

ASSESSMENT REPORT

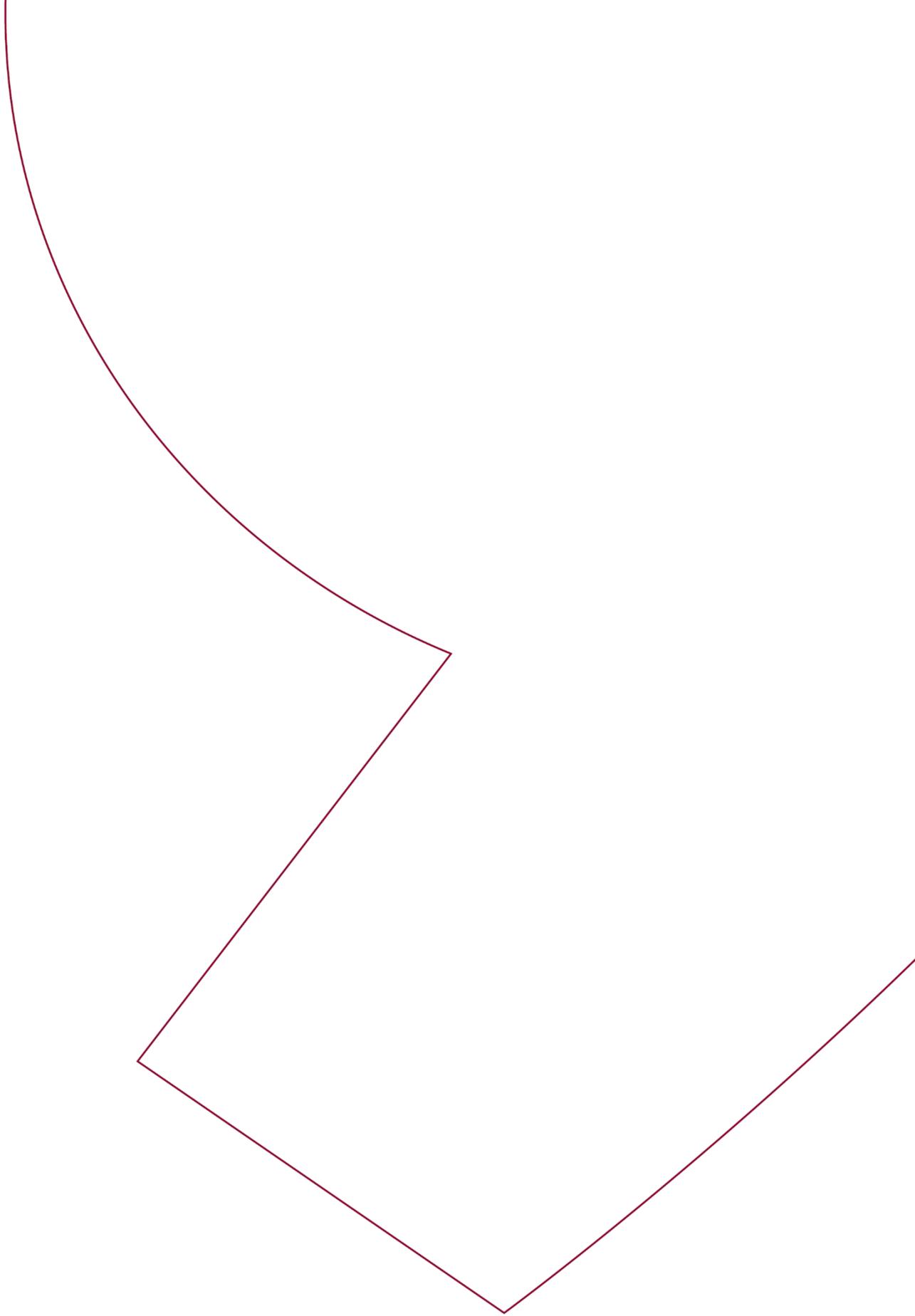
Institution without institutional audit (ITK)

HBO-Master

Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design

Full time

University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU)



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CROHO nr. 49114

Hobéon Certificering & Accreditatie

Dated

October 16th, 2025

Audit committee

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INHOUDSOPGAVE

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1. GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Name Institution	University of the Arts Utrecht
Status	Government funded
Address	P.O. Box 1520, 3500 BM Utrecht, Nieuwekade 1, 3511 RV Utrecht The Netherlands
website	www.hku.nl
Outcomes of Institutional Quality Assessment	n.a.
Name programme (as in RIO)	Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design
ISAT code	49114
BRIN	00MF
Domain/sector	Language and Culture
Orientation and level	HBO
Level	Master
Degree and title	Master of Arts
Number of credits	120 EC
Specialisations	Fine Art Scenography
Location	Utrecht
Variant	Full Time
Research master's degree	Not applicable
Language of instruction	English
Joint programme	No
Does the programme work with learning outcomes, and if so, in which variants of the programme?	No
Special feature	Not applicable
Name visitation group	HBO Master Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving Diagonaal
Date audit	30th of June 2025
Final date submission deadline report NVAO	1 st of November 2025

2. SUMMARY

The Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design (hereafter: MAFAD) contains two programmes: Fine Art and Scenography. Both programmes aim to deepen trans-disciplinary thinking (or question disciplinary thinking) and encourage critical engagement with themes such as visual culture, public and private space, technology, presentation strategies, and communication. While they share a dynamic and research-driven approach rooted in artistic and design practice, each programme builds on and questions a distinct disciplinary legacy. The Master Fine Art programme operates within the context of the fine art domain; the Master Scenography programme centres on the creation of scenographic experiences and the exploration of performative space.

Both programmes are Master's degrees in Artistic Research, placing strong emphasis on the creative process of un-/doing. Central to both is a shared set of characteristics: the Research Community, the How, Diversity, Transdisciplinarity, Polyvocality, Relationality and Knowledge-in-Practice. MAFAD teaches students to become cultural creators who take on diverse roles and professions across a wide range of domains (e.g., writing, teaching, doctoral research, curating, etc.).

Standard 1. Intended Learning Outcomes

The panel finds that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of Standard 1. The programmes are based on the educational aims from the 'Master Profile for Fine Art and Design' and the derived learning outcomes have been translated into competencies tailored to the different programmes. The panel affirms the master's level in both sets of competencies. There are four points of reference that are applicable to all master's programmes in Fine Art and Design, these points of references are: context, disciplinarity, research and self-direction. Both Fine Art and Scenography use the points of reference to shape their curricula. The panel, as well as the students, appreciate that artistic research is prominently reflected in the competencies and the points of reference. The audit panel observes that the programmes maintain frequent contact with the professional field. The audit panel noticed that the guest lectures really bring in the professional fields in both programmes. However, the panel notes a lack of structure in the conversations brought about by the guestlecturers. While the professional field is connected to the programmes, the panel recommends formalizing these dialogues through e.g. archiving and communicating the outlines of the guest lecturers' input with all stakeholders within the programmes, so no information gets lost.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel finds that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of standard 2. The structures of both programmes are based on the threads MAKE, THINK and SHARE, which offer different constellations and perspectives on the points of references (mentioned at standard 1. Students explore what making, thinking and sharing means and how they influence each other. Artistic research is the integration of the three strands and holds a significant position within the curriculum. Both programmes interpret MAKE, THINK and SHARE in their own way, suited by their own approach to the learning outcomes according to the panel. For example: In the legacy of Fine Art it has been hard to integrate MAKE, THINK and SHARE. Therefore Fine Art is developing an integral study line to increase this integration. The threads align well with each other and reinforce one another. The panel clearly recognized the threads within the curriculum and noted that both students and teachers actively engage with them. The panel also spoke highly of the prominent role and attention given to artistic research within both curricula. However, the panel sees opportunities for increased collaboration between the two programmes, which is also a wish expressed by the MAFAD staff. The Scenography and Fine Art programmes are delivered by dedicated teaching teams composed of both permanent staff and guest lecturers. These educators are active professionals and researchers with strong ties to the professional field. Diversity is a key principle: the teams are made up of individuals with varied artistic, academic, cultural, and

socio-economic backgrounds. Students appreciate the commitment of the lecturers, who work closely together in coaching, mentoring, and assessment. Professional development receives structural attention through training, coaching, and research projects, with many lecturers holding a master's degree and a growing number pursuing or holding a PhD.

The audit panel found committed teaching teams with substantial professional experience. The lecturers' strong research capabilities are highly appropriate, given the significant role artistic research occupies in the curricula.

Guidance and coaching are tailored to individual needs and provided by a study coach.

Lecturers are also always accessible for questions.

