Institutional Accreditation

Assessment report on Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA)

2024

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Introduction

'Institutional accreditation' is the process of external evaluation which assesses the conformity of a University or higher education institution`s management, work procedures, study and research activities and environment to both legislation and the goals and development plan of the higher education institution itself. This is a feedback-based evaluation in which an international assessment Panel analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of higher education based on the self-assessment report of the institution and on information obtained during the assessment visit, providing recommendations for improvement and ways of implementing them.

The goal of institutional accreditation is to support the development of strategic management and quality culture that values learning-centeredness, creativity and innovation in higher education institutions (**HEIs**), as well as to increase the societal impact of education, research and development delivered by the HEIs.

HEIs are assessed according to twelve standards of institutional accreditation. Assessment focuses on the core processes of the HEI – learning and teaching, research, development and creative activities, and service to society – as well as on strategic management of the organisation and resource management. The learning and teaching process is examined in more detail under five standards (study programme, teaching staff, learning and teaching, student assessment, and learning support processes). Throughout the assessment process, there is a focus on academic ethics, quality culture and internationalisation.

The Institutional Accreditation Report consists of two parts: (1) an evaluation of twelve institutional accreditation standards, and (2) a report on quality assessment of a sample of study programmes. **Achievements that exceed the level of the standard (not compliance with the standard) are presented as strengths**. **Areas of concern and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the institutional accreditation standard** and affect the formation of the final decision of the Council. **Opportunities for further improvement are proposals for improvement that do not contain a reference to noncompliance with the standard** and the inclusion or exclusion of which is at the discretion of the institution of higher education. Proposals for further developments will not affect the final decision of the Council.

Educational institutions must undergo institutional accreditation at least once every seven years based on the regulation *Guidelines for Institutional Accreditation* approved by HAKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education as of 7.01.2022.

The institutional accreditation of the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) took place in April 2024. The Estonian Quality Agency for Education (**HAKA**) composed an international expert Panel, which was approved by the higher education institution. The composition of the Panel was thereafter approved by the order of the HAKA director.

The composition of the expert Panel was as follows:

Sarah Bennett (Chair)	Consultant, EQ-Arts Board Member, former Head of School of Art and Architecture, Kingston University (UK)
Philippe Bouillard (Secretary)	Professor, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels Engineering School (Belgium)
Kristel Jakobson-Pallo	Student, Tallinn University (Estonia)
Hanna Johansson	Dean, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki (Finland)
Anu-Maaja Pallok	Adviser (Creative Industries), Ministry of Culture (Estonia)
Jørn Mortensen	Dean, School of Arts, Design and Media, Kristiania University College, Oslo (Norway)
Ieva Skaurone	Rector, Vilnius Academy of Arts (Lithuania)
Gerrit Uittenbogaard	Head of Textile & Fashion, Royal Academy of Arts (The Netherlands)

Assessment process

The assessment process was coordinated by HAKA staff – Ms. Liia Lauri and Ms. Tiia Bach.

After an initial preparation phase where the distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment Panel was determined, the work of the assessment Panel in Estonia started on 23rd April 2024, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedures by HAKA. Members of the Panel agreed on the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group during the site visit and on a detailed schedule for the site visit (see Appendix attached to this report).

During the following three days, from Wednesday 24th April to Friday 26th April 2024 meetings/interviews were held with representatives of the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) as well as external stakeholders.

On Saturday 27th April 2024, the Panel held an all-day meeting, during which the findings of the Panel were discussed in detail and the structure of the final report was agreed upon. The findings of the team were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report and evaluation of the 12 accreditation standards.

In finalising the assessment report, the Panel took into consideration comments made by the institution. The Panel submitted the final report to HAKA on 24th June 2024

The current report is a public document and is made available on the HAKA website after the HAKA Council has made an accreditation decision.

Information about the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA)

The Estonian Academy of Arts (hereafter EKA) was established in 1914 and is the only public arts university in Estonia. It is a contemporary academy where artists, designers, architects and art historians are engaged in current and future topics and issues as well as the application and development of traditional techniques. EKA recognises its responsibility for the organisation and quality of education, continuing education (through the Open Academy) and research in the fields of art that shape society's cultural space and living environment.

EKA recently moved to a new main building where students are given the opportunity to develop their skills in 22 studios and workshops equipped with state-of-the-art technology. To serve the community, EKA has an open gallery, a library, a museum, an art residency NART in Narva, a study base on the island of Muhu in Tamse, as well as its own publishing house EKA Press. EKA's post-independence opening up to the global educational landscape in the 1990s reflects a deep commitment to internationalisation, including study mobility and membership in various international networks and associations.

EKA is currently composed of four Faculties (Architecture, Design, Fine Arts and Art Culture) offering 12 Bachelor's, 15 Master's, 1 integrated, 4 PhD and 4 micro-degrees. 1153 students were enrolled in 2022 in these degrees together with 1062 learners enrolled in continuing education. The human resources of EKA are 116 academic and 148 support staff. EKA produces annually more than 50 high-level scientific publications and more than 100 public presentations of creative works.

It has to be noted that during the examined period of accreditation (2017-24), EKA had to face two major unexpected crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian refugee situations.

Main impressions of the self-evaluation report and the visit

In preparation for accreditation, EKA produced an institutional self-evaluation report (SER) that provided numerous hyperlinks to other documentation. It also included SERs for each of the sample programmes. The SER was provided to the Panel in February 2024 who requested additional documentation that was timely provided in April 2024.

The SER was well-written in English and clearly laid out. It was a very helpful guide for the Panel in every aspect and should be commended for its quality and genuine self-assessment.

The visit was conducted on-site with some interviewees attending online. The hybrid format worked smoothly, with no technical problems and the organisation of the visit was very professionally conducted by EKA. The Panel met with a wide range of students, staff, and other stakeholders throughout the visit. The Panel found enthusiastic students and dedicated and enthusiastic staff who engaged openly and constructively enabling the Panel to address the diversity of questions it wished to explore.

Main changes on the basis of recommendations of the previous institutional accreditation

The previous institutional accreditation in 2017 led to a decision to accredit the Academy for seven years – hence the present review in 2024. The SER for the present review sets out in some detail the changes made in responding to the recommendations from the previous review. These mainly cover reforms to the organisation management and operation, the study activities, the research, development and/or other creative activities (RDC) and the service to society.

There were 30 recommendations that the second section of the SER adequately addresses (Table 6 p. 23). It is clear from this that EKA has taken positive steps to streamline and harmonise the operational structure of EKA with quantitative indicators supporting the action plan and a horizontal management structure and to enhance their quality system and culture including a larger and safer participation in anonymous surveys and a prominent role for the curriculum committees to revise the programmes. EKA demonstrated that the cooperation between Faculties and other universities has been strengthened as well as the IT systems. In terms of research, EKA has launched a doctoral school and considerably enhanced the research capacities in various aspects (staff development, definition of artistic research, peer-reviewed publications). Regarding teaching and learning, the

concept of 'student-centred learning' is now well established, the quality of the subject cards and programme descriptions have been significantly improved, progress has been made to foster entrepreneurship, very good attention has been paid to introducing non-differentiated assessment, positive experience has been shared about Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience (RPL), and a psychologist-career counsellor is now available. From an internationalisation perspective, EKA has increased their attractiveness and the mobility, both outgoing and incoming, is now at a very good level. Regarding service to society, it is clear that the Open Academy is now playing a major and positive role.

Although EKA has made some progress regarding salary levels, this remains a concern. A code of ethics has also been developed but some aspects require more attention. The possibility for the student to define their own learning path exists in the intention but is not always practically feasible. Some positive experiences have been related towards international internships but the way an internship is defined at EKA still requires specific guidelines. The introduction to research methods in the bachelor programme is still quite variable. The measuring the societal impact of its activities still requires some attention, in order for EKA to evaluate its outreach. All these aspects are commented on hereafter.

Summary of the Institutional Accreditation Findings

General Findings

EKA adequately takes into account national priorities and the needs of society while formulating its mission, vision, strategic objectives, and key results. Its main strategic objectives targeting learning and teaching, RDC activities, organisational culture, and service to society together with relevant key indicators and target dates are clearly set out in the EKA Development Plan 2021-2025. Since 2017, EKA has made substantial progress in streamlining and harmonising its organisational structure.

EKA develops its staff and manages its physical and financial resources in a purposeful, systematic, and sustainable manner. Staff development and recruitment happen according to EKA's Strategic Development Plan. Spaces and physical resources are carefully assessed and managed.

EKA quality policies, processes and standards are informed and affirmed by its national and European contexts. Its Strategic Objectives are aligned with key indicators and targets and progress is monitored and conveyed in an annual report, that is shared widely. Quality processes are well-established and embedded across EKA, with internal and external stakeholders regularly participating in the quality culture and contributing to quality development and continuous improvement through internal evaluations and membership of committees.

EKA has made substantial progress since the previous accreditation in addressing academic ethics in relation to all aspects of its educational activities, including within its digital and physical work and study environments, informed by Estonian and EU legislation.

The many opportunities offer a diverse number of students the opportunity to gain international exposure (experience) and lecturers clearly indicated that they consider mobility an important addition to their professional practice as a teacher. There is certainly an awareness and vision from the organisation when it comes to internationalisation and how local and global cultures and experiences might be more creatively interwoven.

The Panel finds that teaching at EKA is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff. Visiting teachers and supervisors are vital to the institution and secure quality and connection to the professional field.

EKA uses clear criteria, regulations and goals when designing the various curricula. In general, there is a clear description of how curricula are structured and what the learning objectives and learning outcomes are of the various components, although some require further attention. There is a strong connection between the field of art and design, the industry and the labour market.

EKA systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility for their studies and career planning and supports creativity and innovation.

In EKA, there are two types of assessment methods used: differentiated and non-differentiated. Furthermore, there are also various discussions happening in EKA on assessment types, which is commendable and simultaneously raises awareness of assessment-related topics among students as well.

EKA has great student support mechanisms in place: students have access to psychological counselling (both local and international students). Advice on future career paths is available and everything related to the internships.

The areas of research, development and creative activities are well thought out, planned and carried out, and the target activities are in line with the objectives. EKA has defined its objectives and focus on the fields of RDC and these are based on its mission, as well as on the expectations and future needs of society.

EKA's activities have evident links to serving societal needs. EKA initiates and implements consistently a number of activities that enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence.

Commendations

- Collaborative, open, flexible, and supportive EKA's community of dedicated staff members, students, alumni, and stakeholders understand well the mission of EKA and act accordingly.
- Strong leadership culture and a well-functioning horizontal management system contribute to the implementation of EKA's strategic goals.
- EKA has relevant recruitment Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff members, remuneration systems in place, a good onboarding programme, a convincing policy for motivating employees, and, in general, a solid Human Resource structure.
- The internal quality assurance systems that support the quality culture are embedded across EKA, and in general, are embraced by the internal stakeholders.
- The Panel commends EKA for the introduction of regular performance development reviews for teachers that, alongside student feedback at the end of each semester, create a meaningful way to upgrade teachers' pedagogical skills and share good practices.
- The Panel commends the implementation of a revised Code of Ethics, and inclusion of the Student Council in its drafting. All internal stakeholders are aware of the Code and know how to raise complaints/any violations and where to seek advice. The complaints process is fair and transparent.
- EKA has shown steadily high numbers of international exchanges for incoming and outgoing students. This is unique in Estonia and demonstrated well in the discussions had with EKA students. The benefits the students receive from going abroad and the clear support system in place for them to do so are outstanding.
- EKA has very qualified teaching staff, and thorough systems to ensure and support the development of learners and value their own continuous self-development.
- The 'Good Teachers Seminars', and the way the content of these seminars is informed by assessment mechanisms and evaluation systems are excellent.
- Clear processes within the organisation that leave room for pragmatic adjustment, provided the correct procedure is followed.
- Open, transparent and inclusive feedback systems. e.g. Curriculum committees.
- Curricula are regularly updated, and students and faculty members are involved in the revision.
- Overall supportive and encouraging basic framework of skills and knowledge, electives and methods which generally offer space for flexibility and broadened perspectives.
- Students' individual needs are taken into consideration and student support is well-informed and accessible.
- The teachers have many different IT platforms available to utilise in their teaching work and can choose the most suitable for them. It is evident to the Panel that the usage of the IT systems in teaching and assessment is clear to everyone involved.

- There is a clear coherent counselling service system put in place catering to the needs of the students. In addition to the local students, the international students are provided with various counselling services, notably, a fast-learning programme offering them basic skills in the Estonian language to help them settle into the Estonian cultural context.
- Solid and clear plans to strengthen research and agreed intention to develop research in every research centre.
- There are a number of initiatives and projects that are interdisciplinary and therefore disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence across disciplines and areas of life, but also facilitate the inflow of competences from other areas.

Worthy of Recognition

Standards where the HEI has comprehensively demonstrated outstanding results and/or initiatives.

Standard 1- Strategic Management: The Panel commends the Rector's Office for effectively managing unexpected situations (COVID-19; Support for Ukraine and Ukrainians) and for developing Good Leadership practices that enhance the horizontal management model to work well within EKA.

Standard 2 – Resources: The Panel commends EKA for their management of resources. The budgeting logic, with a shared methodology for distributing resources, is a huge contribution to internal reconciliation.

Standard 12 – Service to Society: The Panel commends the Open Academy as a continuing education centre dedicated to the development of artistic and creative thinking and skills and facilitates the application of these competences in almost any area of life.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The formal feedback system of external stakeholders is not consistent. The Panel recommends making it operational, enhancing and formalising the collection of informal feedback from external stakeholders, including alumni.
- The Panel recommends that EKA consider ways to engage all alumni consistently and formally in quality processes, particularly the international alumni, for example in terms of identifying international trends.
- The Panel recommends that EKA address the concerns of the Student Council about inconsistent student representation in some faculties.
- The Panel notes an absence, within the Foundational Acts of EKA, of policy relating to inclusion and diversity, and recommends that EKA should extend the excellent work done on gender equality (an EU legal requirement), to produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and respect for diversity in all its manifestations now, and for unknown future societal and political scenarios.
- There is still a concern related to how research and creative activities inform teaching and supervision at BA and MA levels amongst permanent staff. The Panel does not doubt the quality of the research activities but recommends the institution systemise the ways these activities support teaching and supervision.
- In practice, some of EKA's learning aims are impractical (interdisciplinary crossovers, electives), and it is still difficult for students to shape their own learning path. The Panel recommends that EKA reconsider this.
- Many learning outcomes (at programme, module or subject levels) require further revision to be compatible with the ECTS User's Guide recommendations.
- The Panel recommends developing clear guidelines for internships, stating longer periods so that the student can get real and proper experience about working life and crediting these periods appropriately in ECTS in the curriculum.
- The Panel recommends better assessing the implementation and the societal impact of RDC activities, methods and tools how to measure the result, and legitimise their own activities.

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Strategic management	☒	☐	☐	☒
Resources	☒	☐	☐	☒
Quality culture	☒	☐	☐	☐
Academic ethics	☒	☐	☐	☐
Internationalisation	☒	☐	☐	☐
Teaching staff	☒	☐	☐	☐
Study programme	☒	☐	☐	☐

Learning and teaching	☒	☐	☐	☐
Student assessment	☒	☐	☐	☐
Learning support systems	☒	☐	☐	☐
Research, development and/or other creative activity	☒	☐	☐	☐
Service to society	☒	☐	☐	☒

Key to evidence

ADD: Additional information provided upon request of the Panel

A: interviews with alumni

E: interviews with employers and other external stakeholders

M: interviews with management and support staff

R: inspection of resources (e.g. library, laboratories)

S: interviews with students

SER: Self-Evaluation Report

T: interviews with teaching staff

1.1   Strategic Management

Standard
Development planning at the higher education institution is purposeful and systematic, involving various stakeholders.
The higher education institution regularly evaluates the achievement of its stated objectives and the impact of its activities.

Guidelines
The HEI has formulated the objectives and key results for its core activities – learning and teaching; research, development and creative activities, and service to society – taking into account national priorities and the needs of society, focusing on its strengths and reducing unnecessary duplication both within the HEI and throughout higher education in Estonia.
The HEI is managed in accordance with its mission, vision and core values, as well as objectives set out on the basis of those principles. Responsibility for implementation of the goals and action plans of the development plan are clearly specified. Achievement of the objectives and effects of the activities are evaluated regularly.
Sustainable development, creativity and innovation are supported and given value in both core and support activities.
The HEI is mindful of the opportunities provided by digital technologies in planning for development activities.
Membership of the HEI (including students), as well as external stakeholders, is involved in developing and implementing the HEI's development plan and action plans. The HEI members share the core values that serve as a basis for the institution's development plan.

Indicators
• The rate of achieving the objectives set in the development/action plan (key results)
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

EKA is the only public university in Estonia which gives bachelor's (BA), master's (MA), and PhD/Doctoral degrees in Arts and takes the national priorities and the needs of society into account while formulating its mission, vision, strategic objectives, and key results. It is within EKA's mission to advance Estonia's cultural and social life and to support Estonia's development by making sense of, shaping the cultural space and helping to create a more sustainable living environment. It is stated in SER (p. 30) that both international policy frameworks (e.g. sustainable development goals) and national policies (in particular, Estonia 2035) had a significant impact on formulating the strategic objectives for the Academy's core activities. On the site visit (M), the Panel learnt that EKA's senior management takes an active role in the preparation of national policies, which is very positive.

Since the last institutional accreditation in 2017, EKA has done a lot in streamlining and harmonising its organisational structure. In 2019, the EKA Act was renewed by the Estonian Parliament and the renewed EKA Statutes were adopted by the EKA Council in 2023. Under the renewed EKA Act, the Academy is managed by the Council, the Senate and the Rector. The EKA Act and Statutes of EKA adequately set out the membership and responsibilities of the Council, the Senate and its sub-committees, the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Rector's Office, Deans, Faculties, Faculty Councils, etc.

The Council is the management body of the Academy responsible for the long-term and sustainable development of EKA and for important economic, financial and assets-related decisions. The Council adopts the Statutes, Development Plan, budget and its annual implementation report, decides on the acquisition and transfer of real estate property, and performs other functions assigned thereto

by law or statutes of EKA. The Council consists of 9 members, four of whom are appointed by the EKA Senate, one member is appointed by the Estonian Academy of Science and four members are appointed by the minister. The Panel noticed that among the four members appointed by the Senate, there is no student representation and strongly suggests that EKA reconsider student body representation at the Council level, the highest management body of EKA.

The Senate is the academic decision-making body responsible for the research, development, creative and educational activities of the Academy and for ensuring its quality. The Senate is composed of 22 members, Rector and Vice-Rectors, Deans, academic staff members, students, the Head of Open Academy, and the Director of Finance and Administration. The Panel considers that the Senate is well composed and represents all groups of internal stakeholders. In 2019, EKA transformed the Academic Affairs Council and the Research Council into Senate committees and the Panel acknowledges this change as having a positive impact on the Academy's management structure.

The Rector is responsible for the Academy's general condition, development, reputation, execution of the budget and lawful and proper use of its financial resources (SER p. 16). In 2020, the Deans of four Faculties were involved in the Rector's Office's structure consisting of the Rector, Vice-Rectors and Director of Finance and Administration. In the meeting with the Deans and Heads of Departments (M), the Panel was assured that the Rector's Office extension made the management of the institution more inclusive and improved the cooperation between Faculties.

The Academy's four main strategic objectives are formulated in EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025. They target learning and teaching, RDC activities, organisational culture, and service to society. Relevant key indicators and target dates are set out in the Development Plan (SER p. 31, Table 8). During the site visit (S, A, E), the Panel learnt that internal (including students) and external stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the Development Plan and both parties are taking an active role in implementing it. Sufficient attention to sustainable development, creativity and innovation, and opportunities provided by digital technologies is given to formulating strategic objectives and their content in the Development Plan 2021-2025 and its implementation in the institution's core and support activities.

External stakeholder involvement in various stages of institutional management was demonstrated by the SER and meetings with alumni and cooperation partners (A, E), although it is not always sufficiently formalised. During the interviews (E), the Panel heard that in most cases the feedback of external stakeholders is collected informally. The Panel recommends that EKA better formalise the system of collecting feedback from external stakeholders to facilitate the analysis and make clear corresponding improvements. At the same time, the Panel commends EKA for the well-developed feedback system of internal stakeholders (students and staff) demonstrated by the SER and multiple interviews (S, T, M).

The Panel must admit that during a number of interviews (M, T), it did not hear a clear understanding as to what exactly the related key indicators of the first strategic objective are – EKA curricula are up-to-date and offer a top-class higher education – and suggests EKA make sure that all stakeholders are aware of them and of the content and context of this particular strategic objective.

The second and third strategic objectives on Research and impact on society are well achieved as confirmed by EKA's stakeholders. The fourth strategic objective – EKA is an organisation based on dedicated people, with a culture of open communication and governance and opportunities for professional self-realisation – is naturally embedded in various stages of organisation management

and EKA's core activities, proved well to the Panel in multiple interviews during the site visit (M, T, S).

In 2022, Good Leadership Practice, consisting of 16 principles, was developed at EKA to improve the quality of leadership at the institution. During the meeting with the Deans and Heads of Departments, the Panel was convinced that these principles are shared by many staff members. In various interviews (M, T, S), the Panel sensed that internal stakeholders, especially, actively participate in setting the strategic goals of the EKA Development Plan 2021-2025, relate to them, and while being informed by those goals, set the goals of their own. The leaders who took part in interviews (M) assured the Panel that they had the necessary agency within the horizontal management model to enact actions and work towards targets and goals to fulfil the EKA development plan.

EKA well managed the COVID-19 crisis (as demonstrated by the results of a student survey conducted in 2020), gave the impetus to the development of EKA's distance learning, creation of EKA TV, improvement of Moodle environment, and remote work opportunities (SER p. 33). In 2022, the senior leadership of EKA lobbied at national and international levels for Ukraine to become a partner in the Erasmus + programme (SER p. 33). It ensured Ukrainian refugee students studying at EKA receive steadier financial support in the form of an Erasmus + grant.

The Panel commends the Rector's Office for the effective management in unexpected situations (COVID-19; Support for Ukraine and Ukrainians) which enhanced the best traits of EKA's community – flexibility, collaborative spirit, quick and appropriate decision-making, proactiveness, reaching out to partners and acting together.

Conclusions

EKA takes into account national priorities and the needs of society while formulating its mission, vision, strategic objectives, and key results. Its main strategic objectives targeting learning and teaching, RDC activities, organisational culture, and service to society together with relevant key indicators and target dates are clearly set out in the EKA Development Plan 2021-2025. Internal (including students) and external stakeholders are involved in the preparation of the Development Plan and both parties are taking an active role in implementing it. Since 2017, EKA has made substantial progress in streamlining and harmonising its organisational structure. In 2019, the EKA Act was renewed, significantly impacting the institution's management by establishing a Council, including external members to oversee financial and economic issues, and creating a Senate responsible for academic affairs. The Panel appreciates the significant improvement made to the management system but strongly suggests EKA reconsider the inclusion of the representative of the student body into the Council thus, empowering the highest management body to represent all stakeholders of the institution. The Panel commends the Rector's Office for effectively managing unexpected situations (COVID-19; Support for Ukraine and Ukrainians) and for developing Good Leadership practices that enhance the horizontal management model to work well within EKA.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 1- Strategic Management and it is worthy of recognition as the Panel commends the Rector's Office for effectively managing unexpected situations (COVID-19; Support for Ukraine and Ukrainians) and for developing Good Leadership practices that enhance the horizontal management model to work well within EKA.

