

**POSTGRADUATE STUDY GUIDE
FACULTY OF ART AND DESIGN
2025-2027**

CONTENTS

	To the doctoral student	3
1.	Objectives of doctoral education and completing the degree	4
1.1.	Objectives of doctoral studies and graduating	4
1.2.	Eligibility for doctoral education and degrees to be completed	5
2.	Toward doctoral studies	5
2.1.	Applying for and granting study right	5
2.2.	Supervision	7
2.3.	Supervisors' eligibility	8
2.4.	Doctoral study plan (DSP)	8
3.	Structure of doctoral studies	8
3.1.	Monograph	9
3.2.	Article dissertation	9
3.3.	Artistic production as part of the doctoral dissertation	9
3.4.	Other degree studies, 30 credits	10
4.	Examination procedures concerning the dissertation	12
4.1.	Preliminary examination procedure	12
4.2.	Starting the preliminary examination procedure	13
4.3.	Starting the preliminary examination of an artistic production as part of the dissertation	13
4.4.	Preliminary examination of the dissertation	14
4.5.	Preliminary examination of an artistic production	15
4.6.	Pre-examiners roles and ethical issues	16
4.7.	Authorisation of the public defence and appointing the opponent	16
4.8.	Grading, grading committee, and grading scale	17
5.	Publishing the dissertation	18
6.	Public examination of the dissertation (defence)	19
7.	Communication on the public examination	19
7.1.	Public display of the dissertation	20
7.2.	Public display of an artistic production as part of the dissertation	20
8.	Post-defence party	20
9.	Doctors's degree certificate	20
10.	Transitional provisions	20
11.	Instructions on the public examination	21

TO THE DOCTORAL STUDENT

This study guide is for doctoral students who aim to complete a doctor's degree in the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. It contains important instructions for those supervising doctoral studies and for experts involved in the various phases of the dissertation work. By reading the guide carefully you will get a comprehensive picture of the requirements set for doctoral studies in the faculty.

Detailed instructions on applying for a doctoral study right and other useful information is available on the web pages of the Doctoral School of the University of Lapland at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/>, which you are advised to read already in the application phase. The university's general Studies pages at <https://ulapland.fi/en/for-students/> contain general instructions on doctoral studies concerning registration for teaching, user credentials, teaching periods, etc.

Apply to doctoral studies in the Faculty of Art and Design using the national Studyinfo.fi system. Upon applying for the study right you are to choose whether your preference is the faculty's general doctoral programme or the university's joint multidisciplinary thematic doctoral programme. Regardless of the programme, your study right concerns the Faculty of Art and Design, which later confers the doctor's degree. The up-to-date study contents of *The Arctic in a Changing World* programme are available on the programme's pages at www.ulapland.fi/arcticdp. You can also contact the Doctoral School for further information.

The Faculty of Art and Design is one of the university-level units of art education in Finland. Its research focuses comprehensively on design, visual art, and media. Its doctoral researchers are part of the faculty's multidisciplinary and internationally networked research community.

In the Faculty of Art and Design, you can complete a doctor's degree in art or philosophy in the following areas related to art and design:

- audiovisual media culture
- graphic design
- visual art education
- fashion and textile design
- industrial design
- design
- service design
- applied art
- art history
- art expertise
- other area of art and design

Doctoral education provided by the faculty always has scientific objectives, and dissertations may contain an artistic production. A doctor's degree cannot be completed based on artistic objectives only.

It takes three years to complete a doctor of arts degree by working full time.

Our doctoral students follow the curriculum of the Faculty of Art and Design.

Contact information of the Faculty of Art and Design

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Visiting address	Yliopistonkatu 8
General information	Head of Administration Susanna Vuorjoki (pre-examiners, opponents, defence permit) Head of Student Services Janette Tolppi (study right, selection process, supervisors, study counselling) Administrative Secretary Marjo Majava (defence and travel arrangements)
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1 OBJECTIVES OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

1.1 Objectives of doctoral education and completing the degree

The Decree on University Degrees (794/04, amended 19 Dec. 2013), issued 19 August 2004, lays down provisions on scientific and artistic doctoral university degrees. The Decree provides the following:

“The objective of postgraduate education is for those completing the studies to

- 1. be profoundly familiar with their own field of research and of its social significance;*
- 2. have gained the knowledge and skills to apply academic research methods independently and critically and create new academic knowledge;*
- 3. be highly familiar with the progress, basic problems and research methods of their own field of research;*
- 4. have attained a grasp of the general theory of science and other disciplines related to their field of research that enables monitoring of progress in those fields;*
- 5. have gained communicative and language proficiency and other knowledge and skills that are adequate for discharging broad and demanding specialist and development duties at work and in international collaboration.*

In addition to the objectives referred to in subsection 1, the objective of postgraduate education leading to the degree of Doctor of Arts may be for the student to gain the knowledge and skills for independently conceiving methods of artistic creation or for creating products or performances that satisfy high artistic demands.

In addition to, or instead of the objectives referred to in subsection 1, the objective of postgraduate education in the field of art and design that does not lead to the degree referred to in subsection 2 may be for the student to gain the knowledge and skills for independently conceiving methods of artistic creation or creating products or performances that satisfy high artistic demands.

To be awarded a doctorate, a student admitted for postgraduate education shall:

- 1. complete the postgraduate studies;*
- 2. demonstrate independent and critical thinking in the student’s field of research; and*
- 3. prepare and publicly defend a doctoral dissertation, or supply any other public thesis project or final project stipulated by the university.”*

In the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, doctoral students must always write a dissertation and defend it publicly. You cannot substitute other public thesis or final projects for the dissertation to complete your doctoral studies in the faculty.

According to Section 37 of the Universities Act (558/2009):

“Eligible applicants for studies leading to an academic or artistic licentiate or doctoral degree have completed

- 1. a relevant Master’s degree awarded by a university;*
- 2. a relevant Master’s degree awarded by a university of applied sciences; or*
- 3. a relevant applicable study programme abroad which in the awarding country gives eligibility for the corresponding level of higher education.*

The university may require a student admitted to study for an academic or artistic licentiate or doctoral degree to complete the necessary supplementary studies in order to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for the study programme.

Eligible applicants for studies leading to a professional postgraduate degree have completed

- 1. a relevant Master’s degree awarded by a university or a university of applied sciences, or*
- 2. a relevant study programme abroad which in the awarding country gives eligibility for the corresponding level of higher education.*

Further provisions on eligibility for professional postgraduate degrees are issued by government decree.

