



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**STUDY FIELD of Media Art**

at Socialinių mokslų kolegija

**Expert panel:**

1. **Mr Mika Ritalahti (panel chairperson)**, *practitioner*;
2. **Mr Joris Landman**, *practitioner, academic*;
3. **Ms Gerda Paliušytė**, *representative of social partners*;
4. **Ms Roberta Kirsnickaitė**, *students' representative*.

**Evaluation coordinator – Ms Austėja Pliupelytė**

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Video Creation and Media</i></b>
State code	6531PX017
Type of studies	Higher education college studies
Cycle of studies	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time 3 years
Credit volume	180 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Entrance exam
Registration date of the study programme	26 September 2012

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order [No. V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions 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 (SER) prepared by HEI; 2) site visit of the expert panel to the HEI; 3) production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel 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 the 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 are **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 are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

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

## 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on **16 November 2022**.

**Mika Ritalahti (Finland)**, panel chair – practitioner; independent film producer; former Head of the department of Film and Scenography at School of Art and Design, Aalto University;

**Joris Landman (The Netherlands)**, panel member – academic; designer; teacher at Gerrit Rietveld Academie, photography department; member of Advisory Committee Designat Creative Industries Fund (NL);

**Ms. Gerda Paliušytė (Lithuania)**, representative of social partners; artist; curator; implementer of contemporary art projects;

**Ms. Roberta Kirsnickaitė (Lithuania)**, student representative; third-year Bachelor's student of study programme *New Media Art* at Vytautas Magnus University.

## 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER 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.	Quality Manual (in English)
2.	The English version of descriptions of several study subjects of the study programme <i>Video Creation and Media: Language of Audiovisual Media; Montage Directing; Story Creation and Story Telling; Documentary Video Project</i>
3.	Information on length of visits of incoming Media Art lecturers at the SMK
4.	List of pedagogical/didactical training Media Art field teachers have taken, and an analysis of related pedagogical competencies
5.	Information on how the data and feedback of the implementation of the Media Art field studies are made public

#### **1.4. BACKGROUND OF MEDIA ART FIELD STUDIES AT SOCIALINIŲ MOKSLŲ KOLEGIJA**

The HEI is a non-state institution operating since 1994. Its main location is in Klaipėda. The Vilnius branch, which is home to the Media Art study field that is assessed here, was added in 1999, and the Kaunas branch in 2018. It is currently the largest non-state HEI in the country, with a total of over 4500 students, and over 275 teachers in 2021. In Media Art, the HEI implements the study programme Video Creation & Media (hereafter, VCM), which had 54 students in 2021, and had state-funded study places since 2013.

During the site visit, management described the role of the study field as adding creativity to its portfolio in business and communication, and digital marketing, as well as to the quality of the HEI's interdisciplinarity. The programme represents the artistic area and needs of the CCI field.

The Media Art study field was first accredited in 2016 for three years.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Media Art study field* and *first cycle* at Socialinių mokslų kolegija is given a **positive** evaluation.

*Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	2
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
<b>Total:</b>		22

\*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

*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*

The HEI periodically carries out quantitative and qualitative research to ensure conformity with needs of society and relevant labour markets, considering strategy, legal aspects, programme content, statistical analysis, and social partners' feedback. On pages 3 and 4, the SER analyses that learning aims and outcomes of the VCM study programme respond to strategic national and European policy aims, such as internationality, and increased activity in the CCI field. It mentions examples of policy documents that aims and outcomes respond to. They do so, for example, through their focus on students developing responsibility and an open personality. Aims and outcomes also foster creative competencies in relation to economic goals. Additionally, the HEI improves conditions for makers in Lithuania and contributes to the increasing dissemination of Lithuanian culture abroad. On page 2, the SER mentions as evidence for its unique outcomes that they have been granted state-funded study places because they offer training that state institutions do not. On page 6, their uniqueness is further described by their focus on applied video creation.

The relevance of learning outcomes of the study programme is generally evidenced by contextualising the economic and social relevance assigned by national and European policies to the general work field for which the programme trains. The need for specialists is then mentioned as an obstacle in achieving goals from such policies. There is good or very good evidence from conversations for integration with labour market needs, such as from social partners from mainly commercial areas. On the other hand, there is also some spoken evidence about the integration with labour market needs in other areas and towards society's needs which is less good. The HEI's contributions to their stated aims of improving conditions for makers and dissemination of culture are not clearly explained. The uniqueness of the study programme is evidenced in a similar general way, by explaining that it fills a space in the



specialisation on applied video creation in Media Art education. In other words, the SER demonstrates the HEI's detailed understanding of the relevance and context of its tasks, but mostly substantiates its compliance with them in a general way, mainly quantitatively, and less so in a self-evaluative way. Without contradicting this assessment, the panel commends the HEI for including the international perspective in its analysis, by listing international HEIs it sees itself as related to. Overall, the expert panel assesses this indicator as good.

Professional activity areas of the specialists trained under the study field analysed are not indicated in the corresponding part of the SER, but evidenced to a good extent during the site visit, primarily by the SER team, and confirmed by persons from other groups. Most work in video companies as operators, camera people, and editing directors. Almost all of them also work as freelancers, or exclusively so. Most work in the commercial part of the CCI sector, but there are some who work in its public parts.

### *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*

The SER presents a coherent and constructive set of learning aims and outcomes for the study programme and field, which is described clearly and transparently. The SER does not provide much specific evidence for the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities, and strategy of the HEI. Good evidence for this was found during the site visit, in conversation with the management. Qualitative or self-evaluative evidence (such as a rationale for strategy and qualitative analysis of how it supports goals) was presented to a lesser extent.

