



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD
HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARTS
at VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS

Expert panel:

1. Prof. dr. Dana Arnold (team leader) *academic,*
2. Dr. Michael Fox, *academic,*
3. Lect. Hannu Apajalahti, *academic,*
4. Ms Monika Lipšic, *representative of social partners,*
5. Mr Justas Žemaitis, *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator - Ms Agnė Grigaitė

Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Programme “Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship”	Programme “History and Theory of Arts”
State code	6121NX009	6211NX005
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	first-cycle study programme	second-cycle study programme
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (4)	Full-time (2)
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	BA in Humanities	MA in Humanities
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	A competitive admissions system for people who have passed at least one state maturity exam and have at least secondary education, based on their previous academic results.	Applicants must hold a first-cycle higher education programme degree. Candidates with a professional bachelor's degree must have completed additional studies at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Practical work experience may be credited as part of the additional studies.
Registration date of the study programme	1997-05-19, order no. 565	1997-05-19, order no. 565

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of study fields is based on the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) 31 December 2019 Order [No.V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit study field either for 7 years or for 3 years. If the field evaluation is negative then the study field is not accredited.

The study field and cycle is **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as ‘exceptional’ (5 points), ‘very good’ (4 points) or ‘good’ (3 points).

The study field and cycle is **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas was evaluated as ‘satisfactory’ (2 points).

The study field and cycle is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as ‘unsatisfactory’ (1 point).

1.2. THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The Review Visit to the HEI was conducted by the team on *08/12/2020*.

1. **Prof. dr. Dana Arnold (team leader)** *the University of East Anglia, Professor of Art History, United Kingdom.*
2. **Dr. Michael Fox**, *Limerick School of Art and Design, Senior Lecturer and Programme Co-ordinator Year One Art and Design Core Year, Ireland*
3. **Lect. Hannu Apajalahti**, *Sibelius Academy / University of the Arts Helsinki, Lecturer of Music Theory, Finland.*
4. **Ms Monika Lipšic**, *VIDEOGRAMS. International Kaunas Film Festival (artists' film festival), Program curator, Lithuania.*
5. **Mr Justas Žemaitis**, *student of Vilnius University, Master study programme Religious Studies, Lithuania.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	'Field of Study: HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARTS (N15) SELF-EVALUATION REPORT' (henceforth abbreviated as the SER)
2.	Introduction to the VAA infrastructure provided in photo format 'VILNIAUS DAILĖS AKADEMIJA / VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS'.
3.	Examples of theses.
4.	'HB0067_Practice Dissemination of Knowledge of Art History / Curating Exhibitions'
5.	'Reports on student performance by host institutions (examples)'
6.	'Student reports on practical work (examples)'
7.	'Filled-in fieldwork forms (examples)'
8.	'Extract from the Minutes of the Study Committee discussing student interviews'
9.	'Course-evaluation essays (examples)'
10.	'DITK_Coverletter_15 12 2020'

1.4. BACKGROUND OF STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN HEI

The Vilnius Academy of Arts (henceforth abbreviated as the VAA or the Academy) is a public higher education institution in the Republic of Lithuania (registered address: Maironio St 6, LT-01124 Vilnius, Lithuania), whose founder is the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The VAA is a legal entity operating as a public institution. The VAA is autonomous in its academic, administrative, economic and financial management activities, which are based on the principles of self-governance and academic freedom, as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Science and Education Act of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Academy Statutes.

The Academy is the only and most notable specialised higher education institution offering programmes in art, design, and architecture in Lithuania. Its evolving academic

traditions can be traced back to 1793, when the Department of Architecture was established at the College of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (now Vilnius University).

The Academy offer first and second-cycle study programmes in Art, Design, Architecture, Media Arts, Artworks Restoration (Arts Studies, 49 programmes), and History and Theory of Arts (Humanities, 2 study programmes), as well as 3 doctoral study programmes in Art, Design, and History and Theory of Arts.

Studies in the study field of History and Theory of Arts consists of 2 study programmes in first and second cycles. The first cycle study programme Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship (state code – 6121NX009) (hereafter – BA programme, BA Fine Arts Studies, first cycle programme) and the second cycle study programme History and Theory of Arts (state code – 6211NX005) (hereafter – MA programme, MA History and Theory of Arts, second cycle programme) are carried out at the Vilnius Faculty where the Department of Art History and Theory is responsible for the programmes. The study programmes and the study environment are updated continuously in line with the vision of VAA (as ‘to be among the leading higher education institutions globally of art, design and architecture’).

The previous evaluation in the study field of History and Theory of Arts was carried out in 2012. After the evaluation significant improvements of the programmes have been carried out and all recommendations of the previous evaluation have been implemented carefully according to the established principle of continuous development. The quality of the programmes would benefit from continuing to work along the same lines.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

History and Theory of Arts study field and **first cycle** at Vilnius Academy of Arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Study aims, outcomes and content	4
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and publicity	4
	Total:	28

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (exceptional) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

History and Theory of Arts study field and **second cycle** at Vilnius Academy of Arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Study aims, outcomes and content	4
2.	Links between science (art) and study activities	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Studying, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and publicity	4
	Total:	28

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3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (exceptional) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. STUDY AIMS, OUTCOMES AND CONTENT

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions).

