



**EXPERIENCES AND  
PERCEPTIONS  
OF THE ARTISTIC  
DOCTORATE IN  
DANCE AND  
PERFORMANCE**

**ARTISTIC DOCTORATES  
IN EUROPE (ADiE)  
SURVEY REPORT**

**AUGUST 2017**



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*“Artistic research is a crucial part of the future of academia... [I]f the university is going to serve the next stages of human society, we need to continue to develop robust and transformative practices...”*

## INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

ADiE is a partnership funded through Erasmus+ to investigate and support the development of Artistic Doctorates in Dance and Performance. The partnership is located in the UK and Scandinavia and includes leading representatives from Universities and the Cultural arts sector. This report is based upon three surveys undertaken by ADiE with key stakeholders to gather their views and experiences of these research degrees.

Artistic Research has been widely debated and establishes the status of creative work as research in the academy. Doctorates that variously encompass creative work have become an established (although not wholly adopted) mode through which to undertake a research degree. Indeed the number of candidates undertaking Artistic Doctorates in the UK, Scandinavia and beyond has been growing rapidly in recent years reflecting the growth in Artistic Research more generally, becoming among the ‘fastest-moving concerns in early-twenty-first-century thinking about performance’ (Freeman 2010, p.2).

This increase in the availability of doctoral level study for Artistic Research is largely understood by ADiE as a positive and affirmative development; supporting the development of artists, challenging expectations as to the nature of dance/performance practice and expanding the potential of art / research to reach beyond established paradigms and contexts. Yet, we know little about the way these Doctorates are experienced and understood by key stakeholders.

What we see in the surveys is that Artistic Doctorates give rise to significant challenges as artists, academics, supervisors, funders and promoters each seek to address the changing expectations and needs of practitioner researchers and understand the impact of these developments in their respective sectors.

*“Today AR is the major channel for arts to be topical, radical, progressive and truly creative”*

### ARTISTIC DOCTORAL RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY

There are a range of terms used to describe Artistic Doctoral Research. In this report we have chosen the term Artistic Research (AR) as a term that best reflects the practice as experienced across the range of countries involved in ADiE (UK, Sweden, Finland) and those who responded to the ADiE survey. However in the UK more widely, Practice-as-Research (PaR) and Practice-led Research (PIR), are terms more often used. In this report PaR is used by some respondents and may describe particular projects or research within an overall doctoral study. When referring to the programme of study undertaken by practice the term ‘Artistic Research’ (AR) or Artistic Doctorate (AD) is used. These terms are used for coherence in the report rather than an evaluation of the appropriateness or otherwise of all these terms. It is also in keeping with the title of the Erasmus+ funded project ‘Artistic Doctorates in Europe’. We are aware that there are a range of debates about these terms, however, it is not our intention to re-open those debates while being aware that the choice to refer here to AR may seem to some to be contentious.

### TARGET GROUPS AND METHODOLOGY

This report shares the findings of three surveys undertaken in the first phase of the ADiE project (Oct 2016-June 2017). Investigating current provision and industry connections the surveys focused upon gathering experiences, views and perceptions of artistic doctorates in order to identify best practices, as well as gaps and issues, in provision by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at the interface with the professional environment.

The online surveys targeted three key stakeholders groups:

- a) current and recent doctoral candidates
- b) doctoral supervisors, and
- c) the wider cultural sector, including artists, producers, promoters and other roles.

The views of these stakeholders are important. As, while much attention has been given to the status and nature of artistic work as a form of research within the academy, little consideration has been given to date as to the experiences of those undertaking and/or supporting doctoral studies, nor to assess the perceptions, and potential impact of, these studies upon the wider cultural sector.

The surveys were widely circulated through academic and arts networks, with a particular focus on UK and Scandinavia as this scope reflects the ADiE partnership. The report introduces each survey and data about the respondents and key themes emerging from the surveys. In each case there is quantitative data alongside free text comments from the survey respondents, plus some commentary to draw out the findings. The data presented is from June 2017, with a total of 185 respondents across the three surveys.



