AQAS

AGENTUR FÜR
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

UNIVERSITAS ESA UNGGUL

DESIGN

VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN (BACHELOR OF DESIGN)

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE (BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION)

February 2024

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Content

DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- **"VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN" (BACHELOR OF DESIGN)**

- **"COMMUNICATION SCIENCE" (BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION)**

OFFERED BY UNIVERSITAS ESA UNGGUL, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Based on the report of the expert panel, and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 20th meeting on 26 February 2024, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programmes "**Visual Communication Design**" (**Bachelor of Design**) and "**Communication Science**" (**Bachelor of Communication**) offered by **Universitas Esa Unggul**, **Indonesia** are accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

   The accreditations are conditional.

   The study programmes essentially comply with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **31 March 2025**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.

3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **31 March 2030**.

Conditions:

All study programmes

1. To transparently document the courses of the programmes, the course handbook must be updated to include all relevant information, e.g., literature and teaching methods, in a complete and comprehensive manner.

2. To ensure the programmes' relevance and educate students according to the labour market's needs, feedback from all stakeholders, internal and external ones, must be collected and protocolled in a structured manner.

3. To reach a consistent implementation of the quality assurance procedures, higher transparency concerning them needs to be achieved. Procedures used at EUU need to be easily accessible for students, teaching staff and faculty members. This could happen through a document explaining all processes, policies and regulations, and that is easily accessible via the university's website, e.g.

4. Examination methods used must be stated in the course handbook to assure transparency and their suitability to assess the ILOs.

5. More international literature must be made available to students, e.g., through access to international databases, to offer them the adequate learning resources to achieve a robust theoretical basis in their field of study:

Additionally for "**Visual Communication Design**" (**Bachelor of Design**)

6.   To ensure that the small practically oriented groups of VCD students are well mentored, more teaching staff, especially professors, must be hired.

7.   The existing academic staff (professors, associate professors, and assistant professors) must have the opportunity to conduct own research.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programmes:

All study programmes

1.   To ensure transparency and accessibility for all involved stakeholders, the appeal procedure in place must be explicitly documented in written form and made available to all parties.

2.   To allow for a better and more comfortable application process, a UX optimization of the application form is recommended.

3.   A structured approach to staff training should be implemented to ensure that staff receives continuous and targeted qualification in line with their tasks.

4.   To further pursue the programmes' goal of internationalisation, teaching staff should receive more incentives as well as support to improve their English skills, e.g., through language courses specifically addressed to teaching staff.

5.   To support teaching staff to conduct its own research and pursue further qualification, it should be further incentivised to do so, e.g., by reducing teaching workload or implementing financial support for publications or attending international conferences.

6.   Regulations outlining the involvement, composition, and role of the student parliament should be drawn up to create transparency concerning this body.

7.   To accommodate the needs of disabled students, a consultation with them about their needs is advised.

8.   To allow highest transparency and reflect the study programmes correctly, the homepage should be optimised concerning its structure, readers' guidance, and design.

9.   To reflect the international approach the programmes strive for, it is recommended to include a consistent translation of all relevant information into English for the homepage.

Additionally for "**Visual Communication Design**" (**Bachelor of Design**)

10. To accurately reflect the workload of the graduation project in all its components, the credits allocated to it should be revised and increased in accordance with Indonesian higher education regulations.

11. To enhance the programme's global perspective and support its internationalisation, it is encouraged to include more content on emerging trends in design theory and international design practices in courses, which should be included in the course handbooks.

12. To ensure the VCD's continued relevance for the labour market and potentially allow students to find employment in an international context, it is recommended to build collaborations with industry professionals.

13. In order to raise the overall level of performance to a professional, talented level from the outset and to be able to make optimum use of the university's resources, it is recommended to include an aptitude test in the application process in the Visual Communication Design study programme.

Additionally for "**Communication Science**" (**Bachelor of Communication**)

14. To support students in their transition of theoretical knowledge to practical use of it, courses of different foci should be better linked and connected. These synergies should transparently be documented in the course handbook.

15. To better prepare students for their academic careers and guarantee the academic goal of the study pro-gramme, more courses on academic writing should be taught.

16. To keep the programme relevant and prepare students for the labour market, current developments, e.g., in public communication as well as media technology, should be implemented more in the course contents.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

EXPERTS' REPORT

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- ▪ **"COMMUNICATION SCIENCE" (BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION)**

- ▪ **"VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN" (BACHELOR OF DESIGN)**

OFFERED BY ESA UNGGUL UNIVERSITY, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Visit to the university: 14-16 November 2023

Panel of experts:

Assoc. Prof. Ahamad Tarmizi Azizan	Faculty of Creative Technology & Heritage, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan/Malaysia
Prof. Dr. Oliver Ruf	Professor Aesthetics of Communication, Head of Programme Technology and Innovation Communication, University of Applied Science Bonn-Rhein-Sieg/Germany
Daniela Grundmann	Senior Art Director BauWatch Projekt Service GmbH/Germany (labour market representative)
Susanna Mönchenberg	Bachelor Student Communication Science, University of Hohenheim/Germany (student representative)

Coordinator:

Dr. Sarah Jenischewski, Maria Rentmeister   AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor's programmes "Visual Communication Design" and "Communication Design" offered by Universitas Esa Unggul.

