



St. Joost School of Art and Design, Master Institute of Visual Cultures,

M Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design

Limited study programme assessment

Summary

In June 2024 the M Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design programme -abbreviated as MAFAD- from Avans University of Applied Sciences was visited by an audit panel from NQA. MAFAD is a two-year (120 EC) full-time programme. The programme is taught in English at the main location in 's-Hertogenbosch.

The audit panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **positive**. The MAFAD programme intends to educate creative leaders who are active in civic participation based on their master background in art and design. The programme has a highly international profile, which becomes visible in its aims and objectives, its staff and student composition.

The students' work is in line with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. These students deliver artistic work, which is informed by research, and well prepared in close cooperation with their highly appreciated tutors. MAFAD also has professional processes and procedures for assessment, and an Exam Board which keeps close track of this. However, there is some dissatisfaction among staff and students, caused by a lack of updated information and communication flows. Similarly, the staff would like to be more involved in managerial issues that effect education like housing, scheduling, development of new courses, etc. A transparent and inclusive consultation structure is not yet in place. Moreover, there are some developments that have caused uncertainty among the people in and around the programme. Therefore, the panel has given recommendations to restore this. Once the recommendations given are in place, the panel remains even more convinced of the high quality of this master programme, with its professional students and staff, and the good output and quality of their artistic work.

Standard 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 1. The programme has aligned its professional profile and its intended learning outcomes with the relevant national and international master levels for comparable programmes. Context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction stand out in this profile. The MAFAD graduates are to become strongly involved in 'civic participation,' becoming 'creative leaders' in their artistic environment. They develop this by doing practice-led artistic research and by getting research-led teaching. The programme intends to have all students combine their individual studio work with their own research on it. Thus, aided by their tutors, their artistic work becomes research-informed. Furthermore, the panel recognises that the programme's external advisers are in fact their main input from the outside world. Therefore, the panel would like to encourage the programme to take decisive next steps towards the type of cooperation with the external advisers they themselves envisage with these advisers.

Standard 2: Teaching-Learning Environment

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 2. There are 120 ECs across four semesters for the three pathways of the programme. The structure and contents of the programme facilitate the intended methodology of students doing practice-led artistic research and getting research-led teaching. In line with its chosen international standards, the programme has an English name and is taught in English. There are also close links with relevant Avans professorships and research centres, in line with the pathways. Relations between students and tutors are good, and there are many joint activities which help the students develop themselves into the graduate artists and designers they want to be. The tutors are of various nationalities,

highly dedicated, well-trained and qualified. Yet, students and staff are calling for better communication and information flows. This will help the management and the staff to aim for a better defined collective ambition for the near future. Therefore, the panel has given a recommendation on the issue of communication and information flows. Two other recommendations by the panel are the implementation of a proper HRM-cycle for all staff and further tailor-made professionalisation on assessments for art programmes in higher education.

Standard 3: Student Assessment

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 3. MAFAD's assessment policy is in line with several policy documents, which indicate that MAFAD's assessment is to be both practice-led and focused on learning, to enable students to develop in line with their own ambitions and talents. The programme's Exam Board is on top of its quality assurance, checking on basic criteria such as reliability, validity, transparency, and inter-subjectivity in all assessments at MAFAD. The programme's Examination Programme shows the details of all assessment available for students at MAFAD. The panel is satisfied with the assessment policy and how the programme has operationalised this, and how the Exam Board is in control of its legal tasks in quality assurance. Still, it would like to encourage the programme to further improve the assessment forms by creating space for more personal feedback options in them.

Standard 4: Achieved Learning Outcomes

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 4. The students achieve their learning outcomes in the final semester, when they work on the Thesis and the Graduation Project at master level. The panel has studied fifteen theses and a number of graduation projects. With only one exception, the panel agreed that the students' work reflects the intended learning outcomes of the programme, at master level. The Graduation Show gave the panel a deeper understanding of the quality of the students' art work. Finally, the MAFAD alums have apparently found work in line with their programme, but the institute stopped collecting data about this. Therefore, the panel advises the programme to set up a survey among alums at short notice by means of desk and internet research.