(1) Factual situation

Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship is the only first-cycle study programme in Lithuania that incorporates not only comprehensive study of global and Lithuanian history of art and architecture, as well as courses in museology and heritage protection, but also provides its students with skills necessary to curate exhibitions and other art events. These curatorial skills are taught in accordance with the latest theories of contemporary art presentation and curatorship.

The strengths of this programme include the direct encounter of students with artistic practices, as they participate in studio art courses together with VAA students in the field of Arts, as well as the development of curatorial thinking in cooperation with art institutions (museums, galleries, foundations, and auctions) and independent artists.

History and Theory of Arts is a second-cycle study programme that provides students with the opportunity to acquire an academic specialisation in the field of Humanities and to obtain a master's degree in Humanities corresponding to their specialist qualifications. This programme presents students with multiple opportunities to deepen their theoretical knowledge and skills in applying research methodologies, to develop their academic interests by learning from the best specialists in Lithuania and visiting lecturers from abroad, to realise their creative ideas by working together with art practitioners studying at the VAA, and to acquire cultural management skills by taking General University Study Courses offered by the VAA.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the evidence presented in the SER and from the meetings during online visit the panel are unanimously satisfied that the knowledge, skills and abilities developed by students who obtain a Bachelor's and/or Master's degrees in Humanities in the study field of Theory and History of Art are appropriate for careers in research, art appraisal, heritage protection, cultural management and knowledge dissemination, as well as for work in media outlets, education, business, museology, and publishing. Such specialists are very much in

demand throughout Lithuania and graduates of these programmes meet the needs of employers and social partners.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI.

(1) Factual situation

The aims, mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the Academy are clearly outlined in the SER and were discussed in a number of meetings during the online visit.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel are agreed that the aims of the BA Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship the MA History and Theory of Arts are directly related to the Academy's mission as identified in the Academy's Statute: 'The Academy, with its widely recognised reputation as a research-intensive institution, aims to produce, broaden, and disseminate knowledge about artistic creation and artistic research in the fields of Social Sciences and Humanities, as well as to educate highly qualified specialists who will make a significant contribution to Lithuania and the global society.'

From the SER and the online visit, it is clear that both study programmes are conceived in such a way as to help educate art researchers who are not only trained specialists that understand academic ethics and take responsibility for the quality and reliability of their research results, but also act as heritage conservationists and participants in the creative process.

It was evident to the panel that graduates of both programmes are well equipped to critically evaluate ongoing cultural processes in the context of theoretical frameworks, initiate creative projects, curate exhibitions, select exhibits for museums, galleries, auctions, and individual collectors, present and publicise creative concepts in Lithuania and internationally, and offer solutions to cultural heritage protection problems.

3.1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field and cycle study programme with legal requirements.

(1) Factual situation

The Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship and History and Theory of Arts programmes are carried out in accordance with the in the Descriptor of the Study Field of History and Theory of Art (hereafter – Descriptor of Study Field) approved by [Order No V-825](#) of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 July 2015 and the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (hereafter - Description of General Study Requirements) approved by [Order No. V-1168](#) of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016. The total scope of Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship and History and Theory of Arts, the scope and proportions of individual

modules, the balance between group and independent work, as well as the forms of assessment used, fully comply with the requirements of legal acts and other legal documents regulating studies in the Republic of Lithuania.

Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship has a curriculum of 240 ECTS credits, which are earned over the course of four academic years (30 credits per semester). Of these, 189 are credits earned for mandatory specialist courses (at least 165 credits, as provided in legal requirements, or at least 120 credits, as required in the Study Field Descriptors), 6 are credits earned for general university study courses, and 30 are credits earned for elective general and specialist study courses (a maximum of 60 credits as per legal requirements).

If students desire to specialise in the same or different field of study, they can choose up to 33 specialist credits, up to 15 credits for language, studio art, and curation courses, and up to 36 general university study credits. In this case, general study courses should amount to no fewer than 15 credits, as per legal regulations, and specialist modules in the same or different field should amount to no more than 120 credits.

Projects and practicals amount to 15 credits (no fewer than 15 credits as per legal regulations and the Study Field Descriptors). The final Bachelor's thesis amounts to 20 credits (no fewer than 15 credits as per the Study Field Descriptors).

The structure of MA programme History and Theory of Arts has been established in accordance with the Description of General Study Requirements, according to which such programmes must have a curriculum of 120 ECTS credits. Of these, 24 are credits earned for mandatory specialist courses and 66 are credits earned for elective courses of considerable academic complexity. This is more than 60 credits required by law and the Study Field Descriptors. Instead of choosing three courses from the study field, students can take three general university courses in a different field of study or practical courses which amount to 18 credits (less than the maximum limit of 30).

Students can take no more than 5 courses each semester. The preparation and defence of the final thesis amounts to 30 credits (therefore at least 30 credits, as per legal requirements and the Descriptor of Study Field).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the SER and other relevant documentation, the panel agree that both study cycles are compliant with the legal requirements and exceed the minimum standards.

3.1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes.

(1) Factual situation

The achievement of expected learning outcomes in the Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship and History and Theory of Arts programmes are described in detail in the SER. Five different methods of teaching and learning (lectures, study trips, seminars, practicals, research) and 7 types of assessed assignments (exams, seminar participation, oral

presentations, data collection, individual and group projects, written coursework, practicals and fieldwork) are outlined. The assessment of each assignment is based on the criteria defined by academic staff, which are also specified in the course description, based on the learning goals, and related to teaching methods.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the SER, supporting documentation and the online visit, the panel are satisfied that the aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods are appropriate for each of the study cycles and employ a variety of techniques of assessment and delivery, which is to the good. The panel noted that there were a great deal of one-to-one personal contact between staff and students which was appreciated by students in both study cycles.

