



STUDY GUIDE



DAS CHOREOGRAPHY, MASTER PROGRAM

Artists who have established a professional practice and seek possibilities for further reflection and development can increase their research skills at DAS Choreography¹. This two-year low-residential program of the Amsterdam University of the Arts aims to contribute to the field of critical and contemporary dance research and creation. The individual artistic practice is the point of departure and will be the guiding thread of the course design.

Since Spring 2016, the two master's study programmes of the Academy of Theatre and Dance, DAS Theatre and DAS Choreography, together with DAS Research have joined forces, in order to profit from the shared aims and interests. They do not only share one building in the Grootlab in Amsterdam-Noord, but also move forward together under one name: DAS Graduate School. In 2016 the 3rd cycle research group DAS THIRD has been introduced, in 2018 the two-year part-time master programme DAS Creative Producing has joined the organisation.

OVERALL CONDITIONS OF STUDY

A two-year full time study course for dance artists interested in augmenting their existing professional practice through immersion in a rigorous Master level arts research program. The program provides a support structure and organization to facilitate choreographic and interdisciplinary practice-led research; with an emphasis on the processes of individual practice and the exploration and facilitation of research vectors unavailable to the candidate/artists in their current contexts. Therefore, the individual's practice-as-research will align with the course content and contribute to the shared experience of exchange during the seminars.

The program accepts four student/artists each year. The curriculum structure includes (minimally) six weeks **individual residency** in Amsterdam to be undertaken in the both years; eight **intensive group seminars** (four-per-year) between one and a half, and three weeks in duration; continuous **mentoring** by both internal (from the Core Staff listed below) and external practitioners; monthly **skype sessions** for each year group; **platforms for presentation** of both research and artwork.

One of the criteria for participation in the program is an existing professional practice (at least three years in the field), through which the candidate demonstrates their capacity to maintain the necessary support structures for their art practice, and to examine and reflect on its various contexts; the multiple connections and relations immanent to the conditions of making. Students are expected to create research paths resonant with these existing conditions. Therefore, while attendance and participation in the scheduled residency, all seminars, meetings and platforms is mandatory, full-time residency in Amsterdam is not a requirement.

PUBLIC PLATFORMS

Research presentations of the program as well as artist lectures are open for general public interest. The program strives to maintain a lively connection with local professional contexts, such as Veem House for Performance, Frascati Amsterdam, Jacuzzi, BAU, Julidans, WhyNot festival, as well as the bachelor programs of the Academy of Theatre and Dance, in particular the SNDO, and Rietveld and Sandberg academies.

¹ Formerly Amsterdam Master of Choreography. Accredited by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders), the official diploma title is "Master of Arts" as listed in the CROHO (Central Register of Higher Education Programs) with the special orientation of "choreography".

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENCY

The program provides a variety of resources (including dedicated studio space in Amsterdam and a limited budget) for this sustained encounter with the student's making practice. Four residency periods of 3 weeks each (one in Fall term, one in Spring term, in each year) will be designed by the individual student with the support of the Core Staff and may involve collaborators (e.g. performers, dramaturges, designers, etc.). A draft design of the residency will already be a part of the second round of the selection process in order that DAS Choreography program resources can be made explicit in connection to the student's proposed research plans. Residencies need to be planned before and after the winter holidays. During the residency periods in the second year there will be a public studio presentation to share the research-in-progress to invited guests. In the second year there are presentations in September and two weeks of residency in the Fall, and a last residency in March, prior to the Master Presentations from mid-March/beginning of April.

INTENSIVE GROUP SEMINARS

The seminars (four-per-year) are intended as intensive events during which each student will present their research questions, methods and processes for peer review and feedback. Students, Core Staff and invited guest presenters will work together to prepare reading material or other objects of study for each Seminar. Various writing components of the program (as constituted in the Dossier) will be collectively discussed. During each seminar studio praxis is a core element in order to share the research in progress.

The **first seminar**, organized at the start of the academic year in September, is intended as an orientation comprising several opportunities for each first-year student to introduce their background, research plans and making practice. Second-year students will present the current state of their research activities with an overview of their trajectories and an **informal studio presentation**. A **guest artist** may be invited to kick-off each seminar with an in-depth reflection on their research praxis or an alternative event may be designed. The Core Staff will lead sessions on topics that unpack the practice of artistic research methods and documentation, issues and debates. Each student will take the lead for 2.5 or 2 hour sessions dedicated to an updating of activity and participatory praxis. These sessions introduce the others to work and working methods, problematizing their motivation statements as research questions. Additionally, there will be two reading sessions of theoretical texts.