1. Criteria

Each programme is assessed against a set of criteria for accreditation developed by AQAS: the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master). The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015. To facilitate the review each criterion features a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria. However, if single indicators are not fulfilled this does not automatically mean that a criterion is not met. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of each programme since not all indicators necessarily can be applied to every programme.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in October 2021. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In October 2022, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programmes and an appendix. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,
- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 5 December 2022. The final version of the SER was handed in April 2023.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in June 2023. AQAS informed the university about the members of the expert panel and the university did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place on 14-16 November 2023. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, teaching staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS Criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the university for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 26 February 2024. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In April 2024, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

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III.   General information on the university

Esa Unggul University (EUU) is a private university in Indonesia, established in 1993 in accordance with a Decree of the Minister of National Education under the auspices of the Kemala Mencerdaskan Bangsa Education Foundation. EUU has ten faculties and 37 departments offering a variety of programmes that lead to Diploma, undergraduate, professional and postgraduate degrees.

At the time of SER submission, the university reported 15,746 active students and 504 teaching staff.

The university defines its core research areas in (1) poverty alleviation, i.e. food safety and security; (2) new and renewable energies; (3) health, tropical diseases, nutrition and medicine; (4) disaster management, national integration and social harmony; (5) regional autonomy and decentralization; (6) arts and culture/creative industries and information and communication technologies; (7) human development and competitiveness.

EUU has created a strategic plan (RENSTRA) with three main goals: human resources with character and high competitiveness, a healthy and independent university, and a university with superior reputation. As part of this strategic plan, concrete numerical goals regarding the GPAs and TOEFL scores among graduates, the waiting times between graduation and first job, and a quota for teaching staff ranking Assistant Professor or higher have been set for all study programmes. According to the SER, the university defines its mission as organising quality and relevant education and creating a conducive academic atmosphere as well as leaders with character and high competitiveness. The university states that it bases its doings and decisions on the tri dharma approach and strives for academic excellence.

The Visual Communication Design (VCD) study programme under revision is one of three study programmes (VCD, Product Design, Interior Design) of the Faculty of Design and Creative Industries. This Faculty was established in September 2004 and currently teaches 829 students. The SER states its vision for the VCD study programme to be a superior study programme in the fields of Intellectual-based Interactive media design, technology responsiveness, archipelago culture insight, artistic/creative spirit, innovative spirit, technopreneurship spirit and noble morals. By 2025 the study programme aims at competing at a global level.

The Communication Science study programme is the only study programme in the Faculty of Communication Science, which was established in 2022. However, the SER states that the study programme has four departments (Marketing Communication, PR, Journalism, Broadcasting), as well as a Master programme. Currently 1,700 students study in this Faculty. Its vision is to become an excellent faculty in the field of Communication Science and be able to build a spirit of independence based on information technology.

IV.   Assessment of the study programmes

1.   Quality of the curriculum

> **Bachelor's degree**
>
> *The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*
>
> *The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.*
>
> *The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.*
>
> *[ESG 1.2]*

1.1 General aspects

According to the SER, all study programmes at Esa Unggul University (EUU) must formulate their own graduate profiles, learning outcomes, course achievements and sub-courses based on the Outcome-Based Education approach that EUU implemented. To achieve academic excellence, all students of all study programmes must participate in English and entrepreneurship courses. Additionally, EUU follows Indonesian governmental regulations, meaning offering compulsory courses such as Pancasila, Citizenship, Indonesian Language or Religion. Curricula are reviewed every four years, with the last one stemming from 2020, when new policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture were accommodated, as the SER states. Apart from these courses on character building, which are taught at the university level, core courses also include an internship and community service as well as elective courses, which are in line with the MBKM system, according to the university.

One semester lasts 16 weeks for both study programmes, consisting of 14 weeks of teaching and learning as well as one week for a midterm and another one for a final exam. 1SKS at EUU equals 1,75 ECTS, as the university states. 1 SKS consists of 50 minutes each for lecture, structured tasks and independent study. Students graduate their study programmes with 144 SKS in a minimal time of studies of seven semesters.

1.2 Visual Communication Design (Bachelor)

Description

The VCD study programme at EUU accepts 50 new students/semester. According to the university, the study programme offers three different specialisations: Exhibition Design, Animation, and Game Design. It received its last national accreditation in November of 2021, lasting five years.

The SER states that the target of the programme is to conclude every semester with average GPA > 3.25 in 2026, to receive one creativity and entrepreneurship programme grant per year, produce graduates on time with an average 4.0 – 4.5 years for at least 50% of each cohort, producing graduates with a waiting period of less than 6 months before their first job (80% for each year of graduation), lecturer attendance in lectures is at least 90% per semester, average student satisfaction index on lecturer performance (IKMKD) at study programme level 3.0.

Before every semester the teaching staff of the Faculty meets to discuss and coordinate the teaching and learning activities in the next semester. Compulsory courses are distributed over all semesters, while elective courses of the VCD study programme are spread throughout semesters five to seven.

The university lists the study programmes graduate profiles as graphic designer, photographer and videographer, illustrator and animator, web and apps designer as well as art director.

The SER mentions ten different ILOs for this study programme:

1) Contribute to improving the quality of life in society, nation, state, and the progress of civilization based on Pancasila.
2) Able to apply logical, critical, systematic, and innovative thinking in the context of the development or implementation of science and technology that pays attention to and applies humanities values in accordance with their field of expertise.
3) Able to document, store, secure, and retrieve data to ensure validity and prevent plagiarism.
4) Intellectual ability in mastering knowledge about the basic theory of design and the elements contained therein, along with how to apply it in the fields of Graphic Design / Photography Design and Videography / Illustration and Animation Design / Web Design and Apps / Art Director.

