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Master Performance Practices ArtEZ University of the Arts

*Report of the extensive programme assessment
9-10 February 2021*

Utrecht, The Netherlands
March 2021
www.AeQui.nl
Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

Programme

ArtEZ University of the Arts

Master Performance Practices

Location: Arnhem

Mode of study: fulltime

Croho: 49125

Result of institutional assessment: not applied for

Panel

Raoul van Aalst, chair

Joanne Butterworth, domain expert

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The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of:

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Summary

On 9 and 10 February 2021 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the Master programme Performance Practices at ArtEZ University of the Arts. The committee judges that the programme meets each standard; the overall quality of the programme **meets the standard**.

This two-year full-time programme of 120 ECTS offers international artists a de-disciplined environment where diverse thinking is stimulated and where performance-making is promoted as a strategy for equitable societies.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes reflect the programme's signature of an artistic research master. Their link to appropriate national and international frameworks guarantees the master's level. The programme has a distinct profile through its de-disciplining approach and socio-political dimension. The programme aims to attract autonomous artists who want to challenge their practice and advance their research skills. Students, staff, alumni and the professional field are actively involved in keeping the intended learning outcomes up to date. The assessment committee assesses that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

Curriculum

The committee recognises that the curriculum offers students appropriate possibilities to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The interrelationship between theory and practice in the programme is strong. Students are offered a solid and wide base of theoretical knowledge and perspectives and learn to link them to their research question and their artistic practice. The content of the specialisation modules is adapted each year to the specific needs of a cohort, in a joint effort of students and teachers. The programme structure of short intense residential periods with longer periods at home fits the group of students who are working as artist-professionals and need to maintain their connections at home. The workload is spread evenly over the year. The programme succeeds in giving students agency and helps them develop it throughout the course. Teachers, students and partners are a strong learning community. The committee agrees that English as the working language is a logical choice, since the range of international students and staff would be impossible otherwise. The programme was quick to respond to the COVID-19 situation and to adapt the

course format to meet the new circumstances. Students were able to quickly convert their work online. The committee commends the programme for its careful intake and selection procedure. It leads to a diverse and international group of students who fit the vision and ambition of the programme. The assessment committee assesses that the curriculum (orientation, contents, structure and intake) **meets the standard**.

Staff

The committee considers that the teaching team of the Master Performance Practices is energetic, strong and well-qualified, with a good mix of skills and experience. The balance between a core team for the overall pedagogical framework and guest lecturers for additional specific expertise works well. Professionalisation is taken up within the team. Current limitations for additional professionalisation should be lifted, at least for core team members. The team size is sufficient for the implementation of the programme. The assessment committee assesses that the staff **meets the standard**.

Facilities

The committee considers that sufficient facilities are available to run the programme, but agrees with the teaching staff that more and other facilities would be welcome because of the growing student numbers and the de-disciplining approach. The committee advises continuing to look for creative solutions to ensure access to space and resources that also optimise use of existing facilities. The tutoring and mentoring system, with many hours of individual tutoring for each student and a strong system of pastoral support, is commendable. Students have access to the necessary information through the intranet and Sharepoint, including comprehensive module handbooks. The assessment committee assesses that the services and facilities **meet the standard**.

Quality assurance

The committee considers that the quality assurance system works effectively. It is built on a formal system of feedback and representation, actively seeks input from relevant stakeholders and gives a strong voice to the students. The feedback from the External Examiners/Work Field Committee is used to improve the programme. The combination of formal and informal feedback mechanisms ensures that quality issues are picked up without delay. The assessment committee assesses that the quality assurance **meets the standard**.

Assessment

The committee considers that the programme has an adequate assessment system, based on a thorough assessment policy and clear assessment guidelines for students and examiners. The assessment methods reflect the variety of competences that are measured. All assessments are marked by two members of staff, appointed by the Examination Board. External examiners provide feedback on the consistency and level of marking. The Examination Board plays an active monitoring role and concludes on the basis of its annual checks that assessment in the Master Performance Practices is done carefully. The committee assesses that the student assessment system **meets the standard**.

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, March 2021

R. van Aalst,
Chair

Achieved learning outcomes

Students work on their Dissertation by Practice to show that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They submit four products to be assessed: a research proposal, performance, artistic portfolio and thesis. The committee studied the work of the last two cohorts and is satisfied that they are all at master's level. Alumni look back on their master's programme with pride and appreciation and have a good professional standing in the field. The committee assesses that the achieved learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

Recommendations

The programme is strong and energetic. Staff and students constitute an intensive and effective learning community. To support the programme in the continuation of its high quality, the committee formulates the following recommendations:

- Formulate the emphasis on engaged practice more explicitly in the intended learning outcomes;
- Remain aware of the drawbacks of using English as the working language;
- Stimulate and enable professionalisation and formal representation for core team members;
- Continue to look creatively for better accommodation.

M.J.H. van der Weiden,
Secretary

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	Positive

Introduction

This report describes the outcome of the evaluation of the master's programme Performance Practices at the Graduate School of ArtEZ University of the Arts, on 9 and 10 February 2021. ArtEZ University of the Arts offers bachelor's and master's programmes in a broad range of arts. The Master Performance Practices is a full-time two-year programme, offering international artists the opportunity for further reflection and development through knowledge generation and research.