The expert panel notes that the HEI takes initiative in developing competencies—which was primarily evidenced during conversations—such as specifically the storytelling art competence, which it integrates into the study field that is assessed here, as well as in other programmes. The panel commends the HEI for this.

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

The scope of the programmes is 180 ECTS, 152 for the study field. The final thesis is credited with 9 ECTS. Due to the nature of the field, the quantity of practice in study programmes exceeds the one-third requirement. The study programme in terms of the structure of academic credits meets the legal requirements of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016) and Descriptor of Media Art study field Requirements (Order No. V-717 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 May 2021).

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

The HEI uses a range of contemporary teaching/learning and assessment methods to achieve the aims and the programme's learning goals, including teaching/learning methods which it developed. These focus on centring the student in education and fostering student responsibility for learning. Course unit descriptions correspond with their respective teaching/learning methods and outcomes. This information is presented in Annex 3.

The HEI demonstrates its good ability for creating coherence between aims and outcomes and subjects in the annex. However, although constructive in essence, it provides mostly general information and the SER lacks some transparent details about why and how specific course subjects, teaching/learning methods, and assessment methods are interconnected, and some rationale for their mix. Project activity and experiential learning are the programme's main teaching/learning methods, but a clear rationale for this is not provided. At the same time, the selection of appropriate assessment methods in relation to learning outcomes is more clearly demonstrated, by providing practical examples of a number of concrete study tasks and their corresponding assessment methods, as well as some information about the general approach to assessment. Overall, the expert panel assesses the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programme as good.

The panel encourages the HEI to continue evaluating if and how it may benefit from some further active analysis of pedagogical principles in art and how it applies them.

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

The study programme consists of general college course units, study field-specific units, and optional units. These focus on the development of creative skills and their application, the social and cultural context of Media Arts, professional practice and entrepreneurship skills and their application, via dedicated and integrated course units. Optional course units are aimed at the specialisation of students. The overall build-up of course units throughout the 3 years is clear and coherent with the study programme aims. Annual reviews are made to update the curriculum where needed.

Similar to other indicators, the expert panel observes that a relatively large amount of good evidence is provided in the form of practical details (such as about the curriculum and procedures by which it is produced and monitored), but analytical or self-evaluative information is expanded on to a lesser extent. For example, and just to illustrate this point, no clear rationale is provided for the order in which courses are organised, the mix of theoretical and practical course units, and the build-up of the programme over the years. Such information could have provided valuable and more precise insight into the pedagogical level of the HEI. Similarly, goals for annual reviews, or how research outcomes specifically inform the mentioned curriculum updates are not expanded on. Overall, the panel assesses the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competencies of students indicator, as good.

### *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*

Appendix 1 shows that out of 34 course units, 3 are optional (free to choose which course units), 1 for each year of study. The 3 optional courses represent 12 (according to Appendix 1) or 15 (according to the SER) credits, out of a total of 180 credits. Students can choose from 17 subjects, 6 of which are specific to the Media Art programme. The other 11 primarily focus on the business side of professional practice.

The panel assesses the opportunities for personalisation as good, because of its clear structure, but recommends that the HEI considers if and how its strategy for personalisation by students, and possibly offers some more and more varied programme-specific opportunities for personalisation (including, other than the relatively limited time for optional courses) may

benefit the study field and programme. The study field and programme in the HEI are not very large compared to the HEI's total size, but the SER describes an upward trend in student numbers, which may further warrant such considerations. In conversations, there is also some mention of study load and working outside of school being an obstacle for the personalisation of studies. At the same time, another aspect of personalisation is mentioned, in that students can personalise mandatory tasks to a good extent. This is good, but it is not clearly evidenced how this structurally contributes to personalisation.

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

Most final theses are commissioned by social partners, including big commercial companies. This was evidenced by persons from various groups during the site visit.

The SER provides an extensive description of the thesis procedure, which is clear and transparent, with care being given to the design of each aspect of the procedure. This contributes generally to the good and very good thesis marks. Most of the examples of the thesis in the relevant appendix are concerned with video clip creation. Thesis topics are general in their descriptive content and do not provide many details about the thesis subject matter or research content, and in this sense do not provide much qualitative evidence about the conformity with the curriculum and with the study field. The panel notes that some issues regarding creativity and critical thinking skills were indicated by social partners.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. The HEI has a detailed understanding of national and European policies and research, and tasks given to the work field for which the programme trains students.
2. The HEI offers a good amount of programme-specific course units.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The HEI can work on developing explicit strategies to ensure the relevance and uniqueness of its programme, for design and adjustment of its programme, and for connecting the curriculum and personalisation opportunities with their aims and the

programme's learning goals. For this, they can benefit from their detailed understanding of national and European policies and research.

### 3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

*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*

In the HEI, research, applied science and art activities (RAS&AA) is carried out primarily by scientific groups which are headed by scientific employees and lecturers with the help of students and external experts. It is not specified which of these scientific groups cover Media Art, although group names indicate possible links. The activities of scientific groups are organised around the RAS&AA activities of the scientific employees and lecturers, such as writing articles and contributing to conferences and consulting activities. Their activities are aimed to be closely connected with course units. The HEI itself organises national and international projects and events and has its own journal, which incorporates Media Art. Additionally, the own artistic practice of teachers is weighed in the staff formation for the programme, which is mentioned on page 20 of the SER to contribute to program-specific RAS&AA. The HEI encourages both lecturers and students to participate in RAS&AA. An award scheme is mentioned as the main instrument for this. RAS&AA is continually planned, managed, and updated, and the SER contains some description of procedures and monitoring. In the period 2017–2021, the HEI declared €1.686.058 for RAS&AA, and received additional funding of €155.000 from the ministry for its commercialisation and development.

