

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA’S RESEARCH TRAINING SYSTEM – CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Please read the submission guidelines before completing and submitting this form. This form should be submitted through the [consultation website](#). **Submissions should be evidence based, provide examples where possible, and address the consultation questions.**

YOUR DETAILS

Organisation	Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts (DDCA)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please provide an executive summary of no more than 300 words of your submission

The **Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts Incorporated (DDCA)** was inaugurated in February 2013 to advance the disciplines of the creative arts in the higher education sector, nationally and internationally. It has a membership of over 22 universities and other higher education institutions and represents learning, teaching and research in the creative arts in Australia.

DDCA agrees that Australia’s research training system needs reframing in line with international best practice, but is concerned that the assumptions made do not reflect the position of creative arts research students and graduates. In addition to HDR students who will contribute through generic creative skills developed through their research programs, HDR programs also include those who contribute specifically to Australia’s artistic and cultural reputation and, as emerging artistic leaders, to its future economic success. For these students, the measures proposed are insufficiently developed.

The focus upon graduate employment in ‘business, governments, non-government organisations, universities, publicly funded research organisations peak bodies and charities’, does not canvass the potential that graduates will be self-employed, or create their own start-up companies, and have portfolio careers which utilise their skills and expertise for different outcomes and clients. Any measures developed which are based upon the assumption of ‘employment’ are inappropriate for many graduates from arts higher degrees.

DDCA is concerned that the extensive contribution that those in arts and cultural fields bring to the Australian economy and society, recently assessed at \$50 billion p.a. to Australia’s GDP, is ignored in current discussions. Australian research programs are a significant locus for the development of emerging artists, and critical to the health and future of Australia’s artistic and cultural capital. It is incumbent upon any review of such training to ensure that it supports and improves success for all graduates.

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

PRODUCING HIGH QUALITY RESEARCHERS

Question 1 - What are the research skills and experiences needed to be an effective researcher?

Creative arts research demands similar generic research skills as in other academic disciplines, for example, critical analysis skills, presentation skills, independence/initiative and self motivation skills, however, subject specific skills and experiences in the student's chosen artistic field are essential to develop and enhance the skills that will allow them to connect with the artistic genres in which they will forge their artistic careers, the assumption made in the discussion paper that the graduate not the research itself is the most important outcome. For creative arts HDRs this needs to be cognisant that during their programs, they will produce the outcomes that will consolidate and establish their position as a professional artist within their peers, influence the success of their professional careers and advance the disciplines themselves.

Question 2 - What broader transferable qualities do HDR graduates need to develop to succeed in a wide range of career pathways? Should these skills be assessed, and if so, how?

Creative arts HDRs acquire a range of qualities through their studies that are relevant to a wide range of pathways, such as lateral thinking, entrepreneurial realisation and creative problem solving. This contribution made by the arts is well recognised in the STEM TO STEAM discussions taking place internationally (United States Congress, 2015*). In addition, mentoring by supervisors who are professionals in the field and who work as professional artists/ artistic researchers within the university setting provides much of the 'industry engagement and development' that is sought externally in more traditional academic disciplines.

DDCA agrees that research training within an internship setting where the graduate may eventually work, whether employed or as self-employed artist, could provide valuable skills and experience that will transfer to a range of potential career pathways, however would be concerned if such a move, and any associated skills assessment obligations, imposed unduly upon the creative independence of the artists' research and the subject specificity of their chosen genre. A recent UK report (Innes & Feeney, 2012), 91% of graduate respondents noted subject specific knowledge as important skills gained from their PhD studies. This is particularly so in creative arts disciplines where graduates will earn their living as professional artists.

The assumption of 'business and industry' as a setting for research training, may be useful for creative arts HDR students but the current discussion paper does not clearly consider how such a model would fit within the 'arts industry', particularly for those who will graduate as professional artists and thus be 'the industry' and further research is needed to clarify how the suggested examples may coincide within such a diverse and complex sector.

* Innes, P. & Feeney, D. (2012) *Career Paths of AHRC funded PhD Students Final Report*. DTZ and Arts and Humanities Research Council. UK.

* Unites States Congress (2013) H. Resolution. 51 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hres51ih/pdf/BILLS-113hres51ih.pdf>

Question 3 - What other broader capabilities should HDR graduates develop during their research training?

DDCA agrees that more data and a better understanding of long term outcomes for graduates is needed to define the capabilities that HDRs should develop during their training.

