

Assessment of Advanced Artist Diploma students

This policy is based on the University of St Andrews document [Assessment of postgraduate research students](#) and has been amended only where necessary to take account of Royal Conservatoire personnel, structures and the practice-based nature of the Advanced Artist Diploma programme offered by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

1 Rules for the submission of dissertations / theses / portfolios

1.1 Form and presentation of submissions

Work submitted for the AdvArtDip should meet the requirements set out in the [Postgraduate Research Senate Regulations](#):

Methods of presentation

- Candidates for the degree will be examined on the basis of a programme of study comprising a preparatory artistic project, a final artistic project, and written work.
- The programme of study will take the form of:
 - A substantial preparatory artistic project that demonstrates outstanding performance skills; and
 - A significant and substantial artistic project in a public and professional or proto-professional context that demonstrates outstanding performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist; and
 - A written self-reflective evaluation of the contribution to the specialism, which articulates the student's artistic practice and professional development. 5,000-7,000 words.
- The three elements are credit weighted. Successful candidates will gain 60 credits for the preparatory artistic project, 90 credits for the final artistic project, and 30 credits for written work. Credit for the preparatory project will be awarded at progress review, but credits for the final project and the written work will only be awarded following a successful viva voce examination. All credits must be obtained for the degree to be awarded.

Required standard

The submission, together with any live assessments, shall constitute a body of work judged by the examiners to represent outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist, consistent with what may be reasonably expected of a diligent student after one year of full-time study. The candidate will be able to articulate how the work has enhanced their own artistic practice and made a significant and original contribution to their chosen artistic sphere.

1.2 Variation of word limit

The word limits indicated in the Postgraduate Senate Regulations will be strictly observed. The stated word limits include all elements of the submission apart from the bibliography and appendices.

Any exception to the word limit must be presented to the Programme Committee for consideration in the first instance. Reasons for the request should be fully stated, and a letter of support from the principal supervisor must accompany the request.

Work submitted in excess of the word limit, without prior approval from the Programme Committee, will not be accepted for examination.

1.3 Appendices

Appendices may include text or material on which the dissertation or portfolio is a comment such as:

- original sources or texts
- comparative translations
- visual materials
- programme notes
- documentary material
- field notes
- descriptions of participant information and sample surveys
- computer code
- ethical approval documents
- uncleared copyright material which may need to be redacted from the final electronic thesis

Appendices do not count towards the maximum word limit of the thesis and therefore should not be used to house material which is core to the central work of the thesis. Underpinning research data are not considered to be an appendix for the purpose of this policy.

When one or more appendices are included with a submission, both the student and supervisor must sign the appropriate declaration confirming that the appendices only contain material in line with the policy above. The Convenor of the Programme Committee should be consulted for any questions regarding what can be included in an appendix.

1.4 Variation of format of submission

Where appropriate, AdvArtDip students may apply to the Programme Committee for part or all of the written element to be submitted as a paper copy, with or without a corresponding electronic copy. Reasons for the request should be fully stated, and a letter of support from the principal supervisor must support the request.

1.5 Submission in a foreign language

The languages other than English which may normally be permitted for the submission of the written element are those inextricably associated with a particular academic discipline taught

in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – such as Gaelic – in which (in addition to the usual scholarly qualities) native or near-native proficiency in the language would be expected of AdvArtDip graduates.

Submission of the written element in a language other than English will be considered for the degree of AdvArtDip.

Special permission to submit the written element in a language other than English must be sought from the Programme Committee in the first instance, in a reasoned case accompanied by written statements by the candidate and the supervisor. The reasoning should normally refer to the following points, as a minimum:

- an evaluation of the candidate's competence to complete the written element in the language proposed;
- confirmation that the written will contain very substantial references to cultural material (film, text, speech, etc) generated in the language of study;
- confirmation that submission of the written element in the language of study will enhance the international accessibility of the research to other scholars within the discipline of study as a whole;
- confirmation of the availability of appropriately qualified supervisors and internal/external examiners.

The following will apply:

- No argument will be accepted that is based on a candidate's relative inability to write in English.
- Permission must be sought as early as possible and at all events by the end of the fifth month of study.
- In addition to the commentary itself, a commentary written in a language other than English must be accompanied by a summary of 2,000 to 3,000 words in English as well as the usual 300-word abstract.
- The oral part of the examination will be conducted in English, and the candidate must demonstrate an ability to hold a linguistically accurate discussion of the research in an appropriately academic register.
- In addition to the title in a language other than English, the commentary must bear an English translation of the title. Both titles will appear in all official documentation.
- External examiners will be notified of the language of the commentary before they are appointed.
- The linguistic accuracy, stylistic qualities and scholarly presentation of a commentary in a language other than English will be judged in the same way as they would be in English.