Strengths

- Collaborative, open, flexible, and supportive EKA's community of dedicated staff members, students, alumni, and stakeholders understand well the mission of EKA and act accordingly.
- Strong leadership culture and a well-functioning horizontal management system contribute to the implementation of EKA's strategic goals.
- Good management of crisis situations (COVID-19; Support for Ukraine and Ukrainians).

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The formal feedback system of external stakeholders is not consistent. The Panel recommends making it operational, enhancing and formalising the collection of informal feedback from external stakeholders, including alumni.

Opportunities for further improvement

- As there is no student representative in the EKA Council, the Panel strongly suggests reconsidering its composition and incorporating a student member into it, thus, empowering the highest management body to represent all stakeholders of the institution.

1.2   Resources

Standard
The higher education institution develops its staff and manages its physical and financial resources in a purposeful, systematic and sustainable manner.
Internal and external communications of the higher education institution (including marketing and image-building) are targeted and managed.

Guidelines
The HEI has an efficient staff development system in terms of both academic and support staff. The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development are based on the objectives of the HEI's development plan and are fair and transparent. The principles for employees' remuneration and motivation are defined, available to all employees, and followed.
Allocation of the HEI's financial resources is based on the objectives of its development plan. The management and development of its infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, classrooms, digital infrastructure, etc.) are fit-for-purpose and economically sound. The infrastructure is regularly analysed (including the network, digital equipment, software and services, IT systems, user support, digital security, etc.), taking into consideration among others the needs of students, teaching staff and other members of the HEI personnel.
Sufficient resources are available for updating the infrastructure for education and research, and/or a strategy exists enabling the HEI to acquire them.
The HEI has defined information protection rules (including data protection and the protection of user privacy) and these are implemented. The development and security of the online learning and teaching environment are ensured. The online learning and teaching environment allows to identify the authorship of student work.
The HEI has a functioning system for internal and external communications, relevant to the target audiences. The information made public about HEI's activities (including study programmes) and the findings of external evaluations are correct, up-to-date, easily accessible and understandable. The HEI has a system to popularise its core activities and academic career opportunities. The HEI members are informed of the decisions relevant to them in a timely manner.
Employee satisfaction with management, working conditions, information flow, etc., at the HEI, is surveyed regularly and the survey results are used in quality improvement activities.

Indicators
• Distribution of revenues and costs
• The results of the staff satisfaction survey
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

With the management structural changes made in 2019 (SER p. 23, M), EKA was provided with a more streamlined, harmonised, and efficient managerial structure to handle its resources and it is the opinion of the Panel that EKA has now a solid structure to handle institutional resources. The budgeting logic, with a shared methodology for distributing resources, is a huge contribution to internal reconciliation.

The Personnel Department operates under the direct responsibility of the Rector and human resources matters, including appointment/recruiting, competences, appraisal, development, and remuneration are well organised and managed.

According to the SER, open competition has been the normal procedure for appointments of permanent positions since 2020. In 2017, a relevant onboarding structure came into place through the launch of the 'EKA Onboarding Programme for New Employees' (SER Annexes). The Personnel Department supports those joining EKA by introducing the organisation, professional development

opportunities and communication culture. A key feature which is well reconciled is the overhauled performance development review, which secures opportunities both for the employer and employees to strategically assess, plan and develop the competences of the institution. Interviews with academic staff and leadership (M, T) confirm a common understanding of the performance development review.

In 2018, EKA adopted a policy for motivating EKA employees ('Principles for Employee Motivation') as well as remuneration regulations that describe the salary levels and the option for determining additional remuneration, performance rewards and support payments. The staff satisfaction measured in surveys has increased consequently, though there are still concerns with the salary levels.

EKA mentions in the SER (p. 38) that the pressure on the budget is increasing every year, as salary expectations, additional space and the implementation of the spatial programme, technology upgrades and digital environments need funding. Consequently, the state activity support must increase annually in addition to resources for development projects. There is a liability to this dependency, but measures have been taken to increase the share of project and business income and income from educational services, which has reduced dependence on state activity support. When asked, the Rectorate is well in control of a situation where the balance between staff expenses and other expenses has changed throughout the last four years (M).

EKA has 19,000 m² space at its disposal. In September 2024, a new laboratory building of 1,100m² will be completed. Still, the institution is in need of another 2,700 m² for different purposes and functions (R). The Panel found the analysis, planning and reasoning for more space adequate. Significant investments in energy efficiency took place in 2023, with projected savings of 10-15%. It is the leadership's assessment that new buildings will be more energy efficient than existing rented buildings, and this will reduce running costs additionally. EKA was rewarded with the European Green Office certificate in 2022 in recognition of these efforts.

The Panel detected certain ambiguities with the workshop investment processes. The academic staff report needs to the workshop manager, organised under the Director of Finance and Administration, who decides what to invest and reinvest. Though the Development Plan for 2021-2025 is a guiding document, it is still unclear for the Panel - after visits to the workshops (R) and the additional interview (M) - how priorities are made and how investments and reinvestments can be informed by academic staff.

EKA has stated in the SER (p.37) that there still is a need for around 2,700m² even after the completion of the laboratory building. The need for more space is based on well-informed qualitative data, in addition to quantitative data harvested from activity censors in the current main building. The monitoring of utilisation is based only on 4 months of survey (M). It is the Panel's view that this information is a bit meagre and should be expanded so that decisions are based on qualified quantitative data.

EKA has a digital infrastructure which has been systematically developed since 2018. Since 2022, an IT Council was set up to gather information, analyse and make decisions on IT and digital developments consisting of a selection of members of the Rectorate, Heads of support units and staff involved in the field. EKA has established a digital development plan which is in the process of completion. The digital infrastructure includes SIS Tahvel, the HR software palk365, and the continuing education software ARTI. In 2022, the EKA wiki intranet was created, and the information management system WebDesktop and the e-learning environment Moodle have been continually

developed. EKA has been paperless since 2019, which is well-reconciled all over the institution. The systems are connected digitally and harvest relevant data where needed. The IT Office has a clear visual description/map which describes the digital infrastructure.

As for information flow and access, the information management system WebDesktop serves the purpose, which is confirmed in interviews with Heads of Curriculum, Deans, Heads of Departments (M) and students (S). However, there has not been a monitoring activity carried out regarding the satisfaction of the IT systems by the students. It is commendable that there are concrete plans in place to update Moodle, but it would also be great to involve students to better understand the users' needs. It is recommended to gather more frequent and regular feedback on the different IT solutions that the students use (see also Standard 10).

EKA's communication practice is based on the general strategic goals, core values and organisational culture at EKA. An internal communication audit carried out in 2021 highlighted several problems related to the flow of information. To solve the challenges, the EKA wiki was developed, which is an intranet that brings together information on the functioning of EKA. For external communication, the EKA website is the main and most important communication channel, although the use of social media platforms has increased substantially in recent years. The effectiveness of external communication is measured through ongoing media monitoring and visits to events and online environments. Visits on the EKA website confirm a robust communication channel, both in Estonian and English languages. Access to RDC, curricula, degrees with content and admission requirements is easily understandable. This also applies to the Academy's general outreach activities.

Conclusions

The Panel finds that EKA develops its staff and manages its physical and financial resources in a purposeful, systematic, and sustainable manner. Staff development and recruitment happen according to EKA's Strategic Development Plan. Spaces and physical resources are carefully assessed and managed. The Panel also found that internal and external communications of the higher education institution are targeted and managed efficiently. EKA has established and embedded quality processes regarding the resources across the institution. This informs leadership and management regularly so that reasonable adjustments in the management of the resources can be made.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 2 – Resources and WoR as the Panel commends EKA for their management of resources. The budgeting logic, with a shared methodology for distributing resources, is a huge contribution to internal reconciliation.

Strengths

- EKA has relevant recruitment Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff members), remuneration systems in place, a good onboarding programme, a convincing policy for motivating employees, and, in general, a solid HR structure.
- The level of satisfaction of EKA's academic and administrative staff is very high.
- The digital infrastructure is built on a clear idea, and the information management system as a whole is convincing.
- The workshops are well-organised and well-equipped.

- EKA's resources are very well-organised and managed. The budgeting logic, with a shared methodology for distributing resources, is a huge contribution to internal reconciliation.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- There has not been a monitoring activity carried out regarding the satisfaction of the IT systems by the students. It is commendable that there are concrete plans in place to update Moodle, but it would also be great to involve students to better understand the users' needs. It is recommended to gather more frequent and regular feedback on the different IT solutions that the students use.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel detected certain ambiguities with the workshop investment processes. The institution may revisit these processes to ensure that investments are properly informed by academic ambitions.
- The need for more space is based on quantitative and qualitative data, but the monitoring of utilisation is based on 4 months of survey only. This should be expanded to ensure that decisions on spatial needs are based on qualified quantitative data.

1.3   Quality Culture

Standard
The higher education institution has defined the quality of its core and support processes, and the principles of quality assurance.
In the higher education institution, internal evaluation supports strategic management and is conducted regularly at different levels (institution, units, study programmes).
The findings of internal and external evaluations are analysed and quality improvement activities implemented.

Guidelines
Members of the HEI have agreed upon definitions for the quality of their core and support processes and are guided by them in their daily work. The HEI has established its policies and procedures for internal quality assurance (internal evaluation). The regular internal quality assurance both at the institutional and study programme level takes into account, inter alia, the standards set out in these Guidelines. All members of the HEI, including students and external stakeholders, participate in internal evaluations.
Internal evaluation of study programmes results in feedback from experts within the HEI and/or from outside it. Regular reviews and enhancements of study programmes ensure their relevance, including their compliance with international trends. In the course of internal evaluations, peer learning, comparisons with other HEIs regarding their results and means for achievement, as well as a sharing of best practices take place, among other things.
Internal evaluation is based on the following key questions in quality management: What do you want to achieve, and why? How do you want to do it? How do you know that the activities are effective and will have the desired impact? Is there an
equilibrium between the desired outcomes and the resources used for their achievement (including technological solutions)? How do you manage the quality improvement activities?

Indicators
• Improvement activities implemented based on the analyses of internal evaluations in the   HEI's core and support processes (examples from different areas)
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

EKA's quality standards are based upon the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) that map the HAKA standards for institutional accreditation. In EKA's case, the Estonian Higher Education Act and the Standard of Higher Education pertain to the first, second, and third cycles, while the Standard of Continuing Education pertains to the Open Academy. Specific to EKA is the Estonian Quality Agreement for Artistic Research to which EKA is signed up, which contributes to the characterisation of an arts university at the third cycle (SER p.40). Through the Rector, the Academy belongs to the Estonian Universities leadership network that has developed 'a quality agreement for Estonian public universities, [...] on good quality practices and a quality agreement for doctoral studies' to 'increase cooperation and systematisation in the field of university quality' (SER p.40). Additionally, EKA has developed a 'quality agreement on artistic research' with EMTA and TLÜ, and beyond its borders EKA is involved in the Erasmus+ project 'Future Art School Trends 45' that is a forum that shares policy papers and guidelines in order to equip arts schools with knowledge and tools to plan for the future. Hence the Panel finds that EKA looks to both its national and European contexts to affirm its quality policies, processes and standards.

While the Rector and the Senate are responsible for leading the quality culture, at the heart of the EKA quality system is the recognition that all members of its educational community, including external stakeholders should actively participate in its quality culture and contribute to the quality

development and continuous improvement of its educational and research activities, as well as its societal impact. During the site visit, the Panel observed an openness and trust that appears to permeate the Academy, among all levels and roles, from student to rector, from administrators to researchers, such that there was a sense of working together towards common objectives. Only in one instance did the Panel find that contributions to the quality culture were narrowly understood as the 'quality' of individual activities evidenced by receiving awards, rather than supplementing this by playing an active role in a culture of continuous improvement through engagement with the quality objectives.

EKA's strategic objectives are clearly identified in a Strategic Development Plan 2021-2025 and relevant key indicators and target dates are clearly set out in most cases (SER Table 8, pp. 31-32). While there appeared to be a tacit understanding among teachers and Heads of Curriculum concerning what an 'up to date' curriculum looks like, the Panel did not hear a clear understanding of how it is measured and evaluated. The Panel recommends that EKA revisit and update the 'Key activities' and 'Desired results' listed against Strategic Objective 1 in the EKA Development Plan (which is subject to approval) and ensure they are widely shared and understood. Progress on the Plan is overseen by the recently appointed Head of Quality and Development and is conveyed each year in the annual report to the Senate and the University Council and is publicly accessible on the EKA wiki (in Estonian).

The quality management system used by EKA is the PDCA cyclical method (Plan, Do, Check, Act) and this is well-illustrated in Figure 9 of the SER (p. 41). Feeding into the PDCA process are regular internal evaluations (SER Table 10, p. 42), and in this way, EKA involves its internal and external stakeholders in student and graduate satisfaction surveys, focus groups, alumni events, curriculum analysis, performance reviews, and employee satisfaction surveys (sample questionnaire provided in requested documents). While the number of responders to the employee satisfaction survey in 2022 remains relatively low at 39% (SER Table 6, pp. 23-27), it is an improvement from the previous accreditation period when the figure was at 29.9%, and the Head of Personnel Department shared their plans to increase participation (M). The Panel commends EKA for the introduction of regular performance development reviews for teachers that, alongside the student feedback at the end of each semester, inform the topics for the Good Teaching Seminars, creating a meaningful way for upgrading teachers' pedagogical skills, and also for sharing good practice - and that the interviewed teachers stated are helpful. During the site visit, interviewees (M, T) were positive that improvements to learning and teaching arise from these two interlinked areas of quality enhancement (see also SER Table 16, p.56). While the Panel heard positive views by teachers (T) that the 'feedback culture has increased in recent years' supported by the appointment of the Head of Quality and Development, it was also noted by international hourly paid teachers that they had not received formal student feedback on their teaching and were eager to engage with students' responses (see also Standard 10).

During the various interviews (T, S), the Panel was confirmed that actions made in response to the feedback received through internal evaluations are communicated in an open seminar format for staff and students, which the Panel considers to be an efficient method for disseminating outcomes arising from an analysis of survey data (SER p. 42). Updates are also accessible on the EKA wiki and in management communications. Students also mentioned (S) that informal feedback to their teachers happens in studio settings when a quick reaction is preferable - thus the studio is a student-centred activity where feedback can be easily collected. Student Council members provide feedback on

'what they know' in advertised meetings and via the student representatives network, and to this end, they are working to ensure that student representation is in place across all Faculties.

The Panel heard (S) examples of internal stakeholder input leading directly to enhancements, such as doctoral students informing the content of the reading seminars, and BA teachers constantly 'reshaping' their courses. The Panel considers the curriculum committees to be an area of good practice, in that they ensure the student voice is heard and responded to, and for evaluating the quality of studies. Some external stakeholders (E) spoke positively about their role on curriculum committees and their agency in influencing curriculum content, for example introducing small business knowledge and skills into the curriculum, while others stated they would like their involvement in curriculum design to be formal rather than informal. The Panel finds that external stakeholder input into curriculum content and design ensures the relevance of the study programmes, however, involvement should be formalised across all programmes.

External stakeholders also confirmed that they participate in assessments, which provides another conduit for their views to inform the study programmes. Overall, the Panel finds that the feedback loops are working well.

Owing to the pivotal role EKA plays in Estonian arts and culture, the Panel finds that the majority of external stakeholders who are employers are also alumni and that many alumni are also teachers and researchers in the Academy. This proliferating connectedness, and resulting co-dependencies, for example in the labour market, is a distinctive aspect of EKA, that serves the quality culture well, but demands that interrelationships are established and nurtured on a formal basis, rather than the informal basis that the Panel frequently heard about (see also standard 1). The Panel recommends, in addition to the alumni network, that alumni be invited to attend and be involved in annual events, EKA consider ways to engage all alumni consistently and formally in quality processes, particularly the international alumni, for example, in terms of identifying international trends.

In a number of interviews, the Panel met internal and external stakeholders who are members of decision-making bodies (E, S): the EKA Council, the Senate, the Student Council, and the Curriculum Committees. Regarding the Curriculum Committees, a few external stakeholders described their involvement in Curriculum Committees as unnecessary because they have strong informal links to the academic staff through which they can influence curriculum content (E). Therefore, the Panel strongly advises EKA to ensure that external stakeholders' formal involvement in curriculum committees is consistent across all programmes. A Panel question arose regarding why there is student representation on every level of the EKA committee structure except for the EKA Council, and this is addressed further in Standard 1. The Panel also recommends that EKA address the concerns of the Student Council about inconsistent student representation in some faculties.

An area of initial concern for the Panel was whether equilibrium exists between, on the one hand - the desired outcomes/improvements implemented through internal QA processes - i.e., what does EKA want to do? And on the other hand - the administrative resources needed to achieve the stated objectives. This leads to the question: is the internal QA workload manageable? It was clear to the Panel in meetings with the Deans, Heads of Departments and Heads of Curriculum (M) that the internal QA processes introduced since the previous accreditation are highly valued and owned, and lead to enhancements, but that the increased workload is a challenge. The Panel witnessed that when well-designed software systems introduce efficiency into quality processes, such as student feedback appearing to teachers in Tahvel, this shows a good use of technology to streamline quality processes. Furthermore, now that the quality culture is well-established and embedded across EKA,

the Panel fully agrees with the improvement stated in the Quality Culture summary (SER p. 44), regarding the 'continued development of user-friendly platforms, including digital solutions and sharing of best practices, empowering support activities to simplify and reduce administrative burden'. The Panel encourages EKA to identify further streamlining of internal QA where possible.

Conclusions

The Panel finds that EKA quality policies, processes and standards are informed and affirmed by its national and European contexts. Its Strategic Objectives are aligned to key indicators and targets and progress is monitored and conveyed in an annual report, that is shared widely. Quality processes are well-established and embedded across EKA, with internal and external stakeholders regularly participating in the quality culture and contributing to quality development and continuous improvement through internal evaluations and membership of committees. Feedback loops work well to inform stakeholders of the outcomes of analysis of their evaluations. Good Teaching Seminars reflect relevant topics in need of enhancement that are identified through student feedback and teacher performance development reviews. EKA has adequately identified areas in need of improvement and is working towards those.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 3 – Quality Culture.

Strengths

- The Panel finds that the feedback loops are working well.
- The Panel recognises that for EKA the term 'external stakeholders' is framed by its pivotal role in Estonian arts and culture as the Panel finds that the majority of external stakeholders who are employers are also alumni and that many alumni are also teachers and researchers in the Academy.
- The internal QA systems that support the quality culture are embedded across EKA, and in general, are embraced by the internal stakeholders.
- The Panel witnesses that well-designed software systems introduce efficiency into quality processes, such as student feedback appearing to teachers in Tahvel.
- The Panel commends EKA for the introduction of regular performance development reviews for teachers that, alongside student feedback at the end of each semester, create a meaningful way to upgrade teachers' pedagogical skills and share good practices.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel recommends that EKA consider ways to engage all alumni consistently and formally in quality processes, particularly the international alumni, for example in terms of identifying international trends.
- The Panel recommends that EKA revisit and update the 'Key activities' and 'Desired results' listed against Strategic Objective 1 'Up-to-date Curricula' in the EKA Development Plan (which is subject to approval) and ensure they are widely shared and understood.
- The Panel recommends that EKA address the concerns of the Student Council about inconsistent student representation in some faculties.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests EKA find a way for international hourly paid teachers to receive formal regular student feedback on their teaching.
- The Panel strongly advises EKA to ensure that external stakeholders' formal involvement in curriculum committees is consistent across all programmes.

- The Panel encourages EKA to continue the development of user-friendly platforms, including digital solutions, to simplify and reduce the administrative burden of internal quality assurance.

1.4   Academic Ethics

Standard
The higher education institution has defined its principles for academic ethics, has a system for disseminating them among its members, and has a code of conduct including guidelines for any cases of non-compliance with these principles.
The higher education institution has a functioning system for handling complaints.

Guidelines
The HEI values its members and ensures that all its employees and students are treated according to the principle of equal treatment.
Employees and students of the HEI are guided by the agreed principles of academic ethics in all their activities.
The HEI respects fundamental values and policies of research set out in the document, 'Research Integrity', issued jointly by Estonian research institutions, the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Estonian Research Council and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.
The HEI supports its students and teaching staff in their understanding and responding to ethical issues.
Teaching staff and students do not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and they will act immediately upon any such occurrence. Attention is paid to the application of principles of academic ethics in the digital environment: avoidance of creative theft, the protection of intellectual property rights, etc.
Management of complaints from HEI members (including discrimination cases) is transparent and objective, ensuring fair treatment of all parties.

Indicators
• The percentage of student papers checked by plagiarism detection systems and the percentage of detected plagiarisms.
• Other indicators depending on the HEI, for example, statistics about complaints (total number, the proportion of decisions taken in favour of the applicant).

Evidence and analysis

During the site visit, the Panel observed that EKA outwardly values its members, and in order to ensure that all its employees and students are treated according to the principle of equal treatment EKA has made significant improvements in academic ethics since 2017, when it was recommended that they needed to 'establish clearer internal rules on ethics violations' (SER p. 23). The Code of Ethics, which is one of five Foundational Acts, has been revised in 2021 and 2023, with reference to a number of key European charters (including ALLEA 2017), and to the 'fundamental values and policies found in the Estonian document entitled 'Research Integrity', issued jointly by the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Estonian Research Council and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research' (SER p. 44). In drafting the Code of Ethics, the Panel heard from the student representatives (S), that the EKA leadership invited the Student Council to participate in the formulation of its agreed principles and values, all of which are encompassed within the Academy's stated core values (SER Table 11, p. 44). The SER (Table 12, p. 45) clearly sets out the related regulations and policies that align with, inform, and constitute the substance of the Code of Ethics, notable of which is the Gender Equality Plan 2025, through which EKA has already delivered results on its objective to 'promote gender equality and ensure equal opportunities and treatment for all members of EKA'. Evidence is set out in the statistical data (SER Figure 15, p. 54) that meets the European Commission's recommendation that gender balance is achieved when both sexes are represented by at least 40% of the total workforce. While the gender balance by academic pay grade shows that at the researcher level, women hold 62% of the posts, and among the professoriate, they

hold only 47% of posts (Gender Equality Plan, Table 2), the Panel noted that the majority of senior leadership positions are currently held by women.

The Code of Ethics sets out the standards of behaviour all EKA members are expected to uphold in their day-to-day activities and covers all the requirements of membership of the EU such as data protection (GDPR) and the Equality Act 2010 that upholds the rights of those with protected characteristics. Through interviews (T, S), the Panel found that the implementation of the revised Code of Ethics has been well-received by the internal stakeholders, who are familiar with its concerns (and will have acknowledged this as well as relevant Estonian legislation, when first logging into Tahvel). The Panel heard time and again that the internal stakeholders know where to seek advice in the first instance should they become aware of, or themselves experience, a case of ethical conflict: students from the student council, psychologist, Head of Curriculum, or the Ethics Committee; and employees from an immediate supervisor, Head of Personnel Department, or the Ethics Committee. Alongside the counselling identified in Learning Support (SER pp. 70-71), psychological counselling is provided for students affected by ethical conflicts through the psychologist-career counsellor, and for employees through a psychological counselling service, that can be accessed three times a year at the Academy's expense (SER p. 46). The psychologist's contract has been increased to offer more counselling since the pandemic and to support students with special needs (M).