3.1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competences of students.

(1) Factual situation

The SER gives substantial detail for both study fields. For example the SER gives an outlines of the Study Courses for BA programme Fine Arts and Curatorship, which are designed by dividing all courses into three categories: general university education courses (required and elective), introductory and foundational courses of the study field (required and elective) and specialist courses of the study field.

The MA programme History and Theory of Art programme is designed by dividing courses into: specialist courses, courses from the Management study field, and courses that help students develop their practical art research skills. 'There are two specialisation options: History of Art and Art Theory and Criticism' in the MA programme. Students' also have an opportunity to use 66 credits of their studies on elective theoretical and study field subjects.

These subject and module content of the programmes were expanded in a more detail providing a breakdown of the individual course subjects and their alignment with the learning outcomes in Annex 1.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From the documentation and discussions with staff, students, employers and social partners during the online visit, the panel is in full agreement that both study cycles ensure consistent development of student competencies.

In the online meeting with employers and social partners the panel learned that Historical skills in Lithuanian art history are needed by employers. It might be possible to use the international links to do this and situate Lithuanian art and its history in the broader context of Europe and beyond.

3.1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes.

(1) Factual situation

From the SER, supporting documentation and online visit the panel is agreed that:

The first-cycle study programme offers students the opportunity to personalize their programme of through for example their term papers and bachelor's thesis, where students can select a research topic and supervisor of their choice. The panel also noted that from the very first semester onwards, students could take at least one elective course, which allows them to specialise in their area of interest;

The major part of the second-cycle study is shaped by the students themselves, as they choose their courses from the available electives according to their interests and chosen specialisation. Students also select a research topic and supervisor of their choice for the Master's thesis.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel note that there is a distinction between the two study cycles for the possibilities for personal choice as Master's students should be able to specialise and explore their topics in greater depth than BA students. This is entirely understandable and appropriate. But, as mentioned before, this does not mean, that BA students lack the possibility to personalise their studies

3.1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements.

(1) Factual situation

The SER, relevant links, Appendix 3 and Annexes 2 and 4 of the Descriptor of Study Cycle approved by [Order No. V-1012](#) of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 16 November 2016 provided the panel with more than adequate information about the compliance of the final theses with the field and cycle requirements.

BA Thesis Defence Committee is composed of specialists 'in the field of History and Theory of Arts (academics), renowned artists, and representatives of the VAA's social partners. At least 50 percent of the members of the Thesis Defence Committee must have a PhD in sciences or arts.'

The MA Thesis Defence Committee is composed of 'no fewer than 7 specialists in the field of History and Theory of Arts (academics), renowned artists, and representatives of the VAA's social partners. There is at least one member of the Committee from another higher education and research institution. At least 70 percent of the members of the Thesis Defence Committee must have a PhD in sciences or arts.'

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is satisfied that the final thesis is compliant with the field cycle requirements for both cycle programmes. The comprehensive documentation assures the panel that the monitoring of quality assurance around the preparation, production and defence of the thesis is rigorous and appropriate for both study cycles.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

The institution might want to consider including more specialisation in art historical topics especially those focussing on Lithuanian in the MA programme. Historical skills in Lithuanian art history are needed by employers. It might be possible to use the international links to do this and situate Lithuanian art and its history in the broader context of Europe and beyond.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDY ACTIVITIES

Links between science (art) and study activities shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study.

(1) Factual situation

Details of the research activities of staff members, their international quality and how they inform the study cycles is extensively outlined in the SER.

The Academy can also boast of high-quality creative undertakings, such as curatorial projects and art criticism. These works of science and art are not only a constantly growing resource incorporated in the study curriculum and instructive examples of scientific research for students preparing their termly coursework and final dissertations, but also the basis of curatorial activity and a significant part of the critical cultural discourse.

According to the Comparative Assessment of Research and Experimental Development carried out by international experts in 2018, the quality of the Academy's research activities in the field of art history in 2013-2017 received an average grade of 3. However, the economic and social impact of activities classifiable as Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) was assigned a 4, whereas the Academy's research potential was awarded a 5.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is satisfied that staff research in the areas of Lithuanian visual culture: history, theory, and contemporary reflection; Theory and criticism of visual art; and Cultural heritage research are key to both study cycles and are of great benefit to the students. The panel are impressed by the integration of students into staff activities e.g. Venice Biennale and work at the Academy's studio in Paris.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology.

(1) Factual situation

During the online meetings it was stated, that Faculty members are scholars and researchers and their teaching is informed by their research, and by collaboration with other active researchers in the field. Although BA is a more general course, MA is a research-driven programme during which students present their research and get feedback, are taught how to research and present the outcomes of the research in articles etc. BA level students are encouraged to develop research skills in their term papers. Details of content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology are also outlined in the SER. For example:

'The Department of Art History and Theory, which conducts both first and second cycle study programmes, aims to have each specialist subject taught by a researcher specialising in that discipline, so that students are introduced to the latest knowledge and methodological tools in the field. In addition to the fundamental art studies methods, such as iconography, the theory of form and style, and source studies, which constitute the foundation of art historians' specialist qualifications, both first and second cycle study programmes make use of contemporary theories of interpretation applicable to visual expression and artistic practices, which focus on the role of the media, representation, narrative, performativity, temporality, corporeality, gaze, identity, gender, commodification, recycling, pastiche, appropriation, participation, placement, and other aspects relevant to contemporary culture and art.'