The institute

ArtEZ University of the Arts is a university of applied sciences, located in Arnhem, Enschede and Zwolle. ArtEZ considers art as an important space of broad public significance: for individuals, groups and organisations. ArtEZ is a school and a knowledge institute. ArtEZ offers art education at bachelor's and master's level in visual art, design, architecture, music, dance and theatre. It stands for an internationally recognised standard of quality in art education. Graduates are able to contribute to constant renewal in art and quality in society. As a knowledge institute, ArtEZ defines itself as a critical, collaborative, and creative community that addresses urgent and emergent questions of our times. Artistic research is considered a transformative practice to create meaningful and caring engagements for a future of humane and ethical possibilities.

The programme

The programme is a two-year full-time master's programme of professional orientation, amounting to 120 ECTS. Until 2020, the programme was called Theatre Practices. The name was changed to Performance Practices, because the strength of the programme was felt to lie in its de-disciplining character: inviting a range of disciplines into the programme and helping students to see the social connections between performance arts and the world. Focusing on the body as the subject, tool and material of the performance event, the programme offers five specialisations: Choreography, Theatre Practices, Performance Art, De-disciplined Body, and Digital Performances.

The programme attracts applicants from different countries and disciplines. Each year, 10-12 are selected to enrol. Per 2021, the programme hopes to attract 3-4 students per discipline, amounting to approximately 15 students for the whole programme. Students are active professionals who want to challenge their own practice and access a new range of potentialities, leading to further growth. The programme is a high-intensity-low-residence course. Group sessions are organised in eight residential periods of three to five weeks, spread over the two years of the curriculum. The curriculum comprises four phases: (1) Suspension of Practice & Critical Reflection, (2) Diffraction & Redirection, (3) Reification & Diversification, (4) Consolidation & Dissemination.

The teaching staff consists of 2.2 FTE, plus 1.3 FTE for management and administration. The core team members are creative pedagogues and bring in substantial working experience in both artistic practice and research. The team is enriched by invited artists, which makes it possible to respond quickly to developments in the professional field.

The assessment

ArtEZ University of the Arts assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its master programme Performance Practices. 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 the graduation projects accepted during the last two years. The findings of the report and the results of the review of graduation projects were input for discussions during the visit.

The site visit was carried out online on 9 and 10 February 2021 according to the programme presented in attachment 2. The committee agreed unanimously to the online procedure. Both the preparatory meeting of the assessment committee and the discussions with representatives of the programme did not, in terms of substance, deviate from an onsite procedure. It gave the committee a good insight into the quality of the programme. The panel has carried out its assessment in relation to, and in consideration of, the cluster of programmes in which this programme is placed. The contextualisation of the programme within its cluster was conducted by the complete panel during the preliminary meeting

and the final deliberations. The knowledge required for this was present in part of the panel.

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 2018 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.

Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue will be planned in the course of 2021. The results of this development dialogue have no influence on the assessment presented in this report.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes reflect the programme's signature of an artistic research master. Their link to appropriate national and international frameworks guarantees the master's level. The programme has a distinct profile through its de-disciplining approach and socio-political dimension. The programme aims to attract autonomous artists who want to challenge their practice and advance their research skills. Students, staff, alumni and the professional field are actively involved in keeping the intended learning outcomes up to date. The assessment committee assesses 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

The intended learning outcomes of the Master Performance Practices aim to reflect the programme's signature of an artistic research master. They are formulated in line with the Dublin descriptors for master programmes, level 7 of the Netherlands Qualification Framework, and the 2016 national competence frameworks for dance and theatre education at master level.

The competences are divided into four categories: knowledge and understanding of relevant perspectives, discourses and practices, subject specific intellectual skills, subject specific practical skills, and transferable skills. Some are generic, while others refer to quite specific topics. Together, they reflect the programme's profile, described in the self-evaluation report as 'the unique combination of contemporary performance studies and cutting-edge artistic research and practice-as-research investigations where the body is prioritised as the subject, tool and material of the performance event'. The socio-political dimension of performance and the role of art in society are important elements: the programme promotes performance-making as a strategy for equitable societies. The programme offers students five specialisations (Choreography, Theatre Practices, Performance Art, Digital Performance and De-disciplined Body), with a focus on de-disciplining and expansion of their field.

The programme is aimed at candidates who work as autonomous and responsible artist researchers and who are interested in challenging their practice and wish to advance their research skills.

The programme's intended learning outcomes are further specified for each module and described in the module handbooks. Students told the committee that they value their teachers' role in translating the intended learning outcomes in individual sessions, helping students to discover how they can use the learning outcomes in their research and practice and to construct their education on the basis of what they want to learn.