5) Mastery of knowledge regarding creative-based briefs and the ability to prepare, formulate and compose creative briefs for the development of Graphic Design / Photography and Videography Design / Illustration and Animation Design / Web and Apps Design.

6) Ability to compile complete technical specifications of the work of Graphic Design / Photography Design and Videography / Illustration and Animation Design / Web and Apps Design to meet the needs of the production party in preparing the production process.

7) Mastery of knowledge and ability to operate software commonly used in the field of Visual Communication Design.

8) Compile complete documentation to protect the Intellectual Property Rights (HaKI) of the resulting Graphic Design / Photography and Videography Design / Illustration Design and Animation / Web Design and Apps.

9) Skills and knowledge to work in the context of a design organization (multidisciplinary team) to complete more complex tasks by combining strategies, plans, arrangements, goals and work priorities.

10) Leadership ability in coordinating the division of tasks with personnel who are members of the design work team.

Experts' evaluation

The SER outlines goals such as obtaining an annual grant and ensuring graduates get a job within six months for the Visual Communication Design study programme. The programme emphasizes critical thinking, technical skills, and real-world application, as seen in many practical works of the students and confirmed by them concerning their course structure, aligned with the university's vision for intellectual and technical excellence.

Referring to the structure and differences of study programmes, the VCD programme is one of three programmes offered by the Faculty of Design and Creative Industries. Emphasis on practical design distinguishes this study programme from the Communication Science study programme.

The programme combines theory and practice as mentioned above, by transferring the theoretically learned into projects, and strategically integrates Artificial Intelligence through both online and offline approaches. The implementation of virtual reality technology in exhibit design and programming exposure enhances students' technological skill sets. The combination and depth of the theoretical and practical knowledge of students ensures that EQF level 6 is achieved within the programme.

The ILOs and specialisation of the VCD programme focus on practical skills grounded in theoretical knowledge. ILOs, which are transparently stated in the course handbook, match the qualification to be achieved and can be measured through the assessments used in the respective courses. Students choose their specialisation from the fourth semester in line with industry demand, which is established through discussions with the labour market. The implementation of MBKM in the curriculum becomes a very valuable added value to the marketability of graduates in the workplace after graduation as most of them use this programme to do an internship, gain valuable experience in the labour market and build first relationships with employers.

The programme, requiring at least 144 credits to graduate, culminates in a final project, including a written thesis and tangible product. Strict measures against plagiarism, such as the use of Turnitin, ensure academic integrity. While the experts commend the practical and theoretical approach of the graduation assessment with a short thesis/project report, article and project shown in front of a jury, the academic load for the final project is too high in relation to the number of credit hours: a final report (considered a thesis), a published journal paper, development of a production project, an exhibit as well as a viva voce session (presentation session)

for only six credits. This implementation should be revised in relation to student workload and student learning time (**Finding 1**).

Through the connection to the labour market, which gives feedback on the curriculum and supports the practical development of students by acting as jury in their exhibitions, the VCD programme at Esa Unggul University shows strengths in the development of practical skills, industry relevance and technology integration. However, continuous improvement is encouraged, especially in keeping the curriculum in line with emerging trends in design theory, such as Artificial Intelligence, its use and questions that occur because of it (**Finding 2**). Additionally, fostering further collaborations with industry professionals and broadening exposure to international design practices can enhance the programme's global perspective (**Finding 3**).

In conclusion, the Visual Communication Design programme at Esa Unggul University is in a good position for accreditation. Its commitment to practical skills, AI integration, and engagement with students and industry stakeholders make it a programme to be commended in the broader context of visual communication design education. Continued efforts to address emerging trends and promote an international perspective will contribute to the continued success and recognition of the programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

1.3 Communication Science (Bachelor)

Description

The study programme Communication Science accepts 400 new students per semester. It was last nationally accredited in December 2018 with the accreditation ending in December 2023.

According to the university, the study programme aims at forming the student's ability to design advertising and creative strategies, manage and implement public relations activities, and find news or stories worth broadcasting as well as accompany the process until this news story has been finalised and aired or published.

The SER states the graduate profiles to include communication officer, communication entrepreneur, communication trainer, research assistant, and communication consultant. According to the university, many students find employment in government institutions or become entrepreneurs in the field of communication science.

The university defines the eleven ILOs of this study programme as:

1. Fear the Almighty God, uphold the five values of Pancasila and nationality in social life.
2. Have an entrepreneurial spirit, never give up, and have a responsibility according to the applicable norms, in contributing to their fields in the society.
3. Be able to build the good cooperation with others.
4. Committing to be the best in every activity refers to international standard and global insight.
5. Be able to motivate himself and others, build initiative and leadership spirit.
6. Be able to manage advertising, public relation programmes, news and broadcast.
7. Be able to design advertising, public relation programmes, news and broadcast.
8. Be able to manage advertising, public relation programmes, news and broadcast.
9. Evaluate advertising, public relation programmes, news and broadcast.
10. Be able to understand the communication research method either qualitative or quantitative approach also used as decision making material, evaluate broadcast, public relation programmes and news and broadcast.
11. Be able to interpret ethics and human values and implement them in communication fields.

How these ILOs are achieved through the different courses is stated in the course handbook, which is said to be available for all courses of the study programme.

