



Evaluation of the Arts-based Research Programme
of the Austrian Science Fund (PEEK)
Final Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The subject of this evaluation is the arts-based research programme (PEEK) of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). With the introduction of this programme in 2009, the FWF has reacted to the equating of arts universities with other universities as postulated in the amendment to the 2002 Higher Education Act, which was anchored in the Research and Technology Act of 2007 with a corresponding amendment. As an equivalent for "science", the work area of "developing and opening up the arts" (i.e. "Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste") was adopted for the arts universities. The inclusion of "developing and opening up the arts" in the Research and Technology Act was also meant to signalise the upgrading of art colleges to arts universities¹ and their equal treatment with other public universities. To ensure the opportunity to provide adequate research approaches that correspond to the character and scope of the arts universities, arts-based research was identified as a promising approach.

The FWF does not offer a comprehensive definition, but does provide clear indications of what is to be understood as arts-based research. The term "arts-based research" helps clarify that the relationship to artistic practice is the decisive element in the research process. Gaining knowledge and developing methods (also) takes place by means of aesthetic and artistic approaches and practices as opposed to purely scientific knowledge processes (FWF, 2021; PEEK application guidelines).

The choice of arts-based research as a research programme of its own is well justified, as this approach has been gaining importance for the past 30 years as a field of action for both arts universities and research-funding agencies. There are competing terms, such as "artistic research" and "practice-based research", which come from different traditions and environments and differ from each other in nuances. These differences are outlined in Chapter 5. In understanding arts-based research, it is helpful to understand what it is not (e.g., research about art; research as a tool for preparing artistic production; creative dissemination; etc.; see Section 5.1). In the course of this evaluation, we concluded that a basic understanding of arts-based research is present in the group targeted by the programme. It provides sufficient ontological guidance for research in this particular programmatic corridor of action.

The institutionalisation of research funding for arts-based research in Europe is more diffuse. First, there are only a few cases of explicit research funding for arts-based research (at least at the national level) and these are very differently designed. They range from mainstreamed approaches, as in Switzerland within the Swiss National Science Fund (SNSF), to sophisticated programme design, as in Norway (the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme of the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education). The latter has used several instruments other than just research funding to build an arts-based research community. In contrast, by introducing a special programme for arts-based research, the FWF has concentrated on actual research funding, which in turn has been handled very professionally. This has undoubtedly provided crucial impulses for the professionalization of arts-based research in Austria, but has also led to a strong institutional concentration due to a lack of accompanying measures. This can be assessed both positively and negatively, which brings us to the core area of this evaluation.

By means of an evaluation, the FWF intended

- to critically review the PEEK funding programme to identify strengths and weaknesses, to quantify and qualify output, outcome and impact;
- to obtain evidence-based recommendations for itself and its supervisory bodies on whether and how the PEEK programme should be continued, improved or restructured; and
- to explore how its overall funding strategy for artistic research (year 2022 and beyond) should further be developed².

The evaluation addressed the following three sets of questions:

¹ We follow the Fund's classification of arts universities and designate all public universities from 1.16 (Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna) to 1.21 (Mozarteum Salzburg) as arts universities, regardless of whether their portfolios focus more on art or music. In addition, there are two private universities, 4.01 (Anton Bruckner Private University) and 4.05 (Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna). See <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/en/>, accessed on 10 September 2021

² These three bullet points are a direct quote from the Terms of Reference of the evaluation.

First, were the programme objectives achieved? Here, a distinction is made between goal achievement in the sense of

- A. support for high-quality and innovative arts-based research in Austria;
- B. building research capacities at an international level;
- C. increasing public as well as academic awareness of arts-based research; and
- D. elevating the profile of arts-based research at universities and other research institutions.

Second, were programme implementation and management adequate and efficient? A distinction should be made here between different phases in the research funding cycle:

- E. call preparation and support;
- F. project evaluation management;
- G. project support; and
- H. regulations

Third, what is the status of PEEK in the FWF's programme portfolio and in the Austrian research landscape?

In order to answer this catalogue of questions, the ZSI team, together with Professor Felix Stalder from the Zurich University of the Arts, used a multi-method evaluation design. It consisted of document analyses and database research, content analyses of documents and expert interviews, artefact-based interviews with grantees, i.e. principal investigators (PIs) as well as team members, an online survey with granted and non-granted applicants, and a focus group with representatives of arts universities and other research institutions. The results from these different methods were reflected on and triangulated with each other several times in the course of the evaluation process.

As an overall result, it can be stated in one sentence that the FWF did many things very right with PEEK.

The following findings can be summarised for the first block of evaluation questions (achievement of programme objectives):

A. The introduction of a competitive research programme – with international peer reviews and a dedicated board that quality-assured the review process in a research area that is itself only partially institutionalised – was undoubtedly a significant contribution to the emergence of high-quality and innovative arts-based research in Austria.

Compared to the FWF's Stand-Alone project funding, arts-based research is characterised by a higher degree of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. This manifests itself in a significantly more diverse output, which – according to our samples – has led to slightly fewer peer-reviewed publications compared to Stand-Alone projects. However, PEEK is characterised by significantly more innovative and diverse dissemination formats.

Almost 100% of the respondent group surveyed, consisting of funded and non-funded PEEK applicants, affirmed that PEEK has contributed to the institutionalisation of arts-based research in Austria, is vital for research activities at arts universities and has improved the international reputation of Austrian arts-based research. A large proportion (89%) also perceived an improvement in the reputation of arts-based research within the research community. About 80% confirmed that PEEK has contributed to increasing the variety of arts-based research output and that the programme has helped to achieve greater diversity in methods and approaches to artistic production. The non-funded respondents were slightly more cautious in their responses to the questions about the impact of PEEK on quality and innovation. They were noticeably more critical only of PEEK's contribution to improving the status of arts-based research within arts communities. The danger of arts-based research becoming too remote from arts and being mainstreamed towards “normal” science/scholarly production appropriated by arts universities was noted several times in this context.

B. With regard to the increase in training and career opportunities, PEEK was also seen to make a high contribution among those involved (average agreement of 93%). In the case of PEEK Principal Investigators (PIs), we mostly ascertained effects on securing their status in the academic field. In turn, the younger and less established PEEK project team members showed significantly more career-related effects. This was confirmed by both the survey and career tracking. From the point of view of the PEEK PIs interviewed, both they and the team members have benefited equally from PEEK in terms of competence building, gaining visibility, international cooperation, personal career advancement, acquiring new qualifications and enhanced academic reputation. However, it was

repeatedly criticised that PEEK projects are not sufficiently incorporated into teaching and are understood as an extracurricular activity of their own.

As far as identity is concerned, it can be stated that by far the largest proportion of the individuals studied feel they belong to both the art world and the academic world. PEEK users create art and publish scientific articles. However, rarely do those individuals describe themselves as arts-based researchers, even though the funded PEEK project is prominently featured in self-portrayals. The identity of a full-time arts-based researcher is basically inexistent.

C. As far as the value of PEEK in academia is concerned, we found that for some non-arts universities, the existence of PEEK is perceived as another option for the application of alternative methods in research. Cases from architecture and digitalisation (especially artificial intelligence) are particularly common in this respect. Yet for the arts universities, arts-based research is fundamentally central, albeit to varying degrees. Six out of seven PEEK applicants (both funded and non-funded) perceived that PEEK has raised the standing of arts-based research in the research community and contributed to its increased public perception. Within its own guild, PEEK has undoubtedly boosted the international recognition of arts-based research from Austria. Interestingly, however, there are information deficits with regard to other PEEK projects that were not carried out by oneself, which was considered a pity on the part of the funded researchers.

D PEEK has given considerable impact to contour arts-based research as a central research approach in several arts universities. This applies especially to the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Performing Arts and Music in Graz. Two thirds of all FWF-funded projects at the first two universities are attributable to PEEK. Conversely, this also implies extreme dependence on PEEK. The FWF project portfolio of those arts universities that also focus on music is broader in this respect, although it can be said that competitively funded basic research at the arts universities is overall limited. In recent years, however, research offices or more or less institutionalised support services have been established at almost all arts universities. At the arts universities that already make heavy use of PEEK, emphasis is placed on expanding the research programme portfolio, and at those that implement only a few PEEK projects, attempts are made to promote PEEK more strongly within their own institutions. Still, PEEK is not a programme for the arts universities alone. Although their share was more than 50% in each year (both in terms of applications and funded projects) and exceeded or even reached the 80% mark in funded projects in five years between 2009 and 2021, the technical universities and a few specialised institutions, such as the Research Institute for Art and Technology, Ars Electronica and the Association of Visual Artists, have also participated in PEEK. In turn, the medical universities are almost not at all represented. Ensuring that PEEK is an open programme that can be used inter- and transdisciplinarily, and is not understood as a programme exclusively for the arts universities, seems central to in order to guarantee exciting projects with innovative approaches and theories in the future.

A shorter statement can be given with regard to the second major evaluation question requested by the FWF, namely whether programme implementation has been adequate and programme administration has worked efficiently.

E. From the perspective of both funded and non-funded PEEK applicants and the vice rectors and research services who participated in the focus group, the FWF has managed PEEK well and professionally. The services offered by the FWF during the application phase were considered at least satisfactory by an average of 80% of the respondents, although non-funded applicants were consistently more sceptical. This assessment corresponds to the results of most evaluations of FWF programmes (e.g., Doctoral Programmes, Schrödinger Fellowship, START Programme Wittgenstein Award) in recent years. It also applies to the comprehensibility of the application documents. The focus group participants criticised above all that there is only one submission deadline for PEEK per year.

F. The review and evaluation process was perceived as critical to an (exceedingly) high degree. This concerns the quality of the individual reviews as well as the role of the PEEK Board in quality assurance. The evaluation criteria appeared appropriate to only 52% of the respondents and only 53% agreed that the review and evaluation process is transparent. This critical perspective by no means came only from the non-funded PEEK applicants. There is a need for action here.

G. In the course of implementing PEEK projects, the FWF was perceived as being accessible at all times, reacting quickly and flexibly, and providing clear and high-quality responses. However, it was also critically noted that the FWF does little to build an arts-based research community.

H. The FWF's high audit effort is problematic. PEEK projects are complex in their production and knowledge generation conditions and processes, which leads not least to a high number of invoices as well as contracts with third parties. However, the PEEK regulations correspond to the complex production and knowledge generation conditions and processes of arts-based research, which is why other ways of containing the auditing burden should be pursued instead of changing the regulations.

Finally, the FWF wanted an assessment of how PEEK is positioned within the FWF funding portfolio and the Austrian research funding landscape. Our findings are clear. PEEK is a programme with a high unique selling position (USP) and, at the same time, it is also different because it represents an alternative research paradigm that is not based on hypothesis-driven testing of assumptions or empirical findings or observations. Instead, PEEK fundamentally works exploratively with artistic methods and often incorporates interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. If PEEK had not been implemented, arts-based research would not exist in Austria at this level and breadth. Only 17% and 7% of the respondents stated that funding from the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and the Austria Wirtschaftsservice (aws), respectively, would also be an option for them. Otherwise, arts stipends, Stand-Alone project funding from the FWF, funding from the federal provinces (e.g., from the Vienna Science and Technology Fund WWTF), the EU "Creative Europe" programme and occasionally Horizon 2020 (incl. the European Research Council ERC), private sponsors and internal university funding were mentioned as additional possibilities for conducting arts-based research. The fact that PEEK fills a gap in the funding portfolio despite these isolated alternatives that are suitable only in part can also be deduced from the fact that PEEK funding recipients are merely sporadically active in other FWF programmes. PEEK has thus mobilised a large number of arts-based researchers who have not yet been able to take advantage of FWF funding.

It is therefore hardly surprising that we recommend that PEEK be continued for the next five to ten years.

In order to maintain the diversity of potential applicants, however, more attention should be paid to public relations and community-building. We are aware that, in contrast to public relations work, community-building is not considered a task of the FWF and would also be structurally far too demanding for the Fund, which is why other actors should also be involved in community-building – in coordination and division of labour with the FWF. These are primarily the arts universities themselves, but also the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF). Finally, PEEK was created with the dual goal of enabling arts-based research in Austria in order to strengthen research at institutions that are responsible for developing and opening up the arts, first and foremost the arts universities. We consider an opening of PEEK in the direction of the art universities, which have so far participated little in PEEK – but also in the direction of other universities and research institutions, museums as well as major art events such as the Salzburg Festival, the Styriarte or the Vienna Festival – to be beneficial in order to prevent an institutional concentration and a possible accompanying narrowing of potential research orientations. In order to make better use of PEEK and to broaden research in arts-based research, we recommend that arts universities in particular integrate PEEK projects into their teaching. There is still abundant room for improvement in this respect. At the same time, we suggest flanking measures to facilitate the transfer of arts-based research to other FWF programmes. This includes first recognising arts-based research as a paradigm of a different, alternative research approach. In the long term, the exclusion of arts-based research in other FWF programmes, such as the career mobility or international programmes, cannot be justified. However, the PEEK regulations must then also apply to the other programmes if the respective applications are arts-based research (tick-box). The review and evaluation process for such applications should continue to be quality-assured by the PEEK Board.

We also recommend making the application process more flexible by allowing for two annual submission deadlines.

The role and mandate of the PEEK Board with regard to its influence on overruling external reviewer opinions should be made transparent and better communicated. The quality assurance function of the Board in the review and evaluation process should be maintained in any case, and even more value should be placed on external reviewers with well-argued and clearly articulated assessments.

The approval rates for PEEK are below the average FWF approval rate and significantly below Stand-Alone project funding. While a fixed budget was justified when the programme was introduced because the applications often did not have the desired quality, the FWF should now work together with the BMBWF to align PEEK budgeting with the more flexible practice of most other FWF programmes.

Finally, in order to reduce the FWF's auditing costs, which are significantly higher for PEEK projects than for other FWF projects, we recommend establishing contracts with the arts universities with the highest numbers of applications for a division of labour to review the costs incurred in terms of justification of content and formal correctness. The division of labour could go along cost types or as random samples across the invoices and contracts incurred.

2. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation object is the programme for arts-based research (PEEK³) of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). The FWF commissioned ZSI to evaluate PEEK in May 2019. As clearly described in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the purpose of this evaluation is

- **to critically review PEEK** in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses and to quantify and qualify the produced output, the generated outcome and the induced impact;
- **to provide recommendations** based on the identified evaluation results and conclusions to the FWF and its supervisory bodies on whether and how PEEK should be continued, improved or restructured;
- to provide **evidence-based and insightful recommendations for the further development** of FWF's general funding strategy for arts-based research⁴ for 2022 and beyond.

The **scope of the evaluation** also included scrutinising the following aspects (see ToRs):

- a. the contribution of arts-based research induced by PEEK to institutional changes within Austria's arts universities to a more pronounced research orientation;
- b. a systematisation of different modes and meanings of arts-based practices of knowledge production;
- c. the identification of (implicit) modes of arts-based research the projects refer and adhere to;
- d. the personal identities and subject positions within the PEEK projects, the meaning of working in a PEEK project and the relation between motivations to work in a PEEK project, the personal identities and models of arts-based research;
- e. the distinction and commonalities to work in PEEK as compared to both artistic projects and FWF Stand-Alone projects in terms of substance and scope, knowledge generation, applied methods, personal identities and motivation;
- f. the forms of collaboration in PEEK projects;
- g. the relations to international and local contexts;
- h. the rationale for applying for PEEK funding vis-à-vis alternative funding potentials (e.g., Stand-Alone projects); and
- i. international examples of other research funding institutions comparable to the FWF in terms of their experience with funding instruments similar to PEEK.

The evaluation was conducted using a multi-method approach and the empirical phase was completed in August 2021. The results (in Chapters 6 to 9), our conclusions and recommendations (in Chapters 10 and 11) as well as the evaluation design (in Chapter 4) are documented in this report.

The evaluation does not include the Elise Richter PEEK Programme⁵.

³ PEEK stand for "Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste" („programme for developing and opening-up the arts").

⁴ Various terms are used in the literature, e.g., arts-based research, artistic research and practice-based research (see Chapter 5). Following FWF terminology, we exclusively use "arts-based research" in this evaluation.

⁵ Richter PEEK serves to support exceptionally qualified women working in the field of arts-based research in their career development with regard to a university career that would enable them to apply for a domestic or foreign professorship after completing the funding (habilitation or equivalent qualification).

3. THE PROGRAMME FOR ARTS-BASED RESEARCH (PEEK)

The science policy background for the emergence of the PEEK programme, which is an abbreviation for "Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste" ('programme for developing and opening up the arts'), was the equalisation of the arts universities in Austria with the scientific and technical universities. The resulting equality of scientific research with the 'development and opening up of the arts' approach is a central feature of PEEK that reflects Art. 1 of the 2002 Universities Act (BGBl. I Nr 120/2002) and the transformation of Austria's higher arts education institutions from arts colleges to arts universities. Arts-based research is legally enshrined in the explanatory comments on the 1982 Research and Technology Promotion Act (BGBl. Nr 434/1982, amended by BGBl. I Nr 36/2007), and set on the same plane as scientific research.

PEEK is understood as a basic-research and not as a use-driven research programme. It aims at increasing the present body of knowledge by means of aesthetic and artistic processes of knowledge production. With this orientation, PEEK sets itself apart from the creative industries. The programme includes capacity-building arrangements as well as new strategies for the dissemination of artistic productions. However, PEEK is neither a programme for the promotion of artistic practice per se nor a scheme to develop teaching or training programmes.

According to the programme description, PEEK aims to fund clearly defined research proposals of high artistic and academic quality at an international level in the field of arts-based research. By using the term "arts-based research", the FWF emphasises that the relationship with artistic practice needs to be integral to the enquiry⁶. Artistic practices are thus envisioned as increasing and advancing societal knowledge. Through its focus on aesthetic and artistic processes rather than those of purely hypothesis-testing rational science and scholarship, arts-based research differs fundamentally from art and cultural studies and disciplines, such as literary criticism and history, art history and musicology. We further elaborate the distinguishing features of different arts-based research understandings in Chapter 6.

The PEEK programme was launched in 2009 and applied a consequent bottom-up principle from its inception. No funding programme specific to arts-based research had previously existed in Austria, even though the FWF's translational research programme (TRP) explicitly addressed artistic researchers, among others. PEEK is not limited to universities of arts. Researchers from all Austrian research organisations as well as individuals engaged in arts-based research who hold the necessary qualifications are invited to submit proposals. This also includes artists, provided that their proposals fall within the scope of PEEK and that they can access and use the required project infrastructure. To satisfy the latter point, they need to be affiliated with an appropriate university or non-university institution in Austria in order to ensure the necessary infrastructure, documentation, support and quality of the results.

This connection does not need to be secured through an employment contract, but can also be established through looser contractual agreements. In general, funding from the FWF is person-related and not institution-related. Usually one principal investigator (PI) is responsible for planning and carrying out a project. This person can collaborate with national and/or international research partners. The formation of the teams, the choice of topics and the elaboration of PEEK proposals lie solely in the responsibility of the involved artists/researchers and their respective institution(s).

The goals of the Programme are

- to support high-quality and innovative arts-based research in which artistic practice is integral to the inquiry;
- to enhance the research capacity, quality and international standing of arts-based researchers in Austria; and
- to increase both public awareness and awareness within the academic and the arts communities of arts-based research and its potential applications.⁷

Since its inception, the Programme has published an annual call for proposals with a fixed deadline. Applications in English are to be made via the FWF's electronic application portal. The ex-ante proposal evaluation is implemented by at least two independent external reviewers. The review process is

⁶ <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/peek>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

⁷ <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/peek>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

carried out with the involvement of the international PEEK Board, which oversees the review process and reassigns shortlisted proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Board currently consists of six international experts and is headed by Michael Punt of the University of Plymouth, UK. As in all other FWF programmes and instruments, the FWF Board⁸ makes the final decisions based upon the recommendations of the PEEK Board.

Once a project is approved, it usually runs for 36 to 48 months with an average grant of approx. €350,000. Personnel and non-personnel costs, including dissemination costs, can be funded through the grant. Overheads are not paid. Chapter 7 informs in detail about the regulatory and administrative features of PEEK.

PEEK is a small programme within the FWF portfolio, with annual approvals amounting to less than 1.5% of FWF's total budget, and the Programme has a largely fixed annual volume. For the 2009-2021 period, and with 12 calls for proposals, the PEEK programme supported a total of 102 arts-based research projects (out of 692 applications) with a funding volume of €34.64 million. All funded PEEK projects can be identified via the "FWF Project Finder".⁹

⁸ See the document "General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure" <https://fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/decision-making-procedure-evaluation/decision-making-procedure/>; accessed on 10 September 2021.

⁹ <https://pf.fwf.ac.at/en/research-in-practice/project-finder/>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

4. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview of the evaluation design

The evaluation questions were clearly listed in the ToR and were **divided into three broad clusters**, referring

- A) to the fulfilment of objectives of the PEEK programme;
- B) to the appropriateness and efficiency of programme implementation and management; and
- C) to the positioning of the PEEK programme within FWF's funding portfolio and within the Austrian research funding landscape (meta-analysis).

All the detailed questions listed in the ToR were addressed with a multi-method evaluation design to identify robust answers. The evaluation design was broken down in a workflow, which employed a variety of different qualitative and quantitative methods:

1. desk research including state-of-art literature review, PEEK-related document analysis and analysis of funding statistics (PEEK and participation of PEEK PIs in other FWF programmes);
2. analysis of three comparable international programmes or funding schemes in Switzerland, Norway and the Netherlands including document analysis and telephone interviews;
3. content analysis based on 25 PEEK final reports and 10 randomly chosen Stand-Alone projects along pre-defined evaluative dimensions;
4. multiple case-study design including document analysis, artefact-based interviews and joint interpretation supported by narrative interviews;
5. online surveys addressing (i) all funded PIs and (ii) a sample of non-funded applicants;
6. scrutinising careers of PIs with already finalised PEEK projects by using the FWF Project Finder to complement the group of questions addressing the career dimension in the survey;
7. face-to-face interviews with programme owners, programme managers and policy-makers, telephone interviews with advisory board members and one focus group with institutional representatives of universities of arts and research organisations;
8. synthesis, triangulation and deduction of conclusions; and
9. recommendations.

The methods used are briefly presented in the following sections.

4.2 Document analysis and funding statistics

We investigated general documents such as the 'Annual Reports' as well as the 'Principles of the FWF Decision-Making Procedure' to better understand the Fund's procedures, the portfolio and programme-specific rules. To identify special regulatory and administrative features of PEEK, we further scrutinised the programme-specific guidelines and application forms. These documents are all publicly available on the FWF website.¹⁰

We further made an analysis of FWF's funding statistics¹¹ in combination with the FWF's 'Project Finder'¹² to provide answers to the following questions:

- **From which universities**/research-performing institutions do PEEK projects come from? Do the arts universities dominate the field? How does the share and success of arts universities develop over time? Have other research institutions recently become more active?

¹⁰ <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

¹¹ <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/en/>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

¹² <https://pf.fwf.ac.at/en/research-in-practice/project-finder>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

- What is **the disciplinary background** of the PEEK projects? How dominant are the arts?
- What are the differences in **the approval rates** in comparison with FWF's Stand-Alone projects in similar disciplines?
- Is the share of **rejection of applications with well rated content** (rejections with C1 or C2) increasing or decreasing? What is the result of a comparison with Stand-Alone projects in similar disciplines?
- **Application history**: What was the submission behaviour of PIs over time? What is the sequence of approvals and rejections of proposals?
- Are successful PEEK PIs also active in **FWF programmes other than PEEK**?

102 arts-based research projects (out of 692 applications) with a funding volume of €34.640 million form the data basis for the funding statistics. In addition to the publicly accessible data on the projects, we received the applications, the reasons for rejection and the data for the Stand-Alone projects directly from the FWF.

4.3 Content analysis of final reports

In order to obtain a robust conceptual understanding of how PEEK projects differ from "classic" FWF Stand-Alone projects, we scrutinised the final reports of 25 PEEK projects and ten randomly chosen Stand-Alone projects from the same or similar disciplines in an attempt to sort, systematise and cluster the PEEK projects according to their distance from Stand-Alone projects.

In an initial step, the FWF randomly selected 25 PEEK projects and provided us with access to the relevant documentation, namely the PEEK final reports, the project budgets and the final reviews. For the 25 completed PEEK projects, care was taken to ensure that, wherever possible, a review of the final reports had already taken place. As a result, the projects tended to come from the first PEEK years. The FWF also randomly selected the ten completed Stand-Alone projects. To ensure a certain degree of comparability, these projects were drawn from the same period as the PEEK projects (from approval year 2009 onwards) and their share of "604 art sciences" classification within their discipline portfolio amounted to at least 40%.

We then analysed these documents and grouped them into three categories based on their perceived distance to more classic FWF Stand-Alone projects in the "Art" category. The initial idea as described in our offer was to compare PEEK and the Stand-Alone projects along two dimensions: research outputs and methods employed. The underlying hypothesis was that both might be less standardised, more heterogeneous and more innovative. The most important variable to assess the distance between PEEK projects and "similar" Stand-Alone projects was the type of output. While most "classic" research projects with a clear scope on "art sciences" focus on peer-reviewed publications as primary output format, arts-based research projects often have a much broader range of output formats, which are considered central both to the research project and for communication among peers, such as exhibitions, performances, artist publications, etc.

Instead of the second criterion proposed in our offer, namely the research methodology employed in the PEEK projects, which proved to be too diverse for a clear-cut category, we applied the following secondary variables for differentiation:

- a) interdisciplinarity, based on keywords other than "Art",
- b) the PIs' FWF track record; and
- c) the number and features of work contracts and contracts for employment used in the projects.

For the latter, we identified that arts-based research projects have a higher number of collaborators, often short-term and part-time, with a higher number of service contracts. This is due to the need to involve external specialists (e.g., sound or video technicians) in the set-up of the research and, in particular, in the production of the various output formats.

Each of the 25 PEEK projects was then rated along each dimension with regards to their closeness/distance to Stand-Alone projects. Section 9.2 gives a detailed explanation of the categories and the final classification of the 25 projects. This classification provided the basis for the selection of the cases described in the following section.

4.4 Case studies

Case studies were a central part of the qualitative evaluation design. The goal of the case studies was to obtain a nuanced understanding of the research process of PEEK projects from the point of view of the researchers themselves. For this purpose, we selected six projects and conducted interviews between 80 and 100 minutes each. Five were conducted with PIs and key researchers from the project team; one was conducted with a PI alone.

One of the defining aspects of PEEK is the great variety of projects that have been realised under this programme. Variety is not only understood here in terms of subject matter, but also in terms of research methodology and research outputs. To ensure that the relatively small sample of projects was as representative as possible, we used the two-step selection process described in Section 4.3. After clustering all 25 projects into one of three categories that indicated small, medium and large differences to Stand-Alone projects, we selected two from each category for the interviews.

During times of repeated shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were all conducted remotely over Zoom, which worked very well and had no negative impact on the quality of the conversations. Each interview followed the same semi-structured format. Before each interview, we asked the participants to feature a physical artefact that played an important role in the research process. We used this artefact as a conversational device to enter at the point of the concrete, material research practice and the processes that define it, which are otherwise difficult to understand if only based on formalised research reports. From there on, the first set of questions helped us better understand the content and context of the research project. The second set of questions focussed on the research processes and modes of collaboration within the team, but also the wider institutional setting in which these projects were based. The third cluster of questions focussed on research outcomes, the fourth on the impact of the research project, subsequent projects and careers, and the final set of questions concerned the researchers' experiences with PEEK/FWF as an "institution". All interviews were transcribed and coded with MAXQDA for analysis.

4.5 Survey

To complement the analytical spectrum and to validate and quantify some of the findings gathered with the exploratory methods, we set up a standardised online survey to gather PEEK PIs' and non-granted applicants' perceptions of the Programme. The survey aimed to collect data regarding the respondents' views on the concept of arts-based research and attitudes towards the standing and role of the PEEK programme in the Austrian arts-based research landscape, their relation to their host institution, their experiences with programme management and the services provided by FWF as well as on the consequences of rejected applications. In addition, the PIs were asked about the career effects triggered by implementing a PEEK project and the dissemination formats of their PEEK project. Thus, wherever it made sense, we addressed the questions to both the test group (PEEK PIs) and the comparison group (applicants without funding) to contrast the findings of the two groups.

The sample of the survey consisted of 73 PEEK PIs and 187 non-granted applicants based on the FWF database¹³. An initial invitation with a personalised link to the survey as well as two reminders were sent out to the potential respondents who so far had not completed the survey. In total, the survey remained open for 27 days. In the case of respondents whose e-mail addresses were no longer valid, their current e-mail addresses were searched manually and they received a new invitation. However, despite all efforts, six applicants were no longer to be reached. Table 1 provides an overview of the survey database and the sample. The response rate for PEEK PIs was very high (66% - i.e. comparable to the response rate in the survey evaluating FWF's international programmes), while the rate for non-funded applicants was lower, but still good (comparable to the group of PhDs in the evaluation of the Special Research Programmes (SFB), which had a response rate of 21%).

¹³ As agreed during the kick-off meeting, the 20% of applicants with the lowest scores in their reviews were excluded from the base population of applicants due to the assumption that they were atypical outliers who neither fitted nor qualified for the Programme, both thematically and qualitatively. Withdrawn and dismissed applications were not included in the base population. PIs who had also applied for PEEK unsuccessfully, counted only for the test group of PEEK PIs.

Table 1: Overview of the survey database

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total |
|------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| Sample size | 187 | 73 | 260 |
| Not reachable | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Net sample size | 181 | 73 | 254 |
| Respondents (=N) | 41 | 48 | 89 |
| Response rate | 22% | 66% | 35% |

The respondents' main demographic data (gender, age, institutional affiliation at the time of submitting the PEEK project) were compared to the data available for the PEEK applicants and PEEK PIs in the FWF database to control for response biases.

■ Gender

In comparison to the data of the FWF on PEEK applicants, the share of women who responded was higher, especially for the group of applicants who had not received any funding. Although some respondents identified themselves as non-binary in the survey, none of them had done so at the time of their application. Thus, no data regarding non-binary applicants were available. Table 2 provides an overview of the distribution of applicants by gender who responded to the survey compared to the total population as recorded in the FWF database.

Table 2: Comparison of respondents and total population by gender

| | Non-funded | | Funded | | Total | |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Respondents | Population | Respondents | Population | Respondents | Population |
| Male | 39% | 53% | 48% | 57% | 44% | 54% |
| Female | 56% | 47% | 46% | 43% | 51% | 46% |
| Non-binary | 0% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| No answer | 5% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 3% | 0% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| N | 41 | 187 | 48 | 73 | 89 | 260 |

■ Age

Table 3 shows that the share of younger respondents in our sample is more than twice as high as that in the overall population. Vice versa, respondents older than 50 are underrepresented in the sample. This deviation might be more exaggerated than the table implies since we asked respondents about their age at the time of their last submission to the PEEK programme, but only know the current age of the population.