We know that artists, through their research and practice, are self driven to achieve, have high levels of commitment to succeed, capacity to collaborate with others and innovate for new products, techniques and productions. We need to support and encourage their capacity to take risks, innovate and challenge the limitations of convention to contribute to advancement of their disciplines and industries.

In particular, more research is needed on the long term destinations of creative arts graduates outside formal employment, for example as self-employed artists; consultants; within unpaid voluntary settings.

As the portfolio career is a feature for many professional artists, capabilities which enhance their capacity to successfully navigate this landscape in their artistic fields may be useful for their development (Bartleet et al, 2013)

* Bartleet, B., Bennett, D., Bridgestock, R., Draper, P., Harrison, S. & Schippers, H. (2013). 'Preparing for portfolio careers in Australian music: Setting a research agenda'. *The Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2012(1), 32–41

Question 4 - What skills and capabilities do employers in Australia need from HDR graduates?

By prioritising the needs of employers, the approach suggested in the discussion paper, appears to ignore the innovative new work being produced by research students. In the arts, doctoral and masters study may produce the work that will establish or consolidate their career as an artist and thus arguably the research is important to the graduate's future career. DDCA would be concerned if general graduate skills required by 'employers' were prioritised over the production of creative work.

DDCA wishes reiterate that creative arts students and graduates are the industry and create employment opportunities for themselves and others. For example the credits on a film indicate the range of skills and expertise are brought together for the success of this collaborative venture.

An increasing number of HDR candidates are mature and successful artists who are engaging in postgraduate study to better understand and improve their artistic practice, not to secure positions with employers. Any reform should ensure that the needs of these students are not overshadowed by a presumption that employment is the objective of all HDR students. The definition of employment needs to be better characterised in any research training reform.

DDCA wishes to remind the review that in some artistic disciplines internationally, a Masters qualification is considered the terminal degree in arts, and is a requirement for employment in arts in academia, irrespective of whether the graduate has a doctoral qualification. Master's level is broadly considered as a professional level entry qualification.

Question 5 - What research skills and capabilities are needed to ensure Australia's research system remains internationally competitive?

Australia has been an early adopter of doctoral qualifications in creative arts and in anticipation the Bologna 3 tier model. A greater correlation with international practices such as Oral examination (or viva voce) defence would contribute to our global standing. Australian research coordinators would be interested to explore further how compulsory oral examination, and the development of presentation skills within HDR students, could improve artistic graduates and their art practice.

Question 6 - What research skills and capabilities are needed from HDR graduates to ensure Australia is ready to meet current and future social, economic and environmental challenges?

DDCA notes with dismay the apparent presumption contained in much current government discussion of the national research system, of the greater importance of STEM based disciplines to Australia's future prosperity. This ignores not only the economic contribution that is made by the arts directly to the Australian economy (Australia Council, 2015*) but also the contribution that creative disciplines provide to private sector advancement through the creative problem solving skills that research in the arts produces and through, for example, improved design solutions. At a time when Australia is seeking to shift from a resources based economic based economy to a service provision model, to focus only on science and technology based disciplines at this point fails to anticipate the workforce needs of the future service and entertainment sectors. It denies, for example, a place for Australia within the film and communications industry globally where competitiveness lies not with the development of new technologies but innovative and creative approaches to content.

The pipeline referred to in the discussion paper relates not only to future workforce capabilities that will enhance economic and business performance, through creative skills and insight, but also skills, which will enhance Australia's cultural and artistic environment for the betterment of society in general.

* Australia Council (2015) *Arts Nation: An overview of Australian Arts. 2015 edition*. Australia Council for the Arts. Sydney.
Retrieved from: <http://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-nation-an-overview-of-australian-arts/>

Question 7 - What features of the research training system should be retained to ensure our graduates are internationally competitive?

DDCA strongly agrees that Australia's research training models need to be comparable with the best in the world, but notes that globally many of the world's leading arts and music schools are located outside the university sector. Current international comparisons may be useful but should be expanded to better include leading global arts and music institutions. We recommend that further research is needed to understand the features of the training system and environment adopted in these institutions to ensure that Australia is comparable with the best arts research training.

Scholarships are a useful contribution to support focused research but creative arts disciplines are rarely prioritised institutionally. - We need a national approach to understanding research higher degree examination processes globally in the creative arts doctoral field to improve competitiveness internationally.

Question 8 - How should the research training system be structured to produce high quality researchers who can contribute to Australia's future prosperity and wellbeing?