*“[Artistic research] is a way to dive deeper than the surface and it helps in finding ways to approach my work as an artist”*

## KEY FINDINGS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

What follows is a summary of the main points as drawn out from each of the surveys. These findings are elaborated in the main report with evidence of the data gathered.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CANDIDATE SURVEY:

- Completing degrees within an environment that still has too little experience of what it means to support Artistic Research projects remains a challenge, and Artistic Research environments need to be strengthened.
- Negotiating the, sometimes, contradictory expectations projected onto Artistic Doctoral projects puts pressure on candidates.
- The lack of resources (time, space, funding) in order to actually conduct practice-led elements of the research needs to be addressed.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SUPERVISOR SURVEY:

- Working in a traditionally academic environment AND believing Artistic Doctorates are important to the wider arts/cultural sector makes the supervisor’s role more complex and time consuming.
- Insufficient and inappropriate training for supervisors means that the supervision provided for candidates is of varying quality.
- Lack of resources and peer support makes supervisors feel insecure and isolated in their role.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CULTURAL SECTOR SURVEY:

- Artistic Research of high quality also needs to receive adequate support (funding etc.) outside of academic structures and their specific demands.
- A productive, mutual dialogue between the cultural sector and research communities is still underdeveloped but is welcomed and needed.
- It would be fruitful to consider the differing frameworks and conditions that exist within academia and the cultural sector.

## DATA OVERVIEW BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

What follows is a summary of survey questions and the respondent data by stakeholder group. In each case we give the total number of respondents and breakdown of this total by country / area. The country classifications used represent the ADiE partnership (UK, Finland and Sweden). As such these particular countries are therefore differentiated from other European and non-European countries in the survey.

### DATA OVERVIEW – CANDIDATE SURVEY

Total: 98 respondents

Country of respondents:

- 50 based in UK (51%)
- 11 based in Finland (11%)
- 4 based in Sweden (4%)
- 24 based in other European countries
  - Spain, Italy, Germany (24%)
- 9 based outside the EU
  - USA, NZ, Taiwan Australia, Canada (9%)

The survey asked QUESTIONS relating to:

- The candidate expectations of Artistic Doctoral programs, in relation to:
  - Their practice
  - Their career
  - The programs they become part of
- Candidate experiences of:
  - Conducting Artistic Research projects PhD programs, syllabi, courses and training.
  - Supervision and support
  - The relation to the arts sector

*“The special significance of artistic research [includes] the ethical and political implications of its radical transformation of society’s epistemological and ontological assumptions”*

## *“Creative research within a higher education context must follow agreed protocols for the design and assessment of university research”*

### DATA OVERVIEW – SUPERVISOR SURVEY

Total: 51 respondents

Country of respondents:

- 23 based in UK (45%)
- 23 based in Finland (17%)
- 9 based in Sweden (11%)
- 7 based in other European countries
  - France, Spain, Malta, Croatia (14%)
- 6 based outside the EU
  - USA, NZ, India, Australia, Canada (12%)

The survey asked QUESTIONS relating to:

- The differences between artistic and traditional doctoral supervision practices
- The importance of artistic and academic knowledge in Artistic Doctoral supervision
- The skills and training needed to supervise
- The practicalities of supervisory processes (such as how long and where supervision takes place)
- Skills and training offered and needed by candidates from the supervisors perspective

### DATA OVERVIEW – CULTURAL SECTOR SURVEY

Total: 45 respondents

Including these self-identified roles in this sector:

- 20 artists (45%)
- 19 commissioners/producers (42%)
- 6 other cultural role (13%)

Country of respondents:

- 26 based in the UK (58%)
- 9 based in Finland (20%)
- 4 based in Sweden (9%)
- 5 based in other European countries
  - Italy, Ireland, Spain (11%)
- 1 based outside the EU – USA (2%)

The survey asked QUESTIONS related to:

- The differences in research environments when found in the Higher Education and Cultural Sectors.
- Perceptions of the main characteristics of Practice as Research/Artistic Research in the Cultural Sector.
- The perceived significance of research degrees for artist development and for the cultural sector more widely

- The different types and modes of engagement and support being offered by the Cultural Sector for Artistic Doctorates
- The perceived value or significance in supporting artistic research work
- The expectations of by the Cultural Sector of individuals doing research degrees



## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESPONSES

What follows is some detailed analysis of responses to selected areas of questioning. In each case we have selected responses that reveal findings of significance in the context of each stakeholder group and point to issues that we consider will be of value to degree providers and others involved supporting and developing Artistic Doctorates.

We offer both quantitative data and typical or notable respondent voices from the free text comments in the survey. In the main we have avoided making additional commentaries on the meanings of these results and seek to allow the data to speak for itself.