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel notes that technological developments have significantly contributed to non-invasive research of cultural heritage objects, providing opportunities to create digital reconstructions and models, and that staff research is fully integrated into the curriculum. The panel is satisfied that the growth of digital content including international and national databases and archives, to individual course or seminar material, to discussion platforms on the intranet is both used appropriately as a study resource and as an object of study in its own right. The panel also notes the 2020 pandemic has been a challenge that has also had a positive impact on the creation and use of digital content. The latter point was remarked upon by staff and students during the online visit.

3.2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in scientific (applied science, art) activities consistent with their study cycle.

(1) Factual situation

Extensive information about the involvement of students from both study cycles in research activities is given in SER. For example

'The 2017-2020 data show sustainable and fruitful student involvement in research and art activities. 14 (32.5%) undergraduates and 6 (25%) postgraduates attended (or will attend, if postponed because of the pandemic) student or national academic conferences; 5 (12.5%) undergraduates and 9 (37.5%) postgraduates published academic and cultural research publications; 36 (90%) undergraduates and 18 (75%) postgraduates published art criticism; 9 (22.5%) undergraduates and 16 (71%) postgraduates curated exhibitions and art events'.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is impressed by the possibilities offered to students from both study cycles. There is a more intensive relationship between students and staff research in the second study cycle, but this is to be expected. Nevertheless, the curricula for both study cycles are mutually complementary and informed by staff research. Meetings with staff and students during the online visit reinforced this positive aspect of both study cycles.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process.

(1) Factual situation

Admission to VAA is carried out in accordance with the regulations of the procedure provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. The admission to undergraduate and integrated studies is carried out during general admission to undergraduate studies through the LAMA BPO, the universal system for admission to Lithuanian higher educational institutions. All the information about the admission is published on the academy's website.

Applicants for first cycle and integrated studies who want to receive a state funding for studies must meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Science and

Sports of the Republic of Lithuania: pass at least three state exams; have an average grades of the five best annual grades which have to be bigger than 7 (from 2019); to have at least the entrance mark prescribed by regulations, consisting of the recalculated examination results and / or the average of the annual marks, who have not passed a certain prescribed examination when entering the chosen study programme. A successful application for admission is notified to the applicant via the LAMA BPO website as well as by E-mail.

Applicants for the second cycle studies must submit the applications during the direct admission on the VAA website and must meet the requirements for admission to the second cycle studies. The following requirements to enter the study program of Art History and Theory are: to have a bachelor's or professional bachelor's degree and foreign language mark or assessment, to submit a cover letter and to participate in a motivational interview. The maximum entrance mark is 30 points. An accepted application is notified via the VAA website, as well as by e-mail.

In the absence of fully satisfied entry requirements, the entrant may be able to offset the missing credits by studying in Bridging studies depending on his / her situation. The Bridging studies are awarded to the entrant when the lack of competencies to study in the chosen programme becomes clear during admission.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is the view of the Panel that both first cycle and second cycle programmes in the field of History and Theory of the Art are well represented and application procedures and regulations are well explained. These programmes are compliant with both national and international regulations and the regulations of admission are clear and transparent.

3.3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application.

(1) Factual situation

The graduates who have completed their studies abroad and who have submitted an application to the selected study programme have to participate in the procedure of attestation of higher education diplomas. The applicants for the chosen study program must apply to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) the assessment of competencies acquired abroad. The procedures of the credit transfer and the recognition of formal and non-formal competences in higher education are established. The SER provides an example of them being carried out: 'In the period under consideration, the VAA received two requests to assess and recognise acquired non-formal and informal competencies from students in the second-cycle study programme. The accreditation committee, in accordance with the procedures established in the Regulations and in order to advance the principles of flexibility, transparency, and objectivity, approved the requests, formally recognising the students' skills

in the field of curation and exempting them from related additional studies in the first-cycle programme Fine Arts Studies and Curatorship.'

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is the view of the Panel, that all the qualification procedures of the programmes are transparent, clearly explained and compliant with both national and international regulations. The procedures of the credit transfer and the recognition of formal and non-formal competences in higher education are well explained and these procedures are very informative for the graduates from the foreign and national higher education schools. Provided example illustrates that these procedures are carried out.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students.

(1) Factual situation

Undergraduate and graduate students who choose to study abroad receive full funding for studying abroad. All students can also take part in abroad internships. Students can be monitored at foreign universities regularly.

VAA participates in Erasmus + and Nord Plus exchange programs. The possibility of inter-institutional studies also exists together with Brazilian, USA, Japanese, Russian and universities in other countries.

There is little interest from students in study exchange opportunities at foreign universities in the field of History and Theory of Art. During the period from 2017 to 2020, only 5 students participated in exchange programs in foreign universities. 4 students and 5 graduates participated in international internships. They had internships at selected cultural associations and institutions in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Denmark and Uruguay. Two students from European universities came to the VAA under the Erasmus + exchange program, but there were no international students who chose to study full-time during the mentioned period. Information on study exchanges and opportunities abroad is constantly updated on the VAA website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Panel is satisfied that there are a lot of opportunities for the mobility to the universities and academies abroad including both part-time studying and study or postgraduate internships.

