain the equivalence of their degree through the ENIC-NARIC network (see [enic-naric.net](http://enic-naric.net)).

Additionally, and crucially, to be considered you must be able to present a portfolio of outstanding artistic work. As research in the arts is practice-based research, the level of your artistic work will be an important factor in the assessment of your application by the selection committee.

For non-Dutch-speaking candidates a minimum CEF-level B2 of English proficiency is required.

Additionally, as successful candidates will be officially employed by University College Ghent, applicants for an artistic assistant position must meet the general requirements outlined in article V.106 of the Flemish ‘Higher Education Codex’ of 20 December 2013 at the time of applying. This article stipulates that employees of the institutions of higher education “1° must be citizens of a member state of the European Union or of the European Free Trade Association [exceptions can be made in line with article V.107 of the Codex: “in the interest of education and research, and based on a detailed justification”]; 2° have full civil and political rights; 3° have the required formal qualifications; 4° conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the function; 5° comply with conscription law requirements; and 6° possess the physical fitness required for the function.” These additional requirements do not apply to guest researchers.

## 2.3. Application and procedure

The call for applications or announcement will direct you to all relevant forms and specific guidelines on how to submit your application. Only those applications that follow these guidelines strictly will be passed on for consideration by the selection committee. In any case, your application will be required to contain at least:

1. Your curriculum vitae [lastname\_1\_cv.pdf]
2. Your motivation/cover letter [lastname\_2\_letter.pdf].
3. Your artistic portfolio (or a text file containing a hyperlink to your portfolio, to limit the file size of your application) [lastname\_3\_portfolio.pdf].
4. Your project proposal [lastname\_4\_project.pdf]. For this doctoral research proposal you must use the template provided in the call for applications. In case you wish to get started on your artistic assistant application before the official launch of a call, a sample form can be found in Appendix A in this guide. Please note, however, that changes may be made to this form for any specific call. *Be sure to use the definitive form linked to in the call for your application.*
5. Scans of required qualifications: at least a master's degree or an equivalent [lastname\_5\_type of degree.pdf]. In case of equivalent qualification or foreign degrees, be sure to add any relevant indications of equivalence.
6. Endorsements from your two supervisors (see below). Both supervisors must write an advice on your proposal. A template will be provided in the call. Note that these documents should not be uploaded or e-mailed by you as part of your application, but that the supervisors must e-mail them to the address specified in the call, respecting the same deadline.

Once your application has been received, it will first be checked for completeness and the key requirements. A committee of experts and peers will then review the applications for selection to interview. Selected candidates will be invited for an interview with the committee to discuss their proposal. The call for applications will include a tentative timing for these interviews.

Key factors in the evaluation of applications will be the level of the candidate's artistic work, the originality and methodological soundness of the research proposed, the relevance of the research questions addressed by it, and the compatibility of the proposed research with the school's research focuses and policy.

All candidates will be officially informed of the committee's decision once the entire procedure has been completed, and no unofficial communication about it is possible before that time. This means that as long as you have not heard from us, the procedure is still running. The official notification will include information on how to request feedback on your application.

## 2.4. Finding supervisors and writing your research proposal

The most substantial part of your application will of course be your research proposal. In addition to a general outline of the research you wish to pursue – including the description of its artistic and theoretical context, the formulation of research questions, a description of the aims, objectives, methods and specific actions of your research, as well as an indication of its expected outcome – you will also have to provide a preliminary bibliography (in any consistently used recognized standard format) and a work plan including activities and milestones for the full research period of six years.

Each research proposal must be endorsed by two supervisors, and it is of great importance that the finalization of your proposal happens in close consultation with these supervisors. If you wish to apply for the programme and meet the entry requirements, the first thing to do, therefore, is to start your search for potential supervisors. One of your supervisors must be an artist and lecturer at University College Ghent's school of arts KASK & Conservatory, and one a professor ('ZAP-member') from Ghent University. Although on an organizational level the programme is anchored in the faculty of Arts and Philosophy, the academic supervisor may be affiliated with any of the university's faculties, depending on the specific expertise required by the focus and scope of the proposed research project. You can find contact details of university faculty browsing the different departments starting from the university homepage: [ugent.be](http://ugent.be).