The programme consults a range of sources to keep the intended learning outcomes up to date. Staff and students are active professionals in the field and aware of recent developments. They regularly discuss the effects these should have on the programme, e.g. in the modules Wild Bodies I and II. In these modules, students are asked to inform and shape new learning outcomes that they consider to be key to the curriculum. Each year, staff and students decide on the elective courses for the next year, based on the students' research needs. Staff members are involved in the national networks of dance and theatre education and work together with national and international theatres and festivals. External examiners are invited every few years to reflect and advise on the programme's vision, by looking at the student assessments and talking with staff and students. Finally, the programme keeps in touch with its

alumni to find out if the competences are still up to date.

Considerations

Throughout the discussions, the assessment committee gathered that the intended learning outcomes match the national competence frameworks and the requirements of the international field. The programme is clearly defined at master's level. The committee notes that the Master Performance Practices has a distinct profile: catering for a very specific group of professional artists and leading the way in its de-disciplining approach. The emphasis on engaged practice became clear in the conversations. The committee thinks this is a strong potential and feels that it could be phrased more explicitly in the intended learning outcomes. The committee notes that the intended learning outcomes at programme level include some very specific elements, while at the

heart of the programme lies the intention that students define their own interpretation of learning outcomes. The committee suggests looking into methods to formulate the intended learning outcomes at a higher level, e.g. the Tuning method. The committee emphasises that this is just a suggestion, since, in practice, the current intended learning outcomes seem to work adequately. The committee commends the programme for its flexibility in formulating the intended learning outcomes and for the way students contribute to the definition of learning outcomes of programme and modules.

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 recognises that the curriculum offers students appropriate possibilities to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The interrelationship between theory and practice in the programme is strong. Students are offered a solid and wide base of theoretical knowledge and perspectives and learn to link them to their research question and their artistic practice. The content of the specialisation modules is adapted each year to the specific needs of a cohort, in a joint effort of students and teachers. The programme structure of short intense residential periods with longer periods at home fits the group of students who are working as artist-professionals and need to maintain their connections at home. The workload is spread evenly over the year. The programme succeeds in giving students agency and helps them develop it throughout the course. Teachers, students and partners are a strong learning community. The committee agrees that English as the working language is a logical choice, since the range of international students and staff would be impossible otherwise. The programme was quick to respond to the COVID-19 situation and to adapt the course format to meet the new circumstances. Students were able to quickly convert their work online. The committee commends the programme for its careful intake and selection procedure. It leads to a diverse and international group of students who fit the vision and ambition of the programme. The assessment committee assesses that the curriculum (orientation, contents, structure and intake) **meets the standard.**

Orientation

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

Findings

The self-evaluation report describes how the programme focuses on practice-as-research and has invested in the development of research conducted by performing artists. The programme offers students a wide range of disciplines, from performance, theatre and dance studies to social sciences and philosophy, and supports them to use these as lenses to understand their idiosyncratic practices. Students are asked to integrate the theoretical knowledge base and artistic performance-making methodologies with practical competences within a professional framework: new theory emerges from practice, and practice is reviewed through theory. The programme also helps students to develop their transferable skills: taking responsibility for independent learning and continuous professional development, building curatorial and collaborative skills, exchanging ideas and combining resources in an ecology of collective engagement and a growing network.

In their conversation with the committee, the students confirmed the strong connection between theory and practice throughout the programme. They feel the constant support from their teachers in the practice-based research and appreciate the access to different approaches of research execution. They describe their position as a combination of learner, researcher and practitioner, trying to move their shared artistic curiosity into an academic context and making their research tangible to a larger public. Writing is seen as a conversation with readers, a different way and style to get their ideas across.

The teaching staff elaborated on this and told the committee that the Graduate School has started an online academic journal, APRIA (ArtEZ Platform for Research Interventions in the Arts). Students are actively invited to contribute when new calls are sent out. Other ways to share the outcomes of students' research are the recent establishment of an online thesis library and the student blogs: in all modules, students are asked to hold a blog, sharing their work with their community and giving it back to where they came from. Students, being artist-researchers, are expected to communicate with different communities,

wider than as an artist, including research but not limited to it.

Considerations

The committee considers that the programme succeeds well in the interweaving of theory and practice, by challenging the boundaries between the two and asking students to bring topics together. All tutors use the same rigorous, but not rigid methodology, and thus support the students in mastering the necessary research and professional skills.

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

In 2018, the programme formulated a new vision and curriculum, broadening from Theatre Practices to Performance Practices, and embracing a post humanist perspective. The focus is on the Body in Performance and the locus on the studio practice. The programme offers five specialisations. These are mainly used as a construct to show (potential) students the range of practices offered in the programme. Students may graduate in one of the four specific specialisations, but are allowed to change freely along the line. In that case, they graduate in the fifth specialisation (De-disciplined Body). Students may also choose modules from other master programmes. Experience shows that, though not always easy for lecturer and student because of differences in experience and background knowledge, this leads to deep learning.

The committee, having studied the module handbooks, recognises that students are presented with a wide range of readings. At the beginning, students have to get to know each other's vocabulary and approaches, since different disciplines

(choreography/dance, theatre, music) use different languages. The first module is, therefore, heavy on theory, with a focus on building a common vocabulary and linking theory to established practices, thus creating a common area. Students describe it as a foundation for the research they are asked to do afterwards. During the course, they explore different notions and philosophical performance related perspectives. Teachers use the group sessions to have students benefit as much as possible from the encounter by arguing and discussion. They orchestrate a conversation and push students to come up with their own ideas and experiences in relation to the theoretical literature. Tutorials during modules are used to tailor readings to a student's specific focus in a dialogue with the student. In the module essay they are asked to reflect on the theoretical framework and to look at their own practice through that perspective.