Once an ethical conflict has arisen, EKA has a clear and serviceable step-by-step procedure (SER Figure. 11, p.46) for raising and resolving complaints such that once advice has been sought, an issue may be resolved at first reporting within the academic or administrative unit. Alternatively, and subject to the nature of the ethical conflict, a complaint can be submitted formally to the Ethics Committee. Depending on the conciliatory, justificatory, or condemnatory decision of the Ethics Committee, the matter proceeds for consideration and action by the Rector. Guidance is easily found on the EKA website under the heading 'Wellbeing and bullying-free academy' (https://www.artun.ee/en/academy/available-posts/). Here, recommendations are set out for students and employees who have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment and/or bullying, as well as recommendations for those against whom a complaint has been lodged. During the site visit, the Panel heard that the current student generation is very aware of 'proper conduct and attitudes' and is openly challenging the older teaching generation, and the Panel noted that the Good Teaching Seminars have provided appropriate training for teachers. While the anonymity of complainers may be assured within the complaints system, the Panel acknowledges that this is not always possible in a relatively small academic community. Overall, the Panel finds that the management of complaints by EKA members is transparent and objective and ensures fair treatment of all parties. Between 2018 and 2022 there were four formal complaints all of which were resolved (SER p. 46).

The Panel noticed an absence in the EKA Foundational Acts of the issues pertaining to inclusion and diversity and understood that customarily, this omission reflects the specific Estonian context in which Russians are the only minority group. However, in the summary of the pre-visit survey the academic staff requested the university to pay more attention in the future to training in inclusive teaching methods. In the same summary, one student raised a specific concern regarding the use of their preferred name as a trans student, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and respect for diversity in all its manifestations, and the need to provide support for staff in adjusting to societal shifts. The Panel recommends that EKA should extend the excellent work done on equality (an EU legal requirement), to produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan. This is particularly

relevant in the current political and social climate, in which the unexpected should be expected. For instance: the Panel heard how effectively EKA moved to online and blended learning, teaching and assessment during the COVID-19 global pandemic, and lessons learnt here could inform an EDI plan. Equally EKA's intention to increase the number of international students would be well-served by preparedness regarding inclusion and diversity across the educational activities of EKA. The Panel was reassured to hear that the Senior Leadership team already planned to address this omission.

In terms of study ethics, the Panel agrees with the statement in the SER (p. 47) that an area of improvement is the establishment of a specific Code of Conduct for Research Integrity at EKA, 'including a procedure for [...] identifying and resolving violations, to cover other academic and research ethics issues'. At present, the role of the Ethics Committee is satisfactorily fulfilled by the Research Council for academic staff and, for doctoral students, by the Board of the Doctoral School (SER 3.4.5), and this arrangement covers incidents of academic fraud, such as cheating and plagiarism. Between 2019 and 2023 EKA advised the Panel that 1,426 pieces of academic writing went through a plagiarism detection software, Ouriginal and that all flagged submissions were reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the academic staff responsible for the relevant course or module and with the Curriculum Leaders (Additional information provided upon request of the Panel - ADD 7). EKA states that this approach enables a 'nuanced and context-aware method that ensures that the individual characteristics of each work and the intricacies of scholarly writing are duly considered'. The Panel is satisfied that plagiarism is addressed when detected across EKA (EKA Study Regulations p. 29) and that no cases of plagiarism have been identified (SER p. 47). Strike Plagiarism/Plagiat.pl is now used by EKA. Contributing to the avoidance of academic misconduct is correct referencing by students of research sources, and therefore the Panel recommends that academic staff should correctly reference publications, websites, online journals, exhibitions etc in reading lists in the Subject Cards, and clearly indicate reading lists as either 'compulsory' or 'recommended'. The Panel found this is not always the case (see subject card DK8600) and identified correct referencing in Subject Cards as an area for concern.

The Panel heard that training for academic staff in research ethics is underway (M, T). However, on the 'rare' occasion that research in EKA needs ethical approval, advice is sought from, or an application is made to, for example, the Ethics Committee at Tallinn University or the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tartu. While this measure does address the absence of an ethical approval process within EKA until the stated objective for an Estonian-wide research ethics committee is established, the Panel encourages EKA to source an appropriate level of external training for key research staff such that advice on preparing ethical approval applications can be provided within the responsibilities of the Ethics Committee. The expertise gained would be of considerable benefit to the research community at EKA.

An area the Panel notes for improvement is clarification at the doctoral level, where and when training in research ethics is taught. The Panel notes that 'Good Research: Principles of Research Ethics', is an elective module for doctoral students (available in Estonian and English), while the compulsory subject: DK8102 'Academic Writing', mentions research ethics in the 'subject content' and in the criteria it states that 'In order to pass the course, all the assignments need to be submitted [...] taking into account the [...] principles of [...] research ethics'. However, there is no equivalent learning outcome, and the Panel understands this reflects that the occasions when research in Art History and Theory requires ethical approval are atypical. Furthermore, the Panel could find no reference to research ethics in the 'EKA Doctoral Studies Regulations', although the professors explained that if a student needs advice on research ethics (which occurs mainly in artistic

research) they turn to the Head of Curriculum and that a personal approach is taken for each case. With a potential increase in artistic research, the Panel suggests this should be addressed by Annex 1 and 2 forms requiring doctoral students and their supervisors to clearly state in the affirmative or the negative whether ethical approval is required for any aspect of the research methods, and a clause be added in Annex 3: Good Supervisory Practice, that a supervisor will ensure that a doctoral candidate is advised on the need for ethical approval, and supported in obtaining it, and if necessary can access training in research ethics within their curriculum. A similar process for academic staff research ethics approval would be worthwhile.

At the master's level, the Panel heard in interviews (T) that artistic research methods are being introduced in intelligent and innovative ways through group research projects and students being involved in staff research and that oversight of these across Departments and Faculties via the Good Teaching Seminars would be very beneficial (see recommendation in Standard 7 of this report). In case a master's student needs to seek ethical approval, the Panel suggests that the introduction of research ethics be incorporated into research methods training at the master's level and that this should pay particular attention to research ethics for artistic research. The Panel noted that sustainability, as an area of ethical practice, is well represented and embedded across the study programmes at EKA and is one of the objectives of the Estonian Artistic Research Network Agreement.

The Panel heard that the development of an EKA repository project for research outputs is underway, to address the fragmented nature of the current system. The launch, expected in the Autumn of 2024, was delayed due to the time needed to decide on the optimal software programme. While the same system (available in Estonian and English) will be used by all Estonian universities, each higher education institution will only be able to access their own outputs. The repository is also central to Intellectual Property (IP) rights in EKA, and currently, the IP regulations (2016) covering student, staff and institution ownership are under revision, but for now, IP is applied one-third each to researcher, supervisor, and EKA. The Panel heard that EKA is in favour of Open Access and that discussions are ongoing, awaiting policy drafting.

The Panel commends EKA on the development of the document 'EKA Artificial Intelligence in Education' that provides guidance for academic staff on the uses and implications of AI: its introduction in the curricula; opportunities for teachers and students; AI and academic honesty and prevention; and citing AI correctly. The teachers value the guidance, although they recognise that the field changes very quickly - and have been testing ways to incorporate AI in their teaching. The Panel heard in interviews that active dialogues concerning its pros and cons are taking place across the EKA community (S, T). Students noted specifically that international guest teachers are engaging with AI and found introductions and discussions about AI useful. It was noted that in the Estonian context, AI is currently 'weak', due to language limitations.

Conclusions

EKA has made substantial progress since the previous accreditation in addressing academic ethics in relation to all aspects of its educational activities, including within its digital and physical work and study environments, informed by Estonian and EU legislation. Internal stakeholders are fully aware of the expectations embodied in its revised Code of Ethics and related policies and Acts and are empowered to raise issues and seek advice if an ethical conflict arises through a well-formed complaints procedure that ensures fairness and transparency. While research ethics are partially covered in the doctoral curricula and an interim process is in place for ethical approval, the Panel

encourages EKA to strengthen this area of its ethics practice by firmly embedding research ethics training for students (Doctoral and Master) in the curricula and establishing research ethics approval for staff and students within its committee structure, if allowed under EKA statutes. Highly successful efforts focused on gender equality should now be extended to encompass inclusion and diversity, in readiness for an unpredictable future.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 4 - Academic Ethics.

Strengths

- The Panel commends the implementation of a revised Code of Ethics, and inclusion of Student Council in its drafting. All internal stakeholders are aware of the Code and know how to raise complaints/any violations and where to seek advice. The complaints process is fair and transparent.
- Gender equality across EKA meets the recommendations of the EU.
- The drafting and implementation of EKA Artificial Intelligence in Education provides guidelines on using AI for academic staff, and dialogues concerning its opportunities and challenges are active across the EKA community.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel notes an absence, within the Foundational Acts of EKA, of policy relating to inclusion and diversity, and recommends that EKA should extend the excellent work done on gender equality (an EU legal requirement), to produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and respect for diversity in all its manifestations now, and for unknown future societal and political scenarios.
- Contributing to the avoidance of academic misconduct is correct referencing by students of research sources, and therefore the Panel recommends that academic staff should correctly reference publications, websites, online journals, exhibitions etc., in reading lists in the Subject Cards, and clearly indicate reading lists as either 'compulsory' or 'recommended' or both.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel encourages EKA to source an appropriate level of external training for key research staff such that advice on preparing ethical approval applications can be provided within the responsibilities of the Ethics Committee (aka Research Council and Doctoral Board).
- The Panel encourages EKA to strengthen the student's understanding of the circumstances in which ethical approval is required by firmly embedding research ethics training for students (Doctoral and Master) in the curricula.

1.5   Internationalisation

Standard
The higher education institution has set objectives for internationalisation and assesses the attainment of these objectives regularly.
The higher education institution has created an environment that encourages international mobility of students and teaching staff, supporting the development of learning, teaching and RDC activities, as well as the cultural openness of its members and Estonian society in general.

Guidelines
The HEI creates opportunities for international student exchanges by offering study programmes and/or modules taught in English. The learning environment at the HEI supports internationalisation and cultural openness.
Recognition of qualifications and recognition of prior learning and work experiences for student admission and programme completion are in accordance with the quality requirements set by the HEI, are systemic and consistent with the expected learning outcomes and support international student mobility. The organisation of studies at the HEI facilitates student participation in international (including virtual) mobility (e.g., study programmes enable mobility windows). The HEI has agreements with foreign higher education institutions and, through international exchange, sends its students abroad to study and undertake internships, providing comprehensive support for this. Members of the teaching staff encourage students to participate in international mobility.
International lecturers participate in the process of teaching, including supervision of doctoral theses. The HEI supports and recognises the participation of its teaching staff in international teaching, research or creative projects, as well as their teaching, research or creative work and personal development which are performed at HEIs abroad.

Indicators
• Teaching staff mobility (in-out)
• Student mobility (in-out)
• Other indicators depending on the HEI, for example:
  - Number of English-taught study programmes by main units and levels of study
  - Percentage of foreign students (by study programmes, levels of study, in total in the HEI)
  - Percentage of study programmes that include English-taught subjects (of at least 15 ECTS)
  - Number of ECTS acquired through external mobility

Evidence and analysis

The Academy shows a clear ambition for internationalisation and indicates that the unique geographical and (historical) geo-political conditions in which Estonia finds itself as one of the most important reasons to encourage mobility. This ambition has been clearly demonstrated in the SER. An extensive programme has been set up to give both students and teachers the opportunity to go on exchanges. This can be a short mobility, an internship or a staff exchange for a short period of time or a longer period.

The EKA indicates that the international experiences that students and lecturers gain, together with the influence of incoming students and lecturers, offer added value for the current education provided in EKA. EKA wants to present itself and profile itself as open to internationalisation culture where internationalisation offers opportunities to broaden horizons and develop international competences. Internationalisation can make an important contribution to language development, awareness and perception of social and global issues in order to develop identity and also to maintain contact with an international labour market. EKA prides itself on the fact that all curricula contain an international competency that is achieved through intensive encouragement of mobility by students, staff and external examiners. The Head of the International Office can take a clear view of the extent to which the internationalisation of EKA has been able to nurture and help develop

Estonia's cultural profile in general. However, this achievement is not immediately felt among the vast majority of other interviewees (T, S, A, E).

The indicators (SER Table 14) show that there is indeed a lot of mobility. The proportion of international incoming students is respectable compared to the total number of students within the bachelor's programmes. The ambition, as indicated in various study programmes, to have every student do an exchange at least once during his/her studies, is reflected in the most recent figures (SER Table 14 p. 50).

The level of achievement of these different points is well reflected by a number of indicators for internationalisation:

1. the share of international students in the total number of students.
2. the number of study programmes taught in English.
3. the mobility of students and teaching staff.
4. the share of international graduates in the total number of graduates.
5. the number of international (regional) collaborations with other Universities.
6. the way funding is organised.

The opportunities offered are very extensive and EKA offers many opportunities to gain international experience. Several international networks have been set up as strategic partnerships with Nordic and Baltic networks such as CIRRUS, EAAE, KUNO, NORDIC-BALTIC ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE AND EDDA NORDEN. EKA succeeds in achieving its long-term goal of being more visible and influential in the regional international networks. EKA is active in ELIA, CUMULUS and the European Alliance of Academies and is also a strategic partner in collaborations such as Cirrus, EAAE, KUNO, DAMA, Nordic-Baltic Academy of Architecture and EDDA Norden. Collaborations in which EKA plays a leading, coordinating role in some cases.

EKA's commitment to fostering international study mobility is also reflected in the increase in funding. EKA shows that it is very successful in securing and applying external financing for its mobility programmes (SER Figure 12). The availability of funding is currently organised in such a way that there is a possibility for everyone who is interested to go on mobility. It is commendable that EKA safeguards this ambition.

Not only are there few financial restrictions to go on mobility, but the range is also very extensive. Within Erasmus+, Nordplus and bilateral agreements, there is the possibility of exchange and there is also the possibility to participate in various traineeships. Mobility is not always self-evident in the case of an exchange with so-called third global south countries but the Panel appreciates the various opportunities created through Erasmus Blended Intensive Programmes. By means of competition, the students can claim to participate in one of the 6 BIPs or to be actively and motivated to look for opportunities in third countries and this is acknowledged.

The Panel is able to conclude that both students and teachers were very satisfied with the possibilities that EKA offers for mobility, (T, S). In its SER, EKA clearly sets out its ambitions and provides clear figures and an overview of developments and collaborations in the field of internationalisation. It shows that there is indeed considerable growth in the field of mobility both in numbers and in the increase in funding.

Internationalisation clearly works in two directions. In addition to many outgoing students, there is a substantial (slight increase) number of incoming students. All possibilities for mobility are clearly communicated by EKA (https://mobility.artun.ee). It provides a clear overview and insight into the

diversity of possibilities and therefore also gives a broader and more diverse group the opportunity to enter into mobility. The panel learnt from interviews (S, T) that international exchanges show a high satisfaction level and see EKA as an attractive destination for international exchange (SER Table 14).

From the interviews (S), the Panel is able to conclude that not only do students find mobility valuable for their study development but also see this as one of the possibilities to shape their own learning path. Lecturers (T) also indicated that they have been able to upgrade their professionalism through mobility. Lecturers are adequately supported in organising mobility and also see mobility as a matter of course and especially as an opportunity to broaden their horizons. This is fully in line with EKA's ambitions.

Although the figures indicate that substantial staff mobility is already taking place (SER, Figure 52 p. 52), there is a clear desire from the staff to teach more for longer periods abroad and to participate in various research programmes which could contribute to the in-house study programmes in the longer term. It is striking that the figures for 2020 compared to 2019 do not show a very large decrease when COVID-19 made its appearance.

Conclusions

In general, the figures and interviews show that there is an active and valued mobility programme. The many opportunities offer a diverse number of students the opportunity to gain international exposure (experience) and lecturers clearly indicated that they consider mobility an important addition to their professional practice as a teacher. The collaborations with other European universities not only offer new insights to the Academy itself but in some cases have the open source result that other stakeholders in education or certain other professional fields of interest can also benefit from the results and thus have a broader social interest. There is clear monitoring of the activities and there is a lot of support in the field of international mobility. EKA provides an ambitious, clear and generous mobility programme. There is certainly an awareness and vision from the organisation when it comes to internationalisation and how local and global cultures and experiences might be more creatively interwoven.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 5 – Internationalisation.

Strengths

- EKA has shown steadily high numbers of international exchanges for incoming and outgoing students. This is unique in Estonia and demonstrated well in the discussions had with EKA students. The benefits the students receive from going abroad and the clear support system in place for them to do so are outstanding.
- The availability of funding is currently organised in such a way that there is a possibility for everyone who is interested to go on mobility.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- In the organisation, and in particular the International Office, there is a clear vision of how internationalisation can contribute to the development of the curricula. It is recommended that this be further developed more intensively together with the curriculum committees.

1.6   Teaching Staff

Standard
Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of learners and value their own continuous self-development.

Guidelines
Distribution of teaching staff by age and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff ensure the sustainability of studies. The career model of academic staff motivates capable young people to start an academic career and creates opportunities for their advancement.
The HEI supports systematically the development of its teaching staff. Members of the teaching staff engage in the development of their professional, teaching and digital competences, improve their supervision competence, and share best practices with one another. IT and educational technological support (including training) are available to teaching staff.
Teaching staff's participation in research, development and/or creative activities supports the teaching process and ensures competence for the supervision of students' theses (including doctoral theses). Members of the teaching staff collaborate in fields of teaching, research and/or creative work within the HEI and with partners outside the HEI, e.g. with field practitioners, public sector organisations, companies, other research and development institutions, and lecturers from other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions. Qualified visiting lecturers and practitioners participate in the teaching process.
When assessing the work of teaching staff (including their periodical evaluations), the effectiveness of their teaching, as well as their research, development and creative work, is taken into account, including student feedback, the effectiveness of their student supervision, development of their teaching; supervisory and digital competences, their international mobility, and their entrepreneurial experience or other work experience in their fields of speciality outside the HEI.

Indicators
• Competition for elected academic positions
• Number of students per teaching staff member in full-time equivalent (FTE)
• Percentage of teaching staff holding a PhD degree
• The results of the students' feedback about the teaching staff
• Teaching staff participating in continuing training or other forms of teaching and digital competences and professional development
• Other indicators depending on the HEI.

Evidence and analysis

EKA's academic staff is well-balanced age- and gender-wise. In 2022, academic staff composition was 56% women and 44% men. There are certain differences between Departments, but the Institution is well aware of these cases and can provide explanations with reference to global trends which is adequate. Age is well distributed with a good balance between professors, associate professors, lecturers, senior researchers, researchers, and PhD students (SER Fig. 14). Although there is no direct correlation between these positions and age, the figure indicates a good age balance. The employment relations of the academic staff of EKA are governed by the 'Rules on Employment Regulations with Academic Staff Members' (approved in 2019), which define the career stages of and career opportunities for academic staff.

As of the end of 2022, there were 13.6 students per academic staff member (FTE) at EKA. This is considered a very good ratio by the Panel. According to the SER, the Departments have a small proportion of permanent academic staff and at least half of the curriculum is taught by hourly paid teaching staff. The SER discusses this phenomenon in detail and explains it with reference to the fact that EKA is the only art university in Estonia and covers all the expectations of the country's art, architecture, and design specialities. Consequently, there are many curricula with small volumes,

which does not allow for the creation of full-time positions. This may lead to concerns about how academic memory is secured and stored on an institutional level. In interviews (M), this was acknowledged as a challenge, but the ambition is that general descriptions of curricula will secure necessary memory.

In 2020, EKA established a new career model for academic staff which lead to evaluations in accordance with EKA's 'Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members'. To systematically support the development of teaching and supervising competences, EKA links the mandatory periodic assessment of academic staff members (regulated by the Estonian Higher Education Act), with the institution's performance development reviews (which aim to assess the performance and satisfaction of staff members with their work and working conditions). The SER states (p. 56) that between 2020 and 2022, 46 periodic assessments were carried out, with four negative decisions. For all negative decisions, the employee was given re-evaluation time to correct the deficiencies.

To secure the development of the teaching staff, EKA has established the Good Teaching Seminars which are complemented by training sessions that promote teaching skills, and e-learning guidance and facilitate the exchange of international experiences. The Panel counted 48 seminars in the period 2018-2023, with a variety of topics (SER p. 56, and Overview of Courses and Seminars in EKA). This is regarded as solid, and interviews with teachers (T) confirm the value for academic staff. The content of the seminars is informed by the academic staff's performance development reviews, evaluations, and student feedback, in addition to broader societal needs. In addition, EKA offers courses like 'Help for Teaching Staff' and 'Learning and Teaching at the University', both for permanent and hourly paid staff.

To secure digital learning, a digital learning designer position was created in 2021, whose main responsibilities are to support teaching staff in developing digital competences and to develop e-learning solutions for the Academy. The Good Teaching Seminars have also included the development of digital competencies ('Moodle training for EKA lecturers', 'e-learning experience café', 'Engaging learners in digital education', 'Artificial Intelligence at university').

EKA has established a thorough evaluation system to monitor the performance of academic staff. In addition to the periodic staff evaluation and the performance review, feedback on the work of the teaching staff is collected from students at the end of each semester and in a graduate satisfaction survey (SER, Table 17). The data is used for improvements. Interviews with students (S) and teaching staff (T) confirmed a well-functioning system. On questions to the students, whether they felt exposed in the feedback surveys, they denied this. Rather the opposite, and they confirmed that changes were made according to feedback given. This is also shown in Table 17, which proves high appreciation by students of highly qualified teachers.

While the institutional developments of teaching staff through the Good Teaching Seminars and further activities are appropriate and effective, there is a small concern related to how research and development activities inform teaching and supervision competence at BA and MA levels. The institutional accreditation of EKA in 2017 recommended the institution, in the area of staff development, to put particular emphasis on the nature and potential outcome of artistic research, to fully involve the Faculties of Fine Art, Design, and Architecture (SER p.23). This has been targeted through the Doctoral School, as well as curriculum developments to engage students in research. Still, it is not very clear how teachers' research activities inform teaching and supervision competences, although several examples of research activities show high-quality research and

sufficient volume (ADD p.12). The second concern relates to a possible – but natural - difference in professional profile between visiting staff and permanent staff. It is common in higher arts education that external specialists are invited in as tutors/supervisors on master projects because they are specialists within their field. The SER states that this is the case for instance within the Interaction Design master's programme (SER p. 131). The institution must develop ways to harvest that specialist competence for the best of permanent staff and the institution.

Evidence of staff involvement with partners outside EKA, e.g. with field practitioners, public sector organisations, companies, other research and development institutions, and lecturers from other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions (SER pp. 93, 107, 121 and 132) must be considered as solid.

At EKA outstanding artists, practitioners or researchers in their field may be invited as visiting academic staff members without competition for up to five years to achieve the objectives of the curriculum. The SER clarifies that all Departments have a small number of permanent academic staff and that at least half of the curriculum is taught by hourly paid teaching staff (external competence – SER p.13., Fig. 1). The overall figure is 116 academic staff for 1153 students.