The **second seminar**, organized mid-year in January, will include a **guest workshop** from a choreographer. This segment of this seminar will focus on a more practice-based, hands-on approach to research praxis, guided by a guest artist. The writing/reading component of the course is also emphasized during this seminar; close-readings of assigned texts will be threaded through on-going peer/mentor feedback. A **guest lecture** by an artist or theorist will be included by the end of the seminar in collaboration with the other programs of the Graduate School and partners in the city.

Master Presentations take place in DAS Graduate School in the first week of April, engage a selected wider audience and give evidence (through documentation, demonstration, lecture, performance and other means) of the quality, reflexivity, rigor, relationality and integrity of the two-year arts research process.

The **third seminar**, at the end of the academic year in June, will serve as the context for a research progress report from all first year students and the final research presentation for those finishing the program. The regular seminar program of text discussion, research activity and writing feedback will be interleaved with the graduating students' presentation agenda.

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

The students enter the program on the basis of a preliminary **research plan**. This plan may or may not be based on theoretical interests and/or references. As a plan however, it needs to indicate a capacity for problematizing as a point of departure for managing investigations in the two-year research practice. This is an important impetus of the program: each student is consistently asked during seminars, residencies and skype sessions, to present and share questions with others. Thus, they will consistently need **to invent techniques to share** the research in ways that can be generative for their artistic inquiries. Each student therefore needs to develop techniques for posing questions that create conditions for productive feedback on the working process. There is no explicit general standard for these techniques, as backgrounds of students can vary widely, through the attentiveness and investment in the reading gradually modes of sharing techniques tend to evolve.

For our program, the value of **theory** lies in its enervating relation to practice. This does not mean we view theory as instrumental or illustrative to artistic practice. Our program focuses on stimulating creative, conceptual thinking that evolves with practices related to specific contexts and conditions. Each student learns to develop, along the contours of their own path, the importance and function of theoretical engagement in their artistic practice. This practice is initiated right in the application process when applicants are asked to present a research proposal. In the first selection interview an exploration of the artist's questions and concerns are the main subject matter. All students will be required to consistently present their questions/propositions and are responsible for devising practical and discursive formats for sharing their work and their experiments.

All assigned **reading** is a shared practice. Texts are discussed in two-hour sessions during the seminar as well as in monthly online skype sessions. What drives these sessions is not so much the acquisition of an overview of a certain field of literature, but rather a micro-scale engagement with the ethical, political, aesthetic and philosophical concerns of a given text. The shared reading invites articulation of specific notions introduced in the text. It invites, through the assignment of reading tasks (such as author biographical information, (inter)disciplinary contextualization, key concepts, relation to practice) an inspiring reading rigor and the sharing of one's perceptions and observations. Each discussion leads to the underlying question of *how* the text at hand may relate to or become meaningful for someone's artistic practice.

MENTORING

A critical component of the program, mentoring supports the large independent study component and is provided by both tutors of the Core Staff, as well as mentors of choice with qualifications in the specific research vectors of the students. Responsive to a range of dynamics and relationships, mentoring augments written course materials and guidelines; integrates the results of ongoing quality assurance measures and enhances the contents of the study course.

Mentoring provides the necessary continuity of engagement between the student and the course structure; and site visits (outside of Amsterdam) are possible. The focus of the mentoring therefor lies on longer (in principle per year) processes rather than project related matters. (see also Dossier)

- Self evaluations/ progress reports with mentor comments after each semester
- In total each student can allocate 20 hours for mentoring per year; additional hours are paid by the student from student budget
- Mentoring can be conducted translocally on an individual basis via Skype, iChat, email/blog, etc. according to an agreed lower hourly fee.
- Monthly one-hour Skype mentoring sessions per student group with core staff are mandatory.

DOSSIER/ DOCUMENTATION/ DISSEMINATION

The **Dossier** is a cumulative project that supports and explores writing across a range of registers including: enhancing communication, expanding observation and critical faculties and expository and creative writing based on reference research and extant literature. Questions arising from the relationship between writing, reading practices and research materials will be explored throughout the course. The final Dossier will include the three Half-Year Reports, an Artist Statement, and documentation of research activity. Two essays will be required.

Documentation refers to the specific methods and approaches used to trace something of the contours (physiological, phenomenological, psychic, nomadic, critical, emotional, theoretical, archipelagic, diagrammatic, etc.) of the practice-led research. What questions does one circle around and return to through this process? What means and modes of reflection are made possible through documentation and how can its **dissemination** further the public's engagement with the research?

