AeQui

Master Fine Art and Design
Design Academy Eindhoven

Report of the extensive programme assessment
26 October 2023 and 20 February 2024

Colophon

Summary

On 26 October 2023 and 20 February 2024 an assessment committee of AeQui assessed the master programme in Fine Art and Design of Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE). The overall judgement of the committee on the quality of the programme is **positive**. The programme offers five departments: Social Design, Contextual Design, Information Design, Critical Inquiry Lab, and Geo-Design. Even though there are differences between the departments (regarding specific focus and context of design), the committee also notes that for example the intended learning outcomes, the structure, the embodiment of the learning environment and the set-up of the assessments are similar. This commonality was also reflected in the graduation show at the Dutch Design Week.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with (inter)national requirements for design and are in tune with the demands from the professional field. All intended learning outcomes are covered in the programme and the intended learning outcomes are aligned with the Dublin descriptors, the European Qualification Framework, and the Dutch national standard for master programmes.

The committee values the core characteristics of the programme and DAE, which focus on critical, research based and creative thinking, reflection, positioning and exploring the role of design in society and beyond the more traditional areas. In a globalising world the programme's clear positioning is very important, recognisable, and unique. The committee notes however that exploring the role of design in society also requires to establish connections with different fields and inviting these fields into the programme to make them accessible for students (expanding 'the bubble'). The committee assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Curriculum

The programme enables students to realise the intended learning outcomes. The yearly plans are very helpful for students to understand the focus and organisation of the programme. Research, which can have many different forms and is always related to a material or applied outcome, is at the core of the programme. Students are actively encouraged to develop and apply their own methodologies and design in context.

The programme has a clear structure. The first year offers students ample insight and practice with (research) methodologies, theories, and media/material. During the second year, students focus on their own research question and design project. The learning environment allows for interactive contact between students and tutors and an individual approach. An effective learning community is created with a strong focus on self-directed and student-centred learning. An adequate enrolment procedure is in place and the programme ties in with the students' different backgrounds.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international staff, the international students, and the international character of the fields of design. Lecturers are skilled in English-language teaching to students from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds. The committee concludes that the international name of the programme is appropriate. The committee assesses that the programme meets standards 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Staff

The staff involved is very committed, competent, and rigorous. All heads and tutors have their own (international) practice as a designer, researcher, curator, or any other design-related practice. The heads of the departments are actively engaged in

the programme. The fixed tenure of the coordinators contributes to continuity in the organisation of the programme, since the coordinators are 'the glue' between students, tutors, and the head of the programme. In addition, this adds to the adequate balance between fixed and freelance staff. Regarding the active involvement of alumni in the programme, the committee stresses the importance of the balance between involving 'alumni tutors' and 'independent (guest) tutors' in the programme. The committee assesses that the programme meets standard 6.

Facilities and support

The programme has appropriate facilities. These include open workspaces and dedicated workshop spaces. The committee expects the new building to meet the needs of the programme and students. The tutoring of students is tailored to the needs of the students, reflects the interactive and intensive scale of the programme, and matches the self-direction expected of master's students. In addition, the committee notes that the programme is based on a general notion of 'care', which is present in all aspects of the programme. The committee assesses that the programme meets standards 7 and 8.

Quality assurance

An effective system of quality assurance in place. Formal evaluations and committees, that involve all relevant stakeholders, are at the heart of this system. Students feel heard by the programme and the programme acts on their feedback. The committee was provided with concrete examples of improvement measures in response to student feedback. The committee assesses that the programme meets standard 9.

Assessment

An adequate assessment system in place, that contains a suitable balance between formative and summative assessment. The involvement of multiple assessors that provide students with different perspectives ensures the inter-assessor reliability of the assessments. The assessment criteria reflect the programme's focus on research.

The DAE Examination Board is pro-active in safeguarding the quality of the assessments and the end level of the programme. The board yearly checks the quality of the final level in the so-called tour of all the examination work. The committee assesses that the programme meets standard 10.

Achieved learning outcomes

An adequate graduation procedure is in place. In assessing the final thesis and design project multiple examiners, including external examiners, are involved. Based on (the visit to) the graduation show during the Dutch Design Week in October 2023 and the studied files, the committee concludes that the level of the graduates is high and that students regularly achieve more than the required master's level.

Most of the studied theses were very well written and showed breadth and depth in the literature used. Some of the studied theses however showed limited use of literature. In addition, students clarified how their research informed their practice of designing and making. In some theses the relevance of the research for design in general (and other practice than their own) could be more elaborated on. The relation with the research and focus on critical thinking was also present in the exhibition of the results during the graduation show. The committee was impressed by the story telling perspective during the graduation show and the awareness that was raised during the show.

The students and alumni met with, seem capable of creating their own career path within their chosen field of design. The programme has strong connections with alumni and alumni are actively

involved in the programme. The committee assesses that the programme meets standard 11.

