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**Bachelor of Dance  
Academy of Theatre & Dance  
ArtEZ University of the Arts**

*Report of the extensive programme assessment  
20 and 21 June 2019*

Utrecht, The Netherlands  
October 2019  
[www.AeQui.nl](http://www.AeQui.nl)  
*Assessment Agency for Higher Education*

## Colophon

Programme  
University of Applied Sciences ArtEZ  
Bachelor of Dance  
Location: Arnhem  
Mode of study: fulltime  
Croho: 34798  
Result of institutional assessment: not applied for

Panel  
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The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of AeQui  
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*This document is best printed in duplex*

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## Summary

On 20 and 21 June 2019 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the Bachelor programme Dance at the Academy of Theatre & Dance (ArtEZ). The committee judges that the programme **meets each standard**; the overall quality of the programme meets the standard. The Bachelor of Dance programme is a four-year full-time bachelor programme for contemporary dance and performance. The programme is of professional orientation, amounting to 240 ECTS and prepares students for a life as an independent performing artist with creative skills and a capacity for self-directed learning and working.

### Intended learning outcomes

The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker aims to prepare students for a robust career in contemporary dance. The programme follows the intended learning outcomes of the Dutch profiles for Dancer and Choreographer at bachelor's level. According to the panel the intended learning outcomes are in line with the international standards of a bachelor's programme in dancing and making.

Three characteristics distinguish the programme from other comparable programmes. Firstly, an important difference with the national profile is that this course trains to be a dancer and maker, instead of one or the other. Secondly, the concept of periodisation has been translated so fundamentally into the programme that it is effectively the foundation of the programme, and adds to students developing their own signature by integrating what they learn into their own ideas and moves. Thirdly, the programme stresses the view that the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skilled dance artist has the ability to communicate and connect with others. This view is integrated in the educational vision, which has been made operational in the programme's *circular valorisation* approach.

The committee appreciates the way the programme connects to the (inter)national network and the professional practice. On the one hand the programme reaches out and attracts external professionals to connect to the programme, while on the other hand, the programme consciously sets out its own course with regard to the method of education and the interpretation of its own profile.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes meet the standard.

### Curriculum

The committee considers that the programme has a clear structure, is clearly student-centred and devotes sufficient attention to both research and professional skills. The programme is built on a number of assumptions that reflect the profile of the programme and include a proactive approach to pedagogics and didactics. Attention to research skills is focussed towards an artistic research module in the third year. According to the committee, both research and practice in dance need to reflect the historical path in which they are inscribed and students need to situate their own practices in that context. Professional skills are strongly stimulated in the programme, both periodisation and circular valorisation add to this. The structural validation of thinking, doing and sharing in a 'circular' (non-hierarchical) way leads to confident students who are well aware of their own strengths and qualities. The complex, but structured curriculum consists of a large number of modules, organised around four learning lines: dance technique, song lines, conditioning and mapping. Periodisation acts as a solid skeleton throughout the curriculum and consists of four phases: preparation, crafting, integration and transition. These phases alternate over the course of each year, but also over the four years as a whole and include physical periodisation as well as the creating process. The curriculum is furthermore geared towards student awareness of their personal skills and qualities and to linking them to choices of the individual student within the broader professional practice. The committee appreciates the set-up of the fourth year, it provides a smooth transition from the protection of the academy towards the 'real' professional world. Another strength is the strong student community in which talented and creative students are stimulated by the programme and peers to develop their talents. The approach to students devel-

oping an individual signature is clearly student-centred. The audition and selection procedure are well-defined.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets the standards pertaining to orientation, contents and structure of the programme, as well as the way this ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.

### Staff

The committee considers that the quality of the teaching staff is good. The combination of a core team with guest lecturers provides the flexibility and breadth of expertise that is required. The committee appreciates that a significant number of guest lecturers do this on a regular basis; this way they strengthen the profile, periodisation, and circular valorisation approach of the programme. Professionalisation of teaching staff is clear and organised at academy level. *Circular valorisation* is clearly adopted by staff members, who are passionate about it. They include students in this circular process, often without them being aware of it. The pre-professorship was used to stimulate initiatives from the practice and practitioners itself (like circular valorisation) and define the research that is done within the academy.

### Facilities

The committee considers the building very suitable for the activities organised, offering students a lively environment and good atmosphere. The system of tutoring and student guidance is organised at different levels, with the mentor being the central contact of the students. Experts on health and study progress are involved in the programme. In the fourth year students profit from a guide that is part of the circle of guides, supporting students towards becoming a professional. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

### Quality assurance

The committee considers that ArtEZ and the Bachelor's programme *Dancer/Maker* give sufficient attention to quality assurance. Guidelines and procedures are clear and the circular valorisation results in

a strong quality culture that comes from within the processes. The committee was impressed by the proactive attitude of students in the education committee. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

### Assessment

The committee considers that the programme has an adequate assessment system that uses a variety of assessment methods that are appropriate to assess the learning goals of the modules. The committee is of the opinion that assessment is valid, transparent and reliable. Positive developments are the increasing attention to structured formative feedback, focus on integral assessment and becoming a learning community. The committee warns the programme not to overload by taking on too many developments simultaneously. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

### Achieved learning outcomes

The close-knit community formed by teaching staff and students strongly contributes to the achievement of learning outcomes. The clear profile and structured curriculum with a periodisation foundation is being lived and leads to very good and sometimes even excellent dancers. Professional preparation is the focus in years one to three, while the fourth year is successfully dedicated to the transition of students to becoming professionals. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

### Recommendations

The programme delivers dancers of high quality. In order to bring the programme to an even higher level of quality in the future, the committee recommends:

- to include somatic forms in the technical training as professional dance (outside of the Netherlands) is heavily based on somatic approaches to movement and creation.
- to include more explicit attention in the curriculum to diversity as the student population is

not (yet) representative of the communities in which it is situated.

- To pay more attention to students developing a theoretical framework, and contextualising their work. Not only is this skill relevant in today's workfield, but also the outcomes of the Artistic research module will benefit from this, the committee thinks.

**Distinctive feature: Circular Valorisation**

The committee grants the programme the distinctive feature Circular Valorisation in Dance. The committee is impressed by the thorough and passionate way in which the Academy of Dance and Theatre has developed and internalised the concepts of circular valorisation. It is well thought out, and highly

relevant to the educational and research goals of the institute. The committee is of the opinion that because the approach is highly fitting to an organisational programme, and is carefully and consistently implemented, the results are showing in many facets of the teaching and learning environment. The students not only benefit from this teaching and learning environment, but are also trained in this way of working that will be a valuable tool throughout their professional career. As such, it is a distinguishing feature of the Academy, and hence of this programme.

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework are assessed positively; the assessment committee therefore awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,  
Utrecht, October 2019

Chair  
Drs. R.R. van Aalst

Secretary  
Dr. M. van Bogaert

## Overview

The judgements per standard are presented in the table below.

Standard	Judgement
1. Intended learning outcomes	<i>Meets the standard</i>
2. Orientation of the curriculum	<i>Meets the standard</i>
3. Contents of the curriculum	<i>Meets the standard</i>
4. Structure of the curriculum	<i>Meets the standard</i>
5. Qualifications of incoming students	<i>Meets the standard</i>
6. Staff: qualified and size	<i>Meets the standard</i>
7. Accommodation and infrastructure	<i>Meets the standard</i>
8. Tutoring and student information	<i>Meets the standard</i>
9. Evaluation of the programme	<i>Meets the standard</i>
10 Assessment system	<i>Meets the standard</i>
11 Achieved learning outcomes	<i>Meets the standard</i>
Overall judgement	Meets the standard

## Introduction

The ArtEZ University of the Arts is one of the major art universities of the Netherlands, with locations in Arnhem, Enschede and Zwolle. The Academy of Theatre and Dance is one of six academies that provides Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in visual art, architecture, fashion, design music, theatre, creative writing, dance and art education. Education at ArtEZ focuses on the artistic, intellectual and personal growth of students. They are trained in professional roles that closely match their talent, personality and ambitions.

### The institute

ArtEZ University of the Arts is a combination of six education institutes. Each programme is classified under one of the education institutes. One of these institutes is the ArtEZ Academy of Dance and Theatre. The academy combines the various preparatory courses and five Bachelor's programmes in the field of dance and theatre in Arnhem and Zwolle. It was formed in 2017, in succession of the Academy for Theatre and the Dance Academy. The Academy for Theatre and Dance has the vision that students should take responsibility for their own, independent learning process. All programmes within the academy are characterised by this focus on the individual. The development and sharpening of the individual artistic and cultural signature of the student is integrated in the programmes. Other themes that characterise the programmes are innovation, entrepreneurship and research.