Although the HEI mentions scientific groups as evidence for RAS&AA, it is not specifically evidenced which scientific groups directly contribute to RAS&AA in the study field, and in which way they are intended to specifically contribute to, or how outcomes are specifically integrated into the study field. Integration of RAS&AA is described generally, via trickle-down through teachers. Other evidence for this indicator mainly consists of good and detailed practical information about RAS&AA, such as the titles of activities which do clearly connect with the

study field, as well as some good procedural information. During the site visit, some more specific information was provided about the Storytelling conference, which is connected to the competence which was developed by the HEI, indicating clear integration. The SER and site visit evidenced a clear understanding and ambition level for the value of RAS&AA for the study field and HEI. But, overall, there could have been more specific evidence pointing at how RAS&AA is specifically implemented and integrated into the study field (for example, an explanation of how RAS&AA is linked to specific study programme goals for the upcoming period, just to illustrate this point). For these reasons, the expert panel assesses this indicator as good.

During the site visit, various persons indicated a need for more varied artistic activity and more artistic activity outside of the HEI. The panel recommends evaluating if and how this may benefit the study programme and the HEI.

The cooperation of the HEI with external partners in carrying out scientific (applied science, art) activities in the field of science/art is analysed generally, but not specifically in relation to the study field of Media Art. For this reason, the panel assesses this cooperation as satisfactory.

Plans for artistic activity related to the study field and their financial viability are not specifically provided in this part of the SER. During the site visit, a new initiative under the umbrella of edutainment is mentioned. Based on the evidence for the above points, and the site visit, the panel trusts in the ability of the HEI to ensure the good quality of these, but misses some more specific insight into the study field's upcoming period.

Overall, the expert panel assesses this indicator as good.

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

In order to ensure the link between course content and the latest developments, course units are constantly updated, in close collaboration with social partners. Teachers and lecturers regularly participate in training, conferences, lectures and similar activities organised by social partners. Students also participate in a number of these. During practice, applied research, and final thesis, which are organised to connect with current real-world practice, students engage with relevant developments. They also engage with relevant developments by using the latest

resources and equipment. Students are supervised on the integration of the latest knowledge in their various study activities. The HEI subscribes to relevant databases, and participates and cooperates in relevant national and international associations.

Pages 22 and 23 of the SER contain clearly listed and specified good information on how links between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology are implemented. It is good that the HEI is aware of a complete range of means to achieve links that it has to its availability. The SER contains not as much clear evidence about the quality of the links to the latest developments themselves, and their specificity in relation to the study field. The quality of the activities lecturers participate in is assessed favourably, based on examples of titles and locations of activities and their apparent connection with the study field. However, the SER does not contain a large amount of additional or self-evaluative evidence for this indicator. And, upon further inspection, during the site visit, the expert panel had some questions about this quality and specificity. It is evidenced in conversations that the HEI is generally very rapid to respond in certain ways, such as by very quickly providing equipment and knowledge for online teaching during COVID-19 lockdowns (within a day). This responsiveness reflects—indirectly but positively—on the HEI’s ability to connect to certain latest developments which impact the study field. It is also mentioned that certain latest developments (specifically media trends) are generally integrated easily, but some persons also provide contradicting evidence, and the structure for this is evidenced in conversations as being relatively informal. The panel values the HEI’s international perspective on the latest development, which is evidenced by its mention of its participation and cooperation in international associations, as well as by having international guest teachers. Overall, the panel assesses this indicator as good.

The expert panel offers for consideration if and how evaluation of the study programme’s structural connection to certain latest developments may benefit the study programme and the HEI. Specifically, creative thinking, critical theory and media arts practice concerning the latest developments which impact the study field and CCI sector (such as, for example, dealing with the environmental impact of media arts production, with the representation of diversity in media arts productions, with the impact of emerging technologies such as computer-assisted image creation).

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

Methods and numbers of student involvement in scientific (applied science, art) activities, outside of those that are an intrinsic part of the curriculum, are provided. The SER mentions that opportunities for student involvement have increased in quality, due to the mentioned conference becoming international after being national.

The expert panel notes that student involvement in the conference and other artistic activities is relatively low, as can be seen by the numbers provided in the SER. COVID-19 lockdowns may of course be a factor in this. The expert panel sees opportunities for the methods of student involvement to be more specifically tailored to the study programme, as well as for more students (if not all) to be involved in artistic activity. An explanation for how student involvement is created (or selected) is not provided. The panel sees opportunities for the development of a Media Art-specific strategy to involve students. Additionally, it was mentioned during the site visit that study load and work outside of the school may be a factor in student involvement. The panel recommends evaluating if and how these things may be considered.

#### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

##### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The HEI has a very good overall approach and experience with artistic activity and research, connecting with the latest developments in an ongoing way.

##### *(2) Weaknesses:*

1. The HEI's artistic activity and research can be more tailored to Media Art students' needs, and the integration of outcomes in the Media Art curriculum can be improved.

### **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*

There are a number of resources available for academic students seeking to apply for admission to study programmes, such as the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education for General Admission (LAMA BPO), the SMK website's Admissions section, and SMK publications relating to undergraduate studies. As part of the process of admission to the graduate program, applications are processed by way of the SMK information system of programme admissions.

From the 2020 academic year on, the principles of forming a competitive score of students entering study programmes in the field of Media Art studies have been established. For those who are applying to study in the field of Media Art studies, the assessment of maturity certificates is not calculated with a competitive score, but rather, the assessment of the entrance exam is used to replace this assessment. In the analysed period of 2019-2022, there were general admission procedures in the LAMA BPO system and a separate admission procedure in the SMK system for the monitoring of study programmes in the field of Media Art studies within these systems.