Standard 3. Student assessment

In regard to the finding the panel concludes that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of standard 3. Both programmes use an assessment system that focuses on students' artistic development, applied methods, and self-reflection. Each semester begins with a formative group feedback session and ends with a summative assessment moment.

Throughout the semester, students receive ongoing feedback from lecturers, peers, and occasionally guest experts, centered on their individual research progress. The evaluation is interdisciplinary and multi-perspective. The only high-stake assessment is the final exam at the end of the fourth semester.

The summative assessments at the end of each semester are key moments for the students. The examiners collect feedback from all lecturers based on the known assessment criteria. The examiners determine the final evaluation. The panel reviewed the assessment plans of both programmes and examined several of the assessment forms used. It was positive about the clarity of the forms and the transparent descriptions of the assessment procedures. Both students and examiners have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Among other things, clear module descriptions, assessment forms, the 'four eyes or more' principal and the involvement of external experts make sure the assessments and judgements are reliable, objective, valid and transparent.

Fine Art students graduate with the Artistic Research Project (ARP) which consists of at least the research document, a public presentation (as part of the HKU graduation exhibition Exposure), and an oral explanation.

Scenography students graduate with a Final Research Document (FRD), and an oral presentation of the research accompanying the presentation (installation, performance, scenographic proposal, etc.) during Exposure, followed by a question-and-answer session.

The audit panel reviewed fifteen final projects and their assessments. It found the procedures to be thorough and appreciated the detailed feedback on the assessment forms. While the inclusion of an external advisor aligns with HKU policy, the panel recommends discussing their role further to avoid potential bias from internal assessors. No issues were observed, and the panel considers the current process reliable.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

In regard to the finding the panel concludes that both programmes **meet the requirements** of standard 4. The panel studied fifteen final exams, eight presentations and seven research documents divided by the two programmes. All fifteen final exams reflected the masters level and aligned with the intended learning outcomes mentioned in standard 1. All the exams had a strong artistic research component.

Alumni remain close ties with MAFAD. And there is also a strong connection with the professional field.

Standard 5. Facilities

The panel finds that accommodation and infrastructure are sufficient on both locations (Fine Art is located in The Loods and Scenography at Pastoe building) and onsite-specific places of the programme. Therefore the panel concludes that the programme **meets the requirements** of Standard 5 for both programmes and thus both locations.

The panel concludes that all necessary facilities are available at The Loods for Fine Art students to create their work. This is also confirmed by the students themselves, although they do feel somewhat isolated from the rest of HKU. They expressed a desire to be surrounded by other students more.

The facilities at the Pastoe building are also in order. During the site visit, the panel visited the Pastoe building and was impressed by the space and facilities.

One of the recommendations from the previous site visit was to reassess MAFAD's facilities. MAFAD has expressed dissatisfaction with the Loods; however, due to the housing crisis in Utrecht, efforts to find a more suitable location have not been successful yet. MAFAD keeps looking for a solution.

Standard 6. Quality assurance

The panel finds that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of Standard 6. The quality culture as well as the quality assurance structure from MAFAD are in order, according to the panel. Everyone within the programmes is involved in quality assurance, fostering a culture of openness, dialogue, and collaboration. The programmes operate according to the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle. MAFAD evaluates the quality of education in collaboration with various stakeholders, using both formal and informal methods.

Overall conclusion:

The panel encountered two strong programmes in which artistic research, as expected from a professional master's programme, runs as a central thread throughout. The competencies are well-defined, and the corresponding coherent curricula offer a clear structure while allowing students sufficient freedom to develop artistically.

After approval by the panel members, this report was adopted by the chair and secretary on the October 16th 2025.

3. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Method of the Assessment

This assessment report is the result of a so-called 'Extended Programme Assessment' of the Master's programme Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design at the University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU). The assessment took place on 30 June 2025 and was carried out by an audit panel of independent experts. See Appendix IV for the composition of the audit panel.

The assessment was part of a national cluster visitation round of higher professional art programmes. Within this cluster, comparable master's programmes in Fine Art and Design were visited during a defined period by panels with a shared core of experts.

MAFAD

The Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design (MAFAD) from HKU offers two programmes: Fine Art and Scenography. Scenography is based at the Pastoe Fabriek and Fine Art at De Loods. HKU consists of several *schools*, and both programmes are part of a different *school* that best aligns with its respective discipline. The Fine Art programme is housed within the *school* HKU Fine Art, while the Scenography programme falls under the *school* HKU Theatre. The programmes have their own course leader, curriculum, teaching staff and location. The course leaders maintain regular contact with one another to ensure alignment and collaboration.

Both programmes are Artistic Research Masters, with a strong emphasis on the creative process of un-/doing and a focus on critical making, sharing, and thinking. The attention and emphasis are on the following shared characteristics: **The Research Community, The How, Diversity, Transdisciplinarity, Polyvocality, Relationality, Knowledges-in-practice.**

Both programmes address (international) themes such as war, discrimination, and the climate crisis within their curriculum. Students in both programmes come from international and interdisciplinary backgrounds, often having prior experience in other fields or disciplines.

Follow-up to Previous Accreditation

During the previous accreditation in 2019, the programme received a positive final assessment. The recommendations formulated at that time have been demonstrably followed up and have led to structural adjustments in the organisation of education and quality assurance. This follow-up was taken into account in the panel's evaluation during the 2025 audit.

The recommendations from the previous accreditation were:

- The audit committee recommends replacing the separate boards of examiners with one board and two chambers. Some examiners should be active in both chambers to create more consistency.
- The panel also recommends a reorientation on the physical facilities, both in accessibility and fitting for purpose.

This report reflects on the follow-up of these two recommendations and describes the audit panel's findings regarding standards 1 through 6 of the assessment framework for Institution without institutional audit (ITK).

4. FINDINGS AND JUDGEMENTS

4.1. Intended learning outcomes

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

Explanation NVAO: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations. The principles for how the programme is organised must match the institution's vision on education and its profile. - The intended learning outcomes must be evaluated periodically.

Findings

Intended learning outcomes

The MAFAD programme is based on the national 'Master Profile for Fine Art and Design'. This profile was established by a workgroup commissioned by the OBK (Overleg Beeldende Kunsten) from the Dutch art education institutes. The intended learning outcomes are based on this profile and presented as educational aims. The educational aims are based on the Dublin Descriptors.

MAFAD's learning outcomes are derived from these educational aims. With reference to the Dublin Descriptors and the Fine Art Tuning Document (developed by the European League of Institutes of the Arts, ELIA) MAFAD has formulated a set of competencies. While these competencies apply to both the Scenography and Fine Art programmes, their interpretations may differ due to the distinct disciplinary heritage and professional vocabularies of each, see the table below.

The educational aims emphasize a stronger focus on an investigative attitude, rather than merely applying knowledge and solving problems as described in the Dublin Descriptors. Furthermore, traditional teaching methods are being abandoned in favor of a more research-oriented approach that supports critical inquiry.

In the curricula of both programmes, as outlined in the following chapter, the modules MAKE, THINK and SHARE serve as the foundational building blocks. These modules provide the framework within which competences can be achieved.

Based on the documents reviewed and the conversations held, the audit panel concluded that the competencies are formulated at a master's level.

At the time of the visitation OBK is developing a new national 'Professional Profile and Education Programme Profiles for Fine Art and Design'. HKU is actively involved in shaping the new educa-

tional aims, which are expected to be published by the end of the 2024-2025 academic year.

These changes will take effect in the 2026-2027 academic year. As a result, the programmes will revisit and update their competencies in collaboration with each other and their communities during the 2025-2026 academic year.