*“I am more committed to what I do already with a deeper understanding of the wider implications of what I do within our society”*



## CANDIDATE RESPONSES

Overall the survey evidence shows that candidates are very positive about their experience of undertaking research degrees. Yet while they report on their programmes and training supportively, they are generally less positive about aspects such as the environments in which they work, offering critiques of the institutional systems they report upon.

It is worth noting that whilst we don't drill down into specific questions by country, as the small number of respondents in some cases mean such an approach would be meaningless, when reading the responses it is important to keep in mind that they encompass candidates' experiences in quite different national contexts and in distinctive programmes.

Even across the four Universities involved in the ADiE partnership we have noted, for example, regulatory and funding differences that significantly shape the candidate experiences. As such, when understanding the answers, note that the structures and contexts of the programmes are varied and that the economic circumstances, both when it comes to the candidate's own income and the possibility of obtaining resources for the practice, differ widely. Further, respondents may well have undertaken Artistic-related programmes at very different times (whilst still self-defining as a candidate or 'recent' graduate).

Significantly, 69% answer that their programme provides sufficient equipment and facilities for their project.

68% felt that the training or taught elements offered them sufficient support.

The candidate respondents witness that the Artistic Doctoral programmes have given them the possibility to:

DEEPEN their work

Work dedicatedly with SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

TRANSFORM their practice and way of thinking.

These are clearly important benefits of undertaking research as one respondent writes: "I am more committed to what I do already with a deeper understanding of the wider implications of what I do within our society."

Further, there is also a sense in the free text answers that candidates value the space, time and support to undertake such studies with comments such as, "I get to do it!" recognizing the privilege such experiences afford to them as individuals.

And yet the responses also evidence difficulties, especially LACK OF EXPERIENCE of Artistic Research within Higher Educational institutions. This, the data suggests, can mean that institutions are ill prepared to support and nurture candidate research in this mode. The

*"If... greater discourse between corporeal practices and textual practices can be encouraged with these degrees, maybe dance can get out of its ghetto"*

## “Artistic Research is probably the last oasis for experimental art”

evidence suggests that there is poor understanding of the time, space and resources needed for the development of artistic research and perceived limitations in the quality of the research environments offered.

This lack of experience was also voiced in relation to the mixed quality of supervisory expertise and the lack of access to transdisciplinary research discussions – which the candidates felt would be useful in supporting their projects.

The responses show that candidates experience struggles that hinder rather than develop their research, with responses including comments such as:

“No support. No Money. Bureaucracy”

“lack of studio space (...) UNDISTURBED studio space”

“lack of understanding of practice as a way of thinking and investigating”

### CANDIDATES TRAINING:

We asked candidates if they felt they had sufficient training. They answered:

Definitely Not	9%
Probably Not	19%
Probably	44%
Definitely	28%

This means that the majority of the candidates responding feel they have received enough training (72%). This is clearly a positive sign. Nevertheless, many responses also point to the lack of specialised training within artistic research.

The candidate survey reveals that **training typically** offered to candidates included the following distribution of topics (which may be required or optional seminars/courses):

Research methodology	55%
Ethics	55%
Research skills	52%
Presentation or performances	51%
Approaches to theory	37%
Professional development	22%
Plus, other topics including: Teaching and project specific topics	

However, there is a **CONTRADICTIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO PRACTICE** evident within artistic doctoral programmes. For example, on the one hand, 67% of the responding candidates think supervisors should have both embodied artistic and academic experience. On the other hand, 40% and 35% give the theoretical methodological work or the written articulation first priority when describing the most important aspect of the supervisors work. Also, most of respondents suggest that the taught elements focus on theory and methodology (with this more or less adapted to suit Artistic Research Processes according to the answers).

As a concrete example of this contradiction, it can be noted that only 14% answer that supervision takes place in the studio, the most common space for supervision being offices (74%). We might be able to surmise thereby that the majority of supervision is experienced as a verbal process, rather than in embodied and performative modes. This might be experienced as a further reinforcement of the stated emphasis on verbal and written articulations within the doctoral training of respondents.

We asked candidates about the importance of the **relationship between the work undertaken in the Artistic Doctorate and the Cultural Sector**.