Table 3: Comparison of respondents and total population by age

| | Non-funded | | Funded | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Respondents | Population | Respondents | Population | Respondents | Population |
| Between 31 and 40 | 27% | 11% | 21% | 5% | 24% | 10% |
| Between 41 and 50 | 37% | 33% | 42% | 33% | 39% | 33% |
| Older than 50 | 37% | 56% | 38% | 62% | 37% | 57% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| N | 41 | 187 | 48 | 73 | 89 | 260 |

Despite these deviations by demographic characteristics between the population and the respondents, we opted against weighting of cases.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the case of gender, this was due to the lack of non-binary cases in the population base. We tested weighting for age, where the deviation was the largest, but opted against it, because it slightly increased the number of funded applicants in comparison to the number of applicants whose PEEK projects had not been funded. Since the response rate of unsuccessful applicants was already lower to begin with, weighting for age would have further worsened that ratio at the expense of the group with the lower response rates.

▪ Institutional affiliation

The respondents were also asked at which institutions they were employed at the time of submitting their PEEK proposals. More than half of the respondents (54%) answered this multiple-choice question by stating that they were (also) employed at an arts university, while 23% of the respondents worked as freelancers and 24% were employed at another university (non-art), a university of applied sciences or a non-university research organisation. The category "other organisations" includes associations of artists, NGOs, architecture firms and the like.

Note that the data on the institutions that provided employment during the grant application are not fully comparable to the available data for the overall population of PEEK applicants and grantees (see Table 4). The information regarding the host institutions of the FWF database was clustered to fit the categories of the survey. However, there is no freelancer category in the data for the overall population, as every applicant had to indicate a host institution in the course of the application process. Corrective weighting would not fit for these cases.

Table 4: Comparison of respondents and total population by institutional affiliation

| | Non-funded | | Funded | | Total | | |
|--|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|----|
| | Respon- dents | Population | Respon- dents | Population | Respon- dents | Population | N |
| Arts universities | 44% | 71% | 63% | 78% | 54% | 73% | 48 |
| Other universities, universities of applied science or non-university research organisations | 27% | 18% | 20% | 15% | 24% | 17% | 21 |
| Freelancer | 29% | 0% | 17% | 0% | 23% | 11% | 20 |
| Other organisations | 5% | 11% | 6% | 7% | 6% | 0% | 5 |

Note: This was a multiple-choice question. The column totals do not necessarily add up to 100% because some of the respondents were employed by several organisations at the same time. The allocation to the groups "other organisations" and "other non-university research organisation" was based on plausibility considerations.

To test the association between the institutions the respondents were employed at and the success of their applications, we calculated Cramer's V, which was 0.251. Thus, we assume a low level of association between the institutions of affiliation and the probability of successful applications.

The results of the survey are presented in detail throughout Chapter 9 along with the results of the other methods employed.

4.6 Focus group

In contrast to the evaluation methods described so far, the focus group aimed at scrutinising the institutional and programme-level effects of PEEK. We therefore invited institutional representatives of organisations that regularly act as hosts for (funded and non-funded) PEEK applications. Those institutions encompass arts universities as well as technical and full universities. Moreover, we also invited non-university organisations (of which, however, none was finally available to participate). The Appendix gives an overview of the institutional representatives participating in the focus group and lists the guiding questions for the conduct of the focus group.

The focus group was recorded in audio and in writing and then coded and analysed along major thematic lines.

4.7 Interviews

In addition to the focus group, we conducted several single and group interviews to better understand the design, impact and standing of PEEK at the programme level. Tailored guidelines were prepared for each of these interviews. The interviews were all held online and were recorded in audio and in

writing and analysed along their major thematic lines. Table 5 provides an overview of the motivations for the interviews, the participants and the main topics discussed.

Table 5: Interviews conducted to assess PEEK at the programme level

| Interview | Motivation | Participants | Main topics discussed |
|--|---|---|---|
| Group interview with three members of the PEEK Board | PEEK's governance and PEEK's position in the international research funding landscape | Kathleen Coessens Sandra Kemp Michael Punt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitions and approaches of arts-based research - Function of the PEEK Board and challenges of the review process - Particularities and standing of the PEEK programme - PEEK's impact on the arts-based research field in Austria (impact, awareness, changes over time) |
| Group interview with FWF Executive Board and staff members | PEEK's governance and administration | Petra Grabner Gerlinde Mautner Cornelia Nalepka Elisabeth Nindl Falk Reckling Elisabeth Thörnblom Andrea Wald-Bruckner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of arts-based research in the FWF - Administrative aspects of PEEK (eligibility of costs, administrative burden, ...) - Board and review process (role and function of the Board, challenges of the review process, role of Kuratorium [i.e. the Board of Trustees]) - Arts-based research as a field (success rates between disciplines, tensions between PEEK as funding source for arts universities vs. a specific approach; community-building and communication activities initiated by the FWF) - Outlook (future development of arts-based research and of funding of arts-based research) |
| Interview with a representative of the Ministry | PEEK's position in the Austrian research funding landscape | Peter Seitz (BMBWF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PEEK and the institutional change of arts universities - Possible future developments for PEEK |
| Interviews with representatives of international funding organisations | PEEK's position in the international research funding landscape | Susanne Grossniklaus (SNSF – Swiss National Science Fund, CH) Geir Ivar Strom (DIKU – Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education, NO) Janneke Van Kersen (NWO – Dutch Research Council, NL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitions and approach to arts-based research, standing of artistic research in the given country - Governance of the programmes (specialised or mainstreamed, review process, administration, ...) - Development of the programme over time (growth in applications, changes in disciplines, etc.) - Challenges and future plans for arts-based research (programmes) |

4.8 Triangulation and validation

Because there is no single research method to address the complexity of PEEK, we adopted a multi-method approach. The application of different methods and perspectives and the use of different data sources for the same phenomenon facilitate a triangulated approach, in which the weaknesses of one method, perspective or data source are compensated by the strengths of another. By triangulating the results of the diverse methods applied in our evaluation of the PEEK programme, we aimed to achieve a higher validity of the research results, to reduce systematic errors and to more richly capture the empirical reality.

We had several team meetings to exchange and discuss the empirical results gained by the different methods and to relate them to each other in form of an interpretative synthesis. The interpretative synthesis was always to be re-focussed along the overall evaluation objectives and the specific evaluation questions.

While there were primary responsibilities for each method, each survey instrument (e.g., questionnaire) was reviewed by different team members. Of course, cognitive interviews were also conducted before the survey to check the comprehensibility and consistency of the questions. In terms of reporting each section was reviewed by all team members and brought to a shared understanding in a discursive review process.

From the evidence that had been collectively obtained and validated by triangulation, we finally drew conclusions, which formed the basis for our recommendations. The conclusions and the recommendations were developed collectively and discursively in several internal discussion rounds. In addition, we repeatedly incorporated interim conclusions into external formats, e.g., interviews and the focus group, in order to check whether they appeared compatible and comprehensible to these groups (FWF, PEEK Board members, arts universities, the Ministry).

5. THE CONCEPT OF ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

Arts-based research as a field of practice has developed across Europe over the last 30 years. It has grown in importance for research funding organisations as well as for art schools and universities and probably also, albeit to a lesser extent, in the art world (Bippus 2015, p.65). Despite this growing popularity and importance, the concept of arts-based research remains ambiguous. This already becomes evident in the terminology for research in or through the arts, which is denoted as “arts-based research”, “artistic research” or “practice-based research”.

5.1 Arts-based research, artistic research and practice-based research

The concept of “arts-based research” has emerged in a social science context (Schreier 2017) and in educational research (McNiff 2011, Barone & Eisner 2010), whereas the concept of “artistic research” (Borgdorff 2007 and 2013) is rooted in the context of art schools (Schreier 2017). “Practice-based research” was developed in the creative arts, design and new media arts (Candy & Edmonds 2018, p.63). Despite the different contexts of origin and connotations, these concepts share the basic aim to produce new knowledge and understanding through an artistic/creative process and practice.

The FWF definition in its guideline for the application to PEEK is very much in line with the concepts described above. It defines arts-based research as “*a type of basic research that aims at increasing the existing knowledge base and developing new methods by means of aesthetic and artistic processes of knowledge production rather than those of pure science and scholarship*”¹⁵.

In order to sharpen the understanding of the concept in question, it is useful to clarify what does **not** constitute arts-based research/artistic research/practice-based research:

- research on the arts: the art practice is scrutinised by an “external” researcher from a theoretical perspective, e.g., in art history or in the humanities (Borgdorff 2007, p.6);
- research for the arts: here the research process has an auxiliary function for the creative process or product, e.g., studying the material to use for the creation of an artefact (Borgdorff 2006, p.6);
- a creative form of dissemination of research results derived from classic research (Badura & Mokre 2014, p.8);
- a form of knowledge production that extends the knowledge or skills only of the practitioner/artist, but does not constitute new knowledge for others. (This form would be called learning) (Badura & Mokre 2014, p.8); and
- the equation of all artistic practice as artistic research.

For further clarification, it is worth diving deeper into the artistic or creative practice that is at the core of all three concepts described above. Drawing on the foundational work of Henk Borgdorff, *practice* is one essential feature that distinguishes arts-based research/artistic research from classic research. He describes the artistic practice as being “*paramount as the subject matter, the method, the context and the outcome of artistic research*” (Borgdorff 2011, p.46). In contrast to classic research, the subject matter is not confined by narrowly formulated research questions and hypotheses, but rather discovery-led and guided by intuition and experiential components. Methodologically, new knowledge and understanding can be acquired through practice and interactions (Borgdorff 2011). As opposed to classic scientific research, the outputs are not limited to written materials, such as journal articles, books and reports, but also include new artistic practices and products (ibid.). Regarding the context of artistic research, artistic practice plays a decisive role, as the results of the research process require meaning, relevance and validity in the world of the arts and in academia (ibid.).

However, not all artistic practice constitutes artistic research. To qualify as such, Borgdorff (2011) underlines the importance of intent, originality and the aim of creating knowledge and understanding.

“Art practice qualifies as research if its purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects

¹⁵ https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/PEEK/ar_application-guidelines.pdf, accessed on 13 August 2021, p.3.

and creative processes. Art research begins by addressing questions that are pertinent in the research context and in the art world. Researchers employ experimental and hermeneutic methods that reveal and articulate the tacit knowledge that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes. Research processes and outcomes are documented and disseminated in an appropriate manner to the research community and the wider public.” (Borgdorff 2007, p. 18)

Exploring more deeply the concept of research, one might wonder whether artistic research constitutes basic or applied research. Although this differentiation as such and the categorisation of artistic research is contested, Borgdorff (2009) gives quite a clear answer. Referring to Stokes’ “Quadrant model of scientific research” (Stokes, 1997, p.73) he categorises artistic research as “use-inspired basic research” (p.18) that includes both – the “quest for fundamental understanding” and the “consideration of use” (p.18). He explains:

“In artistic research, art practices are deployed methodologically in the research process, and in part they are also outcomes of the research themselves. It seeks both to broaden our understanding of the world and of ourselves as well as to enrich that world by experimentally developing new artefacts: compositions, designs, choreographies, images, art installations.” (p.19)

5.2 Institutional context

In relation to the PEEK programme as one of few funding programmes for arts-based research in Europe and beyond, it is worth noting that the emergence of arts-based research is also a result of structural changes in the field of academia as well as a redefinition of culture as a sector of the economy (Oakley 2009). The integration of art schools into the university system throughout Europe and the introduction of the three-degree cycle have both substantially increased the significance of research in art schools (Källemark 2011). As Borgdorff (2012, p.32) notes, this “*academisation*” is also met with criticism within the art institutions, as the accompanying increase in bureaucracy as well as some efforts to reproduce the science model of the natural sciences are seen as a potential threat to the freedom of the arts. In a similar vein, artistic research is also viewed with scepticism by scientific fields and “*is subject financially, politically, and culturally to completely different pressure to legitimize itself*” (Schiesser 2015, p.199). It should be noted that sometimes also art practice has turned towards artistic research, exemplified by the turn of contemporary arts towards “research and reflection” (Borgdorff 2012, p.32).

The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (AEC, CILECT / GEECT, Culture Action Europe, Cumulus, EAAE, ELIA, EPARM, EQ-Arts, MusiQuE, SAR 2020) and its criticism by Cramer and Terpsma (2021) illustrate the potential tension between institutional perspectives on artistic research and those of artists and artistic researchers alike. The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (AR) “*is intended as a policy document addressing political decision makers, funding bodies, higher education and research institutions as well as other organisations and individuals catering for and undertaking AR*” (2020, p.1) and was signed by umbrella organisations of artistic higher education institutions, quality insurance bodies and other policy organisations. In short, the Vienna Declaration requires policy makers to take the following actions:

- to support and work towards the establishment of artistic research as an independent category within the Frascati Manual, establishing the opportunity to harvest research data and statistics from the artistic research field;
- to ensure that funding policies and programmes at both the national and international levels include AR, provide the necessary resources and infrastructure and take care that the expertise in artistic research is available in the relevant decision-making panels;
- to ensure that the range of artistic research outputs is fully recognised at the national and international levels and is eligible for formal quality assurance and/or career assessment procedures; and
- to ensure through appropriate legislation the creation of legal frameworks that permit Arts Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to offer third-cycle study programmes and relevant degrees in AR. (2020, p.2)

The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research was met with criticism by two artistic researchers. It was published on the Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain and shared via dedicated mailing lists.

These researchers, Cramer & Terpsma (2021), criticised the declaration¹⁶ for:

- tightly connecting artistic research with innovation, businesses and intellectual property and thereby reducing artistic research to a tool for entrepreneurial and capitalist practices;
- a tendency to equate artistic research with PhD programmes, which require individualistic work practices rather than collective practices;
- reproducing current (quality) standards and practices of scientific research by demanding artistic research to conform to the same standards rather than questioning or revolutionising those standards and practices;
- contributing to the creation of two hardly related systems of artistic research, namely the institutional world of artistic research and the artistic world, with two different perspectives of what constitutes artistic research and what is regarded as relevant or valid; and
- not mentioning artists or acknowledging the rich history of artistic research.

5.3 Evaluation of artistic research

Given its proliferation as well as its ambivalence, the question of how to assess artistic or arts-based research is a difficult one. Biggs & Karlsson (2010) argue that the "borders and agenda" of artistic research should be co-developed "*between practitioners and theorists, not by individual art genres or traditional research disciplines*" (p.422). Borgdorff suggests seven guiding questions to assess artistic research (projects) (2012, p.212):

1. Is it indeed research?
2. Originality: Does the research deliver or promise to deliver new insights, forms, techniques or experiences?
3. Knowledge and understanding: What knowledge, what understanding and what experience is being tapped, evoked or conveyed by the research?
4. Research question: Is the description or exposition of the topic, issue or question sufficiently lucid to make clear to the forum what the research is about?
5. Context of the research: What relationship does the research have to the artistic or the social world, to theoretical discourse and to the contributions that others are making or have made on this subject?
6. Research method: Does this experiment, participation, interpretation or analysis provide answers to the question posed and, by so doing, does it contribute to what we know, understand and experience?
7. Documentation and dissemination of research results: Does the type and design of the documentation support the dissemination of the research in and outside academia?

Similarly, the Flemish Expertise Centre for Research and Development Monitoring (ECCOM) further developed questions to assess the research aspect of artistic research (Vanlee & Ysebaert 2019):

- a) Research background: What field does the outcome pertain to, which question(s) does it pose and how do these relate to the wider context?
- b) Research contribution: What contribution does the outcome make to knowledge?
- c) Research significance: How was the outcome received in the wider field it features in? (include evidence of the resonance, reception or impact of the research outcome)

Although all of these questions open up useful avenues for the evaluation of artistic research, they fail to provide demarcated criteria to answer the questions raised.

To conclude, artistic research, arts-based research and practice-based research are still rather ambiguous concepts. These forms of research have potential in raising new questions, bringing in new perspectives on research matters and applying different methods, and they ultimately can contribute to new knowledge and understanding. The literature review has shown that the conceptualisation, the definition of conceptual borders and the research criteria can be (partly) attributed to the different interests and stances in the field of arts-based research: policy makers,

¹⁶ <https://onlineopen.org/what-is-wrong-with-the-vienna-declaration-on-artistic-research/>; accessed on 13 August 2021.

research funding organisations, arts universities, other sciences as well the art world. This need not be a bad thing, since the resulting ambiguity allows for freedom required for “discovery-led” research.

6. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF PEEK

The funding landscape for arts-based research in Europe is still in a process of formation and consequently quite varied. At one end of the spectrum are countries like Germany, where the main funding body (German Research Foundation, DFG) neither recognises nor funds artistic research.¹⁷ At the other end of the spectrum are countries such as Austria and Norway, which have highly specialised funding programmes in place – PEEK and the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (NARP), respectively. In the following, we analyse three funding bodies that fund arts-based research in order to draw out differences and similarities to PEEK: The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), NARP and the Dutch Research Council (NWO). This comparison is based on analyses of documents published by these organisations, as well as interviews with programme managers.

What they have in common is that artistic research became a funding objective in response to changes in the higher education landscape across Europe during the late 1990s/early 2000s. This process triggered organisational changes in the field of arts by transforming arts colleges into arts universities in some countries. One of the main consequences of these institutional changes was that research was to become a core activity of these institutions, as one element of this reorganisation was the requirement to conduct research.

6.1 Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

The funding of arts-based research as such is not a specific objective of the SNSF. Rather, the SNSF mandate was expanded, following a decision by the national government (Bundesrat) in the late 1990s, to fund research at universities of applied sciences¹⁸ in their entire breadth, which includes the arts universities in Switzerland. To start the necessary build-up of research expertise at universities of applied sciences, a separate funding vehicle (DoRe: “Do Research”) was introduced in 1999. This process of building up institutional and human resource capacity was considered to be completed in 2011 and the specialised funding programme was dissolved. Since then, research at such universities has been fully mainstreamed and arts-based research is mostly handled by Division I of the SNSF (“Humanities and Social Sciences”).

In order to be able to integrate universities of applied sciences, the scope of funding for the SNSF was expanded by including the category “application-oriented projects”. Whether a project falls into this category or not is indicated by the PIs themselves by ticking a checkbox. Likewise, regular universities can submit application-oriented projects. Conversely, projects submitted by universities of applied sciences, including arts-based research projects, can be declared “basic-research-oriented” as well. As in all other areas, the Foundation has no specific definition of the domain under which a project falls, but relies on the PIs’ self-declaration with the institutional affiliation as a secondary indication. Contrary to other arts-based research funding bodies, the SNSF does require, as a condition of eligibility, that the PIs show a minimum of 50% employment at a HEI at the moment of application. While the SNSF mandates that PIs contribute substantially to the research project (and hence, cannot be involved in more than one project at the time), it never funds PIs themselves, as their research is to be covered by the universities. The Foundation sees this as a way to establish the PIs’ independence from external project partners, which, particularly in application-oriented projects, can play an important role in the design and orientation of a project. Whether this is an effective way to ensure the independence of research is beyond the scope of this report.

In general, the SNSF does not treat arts-based research differently from other research projects. In the field of arts-based research, a two-stage evaluation procedure is applied from the beginning. The advisory “Art, Design, Architecture” panel appoints from its members¹⁹ two referees for each application, who, as the Foundation outlines on its website, “confirm, complete or comment on the assessments made in the external reviews deemed to be useful and deliver their own criteria-based

¹⁷ This position is currently under review. In a recent document, the *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) argued for the need to fund arts-based research in the context of the introduction and expansion of PhD programmes at art and music universities and broader transformations of the European landscape of higher education. See, Wissenschaftsrat (2021). *Empfehlungen zur postgradualen Qualifikationsphase an Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*. Köln (23.04) https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/2021/9029-21.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=10, accessed on 21 July 2021.

¹⁸ In Switzerland, universities of applied sciences are not called universities, but “Fachhochschulen”.

¹⁹ Members are appointed for four years with the possibility of extension of one term.

judgment. In so doing, they again rate the applicants and the proposed project. ... The referees rank the application in relation to other applications."²⁰ Their recommendations, including budget adjustments, are then forwarded to the Research Council, which makes the final decisions on all applications. This procedure has been extended to other areas. Currently the "Art, Design, Architecture" panel is one of five specialised panels in Division I. Like elsewhere in the SNSF, external reviewers are not remunerated.

In terms of budget there are no fixed limits for project sizes, and there are no differences as to which costs can be financed in arts-based research as is the case in other research areas. There is no separate budget for arts-based research. Arts universities of applied science have raised an average of CHF 7 million in research funding per year. This amount has remained roughly stable over the last five years (2016 – 2020). How much of this falls under arts-based research, or includes other research approaches, is not known, since the SNSF does not differentiate between arts-based and other research projects and not all research coming from arts universities is necessarily arts-based.

- *Differences between SNSF funding of arts-based research and PEEK*

There are a number of very significant differences. First, arts-based research is not regarded as a category of its own, but mainly as one of many fields within the "Humanities and Social Sciences".²¹ It is generally thought of as falling under the category of "application-oriented" research and hence, its "broader impact" is rated higher in relation to its "scientific impact". The reason for this assumption is simply that the PIs of arts-based research projects tend to be located at universities of applied sciences. However, arts-based research projects can also self-declare themselves as "basic-research-oriented". The integration of arts-based research is fully mainstreamed into the general project-funding processes of the SNSF. Second, the opportunity to apply is institutionally significantly more restricted insofar as PIs need to be at least 50% employed at an HEI when applying. Moreover, their salaries must be paid by the employer and cannot be funded by the SNSF. This sharply limits the potential range of eligible PIs compared to other arts-based research-funding approaches, such as PEEK or NARP. It precludes artists only loosely affiliated with an arts university from applying and restricts the Programme to HEIs. If research is limited to PIs who are already at least 50% employed by an arts university, the institutional boundaries between arts-based research and non-institutionalised forms of artistic practices are reinforced, possibly limiting the outreach of artistic research into the wider art community. Third, while the funding volume allocated to arts universities is comparable to that of PEEK (about €6.5m/year), it is much smaller as a percentage of the overall research-funding budget. In 2020, the overall SNSF budget was about €863m, whereas the total FWF budget was €237m.

6.2 Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (NARP)

Comparable to Austria, the starting point for NARP was a new university law introduced in 1995, which placed arts-based research on an equal footing with other forms of research.²² The Academy of Music in Oslo and the art academies in Oslo and in Bergen then proposed to the Ministry to finance a certain number of PhD positions. As a result, a research school was established and the number of PhD programmes at arts HEIs grew constantly. Against the backdrop of this development, the need for a dedicated research programme for artistic research became apparent and led to the introduction of NARP. Unlike expected, the Programme is not hosted by the Research Council of Norway, but by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)²³, to ensure that the research school²⁴ and the funding programme for artistic research are taken care of by the same institution.

While there is no strict definition of what artistic research is, NARP states that it is "*essential that the artistic practice is at the core of the activities, alongside reflection on process, methods, and context,*

²⁰ See <https://www.snf.ch/en/uffZqdPv7wgJ1BkH/page/theSNSF/evaluation-procedures/project-funding>, accessed on 21 July 2021.

²¹ "Humanities and Social Sciences" is an administrative category (Division 1 in the SNSF). The fact that arts-based research tends to fall under this category is a consequence of artistic researchers' self-declaration (one needs to state to which division the application is submitted) and not due to how the Foundation defines arts-based research.

²² See <https://diku.no/en/programmes/norwegian-artistic-research-programme>, last accessed on 21 July 2021.

²³ See <https://diku.no/en>, last accessed on 21 July 2021.

²⁴ The NARP research school consists of a set of modules, which count for 20 of a total of 180 ECTS for the PhD programmes. It is a compulsory element for all Artistic Research PhD programmes in Norway.

and results must be made visible. The artist's own experience and insight is the starting point, as opposed to research on the arts, where the view from the outside is essential."²⁵

To ensure this focus on the arts, "artistic project managers" (equivalent to PIs) must show artistic competence or hold positions that demonstrate this competence. They are expected to devote a significant portion (50% or more) of their time to the project. The Programme is open only to accredited Norwegian HEIs, and it is the institution that has to apply for the funding of a research project. However, the artistic project manager does not have to have a contract for work before the proposal is submitted, but only when the project is approved.

Similar to PEEK, there is a special Board that has comprehensive responsibilities. The Board assigns the applications for evaluation according to the members' responsibilities/disciplines. The Board members select and handle international reviewers. They can use a list of reviewers provided by Diku, who have previously been consulted and can be contacted again, but the search for reviewers is the responsibility of the Board. Reviewers are asked to address seven questions, the first and most important being "*What is the project's artistic core and intention, and what are the expected outcomes?*"²⁶ The Board aims to identify reviewers who can assess multiple applications within the same round, so that they are better able to make a comparison between the applications. There are plans to hold webinars for reviewers to make reviews more consistent. Reviewers are paid for their reviews, making it easier to recruit reviewers from outside academia. Each application is reviewed by three reviewers. The Board collects and reviews the external assessments and makes final decisions. There are 15 to 20 applications per year and three to four finally receive funding.

Once the projects have been approved, their administration is no more complex than for other research projects, not the least because there are research offices supporting the PIs at the applying institutions and NARP is managed by staff who understand the particularities of arts-based research. Over time, the projects have become very sophisticated, complex and expensive, involving lots of partners. While NARP has always welcomed international project partners, as they ensure international dissemination and exchange, it has started to limit funding to NOK €3 million (about €300,000) per project to encourage smaller, less organisationally complex projects that are closer to artistic practice.

As a form of monitoring projects in progress and to improve networking among arts-based research practitioners, Diku hosts the annual Research Forum, which is a conference/workshop for the funded artistic research projects (this is part of the research school). There, the PIs and core team members present their ongoing work and a commentator is nominated to provide feedback. This is mandatory for all funded NARP projects. Each project team has to present itself in the Research Forum twice in the lifespan of the project.

To improve dissemination and visibility of the field, Diku has also supported the creation of a specialised journal, the Nordic Journal for Artistic Research (VIS)²⁷, in which projects are presented. Moreover, the Agency encourages the use of a "research catalogue", an international database for arts-based research.²⁸ The main challenge at the moment is to assess the project's results, because output formats are (intentionally) very diverse. The Research Forum is one way to address this challenge.

▪ *Differences between NARP and PEEK*

The two programmes are quite similar in some aspects. Both are specialised funding programmes focusing exclusively on arts-based research and are organised with the help of a separate thematic Board, although to different extent. In NARP, the Board essentially organises the evaluation process and is responsible for decision-making. While the funding amount per project is about the same, NARP funds fewer projects annually than PEEK. The main difference between PEEK and NARP is that the latter, possibly because of its location at Diku and in close proximity to the research school and the PhD programmes, applies a more comprehensive service approach. NARP does not only fund

²⁵ See <https://diku.no/en/programmes/norwegian-artistic-research-programme#content-section-6>, accessed on 21.07.2021.

²⁶ For the full list of questions, see: <https://diku.no/en/programmes/norwegian-artistic-research-programme#content-section-2>, accessed on 21 July 2021.

²⁷ See <https://www.en.visjournal.nu/>, accessed on 21 July 2021.

²⁸ See <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/>, accessed on 21 July 2021.

individual projects, but also the Research Forum, while supporting a specialised journal, which is intended to strengthen the field as a whole. A further difference is that only accredited Norwegian HEIs can submit applications, though PIs do not have to have employment contracts with the universities at the time of proposal submission. This can be seen as striking a balance between keeping the field open and having institutional quality control before submission.

6.3 Dutch Research Council (NWO)

Arts-based research funding in the Netherlands is currently in a paradoxical state. It does not exist as a category of its own, yet it does so in the context of funding PhD research. It further operates as an ongoing, active cooperation of the arts and design universities and between universities of applied sciences and universities, e.g., through the platform "Kunst ≈ Onderzoek" (Art ≈ Research), "*a collaboration of the art lectorates or professorships of the higher art education in the Netherlands. The objective is to inform, exchange and collaborate in the field of research in the arts.*"²⁹

Today, there is no dedicated programme to fund arts-based research in the Netherlands, but the overall situation is in flux and depends on policies that currently seem to change in substance and interpretation. Given the fact that arts-based research funding existed in the past and that future funding of such research is envisioned, the main focus continues to be on "stimulating research" by supporting PhD students. In other words, from the perspective of the funding agency NWO, arts-based research is regarded as research undertaken by students and supervised by professors at an arts and design school. From an administrative side, it has not been treated differently from other research projects funding PhD students, where grants are awarded on the basis of the review of their PhD proposals. This narrowing of arts-based research as exclusively PhD research has been repeatedly criticised (recently by Cramer & Terpsma, 2021).

Within the NWO, two programmes formerly funded arts-based research. The first started in 2009. It was executed in collaboration between the Council and The Mondriaan Fund, the public fund for visual art and cultural heritage. During its lifetime (until 2019), the programme funded only four PhD projects (in a programme for independent artists). The second programme, "smart culture", started in 2012 and had its last call in 2016, but still has ongoing activities. Its focus was to support PhD students at arts and design schools, but also to facilitate the development of the field more broadly, for example, through conferences. The most recent of these conferences, *The Postresearch Condition*, took place at the Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU) in January 2021 and was organised with the European Artistic Research Network (EARN). During that conference, leading art theorists, artists and other arts-based research practitioners from across Europe discussed the premise that "*after an omnipresent 'Research Decade', the concept of artistic research currently seems to be in need of a recharge.*"³⁰ While no new definition of arts-based or artistic research was proposed, emphasis was put on the independence of arts-based research as a field that "*cannot be equated with creative innovation, disciplinary knowledge production, or political activism.*"³¹

In the Netherlands, like in Switzerland, arts and design schools are universities of applied science. Pressure is currently underway to establish the "third cycle"³² at these universities, which is met with suspicion from established universities. Thus, the situation remains in flux, but pilot programmes are running and are likely to increase the pressure to fund arts-based research as part of expanded PhD programmes. At the institutional level, some universities (such as ACPA as part of Leiden University, KABK in The Hague, RASL [a venture of Erasmus University College, Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam and Codarts Rotterdam], MACCH at Maastricht University, ARIAS – Platform for Research through the Arts and Sciences) are strongly pushing to enable artistic research as part of the third cycle at universities of applied sciences as well (at the moment, only universities can grant PhDs).

As policies are now shifting in substance at the national level, which also impacts the work of NWO, art is sometimes regarded as part of the Creative Industries (CI) and sometimes not. What seems to

²⁹ See <https://kunst-onderzoek.nl/en>, last accessed on 3 October 2021.

³⁰ Website of the Postresearch Condition Conference, <https://www.hku.nl/en/study-at-hku/creative-transformation/pre-phd-programme/the-postresearch-condition>, accessed on 11 August 2021.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² "The third cycle in the arts is the phase that follows after completing a bachelor and a master in higher art education. The term 'third cycle' does not necessarily mean a PhD trajectory, but this a possibility. It concerns a phase of relevant and deepening research with a strong connection to practice." <https://kunst-onderzoek.nl/en/3rd-cycle/>, last accessed on 3 October 2021.

be relatively clear for the time being is that the arts, if regarded as part of CI, can be included in research funding, but the emphasis on economic applicability can be stifling. This is a matter of interpretation of what CI funding is supposed to achieve. According to our interview partner at the NWO, new policies are presently being adopted, under which art is again regarded as part of CI. This could potentially provide a second push to (re)establish arts-based research funding.

According to NWO, another perspective would be to mainstream arts-based research into the broader research programmes of the Council. This would require an emphasis to bring arts-based research methodologically closer to scientific research. However, mainstreaming would probably cause more difficulty to conduct experimental, exploratory research led by artistic practices. There is a certain tension between this tendency and the main themes of the above-mentioned conference. This situation creates another paradox. The debate surrounding arts-based research is quite lively, even though there is no clear funding path.