### The programme

The Bachelor of Dance programme is a four-year full-time bachelor programme for contemporary dance and performance. The programme is of professional orientation, amounting to 240 ECTS and prepares students for a life as an independent performing artist with creative skills and a capacity for self-directed learning and working. The English taught programme focuses both on the development of dance technique and choreography, with subjects such as improvisation, composition, dramaturgy and artistic research.

The programme distinguishes itself from other programmes in dance due to the academy's take on resilient contemporary education, proceeding

from a strong vision in which students take responsibility for their own independent learning trajectory. In the programme equal emphasis is placed on the students' development in terms of dance technique (craft) and choreography (creation). The Dancer/Maker profile of the programme conflates the more commonly used separate educational profiles of Dancer and Dance Maker. Furthermore, there is a clear link between reflection on students' personal development and the development of the dancers' identity.

In the past assessment period two committees have reviewed the programme and made a number of recommendations. The first is to continue developing and extending the concept of periodisation, moving beyond its function in the maintenance of overall health, enabling it to become an effective tool in the process of creating artistic work as well. The second was to maintain an open approach and ensuring that the profile and learning outcomes remain adaptable to new developments in the field. These points of attention, in combination with a strength/weakness evaluation led to a Vision Statement in 2015 with a nine-step programme for the 2015-2021 period. The nine steps have been worked on simultaneously, based on annual plans. The nine steps are 1) the curriculum: consolidation and innovation, 2) Expanding international standing, 3) Improving regional standing, 4) Establishing an active scouting policy, 5) Establishing an active alumni policy, 6) Investing in research, 7) Developing and disseminating the health policy, 8) Optimising digitisation, and 9) Optimising the organisation. Throughout this assessment report the committee will take these steps into consideration when



assessing the NVAO standards for reaccreditation.

#### **Distinctive feature in Circular Valorisation**

In addition to reaccreditation the Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker applies for a distinctive feature in Circular Valorisation. In various standards of this assessment report, the commission includes circular valorisation aspects in its findings. In the final chapter of this report, the Committee will give its opinion on circular valorisation as a distinctive feature for the programme.

#### **The assessment**

ArtEZ assigned AeQui VBI to perform a quality assessment of its bachelor programme Dance. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

In the run-up to the site visit, the assessment committee has studied the self-evaluation report on the programme and reviewed a sample of the-

ses accepted during the last two years. The findings of the report and the results of the thesis review were input for discussions during the visit.

The site visit was carried out on 20 and 21 June 2019 according to the programme presented in attachment 2. During the preparation and the site visit, the committee has discussed and considered the several programme assessments in the cluster. In addition to the Bachelor of Dance the committee also assessed the Bachelor of Dance in Education. The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme and the institution.

In this document, the committee is reporting on its findings, considerations and conclusions according to the NVAO framework for extended programme assessment. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

## Intended learning outcomes

The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker aims to prepare students for a robust career in contemporary dance. The programme follows the intended learning outcomes of the Dutch profiles for Dancer and Choreographer at bachelor's level. According to the panel the intended learning outcomes are in line with the international standards of a bachelor's programme in dancing and making.

Three characteristics distinguish the programme from other comparable programmes. Firstly, an important difference with the national profile is that this course trains to be a dancer and maker, instead of one or the other. Secondly, the concept of periodisation has been translated so fundamentally into the programme that it is effectively the foundation of the programme, and adds to students developing their own signature by integrating what they learn into their own ideas and moves. Thirdly, the programme stresses the view that the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skilled dance artist has the ability to communicate and connect with others. This view is integrated in the educational vision, that has been made operational in the programme's *circular valorisation* approach.

The committee appreciates the way the programme connects to the (inter)national network and the professional practice. On the one hand the programme reaches out and attracts external professionals to connect to the programme, while on the other hand, the programme consciously sets out its own course with regard to the method of education and the interpretation of its own profile.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes meet the standard.

## Intended learning outcomes

*Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.*

### Findings

#### Profile and competencies

The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker aims to prepare students for a robust career in contemporary dance, which requires a variety of skills, knowledge and competencies. In addition, obvious prerequisites such as body movement control and creativity, qualities like authenticity, reflection and entrepreneurship are also important to prepare for a career as a dance artist. The national educational and professional profile of Dance was revised and updated in 2017. The Career and Course profile<sup>1</sup> was evaluated and amended in cooperation with the international professional

arena consisting of a variety of dance institutes, companies and organisations. The Dancer/Maker programme aims to foster the competences of the Dutch national profile, which are organised in seven behavioural competences:

- Creative potential: the graduate is capable of giving meaning to choreographic work on the basis of a personal artistic vision. The graduate is capable of making choreographic work that expresses his personal artistic vision.
- Craftsmanship: within his work the graduate applies expertise and a broad range of instrumental skills in a professional way.
- Investigative and reflective abilities: through research and reflection the graduate gains an understanding and knowledge of how he functions as a professional and can use such insights in an artistic and social context.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vereniginghogescholen.nl/system/profiles/documents/000/000/067/original/dans.bop.2018.pdf?1523949283>

- Potential for growth and innovation: The graduate has the ability to constantly develop and deepen his artistic practice and way of working, thereby contributing to the development of his professional field and society.
- Entrepreneurial and organisational capacity: the graduate can effectively lend form to his ambitions in an interdisciplinary and (inter)national professional arena.
- Communicative ability: the graduate is able to interact effectively within a wide range of professional contexts.
- Collaborative ability: in line with his function, the graduate contributes constructively to the realisation of an artistic product or process.

Within each of these indicators a number of competences are described for Dancer and Choreographer at bachelor's level (see Career and Course profile). The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker makes a number of adjustments and additions to the national profile in order to emphasise the uniqueness of the programme. Firstly, ArtEZ integrates the profiles of Dancer and Maker within its curriculum instead of dancer or choreographer. Secondly, ArtEZ uses periodisation as an approach to facilitate the intertwining of these roles. Periodisation in dance education was the distinctive feature that was granted to the programme in the previous assessment (2012). Each year of the programme is designed as a series of macro and micro-cycles in which the training intensity alternately increases and decreases, ensuring that the dancer develops and recovers without causing staleness or overtraining. Over the past assessment period the development of the programme led to further integration of periodisation, making it the foundation of the curriculum. Not only is periodisation employed to prevent injuries, or to achieve the most effective learning curve in dance training; it is also the foundation used to build the individual signature of the student. This implies that the periodisation cycle of preparation-crafting-integration-transi-

tion is applied to all levels of the curriculum: modules, learning tracks and the programme as a whole.

The third adjustment made to the Career and Course profile is that the Dancer/Maker programme stresses the view that the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skilled dance artist has the ability to communicate and connect with others. Besides developing a strong individual perspective on his/her identity (autonomy), the student is able to connect with the work to others (relational autonomy). This is key to be able to develop into a self-steering professional and to methodologically structure reflection and feedback in order to build a robust career underpinned by lifelong development activities. The programme has developed its reflection and feedback approach as integral part of their circular valorisation approach.

#### *Circular Valorisation*

The approach of circular valorisation that the Academy uses is key to its vision on education. One of the objectives of circular valorisation is to make the education inclusive by way of an open community and open dialogue. By creating an essentially non-hierarchical environment, students are invited for example to reflect not only on themselves, but also on the lecturers. The 'circular' approach to giving feedback creates transparency and aims at providing feedback in a structural way. This vision on education results in an awareness throughout the organisation on transparency, communication and collaboration as being part of the education. Students told the committee that already during the auditions the open, transparent atmosphere is visible and tangible. In the programme itself students feel confident in the way they can develop their individual strengths. They describe the mutual collegiality and positive feedback to each other as the strength of the programme.

Secondly, the circular valorisation approach provides the students with a valuable tool in realising the intended learning outcomes. The approach is well connected to these outcomes, supported by

its focus on learning, feedback and working in networks of all kinds.

#### *Links with professional practice*

The programme also applies their circular valorisation approach to their contacts with the professional field. The programme has a strong national and international network of partner schools, institutions, lecturers, choreographers, alumni and contacts related to the professional arena. The professional field is formalised in the 'Circle of Guides' in which a community of experts form a network of (inter)nationally renowned artists. Students are furthermore prepared for a career in the international professional field through one-on-one support during the transition phase (year four). To facilitate structural experts' discussion and to sustain and innovate the curriculum, the programme has its own international professional field committee consisting of (international) professionals active in the field of dance and performance. This committee meets twice a year and offers its perspective on the curriculum and developments within the programme.

#### *Dublin descriptors*

To ensure that the level of the Bachelor's programme *Dancer/Maker* meets international standards, the competencies of the Career and Course profile have been compared with the Dublin descriptors. The committee agrees with this comparison and concludes that the competencies of the programme are in line with the international standards of a bachelor's programme in dancing and making.