Conclusions

The Panel finds that teaching at EKA is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff. Visiting teachers and supervisors are vital to the institution and secure quality and connection to the professional field. The Panel also finds that the institution supports the development of its permanent and hourly paid teachers and stimulates their self-development.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 6 - Teaching Staff

Strengths

- EKA has very qualified teaching staff, and thorough systems to ensure and support the development of learners and value their own continuous self-development.
- The 'Good Teachers Seminars', and the way the content of these seminars is informed by assessment mechanisms and evaluation systems are excellent.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- There is still a concern related to how research and creative activities inform teaching and supervision at BA and MA levels amongst permanent staff. The Panel does not doubt the quality of the research activities but recommends the institution systemise the ways these activities support teaching and supervision.

Opportunities for further improvement

- EKA has a small proportion of permanent academic staff. Consequently, it can be challenging to secure and store institutional academic memory. The leadership is aware of the challenge and is encouraged to develop further measures.
- The open competition for elective positions is low, but the leadership is aware of the challenge and ambition to increase the competition and is encouraged to develop further measures.

1.7 Study Programmes

Standard
Study programmes are designed and developed while taking into account the expectations of stakeholders, higher education and professional standards, and trends in the relevant fields.
The objectives of study programmes, modules and courses and their planned learning outcomes are specific and coherent.
The study programmes support creativity, entrepreneurship and the development of other general competencies.

Guidelines
In planning and developing study programmes (incl. programmes conducted in a foreign language), the HEI is guided by its objectives, its competence areas and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account national strategies and the expectations of society. The study programmes are based on up-to-date sectoral know-how and research.
The planned learning outcomes are in accord with the requirements for the corresponding level of the Estonian Qualifications Framework, and in planning them the HEI has taken into account the future needs, among other things. In developing study programmes, the HEI has conducted a comparative analysis of similar programmes in leading foreign higher education institutions.
The objectives of the study programme and its modules, the planned learning outcomes, theoretical and practical learning, the proportion of independent work and internship, and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes form a coherent whole.
The development of general competences (incl. creativity and entrepreneurship) and speciality-related digital competences as well as support for the development of a self-directed learner is a natural part of the study programme, and these are integrated with speciality studies.
Expected student workloads defined in the study programmes are realistic and consistent with the calculation that, on average, 1 ECTS credit equals 26 student learning hours. The study programme offers sufficient challenges for learners with different levels of knowledge and skills.

Indicators
• Number of students per study programme
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

EKA uses a rather practical but very clear method of how curricula are designed. The curricula are designed in such a way that all curricula have a clear and well-organised structure, use well-founded study methods and have links with practices in the field. In doing so, EKA relates to a number of provisions and regulations and to which it is committed in order to ensure the development, practicability and control.

The curricula are developed following the Higher Education Act and the Standard of Higher Education, the Estonian Academy of Arts Act, the Statutes of the Estonian Academy of Arts, the EKA Study Regulations and the EKA Doctoral Study Regulations. The regulations of the curricula are adequately set out in the Study Regulations. At the MA and PhD levels, a clearer linkage should be established with the long-term objectives set in national development strategy and action plans.

The Curriculum Development Process clearly complies with several regulations and the SER shows clear indicators for the development of new curricula (SER p.61). The Curriculum Diagrams of the various reviewed study programmes in Annexes 3, 7, 11, 15 and 20 of the SER show that the curricula are clearly structured and that the information communicated by means of the subject cards is clear.

EKA consists of different creative curricula of which each is a special one and needs special kinds of skill and problem-solving systems. EKA has a clear idea that different teaching methods are chosen and applied according to the curriculum's needs. The diverse specific and modern teaching methods support creativity and innovation in teaching.

The Panel also finds that EKA systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility for their studies and career planning and encourages creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. EKA consists of different creative curricula, each with its own needs and development of special kinds of skills and other competences.

The distinction between theory, electives, project-based speciality studies and predominantly practical research (including thesis) is clearly shown. The presentation in modules with the subjects and learning outcomes per module linked to them are experienced by the interviewees (T, S) as clear. This organisation, however, is sometimes motivated by practical purpose rather than from a disciplinary perspective, which makes the elaboration of the learning outcomes quite artificial and not pedagogically relevant (see the programme in Architecture for example).

The interviewees (S) indicated that the provision of information regarding the curricula and their content is very clear. The learning objectives and the assessment criteria are clearly presented (during the classes but also in Moodle and Tahvel).

When studying the curriculum diagrams of the several study programmes involved, the Panel observed that the design of all learning modules and the subjects to be carried out shows a clear 'Horizontal' picture. The pursuit of 'Coherence of learning outcomes and a balance between the content and volume of course subjects' (SER p.60) is actually shaped by this horizontal approach. This information, provided by the SER, gives a very clear picture and shows that there are possibilities for students to be able to make the exchange of courses and credits clear and theoretically feasible within the range of various study programmes. In practice, it appears that the students interviewed (S) often show the impracticability of some EKA's aims (interdisciplinary crossovers, electives), e.g. in addition to the proposed electives in the curriculum diagrams, it is still difficult for students to shape their so-called 'own learning path'.

The interviewees (S, A) indicated that the provision of information regarding the curricula and their content is very clear. It is clear from the SER that evaluations from the past have been taken into account when designing new curricula which, as indicated by EKA, are constantly changing. However, many learning outcomes require further revision to be compatible with the ECTS User's Guide recommendations (use an active verb to express what students are expected to know and be able to do commensurate with the level of study, specify what this outcome refers to, specify the way of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes).

Indicators for analysis of a curriculum (SER 3.3.4) show a high level of involvement of different stakeholders and provide insight into the development of the curricula. EKA uses a clear, open and transparent feedback system in which various stakeholders are involved. Students, lecturers, stakeholders from the professional field and, to a more modest extent, alumni.

The interviews (S, T) show that EKA broadly meets the requirements it has set itself. The response has been particularly positive in terms of structure and clear provision of information. Opinions differ in the field of ability to study. Students do not yet clearly experience the balance that should exist between the volume of subjects and the feasibility of assignments. Especially in the graduation year, students opt for more shifts in ECTS in order to be able to distribute the workload better and to

get a better grip on their studies. In that context, it is worrying that, apparently, several students take a gap year before the final exam year to recharge for graduation year.

Lecturers also experience the workload issue but indicated that they can be flexible in this. In general, it can be said that the systems for sharing information and communicating the subject cards (and any adjustments to them) function so well that they are experienced as helpful in carrying out the tasks.

With regard to a 'well-thought link to practices in the field' (SER 3.7.1. p. 60), the interviewees (E, A) indicated that there is an excellent relationship with the professional field. Even during their studies, the students already experience an involvement with that field of work. Stakeholders indicate (E) that there is indeed an excellent awareness of the professional field in the curricula and graduates are qualified as 'very good employable'.

In order to continue to guarantee and monitor quality, EKA has various tools at her disposal.

The Curriculum Committees are highly appreciated by students and staff, precisely because the members of such bodies consist of all layers of the actively involved parties (Heads of Curriculum, students, teachers and one representative of the target and stakeholders group).

The Panel qualifies the influence that can be exerted as transparent and can make an important contribution to the sense of involvement of all those involved and a sense of agency among students in particular. What is still lagging in this regard is the feedback from alumni who indicate in the interview (A) that they would like to be more involved in such curriculum committees. The contribution of this specific group to the feedback structure of EKA has not been clearly formalised yet. Stakeholders indicated (E) that they are sufficiently informally involved in the Academy and therefore feel involved and see EKA as one of their most important partners.

With regard to Heads of Curriculum in particular, there is a clear structure of support in safeguarding the quality of the curricula and monitoring them in the form of Analysis Reports (SER p43). This provides a clear structure of how feedback can find its way back into the various curricula. All these tools and results of this structure show a broad commitment and eventually find their way into publicly accessible Open Seminars where best practices are shared. Results are published/shared online (via WebDesktop).

Conclusions

EKA uses clear criteria, regulations and goals when designing the various curricula. In general, there is a clear description of how curricula are structured and what the learning objectives and learning outcomes are of the various components, although some require further attention. A clear line is visible across the overall breadth of the curricula that consist of the following components: general theoretical subjects, speciality subjects, including internships and electives and optional subjects, although the student face sometimes difficulties in shaping their own learning path. The communication regarding the content of the curriculum is experienced as clear by students and staff. The (digital) resources (e.g. WebDesktop, Moodle, Tahvel) that are used for communication are experienced as user-friendly and give the student insight into the structure of their studies and their study progress. There is an open and transparent feedback system in EKA in which many stakeholders are involved. All curricula show a clear structure and link with practices in the field. The Panel concluded that there is a strong connection between the field of art and design, the industry and the labour market. Graduates are considered to be very employable.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 7 – Study Programme.

Strengths

- Clear processes within the organisation that leave room for pragmatic adjustment, provided the correct procedure is followed.
- Overall supportive and encouraging basic framework of skills and knowledge, electives and methods which generally offer space for flexibility and broadened perspectives.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- In practice, some of EKA's learning aims are impractical (interdisciplinary crossovers, electives), and it is still difficult for students to shape their own learning path. The Panel recommends that EKA investigate this.
- Many learning outcomes (at programme, module or subject levels) require further revision to be compatible with the ECTS User's Guide recommendations.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests EKA improve student workload monitoring, in particular, to avoid the gap year before the final exam.
- At the MA and PhD levels, a clearer linkage should be established with the long-term objectives set in national development strategy and action plans.

1.8   Learning and Teaching

Standard
Admission requirements and procedures ensure fair access to higher education and the formation of a motivated student body.
The higher education institution systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility for their studies and career planning and supports creativity and innovation.
Graduates of the higher education institution, with their professional knowledge and social skills, are competitive both nationally and internationally.

Guidelines
Admission requirements and procedures are fair and impartial. In the admission process, the student's ability for academic progress on the chosen programme is assessed.
The academic recognition of foreign qualifications is based on international conventions, agreements between countries, and Estonian legislation.
The learning and teaching process takes into account students' individual abilities and needs and supports their development. Learning offers sufficient challenges for students at different levels.
Students participate in the planning and implementation of the learning process. The organisation of independent work and face-to-face teaching motivates students to take responsibility for their studies.
Teaching methods and learning aids used in the learning and teaching process are modern, appropriate and effective and support the development of digital culture, contributing – among other things – towards the development of a self-directed learner, creativity, innovation and the development of digital and other general competencies. The HEI has a Code of Good Learning and Teaching (including online) and it is applied in practice.
The internship is integrated with speciality studies, the requirements for the internship are defined and the student's supervision is ensured.
Students are motivated to learn and contribute to improving the quality of their studies by providing meaningful feedback on both the learning and teaching process and the organisation of studies.
Doctoral students plan their studies, as well as their research and development activities, in collaboration with their supervisor(s), setting specific objectives for each year and assuming responsibility for achieving those objectives.

Indicators
- Student satisfaction with the content and organisation of studies
- Alumni satisfaction with the quality of studies
- Employer satisfaction with the preparation of the graduates
- Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

EKA's admission policy is based on the admission rules that define the admission process. According to SER and the Panel's site visit (M, T, S) admission requirements and procedures ensure fair and impartial access to higher education, also for international students. There are 10 criteria in use, for example, portfolio, discussions, and writing. At the first level of HE, each curriculum has admission examinations where an evaluation committee can learn both about the candidate's ability and motivation to enrol in the programme. The biggest challenge is to understand if the student is ready for the studies, but the EKA system works well since students' satisfaction is relatively high, and satisfaction has increased with competences acquired (SER Figure 16, p. 64). Admission examination can take the form of on-site or distance examination according to the level of higher education or the study programme, which is a good practice.

In EKA's studies, there are many student-centred learning activities, and several teaching methods are used and supported, which give students the possibility to learn in real-world situations and develop problem-solving skills. EKA also encourages students to make collaborative projects and

gives them the possibility to learn together with their peers (SER p. 64 Table 20). Based on the SER (pp. 55-56) as well as the site visit (T, S), the Panel learnt that there are several kinds of digital teaching and learning tools as well as well-working digital learning platforms that also have improved the management of learning materials as well as monitoring studies. EKA learning strategy allows and encourages student to choose their own preferences. Students' individual needs are taken into consideration and student supports are well-informed and accessible.

EKA consists of different creative curricula of which each is a special one and needs special kinds of skill and problem-solving systems. EKA has a clear idea that different teaching methods are chosen and applied according to the curriculum's needs. The diverse specific and modern teaching methods support creativity and innovation in teaching. Blended and hybrid learning are also in active use in larger groups. EKA also uses a recording of the lectures, and two applications (EKA TV and EKA Vimeo) are used to channel the programmes. Technical innovation related to AI is in consideration. There are internal seminars, once a month, to promote learning innovation and shared practices. There are also external collaborations that bring innovative ways of learning to EKA. Good Teaching Seminars are often mentioned and are highly valued, as well as open feedback seminars (SER p. 41). Students are satisfied in many senses, and they are proud to be members of EKA's Community.

EKA supports and encourages students to do internships, and students have lots of experience with them. The Panel heard that guidelines have been unified (M, T), but there are still some huge variations. For example, in Architecture, there are two compulsory two-week internships but then some of the programmes such as interaction design have no internship, although studies consist of many external projects with actual clients (S). The Panel also realised that it is not clear in curriculum diagrams what an internship is, how it differs from short mobility, and what it is for (SER Table 14, p. 50). In addition to internships, there are other kinds of educational trips, recently EKA students have participated in workshops in Ghana and Kenya (S), which is positive. Students complete their internships by writing a final report and feedback is also requested about the internship period. The collaboration between the student and the employer has often continued after the internship period, and long-term working-life relationships are common. The difference between internship and training is not clear and the indicators of the aims of the internship are not articulated and shared. A very short period of working experience outside EKA is counted as an internship. Even though there are plenty of good experiences with internships, the Panel recommends developing clear guidelines for internships, stating longer periods so that the student can get real and proper experience about working life and crediting appropriately these periods in ECTS in the curriculum. Despite the shortcomings of uniform guidelines, internships are often successful and lead to a longer-term employment relationship. That means that the collaboration between the student and the employer has often continued after the internship period. The panel heard from the stakeholders (E) that there is indeed an excellent awareness of the professional field in the curricula and graduates are qualified as 'very good employable'.

Doctoral students plan their studies, as well as their research and development activities, in collaboration with their supervisor(s), setting specific objectives for each year and assuming responsibility for achieving those objectives. (EKA Doctoral Study Regulations §§ 5, 7 and 13).

Conclusions

As a conclusion, the Panel agrees that EKA's admission requirements and procedures ensure fair access to higher education and the formation of a motivated student body. The Panel also finds that EKA systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility

for their studies and career planning and supports creativity and innovation. EKA consists of different creative curricula each of which is a special one and needs special kinds of skill and problem-solving systems. Even though there are plenty of good experiences with internships, the Panel recommends developing clear guidelines for internships.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 8 – Learning and Teaching.

Strengths

- Students' individual needs are taken into consideration and student supports are well-informed and accessible.
- Students are satisfied in many senses, and they are proud to be members of EKA's Community.
- EKA is open to innovation in teaching and learning which is proved by a good digital learning environment and many other innovative approaches.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel recommends developing clear guidelines for internships, stating longer periods so that the student can get real and proper experience about working life and crediting these periods appropriately in ECTS in the curriculum.

1.9   Student Assessment

Standard
Assessments of students, including recognition of their prior learning and work experiences, support the process of learning and are consistent with expected learning outcomes.
The objectivity and reliability of student assessments are ensured.

Guidelines
The assessment criteria are understandable to students and students are informed about them in a timely manner. Members of the teaching staff cooperate in defining assessment criteria and apply similar approaches.
Assessment methods are versatile and relevant, assess the degree of achievement of learning outcomes (including general competencies), and support the development of a self-directed learner.
If possible, more than one staff member is involved in the development of assessment tasks and student assessments. Along with assessments, students receive feedback that supports their individual development.
The HEI develops the teachers' assessment competence and supports the solid application of digital technologies in assessment.
The evaluation of doctoral students is transparent and impartial. Its purpose is to support the development of doctoral students, to assess the effectiveness of their current work and to evaluate their ability to complete their doctoral studies on time and successfully defend their doctoral theses.
When recognising prior learning and work experience towards the completion of the study programme, results obtained through the studies and work experiences (the achieved learning outcomes) are assessed. Students are aware of their rights and obligations, including the procedures for challenges regarding assessments.

Indicators:
• The number of credit points applied for and awarded under the accreditation of prior and experiential learning scheme (APEL)
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The assessment criteria are clearly understood by the students in a timely manner. This was supported during the study visit (S). Furthermore, according to the interviews (T), the teaching staff cooperate in exchanging knowledge and best practices about teaching, including assessments, via the Good Teaching Seminars. However, the teaching staff do not apply similar assessment approaches as some have differentiated and some non-differentiated markings in place. There is an acknowledged and encouraged discussion happening in the academy, and it is advised to keep the discussions going on non-differentiated and differentiated assessments and find ways to mitigate any future issues arising in EKA's competitiveness on the international scale while protecting freedom and flexibility to the students with non-differentiated assessment. The Panel noted that in the field of Arts, the 'portfolio' plays an important and relevant part in entry to international study programmes and some employment and career routes.

Assessment methods are versatile and relevant and assess the degree of achievement of learning outcomes (including general competencies) and support the development of a self-directed learner. It is constructive that programmes can opt for non-differentiated or differentiated assessment, and it appears (SER p. 67) that each of the five study programmes considered in this accreditation has decided whether to use non-differentiated assessment (100% in Fine Art and 100% Art History) or combination of non-differentiated and differentiated assessment (Fashion 78.4% / 21.6%, Interaction Design 75% / 25%) or differentiated assessment (Architecture and Urban Design 54% / 46%). The survey carried out in 2022 by EKA on assessment stated that while there was

approximately half the number of negative comments since 2020, 17% of students' comments point to the assessment being subjective, therefore the method for marking is not yet universally understood (SER p. 67). With this in mind, the Panel suggests that EKA continue to monitor the student experience concerning non-differentiated and differentiated assessment methods, in view of methods not being universal across programmes; and to sample feedback forms for any indications of subjectivity. In the areas of assessment (non-differentiated/differentiated), the Panel recommends developing a clear unambiguous policy on internships.

The interviews (S, A) did not indicate issues with the assessment criteria. It was highlighted that the change to a non-differentiated method has resulted in more individual feedback and more qualitative information about the mark. It was noted by the teaching staff and Heads of Curriculum (T, M) that the discussions on both methods of assessment are still ongoing in EKA.

More than one teacher is present for thesis assessments: three for BA and five for MA including one external (SER p. 68), which is positive. During the study visit, the Panel was introduced to the EKA Gallery where it was emphasised that in case the assessment takes place in the gallery, there are several assessors. In other types of assessments, multiple teacher assessors are not always present - only one is required under EKA Study Regulations. Also, the evaluation of doctoral students is transparent as it is regulated in public documents and the evaluation committee is composed of various members (SER p. 67). Furthermore, it is important to note the doctoral students' feedback on the evaluation at EKA is above 3.8 (on a scale from 1 to 5, SER p. 67).

The teachers have many different IT platforms available to utilise in their teaching work. There is a clear distinction made between pre-teaching, during-teaching and afterwards systems which the teaching staff must navigate. According to the study visit interview with the Head of e-learning, the staff is fine with using the different platforms. If any questions arise, the EKA wiki (https://wiki.artun.ee/et/home) can be referred to. As the Panel did not note there being challenges by the teaching staff regarding the digital technologies in assessment, it is convenient to the parties involved. However, the Panel recommends looking more closely into the various opportunities to involve a wider student and teaching body in IT-related development projects, especially when it comes to the user-friendliness of the systems used in EKA.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) procedure is clearly in place and utilised by the students (SER p. 70). Even though the submission of applications has been smaller in 2021 and 2022, it is still a growing trend (SER p. 70). During the study visit (M), it was also apparent that the students are aware of RPL opportunities and utilise them when necessary.

Conclusions

In EKA, there are two types of assessment methods used – differentiated and non-differentiated. Furthermore, there are also various discussions happening in EKA on assessment types, which is commendable and simultaneously raises awareness of assessment-related topics among students as well. EKA has clear rules in place for RPL and performs thesis evaluations transparently with more than one person making the decisions. Teachers utilise various IT tools in conducting teaching-related work and they are supported in this by EKA.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 9 – Student Assessment.

Strengths

- The teachers have many different IT platforms available to utilise in their teaching work and can choose the most suitable for them. It is evident to the Panel that the usage of the IT systems in teaching and assessment is clear to everyone involved.
- It is positive that discussions are ongoing inside EKA on assessment-related matters, including non-differentiated and differentiated assessment, which expands the knowledge of assessment methods and approaches more generally.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- In the areas of assessment (non-differentiated/differentiated), the Panel recommends developing a clear unambiguous policy on internships.

Opportunities for further improvement

- While the Panel finds it constructive that study programmes can opt for differentiated and/or non-differentiated assessment it is suggested that EKA continue to monitor the student experience concerning non-differentiated and differentiated assessment methods, in view of methods not being universal across programmes; and sample feedback forms for any indications of subjectivity.

1.10 Learning Support Systems

Standard
The higher education institution ensures that all students have access to academic, career and psychological counselling.
Students' individual development and academic progress are monitored and supported.

Guidelines
The HEI assists the student in developing an individual study programme based on the student's special needs as well as educational abilities and preferences.
The HEI advises its students (including students with special needs and international students) on finding internship places as well as jobs. Students are aware of where to get support in the case of psychological problems.
The HEI has a functioning system to support and advise international students (including psychological and career counselling) which, inter alia, helps them integrate smoothly into the membership of the HEI and Estonian society. The HEI analyses the reasons students withdraw from studies or drop out, and takes steps to increase the effectiveness of the studies.
In order to carry out studies and research, development and creative activities, the availability of up-to-date study and research literature, other study materials and tools (including those for independent work) and access to research databases is ensured. Study literature, materials and other teaching aids are of equally high quality.
To support study activities, timely and relevant information and communication technology solutions have been planned, including the study information system, document management, online learning environments, and analytical tools for teaching and learning. Support for online learning and IT is available to students.
The HEI supports student participation in extra-curricular activities and civil society initiatives.
The HEI monitors student satisfaction with the counselling services, the online learning and IT support provided and makes changes as needed.

Indicators
• The average duration of the study by levels of study
• Dropout/withdrawal rate (during the first year and the whole study period)
• Students` satisfaction with the support services
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

In EKA, the Head of Curriculum is responsible for advising students on the content of their studies (SER p. 71). Students with special needs can access support through a counsellor whose job is to support students with special needs and ensure that they have equal opportunities with their fellow students. Furthermore, the counselling sessions are kept confidential, as noted in the interview with the support staff of the university. However, if any matters arise from the counselling that requests the Counsellor to take action or recommend adjustments to the way a class is held, this is forwarded to the relevant teacher. It also becomes apparent that in a small university such as EKA, it is difficult to maintain anonymity in all counselling services. The Panel was reassured (M) by the counselling staff that maintaining anonymity and privacy is of most importance, even in instances where it is not entirely possible.

In the pre-visit survey, a general comment from academic staff and students referred to EKA needing to pay more attention to 'Addressing students' mental health and workload concerns'. From the interviews (S), it was gathered that the workloads seldom cause mental health issues for students, but it is monitored, and assistance is offered if a student should need it. This is done via various means, for example, through the feedback that is given by the students to the teachers at the end of the course. Giving feedback is mandatory (SER p. 26) and according to the interviews held with the

Heads of Curriculum, it is also taken into proper consideration by the teaching staff who receive it. However, it became apparent to the Panel during the interviews (T) that the international hourly paid staff do not necessarily receive student feedback (see also Standard 3).