Suggestions

In order to bring the programme to an even higher level of quality in the future, the committee issues the following suggestions:

- To increase the involvement of the two DAE professorships in the programme. This involvement is currently very limited and incidental.
- To actively engage more with the region. And at the same time create more international outreach for students (other than the graduation show at the Dutch Design Week).
- To incorporate more digital technologies in the workshops.
- To relate the assessment criteria more directly to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

The assessment was carried out according to the schedule presented in attachment 2. The programme has made several developments, based on the results of the former assessment (see attachment 3). The committee considered these developments as an integral part of the current assessment. The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme. All standards of the NVAO assessment framework are assessed positively; the committee therefore awards a **positive recommendation** for the accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the entire committee,
Utrecht, June 2024

Raoul van Aalst
Chair

Titia Buising
Secretary

Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The master programme in Fine Art and Design aims for students to become confident in design by developing a form of autonomy in practice that is informed by personal motivation, insight, and ambition. Students are expected not only to reproduce the skills conveyed in the chosen department, but also to build their self-developed methodological approach. The programme contains five departments: Social Design, Contextual Design, Information Design, Critical Inquiry Lab, and Geo-Design. The latter department started in 2020.

Students (of all five departments) are equipped with tools to investigate complex scenarios, to form personal perspectives on potential interventions and to nurture (multi-perspective) collaborations. The self-evaluation report states that, because of the rapidly changing world and ecological concerns, a critical re-evaluation of production processes, economy and the role of designers is needed. The programme therefore aims to educate so-called author designers/researchers who can reassess the designers' role, fostering new forms of authorship and ecological thinking in production. As author designers/researchers, graduates combine a well-developed intuition with a critical, engaged, and reflective approach, research skills and expressive ability. The author designers/researchers are autonomous, driven by curiosity and intuition and acquainted with numerous research methodologies and forms of practice. Students can also formulate their design position and construct argumentation.

Students are constantly encouraged to explore beyond traditional boundaries, involving not only designers but also creators, theorists, curators, researchers, scientists, and practitioners. Students are invited to develop their voice, reflect on the profession's scope, limits, and role within the production infrastructure. Students are challenged to cultivate their personal style, researching pertinent issues to propose valid designs, interventions, presentations, or texts.

The programme encourages students to explore complex economic, technological, scientific, and political themes and to question conventions, navigate complexity and reframe narratives.

By challenging contemporary notions of the design profession and practices through critical analysis of the work field, students learn to foster their autonomy. At the end of the programme, students are expected to understand the design position as one of the nodal functions in the chain of production. Students also know the relational, economic, and ecological significance and the responsibilities that come with it. Students can also formulate their design position and construct argumentation.

The programme defined intended learning outcomes for both years, which are related to the competences of the national profile of the Master of Arts in Fine Arts and Design. The intended learning outcomes have been formulated with consideration of national and international descriptions of the master level, such as the Dublin Descriptors, the Dutch HBO standard for master programmes and the European Qualification Framework.

Discussions during the site visit made clear that the programme's shift towards rethinking the value of design as a critical subject was made explicit in recent years. The programme aims to reposition the role of design in society in an expanded field, to rethink collective values and how design can tackle questions concerning social justice. In addition, it was noted that design is not about producing objects but about producing conditions. This has always been the somewhat implicit focus of the programme that has been made explicit in recent years.

Representatives of the professional field the committee met with during the site visit, stressed the value of the connection with DAE and the programme for their organisation. The way students are trained to research and explore is relevant for the professional field and for the future of design. It was noted that the graduation show is an example of the future and role of design. In addition, it was remarked that the programme can deepen its connection to the city. The connections with Eindhoven are currently more ad-hoc and could be more structural.

Considerations

Based on the interviews and the examination of underlying documentation, the committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes tie in with (inter)national requirements for this field. Based on an overview of the relation between assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes, the committee notes that all intended learning outcomes are covered. This overview also provides insight in the alignment between the intended learning outcomes and the Dublin descriptors, the European Qualification Framework, and the Dutch national standard for master programmes.

The committee values the core characteristics of the programme and DAE which focus on critical, research based and creative thinking, reflection, positioning and exploring the role of design in society and beyond the more traditional areas. The committee notes that in a globalising world this clear positioning is very important, recognisable, and unique. The committee notes however that exploring the role of design in society also requires to establish connections with different other fields and inviting these fields into the programme to make them accessible for students (expanding the bubble).

The assessment committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Curriculum

Orientation

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

Findings

All departments focus on the environment in which they operate rather than on a specific medium. Each department questions what design is and functions as a laboratory dedicated to development and further design. As mentioned before, students are educated to be author designers/researchers. The connection between design and research is at the core of the programmes each department offers. In the first year, students learn skills and tools to conduct their research in the second year. The different design and writing assignments and workshops require that students approach research as the foundation of their work. Students explore different research methodologies and learn how these lead to different design approaches.

To become an author designer/researcher, students are encouraged to develop their own research question. This research focuses on a topic chosen by the student. The programme notes that as an author designer/researcher, students work on the basis of their own fascination and social or professional themes. According to the programme this distinguishes them from the designer as a mere problem solver.

During the programme, research questions are deepened by questioning the rigor of the research itself and students are expected to present coherent argumentation in multiple presentations and other formats. To encourage the development of their own positioning (and criticality towards this), students are exposed to different theories for example philosophy, theories on the epistemological and linguistic roles in exchange and communication, new materialism, and post-humanist thought. In addition, (self)reflection and writing are used as means to conduct and deepen research as well as to explore forms to represent and convey design ideas.

Skills are trained in the context of materialising and actualising the research. The programme expects the research quality to have a material and/or applied outcome. The programme has a broad perspective on material; this includes writing, graphic design, installation, film, curatorial work, performance, and sculpture etcetera. During the programme (and workshops), students are challenged to explore and apply many forms of medium and technology. The programme notes that since design can be presented as a product, but also as a strategy, performance, installation, or speculative scenario, it is important that the work be considered as 'design in context'.