OBK – EDUCATIONAL AIMS	HKU MAFAD – COMPETENCIES FINE ART PROGRAMME	HKU MAFAD – COMPETENCIES SCENOGRAPHY PROGRAMME
Master programmes teach students to formulate specific questions, dilemmas or currently relevant themes.	Context Master-level graduates understand that they operate in complex cultural frameworks and position themselves within. They develop approaches that enable them to relate and connect to current issues, and allow them to articulate urgencies and engage in active participation.	Context Master-level graduates make an original contribution to the development and/or application of ideas, by formulating specific questions, dilemmas or currently relevant themes. They understand the broad cultural framework in which they operate.
Master-level graduates are able to independently expand, develop and deepen their own artistic, intellectual and technical knowledge and skills.	Art practice Master level graduates have a self-directed attitude in terms of relational, sustained and process-related practices. They act publicly in many diverse ways and contribute to the unfolding and deepening of what is understood by knowledge.	Art practice Master-level graduates have the learning skills that allow them to have a practice that is largely of a self-directed nature. They are able to apply, develop, integrate and deepen their own artistic, intellectual and technical knowledge and skills within contexts that expand their own discipline, exploring the possibilities of new connections and new modes of practice and (knowledge) production.
Master-level graduates have developed a demonstrably critical awareness of the methods, work processes and techniques, which they apply in their approach to the questions they have formulated.	Methodology Master-level graduates have a critical awareness of the methods, work processes and techniques, which they experiment with in the approach to their artistic research. They are able to identify and evaluate their steps and decisions in the process and to create/organise feedback loops, thus deepening the scope of their practices experientially.	Methodology Master-level graduates have developed a demonstrable critical awareness of the methods, work processes and techniques, which they apply in the approach to their research. They are able to evaluate their steps and decisions in the process and to create/organise feedback loops, thus deepening their understanding on the basis of experience.
Master-level graduates have developed a critical and systematic understanding and knowledge of the problems and new insights they encounter in their field of research or in the professional field, as well as the necessary knowledge of available techniques that are relevant to their research and/or practice.	Art research Master-level graduates have a critical and systemic understanding and knowledge of their interconnectedness with the world. Theories, methods, experiments and insights are not pre-defined, but found/created while searching, in a process called artistic research.	Art research Master-level graduates have developed a critical and systematic understanding and knowledge of problems; insights; theories; methods and making strategies and techniques that are relevant to their field of research and (professional) practice.
Master-level graduates are able to coherently and convincingly share their thinking and making process with others, verbally as well as in writing, with professional colleagues as well as a general public.	Communication Master-level graduates are able to share their thinking and making process in spatio-temporal articulations, oral word, and written text with colleagues, participants and diverse publics. They understand that sharing is a relational, reciprocal, and mutual act of both sending and receiving. They are able to critically understand documentation processes, their effects, and affordances in relation to the (re-)situating of cultural practices, including their own artistic contributions.	Communication Master-level graduates are able to present their work as a specific curatorial practice and coherently and convincingly share their thinking and making process, and the knowledge, motives and considerations underpinning their findings in word and image as well as in writing, to a specialist and non-specialist audience. They are able to document their work as praxis, integrating theory and practice, conceptual thinking and artistic expression.
Master-level graduates show an independent and original attitude in formulating and reformulating questions.	Positioning Master-level graduates are committed to research and study the position from where they perceive, act and speak. With their work they relate to the contexts in which they operate. Their practices play an integral role in developing and reformulating questions, co-shaping dialogues and pro-actively participating in the unfolding of these contexts, on local, international, as well as on planetary levels.	Positioning Master-level graduates are independent artists able to create within an international context of peers, multi-disciplinary and collaborative environments and state of the art (aesthetic) theories, aware of cultural and social developments; and through their practice play an original role in formulating questions and reformulating questions and co-defining this context.

Orientation

The workgroup from the OBK, who created the ‘Master Profile for Fine Art and Design’, formulated four points of reference that are applicable to all master’s programmes in Fine Art and Design, these points of references are:

- Context
- Disciplinarity
- Research
- Self-direction

All programmes have the freedom to define and shape these points themselves. Both Fine Art and Scenography use the points of reference to shape their curricula. MAFAD gives shape to each point of reference in the following way:

- Context: MAFAD enables students to investigate, work within, discuss, and communicate across diverse worlds and through various forms. The context in which students operate is constantly evolving and also differs per graduation pathway. Within Fine Art, context is shaped by a focus on artistic research within socio-ecological-political frameworks. Students learn to relate to different worlds, to sense, articulate,

- and engage with these relationships. Scenography focuses on exploring and creating environments for performance and encounter. The programme centers on the relationships and interactions between people and their environments.
- **Disciplinarity:** This is about the interactions, overlaps and synergies of different forms of knowing. Thinking, sharing, and doing are taking place in inter-, cross-, trans- and non-disciplinary ways. This means that the study process co-involves modes of learning and unlearning, and to research the disciplinary conventions in relation to (historical) assumptions. Fine Art focuses on transdisciplinary research, including cross-medial forms of visual, spatial, and conceptual artistic practices. In doing so, students explore unfamiliar fields and learn that not knowing is an important part of artistic research. Scenography is a cross-disciplinary practice that embraces performative, artistic exploration on how spaces come into being, what spaces there could be and how this is rendered tangible for audiences.
 - **Research:** within artistic research not only the outcomes or solutions are important but also the process of how and why something is done and the effects it has. Artistic research has only little pre-given methodologies and is a process of activity shaped by iterative learning cycles. Artistic research opens up *sharing*, *making* and *thinking* for the students. Essayistic forms of writing, non-linguistic forms of communicating, the awareness of different approaches to knowing and the inclusion of polyvocal and discipline-expanding discourses are all consistently important. For the Fine Art programme that means that artistic research calls for combinations and integrations of art, theory and curating. The framework of artistic research is to nourish an awareness towards the process, material, relational and socio-eco-political doings and undoings. For Scenography the research practice is entangled with the acts of making and creating. Doing and undoing plays an important part in the process.
 - **Self-direction:** Self-direction within the programme revolves around students' ability to actively shape their own learning process. It is not solely about autonomy, but about continuous development in relation to others. Students are encouraged to bring in their own questions, curiosity, and motivations.

The matter of internationalization is important for MAFAD. There is a community of staff and students from all over the world. In their artistic research, students are not confined to the Netherlands; instead, they engage with a broad international context.

In the documents reviewed and during the site visit conversations, the audit panel observed that artistic research is prominently addressed in both the competencies and the points of reference. Furthermore, both students and lecturers have a clear understanding of what is meant by artistic research and what the programmes aim to teach in this regard; "it's in their DNA," as the panel stated.

Professional field

MAFAD maintains close contact with the professional field. This is important because the field is rapidly evolving, and students need to find their way within this dynamic professional practice. The involvement of alumni in the educational programmes—such as through guest lectures—also ensures that the voice of the professional field is heard within the curriculum.

MAFAD regularly consults with partners from the professional field regarding the intended learning outcomes and whether these still align with current professional practice.

The audit panel observes that the programmes maintain frequent contact with the professional field and that the guest lectures really bring in the professional practice. However, the panel notes a lack of structure in the conversations that are held. While the professional field is connected to the programmes, the panel recommends formalizing these dialogues to create more clarity and consistency in the follow-up of these discussions.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel finds that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of Standard 1. The programmes are based on the educational aims from the 'Master Profile for Fine Art and Design' and the derived learning outcomes have been translated into competencies tailored to

the different programmes. The panel affirms the master's level in both sets of competencies. There are four points of reference that are applicable to all master's programmes in Fine Art and Design, these points of references are: context, disciplinarity, research and self-direction. Both Fine Art and Scenography use the points of reference to shape their curricula. The panel, as well as the students, appreciate that artistic research is prominently reflected in the competencies and the points of reference. The audit panel observes that the programmes maintain frequent contact with the professional field. However, the panel notes a lack of structure in the conversations that are held. While the professional field is connected to the programmes, the panel recommends formalizing these dialogues through e.g. archiving and communicating the outlines of the guest lecturers' input with all stakeholders within the programmes, so no information gets lost.

4.2. Teaching-learning environment

Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes

Explanation NVAO: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach).

If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

The learning environment must reflect the institution's vision on education. - The workforce must be sufficiently large. - If the programme is taught in another language than Dutch, the human resources policy must make accommodation for teachers to teach in that language.

Findings

I. Programme

Structure and content of the curriculum

Both MAFAD programmes are shaped according four semester stages:

- The first semester encompasses the scope from experimentation to un-making.
- The second semester emphasises the range from collecting and curating to re-connecting.
- The third semester pays attention to the span from conceptualising an artistic framework to world-(s)-making.
- The fourth semester opens up the spectrum from documentation, communication and presentation of research results to making (a)public.

The structure on which MAFAD is based consists of the trio: MAKE, THINK and SHARE. These three strands are not separated areas but belong together and interact with each other. Each semester, the three pillars MAKE, THINK, and SHARE offer different constellations and perspectives on the points of references (mentioned at standard 1) – context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction. In doing so, they create opportunities to re-explore what making, thinking, and sharing can mean, and how these elements relate to and influence one another. The three strands combined form the space created within the curriculum for conducting artistic research and the unpredictability that comes with it. MAFAD facilitates this by creating space in the programme for, for example, unexpected encounters and lessons.