The dropout rate is low in comparison to other HEIs in Estonia (SER p. 71) which the Panel finds commendable. However, there is an increase in 21/22 and 22/23 in students dropping out due to the expiry of the end date of studies (SER p. 72). From the interview with the support staff (M), it was mentioned that the students are advised and offered support before making the decision to suspend their studies. An additional measure that was seen as a mechanism to support PhD graduation in time, was the change from students to junior researchers in the PhD level. The change was mentioned by various interviews (T, S) as an opportunity to decrease the dropout at PhD level and as a measure to ensure graduation on time. However, as the change is still relatively recent, it is currently too soon to say if it has any concrete effect on this.

Psychological counselling is well established, and it is provided in both, Estonian and English language (SER p. 72) to both, local and international students, as mentioned in the interview with the supporting staff. Even though it was noted that the students may wait up to two weeks for an appointment, 25-30 on-site meetings are held on average at EKA per month (SER p. 72). As the Panel is aware that the waiting times in publicly offered psychological counselling are often even longer, it is understandable why the waiting time is two weeks. However, it is advised to work on providing access as soon as possible, especially when it comes to crisis counselling. From interviews held with students, it was indicated that they feel that access to counselling is clearly communicated and available. The Panel also noted the advertisements in the university physically indicating access to counselling.

EKA also advises its students (including students with special needs and international students) on finding internship places as well as jobs through career counselling (SER p. 72). However, it was stated by students in multiple interviews that they knew of the opportunity but had not used it themselves as they had found employment or internship through their own contact network.

Furthermore, when it comes to international students, EKA also offers them an introduction to the Estonian language to better equip them to get by in Estonian society. This was presented by the supporting staff in the interviews as something that contributes to the better integration into Estonian society not only via Estonian language semantics but also in better understanding the local customs.

The library is well equipped with sources to support the breadth of art, architecture and design topics (SER pp. 73-74) both in terms of the online and physical attributes. Furthermore, EKA's students and other staff may not only rely on the EKA databases but also on the database licences held by other HEIs, for example, TalTech, which has resources that may be relevant to only a few EKA researchers. This was outlined in an interview with PhD students that even though the online sources are limited, understandably as the licences are rather expensive, it is important that EKA has connections with other institutions, HE and the public (including the National Library of Estonia) which enables the students to also use the sources available there. The lack of sources for research was also highlighted in other interviews the Panel conducted, but it was met with reason from the interviews. However, it was noted in interviews with the students, that that in order to access the physical databases, one has to be in EKA in person. That is supported by the EKA library website (https://www.artun.ee/et/oppimine/raamatukogu/e-raamatukogu/) indicating different physical

access to different sources. The Panel finds that it would be best if the access to the databases would be equal to those in EKA on and off-campus.

According to SER (p. 74) and EKA website (https://www.artun.ee/en/studies/workshops/) the workshops are very well-equipped. Technical Equipment Rental, Wood and Modelling Workshop, Metalworking Shop, Smithy, Prototyping Lab, Sculpting Studio, Scenography Studio, New Media Sound Studio, Digital Lab, Digital Printing Workshop, Painting Conservation Studio, Sculpture Conservation Studio, Analogue Darkroom, Virtual Reality Lab, Print Workshop, 3D Lab, Textile Printing Studio, Knitting Studio, Weaving Studio, Sewing Studio, Jewellery Workshop, Enamelling and Stone Cutting, Accessory Studio, Bookbinding Studio, Ceramics Workshop, Glass Workshop, and Photo and Video Studio. The Panel finds it commendable that the technical staff are part of ETHO (European Technical Heads Organisations), which is a platform within ELIA. ETHO holds events bi-annually: 'one enabling technical staff to share knowledge across the network, and the second aimed at technical leaders focused on the strategic development of technical services' (https://elia-artschools.org/page/ETHO accessed 31/5/24). The Panel considers ETHO to be a very beneficial network, and EKA's membership ensures that innovations such as new management systems for students' inductions and access to technical workshops, health and safety developments, or knowledge of cutting-edge technologies, are shared effectively across the Higher Arts Education (HAE) sector, and that the technicians are supported through their own professional network.

EKA Gallery, Museum and EKA Press are well established (SER p. 74) which was also partially confirmed during the site visit to EKA facilities (R) and then during the 'service to society' interviews. When it comes to EKA Press, it was highlighted that it is not simply a printing service, but also serves as a way to translate important works from English (and other languages) to Estonian therefore making (often professional) literature accessible to those who only know Estonian language. This acts as a service to society.

The HEI supports student participation in extra-curricular activities and civil society initiatives, many through the student Council, which is very active and also provides representation for students at curriculum and senate level (SER p. 76). Participation in civil society activities was highlighted in various interviews with the students and the teaching staff, as well as the employers who noted the valuable input that the students and EKA as a whole contribute to the society in Estonia.

An element that is often a student support mechanism, is housing at an affordable price, which is provided by the dormitory. EKA has places available to both, the local and international students (SER pp. 15 and 36), but as was noted in the interviews (M), there are not enough vacant spaces for everyone. On the one hand, it is understood that there are not enough places, but it is an important student support mechanism to both, the local and international students. The number of vacant places is of most importance when the question of the expansion of the EKA student body comes into play. EKA's ambition to grow the international student body could also mean a bigger demand for the dormitory places offering to ensure everyone accepted to study in EKA will have the opportunity to do so physically in EKA.

Conclusions

EKA has great student support mechanisms in place: students have access to psychological counselling (both local and international students). Advice on future career paths is available and everything related to the internships. The EKA databases and agreements with other institutions to use their databases provide the student body and the staff with necessary access to up-to-date

resources, and with the help of EKA Library, EKA Press, EKA Gallery, and EKA Museum, the students have access to various resources within EKA to enhance their studies. The students are also actively engaged in civil society-related matters. Furthermore, there are various IT environments in place in EKA and the students and the staff are supported in their deployment.

Therefore, the Panel finds that EKA fully complies with the requirements of Standard 10 – Learning Support Systems.

Strengths

- There is a clear coherent counselling service system put in place catering to the needs of the students. In addition to the local students, the international students are provided with various counselling services, notably, a fast-learning programme offering them basic skills in the Estonian language to help them settle into the Estonian cultural context.
- EKA press acts as a tool to bring a range of international publications to Estonian through translation.
- The Panel finds it commendable that the technical staff are part of ETHO (European Technical Heads Organisation), so that the technicians can access innovative practices, and are supported through their own professional network.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel recommends making the documentation databases available more equally to the students, staff, and researchers on and off campus.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests that EKA looks more into the dormitory places currently available, in particular to support EKA's internationalisation ambition.

1.11 Research, Development and/or Other Creative Activity

Standard
The higher education institution has defined its objectives and focus in the fields of RDC based on its mission, as well as on the expectations and future needs of society, and assesses their implementation and the societal impact of its RDC activities. RDC supports the process of teaching and learning at the higher education institution. Support services for RDC are purposeful and support the implementation of the objectives of the core process.

Guidelines
The HEI places a high value on the role and responsibilities of the field of RDC in society and evaluates the results of its RDC activities, their international visibility and societal impact.
The HEI responds flexibly to the current needs of society and the labour market in terms of its research and plans its research in collaboration with enterprises, public sector institutions and organisations of the third sector.
Members of teaching staff introduce students to their research results as well as the latest scientific achievements in their areas of specialisation and involve students in their R&D projects where possible.
The organisation and management of RDC take into account the profile and the mission of the HEI.
The HEI applies digital tools for the administration and re-use of research data.

Indicators depend on the specificities of the HEI
• Numerical data:
- (1) scientific publications by classifiers;
- (2) public presentations of creative work; recognition from international competitions; reviews in professional publications, etc.;
- (3) patent applications, patents;
- (4) textbooks, study aids of various formats, etc.;
- (5) system development solutions; product development solutions; environmental applications solutions;
- (6) contracts concluded with enterprises;
- (7) spin-off companies, etc., in line with the profile and priorities of the HEI; etc.
• Number of scientific publications / creative works per member of academic staff and per employee with the requirement to do research (FTE, by areas)
• Number and volume of externally funded projects of RDC activities
• Proportion of projects with a positive financing decision out of the submitted project applications.
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The objectives of EKA's research, development and research activities are defined by EKA's Development plan 2021—2025 and EKA's strategy 2021—2025. According to those EKA's aim is to create new knowledge relevant to society and culture. EKA was the first EHI that launched artistic research in Estonia, developed the vocabulary and wrote the pioneering paper. EKA also support its members in creative activities. EKA has a strong strategic goal to develop, popularise and integrate artistic research into the Estonian research system.

EKA has four doctoral schools that all have international curricula from 2023 onwards. The mobility of doctoral students is active, and it is made possible by several programmes such as Nora Pluss, Erasmus +, Nordplus.

In addition to artistic research EKA has a significant role in educating art historians in Estonia. EKA doctoral schools in art history and visual culture as well as cultural heritage and conservation have important status and they have responsibility to take care of Estonia's cultural heritage and museum life. This is where EKA's research also has direct and well-functioning collaboration with stakeholders and societal life outside HEI.

EKA has a Research and Development Office (TAO) that has an important role in strengthening research culture within EKA but also more broadly since it also provides consultancy services in entrepreneurship cooperation and coordinates EKA's strategically important research projects. TAO provides information and many kinds of services and strategic support to research and development activities. The Office also takes care of research management and helps researchers in finding funding opportunities (SER p. 76).

The research is made mostly within the research institute and in the three research centres. There is one research institute and three recently (2021) founded research centres in EKA. The Institute of Art History and Visual Culture has the longest research history. There are several research projects going on right now at the Institute. All the research topics focus on local subjects, and Estonia's recent history in art and architecture, but the Panel learnt that the institute has recently had a large project on art historiography. Researchers are also travelling abroad and taking part in international research conferences and communities.

The Panel learnt from the external stakeholders representing the museum and heritage sector, as well as from the Rectorate that there exists an eagerness to establish knowledge transfer doctorates (see Doctoral Studies Regulations), as required by the Ministry of Culture, but thus far, none have been established with the private or public sector, due to a lack of funding (R). For the external stakeholders such collaborative PhDs would enable key areas of Estonian art, such as Early Modern Art History, to be further researched; and co-supervised between the relevant institution or museum and EKA (E). For EKA, the admission of knowledge transfer doctoral students would provide an important conduit between its research centres, and its external partner institutions/organisations and social contexts, thus contributing to social impact. The Panel encourages EKA and its external partners in the pursuit of their shared aim to establish Knowledge Transfer Doctorates, alongside EKA's other knowledge transfer activities (SER p. 77).

The research made in The Institute of Art History and Visual Culture conducts mainly humanities research while the research centres focus on practice-based, experimental and artistic research, or laboratory studies as do the Cultural Heritage and Conservation Lab MUKOLA and The Sustainable Design and Materials lab DiMa where for example Circular design and Bio-based materials are studied. Timber Architecture Research Centre PAKK of the Faculty of Architecture of EKA combines research and teaching with new design methods, living environment and product development, bringing together students, specialists, researchers and clients from both the public and private sectors (T).

Research, development and creative activities output is monitored and analysed by research publications and public presentation of creative works. (SER Table 28, p.76) High-level scientific publications are monitored according to the ETIS classification system (SER p. 76). The number of publications and creative activities is at a good level, and it is noteworthy that the number of high-quality publications (according to ETIS classification) has clearly increased recently. In 2018 there were 47 high-level publications and in 2022 there were 58 high-level publications. Also, budget-wise, the development has been very positive and the external research money has doubled from 2018 to 2022.

EKA has many stakeholders and collaborators in the society outside HEI in Estonia and abroad. EKA has also supported entrepreneurial cooperation and increased knowledge transfer returns after COVID-19 nearly doubled. A noticeable change has also happened in recent years in the sense that the companies or stakeholders themselves finance more projects with the stakeholders. (SER, p. 79).

Many good results have been achieved but the Panel recommends better assessing the implementation and the societal impact of RDC activities, establishing how to measure the result and legitimise their own activities.

There is a smooth connection between research and teaching, and teachers involve students in their research projects and activities, and members of the teaching staff introduce their research results as well as the latest research trends to the students. However, it is not always very systematic and strategic. Information sharing occurs slightly sporadically and with varying methods. This kind of versatility can be a positive thing when it is done on the basis of the student's own research topic and interest, and it serves the advantage of doctoral student studies (T).

One example that was mentioned in the interviews on the teaching of research skills was about painting classes. In painting, there are theory courses in the form of reading sessions, where both theoretical and artists' written texts about different discourses in art are discussed. Students can reflect on their own practice related to the theory (S). During their studies, art students are engaged in different projects that can combine research and art making. Some art students are more ready to embrace research skills than others, and then they can find their context in research. There is a possibility in EKA to experiment with different kinds of argumentation, visual argumentation and other kinds of creative argumentation practices (S).

The panel experienced from the interviews (S, A) that different programmes on the second cycle level of education have different ways of implementing research methods and research thinking. The leadership commented that it could be that EKA's research culture is in some respects young, especially when it comes to artistic research, but also in other practice-based programmes (M). There is some work to do to ensure integration between education on the one hand and research on the other, to avoid silos emerging. Since EKA's leadership has stated expectations in terms of research methods training at the MA level, each programme must explain how they are training research for their field (T, M). The Panel suggest it would be good to identify and share some good practices across the programmes and faculties.

Conclusions

The areas of research, development and creative activities are well thought out, planned and carried out, and the target activities are in line with the objectives. EKA has defined its objectives and focus on the fields of RDC and these are based on its mission, as well as on the expectations and future needs of society. EKA has not yet implemented a system to assess and evaluate research results, their implementation and the societal impact of its RDC activities. RDC supports the process of teaching and learning at the higher education institution although there are still some aspects to be further developed. Support services are purposeful and support the implementation of the objectives of the core process.

Therefore, the Panel finds that EKA fully complies with the requirements of Standard 11 – RDC.

Strengths

- Committed personnel and well-structured strategy and action plan for developing research culture.
- EKA was the first EHI that launched artistic research in Estonia, developed the vocabulary and wrote the pioneering paper.

- Solid and clear plans to strengthen research and agreed intention to develop research in every research centre.
- Clear focus areas that cover EKA educational fields and that are open enough to new research projects and initiatives.
- Good collaboration with stakeholders in many areas, especially in the fields of research centres; cultural heritage and conservation, art history and visual culture, design and textile, architecture, and material studies.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel recommends better assessing RDC activities' implementation and societal impact, establishing how to measure the result, and legitimising their own activities.
- EKA should strengthen the connection between RDC, teaching and education at all levels. It works well in some of the study programmes like art history and visual culture, but for example, in fine arts and design, it is not yet systematically formulated from the BA level to the doctoral level.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests developing plans on how to get more external funds, in addition to state-based institutions like the Ministry and Research Council, and development money.
- To address the ambition to develop the research at the master's level and to consider the various approaches at EKA, the Panel suggest it would be good to identify and share some good practices in teaching research methods across the programmes and faculties.
- The Panel encourages EKA and its external partners in the pursuit of their shared aim to establish Knowledge Transfer Doctorates, alongside EKA's other knowledge transfer activities.

1.12 Service to Society

> **Standard**
> The higher education institution initiates and implements development activities, which enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence.
> The higher education institution, as a learning-oriented organisation, promotes lifelong learning in society and creates high-quality opportunities for that.
>
> **Guidelines**
> The HEI contributes to the development of the community's well-being by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.), providing consulting and advisory services, participating in the development of non-profit sector and charitable activities, and organising concerts, exhibitions, shows, conferences, fairs and other events.
> The HEI involves alumni in activities aimed at the development of the HEI and the knowledge society. Employees of the HEI participate in the work of professional associations and in other community councils and decision-making bodies as experts, directing society's development processes as opinion leaders. The impact academic employees have on society is taken into account when evaluating their work.
> The HEI has clearly defined the objectives for in-service training, measures their implementation and plans improvement activities. The HEI plans in-service training based on the present and future needs of the labour market target groups. Evidence-based learning supports the learning and self-development of adult learners.
> The HEI takes advantage of digital means in order to provide training and services to the public at large.
>
> **Indicators**
> • Number of people in continuing training and other privately financed open forms of study (by responsibility areas or structural units)
> • Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

EKA, as the only public art university in Estonia, has a considerable responsibility in society to contribute to the development of Estonian cultural space and a better living environment. Statutes of the EKA stipulate that in order to achieve its objective, the Academy shall offer opportunities for acquiring a higher education based on research, development and creative activity at all levels of higher education as well as in continuing education in the fields of art, architecture, design, humanities and art education. Also, EKA promotes art, design and architecture education and maintains continuity thereof, cultivates art and research, including artistic research, and advocates in society for art, design and architecture and study and preservation thereof. Although there are examples of activities and projects outside Tallinn, Narva and Tartu, more attention could be paid to regional aspects and addressing different target groups in the society in EKA's strategy and communication. Culture 2030 points out that access to cultural activities across different target groups and regionally is limited. Therefore, EKA, being the only public arts university in Estonia, could contribute to addressing this challenge.

As stipulated in EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025, it is continuously important to be open in their activities both internationally and in Estonia through the Open Academy, which is the centre for continuing education. Expansion of the activities of the Open Academy and growing the EKA community is one of the key activities. The selection of continuing education activities proceeds from discussions with stakeholder organisations (artistic associations, employers, etc.) and from the aim to focus on longer-term courses and programmes. As a 'nano-degree' or 'micro-degree' pilot project, continuing education modules have been developed that can be completed in the

continuing education context. The programmes are put together considering the general demand for training courses, and their development and modification take place in connection with the development activities of the Faculties. Continuing education activities are based on the procedure for the organisation and quality assurance of continuing education approved by the EKA Senate (SER pp. 81-82). However, at the MA and PhD levels, clearer linkage should be established with the long-term objectives set in national development strategy and action plan 'Estonia 2035', culture development plan 2021-2030 'Culture 2030', development plan for R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship 2021-2035 'TAIE 2035' (see also Standard 7).

The SER (3.12) highlights that advising the State and society at large in a wide range of expert and advisory councils, from the timber construction cluster and all the expert commissions on heritage conservation to the Council of the Cultural Endowment is the natural core activity of the EKA members. Internationally they have been involved in prestigious biennales, art and fashion fairs, institutions and the editorial boards of magazines, curated at the museums, etc. EKA is the co-founder, together with its partners, of the Estonian Design Centre and the Estonian Centre for Architecture which are important drivers of policies and developments in the field (SER Table 29, pp. 80-81).

Also, EKA's research centres support the philosophy, goals and activities of lifelong learning. EKA's research, development and creativity (RDC) strategy 2021-2025 stipulates that the strategic goal as a research and development institution is to create new knowledge from the standpoint of society and culture through academic and artistic research and to be a part of the international art, design and architecture field and research in these disciplines. One of the objectives is to engage in cooperation with the public, private and third sector, actively introduce the knowledge developed in EKA and potential applications for the knowledge, take part in policymaking and support members' entrepreneurship ethic and sense of social responsibility. EKA's RDC results are visible and accessible to society.

According to EKA's vision, they offer an opportunity to link creative work to the wider developments in society. One of the four EKA's strategic objectives is that the activities of EKA generate value in different walks of life. EKA opens opportunities for new searches, raises important issues related to society and the cultural sphere, and offers solutions to them. Creative collaboration between lecturers, students, employers and experts in the development of continuing education, as in curriculum development, is the key activity in order to increase the competitiveness of EKA and its social impact.

As stipulated in EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025, supporting knowledge transfer is one of the key activities under the research and development topics. An important role is played by the conceptualisation of knowledge transfer in creative and development activities, from exhibitions and publishing to spin-off entrepreneurship, various cooperation laboratories and thematic think tanks. EKA also supports the production of professional academic, artistic research, educational and other original and translated literature (writing, compiling and editing, translating). The development of an Estonian professional language is considered to be important. EKA's Principles for Employee Motivation include among other prizes recognition of creative work and research publication.

Activities which enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence are described in SER 3.12 as interacting with the public through exhibitions and offering practical problem-solving through projects. Art projects range from intimate self-expression to addressing society's sore spots, practical problem-solving is offered

through projects by architects and designers and artists' exhibitions, actions and other activities invite critical engagement. A list of initiatives (SER Table 29, pp80-81) with societal impact and exhibitions with prominent locations provides good evidence of capabilities to address various areas of life (valorisation of natural resources, healthcare, etc.).

Regarding the assessment of EKA's societal contribution, improvement and/or further development of methods and indicators are advisable, also inclusion of all stakeholders is necessary. Recommendations of the previous institutional accreditation highlighted that EKA could set more ambitious targets and measure the societal impact and results of EKA's activities in order to further develop them. As a response to this recommendation, EKA receives regular information about the media coverage of its activities, which is one of the key indicators of EKA's Development Plan. Also, EKA participated in Kantar Emor's 2018 reputation survey of universities, according to which EKA is among the five most prestigious universities in Estonia. These aspects do not provide sufficient information and evidence about the societal impact of EKA's activities.

EKA library is one of the six Estonian public university libraries that have been permanently awarded the title of research library by the Ministry of Education and Research. This provides the library with stable financing from the Ministry for collection purchases, both physical and digital items. The library's collection totals more than 90,000 items, including 88,666 printed items, 2803 DVDs, more than 50 international academic journals and 11 licensed databases. It is Estonia's best research library in the field of art, architecture and design. The library is open to all art-loving readers. Development of the EKA Library as a common public space is one of the key activities in EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025. The library is strongly associated with teaching and research at EKA, but also at the same time acts as an art information centre serving a wide readership. Priorities include the development of digital library services and the availability of research databases and activities related to EKA's repository of text-based final theses and textbooks. According to EKA's RDC strategy 2021-2025, activities of EKA's publishing house, gallery and museum are integrated with research activity. High-level international conferences, workshops and exhibitions are organised, and an increase in awareness and capabilities in the field of open science at EKA is supported through advisory activities and training courses. A repository for preservation of and access to research data will be created.

According to EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025, the selection of continuing education proceeds from discussions with stakeholder organisations and from the aim to focus on longer-term courses and programmes. Senate approves the principles for the organisation of and quality assurance in continuing education, and the curricula of long-term continuing education and changes thereto (Statutes of EKA).

Supporting the digital transformation and the mastery of digital competences, including the creation of flexible e-learning solutions that can be used internationally, is one of the key activities of EKA. According to EKA's Development Plan 2021-2025, curriculum development takes into account changing student profiles and needs and enables the mastery of digital competencies necessary for work in future. The use of educational technologies supporting the educational goals of EKA, coupled with the support provided by educational designers, has increased. Preconditions have been created for well-functioning blended learning and teaching of creative specialities with the support of digital channels, including with the aim of supporting active learning and also providing lecturers with the necessary guidance and training opportunities.

Meeting with the small Rectorate provided information that EKA has been participating in the elaboration of the Estonian national development strategy 'Estonia 2035' and culture development plan 2021-2030 'Culture 2030'. They are also very well aware of the development plan for R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship 2021-2035 'TAIE 2035' and how it determines the funding schemes.

Meeting with Research & Development (RDC) leading specialists provided evidence that EKA"s RDC strategy 2021-2025 has many links to the topics in Culture 2030. Knowledge transfer to society is measured by the number of contracts and cooperation projects with the companies and organisations (which has grown rapidly during the past year), the number of research grants gained outside Estonia and publications in media.