Eligibility for studies referred to in this section may also apply to a person whom the university deems otherwise to have sufficient knowledge and skills for the studies."

Having completed the doctoral studies in the Faculty of Art and Design, the student

1. has become well-versed in his/her own field of research and understands its social significance;
2. is able to independently and critically apply scientific research methods and produce new scientific knowledge **or**
3. is able to independently and critically apply scientific research methods and produce new scientific knowledge and, in addition, is able to independently create methods of artistic representation and/or products or performances which fulfil high artistic demands;
4. masters the development, basic problems, and research methods of his/her own field of research;
5. has gained such a level of knowledge of the general theory of science and of other disciplines relating to his/her own field of research as enables him/her to follow developments in them; and
6. has reached sufficient communication and language skills to work in extensive and demanding expert and developer positions and to engage in international collaboration.

The education is based on research and artistic activity as well as the relevant professional practices of the field.

1.2 Eligibility for doctoral education and degrees to be completed

In the Faculty of Art and Design of the University of Lapland, scientific doctoral education builds on a higher university degree in a relevant field, a relevant higher university of applied sciences degree, or a relevant education accomplished abroad which in the awarding country gives eligibility for the corresponding level of higher education. The topic of the doctoral degree is to relate to the fields of research conducted in the faculty. More detailed application criteria for doctoral students are available in Studyinfo.

The primary task of the Faculty of Art and Design is to promote art-related research, activity, and societal interaction and to support doctoral education in the field of art. As a rule, the doctoral students of the faculty complete the degree of Doctor of Arts. In special cases, the right to complete the degree of Doctor of Philosophy can be granted to a person who has completed a master's degree in an educational area other than art at a Finnish institute of higher education or a degree corresponding to a Finnish master's degree at a foreign institute of similar status. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy can be granted when the dissertation represents a major subject that the faculty is not in charge of. This applies when the case involves a highly multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research or a doctoral researcher whose field of previous degree deviates from the faculty's majors so much that the degree cannot be granted based on any of them even after supplementary studies.

Those who have completed abroad a degree corresponding to a master's degree can be granted the right to pursue a doctoral degree, provided that they are deemed to have sufficient readiness for doctoral studies and that the faculty can appoint a supervisor.

A person applying to doctoral studies has to mark in the Studyinfo system the degree that the application for a right to complete a degree concerns. Before granting eligibility to a student for doctoral education, the faculty verifies that the completed degree provides sufficient readiness for doctoral studies in the educational field of art and that the faculty can appoint a supervisor.

2 TOWARD DOCTORAL STUDIES

2.1 Applying for and granting the study right

Eligibility for completing a doctoral degree is requested from the faculty that mainly deals with the discipline of the research. The aim of admittance is to produce researchers and other experts out of students who are skilled, motivated, and committed to research and doctoral studies.

The selection process is specifically focused on assessing the applicant's scientific thinking, proficiency in the central concepts and models of his/her field, and ability to define and solve problems. When the research contains an artistic production, the selection also focuses on artistic know-how, documentation of the artistic process, and the way in which the artistic production is related to the research argumentation.

The right to study for a doctoral degree at our university is mainly applied twice a year: in autumn and in spring. You can find the exact times at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/>. The application form for doctoral studies is filled in the Studyinfo system. Likewise, the attachments are sent within the application period. More specific selection criteria and application instructions are available in the Studyinfo system.

Before submitting your application to doctoral studies, you are to contact the professor representing your research topic to discuss the research topic, research plan, and other doctoral studies to ensure that the faculty has the required resources for supervision and that the research topic relates to the faculty's field of operation. In your application, you must also mention the faculty's professor with whom you have been in contact. This is done to initially make sure that the prerequisites for supervision exist when processing the applications.

Contact persons (firstname.lastname@ulapland.fi):

Professor Ashley Colley, interaction design, human-computer interaction
 Professor Jaana Erkkilä-Hill, visual arts, artist pedagogy, artistic research
 Professor Mirja Hiltunen, visual art education
 Professor Maria Huhmarniemi, visual art education, applied art, Arctic art, sustainability
 Professor Jonna Häkkinen, design, user experience, human-machine interaction
 Professor Anniina Koivurova, art history, visual culture, art pedagogy
 Professor Satu Miettinen, service design, social design, art-based research
 Associate Professor Mari Mäkiranta, visual culture, media studies, artistic research
 Professor Heidi Pietarinen, art-based research, textile design, textile history, bioart
 Professor Leena Raappana-Luoma, graphic design, visual culture and communication practice-based research, illustration

Granting the study right

After the end of the application period, the faculty prepares a summary of the doctoral study applications and delivers the summary along with the application material to the faculty's professors so that they can issue their statements on the documents. The preliminary research plan, its quality, and its content appended to the application documents play a central role in admitting applicants to doctoral studies. When the statements have been given, the applications are processed by the Board of Professors of the faculty. Concurrently, the supervisors to be assigned to the doctoral students are discussed. After the Board's deliberations and based on the preparations of the head of study affairs, the dean decides on granting the applicants a right to study and complete their degree.

The right to study begins either on 1 January or 1 August. For a justified reason, you can also get the right to complete the degree at another time. The reason may be, for instance, substantial research funding that requires the study right.

The study right is not granted if the applicant does not fulfil the terms of admission. Admission may also be denied because of insufficient supervision or financing resources or because the available expertise is not applicable to the applicant's research topic.

All applicants will be informed of the results of the selection by email and through the Studyinfo system one month after the application period has ended.

Those admitted to doctoral studies must confirm the reception of their study right by enrolling as students of the university during the registration period in the beginning of the term. This will give them a doctoral student's status. If you do not enrol, you will lose your study place. New students must always enrol for attendance during the first term, unless separate permission to enrol for non-attendance has been granted. Permission to register

for non-attendance during the first term is requested from the dean. If you wish to give up the study right, you are to announce the issue officially at the university's Student Services. Thereafter, you can apply to doctoral studies through the normal application process.

2.2 Supervision

When a student selection is made, at least one supervisor (process/main supervisor) employed by the faculty is appointed to oversee the doctoral student's research. One or two more supervisors can also be appointed from the faculty or from elsewhere for a justified reason. These supervisors may also be appointed at a later stage when the type of required supervisory expertise is known. The aim is that the supervisors' areas of expertise complement one another and thereby support the supervision process. Since the doctoral programme may also appoint supervisors to students who belong to the thematic doctoral programme, the official supervisors are appointed on the basis of the entire supervision concept. All doctoral students are recommended to have at least two supervisors.