The consensus among the expert panel members is that the HEI's procedures are in accordance with good practice.

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

For the recognition of non-formal and informal competencies, the State Ministry of Education has enacted regulations. A quality manager at SMK checks whether the institution is officially accredited and forwards the documents to the Study department for their recognition. This is based on the level of study, field of study, and the degree to which the learning outcomes match the SMK programme and module learning outcomes. The recognition of competencies was used by one student between 2017 and 2022, as well as by three students who had studied at another HEI during this period. Besides diplomas issued by the HEI, other diplomas must also be submitted to the Study Services department for recognition.

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

Through ERASMUS+ and other bilateral exchange agreements, SMK offers its students the possibility of exchanging academic knowledge abroad and being able to return to their home country at the end of the academic year. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to participate in academic mobility, as participation in academic mobility will be evaluated and recognised during the assessment of faculty member performance during the current academic year. In general, the study programme teachers have taken an active interest in academic mobility.

There are three steps to be taken in order to study abroad: validate the student's credits for the first semester, select a foreign institution whose study programme aligns with the SMK programme, and validate the student's credits for the second semester. They should also have good foreign language skills, high academic scores, and clear motivation. A very low number of students participated in the mobility programme from 2018-2021, which represents a very low number of students. The majority of students said that they did not feel confident about travelling abroad, mainly due to the fact that they were uncertain about the cost of accommodation. Due to the current economic crisis, there is a halt to progress in that area, which is unfortunate.

In order to facilitate the involvement of students from all fields of study, experts recommend that curricula include built-in mobility opportunities, such as mobility windows, to help facilitate the participation of students from all study fields. A blended mobility approach can prove to be useful in this sense since it can provide additional opportunities for some individuals or groups of students that may be more suitable.

#### *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*

Academic support is available in the form of regular consultations with teachers to clarify the topics of study courses. Teachers and students receive feedback on assignments, evaluations of learning progress, and evaluations of teacher effectiveness.

In addition, support is provided by the Dean, the Head of the Public Communications Department, and members of the Study Program Committee (hereafter, SPC). These individuals

periodically meet with students and discuss issues pertaining to the student experience and career opportunities. The Faculty Administration Office is also available to support students. SMK Study Regulations require every member of academic staff to spend a specified number of hours per semester supporting students with homework, assignments, and other course-related issues. These consultations are performed face-to-face during office hours and using online platforms. An allotted time is provided for students to discuss their examination results.

Students receive financial support from social partners and the HEI in the form of scholarships that are awarded each year. As a result of their exceptional academic achievements, scientific research, and public service, these awards are made to individuals with outstanding academic achievements. During the academic years 2018-2022, social partners provided money awards and gifts to students in the field of Media Art studies as part of their annual awards ceremony.

It is possible to receive scholarships based on outstanding achievement in sports, cultural or social activities, as well as for representing SMK in events or participating in international projects, conferences, and so forth. In order to assist new students in adjusting to the study environment, a teacher-mentor and a student-mentor are assigned. There is also the option for students to receive psychological support during the course of the course (e.g. social psychology, teamwork, business ethics) in a consultation mode.

### *3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling*

There are a variety of services available to students to assist them in selecting a topic for their research as well as clarifying aspects that arise during the process of writing a paper. There is a link on Moodle where they are able to access the Study Regulations, Code of Ethics, Requirements for the Written Paper, and any other regulations related to the institution's life. During the meeting with the students, however, it was not clear whether this resulted in a better understanding by students of their existence and the activities they can take part in, and how they could benefit from those. Generally, there is a very good connection between the teachers and the students, which facilitates informal counselling and communication between them.

There is an induction program designed to give students information about their studies and provide them with a sense of community. A lot of important information is included in the introduction program document, such as timetables, learning outcomes, and assessments,

among others. The HEI departments as well as the Students' Union, as well as academic consultations and other meetings, both communicate with students in a variety of ways and provide information either directly or through emails that are sent to them by both HEI departments and the Students' Union. During their academic years, students are provided with academic counselling on a wide range of issues, including admissions, academic leave, changing programmes, and adopting individual study plans. The same level of support is provided to international students, including exchange students who are taking part in exchange programs.

In terms of providing students with study information and counselling, the HEI performs well. A student confirms that they have access to all of the information that they require for the successful completion of their course and programme.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Well-organised personal and academic support to students through a variety of initiatives.
2. A great deal of detail is provided on the SMK website and it is clear and concise as well as interactive, accessible and eye-catching.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. There is a need for more support for students to attend mobility programmes.

## **3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, 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*

The HEI applies methods of experiential teaching that encourage students to be active participants in the study process. This methodology focuses on strengthening the critical

thinking of students as well as group work and the exchange of experience and ideas between different individuals of course units. During the visit, students seem very happy with the experience of working in groups and benefit a lot from it. Students also seem satisfied with the possibility to personalise their given schedules. However, the structure and the workload of interim exams might create difficulties for that. Additionally, a more clear policy on the personalisation of students' schedules could be implemented. Students are also encouraged to work in an interdisciplinary way and to collaborate with teachers in different departments.

The HEI also makes good use of the virtual learning environment. The e-learning program is implemented that provides students with a clear and detailed strategy for course material and assessment system.

The SER provides clear information on students' assessment methods. Each lecturer is responsible for the preparation of a Course Unit Assessment System that is publicly accessible. The evaluation of the study progress is monitored through the system of interim exams that are held throughout the semester and the final examination. In the assessment of complex creative tasks of the study programme, the HEI invites the participation of the Head of the Study programme, as well as lecturers from different course units and sometimes the representatives of social partners.