To make things even more complicated: the option for "mainstreaming" arts-based research is in theory already in place as part of NWO's "Dutch Research Agenda" (NWA), which aims *"to utilise knowledge to make a positive, structural contribution to the society of tomorrow, by building bridges today and jointly ensuring scientific and societal impact."*³³ However, in both this programme and in the earlier collaboration between NWO and the Mondriaan Fund, no specialised jury or commission was set up to evaluate and guide project application through the process of external review, making it difficult for arts-based research projects to succeed.

- *Differences between NWO and PEEK*

The Dutch context is politically and institutionally very different from the Austrian one and currently in flux. It comes as no surprise that NWO's arts-based research funding, which is in general perceived as application-oriented, has thus been very different from PEEK from the beginning. Not just in the sense of never existing as a specialised funding programme and being closely related to CI, but also with its primary focus on supporting PhD research. Thus, arts-based research has always been institutionally much weaker and more narrowly focused than PEEK. Nevertheless, the NWO, particularly through its "smart culture" programme, has engaged in the development of the field as a whole by funding conferences that serve as networking events and collective points of reflection.

Summary

The Norwegian context is most similar to the Austrian one. NARP is a distinct funding programme, through which projects of university-affiliated researchers are funded and the funding can include the PIs' salaries. NARP activities, however, go beyond funding research projects. Through the research school, it actively supports horizontal learning between the project teams and this contributes to "community building". In addition, the review process is different, as NARP works more closely with the reviewers who evaluate several projects and are paid for their work.

The SNSF is similar to PEEK in that it is limited to funding arts-based research projects and does not take community-building measures. The main difference is that the SNSF does not have a dedicated programme for arts-based research; rather it has been fully mainstreamed. A second difference is that the SNSF requires PIs to hold at least a 50% position at a research institution and does not fund their salaries (rather, they are funded by the institutions themselves).

The Dutch context can barely be compared to the Austrian one, as the focus of funding arts-based research has always been on support for individual PhD researchers in the field. Even with this narrow focus, funding has never been secured over longer time and currently, no dedicated funding programme is under operation.

³³ Website of the Dutch Research Agenda, <https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/dutch-research-agenda-nwa>, accessed on 11 August 2021.

7. REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FEATURES OF PEEK

This section describes the regulatory and administrative features of PEEK especially as compared with FWF's Stand-Alone projects. To this end, the general procedures and regulations of the FWF are first compared with specific procedures in PEEK, with particular reference to the Application Guidelines and the Final Report Guidelines (see Section 7.1). Then, we highlight several special features of PEEK: At first glance, more and shorter contracts of employment (Dienstverträge), as well as an above-average number of independent works contracts (Werkverträge), seem to be concluded in PEEK projects than in Stand-Alone projects. This assumption is investigated in Section 7.2.

7.1 Document analysis

Based on the following publicly available documents, this section examines the differences between PEEK and other FWF programmes – especially the Stand-Alone projects programme, i.e.:

- the General Principles of the FWF Decision-Making Procedure;³⁴
- the General Application Guidelines;³⁵
- the Final Project Report Guidelines;³⁶ and
- the programme descriptions on the FWF website.

The central processes, such as application submission, eligibility check, review by an international peer review process and decision on funding are similar in all FWF programmes and correspond to international good practice. The FWF describes the general process in the following way (see Figure 1).

One important difference concerns the PEEK Board. A programme-specific evaluation committee precedes the FWF Board in only very few FWF programmes (PEEK, START Programme and Wittgenstein Award, 1000 Ideas Programme, #ConnectingMinds). Such programme-specific boards always come into play when the FWF Board is in need of external specialised knowledge, which is hardly to be accessed internally to make well founded decisions based on the reviews.

Programmes with programme-specific boards, which usually meet only once a year, follow a submission process that differs from Stand-Alone projects and the mobility programmes, as applications must be submitted by fixed deadlines. In the case of PEEK, the calls take place once a year in spring. In contrast to PEEK, there are no defined due dates for the Stand-Alone projects programme and applications can be submitted at any time.

Further minor differences derive from this and are described in the document "*Programme for Arts-based Research (PEEK) Differences from the 'General Principles of the Decision-Making Procedure'*"³⁷:

- *"Minimum number of reviews*
Applications can be recommended for rejection on the basis of fewer reviews than would be required for approval within the respective funding programme if the review(s) received already clearly indicate(s) that the application cannot be approved. In such cases, the PEEK Board must agree to reject the application.
- *Decision and granting of funding*

³⁴ See https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Entscheidung_Evaluation/fwf-decision-making-procedure.pdf, accessed on 11 August 2021.

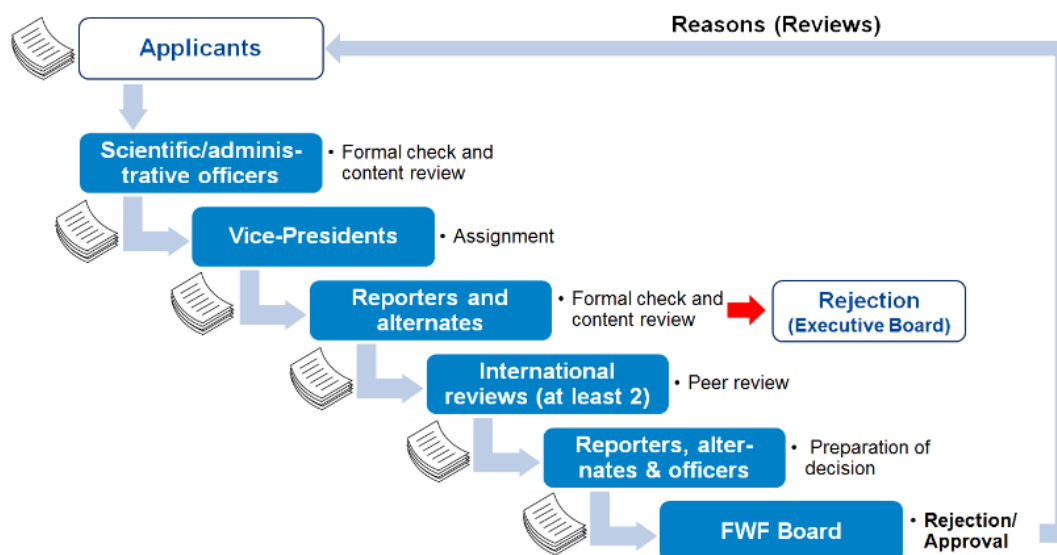
³⁵ See https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/Einzelprojekte/p_application-guidelines.pdf; and https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/PEEK/ar_application-guidelines.pdf, accessed on 11 August 2021.

³⁶ See <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/final-project-reports/Stand-Alone-projects> and https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Projektendberichte/PEEK_FinalReport.pdf, accessed on 11 August 2021.

³⁷ See <https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Downloads/ar-differences.pdf>, accessed on 11 August 2021.

Decisions on funding will be taken by the FWF Board on the basis of the PEEK Board's recommendations."

Figure 1: Decision making procedure



Source: FWF, General Principles of the FWF Decision-Making Procedure

▪ *Application guidelines*

The following table summarises the other major differences between PEEK and the Stand-Alone projects programme. All quotes are taken from the respective application guidelines³⁸.

Table 6: Differences between PEEK and the Stand-Alone projects

| | PEEK | Stand-Alone projects |
|--|---|--|
| Language of application | English without any exceptions | Submission solely in German or another project-relevant language other than English is permitted only in exceptional cases and specific disciplines (linguistic and literary studies). |
| Reason for the difference: As the international PEEK Board must be able to read all applications, PEEK cannot accept applications in languages other than English. | | |
| Applicant's qualification: Number, scope and quality of the applicant's publications | There is no minimum number of publications of defined quality. <i>"Applications within the Programme for Arts-based Research (PEEK) must be led by an applicant of good standing, as judged by international standards, whose research demonstrates a</i> | <i>"At least two publications must have undergone a quality assurance procedure and must be internationally visible with a substantial and independent contribution on the part of the applicant", p.4</i> |

³⁸ Application guidelines for PEEK:

https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/PEEK/ar_application-guidelines.pdf.

Application guidelines for Stand-Alone projects:

https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/Einzelprojekte/p_application-guidelines.pdf.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <i>relationship to EEK³⁹, p.4</i> | |
| Reason for the difference: Due to different assessments pertaining to the value of publications provided by the targeted epistemological communities, the requirements for the scientific track record are different for PEEK, especially since other important aspects (e.g. artistic practice) are added that play no role in standard FWF procedures. | | |
| Cost categories | Two PEEK-specific cost categories are defined: <i>"Costs for necessary project-specific artistic events", p.13</i> <i>"Costs for project-specific public relations work in terms of making PEEK and its results visible to a wider audience than the specialised field", p.13</i> | |
| Reason for the difference: Both artistic practice and public dissemination are explicitly defined programme goals. | | |
| Review process | Approx. seven months ⁴⁰ | Approx. six months |
| Reason for the difference: PEEK's two-stage selection process including the PEEK Board needs more time | | |
| Request for changes | <i>"The FWF will not process incomplete applications ..., unless and until the applicant has rectified the problems within 10 days from when the list is sent to correct the errors."</i> | <i>"The FWF will not process incomplete applications ..., unless and until the applicant has rectified the problems within a reasonable period of time (generally three weeks)."</i> |
| Reason for the difference: This difference is not specific to PEEK, but applies to all programmes with fixed deadlines and programme-specific boards, as these programmes have less time to make changes to applications due to the stricter timelines. | | |

There are also differences in language and wording: Instead of the dominant use of such terms as "research" and "academic", the terms "artistic", "scientific", "scholarly" and "arts-based" are more often used in the PEEK context.

- *Final Project Report Guidelines*

The guidelines for PEEK and for the Stand-Alone projects programme are identically structured and similar in content. Differences concern the use of the term "arts-based research" instead of "scientific/scholarly research", in addition to some minor additions due to the specific objectives of the Programme:

- Public relations activities are queried (under 3.).
- Artistic events must be reported (under 1.3).

However, the reasons for some other small differences cannot be directly deduced from the specific objectives and design of the PEEK programme:

- Among the *"most important results"* (1.2), the PEEK programme asks whether the objectives have been achieved (*"Were the aims achieved?"*). This question is missing in the guidelines for Stand-Alone projects, with no reason given.
- Under *"Career development"* - the questions *"Could international cooperation be established or intensified? Are there developments in working conditions and the environment to report (including any association with a university or non-university institution)?"* are raised. These two questions are missing in the guidelines for Stand-Alone projects. The question about

³⁹ EEK stands for "Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste".

⁴⁰ In 2020, the review process took nine months due to the COVID-19 situation. In the FWF's new application guidelines (2021), the review period was officially extended to 9 months.

working conditions may reflect a certain scepticism of the institutional embedding of PEEK projects in the organisational structures of the respective hosts of PEEK PI's.

- In contrast to the Stand-Alone projects programme, which asks for "*Effects of the project beyond the scientific/scholarly field*", effects of a PEEK project on the economy, society and politics are not asked for. This is surprising, as PEEK is expected to have such effects to a particularly higher degree.

In addition, the PEEK-specific parts are sometimes written in a slightly different language, which does not exactly match the other parts of the guidelines.

Summary

Overall, the documents provide an overview of the FWF's processes and are clearly arranged and structured, giving applicants a good idea of what is expected. The differences described in this section in terms of processes, application rules and reporting guidelines between PEEK and the Stand-Alone projects programme are explained and can in most cases also be derived from the specifics of PEEK. In a few cases, however, this connection is missing – in a possible revision of the documents, more attention could be paid to these aspects.

In Chapter 9, we show how applicants and PIs perceive PEEK in terms of content and how they deal with the regulatory and administrative features of PEEK.

7.2 Contracts of Employment (*Dienstverträge*) and Independent Work/Service Contracts (*Werkverträge*)

One of our hypotheses is that due to artistic production circumstances, the project staff in PEEK projects have more discontinuous employment histories than those in Stand-Alone projects and work more often on an independent works/service contract basis. Considerations for this are that staff in PEEK projects have a less close relationship with the academic host, but often also pursue artistic and other activities outside the research institution. In addition, typical PEEK outputs often require more heterogeneous competences and qualifications – such as technical support for installations or exhibitions – than those involved in traditional research projects. In order to gain some insight into this, we took a closer look at both the contracts for works/services and the contracts of employment in PEEK projects and the Stand-Alone projects.

A clear difference in the use of **independent works/service contracts** became evident when comparing PEEK projects and Stand-Alone projects at an aggregated level. Out of 107 Stand-Alone projects⁴¹, 53% (57 projects) used independent works/service contracts, whereas out of 89 PEEK projects⁴², 92% used such contracts. The average number of works/service contracts issued by PEEK projects is 4.36 times higher (PEEK: 5.80; Stand-Alone: 1.33). With regard to the subcontracted amounts, the average amount in PEEK is €28,961.04 as opposed to only €5,797.75 on average for Stand-Alone projects in the control group and thus 5.19 times higher. Whereas the maximum number of independent works/service contracts issued per project is only seven with Stand-Alone projects, the highest number of independent works contracts for one PEEK project counts 63 independent works/service contracts. For sure, this can be explained in part by the different activities and production conditions carried out in PEEK projects (not only research is conducted, but installations are set up, concerts are prepared, video clips produced, etc.). However, it also indicates higher discontinuities in employment and more efforts needed for administration (at both the project and programme levels).

The picture was similar with regard to **contracts of employment**. Almost all PEEK projects and Stand-Alone projects employ project staff with contracts of employment (with the exception of one project out of a total of 89 projects in PEEK; without any exception in Stand-Alone projects). In PEEK, however, the number of contracts of employment per project is considerably higher and the duration of the contracts is considerably shorter than in Stand-Alone projects. The number of people employed

⁴¹ All Stand-Alone projects between 2009 and 2019 that indicated "arts" as their discipline. Projects from 2020 are not included.

⁴² All PEEK projects between 2009 and 2019. Projects from 2021 are not included.

per project is also higher in PEEK than in Stand-Alone projects. In contrast to the independent works/service contracts, this cannot be easily explained by the different activities and project contents, and suggests very small-scale, probably precarious employment relationships.

The following table provides an overview:

Table 7: Contracts in PEEK and the Stand-Alone projects programme

| | PEEK | Stand-Alone |
|--|-------|-------------|
| Number of projects investigated | 89 | 107 |
| Independent works contracts (WV): Average number per project | 5.80 | 1.33 |
| Independent works contracts (WV): Median/number | 4.0 | 1.0 |
| Independent works contracts (WV): Average value per project in Thsd € | 28.96 | 5.58 |
| Independent works contracts (WV): Median/value in Thsd € | 20.00 | 3.00 |
| Independent WV: Maximum number per project | 63 | 7 |
| Contracts of employment (DV): Extent of employment in %. ⁴³ | 44.1 | 63.3 |
| Contracts of employment (DV): Average duration in months | 12.7 | 16.7 |
| Contracts of employment (DV): Maximum number per project | 23 | 7 |

Summary

A closer look at the contracts of employment (Dienstverträge) and independent works/service contracts (Werkverträge) in both PEEK and Stand-Alone projects shows that the contracts in the PEEK projects are clearly smaller-scale (with lower volumes and shorter durations) than in the Stand-Alone projects. This conspicuously small-scale nature of the contracts can certainly be explained in part by the content and production conditions of the projects (artistic performances require a large number of smaller technical works), but probably also points towards more precarious employment relationships.

In any case, this small-scale nature is problematic in two respects: 1) for project staff and their careers, and 2) for the administrative burden at the FWF and at the universities and research institutions implementing the PEEK projects (and for the PIs themselves).

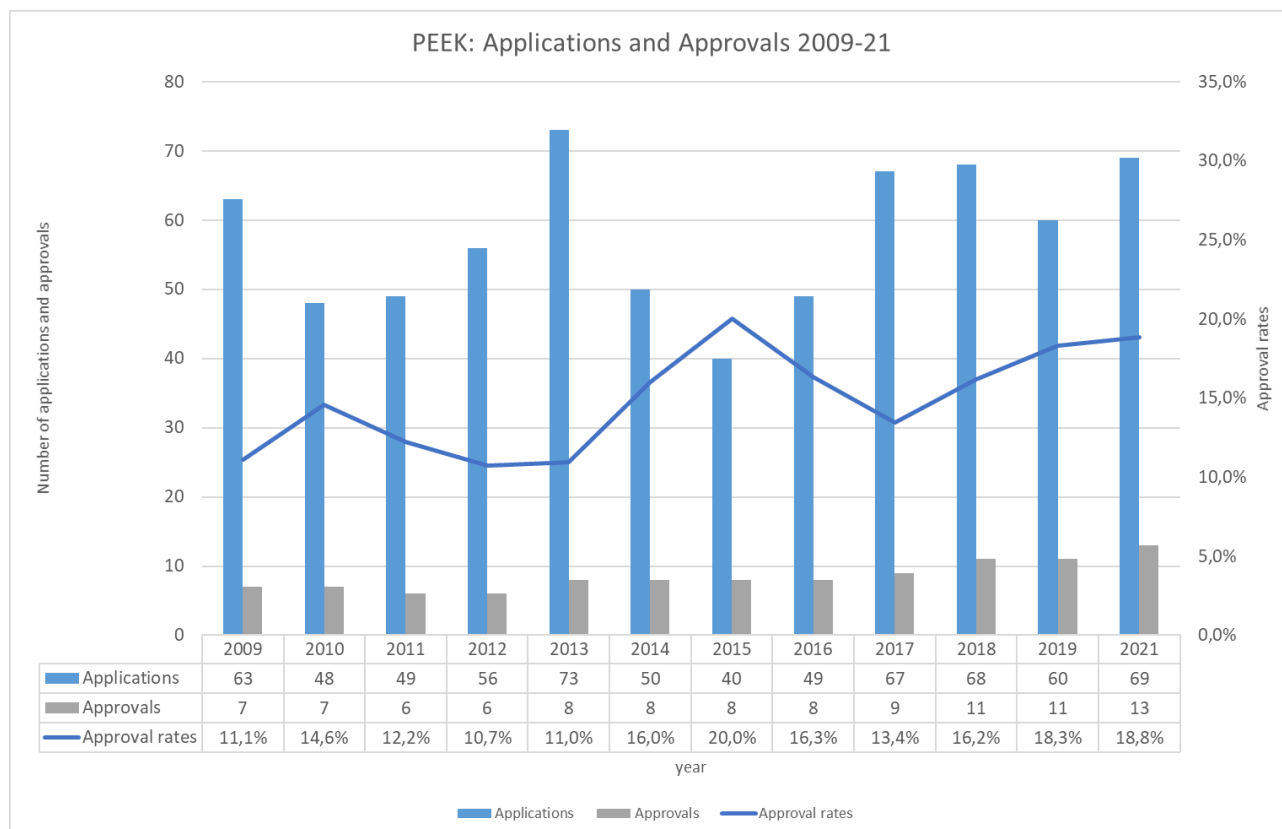
⁴³ The extent of employment is given as a percentage of a full-time position.

8. FUNDING STATISTICS

During the 2009-2021 period, the PEEK programme supported a total of 102 arts-based research projects (out of 692 applications) with a funding volume of €34.64 million. Two of the projects, which were C1/C2-rated, were initially rejected by the FWF Board due to budgetary restrictions, but were later funded within the framework of the “Matching Funds” mechanism together with the federal states.⁴⁴

Figure 2 shows an overview of the development of applications and approvals from 2009 until 2021. In 2020 were no approvals because the funding decision was not made until March 2021. Thus, data for 2021 actually contain the applications from 2020.

Figure 2: PEEK applications, approvals and application rates 2009-2021



Source: FWF dashboard <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/de/>

The approval rates⁴⁵ fluctuated comparatively strongly with the number of applications received. This was also caused by the fact that – unlike most other FWF programmes – PEEK has a largely fixed annual volume. The connection between the high number of submissions and the low approval rates is particularly visible in the years 2009, 2012, 2013 and 2017, in which the approval rates were especially low. Conversely, relatively higher approval rates can be seen in years with a lower number of applications, such as in the years 2014 to 2016, and particularly in 2015. We suspect that in the first years of PEEK, the approval rates were so low because the applicants first had to learn how to use the Programme. Overall, the approval rates for PEEK were significantly below the FWF average of about 25% in the period under review, but have risen noticeably in recent years.

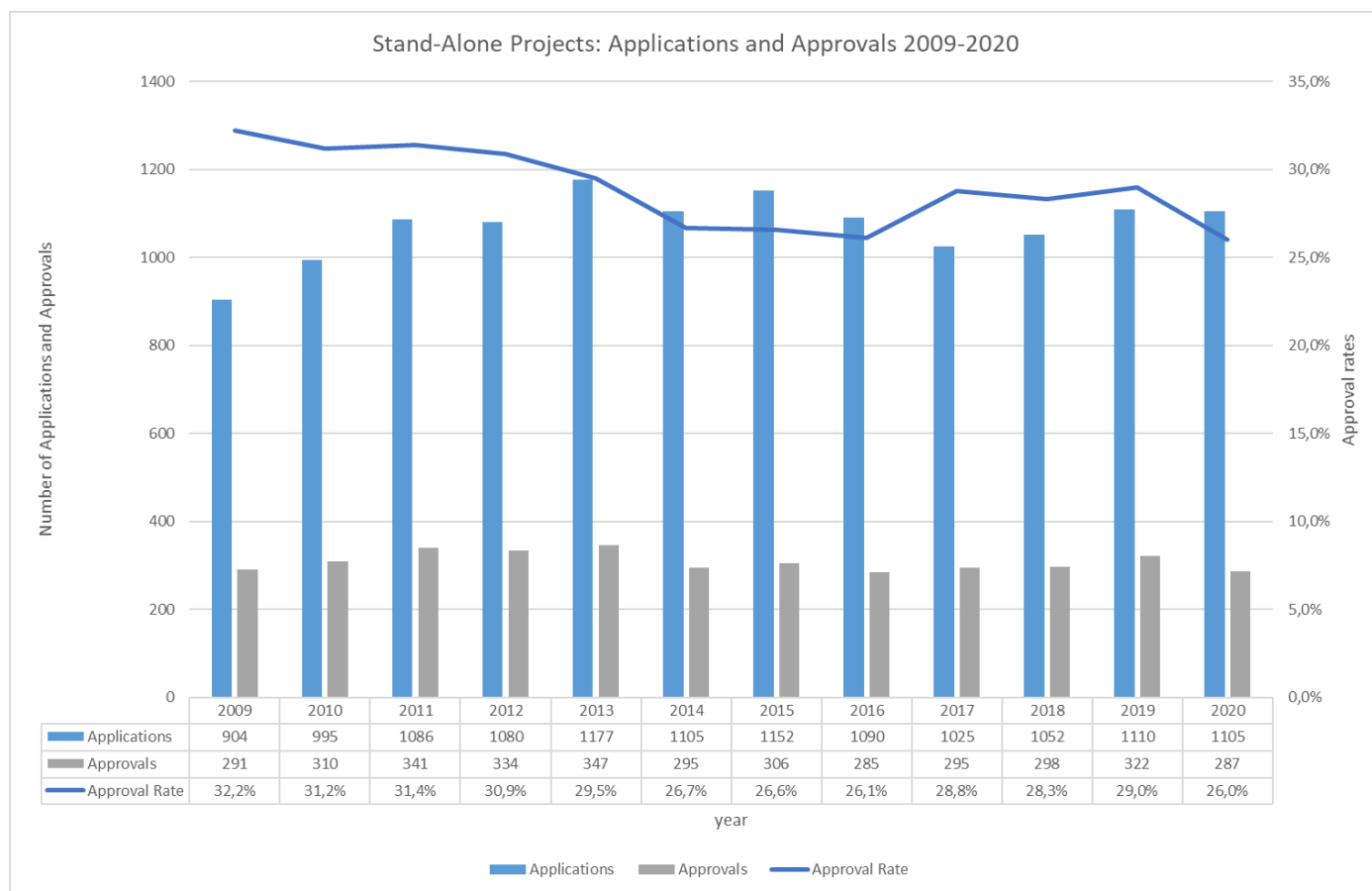
In comparison, the same picture for the Stand-Alone projects shows considerably higher, but also considerably more stable approval rates over time (see Figure 3). In this case, the FWF has the possibility – within the framework of its overall budget – to react to increasing numbers of excellent applications by shifting budgets between programmes and thus stabilising approval rates. However,

⁴⁴ For FWF’s rejection reasons see Section 8.4. The “Matching Funds” mechanism is explained in Footnote 53.

⁴⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, the approval rate is defined as the ratio of approvals to applications.

if the number of applications in all programmes increases, the approval rates decrease while the budget remains the same, as can be seen particularly in the years 2009 to 2014.

Figure 3: Stand-Alone projects - applications and approvals, 2009-2020.



Source: FWF dashboard; <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/de/>

Based on this first overview, a more detailed examination of the funding statistics will answer the following questions⁴⁶ in the next sections:

- From which universities/research-performing institutions do PEEK projects come from? Do **arts universities** dominate the field? How does the share and success of arts universities develop over time? Have other research institutions recently become more active? (see Section 8.1).
- What is the **disciplinary background** of the PEEK projects? How dominant is the arts discipline? (see Section 8.2).
- What are the differences in the **approval rates** in comparison with Stand-Alone projects in similar disciplines? (see Section 8.3).
- Is the share of **rejections of applications with well rated** (i.e. rejections with C1 or C2 ratings) on the increase? What is the result of a comparison with Stand-Alone projects in similar disciplines? (see Section 8.4).
- **Application history**: What does the submission behaviour of PIs look like over time? What is the sequence of approvals and rejections? (see Section 8.5).
- Are successful PEEK PIs also active in **FWF programmes other than PEEK**? (see Section 8.6).

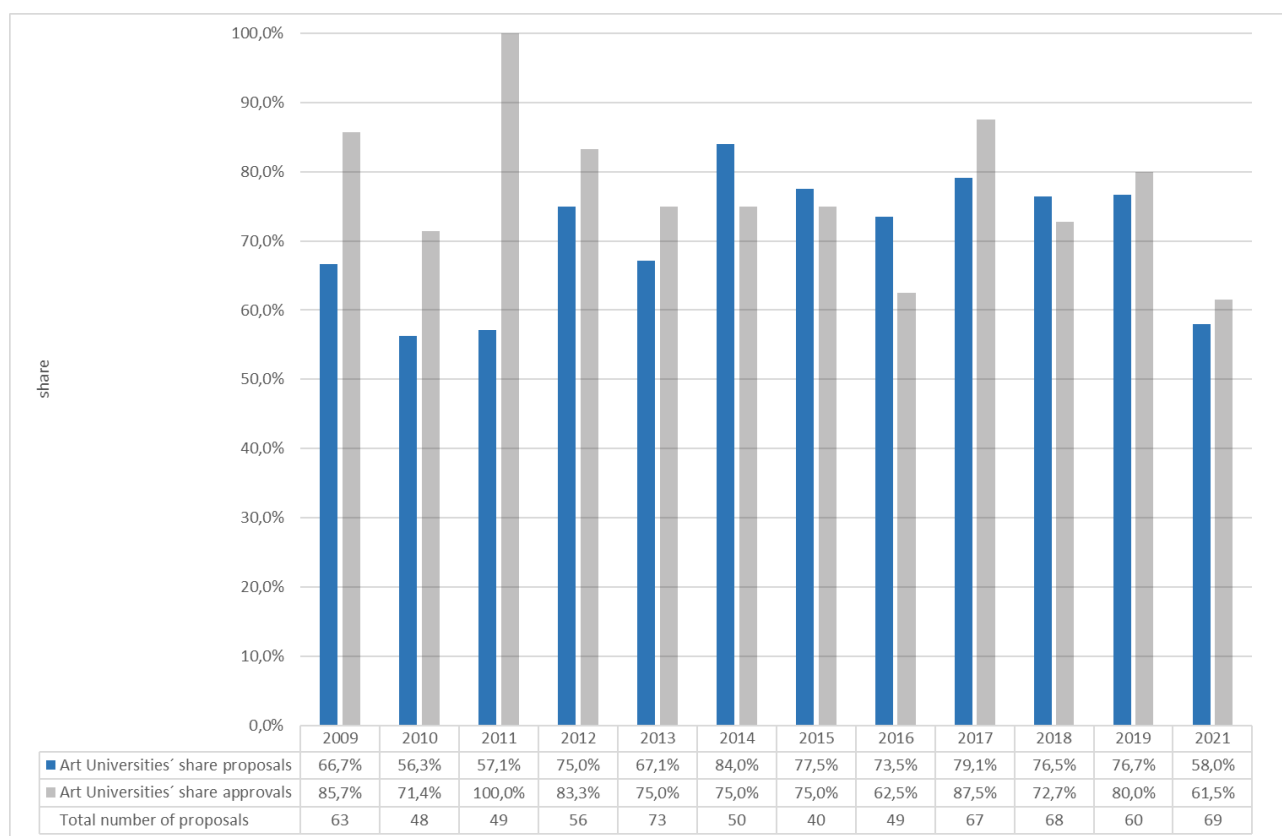
⁴⁶ These questions were supplemented and expanded by the FWF in the course of the interim presentation.

The database for these examinations is in part publicly available via the Project Finder⁴⁷ and the FWF statistics dashboard⁴⁸, or was otherwise provided by the FWF specifically for this evaluation.

8.1 Universities and research institutions hosting PEEK projects

The distribution of PEEK projects among the various research institutions shows an overwhelming dominance of the arts universities (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Arts universities' share, 2009-2021.



Source: FWF

Both the share of proposals and the share of approvals exceeded 50% in every year considered, and in most years (with the exception of 2010, 2011 and 2021), their share was even above 60%. The share of approvals was also higher than the share of proposals in most years (with the exception of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018), which means that the approval rate of the arts universities was also above average (15.6% on average in all years compared to a rate of 11.8% for all other research institutions). No apparent trend is visible to suggest that the arts universities have lost their dominant status.

While the arts universities clearly dominate, and the medical universities are almost absent, the technical universities and "other research institutions" are quite strongly represented. The highly visible level of participation on the part of the technical universities reflects the fact that most of them host faculties of architecture and construction, i.e. disciplines frequently involved in PEEK projects. These institutions also often participate in projects that are characterised by a digitisation component.