The professional field is in different ways involved in the programme. Since department heads and tutors are actively engaged in the professional design field, the content offered by the different department is closely connected to current working practice. Moreover, external professionals are invited to take on the role of 'client' to let students test their message on a real 'audience'. Departments cooperate with industry, non-profit organisations, and governmental institutions on an individual basis but

also in cooperation with other departments. Examples of collaboration partners are municipality of The Hague, Netherlands Food Partnership, GGzE, Van Abbemuseum and Airport Eindhoven and International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam.

During the site visit, the committee discussed with various groups the programmes focus on professional skills development and the preparation for work life after DAE. Based on the information provided, the committee is under the impression that quite a lot of graduates are self-employed. The site visit made clear that self-employment also includes working in hubs or groups and working for external clients. During the programme encourages students to build their network, by inviting guest tutors from the professional field, by presenting students work at for example the graduation show and by the discussions with their tutors. Furthermore, it was noted that currently a plan is developed to create a platform for connection between alumni and the (regional) professional field.

Related to the above, students mentioned during the site visit that in the final trimester of the programme, their primary focus is on their thesis and the graduation show, with less attention directed towards post-graduation career plans. However, students expressed confidence in navigating their own career paths, relying on the networks they built during the programme and their experiences in initiating independent projects. Students also noted that the first year could provide more opportunities for exhibitions and collaborations.

Alumni noted during the site visit that the preparation for work life after DAE differs per department. Alumni of the Critical Inquiry Lab see room for improvement in this matter.

The committee concludes that research is at the core of the programme. Research can have many different forms and is always related to a material or applied outcome. Students are actively encouraged to develop and apply their own methodologies and design in context.

The committee supports the programmes' commitment to increase the involvement of the two DAE professorships in the programme. This involvement is currently very limited and incidental.

The committee recommends the programme to actively engage more with the region. And at the same time create more international outreach for students (other than the graduation show at the Dutch Design Week).

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Contents

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

Findings
The five departments all have their own focus and characteristics. In addition, each department is autonomous in the content of the programme. This is reflected in the yearly plan, drafted by the heads of the department. This plan provides insight in the specific programme, content, and tutors for each department. Since department heads and tutors are actively involved in the professional design field, the content offered is closely connected to current working practice.

The first year aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to successfully conduct individual research and to take on their graduation design project in the second year. In the second year, students develop a thesis and design project within their department.

The Contextual Design department considers design as a way to make sense of the world, as a practice of cultural critique. As a designer, students learn to be aware of the multiple contexts (ecological, spatial, social, and historical) in which they are designing. In addition, students learn to decipher and deconstruct the given contexts in the ongoing praxis of design. When students understand their positioning in the contexts, they can start to imagine how to design and reconstruct the context (whether these are objects, spaces, or relations). In addition, students learn that each designed object and strategy is a node in a network of relationships with other people, things, and contexts.

The Social Design department focusses on new social roles for designers attuned to contemporary ecological and social challenges. Students learn to understand design both as a practice and as a medium that functions at the intersection of ethics, politics, and ecology. In addition, the term social design is constantly questioned. In the programme, the ideologies and biases present in any design are discussed, in addition to how design could set conditions to include and exclude, homogenise, and diversify, and to bring together or set apart. This includes examining the historical, cultural, political, and economic background from which design practice emerges.

In the Information Design department students explore the politics and agency of information and its modes and contexts of production. By rejecting pre-defined professional roles, the programme combines technical proficiency with intellectual rigour and curiosity, in order to address the entangled relationships between social injustice, regimes of extraction, racial discrimination, spatial violence and the climate emergency.

The Geo–Design department questions how design can interface with complex phenomena in the material world by means of research, new objects, and cinema. The department is a space to question design's rootings critically and lyrically in and aspirations for the material world. A space to seek for new (eco)systemic, (eco)critical, as well as physical, biological, infrastructural, geological, and geopolitical possibilities and touchpoints for design.

The Critical Inquiry Lab offers students an environment to develop a self-directed design practice driven by transdisciplinary research. Design-research is defined as a mode of thinking through making. The department explores experimental methodologies of inquiry that weave performative, material, acoustic, image-based, and spatial modes of composing, underwritten by a process-oriented ethos. The department aims to construct questions guided by theoretical reflection, while animating design practices within those problem-spaces.

During the site visit, the committee discussed the similarities and differences between the departments with the department heads. It was noted that the focus on research as design, design as research, materialising body and concepts and criticality and positioning are recognisable elements of all departments. Even though all departments are media-independent, the media chosen by students differs per department. In addition, departments differ in their approach, positioning, language, personality, and the way design is contextualised.

The students the committee met during the site visit are in general positive about their programme. Students remarked that they are introduced to a lot of different methodologies and ways of thinking. In addition, they meet a lot of (guest) tutors, all with different experiences and expertise. This is liberating and motivating. And it allows them to create their own methodology. The second year is more focused and allows students to integrate the methodologies, theories etcetera from the first year.

Students are familiar with the departments yearly plan; this gives them insight in the topics and themes discussed, the tutors involved and provides them with a reading list. It helps them to prepare for the different trimesters.