DDCA agrees with the observation that research training is a lifelong investment and that this is particularly so for graduates in creative arts training where the time and effort invested during postgraduate years will develop a body of work that will consolidate their careers as professional artists. Creative arts disciplines have been consistently overlooked within national research priorities and the current review presents a welcome opportunity to correct this imbalance. As with all research disciplines, the future creative arts workforce would be enhanced by equal access to researcher mobility programs and targeted actions that provide greater post-doctoral and ECR opportunities and support.

The criteria used to compare training models, particularly employment outcomes and destinations and employer satisfaction perceptions, are too narrowly focused on employers to be reflective of creative arts graduates, many of whom will transition to self-employment to pursue successful careers as artists. Satisfaction interviews with graduates who are working as professional artists, five years out of graduation may provide a mechanism to obtain data on this cohort equivalent to employer satisfaction and perception data.

DDCA supports the call for different training approaches reflective of disciplinary needs and the recognition of the varied pathways through which students arrive at HDR. In particular, greater flexibility is needed within creative arts HDR programs to recognised that skill levels between level 9 (Masters) students and Level 10 (doctoral) students, in artistic disciplines may not be as distinct in other disciplines.

The current learning outcomes differentiation between level 10) and level 9 are artificially constructed when applied to combined 'project work' such as ensemble playing where activities are based upon artistic skills and capacity rather than program enrolment. Examination criteria need to be clarified to make distinction between mastery and new innovation within these settings.

DDCA disagrees with the suggestion that HERDC will provide appropriate data to determine workforce needs appropriate to the creative arts and its associated workforces as the data collected and the weighting accorded within this system fails to capture or recognise the creative arts sector. DDCA recommends analysis of the deficiencies in HERDC in relation to creative arts and the development of additional measures, the identification of additional data sources, and reframed collection practices to rectify this gap.

Question 9 - How can entry and exit pathways to and from research training be better structured?

Selection processes such as embedded coursework as preparation for thesis development would assist entry and oral presentation to the arts profession as a graduating experience would contribute to enhanced research training as recognition of professional standing.

Question 10 - How can barriers to participation in HDR programs be overcome so that more candidates from non-traditional backgrounds, including indigenous students, undertake research training?

DDCA agrees that increased participation by candidates from non traditional backgrounds would enhance the HDR culture and that targeted actions are needed to encourage such participation.

We wish to note that in some artistic disciplines, such as music, technical and creative skills will have been developed over many years through private tuition. Challenges to providing access for candidates from non-traditional backgrounds to this essential early development will entail measures that allow greater access to such programs by students University level pre graduate entry enabling and pathway programs could contribute to enhanced access.

OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Further supporting information not covered in your answers to the consultation questions should be provided here

The review may find the following articles and reports useful to consult to better understand the position of creative arts research and research training, however DDCA acknowledges that further research is required to better understand how to develop research training systems that support HDR artistic careers:

Adams, Sarah, 'Embedded Creatives earn More', *ArtsHub* February 2014 < <http://www.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/all-arts/sarah-adams/-embedded-creatives-earn-more-198176>

Baker, S., Buckley, B. & Kett, G (2009) *Creative Arts PhD: Futureproofing the Creative Arts in Higher Education*-Final Report. ALTC.

Bartleet, B., Bennett, D., Bridgestock, R., Draper, P., Harrison, S. & Schippers, H. (2013). 'Preparing for portfolio careers in Australian music: Setting a research agenda'. *The Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2012(1), 32–41

Bridgestock, Ruth S. (2013) Not a dirty word : arts entrepreneurship and higher education. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 12(2-3), pp. 122-137. CCI Australian Creative Economy Report Card 2013, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, <http://www.cci.edu.au/Creative_Economy_report_card.pdf>

Draper, P. & Harrison, S. (2014). 'Practice based research training at the Queensland Conservatorium', in J. Cox (Ed.), *Perspectives on 2nd Cycle programmes in Higher Music Education: Combining a research orientation with professional relevance*. Brussels, Belgium: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen.

Innes, P. & Feeney, D. (2012) *Career Paths of AHRC funded PhD Students Final Report*. DTZ and Arts and Humanities Research Council. UK.

Foundation for Young Australians (2015) *The new work order: Ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past*. <http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-New-Work-Order-FINAL-low-res-2.pdf>

Torney, Robyn. (2008) *Transitioning from Training to Employment in the Performing Arts: The model of the graduate-performance-company* published, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation <www.cci.edu.au/sites/default/.../Torney_Transitioning_from_training.pdf>