3.3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field.

(1) Factual situation

The students of VAA are provided with academic, financial, social and psychological assistance by contacting the heads of their departments if they are facing additional problems and challenges.

Academic assistance is provided by the Study Programme Committee in case of questions about study evaluations, individual study opportunities, choice of study subjects and other related issues.

Scholarships and allowances are provided to meet the financial needs of students. Scholarships according to their type can be one-time, named endowed and needs-based.

The following scholarships are available for disabled students. Applications for these scholarships are submitted to the Social Welfare Department of the VAA.

Psychological assistance is provided to students facing psychological and emotional problems. The student is consulted by both a professional psychologist and a priest if the pastoral help is needed.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is satisfied that the provision for support meetings is highly sufficient and were assured of this in the meetings with students and staff during the online visit. Specific examples were given including: one of teachers spoke about the situation where transgender student who had identity issues received help from Academy's psychological counselling; and one student from B.A. noted that help is given for those who need it most. Students (M.A.) unanimously spoke positively about psychological and financial aid they can apply to get. However, it was pointed out to the panel that one building of VAA in the Old City does not have an elevator for the disabled students, as it is an historic structure but in the SER it was stated, that "There have as yet been no students with special needs in the programmes in the field of History and Theory of Art. However, if there were such students, they could be accommodated in the Old Academy building (Maironio St 6). The building's first-floor auditoria are freely accessible for wheelchair users, and it has accessible toilets'. So, even the VAA's possibilities to adapt some of the buildings due to them being a part of heritage are limited, the VAA showed the possibility to meet the special needs of the students

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling.

(1) Factual situation

Every year each new student in VAA is introduced of the study process both on the VAA website and live in audience during the introductory meeting, where first cycle and second cycle students are informed about the study programme and its requirements, the infrastructure of academy and social or psychological support.

All students of Vilnius Academy of Arts are assigned by unique e-mail. The e-mail address is not only used by students to connect to e-mail, but also for the connection to the Moodle and Google systems where students can find subject descriptions, study materials, and other information. The VAA Academic Information System provides information about the study subjects and its assessments.

On the official website of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, the student can find the study schedule, guidelines for writing a Research project, and guidelines for the first and second cycle of studies. Students have the right to comment on the course of the study subject by notifying the departments, where problems related to the study material taught in the study subjects are discussed at the meetings of the Study Programme Committees.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is satisfied student information and counselling is more than adequate and meets students' needs. The panel also notes the quick reaction from VAA to transfer its activity to the online learning during lockdown. The students' needs (study material, databases, open libraries) were assessed during the lockdown and catered for without any problems. Lockdown also led to the improved online learning platforms through the uploading scanned materials, data and recorded lectures.

3.4. STUDYING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

(1) Factual situation

The teaching and learning processes in both the first and the second cycle are varied and appropriate to the material under study. The methods used include lectures, study trips, seminars, practicals, and fieldwork.

The BA programme includes the encounter of students with artistic practices, as they participate in studio art courses together with VAA students in the field of Arts, as well as the development of curatorial thinking in cooperation with art institutions: museums, galleries, foundations, and auctions as well as independent artists. Practical modules include e.g. working in editorial desks of various journals, newspapers and TV studios where students are

supervised by journalists. They are supposed to learn to perform various tasks related to journalism: press conference participation, article editing, writing, preparing and publishing texts of various genres. Placed in museums, galleries, art fairs and other art platforms, students learn by assisting professionals working in these institutions. They are working either in groups or individually. Students learn to handle art works, negotiate with artists, sponsors, supervise exhibitions, create educational programs and mediate them to the public.

The MA programme includes e.g. lectures and seminars, study trips, creative practicals, and individual tutorials. By making use of group work and creative workshops, students are encouraged to work in an interdisciplinary team and to lead it, as well as to initiate, develop, and implement projects related to contemporary culture or artistic and architectural heritage. Students have to write literature and source reviews, essays, artwork analysis, term papers and final theses.

Methods and principles of student assessment are described in the SER. Further opportunities for graduate studies are described and evaluated.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Based on the information given in the SER and related documents, as well as online discussions with teachers and both BA and MA students, the panel agrees that teaching and learning methods and processes are appropriate to the needs of students in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

The panel requested additional documentation from the VAA concerning assessment of practical studies. The institution answered to that request, and the panel was satisfied with the information given.

During the discussions with different groups, it became evident that the VAA has managed to maintain and support students' learning process also during the restrictions caused by covid-19. New distance-learning methods were implemented. Students were especially satisfied by the fact that there were much more study materials available online (e.g. via Moodle) than ever before. Students were happy with the situation when even social partners have given more possibilities to students. e.g. cinema festivals online.

3.4.2. Evaluation of conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER tolerance and inclusive academic culture are some of the core values of the Academy. The VAA Code of Academic Ethics (in Lithuanian) stipulates that academic instructors have to create conditions for students with special needs to be able to fully participate in the learning process and complete the assessed assignments. The VAA Strategy for Study Quality Assurance, Management, and Fostering a Culture of Excellence (in Lithuanian) states the Academy's instructors must accommodate flexible learning paths and

take the diversity of students and their needs into account when choosing their educational methods.