Although DAS Choreography is a practice-led research program and as such takes the position that it does not focus primarily on theoretical practices per se (as would an academic Dance Studies degree course); the ability to communicate aspects of the process of personal practice through writing and various forms documentation will be a prerequisite for satisfying the terms of the study.

Revised Research Plan: in the fall of the first semester, after the first seminar when first year students have introduced their artistic practice and research, they are asked to reformulate their research plan as they have submitted it for the selection procedure. As such a practice is introduced alternating moments of sharing the research with peers and tutors, and the written articulation. The revised research plan sets up the vectors of reflection for the reports.

Half-Year Reports (2): these documents, due in the spring and fall are focal to the assessment (self-assessment, mentor feedback and institutional assessment) of the programme. They contain a chronological synopsis of activity, notes from the seminars and residency, documentation of experiments, methods, projects, productions, reading/writing, etc., undertaken during the period.

Essays (2): Two papers of word length 3000+ and 5000+. The assignment of the essays is to write in third person perspective (in contrast to the report writing) about a topic of choice.

Artist Statement: before the final presentation the student describes in a concise manner the core interests of the artistic practice and research, in language and style that can be used for representational purposes. (500 words)

Documentation for the assessment committee: at latest two weeks prior to the MP presentations the student provides background information and insight into the longer research trajectory of the presentations in April to the assessment committee. (2000 words, 4-5 pages)

'Minor' Thesis or Third Half-Year Report: The final writing assignment is framed as a small scale thesis that assembles elements from previous reports and essays of the research practice into a propositional statement/argument (5000+ words). One or two theoretical concerns will be unpacked and analyzed in relation to the research practice. Minimal conventions of academic thesis writing (MLA formatting of footnotes, references) are encouraged though a breadth of expressive styling is acceptable.

Administrative documentation – Overview of activities: overview of artistic projects, productions, residencies and teaching during the year. This is needed to validate the credits for ongoing artistic practice. Additional audio-visual, textual, pictorial, etc., material of the research process, residency period and production results (if any).

Schedule of writing assignments:

<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Due</u>
Revised research plan	1 November
Essay 1	15 March
Half-Year Report 1	15 May
Overview of activities year 1	30 June
<u>Year 2</u>	
Half-Year Report 2	15 December
Documentation for assessment and booklet MP presentation	1 March
Artist Statement	30 June
Mini Thesis / Half-Year Report 3	30 June
Essay 2	30 June
Overview of activities year 2	30 June

INTEGRAL ASSESSMENT

Research plans for the selection interview will lay the ground for the generation of appropriate individualized **learning goals** for the candidate/artist. Upon selection, these will be further contextualized in and around the research plan, aims and objectives and the emerging documented results of the research process of the individual student.

Dossier: Research Practice evaluation is based on documentation of Individual Study through **writing requirements (the dossier)**. The articulation of the research process and its documentation is assessed according to each individual student's authorized evaluation criteria in their Half Year Reports.

Continuous Evaluation of each student takes place through **meetings** with external mentor(s) and tutors resulting in **Half Year Reports** written at the end of each semester. **Mentor reports** are integrated within this document and are indicative of the student's development and progress based on the individual student's own evaluation criteria.

Each Half Year Report submitted by the student is responded to with written commentary by tutor(s) and the external mentor in relation to the larger aims of the program.

At the end of the year the tutor(s) and the DAS Choreography artistic director meet with the participant to evaluate the research progress. For this purpose the participant will write a **self-evaluation** that will be the basis of the integral assessment. The credits are accordingly awarded for the year.

In order to properly assess a student's development, it is important that a committee of examiners examine the progress of a student over the full width of his/her artistic development. This is an **integral approach to assessment**, rather than grading separate elements of the curriculum. Assessment takes place during the semester assessment meeting attended by the artistic director, tutor and mentor who take on the role of examiners by the end of the academic year. They are well-acquainted with individual students and assess them on the basis of their observations, half year reports written by the student and written feedback submitted by the mentor.

Green light procedure. During the September seminar of the second study year each student meets with the internal assessors to confirm that the student is on track to be able to complete the studies within the scheduled planning, or that adjustments will be needed. During the green light procedure it will be determined if all requirements have been met, as well as what has been achieved in relation to the research objectives, and finally what is still needed to complete the studies.