#### *Considerations*

Throughout the discussions, the assessment committee started to understand and appreciate the philosophy of the *Dancer/Maker* programme. Core to the profile are periodisation, the individual signature of the student and a structured way of working together in networks, and giving (circular) feedback. The profile is carefully designed, and with a clear perspective on the future and how a 21<sup>st</sup> century dancer/maker should be educated.

The profile of the programme is closely interwoven with the concept of periodisation. The committee observes that periodisation has become a second nature in the programme. Lecturers, students and management all know, recognise and use periodisation when describing the programme. Throughout the site visit as well as in the documentation the development of students towards professional standing with their own individual signature was emphasised time and again and was visible at different times in the programme of the site visit. Although it took some time for the committee to understand the concept of circular valorisation, throughout the visit it became clear to the committee that methods of communication between all persons within and outside of the programme have been designed carefully and consciously. Its non-hierarchical orientation is particularly valuable to the professionalisation element included in the seven indicators as defined in the national profile.

The committee is of the opinion that the national educational and professional profile of Dance provides a solid basis for the indicators and competences that are used by the programme and are in line with the international requirements for a bachelor's programme in Dance and Choreography.

The committee appreciates the way the programme connects to the (inter)national network and the professional practice. On the one hand the programme reaches out and attracts external professionals to connect to the programme, while on the other hand, the programme consciously sets out its own course with regard to the method of education and the interpretation of its own profile.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes **meet** the standard.

## Curriculum

The committee considers that the programme has a clear structure, is clearly student-centred and devotes sufficient attention to both research and professional skills. The programme is built on a number of assumptions that reflect the profile of the programme and include a proactive approach to pedagogics and didactics. Attention to research skills is focussed towards an artistic research module in the third year. The committee recommends to more explicitly include contextualisation in the research done by students. Professional skills are strongly stimulated in the programme, both periodisation and circular valorisation add to this. The structural validation of thinking, doing and sharing in a 'circular' (non-hierarchical) way leads to confident students who are well aware of their own strengths and qualities. The complex, but structured curriculum consists of a large number of modules, organised around four learning lines: dance technique, song lines, conditioning and mapping. Periodisation acts as a solid skeleton throughout the curriculum and exists of four phases: preparation, crafting, integration and transition. These phases alternate over the course of each year, but also over the four years as a whole, and include physical periodisation as well as the creating process. The curriculum is furthermore geared towards student awareness of their personal skills and qualities and to linking them to choices of the individual student within the broader professional practice. The committee appreciates the set-up of the fourth year, it provides a smooth transition from the protection of the academy towards the 'real' professional world. Another strength is the strong student community in which talented and creative students are stimulated to develop their talents. The committee recommends including explicit attention in the curriculum to diversity and the bodies that are not in the room. The approach to students developing an individual signature is clearly student-centred, although the committee warns the programme not to let it become too much a student-driven programme. The audition and selection procedure are well-defined. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets the standards pertaining to orientation, contents and structure of the programme, as well as the way this ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.

### Orientation

*Standard 2: The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.*

#### Findings

In order to educate students to become individually unique, resilient dance artists, the curriculum of the Dancer/Maker programme is built on four assumptions:

- It offers a combined profile for Dancer and Maker and an individual teaching approach that focuses on students' artistic and cultural identities;
- Students are trained to become individual, contemporary and inter-relational dancers and makers;

- The curriculum is outlined using periodisation as an approach, which comprises a healthy alteration of lessons-rehearsals-presentation-recovery-reflection;
- It operates within a changing international professional field, as a result of which it has an extensive, active international network at its disposal.

#### Professional research

One of the three ArtEZ wide domains of research is adopted by the Dancer/Maker programme, namely artistic research. The programme invests in practice-led and applied research, visits and presentations at symposia. Teaching staff takes an active role in the research circles formed to

support these research projects, which subsequently has an effect within parts of the curriculum. Throughout the site visit the committee discussed the approach to research with students, staff and management. Artistic research is built up in small assignments in the first and second year, while year three is considered to be an integration year. In this year a large module connects previously learned aspects. The research is always discursive, students have to relate not only to themselves, but also to society and other makers. Students told the panel that the artistic research is a long and individualised process that starts in the second year and leads to a final product in the third year. Although guided in groups, students have a lot of freedom in the way they do their research and the amount of theory and studio-time that is included.

#### *Professional skills*

To prepare students for the professional field, guidance is given in relation with others (experts). According to the self-evaluation report true preparation and sustainable development are rooted in structural validation of thinking (conceptualisation), doing (actions) and sharing (dissemination). In this respect the *circular valorisation* approach is used, for example by providing students with a supportive network. Developing professional skills as a Dancer and Maker also includes the periodisation approach, allowing integration of the two profiles and the development of artistic research skills simultaneously. The manner of giving feedback has developed in the past assessment period, becoming circular, transparent and oral (instead of written). The feedback is aimed at stimulating students to grow into autonomous artists, while preventing them from learning techniques that will harm them physically or mentally. The committee met confident students with a clear view on the development of their own professional skills as well as being able to provide constructive feedback to others, irrespective of their roles or positions.

#### *Professorship*

In developing an assignment for a professorship, the academy initiated a pre-professorship. During this pre-professorship research was done and the community was emancipated in their search for a topic that fits the community. A temporary associate professor was appointed to initiate and supervise this process. One of the objectives was to link up with the existing research. This pre-professorship led to a research portfolio of the bachelor's programmes in the academy. By using the research circle the programme-specific portfolio is being further developed. Within the pre-professorship the *circular valorisation* was developed. The model includes that in the design and at the start of the professorship the research circle is a fully-fledged discussion partner for the professorship and the lecturer. The professor then works in consultation with the inner circle. In the upcoming years the research carried out by teaching staff will be conducted in the academy's research circle and in this way feed into the programme. At the same time, choreographers who carry out research with students whilst they are in the process of creation are and will continue to be invited.

#### *Considerations*

The committee considers that the programme devotes sufficient attention to both research and professional skills. According to the committee, both are important in achieving the bachelor's level. Students are taught to do research on a topic that relates to their personal interests and talents. Research starts at the level of the students, then they build it up to a discourse around a question the student needs to answer. Students are stimulated in doing discursive research, which is predominantly done in the studio. According to the committee the external framework that is required to contextualise this research in terms of historical and current choreographic practices can be expanded. Students do combine theory with practice, but the panel believes that this skill could receive some more attention, as both evidence-based research and theoretical perspectives can provide a wider contextualisation to

dance performance and practice. For a dancer/maker this skill, requiring both reading and writing skills, is indispensable in today's context, the committee believes.

The committee is of the opinion that the development of professional skills is strongly stimulated by both periodisation and circular valorisation. The structural validation of thinking, doing and sharing in a circular way leads to confident students who are well aware of their own strengths and qualities. The committee concludes that discursive research does indeed take place and students are confident in the way they do their research. The committee also noticed that research methodology is highly individual, and mostly dominated by in-studio artistic research. According to the committee this reflects the individualised approach of the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Contents

*Standard 3: The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

### Findings

The curriculum of the Bachelor's programme *Dancer/Maker* is continuously being innovated. Insights from applied (dance) research and other dance related disciplines (e.g. sports) are used as building blocks for the curriculum development. The aim is to achieve an increasingly high level of professionalisation in both dance and dance training. The periodisation approach emphasises injury prevention, knowledge of how the body functions in the diverse array of circumstances in which dancers have to perform and the continued development of each student's personal signature. Based on the concept of periodisation each year of the curriculum is divided into four phases:

- Preparation: developing the body to prepare for technical training and to support the development of a strong, open, flexible mind. Focus lies on creating a foundation and building a strong technique.
- Crafting: aimed at craftsmanship and technical professionalism and coaching students as performers and creative artists. Focus lies on technique and skills.
- Integration: geared towards artistic identity, integrating the qualities achieved for the final presentation and preparing for the transition into the sphere of work by formulating a personal development plan. Students integrate their skills in research, creation and performance.
- Transition: students move beyond ArtEZ to engage in internships, a maker's learning context and/or independent courses relevant to the field of dance.

In addition to the four phases there are four learning paths, each module is connected to one of these learning paths:

- **Dance Technique**: students build on classical and modern techniques to develop contemporary techniques. This learning path covers approximately one third of each of the first three years of the programme.
- **Song lines**: students learn to 'sing their song' in year 1-3 which helps them find the body-mind balance. Classes provide a pace to learn about the body in a different way, e.g. Pilates.
- **Conditioning**: development of flexibility, perseverance and strength receives a lot of attention. In the first-year students attend guided classes to learn about conditioning, while in year 2 and 3 they are expected to develop their own conditioning plan.
- **Mapping**: supports students in their journey towards becoming an independent inter-relational artist and they draw up a personal evolution map (creating, reflecting, presenting, relating, contextualising, arguing, moving, shaking, shining, sweating). In year 1, 2 and 3, mapping constitutes approximately

half of the credits, while the entire fourth year is mapping.