Structure and content of the curriculum – Fine Art

The MA Fine Art programme is dedicated to, and experiments with, artistic research practices that are sensitive to difference and have an anchor in social-eco-political contextualisations. According to the programme cultural expressions are not neutral and therefore negotiable. Artistic research has an important say in these negotiation processes. MAKE, THINK and SHARE can be seen as followed:

- The MAKE strand is dedicated to an expanded notion of (un)making, including many possible forms and modes of production and collaboration, beyond focusing merely on skill-based methods.
- The THINK strand experiments with artistic thinking, exploring thinking in the (un)making. It means learning to situate artistic practices in historically and culturally relevant contexts.

- The SHARE strand develops a literacy towards the manifold ways and contexts of sharing. Next to the conventional understanding of sharing as modes of dissemination, the programme emphasises sharing as an active effort to devote energies to being together and researching the relational and affective ecologies in artistic practices.

The overarching goal is to nourish an awareness and literacy (meaning the ability, confidence and willingness to engage in, de-construct and co-shape practices that address and act in the world) towards the processual, material, relational and eco-political doings and undoings of artistic research practices. Students appreciate the structure of the programme. Students feel that the overlap between MAKE, THINK and SHARE helps them to enrich their own practice. The Fine Art programme integrates MAKE, THINK, SHARE in the fourth semester in context(s) of the students research practice(s); students conclude their study with a public presentation of their artistic research project, including a written articulation of contextual aspects of their work and a verbal presentation.

Within the legacy of Fine Art, there has always been a separation between MAKE, THINK and SHARE. It remains a challenge for the programme to integrate these three threads. Fine Art is developing an integral study line, the 'Integral Study Approach' (ISA), which works towards and results in a fourth integrated semester module. This ISA is seen as a response and experimental intervention to take accountability within and towards this legacy.

The programme has also initiated lectures and lecture performances related to this topic. The insights gained are being incorporated into the further development of the curriculum. The audit panel considers these appropriate actions to further dismantle the separation between MAKE, THINK and SHARE.

Structure and content of the curriculum – Scenography

The threads MAKE, THINK, and SHARE are the starting points from which students explore, connect, and develop their artistic research. Keywords of the modules are:

- MAKE: critical spatial/artistic practice, experimentation, research/thinking through making, studio practice and artistic research.
- THINK: contextual and critical studies, artistic research and knowledge, cross- and transdisciplinary (research) studies and research formulation.
- SHARE: forms of dissemination, collaborations, peer reviews, exchanges, excursions and presentations, mutual, reciprocal, in relation.

The disciplinary heritage of Scenography has always focused on themes such as dissemination and communication, with questions like “how do you reach your audience, and in what way?” forming a core part of this heritage. The programme sees this sharing-heritage of Scenography reflected in the way it works with students on disseminating their artistic research, creating connections between the modules.

The programme is working on ways to broaden the formats of dissemination (like websites, podcasts etc.). Students used a lot of different formats for their Final Research Document like puzzles or a patchwork blanket, but the programme wants to stimulate this more.

The programme invests in exchanges between the years to build a research community. And although this is already happening the programme aims for more cross-pollination between researchers.

The auditpanel appreciates the initiatives the programme takes to broaden the format (like inviting guest lecturers) and to aim for more cross-pollination (for example by structurally including workshops given by the second-years to the first year students). According to the panel, the programme clearly demonstrates an awareness of areas for improvement within the curriculum.

The audit panel was positive about the structure and content of the programme, which it found to be coherent. The threads are clearly defined and recognizable; not only to the panel, but also to students from both programmes. Students felt that the threads are well aligned and mutually reinforcing.

Because students follow their own individual learning paths, the panel observed that they have considerable influence over the shape of their programme, which students greatly appreciate.

The audit panel did, however, see room for increased collaboration between the two programmes. During the audit discussions, it became clear that this is also a shared ambition of both programmes. The panel therefore recommends exploring opportunities for collaboration. For example, students mentioned that they would like to attend each other's exhibitions, which is currently not possible due to the final exams of both programmes taking place simultaneously. The panel suggests that MAFAD considers adjusting this scheduling. Students have also expressed a desire for more attention in the curriculum to life after graduation. The panel recommends that the programmes strengthen the connection between the curriculum and students' professional futures.

Research

As described above, artistic research plays a central role in both programmes and receives significant attention in the curriculum. Many lecturers are themselves active as artists and researchers, and they bring their research into the classroom.

The programmes are also closely connected to research groups. For example, Scenography works closely with the research group *Expanding Artistic Practices*, and lecturers from both programmes are involved in the research network around MAR (*Meaningful Artistic Research*), a collaboration between HKU and the University of Humanistic Studies. Additionally, Fine Art expresses strong interest in further collaboration with HKU's research domain.

The audit panel was very positive about the attention given to artistic research in the curriculum. It observed that developing this skill helps students grow and look at the world around them with fresh perspectives. Students themselves also emphasized that artistic research is an essential part of their process.

Internationalization

The international community within both programmes encourages a cross-border perspective and collaboration. Lecturers and researchers are also involved in international networks such as EARN (European Artistic Research Network) and ELIA.

The programmes make use of international literature, and English is the language of instruction. Students are satisfied with the English proficiency of their lecturers.

During the planning-neutral conversion in 2016–2017, it was decided to transfer all specialized master's programs in the field of Fine Art and Design to a new generic program: Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design. This international name was agreed upon at the national level for all programs involved in the conversion. Given the international character of this program and the global perspective that students acquire, this English name is well suited to the program according to the panel.

Learning community

Students are very positive about the learning community, describing it as a "place of immense care." There is space for everyone's individual needs. Students from both programmes feel the freedom to make suggestions on the curricula.

As mentioned earlier, the programmes offer a high level of flexibility, which allows room for students' personal learning paths. This is something they greatly appreciate.

However, students from both programmes expressed a desire for more collaboration with other disciplines. They believe that such interdisciplinary exchange would benefit their creative process.

Intake

Students applying to either of the two programmes come from both the Netherlands and abroad, and bring diverse backgrounds in visual and spatial arts, design, and cultural practices. Students are informed about the programmes through various channels, such as the website, Instagram, and online chat sessions between staff and prospective candidates. Current students and alumni are also involved as ambassadors of the learning community.

New students are selected through an entrance examination conducted by an admissions committee consisting of at least one core lecturer, another lecturer, and possibly a student.

In multiple phases, the committee assesses the suitability of candidates and advises the school director based on its findings. The school director makes the final decision on admission based on this advice.

The admission requirements are outlined in the Academic and Examination Regulations (AER) and communicated via the website.

The admissions committee assesses whether candidates possess sufficient knowledge of an art or cultural practice, show a non-assignment-based drive, curiosity for experimentation, and a critical openness to the demands of an MA programme.

MAFAD continues to critically evaluate its selection criteria, as it places great importance on fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

II. Teaching staff and guidance

The teaching teams of both programmes consist of a core group of permanent lecturers, complemented by temporary guest lecturers. All lecturers are active professionals or researchers in their field, with strong ties to professional practice. The core team and the course leader are responsible for the content and delivery of the programme, as well as ensuring continuity. Guest lecturers are invited to contribute to specific parts of the curriculum or to coach students during particular phases of their studies, or on specific topics, contexts, or themes.

Both programmes place great value on diversity, which is reflected in the composition of the teaching teams. The teams include individuals with varied artistic and academic backgrounds, as well as differences in cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds.

All lecturers work part-time and have small appointments. Schedules are designed to allow for overlap between lecturers wherever possible, encouraging collaboration and dialogue.

Lecturers from different disciplines work together in theory and practice-based modules, assess each other's work, and participate in joint teaching sessions.

As students increasingly integrate theory and practice, lecturers collaborate more closely as teams, working together in coaching, support, group work guidance, tutorials, and assessments. Regular team meetings, away days, and check-ins at the beginning, middle, and end of each semester, along with shared feedback sessions, help strengthen collaboration and support for students.

A high percentage of lecturers in both the Scenography and Fine Art programmes hold a master's degree, and a growing number also has a PhD. All permanent staff members hold a master's degree (or equivalent), and many either have a PhD or are currently pursuing a PhD or PD trajectory.

HKU invests structurally in professional development by allocating time and budget for staff training. The university offers courses, training sessions, coaching, and tailored development programmes. Permanent staff are also required to hold a teaching qualification. HKU provides the Basic Course in Didactic Competence (BDB) training, including the Basic Examination Qualification (BKE).

There is strong focus on developing research skills among lecturers. Within HKU's research environment, *Communities of Practice*, lecturers, researchers, students, and alumni exchange knowledge and experiences. Individual staff members can further develop their research skills and practices. Lecturers also work within research groups to deepen their expertise and expand their knowledge.

MAFAD also strengthens exchange between disciplines, students, staff, and knowledge at the master's level through regular 'Master Consultation' sessions, where course leaders from all programmes meet. MAFAD is exploring ways to expand this initiative.

