

## **Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) Music Division, Wits School of Arts**

### **Information for Applicants**

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The PhD degree is a postgraduate degree that can be undertaken full-time or part-time. This degree can be by research only or by creative work with a research component. Traditionally, the creative work has taken the form of music performance or composition. But the PhD also allows for work in other areas such as, but not limited to, arrangement or a combination of transcription, analysis and performance.

The PhD by research only consists of a written thesis. The PhD by creative work and research consists of the creative work and a written research thesis that is related to the creative work.

Before research and writing commences for the degree, the student will be required to submit a proposal within six months after their first registration (part-time students have twelve months in which to submit this document). The length of the proposal should be between 8 000 and 10 000 words. Once the proposal is accepted by the Faculty of Humanities work begins on the dissertation. See the Faculty's Graduate Studies Handbook document for further information.

#### Admission criteria

Applicants for the PhD must typically have graduated with a master's degree in music, *having specialised in the area in which they tend to do the creative work*, if applicable. Typically, the PhD in creative work has been pursued by early- or mid-career professionals rather than by recent graduates.

Applications from candidates for the PhD are considered by the PhD sub-committee of the Wits School of Arts Graduate Studies Committee before the application is forwarded to the Faculty for approval. The committee will assess the candidate's ability to produce work on a PhD level. More particularly, the committee will assess whether the proposed creative work is likely to be accepted as accomplished work in its own right.

In addition:

- a) Applicants who tend to pursue performance in the PhD will be required to perform an audition consisting of at least three different works of a combined duration of 20 minutes for a panel. Applicants who wish to pursue creative work under the rubric of composition will be required to present a portfolio consisting of three different samples of original work with a combined duration of 20 minutes; the applicant should have had public performances of some of his/her compositions.
- b) Applicants who have not recently completed their master's degrees (within the last five years) may be required to present a sample of writing and/or successfully complete, as a co-requisite, a research methodology course within the University; a co-requisite course is not part of the PhD itself, but in addition to it.

## Application

Applicants should, in the first instance, initiate discussion of their proposed plans for the research or creative work and research with relevant Wits Music staff. See the Wits School of Arts website for staff and their contact details:

<http://wsoa.wits.ac.za/music/staff/>.

Once it has been established that there is supervisory expertise within the area of creative work the applicant wishes to pursue, the applicant should complete a Faculty of Humanities Application for Postgraduate Study form, obtainable from the Wits School of Arts' postgraduate administrator Mrs Sao Mendes

(Sao.Mendes@wits.ac.za, 011 717 4617), or apply online:

<http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/>. In addition, *as an attachment to the form, applicants should include a concept document or preliminary proposal outlining their intended creative work and research.*

If applicable, applicants may have to fulfill one or more of the requirements detailed in the Admission section above. Candidates will be informed of this once their application has been processed by Faculty.

## Registration

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. If a candidate is accepted to the degree they may register either at the start of the academic year, in January/February, or mid-year, in July.

The typical period of registration for the PhD for a full-time candidate is three years, and four years part-time.

## Fees

The fee of the PhD in 2016 is approximately R20 000 per annum (full-time) and R13 000 (part-time) per annum. Financial assistance and scholarships are available—please see the following website for more information:

<http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/student-finance/>

## Supervision

The PhD is a research degree that is undertaken through supervision, which includes performance lessons for performance candidates, rather than formal taught courses. Notwithstanding this, and depending on the nature of the creative work and the intake of candidates, there may from time to time be seminar-type classes, attendance at and participation in which will be compulsory.

The nature of the PhD with the creative work component implies that most candidates will need more than one supervisor. The School will only accept candidates for whom a suitable supervisor(s) are available and will attempt to involve expertise from other divisions within the School or from outside the University where necessary. In the case of co-supervision one of the supervisors will be appointed as primary supervisor.

### Expectations of the thesis (by research only)

On doctoral level, the work should demonstrate competencies in a number of areas. These include the presentation of a clearly stated research question or problem which has the potential to deliver an original contribution to the field and a detailed literature review incorporating evidence that the student has read widely and applied a critical approach not only to the literature surrounding the topic, but also to how this literature is situated in the field in general. The methodology section will need to demonstrate a reflective approach to and understanding of the research conducted and the student should be prepared to collect a wider range of data in comparison to that expected at master's level. The research analysis and interpretation should contribute a new and original synthesis and the conclusion should contain a sophisticated and complex evaluation of the dissertation's findings.

### Relationship between creative work and thesis

There must be a coherent relationship between the creative work and the thesis. This does not necessarily mean that the thesis must be a direct commentary on the creative work. It must, however, serve to contextualise the creative work critically.

By way of example, in the field of performance the candidate may choose to write a thesis containing an analysis of the compositions that are performed and/or a critical commentary on previous performances. The research could focus on one or more of the following: a critical exploration of the history, theory and practice of the creative work; the development and creative application of new materials and technologies; the relationship between the performing arts and society; and the relationship between the performing arts and other disciplines.

Depending on the nature of the project, and taking into consideration examiners' competencies, the creative work and thesis may be examined separately or as an integrated whole.

In the Research Proposal as well as the thesis the candidate must demonstrate how the scholarly work informs and elucidates the creative work.

### Scope of the creative work

The appropriate scope of the creative work is, in the first instance, discussed with the supervisor(s). This is then tabled for further discussion by Music staff. Finally, it is outlined in the Research Proposal, for approval by the Faculty.

Guidelines include the following. In the field of performance, candidates will typically perform three 70-minute recitals in an appropriate and approved performance venue (noted in the Research Proposal), within or without the University. In the area of composition, candidates typically present a portfolio of work of approximate duration of 90 minutes composed during the period of registration. Note: If the candidate's creative work is presented outside the University or uses human and/or non-human resources beyond those available within the University, the cost of such is borne by the candidate.

### Scope of the thesis

By research only: the length of the thesis should be between 75 000 and 85 000 words.

By research and creative work: the length of the thesis should be between 30 000 and 40 000 words.

### Submission of creative work

In some instances, for example in the field of performance, a PhD candidate will have to present part of the creative work in public at the University (such as at a lunch-hour concert or at a “combined practical”), to assess readiness of the work for examination.

All creative work forming part of the PhD must be submitted in the form of retainable documentation – video recordings, audio recordings, scores, transcriptions, and other appropriate visual and audio forms of documentation. In order to avoid any dispute around this matter, the Research Proposal must indicate for approval what documentation would be submitted.

### Submission of doctoral work

The deadline date for degree work submissions is mid-February. Students will need to complete the required forms and obtain written permission and approval from the supervisor before submitting the work.

### Annual report

It is important to meet regularly with your supervisor and draw up a schedule that suits your particular study. You will also be expected to submit an annual report to your supervisor which outlines the progress you have made and your plans for the next registration period.