The curriculum consists of a large number of modules, for each of which a work plan is written which contains organisational as well as educational information, the phases that are included, connection to other subjects, and learning paths. Finally, the workplan provides an overview of the indicators and competencies the module contributes to. In addition to the large number of modules and learning tracks in the curriculum, there are a number of projects that combine all aims and competences in a pressure cooker module. For example, the Choreographer/Composer project represents all competences required for a career as dancer/maker. Under time constraints, the students create own work and dance in works of others, collaborate with other departments and disciplines (students and professionals), practice receiving and giving feedback based on individual reflection, have transversal interaction throughout the four student years and deal with leadership and assistant roles.

The curriculum overview shows that periodisation provides a solid skeleton throughout the entire programme. During the site visit the teaching staff explained that students not only need time to learn and understand quality (technique and floor work), but also to be able to use it in developing their own signature. For example, throughout the first-year students get offered a number of techniques, both contemporary and modern as well as ballet. Connected is a project in which students use the philosophy of a technique to create their own movement phrase of 10 seconds. In this phrase their understanding of a contraction, shift of weight and release is included. In the programme the focus thus lies on transferring knowledge, learning techniques and working on what it means for the body of the individual. Students learn to recognize the combination of different techniques or different thinking about a movement that can be integrated and made their own. The programme aims to cater to the individual needs of the student, and the curriculum is

geared towards raising awareness of the personal skills and qualities of the individual student and linking them to the student's choices within the broader professional practice. Students have individual (studio)time to reflect on what they learned in classes and create their own signature. Throughout the curriculum there are many channels and learning lines in each year, brought together in an integration phase. Each year the level is raised compared to the previous year: the integration in first year leads to creating a solo, in the second year the integration product is a duet, and a theatre line is introduced in the curriculum. Students told the panel that the resting part of periodisation is not only beneficial for physical aspects but is part of networking and community building. It also allows them to plan and learn in a way that works for them as an individual.

The third year includes artistic research in which they are coached that prepares students for their final presentation. Students told the committee that this artistic research is a long process that starts in the second year, when they have to think about topics, read presentations of other years and get involved in the process of research of students in their third year. In the third year they start with a research week and students are divided in groups. They write a research proposal in the first months of the third year after which they have an intensive of three weeks in which students work with a guest choreographer. Students integrate theory and practice in their research and find ways to share their work through a presentation, in writing and possibly other materials. The artistic research is also translated into phases with integration being the research paper and presentations.

As a result of the recommendation by the previous assessment committee, the programme developed a better understanding of how to support the maker line. This has led to a more profound understanding of student work within the curriculum, programme and phasing of the modules in support of it. The programme developed the fourth year of the curriculum based on what



was missing, which was a smooth transition between school and the professional field. In this year students earn credits based on external activities, e.g. freelance work, going abroad etc. To structure the freedom students can divide their activities into five subjects, the proportions between these five are determined by the student. The five subjects are: internship (dancer, or (assistant) choreographer), marketing (communicate and be the product), becoming a self-employed artist, Erasmus (exchange) and artistic research as a maker (continuation of the third year). Using these categories students get the opportunity to explore what kind of artist they want to be, as a young professional.

#### *Considerations*

The committee considers that the curriculum seems complex at first, with a lot of small modules and multiple modules being scheduled on a single day. However, it is all part of the periodisation approach and students appreciate the frequent changing of modules throughout a day and a week. The four phases and learning paths provide structure to the curriculum in a way that to students and lecturers it is clear what being in a certain phase implies and what the goal of each learning path holds. The committee finds that there is a clear build-up over the years, with students achieving the intended level of research and technical skills at the end of the third year. This is reflected in the research report and presentation on the one hand and in the graduation performance on the other. The committee considers the concept of the fourth year to be brilliant, as it facilitates the transition of students from the protected academy to the real world. The extent to which it is successful depends on students feeling ready for the real world after the fourth year. From the interviews it became clear that students feel very well prepared and are eager and confident to enter the labour market.

To the committee it is clear that the student community is a strength of the programme. The committee wants to commend the programme; it has

seen extraordinary, talented, dedicated and creative students who are confident about their talents, training and future.

When thinking about how the programme could be further improved, the panel would like to make the following two recommendations. The first recommendation by the committee is to include somatic forms in the technical training. Professional dance outside the Netherlands is heavily based on somatic approaches to movement and creation. Some Dutch companies already work in this way. Preparing students for a career that is versatile and responsive to the market, it is essential that these movement qualities and improvisational skills be developed.

The second point relates to diversity. Here the committee first likes to note that the programme is clearly active on this point, and is also dependent on larger societal developments and themes to really have the diversity in influx it aspires to.

The committee sees a very proactive attitude towards progressive pedagogy; this is e.g. visible in the periodisation, and the focus on the development of the individual student. At the same time, the committee is struck by the fact that the focus on some pedagogical themes, for example diversity as it exists in the current professional context, is somewhat less pronounced. The committee is of the opinion that a wider range of ethnocultural backgrounds among the student population would be beneficial to the programme. And this argument may also be expanded to different kinds of disability (for which there is a growing body of practice as well). This way, not only will the programme better reflect the Arnhem and Dutch populations in which it is situated, but also, it will facilitate dance and dance education being a relevant and pertinent contribution to the community. Another aspect of the diversity question emerges in the potential for some somatic movement practice to be part of the curriculum. Not as a form of technical training, but rather as a tool (of many) for creation and exploration of singularity. Somatic practices are an important tool for acknowledging the value and empowerment of

each person's specificity – rather than feeding a general physical or movement aesthetic.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Structure

*Standard 4: The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

### Findings

Since the content and structure of the curriculum are closely related, some of the information for this standard has already been included in standard 3. The Bachelor's programme *Dancer/Maker* focuses on the student's individual journey rather than on a pre-set study outcome. The number of students selected each year is small, and guarantees sufficient time and space for individual support and for students to develop their own talent.

During recent years, while developing its *circular valorisation* approach, the programme has changed essentially into an organisation of evolving and dissolving networks. Students are equal partners in these networks, where the focus is shifted from hierarchy and formal positions, to sharing values and contributing to each individual's goals. In this way the structure of the learning environment contributes to the learning goal of becoming self-steering, reflective practitioners.

Where circular valorisation provides the core to the learning community, the periodisation approach provides 'the rhythm'. It leads to a phased trajectory with alternating periods of training and recovery. It starts with identifying when optimal performance is required, to be able to set clear learning goals and work towards them in a structured, phased manner. Key is that students learn to divide the final goal into sub-goals, with the main goal being the realisation of the professional final qualifications that allow students to

enter the professional world. Intermediate goals are set per year and per phase, e.g. a yearly performance, exams, or skill pertaining to technique or creation. Crucial according to the self-evaluation report is to provide a structured definition of what is meant and expected from each identified moment of performance over the four-year curriculum. By combining the *Dancer and Maker* profile, it is important to align the goals within all learning lines.

Another important aspect of the programme that has an effect on the structure, is the objective to stimulate students to develop their own signature. Combined with the circular valorisation approach, this implies that students are expected to take responsibility for their own independent learning trajectory. It leads to a clear link between reflection on students' personal development and the development of the dancers' identity and displays the student-oriented approach.

As the international professional field is the destination for graduates, the programme is fully taught in English. Part of both the students and the (guest) lecturers are international. During the site visit the committee noticed that both during and outside classes students and staff predominantly communicate in English.

### Considerations

The committee thinks that the structure of the curriculum is well thought out. Circular valorisation helps creating an effective, open and inclusive, learning environment, whereas periodisation provides a well-developed and strong foundation to the curriculum. It structures the curriculum in such a way that students are continuously activated. Students not only are present when they have classes. They spend a lot of time at the institute, to practice and develop their creative process (studio-time) as well as to interact with other students, lecturers and external partners.

As an additional strength, the committee believes, the circular valorisation approach fosters resilience to the rapid changes in professional and educational contexts, as it is highly flexible

and does away with many of the negative elements of hierarchy and formal structure. The structuring of education is in a fundamental way based on students' questions, concerns and wishes and thus clearly a student-centred approach. The committee warns the programme to remain aware of the thin line between a student-driven and a student-centred approach. The committee is of the opinion that the programme can steer the students in a more proactive way, since students are still in the learning process and do not always have the required awareness to take full ownership of what is possible.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

### Incoming students

*Standard 5: The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.*

#### *Findings*

Approximately twenty students are accepted each year. Interested future students have to audition for the program. The audition involves assignments that have been set by the admissions committee. Besides dancing repertoire or improvisation on a given theme, an interview with the admissions committee is held as well as a screening by a doctor who will make recommendations with respect to the applicant's capacity to deal with the physical demands of the programme. Requirements to which students must adhere are technical/physical skills, artistic talent and being a critical thinker (including articulacy in English). Several pathways lead to the bachelor's

programme, for example the preparatory programmes in Arnhem, Venlo and Enschede, Boys Action, Fast track and Danslab. Furthermore, orientation days, open days, talent days and labs are organised.