In Appendix B in this guide, you will find an overview of the potential KASK & Conservatory supervisors, arranged according to our different departments. Feel free to contact any of them with an outline of your plans, or you may contact the head of the department most relevant to your proposed research, who will in turn help you to select the best supervisor for your personal project. Our lecturers are, however, free to accept or decline to take on a project, depending on their affinity with your proposal, and your success in convincing them of your qualities. Supervisorship is not a mere formality, so contact potential supervisors well in advance and finalize your project proposal in consultation with both of them.

### **3. Conducting doctoral research**

#### **3.1. From enrolment to public defence**

The PhD programme is a six-year track. Successful artistic assistant applicants will be offered a full-time contract at University College Ghent's school of arts. You will initially be appointed for a period of two years, with two subsequent two-year extensions of your contract upon positive evaluation of your research progress. Your tasks will consist of conducting your doctoral research (for at least 70% of your employment time) and assisting in teaching activities (for no more than 30% of your time).

As a guest researcher, you will have to meet the same requirements as artistic researchers do in terms of selection and evaluation, but you will not become an employee and will not have to assist in teaching activities at the school of arts. As such, you may combine this affiliation with any type of funding, scholarship or employment.

All selected researchers (artistic assistants and guest researchers) will be invited to enrol as a student at Ghent University, with required re-enrolment every academic year until graduation. As a university college staff member or affiliate, and university student, you will be able to benefit from both institutions' research facilities.

At the outset of your trajectory, you will be asked to constitute a doctoral advisory committee in consultation with your supervisors. This committee will meet at least once a year, on your initiative, to discuss your progress and advise you on how to proceed. At the end of your research period, you will submit your conclusions and output to an examination committee that will assess it and decide whether you are to be allowed to the public oral examination or defence. Coinciding with your defence, you will also present (part of) your artistic research output to the public on one of our campuses.

#### **3.2. Doctoral School**

As a PhD student you will also be registered for the Ghent University's Doctoral School of Arts, Humanities and Law, where you will be required to complete a minimum doctoral training programme. This will consist of a number of 'specialist' and 'transferable skills' courses or seminars, participating in conferences and contributing to peer-reviewed publications. See the doctoral schools website for more information: [ugent.be/doctorschools](http://ugent.be/doctorschools).

## 4. Contact and links

For more information, feel free to contact the school's research office:

- Katrien Vuylsteke Vanfleteren, head of office  
[katrien.vuylstekevanfleteren@hogent.be](mailto:katrien.vuylstekevanfleteren@hogent.be)  
+32 9 243 36 24
- David Depestel, senior staff member  
[david.depestel@hogent.be](mailto:david.depestel@hogent.be)  
+32 9 243 36 23

Have a look at our website to discover the school and its programmes, research projects and artistic productions: [schoolofartsgent.be](http://schoolofartsgent.be).

KASK & Conservatory make up the School of Arts of University College Ghent: [english.hogent.be](http://english.hogent.be).

Vacancies are announced on: [www.hogent.be/vacatures](http://www.hogent.be/vacatures) (see 'International').

Browse through the university college's research portal Pure, which lists all research projects and output for the entire HoGent: [pure.hogent.be](http://pure.hogent.be), or you might want to see the list of all current and completed [KASK & Conservatory PhD projects](#).

Ghent University is our partner in the organization of the joint PhD in the Arts programme: [ugent.be](http://ugent.be). University College Ghent and Ghent University are members of Ghent University Association: [www.augent.be](http://www.augent.be)



## **Appendix A: Sample project proposal form**

Please note that the ‘artistic assistant’ project proposal form on the following pages is presented here for information purposes only, and that for any particular call changes may have been made to the form. To apply, always use the template provided in the call for applications to which you are responding.