Interviews with Fine Arts (BA) and Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design (BA) students provided evidence that there is an opportunity to gain the understanding and skills necessary to produce societal impact by discussing topics and issues in society. For example, sustainability aspects and competencies are incorporated in various projects. Teaching staff of the same programmes explained that the number of new or follow-up projects and new contacts or cooperation partners illustrate the scope of the activities with societal impact. Open houses, open courses and lectures are very popular, and people are addressing EKA as a competence centre.

Employers and cooperation partners describe EKA as a source of new, scientific and innovative knowledge, and a link to co-operate with young generations.

Conclusions

The Panel finds that all EKA's activities have evident links to serving societal needs. EKA initiates and implements consistently a number of activities that enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence. Strategic documents, SER and interviews provide excellent evidence that EKA is a learning-oriented organisation that promotes lifelong learning in society and creates a variety of high-quality opportunities for that. Development and implementation of continuing education activities take place in cooperation with a number of stakeholders and with a focus on the future needs of society. EKA's knowledge, expertise and resources are well shared.

The overall conclusion of the Panel is that EKA is fully compliant with Standard 12- Service to Society and it is worthy of recognition for the Open Academy as a continuing education centre dedicated to the development of artistic and creative thinking and skills and facilitate the application of these competences in almost any area of life.

Strengths

- There are a number of initiatives and projects that are interdisciplinary and therefore disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence across disciplines and areas of life, but also facilitate the inflow of competences from other areas.
- In a number of activities there are international dimensions and impacts that address global issues (sustainability, etc.).
- Open Academy as a continuing education centre dedicated to the development of artistic and creative thinking and skills facilitates the application of these competencies in almost any area of life.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Regarding the assessment of EKA's societal contribution, improvement and/or further development of methods and indicators is advisable as insufficient information and evidence about the societal impact of EKA's activities are currently collected and analysed.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Although there are examples of activities and projects outside Tallinn, Narva and Tartu, more attention could be paid to regional aspects and addressing different target groups in the society in EKA's strategy and communication.

2. Assessment Findings of the Sample of the Study Programmes

2.1   Study Programme: Fine Arts (Bachelor)

The Bachelor in Fine Arts (BKU) curriculum (three years; 180 ECTS) brings together three disciplines: (1) graphic art, (2) installation and sculpture and (3) painting.. BKU is balanced between theory subjects (28%), general technical skills subjects (22%), and skill subjects and practices specific to the field of study (50%). It aims to provide students with versatile basic skills and knowledge in the principal areas of Fine Arts. The curriculum focuses on enabling the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and competences needed by the artist. Awareness of the artistic and cultural context, the provision of technical and practical competences, the development of an original artistic style and the positioning of the artist and communication skills are key markers of the Fine Arts curriculum. In the last five years, an average of 66 students were enrolled in the programme every year. The number of graduates varies from 11 to 17 and the number of dropouts varies from 1 to 5. Since 2018 the number of students in the Fine Arts programme is slowly decreasing, the same must be said about the number of admitted students to the programme which is balanced with the number of graduates that year. Each year about 6 students per discipline are admitted to BKU thus making the total number 16-22.

2.1.1 Planning and Management of Studies

> The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities are sufficient and support the launching of the study programme(s).
>
> The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity, entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
>
> The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology supports the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The BA in Fine Arts (BKU) curriculum, implemented by the Faculty of Fine Arts and its three departments: Department of Graphic Art, Department of Painting, and Department of Installation and Sculpture complies with the EKA's procedures in terms of curriculum development which is supported by clear communication of the learning process and learning outcomes to internal and external stakeholders. The Curriculum Committee, composed of Heads of Departments, teaching staff, students and external stakeholders oversees the curriculum development process.

The process whereby student feedback is considered, and changes are made at EKA and curriculum levels, has been formalised. Since 2020, an analysis has been carried out for BKU, with student feedback as an important input. The analysis is used as a basis for curriculum development and support for academic staff development. In addition, student feedback is used as input for the evaluation of academic staff (SER p. 26). During the interview (S), students confirmed that filling in the feedback in the study information system Tahvel at the end of each semester is compulsory and that they see their input into the development of the curriculum.

During the interviews (A, E), the Panel learnt that the feedback system for external stakeholders lacks consistency in a formal way and in many ways, it stays informal. Nevertheless, it was confirmed to the Panel that most professional artists working in the Fine Arts field in Estonia and representing the country abroad are the graduates of EKA and that EKA is the most important and valuable cooperation partner for many art and artist institutions whose representatives took part in the interview with the Panel.

The Faculty of Fine Arts is regularly benchmarking the curriculum with the Uniarts Helsinki, the HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design, the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, and Dutch art academies to develop the curriculum based on the best practices (SER p. 86). Within Estonia, the BKU curriculum has been constantly monitored with the one of Pallas Art School in Tartu to ensure a distinct character and a cohesive whole (SER p. 86).

The artistic research and creative activities (treated as RDC at EKA) conducted by BKU teaching staff, who all are practising artists, play a key role in the development of the BKU curriculum. The examples given in the SER (pp. 86-87) and interviews (T) offer some good evidence of that. The Panel acknowledges that the level and volume of RDC activities of the academic staff is sufficient and supports the launching of the study programme (SER pp. 86-87).

The general objectives and learning outcomes are clear and relevant to the BA curriculum of Fine Arts. They are further related to the objectives and outcomes of the modules: general theoretical subjects (21 ECTS), general practical subjects (39 ECTS), theoretical subjects of the speciality (30 ECTS), speciality subjects (Graphic Art, Sculpture and installation, Painting) (48 ECTS), Elective subjects (15 ECTS), Optional subjects (9 ECTS), Practices (8 ECTS), Bachelor thesis (10ECTS). The objectives of the modules are in some cases too broad and indistinct as in the case of the objective of the Practices module to enable the student to understand the world into which they will enter after the study period (SER Annex 2, BKU Curriculum). Overall, the objectives and learning outcomes of the modules are concrete and coherent to the objectives, teaching methods and assessment criteria of various subjects in the modules.

BKU fosters collaboration, collective study forms and discussions. An important social learning environment is the EKA gallery. The Faculty admits the importance of exhibitions and public performance carried out in the learning process which supports the practising artist's career potential of the students (SER p. 92). The Panel fully agrees with it and commends the Faculty for including observation trips and exhibition visits (Venice, Helsinki, Riga Biennales) and for supporting students with the opportunities to operate in autonomous gallery/project spaces as a suitable teaching method for Fine Arts students to further develop creativity, entrepreneurship, and other general competencies.

BKU material resources have improved significantly since 2018 when EKA moved to the new building. From then students have access to new studios and workshops with contemporary equipment (e.g. Printmaking workshop is equipped with new lithography and gravure printing

presses, SER p. 88). However, there is insufficient space for drawing, monumental painting, sculpture, fresco-mosaic, and stained-glass workshops. (SER p. 88) During the interviews (S, T), the Panel learnt that both students and teachers find a way how to coexist in a limited space on an everyday study basis and are looking forward to the opening of the new EKA building which will partially solve the problem of space. The problems with equipment and software in the Digital Lab are adequately identified in SER (p. 88). The Panel encourages the Faculty to address these problems and to look for workable solutions.

Access to research literature and databases is well provided by the EKA library. Students have access to EBSCO research databases. They also have opportunities for independent work in specialised studios, workshops, and common rooms. Students are given access to a shared area where they have room to store their work. Based on SER and interviews (S, T, R), the Panel acknowledges that the general conditions of the learning environment are satisfactory, though the constraint of limited space exists.

Strengths

- The system of student feedback is well-functioning.
- Creative activities and art research adequately support the curriculum.
- Student exhibitions, public performances and field trips to the main art exhibitions abroad contribute to the practising artist's career of future graduates.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The system of external stakeholder feedback should be better formalised.
- Insufficient equipment and software in the Digital Lab and the Faculty should elaborate a clear action plan.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests continuing to look for solutions how to solve the room space problem for creating bigger size art projects.

2.1.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and a motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.

A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and careers supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.

> The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.
>
> Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.
>
> Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

The BKU programme is promoted through an EKA-wide admission campaign and open days organised at the Academy. Useful Art competitions, an information campaign 'Become an Artist for secondary schools', the Art Ambassadors programme, art exhibitions and artworks in public space – all contribute to BKU promotion among prospective students (SER p. 89).

From the 2021/2022 academic year, students are assigned to specialities in the entrance exams (SER p. 87). The admission process is carefully designed, competitive and transparent, consisting of four parts: writing a concise review, portfolio and interview round, a drawing exam, creative work and its presentation. It is open to everybody with a secondary school education diploma or equivalent. During the interviews (S, A), the Panel did not hear about any issues regarding their admission process but according to the SER (p. 90), regional inequalities in accessing exams are identified as a problem. The Panel suggests the BKU admission committee address this issue seriously and find solutions for how young people from rural areas of Estonia could better access the admission exams.

Students are informed of the assessment criteria in the subject cards and description of the programme. Since 2023, the BKU assessment became non-differentiated and based on written feedback, the thesis mark was made non-differentiated as well (SER p. 91). Teaching staff and students during the interviews with the Panel saw many advantages of non-differentiated assessment in fine arts. The written analysis instead of the mark given by teachers to students at the end of each semester is seen as a new quality in the assessment process, thus, objective, and reliable assessment is ensured. Participation in at least 80% of the activities is a crucial component of completing the course.

BKU supports the development of students' key competences and the achievement of the learning outcomes through its composition of general subjects (theoretical and practical), speciality subjects (theoretical and practical), electives, and optional subjects. A student–centred approach is used in the studies by giving chance for students to tailor the curriculum to their needs through the module of optional subjects (9 ECTS) and the module of electives (15 ECTS). The student is free to choose the optional subject offered by different study programmes at EKA and electives are organised into three minors (Academic and Self- Expressional Skills; Theoretical and Practical Tools; Creative workers – Annex 3 – BKU Curriculum diagrams). BKU is a combined curriculum of three disciplines when the first semester is held jointly for the students (SER p. 87). Considering an adequate volume of optional and elective modules as well as the advantages of the cross-disciplinarity of the combined curriculum, the Panel states that students are given opportunities to take responsibility for their learning path. However, as suggested by the SER (areas of improvement, p. 93) and confirmed during the interviews (S), the Panel suggests reviewing the proportion of small-volume subjects.

The RPL system used at EKA considers previous education, continuing education or independent study, knowledge and skills gained from the work experience (SER p. 91). During the interview (S), the Panel heard how one of them successfully completed the formal recognition of his learning gained outside EKA.

BKU module of practices (8 ECTS) offers the opportunity for experimentation with what students have learnt at EKA, putting it into a new context, and promoting a deeper understanding of the contemporary art field. The most common is the internship held outside EKA, often as a week-long summer school or intensive course in Narva Art Residency and Tamse base in Muhu. Students are also encouraged to have an internship abroad and international internships are fully recognised within the curriculum. This integration is supported using RPL for relevant experiences, such as the 'Entrepreneurship internship'. The sufficiency of the internships received a modest rating (3,8/5) in the feedback from graduates though. (SER p. 87) On the basis of this, the Panel encourages BKU to spotlight the concept of internships and their implementation within the curriculum.

The number of incoming students varies from 4 to 12 per academic year and the number of outgoings varies from 4 to 10. It makes an impressive number of international student exchanges for the curriculum with a total average number of 66 enrolled students.

The support services for students include academic counselling, psychological counselling, and counselling for students with special needs. It is stated in the SER (p. 91) that nominal-time graduation is problematic and that one of the main reasons for students dropping out is not returning to studies after the academic leave. During the interviews, students complained about the overload of work in the last semester when they studied a number (5) of other subjects in addition to the bachelor's thesis (10 ECTS). The Panel heard (S) that due to the composition of the final semester, many students take an academic leave to have more time for the bachelor's thesis. The Panel recommends the Curriculum committee reconsidering the volume of the bachelor's thesis and decrease the number of different subjects studied during the last semester.

Graduates of BKU are active artists nationally as well as internationally. At least half of them continue their studies at the Master's level in EKA or other universities in Estonia or abroad. This was confirmed by SER and alumni, young teachers-graduates of EKA, and representatives of cooperation partners during interviews with the Panel (T, A, E).

Strengths

- Admission conditions and procedures are clear and conducted transparently.
- Non-differentiated assessment ensures objectivity and better motivating feedback.
- An adequate number of optional and elective subjects for developing a student-centred approach in the studies.
- High figures of student outgoing and incoming mobility.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The Panel recommends the Curriculum committee reconsider the volume of the bachelor's thesis and decrease the number of subjects studied during the last semester.
- The Panel recommends that BKU better define the concept of internships and spotlight their implementation.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests reviewing the proportion of small-volume subjects.
- The Panel suggests looking for solutions on how young people from rural areas of Estonia could better access the admission exams.

2.1.3 Development, Cooperation and Internationalisation of Teaching Staff

Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.

Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.

Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programmes which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.

The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI are taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the members of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

According to the SER (Table 32, p. 93), the academic staff is composed of 24 persons, 4 having a PhD degree, 20 MA. The average age of the teaching staff is 46.5 years, it is balanced in gender and age. Creative achievements are significantly taken in account in the quality of the teaching staff while recruiting them through open competitions, making a visiting lecturer contract or undergoing an evaluation of their academic work every five years in accordance with Higher Education Act and EKA's Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members. The entire academic and support staff of BKU are practising artists.

The Panel learnt from SER and interviews (T) that EKA has a good system for supervising and building up the teaching skills of its staff through Good Teaching Seminars during which, the training is conducted on generic competences, e-learning counselling, teaching skills and sharing good practice from the international exchange.

The total BKU student number in 2022/2023 was 60, meaning that, although not clearly calculated in the SER or monitored by EKA, the staff-student ratio is very comfortable and ensures the individual student approach in the study process.

During the interview (T), the Panel was assured that BKU academic staff follow the principles of academic ethics described in the EKA Code of Ethics. According to the SER (p. 93), so far there has been one case under review concerning BKU's activities that required addressing by the EKA Ethics Committee. There have been no complaints but discussions on creative plagiarism within the scope of the curriculum.

BKU members of the teaching staff are actively participating in Erasmus+, Nordplus and other exchange mobility programmes. Faculty members are involved in the ELIA workshop programme and virtual seminars. EKA is a member of the KUNO network and the Head of BKU curriculum chairs the KUNO steering group. BKU teaching staff cooperate with other academies from the network in conducting KUNO intensive or express courses open to students from different Baltic and Nordic countries. Over the past three years, BKU teaching staff taught in prominent art universities in the USA, Canada, Chile, Mexico, and Europe. During the interviews (M, T), the Panel got to know that teaching/staff exchange mobilities contribute to bringing the international perspective and deepening intercultural awareness into the curriculum, enriching the development of RDC activities with different perspectives and contacts. To further enhance this positive development the Panel encourages the curriculum committee to review the extent to which the curriculum reflects the principles of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (see recommendation in Standard 4)..

The Higher Education Act requires academic staff to undergo an evaluation, the periodic assessment of an academic staff member's performance and compliance with the position's requirements, at least once every five years (SER p. 55). From 2020, regular academic staff were evaluated according to EKA's Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff members. The teaching staff members are evaluated in three areas: study, RDC and administrative activities. During the interview with teaching staff, the Panel was assured that students' feedback and international mobility are considered while evaluating the staff member's work as well. The Panel also heard how teachers appreciated the opportunity for a sabbatical semester every five years which contributes substantially to the RDC activities of 'Fine Art' teaching staff.

Strengths

- The number of teaching staff exchange mobility is remarkably high.
- Good system of periodic assessment of an academic staff member's performance and compliance with the position's requirements.
- Opportunity for each permanent teaching staff member to take a sabbatical semester once every five years.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests enhancing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) approach to the curriculum based on international exchange and activities highlighting the importance of inclusivity and respect for diversity.

2.2 Study Programme: Fashion, Accessory and Textile Design (Bachelor)

The curriculum Fashion, Accessory and Textile Design (BMAT) is a relatively new programme that was launched in 2019 and formed by merging and integrating three separate curricula: Fashion Design, Textile Design and Accessory Design. The curriculum is mainly focused on the needs of society (societal impact) and the labour market and has committed itself as a future goal to comply with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This combined programme, bringing together three specialities is rather unique and future challenges are to benefit from common grounds, create joint activities and encourage interdisciplinary crossovers without the loss of identity of each particular specialised discipline. The programme has a total of 64 students.

2.2.1 Planning and Management of Studies

The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities are sufficient and support the launching of the study programme(s).

The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity, entrepreneurship and other general competencies.

The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology supports the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The curriculum BMAT focuses on 'broad-based professional development and international competence in the field taking into account the needs of both the student and the current and future labour market' (SER p. 96). The programme clearly gives great importance to the student's responsibility to take initiative and 'to be the designer of their own future authorship and creative path' (SER p. 96). BMAT makes this clear in the design of its curriculum. Not only by offering a large number of electives but also because of the possibilities in short-term mobility, the student has the opportunity to set their own goals and achieve an individual approach to the study.

In line with the academy-wide structure and regulations, as indicated in the SER concerning the construction of a curriculum, BMAT has a logical structure of modules and subjects. The Panel could see in the curriculum diagram, subject cards and subject programme that a coherent structure is clearly depicted in its construction. During the interviews (S), it becomes clear that the communication regarding this information is clear and appreciated.

In terms of content, it becomes clear how BMAT wants to profile itself as a study programme. Generic competences (SER, p. 99) encourage important themes, but topics on supportive sustainability and social innovation are well represented in the curriculum.

An important goal and challenge is the commitment that the curriculum wants to convey with regard to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This should not only be reflected in the general competences. Sustainability orientation, and distinguishing between environmental, cultural and social sustainability are important issues in the development of a sustainable learning environment. From a practical point of view, this is already tentatively visible in the Speciality Studies shown in the curriculum diagram. The impression is that such an ambition could be set out even more broadly across all three disciplines, that the need is acknowledged among students and teachers and that they are familiar with the UN SDGs but are not yet widely represented in the learning outcomes, for example.

BMAT is rooted in the culture and history of Estonia with a focus on provenance and anthropology and wants to place this in a broader international context (T). The programme is locally strong, and ambitious internationally, which is reflected in research programmes, mobility and the development and activities of the teaching staff. Compared to other programmes in this area, BMAT shows a relatively large impact on society.

The merging of the three disciplines is seen as a positive development. Whereas at the beginning of the programme, the emphasis is mainly on common ground and topics are formulated in a more general way, from the second semester onwards there is an immediate emphasis on the various specialities. Students also see the merging of the disciplines as an opportunity to work more easily interdisciplinarily, that a course of study is structured more clearly and specifically, and that the disciplines can reinforce each other by means of joint practices.

Strengths

- The merging of the three disciplines is seen as a positive development.
- Sense of relevancy and urgency concerning sustainable learning and teaching and sustainable well-being in relation to curriculum and implemented subjects.
- Very coherent structure of the programme in a logical sequence of modules and subjects

Opportunities for further improvement

- The panel suggests that UN Sustainable Development Goals be addressed in the learning outcomes across all three disciplines.

2.2.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and a motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.

A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and careers supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.

The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.

Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.

Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

In its authorisations, the general admission process, and the composition of the admission committee, BMAT follows the general provisions that apply to the whole of EKA. The SER (p. 102) shows that an extensive process has been set up for the admissions, but that BMAT also offers guidance in the preparation of candidates in the form of workshops, training courses and admission consultation. The Department shows a good application competition rate of 4.0 and 3.7 applicants per place. BMAT aims for classes of less than 10 students on average which, although the staff student ratio is not clearly calculated in the SER or monitored by EKA, is comfortable given the number of teachers. In this way, individual support for the students can remain optimal and guaranteed.

In relation to studying and working, the Department is very aware of the sustainable well-being of students and teaching staff, taking into account the workload and how students can often challenge themselves too much. The student takes responsibility for their choice of subjects as well as for extra-curricular activities such as participation in competitions, design fairs, etc. The learner-centred and learning-centred approach translates into the possibility and responsibility of each student to shape their own learning path. The interviewees (S) indicated that students are aware of their own responsibilities and ambitions and that they are familiar with the structure for support in case of special or additional needs or study guidance. Guidelines for consideration of special needs are communicated by EKA's psychologist after consultation with the student.

Assessment methods and criteria are described in the subject card and are easily accessible to the students. BMAT is also experimenting with non-differentiated assessment and differentiated assessment with regard to speciality subjects. It is a multi-level process where students can gain a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their work and where there is constant development. Peer reviews are an important part of this process. The students generally present the

entire process in which the accessory design speciality experiments with a Matrix Assessment in which the subject can also be assessed in smaller parts, making the assessment process clearer. The assessment process is open and reviewed by external experts and a committee of at least three members to ensure objectivity and transparency. In the context of student well-being, support to students can often take place on an individual basis due to the small student groups.

In the interviews (S), students indicate that they are familiar with the EKA-wide counselling system for support. One could conclude that a decrease in dropout may be a consequence of the availability and accessibility of such a facility.

As the curriculum focuses on professional development and international competence in the field, taking into account the needs of the current and future labour market, then the set learning outcomes are in line with this. Even during their studies, the students already experience an involvement with that field of work. Stakeholders indicated (E) that there is indeed an excellent awareness of the professional field in the curricula and graduates are qualified as 'very good employable'.

Strengths

- Sense of relevancy and urgency concerning a learner-centred approach.
- Clear and transparent processes for assessments and feedback.

2.2.3 Development, Cooperation and Internationalisation of Teaching Staff

Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.

Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.

Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programmes which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.

The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI are taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the members of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

In relation to studying and working, the Department is very aware of the well-being of students and teaching staff, taking into account the workload and how students can often challenge themselves too much. Together with external partners and experts, the Department develops its curriculum in order to continue to anticipate current developments in skills, sustainability, digital competencies

and the (future) labour market. There is a great emphasis on introducing different designer profiles, collaborating with companies and expanding the internship base. And creating wider network opportunities for students. BMAT is active in various (international) partnerships to achieve these goals. Several working groups of universities have been initiated with the aim of keeping curricula distinct and developing the specialities across institutions. The interviewees (S, T) know how to find and appreciate these exchanges and the opportunities for mobility offered and see this as a valuable addition to the curriculum.

The Panel learnt from the SER (p. 103) and interviews (T) that EKA has a good system for supervising and building up the teaching skills of its staff through Good Teaching Seminars in which training is conducted on teaching skills and generic competences, e-learning counselling, sharing good practice from the international exchange and the networks in which EKA and BMAT in particular participate. In general, support is quite generous and offered with the possibility of taking a free semester and the creative period set out in the employment contract. Development and implementation of skills are monitored during annual performance reviews. Feedback on the work of teaching is clearly formulated and monitored by indicators like:

- annual performance development reviews.
- student feedback on the subject.
- overall learning outcomes.
- professional objective review by peers.

In general, the interviews (S, T) indicate that BMAT finds a pleasant working environment and emphasises a 'community feeling' with very good possibilities to learn and use technical tools. This fosters an 'Everything is possible' attitude.

Teaching staff are professionals in the field. Many guest professors are rotating frequently. Mobility of teaching is encouraged and, according to the interviewed lecturers (T), highly appreciated. The exchange of knowledge on an international level provides new perspectives and promotes the development of new teaching methods. Thanks to EKA's membership of extensive networks (e.g., CIRRUS, ELIA), BMAT teachers can upgrade their teaching skills by attending workshops. Teachers can use the space given through the free semester for their own creative development, development or teaching skills, or expanding their networks.