Social and financial support is available for students with special needs. Students with disabilities are eligible for two types of benefits: financial aid and disabled students' allowance. The Academy is providing financial assistance in accordance with the Regulations of Providing Financial Assistance to Disabled Students in Higher Education Institutions (in Lithuanian). All students can access professional psychological support as well. According to the SER the Academy's buildings are accessible for students with mobility impairments although all premises in the old town are not equipped with elevators.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel was convinced that adequate systematic provisions are made for vulnerable students and those with special needs. During the discussions with students and staff members it was evident that students and teachers are very well informed about students' possibilities to get social and financial support (albeit there was a general consensus that scholarships are rather small). Students are encouraged to consult with the administrative and academic staff on the issues of their special needs. The panel was impressed by the warm atmosphere and good relations between staff and students.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress.

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER the academic progress of the students is monitored periodically (once a semester) following the Description of the VAA Academic Feedback System and the results are discussed in the Study Programme Committees and department meetings. Course instructors provide individual consultations with students. The department organises regular meetings with students providing opportunities to discuss students' results and grades.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There are systematic means in use for monitoring of students' academic progress. During the interviews with teachers and students it became apparent that a small student body and straightforward contacts between teachers and students help to make monitoring and feedback an effective two-way process.

3.4.4. Evaluation of the feedback provided to students in the course of the studies to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress.

(1) Factual situation

The SER describes how students are provided with feedback on their performance and provides information on further planning of study progress. Students also provide their suggestions, evaluations, and comments in course feedback questionnaires.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Feedback is based mostly on direct contacts with students and teachers during lectures, seminars, and personal meetings. During the online meetings students confirmed that they receive adequate feedback to assist them in progressing their studies and personal development. Students were happy with the two-way process of the feedback.

3.4.5. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field.

(1) Factual situation

According to the data collected by the VAA and the Government Strategic Analysis Centre there is a high employment rate of the graduates of both study programmes. Data on graduate employment 2015-2019 is presented in the SER.

Most students who graduated in 2017-2020 have found a job in the arts sector. A significant number continued their studies in masters' and doctoral programmes.

According to the surveys presented in the SER, employers are satisfied with the professional skills of the graduates of both programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Online discussions with the alumni and social partners confirmed quite unanimously that graduates have appropriate professional skills for the labour market within the arts sector. The panel formed a positive view of existing and potential future employment prospects for graduates of both programmes.

Some of the representatives of the social partners raised the question that there is (e.g. in museums) a constant lack of professionals in the field of old arts. This problem is partly due to students' choices for their specialization and orientation, mostly towards modern arts. It was noted that this is a general problem also in other countries in Europe. International co-operation might be a means of addressing this need.

3.4.6. Evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

(1) Factual situation

The compliance with the principles of academic fairness and integrity in the VAA is ensured in accordance with the VAA Code of Academic Ethics.

According to the SER plagiarism is relatively rare in the programmes in the study field. Plagiarism is avoided by checking all submitted work with URKUND application.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel agrees that policies are adequate. There were no signs during the online discussions with different groups that there are known academic integrity violations or reported intolerance and discrimination in the study field in 2017-2020.

3.4.7. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies.

(1) Factual situation

The procedure of appeals and complaints is governed by the VAA Study Regulations, the VAA Regulations for the preparation and defence of Bachelor's theses, and the VAA Regulations for the preparation and defence of Master's theses. The processes are described in the SER.

In the last three years, no appeals were submitted regarding the programmes in the study field.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel agrees that the processes for student appeals and complaints are appropriate and encompassing.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes. entrance requirements are well-founded, consistent and transparent.

(1) Factual situation

It is clear from the SER including the links to related legal documents and the online visit that the academic staff in the study field of History and Theory of Arts actively participate in high profile research activities in Lithuania and abroad. The results of their research are disseminated through academic publications, scientific conferences, public lectures, and public media, and participate in artistic activities and curatorial projects. The entrance requirements and language skills of staff are entirely appropriate. Staff student ratios are very good.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is completely satisfied that the research and professional profiles of the teaching staff more than adequately meet all the necessary requirements. The panel also notes the ways in which staff research informs and enhances the curriculum and other student activities in both study cycles.

3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile).

(1) Factual situation

The SER outlines the involvement of academic staff in the ERASMUS+ exchange programme and collaboration and partnerships with foreign higher education institutions. The strategy of attracting visiting lecturers from other higher education institutions in Europe and the world is mentioned and was explored further in the online visit.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is satisfied that the conditions to ensure staff mobility are more than adequate and have potential to be developed further by academic staff of both study cycle programmes be more proactive in seeking opportunities to teach their subjects in higher education institutions abroad.

3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff.

(1) Factual situation

The SER and links to relevant documentation clearly outline the conditions for scholars' professional development. The Academy regulates by means of a periodic certification of the academic staff. At the end of each academic year, academic staff prepare reports on the results of their artistic and research activities, which are published in the VAA's annual report and discussed in Study Programme Committees and departmental meetings. The Department of Art History and Theory also discusses the results of these reports and the students' feedback questionnaires at end-of-year meetings.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel is very satisfied that more than adequate measures are in place to enable staff to improve their competencies. The panel notes the availability of funds to support activities and that internationalisation is a priority in line with institutional strategy.