POINT SYSTEM FOR CREDIT

DAS Choreography program amounts to 120 ECTS. The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is the European standard for measuring study load in higher education: each credit stands for 28 hours of study. In a year 60 credits need to be acquired. The general policy at the Academy of Theatre and Dance is to assign credits within the system of integral assessment. This means that a student receives 30 credits each semester, subdivided by 20 points for participation in the educational process, and 10 for overall artistic evaluation. However within DAS Choreography credits are assigned only once a year. Only in specific cases students can ask for a declaration of half year credits.

In order to obtain the credits the following elements need to be completed

Program Year 1

Semester One - 30 ECTS

Seminar September and January
Residency Fall 3 weeks
Research Plan and Essay
Individual track / mentoring
Choreographic productions`

Semester Two – 30 ECTS

Seminars April and June
Residency Spring 3 weeks
Individual track / mentoring
Report One
Choreographic productions

Total Year One 60 ects

Program Year 2

Semester One - 30 ECTS

Seminar September and January
Residency Fall 3 weeks
Report Two
Individual track / mentoring
Choreographic productions`

Semester Two – 30 ECTS

Seminars June
Master presentation and residency
Individual track / mentoring
Mini Thesis, Essay Two, Artist Statement
Choreographic productions

Total Year Two 60 ects

Assessment procedure of master presentation

The master presentations of the second year will take place at DAS Graduate School, engage a selected wider audience and give evidence (through documentation, demonstration, lecture, performance and other means) of the quality, reflexivity, rigor, relationality and integrity of the two-year arts research process.

Prior to the master presentations in April the students submit documentation of their research trajectory to the assessment committee (ca 5 pages – at latest two weeks prior to the presentations).

The committee consists of two external assessors (in some cases only one). One of them has seen the presentation in September, and has met with the students in January for a short introduction to the research aims. The internal assessor is a staff member and tutor of DAS Choreography. The artistic director of DAS Choreography is in charge of the moderation. The student will receive documentation of the assessment conversation afterward.

Procedure of the assessment conversation

The student is asked to open the conversation with a short introduction in order to shed light on the main concerns of the project as well as to respond to the specific instantiation, the particular event the committee has had the chance to witness. The assessors will ask questions in order to obtain sufficient information for their assessment. The duration of this session is 1.15 hours.

The assessment is made upon the documentation of the research process, the presentation, and the conversation. The assessors are asked to refer to these three instances explicitly.

Final qualifications

The final qualifications function as assessment criteria all along the studies, at each integral assessment, and each assessed component will address several, or all, of these criteria.

The final qualifications address the seven competences that are articulated in the Professional profile and study profile Dans, December 2016 as formulated by the Landelijk Netwerk Dansopleidingen and Federatie Cultuur²

A graduate of the DAS Choreography has:

- 1) developed rigorous and insightful artistic research propositions, that clearly demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and layered nature of artistic practice.
- 2) developed the facility to articulate and problematize the functions of specific and idiosyncratic research methodologies within artistic practice.
- 3) extended their ability to reflect upon and communicate the processes and methods of choreographic research, through the use of written and audio/visual documentation, collaboration, conceptualization, and feedback (from peers, mentors, collaborators and audience).

² The nationally formulated seven competences for Master education in dance are:

1. Creative potential. The graduate is capable of making choreographic work by further deepening or expanding his personal artistic vision.
2. Craftsmanship. In his work the graduate investigates and develops instrumental skills and professional expertise.
3. Investigative and reflective abilities. Through research and reflection the graduate forms opinions, develops research methods and can substantiate why he applies them in an artistic or social context.
4. Potential for growth and innovation. The graduate develops his artistic practice by deepening and broadening his method of working and thereby contributes to the development of his professional field and society.
5. Entrepreneurial and organizational ability. The graduate initiates and organizes projects in an interdisciplinary and (inter)national work field.
6. Communicative ability. The graduate is able to interact within a wide range of professional contexts and can convey and validate his work unambiguously to an audience of experts or laymen.
7. Collaborative ability. The graduate shows he has a clear vision of how he wants to collaborate in order to realize an artistic product or process.

4) strengthened their capacity to contribute to the field of dance and the performing arts, showing a keen awareness of topical developments in contemporary arts discourse with an aptitude for communicating the relevance of their practice within this larger sphere.

5) integrated artistic perspectives into a specific approach to initiate and organize projects in an interdisciplinary and (inter)national work field and applies this approach in a clear vision of how s/he wants to collaborate in order to realize an artistic product or process.

Award of Diploma:

A final graduation talk takes place when all credits have been received and all obligations have been met. Here, the development of the student during the study course, the level achieved (in relation to the Final Qualifications) and future plans and expectations are discussed with the tutor(s) and the artistic director. At the end of the final graduation talk, the student receives the diploma.