Experts' evaluation

The Bachelor's degree programme "Communication Studies" offers an academically qualifying, broadly scientifically classified and application-oriented study programme, whose basic orientation corresponds to internationally accepted standards in communication studies. Nevertheless, it is based on the Ministry's regulations on national standards for education in Indonesia, i.e. it is in line with the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework and the Indonesian Qualification Framework. The fact that the Bachelor's study programme in Communication Studies is not – as is usually the case – integrated into a Faculty of Social Sciences, but offered in a separate Faculty of Communication Studies, is a special feature. This faculty is further divided into departments of journalism, broadcasting, advertising and public relations, allowing students to specialize in one of these fields and choosing the corresponding graduate profiles for themselves.

The ILOs of the programme refer to these areas in a convincing manner and demonstrate an interdisciplinary connection between the individual fields of applied communication, which are also linked accordingly at the level of course content. Still, this connection is critically discussed and, therefore, also differentiated from one another. However, there is still no real connection to subjects in other faculties (especially not intensively to the Faculty of Design), although the overarching topic of communication offers sufficient reason and background for this – for example with regard to practical media training or the teaching of scientific methodology. It is therefore recommended to strive for more collaboration in between faculties and link courses of different foci (**Finding 4**).

Nevertheless, the Bachelor's degree programme in Communication Studies bridges the gap between academic analysis and practical professional application, for example by involving lecturers, offering internships or working in the faculty's studios. The intended learning outcomes therefore take account of developments relevant to the profession and are sufficiently flexible to react to current trends The corresponding elements of the curriculum in the form of modules and courses are also documented in a sufficiently transparent manner. Their purpose within the degree programme is explained for the most part. However, the information on the literature read in the courses or on which references are based is not up to date, as are the teaching methods used, which are not always specified. Furthermore, this information is not sufficiently comprehensive (**Finding 5**).

The competencies and skills to be taught through this curriculum are extremely knowledge-based and at the same time offer the opportunity to respond to students' individual interests and inclinations. The methodological skills (for academic work) and the general soft skills (for personal development as well as for general education) are also adequately developed well within the curriculum – with the exception of the teaching of academic writing. Currently it is not taught until late in the study programme and only in preparation of the thesis. Instead, it should be offered throughout the entire programme and deepened ostensibly to guarantee the achievement of the academic goals of the study programme (**Finding 6**).

Although the curriculum emphasizes current developments in professional communication, it should be noted that two current developments in interdisciplinary communication science research are not yet taken into account: On the one hand, "public communication" is no longer exclusively "mass communication", but rather blends private communication spaces and environments (for example, in the case of social media). Journalism, e.g., is a field which must also react to this development. On the other hand, the discourse of digitalization, which is a significant innovation and transformation factor for communication, also requires the consideration of current media technology developments such as generative language models and artificial intelligence. Both

topics should be incorporated into the curriculum and therefore also into the learning outcomes to a greater extent (**Finding 7**).

The typical course plan presented documents a general course structure. The resulting workload is stated correctly and transparently and distributed among the individual study programme elements. This also applies to the stated number of credit points as well as to the appropriateness of the study programme as a whole, which is ensured by evaluations, graduate surveys and feedback from the job market.

To potentially take the study programme to another level in the future, the experts suggest considering stronger interdisciplinary structures to the Faculty of Design as well as the Faculty of Communication Science and opening its range of courses with regard to Media Studies. This would create a nexus to design and make it possible to respond to current trends, such as the discourse of digitality. Ultimately, this could culminate in the development of a joint Master's degree programme and a subsequent PhD programme – what would give the university as a whole a new trademark as a kind of new academic signature look.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

2. Procedures for quality assurance

> **Bachelor's degree**
> *The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.*
>
> *A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.*
>
> *The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.*
>
> *Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.*
>
> *[ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]*

Description

Esa Unggul University has set 24 internal quality assurance standards based on Indonesia's National Higher Education Standards. According to the SER, the Quality Policy of Esa Unggul University focuses on academic and non-academic areas. For the academic field, policies focus on education, research, and community service (tri dharma of higher education). For the non-academic field, policies focus on administrative activities, resource management. EUU's quality assurance is set up at three levels: a Quality Assurance Unit (UJM) responsible for each study programme, a Quality Control Group (GKM) for each faculty, and the Quality Assurance Office (KPM) for the university as a whole. Each GKM is headed by a chairperson who coordinates with the Dean, Deputy Dean, and the heads of the study programmes. The university follows the PDCA (plan-do-check-act) cycle for quality assurance.

The University states to conduct internal evaluation for quality assurance in the study programmes regarding the performance of study programmes, lecturers, students, and graduates. The results of the internal evaluation are meant to control and improve the quality of teaching, the curriculum composition, and the quality of study programme management.

The university's Quality Assurance Office makes use of the documentation system ISO 9001:2015 as well as the accreditation provisions of BAN-PT. It conducts yearly internal audits, the results of which are relayed to

the study programmes. In addition, the study programmes undergo external evaluation by the national accreditation agency every five years.

The SER describes how EUU utilises its academic information system (SIAKAD) for monitoring and assessments. It is used to monitor lecturer attendance (weekly), student attendance (weekly), course pass rates (every semester), and the completeness and relevance of teaching materials (every semester). The collected data can be evaluated and monitored by the Dean, the heads of study programmes, the lecturer coordinators of courses, the study programme staff, as well as lecturers of the relevant subject and students.