A reciprocal agreement (supervising agreement) is made between the supervisor(s) and the doctoral student. It clearly defines the responsibilities pertaining to the commitments of the main supervisor/supervisors and the student in the supervision relationship (supervising agreement). The supervision agreement is made either by one agreement or by separate agreements with each supervisor. The agreement is delivered by the student to the faculty office to be archived by the chief of administration in either paper or electronic format. The dean appoints all the above-mentioned supervisors and thereby makes the supervision relationships official.

The main supervisor is always responsible for the administrative processes concerning the dissertation. The main supervisor oversees and supports the doctoral researcher's work from the beginning of the process to the completion of the dissertation and conferral of the degree. If another supervisor or other supervisors are appointed in addition to the main supervisor, the main supervisor appointed from the faculty always supports in planning the doctoral studies and registers potential study attainments (including transfer of credits performed elsewhere). At the end of the studies, the process supervisor also proposes the pre-examiners and acts as the custos during the defence.

The Cotutelle agreement may enable you to conduct the dissertation research simultaneously at the University of Lapland and at a foreign university. In these cases, a separate supervision agreement is made between the universities, defining the degree-related procedures such as the supervisors' responsibilities and procedures related to the pre-examination and the dissertation's grading. The agreement on a double degree should be made at the start of the studies, but within 18 months from the start at the latest.

As a doctoral student, you may request the dean to change a supervisor or the roles between them if you can justify the change clearly. Supervisors can also request such a change if they can justify it clearly. In these cases, the student asks the faculty to appoint a new main or other supervisor if needed.

The tasks of the main supervisor are as follows:

- to ensure that the supervision agreement is made, defining the main supervisor's, other supervisors', and the student's responsibilities, obligations, and commitment to the cooperation relationship and other potential matters of concern. The supervising agreement is available on the web pages of the Doctoral School at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/>.
- to ask together with the doctoral student the faculty to appoint another supervisor or other supervisors for the dissertation work when needed
- to negotiate the study plan with the doctoral student, to handle the possible credit transfers, and to ensure that the study attainments comply with the degree requirements
- to check that the student has completed all other studies specified in the degree requirements before approving the pre-examination proposal
- to make a proposal for the Faculty Council to appoint a grading committee before the opponent(s) are invited
- to make a proposal to publish the dissertation in the Acta Electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis and/or Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis series

In doctoral studies, the main supervisor's role is of great importance. The supervisor is to oversee the scientific research and, in the case of an artistic production, to oversee the completion of the artistic process and to supervise the doctoral studies in general. It is good supervisory practice that the supervisors communicate with one another and agree on the sharing of responsibilities as proposed by the main supervisor.

2.3 Supervisors' eligibility

The main supervisor may be a professor, associate professor, docent, or a person holding a doctoral degree who is academically and, when necessary, artistically competent and knowledgeable in the relevant field.

Depending on the nature of the dissertation, a sufficient number of instructors shall be appointed. At least one of them must represent the faculty's field of education, and at least one of them must have a doctoral degree. The other supervisor(s) need not represent the faculty. The supervisor shall hold a doctoral degree and have profound knowledge of the relevant field of research. Also, the supervisor of an artistic production shall hold a doctoral degree.

The decision to appoint the main supervisor and other supervisors is made by the dean, and it requires the doctoral student's written consent. Should supervisors be changed at a later stage, the student and the appointed instructors shall be heard before making the official decision.

2.4 Doctoral study plan (DSP)

All those admitted to study for a doctoral degree must make a personal doctoral study plan (DSP) together with the process supervisor. The DSP is mandatory. The process starts at the beginning of studies and is implemented as follows:

1. Applicants make an initial DSP as part of their application for a right to study for a doctoral degree.
2. Having been admitted, the student contacts the main supervisor and they draw up a more detailed DSP. The DSP specifies how the student will complete the doctoral studies required by the curriculum and potential supplementary studies, and how the student will carry the research forward. The plan must also contain a schedule for various study attainments and, when necessary, a funding plan to enable the doctoral studies. The student's learning outcomes are also discussed in the plan.

Doctoral students report their progress at least once a year by updating the DSP with their process supervisor by the end of September. The updated DSP shall contain plans for the following academic year and the results of the previous years. The DSP also recounts the progress of the dissertation. The DSP form is available at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/guidelines-and-recommendations/>.

3. STRUCTURE OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

In the Faculty of Art and Design, the scope of the doctor of arts degree is 210 credits. The scope of the dissertation and other doctoral studies is 180 and 30 credits, respectively.

The dissertation is a coherent scholarly work that is based on the author's own research and produces new scientific knowledge. The doctoral dissertation must be relevant and valuable in terms of research in the educational field of the Faculty of Art and Design, and it must demonstrate the author's capability of producing new research-based knowledge independently. The ideal time to complete the doctor of arts degree is three years.

The dissertation may be written in Finnish, English, or some other language if deemed justified by the faculty. The author of the dissertation must make sure that the manuscript is linguistically correct.

The dissertation can be a monograph or an article dissertation, and it may include an artistic production adding up to 60 credits.

3.1 Monograph

A monograph is a coherent and independent written work. It is an academic paper that is made solely by the author, is based on independent research, and has not been published before. During the dissertation process, the author may publish articles related to the topic and refer to them in the dissertation. The scope of a monograph dissertation, excluding references, is typically 200 pages using font size 12, line spacing 1.5, and margins of 2.5 cm.

The share of an artistic production assessed separately as part of a monograph is up to one-third (60 credits) of the whole.

3.2 Article dissertation

In the scientific doctoral education of the Faculty of Art and Design, a dissertation may be based on articles. In such cases the faculty accepts as a dissertation a required number of scientific publications or manuscripts accepted for publication and a summary thereof.

The publications may include co-authored publications if the author's independent contribution to them can be demonstrated. A report on the doctoral student's contribution to the work is to be included in the introductory part.

An article-based dissertation must include a sufficiently extensive introduction (50–70 pages) combining the articles into a comprehensive scientific entity with an integrated set of problems and scientific relevance in the branch. The introduction must also include the methods and results of the research.