## “Struggle to find the balance between academic language and language that ‘suits’ the dissemination of creative material”

Respondents said that this was,

Extremely important	40%
Very important	38%
Moderately important	15%
Slightly important	6%
Not at all important	2%

It is clear from this data that the vast majority of candidates think public/professional engagement with the cultural sector and artistic research is important. However, in contrast specific attention towards professional development and public engagement within programs appear to be lacking. That said, candidates also remark that; “I did not seek this out”, “I’m already well established [as an artist]” (and therefore within the cultural sector) and, “I’m a mature student so this does not really apply”. As such we see a mixed picture as to professional/public engagement in Artistic Doctorates wherein the links between sectors is clearly seen as important, yet training is neither offered, nor in these respondents comments, particularly desired. Others do refer to “professional development” but tend to locate this as development for professions within Higher education institutions and training is provided in this area.

**Managing the gap between sectors and across discourses**, the responses show that many candidates experience a shift between the cultural sector and the higher education environment which forces them

to try and find a balance between different systems, priorities and discourses. They write about “struggle” and “feeling torn” in negotiating different expectations. They express tensions between theory and practice, practice in the profession vs practice in research and between the different language registers their work requires: “Struggle to find the balance between academic language and language that “suits” the dissemination of creative material.”

“Feeling torn between developing professional creative practice – with a necessary focus upon the research question(s).”

“Uniting/switching from practice to writing modes or trying to work in tandem.”

“External factors (production means, rehearsals, venues) will demand engagements that generate unbalance between the focus given to the artistic practice and focus given to reading and writing.”

From the candidates’ answers, it is also evident that **economy and resources** constitute a source of struggle or anxiety for many. This is likely to be especially the case for self-funded candidates who have even more difficulties getting the Doctorate-life puzzle to function. They are also more exposed to the clashes that occur between higher education structures and the cultural sector. Even funded candidates struggle with the question of how to finance

their creative practice, as higher education systems may not provide such funding, and obtaining it within the cultural sector may in some cases be more difficult if one is simultaneously undertaking an educational qualification.

We asked questions of the candidates in order to understand **their perception of the significance of Artistic Research**. We felt this was important as the candidates are in the midst of the wider discussions that continue to take place about what constitutes Artistic Research and why it is significant. Their responses were illuminating, suggesting that for them the significance of Artistic Research stretch from the idealistic to the rather more cynical:

“Artistic Research is probably the last oasis for experimental art”

TO

“this seems to me more an economical system than anything else”

Further, they see potential in these notable aspects:

“If ... greater discourse between corporeal practices and textual practices can be encouraged with these degrees, maybe dance can get out of its ghetto”

“bridging the gap between the artistic community and the audience”

“acknowledging the human being as a whole.”

*“The supervisor must have the foresight to see how this unique methodology will work and what is needed to develop further”*

## SUPERVISOR RESPONSES

When understanding the supervisors answers it is important to keep in mind, that due to the relatively recent emergence of these degrees, many that are now supervising may not have themselves have undertaken either an Artistic Doctorate or a traditional PhD, because these programmes were not available at the time of their study. Further, those that have undertaken their own Artistic Research (or related) programmes will have done so at a specific time in the development of these degrees within the Academy. These experiences will often inform their current expectations.

We also note that the sample size is relatively small and distribution of respondents was predominantly UK based supervisors, which, given the larger provision available in the UK, is perhaps not surprising but this will colour the data. Further, the responses will most likely reflect the structure and context of the programme including economic, administrative and management support.

Overall **supervisors are very positive about Artistic Doctorates but all found areas that need further developments.** They affirm the potential and importance of these degrees to both individuals and the wider development of the cultural sector in the following:

We asked if these programmes are important for the development of artists:  
 42% responded ‘probably yes’  
 33% responded ‘definitely yes’  
 4% responded ‘no’

We also asked if these programmes are important for the development of the cultural sector:  
 41% responded ‘probably yes’  
 39% responded ‘definitely yes’  
 2% responded ‘no’

**The role and skills of the supervisor:** In the survey we asked questions relating to **the important skills and areas of knowledge in supervision.** It might be that the supervisor role can be understood to help candidates in the development of unique practice, theoretical framework and final articulation style specific to the individual.

When asked: What skills does the supervisor of Artistic Research need to achieve this? In response supervisors stated they are involved with:

“detailed consideration of the practice and this leads to a unique methodology which influences the forms of dissemination”



## *“Sometimes I feel like I’m ‘winging it’ and it is quite isolating”*

“Because candidates often need to define their academic/theoretical context, they lose confidence in their practice, the supervisor has to help hold both of these and find ways to clarify the value and knowledge in the practice”

“Skill in guiding the candidate to find the best mode for the articulation of their practice”

“As each candidate is unique, no one methodology or approach is viable so the supervisor must have the foresight to see how this unique methodology will work and what is needed to develop further”

These skills circulate around how candidates are supported to design and articulate their practice within the research context. In order to do this 72% of the supervisors responding felt it was important to have knowledge and experience of BOTH EMBODIED ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC APPROACHES and appropriate theoretical knowledge to be able to supervise.