The SER defines procedures to gain input from students, alumni, and potential employers in designing and evaluating the curriculum. Students are involved through assessments by their heads of study programme and academic advisors as well as data from the SIAKAD system. Alumni take part in focus group discussions and yearly surveys. According to the SER, representatives of the labour market are invited as speakers, but also take part in focus group discussions and questionnaires.

A procedure to guarantee academic integrity is in place. All violations against it will be handled by the faculty senate, as the university states, and sanctioned accordingly.

Experts' evaluation

Upon reviewing the SER documents and additional materials, it is evident that Esa Unggul University has effectively implemented rules and procedures, maintaining commendable consistency and order within the organizational structure. The current foundational approach teaching students the basics of their disciplines ensures consistent and standardized programme management and reflects the university's dedication to a quality-oriented culture that prioritizes continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The incorporation of regular feedback mechanisms, engaging both internal and external stakeholders, showcases a proactive stance in identifying programme strengths and areas for enhancement. Nevertheless, field interviews revealed opportunities for improvement in the implementation of quality assurance procedures.

Whereas external stakeholders, such as labour market representatives stated that they were informed in direct discussions and meetings, formal procedures and policies concerning their feedback do not appear to be in place. Strengthening their engagement and formalising it, e.g., through official working groups or protocolled meetings, is crucial. Gathering these valuable industry insights, but also alumni, in a structured way and aligning programme offerings with growing demand, is essential to ensure programme relevance (**Finding 8**).

A robust feedback mechanism through the student parliament, which allows them to contribute to programme improvement, is commendable. As with the involvement of external stakeholders, the already existing exchange with this student organisation, too, would benefit from a more structured approach (see **Finding 8**).

As has been mentioned above, procedures concerning quality assurance are in place, but it seems that they could be more transparent and easily accessible to academic staff as well as students and faculty management, which prevents a more consistent implementation. Improving accessibility fosters transparency, aids stakeholder understanding of the quality assurance framework, and ensures international compliance. More transparency concerning policies, procedures and their implementation needs to be achieved, e.g., through a document, which explains all processes, policies and regulations, and that is easily accessible via the university's website (**Finding 9**).

A procedure concerning academic integrity and plagiarism is in place. Theses are checked with Turnitin. Mechanisms, which take effect if policies on academic honesty are not adhered to, are available and known to students.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

> **Bachelor's degree**
> *The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.*
> *Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.*
> *Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*
> *[ESG 1.3]*

Description

EUU characterises its methodology as student centred, based on active discussion and study. According to the SER, the learning process is geared towards the implementation of interactive, holistic, integrative, contextual, thematic, effective, and collaborative learning. The commonly used learning methods are listed as small group discussion, project-based learning, practice-based learning, case studies, and simulation. Teaching takes place face-to-face and online. These methods intend to support reaching the ILOs. All learning objectives are intended to implement the Life-Based Learning (LBL) approach. The LBL approach has three stages within one learning sequence, 1) the stage of knowledge master, 2) the stage of expansion of knowledge, and 3) the stage of knowledge implementation in real-life situations. To evaluate students, lecturers carry out quizzes and assess the results of discussions, presentations, and essay reports.

For the VCD study programme, the SER states that an adult education system in teaching is used, which is supposed to apply a principle of equality, initiative, and spontaneity. Following the university's argument, this system uses a dynamic teaching and learning process and can stimulate students' creativity.

For student assessment, EUU states to follow the principles of equity, transparency, and validity. Assessments take place at mid-term and at the end of the term. The SER lists tests, product presentations, performances, projects, or observations as methods of assessment. For the undergraduate thesis, students are assessed based on the overall report writing process, the quality of the project, and an oral presentation. To participate in a test, students must have attended at least 75 % of the class. EUU states to plan the exams and to have processes in place to retake a test in case students cannot participate in an examination or if a student fails. According to EUU, students can also submit a formal appeal for the outcome. To graduate in the Bachelor programmes, conducting an internship is mandatory for students.

Learning and teaching is supported with an online platform that helps to plan assignments, attendance, video conferences, etc.

Experts' evaluation

During the site visit, it has become evident that students at Esa Unggul University (EUU) exhibit notable levels of activity, flexibility, and engagement in the learning processes. The methods employed for learning and teaching create a student-centred environment. Lecturers regularly introduce practical cases and initiate interactive discussions at the commencement of lectures, fostering an environment that encourages self-reflection among students and the exchange of diverse opinions.

To reinforce understanding of course content, students engage in quizzes aimed at reconsidering the material covered. Course projects offer flexibility, allowing students the option to work independently or collaboratively in groups. Notably, students at EUU receive substantial appreciation and individualized guidance from the faculty, who serve as mentors.

Diverse learning paths are presented to students with instructors displaying receptiveness to students' ideas and incorporating them into the assessment process, significantly motivating the students. An emphasis is

placed on training students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios beyond the academic sphere. The learning methods effectively align theoretical concepts with practical applications through the examination of case studies and projects that necessitate considering the perspective of the labour market.

However, the forms of assessment, particularly within the VCD (Visual Communication Design) programme, are somewhat incongruent with the standards prevalent in the labour market. It is recommended that EUU consult its various industry partners to integrate their perspectives into the design of student tasks (see **Finding 8**). By doing so, the university can better fulfil its commitment to preparing students adequately for the demands of the labour market.

