



## HDK-VALAND – ACADEMY OF ART AND DESIGN

# Applying for doctoral studies in Design

Date: 02/07/2021  
Reference number: PAR 2021/955  
Recipient: Applicants  
Administrator: Anna Frisk

## Guidance notes

### 1. What is a doctorate?

A doctoral degree is the entry-level qualification for a future research career. It is a certification by the University that the bearer has demonstrated the ability to conceive, develop, implement, document, explain and evaluate a research project.

The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, which is the law governing university degrees, says that a “Degree of Doctor is awarded after the third-cycle student has completed a study programme of at least 240 credits in a subject in which third-cycle teaching is offered”.

The doctoral training at HDK-Valand includes mandatory participation in a series of seminar courses, participation in Gothenburg University’s pedagogical course, and an expectation to teach for a maximum of 20% of your contracted time.

### 2. How to write your doctoral proposal

Your proposal should cover a maximum of six numbered pages (plus bibliography and illustrations), using Arial font, size 11, with single line spacing and 2.5cm margins. Please include your name, the project title, and the subject you are applying to in the document header. Use non-specialist language or give your definitions of terms where necessary: the proposal will be read by people outside your immediate discipline.

The main text should comprise the following sections:

i. Abstract (no more than 1500 characters including spaces)

The abstract should be a clear summary of what you propose to research (your question and aims), how you propose to do it (your methods) and why it is important to do this work.

## ii. Research Plan

This is where project is described in detail. Use the following sub-headings:

### Purpose of the proposed research

Specify what you hope your research will achieve. What are you trying to find out that is not already known? You should be able to organise your research around a clear question or problem, and to list the aims of the project.

#### – Theoretical context and approach

Describe the theoretical approach you will take to addressing your question or problem. You should refer to the disciplines that study the question / problem you wish to study, and describe what work has been done or is being done that is relevant to your project. Where the project draws on work from various disciplines, describe how you plan to integrate these in your research.

#### - Practical research methods

How will you select or innovate artistic research methods that are appropriate for your project? In what ways are these methods necessary to pursue this project? How are the artistic methods articulated in the context of your theoretical approach? Give brief details of your relevant experience in the methods you plan to use.

#### - Significance of the proposed research

Why is this project of importance? Describe the gap in current knowledge, including thinking around practice. What potential impact will your project have, in terms of producing new knowledge, new theoretical and / or practical approaches, and avenues for future research?

## iii. Equipment / resources

If you know of any particular resources that you will need to do this project, please describe them. These might include equipment, people with specialist expertise or knowledge, or access to particular archives.

## iv. Schedule

Give a suggested time plan for the project. This will inevitably be more detailed in the earlier stages – describe what you hope to achieve first, in order to define the shape of the later stages of the project. Include the points at which you expect to complete different parts of your project. You can attach a supplementary time chart to map the development of the project if you wish. Bear in mind that you will be required to present a seminar on your project at the 25%, 50% and 80% stages, before your final public defence; and that as a PhD student you are usually expected to teach in the unit with which you are associated, up to a total of 20% of your employed time.

## v. Relevance to the research project Artificial Intelligence, the Social Contract and Democracy

State why your project is relevant to the research project. How does your research fit within the project terms? Please take time to read the project description:

<https://www.gu.se/en/research/ai-the-social-contract-and-democracy>

Please also include a bibliography / list of relevant works. This can be short or long – the most important thing is that it identifies some key materials that you believe you will engage with in the course of doing the research. (This is not counted as part of the 6 page count.)

Note that a successful research project proposal is usually NOT a perfect one! A research proposal is a proposal based in not knowing something and trying to come to know it in some way. It is not about mastery, but rather about a special kind of 'ignorance' – in the sense of recognising that we do not yet know or understand something, or that we have a deep curiosity about something we do not fully comprehend.