The principles of academic ethics are centrally organised at EKA. BMAT and its staff attach great importance to relating to that. Not only when it comes to equal treatment of students, but also when it comes to design ethics. In the programme, various themes and topics are focused on the awareness of design ethics and how to deal with them. Not only on a theoretical level but also in the executive process, the student continues to analyse and record the process in order to be able to guarantee authorship.

In general, BMAT has a strong ambition to have a societal impact. It is not only in terms of content that the Department shows that it is involved in social development. Through the many collaborations, presentations and contacts with the professional field, BMAT can also show great commitment and achieve impact.

Strengths

- The programme is relevant regarding design ethics and international relationships.
- Strong structure of networks to interact with and create opportunities for students and teaching staff to learn from.

2.3 Study Programme: Architecture and Urban Design (Integrated Studies)

The master's degree in architecture and urban design is an integrated programme (BA+MA) of five years (300 ECTS). It aims to prepare spatially capable architects, interior architects, urban planners and urbanists with independent and critical thinking skills and a broad-based humanities and technical education, providing opportunities for both practical work and professional research. About 130 students are enrolled in the programme with 20-25 students admitted each year, with 20 students admitted to the 1st year and 5 students admitted to the 4th year. The number of graduates varies from 11 to 23 and the number of dropouts varies from 4 to 10.

2.3.1 Planning and Management of Studies

> The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities are sufficient and support the launching of the study programme(s).
>
> The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity, entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
>
> The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology supports the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The Faculty of Architecture is complying with EKA's procedures in terms of curriculum development and has commissioned a Curriculum Committee in charge of the monitoring, evaluation and revision of the programme. As stated in the SER (pp. 110-111) and confirmed during the interviews (M), it is adequately composed of representatives from the academic staff, students and external stakeholders. There is evidence that continuous feedback is gathered from the students and Alumni and it has resulted in some improvement over the years, particularly regarding the articulation between the studio and the subjects, and the creation of new subjects. The external stakeholders (employers and partners) were particularly keen to confirm the high level of qualification of EKA's architects, complying with the national and European qualification frameworks, and the labour market needs. EKA is regularly benchmarking the programme with the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Royal Danish Academy and Centre for Information Technology and Architecture (CITA), The University of Innsbruck, TU Delft, and RMIT (SER Table 37, p.112), which demonstrates a very good level of ambition. The research activities in the Faculty are various and clearly support the programme. In recent years, the academic staff have participated in several national (Unfinished City, Järva Municipality, wooden building and envelope system) or European research (LIFE IP Buildest, an individual Marie Sklodowska-Curie fellowship) projects. The academic staff give very good attention to scientific production, particularly in terms of books and proceedings (SER, AN and W), including in the Estonian language, which is positive. Some effort has been recently made

towards scientific publication in international peer-reviewed journals and this requires further improvement to support EKA's international ambition, both in terms of confronting EKA's research to international standards and to enhance EKA's visibility in the international Community. This research activity is reflected in the design studios, both specialised and vertical (SER Table 38, pp.112-113).

The general objectives are very clear and relevant to such an educational programme. They are further articulated in 8 programme learning outcomes (PLOs) that do not fully comply with the ECTS Users' Guide as they are mostly phrased with inadequate and passive verbs for an EDF level 7 programme, except for the last one. As such, the PLOs cannot ensure the expected coherence of the programme and need further attention although this coherence is adequately ensured by the design studios. The programme is further articulated in 9 modules but most of these modules have been defined on an organisational basis, not reflecting a student-centred approach to group subjects in coherent modules where learning outcomes, methods and assessment could be coordinated. This is confirmed by the fact that most of the module learning outcomes are often too broad and vague to ensure consistency with the learning methods and assessment. This articulation should be reconsidered from disciplinary and student perspectives in order to better benefit from the module approach. Although these formal aspects are important and need to be fixed the learning methods and assessment are appropriate for such a programme. During the interviews, the Panel learnt that formative and certification evaluations are well in place and systematic feedback is provided to the students which is positive. Very good attention is paid throughout the programme to creativity skills, mainly to the design studios but also through other learning activities, and good attention is paid to entrepreneurship which is covered in the module of 'Elective Subjects of General Theory', although it is not clear to which extent as the subject title do not clearly refer to it. General competencies are well covered with several general subjects that are relevant to the programme. Five subject cards were submitted for review and the analysis reveals that they are very accurate but here again, better attention should be paid to the learning outcomes which are presented in very different ways and almost none of them comply with ECTS Users' Guide.

In recent years, the programme has clearly benefited from the move to the new EKA building offering the students an adequate place dedicated to each year's studio work (R). It also provides room for exhibition and committee review. EKA's new building supports a social and active learning environment and co-creation (SER p. 115) and is therefore very good, including access to a physical library which is very important for such studies. The move to the new EKA main building has had a significant impact on the material resources and working environment of the curriculum, creating new synergies between different Faculties and deepening interdisciplinary learning according to the SER (p. 114) but the Panel found limited evidence of these new synergies. Thanks to the access card system, the students have 24-hour access to EKA's studios, workshops, modelling workshops and equipment, which is a major asset for the students. Regarding the software, EKA has a sufficient number of licences for students to use on their own computers and students are encouraged to use free and open-source tools (e.g. QGIS) as well, which is relevant. In terms of laboratories, the programme is supported by a Prototyping Lab, a 3D Lab, and a Virtual Reality Lab which are operational and accessible to the students.

Strengths

- The programme delivers a high-level qualification in architecture and urban design, complying with the national and European qualification frameworks.
- The research activities of the academic staff are adequately supporting the programme.
- The learning environment is top class with studio rooms dedicated per year, a library, laboratories and a 24-hour access system.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The learning outcomes at all levels (programme, modules, subjects) do not comply with the ECTS Users' Guide and are often not appropriate for such a level of education. They should be thoroughly revised.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Better attention could be paid to publications in international peer-reviewed journals in order to fulfil EKA's international ambition.
- The articulation in modules is driven by internal organisational aspects and is not instrumental to the students. The articulation could be revised to ensure pedagogical coherence from a learning and student perspective.

2.3.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and a motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.

A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and careers supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.

The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.

Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.

Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

The admission conditions for the bachelor's degree are clear and transparent. The programme is open to any student with a secondary education diploma or equivalent. EKA is very active in providing prospective students with clear and genuine information through various mechanisms like

newsletters, social media, workshops to secondary, open days, and student shadowing. This is highly positive.

As usual in architectural studies, and EKA makes no exception, the learning process is characterised by a student-centred approach mainly through the design studios throughout the curriculum. These studios play a central role in training the students for their future profession covering knowledge, skills and competencies, in particular creativity, adaptability and teamwork (SER p. 116). An original aspect of the programme is the combination of horizontal specialised studios and vertical studios where the students have the opportunity to work on research topics. The programme is complemented by general subjects (both theoretical and practical), speciality subjects (both theoretical and practical), engineering subjects, practice and elective subjects. The programme clearly allows the students to achieve the programme's general learning objectives.

The Panel collected evidence that the student work assessment is conducted fairly and transparently. In particular, regarding the studios, the students receive continuous formative feedback from their supervisors and two formal review sessions are organised with external members at mid- and final terms.

Regarding the organisation of studies, it must be noted that the number of elective subjects (16 ECTS) is low and the programme fosters organised electives in three minors instead (Landscape Architecture, Cultural Heritage and Conservation, and Planning). Although these minors are relevant, this system prevents the students from taking full responsibility for their learning paths. The absence of actual electives also prevents EKA from being more agile in offering subjects anchored in state-of-the-art research like Artificial Intelligence, Digitalisation, BIM, Sustainability, Circular Economy, etc. These research topics are discussed in the vertical studios (8 ECTS), which is positive but does not always offer the required theoretical setting and is not comprehensive. It would be, for instance, possible to implement such electives by reconsidering the number of credits allocated to the second master's project (20 ECTS) and the master's thesis (30 ECTS) which have overlapping learning outcomes. Regarding the practice, there are two two-week internships (one in an architectural office, and one on a construction site). Although this is positive, the duration and the number of credits (2x2 ECTS) are low putting these internships at an observation level and insufficiently integrated into the learning process. It is advisable to reduce the number of small practice activities to develop extended internships with clear learning outcomes monitored by EKA's Faculty members. In terms of mobility, EKA is offering many opportunities for their students to make short- or long-term mobility periods. The number of outgoing students per year is significant as almost all students benefitted from such an exchange. The incoming attractiveness is clearly established as well with 10 students on average per year coming from different EU countries (mainly France, Belgium, Lithuania, Germany and Greece). Less attention is paid to mobility within Estonia.

The support services for students are well in place including academic counselling, career counselling, psychological counselling and counselling for students with special needs. Regarding academic counselling, both the supervision of the studios (with two practitioner architects) and the master's thesis are highly valuable. The number of dropouts is moderate and they receive adequate attention. Good attention is also paid to monitoring the average duration of studies which is about 5.5 years which is reasonable (SER p. 119).

In terms of graduate competitiveness, the Panel gathered much positive evidence like the high employment rate (88%, SER p. 111), positive feedback from the Alumni ('During my studies, I acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for professional work' has increased from 2.8 to 4.1 –

on a 5-point scale – over the period of 2019-2023, SER p. 119), and several prizes awarded during master's thesis competitions.

Strengths

- The learning process is characterised by a student-centred approach mainly through the design studios throughout the curriculum.
- An original aspect of the programme is the combination of horizontal specialised studios and vertical studios where the students have the opportunity to work on research topics.
- The student mobility, both outgoing and incoming, is significant.
- The support services for students are well in place including academic counselling, career counselling, psychological counselling and counselling for students with special needs.
- Very good graduate competitiveness with a high employment rate (88%).

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The organisation of the studies prevents the students from taking full responsibility for their learning paths and EKA should develop and integrate actual electives.

Opportunities for further improvement

- It is advisable to reduce the number of small practice activities to develop extended internships with clear learning outcomes monitored by EKA's Faculty members.

2.3.3 Development, Cooperation and Internationalisation of Teaching Staff

Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.

Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.

Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programmes which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.

The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI are taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the members of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

According to the SER Teaching Staff Table, the teaching team is composed of 148 persons with different positions (prof., assoc. prof., lecturer, visiting lecturer, prof. em., senior researcher, workshop master, hourly paid staff). In terms of credits, permanent teaching staff accounts for 43% of teaching and hourly paid teaching staff for 57%. This proportion ensures that the specialist practical subjects (design studios) and engineering subjects are taught by practitioners, which is

positive. (SER p. 120). The number of teaching staff with a PhD degree is increasing (36) which is also positive to further developing research activities. The staff-student ratio, although not clearly calculated in the SER or monitored by EKA, is overall very good and the level of competencies is high, largely contributing to the student development and the quality of the learning experience at EKA.

During the interviews (T), the Panel learnt that the teaching staff is following the recently created Code of Ethics. Their awareness of ethical issues and academic misconduct is improving. The students are also trained to avoid plagiarism, but it comes late in their programme. Student works are systematically tested against plagiarism using Ouriginal software, which is positive.

The Faculty of Architecture is a member of several international networks (NBAA, RMIT PRS, T4E) and actively participates in the Erasmus+ programme. There is evidence of some positive international activities for staff including visiting renowned staff (13 involved in 24 subjects SERAN) and participation in international research projects. Limited evidence has, however, been paid to demonstrate how the teaching staff benefits from other mobility programmes for their teaching activities, particularly for the hourly paid teaching staff.

The staff undergo an evaluation at least once every five years, as legally prescribed by the Higher Education Act (SER p. 120). In 2020, EKA launched a new career model for academic staff following EKA's Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members. With this framework, EKA makes sure that all staff activities are taken into consideration (teaching, RDC, services to the community, and mobility). Due attention is given to students' feedback and the Panel appreciates that the interview with the line manager is supportive and focuses first on possible improvement.

Strengths

- The staff-student ratio is very good and the level of competencies is high, largely contributing to the student development and the quality of the learning experience at EKA.
- Good involvement of internationally renowned staff in the programme.
- New EKA's Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members apply and provide adequate feedback regarding all staff's activities.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Improve the teaching staff's opportunities to benefit from mobility programmes for their teaching activities, particularly for the hourly paid teaching staff.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Train the students in academic conduct and ethics as early as possible in the programme.

2.4   Study Programme: Interaction Design (Master)

The Interaction Design MA at EKA is a young contemporary study programme (created in 2016) highly designed to meet expectations in society at large. About 30 students are enrolled in the programme with 12 students admitted each year. The number of graduates varies from 3 to 13 and the number of dropouts varies from 3 to 7.

2.4.1 Planning and Management of Studies

The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities are sufficient and support the launching of the study programme(s).

The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity, entrepreneurship and other general competencies.

The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology supports the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The aim of the programme is to educate specialists in interaction design and related disciplines, to be a local developer in the field, responding to the needs of students, employers and other stakeholders today and tomorrow. The programme is grounded in human-based design and is heavily informed by RDC activities performed by academic staff (ADD p.18). Simultaneously the programme is being developed with references to international trends and research. 'Rethinking Design Education' (Davis and Dubberly, 2023) is used as a highly relevant reference (SER p. 125). The core philosophy is to develop design thinking from making things to solving problems through innovative methods. It is the Panel's assessment that the Interaction Design MA at EKA is well-planned to do so.

The objectives of the programme are clear and stated in the 'General information of the Curriculum'. The programme has an obvious applied profile leaning towards meeting the demands of the labour market by graduating candidates who are team-oriented, creative and innovative. The Study Programme website reveals a learning philosophy based on the principles of learning by doing (www.ixd.ma). The modules support the general objective with a logical development which secures relevant theoretical and practical knowledge and competences. Module 3.1 and 3.2 secure relevant introductions to theory and research strategies, whereas Module 3.3 prepares the students for practical problem-solving. After internships (Module 3.4) the students are prepared for the master's thesis (Module 3.6).

Still, there is additional work to be done on the programme learning outcomes as they are too numerous, therefore not instrumental, and should be limited.

Students work with their portfolio through constant iteration, guided by mentors—who use their experience to guide them through challenging projects. Most of the mentors are active professionals and projects are carried out in cooperation with industry partners. Alumni confirm the relevance of the programme and that the content of the curriculum corresponds well to the tasks expected in their professional lives (A).

The resources allocated to the programme are based on EKA's shared and reconciled principles of budget distribution. EKA states in the SER (p. 127) that the curriculum is in a good material position, and that the learning tools are primarily digital, so material costs are low. Students have also access to databases through the EKA Library. There are no indications of a lack of material or financial resources to ensure the design and implementation of the programme. There is a concern amongst students about the lack of space. Students expressed in interviews (S) the need for private space, like Fine Art and Architecture students have. EKA has identified this need and states in the SER a need for space where students can hang works/materials throughout the courses (SER p. 127).

Strengths

- The Interaction Design MA programme is a contemporary human-oriented design programme with clear societal ambitions. It harvests input from best practice programmes internationally and is well-informed about labour market needs as well as well as connected with industry/public services.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The programme learning outcomes are too numerous – more than 20 - and therefore not instrumental. The Panel recommends limiting their number.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel would encourage EKA to monitor the needs of the Interaction Design students, with the ambition to solve the spatial issues raised by the students. The SER indicates that learning tools are primarily digital, but students report a need for physical conditions to fulfil expectations of learning outcomes.

2.4.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and a motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.

A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and careers supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.

The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.

Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.

Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

The Interaction Design MA has fair admission conditions. Applicants submit their application and documents to EKA via the digital interface 'DreamApply'. This includes a CV and Motivation Letter, documentation of previous experience, and diplomas. The admission website encourages students from all different professions, cultures, and backgrounds to apply. As entry to the curriculum does not require any prior professional competences, it is primarily the ambition, willingness, and ability to acquire these competences during studies that are assessed.

The teaching is highly student-centred with a heavy focus on studio-based learning. Students solve cases/projects with supervision support and feedback from teachers/tutors. This is a typical design-based pedagogy and stimulates students to develop independent, collaborative creative and innovative skills in a teamwork environment. (SER p. 129).

The curriculum mainly uses learner-centred and sustainable assessment methods and assessment is formative and continuous. To ensure the objectivity of the assessment, the assessment at the end of the course with more volume is overseen by the Head of Curriculum together with the committee. The assessments are informed and assisted by methodologies accessible on the EKA's intranet (SER p. 130). The Panel collected evidence that the student work assessment is conducted fairly and transparently (S).

The programme is well organised with a substantial part being the Subjects of speciality (30 ECTS), Internships (30 ECTS), as well as the Master's Thesis (36 ECTS). This provides for concentration around each student's focus/interest. Student mobility is secured through the Erasmus programme and incoming students have on average been three students per year. Outgoing students have been few and EKA explains this with reference to the pandemic and a strong desire amongst students to stay with their classmates (SER p. 125)

The support services for students are well in place including academic counselling, career counselling, psychological counselling, and counselling for students with special needs. A climate of trust has been developed within the student group and between students and the Head of Curriculum. The Panel collected evidence from the interviews with the students that this is the case.

Indications of a well-working programme are the popularity of the programme (the most popular at EKA), low dropout rate, and 92% of alumni employed within their field.

Strengths

- The Interaction Design MA has in a few years become a popular and relevant programme with strong ties to society and industry.
- The programme is capable of adjusting the curriculum content according to shifting demands and expectations amongst stakeholders.
- The programme stimulates students to become competent problem solvers using a variety of design methods.

2.4.3 Development, Cooperation and Internationalisation of Teaching Staff

Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.

Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.

Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programmes which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.

The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI are taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the members of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

Teaching at the Interaction Design MA is conducted by nearly 28 teachers/supervisors with backgrounds from universities, state institutions, corporations, and agencies. Five of these are permanent. The permanent staff members have more theoretical and field-expanding skills, while most of the tutors are visiting practitioners and specialists. This is a typical feature in higher arts- and design education and often results in a different competence profile between internal and external teachers. The staffing is appropriate, and the blend secures different experiences to the curricula. 7 out of the 28 teachers hold a doctorate degree, 13 different countries are represented, and the average student rating of the teaching staff is 4.6 out of 5. All in all - very solid.

The SER states that there have been no cases of plagiarism or fraud and that ethics are addressed in lectures and in case of suspected breaches (SER p. 132). During the interviews (T), the Panel learnt that the teaching staff is following the recently created Code of Ethics.

The ambition of EKA is that all permanent teaching staff undertake at least one mobility period per year to keep academically and network-wise updated. It is the Panel's assessment that the permanent and hourly paid teaching staff are well informed about current developments in the field of interaction design, which may have to do with a highly international staff. Interviews with teachers (T) and Heads of Curriculum (M) show strong ties to specific academic institutions, which are used for benchmarking. These are listed in the SER (p. 132).

The staff is undergoing an evaluation at least once every five years, as legally prescribed by the Higher Education Act (SER p. 120). In 2020, EKA launched a new career model for academic staff following EKA's Rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members. With this framework, EKA makes sure that all staff activities are taken into consideration (teaching, RDC, services to the community, and mobility). Due attention is given to students' feedback and the Panel appreciates that the interview with the line manager is supportive and focuses first on possible improvement.

Strengths

- Teaching at the Interaction Design MA is performed by skilled and engaged teachers (permanent and hourly paid). The number of teachers is fair and balanced for a not too big student group. The programme has found ways to constantly develop and challenge the curricula within a field of constant change.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The permanent staff members have more theoretical and field-expanding skills, while most of the tutors are visiting practitioners and specialists. Even if this is a typical feature in higher arts- and design education, the institution may look for ways to include expert competence within the institutional framework.

2.5   Study Programme: Art History and Visual Culture (PhD)

The doctoral programme of Art History and Visual Culture (DKT) is an important educational unit in Estonia since it is the only doctoral school within the field in the country. DKT is a part of the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture. The Institute has a dual-functional role in EKA since it provides both research and art history education at all three levels. The Institute is also responsible for the content of the doctoral programme of Art History and Visual Culture (DKT). The doctoral school has approximately 20 active students. The programme admits two new students every year. The exception has been the academic year 2021 2022, when four new students were admitted. Each year one doctoral student is graduating. Approximately 0.5 doctoral students suspend their studies annually.

2.5.1 Planning and Management of Studies

> The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities are sufficient and support the launching of the study programme(s).
>
> The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity, entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
>
> The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology supports the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The doctoral programme of Art History and Visual Culture has a special status because it is located within the Academy of the Arts. This has two consequences: first it allows art history students to easily make acquaintance with art students, and secondly vice versa - it strengthens EKA's academic and research culture. The Department has a long history, and it has very high-quality teachers and supervisors (ADD 23, p. 2). Based on the sample theses made available for the Panel, and on meeting the current students, the Panel considers that the DKT students are ahead in many ways - in their research questions and theoretical approaches. The reviews of students' theses (Annexes 25a and 25b) corroborate the Panel's finding that students are of a high quality. The Panel found (E) that recently hired coordinators were art history alumni from EKA, which means that their education is also valid for work as an academic.

The Panel finds that the objectives of the Art History and Visual Culture programme are satisfactory, but the learning outcomes are well designed and considered the learning outcomes do not all comply with the ECTS Users' Guide and the Panel recommends that they should be reviewed and revised (Annex 19). The curriculum is developed in accordance with the standard needed (SER p.135). It is developed in cooperation with the Head of Programme and DKT Doctoral Council.

Students and teaching staff are also heard, and their opinions are taken into consideration when changes to the curriculum are decided (SER p. 136; S). The input from external stakeholders is in evidence (E), although the Panel heard that this tends to happen informally due to the stakeholders mainly being alumnae (see Standard 3).

One recent change is a new elective course on academic ethics, while admission for international students was introduced in autumn 2023. Because of this, there are also more courses in English, and one monthly seminar is conducted in English, one in Estonian (T) and there is an English language academic writing seminar (SER p.136).

Students appreciated the new more international curriculum, for example, international professionals frequently give workshops, otherwise, no big changes have been made directly to the curriculum that would reflect the international profile. Some of the students found language issues problematic (S); how to keep the balance between English and Estonian, but mostly the students were satisfied with the balance. Students hope that the language issue will be solved, and more joint seminars across programmes are created (S).

The research topics of the students are often linked to the interests of teaching staff and ongoing research projects, but students can also choose their subjects independently. There are many optional courses to be chosen by the students. Overall, the curriculum has also a good balance between the pre-given study material, theoretical courses and courses, topics and reading ideas that come from the students (SER pp. 137, 141). Students of DKT are mostly satisfied with the studies (SER Table 21, p. 69). They stated in the interview (S) that there is an openness and good atmosphere where you are allowed to express your opinions and hopes (SER, p. 137, S). The students also speak well of the interdisciplinary nature of the programme (pre-visit survey p. 9).

A feedback system has been developed and introduced to the students in 2022 and used regularly, at the end of each semester via Tahvel, and there is a course on academic ethics available. Students also have a clear image of how to behave and whom to contact if there are more serious matters (SER p. 138, S).

Students commented that they learnt how to do funding applications in the institute, but they consider there should be more courses on how to work in archives. This aligns with the external stakeholders' remark that medieval art history is not studied and researched enough. They noted that good possibilities exist for internships and participating in the heritage and culture in Estonia and that museums need professionals who are specialists in medieval culture (E).