The number of articles is not crucial in itself. Instead, the scientific contribution realized through the articles and introduction is essential. The total number of articles is at least three high-level international or Finnish refereed articles, and the author must be the only or the first author in at least two of them. The articles must have been published or approved for publication in established publications of the related discipline after admission to the doctoral studies. The articles are deemed outdated if ten years or more have passed since their publication. One article published over ten years can though be of a reasonable reason be accepted with a decision of the faculty council.

If a peer-reviewed artistic production is included in an article dissertation, it must contain at least two articles.

In assessing the whole, attention is paid to the publication forum and how well the articles and introduction function as an in-depth research concept.

The main supervisor makes sure that the articles, their publication dates, the publication channels and permits, and the student's status in the articles comply with the criteria confirmed by the faculty. In connection with the proposal concerning pre-examiners, the main supervisor delivers to the faculty office a separate appendix containing a report on fulfilling the mentioned requirements. The report is then included in the Faculty Council's agenda.

The doctoral student runs the manuscript through the Turnitin plagiarism detection system and delivers its report and the manuscript to the main supervisor. The process supervisor checks the report and delivers it with the proposal concerning pre-examiners to the faculty's chief of administration and administrative secretary. The pre-examination procedure and the related necessary information are discussed in more detail on pages 11 and 12. Turnitin instructions are available at <https://ulapland.fi/en/for-students/completing-studies/turnitin/>.

The share of an artistic production as part of an article dissertation is up to one-third (60 credits) of the whole.

3.3 Artistic production as part of the doctoral dissertation

A dissertation may contain one examined artistic production that is an integral part of the whole. The artistic production and the dissertation manuscript are to be pre-examined by the same persons. The period between examining the artistic production and pre-examining the manuscript shall not be longer than two years without a justifiable reason. Further information on assessing the artistic production is available in section 4.5.

The artistic production can be an exhibition, a designed product or service, a teaching production, a production concept, etc. To be accepted in the dissertation, the production is to be presented on a sufficiently prominent forum. The presentation forum may be a nationally or internationally noteworthy space employing curation or competitive practice. It may also be some other time- or place-specific space or location relevant to the artistic production. The doctoral student is in charge of planning for the presentation forum. When implementing the artistic production, you must point out that it is related to a doctoral dissertation.

The main supervisor ensures that the presentation forum meets the requirements set by the faculty and provides a statement on the issue in connection with the pre-examination proposal.

The doctoral student makes sure that the artistic production is recorded, the recorded material can be examined afterward, and the recorded material can be viewed during the defence.

3.4 Other degree studies, 30 credits

The doctor of arts degree consists of the dissertation itself (180 credits) and other degree studies (30 credits). The other degree studies consist of general studies in researcher skills concerning the methodological basics of research, studies related to the field of research advancing knowledge of your major subject and field of research, and other studies supporting the topic of your dissertation and applicable to the doctoral programme. The degree may also include researcher training courses approved by the faculty and professional specialisation studies. Including these studies in the degree is discussed on a case-by-case basis with the supervisor.

The studies may include the following: studies supporting research and exceeding the minimum scope of the master's degree as defined in more detail in the curriculum and the student's doctoral study plan, studies performed in national doctoral study programmes and abroad, articles and other publications, conference presentations, research-based teaching, and other scientific activities.

Other degree studies, 30 credits

Other studies of the discipline-specific doctoral programme, 30 credits

UTAT01000 General Studies in Researcher Skills, 10 cr. (at least 10 cr. to be selected)

UTAT010001	Research courses provided by the Faculty of Art and Design, 1–10 cr.
UTAT010002	Research courses provided by the Doctoral School and other parties, 1–10 cr.

UTAT02000 Studies in the field of research (at least 10 cr. to be selected, of which at least 2 cr. must be earned from seminars)

UTAT02001	Introductory seminar to researcher studies, 2 cr.
UTAT02002M	Design research seminars, 2–10 cr. (at least 2 cr.) OR
UTAT02002T	Research seminars in the educational field of art (at least 2 cr.)
UTAT02003	Teaching experience related to the topic of research, 1–5 cr.
UTAT020004	Participation in national or international seminars, conferences, or corresponding art events, 1–10 cr.
UTAT02005	Research-oriented work experience, 1–5 cr.
UTAT02006	Other studies in the field of research, 1–5 cr.
MTUT0025	Theories of Design, 5 cr.

UTAT03000 Studies supporting the topic of research, 10 cr. (at least 10 cr. to be selected)

UTAT03001	Other studies supporting the topic of research, 1–8 cr.
TUTA03002	Literature review of the topic of research, 2–5 cr.
MTUT0024	Design research courses and workshops, 1–5 cr.
TTUTU0024	Artistic and art-based research courses and workshops, 1–5 cr.

Other studies of the Arctic in a Changing World doctoral programme, 30 cr.

The Arctic in a Changing World thematic studies, 15 cr.

Core courses

TUKO1301	Introduction to Arctic research, 5 cr.
TUKO1300	Research seminar, 5 cr.

Elective courses

TUKO1295	Critical Arctic studies, 5 cr.
TUKO1296	International politics and indigenous peoples, 5 cr.

UTAT02000 Studies in the field of research, at least 8 cr. (at least 2 cr. must be earned from seminars, including opponent seminar)

UTAT02001	Introductory seminar to researcher studies, 2 cr.
UTAT02002M	Design research seminars, 2–10 cr. (at least 2 cr.) OR
UTAT02002T	Research seminars in the educational field of art, 2–10 cr. (at least 2 cr.)
UTAT02003	Teaching experience related to the topic of research, 1–5 cr.
UTAT020004	Participation in national or international seminars, conferences, or corresponding art events, 1–10 cr.
UTAT02005	Research-oriented work experience, 1–5 cr.
UTAT02006	Other studies in the field of research, 1–5 cr.
MTUT0025	Theories of Design, 5 cr.

UTAT03000 Studies supporting the topic of research, at least 7 cr.

UTAT03001	Other studies supporting the topic of research, 1–8 cr.
TUTA03002	Literature review of the topic of research, 2–5 cr.
MTUT0024	Design research courses and workshops, 1–5 cr.
TTUTU0024	Artistic and art-based research courses and workshops, 1–5 cr.

Seminar presentation and acting as an opponent

The mandatory courses UTAT02002M Design research seminars, 2–10 cr. (at least 2 cr.) or UTAT02002T Research seminars in the educational field of art, 2–10 cr. (at least 2 cr.) include a seminar and acting as an opponent.