The Project Finder on the FWF website provides information about the institutions that are hidden behind the "other research institutions" category. These are mainly small art-related institutions, which represent a rather untypical clientele for the FWF. The highest number of submissions can be found at the following institutions: Research Institute for Arts and Technology (8 submissions), Ars

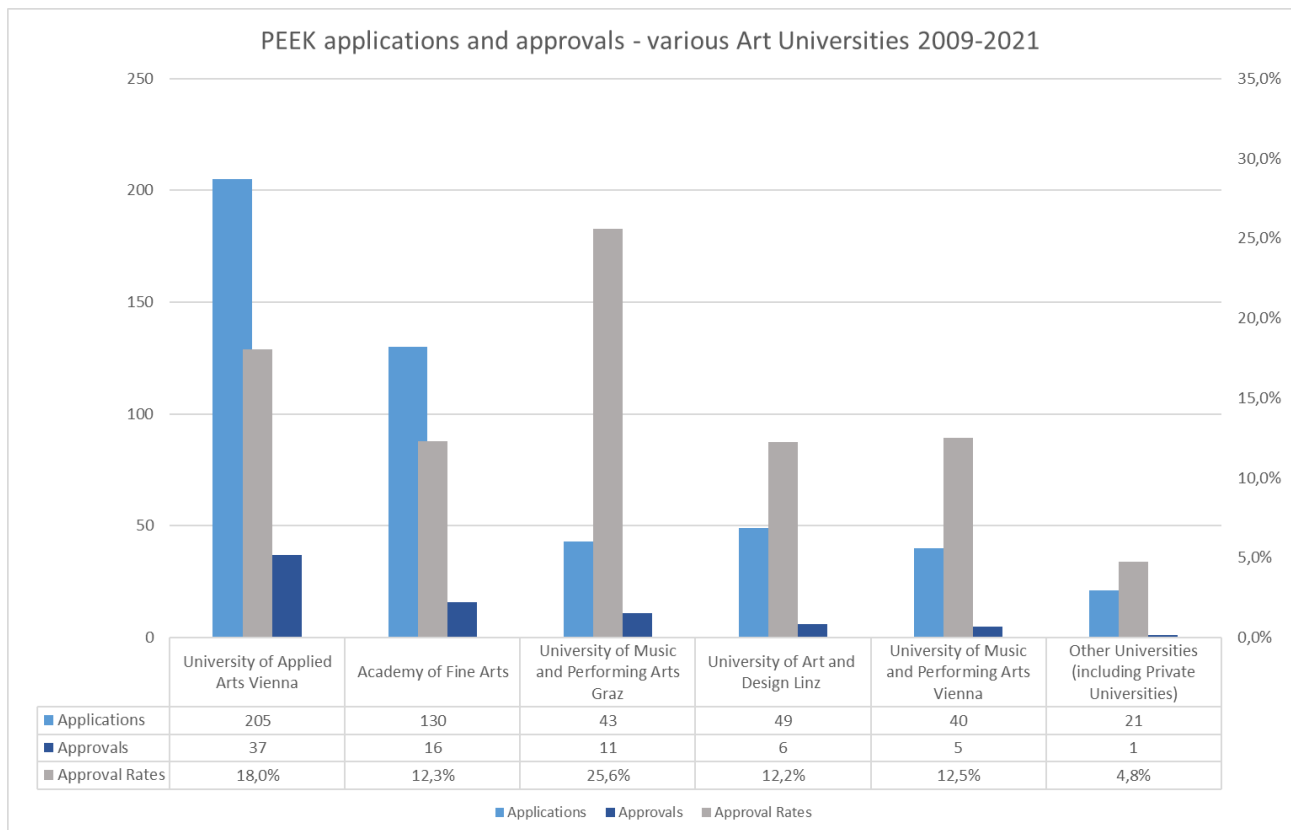
⁴⁷ See <https://pf.fwf.ac.at/en/research-in-practice/project-finder>, accessed on 10 September 2021.

⁴⁸ See <https://fwf.ac.at/en/about-the-fwf/funding-statistics/>, accessed on 10 September 2021.

Electronica Linz GmbH (6 submissions), Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen (6 submissions) and <rotor> Verein für zeitgenössische Kunst (4 submissions).

A closer look at the arts universities reveals a very heterogeneous picture (see Fig. 5). Most PEEK projects are hosted at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (49%), followed by the Academy of Fine Arts (21%) and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz (14%)⁴⁹. These three universities of arts dominate PEEK. Significantly less PEEK projects have been awarded to the University of Art and Design Linz as well as the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (8% and 7%, respectively). Other arts universities (Mozarteum, New Design University, Jam Music Lab, Gustav Mahler University) play virtually no role; only the University of Music and Art of the City of Vienna submitted a project in 2016, which was also approved.

Figure 5: Applications and approvals at arts universities, 2009-2021.



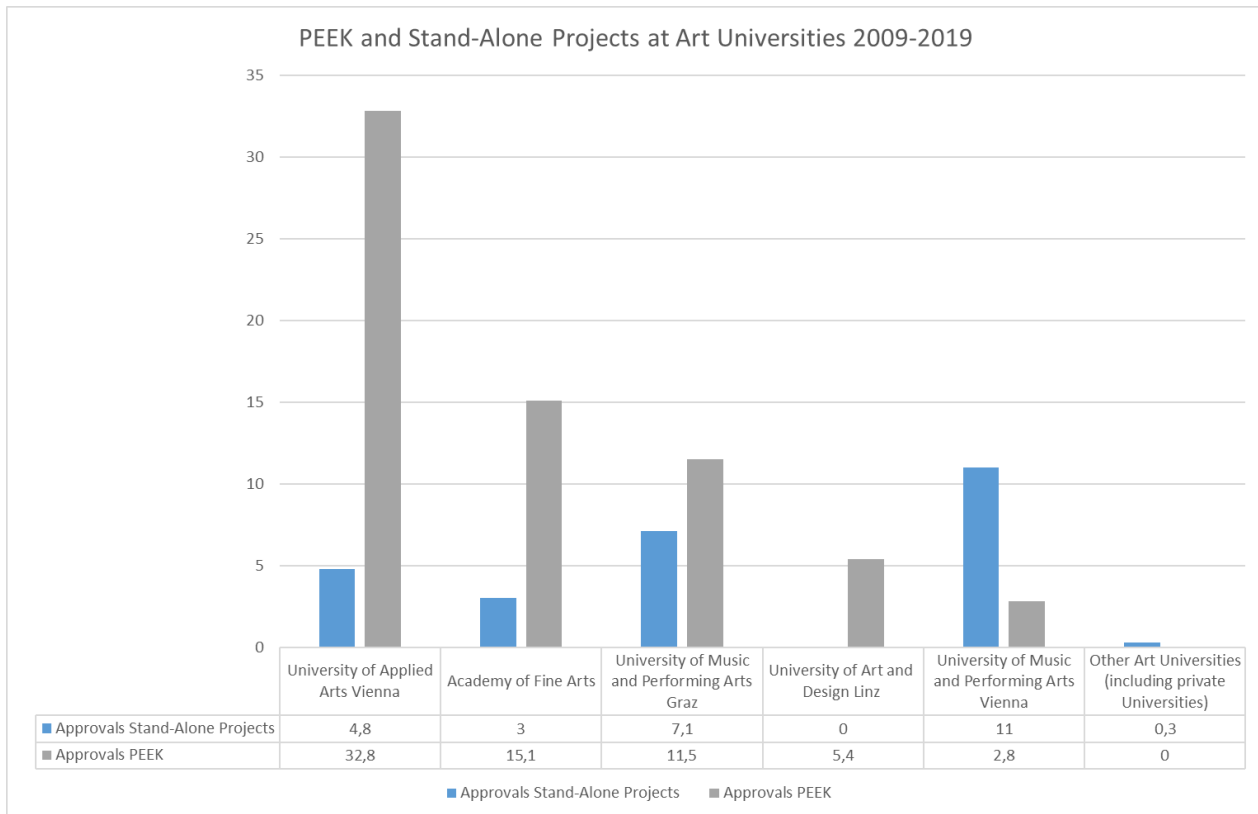
Source: FWF.

However, not only the number of approvals, but also the number of proposals and thus the approval rates differ greatly between the individual arts universities. For example, the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, with comparatively few submitted proposals, is the most successful institution with an approval rate of 25.6%, followed by the University of Applied Arts in Vienna that submits very actively, while the other arts universities reach an approval rate of approx. 12% or even lower.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that only very few Stand-Alone projects are hosted by the universities of arts (see Fig. 6). With the exception of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, PEEK grants exceed the number of Stand-Alone project grants by far. While most arts universities obtain at least some funding from Stand-Alone projects, not a single Stand-Alone project can be identified at the University of Art and Design Linz during the investigation period of 2009-2019. It should be noted that the arts universities are comparatively small and employ only a low number of scientific staff, such as PhD students or postdocs.

⁴⁹ FWF counts the projects fractionally, e.g., if a research institution hosts a 50% share of a project, it receives a 0.5 assignment for this approved project. The number of approved projects is calculated as the sum of these shares.

Figure 6: PEEK projects and Stand-Alone projects in Art universities' portfolios



Source: FWF Dashboard <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/de/>

Note: All Stand-Alone projects from all disciplines are covered. FWF counts the projects fractionally, e.g., if a research institution hosts a 50% share of a project, it receives a 0.5 assignment for this approved project. The number of approved projects is calculated as the sum of these shares.

Summary

The distribution of PEEK projects among the various research institutions shows a dominance of the arts universities. Both the share of proposals and the share of approvals exceed 50% in every year considered and 60% in most years. The share of approvals is also higher than the share of proposals in most years, which means that the approval rate of the arts universities is in general above average (15.6% overall in all years compared to a rate of 11.8% for all other research institutions). Although the share of arts universities slightly decreased in 2021, no trend is apparent to suggest that the arts universities would have lost their dominant status in PEEK.

However, the individual arts universities differ greatly from one another: Most PEEK projects are and were hosted at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, followed by the Academy of Fine Arts and – with some distance – the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz. Significantly less PEEK projects have been awarded to the remaining arts universities.

8.2 Disciplinary background of granted applicants

To identify the disciplinary background of the projects, information about the disciplines' portfolio was retrieved from the FWF database by using the Project Finder. The distribution of scholarly disciplines is indicated by the applicants themselves.

Given the focus and topic of PEEK, it is not particularly surprising that "arts" is the dominant discipline: 75 out of 102 PEEK projects granted so far (74%) contain a share of at least 50% of "arts" assignment. 16 projects even state "arts" as the only discipline. At the other end of the scale, we identified nine projects (9%) that do not mention "arts" as a discipline at all. The disciplines mentioned in these nine projects are:

- 4 projects: 100% natural sciences;
- 2 projects: at least 70% natural sciences and 30% social sciences and humanities (SSH);
- 2 projects: approximately 50% SSH and 50% natural sciences; and
- 1 project: 70% SSH and 30% natural sciences.

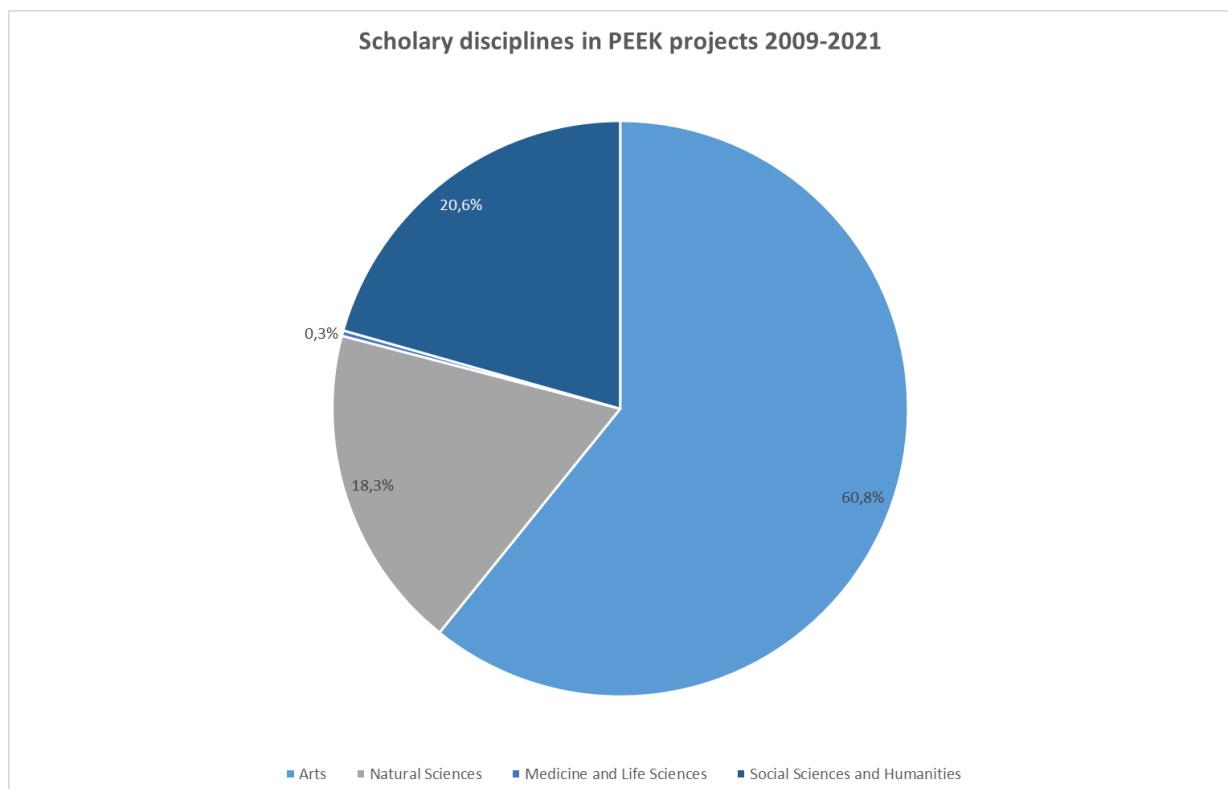
Most of the projects are inter-disciplinary: 59 out of 102 projects (58%) integrate further disciplines from the field of the SSH into their research, 42 projects (41%) work with disciplines from the natural sciences (including mathematics and engineering) and only three projects include disciplines from the broader field of medicine and the life sciences. Furthermore, most of the 102 projects contain more than one discipline or discipline group. Table 8 shows exactly how many these are.

Table 8: Disciplines in PEEK projects

| Disciplines | Number of projects (n= 102) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Arts only | 16 |
| Arts plus one more discipline group | 64 |
| Arts plus two more discipline group | 13 |
| No Arts | 9 |

Each project mentions not only the various disciplines they are working in, but the percentage distribution as well. According to these distributions, we calculated an average, which shows in Figure 7 how the various disciplines are represented in PEEK. To do this, we added up the shares of the disciplines of all projects and divided them by the total number of projects (102). A project that contained 60% arts, 30% civil engineering and 10% electrical engineering thus counts as 0.6 in the "Arts" category and as 0.4 in the "Natural Sciences" category. In this way, the average share of the different disciplines was obtained across all 102 PEEK projects. As shown in Figure 7, "the average PEEK project artefact" across all 102 PEEK projects contained 61% arts, 21% SSH and 18% natural sciences.

Figure 7: Average distribution of disciplines



Source: FWF

Summary

The arts are the dominant discipline in PEEK: 75 out of 102 PEEK projects granted so far (74%) contained a share of at least 50% of “arts”; 16 projects even named “arts” as the only discipline they are working in. At the other end of the scale, we identified 9 projects (9%) that do not mention “arts” as a discipline at all.

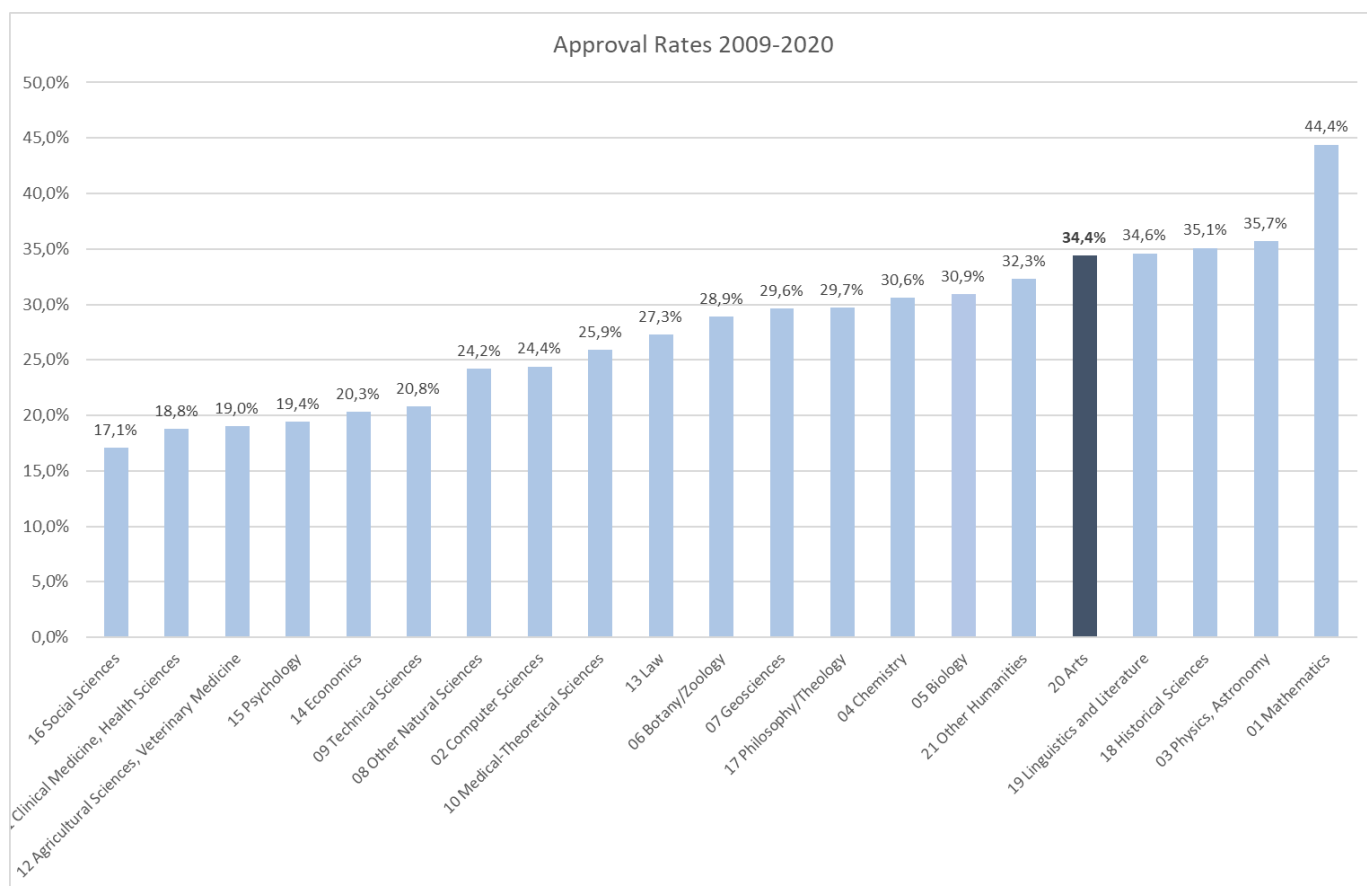
Across all PEEK projects, the sum of shares assigned to “arts” is 61%, with 21% for the SSH, 18% for the natural sciences and only 0.3% for medicine and the life sciences.

8.3 Approval rates over time

The FWF approval rates differ between the different programmes and also between the disciplines. The extent to which the FWF might have treated individual disciplines unfairly was intensively discussed in an internal investigation in 2010⁵⁰. The comparatively high approval rates, especially in mathematics, physics and most humanities subjects, were explained as follows:

“The FWF does not earmark funds for specific scientific disciplines, meaning that the approval rates also reflect Austria’s existing strengths in free competition among disciplines”. (Fischer et al. 2010, p.10)

Figure 8: Approval rates (approved grants / requested grants) of Stand-Alone projects by disciplines (fractional counting), 2009-2020



Source FWF Dashboard <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/de/>

Note: Stand-Alone projects only, fractional counting, FWF Level2 (regroupings of the Austrian Fields of Science and Technology Classification [ÖFOS] disciplines in terms of content-related aspects)

⁵⁰ See https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Ueber_den_FWF/Publikationen/FWF-Selbstevaluation/FWF-ApprovalProbability_P-99-08_15-12-2010.pdf, accessed on 10 September 2021. The paper investigates Stand-Alone projects only.

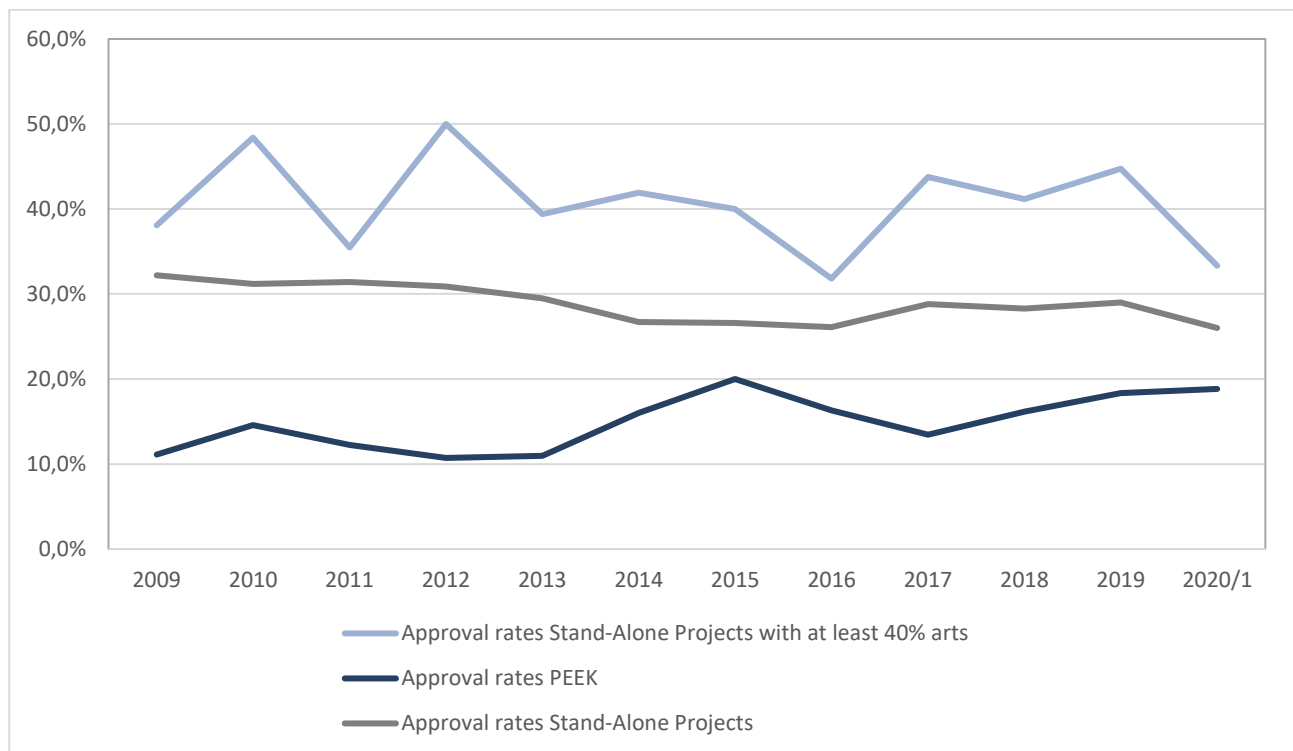
This statement was followed by an explanation that the approval rates reflect both the success of Austrian scholars in other (European) funding schemes, e.g., the ERC and specific strengths in terms of publications. Furthermore, the approval rates follow the review ratings and are therefore based on the judgement of external peers.

Figure 8⁵¹ shows that the high approval rates of mathematics, physics and some of the humanities can still be observed in the 2009-2020 period. The rather low rates for agricultural sciences, the social sciences, clinical research and the technical sciences remained stable. In the midfield, “arts” is relatively close to the FWF average.

Programme and discipline logics mix in PEEK. As shown before, the vast majority of projects mention arts as a central discipline. However, if we look at the approval rates at the programme level rather than the discipline level, we see that the approval rates for the PEEK programme are clearly and continuously below the rates for Stand-Alone projects (see Figure 9). The Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts assignment had considerably higher approval rates over the entire period, not only higher than PEEK, but also higher than the total of all Stand-Alone projects. In particular, in the first few years (2009-2012), PEEK had very low approval rates, yet the gaps remained significant even in the later years.

As already mentioned, the relatively low approval rates of PEEK might be related to the fact that PEEK is one of the few FWF programmes with a fixed budget, which can more easily lead to above-average oversubscriptions than in the FWF programmes showing flexible budget adaptation. Another explanation is that applicants in PEEK are (respectively, were) not familiar with the logic of the FWF – which was probably true in the early days of the Programme.

Figure 9: Approval rates for PEEK, Stand-Alone projects and Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts assignment, 2009-2020/1



Source FWF Dashboard <http://dashboard.fwf.ac.at/en/> , accessed on 13. September 2021

Note: The data on Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts were provided by the FWF.

Another important piece of information in this context is the numbers of applications that were rated well but rejected for budgetary reasons (C1/C2 rejections). If these were considerably higher in PEEK than in other programmes, then the low approval rates would seem particularly unjustified, since an

⁵¹ All FWF programmes are covered here.

above-average number of good projects do not get a go-ahead. The next section is devoted to this topic.

Summary

The approval rates of the FWF differ between programmes and between disciplines. Mathematics shows very high approval rates, followed by some of the humanities and physics. Arts are in the upper midfield along with other humanities and life sciences.

Despite the comparatively good positioning of arts in the FWF's spectrum of disciplines, PEEK has significantly lower approval rates than other FWF programmes. In concrete terms, the approval rates for the PEEK programme are clearly and continuously below the rates for Stand-Alone projects. The Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts assignment had considerably higher approval rates over the entire period, not only higher than PEEK but also higher than the total number of Stand-Alone projects. In particular, in the first few years (2009-2012), PEEK had very low approval rates. This gap has narrowed somewhat over time, probably due to the applicants' learning achievements, but remains significant.

8.4 Well rated applications rejected for budgetary reasons (C1/C2 rejections)

In the 2000s, the FWF introduced formalised reasons for rejections by introducing C1 to C5 labels in order to provide applicants feedback on the evaluation of their applications. The reasons for rejection have been revised several times over the years. Currently, they are defined as follows:

Table 9: Standardised rejection reasons C1 to C5

| | |
|----|--|
| C1 | The reviews of your application were entirely positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, the reviewers expressed even greater support for other applications. For budgetary reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favourable reviews and ratings; this means that your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project in order to improve your chances of approval. |
| C2 | The reviewers of your application were predominantly positive with regard to the research project itself as well as your research qualifications. However, there were several minor points of criticism in the reviews, and the reviewers expressed greater support for other applications. For budgetary reasons, the FWF can currently only approve those applications which receive the most favourable reviews and ratings; this means that your application could not be approved. If you choose to resubmit your application, please place greater emphasis on the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' suggestions into consideration in order to improve your chances of approval. |
| C3 | The reviews of your application were largely positive with regard to the research project itself and/or your research qualifications. However, there were a number of points of criticism in the reviews, meaning that your application could not be approved in its current form. If you choose to resubmit your application, please focus more on defining the strengths of the project and take the reviewers' comments and suggestions into consideration in a clear and visible way. |
| C4 | The reviews of your application were only partly positive with regard to the research project and/or your research qualifications. However, there were numerous points of criticism in the review, meaning that the application would have to be revised substantially and possibly refocused in order to be eligible for funding. If you choose to re-submit your application, please take the reviewers' suggestions and points of criticism into consideration in a clear and visible way. |
| C5 | The reviews of your application were predominantly very critical. As it cannot be assumed that the weaknesses in the application can be remedied within a short period of time, the FWF Board has decided that a resubmission to this funding programme will only be permitted after a period of 12 months starting from the decision date. |

Source: <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/decision-making-procedure-evaluation/decision-making-procedure/funding-decisions>; accessed on 15 August 2021.

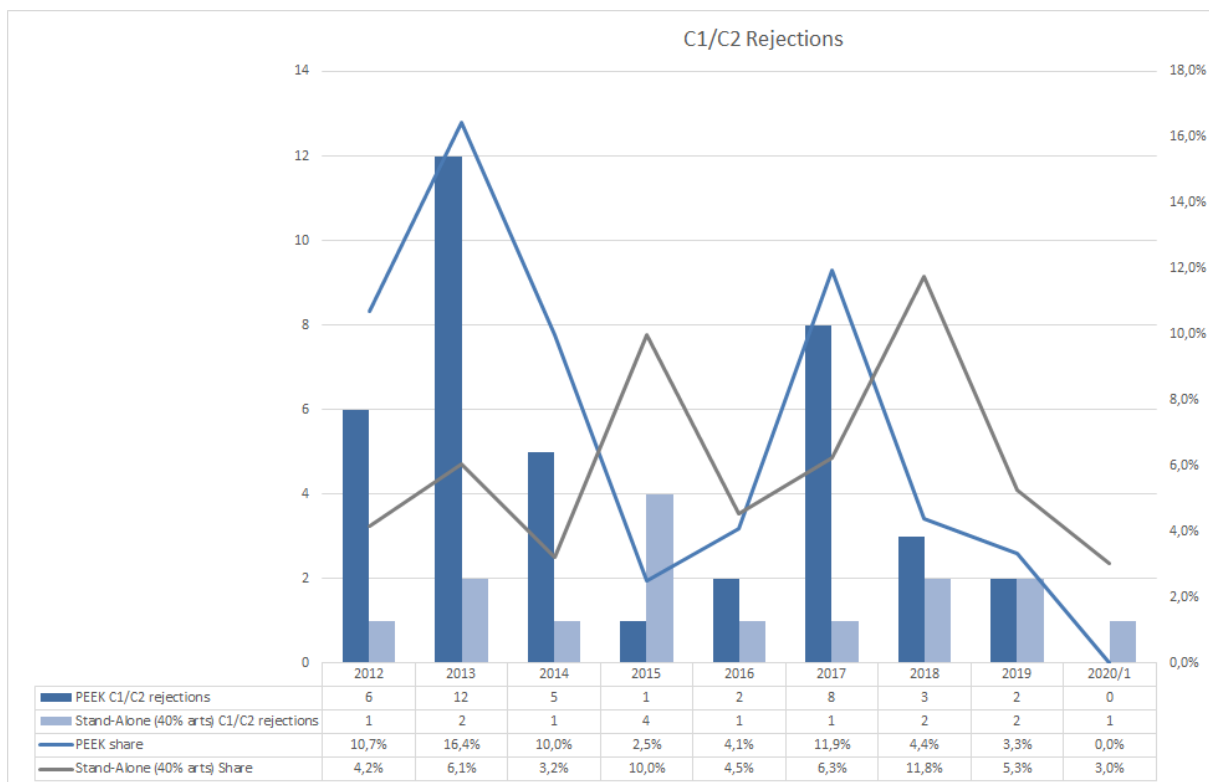
A rejection with C1 and C2 thus means that the applications are highly eligible for funding, but that the FWF cannot provide funding for budgetary reasons. While the C1 and C2 rejection reasons were initially intended to encourage applicants to resubmit the application, they became an important political argument for the FWF over time. It was argued that the FWF needs more budget, at least to

the extent of these C1/C2 applications, to fulfil its research policy role, namely to fund excellent basic research projects in Austria.

The introduction of the Matching Funds mechanism⁵², under which C1/C2 rejections could be (co-)funded by the federal states, had a direct impact on the PIs. Through this Matching Funds mechanism another opportunity to have their rejected projects funded after all was given to them.

Figure 10 shows the development of the total number of C1/C2 rejections as well as the share of C1/C2 rejections in all applications for PEEK and Stand-Alone projects with more than 40% art assignment. The latter is used here for comparison purposes. The numbers include two rejected applications, which were approved later by the Matching Funds mechanism, both for PEEK and for the Stand-Alone projects. Since the formalised reasons for rejection are only available for PEEK from 2012 onwards, the comparison is limited to the period of 2012-2020/1.