Recommendations for this evaluation area:

Academic staff of both study cycle programmes could be more proactive in seeking opportunities to teach their subjects in higher education institutions abroad.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

3.6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process.

(1) Factual situation

The SER describes the premises used for the field studies and the numbers of working places are provided. The means and the equipment used is sufficient, The adaptability of the resources for the people with disabilities is sufficient, however only adapted to people with movement disability. The paper and digital archives of the library are fully sufficient for the field of studies. In case of lack of resources, the students are free to use the resources of the social partners. Students are encouraged to order books they need in the library for purchase.

Transition to online learning, according to the students, was quite fluid, all information is stored and accessible online.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The general conditions of learning resources seem to be satisfactory for the field of studies, however due to the nature of interdisciplinarity and tendency for contemporary arts rather than art history, the changing nature of the field is dictating rapid changes. The panel evaluated as a good feature the possibility for students to use all the resources available in VAA, such as Nida Art Colony, Mizarai studios, different media labs. Also, the close contacts with social partners encourage students to research archives and materials outside the VAA resources.

The suitability and availability of the physical, informational resources for disabled students should be expanded to include not only movement disability.

3.6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies.

(1) Factual situation

The SER describes the constant maintenance of the resources in the VAA and consistent quality measures. For example it is described that in 2021 the department hopes to replace projectors and projection screens with smart large screen TVs in two lecture rooms of the department. The renovation of the theoretical study room had taken place after the last recommendations.

The information about planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies was provided in more detailed way to the Panel during online meetings. HEI staff

reported that the Academy buildings are a good mix of old and new. The library for example is in the old building and is well resourced with a good selection of books, while laboratories, studio laboratories and laboratory equipment are housed in the more modern buildings. The Academy applies for European funding each year to continually modernise the buildings and facilities based on demand.

The Library uses a variety of strategies to provide the best possible service to the students. It has arrangements with Vilnius University and Vilnius National Library, both within walking distance of the Academy. It also has a resource sharing agreement with the Contemporary Art Centre, which has a good collection of books which the students can use.

Digital databases require continual updating and can be very expensive. This expense is offset by cooperation and sharing with Vilnius University and Vilnius Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Costs are also reduced by being a member of the Lithuanian Consortium of Libraries.

In the opinion of the Panel ongoing modernisation and cooperative strategies greatly benefit the students and help maintain a high standard of facilities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The planning and the upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies is generally evaluated by the panel as good.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY

Study quality management and publicity shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies.

(1) Factual situation

Both study programmes are subject to the Academy's and the Department's quality assurance procedures.

Quality assurance is overseen by a Quality assurance Department and guided by the Academy's strategy on Study Quality Assurance Management and Cultural Excellence, produced in 2018.

It is noted in the SER that internal quality assurance is an integral part of every study programme. This internal process is founded on a decision-making structure which includes academic staff, study programme committees, students and social partners.

Student opinions are welcomed and students are involved at all levels of the decision-making process.

At the core of the Academy's quality assurance structure is the Study Programme Committee (SPC), which consists of no fewer than 6 members and meets at least twice a semester. A list of the SPC's duties are outlined in the SER.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel were generally impressed with the quality assurance measures in place, their democratic nature and the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

During the Expert Panel's online visit there was confirmation of the VAA's commitment to quality assurance evidenced at a number of the meetings. The involvement of programme staff in the Academy's decision-making committees and in the Senate was outlined by both members of the Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff, by members of the SER preparation group and by members of the Teaching staff at their meetings with the panel. The panel noted the democratic nature of representation, which was also outlined, as members of the various committees are voted in by their colleagues. Members of the Teacher's group also pointed out that elections to the Senate take place every 4 years. The Head of Department is an ex officio member of the Senate.

The central role of the Study Programme Committee was also confirmed during the meeting with the SER group who outlined the participation of professors, students and social partners.

There appears to be a good practice of dealing with most issues at local (faculty) level and the meeting with Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff outlined how issues raised by the Study Programme Committee may go all the way to the Rectors office but are usually solved at faculty level.

3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies.

And

3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI.

(1) Factual situation

According to the SER the role of stakeholders in the quality assurance structures of the programmes is embedded as one the five quality assurance principles, under the heading of partnerships. It guarantees the involvement of all of the academic community including students and social partners in the formulation and implementation of the VAA's strategic goals.

The panel were informed by the Senior Management and Faculty Administration Staff that:

- students are formally surveyed twice a year;
- conversations with students are regular;

- Students may bring issues to the rector's office with the department of communication as a go between;

- Students are part of committees and contribute to programme structures.

In relation to social partners, an extensive list of how external partners interact and influence the content, the operations and development of both first cycle and second cycle programmes is outlined in the SER. This interaction includes:

- knowledge sharing;
- providing internships;
- assisting with national and international exhibition projects;
- helping with career prospects;
- involvement in the examination of Bachelors and Masters thesis examinations.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From both the SER and the online meetings it is apparent that there is good involvement from both the students and the external stakeholders in the quality assurance structures at both first cycle and second cycle levels:

- Members of the SER group indicated to the panel that students are encouraged to be active participants in quality committees, particularly the Study Programme Committee;

- It was however pointed out that students feel close to professors and often issues are related informally. This resulted in the panel being impressed by the good atmosphere and good relations between staff and students at all levels;

- While students do not appear to have been directly involved in the SER process their opinions were taken into account through written questionnaires and feedback opportunities;

- The BA students confirmed that they were surveyed every semester and they received questions from the staff to which they could give their feedback;

- The MA students explained how they participate in a survey at the end of each semester, how they are asked to share their CVs and how as a group they can gather and share opinions. They also confirmed that they had received the SER in advance of the panel's online visit.