The student is to present the dissertation work to the Faculty of Art and Design in a seminar, where an opponent from the faculty addresses the work and where the participants have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the dissertation. The opponent may be a member of the faculty's teaching and research personnel who has a doctor's degree. At this point, the dissertation must be ready for pre-examination and it must be delivered in advance to the opponent. The student's readiness to give the seminar presentation is defined by the main supervisor before inviting the student to the seminar. The seminar and the opponent's contribution must be completed before sending the dissertation for pre-examination. The grading is done by the main supervisor (pass/fail).

4. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE DISSERTATION

4.1 Preliminary examination procedure

When submitting the dissertation manuscript or the artistic production to the faculty for pre-examination, the doctoral student must be registered as an attending student at the university. According to section 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the University of Lapland, the Faculty Council appoints the pre-examiners, examiners, and opponents for doctoral dissertations. It also grades dissertations, theses, and corresponding papers based on pre-examiner statements.

At least two pre-examiners nominated by the Faculty Council are always appointed to examine the dissertation manuscript and artistic production. The artistic production and the dissertation manuscript are to be pre-examined by the same persons. Gender equality is also considered in the selection of pre-examiners as far as possible.

As a rule, the pre-examiners are primarily from outside the university. A faculty docent who is not employed by the university can be considered a non-faculty actor. The pre-examiners cannot be members of your own faculty.

Internationalisation is advocated in doctoral education, and therefore using a foreign expert as a pre-examiner is recommended. When using a foreign expert, the main supervisor must ensure that the criteria of the University of Lapland are met when making the pre-examiner proposal. It is recommended that the other pre-examiner is a Finnish academic expert.

Primarily, the pre-examiners must be professors or docents with a doctoral degree, and they must be specialists in the area of the dissertation research.

A supervisor can never act as a pre-examiner.

The provisions in the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) on disqualification apply to all university activities, including the pre-examination. The disqualification of pre-examiners is governed by the provisions of sections 27–28 of the Administrative Procedure Act. For example, a close family relationship or another very close relationship leads to disqualification. In addition, disqualification results from close cooperation projects or competitive application to the same position. A polemic relationship also results in disqualification if it can be clearly substantiated.

Acting as a pre-examiner is denied from a person whose relationship with the doctoral candidate, a supervisor, or some other connected party compromises the person's neutrality.

A pre-examiner cannot be

- a person who is a co-writer in one of the constituent publications of the dissertation
- a person who is engaged or was engaged during the dissertation project in research collaboration with the doctoral candidate
- a person who has been engaged in close research collaboration with a dissertation supervisor during the three years preceding the examination of the dissertation
- the doctoral candidate's relative
- the doctoral candidate's or supervisor's immediate manager or subordinate
- a person who is competitively applying for the same position as the doctoral candidate

Disqualification always means a personal relationship with a matter, and when assessing disqualification, one must consider how the matter appears when examined by an outsider. According to the Administrative Procedure Act, potential disqualification must be brought out on one's own initiative.

4.2 Starting the preliminary examination procedure

The doctoral student is personally responsible for the content of the work. When preparing for the pre-examination process, the main supervisor ensures that the quality of the work allows it to be submitted for pre-examination. The student is also responsible for the linguistic correctness of the dissertation.

All dissertations at the University of Lapland are required to undergo a plagiarism check to ascertain the authenticity of the texts. Doctoral students must run their texts through the university's plagiarism detection programme and send the report with the manuscript to the main supervisor before starting the pre-examination. The main supervisor's task is to verify the report.

The doctoral student is to present the manuscript at the faculty's seminar where an opponent comments upon the work. This seminar is graded pass/fail by the supervisor. After a passed seminar the manuscript can be taken to pre-examination. The main supervisor and the doctoral student discuss the examination and potential pre-examiners, who must not be disqualified. For more details about disqualification, see section 4.1.

The preliminary examination starts when the main supervisor delivers the PDF-format manuscript, the proposal for pre-examiners, and the analysis of the plagiarism detection report to the faculty office for appointing the pre-examiners **three weeks before the Faculty Council meeting in which the pre-examiners are to be appointed**. The main supervisor decides when the manuscript is ready for pre-examination and ensures that it is not forwarded in an unfinished state.

Before starting the process, the student's other degree studies must be completed.

The main supervisor proposes two independent pre-examiners for the dissertation and requests their consent to the task. When preparing for the pre-examination, one must consider the examiners' disqualification and, where possible, gender equality. The final pre-examiner decision is made by the Faculty Council based on a written proposal made by the main supervisor.

The main supervisor's written pre-examination proposal is delivered to the faculty's chief of administration and administrative secretary. The proposal is to include the following information:

- The author, title, and form of the dissertation and contact information of the supervisors
- The supervisor of an article dissertation must provide information of all the constituent articles, their publication forum classification, their publication dates, their publication channels and permissions, and the doctoral candidate's status in the articles (sole/first author)
- The supervisor of an artistic production must provide information of the presentation forum and the way in which it fulfils the criteria set by the faculty. The pre-examiner statements on the artistic production must also be appended.
- Confirmation of a completed opponent seminar
- A transcript of records showing that the candidate has completed the required other degree studies
- The pre-examiner's name, degree, and contact information (address and email)
- The absence of grounds for disqualifying the pre-examiner
- Grounds for appointing the pre-examiner: how the person's expertise relates to the topic/research area of the dissertation
- The pre-examiner's CV or bio

Before appointing the preliminary examiners, the doctoral candidate is given the opportunity to give a statement on the possible disqualification of the proposed examiners.

4.3. Starting the preliminary examination of an artistic production as part of the dissertation

The main supervisor is to ensure that the artistic production is ready for pre-examination and that the pre-examiners can be appointed.

The pre-examination of the artistic production starts when the main supervisor delivers to the faculty's chief of administration and administrative secretary a written report in PDF format made by the doctoral candidate on the status of the production in the dissertation. To enable assessment of the artistic production, the report is to be sent no later than three weeks before the Faculty Council meeting in which the pre-examiners are to be appointed (see section 4.5). The report must point out how the dissertation's scientific part and artistic production are related in terms of content and how they are linked to each other. The required scope of the report is 15–20 pages. The report enables the pre-examiners to understand the relationship between the artistic production and the theory part in the dissertation.