The alumni the committee met with are also positive about the programme. The programme provided them for example with strategies for critical thinking, allowed them to develop a more critical and reflective practice, to explore different media and to self-determine and find their way in projects.

Considerations
The committee considers that the content of the programme enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The yearly plans are very helpful for students to understand the focus and organisation of the programme. The reading lists mentioned in the yearly plan are up-to-date, relevant, and comprehensive.

Even though the programme offers students ample room to find their own methodologies and positioning, the programme also has a clear structure. The first year offers students ample insight and practice with (research) methodologies, theories, and media/material. During the second year, students focus on their own research question and design project.

Even though the programme consists of five different departments, the committee is of the opinion that there is one programme with many commonalities.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

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

Findings
The 120 EC programme is organised in three trimesters each year. The first two trimesters of each year consist of one module (20 EC each) and the final trimester of two modules (10 EC each).

DAE aims for working and learning environments that are responsive, inclusive, and forward-thinking. These learning environments are expected to nurture a generation of designers who are equipped to engage with and shape the changing contours of the world. Subsequent to this, the programme fosters and promotes a generous exchange culture. This means that the education spaces are not only for learning but also for negotiation and dialogue. The programme wants students to feel empowered to participate freely in conversation and in the educational ecology they inhabit for their two-year study.

The programme's guiding didactical principle is thinking through making/writing and learning by doing (experiential education). This implies that the education in all departments is project based and organised in studios. Students work on an assignment that defines a challenge or a theme. Teaching methods include design and

research studios, theory and writing classes, fieldtrips, workshops, lectures, lectures by visiting critics and guests, discussion events within the departments, group agreement meetings and feedback sessions.

The programme also emphasises co-learning and collaboration. Within their department, students work together on design assignments. Peer-to-peer learning is fostered through collective and structured feedback sessions and the shared desks and open-plan space in which students work every day. In addition, students work and learn together across departments during collaborative projects. These projects focus on research, reflection, positioning, collaboration, and presentation while practicing a professional attitude. In the third trimester for example, students of all departments participate in an external project.

The department heads confirmed during the site visit that group work as well as individual work is part of the programme. During the programme, students create a peer group with whom they continue to collaborate after the programme. It was also noted that the Information Design department offers a so-called research lab that students can join in an open-ended collaboration, without deadlines.

Extracurricular activities include the DAE Lecture Series featuring speakers from various disciplines and backgrounds and at different stages in their careers. This lecture series is open to everyone and co-curated with bachelor and master students.

Students value the one-on-one tutoring and the tutoring in small groups, the committee learned during the site visit. This allows for focus on their own development and (group) projects.

The committee concludes that the structure of the learning environment allows for interactive contact between students and tutors and an individual approach. Different teaching formats are used, that leave room for individual and group work. In addition, the teaching formats are part of discussions between students and their tutors. The committee noticed that the balance between individual and group work is constantly watched over.

The committee is of the opinion that the programme succeeds in creating an effective learning community with a strong focus on self-directed and student-centred learning. The programme creates an ongoing discourse with students about their (future) positioning in the field of design and beyond.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international profile of the staff involved, the international students attending and the international character of the fields of study and research. The committee therefore concludes that the international name of the programme is more than appropriate. In addition, the committee establishes that the tutors involved are experienced in English-language teaching to students from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Incoming students

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

Findings
The legal enrolment criteria apply to the programme. The programme has a selective admission procedure in place. This procedure consists

of intake sessions during which the admission panel (department head and tutor) evaluates if students meet the requirements to start the programme. Applicants are asked to submit a cv, a digital portfolio, a motivation letter and a one-minute video, also to prove their proficiency in the English language. Based on this, applicants are invited for an interview via Skype with the head of the department and a tutor. Applicants apply for a specific department; after feedback from the admissions panel, students can apply to another department. Starting 2023 - 2024, a pre-master programme is offered for prospective students. The pre-master programme aims to bridge the gap between the practical focus of bachelor programmes of art academies and the research and writing skills required in this master programme.

The programme embraces diversity and is therefore open to students who show a sufficient basic understanding of design but have a different background. Student's backgrounds are very different, the committee learned during the site visit, and vary from finance, dental practice, and art to different fields of design. Approximately 65% of the students is European, 30% is non-European and 5% is Dutch. The programme organises an orientation week before the programme starts so students can get to know each other.

Students appreciate the reciprocal nature of the admissions interview, the site visit revealed. In addition, the students value the orientation week that helps them to create connections throughout the departments, to find their way in the city, and to make friends.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the legal enrolment criteria are applicable to the programme. In addition, the programme has a selection procedure in place that ensures that motivated students enrol the programme. Moreover, the committee is of the opinion that the programme ties in well with the students' different backgrounds.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Staff

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

Findings

The head of the programme is responsible for the entire programme. The heads of the departments bear responsibility for the content and education in their respective departments. The heads of the departments are leading international professionals in their respective fields. And have an important role in shaping the discourse in their field and in their department. The heads are supervised by DAE's Executive Board that consists of the academy's Creative Director and Director of Education, Research and Organisation. The head of the programme, the heads of the departments and the Executive Board meet on a regular basis.

The department heads are supported by a coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operation in the department and the first point of contact for students and tutors. The site visit learned that the coordinators have a crucial role in the scheduling of the programme, organising the assessments, welcoming and supporting students, coordinating with and onboarding tutors, and keeping up the budget. The aforementioned yearly plan is the foundation the realisation of the programme.