1.6 Submission and electronic publication

Advanced Artist Diploma students will submit their thesis electronically via the [Conservatoire moodle](#). The submission of final copies to the St Andrews Library is electronic only and is added into the St Andrews Research Repository.

It is the University's and the Conservatoire's intention to support the appropriate dissemination of research material by electronic means. Supervisors and students should

therefore think carefully about the copyright and intellectual property consequences of their work from the outset. The copyright of a thesis normally belongs to the author, but students must still complete the required declarations (see 'Guidance on Portfolio Submissions'). Students are required to submit both preservation and dissemination version of their final copies to enable the digital preservation of their submissions. Students should ensure that their final copies comply with the current University guidance on digital accessibility.

At the point of the submission of a thesis for examination, the candidate and supervisor must fill in the section of the declaration (see 'Guidance on Portfolio Submissions') which relates to embargoes of work where publication would have commercial, professional, legal or ethical consequences. Embargoes of all or part of the thesis must be accompanied by a brief justification. The standard maximum embargo period is five years in the first instance.

2 Examination of AdvArtDip students

2.1 Nature of assessment

Theses, dissertations and portfolios submitted for the AdvArtDip are to be assessed in accordance with the relevant Postgraduate Senate Regulations.

The purpose of the oral examination is to:

- Ensure the candidate's authorship of the thesis;
- Discuss points arising from the examiners' reading and the candidate's live performance;
- Discuss the wider context of the candidate's specific area of research;
- Clarify areas of uncertainty or doubt.

The Royal Conservatoire and the University expect that AdvArtDip submissions be scholarly, substantial, significant and lucid.

Students with a disability may need reasonable adjustments as set out in the document [Academic Adjustments Guidance: Inclusive Learning and Teaching in a Doctoral Setting](#), and should engage with [Disability Support](#) at the earliest opportunity.

2.2 Examining committees and their operation

The final artistic project will typically take the form of a live performance, which will also be documented and submitted as a recording. The same examining committee must assess both the live/recorded and written component of the programme of study and make a holistic judgment on their merits.

2.2.1 The appointment of the examining committees

When appointing an examining committee for the AdvArtDip degree, the principal supervisor must nominate an examination committee to the Programme Committee at least 6 weeks prior to the final artistic performance. There may be delays if the examining committee has not been nominated by the principal supervisor and agreed by the Programme Committee by the time the submission is made. Nomination forms for an Examination Committee should be signed by the principal supervisor and endorsed by the Head of Programme. Candidates should be given the opportunity to comment on the composition of the examination

committee. Candidates do not have a right of veto, but may appeal to the Convenor of the Programme Committee if there is no resolution of a dispute.

The Committee will consist of three examiners:

- an external examiner
- an internal examiner
- a convenor, who will also act as an internal examiner

The convenor will be a member of RCS staff identified as having Significant Responsibility for Research. Their role, as well as examining, is to ensure that all processes and regulations are observed.

The following applies to the appointment of external examiners:

- Only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority in the relevant artistic field should be appointed. Appointees should normally hold, or have recently held, an academic appointment in a University or Conservatoire.
 - In certain circumstances, however, it may be appropriate to appoint from outside the higher education system, for example from industry or the professions, or from the higher education systems of other countries.
 - There should be no significant conflicts of interest in the appointment, such as any on-going joint research or musical activity between the external examiner and supervisor or student.
- Former Royal Conservatoire members of staff or research students should not be invited to become external examiners before at least four years have elapsed.
- Members of other Conservatoires and Universities who are part of pooling arrangements which relate to the candidate's area of study may not normally act as external examiners.