Yet on the other hand, a PRIMARY and evident concern for the supervisors (and the candidates) is the difficulty in developing a unique methodological approach, theoretical frame and the ability to articulate the unique knowledge in research (rather than for instance, developing the artistic work itself). Thereby, as seen in the candidate survey, there is a CONTRADICTIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO PRACTICE.

Exploring the role of supervisors further, it is clear that supervisors are helping candidates to navigate the University systems and procedures, whilst also supporting the individual artistic project. In order to do this they note that they draw on:

- Shared skills and expertise between student and supervisors
- Knowledge of the University systems and procedures
- Knowledge of research area (rather than only the specific topic)
- Knowledge of artistic processes
- Interpersonal skills - generosity, patience, open mindedness
- Ability to guide students through a praxis and help articulate the tacit knowledge

Being able to operate across these territories suggest complex engagements. Yet, whilst the majority of respondents described themselves at the opening of the survey as either moderately, or very, experienced supervisors, they also comment on their own LACK OF EXPERIENCE. This is perhaps exacerbated by their view that there is a lack of understanding about Artistic Research within the Higher Education institutions and the LACK OF TRAINING for supervisors, and in particular a lack of training that focus on artistic degrees.

When asked if they had sufficient training they answered:

Probably not enough	40%
Definitely not enough	8%
Probably enough	28%
Probably yes	24%

This means that 48% feel they have not had enough training. This figure can also been seen in the context of 47% of supervisors stating they had received NO TRAINING before starting to supervise. Typical responses include a sense of isolation in the process of supervision and point toward the unhelpful generality of the supervisor training that is offered:

“Sometimes I feel like I’m ‘winging it’ and it is quite isolating”

“It can be a lonely experience being a PhD supervisor and I do often question whether I am guiding a student in the right way given that there is little feedback or evaluation along the way.”

And on supervisor training:

“On the whole, Training sessions tend to be too general (a ‘one size’ approach designed to be delivered at University”

“There was no training. There was one session where they talked about the management chain in the leading institution.”

## *“Training is more focused towards building a ‘traditional’ academic career (not necessarily as an artist within academia)”*

Respondents stated that **skill development and training for supervisors might usefully include:**

- working closely with, or observing, other experienced supervisors
- peer to peer support
- specific PaR supervision seminars
- undertaking their own Artistic Doctorate

We were interested to know about the **environment and resources** offered to and needed by supervisors. Respondents suggested that Artistic Doctoral Supervisors would find the following useful to support their work.

- Resources/Archives
- Peer support/opportunities
- Networking/sharing across the within sectors
- Review of systems

### COMMENTS BY SUPERVISORS ON TRAINING FOR CANDIDATES:

The variety of supervisors comments suggest a range of practices across institutions from a lack of training for Artistic Research at Doctoral level to extensive programmes of support for the developing artist. Here we focus on the comments relating to the development of artist researchers in terms of engagement with the professional arts sector. Supervisors evidence the differences in provision:

‘At MA level there’s lots of things going on [for professional development], but as I understand, not that much is being discussed about the career development of doctoral students’

“the usual training is more focused towards building a ‘traditional’ academic career (not necessarily as an artist within academia)”

In contrast a comparatively comprehensive model is evident in the following:

‘They receive training in grant applications, in international conference presentations in publishing artistic research, in various creative and physical practices. They are obliged to participate in or self-arrange seminars and events in artistic research. They can attend seminars and courses on how to apply for funding and professional development.’

### ENGAGING WITH THE CULTURAL SECTOR:

We asked supervisors about the importance of the relationship between Artistic Doctorates and the Cultural Sector. Respondents said that this was:

Extremely or very important	51%
Moderately important	44%
Slightly or not at all important	4%

As with the candidate survey, we see the vast majority of supervisors think the intersection between public/professional engagement and artistic research is important however, only one respondent named training events specific to professional development. However supervisors did note that candidates are often already professional artists so do not need training in this area and also that training in this area often is provided in professional sector networks. Also (perhaps in contrast), supervisors commented on the pressing need to focus on the academic skills development.

