



Guidelines for PHD Submissions

All PhD submissions within the School of Performing Arts (SPA) are to follow the norms detailed in these guidelines alongside the [University of Malta PhD Regulations \(2023\)](#) and the [PhD bye-laws of the School of Performing Arts \(2024\)](#).¹

1. PHD SUBMISSIONS

PhD: a thesis of 80,000–100,000 words, excluding endnotes/footnotes, list of references, appendices, abstract, and preliminary material

PhD by Practice as Research:

- (i) a presentation of practice that consists of a substantial work, such as a performance or concert, a technical/work demonstration, an installation/exhibition or a durational work, a play script, a portfolio of compositions or of stage/light/sound designs, a film, or a combination of these and other media or disciplines. The practical work must be documented in relevant and retainable forms such as video/digital recordings, music scores or theatre scripts or dance notations, photographic evidence, or a combination of these. The work may or may not involve the student as performer but must be entirely the student's work.

And

- ii) a thesis of 30,000–50,000 words, excluding endnotes/footnotes, list of references, appendices, abstract, and preliminary material. The thesis will contextualise and expound analytically upon the submitted practice in relation to the key research issue, question, or problem as well as the chosen methodologies and processes undertaken.

2. PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL

Students are to submit all materials related to the examination of their PhD, including the thesis, in a digital format. This also applies to Practice as Research submissions except where certain artefacts like portfolios or design models are concerned.

For written material including the thesis, SPA follows the [MHRA Style Guide](#) for text conventions, referencing (as per the 'Citation by the Author–Date System', see MHRA Style Guide, Section 11.4, p. 78), and all other format matters. Students should in the first instance refer to the '[SPA Referencing and Text Conventions](#)'. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with this style early on to adopt it when writing drafts related to their PhD. The following order should be followed in the thesis:

- (a) Title-page (see template at the end of this document)
- (b) Abstract

¹ Nothing in the content of these Guidelines takes precedence over the [University of Malta PhD Regulations \(2023\)](#) and the [PhD bye-laws of the School for Performing Arts \(2024\)](#) which may be subject to amendment.

- (c) Dedication (if any)
- (d) Table of Contents
- (e) List of illustrations (figures, maps, plates, in that order)
- (f) Acknowledgements (if any)
- (g) List of abbreviations and/or glossary if necessary to an understanding of the text; otherwise the glossary may be placed towards the end, before the references list
- (h) Text of Thesis
- (i) Appendix or appendices (if applicable)
- (j) Endnotes (for the whole text) if applicable and if preferred over footnotes
- (k) List of References or Bibliography

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the implications of plagiarism and of the University's policy on the matter. See ['How to avoid plagiarism' and 'Plagiarism Screening Policy for Dissertations-Theses'](#).

For PhDs by Practice as Research, the presentation of practice should be guided by sections 1 and 4 of this document.

3. TRANSFER FROM MPhil TO PHD

At their MPhil-to-PhD transfer stage, students are expected to submit:

- (a) an abstract, inclusive of aims and methodology;
- (b) the equivalent of at least two chapters of the entire thesis (14,000–20,000 words);
- (c) a chapter-outline of the thesis alongside a schedule for its completion.

In the case of Practice as Research this shall involve:

- (a) an abstract, inclusive of aims and methodology;
- (b) the equivalent of at least one chapter of the entire thesis (5,000–8,000 words);
- (c) documented evidence of the ongoing practical research accompanied by a written articulation of the process (2,000–4,000 words) – the documented evidence will entail curated material as appropriate to the project, e.g. audio-visual material for performance-oriented practices (to be shared on the University's google drive and/or a pen drive) and curated portfolio material for other practices (e.g. script-writing, composition, design);
- (d) a chapter-outline of the thesis alongside a schedule for its completion that also includes the final presentation of practice vis-à-vis PhD Regulation 43.3 (i.e. 'The presentation of formally examinable practice shall not normally be more than one calendar year in advance of the final written submission').

4. PHD EXAMINATION

Further to the relevant items in the [University of Malta PhD Regulations \(2023\)](#) that govern the examination of PhD theses, the examination of a PhD by Practice as Research consists of:

- (a) the presentation of the approved practice (at least one year in advance of the final written submission, or two years if part-time);
- (b) documentation in a relevant and retainable form of the submitted practice as well as a curated selection of documentation of the process (both accessed by the examiners via a University of Malta google drive link and/or a pen drive submitted along with the thesis);
- (c) a thesis;
- (d) an oral defence of the thesis that necessarily also involves the practice.

Depending on the nature of the project and its exigencies, the presentation of practice can take different forms, including as an audio-visual recording of an event. Reasons for this may include work with sensitive audiences (as in the case of Applied Performance), durational projects that require a curated selection of materials (as in the case of technical workshops spanning several days or weeks), and site-specific events and/or venues (including community projects and locations not in Malta). In such cases, a hybrid format where the student frames the audio-visual material (to be shared and viewed previously) in a live setting with the examiners is recommended. The liveness of such presentations can be in person or online depending on the exigencies of the project and as approved on a case-by-case basis by the Doctoral Academic Committee via the recommendation of the School Doctoral Committee and the Principal Supervisor.

All expenses related to the written and documentation materials required for PhD submissions (mainly, but not exclusively, the thesis and any video recordings, portfolios and pen drives) will be borne by the student.

5. PHD FEES

Information about the applicable fees for UM PhD degrees, which include by Practice as Research, can be found on the [UM website](#).

For purposes of clarity, the fees for SPA PhDs by Practice as Research cover the use of University spaces (including its standard technical and administrative support) for training and rehearsal purposes as well as for the final assessed event (such as a performance). Although SPA will seek to facilitate access to the requested University space/s, these are subject to availability, hence the importance of prior planning and early booking.

PhD fees do not cover (1) the renting of non-UM spaces, (2) the remuneration of performers, designers, or any other additional staff, or (3) the purchase of equipment, instruments, software, costumes, and other materials. The final assessed event may be open to the public, especially if the presence of an audience is part of the research. In such instances, the public may be charged an attendance fee subject to normal procedures and that this be administered by the student.

In the case of a resubmission of the practice, all production and examination costs except for the use of a UM space (always subject to availability) will be incurred by the student. Where appropriate, and to mitigate any expenses relating to an extra visit by the external examiner, a hybrid format as detailed in section 4 is recommended.

6. PRACTICALITIES

- (a) It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that ethics clearance is obtained as early as possible to facilitate the practice, especially in view of the presentation of the examinable practice (see 4a).
- (b) On successful completion of their studies, students are required to submit to their Department one hard bound copy of the thesis and one digital copy within six weeks from the publication of their result. In the case of Practice as Research submissions, the hard bound submission shall include a pen drive with an audio/visual record of the practice plus any other relevant materials and documentation. Students should also submit a digital copy to the UM Library via the VLE task. Students who do not comply with this requirement shall not be awarded the Degree.

Dancing with Words: Investigating Music as a Tool for Performer Training

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A thesis submitted in *partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy *by Practice as Research* in ***** Studies

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