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	6
Characteristic Features of the Study Programme	8
Basic Data of the Study Programme	9
Retrospective View of the Previous Accreditation	9
Assessments of NVAO Standards	10
Standard 1 Intended Learning Outcomes	11
Standard 2 Teaching-Learning Environment	15
Standard 3 Student Assessment	23
Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes	26
Final Conclusion	29
Recommendations	30
Appendices	31
Appendix 1: Programme for the Site Visit on 27th June 2024	32
Appendix 2: Documents Examined	33

Introduction

This assessment report constitutes the assessment of the fulltime M Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design programme (MAFAD) at Avans University of Applied Sciences in 's-Hertogenbosch. The assessment itself was done by an audit panel compiled by Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA) and commissioned by Avans University of Applied Sciences, in consultation with the programme representatives. The audit panel was approved by NVAO prior to the assessment process.

In this report NQA describes its findings, considerations and conclusions. It also gives some recommendations for the programme. This report has been drawn up in accordance with the *Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands of NVAO* (September 2018) and the *NQA Guideline 2022 for Limited Programme Assessment*. The site visit took place on 27th June 2024.

The audit panel consisted of:

Name:	Role:	Function:
Ms Drs Jurriënne Ossewold	Chair,	Director Concepts of Change, Zutphen.
Ms Dr Konstantina Georgelou	Domain Expert	Creative consultant and strategist, University lecturer Performance studies University of Utrecht and lecturer, Master of Fine Art Department, DAS (HKU Amsterdam),
Ms Dr Nuraina Juliastuti	Domain Expert	Researcher and Writer, Dutch Art Institute and Post-doc Fellow at the University of Amsterdam,
Ms Kyra Nijskens	Student Member	Student MA Fine Art, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam (Willem de Kooning Academy).

Mr Ir Alfons Hoitink, NQA auditor, acted as secretary of the panel.

The Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design programme at Avans University of Applied Sciences is part of the audit cluster entitled 'HBO Master Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving Zuid.' The audit panels of this cluster have been aligned with each other, in the first place through the instruction of their members about the NVAO assessment framework. The assessment criteria calibrated between Hobéon and NQA are part of this instruction. From the start this alignment is guaranteed by the overlap between the composition of all the panels. In addition, taking into account that each assessment of a study programme is an individual assessment, as a result of the overlap between the composition of the panels, there has been progressive reflection on previous site visits within the audit cluster wherever relevant. Furthermore, the alignment between panels is guaranteed by the support of the same panel secretary as often as possible, from NQA and other quality agencies, and by employing well-trained panel chairpersons.

Way of working of the panel and process

The study programme has delivered a critical reflection with appendices for this assessment. For the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes, the panel has studied fifteen graduation files

-theses and graduation projects- by graduates who recently finished their studies. These fifteen graduate files have been selected from the list of alumni of the last two academic years. In this selection, the variety in grading and the various pathways have been taken into account.

Three weeks before the site visit the panel held a preliminary meeting and studied the available documents on site. The panel already met with a number of representatives from the study programme during the so-called 'preparatory audit'. In the preliminary meeting the panel members have been instructed about NQA's method of working and about the *NVAO-Assessment Framework*. In this meeting the panel members also discussed their tentative findings. During both the preparatory audit and during the site visit, the panel members continuously shared their findings. During the site visit the panel spoke with various stakeholders of the study programme, such as students, lecturers (examiners) and representatives of the work field and it studied several documents, see appendix 2. At the end of the site visit the panel incorporated all the information it had obtained into an overall picture and into a provisional assessment, well-argued. In the final oral feedback session, the chairperson of the panel communicated the panel's conclusive assessment and its major findings to the programme's representatives.