After completing the first cycle of college studies, students are provided with good opportunities to continue their studies. In order to do so, they have to conform to the specific requirements set by the local and foreign higher institutions.

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

The HEI has implemented an efficient strategy for the increase of the accessibility of studies. It is enhanced by the HEI's participation in the State Studies Foundation project that ensures consistent financial support for the improvement of study conditions for students with special needs. The building and the equipment of the HEI are well adapted for students with physical disabilities. Additionally, special training aimed at "Increasing study accessibility" was organised.

Although the SER appears to define social vulnerability in terms of physical or neurological ability, it also has a policy for supporting low-income students. However, the policy could be more practically implemented and be more efficient. During the meeting with students, some students that came to study from outside of Vilnius expressed stress caused by the lack of accessible dormitories.

After the visit of the HEI, the expert panel assesses the clear efforts of the HEI to ensure diversity and social safety of their community as very good and clearly progressive.

#### *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*

On pages 37, 38 and 39 the SER provides a clear description of the monitoring processes of the students. It proves that the HEI has an effective system for evaluating students' progress. The monitoring is conducted through the structure of interim exams as well as student surveys, meeting with students, pre-arranged individual consultations, and providing feedback to students during the lectures. Additionally, peer review is encouraged, as the HEI emphasises the horizontal structure between lectures and students and the equal importance of their input, which is good. Students also get feedback from both lecturers and the Head of the Department, which ensures consistency in the attempt to achieve intended learning outcomes. The students also expressed positive views on the involvement of the teachers in their studying process and the way they monitor their progress and provide consultation/direction, based on student's needs and achievements.

#### *3.4.4. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field*

On pages 37, 38, and 39, the SER provides clear data on the employability and graduate career taking of the graduates. Through the implementation of the Programme of Graduate Career Monitoring, the HEI implies a graduate and efficient career evaluation. A system on graduate employment 12 months after graduation is provided. The opinions of the graduates and the social partners-employers are provided in a systematised and clear way. The main source of information are surveys taken by graduates and the opinion of employers. The overall data shows great consistency in the monitoring processes and efficient strategies. The HEI also has developed the brand *HeyReady*, which aims to connect its graduates and students with potential

employers. Additionally, the HEI tends to involve graduates in the improvement of their study quality and invites them into the decision-making processes. This shows a great level of openness of the HEI and a will to respond to the needs of society.

The employment rate of the HEI is at a good level. The SER notes that all the graduates in the assessment period were recruited by speciality.

Social partners in the private sector praised the very good level of technological and practical skills of the graduates, and their ability to work in teams. However, during the meeting, social partners from both public and private sectors expressed concern about the level of critical thinking, and limited ability for creative solutions and problem-solving. During the meeting, these problems were emphasised by a representative of the public sector, whereas students were critical of the lack of dynamism and progress in the aforementioned sector.

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

The principles and measures to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are clearly provided. Additionally, the HEI not only has a formalised strategy of non-discrimination policy, but it is also well implemented in the actual procedures of HEI.

Apart from the Ethical Code, the HEI also has approved the Descriptor of Equal Opportunities Policy and the Order of its Implementation. The goal of the approved document is to ensure equal status of all employees of the HEI and persons applying for employment, both until and after signing a contract, despite gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or attitudes, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic dependence. The formalisation of such policy is seen as a progressive aspect in the general policies of the HEI, that differentiates the HEI from other institutions in the study field.

Although the policy of the HEI is formalised, a more structural implementation of policies for ensuring diversity, integration of different socially vulnerable groups, and non-discriminatory policy at the HEI would be encouraged.

The HEI has an international perspective and students describe the atmosphere of tolerance and ethnic diversity which is good.

Summarised information of past cases of violations is also provided. The procedures for dealing with breaches of academic integrity seem very clear and are efficiently implemented in the general policies of HEI.

#### *3.4.6. 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*

On pages 41, 42, 43, and 44 the SER provides a clear and accurate description of the procedures for the submission and handling of the appeals. It also provides concrete data on the number of appeals submitted by the students of the evaluated study programme and the decisions that were made.

At the HEI, procedures of the process of appealing and complaining for studies are regulated in Provisions of the Commission of Appeal and Provisions of Dispute Solving Commission. The HEI also has a Dispute Solving Commission that solves disputes concerning different problems that arise from teaching and learning processes, carried out in the study field.

The data above shows that the HEI has a clear and systematic approach to examining and solving appeals and complaints of students.

#### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

##### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The HEI applies an experiential teaching method that is liked by students and is helpful in achieving the intended learning goals.
2. The HEI has implemented a concrete Equal Opportunities policy that ensures the equal status of all the employers at the HEI.
3. The consistency of monitoring the employment opportunities of the graduates.

##### *(2) Weaknesses:*



1. A more clear and efficient policy for supporting low-income students should be implemented.
2. A lack of critical thinking and limited ability for creative solutions and problem-solving as mentioned by some of the social partners is something to be concerned about.

### 3.5. TEACHING STAFF

*Study field teaching staff 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*

There are 17 lecturers in the study programme at SMK. Four of those are having a scientific degree. 8 of them are recognised artists. The student-to-teacher ratio varies from 1 (2018-2019) to 2,3 (2020-2021). There is a significant raise in the number of students in those years, which explains the change: from 23 (2018-2019) up to 56 (2020-2021).

Teachers are active practitioners of art and have participated in many exhibitions and projects. dr. Venckus has participated in 3 exhibitions in 2018-2019, dr. Dagiene had personal exhibitions in 2019 and 2020. Justinas Lingys has directed three documentary films: 2019, 2020 and 2022-, he has also been on two tv-projects in 2021.-

All the lecturers in the study programme have 3 or more years of pedagogical experience. All the teachers in the study field subjects have more than 4 years of experience. The practical work experience of the teachers varies from 8 to 50 years and in the study field subject teachers from 9 to 50 years.