Towards the end of each year, students and staff design next year's elective (specialisation) modules, based on the cohort's common research interests. This ensures that the content of the programme meets the students' needs. Teachers observe that cohorts differ, e.g. in social engagement, and that this is reflected in the modules from year to year.

Considerations

The committee considers that the Master Performance Practices is a very dense programme, presenting the students with a lot of content: modules, topics, literature and skills. Students may use this in a way that fits the direction they want to go. They are offered many different theories and constructs, not to reproduce them in an exam, but to choose what is pertinent to their particular research topic. The committee recognises from the final works (see standard 11) that students are not only presented with all relevant philosophical concepts, but learn to use them constructively. The committee commends the programme for the interactive way in which electives are designed each year, based on the cohort's interests.

This ensures that the contents are in line with students' needs. The committee thinks it is a good choice not to work with specific sets of specialisation courses, but allow students to mix them and work towards de-disciplining.

The committee notes that the concepts of 'body' and 'post humanism' are a current focus in the documentation and in conversations and these terms themselves risk becoming part of dominant discourses. The committee suggests that it may be necessary to consider deconstructing these concepts in the not-too-distant future. The committee does not doubt the programme's ability to do so, as it is in line with the programme's general responsiveness to changes.

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

The Master Performance Practices is a two-year fulltime programme (120 EC), described in the self-evaluation report as a high-intensity-low-residence course in modular form. Group sessions are organised in eight residential periods of three to five weeks. In between these periods, students work autonomously on their research projects with the support of one-to-one tutorials, online group meetings and peer feedback. The programme is divided into four phases: (1) Suspension of Practice & Critical Reflection, (2) Diffraction & Redirection, (3) Reification & Diversification, (4) Consolidation & Dissemination. The first year comprises the first two phases and is intended to expand the students' views and knowledge, while the second year (the third and fourth phase) provides a more focused path. Students told the committee that, during the intake process, they are prepared for a high workload.

This workload is spread evenly over the two years. Before the start of the programme, they already meet each other online, beginning to form a learning community.

The teachers explained the programme's ecology, that consists of three elements: the students, lecturers and partners. The students are working professionals who want to expand their practice as artists and, in order to do so, need guidance and space. They enter the programme with a specific research proposal and situate this in each module, working towards their own questions and fascination. They take steps to combine their artistic and academic language, while they are supported, facilitated, challenged and pushed. They are encouraged to be active partners in their programme, e.g. by designing the second-year elective modules. Intergenerational learning between the two cohorts takes place in these electives and in other exchange moments. All lecturers are active practitioners and researchers in the field of performance practices and guide the students in classes and in one-to-one tutorials. They aim to create a safe learning community. Partnerships and collaborations vary from the local to the international level. Within ArtEZ, the programme collaborates with the bachelor programme Dance and the Graduate School (which includes masters and professorships, the Arts Business Center and ArtEZ Press). Partnerships with theatres in the city of Arnhem open opportunities for collaboration. International partners are important to introduce new environments and concepts to students, discovering through encounters and discussions how people respond to different political, economic and social situations.

English is the working language of the Master Performance Practices. The programme feels this is the only option because the world of performance practices is international. Students come from different parts of the world, collaborations and exchanges take place with international institutions, and teaching staff and external experts are sourced from a broad international base. A practical difficulty for international students and

staff is that not all formal ArtEZ documents are available in English.

Recent developments

In 2020, the programme was offered online for a larger part than usual. Alerted by the international students, the teachers decided to go online completely even before the lockdown in the Netherlands in March. Students were able to adapt their work and performances to online sessions. The second-year students, only eight weeks away from their presentations for an audience, made full length films and online workshops. Many works looked into the political side of COVID: isolation, care, responsibility. In September, the community of staff and students worked together on safe conditions for physical meetings.

The quality of the learning environment as well as the wellbeing of students was monitored. Teachers were flexible: since it was more difficult to stay in touch with students and maintain the collective attention span, and since online teaching did not work in an intensive mode, they changed the schedule and extended it across a longer period: more days in a row with shorter sessions. Teachers and the student community emphasised the importance of self-care and responsibility. Teachers were surprised at the new possibilities to come together that the online environment opened up.

Considerations

The committee notes with appreciation that in the Master Performance Practices the concept of 'student-as-agent' is more than just words. The programme succeeds in giving students agency and helps them develop it throughout the course. The structure of short intense residential periods with longer periods at home fits the group of students who need to maintain their professional connections. The workload is spread evenly over the year. The committee appreciates that students meet online already before the start of the programme after having received prior academic preparatory readings, and thus start to become a group. Teachers, students and partners are a

strong learning community. Intergenerational learning works effectively. The environment of the Graduate School is stimulating and helps the master programmes grow, also as a stepping-stone towards PhD programmes. The group residencies with international partners contribute positively to the learning experience.