*“We are training artists to see their work in a broader context and asking questions about the relationships between art/dance and its contexts, which they will feed into their professional work”*

#### THE PERCEIVED SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH:

75% of supervisor respondents’ consider Artistic Research to be important or probably important to the development of artists and the Cultural Sector.

In alignment with the candidates’ responses on this topic, supervisors propose that the significances can be found in the benefits to the individual, noting: “We are training artists to see their work in a broader context and asking questions about the relationships between art/dance and its contexts, which they will feed into their professional work”.

Reaching beyond the individual benefit to the arts and performance sectors as a whole, others comment that significance is found in the creation of “new understanding and new formulations of art has an impact on how art is practiced and how it is understood in the wider arts and cultural sector”. Similarly, another respondent suggests that; ‘Artistic research pursues the avant-gardist, political, ethical, pedagogical and theoretical tendencies the contemporary art would otherwise have hard, if not impossible, to do. Today AR is the major channel for arts to be topical, radical, progressive and truly creative”.

While, focusing on both the significance and means, we see: ‘These degrees give time, space, depth, food, community, challenges, development and inspiration to artist-researchers who throughout their research programmes and beyond contribute significantly to the development of artists and the wider sector - by creating and curating events, by discussing work, by publishing, by giving feedback, by engaging with work’.

ON THE OTHER HAND, whilst only 2% felt Artistic Research was definitely not significant to the development of artists and the Cultural Sector, comments such as: ‘The degree probably gives credence to the students in their own eyes rather than from the wider cultural sector” should not be overlooked. Speaking as it does to a potential problem for graduating candidates and the still uncertain value of these degrees in some contexts.

**In summary, and looking to the future of Artistic Doctorates, respondent’s offer some concrete proposals:**

**Reconsidering the requirements, structure and delivery of these degrees by perhaps,**

- Developing a more structured approach to developing and defining practice, with more time in a ‘studio’

- Reconsidering the nature and support for the written element, with proposals for removing the expectation for a written component (and ADiE are aware of examples of this option in operation)
- Undertaking group supervisions/creative labs
- Development of research methods specifically for Artistic candidates
- Overhaul of examination system
- More detailed development of research methodologies

**Developing better outward connectivity for supervisors and candidates by perhaps,**

- More networking across disciplines
- Closer ties with professional artistic field
- Offering ‘Student sharing days’ across institutions
- More models of successful practice

*“Outside of the institution (outside HE) it can be less secure, but potentially more responsive to the market for dance”*

## CULTURAL SECTOR RESPONSES

The cultural sector respondents are a mixed group in terms of their role within and relationship to doctoral research across the three surveys undertaken. They are, potentially, the least directly affected by the work of Artistic Research and could represent perspectives that have been the least heard in academic debates.

It should be noted that many respondents of this survey also identified as being either a supervisor of Artistic Research or a Doctoral candidate themselves. This may suggest something about how the individual identifies themselves or about how the survey was marketed. The important factor is that those who responded to this survey will have some interest in responding and so those in the cultural sector with no interest or understanding of Artistic Research or Doctoral studies are potentially not represented in this survey. Correspondingly, when asking this group: Do you have experience in artistic work when framed as research?

Of a total of 43 respondents 39 (91%) answered “Yes” or “Somewhat” and only 4 (9%) answered “No”. When looking only at the respondents from Finland and Sweden 0% answered “No”.

These percentages are potentially evidence of the relevance of Artistic Research beyond University contexts, and may reflect the specific data set generated by the respondents (as mentioned above).

In what follows the **key topics** discussed encompass, understandings of Artistic Research, the differences in research in Higher Education (HE) and professional or culture sector contexts, the expectations of Artist Researchers and, as with the other surveys, the perceived significance of these degrees and artistic research more broadly.

These topics were chosen on the basis of the following premises:

1. Contextualizes how the respondents understand the main topic of the survey.
2. Is the theme where the respondents made most comment, particularly insight on how to bridge perceived gaps between academic and cultural sectors.
3. points to issues AD should provide as well as potential benefits that AR provides more generally.
4. offers insight into how Artistic Research is considered as a means to develop and challenge artists, art-making and the cultural sector more broadly.