The number of core tutors involved in the departments varies from seven (Critical Inquiry lab) to fifteen (Information Design). In addition, guest tutors are involved in all departments. The self-evaluation report indicates that, aside from the programme head, coordinators, and one tutor, all other tutors and department heads at DAE are engaged as freelancers. Alumni are involved as a (guest) tutor in the programme and more than half of the current heads of departments are alumni.

In recent years, all coordinators have been trained in teaching and assessment skills (BDB/BKE). In addition, DAE organizes an annual BDB/BKE course for tutors. This year two freelance tutors have participated in this course. The programme notes that not all tutors have obtained their teaching qualification. The programme aims to increase this. The department heads organise informal team sessions with tutors to discuss the programme. The frequency of these team sessions varies between departments from once a trimester to once a year.

In total 68 tutors (heads and coordinators included) are involved in the programme (2,60 fte). 75% of the tutors have a master's degree. The tutors involved have a diverse and international background. The programme aims to further expand the international perspective by inviting tutors with a non-western perspective.

Last year, tutors of the master's programme joined the yearly Educational Day for the bachelor's programme. During this day cross-departmental meetings were held, the thesis proposal pilot was discussed as well as student motivation, group dynamics, feedback and diversity and cultural awareness. The site-visit learned that the Educational Day was met with great enthusiasm and therefore will be continued for the master's programme.

During the site visit, tutors expressed several examples of creating a safe space for students to express themselves. These include for example

a list of 'trigger' words and weekly moments to check in and check out with students. Tutors also noted their involvement in engaging external organisations or practitioners in the programme. This is based on the need of the student group. Tutors also are engaged as guest tutors in the other departments.

The presence of the heads of the departments at DAE is different for each programme, the committee learned during the site visit. Around the mid-term evaluations and assessments, heads are always present and interact with students. In addition, the heads of the departments provide annual seminars (approximately 50 hours per year) and consult with student groups and individual students throughout the year.

Tutors within the master's programme are expected to speak sufficient English. This is tested by the department head via a telephone interview.

Considerations
The committee considers that the staff involved is very committed, competent, and rigorous. All heads and tutors have their own (international) practice as a designer, researcher, curator, or any other design-related practice. The committee observes that the staff involved has an adequate command of the English language.

The committee appreciates that in recent years the programme invested in employing the co-ordinators by DAE. This contributes to the continuity in the organisation of the programme, since the coordinators are 'the glue' between students, tutors, and the head of the programme. In addition, this adds to the adequate balance between fixed and freelance staff.

The committee values the active involvement of the heads of department in the programme. The heads also frequently meet and discuss with each other and are well connected to the coordinators and the tutors.

The committee encourages the programme to initiate and participate in activities such as the yearly Education Day and the didactical training. The tutors involved in the latter found this very valuable, especially regarding assessments and giving feedback to students.

The committee notes that alumni are actively involved in the programme, as head of department or as (guest) tutor. Even though the committee values this, the committee also stresses the importance of striking a balance between involving 'alumni tutors' and 'independent (guest) tutors' in the programme.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Facilities and support

Accommodation

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

Findings

The programme is offered at the DAE building in Eindhoven. The facilities include open workspaces and dedicated workshop spaces for plastics, wood, metal, silkscreen, ceramics, and textiles. In addition, a digital workshop space (with a wide variety of printing techniques, a photo studio and darkroom, sound recording, PC computers and a wide range of software), 3D lab (with 3D printers, a laser cutter, electric lab equipment, VR glasses and 3D scanning), and a small Biolab are available. Moreover, the programme collaborates with external parties in extended labs. This provides students with access to facilities at Textiellab (Tilburg) for textiles, EKWC (Oisterwijk) for ceramics, Beeldenstorm for metal, wood, ceramics and silk screen, Make Eindhoven for glass, metal and graphic design, and the Van Abbemuseum (both Eindhoven) for curating, exhibiting and a relation to the arts.

Students can access literature through the in-house library, the National Library of the Netherlands, and the library of the Technical University Eindhoven (at a reduced rate). Furthermore, the academy has its own restaurant on the top floor.

The self-evaluation report notes that, in 2027, DAE will move to a new location, The Microlab building at Strijp-S. This building will be more suitable for the growth of the academy and flexible education.

Students noted during the site visit that access to workshop spaces and equipment could be improved, as could workshop opening hours. Students also stated that the workshops tend to fill up rapidly. Students discuss this within the programme and realise that it will likely take longer to resolve than their own stay at DAE.

Considerations

Based on the documentation and the tour of the facilities during the site-visit, the committee concludes that the programme has appropriate facilities. The committee expects the new building to meet the needs of the programme and students. The committee recommends the programme to incorporate more digital technologies in the workshops.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Tutoring

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

Findings

The coordinators of the departments are students first point of contact. Coordinators are responsible for the day-to-day business in the departments. If needed, extra support from the programme's student counsellor is available.

DAE aims to provide a learning and working environment that is based on trust, exchange, dialogue, co-developing and co-learning, and in which everyone feels safe and acts responsibly. A code of conduct is used to make everyone

aware of the policy on this topic and informs about the steps to be taken in case of undesirable behaviour. In the event of undesirable behaviour, students (and lectures) can consult the confidential counsellors. In addition, students can contact Mores, an independent disclosure office for undesirable behaviour in the performing arts, film and television sectors, art education and museums.