The audit panel found highly engaged teaching teams with strong professional experience. The level of research skills among lecturers is very high, which aligns well with the central role of artistic research in the curriculum. Lecturers are committed and support students wherever possible. They are deeply connected to the programmes and carry the vision of the curriculum.

Due to the specific learning paths of students, both guidance and coaching are tailored to individual needs. Students regularly consult with lecturers about the content and process of their projects. Lecturers provide formative feedback on the quality of the work process and outcomes, and are also involved in summative assessments.

In addition, students are supported by a study coach who focuses on individual progress and learning processes. Study coaches offer guidance on study skills, reflect on students' academic and professional attitudes and future ambitions, and identify potential obstacles in their progress. Each programme has its own dedicated study coach.

Study coaches meet with student groups regularly during informal coffee or lunch sessions, and individually when needed. They also respond to students' needs by suggesting themes for workshops or classes. Study coaches stay in close contact with the course leader to discuss student progress.

In Scenography, the course leader organizes at least two meetings per semester to address issues raised by students. Additionally, once per semester, 'Staying with... Sessions' are held for interested students and alumni, offering space for long-term reflection on the design and context of the curriculum.

In Fine Art, the course leader invites students to 'Lunch with Questions' sessions: one-hour meetings held three times per semester to discuss urgent matters.

Beyond lecturers and study coaches, HKU offers the Student Well-being (StuW) programme, a support infrastructure aimed at raising awareness and addressing structural risks related to student well-being.

Students (and staff) also have access to three confidential advisors, a student counsellor (for support with personal or sensitive issues), and two coaches who help students regain creativity or focus.

For students with functional impairments, HKU has developed the Policy Plan for Studying with a Disability.

HKU has also established a Code of Conduct, which outlines principles around equal treatment, harassment, and violence, and defines the integrity standards upheld by the university. The aim is to provide a safe and inclusive learning and working environment for both staff and students. All staff members have completed training on social safety.

III. Information provision

MAFAD keeps students informed about important matters within the programmes through various channels:

- The Student Portal serves as the central source of information for students.
- Nextcloud is the digital platform used for storing course materials and documentation.
- MyX functions as the student calendar and also allows students to quickly message each other.
- OSIRIS is the digital study information system where students can find up-to-date information about their study results and academic progress. All module descriptions are available in OSIRIS, and lecturers can upload grades and evaluations to the system.

During the introduction week at the start of the academic year, students receive all necessary information about the programme, curriculum, available facilities, and activities.

The Student Affairs Service Desk is available for all official matters and questions regarding enrollment, finances, academic progress, studying with a disability, applying for grants and scholarships, and more.

Due to the small scale of the programmes, communication lines are short, and lecturers are always approachable when students encounter any issues.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel finds that both programmes **meet the requirements** of standard 2. The structures of both programmes are based on the threads MAKE, THINK and SHARE, which offer different constellations and perspectives on the points of references (mentioned at standard 1). Students explore what making, thinking and sharing means and how they influence each other. Artistic Research is the culmination of the strands and holds a significant position within the curriculum. Both programmes interpret MAKE, THINK and SHARE in their own way, suited by their own approach to the learning outcomes according to the panel. For example: In the legacy of Fine Art it has been hard to integrate MAKE, THINK and SHARE. Therefore Fine Art is developing an integral study line to increase this integration.

The threads align well with each other and reinforce one another. The panel clearly recognized the threads within the curriculum and noted that both students and teachers actively engage with them. The panel also spoke highly of the prominent role and attention given to artistic research within both curricula. However, the panel sees opportunities for increased collaboration between the two programmes, which is also a wish expressed by the MAFAD staff. The Scenography and Fine Art programmes are delivered by dedicated teaching teams composed of both permanent staff and guest lecturers. These educators are active professionals and researchers with strong ties to the professional field. Diversity is a key principle: the teams are made up of individuals with varied artistic, academic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. Students appreciate the commitment of the lecturers, who work closely together in coaching, mentoring, and assessment. Professional development receives structural attention through training, coaching, and research projects, with many lecturers holding a master's degree and a growing number pursuing or holding a PhD.

The audit panel found committed teaching teams with substantial professional experience. The lecturers' strong research capabilities are highly appropriate, given the significant role artistic research occupies in the curricula.

Guidance and coaching are tailored to individual needs and provided by a study coach.

Lecturers are also always accessible for questions.

4.3. Student assessment

Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Explanation NVAO: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes. The Board of Examiners carries out its legal duties and exercises its legal powers.

Findings

System of assessment

The curricula of both programmes are designed to assess not only the students' artistic research and development, but also the applied methods and approaches. Self-evaluation of one's own work and processes is a key component of assessment.

As previously mentioned, both programmes are structured into four semesters. Each semester begins with collective formative moments (referred to as Way Points 1–4F in Scenography and Evaluations in Fine Art). Each semester ends with a collective summative moment of exchange and assessment (called Way Points 1–4S in Scenography and Assessments in Fine Art). Throughout the semester, students receive feedback during various formative moments. These shared feedback sessions transcend individual modules and focus on the status and development of students' individual research trajectories, involving semester lecturers, peers, and occasionally guests. They provide a holistic view of students' research progress. Lecturers and peers represent the diverse perspectives offered within the module contexts, supporting an integrated and multi-voiced form of assessment. The fourth semester concludes with the final exam, which is the programme's only high-stake assessment.

System of assessment - Scenography

Way Points, as they are called from the 2024–2025 academic year onward, are checkpoints that map the students' research development throughout their studies. During these moments, students are asked to position themselves and reflect on their research. They are also encouraged to formulate questions for the students and lecturers to whom they present, in order to further explore their own interests.

In addition to the collective sessions, lecturers exchange information informally about students' development, and starting in 2024–2025, they will do so formally at least once per semester. All documents and guidelines related to assessment—such as the Way Point guidelines and the final exam protocol—are reviewed and updated annually.

System of assessment - Fine Art

During the Evaluation and Assessment moments, students present their work along with their research document and provide an oral explanation of their work and its context. This is followed by a discussion with lecturers in which students position and reflect on their artistic research.

Over the course of the four semesters, the programme's assessment plan supports a gradual development: from module-specific assessments to a fully integrated evaluation at the end of the fourth semester.

Students are content with the assessments and the quality of the feedback they get. There is a safe, non-competitive learning environment in which feedback is well given and received. Students also notice that there is good communication between the lecturers, that they relate to one another and have ongoing dialogue.

For students in both programmes, summative assessments are key moments at the end of each semester, building on the preceding formative sessions. During these assessments, the examiner(s) collect feedback from all lecturers based on the learning objectives and assessment criteria outlined in the module descriptions and assessment forms provided by all

lecturers. The examiner(s) then determine the final evaluation. The executing examiner(s) compile grades and written feedback.

The assessment forms include both formative, process-oriented criteria (gathered throughout the semester) and summative, outcome-oriented presentation criteria. These criteria are shared and discussed with students in advance. Upon successful completion of a summative assessment, credits are awarded for each module.

Student assessments, as summarized above, are described in more detail in the assessment plans of the respective programmes.

Reliability, objectivity, validity, and transparency

The programmes ensure transparency, objectivity, and reliability in assessment through various measures. Examples include:

- A competency matrix is available to clarify how modules contribute to competencies and educational goals.
- Module descriptions include objectives and assessment criteria.
- The assessment plan outlines the assessment practices.
- Assessment forms are used for summative evaluations. These clearly describe the assessment criteria (as defined in the study information system Osiris) and indicate whether they are outcome- or process-oriented.
- To ensure intersubjectivity, joint assessment procedures follow the 'four-eyes or more' principle (at least two assessors per evaluation, typically three to four). A second (and external third) reader is involved in assessing the Final Research Document.
- External experts are involved as advisors during the final exam (the 'strange eyes' principle).
- Lecturers conducting summative assessments are qualified and experienced in assessment practices. They have completed the Basic Didactic Competence course (BDB).
- The two chambers (Fine Arts and Theatre) of the Board of Examiners appoint examiners according to the required standards.
- The chambers of the Board of Examiners monitor the quality of assessments. To do so, they attend assessment meetings (on a sample basis), review research documents or other written work, and critically examine module descriptions. Their role is to advise the programmes based on their findings and report to the Executive Board of HKU.

Partly due to the introduction of the Integral Study Approach (ISA, see Standard 2), and the integrated assessment and evaluation in the fourth semester, the assessment processes within Fine Art are being revised, and the programme is working towards a more integrated assessment culture. The Fine Art team meets monthly to discuss and further develop their teaching practices in relation to this integrated approach.