The committee agrees that English as the working language is a logical choice, since the range of international students and international collaborations would be impossible otherwise. The last cohort of students and the staff are completely international. The committee feels that it should be a point of consideration how this relates to the programme's concept of hospitality, for it excludes students who do not speak English and makes communication with the local community more difficult. The committee has no answers, but wonders whether more globalised approaches to questions of engagement could be explored as the programme develops. As long as English is the chosen language, ArtEZ should provide translations of all relevant Dutch language documents for international students.

The programme was quick to respond to the COVID-19 situation and to adapt the course format to meet the new circumstances. The programme structure, with short residential phases and longer home-based periods, was helpful, since staff and students already worked online a lot. Students did a great job in converting their work online. The shared decision-making and short lines of communication proved to be favourable conditions for the programme to act quickly in a crisis situation.

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

The programme has set up an admission procedure designed to engage applicants in a dialogue about their research questions, educational-professional perspectives, and methodology, to find out if student and programme will be a good match. Firstly, applicants submit the required materials, such as degree certificate, English proficiency test, research proposal and motivation letter. A number of candidates is then invited to the second phase, which consists of an assignment and an interview, live or online. Applicants receive feedback on their assignment and have the chance to rework it. The focus in the selection process is on an applicant's response to feedback, collaborative skills, criticality, imagination and the capacity to solve problems. The final selection is done by a selection committee, comprising a minimum of three staff members including the Learning Coordinator. An important criterium is that the applicant's research interest aligns with what the programme offers. In addition, the programme seeks to bring together a large range of diversity (cultural and geographical background, age, experience, discipline and position).

Students with special needs are welcome at ArtEZ and have the right to course adjustments and/or special equipment. A student counsellor holds an intake interview at the start of the programme and will continue to monitor the student's progress.

The students expressed their appreciation of the intake procedure: they feel that the auditioning process is a realistic template for the programme. It made them understand what the programme would offer and what would be required from them.

The lecturers feel that the intake procedure enables them to attract the right students. The hospitality of otherness and staying assertive with the programme's values while inviting new students work out well. They regret that language and degree requirements sometimes keep students away who would fit the programme well. Also, the high costs and the very limited number of scholarships are an obstacle for some interested applicants.

Considerations

The committee commends the programme for its intake and selection procedure. It is a very careful process, giving potential students an extensive sense of the programme. It leads to a diverse and international group of students who fit the vision and ambition of the programme. If the programme would like to attract a broader range of students, recognition of previous knowledge and experience could be explored as an option. This could have implications for how students are supported to engage with the theoretical content introduced early in the programme.

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 teaching team of the Master Performance Practices is energetic, strong and well-qualified, with a good mix of skills and experience. The balance between a core team for the overall pedagogical framework and guest lecturers for additional specific expertise works well. Professionalisation is taken up within the team. Current limitations for additional professionalisation should be lifted, at least for core team members. The team size is sufficient for the implementation of the programme. The assessment committee assesses that the staff **meets the standard**.

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 and instructing staff of the Master Performance Practices consists of 2.2 FTE plus an additional 1.3 FTE for management and administration. With the current student population of 23, this amounts to a teacher to student ratio of 1:10.5, or a staff to student ratio of 1:6.4. The Head of Programme works closely with coordinators and teachers to determine the overall direction and vision of the programme. The core team maintains the continuity in the curriculum, while invited artists enrich the learning environment with their professional expertise and networks.

Team members must have at least five years of working experience in arts and/or education and an established reputation for their specific specialisation. All lecturers involved in theoretical work have a history of research and are qualified to at least master level. Others were selected for their experience in curation, performance and technical delivery and facilitation. Most members of staff are accredited for teaching and learning in higher education (including the basic qualification for assessment BKE). A BKE certificate is mandatory for examiners. The CVs of staff provide a comprehensive overview of all team members and their qualifications.

The programme runs in English. There is no policy on English language proficiency of staff, but all core lecturers and most guest teachers are English natives or have a degree from an English-

speaking university programme. Guest speakers without such formal qualifications have a professional record of working in English. They are not involved directly in assessment.

BKE training is provided by ArtEZ. The teaching staff organise internal professionalisation meetings, e.g. to discuss the assessment criteria of essays or how to mark assessments (the role of subjectivity and understanding the learning outcomes and assessment criteria). Staff meetings were held to exchange strategies to deal with the COVID-situation. These were found to be helpful and added to the level of mutual support. Within the Graduate School, monthly policy meetings are held to discuss common outreach and research programmes. The Master Performance Practices has taken up a leading and active role in these discussions. In their conversation with the committee, staff members remarked that they feel budgetary constraints to attend external professionalisation activities. They also noted that non-structural staff have no access to employment allowances nor can they be part of the representative bodies.

Considerations

Based on the conversations during the site visit, the committee considers that the teaching team of the Master Performance Practices is energetic and strong, with a good mix of skills and experience, and an international orientation. The Head of Programme plays a stimulating role. Staff have an adequate command of the English language. The committee considers the current relation between core team and guest lecturers to be well-

balanced: responsibility for the pedagogical framework of the programme rests with the core team, while guest lecturers are invited for more specific parts.

