

Policy name: Overview of Regulations Pertaining to Doctoral Studies: Policy and Procedure

Approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020

1. Context

- 1.1 All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes delivered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, are accredited by RIAM and validated by the Designated Awarding Body, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity. Such programmes, including those offered at doctoral level, have formal procedures which specify eligibility criteria and entry requirements, admission procedures, arrangements for review and monitoring of progress during the programme, and the consequences of failure to meet course and assessment requirements. These comply with the principal legislation underpinning quality assurance in Irish higher education and training, which is the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and internal quality assurance processes in Trinity.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Doctorate in Music Performance is intended to develop the capacity of applicants to make a contribution to the advancement of knowledge of professional practice in their own field of music. Because it is related directly to their chosen career path, the performance-based character of the programme gives an opportunity to advanced musicians, who are otherwise unlikely to study for a PhD, to undertake research into problems that are of direct relevance to their own interests. Performance doctorates are designed to assist in developing excellent performing musicians who can also research as professionals. In particular, the Doctorate in Music Performance seeks to develop in students the ability to tread the delicate balance between supporting academic concepts of research as a public good in its own right, while expanding the necessary technical and musical skills required as a solo performer. Originality will lie more in the way in which theoretical and conceptual understandings are applied rather than in simple extension of those theories and concepts.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy sets out the formal procedures articulated in 1.1 above for a doctoral level programme offered and delivered by the Academy, which leads to the award by Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin of Doctor in Music Performance. [Note: Full details of this programme are given in the Programme Handbook, which should be consulted in conjunction with this policy.]

4. Benefits

- 4.1 This policy, and the links provided at 9.1, give clarity to doctoral students in relation to the conditions to be observed and the formal requirements to be fulfilled for the award of the degree, in order to ensure that they receive an optimum learning experience from the Programme.

5. Principles

- 5.1 The Doctorate in Music Performance aims to equip students with a range of knowledge and skills that will fully prepare them to meet and surpass international standards in both performance and scholarship.
- 5.2 This will be accomplished by:
- (i) providing an environment in which students will be proactive and take the initiative in identifying, developing and implementing their research topic;
 - (ii) enabling students to be at ease in discussing the contribution of research within the musical, academic and educational communities;
 - (iii) equipping students with the expertise and skills to evaluate, initiate and direct musical projects;
 - (iv) developing students' capacity to plan and manage personal learning and change.
- 5.3 On completion, students will have developed a portfolio of personal transferable competencies appropriate for their planned and projected future careers.

6. Policy

6.1 Eligibility criteria and entry requirements

- 6.1.1 The typical successful applicant will be a performer of international calibre. Early career applicants may already be competing in international competitions and wish to inform their performance through research. Mid-career performers may wish to reflect on their performance and refresh their skills with high level research in an area which has become their specialism over the years.
- 6.1.2 Applicants will normally hold a Degree of Master or equivalent and have a track record of professional achievement. Applications are also invited from performers who have attained a very high standard professionally but would not have had the opportunity to undertake postgraduate studies at an earlier stage in their career.
- 6.1.3 Applicants will also normally be expected to have demonstrated considerable maturity and developed significant expertise in a number of the following areas:
- musical excellence;
 - continuing professional development;
 - extensive performance development;
 - comfort within intellectual discourse.

This list is not exhaustive. Rather, it is intended to indicate that in addition to a record of academic achievement, applicants will be expected also to have a track record of considerable accomplishment and demonstrated maturity in a number of musical areas.

- 6.1.4 Exceptionally, if the quality and extent of independent research or professional experience already demonstrated by an applicant clearly indicates capability of

successful doctoral level study, the formal Masters qualification may be waived. The appropriate criteria of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning [APEL] will be applied in these circumstances.

6.2 Admission procedures

- 6.2.1 Applications are accepted up to 1st December each year. However, late applications may be considered in exceptional cases. A full list of documents to be submitted online by all applicants is provided in the Programme Handbook.
- 6.2.2 Applicants will be selected on the strength of their performing ability and scholarly record, and their individual research interests. Short-listed applicants will be notified of the day and time of their audition and interview. The detailed form and arrangements for these are given in the Programme Handbook.
- 6.2.3 Successful applicants who are offered a place on the programme are notified in writing and must adhere to the deadlines stated in the letter of offer, or the offer will lapse and the place will be re-assigned.