This year, the Master's programme in Scenography has explicitly initiated a team of lecturers to evaluate its position on assessment through dedicated feedback sessions. Additionally, the programme has updated its assessment criteria and continues to refine its vision on assessment.

According to the panel, these types of meetings clearly contribute to the quality of assessments.

Board of Examiners

The role of the Board of Examiners is to ensure the quality of assessments within HKU. The board operates independently and has an advisory and monitoring role for the programmes it oversees.

The Board of Examiners of MAFAD consists of two chambers: HKU Fine Art and HKU Theatre. Each chamber includes a chair, two members from the respective teaching teams, and one external expert.

The two chambers align their working methods and vision on assessment quality and meet several times a year. They also regularly consult with the *school* directors. The Board of

Examiners operates according to procedures outlined in the HKU Board of Examiners Regulations. Each chamber prepares an annual work plan that includes standard actions as well as specific focus points that vary each year, such as dossier development or curriculum changes. The board's activities and findings are shared through an annual report and targeted memos.

A formal responsibility of the Board of Examiners is to appoint lecturers as examiners in accordance with HKU policy. These appointed lecturers are responsible for developing, executing, validating, and assessing their modules.

HKU provides extensive support for the professional development of its Boards of Examiners. Each year, multiple training sessions and workshops are organized by HKU or by the boards themselves. The chairs of all HKU Boards of Examiners meet ten times a year to share experiences and cases. The Executive Board of HKU attends these meetings several times a year. The HKU Theatre chamber meets at least once a year with the course leader of the Scenography programme to discuss developments or changes in assessment within that programme. It also organizes one to two annual working sessions to foster deeper dialogue between course leaders and lecturers from various HKU Theatre programmes on relevant assessment topics, such as calibration or the final exam protocol.

The HKU Fine Art chamber meets at least twice a year with the course leader of the MA Fine Art programme. Additional meetings are held to discuss changes in the curriculum or, when necessary, based on observations.

Together, members of both chambers annually observe the final exams of both programmes. Since the last accreditation in 2019, increased attention has been given to the two chambers of the MAFAD Board of Examiners. Rather than merging the two chambers into one, HKU chose to focus on improving communication and exchange between the two, as this is the existing structure in other HKU Boards of Examiners. Since then, they have met regularly and attend each other's exams to discuss procedures, learn from one another, and ensure the quality of assessments.

The panel has a lot of confidence in both chambers. The members are proactive and have all the right qualifications.

Graduation

HKU MAFAD is designed for postgraduate students and professionals with an artistic research practice. Upon graduation, these emerging professionals are equipped to contribute to the specificity of their field and to critically question its boundaries. They work towards creating meaningful connections and fostering new cross-pollinations.

Graduation demonstrates that the student has achieved all intended learning outcomes. Once the three preceding modules have been successfully completed, the student may begin the graduation phase.

Fine Art students graduate with the Artistic Research Project (ARP), which consists of at least the research document, a public presentation (as part of the HKU graduation exhibition Exposure), and an oral statement.

As previously mentioned, Fine Art now assesses the fourth and final semester as one integrated project (see also Standard 2), in line with the programmes vision of an integral study approach. The first cohort of students under this new structure graduated in 2023. Fine Art is currently evaluating this development and its potential implications.

For Scenography, the final work consists of a Final Research Document (FRD) and a verbal presentation of the research, followed by a Q&A session. The FRD is a written document, but it may be integrated into the artistic work and vice versa. There is also an option for collaborative graduation projects, in which students must still individually reflect on their own (research) position within the joint project (FRD and Q&A).

One area of focus within the programme is strengthening the relationship between the Final Research Document and the student's experiential artistic work, seen as a reproducible, enduring 'alter ego' of the research. Currently, the FRD often takes the form of a book. While

this is a valid format, the programme recognizes that, from the perspective of artistic research, a broader range of formats would be desirable. Such changes in format do, however, impact assessment procedures. The programme continues to develop these criteria, as well as the roles of the teaching team and students in the context of assessment within master's education.

The audit panel reviewed fifteen final projects, both physically (presentations) and on paper (research projects and documents), and also examined the corresponding assessments. For the works viewed in person, the panel observed that the assessment procedures were clearly explained and carefully executed. The panel was particularly positive about the extensive feedback provided on the assessment forms.

The final exam assessment procedure, which the panel attended, was also carried out with great care. The assessment committee for the final exams includes an external member who serves in an advisory role — a policy applied across HKU.

However, the panel encourages the programmes to initiate a dialogue about the function of this advisory role. There is a potential risk that internal assessors, being familiar with the students' learning trajectories, may unconsciously take this into account during evaluation. The panel did not observe this in practice and, given the thorough procedures, does not expect any issues. Nonetheless, allowing the external advisor to participate in the assessment could help mitigate this risk. The panel considers it valuable for this conversation to take place.

Considerations and Judgement

In regard to the finding the panel concludes that both programmes **meet the requirements** of standard 3. Both programmes use an assessment system that focuses on students' artistic development, applied methods, and self-reflection. Each semester begins with a formative group feedback session and ends with a summative assessment moment. Throughout the semester, students receive ongoing feedback from lecturers, peers, and occasionally guest experts, centered on their individual research progress. The evaluation is interdisciplinary and multi-perspective. The only high-stakes assessment is the final exam at the end of the fourth semester.

The summative assessments at the end of each semester are key moments for the students. The examiners collect feedback from all lecturers based on the known assessment criteria. The examiners determine the final evaluation. The panel reviewed the assessment plans of both programmes and examined several of the assessment forms used. It was positive about the clarity of the forms and the transparent descriptions of the assessment procedures. Both students and examiners have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Among other things, clear module descriptions, assessment forms, the 'four eyes or more'-principal and the involvement of external experts make sure the assessments and judgements are reliable, objective, valid and transparent.

Fine Art students graduate with the Artistic Research Project (ARP) which consists of at least the research document, a public presentation (as part of the HKU graduation exhibition Exposure), and an oral explanation.

Scenography students graduate with a Final Research Document (FRD), and an oral presentation of the research, followed by a question-and-answer session.

The audit panel reviewed or visited fifteen final projects and their assessments. It found the procedures to be thorough and appreciated the detailed feedback on the assessment forms. While the inclusion of an external advisor aligns with HKU policy, the panel recommends discussing their role further to avoid potential bias from internal assessors. No issues were observed, and the panel considers the current process reliable.

4.4 Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Explanation NVAO: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

Findings

Overall assessment of the final level by the audit panel

Prior to the audit the panel has studied fifteen students' final projects. This concerned five final projects from Fine Art in documentation (research products), two final projects from Scenography in documentation (research documents), four final projects of Fine Art at location BAK, and four final projects from Scenography at location De Nijverheid.

The panel concluded that all fifteen final exams reflected the masters level and aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. All the exams had a strong artistic research component.

The Fine Art exams, both seen and read, are mostly delicate and show the students invitingly, making one curious about the personal, socio-cultural and political narratives they relate to. It is clear that the works are not made for aesthetic discourse or to make a statement, but contain a strong personal urgency in which viewers are invited to reflect on by seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting, reading, opening, folding.

From the students of the MA Scenography programme, there are many interactive and sometimes immersive installations that invite people to participate. These bodily interactions arouse curiosity, are moving and appeal to a compassion. The works show a strong awareness of sensitivities in location, material, dimension, narrative, colour and sensibility.

Alumni and professional field

MAFAD maintains close ties with the professional field to monitor how well the programmes align with professional practice. These connections are actively maintained through dialogue with industry partners. Alumni are involved in the programmes in various ways, including participating in feedback sessions and presentations.

There is also a structured alumni policy. In addition to tracking how graduates transition into the professional field, alumni form a learning community and continue to receive support even after completing their studies.

As mentioned in standard 2 current students from the Fine Art programme would like more support and guidance in navigating the professional artistic network by making more excursions and introductions in order to be able to network. Students from Scenography share this opinion. They feel the need for a strong link to professional practice after graduation.

Considerations and Judgement

In regard to the finding the panel concludes that both programmes **meet the requirements** of standard 4. The panel studied fifteen final exams, eight presentations and seven research documents divided by the two programmes. All fifteen final exams reflected the masters level and aligned with the intended learning outcomes mentioned in standard 1. All the exams had a strong artistic research component.

Alumni remain close ties with MAFAD. And there is also a strong connection with the professional field.

4.5 Facilities

Standard 5: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.

Explanation NVAO: The accommodation of the programme and the facilities are in keeping with the intended learning outcomes and the teaching-learning environment.