The assessment procedures and examination schedules are typically communicated at the onset of courses, and the criteria are made accessible to students through the Learning Management System (LMS). Transparent requirements enable students to comprehend the grading process effectively. Taken aside the limitations mentioned above for the VCD study programme, assessment methods are adequate to measure the ILOs of both study programmes.

The sequencing and logistics of mid-term and end-term exams are clearly outlined by the university, ensuring students are well-informed about the procedures involved in crafting their bachelor's theses.

While the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) includes information about the assortment of assessments, the final decision regarding assessment formats resides with the lecturer. To further familiarize students with a suitable array of formats, the university must provide more detailed documentation, e.g., in an academic handbook, but especially in the course handbook, specifying which examination formats correspond to specific semesters and courses. This guarantees that students are transparently informed about the type of assessment they face in a test as well as that they will sit a variety of assessment methods throughout their studies (**Finding 10**).

Students are afforded the opportunity to retake exams, with individualized considerations provided in cases of disadvantage, illness, or absence.

The university asserts the existence of procedures for student appeals. However, to ensure transparency as well as accessibility for all involved stakeholders, this procedure must be explicitly documented in written form, outlining time limits and a detailed process, and made available to students and faculty alike (**Finding 11**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

> **Bachelor's degree**
> *Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.*
> *[ESG 1.4]*

Description

For the two Bachelor's programmes under review, the regulations for student intake follow national regulations. The admission scheme is primarily organized by the university.

EUU states that the monitoring system on the learning progress is carried out by the academic advisor, the Vice Dean, the Dean, the Vice Rector, and the Rector. Each student is assigned an academic advisor who monitors the student's progress. It is stated that students meet their academic advisor at least three times per

semester regarding their study and learning progress, support for academic and non-academic problems, and planning of the course load. The academic advisor also checks if students maintain their GPA to progress in the study programme. The GPA of a student defines the workload for the next semester. The university also states to offer counselling for career development, academic success, stress management, communication skills, and psychology tests through a Centre for Counselling and Alumni Support.

According to the SER, students can participate in international mobility programmes: Students from the VCD study programme can participate in an one term exchange with Italy or Canada (since 2020), whereas students of Communication Science should be given the opportunity for one semester exchange programmes to the United States, Turkey, and Hungary, starting in 2021. The university offers non-academic activities in the area of arts and sports to students.

For the Bachelor's programmes, the admission regulations are provided on the university's website. The minimum requirement for enrolment is a high school degree. The student's English language skills are assessed. Applicants have to pass an Academic Potential Test. The university states that due to the application process, less than 10% of students do not pass the course or do not achieve the learning outcomes in this programme.

Experts' evaluation

The admission requirements and information on the various admission routes can be found on the website and are, if need be, supported by further links. Admission requirements, the required documents, the online application form, the tuition fees as well as addresses and registration dates and times are all available. On the corresponding landing page for registration, the Call to Action (CTA) for registration is unfortunately quite inconspicuous and very far down, which could be improved easily through UX optimization to allow for a better and more comfortable application process for potential students (**Finding 12**). Within the registration form, it might be worth considering including explanations for abbreviations used as they might be confusing in their current form. Additionally, in the course of internationalization, the selection option "diverse" in the category "gender" might reflect an open attitude of EUU.

The admission criteria are transparent and adequate for a private university such as Esa Unggul is. Although a creative work is currently required at the beginning of the VCD study programme, this is not assessed. It is merely submitted to assess the student's progress later. In the creative field, an aptitude test, which also has a selective character, is desirable regarding creative abilities in order to raise the overall level of performance to a professional, talented level from the outset and to be able to make optimum use of the university's resources (**Finding 13**).

Ongoing support from academic advisors ensures that students' development is clear and comprehensible, and progression – together with the structure of the curriculum – is given. A procedure to recognize credits, which were achieved in a different institution, programme or in an internship, e.g., through the MBKM programme, is in place and known to students.

Graduates of the Visual Communication Design programme receive the degree "Sarjana Design (S.Des)" and those of the Communication Science programme receive the degree "Sarjana Ilmu Komunikasi (S.Ikom.)". A diploma as well as an SKPI (Surat Keterangan Pendamping Ijazah), a supplementary declaration, in which the academic and non-academic achievements are listed and explained, are issued to the graduates.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Teaching staff

> **Bachelor's degree**
>
> *The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*
>
> *Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.*
>
> *Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.*
>
> *[ESG 1.5]*

Description

EUU states to follow the national laws and regulations for the recruitment of academic and supporting staff. The recruitment of new full-time lecturers follows a three-step procedure consisting of a psychological test, an interview, and a microteaching test. Part-time lecturers are assessed and approved by the head of the respective study programme. The minimum qualification level is a Master's degree. Full-time instructors can benefit from the study programme's collaborations in the field of publications and research.

Currently, the Communication Science programme counts 13 full time lecturing staff: one professor, three associate professor, and nine assistant professors. The VCD programme has 17 full time teaching staff teaching in its programme: four associate professors and 13 assistant professors.

Lecturers must conduct at least one research and community service project every year. Research can be supported through internal grants, external grants, or independent funding. Lecturers are required to publish the results of their research and community service in international, national, and local journals.

For teaching staff, development opportunities consisting of training, planning, workshops, certification, and qualifications for further studies at the doctoral level, post-doctoral, and professionals' levels are stated to be available.