The committee supports the requirement that all teachers who act as examiners must have a BKE and feels that all core team members, including those on (small) part-time contracts, should have access to professionalisation activities and membership of representative bodies. To facilitate this,

it may be desirable to provide some permanent fixed term fractional contracts for staff currently working on guest contracts.

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 that sufficient facilities are available to run the programme, but agrees with the teaching staff that more and other facilities would be welcome because of the growing student numbers and the de-disciplining approach. The committee advises continuing to look for creative solutions. The tutoring and mentoring system, with many hours of individual tutoring for each student and a strong system of pastoral support, is commendable. Students have access to the necessary information through the intranet and Sharepoint, including comprehensive module handbooks. The assessment committee assesses that the services and facilities **meet the standard**.

Accommodation and infrastructure

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

Findings

The programme has its main workspace at Kortestraat 27 in central Arnhem, sharing the building with other master programmes. The programme has three main teaching areas (serving as studios and classrooms), its own library, equipment for studio and stage experimentation, interactive and digital resources and a shared kitchen and lounge for informal exchange between students and staff. Students have access to the broader ArtEZ facilities, comprising studio spaces, fully furnished theatres, props and costume department, skilled technical support and a range of makerspaces, such as for woodworking, textiles, ceramics and photography. Students also use the ArtEZ library and digital services.

During the conversations with teaching team and Graduate School, the committee learnt that the use of the wider ArtEZ studio facilities is not always easy because bachelor students have priority. More importantly, the programme dreams of having a professional venue for themselves, for students to learn how to run a performance venue, and for showing their work to the local ecology in a more inviting environment. The Graduate School is currently looking at this, trying to find a space for performance and experimentation, in collaboration with partners in the wider community of Arnhem.

In addition, the programme notes that de-disciplining leads to new demands for documentation and space, e.g. more access to makerspaces for metal and leather work and more need of digitisation.

Considerations

The committee considers that the programme runs adequately with the current facilities. The committee agrees with the programme, however, that growing student numbers and the de-disciplining approach put pressure on them. The committee advises continuing the efforts to find creative solutions in a constructive discussion with ArtEZ management, e.g. exploring possibilities for skill based and research-based work stations across programmes.

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

During the high intensity residency periods, students work together and with their teachers in studio sessions, workshops, lectures, seminars, mentoring sessions, residencies and field trips. During the non-residential periods, students meet approximately every week online for an hour with one of the tutors to receive feedback

on their progress. For every 5 EC module, two hours of individual tutorials are available before submission and assessments. Students also provide critical peer feedback, supporting each other through peer learning. While working on their practice-based dissertation, students receive ten hours of supervision and an additional six hours with an external mentor who is an expert in the field. Financial support is available for choosing this external mentor. Group and individual tutorial support are available at specified times during the programme, and at the students' request.

Pastoral support is available from ArtEZ Student Services, comprising the International Office, the Student Affairs Department and the student counsellors. Students with special needs can call upon additional support and facilities. Buildings are made accessible as much as possible. Within the Master Performance Practices, students can approach the Year Coordinators (one for each year) and the Learning Coordinator. During the site visit, they explained that their role is to help and support students in their learning process, creating a sense of trust and a safe space, so students will not hesitate to seek support if needed. The coordinators work proactively and try to identify issues as early as possible. Topics vary from questions about practical matters and timetables to assessment.

General student information is available on the Intranet portal. The students confirmed that all learning materials such as timetables, reading materials and handbooks can be accessed on the

Sharepoint space. The committee has studied the handbooks for each module. These provide comprehensive information on learning objectives, course format, reading materials and assessment and are regularly updated in response to feedback by students.

Recent developments

In 2020, the programme was offered online for a larger part than usual. The staff explained that the proactive approach of tutors and year coordinators enabled the programme to monitor the well-being of students closely. Because of the low-residence format, the necessary facilities and knowledge were already available to stay in touch with the students from a distance.

Considerations

The committee commends the programme for its extensive tutoring and mentoring system, with many hours of individual tutoring for each student and a strong system of pastoral support. The support for students with special needs is very positive. ArtEZ is aware that not all buildings are sufficiently accessible. The module handbooks provide the students with all the information they need.

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 the quality assurance system works effectively. It is built on a formal system of feedback and representation, actively seeks input from relevant stakeholders and gives a strong voice to the students. The feedback from the External Examiners/Work Field Committee is used to improve the programme. The combination of formal and informal feedback mechanisms ensures that quality issues are picked up without delay. The assessment committee assesses that the quality assurance **meets the 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 in the Master Performance Practices is based on the ArtEZ Quality Assurance Plan 2015-2021 and aims at the continuous improvement of quality. Staff and students are represented in the formal Course Committee (Opleidingscommissie). Input from relevant stakeholders is actively sought, such as feedback from the Examination Board and External Examiners/Work Field Committee. Staff meetings and Graduate School committee meetings are a platform for teachers' feedback, while students can do so in powwow meetings at the end of each semester, through their representatives and in evaluation forms. The students told the committee that the programme staff is very open for discussions and feedback, which is in line with the programme philosophy. They feel that they are truly agents of their education.