6.3 Arrangements for review and monitoring of progress during the programme

- 6.3.1 The Academy reviews the progress of all of its doctorate students on an annual basis. Full details of the form and arrangements for these reviews are given in the Programme Handbook.
- 6.3.2 Students accepted onto the Doctorate in Music Performance course are accepted to year 1 on a probationary basis, and in year 2, the students are invited to attend a doctorate confirmation interview.

Students will be expected to submit a Confirmation Report for consideration at this interview. Details of the form and content of this Report are given in the Programme Handbook.

The outcome of the interview shall be one of the following:

- (i) Continuation on the doctorate programme.
- (ii) Continuation on the doctorate programme after some minor changes have been made to the Confirmation Report.
- (iii) Continuation on the doctorate programme not recommended at this time. A new report to be written and confirmation interview to be held again as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iv) A recommendation to transfer to the Master in Music Performance course.
- (v) The student withdraws from course.

Written feedback from the supervisor and performance lecturers will be given via the Chair of the Doctorate in Music Performance Course Committee.

- 6.3.3 In order to encourage discussion of postgraduate issues, an annual Forum for Doctoral students is held in November of each year at the Academy. This Forum is

convened by the Chair of the Doctor in Music Performance Course Committee and is attended by staff teaching on the programme and all Doctorate students.

- 6.3.4 Feedback on module content, assessment, and teaching is also sought directly from students in annual interviews with the RIAM Director, in addition to the opportunities presented to Doctorate student representatives for comment at the four Doctorate Course Committee meetings.

6.4 Assessment of performance and dissertation modules

[Note: Detailed assessment arrangements for all modules are given in the Programme handbook.]

- 6.4.1 For the principal study performance requirements, students are expected to complete the following:

- (i) Three full-length recitals;
- (ii) Two concerto performances.

Performers who are also composers may apply to substitute, in place of one full-length recital, a lecture recital on an original composition of their own. The work must be composed during the period of doctoral study.

- 6.4.2 Dissertation requirements: students will be assessed on the basis of a written dissertation, and an oral examination (*viva voce*) conducted by Examiners appointed subject to approval by the Trinity Dean of Graduate Studies. Students will be required to show ability to engage in original investigation or scholarship, to test ideas whether his/her own or of others, and to understand the background and fundamental basis of the work undertaken.

6.5 Failure to meet Course/Assessment requirements

- 6.5.1 Students who fail to satisfy the Examiners for any module may be permitted, at the discretion of such Examiners, to represent their performance or their written work on one occasion only for a supplementary examination. Any student who receives a failing mark for any supplementary examination will normally be required to withdraw from the programme.

- 6.5.2 Where a *viva voce* of a dissertation has been held, and the dissertation referred back for extensive revision, or the award of a lower degree, or if outright failure is recommended by the Examiners appointed as provided for at 6.4.2 above, the candidate shall be informed of the verdict prior to the submission of the Examiners' reports to the Board of Examiners. Details of the arrangements for the resubmission of referred dissertations are given in the Programme Handbook.

- 6.5.3 Students may appeal decisions of examiners in accordance with the Academy's established Appeal Procedures.

- 6.5.4 Students who are not permitted to progress to year 3 of the Doctorate programme may be considered instead for an exit award of Master in Music Performance (M. Perf Mus), if appropriate. Details of the requirements to be fulfilled to be so considered are given in the Programme Handbook.

7. Responsibility

- 7.1 The Chair of the Board of Studies is responsible for overseeing this policy. The Administrative Officer, Registry is responsible for the operating procedures in relation to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

8. Legislation and regulation

- 8.1 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012.](#)
- 8.2 [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2005\).](#)
- 8.3 [Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners \(2015\).](#)
- 8.4 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\).](#)

9. Related Documents

- 9.1 Admissions and Transfer Policy and Procedure.
- 9.2 Academic Assessment and Progression Policy.
- 9.3 Academic Programme Development and Review Policy.
- 9.4 Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 9.5 Plagiarism Policy.
- 9.6 Doctorate in Music Performance Handbook.

10. Document Control

Approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020.

Next review: Academic year 2020/21.