According to teaching staff the audition starts with a solo by the student. The solo shows what the students think represents them. The essence for the admissions committee is if they see an artist. Students with limited techniques might be admitted, if they show creative attitude and spirit. Students informed the committee about the extensive and energizing audition that focussed both on dancing and making. They specifically mentioned the pleasant atmosphere, already during the auditions and emphasized the safe environment.

#### *Considerations*

The committee considers that the audition and selection procedure is well-defined. Based on the input by students the committee concludes that the atmosphere during auditions reflects the educational approach during the programme. The intake process is done carefully and with great effort and attention to detail. The committee met with students and saw true creativity in conveying messages.

The committee suggests expanding the existing preparatory programmes to include a greater diversity of dancers, including for example disabled dancers.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Staff

The committee considers that the quality of the teaching staff is good. The combination of a core team with guest lecturers provides the flexibility and breadth of expertise that is required. The committee appreciates that a significant number of guest lecturers do this on a regular basis; this way they strengthen the profile, periodisation, and circular valorisation approach of the programme. Professionalisation of teaching staff is clear and organised at academy level. *Circular valorisation* is clearly adopted by staff members, who are passionate about it. They include students in this circular process, often without them being aware of it. The pre-professorship was used to stimulate initiatives (like circular valorisation) and define the research that is done within the academy. The committee thinks that time has come to actively recruit a professor who can further stimulate research.

*Standard 6: The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.*

### Findings

The teaching staff in the programme consists of educational professionals from a range of backgrounds and nationalities. Adding to a core team of lecturers, there are a group of lecturers on temporary contracts, and guest lecturers. The core team safeguards continuity and organisational tasks. By making use of temporary lecturers and guest lecturers, flexibility is introduced to allow for topicality of the curriculum and the programme's position within the international professional field. According to the programme cross-pollination is very important and hence young and diverse staff is attracted from the international professional field. The programme also invests in its alumni. By training them in areas for which it has been difficult to find suitable teaching staff, the programme anticipates on possible shortages in certain areas of the profession. In addition, a group of experts is added to the team to support the individual development and wellbeing of the students by providing guidance and feedback on sustainability, physical, mental and social aspects. Of teaching staff in contemporary dance, all but one lecturer is external. This allows the programme to include a variety in techniques. Most guest lecturers come for a period between three and six weeks. Teaching staff also told the committee that many guest lecturers come every year to teach a module.

The committee in-depth discussed the way the staff deals with periodisation, circular valorisation and the role and responsibilities of guest lecturers. The programme has a clear philosophy in this respect. New guest lecturers with many nationalities, cultural backgrounds and philosophies have to get to know the school, the students and the approach. Before they start teaching classes, they are required to look into the philosophy and interact with mentors. The idea is that three hours studio-time (teaching) in practice is being in the building for at least six hours and interact with other lecturers and specifically with students.

The core team and core group of frequent guest lecturers are crucial in maintaining the profile of the programme. Often guest lecturers are initially invited as choreographer and in later years start to give classes as well. To a certain extent the guest lecturers get freedom in the way they provide feedback to the students; according to the programme it is important that students meet with and learn from lecturers of different backgrounds and with different approaches to a certain technique. It helps students develop their own signature, both from what is taught during classes but also from discussion about the artistic research they are doing. Students told the panel that they highly appreciate the teaching staff. They do observe a difference in the approach of none-regular guest lectures. However, this is ex-

citing in a different way and the core team is always available and provide a solid basis. This way it is ensured that the classes of guest lecturers have a place within the larger programme.

ArtEZ's professionalisation plan gives lecturers and education support staff the option to follow training sessions and courses, e.g. training lecturers on project-based working, entrepreneurship, didactic skills and the English language. For teaching staff involved in mentoring students, support is given in the development of a coaching style that combines supervision and teaching. In addition to individual professionalisation processes Academy-wide study days are organised, entailing discussion of collective themes like assessment, talent development, or inclusion.

Teaching staff identifies itself with circular valorisation. The method of communication - also during the site visit - is aimed at giving everyone an equal role in the discussion. By doing so, the programme aims to transform the hierarchical structure into a spiral or circular network and to become a learning organisation irrespective of the position of the individual. The pre-professorship has been very important in the development of this approach.

#### *Considerations*

The committee met with very engaged staff, and considers that the quality of the teaching staff is very good. By combining a fixed core with a flexible shell, all techniques can be taught by specialised lecturers. The regular return of guest lectur-

ers contributes to the philosophy of the programme: periodisation and circular valorisation. The lecturers whom the committee spoke to during the visit were enthusiastic, involved and clearly aware of the philosophy underlying the programme. The academy has a clear policy regarding professionalisation of staff, both academy-wide and individually.

The committee is impressed by the way circular valorisation is adopted by staff members, and it understands why they are passionate about it. Stakeholders from the professional field who are connected to the programme (some of them alumni) also seem to be gradually adopting the method. Since the introduction and adoption of circular valorisation is still under development within the academy, the committee believes that it is not to be expected that much effect will already be noticeable outside the walls of the institution. Nevertheless, it is clear how education might benefit from this approach, and the committee met with students who – without always being aware of it – were part of this circular process. In this respect the pre-professorship was a useful period, it clearly created an inside-outside spiral that is in line with the objective of circular valorisation.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Services and facilities

The committee considers the building very suitable for the activities organised, offering students a lively environment and good atmosphere. The system of tutoring and student guidance is organised at different levels, with the mentor being the central contact of the students. Experts on health and study progress are involved in the programme. In the fourth year students profit from a guide that is part of the circle of guides, supporting students from being a student to becoming a professional. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

### Accommodation and infrastructure

*Standard 7: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.*

#### Findings

The programme is provided in ArtEZ's Theatrium in Arnhem. The Theatrium has all facilities required for the education and students, including studio's and theatre halls. The programme is continuously working on improving the facilities to accommodate the requirements of the education, students and staff. Students at ArtEZ have an account which enables them to use many online facilities. On the ArtEZ Electronic Learning Environment (ELO) detailed information about modules, classes and the programme are provided.

The Art Business Centre is the ArtEZ entrepreneurial centre which links the institute with the professional field. Students can use it to find all the information they need for the commercial implementation of their ideas, and for setting up their own businesses.

Students rate the facilities as sufficient to good. Because it is a mainly underground facility the building comes with particular difficulties, that make it an everyday challenge to work, live, and educate in the Theatrium. This notwithstanding both staff and students consider it a home base.

#### Considerations

The committee is of the opinion that the facilities clearly meet the requirements of a Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker. During the site visit, it was made clear that students spend many hours

in the building and find time and opportunity to practice and interact. Digital facilities also fulfil the requirements. The committee is pleased with the continuous attention of the academy to adapting the facilities to the requirements of the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

### Tutoring and student information

*Standard 8: The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.*

#### Findings

As described before, active and student-centred learning is essential in the learning lines to ensure that as the year progresses, students increasingly learn from their mentor to take responsibility for their own programme and activities. ArtEZ-wide a vision on the role of student career counselling was formulated in 2014, in order to enable students to plan and pursue their academic career in a way that fits in with their personal ambitions and potential. It also includes challenging students to explore opportunities so that they can make explicit choices within the programme, supporting students with a functional impairment, identifying problems at an early stage and support students with problem-solving, and paying personal attention to students and offering a listening ear. These all will contribute to students

completing their programme and develop their talents and prepare optimally for their future. ArtEZ launched a pathway in which mentors are trained to actively implement these goals. The introduction of *circular valorisation* has had an effect on the way students are coached and guided, by creating an open, and inclusive community of practice in which students are challenged to operate as equal partners, with their own goals.

The programme runs a conscientious health policy that is embedded in the curriculum through a number of courses and lectures about health. The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker has a health team that performs an active role in supporting students' health and motivation, members are aware with individual students' needs and challenges. The Health Coordinator, who leads the team, regularly attends classes and rehearsals and is present during shows. The health team aims at producing health dancers and maseur and ensure their longevity.

During the site visit the committee discussed in detail the individual guidance of students in the programme, related to reflection, self-reflection and interaction with the mentor. The mentor's focus is on academic aspects and progress of the student. In case of (impending) academic delay, the mentor refers the student to the ArtEZ Arnhem student counsellor. Mentors meet in the mentor's consultations; in which they can discuss issues they meet. The committee understands that the mentor has an important role in the feedback students receive, also that given by (guest) lecturers. According to the programme management the development of individuality of the student is not only developing technique and skills, but also learning to understand what he/she has to give. Each year students are connected to a new mentor, although occasionally a student and mentor might team up for a longer period. As the student progresses in the programme, the role of the mentor also changes. Teaching staff told the panel that sometimes the guidance of students in

the third year (artistic research) is better done by a guest lecturer.

