

**ZHdK Institute for the Performing Arts and Film**  
**FAQ PEERS PROGRAMME**  
**September 2021**

**Who can apply for PEERS?**

The PEERS programme is aimed at mid-career artists with extensive artistic practice in theatre, dance, performance or film. Candidates must hold an MA or an equivalent degree (MA in the Arts or in a related field, for instance, the humanities). They will be expected to develop research and peer learning methodologies, as well as have a strong interest in research. As a guideline, candidates should have at least five years of artistic practice (between or after their studies).

**Is there a "quota"?**

We haven't defined a specific quota but follow an inclusive and attractive selection policy. We want to provide equal opportunities and therefore encourage candidates from different backgrounds to apply. The PEERS programme welcomes suggestions about how its structure might be further developed. If you have any concerns about accessibility during the application process, please contact us in good time ahead of the application deadline.

**Who are the mentors and how does matchmaking work?**

We are establishing a pool of experienced mentors (we work closely with UdK Berlin and Amsterdam University of the Arts) with proven expertise in artistic research on dance, film or theatre, and in supervising doctoral students. Every PEER will have two mentors and usually one hour of mentoring per week during the semester. You may use your 44 hours of mentoring at your own discretion and as best suited to your needs (weekly or spread over individual days).

**May I propose a possible mentor?**

Since we are still in the process of expanding our pool of mentors, we are open to suggestions from your side. We recommend choosing one mentor with professional practice, a freelance artist and one mentor from an institution. Prospective mentors need not be from your discipline, but may very well come from other discipline.

### **How is the selection process organised?**

The selection process consists of two steps: In a first step, applications will be reviewed according to formal criteria. In a second step, the selection committee of the Department of Performing Arts and Film will draw up a shortlist. The shortlisted candidates (up to 10) will be invited for an online interview with the committee (via Zoom).

The admissions process will be made as transparent as possible by informing applicants after each step. Current committee members: Yvonne Schmidt (Chair, Head of Programme), Marijke Hoogenboom (Head of Department), Anton Rey (Head of Research), Stefanie Lorey (Prof. Theatre), Michael Schärer (Prof. Film), Friederike Lampert (Prof. Dance), Patrick Gusset (PhD Graz/Zürich, Third-Cycle Representative).

### **What should be included in the video statement? Do I have to make one?**

If you are unable to make a video statement for justifiable reasons, you will not be required to do so. The video shouldn't be an artistic work or a translation of such work. Its main purpose is for you to explain what interests you about PEER to PEER exchange.

### **Does the PEERS programme consider other artistic fields (e.g. music / sound arts / visual arts, curatorial practice)?**

PEERS is also open to artists from other artistic fields. If you are from another field, it is important that you make explicit how you and your research interest relate to the performing arts or film.

### **Is the PEERS programme open to collectives?**

Yes, collectives may also apply.

### **Do the “references” on the application form mean providing proof of five years of work experience in the respective field? For instance, from a company where one has worked for a certain amount of time?**

No, we don't need job certificates or company references. What matters most is that you have five years of artistic practice.

**May I apply several times? Do you provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback?**

Yes, you may apply more than once. Unfortunately, we can't give individual feedback as we receive too many applications. We have shortlisted persons for whom we give detailed feedback. We accept five candidates or possibly six (if we receive many interesting applications).

**Which expenses does the programme cover?**

An individual financial plan will be devised with every participant at the beginning of the programme. Participants are each awarded a personal budget of up to CHF 3'000. This amount can be used to cover research trips, equipment, books, conference or festival participation, as well as other activities and measures serving to develop one's research plan. We also cover participants' travel expenses to Zurich and their accommodation costs.

**Does the PEERS programme provide jobs (e.g. as an assistant)?**

Unfortunately, we cannot facilitate jobs. You may, of course, apply for open positions and we will try to connect you with potential employers.

**Can I use ZHdK facilities (e.g. film and theatre studios, editing suites, etc.) during my PEERS year?**

We try to make ZHdK facilities available for PEERS students. However, regular teaching and current research projects always have priority.

**Are further costs covered, such as PhD bursaries?**

PEERS offers mentoring sessions in order to prepare prospective PhD students for postgraduate work in the performing arts and film. As part of this process, we also provide PhD funding advice (<https://research-funding.zhdk.ch>). Currently, ZHdK does not offer any scholarships, but various PhD funding opportunities are available in Switzerland. Other opportunities might be available in your own country of origin. See:

<https://www.zhdk.ch/doktorat>

### **What does the annual structure of PEERS look like? What is the exact schedule?**

The PEERS year involves five intensive workshops, a kick-off event, a writing workshop, a one-week-seminar, a show-and-share workshop and a mandatory summer residency. See here for the preliminary dates: <https://3rd.zhdk.ch/programmes-page/test-subsite/>. Apart from the schedule, PEERS candidates are part of the Junior Research Group (dates to be determined with the group in spring 2022).