The programme uses several digital systems to inform students about their programme and results and to communicate with students. In addition, a monthly newsletter is issued, and a study guide is available. Starting academic year 2024 – 2025 Canvas will be used as a digital learning environment for the master's programme. This allows for the programme to share assignments and content with students and for communication between tutors, coordinators, and students.

Considerations
The committee concludes that the programme has sufficient tutoring in place, that matches with the independence expected of master students. The coordinators and tutors provide most tutoring and if needed extra support is available.

The committee encourages the programme to keep working on the clarity and findability of the information provided to students. During the site visit, students noted differences in this between departments.

In addition, the committee finds that the programme is based on a general notion of 'care', which is present in all aspects of the programme. This is for example illustrated by DAE's restaurant, that not only provides food but also a genuine interest in, and care for, students. Students are not left out at the programme.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Quality assurance

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

Findings

Regarding quality assurance, the programme has a cyclical process of planning, execution, adjustment, and assessment in place. This includes self-evaluation, group reflection and feedback sessions. The programme notes that self-reflection prompts discussions on quality improvement, leading to plans that are in line with the broader policies of DAE. Formal evaluations, such as interviews, meetings, surveys, and events provide input for year plan conversations, improvement plans and curriculum adjustments. DAE participates in the Dutch Kunsten-Monitor and the National Student Survey.

To investigate and explore changes in the student charter and the institutional structure of the programme — for instance regarding assessments, EC's, and evaluation criteria —a group has been set up to develop, pilot and evaluate proposed changes before recommending implementation.

DAE has established several bodies involved in quality assurance. These include the Master Course Committee, the Institutional Participation Council, and the Student Council. The Master Course Committee (MCC, consisting of students and tutors) is an advisory body that concerns the quality of education within the departments. The MCC consults with students and tutors regularly and works with the Student Council and Executive Board to discuss and formulate advice on improvements. The MCC provides solicited and unsolicited advice on all aspects of education and checks if changes are in line with the Teaching and Examinations Regulations. The MCC meets four times a year and students and tutors remain members for two years.

The Institutional Participation Council (IPC) is the official representative body of the entire DAE community. Elected every two years, the IPC consists of four chosen staff members and four chosen students. The IPC advises the Executive Board on strategic planning and policies. The Student Council (SC) is an informal representative body run for and by students. The Student Council aims to ensure that the student experience at DAE is exciting, meaningful, and accessible. The Student Council meets with the Executive Board every six weeks. One member of the council is represented as student member in the IPC.

Students are also involved in quality assurance trough the class representative meetings that are held every six weeks. During these meetings, the head of the programme sits with class representatives (in total 20 students) that give feedback on the programme. In addition, the departments organise so-called feedback sessions in January. During these sessions, class representatives, the head of the department, the co-ordinator, two tutors, the head of the programme and the master desk discuss the curriculum, the set-up of classes and the evaluation formats etcetera. Minutes are taken, actions are noted in a commitment list and are designated to a representative.

Each department has a group agreement in place that describes how the group handles discussions, meetings and sensitive information that comes up in group settings. This agreement is developed with students, the coordinator and the departments head and is reviewed every trimester.

During the site visit, alumni pointed out that following each assessment, students are encouraged to provide feedback to both the tutors and the head of the programme. Both students and alumni emphasised that a change in programme leadership can spark discussions and the implementation of improvements. Alumni and students cited various examples in which their feedback was effectively addressed and resulted in improvements in the programme.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the programme has an effective system of quality assurance in place. Formal evaluations and committees, that involve all relevant stakeholders, are at the heart of this system. In addition, the committee finds that the before mentioned notion of care (see standard 8) is also reflected in the quality assurance of the programme and in for example the frequent meetings with the class representatives.

Based on the discussions during the site-visit and the documentation studied, the committee determines that students in general feel heard by the programme and that the programme acts on their feedback. The committee was provided with concrete examples of improvement measures in response to student feedback.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Assessment

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

Findings

The programmes vision on assessment assumes that assessment is part of the learning process, and that assessment is a holistic element of the education provided. Summative and formative assessments are used as a measuring tool and to prepare students for professional practice. At the core of the assessment process is the focus on students' process: how did the student choose their methods and what analysis was derived from the outcomes of the research? Tutors construct the discourse and guide the conversation, which is reflected in the progress of the student work. To create a culture of quality, the programme places high value on the differences in perspectives between the tutors involved.

Formative assessment is an ongoing process; during each trimester students' work is evaluated by their tutors, peers, and themselves. In both years, each trimester includes a formative mid-term evaluation. During this formative evaluation students discuss their progress with the head of the department and their tutors.

At the end of each trimester the assessments have a summative character in which students work, and projects are assessed. This involves an assessment committee, consisting of a chair (department head), a secretary (department coordinator) and a minimum of two tutors (all appointed by the Examination Board). The assessment committee assesses students work and process based on five assessment criteria and through dialogue and conversation in which the different perspectives of all involved are discussed.

In the third trimester of the second year, the mid-term evaluation is called the 'Green Light'. During this evaluation, the evaluation committee assesses whether students are expected to pass the final exam. A Green Light implies that the evaluation committee is confident that the student will pass the exam. A Red Light implies that not enough evidence has been provided to give the committee sufficient confidence that the exam can be passed. This is however an advice and intended to provide students with feedback on where they stand and what is expected of them up to graduation. Students with a 'red light' still have the opportunity to pass the final exam. And the final exam is assessed regardless of the results of the previous trimesters and the Green Light evaluation.