In the fourth year the relationship between student and mentor changes. Already in their third year, students have to write a goal-milestone plan on what they want to achieve in the fourth year and the first year after graduation. At this point the circle of guides takes over the major part of mentoring. The circle of guides is an established network that hosts external, independent professional artists who represent the diversity existing within the international work field. Approximately 40 guides who are active in the professional field are connected to the programme. This platform offers a variety of dancers, makers, producers, researchers, an opportunity to provide personal guidance to a fourth-year student who takes his/her first steps in the professional field. Students are coupled to a guide that fits with the objectives and goals of the student, but also shares values with the student. In addition to individual coaching, the circle of guides provides a network to students that will help them pursue their aims in the fourth year and beyond.

#### *Considerations*

The committee considers that the programme has a good system of tutoring and guiding students at an individual level. The mentor plays a central role and acts as a permanent point of contact for the student. Experts - both in the field of health, study progress and other issues - are closely involved in the programme and familiar with the individual students. This provides the students with a good system that ensures them to graduate without delays as much as possible. In the fourth year the circle of guides is a nice approach to supporting students in their transition from being a student towards becoming a professional.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Quality assurance

The committee considers that ArtEZ and the Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker give sufficient attention to quality assurance. Guidelines and procedures are clear and the circular valorisation results in a strong quality culture that comes from within the processes. The committee was impressed by the proactive attitude of students in the education committee. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

*Standard 9: The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.*

### *Findings*

Quality assurance (QA) according to ArtEZ involves collaboration, sharing and working together. The ArtEZ wide strategic plan forms the basis of the performance indicators in the Academy of Theatre and Dance, guaranteeing a proper connection to institutional developments. The head of the programmes and some core lecturers actively participate in the academic innovation project Develop, Do, Disseminate (DDD) and are part of the 'research circle'. The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker is embedded in the wider community of the Academy. This community shares a vision on the relevance and relation to both theatre and dance, with shared networks and common values. As the process of actively seeking feedback, evaluating (assigning value), and then taking a next step, is a cornerstone to the circular valorisation approach, the academy has come to enjoy a quality culture that comes from within – that is an essential part of the dialogue in each meeting. It makes for an effective quality assurance system. Building on this, the programme subscribes to the ideas formulated in the Quality Assurance Plan of ArtEZ, to foster and facilitate a permanent dialogue on the quality of the educational programme, research and organisation. A quality calendar was created and an action and measurement tool to safeguard and support the execution. Within the community of theatre and dance circular valorisation extends to the way of working with students, lecturers, the professional arena, colleagues from other programmes, professorships, etc. Information and results from all these stakeholders are fed back

into the community of lecturers and students. Based on these inputs, in the upcoming years the programme will focus on digitisation, assessment and feedback and student scouting.

Regular meetings between educational committee and management are held to discuss the Education and Examination Regulations (EER/OER), student inquiry and evaluation results and other topics. The Examination Board is occasionally consulted about the assessment plan and programme (see standard 10). The management and staff meet regularly to discuss curriculum, assessments, OER, etc.

### *Considerations*

The committee considers that quality assurance is well organised. At ArtEZ level, sufficient and clear procedures and guidelines have been described. These are operationalised at the academy and training levels. Circular valorisation contributes to the quality culture through the transparent and circular way in which students, lecturers and others interact with each other.

During the site visit the committee met with a number of (former) student members of the education committee and read the minutes of their meetings. The committee thinks that students play an important role in the quality assurance system of the programme. The students and the points of attention they raise are taken seriously by the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.



## Assessment

The committee considers that the programme has an adequate assessment system that uses a variety of assessment methods that are appropriate to assess the learning goals of the modules. The committee is of the opinion that assessment is valid, transparent and reliable. Positive developments are the increasing attention to structured formative feedback, focus on integral assessment and becoming a learning community. The committee warns the programme not to overload by taking on too many developments simultaneously. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

*Standard 10: The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.*

### Findings

The Bachelor's programme Dancer/Maker has an assessment plan that includes the policies and procedures concerning assessment. A Testing Programme provides a detailed overview of all modules, the way they are assessed, the moment of assessment and by whom. The programme structures assessment and testing in accordance with the four phases of periodisation (preparation, crafting, integration and transition). Often a combination of two assessment methods is used, resulting in written feedback and process assessment in a report as well as assessment of the results of (for instance) a test class on technique. Theory components are usually assessed by way of essays or presentations.

In the self-evaluation report the validity, reliability and transparency of assessment is described. With respect to validity the seven competencies comprising indicators have been transformed in module-specific indicators for success in a workplan for each module. Both formative and summative assessment is used in the programme. The main objective of formative assessment is to give students feedback. Summative assessment is used to determine whether students have fulfilled the module-goals by the end of a module or phase. The entire set of summative assessments covers all competencies of the programme. A recurring challenge in art education is how to assess

technique and artistic development. The generally accepted approach in the professional field is to allow students to be assessed by external assessors who have undisputed quality and expertise in the professional field. The programme aims at a range of assessors evaluating students instead of only the module's lecturer. Combined with assessment forms on which assessors have to substantiate or provide justification of the grade, reliability of assessment is obtained. Assessment methods and criteria are included in each workplan, for summative assessment there are assessment forms. Both workplan and assessment forms are available on the ELO.

Feedback receives a lot of attention and is being regularly discussed in the education committee meetings. Students informed the panel that they put feedback issues on the agenda, including concerns. Although the programme is still working on implementing changes, students note that in recent years there have been clear improvements in the way in which feedback is given and how it contributes to the assessment. For example, students receive more (oral) feedback during their progression in the modules. Staff members added that openness and flexibility are essential in this process of providing feedback. The introduction of *circular valorisation* supports this development. In the assessment of solos in the first year and duets in the second year the more integrated assessments are current practice, and one of the lessons learned was that feedback needs to be structured in order to create openness. This

approach is now slowly slipping into other modules in the programme, both regarding formal assessment and providing informal feedback.

Within ArtEZ a Central Examination Board (CEC) is responsible for ensuring the application of all relevant procedures and regulations as described in the EER/OER, assessment policy and assessment plans. There are three mandated chambers, the chairs of these chambers form the CEC. The chamber Theatre and Dance deals with the day-to-day issues regarding assessment of the Bachelor's programme of Dancer/Maker and has two members in addition to the chair and one member in training. The Examination Board collaborates closely with Education & Quality and provides structural and ad hoc advice to course coordinators and management, based on concrete questions submitted by students and other findings regarding assessment and examinations.

Based on input of the Examination Board and Education & Quality the programme is currently reviewing the number of assessments in the curriculum and will be experimenting with more integrated assessments in the upcoming year.

#### *Considerations*

The committee muses that grading in dance programmes may seem contradictory and unproductive, but understands that grading is important for students to understand how they are doing.

The credits for a number of modules are understandably (partly) based on attendance of the class. The committee is of the opinion that assessment is valid, transparent and reliable. The committee is pleased to learn that formative feedback is increasingly being used and helps the students in their development. This is a clearly visible effect of the implementation of circular valorisation. The committee points out that the quality of written feedback could be improved, as written feedback works on a different level than, and adds to, oral feedback. The committee expects that the circular valorisation approach will in time also contribute to these developments. By breaking through a hierarchical structure, feedback becomes more meaningful.

In general, the committee is very positive about the developments in the programme, with respect to the number and frequency of assessments being reduced, feedback and assessment forms and being a learning community. However, it agrees with the Examination Board to not change too much at the same time.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Achieved learning outcomes

The close-tight community formed by teaching staff and students strongly contributes to the achievement of learning outcomes. The clear profile and structured curriculum with a periodisation foundation is being lived and leads to very good and sometimes even excellent dancers. The outcomes of the Artistic research module will benefit from more explicit attention to contextualisation and a theoretical framework. Professional preparation is the focus in years one-three, while the fourth year is successfully dedicated to the transition of students to becoming professionals. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

*Standard 11: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

### Findings

The programme demonstrates the achievement of intended learning outcomes by assessment results, final projects and the performance of graduates in the professional arena or postgraduate programmes.

Prior to the site visit the committee studied the products of a selection of fifteen students that graduated in the past two academic years. The products are representative of the students achieving the final qualifications and included papers, reflection and assessments on the artistic research and the individual study trajectory of the fourth year. In addition, the committee was invited to watch the try-out of the end performances of third year students. The module on artistic research focuses on students developing and investigating their own artistic practice as dancer/maker by deepening their knowledge and gaining experience in doing artistic work. The final assessment is based on four assessments, a written report on the research week (including reflection on the process), the intensive (assessed by a guest choreographer), research presentation at the end of the craft phase and the research paper.