Students are already able to enter working life during their studies, which is positive, but it also has a negative side in that it prolongs their studies and sometimes students even suspend their studies because it is not always possible to balance work with study (SER Table 41, p. 135). The number of discontinued students has remained consistent over the years, at 0.5 per annum on average (SER p. 141). The Panel found that the external stakeholders (E) are keen to be involved in the registration of Knowledge Transfer doctoral students (Doctoral Study Regulations p. 3), but at present funding for such doctorate collaborations is an obstacle.

The Panel is very satisfied with the management and planning of DKT studies. However, one point was found that would require consideration: the working space for doctoral students does not support and encourage collaboration and a good working atmosphere. The space that is reserved for doctoral students is not big enough to enable all students to work at EKA's premises (T), although the Panel are aware that the Rectorate are trying to find solutions to insufficient space (M).

The Panel heard that the Heads of Departments are familiar with and satisfied with the common methodology (SER p. 38) for allocating budgets and that they have the agency to use budgets flexibly. There is also a strategy to use the leftover budget to make some investments. The workshops, such as bookbinding, have their own budgets and managers (see Standard 2) Students, however, stated the same thing, that they do not have access to all the literature, databases, and other research materials they would need in their studies (S). Some journals are not accessible to EKA people. Those that there are, are used actively. Students have good opportunities to go abroad and use the facilities/databases there. Some students said that they prefer to use TalTech databases instead of EKA's library's databases, as they are more relevant to the work (T).

Strengths

- Ambitious programme and well-organised doctoral school.
- Well-structured supervision practices.
- Functional and supportive relationship with the field and stakeholders and career possibilities

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The learning outcomes do not all comply with the ECTS Users' Guide and the Panel recommends that they should be reviewed and revised.
- Graduate students are missing medieval art history which is considered important for Estonian culture and museums and the Panel recommends reconsidering this subject in the curriculum committee.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel recommends strengthening the research community among doctoral students by offering them more dedicated and quiet research spaces.
- The Panel suggests that EKA should put considerable effort and support into establishing Knowledge Transfer doctorates. Alongside the Junior Research doctoral positions, these might help reduce the number of suspensions needed by doctoral students due to workload pressures.

2.5.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and a motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.

A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and careers supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.

The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.

Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.

Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

The admission of the doctoral school is made openly and in fair a manner and the admission process follows good practice. Candidates are interviewed and their motivation is confirmed (EKA doctoral Study Regulations, p. 5-6). One external student (S) was very impressed by VÕTA opportunities (Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL) – and that good communication exists around this process.

Students of the Art history and Visual Culture doctoral programme are satisfied with the studies. Overall, the study programme is recognised for its personalised approach, diverse learning opportunities, international connections, and interdisciplinary focus, making it a standout choice for students seeking to advance their careers in art and visual culture studies. Students said in the Pre-visit survey that the study programme stands out for its small class size, allowing for personalised feedback on research work. Annual invitations to internationally renowned professors contribute to the programme's exceptional learning environment (Pre-visit survey). Students make their own individual study plan where they can choose to study their own areas of interest (Doctoral Study Regulations, Annex 2). The Panel encourages the Faculty to develop more interdisciplinary collaboration between art history and artistic research.

The assessment of studies is made by non-differentiated assessment. This was confirmed by the students who said that most subjects and classes are not marked by numbers, but only passed/not passed. This is to say the emphasis is not on numbers, but more on the comments, discussions and dialogical feedback, and the students have the possibility of dialogue with the supervisors and teachers. Students valued the use of pass/fail because there are many students from different years in the same classes, some are more advanced than others, which makes it difficult to evaluate students' results evenly (S). However, the Panel heard that there could be more discussion on the content of the marks (pass/fail) and what it meant to fail (S). There are also other kinds of support for the doctoral students and supervisors, like evaluation report with schedule indicators for the completion of the doctoral thesis (Doctoral Study Regulations, pp. 7-8 Annex 4), A Good Supervision Practice for Supervisors (Doctoral Study Regulations, p.19). The evaluation report is one way to monitor the progress of studies. The primary support for the doctoral student is, however, the supervisor who is following the studies in regular meetings with the student.

The Panel found that the assessment process for thesis defences is clearly set out in the Doctoral Study Regulations (pp. 11-13) and involves a Defence Committee comprising at least five scholars with doctoral degrees, thereby providing evidence of the rigour of the assessment, with the thesis being made publicly accessible on the EKA website or in the library at least one month before the defence takes place. The Panel acknowledges that additional regulations exist for theses with an artistic practice element.

For international students (there is one in DKT) there is an international Admissions Specialist who advises doctoral students on practical matters like residence permission, while the International Office and Doctoral School coordinator help students to plan and apply for studies abroad (SER p.141). One student stated that when applying for the PhD, the committee asked if she planned to study abroad, and it was indicated that there was an expectation to spend some time studying abroad. Four of the students and alumni interviewed had international experiences during their studies (S, A). The Panel supports DKT's ambition to recruit more international students, as this would make the programme even stronger, and extend its reach.

During the site visit, the Panel heard that graduates from the DKT are well-positioned for the world of work in the field. The employment rate of Art History and Theory students in their field is 100% (SER p. 136), and this was confirmed with the Alumnae the Panel met (SER p. 136). Many of the students had been working in their own professional fields since being undergraduates. However, it appears that the positive aspect of combining professional work with doctoral studies does slow down the study and extend the necessary time to submit their PhD. This might be one reason that the number of students graduating (SER Table 41, p. 135) is low, given the registered number of students. There are clear regulations about students temporarily suspending their studies (Doctoral study regulations pp. 6-7), but the Panel heard during the site visit that there are students who suspend their studies also for other reasons than those mentioned in the doctoral study regulations (S). There is a hope that the new junior research system that was introduced in 2022 will reduce the number of suspended students (SER p. 141). Junior research position was created as a part of the national doctoral education reform and EKA recruit four new junior researchers each year, of which one for the DKT. The junior researcher is monitoring compliance more rigorously with all the evaluation criteria needed to ensure graduation in the target time. Junior researcher's responsibilities are defined by the Rules on Employment Relations with the Academic Staff Members and Doctoral Study Regulations.

Strengths

- Good study atmosphere despite lack of dedicated study space.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel supports DKT's ambition to recruit more international students, as this would make the programme even stronger.
- The Panel encourages the Faculty to develop more interdisciplinary collaboration between art history and artistic research.

2.5.3 Development, Cooperation and Internationalisation of Teaching Staff

> Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.
>
> Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.
>
> Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programmes which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.
>
> The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI are taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the members of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

The teaching staff and supervisors of doctoral students are high-quality skilled professionals in their respective fields. They publish and present papers in conferences regularly both nationally and internationally and participate in international organisations according to their specific interest (SER, p. 143). EKA's rules on Employment Relations with Academic Staff Members, annual performance development reviews and annual reporting ensure the quality of academic staff. EKA has every five years academic staff evaluation by the committee that has one external member, as legally prescribed by the Higher Education Act (SER p. 120). This is appreciated as an important part of the work. It allows self-reflection and the possibility to consider own performance in a focused way (T). The Panel learnt that across EKA only in a few cases has a teacher not passed the evaluation.

Teaching, researching and supervising skills are supported in many ways by EKA. There are Good Teaching Seminars and Good Supervision practice courses that support teaching and supervising at the doctoral school. EKA has organised also other kinds of teacher and researcher training like e-learning consultancy and 'How to Write an Abstract' and 'How to Publish a Monograph?', etc. (Doctoral Study Regulations, Annex 5).

The professor's research is strongly supported by allocating 50% of annual working hours for research (T, M). For personal development and to be able to carry out high-quality research, teaching staff are also entitled to a sabbatical semester every five years with a full salary (SER, p. 142). There is also a research fund where EKA teaching staff can apply. This fund provides extra funding for conferences. The Panel heard that the Ministry of Culture has established a separate grant for humanities (T). However, the Panel suggests defining a more precise supervisors' payment system.

Since last year, the doctoral programme curriculum has become international. This means that more classes and seminars are held in English. The Art History and Visual Culture doctoral programme also has a few international hourly-based teachers / second supervisors of doctoral students (Annex 22).

Art History and Visual Culture doctoral students speak well of international connections (pre-visit survey p. 8, S). They are mostly satisfied with the language balance between English and Estonian.

Strengths

- Teaching staff's own research is well supported via various means, for example, the sabbatical with full pay.
- Many good courses for teachers and supervisors to support their work, including the Good Teaching Seminars.
- Supported opportunities for mobility and participation in international research community and discussions.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The Panel suggests defining a more precise supervisors' payment system.

Appendix 1: Schedule of the visit

Time	Activity	Experts, room / meeting link	Participants in the meeting *Names and positions*
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24** Estonian Academy of Arts (address: Põhja pst 7)		
9.30 – 9.50	1. Introductory meeting with EKA self-evaluation team	**Room A-503**	**Small Rectorate** and **Support Team:** Angelina Valk – Rector's assistant Cätly Heinpõld – HR Specialist Kaija Põder – Study Specialist Gregor Kornav – IT Specialist Kristiina Krabi-Klanberg – Head of Quality and Development
9.50 – 10.00	*Break. Refreshments A503*		
10.00 – 11.15 *Parallel meetings*	2a Meeting with **students: Fine Arts (BA, abbreviation: BKU); Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design (BA, BMAT) programmes**	Ieva, Gerrit, Anu-Maaja D506	**Anna Abrasimova,** BMAT 3rd yr **Daria Morozova,** BKU 3rd yr **Freyja Tralla,** BMAT 3rd yr **Jürgen Sinnep,** BMAT 2nd yr **Laura Lillepuu,** BKU 2nd yr **Maria Pruuden,** BKU 3rd yr **Maria Roosiaas,** BMAT 3rd yr **Mattias Jürgen Veller,** BKU 3rd yr

			Pauline Ööpik, BMAT 2nd yr
			Sandra Puusepp, BKU 2nd yr
	2bMeeting with **students: Interaction Design (MA, abbr. MIxD); Architecture and Urban Design (INT, abbr. AL)**	Jørn, Philippe A503	**Carol Alice Tõniste,** MIxD 1st yr
			Daria Gužovskaja, AL 4th yr
			Diana Drobot, AL 5th yr, member of AL curriculum committee
			Helena Väinmaa, MIxD 1st yr
			Keijo-Johann Norden, AL 2nd yr
			Kristjan Poska, MIxD 2nd yr
			Nikoloz Aduashvili, MIxD 2nd yr
			Patrick Liik, AL 4th yr
			Tuule Kangur, AL 3rd yr
			Zacari Scott Heisey Kercher, MIxD 2nd yr
	2c Meeting with **students and alumni: Art History and Visual Culture (PhD; abbr. DKT) in Zoom**	Hanna, Sarah, Kristel A502	Students: **Rahel Aerin Eslas,** 1st yr
			Maija Rudovska, 1st yr
			Liisa-Helena Lumberg-Paramonova, 4th yr
			Mie Mortensen, 1st yr extern
			Ragne Soosalu, 2nd yr
			Taavi Hallimäe, 3rd yr
			Alumni: **Greta Koppel,** Alumnus 2021

			Kädi Talvoja, DKT Alumnus 2019
			Maris Mändel, Cultural Heritage and Conservation (PhD; abbr. DMK) Alumnus 2019
			Mariann Raisma, DMK Alumnus 2023
11.15 – 11.45	*Panel reflection, break*	A503	
11.45 – 13.15 *Parallel meetings*	3a Meeting with **teaching staff: Fine Arts (BA; abbr. BKU); Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design (BA; abbr. BMAT) curricula**	Ieva, Gerrit, Anu-Maaja D506	**Fashion and Design (BMAT):** **Aili Aamisepp,** hourly paid teaching staff **Imbi Armas,** teaching staff of Textile Design **Stella Runnel,** Associate Professor of Accessory Design **Anu Samarüütel-Long,** Visiting Associate Professor of Fashion Design **Kärt Ojavee,** Visiting Professor of Textile Design **Maarin Ektermann,** BMAT and BKU Lecturer of General Theory Subjects **Fine Arts (BKU):** **Johannes Luik,** hourly paid teaching staff **Kristi Kongi,** Associate Professor of Painting **Tõnis Saadoja,** Associate Professor (Drawing) **Sirja-Liisa Eelma,** visiting Associate Professor of Painting **Viktor Gurov,** Visiting Associate Professor

	3b Meeting with **teaching staff: Interaction Design (MA; abbr. MixD); Architecture and Urban Design (INT; abbr. AL)**	Jørn, Philippe A503	**Elina Liiva,** AL Junior Researcher **Gregor Taul,** MixD and AL Lecturer of General Theory Subjects **Martin Melioranski,** AL Lecturer and Head of 3D Lab **Mike Jader de Oliveira Ramos,** MIxD hourly paid teaching staff **Nesli Hazal Oktay,** MIxD Visiting Lecturer **Rene Rebane,** MIxD hourly paid teaching staff **Renee Puusepp,** AL Senior Researcher **Riina Raudne,** MIxD hourly paid teaching staff **Siiri Vallner,** AL hourly paid teaching staff **Toomas Tammis,** AL Professor
	3c Meeting with **teaching staff: Art History and Visual Culture (PhD, abbr. DKT)**	Hanna, Sarah, Kristel A502	**Krista Kodres,** DKT Professor **Kristina Jõekalda,** DKT Associate Professor, Senior Researcher **Virve Sarapik,** DKT Professor **Anneli Randla,** Cultural Heritage and Conservation PhD / Professor and Senior Researcher
13.15 – 14.00	*Lunch*	A500	
14.00 – 15.00 *Parallel meetings*	4a Meeting with **employers/cooperation partners: Fine Arts (BA; abbr. BKU); Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design (BA; abbr. BMAT) programmes**	Ieva, Gerrit, Anu-Maaja D506	**Fine Arts:** **Kadi Kesküla,** Administrative Manager of the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM) **Siim Raie,** Owner of Gallery Artrovert **Vano Allsalu,** Vice President of the Estonian Artists' Association

			Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design:
			Ilona Gurjanova, President of Estonian Association of Designers, Head of Estonian Design House/ Tallinn Design Festival
			Jaana Varkki-Truverk, Entrepreneur, owner of namesake label Jaana Varkki
			Kadri Kruus, Entrepreneur
			Kaie Kaas-Ojavere, Entrepreneur, previous brand manager for Estonian leading labels Ivo Nikkolo, Monton
			Kristel Sooaru, Marketing and Communication Manager at Viru Centre
	4b Meeting with **employers/cooperation partners: Interaction Design (MA; abbr. MixD); Architecture and Urban Design (INT, abbr. AL)**	Jørn, Philippe A503	**Interaction Design:** **Dan Mikkin,** MIxD / leading Service Design expert **Keit Ein,** MIxD / Eesti Energia, MIxD co-founder **Kevin Yves Nicolas Crepin,** MIxD employer / Head of DUX **Tiia Vihand,** MIxD / Head of Estonian Design Center **Janno Killing-Jaago,** MIxD employer / team lead at TWN **Architecture and Urban Design:** **Aet Ader,** AL employer / Vice-President of the Estonian Association of Architects; Architect B210 **Andro Mänd,** AL employer / President of the Estonian Association of Architects, Architect "SALTO"; member of AL curriculum committee;

			Jaan Saar, AL partner / Ministry of Climate; digitalisation of the construction sector
			Kalle Komissarov, AL partner / RKAS (state real estate development and management company), Architect; partner
			Kalle Vellevoog, EKA Council Member, Architect
	4c Meeting with **employers/cooperation partners: Art History and Visual Culture (PhD, abbr. DKT)**	Hanna, Sarah, Kristel A502	**Eva Näripea,** Director, Film Archives of Estonian National Archives
			Kadi Polli, Director of Kumu museum
			Kais Matteus, Head of Counselling Department, Estonian National Heritage Board
			Merike Kurisoo, Programme Manager/Curator, Art Museum of Estonia, Niguliste Museum
			Teet Teinemaa, Visiting Lecturer / Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School
15.00 – 15.30	*Panel reflection, break*	A503	
15.30 – 16.30 *Parallel meetings*	5a Panel meeting with **alumni: Fine Arts (BA; abbr. BKU); Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design (BA; abbr. BMAT) programmes**	Ieva, Gerrit, Anu-Maaja D506	**Fine Arts:** **Ats Kruusing,** Alumnus 2021 **Brenda Purtsak,** Alumnus 2020 **Lisette Lepik,** Alumnus 2022 **Pavel Dodatko,** Alumnus 2023 **Sandra Ernits,** Alumnus 2022 **Fashion, Textile and Accessory Design:** **Agathe Peri,** Alumnus 2023

			Kaileen Palmsaar, Alumnus 2023
			Kärolin Raadik, Alumnus 2023
			Liisa Torsus, Alumnus 2022
			Mai Riin Salumaa, Alumnus 2023
	5b Panel meeting with **alumni**: **Interaction Design (MA; abbr. MixD); Architecture and Urban Design (INT; abbr. AL)**	Jørn, Philippe A503	**Interaction Design:** **Alma Yareny Duriez Urías,** Alumnus 2023 **Derin Baykal,** Alumnus 2022 **Helen Staak,** Alumnus 2023 **Külliki Kesa,** Alumnus 2023 **Nursultan Barun,** Alumnus 2022 **Architecture and Urban Design:** **Eneli Kleemann,** Alumnus 2022 **Jornas Toomas Iisak,** Alumnus 2022 **Merilin Kaup,** Alumnus 2022 **Mia Martina Peil,** Alumnus 2022 **Ra Martin Puhkan,** Alumnus 2022
	5c Panel meeting with **Student Council**	Hanna, Sarah, Kristel A502	**Kristi Laanemäe,** Student Council President since 2023, Digital Product Design BA Student **Elise Lissel Pähkel,** Student Council Member since 2023, Architecture and Urban Design Student **Kristin Silm,** Student Council Member since 2023, Digital Product Design BA Student

		Margus Elizarov, Student Council President since 2021-2023
		Elisa Margot Winters Student Council members 2021-2023
16.30 – 17.30	6. EKA tour – library, labs, workshops etc, also sample of study programme related premises and infra. Led by **Gregor Taul** (35-40 min) **A500**	
	7. InfoSystems (what administration, teaching staff or students use) - 20 min (max) - **Kaja Toomla A502**	

Time	Activity	Experts, room / meeting link	Participants in the meeting *Names and positions*
		THURSDAY, APRIL 25 Estonian Academy of Arts (address: Põhja pst 7)	
9.30 – 11.00	8. Meeting "small" Rectorate	All panel members Room: A502	Rector **Mart Kalm** Vice Rector for Academic Affairs **Anne Pikkov** Vice Rector for Research **Anu Allas** Director of Finance and Administration **Andres Tammsaar** Head of Quality and Development **Kristiina Krabi-Klanberg**
11.00 – 11.30	*Panel reflection, break*	A503	
11.30 – 13.00	9. Meeting with **Heads of Curricula, Deans, Heads of Departments (all 5 programmes)**	All panel members Room: A502	Curriculum Heads: BKU **Liina Siib**, BMAT **Piret Puppart,** MIXD **Tanel Kärp,** AL **Andres Ojari**, DKT **Andres Kurg** Deans: Faculty of Architecture **Sille Pihlak,** Faculty of Design **Ruth-Helene Melioranski,** Faculty of Fine Arts **Kirke Kangro** Head of one Workshop: **Lauri Kilusk** Head of Department of Interior Design: **Jüri Kermik**
13.00 – 13.45	*Lunch*	A500	

13.45 – 15.15	10. Meeting with **Study Support Personnel/Units**	Jørn, Kristel, Gerrit, Hanna, Philippe A503	Head of Academic Affairs Office **Elisabeth Kuusik** Psychologist-special needs and career-counsellor **Kaia-Leena Pino** Digital Learning Designer **Kaja Toomla** Good Teaching Seminar working group, lecturer of Art Education **Anneli Porri** International Office Specialist (outgoing students) **Marilyn Riisimäe** Study Specialist (EKA Centre for General Theory Subjects; electives and International Students) **Kaija Põder** Senior Specialist of Academic Affairs Office **Helen Jürgens** (admissions and grants-scholarships) Senior Specialist of Academic Affairs Office **Riina Laaneveer** (RPL)
13.45 – 14.15	11a Meeting with international teaching staff (on Zoom)	Sarah, Ieva, Anu-Maaja A502	Former Head of the Master of Contemporary Art (MACA) Programme and Visiting Professor in EKA (until 2022) **Mark Dunhill** (UK) Professor of Art History, Concordia University Canada, ELIA UAx Platform chair and hourly paid teaching staff in EKA - **Rebecca Duclos** (CAN) EKA Professor of Service Design **Jörn Frenzel** (GER) Architecture and urban studies hourly paid teaching staff - **Leonard Ma** (CAN/FIN) Hourly paid teaching staff in EKA (Animation) **Lucija Mrzljak** (Croatia) **Mira Järvinen** (FIN) Aalto, hourly paid INT teaching staff at BMAT (fashion design)

14.15 – 14.45	11b Meeting with international alumni (on Zoom)	Sarah, Ieva, Anu-Maaja A502	**Natalia (Nata) Kostenko -** MixD Alumnus (UKR/CAN) **Moryana Filipova,** BMAT Erasmus exchange student, fall 2022 from Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp, Belgia, **Heta Jäälinoja,** Animation MA (INT) curriculum Alumnus **Aggie Lee Pak Yee,** Animation MA (INT) curriculum Alumnus **Lisette Sivard**, BMAT Alumnus 2023 (EST), continuing her studies at Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp Costume Design, MA
15.15/14.45 – 15.45	*Panel reflection, break*	A503	
15.45 – 17.00	12. Research & development (RDC)	All panel members Room: A502	Leading Specialist of Research and Development Office and Research Centres **Pille Epner** Project Manager **Sven Idarand** Researcher **Ingrid Ruudi** Timber Architecture Research Center in EKA- **Siim Tuksam** The Sustainable Design and Materials Lab in EKA- **Reet Aus** Cultural Heritage and Conservation Lab - **Andres Uueni** Coordinator of Doctoral School **Irene Hütsi**

		FRIDAY, APRIL 26	
		Estonian Academy of Arts (address: Põhja pst 7)	
Time	Activity	Experts, room / meeting link	Participants in the meeting *Names and positions*
9.30 – 10.30	13. Service to Society	All panel members Room: A502	Head of Open Academy **Elise Jagomägi** Head of Communications **Laura Jüristo** Head of Gallery **Kaisa Maasik**, Head of EKA Press **Neeme Lopp** Projects for Society: Dean **Hilkka Hiiop** Partner of NART, former Mayor of Narva 2020–2023, representative of the University of Tartu in Ida-Virumaa – **Katri Raik** Partner of Faculty of Design, LAETUS program from the National Library of Estonia, designer **Regina Tagger**
10.30 – 11.00	*Panel reflection, break*	A503	
11.00 – 12.00	14. Resources	All panel members Room: A502	Head of Human Resources **Dagmar Raide** Head of International Office **Sandra-Leena Mell** IT Manager **Kenet Pindmaa**
12.00 – 12.30	Open Doors (on Zoom)	Room: A502	Opportunity for those from the Academy who want to come to discuss various topics related to institutional accreditation with the experts. Please register by sending e-mail: tiia.bach@harno.ee by April 25. Time limit is 5 minutes per person.

12.30 – 13.00	*Additional interviews if needed*	Room: A502	
13.00 – 13.30	*Lunch*	A500	
13.30 – 16.30	*Panel meeting, wrap-up, documents. Preparing for the feedback to be given to EKA.*	A503	
16.30	Presentation of preliminary feedback by the panel to EKA	Room: A-501	All who are interested are welcome!