During the years of evaluation, the turnover of the teachers was very low in the study field. It has been insignificant, according to SER. The expert panel would like to point out that this is something for the study programme to potentially pay attention to as to how to ensure the latest trends and practices are part of the curriculum. On the other hand, SMK encourages

teachers to participate in various events and conferences. The students the expert panel met, expressed their wish for more international teachers, as stated before.

The teachers of the study programme know foreign languages, out of the 17 study programme teachers Russian is spoken by 15, English by 12, German and French by 2.

The number and qualification of the teachers are at a very good level. The teachers are qualified, competent and devoted.

### *3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility*

The HEI has 78 international cooperation contracts with higher institutes in 24 European countries. 10 of those partners have visual media studies. In SMK, the internationalisation is coordinated by the International Relations Department (hereafter, IRD). The IRD promotes within SMK and helps the outgoing teachers and students in all areas, including visas, travel, accommodation etc.

In the years 2018-2022, 18 lecturers of the study programme participated in the mobility. During this period, 4 lecturers from abroad visited the HEI. However, according to the titles of lectures given, the incoming teachers were not in the study field area.

There is an annual budget for 12 study field teachers to participate in international mobility. The teachers that the expert panel met confirmed that they are encouraged a lot to participate in mobility. The participation is challenging, due to teachers being active practitioners of the study field subjects, and sometimes also teachers in other institutes. Some of the teachers enhance their skills and competencies by participating in courses arranged by their own association; such as one cinematography teacher's participation in an exhibition in Amsterdam, arranged by the cinematographers association. Another teacher participated in a festival with their students and applied for and received funding from the local film centre.

The opportunities for the teachers to participate in mobility are at a very good level.

### *3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competencies of the teaching staff*

According to page 47 of the SER, the teachers of the study programme have participated in various pedagogical conferences and training in the years 2018-2022. The variation of the courses is wide.

The teachers of the study field also teach in other institutes, and sometimes they can improve their skills in those institutes. Nevertheless, because of the low turnover of the lecturers in the study programme, the HEI should consider ways to ensure that the qualifications of the teachers enable the latest trends and practices being included in the teaching.

At the beginning of each academic year, the SMK Head of Academic Activities asks lecturers to present their competence requests. Activities are then planned accordingly. The development of competencies is divided into 6 different areas (SER pages 47-48): seminars etcetera in SMK; projects; training in other institutes; mobility programmes; doctoral studies; and participation in decision-making processes in the University.

In the years 2018-2022, SMK organised various seminars where the study field lecturers were able to participate and enhance their competencies. In seminars aimed at general competence development, 10 lecturers participated. 11 lecturers participated in training for teaching, learning, and research competencies. In the same period, 10 lecturers of the study field participated in training in other institutions.

Lecturers fill out a self-evaluation report by the end of each course. By the end of each academic year, an interview is conducted by the Head of the Study Programme. In this interview, ideas for improvements are discussed and a development plan for the next year is made.

The opportunities for teachers to improve their skills and competencies are at a very good level.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Devoted and qualified teachers.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The incoming teachers' mobility in the study field is at a low level.

### 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*

The HEI is located in the new and specially-designed building, which has many open spaces for independent learning and communication. The building clearly reflects the HEI's progressive and up-to-date stance towards the learning environment and self-expression, which meets contemporary and international standards. During the site visit, the panel found evidence for uniqueness related to the general study environment, in the form of the building which through its architecture and interior design facilitates innovative educational settings.

However, although most of the HEI's premises have been well-furnished, the need for more digital resources such as a bigger variety of accessible software (for example, Affinity Photo, Sketch, Maya) relevant to students' needs and wireless devices that do not require major renovations, is detected.

For the study programme, there is a significant lack of some specialised workshop spaces and equipped laboratories. For instance, there is no up-to-date video creation studio, which is seen as a fundamental shortcoming. Although there is a relatively large number of places for independent work (6 computer classrooms with 114 places) which is satisfactory, a video studio with only 8 working places is not enough for the amount and needs of students in the study programme. Besides, the current place for video creation is directly connected to the library and lacks privacy and focus because it cannot be closed off, which is seen as a significant disadvantage and disturbance for both library and video studio users. The expert panel is of the opinion that the current setup does not yet provide a good example to students of how professional work conditions should be organised, which may impact their future professionalism.

A bigger and better-equipped sound studio would be also beneficial for the effective learning process. Moreover, during the meeting with the panel, students expressed the need for a photo studio, which the HEI does not yet provide.

There were some concerns that the renting process of the equipment could be better adapted to the student's needs. Both teachers and students shared an opinion that some technological equipment is in high demand and, thus, is less available for rent.

Additionally, there are no specifically designed spaces for students to exhibit their work—and so to increase its visibility and contribute to learning processes. This said, close to the entrance of the building there is a designated space for the gathering of students and student representatives, which is seen as a positive thing. In addition, there is a large-size screen on the 2nd floor and a conference hall, which can be used for presenting students' work during their exams and different internal events and which the experts see as positive development. However, although the expert panel understands that the building of the HEI is intended to be multifunctional, more dedicated opportunities and circumstances for exhibiting student work would provide a more sufficient experience and educational opportunities, such as a more interdisciplinary approach towards the media study field. Also, it would give students' work regular and permanent visibility.