Figure 10: Development of C1/C2 rejections of PEEK applications compared with Stand-Alone applications with a minimum of 40% art assignment



Source: FWF, own calculations.

The shares of C1/C2 rejections fluctuated strongly and declined in the last year. This applies both to PEEK and to the Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts assignment. In the nine years since 2012, the proportion of C1/C2 rejections for PEEK, at 7.3% on average, has been higher than for the Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts (5.9%), but this is substantially due to one year (2013) in which many C1/C2 rejections for PEEK (12) occurred. While the proportion of C1/C2 rejections was considerably higher for PEEK than for Stand-Alone projects over the first three years of the observation period (until 2014), the proportions fluctuated until 2017. In the last three years, however, the proportion was considerably higher for Stand-Alone projects than for PEEK projects. Our initial assumption that the proportion of very good applications at PEEK, which had to be rejected due to the high oversubscription of the Programme, has risen in recent times cannot be confirmed on the basis of the available data.

⁵² The federal states of Carinthia, Styria, Salzburg, Upper Austria, Lower Austria and Tyrol are involved in the Matching Funds. In particular, the province of Tyrol has made great use of this possibility in the past. In 2020, a total of five projects from the federal states were funded (see FWF Annual Report 2020, p.82, https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Ueber_den_FWF/Publikationen/FWF-Jahresberichte/fwf-jahresbericht-2020.pdf, accessed on 10 September 2021).

Summary

The FWF defines rejections of applications that have been positively reviewed in terms of content but do not receive funding for budgetary reasons as C1 and C2. This applies both to PEEK and to the Stand-Alone projects with at least 40% arts assignment. Our working thesis that the proportion of very good PEEK applications, which had to be rejected due to the high oversubscription of the Programme, has risen in recent times, cannot be confirmed on the basis of the data on C1/C2 rejections.

8.5 Patterns of application history

This section explores the question of the applicants' application behaviour, whether they continue to submit after (multiple) rejections and whether they attempt to attract more projects after a successful submission.

During the entire duration of PEEK so far (2009-2021), 216 out of 374 applicants have applied more than once. Of these, exactly two thirds (143) have never had a project approved. The number of submission attempts and their results in terms of awards is shown in Table 10. One hundred and three applicants have applied twice, 68 three times, 19 four times, 21 five times, 4 six times and one applicant has applied eleven times. It is interesting to note that eight applicants each submitted four and even five times without ever having a project approved.

Table 10: Applicants with more than one application

| Number of applications per PI | no approval | one approval | two approvals | three approvals | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| 2 applications | 78 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 103 |
| 3 applications | 49 | 16 | 3 | 0 | 68 |
| 4 applications | 8 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 19 |
| 5 applications | 8 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 21 |
| 6 applications | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| more than 6 | | 1 | | | 1 |

Figure 11 shows that the approval rate tended to increase with the number of submissions, being highest for applicants with six applications, second highest for applicants with four applications and lowest for applicants with two or three submissions⁵³. However, this raises the question of causality: Do applicants submit often because they are successful or are they successful because they submit frequently?

In the case of applicants with a particularly large number of applications (four or more), the question was also asked as to whether they had submitted unsuccessfully (or even successfully) before or after a funded PEEK project (see Table 11). The general answer to this question was: almost always. Barely any applicant was discouraged by an initial rejection but instead submitted again. Whether these submissions were revisions of previously rejected applications cannot be answered. The majority of applicants also submitted again after their projects had been funded, although at times with some time lag.

⁵³ The applicant with eleven submissions is not included in the picture. The rejections include Executive Board dismissals ("Absetzungen") as well as withdrawn applications.

Figure 11: Approvals of applicants with two or more applications

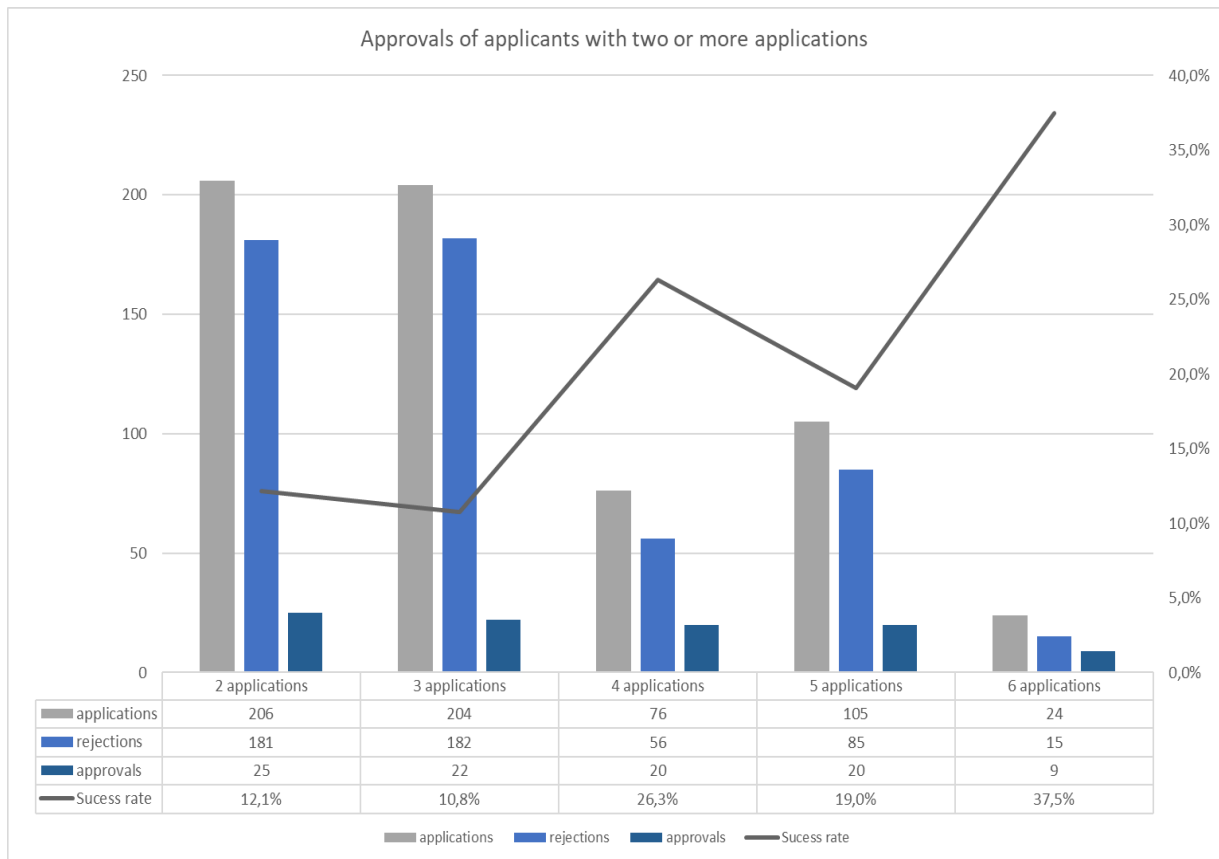


Table 11: Application history for applicants with four and more applications

| Number of applications | Number of applicants |
|--|----------------------|
| 4 applications | 19 |
| at least one approval | 11 |
| submitted again after a successful project application | 9 |
| submitted again after the first rejection | 11 |
| 5 applications | 21 |
| at least one approval | 13 |
| submitted again after a successful project application | 8 |
| submitted again after the first rejection | 12 |
| 6 applications | 4 |
| at least one approval | 4 |
| submitted again after a successful project | 3 |
| submitted again after the first rejection | 4 |

Summary

Of the total of 692 PEEK applications submitted since 2009, by far the largest number – 626 – came from applicants who had submitted more than once. Of the 216 applicants who had submitted more than once, 103 had submitted two applications, the remaining 113 applicants had submitted three or more applications, and one applicant even had eleven submissions. Eight applicants each submitted four and even five times without ever having a project approved. This shows that for many applicants, few alternatives to PEEK exist, which is also confirmed by our survey results and the interviews.

The approval rate tends to increase with the number of submissions, being highest for applicants with six applications and lowest for applicants with two or three submissions. However, this raises the

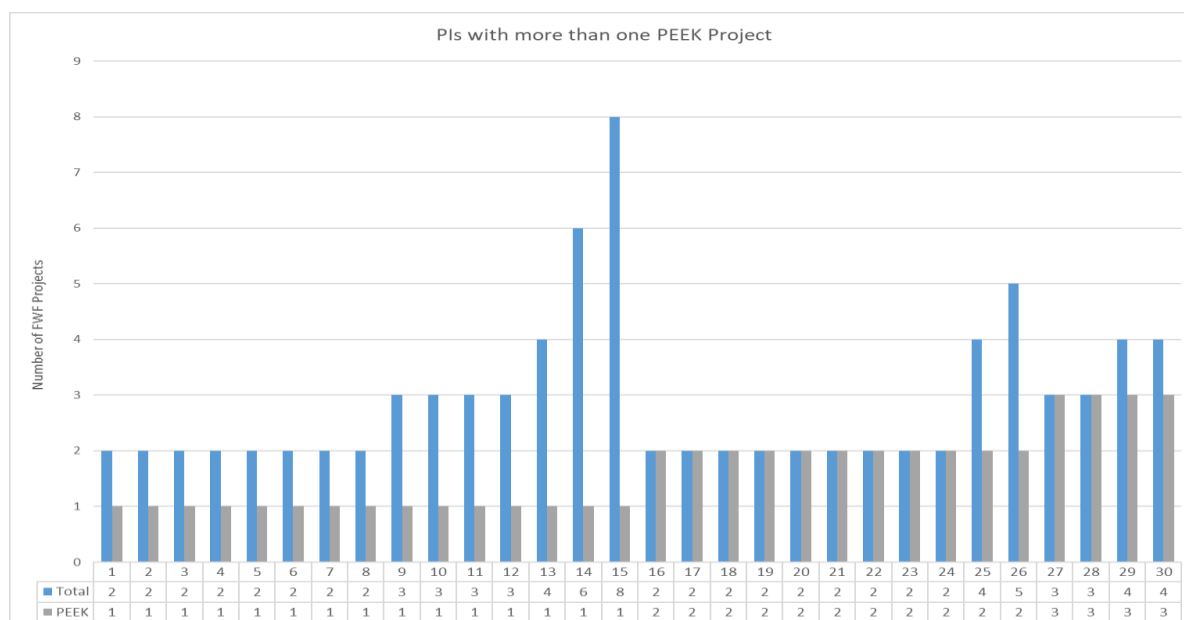
question of causality: Do applicants submit often because they are successful or are they successful because they submit frequently?

For applicants with a particularly high number of submissions (four or more), it was also investigated whether they had submitted further applications before or after an approved project. This was almost always the case. Nearly all applicants had not been discouraged by an initial rejection and submitted again.

8.6 PEEK PIs' experiences with other FWF programmes

The low participation of art universities in other FWF programmes in other FWF programmes (see Section 8.1), suggests that the PIs were also rather inactive in other FWF programmes. This assumption is examined in more detail below. Out of the 102 PEEK projects, 83 PIs were identified, as some PIs have or had two or more PEEK projects. Of these, 53 (64%) PIs led only a PEEK project, and 30 (36%) have or had more than one FWF project in the period of 2009-2021. The distribution of projects among the 30 PIs with more than one PEEK project is as follows:

Figure 12: PIs with more FWF projects than one PEEK project



Most of these PIs (17) have or had two FWF projects, eleven had two PEEK projects and four PIs had four PEEK projects. Only few had several other FWF projects beyond PEEK in their portfolio: Four PIs had four FWF projects and only three had more than four. Of these three, only one PI was located at an arts university, while the other two came from a full university and a technical university, respectively. Table 12 shows a detailed breakdown of where these projects are funded from beyond PEEK.

Table 12: FWF projects other than PEEK

| Stand-alone | Science communication | Translational research ⁵⁴ | Stand-Alone publications | Schrödinger | Firnberg | Richter ⁵⁵ |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 3 |

Further programmes are: 1 Open Access Journal, 1 doc.fund, 1 Meitner

This means that there were 19 PEEK PIs, who led a total of 38 FWF projects outside PEEK during the period under consideration. Of these 38 projects, eleven were very small publication grants and four

⁵⁴ Before PEEK was launched, artistic research projects could be submitted to the Translational Research Programme.

⁵⁵ The Elise Richter programme includes Elise Richter PEEK, which addresses highly qualified female arts-based researchers striving for a university career. The three projects mentioned here may be Richter-PEEK projects and therefore quite similar to PEEK.

came from the Translational Research Programme. The number of Stand-Alone projects is quite low, while comparatively many projects (10 in total) belong to the mobility and career programmes of the FWF (Schrödinger, Firnberg, Richter, Meitner). It can be assumed that these PIs were probably better anchored in the scientific system than the 53 PIs with only one PEEK project.

Summary

Most PEEK PIs focus on the FWF's PEEK programme and have comparatively few other FWF projects. If so, then these projects were rather funded by the FWF mobility and career programmes than the Stand-Alone projects programme. Of the three PIs with a substantial FWF track record (i.e. more than four FWF projects), only one was affiliated with an arts university.

9. OBSERVED EFFECTS

9.1 Effects on the Austrian arts-based research fabric

One of the impulses for founding PEEK was to support the transformation of arts colleges into arts universities in line with Art. 1 of the 2002 Universities Act (BGBl. I Nr 120/2002). In consultation with the country's leading arts universities, the FWF identified "arts-based" research as a central research approach prior to the implementation of PEEK. Arts-based research then became legally enshrined in the explanatory comments on the 1982 Research and Technology Promotion Act (BGBl. Nr 434/1982, amended by BGBl. I Nr 36/2007), "Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste" ("development and opening up of the arts") and is set on the same plane as scientific research.

Arts universities have naturally also embraced other academic disciplines, such as research on arts (e.g., musicology) or material sciences (research for the arts). Arts-based research, however, as an approach that is not thematically predisposed, has been referred to as a genuine approach that is primarily at home in the arts universities. The identification of this approach as key for arts universities was also anchored in the international discourse. Norway, for example, which was also confronted with the challenge of supporting the transformation of arts colleges into arts universities in the 1990s, set up the NARP programme (see Section 6.2). However, NARP went a step further than PEEK, as it also supported strong networking and community-building activities to support the expansion of research at the arts universities.

To assess the perception of the PEEK programme on the part of the PIs and non-funded applicants, they were asked about their opinion as to the role PEEK plays for arts-based research in Austria. They were required to mark their level of agreement to a set of given items on a four-point scale⁵⁶. Table 13 shows the funded and non-funded respondents' affirmative perceptions (sum of "strongly agree" and "agree") of the PEEK programme.

Table 13: Perceptions of the effects of the PEEK programme differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| The PEEK programme... | Non-funded | Funded | Total | N |
|---|------------|--------|-------|----|
| contributes to the institutionalisation of arts-based research in Austria. | 97% | 100% | 99% | 84 |
| improves the international standing of Austria's arts-based researchers. | 91% | 100% | 96% | 78 |
| is vital to the research activities of arts universities. | 92% | 98% | 95% | 83 |
| contributes to increase the impact of the arts-based research output. | 86% | 98% | 93% | 83 |
| supports the career development of young arts-based researchers. | 84% | 100% | 93% | 75 |
| improves the standing of arts-based research within the research communities. | 79% | 95% | 89% | 78 |
| is well suited to drive arts-based research in Austria. | 78% | 98% | 89% | 84 |
| is vital to the research activities of artists. | 79% | 93% | 87% | 84 |
| improves the standing of arts-based research within the art communities. | 73% | 98% | 86% | 77 |
| contributes to the public awareness of arts-based research. | 78% | 88% | 83% | 84 |
| contributes to increase the variety of the arts-based research output. | 74% | 89% | 82% | 79 |
| supports greater diversity in the approaches to artistic production. | 68% | 86% | 78% | 78 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

Note: The total sample consisted of 28% funded applicants and 72% non-funded applicants.

The respondents strongly confirmed the ambitions that the PEEK programme sets out to achieve. Of these respondents, 95% or more agreed to the top three items:

- i) the contribution of PEEK to the institutionalisation of arts-based research in Austria;
- ii) PEEK improving the international standing of Austria's arts-based researchers; and

⁵⁶ Scale: strongly agree / agree / disagree / strongly disagree. Moreover, the respondents were given the option to mark "Don't know". The values of the latter option were treated as missing values in the data analysis.

- iii) PEEK being vital for the research activities of the arts universities.

However, the test group (funded PIs) and the control group (non-funded applicants) differed by 25 percentage points (pp) in their affirmative assessment of PEEK's contribution to improving the **standing of arts-based research within art communities** with 98% (funded) and 73% (non-funded), respectively.⁵⁷

The narrative interviews as well as the focus group revealed that the concept of arts-based research is quite contested within the art communities, mostly due to its strong entanglement with the increasing institutionalisation of arts universities and the hegemonic stance such universities take in defining arts-based research and exploiting the scarce funding options. Especially the independent artists who we interviewed underlined that neither they nor their colleagues are in need of the label "arts-based research". This emphasis is based on the conviction that their artistic practice has always been intertwined with critical reflection and that the new label thus has had no changing effect on their artistic process or practices. The participants of the focus group reported that they conceive an increasing differentiation between artists/practitioners, arts-based researchers and other researchers within their institutions and beyond. While this differentiation has the potential to spur a critical and productive discourse around art and research, their entanglement, embeddedness or separation can also lead to tensions that tend to deepen existing trenches.

Differences of approx. 20 pp between the test group (funded PIs) and the control group (non-funded applicants) can also be found for the items "*PEEK is well suited to drive arts-based research in Austria*" and "*PEEK supports greater diversity in the approaches to artistic production*". On the one hand, it is not surprising that non-funded respondents perceive the approaches to arts-based research supported by the PEEK programme as not being sufficiently diverse, since their suggested proposals failed to be funded. On the other hand, this finding can also be put in the context of increasing "**mainstreaming tendencies**" of arts-based research, which some of the interviewees and some of the participants of the focus group perceived. Those mainstreaming tendencies encompass many aspects, including

- (i) the perception of arts-based research as being too close to "regular" sciences;
- (ii) the perceived dominance of certain topics that are "en vogue" (e.g., artificial intelligence);
- (iii) the hegemony of arts universities in comparison to other universities or freelancers; and
- (iv) a perceived decrease in the diversity of artistic disciplines that receive PEEK funding.

We should also note at this point that the clear contribution PEEK has made to the institutionalisation of genuine research at a few arts universities is also perceived as an institutional narrowing, especially by artists who operate predominantly outside the university system. While we understand this assessment, we do not think it is entirely true. Rather, we see this institutionalised containment as a logical process that results from increasingly cumulative expertise at the, mainly public, arts universities. Formally, there is no restriction of PEEK participation to arts universities (unlike in Norway or Switzerland), while freelance artists as well as artists and researchers from non-arts-universities and non-university research institutions may also participate in the Programme.

Still, due to the ever-increasing quality screw, a process of concentration on arts universities does not seem at all surprising to us. The public arts universities, in particular, had a starting advantage due to their central position and the public support they received, which they (with few exceptions) also used productively and thus "ascended to the PEEK master class". Incidentally, the results of the last PEEK deadline in 2021 have shown that the Programme is not institutionally limited to arts universities. However, it must be noted that only three arts universities⁵⁸ together allocate 85% of the PEEK projects. This is a strong concentration effect within the arts universities. Especially the private arts universities are clearly lagging behind.

⁵⁷ Note: We also implemented an explorative principal component analysis to explore the main factors of the role the PEEK programme plays in Austria. The results are presented in Annex B. They show the two factors that explain the most variance and that can be interpreted as the institutionalisation factor and the content and outreach factor.

⁵⁸ According to the fractional counting method of FWF, most PEEK projects have been hosted at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (49%), followed by the Academy of Fine Arts (21%) and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz (14%) (see Section 8.1).

At the institutional level, most public arts universities have primarily built up internal capacities in research support services. PEEK promotion and application counselling have taken on a very high priority at some of these institutions, which is also reflected in the application and approval statistics. The University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts are particularly noteworthy here. Other institutional effects can be observed as well, such as the anchoring of arts-based research in specific centres or labs (e.g., the Innovation Lab and Performance Lab of the University of Applied Arts, or the Future lab and mobile city lab of the Technical University of Vienna), the establishment of artistic doctoral programmes and research schools, the provision of seed funding to elaborate PEEK proposals (University of Klagenfurt) or the establishment of an interdisciplinary professorship for arts-based research (Mozarteum).

Some, especially private arts universities, have just recently started to follow suit institutionally in order to make PEEK more accessible to their organisations. Within the focus group we implemented, the universities raised fears that the pressure of quality and competition for successful PEEK applications will continue to increase in the future.

PEEK has been so dominant for the research orientation of some arts universities that the risk of strong path dependency has emerged. This is further reinforced by the qualification of a new generation of researchers explicitly trained for arts-based research through the artistic doctoral programmes and the Richter PEEK programme. In view of the fact that the arts universities participate so marginally in other programmes, at least FWF programmes, this path dependency should not be underestimated. In addition, alternative submission possibilities are lacking. In our opinion, the European research and innovation programme Horizon Europe, which policy-makers often refer to as a cornucopia for everything, is not an adequate funding instrument for arts-based research, as the focus there – if at all – is on the preservation of cultural heritage. FFG programmes, on the other hand, are too application-oriented and do not offer the necessary flexible regulatory and administrative framework for arts-based research, which is basically very exploration-oriented. To possibly phase PEEK out or even downsize the Programme would therefore be extremely negative for the efforts of the arts universities to develop a genuine scientific anchorage. The likely consequence of such a scenario would be to retreat to other core virtues such as excellent arts training and arts outreach, while an alternative academic profiling would seem unlikely.

Table 14: Relation with the host institution differentiated by non- funded and funded applicants

| | Non- funded | Funded | Total |
|--|-------------|--------|-------|
| I held a permanent position at the host institution. | 39% | 40% | 39% |
| I have collaborated with staff from the host institution. | 22% | 35% | 29% |
| I held a temporary position at the host institution. | 29% | 25% | 27% |
| I studied at the host institution. | 22% | 21% | 21% |
| I had no relation to the host institution prior to the PEEK application. | 7% | 8% | 8% |
| Other | 2% | 6% | 5% |
| N | 41 | 48 | 89 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

Another indication of the institutionalisation of arts-based research is the extent to which the universities and research institutions active in PEEK have the Programme on their radar and offer corresponding support services to potential applicants. We therefore present the corresponding results from the survey in the following paragraphs.

The survey results clearly show that all but 8% of the grantees and applicants had some form of relationship to their host institutions while preparing their last PEEK applications. In this respect, there were no differences between the funded and non- funded applicants. There were also no differences between the two groups with regard to the presence of permanent positions at the host institutions: 40% of the funded and 39% of the non- funded applicants held permanent positions. It was only noticeable that fewer of the non- funded applicants had collaborated with host institution staff in advance in comparison to the funded applicants (see Table 14).

Table 15 shows that around 80% of the respondents had received support from their host institutions, which confirms a central supportive role of those institutions during the application processes. Twelve per cent of the respondents had received help from outside their host institutions, either in addition or in place of the support received from host institutions. Almost 20% of the respondents said that they had received no support. Interestingly, however, this proportion is slightly higher among the funded than among the non-funded applicants.

Table 15: Support from the host institution differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total |
|--|------------|--------|-------|
| Yes, I received support from my host institution. | 83% | 79% | 81% |
| Yes, I received support from outside of my host institution. | 20% | 6% | 12% |
| No | 17% | 21% | 19% |
| N | 41 | 48 | 89 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question.

The respondents had mainly been supported by advice and assistance with administrative aspects (85%) and with understanding the PEEK programme and its requirements (75%). Thirty per cent of the respondents had received more in-depth advice on how to write a good proposal (See Tab. 16). Only very few respondents mentioned other forms of support, e.g., issuing new employment contracts or forms of relief through redeployment of work.

Table 16: Forms of support provided by the host institution differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total |
|---|------------|--------|-------|
| I was supported regarding administrative aspects of the application. | 76% | 92% | 85% |
| I received help in understanding the requirements of the PEEK programme. | 76% | 74% | 75% |
| I was advised on how to write a good application. | 27% | 37% | 32% |
| Other | 9% | 5% | 7% |
| During the submission phase, my professional tasks were shifted, reduced or temporarily taken over by other colleagues in order to be able to concentrate on the application. | 6% | 3% | 4% |
| Someone else received a works contract to support me in preparing the application. | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| I received an independent works contract to prepare the application. | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| I received a limited employment contract to prepare the application. | 0% | 5% | 3% |
| N | 33 | 38 | 78 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

As the following table shows, the research services play a crucial role in supporting PEEK applicants. Almost 80% of the respondents (n=71) had been supported by these organisational units. Moreover, colleagues and administrative staff had also been an important source of support for the respondents. Almost a quarter of the respondents had received advice from the FWF staff during the application process. There were striking differences between the non-funded and the funded applicants with regard to the extent of help given by colleagues outside the host institution and with regard to support from academic supervisors. The proportion of help from outside among the respondents was twice as high among the non-funded as among the funded, while the proportion of academic supervision was 11% among the funded and not present among the non-funded applicants.

Table 17: Sources of support differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total |
|--|------------|--------|-------|
| The research service of my host institution ("Forschungsservice" of the University, Center for Arts-based research...) | 79% | 78% | 79% |
| Colleagues within the host institution | 35% | 32% | 34% |
| Administrative staff from the host institution | 24% | 27% | 25% |
| FWF staff | 27% | 22% | 24% |
| Colleagues from outside the host institution | 29% | 14% | 21% |
| My supervisors | 0% | 11% | 6% |
| Other | 9% | 0% | 4% |
| N | 34 | 37 | 71 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

Table 18: PEEK project leaders' satisfaction with their host institutions

| | Very satisfied/ Satisfied | Dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied | N |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|
| Access to adequate infrastructure and technical equipment | 98% | 2% | 43 |
| Access to material/consumables | 93% | 7% | 42 |
| Administrative support | 89% | 11% | 44 |
| Access to external service providers (e.g. event management, venues, ...) | 88% | 12% | 34 |
| Access to own workspace | 84% | 16% | 43 |
| Recognition for my PEEK project | 75% | 25% | 44 |
| Knowledge transfer within the institution | 72% | 28% | 39 |
| Support in organising(public) events | 71% | 29% | 38 |
| Support with PR for the project | 64% | 36% | 42 |
| Integration of my project into teaching | 55% | 45% | 31 |
| Support in preparing a follow-up project | 55% | 45% | 31 |
| Access to additional financial resources | 47% | 53% | 30 |

Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

The PIs⁵⁹ of PEEK projects were also asked how satisfied⁶⁰ they were with the support they had received from their host institution during the implementation of their (last) PEEK project. In general, the PIs were very satisfied, especially with access to infrastructure and material, provision of an own

⁵⁹ Since this paragraph is about the implementation of the PEEK projects, only PIs were asked, not applicants.

⁶⁰ Scale: very satisfied / satisfied / dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Moreover, the respondents were given the option to mark "Not applicable". The values of the latter option were treated as missing values in the data analysis.

workspace, access to external service providers as well as with administrative support (see Tab. 18). However, more than half of the project leaders were (at least) dissatisfied with the access to additional financial resources. Moreover, 45% of the respondents were (very) dissatisfied with the host institutions' support in preparing follow-up projects and with the integration of their PEEK projects into teaching.

9.2 Effects of PEEK on the quality and innovation of arts-based research

In order to capture the novelty as well as the different nature of PEEK as a programme, we attempted to elaborate how PEEK projects differ from "regular stand-alone FWF projects" on the basis of various dimensions. For this purpose, we applied content analysis to the final reports of 25 PEEK projects and ten randomly chosen Stand-Alone projects from the same or similar disciplines (see Section 4.3 for methodological details). We analysed the PEEK and Stand-Alone projects along the following dimensions:

- **Outputs** (*source: Final Reports*): The project outputs listed in the Final Reports were identified as either predominantly "classic" or predominantly "PEEK-like". "Classic" outputs refer to scientific and scholarly publications, such as journal papers, scientific reports, proceedings, etc. "PEEK-like" outputs relate to artistic and creative products and their outreach modes (concerts, exhibitions, artefacts, films, installations, performances, art works, etc.). Some of the projects were difficult to classify, as both output types were present to a similar extent. The comparison revealed that Stand-Alone projects almost exclusively produced "classic" outputs. One Stand-Alone project also facilitated public lectures, and contributions to exhibitions or art catalogues were mentioned among the outputs in some art historian projects. However, it has to be noted that the latter cases contributed analytical or descriptive elements to exhibitions or art catalogues, but did not showcase pieces that derived from their own arts-based research practice.
- **Peer-reviewed publications** (*source: Final Reports*): We assumed that peer-reviewed publications point to particularly "classic" outputs. Therefore, projects that mentioned such publications in their Final Reports received additional identifiers according to the number of produced peer-reviewed publications⁶¹.
In terms of peer-reviewed publications, the difference between PEEK and Stand-Alone projects did not seem to be very distinctive. The assumption that Stand-Alone projects generally produce a high number of peer-reviewed publications is not entirely true, at least not for our randomly selected small sample. The low number of peer-reviewed publications is probably rather caused by the publication practice of the "arts studies" discipline in general.
- **FWF track record** (*source: Project Finder*): We further interpreted granted non-PEEK FWF projects, which were successfully acquired by PEEK PIs as indicators of the proximity to Stand-Alone projects. As already mentioned in Section 8.6, while several PIs have multiple PEEK projects, only a few also run FWF projects other than PEEK or the previous Translational Research Programme. Interestingly, the PIs of the ten selected Stand-Alone projects did not have an outstanding FWF track record; only a few lead or have led other FWF projects, mainly further Stand-Alone projects or independent publications. This phenomenon of concentrating on only one funding stream may be due to the discipline and/or also to the small size of the research community conducting arts-based research or arts studies.
- **Discipline portfolio** (*source: Proposals and Funding Statistics*): PEEK Projects with less than 50% of "604 art sciences" in the discipline portfolio received identifiers for closeness to Stand-Alone projects: The lower the share of "604 arts sciences", the lower the assumed closeness was to PEEK.
Since the Stand-Alone projects were selected in such a way that their share of "arts sciences" was at least 40 %, this column was not filled in for the Stand-Alone projects.
- **Keywords**: We then examined the keywords of all 89 PEEK projects from 2009 to 2019 as well as all Stand-Alone projects from the scientific discipline "604 art sciences" from the same period. The PEEK projects that used the most frequently used keywords of the Stand-Alone projects were given an additional identifier. In concrete terms, PEEK projects using such keywords such "literature", "studies", "research" (without arts-based research), "history",

⁶¹ These identifications might not be correct for projects with project numbers lower than AR 75, since the FWF introduced a standardised list of outputs including the distinction between peer-reviewed publications and non-peer-reviewed publications only in 2015. This is also a matter of self-assessment by the PIs, and peer-reviewed publications are not always shown separately.

“analysis”, “science”, “model” and “cultural” were supposed to be particularly similar to Stand-Alone projects, and therefore, designated as “classic”.