The study guide informes students about the (guidelines for the) assessments. Furthermore, group meetings are organised to ensure that students are aware of these guidelines. The programme notes that despite these efforts, students not always find the right information at the right moment. Therefore, the programme will install a central online platform (see also standard 8) for all information and communication toward students.

The programme has installed a (permanent) working group that currently focusses on the redo procedures and the relation between the intended learning outcomes, the assessment criteria, and the thesis assessment.

Students remarked during the site visit, that in general they are content with the feedback the receive from their tutors during the programme. This is an ongoing process during the studio meetings with their tutors. They especially value the serious and personal written feedback after the assessments. Students are familiar with the assessment criteria and know what is expected of them during an assessment.

Tutors noted during the site visit that after each assessment a check out moment is organised. This allows for students to discuss the feedback and the assessment with their tutors. In addition, at the beginning of each year sessions are held in which the assessment procedure and criteria are explained.

The DAE Examination Board is responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment and the end level of the programme. In addition, the Examination Board is also concerned with the rules regarding proper conduct of the exams, the measures to be taken during the exams and fraud. The Examination Board includes an external member. The tasks and responsibilities of the Examination Board are described in a manual and the board writes a yearly plan and a yearly report. The Examination Board monitors assessments and examinations by attending final presentations, interrogations, and deliberations. This includes a so-called tour of all the examination work. During this tour, held a day after the examinations, the board assesses the final level achieved by comparing the assessment forms with student grades with the work in the presentation. If needed, issues concerning the final level are discussed during the annual meeting with the Executive Board and are fed back to the head of the programme and the head of the department.

During the site visit, the committee met with representatives of the Examination Board. It became clear that the board analyses the language and discourse used in the written feedback; this helps understanding how the level is articulated in the departments. The Examination Board has long advocated the establishment of an assessment policy. Currently two project groups are engaged in writing the assessment policy and the detailing of the assessment criteria.

Considerations
The committee is of the opinion that the programme has an adequate assessment system in place. The programme achieves a suitable balance between formative and summative assessment. The involvement of multiple assessors that provide students with different perspectives ensures the inter-assessor reliability of the assessments.

The committee notes that the programmes focus on research is reflected in the assessment criteria of the different modules. The committee however also notes that the assessment criteria are formulated quite generally and can be more directly related to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

The DAE Examination Board is pro-active in safeguarding the quality of the assessments and the end level of the programme. The board yearly checks the quality of the final level in the so-called tour of all the examination work. The committee endorses the Examination Board in its case for an assessment policy and encourages the programme in developing this with some urgency.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

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

Findings

The programme is finalised in the last trimester of the second year with a design project and a thesis. The thesis encapsulates and reflects on the initial research process of the graduation project. The programme notes that research continues in the finalisation stages of the project, after the thesis is completed. It is through the thesis that a student and their project's full range of research, critical reflection and positioning is legible. The programme also notes that the capacity to synthesise and present research in the thesis can take many different forms and is not limited to strictly academic forms.

In the final stage of the programme, students are guided by their thesis tutor and the rest of the team.

The assessment of final trimester is similar to that of the other trimesters. However, the evaluation committee also consists of external examiners that internationally renowned in the design field. These external examiners have an important role in questioning the student, providing feedback to the student, and taking part in the discussion about the grade. The external examiners are appointed by the Examinations Board.

External validation of the final level is also provided by the yearly graduation show during the Dutch Design Week. The show is an important part of the programme: students show their work to the world and communicate with an au-dience of specialists and non-specialists. In addition, the graduation show offers opportunities to graduates and the academy to benchmark the final level with the international field.

The programme notes that alumni acquire diverse positions, varying from designers/entrepreneur with their own studio, design theorist, critical design activist, in cooperation with scientists, positions in major companies to designers within collaborations, design curators or teacher. Moreover, alumni also pursue further studies or a PhD in design or art.

An alumni review shows that the majority of the alumni works in the Netherlands and more specifically in the Brainport region. Alumni work in a wide range of fields, from activism to consultancy, craft to technology and education, and other creative roles. As mentioned in standard 6, alumni are also actively involved in the programme as (guest) tutor or head.

The alumni coordinator publishes the alumni newsletters, manages the alumni social media accounts, organises the No Panic Classes for graduating students, and the alumni homecoming during the Dutch Design Week. The No Panic Class, during which alumni share their experiences with students, is intended to prepare students for the realities before, during and after the Graduation Show. The alumni coordinator is also a liaison between DAE and organisations that want to get in touch with alumni.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the programme has an adequate graduation procedure in place. In assessing the final thesis and design project

multiple examiners, including external examiners, are involved.

To assess whether students achieve the required end-level and the exit qualifications, the committee visited the graduation show during the Dutch Design Week in October 2023. In addition, the committee studied 20 student files, with a good representation of the departments. Based on this, the committee is of the opinion that the level of the graduates as reflected in the thesis and the design projects, is high and that students regularly achieve more than the required master's level. The committee agreed with the grades given.

The committee considered the choice of a shopping mall for the location of the graduation show to be interesting and questioning the use of the mall. The location highlights the connection with the public and the professional field. The committee describes the show as a 'conversational design' space where personal stories, opinions, and new ways of making and answering to problems are shared in a commercial environment. The committee however also notes that the location of the graduation show does not serve all presented projects.