In the fourth-year students are given space and responsibility to develop an individual tailor-made learning trajectory, becoming self-employed artists. Some students combine a dance

company internship (dancer) with an artistic research process (maker). The company then often provides time, space and artistic guidance in both professional roles. Others choose for the status as independent artist for the larger part of the year, during which they create and develop their own artistic work more or less supported by a production house, dance studio, or residence abroad while meanwhile working with freelance choreographers or in project-based signature companies. A group of students chooses to work exclusively as dancer or maker in subsequent projects or companies. Finally, some students use this fourth year as an intensive for training additional individually preferred skills and competences, such as techniques, repertoire or entrepreneurial skills.

### Alumni

Graduates of the Dancer/Maker programme work in a variety of (international) companies, e.g. Konzert theatre Bern, and Cullberg Ballet. Others work as a freelancer with different choreographers or companies. They also work as independent makers both in the Netherlands and abroad. Some alumni teach at ArtEZ or elsewhere, or continue doing a master programme in the performing arts, become dance film maker or combine their dance practice with teaching somatic practices. Alumni told the committee that it is empowering that the programme looks at the individual students, supporting them in a constructive way to become the professional they aspire to be. Furthermore, they are not trained merely as dancers, but also as makers who (co)create, think and con-

tribute in the process. Both periodisation and circular valorisation provide the students with skills that are highly valuable to their practice.

#### *Professional field*

Once students graduate the programme continues to support them in several ways. One alumnus initiated that during the vacation weeks the studios in the school could be used by graduates to practice. This allows young professionals not only to practice at an affordable location, but it offers them to provide and receive feedback from others.

#### *Considerations*

The committee is of the opinion that the close-knit community formed by lecturers and students makes a major contribution to achieving the learning outcomes. The students are provided with tools, most notably periodisation and the network orientation that is part of the circular valorisation approach, which will remain valuable throughout their professional career. The profile of the program is clear and both students and lecturers live it. The programme delivers very good to excellent dancers to the labour market, who are confident about who they are and what they do.

The Artistic research is a long process that already starts in the second year and results in a research paper. Students told passionately about the search and the research they have done, usually for many hours in the studio. The committee concludes that the design and implementation of this module leads to what the programme expects of students in artistic research. In doing so, the programme achieves the intended learning outcomes. However, as the committee has already

indicated under standard 2, contextualisation is a skill that has become important to the dancer/maker, and this skill can receive more attention in the programme and the realised learning outcomes. Illustrative to this point, the research papers sometimes lacked a clear, external theoretical framework. The committee is of the opinion that such a framework is crucial in positioning the student's own artistic research in relation to existing research (artistic and other), theories and practices. The committee therefore recommends that students be more explicitly encouraged - and this should be included in the description of the module - to put their research and/or artistic work into a framework (theoretical or evidence based) and to contextualise it.

With respect to the professional preparation the programme takes an interesting approach. The fourth year of the programme strengthens the transition from student to professional. Based on the information the committee received, nearly all graduates are working as dancers and/or makers in the Netherlands or abroad, often as freelancers. This is impressive and shows that the approach in the fourth year supports the students in their transition towards becoming a professional dancer and/or maker.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets** this standard.

## Distinctive feature: Circular Valorisation

The committee **grants** the programme the distinctive feature Circular Valorisation in Dance. The committee is impressed by the thorough and passionate way in which the Academy of Dance and Theatre has developed and internalised the concepts of circular valorisation. It is well thought out, and highly relevant to the educational and research goals of the institute. The committee is of the opinion that because the approach is highly fitting to an organisational programme, and is carefully and consistently implemented, the results are showing in many facets of the teaching and learning environment. The students not only benefit from this teaching and learning environment, but are also trained in this way of working that will be a valuable tool throughout their professional career. As such, it is a distinguishing feature of the Academy.

### Introduction

In its search to further improve the quality of education, to become more innovative and inclusive, the Academy of Dance and Theatre was looking for a way to deal with the different programmes functioning as islands, and the tradition of hierarchy in art schools that involved a strong student-lecturer structure in classes.

The concept of circular valorisation has been developed by philosopher Henk Oosterling and director Gaby Allard, in response to some of the ineffective consequences of traditional modes of organisation that are hierarchical and functional in nature. Themes that are explicitly addressed are inclusiveness, adaptive capacity, development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and a learning organisation.

The organisation concept is based on groups, or circles, that are fluid in existence and participants. Furthermore, the groups have no hierarchy, but are explicitly viewed as interrelations between participants that are both giving and taking (e.g.: teaching and learning). Participants join because they have something to give to and take from a particular circle, not because they have a functional or hierarchical position. As all stakeholders are part of multiple circles, the organisation soon becomes a collection of networks, a.k.a. circles. And then, circularity is also meant in the sense of sharing information, needs, values, individual goals, and so on.

The concept of valorisation is also intended in multiple, related ways: it is about sharing value and values, creating new shared values and value. The essential idea is that through sharing and collaboration value is added, as well as realised in the

sense of made concrete / palpable. As a result of making the exchanges in the circles concrete, the approach is not only a way of thinking, but also a way of very consciously doing.

The Academy has started a process to adopt and adapt this organising concept into its ways of working. This started with a small group, which then expanded to include all lecturers and students. Soon, in the development process, the entire Academy organisation was impacted.

In the implementation by the Academy, the core of Circular Valorisation can be described as a didactical and methodical approach, based on non-hierarchical collaboration within networks. Students learn to work integrally and inclusively by connecting at various scales to a multiplicity of networks. This way they become critical independent professionals. The learning community is collectively formed by students, lecturers and professors. They are in constant dialogue and develop their skills through collaboration. By looping input from various scaled networks within and outside the academy back into the education, value creation and exchange takes place. As power relations circulate, the student becomes master, and the master becomes student as well; every participant is connected in nodes at each moment, where some nodes have more connections than others and/or are more intensive.

### Distinguishing nature

In essence circular valorisation is an organisational principle, which tries to address some widely recognised issues with existing modes of

organisation. As such it is not unique; more approaches have been developed. The system of *holocracy* is one example, and the concept of *deep democracy* another.

The approach of circular valorisation is highly fitting to an educational institute, not in the least because of its focus on creating a learning organisation, and an organisation of learners, that is inclusive and open. The academy has clearly realised an extensive and individual interpretation and implementation of the approach. Maybe even more important, throughout the Bachelor's programme *Dancer/Maker* circular valorisation is connected to, and made concrete in, many facets. According to the committee, the aim for inclusive education by creating an open community and open dialogue that leads to an ongoing process of learning is distinguishing from what other institutes and programmes do.

### **Concretisation**

*Standard 1: objectives and vision of the programme, relation with the professional field*

The approach of circular valorisation that the Academy uses is well embedded in its vision on education. One of the objectives of circular valorisation is to make the education inclusive by way of an open community and dialogue. The development of a non-hierarchical learning environment in a discipline that traditionally has a high degree of hierarchy, leads to students reflecting on themselves as well as on each other and their lecturers. In circular valorisation feedback creates transparency aimed at giving feedback in a structural way. Throughout the organisation transparency, communication and collaboration become a part of the education. Many stakeholders from the professional field are connected to the Academy of Dance and Theatre and are included in the circular valorisation approach.

Secondly, the circular valorisation approach provides the students with a valuable tool in realising the intended learning outcomes. The method is well connected to these outcomes, supported by its focus on learning, feedback and working in networks of all kinds.

*Standard 2: orientation and collaboration with the professional field*

Development of professional skills are rooted in structural validation of thinking, doing and sharing (conceptualisation, actions and dissemination), that is fundamental to the circular valorisation approach. The circles are used when providing students with supportive networks, for example the circle of guides in the fourth year.

*Standard 4: innovative set-up of the curriculum*

In supporting the development of an individual signature of each student, circular valorisation contributes by the continuous feedback they receive as well as learning to provide feedback themselves. Students' personal development and the development of the dancers' identity are supported by this student-oriented approach.

*Standard 6: the extent to which it is lived by the lecturers, and the extent to which students, lecturers and the professional field form a learning community*

The committee is impressed by the way circular valorisation is adopted by staff members. They identify with the circular valorisation approach. The method of communication - also during the site visit - is aimed at giving everyone an equal role in the discussion. By doing so, the programme aims to transform the hierarchical structure into a spiral or circular network and to become a learning organisation irrespective of the position of the individual.

*Standard 8: the extent to which students and supervisors form a learning community, mutual coaching*

The introduction of *circular valorisation* has had an effect on the way students are coached and guided, by creating an open, and inclusive community of practice in which students are challenged to operate as equal partners, with their own goals.