Such keywords as “history”, “cultural”, “literature” and “research” clearly predominate in the Stand-Alone projects, which is why they were all marked as “classic”.

- **Contracts of employment**⁶² (source: *Final Reports, list of transaction provided by the FWF*): A further hypothesis is that project staff⁶³ in PEEK projects have more discontinuous employment histories than those in Stand-Alone projects. The duration of employment in PEEK projects is significantly shorter and the level of employment (as a percentage of full-time employment) is significantly lower than in Stand-Alone projects. The number of employees and the number of contracts per project is also higher than in Stand-Alone projects. Correspondingly, PEEK projects with a particularly large number of employees with contracts of short duration and many contracts received different identifiers than those with comparatively few employees with contracts of longer duration. Here, too, a higher number of identifiers indicated the proximity to Stand-Alone projects. Among the ten Stand-Alone projects examined in detail, three projects had no or only one employee. Two or three employees were identified in six projects and more than four in only one project.
- **Independent works contracts** (source: *Final Reports, list of transaction provided by the FWF*): Similarly, it was assumed that projects with many independent works/service contracts are typical for PEEK and have a greater distance to Stand-Alone projects than projects with few independent works/service contracts. Among the ten Stand-Alone projects, only one project had a contract for works/services.

Results

According to our internal classification, the majority of PEEK projects fall into the “medium” category. They show mixed characteristics, some of which are also seen in Stand-Alone projects. Only four projects were classified as predominantly “classic”, six projects as truly “PEEK-like”. This pattern is not surprising, since PEEK promotes research and not exclusively artistic activities. All PEEK projects include scientific research as well as artistic research and artistic activities, albeit in different proportions. It should be noted that projects labelled “classic” in one dimension can have a different labelling in another dimension. In cases with inconclusive quantitative metrics, an additional qualitative assessment of the final reports was undertaken.

In contrast, nine of the ten Stand-Alone projects were classified as “research on the arts” and the remaining one was classified as “research for the arts”.

An in-depth review of the proposals, the Final Reports and the final reviews revealed some other critical differences between Stand-Alone projects in the arts disciplines and PEEK projects.

- **Research aim:** Although the Stand-Alone projects differ in their specific research questions, their research activities aim at the description, analysis and historic contextualisation of existing art and artistic artefacts. The objective of those projects is to achieve a high degree of clarity– the correct attribution of mostly historic art works, the comprehensive stock-taking of artistic architectural elements or the exact measurement of a certain sound. In contrast, PEEK projects are more open towards ambiguity and research avenues that only open up during project implementation. This striving for accuracy can be illustrated by the example of a Stand-Alone project that aimed to reduce the discrepancy between the theoretical modelling of a sound and what musicians actually heard. The small difference between the two could not be eradicated during the research process. The researchers therefore concluded that their models need further

⁶² There are hardly any adequate English terms for the differences between “Werkvertrag” and “Dienstvertrag” under German and Austrian law. According to EURES, The European Job Mobility Portal: “Legally, a distinction is made between a contract of employment (Arbeitsvertrag), a freelance contract (freier Dienstvertrag) and a contract for works (Werkvertrag)”

<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=8260&acro=living&lang=en&parentId=7768&countryId=AT&living=>. The FWF uses the term “independent work contract”, which is also adopted here in order to be as consistent as possible with FWF’s language. <https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/werkvertrag.pdf>.

⁶³ All persons with a contract of employment in the project count as project staff. In some cases, however, the PIs also have a contract and are financed from project funds (the FWF refers to these persons as “independent applicants” or “SelbstantragstellerInnen”).

refinement. It would be highly interesting to see how these differences would be framed in a PEEK project and how the subjectivity of hearing (and even feeling) a sound would be further explored.

- **Artistic practice:** Stand-Alone projects perform research on the outcomes of other artists' artistic practices. In contrast, PEEK projects contain some form of artistic practice as a central element of their research endeavour. In some cases, this seems to be the decisive distinctive element. For example, two PEEK projects in our sample aimed to create archives of artistic outcomes. In that regard, they are not very different from Stand-Alone projects. However, as a part of their research process, they did performances and (re-)produced and (re-)contextualised those art pieces. Thus, their methods were not only analytical, but also artistic.
- **Researchers:** In comparison to the PEEK projects, the ten Stand-Alone projects were rarely multi- or interdisciplinary. Two of them were conducted by a sole researcher. In most cases, the researchers shared a very similar academic background.
- **Outputs:** As mentioned above, Stand-Alone projects produce "classic" outputs such as journal papers, book chapters, monographs, conference papers and talks at conferences. The least classic outputs of the scrutinised Stand-Alone projects were (public) talks, workshops and occasional media contributions.

Based on the conceptualisations of arts-based research as well as the content analysis described above and the answers of the narrative interviews, we asked the PIs and applicants which of the following elements constitutes arts-based research to them. The following table shows how much of the respective groups (funded vs. not funded) strongly agree or agree to the given items.

Table 19: Agreement with conceptual properties of arts-based research (differentiated by funded vs. non-funded)

| Arts-based research... | Non-funded | Funded | N | Diff. in % points (pp) |
|--|------------|--------|----|------------------------|
| ... offers new perspectives on a certain topic. | 100% | 100% | 89 | 0 |
| ... is an explorative research process. | 95% | 100% | 87 | 5 |
| ... approaches research and arts together. | 95% | 100% | 86 | 5 |
| ... goes beyond traditional forms of knowledge production. | 93% | 100% | 86 | 7 |
| ... goes beyond the borders of a field or discipline. | 95% | 94% | 84 | -1 |
| ... expands the concept of research. | 93% | 96% | 83 | 3 |
| ... puts artistic practice at the core of the research process. | 93% | 94% | 82 | 1 |
| ... creates new, innovative research methods. | 90% | 96% | 83 | 6 |
| ... integrates non-academic actors into the research process. | 89% | 96% | 78 | 7 |
| ... creates new approaches to artistic production. | 90% | 94% | 80 | 4 |
| ... develops novel theories and perspectives. | 88% | 96% | 80 | 8 |
| ... promotes plurimediality. | 86% | 93% | 70 | 7 |
| ... builds bridges between art and science. | 83% | 94% | 78 | 11 |
| ... expands scientific knowledge/understanding on a certain topic. | 85% | 89% | 77 | 4 |
| ... is based on a collaborative research process. | 80% | 86% | 72 | 6 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration.

Note: Only answer categories "strongly agree" and "agree" are considered.

In total, the element "*Arts-based research offers new perspectives on a certain topic*" was the element most fully agreed upon in the two groups. All funded PIs (G) and all non-funded applicants (A) either "strongly agreed" (G: 87.5%, A: 61%) or "agreed" (G: 12.5%, A: 39%) to this statement. Interestingly, the seemingly similar statement "*Arts-based research expands scientific knowledge or understanding on a certain topic*" is the statement with the second-to-last lowest percentage of agreement. This difference could point to the contested value of "science" in the context of arts-based research.

Overall, the project leaders and non-funded applicants did not differ greatly in their answers. The item for which the level of agreement differs most (11 pp) is "*Arts-based research builds bridges between arts and science*", where non-funded applicants were more sceptical. In general, however, it can be summarised that the conceptual attributions of arts-based research enjoy high approval from the community and can be qualified as shared understanding.

In addition to the conceptual properties of arts-based research, the PIs were also asked to which extent the FWF PEEK programme actually facilitates the implementation of the aforementioned characteristics of arts-based research. Overall, the differences between the characteristics that PIs saw at the core of arts-based research and the extent to which the FWF enables those characteristics are rather marginal. Only 30% of the PIs answered that PEEK makes it possible to integrate non-academic actors into the research process only to a little or very little extent.

Overall, the applicants (whether funded or not) expressed the opinion that the FWF had adequately implemented and operationalised the concept of arts-based research with PEEK. The agreement levels on the questions of the role of the Programme and the conceptualisation of arts-based research are extremely high and show no major differences of opinion between the funded and non-funded applicants.

In summary, PEEK has facilitated a new level of quality of arts-based research and innovativeness. FWF's definition and understanding of artistic research reflects the specifics perceived by arts-based researchers well. FWF defines arts-based research as "*a type of basic research that aims at increasing the existing knowledge base and developing new methods by means of aesthetic and artistic processes of knowledge production rather than those of pure science and scholarship*"⁶⁴. Thus, it understands artistic research as an alternative method to scientific or scholarly research for the creation of new findings and the further development of existing knowledge.

With our content analysis, we also showed that the properties of PEEK projects differ significantly from Stand-Alone projects. Thus, a simple mainstreaming of PEEK into Stand-Alone would be difficult and would require a substantial overhaul. According to our findings, PEEK projects

- are more often carried out in multi- and transdisciplinary teams and are more open towards ambiguity and research avenues that only open up during project implementation;
- contain some form of artistic practice as a central element of their research endeavour; and
- produce fewer (peer-reviewed) publications, but instead a variety of outputs, including performances, concerts and installations and videos.

9.3 Effects on human resources and career development

This section explores how PEEK has affected the research capacities and career developments of the researchers involved. This aspect is important because the FWF defines "*the increase in research capacity*" as one of three central goals of the Programme⁶⁵. In addition to the researchers directly involved in PEEK projects, the focus here is also on the level of the researchers' embeddedness in their host universities, the extent of support they receive from those institutions and the ways in which the project leaders' and team members' careers develop or have developed. For the latter, the information derived from the respondents' questionnaires was used. In addition, however, we also scrutinised the careers of PIs and project staff from completed projects based on information from the Project Finder through a manual Internet research. The interviews also provided information about the career paths that the PIs are following or have followed – both in the arts and in research.

Over the past decade, the field of arts-based research has been established in Austria and a growing number of artists have gained experience in research as PIs or as researchers in projects. The establishment of PhD programmes in the field of arts-based research at arts universities has also contributed to this development. Overall, considerable research capacity in arts-based research has been built, particularly considering that hardly any existed ten years ago. However, this does not imply that the clear job description of an "arts-based researcher" has developed. In our interviews, only one individual perceived him/herself primarily as an "arts-based researcher". In particular, the

⁶⁴ See https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/PEEK/ar_application-guidelines.pdf, p.3, accessed on 23 August 2021.

⁶⁵ As one of three goals, the FWF mentions the "Increase [of] research capacity, quality and international standing of arts-based researcher in Austria." See <https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/peek>; accessed on 23 August 2021.

few persons with a background in architecture see themselves as researchers with arts-based research being one of several possible approaches available to them. The majority, however, sees themselves primarily as artists, with arts-based research being one of the possible fields in which they can work. In other words, arts-based research is rarely perceived as a full-time profession of its own.

It is quite difficult to assess the contribution of PEEK to the careers of individual “researchers”, as the research activity is usually only one aspect in their portfolio. This is most likely aggravated by the fact that arts-based research does not offer a coherent career path or job profile. There are very few, if any, positions for arts-based research. The question therefore arises as to what the career prospects are for those currently in a PhD programme, in which promising research is being conducted yet very few vacancies are available.⁶⁶ “Exporting” these graduates does not really solve the problem, since there is an equally strong pressure on Austrian openings from abroad.

To trace the careers of PIs and project staff, we investigated all projects concluded by the end of 2018. This equals 37 projects and 36 PIs, which is less than half of all PEEK PIs to date. By using manual Internet search (by scrutinising LinkedIn and Wikipedia or institutional and personal websites), we first identified the former PIs’ current activities and working positions. Second, we extended the analysis to the two staff categories “PostDoc” and “Senior PostDoc” in order to identify more noticeable effects among the staff members. All individuals from these two categories, who had been employed for at least 24 months at least half-time (50% or more), were included in our analysis. This resulted in 17 additional persons (10 men and 7 women).⁶⁷ In the following, the PIs and project staff are analysed separately.

By web research, we identified all 36 PEEK PIs, who had concluded their PEEK projects by the end of 2018, most of whom have a Wikipedia entry. We also found personal and project websites. However, the yield of these findings varied: In most cases, the websites served marketing purposes and did not intend to provide precise descriptions of the PIs’ functions and positions. It was interesting to note, however, that nearly all PIs attach importance to the PEEK project in their careers. With only one exception, all PIs mentioned the project on their homepage and/or in their CV – often in a prominent way.

Other common features of the PIs are that:

- most are still anchored in the academic system (26 out of 36);
- most teach (at least 26 out of 36); and
- half of them (18 out of 36) lead other FWF projects (PEEK and projects other than PEEK).

Table 20 shows the aggregated results of this investigation. The functions and positions listed here are not clearly defined categories, but rather self-descriptions of the PIs on their personal homepages, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., or the descriptions in Wikipedia or on project homepages. Individuals who call themselves “Professor” but not “Full Professor” are usually Associate or Assistant Professors. Almost all PIs stated more than one function or position. Very often, they described themselves as “artists and researchers”. The self-designation as “artist” was used both by PIs who were still affiliated at academic institutions and by those who were no longer affiliated within the academic sector but worked as (independent) artists.

It is immediately apparent that neither the PIs’ positions nor functions (i.e. as artists or researchers) have changed significantly from the start of the project until recently: People established as professors in the academic system for many years dominate. At first glance, men seem to be slightly more present in the higher positions: While men constitute the majority among the professors and among CEOs or directors alike, most of the “researchers” and “artists” are female.

⁶⁶ This question is currently also being asked by the arts universities.

⁶⁷ It must be noted that there is some overlap between the PIs and project staff, as in some cases, both the staff and the PIs also receive their salaries via the FWF project. The FWF allows this for PIs who are not employed at universities or research institutions or who have no other means of financing their activities (“independent applications”; see https://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Antragstellung/information_grant-salaried-PI.pdf, accessed on 13 September 2021). These persons were excluded from the project staff and counted as PIs.

Table 20: PIs' positions and functions at project initiation and today

| Position or function at project initiation | No of PIs | Male | Female | Current position or function | No of PIs | Male | Female |
|--|-----------|------|--------|------------------------------|-----------|------|--------|
| Professor ⁶⁸ | 17 | 10 | 7 | Professor | 16 | 11 | 5 |
| Full professor | 14 | 8 | 6 | Full professor | 14 | 9 | 5 |
| Artist | 16 | 6 | 10 | Artist | 13 | 6 | 7 |
| Researcher | 10 | 3 | 7 | Researcher | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Curator | 4 | 2 | 2 | Curator | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Director or CEO | 3 | 3 | - | Director or CEO | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Source: Career tracking, own elaboration

Note: The positions/functions are self-descriptions of the PIs

In most cases, however, it is difficult to attribute a change in position directly to a given project; often, it is one argument among many others that led to change. Even the perception of a change as an improvement may cause difficulties: The change from an academic position to arts may have been voluntary and willing, or even inevitable, simply because the resp. academic position had expired by the end of the project.

Overall, stability prevails as regards the PIs: In 18 cases, both the positions and the affiliated institutions were the same as they had been when the project started, including all 17 professors (one professor has retired in the meantime). In four cases, a horizontal mobility change from the academic field to the field of arts or art management was observed (only men). Two PIs used their PEEK projects to start a spin-off from the university. One newly founded institute was also subsequently successful in raising third-party funds from various sources. In eight cases, a vertical upwards change in position within the academic sector was identified, and only women were affected. In four cases, the PEEK projects may have played a role, as the improvement of the positions was chronologically directly related to newly acquired projects:

- A permanent senior researcher position came along with a newly awarded second PEEK project.
- A postdoc position came along with a newly awarded PEEK project (2 cases).
- A recently won Richter project might have led to a permanent position at a university.

In the four other cases the link between the PEEK project(s) and the improved positions is less obvious, since no additional projects were newly acquired.

For postdocs and senior postdocs, the situation is different and thus Table 21 shows a clearly different picture compared to Table 20. Upon initiation of the PEEK projects, the majority of the 17 individuals (ten males, seven females) were (mostly experienced) freelance artists and researchers. Unlike the typical cases in other FWF programmes, they were not predominantly young or early-stage researchers. Twelve out of the 17 identified postdocs are still anchored in the academic system, and half of them (nine out of 17) are associated with the arts sector. Only four (out of 17) have no institutional embedding at all and one individual (the founder of a digital movie-making company) is neither established in the arts nor in academia. Eleven individuals are in teaching positions. In the same way as with the PIs, we attempted to track the persons involved. Here, too, all could be identified via Internet, although the information was somewhat sparser than for the PIs. Another limitation is that some entries in the Internet have not been updated for some time.

As mentioned above, the functions and positions are not disjunctive; some call themselves, for example, "artists, lecturers, researchers". Moreover, some terms or categories used in the self-attribution of postdocs on the Internet are not very meaningful.

⁶⁸ For the difference between "Professor" and "Full Professor", see the text above the table.

Table 21: Postdocs' positions and functions at project kick-off and today

| Position or function at project kick-off | No | Male | Female | Current position or function | No | Male | Female |
|--|----|------|--------|-------------------------------|----|------|--------|
| (Free) artist | 9 | 4 | 5 | (free) artist | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| (Free) researcher | 9 | 4 | 5 | (free) researcher | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Research fellow | 2 | 1 | 1 | Research fellow | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Permanent (academic) position | 1 | 1 | - | Permanent (academic) position | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Professor | - | - | - | Professor | 1 | 1 | - |
| Director or CEO | 3 | 3 | - | Director or CEO | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| PhD student | - | - | - | PhD student | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Source: Career tracking, own elaboration

Note: multiple answers and self-assignments

- **"Research fellows"** are people with clear institutional connections – probably on the basis of third-party funding – as well as people who have no affiliation.
- **"Lecturers"** are often persons who do not hold positions at the academic institutions they teach at. However, not everyone who teaches calls himself/herself a "lecturer". Eleven of the 17 people considered here teach, many of them at several national and foreign institutions. Conversely, some call themselves "lecturers" even if they hold other positions (e.g., research positions).
- The two **"PhD students"** are participating in the "Artistic Research PhD" programme at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

The category "PhD students" is surprising in this context: First, PhD students are usually not postdocs and second, in contrast to other FWF projects, there are very few PhD students in PEEK projects. The former can be explained by the fact that, in these specific cases, we are dealing with two obviously experienced artists and researchers who have been given the opportunity to take up PhD studies through the PEEK project. One possible explanation for this situation is that it has only recently become possible to enrol into an arts-based doctoral programme. With the transformation of art colleges into universities of the arts in 1998, these universities received the right to award doctorates. They grant doctoral degrees in many scientific disciplines (doctor of philosophy Dr.phil., doctor of natural sciences Dr. rer.nat., etc.). In the field of arts-based research, the following four arts universities have implemented doctoral degrees:

- the University of Art and Design Linz⁶⁹;
- the Art University Graz⁷⁰;
- the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna⁷¹; and
- the University of Applied Arts Vienna⁷².

While the three universities in Vienna and Linz offer PhD programmes and candidates accordingly graduate with a doctor of philosophy, graduates of the Graz university receive the title Dr. artium.

Due to the small number of non-PI cases, no general statements can be made about the extent to which participation in a PEEK project has promoted the careers of researchers and artists. Even though at first glance, it looks as if the number of freelancers has decreased, especially among women, these

⁶⁹ See <https://www.ufg.at/PhD-Programme-Admission-Procedure.14861+M52087573ab0.0.html>; accessed on 24 August 2021.

⁷⁰ See <http://doctorartium.kug.ac.at/>; accessed on 24 August 2021.

⁷¹ See <https://www.akbild.ac.at/Portal/studium/studienrichtungen/phd-in-practice>; accessed on 24 August 2021.

⁷² See https://www.dieangewandte.at/en/studies/programmes/doctoral_programmes/artistic_research_phd_programme; accessed on 24 August 2021.

results should not be over-interpreted: It is almost impossible beyond the academic world to consider a change in function and position as an improvement or deterioration. Many people who describe themselves as “(free) artists and researchers” are extremely successful and internationally celebrated artists engaged in many exhibitions, concerts, films or performances, even without any institutional ties. For others, however, a freelance existence may be precarious rather than self-chosen.

However, in some cases - with all due caution – we may assume an improvement of the “postdocs” professional situation, although the direct contribution of the PEEK projects remains unclear:

- Three people were able to secure permanent positions at universities (two of them permanent academic positions, one person heads the university's career centre);
- one person was awarded a professorship;
- one person became artistic director;
- one person founded a digital moviemaking company; and
- two people were accepted into the PhD programme of an arts university.

With regard to the PEEK PIs’ and team members’ personal identities at the interface of research and arts, we finally assigned all 55 scrutinised individuals according to their current activity or position to one of the following categories:

- art
- academia
- both
- neither / nor

Clearly, most of the 55 persons investigated are still at home in both worlds: They publish, do research and create art. Only six of the people examined are today engaged in other activities:

- Two of them work in an architectural office;
- two hold managerial positions (but in the arts sector);
- one person has an administrative position at a university; and
- one person has retired.

In addition to career-tracking via the web, all PIs were also asked via the survey what multiple effects the PEEK project had had on their career developments **during project** implementation. Thirty out of 48 PIs reported effects. Half of the respondents who reported effects had been able to establish new temporary work contracts at their host institutions because of the PEEK project, and 17% of the respondents had succeeded in prolonging their work contracts. Overall, the PEEK funding obtained had had a direct job-securing or job-creating effect (see Table 22).

Table 22: Effects of PEEK on the career development during project implementation

| | N | Percent of cases |
|--|----|------------------|
| Establishment of a new temporary work contract at my PEEK host institution | 15 | 50% |
| Prolongation of my work contract at my PEEK host institution | 5 | 17% |
| Other | 5 | 17% |
| Establishment of a new permanent work contract at my PEEK host institution | 4 | 13% |
| I got a temporary job outside my PEEK host institution | 2 | 7% |
| I got a permanent job outside my PEEK host institution | 2 | 7% |

Source: Survey for PEEK PIs, own elaboration.

Note: Multiple-choice question. The category “other” includes: change of PEEK institution; someone else established a work contract; PEEK helped in (applying for) an assistant professor qualification agreement; more freelance offers; permanent position, but not only due to PEEK.

When asked about their personal development due to their last or their ongoing PEEK projects, all but two respondents answered that they had expanded their expertise. More than 70% of the respondents answered that the visibility of their work had increased (79%), that they had established international cooperation due to PEEK (77%) and that they had made personal career advancements (75%). 40% of the respondents answered that they had secured other projects due to their PEEK

project. As shown in Table 23, the PEEK project as a door opener for new memberships played the least important role (only 17% of the respondents chose this option).

The PIs were also asked about the personal development of their core team members. The results show that the effects of working in a PEEK project on personal development seem to have been similar for the PIs and the core team members. The expansion of expertise, building international cooperation, personal career advancement and greater visibility of work were most often mentioned as the most important effects. The main difference is that invitations to international conferences, events and institutions had played a more important role for the core team members than for the PIs themselves. This can probably be attributed to the assumption that the project leaders were already more integrated in the international academic community.

Table 23: Effects of PEEK on the personal development of PEEK project leaders

| | N | Percent of cases |
|--|----|------------------|
| Expansion of my expertise | 46 | 96% |
| Greater visibility of my work | 38 | 79% |
| Building international cooperation | 37 | 77% |
| Personal career advancement | 36 | 75% |
| New qualifications | 33 | 69% |
| Invitation to international conferences, events and institutions | 31 | 65% |
| Increased academic reputation | 31 | 65% |
| Increased artistic reputation | 24 | 50% |
| Acquisition of further projects | 19 | 40% |
| Door opener for new membership in important bodies | 8 | 17% |
| Other | 2 | 4% |

Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

As discussed in the focus group and in the narrative interviews, the field of arts-based research has not yet become an institutionalised disciplinary career domain. Therefore, we were interested in seeing which career paths the core team members of PEEK projects had taken after the completion of the project. Thus, PIs with completed PEEK projects were asked whether their core team members had stayed in the field of arts-based research.

As Table 24 shows, almost half of the PIs stated that their core team members (or at least some of them) had secured other grants, while only few had acquired a PEEK grant. 42% of the core team members of PEEK projects had started working at a different institution, although these categories are not mutually exclusive. In 58% of the cases, the core team members were reported to remain arts-based researchers, whether at another institution, their original host institution or as freelancers. Yet again, these categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 24: Retention of core team members after the completion of a PEEK project

| | % | N |
|---|-----|----|
| Acquisition of other grants | 47% | 9 |
| Started working in another position at another institution | 42% | 8 |
| Remained or became arts-based researcher(s) at another institution | 32% | 6 |
| Started working in another position at the host institution | 32% | 6 |
| Remained or became free-lance artist | 21% | 4 |
| Acquisition of their own PEEK project(s) | 16% | 3 |
| Remained or became free-lance arts-based researcher | 16% | 3 |
| Remained or became arts-based researcher(s) at the host institution | 11% | 2 |
| Other | 11% | 2 |
| Total | | 19 |

Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question

9.4 Effects on awareness within academia, the art communities and the public

Person-related effects

Within academia, the awareness of arts-based research and of PEEK as the primary Austrian funding programme for arts-based research is very high. From the perspective of Austrian arts universities, arts-based research is seen today as one of the core areas – besides teaching/training and exhibiting/performing – which defines their field of activity. This means that in terms of research, the gap between arts/music and “regular” universities is further closed. While not all arts universities have yet established a significant track record of successful arts-based research projects, all have set up institutionalised research offices to support arts-based research (as well as other research fields and approaches) at their institutions and seek to create research proposals aimed at PEEK.

Table 25: Very important and important aspects for applying to the PEEK programme by funded/non-funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total | N |
|--|------------|--------|-------|----|
| PEEK allows conducting a multi-year research project. | 90% | 96% | 93% | 89 |
| Being able to conduct an arts-based research project. | 85% | 98% | 92% | 89 |
| PEEK is the only funding programme for arts-based research in Austria. | 83% | 96% | 89% | 88 |
| PEEK enables projects of adequate size. | 85% | 92% | 89% | 89 |
| PEEK covers the costs for necessary project-specific artistic events. | 71% | 73% | 72% | 89 |
| Being able to support young arts-based researchers. | 74% | 67% | 70% | 86 |
| PEEK allows a flexible implementation of the project. | 58% | 77% | 67% | 86 |
| PEEK covers the costs for project-specific public relations work. | 63% | 60% | 61% | 88 |
| Improving my (international) recognition due to the prestige of FWF-funded projects. | 50% | 50% | 50% | 88 |
| Obtaining third-party funding is essential for my job retention. | 53% | 40% | 46% | 86 |
| Being encouraged by my host institution to apply to PEEK. | 37% | 38% | 37% | 89 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

There are three reasons for this. First, there is a European development towards the establishment of artistic research, which is viewed with interest by Austrian researchers and offers a rich field of potential collaborators and professional networks. Second, the establishment of PhD programmes (third cycle) at arts universities creates a pipeline of artists trained in research methodologies and with an artistic practice that is research-oriented. Third, and most importantly, PEEK provides funding which is not only relatively large compared to other funding opportunities within the arts field, but also may facilitate a type of project (multi-year interdisciplinary research) that would be very difficult to realise otherwise. Table 25 confirms that for applying to PEEK, the most important aspects from the point of view of applicants include the amount and duration of project funding, as well as the USP of the Programme in terms of content.⁷³

The central role and the unique selling proposition (USP) of the PEEK programme in the Austrian research landscape are underlined by the results of the survey. As shown in Table 26, 70% of the respondents had not considered submitting the idea of their last PEEK application to a funding programme other than PEEK, either before submitting the project idea to the Programme or after receiving the funding decision of their PEEK application.

Table 26: Alternatives to PEEK applications

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total |
|--|------------|--------|-------|
| Other funding programmes considered | 39% | 21% | 29% |
| No other funding programmes considered | 61% | 79% | 71% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| N | 41 | 48 | 89 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

Moreover, only 15% of the respondents had been informed about other funding programmes by their host institution, which further demonstrates the unique and central position of the PEEK programme for arts-based research in Austria.

The respondents who answered that they had considered other funding programmes referenced Horizon 2020 and the ERC, national funding programmes (WWTF, OeNB funding, funding from the federal states [e.g. Vienna Innovative Arts funding]), international funding programmes (Berliner Förderprogramm Künstlerische Forschung, Swedish Research Council) and other funding instruments of the FWF (Stand-Alone, Richter-PEEK) besides private funding and funding from cultural institutions.

Table 27: Alternative funding programmes for arts-based research

| Funding programmes | % | N |
|--|-----|-----------|
| Stipends or grants for artists | 69% | 53 |
| Other funding instruments of the FWF, e.g. Stand-Alone projects | 60% | 46 |
| Project funding of the federal states | 48% | 37 |
| Creative Europe Programme of the EU ("Kreatives Europa"-Programm) | 47% | 36 |
| Funding programmes of the universities | 34% | 26 |
| Funding programmes of private sponsors/foundations | 29% | 22 |
| Horizon 2020 | 27% | 21 |
| Horizon Europe | 26% | 20 |
| Funding programmes of the FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency), e.g. BRIDGE,... | 17% | 13 |
| Funding programmes of the AWS (Austria Wirtschaftsservice), e.g. Creative Impact,... | 7% | 5 |
| Other | 7% | 5 |
| N | | 87 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

⁷³ Note: we also implemented an explorative principal component analysis to explore the main factors that drive the usage of PEEK by arts-based researchers. The results are presented in Annex C. They show the two factors that explain the most variance and are interpreted as the resource provision factor and the Programme's recognition factor.

All respondents were also asked which other funding programmes they considered to be relevant for arts-based research (not for pure artistic practice). As shown in Table 27, stipends or grants for artists were mentioned by almost 70% of the respondents. 60% of the respondents also considered other funding instruments of the FWF as relevant although the actual use of other FWF instruments and programmes by PEEK PIs was limited, as shown in Section 8.6. It is interesting to see that these two most relevant alternative funding instruments primarily fund either artistic practice or classic forms of research. This could be due to the lack of knowledge of the other funding programmes listed or their minor role as funding alternatives. However, it could also point to some overlap between artistic practice, arts-based research and classic research that can be exploited by (arts-based) researchers/artists who know how to tailor applications to the requirements of the respective funding programmes. Since PEEK PIs are rarely funded by other programmes of the FWF, it is questionable to which extent these funding alternatives are considered as real options that are made use of.

Academic institutionalisation effects

Over the last ten years, arts-based research has become institutionalised and, to some degree, streamlined and has been adopted as a central research direction in most arts universities. This development is also of interest with regard to two other events. The first is the 2015 revision of the OECD Frascati Manual (The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities).⁷⁴ The current edition proclaims to put greater emphasis than past editions on the social sciences, humanities and the arts and notes a number of important aspects to consider for these fields in general. Not surprisingly, they also apply to arts-based research more specifically.