### **Do I need to move to Zurich to attend the programme?**

The PEERS programme is not full-time, so you don't need to move to Zurich. But you are expected to participate in scheduled activities (see our website). It is important that PEERS participants get to know the host institution (i.e. ZHdK) and can work in the PEER group. While we fund travel to Zurich, we want to keep the global footprint as minimal as possible and try to provide environmentally friendly travel opportunities. Travel costs are fully covered.

### **Is remote participation possible?**

Essentially, on-site activities are important to create and consolidate the PEERS community. We will most likely arrange in person meetings in Zurich. However, the pandemic means we need to remain flexible (subject to applicable COVID-19 measures).

### **What are the PEERS selection criteria?**

In terms of formal requirements, PEERS candidates must have (1) at least five years of practical experience in their specific artistic field and (2) an MA degree (or equivalent). We are looking for candidates with an innovative, research-driven approach within their artistic practice, and with a strong interest in transdisciplinary exchange. The selection committee is also keen to ensure the diversity of the PEERS community. Overall, PEERS seeks to promote career development rather than fund artistic projects.

The project outline (to be submitted as part of your application) is not required to be a fully fledged PhD proposal. Rather, it is meant to tell us (1) who you are, (2) how you think, (3) what your research interest is, and (4) how you situate your interest in the context of a PhD and a relevant field.

**What about the balance between practice and theory?**

We are seeking to enrol practising artists. However, projects may involve balancing theory and practical artistic work. Your interest may, of course, also be theory-driven and/or you may be aiming to balance discursive and practical artistic methodologies. Saying that, “research in and through practice” is a crucial part of our programme.

**How do you define artistic research?**

We work with a very open concept of artistic research. We are still defining the term for ourselves. For the purposes of the PEER to PEER group, it may be interesting to ask *which research is important for oneself* during the programme.

**What do you mean by peer-to-peer-mentoring?**

PEER-to-PEER-mentoring is an important aspect of the programme because exchange with and within the PEERS group is central to artistic research. Currently, the members of the Junior Research Group (JRG) at the Department of Performing Arts and Film (PhD students and emerging researchers) meet regularly, sometimes with guests, in order to foster exchange and a vivid research culture at the department.

We are very interested in continuing and further developing PEER-to-PEER exchange with the department’s Junior Research Group (JRG) with PEERS newcomers. We strongly believe in the benefits of collaborative study, attentive feedback and (if possible) shared studio practice.

**What future prospects does PEERS promise?**

PEERS gives you the opportunity to try out and further develop your research practice in a sheltered environment, and to sharpen your research question and method. PEERS offers members the chance to prepare for an artistic PhD. It also provides guidance on how best to manage the highly competitive application process. Please note that a PhD position at the end of the programme is not guaranteed.

### **What types of PhD does ZHdK award?**

ZHdK is not entitled to award doctorates in its own right and therefore works with partner universities. Currently, we are cooperating with two arts-based artistic/scientific programmes (Graz University and Konrad Wolf Film University) and one fully artistic PhD programme (Stockholm). Candidates may, however, also pursue a PhD at ZHdK outside a formal partnership. ZHdK provides the infrastructure and mentoring for such individual PhD work. In general, you can also do research outside of an institution.

### **Where can I get more information on the PhD programme?**

The Department of Performing Arts and Film is currently developing a brand new PhD Programme in Performing Arts, Music, and Film (together with ZHdK's Department of Music). We are collaborating with Graz University of the Arts (see: <https://www.kug.ac.at/en/>) and expanding our collaboration with Konrad Wolf Film University Potsdam-Babelsberg and Stockholm University of the Arts.

ZHdK also offers PhD programmes in other fields (see: <https://www.zhdk.ch/doktorat>).

During the PEERS year, we will explore and establish the ideal setting for each PEERS candidate at ZHdK and beyond. You may of course also apply for PhD programmes outside ZHdK.

### **Do candidates need to submit a portfolio and a CV?**

You are welcome to submit a portfolio with selected works (max. 4 pages) and a separate CV.

### **Does the PEERS programme give me the chance to teach and work with students?**

At present, we cannot guarantee that PEERS participants will automatically be able to teach. We are, however, trying to establish links with various ZHdK degree programmes that would provide PEERS candidates with teaching opportunities.

**What is my status at ZHdK as a member of the PEERS programme?**

As a PEER, you will have the status of a junior research associate at ZHdK. This includes access to the university's infrastructure and a ZHdK e-mail account. You will also be listed on the new PEERS programme website.

**Will I be awarded a certificate or degree at the end of PEERS?**

No, we currently don't award an official certificate or degree (under review). Hopefully, though, you will have a better chance of successfully applying for a PhD position.

**The new PEERS programme sounds similar to the Fellowship Programme. Will the Fellowship Programme continue?**

The new PEERS programme will replace the Fellowship Programme, which is due to expire in 2021. In contrast to the Fellowship Programme, PEERS doesn't support projects, but prepares artists for a formal PhD programme and for a career including artistic research.