The committee is of the opinion that most of the studied theses were very well written and showed breadth and depth in the literature used. Some of the studied theses however showed limited use of literature.
In addition, students clarified how their research informed their practice of designing and making. In some theses the relevance of the research for design in general (and other practice than their own) could be more elaborated on.

The committee noted that the relation with the research and focus on critical thinking was also present in the exhibition of the results during the graduation show. The committee was impressed by the story telling perspective during the graduation show and the awareness that was raised during the show.

The committee also noted that a lot of the work presented came from students' personal fascinations and interests. Even though this is valuable, the committee also believes that students have yet to make the transition to more external and client related projects and to the role of design in other fields of society (see standard 1).

During the graduation show, the committee could not distinguish the work of the various departments. The committee believes that this (positive aspect) is not only because of the organisation of the graduation show but also because of the great commonality in the programme.

The meetings with students and alumni during the site visit confirmed the high level of the programme. The students and alumni the committee met with, are capable of creating their own career path within their chosen field of design. The programme has strong connections with alumni and alumni are actively involved in the programme. The committee encourages the programme to continue monitoring 'Where do student end up after graduation', including the match between the level of actual work and the level of education.

Based on the above, the committee establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Attachment 1: assessment panel

Raoul van Aalst, chair
Independent consultant and organisational philosopher

Luisa Collina
Professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano

Alexis Georgacopoulos
Director École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECAL)

Hugo Béhérégaray, student
Student at Sandberg Instituut (Rietveld Academie) Master in Fine Arts and Designs

The committee was supported by Titia Buising, as a certified secretary.

All committee members have completed, signed, and submitted a statement of independence and impartiality to NVAO.

Attachment 2: site visit schedule

On October 26, the panel visited the graduation show of DAE, which included all programmes of the institution.

Programme 20 February 2024	
Time	
09.00-09.15	Welcome
09.15-10.00	Management
10:00-10:30	Tour
10.30-11.30	Department heads
11.30-11.45	Break
11.45-12.30	Tutors and coordinators
12.30-12.35	Break
12.35-13.15	Examination Board
13.15-14.00	Lunch Break
14:00-15:00	Alumni and professional field
15:00-15:15	Break
15:15-16:15	Students
16:15-17:30	Deliberation
17.30-17:45	Feedback
17:45-18:30	Drinks

Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue will be planned in the course of 2024. The results of this development dialogue have no influence on the assessment presented in this report.

Attachment 3: follow-up on former assessment

The table below describes the areas for improvement following the previous accreditation, as well as the improvements realised.

Areas for improvement	Improvements realised
It is recommended that the programme develops a clear strategic plan that supports and makes it goals explicit and shows how these ambitions are translated in each of the four departments.	In 2019 a strategic assessment has led to the reform of one of the programmes and the introduction of adding a new department to the portfolio: Geo-Design.
Though there is sufficient informal exchange between the departments, it is recommended that the programme invests in a more formal dialogue system between departments about the assessment procedures, particularly with regard to the set-up of the examinations, the feedback given to students and the status and role of the thesis in the final project. This way, the programme will be able to ensure that the four departments share a similar frame of reference when it comes to assessment procedures and criteria.	Design Academy Eindhoven has introduced OSIRIS as student monitoring system to formally track student grading and feedback. This system is also used for the admission process of new incoming students. In 2024, LMS system Canvas is introduced to ensure similar reference and communication channels between students and staff. Furthermore, the MA Programme has created several supporting guidelines for assessment and procedures. During general information sessions the educational staff actively engages with the students to make certain the students know and understand the formal assessment procedures. Throughout the year, this is brought to the students' attention repeatedly by the department coordinators.
The programme is encouraged to investigate whether it can involve more non-Dutch tutors to match the cultural diversity of the student body.	The tutor team of the master's programme has 18 different nationalities. 53% of the tutors have a nationality other than Dutch.
It is recommended that the opening hours of the workspaces are extended into weekends.	Workspace opening hours have been extended to include opening on Saturdays.

Attachment 4: documents

- Self-evaluation report
- Matrix learning outcomes
- Several articles from Eindhovens Dagblad and Studio 040
- Year plans 2023-2024 of the departments
- Collaborative project Municipality of The Hague
- Collabarative project Netherlands Food Partnership
- Collaborative project GGzE
- Collaborative project Van Abbemuseum
- Collaborative project International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam
- Professorship Design and Social-Justice
- Professorship Transdisciplinary Design Networks
- Staff overview DAE master programme
- Code of Conduct DAE
- DAE Letter | Dedicated Issue: Solidarity with Ukraine
- DAE Letter regarding current events unfolding in the Middle East
- DAE study guide 2023-2024
- Student Charter 2023-2024
- Factsheet NSE 2023
- Assessment criteria of the master programme
- Thesis Proposal assessment criteria
- Manual of the Examination Board
- Workplan 2022-2023 of the Examination Board
- Annual reports from the Examination Board
- Self-evaluation Examination Board 2023
- Alumni Newsletter - August 2023
- The Alumni interview - Sander Manse
- Alumni review 2023
- Results of the Alumni Survey 2021
- Thesis and graduation work of 20 students

Attachment 5: Overview

The judgements per standard are presented in the table below.

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