However, there is still a considerable extent of ambivalence towards arts-based research. The manual draws a distinction between "research for the arts" (novel tools and services for artists), "research on the arts" (art history, musicology, etc.) and "artistic expression". With regard to the latter, it notes:

"Artistic performance is normally excluded from R&D. Artistic performances fail the novelty test of R&D as they are looking for a new expression, rather than for new knowledge. Also, the reproducibility criterion (how to transfer the additional knowledge potentially produced) is not met. As a consequence, arts colleges and university arts departments cannot be assumed to perform R&D without additional supporting evidence. The existence of artists attending courses in such institutions is not relevant to the R&D measurement. Higher education institutions have, nevertheless, to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis if they grant a doctoral degree to an artist as a result of artistic performances. The recommendation is to adopt an "institutional" approach and only to take account of artistic practice recognised as R&D by higher education institutions as potential R&D (to be further used by data collectors)." (OECD, 2015, p. 65)

Thus, the authors of the OECD Frascati Manual (edition 2015) rather refrained from drawing a clear line between artistic practices more generally and arts-based research more specifically. Instead, they are calling upon arts universities to define the boundary as it applies to their own activities. Austrian arts universities are well positioned to fulfil this task and are actively working to clarify the issue and establish arts-based research in this context. With their (comparatively) substantial organisational capacities, both as entities within individual institutions (research offices) and as a well-coordinated national network, Austrian arts universities intend to play a role in the further development of the OECD Frascati Manual, as highlighted by the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (AR) (20 June 2020).⁷⁵

"The declaration aims at (1) presenting a clearer, better articulation of the concepts and impact of AR within the Frascati Manual – the OECD classification manual for collecting statistical research data. This clarification will assure the realisation and acknowledgment of successful research activities in the field, and, consequently, contribute to (2) the restructuring of funding policies and programmes at regional, national, European and global levels in such a way that they support AR in line with the sciences and humanities, and (3) the securing and embedding of practice-based third cycle studies in Higher Arts

⁷⁴ See <https://www.oecd.org/sti/frascati-manual-2015-9789264239012-en.htm>, accessed on 24 August 2021.

⁷⁵ See https://cultureactioneurope.org/download/?filename=/files/2020/06/Vienna-Declaration-on-AR_corrected-version_24-June-20-1.pdf.

Education, in all countries across Europe, to further develop AR and underpin the contemporaneity of the curriculum.” (Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research, 2020, p. 1)

The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research shows the awareness of the arts universities not only of arts-based research as a field but also as a strategic long-term policy development necessary to further consolidate and expand arts-based research and their willingness and capacity to engage in the necessary processes. The leading role that Austrian institutions play in this process can be regarded as a direct consequence of the institution-building effects of PEEK over the past decade.

In the wider academic context, PEEK is also very well-known and regarded as a small but highly innovative funding opportunity due to its central focus on interdisciplinarity, rather than as an add-on to largely disciplinary perspectives. Thus, PEEK is seen as a driver for innovation with respect to interdisciplinarity and new ways of conducting research (open-ended, exploratory rather than hypothesis-driven and falsification-oriented) that might also have an impact on other academic disciplines such as architecture.

The awareness of arts-based research is not limited to academia itself, but extends into the wider art world. Exhibitions such as “UNDERSTANDING – ART & RESEARCH” – which presented arts-based research projects of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna both locally (MAK) and internationally (New Zealand [Dunedin School of Art], Singapore [Nanyang Technological University Singapore] and Los Angeles [UCLA Art|Sci Center])⁷⁶ – and publication partnerships, such as the one between the University of Applied Arts and De Gruyter,⁷⁷ ensure wider dissemination into the diverse arts communities.

This awareness of arts-based research, however, is not growing without tension. The Vienna Declaration drew sharp criticism as a document that focuses exclusively on an institutionalised perspective while side-lining artists and artistic practice. As two prominent critics note, the entire declaration does not mention artists and they see it as “*an institutional power grab.*”⁷⁸ In the wider arts communities, anecdotal evidence suggests that arts-based research is often regarded as a mixture of envy for the possibility to conduct long-term collaborative research through the arts, and negativity as being insular, hard-to-understand and the domain of already privileged university professionals. PEEK is comparatively open in terms of who can apply and thus, less insular than other international arts-based research funding approaches (see Chapter 6). Still, in practice, the significant upfront work to develop applications, the long decision time and the relatively low success rate make it difficult for arts-based research practitioners who lack a significant university affiliation to apply.

The awareness of the wider public is difficult to assess. Exhibitions and specialised publications tend to address professional audiences in the wider arts/academic communities. If we take the presence of arts-based research in the mass media as a relevant indicator, then arts-based research has been established and continues to be present in the general discourse, though, not surprisingly, on a fairly small scale. Since 2010, the “Der Standard” newspaper (based on its online archive) has published 43 articles mentioning arts-based research (“künstlerische Forschung”), while the public broadcaster, ORF, has published 24 articles in its online medium during the same period.

9.5 Feedback on programme implementation and management

In response to our survey, the non-funded and funded PEEK applicants perceived the PEEK programme as a well and professionally managed research funding programme, the interviewed PEEK PIs and the (vice-)rectors and research services of applying universities taking part in the focus group we organised. The following paragraphs detail their perception on the different phases of programme implementation and management: the application procedure, the review phase and the implementation of PEEK projects.

⁷⁶ See https://www.dieangewandte.at/ausstellungen/understanding__art__research.

⁷⁷ See <https://www.degruyter.com/serial/EA-B/html>.

⁷⁸ See <https://www.onlineopen.org/what-is-wrong-with-the-vienna-declaration-on-artistic-research>.

Application phase

As shown in Section 7.1 (comparison of programme documents), the application procedure of PEEK is similar to that of other FWF research-funding programmes. In our survey, 84% of the respondents rated the Programme application guidelines as clear. However, non-funded applicants (76%) reported a lesser extent of understandability and comprehensibility of PEEK regulations than the funded applicants (92%)⁷⁹. Although this assessment might partly be charged with emotion, there still seems to be a need for clarification here.

One main difference to FWF Stand-Alone projects is the fixed deadline of the PEEK programme that only allows applications once a year. This constraint was the main point of criticism regarding the application procedure that was shared in the focus group, in the open-ended questions of the survey and in some of the interviews. Due to the lack of alternative funding options for arts-based research in Austria and the comparably low award rate, unsuccessful applicants are at the risk of losing a lot of time when they wish to re-submit their project ideas – especially if they are banned from the next funding rounds due to a very negative previous evaluation. In this context, focus group participants heavily criticised the “time to decision” by the FWF (which can take up to nine months) and the relatively short time span for re-submissions. In a similar manner, 52% of the non-funded, but only 21% of the funded applicants, assessed the time between the application submission and funding decision as inappropriate and too long (the difference between the two groups was not significant, $p=0.219$).

In order to support a high quality of applications to the PEEK programme, the FWF offers support services during the application process. In the survey, non-funded and funded applicants were asked about their satisfaction with the services provided. It is worth noting that between 25% (individual advisory services provided by the FWF) and 38% of the applicants (FWF-Coaching and Workshops and PEEK-specific information events of the FWF) did not seem to have made use of the services, since they had chosen the option “not applicable” when asked about their satisfaction with the respective services. Among those who had used those services, the level of satisfaction (sum of options “very satisfied” and “satisfied”) is quite high⁸⁰. This holds especially true for successful applicants who reported a satisfaction level of approx. 90% for all the services provided. In contrast, unsuccessful applicants were particularly less satisfied with the individual advisory services provided by the FWF, as shown in Table 28.

Table 28: Satisfaction with FWF services during the application process differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total | N |
|--|------------|--------|-------|----|
| FWF-Coaching and Workshops | 69% | 89% | 80% | 54 |
| Individual advisory services provided by the FWF | 59% | 92% | 78% | 64 |
| PEEK-specific information events of the FWF | 68% | 90% | 80% | 54 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

In comparison to the results of evaluations of other FWF programmes, the funded PEEK applicants’ level of satisfaction with the services provided by the FWF was at a comparably high level. In the START Wittgenstein evaluation, more than 86% of the START grantees rated the assistance of the FWF as adequate or more than adequate (Seus, Heckl, Bühner et al. 2016, p.42)⁸¹. In the evaluation of the SFB, the “quality of FWF during the application” (Dinges et al. 2020: p.71) was rated as very good or good by more than 70% of the respondents with an average grade of 1.82 (ibid.)⁸². Although these indicators are not fully comparable due to different scales, details of questions and the fact that the other evaluations posed those questions only to funded applicants, we conclude that the level of

⁷⁹ Fisher’s exact test was computed, but did not show a significant difference between the two groups.

⁸⁰ “Not applicable” was treated as missing values in this table.

⁸¹ This good assessment was confirmed in the interviews with the START grantees, in which satisfaction with the FWF was perceptible (“vorbildlich” / “sehr gut, ausgezeichnet, kompetent, super” / “unheimlich informiert mit dem Blick auf die richtigen Dinge, sehr professionell” / “really great organisation”) (Seus, Heckl, Bühner et al. 2016, p.42).

⁸² The SFB evaluation employed a five-point scale (very good / good / satisfactory / adequate/ unsatisfactory).

satisfaction with the application process in the PEEK programme is in line with those of other FWF programmes⁸³.

Review phase

As the main funding organisation for basic research in Austria, the FWF employs very high standards in evaluating research applications. As in all programmes of the FWF, PEEK employs a peer-review procedure. As detailed above, one particularity in the PEEK review process is the PEEK Board that is tasked with assuring a high quality of arts-based research to be funded by the FWF. According to the views shared in the focus group, the fact that PEEK is a competitive research funding programme with a peer-review procedure has clearly contributed to the recognition and quality improvement of arts-based research in Austria (especially on the part of the "traditional sciences").

Nonetheless, our empirical results (survey, interviews and focus group) point to some critical elements in view of the review and evaluation process within PEEK.

The most often criticised issue was the **mixed quality of the PEEK reviews**. The institutional representatives in the focus group even observed growing dissatisfaction within the arts-based research community with the quality of the reviews and handling by the PEEK Board. Although inappropriate reviews might be small in absolute numbers, their negative impact on the community is considered to be severe given PEEK's outstanding importance in the funding landscape for arts-based research. The critics accused the evaluators of lacking understanding of arts-based research processes and artistic processes, as well as deficient expertise in the discipline or the specific field that the PEEK projects intend to contribute to. Therefore, the respondents were particularly critical of the reviews that employed standards of other disciplines (especially of natural sciences) to arts-based research and made little effort to understand the artistic research process at the core of the project. This issue was even exacerbated in the case of interdisciplinary projects that require even more open-minded and highly competent reviewers. Besides, arts-based research as a relatively young research field is challenged by the vagueness of what arts-based research means in the context of very specific projects.

The interviews revealed that the conceptualisation and practices of arts-based research had been (re-)negotiated for every project in situ, partly due to their experimental character and innovativeness. In the context of evaluating arts-based research, this raises the question of what constitutes the state of the art in arts-based research and which requirements an arts-based research project has to fulfil. Criticism regarding reviews that were conceived as ideologically charged, superficial or formulated in a hostile manner was also brought forward. Another important issue in this context was the perception among PEEK PIs that the reviewers (and/or members of the PEEK Board) were biased towards funding proposals of more senior arts-based researchers who had a longer track record and that they were more critical towards younger researchers. It was reported to us that researchers who are more advanced in their careers put their name on the applications in order to increase the chances of getting funded.

Both some of the respondents and members of the focus group observed that the growing professionalism of arts-based researchers increases the barriers for non-academics to have a PEEK application funded. Additionally, members of the focus group observed problems in having projects of research partnerships funded that go beyond Europe and wondered what role the evaluation criteria played in this context. In this regard, they argued for greater openness and transparency on the part of the FWF and the reviewers.

In the survey, 78% of the funded applicants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the reviews they had received for their applications were comprehensible and useful, whereas only half of the non-funded applicants regarded them as useful. This difference is statistically significant ($p=0.002$). A further indicator regarding the quality of the reviews is whether the PEEK applicants considered them useful for re-submitting rejected applications. Therefore, we asked non-funded

⁸³ The FWF also receives good ratings in the DK evaluation: *"The interview partners evaluated the review and evaluation procedures for DK as clear, transparent and well known. In particular, the organization of the international peer review is appreciated by the Principal Investigators and Coordinators, many interviewees point out that the implementation of this kind of quality assessment was 'the best that ever happened to the FWF and the scientific community'"* (Ecker et al., 2014, p.57). The scientist survey of 2014 stated that *"Während die Bewertungen durch erfolgreiche Antragstellende sehr positiv ausfallen, liegen die Werte der Erfolglosen um ca. einen Skalenpunkt darunter, befinden sich allerdings ebenfalls im positiven Bereich."* (Neufeld et al., 2014, p.41).

applicants who had re-submitted their applications (N=24) and funded applicants who had one of their applications rejected and re-submitted (N=31) whether the reviews had been useful for re-submitting to the PEEK programme. About a third of the non-funded applicants and the funded applicants regarded the reviews as useful. Approximately half of both the funded applicants who had re-submitted their applications and the non-funded applicants regarded the reviews as partly useful. For a quarter of the non-funded applicants and 19% of the granted applicants, the reviews had not been useful for re-submission. These values are too high to negate and certainly call for remediation.

The second problem area regarding the evaluation process is the **lack of consistency of the evaluation criteria**. Only 52% of the respondents of the survey strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the evaluation criteria for the applications were appropriate. The difference of non-funded applicants (37%) and funded applicants (66%) amounts to 29 pp and is significant ($p=0.006$). Based on Cramer's V ($=0.296$), we assume a medium association between the funding outcome and the perception of the appropriateness of the evaluation criteria. A second indicator for the need to improve the transparency and consistency of the evaluation process is that only a little more than half of the respondents agreed with the statement that the review and evaluation procedure of the PEEK programme is transparent⁸⁴. Interestingly for this item, the funded applicants were significantly more critical than the non-funded applicants ($p=0.006$), as shown in Table 29.

Table 29: Affirmative perception of the consistency and transparency of the evaluation process in PEEK differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total | N |
|---|------------|--------|-------|----|
| The evaluation criteria for the applications are appropriate. | 37% | 66% | 52% | 86 |
| The review and evaluation procedure of the PEEK programme is transparent. | 60% | 47% | 53% | 88 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

Based on the results of the open-ended questions of the survey, the interviews and the focus group, the following issues are particularly critical as regards the perceived (lack of) transparency of the review process. First, two very contradicting reviews assessing the same proposals were viewed as highly problematic. In this case, the FWF should make more use of the possibility to reject reviews and seek for a third or even fourth review. Second, reviews of resubmitted projects that are more negative than those issued for the original submissions cause frustration. Third, the lack of coherence and consistency of the written texts of the review, of review grades and of the final reasons for refusal were criticised. This overall lack of consistency and coherence causes frustration among rejected applicants, but also reduces the motivation to resubmit applications to PEEK. The research services underline that this lack in consistency also reduces their ability to provide meaningful consulting to applicants on possible improvements of the proposals.

In addition, the qualification, composition and the role of the PEEK Board is not perceived as transparent. It is not clear whether the Board's function also lies in reviewing the PEEK applications, and how much power the Board has and actually exerts in following or overruling the reviews when making its decisions. Especially the members of the focus group urged that the PEEK Board should in some way justify vis-à-vis the applicants its decisions if it deviates from the reviews. Thus, more communication work is necessary to make those processes more transparent to the community of arts-based research.

Implementation phase

The empirical results confirm the FWF's reputation of a highly professional and cooperative research-funding organisation in the course of project implementation. The interviewees particularly appreciated that the Fund does not exert any influence, content- or form-wise, on the PEEK projects. The survey demonstrates an extraordinarily high level of satisfaction⁸⁵ among the PEEK PIs (N=48) with the services of the FWF during the implementation of their last PEEK projects, as shown in Table 30 – particularly in view of administrative aspects. For benchmarking purposes, we compared these excellent results with evaluations of other FWF schemes. To give an example: 88% of the START grantees rated the Fund's assistance in the course of project implementation as more than adequate

⁸⁴ Sum of "strongly agree" and "agree". Moreover, the respondents were given the option to mark "Don't know". The values of the latter option were treated as missing values in the data analysis.

⁸⁵ Very satisfied / satisfied / dissatisfied / very dissatisfied. Moreover, the respondents were given the option to mark "Not applicable". The values of the latter option were treated as missing values in the data analysis.

or adequate (Seus, Heckl, Bühner et al. 2016, p.42). More than 60% of the SFB participants rated the appropriateness of reporting requirements as very good or good (average grade 2.38). Although the applied scales were different⁸⁶, we identified an even higher level of satisfaction among the PEEK PIs. Regarding the overall quality of FWF's support to SFB projects, almost 80% of SFB participants rated the support as very good or good (average grade 1.99). Thus, PEEK PIs showed a higher level of satisfaction than the SFB grantees.

Table 30: Satisfaction with the administrative aspects of FWF services during project implementation

| | Very satisfied/Satisfied | N |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Availability of the service by the FWF during project implementation | 96% | 46 |
| Quality of the service by the FWF during project implementation | 94% | 46 |
| Flexibility of the FWF regarding content-wise changes | 93% | 41 |
| Flexibility of the FWF regarding changes in the use of financial resources | 93% | 41 |
| Adequacy of reporting requirements | 94% | 48 |
| Response time of the FWF to my enquiries | 92% | 48 |
| Clarity of the FWF's response to my enquiries | 96% | 48 |

Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

In spite of the PEEK PIs' very high levels of satisfaction with the administrative aspects of the Programme, the institutional representatives of (arts) universities also discussed some critical aspects. First, they claimed that the accounting and eligibility modalities should better mirror the requirements and practices of arts-based research. The rules of the FWF – and the practice of the audit department as well as the rules of the respective universities, respectively – do not necessarily harmonise; issues with revision mostly arise in the context of PEEK projects. An open exchange about the issues encountered on both sides could make the PEEK programme even more effective. Second, arts-based research and artistic practice often necessitate specialised and costly infrastructures. Since this cost category is not eligible in FWF programmes, PEEK projects can be burdensome for the budget of (arts) universities. Furthermore, it was mentioned that the allowance of overheads would help (especially smaller) institutions to invest more in the institutional capacity for arts-based research.

In contrast to the high satisfaction levels with the administrative aspects of the FWF services during the implementation of the Programme, PEEK PIs were less satisfied with the community-building efforts of the FWF, and more than 40% were dissatisfied with the Fund's promotion of their PEEK projects. In addition, around a quarter of the responding PIs was not satisfied with the final reviews for their projects (see Table 31).

Table 31: Satisfaction with other FWF services during project implementation

| | Very satisfied/Satisfied | N |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Promotion of my PEEK project | 58% | 40 |
| PEEK community-building by the FWF | 37% | 38 |
| Final reviews | 74% | 27 |

Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

The lower level of satisfaction with the Fund's support in promoting PEEK projects and especially with community-building by the FWF can be well contextualised with findings of the narrative interviews. They reveal that the expectations of PEEK PIs vis-à-vis the FWF go beyond the administration of projects, as interviewees would have wished for a stronger interest on the part of the Fund in their project and in arts per se. The interviewees talked of a "missed opportunity" of the FWF to learn from PEEK projects and emphasised their ability to communicate and target their processes and results to very different target groups as a potential learning field for traditional sciences. Therefore, they would have wished for more promotion of their PEEK projects within the FWF and beyond as well as for more community-building activities. In a similar vein, the focus group called for more capacities for the Fund's PEEK programme management to implement more communication activities with the arts-based research community and for increasing the visibility of arts-based research. However, their perception is at odds with the actual promotion of successful arts-based research projects by the

⁸⁶ The SFB employed a five-point scale (very good / good / satisfactory / adequate / unsatisfactory).

FWF. According to FWF programme management, arts-based research projects are relatively more often (and also preferentially) featured by the Fund's PR department.

All non-funded applicants and the PIs who had indicated that one of their applications to the PEEK programme had been rejected were finally asked what consequences those rejections had caused (multiple-choice question). Table 32 shows those consequences differentiated by test and comparison group. While half of the unsuccessful applicants could not realise their project idea at all due to the rejection of their PEEK applications, this holds true for only 35% of the respondents who had been granted PEEK projects at one point in time. However, it seems that a third of the non-funded applicants realised parts of their idea by downsizing their proposals.

The consequence that affected most applicants was that they could not offer project positions to qualified personnel. Moreover, 35% of the respondents indicated that the rejection had had a negative effect on their personal development as arts-based researchers and their prospective team members. These results point to the importance of PEEK as a potential source of employment and underline its contribution to the growth and consolidation of arts-based research in Austria.

Table 32: Consequences of rejected PEEK applications differentiated by non-funded and funded applicants

| | Non-funded | Funded | Total | n |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| I could not at all realise my project idea. | 49% | 35% | 43% | 28 |
| I had to downsize my project idea significantly to realise it. | 33% | 12% | 25% | 16 |
| I could not offer project positions to qualified personnel. | 59% | 58% | 59% | 38 |
| I lost the financial basis for my employment at the host institution. | 15% | 19% | 17% | 11 |
| I discontinued collaboration with the host institution for the planned PEEK project. | 15% | 15% | 15% | 10 |
| It was difficult to maintain international collaboration. | 31% | 46% | 37% | 24 |
| The rejection had a negative effect on my personal development as an arts-based researcher. | 36% | 27% | 32% | 21 |
| The rejection had a negative effect on my prospective team members' personal development as arts-based researchers. | 36% | 35% | 35% | 23 |
| Other | 10% | 4% | 8% | 5 |
| N | 39 | 26 | 65 | 65 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple choice question

Note: N = number of respondents in total (out of 65). Due to the low number of cases, interpretation is difficult.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapters, we shall draw some conclusions.

Our focus in Section 10.1 is on the broader effects of PEEK on Austrian arts-based research at the institutional level ten years after its inception. We also formulate conclusions on the positioning of PEEK within FWF's funding portfolio and within the Austrian research landscape in general.

In Section 10.2, we draw appraising conclusions regarding the achievement of the programme objectives in terms of support provided for high-quality and innovative arts-based research, the Programme's contribution to capacity-building and its contribution to awareness-raising at the national and international levels.

Section 10.3 presents conclusions regarding the appropriateness and the efficiency of programme implementation and management.

10.1 The broader institutional effects of PEEK and its position in FWF's funding portfolio and the Austrian research landscape

With the introduction of PEEK in 2009, the FWF reacted to the equality of scientific research with the approach of developing and opening up the arts, which was postulated in the 2002 amendment to the Higher Education Act. This equivalence was also anchored in the Research and Technology Act with a corresponding amendment in 2007. Likewise, the inclusion of the approach of developing and opening up of the arts was intended to facilitate the upgrading of art colleges to arts universities and their equality with other public universities. In order to ensure the possibility of providing adequate research opportunities that correspond to the character and essence of arts universities, arts-based research was identified as a promising approach that materialised in PEEK ("Programm zur Entwicklung und Erschließung der Künste").

Our findings clearly showed that PEEK is a programme with a high unique selling proposition (USP). It represents an alternative research paradigm that does not necessarily focus on hypothesis-driven testing of assumptions or empirical findings or observations, but works exploratively with artistic methods and often interactively incorporates interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. We conclude that if PEEK had not been initiated, arts-based research would not exist in Austria at this level and breadth.

We further conclude that overall, the PEEK programme has attained its programmatic objectives. Its three main objectives,

- (1) to support high-quality and innovative arts-based research;
- (2) to increase research capacity; and
- (3) to increase awareness within the academic and the arts communities as well as the general public,

have largely been met, although, since these are open-ended goals, its mission cannot be regarded as completed. However, the evaluation identified that they were met somewhat unevenly, that the relationship between some of the objectives require some clarification and that there are areas in need of improvement.

The unique position of PEEK and its central importance for arts-based research is further confirmed by the fact that only 17% and 7% of the survey respondents stated that funding from the FFG and the AWS, respectively, would be an alternative option for them. Otherwise, art grants, funding from the federal provinces (e.g., from the WWTF), or the EU's "Creative Europe" programme and occasionally Horizon 2020 (incl. ERC), and finally private sponsors and internal university funding were mentioned as alternative possibilities that would occasionally offer the opportunity to conduct arts-based research. The fact that PEEK fills a gap in the funding portfolio can also be inferred from the fact that PEEK funding recipients are only sporadically active in other FWF programmes. PEEK has mobilised a large number of arts-based researchers who do not fit in other FWF programmes.

We also conclude that PEEK has led to the profiling of arts-based research as a central research approach in (several) arts universities. Three arts universities dominate in terms of successful PEEK projects: the University of Applied Arts Vienna, followed with distance by the Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Performing Arts and Music in Graz. These three institutions together lead 84% of the funded PEEK projects secured by Austrian arts universities. The share of the other arts universities is small to negligible. It can be concluded from this that institutional capacity building for arts-based research has been associated with high concentration effects. Accordingly, the first-movers quickly built up internal institutional support capacities and created a corresponding intellectual environment. In discussions with other arts universities, we learned that some are now following suit institutionally and are just beginning to discover arts-based research for themselves. We can therefore state that the institutional capacity-building process is not yet complete and is proceeding at various speeds. In particular, the arts universities that have already introduced arts-based research PhD programmes will soon directly contribute to further demand dynamics through their graduate students.

It is worthwhile to note that 42% of all applications from arts universities with a focus on music and 44% of all approved FWF projects in the period between 2009 and 2020 fall within the PEEK programme. At the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts, the concentration on arts-based research is even higher: For both institutions together, it amounts to 69% of applications and 64% of approved FWF projects. Conversely, this also implies an extreme dependence on PEEK. Another indication of this dependency is the relatively low share of Stand-Alone projects submitted by the arts universities among all FWF projects submitted by those universities. It is only 15%. Universities in Austria generally have a high proportion of Stand-Alone projects, which also characterises the breadth of their research. It should be noted, however, that the arts universities with a focus on music are more active in the Stand-Alone project programme than the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

In summary, arts-based research has become the central research approach at arts universities and PEEK has played a very important role in this process. Basic research conducted at arts universities as a whole, however, is still limited.

Nevertheless, PEEK is not just a programme for arts universities, although its introduction was a central motivation for enhancing the development and opening up of the arts and the research orientation at the arts universities. Non-arts universities and research organisations also draw on the Programme, as it gives them an alternative approach to conduct research. Non-arts universities and research organisations also frequently cooperate with arts universities, although the arts-based profiling aspect is rather irrelevant to the non-arts universities.

With the introduction of PEEK, the institutional capacities at the arts universities have also grown significantly, though quite unevenly, with the larger universities, particularly the University of Applied Arts Vienna, leading the way. Smaller universities have been entering the field of arts-based research much more slowly. By now, all of them have established research offices and/or support structures to assist arts-based researchers internally and provide an operative interface with PEEK. These facilities also serve to network with other institutions to support common goals in positioning arts-based research as an equal approach in the scientific canon and to further develop a supportive institutional framework for arts-based research at the national, EU and OECD levels.

Institutional capacity-building is still in progress at the smaller universities. The unevenness of the institutional take-up, however, might lead to problems with PEEK slowly transforming into a funding vehicle for a small number of institutions, which managed to increase their research capacities in time, putting smaller universities at an even greater disadvantage. This is not to say that the three top performers do not deserve it. On the contrary. Yet the Matthew effect, which is a recurring phenomenon in the science business, is characterised by more dynamic concentration processes in smaller research communities with limited research capacities. Of course, this also has to do with how strongly PEEK is perceived and accepted outside the arts universities. There are examples of uptake by non-arts universities, but we have not been able to detect any conspicuous trend towards a broadening of the base. We attribute this in part to insufficient community building and an insufficient scope of offensive outreach measures.

Those engaged with PEEK see it as a driver for innovation with respect to inter- and transdisciplinarity and exploratory (rather than hypothesis-driven) research. While it is difficult to quantify, it seems fair to say that its impact in this regard has been out-sized in relation to its budget. Within the wider arts communities, the awareness of arts-based research has grown as well, but there are tensions between

administrative requirements of research (funding) and the more freewheeling, less formalised character of artistic practice, which often sees itself as also doing research.

One point to note is that the institutions hosting PEEK research projects do not represent the full range of institutions that could be involved in arts-based research, such as museums, art festivals or even independent art groups and associations. In principle, PEEK allows non-university institutions to apply, but in practice, the percentage of non-university organisations has always been very small – although considerably higher than in other FWF programmes (see Section 8.1). In this context, however, we also found that the arts universities, when they decided to support proposals that did not come from their own employed staff, did not make any significant differences in terms of proposal support. They advised internal and external applicants equally intensively and as well as possible.

We identified a certain tension among PEEK's objectives of supporting the development of arts-based research as its own paradigm at one hand and supporting the capacity-building of arts universities at the other, although they are of course strongly interconnected. While the latter was highly necessary at the outset of PEEK to create enough absorption and quality, there is now the danger of "institutional capture", where a small number of arts universities make excessive demands on the Programme, which they sometimes also view as "their own". We have been told of perceptions that other institutions would have inappropriately increased the number of successful projects, encroaching on their territory. This perception is not supported by the actual approval rates.

Thus, the question that has emerged now is whether PEEK is a programme for arts universities and their institutional research capacities, or whether its aim is to support innovative arts-based research, no matter where it is institutionally based. Compared to some of the other arts-based research-funding programmes reviewed in this evaluation (see Chapter 6), PEEK's mandate is institutionally quite open, but the administrative requirements of the Programme and the interpretation put forward by the arts universities themselves is veering to the former. The observable institutional Matthew effect could have a negative long-term impact on the quality of the overall research output due to a narrowing of critical mass. We make recommendations specific to this point.

We also observed that the research offices of the arts universities are well networked with one another and in an exchange about arts-based research (even under conditions of competition). The individual researchers, however, overall tend to have (a) as yet little awareness of the field as such (in contrast to the thematic/disciplinary field of their research) and (b) they do not seem sufficiently informed about the activities of their fellow arts-based researchers. This might further exacerbate the relative dominance of the large arts universities who are able to organise the horizontal knowledge exchange internally. We make recommendations specific to this point as well.

One concern raised by the community was that the field of "music" was structurally given less consideration than "art" within the framework of PEEK. Over the course of the Programme, we have not been able to identify any disadvantages to the detriment of "music". In the whole period from 2009 to 2020, the average approval rate for arts universities with a focus on music (17.1%) was even higher than that of the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts (15.7% between 2009 and 2020). The situation is different, however, if only the last three years (2018-2020) are considered: Here, the approval rate for arts universities with a focus on music dropped on average to 8.8%, compared to 20.2% for the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts. However, since the total number of granted PEEK projects is very small, a handful more of approved projects can already make a large statistical difference. This is why we cannot conclude with certainty that a thematic narrowing at the expense of the music universities has actually occurred, but the further development must definitely be observed. Moreover, it should be noted that equating "music" with arts universities that focus on music is problematic, because these arts universities also teach, do research in and perform other types of art.

In summary, it can first be concluded that the institutional effects of PEEK have been very substantial and have benefited the arts universities particularly in raising the profile of their research portfolios. Still, high institutional concentration effects can be identified – which should not be assessed as detrimental per se.

Second, it can be concluded that PEEK has closed a funding gap in FWF's programme portfolio, but also in the entire Austrian research-funding landscape. However, arts-based research should not be seen as an "arts discipline" for whose further development a funding instrument has been created (i.e. PEEK). Only 16% of the granted PEEK projects attribute themselves exclusively to the arts sector. Interdisciplinary interactions with the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences are widespread. In contrast, the inclusion of topics, issues, expertise and methods from the life and

medical sciences is almost inexistent. Instead of an academic discipline, arts-based research is rather a distinct inter- and transdisciplinary research paradigm that works with artistic practices and methods and that cannot be limited to a singular funding programme in the long run. We make corresponding recommendations in this regard.