BUDGET

Each candidate/artist is entitled to a personal budget that can be used to take care of the expenses of additional advisors, dramaturges, collaborators, technicians. For more detail about practical matters see the intranet of MyAHK. The exact amount of the budget will be determined every year in spring.

INTERRUPTION AND/OR EXTENSION OF STUDIES

Presence during all seminars is mandatory. In case it is impossible to be present during a seminar, a student will need to extend the study period in order to fulfill the requirement for participation in seminars. This may also be required when the final materials cannot be handed in before the termination of the academic year. For further details on these matters, please see the Onderwijs en Examenreglement (OER).

CORE STAFF

Alice Chauchat, seminar mentor of DAS Choreography, lives in Berlin and works as a choreographer, performer, teacher, editor and other activities related to choreography. She created performances in collaboration with a.o., Anne Juren, Frédéric Gies, Alix Eynaudi and performed with a.o. Jennifer Lacey, Juan Dominguez, Xavier le Roy, and Mårten Spångberg. She has been working mostly in collaborative set-ups, developing numerous choreographic projects and platforms for knowledge production and exchange in the performing arts (everybodystoolbox.net, special issue, practicable, ...) as well as regularly teaching and leading research processes (New York, Stockholm, Berlin, Vienna, Giessen, San Sebastian, Zagreb etc).

In 2010-2012 she was in the artistic co-direction for Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, a centre for artistic research in the Parisian suburbs.

Collaboration (and so negotiating distance, alterity, de-centering etc.) has been a recurrent reality and growing concern of her work. Over the last few years, her choreographic practice has focussed more and more directly on processing the knowledge and complexity of collaborative practices into aesthetic setups.

Sher Doruff, tutor of DAS Choreography, works in the visual, digital, and performance arts in a variety of capacities. For the past ten years her work has been situated in the expanded field of artistic research practice as an artist, writer, tutor, mentor, and supervisor. Her research practice currently explores fabulation and fictive approaches to writing in and through artistic research. She currently mentors 3rd cycle/PhD artist researchers at the DAS Graduate School (Amsterdam University of the Arts) and the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Art and Design. She has published numerous texts in academic and artistic contexts.

Jeroen Fabius, artistic director and tutor of DAS Choreography since 2002, and a such member of the board of DAS Graduate School since 2016. He was head of department of the School for New Dance Development from 2000-2002, and has been teaching Dance History and Art and Society among other subjects since 1991 at SNDO. He is doing his PhD with the University of Utrecht (working title: Micropolitics of Choreographic Address: Closely watching moving bodies). He has been involved as advisor in artistic projects of Lina Issa, Mette Ingwarsen, Aitana Cordero, Pere Faura, Keren Levi and Andrea Božić. He is member of the board of BAU, an organization/a platform for the independent dance and performance scene of Amsterdam.

Konstantina Georgelou

Konstantina Georgelou is an Amsterdam-based performing arts theorist, dramaturg and researcher. She teaches in the Department of Media and Culture at Utrecht University where she also received her PhD in 2011, and in DAS Theatre, while she collaborates with a number of theatres, dance production houses and Universities for the Arts in the Netherlands and abroad. Her research spans over the areas of dramaturgy, choreography, political philosophy and artistic research, inquiring ways to be, move and act together. She studies artistic, discursive and activist practices as articulations of the political, and researches in-practice collective modes of production in theory and in the arts. Her publications have appeared in several journals and books, such as with *Performance Research Journal*, *Performance Paradigm*, *Maska*, *LADA*, *Routledge*, *Palgrave MacMillan*; she co-authored *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance* (Valiz, 2017) and co-edited the issue 'On Names' (*Performance Research Journal*, 2017). She has worked together with several artists including Zhana Ivanova, Danae Theodoridou, Janez Janša, Efrosini Protopapa, Mladen Alexiev, Katja Heitmann, Ingrid Berger Myhre and Apostolia Papadamaki. Konstantina considers her work across institutions in which both academic and artistic research takes place rigorously and often with suspicion towards one another, as a dramaturgical and political practice.

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For further information on matters of the practical organization of DAS Choreography, see DAS Choreography practical guide, and inside DAS Graduate School, see User's Manual.

For further information on study regulations see OER (Education and Exam Regulations), the student charter and Complaints procedure regarding undesirable behaviour: (sexual) intimidation, discrimination, aggression/violence and bullying, all available through the MyAHK intranet.