Findings

Fine Art

Fine Art is located at De Loods, A studio building that offers opportunities for both individual and collaborative projects. There is a basic workshop where students can carry out projects, with or without the support of a facilities manager or technician.

Close to De Loods is another HKU location with an extensive workshop facility, which includes not only traditional workshops but also a digital makerspace, a black box, a biolab, and a media library.

Students Fine Art confirm that the programme-specific facilities are in order. However they do feel that they are isolated from the rest of the educational community at HKU. While they have the freedom to move around many students feel (because of unavailable opportunities and a lack of time) that they are missing an opportunity to experience a wider university context. They would like to be surrounded by different students, actions and energies more often.

Students would also like to see that the opening hours of the Loods would be expanded so they have more access to their studio.

Scenography

Scenography is housed in the Pastoe building, which offers a shared studio space and individual workstations for students. Pastoe also includes workshops for printmaking, wood, metal, ceramics, and more, as well as a black box theatre and LAB Pastoe (a space dedicated to material research and experimentation with cross-disciplinary techniques).

Given the strong connection between the Scenography programme and theatre/performance, students also make use of the facilities at HKU Theater on Janskerkhof. These include two theatre halls, storage spaces for costumes, props, and equipment, and a specialized theatre library.

During the site visit, the panel visited the Pastoe building and was impressed by the spaciousness and the quality of the facilities available.

HKU ensures that its facilities are up to date and aligned with developments in the professional field as well as internal needs by allocating an annual budget for maintenance and improvements of its regular housing.

Following the 2019 site visit, one of the recommendations was to reassess the physical facilities at the MAFAD locations, particularly in terms of accessibility and suitability. The Loods has been a point of discussion within HKU for some time, mainly due to the concerns raised by students. MAFAD has explored alternative locations, but due to the housing crisis in Utrecht, no suitable solution has yet been found. MAFAD continues to search for a sustainable solution. The audit panel acknowledges that MAFAD is actively addressing this issue and is taking the appropriate steps.

HKU offers institution-wide advanced technological and ICT facilities, as well as copying and printing services, and various media libraries with specialized educational collections. In addition, HKU students and staff have free access to the library of Utrecht University. Most HKU locations also provide equipment lending services for specialized tools such as computers, cameras, microphones, musical instruments, and more.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel finds that accommodation and infrastructure are sufficient on both locations and on

site-specific places of the programme. Therefore the panel concludes that the programme **meets the requirements** of Standard 5 for both programmes and thus both locations. The panel concludes that all necessary facilities are available at The Loods for Fine Art students to create their work. This is also confirmed by the students themselves, although they do feel somewhat isolated from the rest of HKU. They expressed a desire to be surrounded by other students more.

The facilities at the Pastoe building are also in order. During the site visit, the panel visited the Pastoe building and was impressed by the space and facilities.

One of the recommendations from the previous site visit was to reassess MAFAD's facilities. MAFAD has expressed dissatisfaction with the Loods; however, due to the housing crisis in Utrecht, efforts to find a more suitable location have not been successful yet. MAFAD keeps looking for a solution.

4.6. Quality Assurance

Standard 6: Standard 6: The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.

Explanation NVAO:

The programme organises effective periodic feedback that supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Existing programmes implement appropriate improvements based on the results of the previous assessment. They initiate appropriate evaluation and measurement activities to that end. The outcomes of this evaluation demonstrably constitute the basis for development and improvement. Within the institution, those responsible are held to account regarding the extent to which the programme contributes to the attainment of the institution's strategic goals. Quality assurance ensures the achievement of the intended learning results. The programme committee, examination board, staff, students, alumni and the relevant professional field are actively involved in the programme's internal quality assurance. The programme's design processes, its recognition, and its quality assurance are in keeping with the European Standards and Guidelines. The programme publishes accurate, reliable information regarding its quality, which is easily accessible to the target groups

Findings

Quality assurance at HKU serves two main purposes: fostering development and ensuring accountability. It combines an open, informal quality culture with a structured system of processes and protocols aimed at continuously improving education.

Within MAFAD's quality culture, emphasis is placed on the involvement of both students and staff, promoting openness, dialogue, and collaboration. Clear lines of communication exist between programmes, *schools*, workshops, and back offices, with shared responsibilities at the core. For example, course leaders of all HKU master's programmes regularly meet during the 'HKU Masteroverleg', where topics such as vision, programme design, admissions, assessment, and evaluation are discussed.

The quality assurance structure includes specific processes, protocols, and instruments to safeguard, clarify, and enhance educational quality. MAFAD's system is based on the HKU Quality Assurance Framework for Education and the quality plans of the respective schools. The programmes follow the PDCA cycle: developing and revising the curriculum (PLAN), implementing it (DO), evaluating the educational activities and checking whether the intended goals have been achieved (CHECK), and adjusting the next cycle as needed (ACT).

The audit panel notes that MAFAD evaluates the quality of education in various ways—both formally and informally—in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. Students, lecturers, alumni, representatives from the professional field, and the Board of Examiners all play an active role in quality assurance and provide valuable input.

Formal instruments used to support the PDCA cycle include student evaluations, the Course Committees (in Dutch: OC's), the Arts Monitor for Alumni (KUO monitor), and the National Student Survey (NSE).

At the institutional level, Planning & Control-interviews are held between *school* directors and the Executive Board, in which annual plans, multi-year personnel plans, quality plans, and assessment plans are discussed.

The audit panel also observed that many informal conversations take place, for example between students, lecturers, alumni, and representatives from the professional field.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel finds that the two programmes of the Master **meet the requirements** of Standard 6. The quality culture as well as the quality assurance structure from MAFAD are in order, according to the panel. Everyone within the programmes is involved in quality assurance, fostering a culture of openness, dialogue, and collaboration. The programmes operate

according to the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle. MAFAD evaluates the quality of education in collaboration with various stakeholders, using both formal and informal methods.

5. OVERALL CONCLUSION

The panel encountered two strong programmes in which artistic research, as expected from a professional master's programme, runs as a central thread throughout. The competencies are well-defined, and the corresponding coherent curricula offer a clear structure while allowing students sufficient freedom to develop artistically.

The teaching team is passionate and fully supports the design and content of the programme. Assessment procedures are well-organized, with the panel particularly highlighting the frequent feedback moments and the detailed evaluations of the final exams.

However, the panel believes that more collaboration between the two programmes could be pursued; a wish also expressed by students.

Taking everything into account, the panel advises the NVAO to reaccredit both programmes.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Seek greater collaboration between the two programmes so that students can inspire and learn from one another.
- Include more focus in the curriculum on 'life after graduation' to better prepare students for the post-study phase.

Appendix I Overview of judgements

Results overview University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU) Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design Full time		
Standard	Judgement Fine Art	Judgement Scenography
Standard 1. Intended Learning Outcomes	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Standard 3. Student assessment	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Standard 5. Facilities	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Standard 6. Quality Assurance	Meets the standard	Meets the standard
Overall conclusion	Positive	Positive

Appendix II Site visit, working methods and rules of decision

Audit schedule Extended Programme Assessment of Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design, University of the Arts Utrecht (HKU).

Location: HKU Location Pastoe Fabriek, Rotsoord 3, Utrecht

Date location visit: 30th of June 2025

Time	Conversation participants	Possible conversation topics
08.30 - 08.45	Walk in & reception audit panel	
08.45 - 09.30	Preliminary internal meeting of the audit panel	
09.30 - 10.15	Panel management team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • director <i>school</i> HKU Fine Art • director <i>school</i> HKU Theatre • course leader MAFAD programme Fine Art • course leader MAFAD programme Scenography 	<p><u>Introduction to the MT and setting of the agenda. Possible conversation topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic policy, vision, mission • developments in and relation with work field • market position / positioning & profiling • international orientation • vision on applied research • professorship & knowledge circle • staff policy /development • hbo-level / educational achievement - quality assurance
10.15 - 10.30	Break / Internal meeting audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal meeting
10.30 - 11.15	Panel Students <p>Scenography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student MA programme Scenography Year 1, class representative • student MA programme Scenography Year 2, class representative & member course committee (OC) • student MA programme Scenography Year 2 <p>Fine Art:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student MA programme Fine Art, year 1 • student MA programme Fine Art, year 2 • student MA programme Fine Art, year 2, class representative & member course committee (OC) 	<p>Possible conversation topics students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connection previous education / admission • quality and relevance of the course • feasibility, study load • study guidance • quality teaching staff • provision of information • course-specific provisions • assessments • graduation <p>Possible conversation topics OC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interaction with the management (course leaders) • role in internal quality assurance • involvement in decision-making process
11.15 - 11.30	Break/ Internal meeting audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal meeting