In conversation with the committee, one of the 2019 external examiners sketched the issues raised in the August 2019 report and the improvements made by the programme since then. This same examiner has been invited to do a similar assessment in 2021, by observing student

work and the teaching team at work and by studying programme documentation. Both the programme staff and the external examiner consider this a rigorous and worthwhile feedback method.

In response to the previous accreditation assessment, the programme has increased its visibility within ArtEZ and externally, through building broader links to local and international networks, developing a strong social media presence and documenting student work digitally.

Considerations

The committee considers that the programme has an effective system of quality assurance in place. Not only the formal system of feedback and representation contributes to a quality culture, but especially the open atmosphere and active methods to seek input and feedback for continuous improvement. Students are given a strong voice. The strong informal relationships and the energy of the Head of Programme ensure that issues are picked up without delay.

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, based on a thorough assessment policy and clear assessment guidelines for students and examiners. The assessment methods reflect the variety of competences that are measured. All assessments are marked by two members of staff, at least one of which is appointed as an examiner who has fulfilled a BKE certification or the equivalent. External examiners provide feedback on the consistency and level of marking. The Examination Board plays an active monitoring role and concludes on the basis of its annual checks that assessment in the Master Performance Practices is done carefully. The committee assesses that the student assessment system **meets the standard**.

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

Findings

The programme considers assessment as a part of the learning process and has devised a detailed assessment policy. This document provides information about the system of marking and moderation, ways of examining, resits, feedback and grading. Students are encouraged to proofread their written work and may involve a third party for proofreading. In order to ensure that the student remains in all cases responsible for the text and to avoid a breach of academic integrity, the programme has devised a guideline on proofreading.

Assessment methods reflect the variety of competences that are measured: reflective journal, artefact, performance, performance experiment, performance lecture, viva, ongoing assessment, written examination, portfolio, written dissertation or a combination of these. The module handbooks provide information on the type of work to be assessed, to which learning outcomes it is related, the grading sheet (feedback form) and the grade descriptor (explaining when a grade of 1-10 is awarded). Each handbook also contains a paragraph on (how to avoid) academic offences.

All assessments are double marked by two members of staff. At least one of them must have the BKE certificate. The first marker provides feedback for the student, indicating the strengths and weaknesses, and awards a mark. The second marker checks on the standards for marking and

also writes a brief feedback to the student. Both markers need to agree on the final mark. If this is not the case, a third marker, invited by the Head of Programme, reviews the submission and awards a grade between the grades suggested by the first two markers. In case of performances, both markers are treated as first markers. Examiners are appointed by the Examination Board when they have fulfilled the BKE-certification or the equivalent. External guests may be involved in the assessment as a third person, providing feedback for the student, but not informing the grade.

External examiners help to ensure that the assessment process is operated fairly for students and in line with the university's and programme's policies and regulations. They also advise on the quality and enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment. They are present at the end of year performances and assessments and view samples of assessments of the rest of the year. They are thus able to determine that internal marking and classifications are consistent and of an appropriate standard.

Within ArtEZ, the Central Examination Board is responsible for ensuring the quality of the exams, the assessment plans and assessment policy. The Master Performance Practices falls under the jurisdiction of this Examination Board. In their conversation with the assessment committee, the chairs of both Examination Boards clarified their monitoring system. The Examination Board checks the assessment plans and student assessment files to ensure that degrees are awarded

lawfully. Its findings are presented in an annual report. The board collaborates with the ArtEZ Department of Education & Quality and is available for structural and ad hoc advice to course coordinators and the management. Every year, the Education and Examination Regulations are established, with the advice from the Examination Board and the Course Committee. These regulations are available in English. The conclusion of the Examination Board is that assessment in the Master Performance Practices is exemplary: both the handling of assessments and the reporting are done very carefully.

Recent developments

In 2020, the programme was offered online for a larger part than usual. The programme was able to continue its methods of assessment online. The teaching staff informed the committee that stu-

dents did a great job in adapting their performances to online conditions. All assessments were taped.

Considerations

The committee considers that the programme has an adequate assessment system. The programme uses an appropriately wide range of assessment methods and provides clear and detailed information to students. Good quality mechanisms are in place, such as a thorough assessment policy, double marking by two qualified examiners, feedback from external examiners and an active Examination Board.

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

Achieved learning outcomes

Students work on their Dissertation by Practice to show that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They submit four products to be assessed: a research proposal, performance, artistic portfolio and thesis. The committee studied the work of the last two cohorts and is satisfied that they are all at master's level. Alumni look back on their master's programme with pride and appreciation and have a good professional standing in the field. The committee assesses that the achieved learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

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

Findings

In the first three semesters, the students develop their research, contextual, reflective and creative skills. In the last semester, they work on their Dissertation by Practice, with four assessment components: research proposal, performance, artistic portfolio and thesis. The dissertation should demonstrate an understanding of theoretical perspectives pertinent to the student's practice, contain a coherent implementation of research methodology and pre-production planning, and show evidence of autonomous research that contributes to and diffracts creatively its field. The performance must be a major substantial practice-based work (a final degree show) and the artistic portfolio should disseminate the outcome of the research.