The following applies to the appointment of internal examiners and conveners:

- Conveners of examination committees should be academic or academic related members of staff of the Royal Conservatoire who will not be retiring or departing the Conservatoire up to six months after the expected date of submission. In some cases, for example if a member of staff knowledgeable in the subject area is not available, two external examiners should be appointed with an internal convener/examiner.
- The Head of Programme is responsible for arranging the date of the oral examination and informing the convenor, student and supervisors.
- The convener is responsible for assuring that the oral examination takes place in an appropriate setting, that the candidate is given the opportunity to answer reasonable questions, and that on conclusion all appropriate forms are completed.
- A supervisor may not be appointed to an examination committee and is not permitted to attend the oral examination even as an observer.
- As an internal examiner, the convener should be sufficiently distant from the candidate and supervisor, both academically and personally, to ensure an impartial and objective opinion of the submission. It is accepted, however, that in a small institution such as the Royal Conservatoire there will inevitably have been some academic interaction between the convener and candidate.

2.2.2 Viva formats

The viva will be delivered in one of three formats, as agreed by the examining committee in advance: fully in-person, fully online, or hybrid with both online and in-person attendance. The student should be consulted in determining the viva format but will not normally be able to veto the examining committee's preferred format.

The convenor of the examining committee must ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the guidance given in 'Use of videoconferencing in a Viva' if the examination is conducted fully or partially online.

A note of the viva format should be included in the examiners' final report.

2.2.3 Procedures followed by the examining committee

The Director of Research and Engagement shall complete the Faculty Officer's report informing the examining committee of any special circumstances that may have affected the student's performance during the period of study.

The examination of a submission should normally be completed within three months of the date of submission. If the examining committee is unable to convene within three months, then the Convenor of the Programme Committee may either authorise a short extension or advise that a new committee should be appointed.

Examiners are expected to prepare independent written reports on the submission prior to the oral examination, and they should express a provisional judgement on the submission on these reports. If academic misconduct is suspected then the Conservatoire [Policy for Doctoral Students: Good Academic Practice](#) should be followed.

Examiner's reports should be submitted at least five working days before the oral examination and made available to the convenor of the examining committee once all reports have been received. In order to maintain independence, examiners should not confer with one another about the submission or their judgements prior to all reports having been submitted. These reports will remain confidential unless requested as part of a freedom of information request or appeal. Examiners shall submit independent written reports on both the final artistic project and the written component.

The examiners should note that in order to preserve the independence of their individual reports, they should have no discussion until after completion of the programme and the submission of all reports. Any such discussion will render the examination procedure null and void, and a new examining committee will be appointed. This means that no discussion may take place until the reports on both the final artistic project and the written component have been received.

Reports following the final artistic project must be returned a maximum of five working days after the live assessment.

Examiners will not provide feedback to the candidate after the live assessment: if necessary, a brief meeting of the whole committee with the candidate may be convened in order to clarify any points about the processes that underpinned the work observed. Significant conceptual questions must be reserved for the final viva voce.

2.2.4 The recommendations of the examining committee

After examination, the examining committee may make a recommendation from the relevant options set out in the Postgraduate Senate Regulations.

The examiners may tell the candidate their recommendation informally during or after the oral examination, but the candidate will be notified officially of the result of the examination only after the Associate Provost Students has approved the recommendation of the examining committee.

The examiners must prepare an agreed final report which will be made available by the convener to the candidate within two weeks of the examination regardless of the result, containing any recommendations for changes before resubmission, reasons for referral, and commentary on the future direction of successful submissions.

If there are minor revisions to be made to the submission, these will be conveyed to the candidate in writing by the convener. Note that the supervisor's role does not end after the examination and that the supervisor should offer guidance to the candidate on achieving the required revisions. The revised submission should then be examined by the convener within two weeks of receipt of the revised submission. The convener is responsible for reporting to the AdvArtDip Administrator on the Minor Corrections Report Form that the corrections or revisions have been successfully completed.

Where the submission is more seriously flawed and the examining committee has recommended a resubmission for the same degree after major revision, the candidate must receive written feedback which provides a detailed list of corrections and revisions deemed necessary by the examiners. The candidate shall be expected to take these into account in any resubmission of the thesis.

Students who are required to revise and resubmit the written commentary will be permitted an increased maximum word limit of 8,000 words. In such cases, the supervisor continues to have an important role after the examination. The supervisor should offer guidance to the candidate, in consultation with the convener or, where necessary, the other members of the examining committee, on achieving the required changes.

When the examiners have recommended that the degree should be awarded, one electronic copy of the submission – the video recording of final performance and the written work – must be deposited in the University and Royal Conservatoire libraries before the student is able to graduate.

A candidate who is dissatisfied with the result of an examination has the right of appeal and details of the appeals procedure can be obtained from the Senate/Court Office, see the policies on Student Academic Appeals.