11.30 - 12.15	<p>Panel Lecturers</p> <p>Scenography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenography lecturer Make • Scenography lecturer Share • Professor (lector) Expanding Artistic Practices, Scenography lecturer Share & Think <p>Fine Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine Art lecturer 'Guided Practice' / Make, member HKU central council of representatives (CMR) • Fine Art lecturer 'Getting Connected' / Think • Fine Art lecturer 'Processing Feedback' / Share 	<p>Possible conversation topics lecturers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coherent educational environment • content, design, developments, profile and consistency course (characteristics) • relation with / input of work field • international component • research line • interaction research and education • study career guidance/ feasibility, study load • professional space/staff development • workload • influence on/involvement with the course • involvement lecturers and work field • assessments (strategy) • quality assurance
12.15 - 12.30	Break/ Internal meeting audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal meeting
12:30 - 13.00	Rondleiding	
13.00 - 13:45	Lunch	
13.45 - 14.30	<p>Panel Board of Examiners</p> <p>HKU Theatre: former chair Board of Examiners, chamber Theatre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • member Board of Examiners, chamber Theatre <p>HKU Fine Art: chair Board of Examiners, chamber Fine Art member Board of Examiners, chamber Fine Art</p>	<p><u>Possible conversation topics Board of Examiners:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authorizations, tasks and roles • relation to the management /course leaders • quality assurance assessments quality assurance graduation
14.30 - 14.45	Break / Internal meeting audit panel	internal meeting

14.45 - 15.30	<p>Panel Work field /Alumni</p> <p>Scenography alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA programme Scenography graduate 2024 <p>MA programme Scenography graduate 2022</p> <p>Scenography work field representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over het IJ & Zero festival, Scenography guest lecturer <p>Fine Art alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA programme Fine Art graduate 2024 MA programme Fine Art graduate 2023 <p>Fine Art work field representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> part of BAK Fellowship for situated practices 2023-24, Decolonial Glossary (https://decolonialglossary.com.ua/home-en) 	<p><u>Conversation topics alumni:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality and relevance of the course (programme, lecturers) functioning in the work field or further education after graduation <p><u>Conversation topics work field:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> actual developments and translation in the course other wishes from the work field own profiling of the course research component involvement in quality assurance realised level
15.30 - 15.45	Pending issues (if needed)	
15.45 - 16.45	Internal meeting audit panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> determine preliminary assessment
16.45	Feedback/preliminary assessment (public, in Dutch)	

For privacy reasons, the names are not included in this report. The names of auditees are known to the secretary of the audit panel.

Working methods

Selection of the delegations / the auditees

In compliance with the NVAO regulations the audit panel prior to the audit decided on the composition of the delegations (auditees) in consultation with the course management and on the basis of the points of focus that had arisen from the panel's analysis of the course documents.

Auditing process

The following procedure was adopted. The panel studied the documents regarding the programme (see Annex Documents reviewed) and a number of theses. The panel secretary organised input from the auditors and distributed the preliminary findings among the panel members prior to the audit. A preparatory meeting of the panel was held before the site visit took place at the institute, on the 30th of June.

During the site-visit the audit panel members spoke randomly to students and reviewed a number of additional theses.

The assessment of the full-time programmes in question was based on the Assessment Framework for Accreditation of Higher Education in the Netherlands' adopted by NVAO (effective April 1, 2024). This lists the standards on which an audit panel must focus in the comprehensive programme assessment of a programme and the criteria by which the panel must determine its assessment of the programme.

The visitation focused on verifying the findings from the document analysis and obtaining additional information about the content of the programme. This was done through interviews with representatives of the programme, students and the field, which could be characterized as "peer-to-peer conversations.

The verification by the audit panel took place by discussing the same subject several times with different sections and on the basis of additional documentation and -where accommodation and material facilities are concerned- also by own observation.

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

An 'open consultation session' was scheduled as part of the site-visit programme. The panel verified that the scheduled times of the consultation session had been made public to all parties involved in the school community in a correct and timely manner. No students or staff members attended the open consultation session.

A first version of the assessment report was drafted by the secretary and circulated among the members of the panel for review and comments. The final draft was subsequently forwarded to the institute to correct factual inaccuracies.

Rules of decision

According to the NVAO Accreditation Decision Rules, a standard can score "satisfactory", "partially satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". Hobéon has applied the decision rules as listed in the "Assessment Framework for the Dutch Higher Education Accreditation System" (2024).

If there are different variants of a programme (e.g. full-time, part-time and dual), the assessment must show that the quality of each variant is guaranteed on the basis of the standards set out in the relevant assessment framework in order to arrive at a positive final assessment of the programme. The final assessment of the programme is either "positive", "positive with conditions" or "negative".

If a programme is offered under a single programme code (ISAT) at multiple locations, the programme can only be considered for accreditation if the assessment shows that each location meets the quality standards specified in the relevant assessment framework.

Programme assessment of institutions without ITK accreditation

The final assessment of a programme is positive in any case if all standards score "compliant".

The final assessment of a programme is positive with conditions in any case if

Standard 1 is compliant and a maximum of three standards score "partially compliant", in which case the audit panel recommends imposing conditions.

The final assessment of a programme is negative in any case if:

- one or more standards score "does not meet"
- standard 1 scores "partially meets"
- one to three standards score "partially meets", whereby the audit panel does not recommend imposing conditions;
- three or more standards score "partially compliant".

Appendix III Documents reviewed

List of documents examined

- Self-evaluation Report institute
- Readers Guide SER
- MAKE – THINK – SHARE SER-MAFAD Appendix
- Assessments MA programme Scenography
- Assessments MA programme Fine Art
- Photos HKU MAFAD
- Overview Teaching staff and network Fine Art
- Overview Teaching staff and network Scenography
- Photos HKU Location De Loods
- Board of Examiners observation form
- Master profile Fine Art and Design
- Module descriptions MAFAD
- Academic and Examination Regulations 2024-2025 FA
- Academic and Examination Regulations 2024-2025 SC
- Annual report Board of Examiners (EC) HKU Fine Art 23-24
- Annual report Board of Examiners (EC) HKU Theatre 23-24
- Annual report Board of Examiners (EC) HKU Theatre 22-23
- Annual report Board of Examiners (EC) HKU Fine Art 22-23
- Annual report Course Committee (OC) HKU Fine Art 22-23
- Annual report Course Committee (OC) HKU Theatre 22-23
- Annual report Course Committee (OC) HKU Fine Art 23-24
- Annual report Course Committee (OC) HKU Theatre 23-24
- Workshop facilities HKU Overview
- HKU Help chart - support system offered by HKU
- Video MA Scenography
- Video MA Fine Art
- Representative selection of final projects, selected by the panel, of the past two years with corresponding assessment criteria and requirements;
- List of all recent final projects/papers examined prior to the audit:

Following NVAO regulations the panel prior to the audit the panel has studied fifteen students' final projects.

This concerned 15 full-time final projects, 5 final projects from specialisation Fine Art in documentation, 2 final projects from specialisation Scenography in documentation, 4 final projects of Fine Art at location BAK, and 4 final projects from Scenography at location De Nijverheid.

For privacy reasons, the names of these graduates and their student numbers are not included in this report. The names of the graduates, their student number, as well as the titles of the final projects, are known to the secretary of the audit panel.

Appendix IV Compositon of the auditpanel

Name visitation group:	HBO Master Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving Diagonaal
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Succinct resumes of participating panel members:

Name		Succinct CVs
Drs. Joséphine Rutten	chair	Drs. Rutten is independent educational expert, and has chaired numerous accreditation audits in Higher Education.
Heleen de Hoon	member	Is director of Studies at Fontys Academy of the Arts and has been a lecturer in Artistic Connective Practices at the Fontys Academy of the Arts since 2021.
Joram Kraaijeveld RMA	member	Joram Kraaijeveld has curated exhibitions and projects. From 2016-2020, he was director of Platform BK, the interest group for artists and designers in the Netherlands.
Inneke Taalman, MA	studentmember	Master of Fine Art Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam NL (current).

José Koot	Secretary	NVAO-trained Secretary at Hobéon.
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Prior to the audit all panel members undersigned declarations of independence and confidentiality which are in possession of the NVAO. This declaration certifies, among other things, that panel members do not currently maintain or have not maintained for the last five years any (family) connections or ties of a personal nature or as a researcher/teacher, professional or consultant with the institution in question, which could affect a fully independent judgement regarding the quality of the programme in either a positive or negative sense.

On 8th of April 2025 the NVAO endorsed the composition of the panel to assess the Master of Fine Art and Design of the University of Arts Utrecht (HKU), number PA-2322.

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