Experts' evaluation

In general, both study programmes impress with the level, movement and commitment of the teaching staff. These are undoubtedly the basis for the success of the courses on offer. Professors and lecturers of both study programmes are qualified both academically and professionally. The relevant academic qualifications meet international standards and prove that standards concerning the hiring process of new academic staff is in place. Of course, having Master's and PhD programmes in the study field would increase the chances of teaching staff being educated at Esa Unggul itself, which seems desirable.

However, it should be noted that only very few full professorships have been established, only one in the CS study programme and none in the VCD programme. The main workload falls to associate, assistant professors and lecturers. Whereas the number of lecturers for Communication Science is adequate and staff has a different focus due to its partially more theoretical focus, more teaching staff must be hired for the VCD programme. Given that currently no professor is active in this study programme, the hierarchically higher positions should be extended. This observation is also based on the different structure of this programme, which in part has a strong artistic focus, requiring more individual group teaching and a small student cohort, and, therefore, a smaller teacher-student ratio (**Finding 14**).

Opportunities to further educate themselves is given for teaching staff, especially at the lecturer level. However, there does not appear to be a structured approach to do this, especially concerning a targeted further qualification. This could take place in a separate university unit or within the faculties. Academic staff, which must keep up to date with current, subject-specific discourses, as well as practically oriented staff within the study programme, e.g., in laboratories and workshops, who must be up to date with technological innovations, such

as artificial intelligence, game design or motion design, would benefit greatly from such a recommended unit (**Finding 15**).

In addition to pedagogical training as well as discipline-related training, it is recommended that teaching staff of the study programme receive further incentives as well as opportunities to improve their English skills. Especially in the context of the pursued internationalization, a higher competence in English is indispensable for all academic staff of both study programmes (**Finding 16**).

Workload for all teaching staff is very high. Opportunities to reduce the teaching workload is in place if teaching staff takes on administrative tasks or conducts research. This is to be commended. However, these possibilities should be expanded and extended, e.g., to financial support, to generate a more intensive incentive and relief system for its professors. This will support teaching staff pursuing further qualifications as well as conducting research, benefitting the staff's as well as the university's reputation (**Finding 17**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

6. Learning resources and student support

> **Bachelor's degree**
> *Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.*
> *Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.*
> *[ESG 1.6]*

Description

According to the SER, both faculties have five and two laboratories, respectively. Students of the VCD study programme have access to design laboratories, a workshop, a photography studio, a TV and Broadcasting Studio, and computer laboratory, whereas the study programme of Communication Science has an E-learning and a general studio.

Students of all study programmes can participate in non-academic activities with their own spaces, such as the kemala ballroom, futsal field, basketball court, volleyball court, mosque, rock climbing, and Tokopedia corner, physiotherapy clinic, language centre.

The Esa Unggul library includes nine PCs, more than 25,000 books and national as well as international e-journals, which can be used by the students.

As the university states, it offers introduction activities to students at the beginning of their studies to help them adapting to campus life, such as Emotional Spiritual Quotient Training or State Defence Training in first two weeks. During their studies, all students have their own Academic Advisor, whom they meet three times each semester. According to the SER, the university also offers a Guidance-Counselling Unit and different scholarships. At the end of their studies, the Career Centre Unit several debriefing programmes on soft skills, job vacancies, CV writing trainings, as the university claims.

Consultation offers are available for students with special needs or students in special life situations.

Experts' evaluation

EUU extends advisory services and regular consultation hours to students through academic advisors and career centers. Lecturers are able to monitor individual student workloads online through a score measured after each course. Regular discussions ensue, and concrete measures are implemented if results are subpar.

Further examples of student support are regular events and training offers in which students are provided with the opportunity to develop their talents beyond their field of study. These possibilities are offered by the student association, which is comprehensively supported in order to make its non-academic activities available to students in the best possible way. Due to the cooperation with Arizona State University, opportunities to participate in exchange programmes are given. They are adequately communicated to interested parties via the website and social media channels.

Scholarships are provided to students, and exchange students receive financial aid and guidance. Detailed information regarding tuition fees and the selection process are easily accessible on the university website for all interested parties.

The connection between EUU and its alumni is consolidated through the establishment of an alumni network, which fosters learning opportunities as well as support for current students, looking for their introduction to the labour force as vacancies are often shared by graduates.

The student body is represented by the student parliament, an integral part of quality assurance and student involvement. A diagram delineating the organizational structure of the student parliament, its involvement and its role should be documented in written form and made available for all stakeholders for the purpose of transparency (**Finding 18**).

EUU considers diversity in the allocation, planning, and provision of learning resources and student support, making efforts to integrate students and lecturers with disabilities or special needs. However, the facilities still present some challenges for physically challenged individuals: e.g., the ramps for wheelchair users should not exceed a 32° angle, as the incline becomes too steep to safely use it. A consultation with disabled students should take place or guidelines for accessible building measures should be developed to then improve these conditions and accommodate the needs of disabled students (**Finding 19**).

The university boasts an outstanding array of material resources that greatly enhance the students' learning experience. The computer workspaces and other laboratories provide high-quality support, particularly benefiting students enrolled in the Visual Communication Design (VCD) programme. The facilities adequately accommodate the current student body size and offer flexible timings for assignment completion.