Following the meeting with the social partners the panel were satisfied that there is a strong relationship between the social partners and the programmes, at both first cycle and second cycle levels. The interactions outlined in the SER and mentioned above were confirmed with examples of graduate employees (National Museum of Art for example) internships, (Lithuanian Art Centre for example) and confirmation of attendance and participation in student examinations and defences. It was also pointed out at this meeting that there are new agreements by which social partners can suggest themes for research to meet industry needs. This has promoted two-way traffic communication.

3.7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes.

(1) Factual situation

The SER document provides a series of links to online published programme documents for both the Fine Art Studies and Curatorship first cycle and the History and Theory of Arts second cycle programmes. The SER also evidences the collection, collation and tabular analysis of information collected from students, in relation to student satisfaction ratings relative to their programmes (the examples included in the SER are from the second cycle programme and not from the first cycle). The SER also points out that while the 2012 external evaluation did not provide recommendations on study quality management and publicity the Academy made adjustments based on its programmes on the basis of feedback from graduates and employers, adding greater emphasis on the practical elements. The SER acknowledges the strong commitment to gathering student feedback and the positive effect this has had on the development of study programmes (this is included in the SER as a strength).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The quality of gathered, collated and published material is strong, as reflected in the examples cited above. Having accessed the online course material, the panel found it is extensive and is available in both Lithuanian and English. The information for both programmes is published both as academic documents and as documents which are more accessible to the general public. Internal survey documentation is in tabular form and is very clear and concise.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Core definition: Excellence means exhibiting characteristics that are very good and, implicitly, not achievable by all.

Explanatory context Excellence enshrines one meaning of quality: a traditional view that associates quality with the exceptional.

- The good atmosphere and good relations between staff and students at all levels is admirable. As a result, students actively engage with their teachers, and studies, including curatorial projects, and are comfortable giving direct feedback;
- Staff and students are well supported with books, equipment, and teaching facilities;
- Staff are fortunate to offer research-led teaching and to be able to promote these areas of study, especially at MA level, and to train doctoral students as the next generation of university teachers. This leads to a mutually beneficial relationship between staff and students where knowledge transfer and the promotion of a research-led environment are a core part of the activities of both programmes;
- Staff are clearly aware of student needs, including how to support students who are exceptionally gifted.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The institution might want to consider including more specialisation in art historical topics especially those focussing on Lithuanian in the MA programme. Historical skills in Lithuanian art history are needed by employers. It might be possible to use the international links to do this and situate Lithuanian art and its history in the broader context of Europe and beyond.

2. Academic staff of both study cycle programmes could be more proactive in seeking opportunities to teach their subjects in higher education institutions abroad.

VI. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the evaluation team based on the Self-Evaluation Reports and the interviews with the university administration (senior management and faculty administration staff), staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff and stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, social partners). The evaluation team gives a positive evaluation to the implementation of the study field of History and Theory of Arts first and second cycle study programmes at Vilnius Academy of Arts with all areas of evaluation assessed as very good.

The panel has formed a very positive view of the quality of provision and achievement in each of the study field evaluation areas for both study cycles. It is clear to the panel that VAA is very well placed in the national and international context, without any deficiencies.

The panel are very impressed by good atmosphere and good relations between staff and students at all levels and that staff are clearly aware of student needs, including how to support students who are exceptionally gifted. It is clear the institution supports staff and students with books, equipment, and teaching facilities. The panel also notes that staff are fortunate to offer research-led teaching and to be able to promote these areas of study, especially at MA level, and to train doctoral students as the next generation of university teachers. The panel are impressed by the integration of students into staff activities e.g. Venice Biennale and work at the Academy's studio in Paris.

The alumni and social partners confirmed quite unanimously that graduates have appropriate professional skills for the labour market within the arts sector. The panel formed a positive view of existing and potential future employment prospects for graduates of both programmes. Also, panel was informed about close relationship between social partners and the VAA which includes not only both-way communication regarding the improvement of both programmes and the joint projects, but also the possibility to use each other's facilities. Some of the representatives of the social partners raised the question that there is (e.g. in museums) a constant lack of professionals in the field of old arts. This problem is partly due to students' choices for their specialization and orientation, mostly towards modern arts. It was noted that this is a general problem also in other countries in Europe.

The academic staff in VAA are highly motivated and are active researchers and practitioners in national and international contexts. Staff research informs and enhances the curriculum and other student activities in both study cycles. The panel is satisfied that the conditions to ensure staff mobility are more than adequate. Although Academic staff of both study cycle programmes could be more proactive in seeking opportunities to teach their subjects in higher education institutions abroad.

Expert panel signatures:

1. **Prof. dr. Dana Arnold (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Dr. Michael Fox,** *academic,*
3. **Lect. Hannu Apajalahti,** *academic,*
4. **Ms Monika Lipšic,** *representative of social partners'*
5. **Mr Justas Žemaitis,** *students' representative.*