## *“The relationship between cultural sector and education sector is vital to both”*

### UNDERSTANDINGS OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH EVIDENT IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR:

Responses suggest that they think Artistic Research,

- Offers time, space and funding to produce knowledge on art making.
- Relates to practice as a form of knowledge production, involves embodied investigation, creative production, reflection and documentation.
- Involves interdisciplinary inquiry, the intertwining of practice and theory, verbal articulation, novel forms of dissemination and dialogue between artistic and academic communities.
- Produces unexpected outcomes contributing to the arts and other fields.

Here are a few comments describing the Artistic Research by the cultural sector:

“Mix of practical and intellectual ideas to be tested ... opportunities for debate and dialogue between artistic and academic communities.”

“To arrive somewhere unexpected”

“Innovation, exploring new avenues, viewing issues/problems/questions from a dance perspective, experiential learning/teaching, discovering, uncovering.”

“Embodied investigation”

Respondents describe Artistic Research as an encompassing endeavor that operates in relation to several disciplines and contexts. They also suggest that artistic research can have the potential to renew more general and conventional understandings of knowledge. One respondent writes:

“I consider that the main characteristics of artistic research are [the] interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary nature of it. Also collaboration is an important part of it and it also creates new knowledge and helps to understand practice as research more deeply. It makes artistic knowledge more rooted and stable. It is a way to dive deeper than the surface and it helps in finding ways to approach my work as an artist. Also internationality is one of the main characteristics of artistic research.”

And another notes:

“the special significance of artistic research [includes] the ethical and political implications of its radical transformation of society’s epistemological and ontological assumptions.”

We asked the cultural sector:

**Do you believe creative research undertaken in a higher education context to be different from that undertaken in other cultural or professional contexts?**

From a total of 44 respondents, 42 (95%) individuals answered “Yes” or “Somewhat”.

The mix of voices in the cultural sector survey suggested that these **noted differences** focus around...

... different FRAMEWORKS  
which in turn offer  
different CONDITIONS for conducting research

The different conditions can be seen to encompass – finance, infrastructure, format, language, documentation, community, influence and impact. These factors guide artistic research, creating distinct pressures, aims, and influence how artistic research is expressed.

The main supposition of respondents was that academia requires analysis, original premise, and identifiable and documentable outcomes whereas in cultural industries the focus is on the artistic interest, production, market and audience.

## *“Differences arise because of ... different frameworks rather than as a result of the artist’s practice or approach to research”*

Overall the cultural sector survey revealed that one of the major differences between the cultural sector and Higher Education is the CONTEXT itself, with one respondent putting it this way: “ a lot of the differences arise because of these different frameworks rather than as a result of the artist’s practice or approach to research.”

The ACTUAL PRACTICES are considered similar in both realms but less research might take place in the professional sector because there is less time afforded to these processes within a production house context.

In the midst of differences between Artistic Research in Higher Education and the professional context there are COMMON FEATURES, including: rootedness in practice, shared creative approaches for creating new art works as research.

The different conditions in both contexts create distinct pressures, aims, and influence how artistic research is presented. Artistic Research in HE is considered to be surrounded by norms and procedures, leaning towards theory, context and teaching. For example: “Creative research within a higher education context must follow agreed protocols for the design and assessment of university research.”

Other differences include support of finance, community and advice. In the professional context the artist makes an individual journey whilst

in Higher Education there exist conversations with the teaching staff and other students. Differences are described as focusing either on new ideas (in Higher Education) or leaning towards production (in the Cultural Sector). The production orientation is understood to focus more on audiences and the market: “Outside of the institution (outside HE) it can be less secure, but potentially more responsive to the market for dance.”

### EXPECTATIONS OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND RESEARCHERS:

The cultural sector expected that Doctoral work undertaken in practice would encompass:

- comprehensive investigations, rigorous processes, academic enquiry, considered use of resources, the production of new work, active dissemination of research.
- a self-critical approach, investigation with curiosity, passion, openness to feedback, fearless experiments.
- an interdisciplinary perspective on art and approach to research in order to produce new understanding.
- Outlooks on artists as researchers relate to commitment and acumen, and that the research will be critical, involving encompassing dialogues with bodies of knowledge and cultural contexts.

Respondents noted that:

“One needs to have a determination to focus on a long process, which essentially has lots of unprecedented and unknown results. It requires discipline and a good research plan.”

“In depth enquiry that considers multiple perspectives.”

“To discuss and share ideas, practice and outcomes. To consider these in the broader market for dance. To acknowledge this support.”