In preparation of the site visit, the committee studied the work submitted by the last two cohorts of students (2017-2019 and 2018-2020). The committee considers that the work of these sixteen students reflects the intended master level and learning outcomes. The committee agrees with the marking and feedback from the examiners. Comparing the two cohorts, the committee concludes that the assessment criteria are better defined for students who graduated in 2020, that the quality of feedback has improved and that the second cohort performs better in both writing and performance.

Alumni look back on their master's programme with pride and appreciation, as was apparent from the documentation and from the committee's conversation with students and alumni. Second year students described how the programme gave them new reflective and research skills to move wider, with a strong interaction between theory and practice. Many alumni have been able to find or create platforms for their work, despite the fact that circumstances for the arts are not very favourable at the moment. The self-evaluation report highlights the accomplishments of a number of them.

Considerations

The committee is satisfied with the level of the graduates' final works. It is evident that the intended learning outcomes are achieved and that they are at the master's level. It is encouraging that the results of the most recent cohort (2018-2020) are better than of the earlier cohort. Recent changes in the curriculum have clearly had a positive effect. The fact that alumni appreciate the programme as helpful and that they have a good professional standing in the field also illustrates the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

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

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

drs. Raoul van Aalst, chair

Raoul van Aalst is a researcher and consultant at the interface of organisational science and philosophy. Until 2020 he was program manager in the field of HRM.

PhD J. (Joanne) Butterworth is Professor of Dance Studies at the School of Performing Arts, Malta

Jane Carr PhD is Head of School Media and Performance, University of Bedfordshire. She is a lecturer as well as a Member of the Research Institute for Media, Arts and Performance.

V.L. (Vera) Broek, student

Vera Broek studies B Music at Codarts, and BSc Biomedical Sciences at LUMC.

dr. M. (Marianne) van der Weiden supported the panel as a registered Secretary.

Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

Tuesday 9 February 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Participants</u>
09:00-09:15	Checking connections with panel	Panel + team
10:00-10:20	General Welcome	Programme management
10:20-11:20	Committee briefing	Panel
11:20-11:30	Break	
11:30-12:00	Student Takeover Part 1	Students
12:00-13:15	Vision & Realisation	Core team lecturers
13:15-14:15	Lunch Break	
14:15-15:15	Tutoring & Student-as-agent	Core team lecturers
15:15-16:00	Open consultation hour (optional) / Daily closure	

Wednesday 10 February 2021

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Participants</u>
09:30-10:00	Checking connections	
10:00-11:00	Student Takeover Part 2	Students
11:00-11:45	Assessment	Core team lecturers
11:45-12:30	Lunch Break	
12:30-13:15	Research	Core team lecturers
13:15-14:00	Facilities & ArtEZ	Core team lecturers
14:00-15:00	Panel Deliberations	Panel
15:00-15:30	Accreditation Outcome	all welcome

Attachment 3 Documents

- Cut-throughs, Ecologies of Intra-action: Self-evaluation reflection for re-accreditation 2021
- Graduation Projects of 16 students
- Appendices to the self-evaluation reflection:
 - ArtEZ and Graduate School:
 - ArtEZ Governance and Management Regulations 2018
 - ArtEZ Education Vision
 - Graduate School Identity vision
 - Perched on a Hyphen by Graduate School
 - Research Manifesto
 - Intended learning outcomes:
 - Approval of 'Performance Practices' name by NVAO
 - Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
 - Dutch Framework for Qualifications in Higher Education
 - Beroepsprofiel en Opleidingsprofiel van Netwerk Dans Federatie Cultuur
 - Beroepsprofiel en Opleidingsprofiel van Landelijk Netwerk Theateropleidingen Federatie Cultuur
 - Curriculum:
 - Module Specifications
 - Overview of Generic Learning Outcomes per module
 - GraSED (Graduate School Exchange and De-disciplining Week)
 - Dictionary of Work Ethics
 - Delivery Dates
 - Feedback Methodology
 - Module Handbook
 - Intake:
 - Master Performance Practices Applicants' Overview
 - Example of first phase intake Motivation Letter
 - Tasks and info online audition
 - Staff:
 - CV staff Master Performance Practices
 - Professionaliseringsplan 2019 en 2020
 - Staff members' websites
 - Facilities:
 - Guidelines for studio use
 - External partners' websites
 - Quality Assurance:
 - ArtEZ Quality Assurance Plan 2015-2021
 - Student Meetings Minutes
 - NSE MA Theatre Practices (Choreo) 15-18 Analysis
 - ArtEZ Education and Examination Regulation for Master Degree Courses
 - ArtEZ Education and Examination Regulation for Masters Programmes 2020
 - EER attachment course specific regulations Ma Theatre Practices
 - Assessment:
 - ArtEZ Testing policy 2017

- Assessment Policy
- MA Theatre Practice Report, review MA by Kayla Bowtell 2019
- Dissertation by Practice (Procon)
- Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity 2018
- Guidelines on proofreading
- Achieved learning outcomes:
 - Master Theatre Practices Alumni
 - Alumni individual websites