**Research proposal**  
***School of Arts KASK & ROYAL CONSERVATORY |***  
***University College Ghent***

**Application form for artistic assistant candidates**

Complete this document, save it, then save it as a pdf file under the title "name\_4\_project.pdf" and add it to your application. Respect the indicated word and page limits.

**1. Personal data and general information**

|                              |                    |   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| First Name                   |                    | PhD in the Arts: Audio-Visual Arts<br>PhD in the Arts: Drama<br>PhD in the Arts: Music<br>PhD in the Arts: Visual Arts  |
| Last Name                    |                    |   |
| Date of birth                |                    |   |
| Nationality                  |                    |   |
| Address                      |                    | Audio-Visual Arts: Animation<br>Audio-Visual Arts: Film<br>Drama and Performance<br>Fashion and Textile Design<br>Music: Classical Music<br>Music: Jazz and Pop<br>Music: Production and Composition<br>Visual Arts: Fine Arts<br>Visual Arts: Graphic design<br>Visual Arts: Multimedia design<br>Visual Arts: Photography |
| Telephone                    |                    |   |
| E-mail                       |                    |   |
| Research project title       |                    |   |
| Project finality             | ----select one---- |   |
| Peer discipline <sup>1</sup> | ----select one---- |   |

<sup>1</sup> Your artistic portfolio will be assessed by School of Arts faculty who are experts in their field. Please select the department/discipline you feel is most suited to do so.

**2. Training and professional data**

Provide an overview of your formal qualifications in the table below. Please add a complete curriculum vitae to your application in a separate document (see submission guidelines).

| Year | Degree gained | Programme | Institution and country |
|------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|
|      |               |           |                         |
|      |               |           |                         |
|      |               |           |                         |
|      |               |           |                         |
|      |               |           |                         |

### 3. Research project

#### A. Abstract (150 words maximum)

*Concisely state the essence of your project in layman's terms.*

...

#### B. Project outline (2000 words maximum)

*Provide a substantial outline of the research project you propose; devote attention to (at least):*

- *State of the research field;*
- *Formulation of the problem and research questions (artistic/theoretic);*
- *Objectives, importance and potential impact of the research;*
- *Methodology and proposed actions;*
- *Expected results and output (including ideas on communication/dissemination).*

...

#### C. Provisional timing (1 page maximum)

*Provide a schematic outline of your provisional timing for the complete 6-year research period, indicating main research activities and project milestones.*

...

#### D. References / Works Cited (1 page maximum)

*Provide a basic reference list used in composing your research proposal. This list may include written and other 'sources'.*

...

#### 4. School of Arts | University College Ghent supervisor data

*Please provide the information below and ask your supervisors to complete the separate advice form as described in the submission guidelines.*

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Name       |  |
| Department | ----select one---- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classical Music</li> <li>Design</li> <li>Film, Photography and Drama</li> <li>Fine Arts</li> <li>Jazz and Pop Music</li> <li>Music Production and Composition</li> </ul> |
| Address    |  |
| Telephone  |  |
| E-mail     |  |

#### 5. Ghent University supervisor data

*Please provide the information below and ask your supervisors to complete the separate advice form as described in the submission guidelines.*

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Name       |  |
| Faculty    |  |
| Department |  |
| Address    |  |
| Telephone  |  |
| E-mail     |  |



## **Appendix B: KASK & Conservatory PhD supervisors (contacts)**

The following pages list a number of people you may contact at KASK & Conservatory in order to find a suitable artistic supervisor for your PhD project, arranged according to department and/or discipline and expertise. Feel free to contact them with a preliminary outline of your research proposal and your portfolio, but do so well before the application deadline, so they can assist you in selecting the most suitable supervisor, who may then aid you in finalizing your proposal.