*Standard 9: quality assurance and specifically the quality culture*

Circular valorisation contributes to the quality culture through the transparent and circular way in which students, lecturers and others interact

with each other. The process of actively seeking feedback, evaluating (assigning value), and then taking a next step, is a cornerstone to the circular valorisation approach. As a result, the academy has come to enjoy a quality culture that comes from within – that is an essential part of the dialogue in each meeting.

*Standard 10: connection of the system of assessment*

Although still in its infancy, the first effects of circular valorisation are visible in the method of assessment. This is reflected in the attention for feedback (oral versus written) and the observation that the method of giving feedback needs to be structured to fit in with the approach. Already visible is the increased use, and quality, of formative assessment in the assessment system.

*Standard 11: graduates can identify the added value concretely, what are the implications on their professional practice*

Since students often participate in the circular valorisation process unconsciously and take a number of aspects for granted, it is not always easy for students and graduates to concretely indicate how circular valorisation contributes to the execution of their profession. However, the way of communicating and interacting with each other, as observed by the committee, shows that even when unconscious of it, alumni have contributed to the process and learned from it. Especially the way they have learned to consciously build and use networks is identified by students and alumni as a valuable tool. In addition to this, the committee noted the quality of self-reflection with the students.

### Relevance

The goal to shift from a hierarchical organisation towards an inclusive spiral society with structural feedback as a core element seems very relevant

to the development of students. Communication and collaboration in an open and transparent atmosphere are likely to benefit students in many ways, both during their studies and after graduation.

During the site visit the committee continuously noted the circular valorisation approach, both in interviews with staff, students and management. Students and alumni are confident and well aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

### Conclusion

The committee is of the opinion that in a discipline that is traditionally hierarchical, the circular valorisation approach is a valuable tool, or even method of change, that adds to the quality of educating students. As such the committee would go so far as to recommend the approach to other learning programmes as well.

The committee encourages the programme, the academy and ArtEZ to continue with the development and implementation of circular valorisation. It also notes that it is important to recognise and acknowledge what this approach cannot do, and to act on these points. Similar to the approach of periodisation: it has to be a tool/vehicle rather than a goal in itself.

As a final note, the committee would like to point out that the name *circular valorisation* might be easily confused with the Dutch connotation of valorisation of scientific research. The approach can easily encompass this aspect, as a way of doing it; but the essence of circular valorisation lies first in the thinking and doing of organising and teaching at the academy.





## Attachments

## Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Drs R.R. van Aalst	Raoul van Aalst is programmamanager Always Energy bij TenneT – het programma richt zich op gezondheidsaspecten van medewerkers. Hij zit met regelmaat visitaties voor
Mrs. A. (Angélique) Willkie	Angélique Willkie is Assistant Professor at the department of contemporary Dance of Concordia University, Canada. She is a performing artist, dramaturge, certified coach, yoga & dance pedagogue.
E. Urmston PhD	Elsa Urmston is a Researcher, at the University of Bedfordshire, in the field of dance. She is a dance educator at BA and MA level for several dance schools
J. Nabbe	Julia Nabbe is student Liberal Arts and Sciences aan de UU. Momenteel vervult ze een bestuursjaar bij de studievereniging Atlas

The panel was supported by Meg van Bogaert PhD.  
All panel members have signed a declaration of independence.

## Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

Thursday 20 June 2019

Tijd	Activiteit	Onderwerp
08.30 – 10.00	Aankomst commissie	<i>Interne vergadering visitatiecommissie AeQui</i>
10.00 – 11.00	Vertaling periodisering naar programma	Doel: Hoe ziet het onderwijs inhoud, opbouw + jaarplan eruit. En hoe geeft de opleiding artistieke invulling aan periodisering <i>NVAO Standaarden: Beoogde leerresultaten, programma, instroom, begeleiding, personeel, toetsing</i>
11.15 – 12.15	Open Podium verzorgt door studenten Dans	Doel: Werk dat studenten maken buiten het curriculum, kan onderdeel zijn van derde jaar onderzoek. <i>NVAO Standaarden: beoogde leerresultaten, programma, oriëntatie, toetsing</i>
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch en inloop-spreekuur	Mogelijkheid voor studenten en medewerkers voor gedachtewisseling met commissie, tevens bestudering van documenten
13.15- 14.15	Studentendeel	Doel: Ervaring van het programma door studenten. Kernwoorden: Community, feedback van docenten aan studenten en vica versa. <i>NVAO Standaarden: Leeromgeving, voorzieningen, instroom, kwaliteitszorg</i>
14.30 – 15.30	Circle of Guides – ronde tafelgesprek	<i>NVAO standaarden: beoogde leerresultaten, gerealiseerd eindniveau, studiebegeleiding, oriëntatie, kwaliteitszorg</i>
15.45 – 16.45	Rondetafelgesprek academie overstijgend	Doel: Het rondetafelgesprek is een reflectiegesprek: waar staan we, waar willen we naartoe, wat zijn de ontwikkelingen en uitdagingen. Thema's: Onderzoek, Graduate School (masters), Ondernemerschap, Interdisciplinair programma, Studentbegeleiding, Voorzieningen, koppeling ArtEZ beleid naar academie en opleiding <i>NVAO Standaarden: voorzieningen, begeleiding, kwaliteitszorg, leeromgeving, beoogde leerresultaten, oriëntatie, toetsing</i>
16.45 - 17.45	Afronding van de eerste dag	
20.30	Try out voorstelling DM 3 (ArtEZ) / diner voorafgaand	<i>NVAO Standaarden: gerealiseerd eindniveau</i>

Friday 21 June

Tijd	Activiteit	Onderwerp/doel
09.00 – 09.45	Aankomst commissie	<i>Interne vergadering visitatiecommissie AeQui</i>
9.45 – 10.45	Studentendeel 1. Reis door de opleiding – Presentatie 2. Kleurenpalet (beroepsrollen - profielen van de opleiding) - Presentatie 3. (na)gesprek met de commissie  Verzorgd door studenten DD.	Doel: hoe komt de student binnen, welk traject legt hij af (hoe ervaart de student dit) en wat is zijn visie (rollen) en hoe wordt dit gefaciliteerd/begeleid door de opleiding? <i>NVAO Standaarden: beoogde leerresultaten, programma (2,3,4), instroom, voorzieningen</i>
11.00-12.00	Praktijk studio's begeleiding o.l.v. studenten	Doel: beroepsrollen in praktijk toegepast (benaderingswijzen, reflective practice), stage begeleiding, coaches (peer assessment)  <i>NVAO Standaarden: programma, beoogde leerresultaten, begeleiding, voorzieningen, toetsing</i>
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch	
13.00 – 14.00	Ronde tafelgesprek - Bijzonder Kenmerk Circulaire valorisatie	Bijzonder kenmerk, circulaire valorisatie
14.15 – 15.00	Waarden van de opleiding a.d.h.v. kwartetspel van en door de studenten DD + ruimte voor (na)gesprek	Doel: tonen van de waarden/kwaliteiten van de opleiding, zichtbaar in het programma. <i>NVAO Standaarden: programma (2,3,4) en toetsing, kwaliteitszorg, personeel</i>
15.15 – 16.30	Up to the future Pitch - Studenten - Werkveld - Alumni	Doel: beroepsprofiel, eindkwalificaties, eigen profilering studenten, na de opleiding (alumni) en bestemming werkveld. <i>NVAO Standaarden: beoogde leerresultaten, begeleiding, gerealiseerd eindniveau, kwaliteitszorg, toetsing</i>
16.45-17.45	Intern beraad commissie	Conclusies formuleren
17.45-18.15	Terugkoppeling van de commissie	

## Attachment 3 Documents

- Graduation Projects of 15 students
- Access to ELO, intranet, various film and photo collections
- Access to ArtEZ Business Center on Facebook
- Education and examination regulations
- Assessment matrix
- Assessment plan
- ArtEZ policy on assessment
- Quality Calendar ArtEZ
- *Meerjarenplan ATD*
- *Reglement medezeggenschap*
- *ArtEZ instellingsplan*
- Position paper circular valorisation
- Health programme
- ArtEZ policy "*studeren met een studiebeperking*"
- Film on periodisation
- *Huisvestingsplan ArtEZ*
- ArtEZ & Innovation
- ArtEZ Press
- Facility Plan Academy T&D
- Facility Plan ArtEZ
- HRM plan ArtEZ
- List of names guest teachers, list of guides, CV's
- *Professionaliseringsplan ArtEZ*
- Vision statement B Dancer / Maker
- Research Policy plan ArtEZ
- *Beroeps en opleidingsprofiel netwerk Dans*
- Outcomes NSE, MTO
- Factsheet B dance