Although the library has a set of books for professional video production, the selection and quantity of resources at the library is mainly text-based and should be improved with relevant books in art and new media studies. The library doesn't order any periodicals or journals that present the latest trends in the field or focus on visual information. The current display in the reading room of the library lacks a representation of up-to-date ideas and tendencies that are relevant to the study programme. Therefore, digital resources and access to digital libraries could be renewed. More varied access to digital libraries that contain scientific unique information and papers in Research Activities could be added.

In general, the panel sees points of improvement for the study field-specific facilities, but commends the HEI for the contribution to its uniqueness as the building is relatively innovative for learning. The panel sees that the study field is in development and recognises the circumstances caused by COVID-19. It also sees that facilities and equipment have been

upgraded and supplemented, for example, new appliances such as filming, lighting, and portable sound recording equipment have been acquired, and plans exist for their further development (including an independent video studio in 2023). This said, the panel finds that the improvements indicated above should be implemented as the current infrastructure today meets only minimum requirements, nationally and internationally.

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

On page 52, the SER provides clear information on how the renewal of study resources is planned annually. Also, this page of the SER indicates exactly how much finances were allocated for the purchase of new equipment in the last three years. However, the process of acquiring the equipment needed for the studying process and for internal activities could be updated to become more systematic and strategic. Although the HEI conducts yearly surveys for students and teachers in order for the technical equipment to be renewed and new equipment to be purchased every year, the system of doing so could be revised to better reflect the changing needs of students.

As the current material resources only fully meet the basic needs of students, it is worth reviewing the current system of funding as well. While page 52 of the SER states that the materials are purchased from the contribution of those paying tuition fees, attracting additional sources of external funding would be recommended.

Additionally, the selection and purchase process for the renewal and expansion of library resources should be done more strategically and consistently.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. A contemporary and well-furnished building with many open spaces for independent work.
2. A comfortable space for student gatherings at the main entrance of the building.

#### *(2) Weaknesses:*

1. A lack of sufficient resources for intended learning goals, such as a proper video creation studio.
2. The strategy of acquisition of resources in relation to changing needs of students.
3. The system for funding resources needed to carry out the field studies.

### 3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

*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*

The HEI has established and implemented a Quality Assurance System, which is described in the Quality Guide of the University. The Guide is available in Lithuanian and English and it describes in detail the responsibilities and structures for quality control.

The study process is administered by the Department of Studies. The highest institution in the HEI is the Academic Board, to which SPCs report. The Head of Studies oversees the implementation of the study process. The SPCs consist of the Head of the Study Programme, lecturer, representative of social partners, student representative and graduates. There is an SPC for Video Creation and Media study programme. It is the central organ in the development of the study programme.

The teachers and social stakeholders are aware of the quality assurance and responsibilities. They know how they can contribute to the development of the study programme.

The expert panel considers the quality assurance systems to be adequate and effective. The social partners, the graduates and the students are involved in quality assurance. The collection of information is regular and systematic. However, the panel notes that the obvious needs for improvements in the facilities has not been detected by the Quality assurance systems.

#### *3.7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance*

Social stakeholders are involved in the study quality assurance at all levels. They have representatives in the University Board and SPC. The HEI has developed and implemented a method for the feedback: the Order of Organizing Feedback in the University (see SER page 58). The Feedback is collected from the students, lecturers, graduates and social partners in various ways and intervals. The collection of feedback from the students is organised several times during the year and from lecturers twice an academic year. The graduate surveys are organised 6 months and 3 years after graduation. However, the study programme has noticed that the involvement of graduates in the surveys on their employability is not very active (see SER page 59). The expert panel finds it important that the study programme has made this observation and is monitoring the issue. The employers and other social partners are involved in the quality assurance in different ways: their experience after the practices have been carried out, their participation in the assessment of the final theses, they have a representative in SPC, round table discussions are arranged and once a year a survey is held about the professional needs of the labour market.

SMK acts on the feedback collected from the stakeholder. In December 2020, students of the programme expressed their wish for a wider selection of foreign languages. The set of Optional Course Units was supplemented with new options. In December 2019, students wanted their lectures to start at 9 am, which is the starting time now. In April 2019, students expressed their wish for a course in special effects to be included in the curriculum. The course unit "Special Effects" has since been included in semester 5 of the studies.

During the meeting with social stakeholders, the expert panel was able to witness a nice discussion between a stakeholder and graduates where they quite openly talked about possible future co-operations. The panel considers this a great example of a very good connection between the study programme, the stakeholders and the graduates.

In December 2020, teachers expressed their concern about students using the latest scientific articles in their studies. Now it is agreed that every lecturer includes scientific articles in their list of compulsory reading. Interdisciplinary projects were promoted in the study programme after lecturers suggested this in September 2021.



Based on the observations by the employers participating in the assessment of the final theses improvements were made. The number of ordered theses was increased. The changes in the study curriculum were made after the suggestions in a round table discussion with the employers and other social partners, lecturers, graduates and students.

The effectiveness of the participation of the stakeholders in quality assurance is at a very good level.

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

The information collected by the student surveys on the quality of the studies and teaching is discussed with the students and placed in the SMK's e-learning environment. The same method applies also to the feedback from the teachers.

The results are also discussed in public conferences; in 2022 the study programme participated in a round table scientific-practical conference "Audiovisual Media in Lithuania: Research, Education, Ethics" and the results were presented there.

Due to the nature of the study field, the results in the form of video works are presented and used widely in the marketing of the study field; they are shown in open house events, exhibitions, conferences, visits of high school pupils in SMK, graduation ceremonies, information portals (Delfi) and festivals among other.

The final theses are available on the online Elaba platform. The study programme is an active member of various associations (European Storytelling association, among others) and is using those platforms to communicate about itself.