## **1. Department of Fine Arts**

Head of department: Emmanuel Depoorter | [emmanuel.depoorter@hogent.be](mailto:emmanuel.depoorter@hogent.be)

Curatorial Studies: Antony Hudek | [antony.hudek@hogent.be](mailto:antony.hudek@hogent.be)

Drawing: Ruben Bellinkx | [ruben.bellinkx@hogent.be](mailto:ruben.bellinkx@hogent.be)

Illustration: Elsje Dezwarte | [elsje.dezwarte@hogent.be](mailto:elsje.dezwarte@hogent.be)

Installation: Stefaan Dheedene | [stefaan.dheedene@hogent.be](mailto:stefaan.dheedene@hogent.be)

New Media: Jerry Galle | [jerry.galle@hogent.be](mailto:jerry.galle@hogent.be)

Painting: Emmanuel Depoorter | [emmanuel.depoorter@hogent.be](mailto:emmanuel.depoorter@hogent.be)

Performance: Shila Anaraki | [shila.hadjiheydarianaraki@hogent.be](mailto:shila.hadjiheydarianaraki@hogent.be)

Sculpture: Philip Metten | [philip.metten@hogent.be](mailto:philip.metten@hogent.be)

## **2. Department of Design**

Head of department: Wim De Temmerman | [wim.detemmerman@hogent.be](mailto:wim.detemmerman@hogent.be)

Autonomous design: Kristof Van Gestel | [kristof.vangestel@hogent.be](mailto:kristof.vangestel@hogent.be)

Design: Hilde Bouchez | [hilde.bouchez@hogent.be](mailto:hilde.bouchez@hogent.be)

Fashion: Bram Jespers | [bram.jespers@hogent.be](mailto:bram.jespers@hogent.be)

Musical instrument making: Andreas Korczak | [andreas.korczak@hogent.be](mailto:andreas.korczak@hogent.be)

Musical instrument making: Geerten Verberkmoes | [geerten.verberkmoes@hogent.be](mailto:geerten.verberkmoes@hogent.be)

Textile design: Diane Steverlynck | [diane.steverlynck@hogent.be](mailto:diane.steverlynck@hogent.be)

## **3. Department of Film, Photography and Drama**

Head of department: Lars Kwakkenbos | [lars.kwakkenbos@hogent.be](mailto:lars.kwakkenbos@hogent.be)

Animation and film (media archaeology, curating): Edwin Carels | [edwin.carels@hogent.be](mailto:edwin.carels@hogent.be)

Drama (actors' dramaturgy, scenic presence): Jan Steen | [jan.steen@hogent.be](mailto:jan.steen@hogent.be)

Drama (performing history, interculturality): Chokri Ben Chikha | [chokri.benchikha@hogent.be](mailto:chokri.benchikha@hogent.be)

Film: Hilde D'haeyere | [hilde.dhaeyere@hogent.be](mailto:hilde.dhaeyere@hogent.be)

Photography: Jan Kempnaers | [jan.kempnaers@hogent.be](mailto:jan.kempnaers@hogent.be)

## **4. Department of Music Production, Jazz and Pop Music**

Head of department: Peter Lesage | [peter.lesage@hogent.be](mailto:peter.lesage@hogent.be)

Music production, jazz, pop: Leon Lhoest | [leon.lhoest@hogent.be](mailto:leon.lhoest@hogent.be)

Music production, jazz, pop: Gert Keunen | [gert.keunen@hogent.be](mailto:gert.keunen@hogent.be)



## **5. Department of Classical Music**

Head of department: Wim De Temmerman | [wim.detemmerman@hogent.be](mailto:wim.detemmerman@hogent.be)

Classical music: Geert Dhondt | [geert.dhondt@hogent.be](mailto:geert.dhondt@hogent.be)

Classical music: Daan Vandewalle | [daan.vandewalle@hogent.be](mailto:daan.vandewalle@hogent.be)

Composition: Filip Rathé | [filip.rathe@hogent.be](mailto:filip.rathe@hogent.be)