The main supervisor proposes pre-examiners for the production and requests their consent to the task. These pre-examiners also function as the manuscript's pre-examiners later on. The final pre-examiner decision is made by the Faculty Council based on a written proposal made by the main supervisor. The proposal is delivered to the faculty's chief of administration and it is to include the following information:

- The author, title, and form of the dissertation and contact information of the supervisors
- The pre-examiner's name, degree, and contact information (address and email)
- The absence of grounds for disqualifying the pre-examiner
- Explanation of the pre-examiner's expertise in the task
- The pre-examiner's commitment to also examine the manuscript
- The pre-examiner's CV or bio (these alone do not suffice as an explanation of expertise)

Before the Faculty Council's decision to appoint the preliminary examiners, the doctoral candidate is given the opportunity to give a statement on the proposed examiners.

4.4 Preliminary examination of the dissertation

In terms of quality control, pre-examiners bear the great responsibility of not letting unfinished dissertations to enter the defence phase. On the other hand, it is important in view of the student's legal protection that the minimum requirements for the dissertation are met before the defence.

The purpose of the pre-examination is to ensure that the dissertation manuscript fulfils the criteria for scientific research and writing. It is done to make sure that the proposed manuscript meets the quality requirements for dissertations and that the work is at sufficient scientific level.

In their statements, pre-examiners must point out clearly whether the dissertation meets the criteria for granting permission to a public defence or whether they propose denying the permission. The pre-examiner statement must always be justified.

The pre-examiners are to make a justified statement on the manuscript by assessing the following points:

- The scientific significance of the research and the significance of a possible artistic part for producing new knowledge
- Novelty value of the topic and research problem
- The theoretical and the possible artistic approach
- The coverage and processing of the material
- The methods used
- The results and credibility
- The conclusions and discussion
- The functionality of the composition and presentation

The pre-examiner statement must conclude with a summary of the entire dissertation's quality and significance in the field of research. At the end of the summary the pre-examiner states whether or not they propose authorisation of a defence. Pre-examiners can use the evaluation criteria confirmed by the faculty (pass with distinction, pass, fail), although it is not a pre-examiners task to grade the manuscript.

A pre-examiner statement may contain correction and improvement suggestions, but the statement cannot be conditional so that the change proposals are a precondition for authorizing the defence. Regardless of the proposed corrections, the pre-examiner may recommend authorisation of the defence, if the making the corrections is not a requirement for the authorisation.

If the statements or one of them does not favour the examination, the dissertation work returns to the supervisory process, where the supervisor's duty is to discuss the pre-examiners' feedback with the doctoral candidate. The candidate is to submit a written report to the main supervisor on the way the feedback has been considered. The main supervisor is to make sure that the pre-examination statements have been observed in the finalisation of the dissertation. When making a proposal for re-examining the manuscript, the main supervisor is to submit a written statement on how the pre-examiners' feedback has been considered in the new version. However, the doctoral candidate is ultimately responsible for the research and the final form of the dissertation.

The pre-examiner statements must typically be given within two months from receipt of the manuscript.

The candidate is given an opportunity to submit a written reply to the pre-examiner statements before the Faculty Council's authorisation decision.

4.5 Preliminary examination of an artistic production

The preliminary examiners of an artistic production must give their statements within two months after having received each production.

The examiners are expected to assess the following three interrelated aspects:

- the relation of the artistic production to the topic of the research and the significance of the production in terms of the research topic
- the field-specific merits of the production in terms of quality
- the context of the presentation

The significance of the artistic production in terms of the research topic means the overall relation between the artistic production and the articles or monograph. *The field-specific merits of the production in terms of quality* refers to the merits of the production within its genre and the technical level of the work. *The context of the presentation* means its publication venue and the social, professional, and cultural discussions created by it. The publication venue is to be of significance from the viewpoint of the research objectives.

The pre-examination is peer-reviewing that contributes to the community, practices, and institutions of artistic research. One of its objectives is to assess how the artistic production is connected to field-related developments and what the impact of the production is. The pre-examiners are to consider that art and design productions often generate new and experiential forms and practices in a research context.

The pre-examination shall be carried out critically, but constructively. Its purpose is to assess the work and its strengths in the context of the dissertation. It is important that the examiners attend to detail and explain their observations and conclusions clearly.

Having considered the above-mentioned issues, the pre-examiners submit their written statements recommending authorisation or rejection of the artistic production as part of the dissertation. The statements shall be delivered to the faculty office within two months from receipt of the production. The statements are delivered to the doctoral candidate and the supervisors. If the statements or one of them does not favour the examination, the dissertation work returns to the supervisory process, where the supervisor's duty is to discuss the pre-examiners' feedback with the doctoral candidate. When making a proposal for a potential re-examination of the production, the main supervisor is to submit a written statement on how the pre-examiners' feedback has been considered in the new version.

The candidate is given an opportunity to submit a written reply to the pre-examiner statements.

4.6. Pre-examiner roles and ethical issues

Supervisors may discuss the content of the dissertation with pre-examiners before the work is sent for pre-examination. During the pre-examination process, a pre-examiner may not be in contact with the doctoral candidate. The faculty is in charge of all communication between the candidate, supervisors, and pre-examiners. The faculty office sends the manuscript, the candidate's written report on a possible artistic production, and the pre-examination letter with its appendices to the pre-examiners.

The pre-examiners must send their statements directly to the faculty office and nowhere else. A pre-examiner may be in contact with the faculty office on potential open issues. The faculty office assists the pre-examiner in finding people who can provide information on the applicable criteria, examination process, etc. However, supervisors are not to be contacted because of disqualification issues. When the pre-examination statement contains an appendix with correction and improvement proposals, the appendix is also delivered to the faculty office, which forwards it to the candidate and main supervisor. Throughout the pre-examination process, the pre-examiner shall only deal with the faculty office.

The pre-examiners may not send the statement directly to the candidate or supervisors, nor are they allowed to discuss the content of the statement or other dissertation-related issues with them during the pre-examination process. The pre-examiners must state in their statement whether they have been in contact with the doctoral candidate or supervisors during the examination process. Furthermore, a pre-examiner is not allowed to receive revised manuscript versions or other related documents or materials directly from the candidate or supervisor. These can only be received from the faculty.

4.7 Authorisation of the public defence and appointing the opponent

The Faculty Council makes the final decision to authorise the public defence (also called public examination) based on favourable pre-examiner statements.