### THE PERCEIVED SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTISTIC DOCTORATES:

As evident in all the surveys, the vast majority (93 %) of cultural sector respondents considered Artistic Doctorates to be relevant to the future development of the arts/cultural sector.

The ways in which the respondents understand themselves to be supporting artistic research were listed as: production support and promotion, recommendations to others, funding, residencies, rehearsal space, advice, mentoring and involvement in supervision.

*“I question whether most academics ... are as invested in bringing the most interesting, challenging practice to an audience”*

Respondents proposed that:

ARTISTIC DOCTORATES:

- offer a constructive framework, financial and intellectual support
- allow for background study, foster artistic growth, broaden approaches, offer qualification, support innovations, support access to academic positions
- rigorous and experimental investigations, supporting art’s contributions to society more generally

They also note CHALLENGES, with the following being particularly significant:

- Artistic Research degrees can act as a restrictive boundary
- pressure to validate “artistic labour as intellectual labour”
- risk distraction from “core making”
- divorced from the art market

These challenges are evident in the extensive number of comments that discussed collaboration, dialogues and networks between academia, public, audience, and artists doing Artistic Research. Such dialogues and connections to audiences are seen as important in broadening the perspective and relevance of artistic research, and the importance of making it more outward facing. The potential and risks are encompassed in this response: “When degrees are associated with cultural partners - as I’ve seen with Globe, Tate, Duckie - I find that the outputs are more aligned with professional arts/ cultural sector. Without this, the academic work and PaR doesn’t seem as outward facing as I would like, or relevant to the development of the arts generally.” It is clear that the framework of a research degree is not always wholly enabling, they can act as a restrictive boundary and that academic artistic research can be alienating. Several answers (4) considered research degrees as not significant for the development and support of artistic work. Research degrees risk distraction from “core making” and “disconnection from wider culture and society” if not regularly reviewed, for as one respondent writes:

“... I question whether most academics (or people engaged fully in the academy) are as invested in bringing the most interesting, challenging practice to an audience. For me, audience is always key to the creation of effective and meaningful artwork, and without this, artwork often lacks relevance.”

ON THE OTHER HAND, Artistic Research fosters structured development in future arts by challenging and extending the understanding of both art and research. It was noted that the interaction enhances the quality of the performing arts and develops pioneering hybrid art forms such as circus.

Research degrees were also understood to support artists in developing creative and critical positions that can question (the instrumentalisation) of the arts offering, “a way of developing an institutional critique” and allowing for the self-recognition of an artist’s work as a “body of knowledge”. It was similarly noted that research degrees could offer validation, acceptance and approval of artistic work in a way that might positively spread into the wider society. It might also positively affect decisions by funders and producers. The potential to foster dialogue and partnerships between researchers and practitioners, was noted along with requests for “robust data and evidence for the value of the arts on wider policy areas”. This evidence is important for as this respondent notes; “The relationship between cultural sector and education sector is vital to both. The research projects provide a point of confluence that allows artists to recognise their work as both a mode of research and a body of knowledge”.

## SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

“Artistic research is a crucial part of the future of academia...[I]f the university is going to serve the next stages of human society, we need to continue to develop robust and transformative practices...”

Artistic Doctorates are valued and the benefits understood by candidates, supervisors and the wider cultural sector. The significance of these programs is, in large part, in the self-development of candidates. Stakeholders also perceive that they also have a role in the enhancement of the professional field and to art form development. There is a sense however that the full potential of the Artistic Doctorate is going unrealized. Enhancements to the support, delivery and connectivity of these degrees would help lock the potential benefits.

*“We need to continue to develop robust and transformative practices...”*

Areas in need of attention are:


There is ongoing tension between embodied artistic processes and those found in conventional academic work. These tensions continue to need attention in the development and delivery of Artistic Research methodologies and tools would assist artist researchers and supervisors.

Artistic Doctorates needs adequate support within and without academic structures. The lack of resources (time, space, funding) needs to be addressed.

Candidates and supervisors need sufficient and appropriate training and Artistic Research environments in Higher Education need to be strengthened to ensure high quality outcomes.

A productive, mutual dialogue between the cultural sector and research communities is still underdeveloped but is welcomed and needed. To develop this dialogue it would be fruitful to consider the differing frameworks and conditions that exist within academia and the cultural sector.





[www.artisticdoctorates.com](http://www.artisticdoctorates.com)  
[info@artisticdoctorates.com](mailto:info@artisticdoctorates.com)

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