10.2 Achievement of programme objectives in terms of high quality and innovative arts-based research, capacity and awareness

Our analyses showed that PEEK has done a lot right and that much of what the Programme had promised has actually come into effect. In this section, we will mainly refer to conclusions on three central points that were requested in the evaluation ToR: first, whether PEEK has succeeded in supporting high-quality and innovative arts-based research in Austria, second, whether it has succeeded in enhancing research capacity and bringing it up to an international level and, third, whether it has increased both public awareness and awareness within the academic and the arts communities.

As regards the aspect of support for high-quality and innovative research, we conclude that arts-based research as a field has been established and a steady stream of high-quality and innovative research projects have been generated that operate at an international level and often with international partners. We identified, however, that after the introduction of PEEK, the application success rates were very low for some five years (between 10.7% and 14.6%), which we attribute to the fact that in this phase, many things were still being explored on the part of the applicants. Probably it was also not fully understood what was being aimed for with arts-based research, or what PEEK as a programme corridor for applications may or may not facilitate. After the five-year initial phase, however, the success rates generally increased remarkably to higher levels (between 13.4% and 20.0%). We attribute this, amongst others, to a learning curve effect, i.e. that the community has learned to “read” and use the Programme. In addition, better applications have been submitted and the number of applications itself has settled at a high level over the last four years (between 60 and 69 applications annually).

The increase in quality that has occurred was also confirmed by the PEEK Board, which is ultimately responsible for preparatory funding decisions. The assessment that PEEK has advanced arts-based research in Austria is further confirmed to a high degree by the applicants themselves (89% on average).

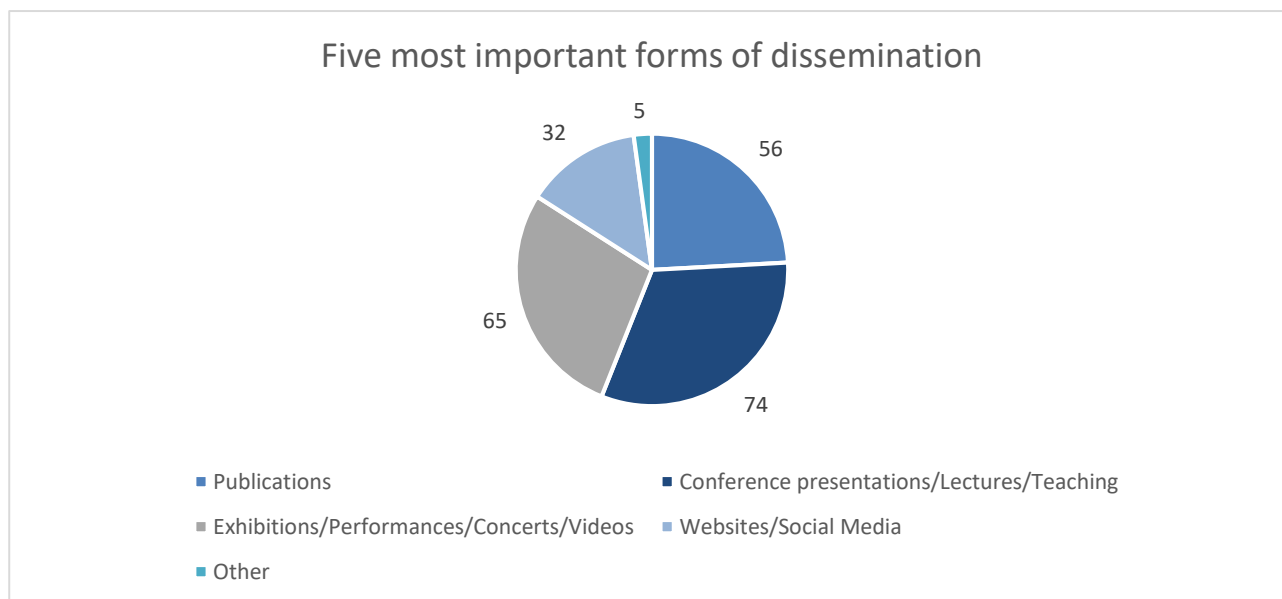
Essential to this success was, first, the introduction of an open competitive award process (operationalised by FWF through PEEK), which has led to ever better applications, and, second, the international peer review, which moreover has been quality-assured by the PEEK Board.

Our survey results also clearly showed that a broad understanding of arts-based research has now been achieved in the research community. Differences in perception between funded and non-funded PEEK applicants are minor in this respect. Scepticism was expressed from time to time, as to whether the bridging function of PEEK at the interface between research and art is not already overly skewed towards research. However, we can clearly state that PEEK projects do indeed differ from “regular” research projects in some essential characteristics, which is why we understand PEEK as a functional bridge programme between research and arts. This is strongly reflected in the different output formats, which are more diverse in PEEK projects (only partly at the expense of peer-reviewed articles) and in the use of artistic methods and forms of expression in the knowledge process.

Even when only considering textual production, the formats are much more varied than in most “regular” science projects, ranging from conventional peer-reviewed journal articles to unconventional “artists’ publications” and everything in between. PEEK output formats go far beyond written texts and include video, performances and all kinds of installation-based exhibition formats, as well as frequently very extensive online presences. However, the notion of “output format” might be somewhat misleading, since it is quite typical for arts-based research projects and art practice more generally not to separate content and form, but to use specific presentation formats as sites for research itself. Also, particularly in exhibition and performative modes, arts-based research projects often do not differentiate whether their output is geared towards a community of peers, as most scientific output is, or at a more general public.

Figure 13 shows the most important forms of dissemination mentioned by the PEEK PIs as grouped into five categories. It demonstrates that publications (which include peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications) are of comparatively rather moderate importance.

Figure 13: Five most important forms of dissemination as mentioned by PEEK PIs



Source: Survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration; multiple-choice question, answers limited to 5 sub-categories.

In this context, we also conclude that for the inclusion of artistic methods and forms of expression in the knowledge process, FWF offers a supportive financial framework that differs from the other FWF programmes in terms of scope and flexibility. This specific regulatory framework is indispensable for knowledge production in the field of arts-based research and should therefore be retained at any cost, even though the Fund's monitoring efforts are considerable. We make a recommendation on this issue.

The conceptual understanding of arts-based research mentioned above has duly found its counterpart in PEEK. In other words, the Programme provides a corridor of action in which the understanding of arts-based research can be developed and realised through projects. Both the funded and non-funded applicants confirmed the suitability of PEEK in this respect. Criticism was again mainly related to the involvement of art and artists, which a small group perceived as insufficient. We interpret this criticism more as addressing the permeability and connectivity of the institutions behind the PEEK applications. Our surveys did not produce any evidence that in-house PEEK applicants are treated structurally significantly better than PEEK applicants who are not tied to the organisation through works contracts in the context of preparing a project proposal. However, it must be acknowledged that PEEK has led to an institutional professionalisation in the arts-based research sector that has widened the gap in initial conditions between "independent" and "institutionalised" arts-based researchers. We consider this to be a normal effect of professionalisation and concentration, but one that may represent a cultural break in the originally relatively free and permeable arts higher education scene.

As further detailed in Section 10.1, these concentration effects start from a narrow base. In the future, too, attention will therefore have to be paid to the balance between professionalisation / concentration and openness / innovation, which cannot be sharply separated. We found no evidence for the argumentation of some arts universities that PEEK would be increasingly occupied by non-arts universities. Rather, we think that in order to ensure PEEK as an open arts-based research programme, and not as an arts universities programme, institutional containment should be prevented in order to keep competition open and to allow a door of entry for influences from outside the arts universities.

Our analyses have shown that PEEK has contributed differently to the funded individuals' career dynamics. The career paths of the PEEK PIs studied revealed slight gender differences. Although overall, the Programme has generally been mainly structure-preserving for the established project leaders, it was especially the female project leaders who benefited from remaining and advancing in academia thanks to the PEEK projects. For the male project leaders, structure-preserving effects that have facilitated remaining in academia were also identified, although a few have also left academia after PEEK to go into arts management or to found their own institutions. Participation in PEEK

projects has clearly provided more dynamic impulses for the careers of less established and younger researchers at the interface with the arts. It should be noted that the PEEK-Richter programme, which was not the subject of evaluation, has of course also contributed to increasing research capacity, although the number of cases is quantitatively (still) small. The new PhD programmes for arts-based research will have a comparatively even more important impact. With their help, a new generation of arts-based researchers is being systematically trained, which will soon induce increasingly stronger demand-side effects for additional research funding in the field of arts-based research – also in terms of mobility and international networking.

We suspect that, in the future, the observable extent of professionalisation will also change the identity-creating consciousness of those concerned. The self-designation “arts-based researcher” is hardly in use today. “Arts-based research” is rather understood as an extension of the methodological spectrum of options, but not as a full-time academic occupation. Moreover, a clear job description is lacking. However, this does not mean that PEEK projects are not considered important. On the contrary: The Programme is strongly emphasised in the self-representations of the PEEK project leaders.

However, the increase in research capacity in arts-based research should not only be considered under formal recognition aspects, but above all through the gain in skills, individual competence and capacity. Here, PEEK has particularly supported the expansion of expertise, visibility, career opportunities, international cooperation, qualification and academic reputation (agreement of 95% to at least 65% of PEEK project leaders and key project staff for each of these aspects). In turn, it was repeatedly criticised that PEEK projects are (too) little incorporated into teaching, but are understood as an extracurricular space for action.

As regards awareness, we identified that six out of seven PEEK applicants (both funded and non-funded) perceived PEEK to have raised the standing of arts-based research in the research community and to have contributed to an increased public perception of arts-based research. Within its own guild, PEEK has undoubtedly given a boost to the international recognition of arts-based research from Austria. Interestingly, however, there are information deficits at the national level with regard to PEEK projects that had been carried out by others. Moreover, arts-based practitioners also saw a visibility deficiency for the field as such rather than for individual projects. Some also claimed the lack of a central repository where arts-based research projects and especially their outputs are documented and made accessible.

The public awareness is commensurate, considering the general complexity of arts-based research.

Overall, we conclude that PEEK has made essential contributions to high-quality and innovative arts-based research in Austria. It has also contributed to the academic consolidation of the field and provided many benefits for the PIs and their team members in terms of increased knowledge and skills. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of integrating the projects and their results into academic teaching. The contribution of PEEK as a research funding programme to the understanding of arts-based research is given within the active target group, but a broader awareness is still in the making. In communication, the Programme needs to be more broadly anchored as an alternative research paradigm that is not only accessible to the arts universities. For this, further internal as well as external awareness-raising measures are needed.

10.3 Implementation and management of PEEK

We conclude that PEEK is a well-established programme in which communication between the FWF and the PIs or applicants is quite functional and works well. The survey also showed a high level of satisfaction among applicants with programme management; the results here are similar to the evaluations of other FWF programmes (e.g., SFB, DK, Start-Wittgenstein) and also similar to the scientist survey of 2012. The relationship and the administrative processes between the arts universities and PEEK are by and large seen as productive and efficient.

In general, the comprehensibility of the application documents is regarded very positively. There are, not surprisingly, clear differences in perception between funded and non-funded PEEK applicants, although even 75% of the latter group reported no problem with the comprehensibility of the application documents. With regard to the services offered by the FWF in the preparation phase of an application, e.g., through FWF coaching and workshops, individual counselling and PEEK-specific events, there is also much agreement on the high quality of services offered on average. However,

clear discrepancies between the funded and non-funded PEEK applicants can be identified here as well (especially with regard to individual counselling). This was to be expected.

The focus group participants mainly criticised the fact that there is only one submission deadline for PEEK per year. The time-to-decision of nine months is also perceived as overlong. Both aspects have a negative impact on submission dynamics. Many applicants also complained that with the annual deadline, the time to properly revise an application is often very short and then a whole year is lost until a new submission option is offered.

Our analysis also revealed that people belonging to the relatively small arts-based research community in Austria submit proposals comparatively often and are overall not discouraged by rejections. Indeed, many applicants submit one or more applications in each round and are thus very likely to be rejected. This is accompanied by a rather high risk of proposal bans.

With regard to the review and evaluation process, two aspects in particular were criticised by the vice-rectors and the research services: first, the varying quality of the reviews produced by the external reviewers and, second, the role of the PEEK Board, which can "overrule" reviews in individual cases. Both aspects are related, as the Board is also responsible for the quality assurance of the review process. However, the role and scope of the PEEK Board's mandate are inadequately communicated, and the Board's decisions are insufficiently explained to the outside world, giving some outsiders the impression of a black box.

With regard to the reviewers, their suitability for a sufficient understanding of arts-based research was occasionally doubted. Applicants as well as representatives of the research institutions complained about poorly usable reviews, low consistency between text and scoring and a poor fit between the reviews and the PEEK jury's verdict. This criticism often referred to the artistic perspective. We identified significant differences between funded and non-funded applicants in assessing the clarity and usefulness of the reviews. On average, only 52% of the respondents in our survey agreed that the evaluation criteria are appropriate. Regarding the transparency of the review and evaluation process, the agreement was also only 53%. There are statistically significant differences here as well, but this time with significantly more criticism from the funded PEEK applicants. Overall, dissatisfaction with the review and evaluation process is too extensive to be dismissed as normal background noise.

With regard to the FWF's support in implementing the PEEK programme and the projects funded under it, the project leaders were very satisfied overall. On the one hand, the FWF is accessible, reacts quickly and flexibly and is clear in its responses. On the other hand, it is striking how little the project leaders were satisfied with the FWF in terms of building an arts-based research community. We will come to this point in our recommendations. Many also wished to see more promotion of their PEEK projects. However, we found no evidence that PEEK projects are used less often in PR on the part of the FWF, on the contrary.

The high audit effort on the part of the FWF is problematic, because the PEEK rules and regulations differ from those of the Stand-Alone projects, for example. This causes problems with regard to the recognition of costs in terms of content and eligibility. Yet PEEK projects also involve significantly more contracts with third parties, which significantly increases the PEEK audit burden for the FWF. However, the current Programme's financial rules correspond to the knowledge production conditions of arts-based research in terms of content and should not be changed in this regard.

Our analysis showed that the approval rates for PEEK have varied greatly: In years with a high volume of applications (such as in 2013 and 2017), they were particularly low due to the rather fixed budget envelope for PEEK. The approval rates for the Programme were also significantly lower than those for Stand-Alone projects over the entire period under review. Although C1 and C2 rejections – i.e. rejections of well rated applications for purely budgetary reasons – are no longer higher than for Stand-Alone projects in recent years, the low approval rates caused by the fixed budget envelope do not seem to be justified. We make a recommendation on this.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Recognise arts-based research as a research paradigm, open it up to other FWF programmes and develop it further

With the increasing number of PhD holders trained in arts-based research, the demands on international and mobility programmes will especially increase and there is no reason why these researchers should be structurally excluded from such programmes. Or in other words: in the long term, an exclusion of arts-based research in other FWF programmes cannot (or can no longer) be justified.

Thus, we recommend recognising arts-based research as a research paradigm (distinct from basic research, applied research or clinical research) rather than as a specific discipline or funding programme in the mid to long run (5 to 10 years). This paradigm requires specific competences (on the researcher and the reviewer side) and funding rules in line with the specific knowledge production needs at the interface with artistic methods and the variety of output formats of arts-based research.

As a research paradigm, arts-based research should consequently be recognised in all FWF programmes. This also refers to recognising the specific regulatory framework (incl. the financial rules) for arts-based research, if arts-based research is concerned (tick-box). If a project application, regardless to which FWF programme, is ticked as arts-based research, then the review and evaluation processes for such applications should continue to be quality-assured by the PEEK Board. We consider it impracticable to duplicate a corresponding PEEK programme for each FWF programme and instead propose that only the specific procedure, the specific responsibility and the specific regulatory framework already in place and applied to PEEK be used for arts-based research.

11.2 Keep PEEK as a programme for 5 to 10 years before mainstreaming, because institutional and capacity-building processes have not yet been completed.

In the medium term, we recommend keeping PEEK as a specific programme largely in its current structure with the international Board, as capacity building and institutionalisation are still underway at the smaller arts universities and the paradigm as such has not yet been fully stabilised. PEEK as a special programme is still essential as a strong signal to the field and within the Fund. We assume that this will still be the case in the next five to ten years. After that, mainstreaming of artistic research in all FWF programmes should be possible, as described in Recommendation 11.1.

However, certain steps towards mainstreaming should be taken at an earlier date, also – but not exclusively – to allow for a smooth transition. In particular, the rhythm for submissions (one deadline per year) should be changed as soon as possible. All stakeholders see this rhythm as problematic. In the long term, rolling submissions would be the optimal solution. As an intermediate step, we strongly recommend to introduce two annual deadlines.

The authors are aware that this process would increase the demands on the international Board, but we are confident that it would be possible to hold one panel meeting virtually and one panel meeting in person to avoid increasing travel requirements, at the least. The slightly faster rhythm would also allow the PEEK Board to review submissions of arts-based research in other FWF programmes that need to be opened (see Recommendation 11.1). Given the relatively low number of relevant submissions to be expected (based on experience with the Richter PEEK programme), the additional workload for the Board should prove manageable.

11.3 Promote exchange on arts-based research and scientific community building

As we noted, capacity-building has been very successful in a small number of large arts universities that submit the majority of successful research applications. It has been less successful in smaller universities. Other arts organisations with potential research capacities are largely absent in PEEK. The awareness among the arts-based researchers of each other's activities, particularly beyond institutional borders, is also quite limited. Overall, this runs the danger of leading to an institutional and possibly even thematic narrowing that could be problematic both for the perception and self-

image of the Programme as exclusive to the arts universities and for the generation of sufficiently diverse competition that allows for substantial quality, thematic breadth and innovative combinations.

We acknowledge that the FWF does not consider community building to be one of its tasks and lacks the necessary resources to support such processes on its own. Nevertheless, we see it as necessary for an impulse programme, as PEEK still is, to overcome the risk of a high institutional concentration and a possibly accompanying narrowing of the spectrum of research questions and artistic approaches in terms of content. Thus, we propose to make efforts to open PEEK to the arts universities that have so far hardly participated in PEEK, but also to other universities and research institutions, museums as well as major art events, such as the Salzburg Festival, the Styriarte or the Vienna Festival Weeks.

We thus recommend the following activities, listed in decreasing order of urgency.

- Clarification of the submission rules to counteract the impression that PEEK is primarily intended for the large arts universities. The openness of PEEK is one of its main features that should be strengthened. Special outreach events targeting other arts institutions with research capacities could help communicate the clarification of the rules, increase the diversity of submissions and support innovation in arts-based research.
- To increase peer exchange and community building among arts-based researchers, the FWF should identify partners (BMBWF, arts universities) who would facilitate conferences at least once a year on the ongoing PEEK projects to be presented, discussed and critically reflected upon (following the example of the "Research Forum" in Norway).
- To increase the visibility of arts-based research and its wide variety of research outputs, the FWF should initiate a repository of innovative outputs (images, movies, audio files, etc.) coming from PEEK research projects. This could provide a valuable learning process for the development of innovative research repositories with a broad relevance, as the variety in output is likely to increase in other fields as well.
- More than ten years of PEEK would also be an adequate period to ensure more international visibility and, for example, to create and publish an internationally curated catalogue of successful PEEK projects. This should not be done from the point of view of the funding organisation, nor as a collection of project self-descriptions, but as an independent assessment of the field, e.g., by an art critic specialised in arts-based research.
- The FWF should advocate the promotion of arts-based research in the EU-wide institutional research funding landscape. Arts-based research is a field in development, but comparatively well developed in Austria. More international attention could additionally have a long-term positive feedback effect on the Austrian scene.

To support such activities, the necessary funds need to be made available. Since PEEK is already very personnel-intensive, additional administrative resources will be needed. Ideally, these resources should be covered by an overall increase in the Programme's budget, but funds may also be made available by dedicating a small proportion of the existing budget to community building. Collaboration with the arts universities may help share costs.

11.4 Apply PEEK increasingly in teaching

This recommendation does not refer to the FWF. We know that teaching is not one of the FWF's tasks, but we recommend that the FWF pass this recommendation on to the arts universities.

We recommend that the arts universities in particular push the integration of PEEK projects into teaching to make better use of PEEK for capacity development and to broaden the arts-based research basis. There is still room for improvement here and we believe that this would be important for the further development of the field.

We can give little guidance *ex cathedra* on the design of the integration of PEEK projects, their processes and results into teaching. The arts universities know better what is possible and how. But of course, this lack of integration also has something to do with the nature and limitations (legal, financial and organisational) of the involvement of the (at times external) artists and arts-based researchers. Perhaps more innovative incentives could be set in this regard, so that the potential of PEEK can even better be tapped for teaching.

11.5 Clarify and communicate the role and decision-making authority of the Board in the review process.

The feedback from the PEEK applicants as well as the research services of the arts universities regarding the quality, comprehensibility and style of the reviews was too strikingly critical to be dismissed as “regular” background noise.

We therefore strongly recommend that the review process be improved. Approaches to this end would be a better definition of the selection criteria, a better selection of reviewers, better training and guidance, a more thorough control of the reviews, but possibly also moderate procedural changes.

We continue to consider it important that the PEEK Board plays a quality assurance role in the review process. Perhaps it should be made even more responsible. In this context, we also find it justified for the Board to overrule individual reviews if they are not deemed appropriate. However, this should first be balanced out in such a way that an additional external expert opinion is quickly obtained before the Board itself conducts a substantive review. However, if the Board overrules in certain individual cases, this should be communicated clearly and transparently. The impression must not be created that the Board is a black box. PEEK Board membership is therefore a responsible job that must be valued accordingly (intrinsically and extrinsically).

Thus, we recommend

- a better description of the function of the reviewers, the PEEK Board and the FWF Board in order to make the interplay of the various roles and bodies more transparent to applicants;
- a revision of the evaluation criteria with the aim of making them more comprehensible and to provide clear guidelines for reviewers and applicants. For instance, the FWF could provide applicants and reviewers with a selection of references on what constitutes arts-based research. Borgdorff's publications seem to be suitable here. Also the description on the Diku website for the Norwegian programme of artistic research provides a good example of what is expected from a project if they apply to the programme⁸⁷;
- paying more attention to the reviewers' training and selection (perhaps strategic cooperation with other funding agencies for arts-based research would be helpful in this context);
- acknowledging that negative reviewers' comments are a source for complaints and dissatisfaction when they are viewed as unfair or uninformed. This also applies to situations when the Board overrules reviewer comments. While this lies in the nature of the process, given the relatively emergent and dynamic nature of the field, a more thorough review (including a check of wording) of the external reviews and the Board's decisions is necessary, not the least to increase transparency;
- a clear increase in the transparency of the role of the Board and its powers (including more transparency if the Board overruled a review in the course of its quality assurance role); and finally
- considering whether the same external reviewers should be used more often.

As far as the last point is concerned, the FWF is known for identifying the right thematic reviewers for each application and only using them more than once in emergencies (when no one else more suitable can be found). This has the advantage that the reviewers are very knowledgeable, but can lead to a lack of understanding of the Programme goals on the part of the reviewers due to their infrequent use, which could be problematic in the case of a non-traditional research-funding programme such as PEEK.

NARP pursues an alternative approach. It develops close relationships with reviewers. Not only does it use the same reviewers several times, but it also has them review several applications in one round to be able to compare them better. NARP also holds introductory webinars with reviewers to explain the programme goals to the reviewers in more detail. NARP, however, remunerates its reviewers for the increased workload. It is certainly not a simple consideration whether a good understanding of the programme goals is more important than technical suitability, but it is worth considering in the context of such a specific programme as PEEK.

⁸⁷ See <https://diku.no/en/programmes/norwegian-artistic-research-programme#content-section-2>, accessed on 19 October 2021.

11.6 Flexibilise the PEEK budget

Most FWF programmes do not have fixed budgets. Instead, the programme budgets are adjusted to the respective application volumes as far as possible within the overall budget. Care is taken to ensure that the approval rates do not fluctuate too heavily and do not differ too strongly between programmes. This is different for PEEK – and a few other programmes – where the approval rates are also significantly lower than those of the Stand-Alone projects. While this seemed justified when the Programme was introduced, because the applications often did not have the desired quality, today the FWF should consider, together with the BMBWF, whether the relatively fixed programme budget could not be made more flexible in line with the practice in most other FWF programmes. A simple way to implement this would be to fix the approval rate at a level slightly below (e.g., 2 to 3 percentage points) or around that of the Stand-Alone projects. Since the PEEK budget represents a very small part of the total FWF programme budget, this would hardly be at the expense of other programmes.

If such flexibilisation of the PEEK budget is not feasible, an expansion of the PEEK budget should at least be considered.

11.7 Reduce the FWF's audit workload through agreements with the arts universities on the division of labour

Finally, in order to reduce the FWF's auditing efforts, which are significantly higher for PEEK projects than for other FWF programmes, we recommend a redistribution of the audit workload to the universities based on the division of labour.

For a practical implementation of this recommendation, we propose that, as a first step, the FWF concludes contracts with the three institutions that have the most PEEK projects. In particular, we consider it sensible for the substantive justification of an invoice and its formal correctness to be carried out exclusively by the universities. The FWF's audit department should then concentrate on spot checks or, above all, only deal with the major cost items (e.g., salaries). In any case, a full audit is neither expedient nor economical, since the universities must in any case also guarantee flawless business conduct internally.

After a test phase of two to three years and a review with regard to the usefulness and fit of such a work-sharing procedure, further agreements should be made with the other organisations that submit more frequently to PEEK.

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ANNEX I – INFORMATION ON THE FOCUS GROUP

Participants of the focus group

| Name | Organisation | Position |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Eugen Banauch | Universität Mozarteum Salzburg | Research Services |
| Alexander Damianisch | Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien | Research Services |
| Susanne Fischer-Kauer | Anton-Bruckner Privatuniversität | Research Services |
| Johannes Fröhlich | Technische Universität Wien | Vice-Rector Research & Innovation |
| Michaela Glanz | Akademie der bildenden Künste | Research Services |
| Gerd Grupe | Kunstuniversität Graz | Vice-Rector Research, Gender and Diversity |
| Karin Harrasser | Kunstuniversität Linz | Vice-Rector for Research |
| Therese Kaufmann | Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien | Research Services |
| Sandra Pretis | Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt | Research Services |
| Barbara Putz-Plecko | Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien | Vice-Rector Research and Diversity |
| Rudolf Scheuven | Technische Universität Wien | Dean Architecture and Planning |

The participants of the two-hour online focus group discussed the following guiding questions:

PEEK as an impulse generator for research at arts universities and other institutions:

- How would you assess the importance of research in your organisation today?
- Have any organisational changes been made to better anchor and support research institutionally? Are such changes still planned?
- Are you satisfied with the organisation and handling of PEEK by the FWF, or do you have any suggestions for changes with regard to processes, evaluation and comprehensibility (interfaces/frictions)?

PEEK as an impulse generator for artistic research:

- Do you have the impression that PEEK projects have actually been able to produce new content, theories and methods?

Internal perception and status of PEEK within the organisation:

- What is the status of PEEK projects within your organisation?

External perception of PEEK and arts-based research

- In your opinion, how has PEEK changed the general attitude of the Austrian research communities (from the natural sciences, technical sciences, social sciences and humanities) towards arts universities as research institutions and artistic research as an approach?
- Has PEEK changed the public perception of artistic research and universities of arts as places of research?
- How about the perception of the international research communities? Is PEEK perceived internationally? How is the output of PEEK projects perceived?

Unique selling point of PEEK

- How do you assess the PEEK programme today? What should the Programme look like in ten years time – what is needed to strengthen arts-based research in terms of content and programme structure?
- After more than ten years, is PEEK still necessary as an individual programme for the research performance at the arts universities or for the funding of artistic research, or would it not be appropriate to “include” arts-based research in the FWF's other funding instruments, e.g., through Stand-Alone project funding?

ANNEX II – PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS OF THE PEEK PROGRAMME IN AUSTRIA

To explore the main factors of the role the PEEK programme plays in Austria, an explorative principal component analysis (PCA) was used. The preconditions for the PCA were fulfilled (KMO measure: 0.845, Bartlett’s test: $p=0.000$). Based on the scree plot, two factors with eigenvalues higher than one were retained. Those two factors account for 65.11% of the total variance. The table below summarises the outcome of the PCA.

Factor 1 and 2 of the PCA for the effects of PEEK

| The PEEK programme | Factor 1 (40% of rot. variance) | Factor 2 (25% of rot. variance) |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ... is vital for the research activities of arts universities. | 0.842 | |
| ... contributes to the institutionalisation of arts-based research in Austria. | 0.809 | |
| ... supports the career development of young arts-based researchers. | 0.684 | |
| ... is vital for artists’ research activities. | 0.625 | |
| ... contributes to increase the variety of arts-based research output. | | 0.832 |
| ... supports greater diversity in the approaches to artistic production. | | 0.822 |
| ... contributes to increase the impact of arts-based research output. | | 0.795 |
| ... improves the standing of arts-based research within the research communities. | | 0.753 |
| ... improves the international standing of Austria’s arts-based researchers. | | 0.749 |
| ... improves the standing of arts-based research within the arts communities. | | 0.744 |
| ... contributes to the public awareness of arts-based research. | | 0.699 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration

Note: The item “The PEEK programme is well suited to drive arts-based research in Austria” was excluded since it loaded with very similar values on both factors.

The first factor can be described as the **institutionalisation effect of PEEK**. It underlines how closely the institutionalisation of arts-based research is connected to the research activities of the main institutions in arts-based research, namely arts universities. The second factor can be described as a **content and outreach effect of the PEEK programme**. The main items loading on this factor are that the Programme increases the variety and impact of arts-based research as well as diversity in the approaches to artistic production. Although to a lesser extent, all the items that touch upon the standing or the public awareness of arts-based research load on factor 2 as well.

ANNEX III – PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS DRIVING PEEK APPLICATIONS

A PCA was carried out to identify the factors that drive applications to PEEK. Items with an anti-image correlation below 0.5 were excluded from the analysis (i.e. *"Being able to support young arts-based researchers"*; *"Obtaining third-party funding is essential for my job retention"*; *"Improving my (international) recognition due to the prestige of the FWF-funded projects"*; *"PEEK is the only funding programme for arts-based research in Austria"*). After this exclusion, the preconditions for the PCA were fulfilled (KMO measure: 0.708, Bartlett's test: $p=0.000$). Based on the scree plot, two factors with eigenvalues higher than one were retained. Those two factors account for 59.09% of the total variance. The table below shows the items of the first principal component (33% of rotated variance) and the second principal component (26% of rotated variance). The first component can be described as the resources that PEEK as a programme offers or facilitates (multi-year project, budget size, flexible implementation, arts-based approach). The second component deals with the Programme's recognition in the community and its flexibility.

First and second principal components of the component analysis of rationales to apply for PEEK funding

| Item | PC1 | PC2 |
|---|-------|-------|
| PEEK allows conducting multi-year research projects. | 0.883 | |
| PEEK enables projects of adequate size. | 0.821 | |
| PEEK allows projects to be flexibly implemented. | 0.536 | |
| Being able to conduct an arts-based research project. | 0.433 | |
| PEEK covers the costs for necessary project-specific artistic events. | | 0.738 |
| PEEK covers the costs for project-specific public relations work. | | 0.737 |
| Being encouraged by my host institution to apply to PEEK. | | 0.702 |

Source: Survey of non-funded PEEK applicants and survey of PEEK PIs, own elaboration



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