When the defence has been authorised, the Faculty Council appoints the opponent(s) based on the main supervisor's proposal. An opponent's selection criteria are the same as those of a pre-examiner. A pre-examiner may act as an opponent. Before appointing the opponent(s), the candidate is allowed to comment on the potential disqualification of the proposed person.

As a starting point, the role of custos is taken by the dissertation's main supervisor, who is employed by the university and a professor of the relevant educational/scientific field, an emerita/emeritus professor, or a docent. The Faculty Council typically appoints the custos in connection with appointing the opponent(s).

To determine the date and venue of the public defence, the process supervisor contacts the doctoral candidate, custos, opponent(s), and chief of administration, after which the Faculty Council determines the date and venue. As a rule, public defences are arranged in the premises of the University of Lapland; other venues are exceptions. Room reservations are made by the faculty office when the defence is arranged in the university premises. If another venue is desired, the reservation and necessary arrangements are made by the doctoral candidate.

When planning the date, you are advised to consider the instructions of the Doctoral School related to publishing dissertations. The instructions state that you should reserve at least two months for the publication process before the publishing deadline. You are expected to be in contact with the Doctoral School, which reserves a layout editor for the work. The dissertation must be sent to the editor no later than seven weeks before the defence.

Further instructions are available on the web pages of the Doctoral School at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/>.

4.8 Grading, grading committee, and grading scale

Within two weeks after the public examination, the opponent provides the Faculty Council with a justified written statement of either approving or rejecting the dissertation. If there are several opponents, they may also give a joint statement. The statement must express clearly whether the opponent recommends rejecting or approving the dissertation; in the latter case, the statement must also include a proposal for a grade if a separate dissertation committee has not been appointed.

The candidate's defence during the public examination is also considered in the grading.

The written opponent statement(s) on the dissertation is delivered to the author as soon as it arrives in the faculty. The candidate is allowed to reply to it. To submit the reply, the candidate is entitled to request that the grading be postponed to the next Faculty Council meeting.

Based on the main supervisor's proposal, the Faculty council may appoint a grading committee to suggest a grade for the dissertation. **The grading committee must be set up before appointing the opponent(s).** The committee may include the following: the opponent(s), custos, main supervisor, professor of the discipline, an external expert, etc. The main supervisor may attend the meeting as an adviser on the dissertation, but not as a member with decision-making power. Thus, the main supervisor shall not take part in making the grading decision. The grading committee members are required to be present in the public examination.

The grading committee's task is to assess the opponent's statement and grading proposal and to define in its own statement and grading proposal whether it concurs with those of the opponent. The committee's written statement is delivered to the candidate as soon as it arrives in the faculty. The candidate is given an opportunity to reply to the statement. To submit the reply, the candidate is entitled to request that the grading be postponed to the next Faculty Council meeting.

The Faculty Council decides whether to approve or reject the dissertation. It also grades the dissertation.

Should you disagree with the evaluation, you may send a written rectification request to the Faculty Council within 14 days from being informed of the evaluation decision. If unsatisfied with the rectification decision, one may appeal to the appellate committee for an amendment within 14 days from being informed of the rectification decision. Deliver the appeal to the University Registry at kirjaamo(at)ulapland.fi.

In the Faculty of Art and Design, the following grades are given for dissertations in accordance with the decision of the Faculty Council on 13 February 2025: pass with distinction, pass, and fail.

Grading a dissertation *pass with distinction* requires that the dissertation is of outstanding quality and represents leading research in its field. Regardless of the form of the dissertation, the grading is always done on the basis of the entire work.

The following aspects are considered in grading:

- The scientific significance of the research and the significance of a possible artistic production
- novelty value of the topic and research problem
- The theoretical approach and processing of the possible artistic production
- The coverage and processing of the material
- The methods used
- The results and credibility
- The conclusions and discussion
- The dissertation as a whole and the appropriateness of the presentation
- Defending the work at the public examination

The grade *pass with distinction* requires the following:

- In an international comparison the dissertation has exceptional scientific merit and its possible artistic production is of particularly high quality according to all salient assessment criteria.
- The research demonstrates a critical and innovative approach and an excellent ability to organize theoretically and/or artistically extensive clusters of issues and problems.
- The results have exceptional significance within the discipline, and the observations and conclusions are essentially fresh. As part of a research group, the author's contribution is significant and clearly definable.
- The articles of an article dissertation have been published in esteemed international scientific series or in other comparable refereed publications. At least two articles have been published on strongly established publication forums and one on an established forum.
- The presentation is of high standard and unique, and the linguistic style and referencing system do not leave room for complaint.
- The dissertation was defended excellently at the public examination.

The grade *pass* requires the following:

- The research questions, theoretic background, theoretical frame, methodology, and the possible empirical material demonstrate a good command of the field and adherence to ethically sustainable principles. The dissertation forms a scientifically convincing whole and the possible artistic production is of high standard in light of all the relevant assessment criteria.
- The research demonstrates a critical and innovative approach and an ability to organize theoretically and/or artistically extensive clusters of issues and problems.
- The results produce fresh knowledge to the field of research. The observations and conclusions are new. The extent of the author's own part is sufficient and it can be clearly demonstrated.
- The articles of an article dissertation have been published in established conference publications, scientific series, or other refereed publications of high standard. In at least two articles the author is the only or first author.
- The author defended the dissertation well at the public examination.

The grade *fail* refers to the following:

In light of the assessment criteria, the work has many grave deficiencies without a sufficient supply of compensatory merits. The dissertation is not a coherent work based on independent study. It does not produce new knowledge or has serious deficiencies in several of the following areas: the objectives and delineations are unclear; the work does not yield a clear contribution; both the theoretical frame and empirical part or possible artistic production have serious deficiencies or problems; a critical analysis is missing or it is inadequate; there are serious deficiencies in defining the core concepts and/or in justifying the choices on which the work is based. The author failed to defend the dissertation at the public examination.

Artistic productions are not graded separately because they are assessed as part of and relative to the whole dissertation.

5. PUBLISHING THE DISSERTATION

If put out by the University of Lapland, **dissertations are primarily published on the open web** as part of the Acta Electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis series. The publication platform is the Lauda repository of the University of Lapland. In preparation of the examination session, the university makes six paper copies of an electronically published dissertation for public display and one copy each for the candidate, opponent(s), and custos. Candidates need not pay for the electronic publication of a dissertation, but they may have more printed copies made on their own cost.