However, upon observation, the library appeared to lack an adequate amount of international literature. This insufficiency poses a challenge, especially for Communication Science (CS) students, where extensive literature engagement is a significant aspect of the subject. Connecting practical findings with a robust theoretical basis and formulating theses based on an appropriate blend of national and international papers require a more extensive repertoire of international literature (e.g., Springer license) (**Finding 20**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Public information

> **Bachelor's degree**
> *Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders.*
> *[ESG 1.8]*

Description

According to EUU, the curriculum for each study programme is disseminated to relevant internal and external stakeholders through print and also online as an upload in SIAKAD (Academic System). The printed form is distributed to all academic staff, students, and supporting staff. According to EUU, the curricula are also presented to and discussed with the students in the orientation programme, in classes, and in the meetings with academic advisors, and disseminated to the parents in the department meetings with them. Furthermore, stakeholders are informed about the knowledge and skills of the graduates, the SER states. Alumni, on the other hand, can join a WhatsApp group where job vacancies are posted, according to the university.

Information on the general profile, curriculum, and lecturers are stated to be available on the respective websites of each study programme.

Experts' evaluation

All stakeholders are able to find sufficient information on the Esa Unggul homepage to inform themselves about the programmes. However, structure and reader guidance are sometimes inconsistent and confusing. To ensure that all information is easily found, and transparency is given, a review and optimization of the user experience is recommended. In the course of this, it is recommended to take a critical look at the design and adapting it to the latest creative and communication science findings (**Finding 21**). Currently, the design seems outdated, which does not reflect the modern approach the study programmes have.

Some pages can be switched to English; this option is easy to find. Unfortunately, the language change often must be repeated on new pages when browsing. It would be ideal if the language selection was remembered for each visit to the domain. Unfortunately, not all texts are translated into English. In favour of the desired international orientation, we recommend a careful, consistent, uniform translation of all (relevant) content and headlines into English (**Finding 22**).

The content of the website is clearly kept up to date: Headers of all pages contain up-to-date announcements and reports as well as banners, registration dates and running times. It is evident that processes and responsibilities concerning the homepage are well distributed and stuck to.

Students additionally referred to social media, where they receive further information and updates on their study programmes and confirmed that they always feel sufficiently informed.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programmes "Communication Science" and "Visual Communication Design" offered by Esa Unggul University with conditions.

Commendation:

The teaching staff is to be commended to not only being invested in their students' learning and career, but also conducting research at the same time. Their commitment and achievement of connecting theoretical and practical parts of the study programmes is another very positive aspect the experts took note of. The possibility for students to become involved in their study programmes in an organized manner through the student parliament is very appreciated.

Findings:

1. To accurately reflect the workload of the graduation project in all its components, the credits allocated to it should be revised and increased in accordance with Indonesian higher education regulations.

2. To enhance the VCD programme's global perspective and support its internationalisation, it is encouraged to include more content on emerging trends in design theory and international design practices in courses, which should be included in the course handbooks.

3. To ensure the VCD's continued relevance for the labour market and potentially allow students to find employment in an international context it is recommended to build collaborations with industry professionals.

4. To support students in their transition of theoretical knowledge to practical use of it, courses of different foci should be better linked and connected. These synergies should transparently be documented in the course handbook.

5. To transparently document the courses of the programmes, the course handbook must be updated to include all relevant information, e.g., literature and teaching methods, in a complete and comprehensive manner.

6. To better prepare students for their academic careers and guarantee the academic goal of the study programme, more courses on academic writing should be taught in the study programmes.

7. To keep the programme relevant and prepare students for the labour market, current developments, e.g., in public communication as well as media technology, should be implemented more in the course contents.

8. To ensure the programmes' relevance and educate students according to the labour market's needs, feedback from all stakeholders, internal and external ones, must be collected and protocolled in a structured manner.

9. To reach a consistent implementation of the quality assurance procedures, higher transparency concerning them needs to be achieved. Procedures used at EUU need to be easily accessible for students, teaching staff and faculty members. This could happen through a document explaining all processes, policies and regulations, and that is easily accessible via the university's website, e.g.

10. Examination methods used must be stated in the course handbook to assure transparency and their suitability to assess the ILOs.

11. To ensure transparency and accessibility for all involved stakeholders, the appeal procedure in place must be explicitly documented in written form and made available to all parties.

12. To allow for a better and more comfortable application process, a UX optimization of the application form is recommended.

13. In order to raise the overall level of performance to a professional, talented level from the outset and to be able to make optimum use of the university's resources, it is recommended to include an aptitude test in the application process in the Visual Communication Design study programme.

14. To ensure that the small practically oriented groups of VCD students are well mentored and existing academic staff also has the opportunity to conduct own research, more professors, associate professors and assistant professors must be hired.

15. A structured approach to staff training should be implemented to ensure that staff receives continuous and targeted qualification in line with their tasks.

16. To further pursue the programmes' goal of internationalisation, teaching staff should receive more incentives as well as support to improve their English skills, e.g., through language courses specifically addressed to teaching staff.

17. To support teaching staff to conduct its own research and pursue further qualification, it should be further incentivised to do so, e.g., by reducing teaching workload or implementing financial support for publications or attending international conferences.

18. Regulations outlining the involvement, composition, and role of the student parliament should be drawn up to create transparency concerning this body.

19. To accommodate the needs of disabled students, a consultation with them about their needs is advised.

20. More international literature must be made available to students, e.g., through access to international databases, to offer them the adequate learning resources to achieve a robust theoretical basis in their field of study.

21. To allow highest transparency and reflect the study programmes correctly, the homepage should be optimised concerning its structure, readers' guidance and design.

22. To reflect the international approach, the programmes strive for, it is recommended to include a consistent translation of all relevant information into English for the homepage.