The expert panel considers the study programme's observation in the SER (on page 59) to be correct, that an area for improvement is the communication of the information on studies and the development of the study programme.

### *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*

Quantitative surveys have been conducted every year 2018-2021. When asked about the overall satisfaction of the students in the study field, the grading has been rising from 4,3 (out of 5, 2018) to 4,6 (2021). As well for the question of the usefulness of the course units the grading in the replies has risen from 4,4 (2018) to 4,5 (2021) The overall satisfaction of the students in the study programme is at a very good level.

The study field students are heard while developing the study field. The students confirmed this. To provide an example, the students felt one of their teachers in a course was not competent enough. They brought this issue up which was reviewed and the teacher was replaced within the relatively short period of 2-3 weeks.

The opinion of the students is collected, analysed and used to develop the study programme. The expert panel considers the collection and analysing of the feedback of the field students to be adequate and done according to the common processes.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. The quality assurance is efficient and includes all the partners. It is used to improve the study programme.
2. The students are satisfied with the content and the quality management of the study field.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The publication of the study field processes and improvements is limited
2. The involvement of the graduates in the employability surveys is not very good.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	The HEI is recommended to evaluate if and how its strategy for personalisation by students, and possibly offering some more and more varied programme-specific opportunities for personalisation (including, other than optional courses) may benefit the study field and programme.
Links between science (art) and studies	<p>The HEI is encouraged to evaluate the study programme's structural connection to certain latest developments (specifically, creative thinking, and critical theory and media arts practice concerning the latest developments which impact the study field and CCI sector).</p> <p>The HEI is recommended to evaluate opportunities and the strategy for artistic activity to become more specifically tailored to the study programme, as well as for more students (if not all) to be involved.</p>
Student admission and support	<p>In order for applications and future students to make a more informed decision, the HEI needs to produce more detailed student testimonials.</p> <p>For the programs to continue to be able to offer enough high-quality internship opportunities for the students, the HEI should provide guidance and support to students considering mobility opportunities, so they can continue to offer enough high-quality internships to them.</p>
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<p>A more clear and efficient policy for supporting low-income students should be implemented.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to consider some of the problematic aspects of the study programme which were expressed by its social partners: the lack of critical thinking as well as the limited ability for creative solutions and problem-solving.</p>
Teaching staff	A way to improve teachers' international mobility should be found.

Learning facilities and resources	A significant improvement of resources for intended learning goals is necessary. The strategy of acquisition of resources should be revised.
Study quality management and public information	The communication of the study programme could be enhanced.

## V. SUMMARY

The following findings are based on the results of an evaluation conducted by the review team as part of its self-evaluation. Based on the findings of the self-evaluation, a report has been prepared and an interview has been conducted with the HEI's administrators (senior managers and vice-chancellors). In addition to graduates, employers, social partners, and other stakeholders who might be interested in the SER, members of the faculty administration staff, members of the teaching staff, as well as members of the staff involved in preparing the SER, are also involved in the process.

According to reviewers, the implementation of the Media Art programme has been well received by both reviewers and the public. A comprehensive evaluation has been carried out by the SMK of all aspects of the study cycle, and it has been concluded that all areas of evaluation have been deemed positive by the SMK.

The expert panel ranked the Media Art proposal based on the following key strengths during the process of evaluating the application:

1. In its programme, students are given the opportunity to develop a detailed understanding of national and European research policies and tasks pertaining to the work field for which they are being trained.
2. The HEI has an overall constructive approach to and experience with artistic activity and research and has been keeping up-to-date on the latest developments in an ongoing manner.
3. Through a variety of initiatives, the institution offers students well-organised personal support.
4. Students are very interested in the experiential teaching method that HEI uses in order to achieve the learning goals that were intended and they seem to like it very much.
5. There is a concrete Equal Opportunity policy that HEI has implemented that ensures equal status for all employers at the institution in terms of their employment rights.
6. Teachers who are dedicated to their students and qualified to teach them.
7. Located in a contemporary and well-furnished building, there are many open spaces where individuals can work independently.
8. The main entrance of the building has a comfortable space for students to gather in.

9. During the site visit, the panel found evidence for uniqueness related to the general study environment, in the form of the building which through its architecture and interior design facilitates innovative educational settings. The committee sees points of improvement for the study field-specific facilities (which are mentioned above and below) but commends the HEI for this good contribution to its uniqueness.
10. In order to maintain quality, a quality assurance method has been implemented and is being used
11. In regards to the content and quality management of the study field, the students are satisfied with the content.

Furthermore, the panel has reviewed the areas that could be improved:

1. Those in higher education institutions can work towards developing explicit strategies that are designed to ensure that their programs are relevant and unique, to ensure that they are designed and adjusted in a way that complements their aims, and also to relate curriculum and personalised learning opportunities to their learning outcomes, in order to ensure that their programs are relevant and unique. This will allow them to take advantage of their comprehensive understanding of the national policies and research that is being carried out at the national as well as at a European level, thereby benefiting from their expertise.
2. Due to the uncertainty in students' responses, it appears that there is no clear support available to students planning exchange studies.
3. While the student council is available online, there could be a better way to communicate with them.
4. A system of access to higher education institutions could allow for a more flexible personalisation of studies to be implemented.
5. There should be a clearer and more efficient policy for the support of students from low-income backgrounds.
6. It is reported that there is a low level of mobility among incoming teachers in the study field
7. Generally, there are not sufficient resources available to support the objectives of the program.
8. It is necessary to revise the strategy for acquiring resources to meet the needs of the organisation.

9. A better way to publish the processes and improvements of the study field could be developed.

Expert panel chairperson's signature:

Mr Mika Ritalahti