For special reasons (e.g. nonstandard design) **and by decision of the faculty, a dissertation may be published in the university series only in print or also in print.** In this case the faculty makes a separate decision regarding the printing costs. Further instructions on publishing in the university series are available on the library's web pages at <https://libguides.luc.fi/dissertations>.

If your dissertation is published elsewhere or as an author's edition, you must deliver 15 paper copies or an electronic copy and 6 paper copies to the chief of administration no later than 10 days before the public examination. Whether it is an article dissertation or a monograph, the same number of copies must be delivered to the university. Before delivery to the faculty, you are to have the dissertation's introductory part and constituent articles bound together or compiled into one electronic file.

In all events you must ensure that your dissertation is ready and publicly available no later than ten days before the public examination. The faculty distributes the dissertation to the pre-examiners, the opponent(s), the custos, and the main lobby. When publishing an author's edition, make sure that the dissertation has an ISBN code. Further instructions on acquiring an ISBN code are available on the library's web pages at <https://libguides.luc.fi/dissertations>.

6. PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF THE DISSERTATION (DEFENCE)

The role of the opponent(s) in the public examination of the dissertation (also referred to as a defence) is to inspect and discuss the varied themes of the work. The opponent comments on and asks questions about the manuscript and the candidate defends the work. If there is more than one opponent, they can agree on their order of appearance and work allocation. They can also take part in discussing a topic introduced by any of the opponents. The total duration of the examination may not exceed six hours.

The public examination is opened and closed by the custos. The custos functions as the chair and makes sure that the doctoral candidate is allowed an immediate reply to each remark. The custos also ensures that the discussion does not stray too far from the topic. If the examination lasts more than two hours, the custos is to announce a break. The custos also leads the discussion with the audience. The custos may give the faculty a brief report on the proceedings of the public examination. Further instructions are available on the university's website at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/guidelines-and-recommendations/>.

7. COMMUNICATION ON THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION

The faculty informs the Communications unit about the time, opponent(s), and custos of the public examination as soon the matters have been decided. In addition, the administrative secretary enters the defence into the Events section on the university's website. The Communications unit informs the media about the public examination. For this purpose, the doctoral candidate must deliver a one-page draft press release to the Communications unit introducing the dissertation. This is to be done at least two weeks prior to the examination. In collaboration with the candidate, the Communications unit draws up a press release on the basis of the draft. Further instructions are available at <https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/guidelines-and-recommendations/>.

The Communications unit is in charge of distributing your press release to the media. The basic distribution list covers the most important media in northern Finland and the rest of the country. The release is also sent to field-specific media. If you have personal preferences, you may also suggest other media to be included in the list. The extent of the distribution will be discussed with you. You are also recommended to be active in communication about your doctoral defence and to utilise your own media relations. However, it is important to ask reporters to abide by the publication date settled with the Communications unit; prearranged stories should not be published before other media have received the press release from the Communications unit.

The media decide independently on the publication of the release. Distribution of the English version to international media must always be settled separately. You are to personally take care of communication to international publication series. The Communications unit assists and gives advice to candidates in matters related to press interviews and the media. You are advised to get ready for journalists contacting you both before and after the public examination – especially when the press release is sent to the media. The Communications unit also reports the defence on the website and social media of the University of Lapland.

7.1 Public display of the dissertation

The public display of an electronically published dissertation takes place on the frontpage of the university's website. Furthermore, **the faculty places one paper copy of the electronically published dissertation on public display in the university's main lobby ten days before the defence.** A dissertation published in paper format is placed on public display only in the university's main lobby. The faculty also delivers a printed copy of the dissertation to the opponent(s), custos, pre-examiners, and supervisors.

The Communications unit already has the necessary data on dissertations published in the university series. As for dissertations published elsewhere, the faculty delivers one press copy of them to the Communications unit. Press copies to reporters interested in the topic are usually delivered by the candidate (or the publisher of a dissertation put out elsewhere).

The dissertation is to be published no later than ten days before the defence. For special reasons, the dean may shorten this time limit.

7.2 Public display of an artistic production as part of the dissertation

When the dissertation includes an artistic production, you are to announce no later than ten days before the defence where the production or recording thereof is on display. Send the information to the faculty office and the Communications unit.

8. POST-DEFENCE PARTY

The post-defence party is an old academic tradition. It is a party after the public examination, organised by the doctoral candidate to thank the opponent, supervisors, custos and other people who contributed to the dissertation. Besides academics, you may invite friends and relatives to the karonkka, using your own discretion as to the number of guests to be hosted.

9. DOCTOR'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE

Apply for the degree certificate using the Peppi system at [Thesis and graduation | Studies | University of Lapland](#) and by selecting the "Apply for the certificate" option. **Before applying for the degree certificate, make sure that all the studies included in the doctoral curriculum and the corresponding credits have been entered into the credit record. If something is missing, ask the main supervisor to update your credit record data. The degree certificate cannot be awarded before all the studies have been entered into the credit record.** It is advisable to check the credit record annually during the DSP discussions with the process supervisor.

Doctors are given an electronic degree certificate that has the following information: the title of the degree, the date of graduation, the scope of the degree, the studies included in the degree, potential study modules with their grades, the title of the dissertation, and the grade of the dissertation. The certificate is granted by the dean.

10. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

These updated doctoral degree requirements take effect on 13 February 2025.

Doctoral students who have already started their studies may choose whether they continue according to the previous curriculum or the new requirements. Those who started on 1 January 2025 will study according to the new requirements.

All the updated instructions of this study guide regarding the examination of the dissertation, participation in the faculty's open doctoral study seminar, plagiarism detection, etc. concern all doctoral students as of the entry into force of this guide. The updated instructions concern also change according to which a dissertation may contain

one examined artistic production that is an integral part of the whole. Exception to this are those doctoral students who have already started their studies and who have **according to the estimation of the supervisor** proceeded in providing several artistic parts. In that case a doctoral student has got the right to include all artistic parts to part of dissertation.

11. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION

The website of the Doctoral School contains information on the defence-related preparations, dress code, and proceedings. There is also information on grants that you can apply for.

<https://ulapland.fi/en/research/doctoral-education/>

Doctoral Study Guide of the Faculty of Art and Design,

Processed by the Board on 16 January 2025 and approved by the Faculty Council on 13 February 2025