Staff members and students of the study programme have had the opportunity to approach the panel (via mail) in confidence to bring to the attention of the panel those matters they consider important to the assessment (direct consultation in person). However, nobody made use of this opportunity.

After the site visit a draft report was drawn up, which was first presented to the panel. On the basis of the panel's input a second draft was made, which was then presented to the study programme for a check on factual inaccuracies. The panel members have taken note of the reaction by the representatives of the study programme and, wherever necessary, adapted the report. Subsequently, the report was made final. With all information provided (orally and in writing) the panel has been able to make a well-considered judgement.

The audit panel declares that the assessment of the study programme was carried out independently.

Utrecht, *October 21, 2024*

Panel chair

Jurriënne Ossewold

Panel secretary

Alfons Hoitink

Characteristic Features of the Study Programme

The Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design, abbreviated as MAFAD, is a full-time, two-year master programme in the art and design domain from Avans University of Applied Sciences. The programme is located in an older, industrial building outside the 's-Hertogenbosch city centre, having nearly all of the necessary facilities at its disposal. The most recent student and teaching staff figures are from March 2024, when some 47 students were attending the programme, supported by around 16 part-time tutors. Within this programme, students choose one out of the following three (and per September 2024 four) pathways:

- Ecology Futures (EF), which focuses on bioart and biodesign;
- Situated Design (SD), where students learn to master situated and iterative design methodologies to create new perspectives in design and user experiences;
- Visual Arts and Post-Contemporary Practice (VAPCP) where students learn to develop theoretically informed strategies and practices that expand the social and aesthetic sense of society;
- Health by Design (HxD, per September 2024), which addresses urgent healthcare and well-being issues by employing critical design as a key to social change.

As visible in the description of the pathways, MAFAD intends to have their students contribute to social transformation and enhancing the world around us through civic participation. Their graduates are to use the visionary power of art to arrive at new concepts and different types of relations. In their civic participation, these students are trained to become the creative leaders of the near future. For this purpose, the MAFAD staff have translated their educational policy into a didactic model with a very strong connection between the students' individual studio work and their self-directed research.

The panel has talked to a number of motivated students and highly dedicated tutors. Supported by these tutors students produce innovative and creative work at master level. Yet, in the past few years there have been several management changes, and some uncertainty about the programme's place in the Avans organisation. This has led to some insecurity among staff, and meanwhile some processes and procedures deserve more attention leading to recommendations for the teaching-learning environment.

Basic Data of the Study Programme

Name of study programme in RIO	M Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design
ISAT-code	49114
Orientation and level study programme	Higher profession-oriented education (hbo)
Level	Master
Degree	Master of Arts
Number of study credits	120 EC
Variant (s), including a possible 3-years track for VWO (pre-university education) in case of a study programme of higher profession-oriented education	Full-time
Location(s)	's-Hertogenbosch
Teaching language	English

Retrospective View of the Previous Accreditation

Since 2018 the programme has received recommendations from the previous visitation panel and from an internal audit. This has led to various improvements in the programme. For Standard 2, this involved three major changes, such as: a significant increase in international staff; support for the pathway leaders to strengthen the interconnectivity among pathways; a better structure for the Research Seminars. Moreover, the programme aims to intensify cooperation with the centres of expertise. It was also recommended to embed the professional practice better into the programme. For this reason, the Professional Practice modules and the Rethinking the Artists' Economy were introduced. Furthermore, the recommendation to clarify the learning aims and objectives around Self-Directed Learning were clarified, as already acknowledged during the 2019 re-assessment.

Since 2021 at least two study days per year have been organized, where staff have started to share good practices across the pathways. A recommendation in this context for Standard 3 was to organize cross-pathway assessment panels, but this has appeared to be impracticable. However, the programme has solved this by adding external examiners to graduation exams, and by scheduling calibration sessions. Thus, the tutors have more discussions on teaching, research, and assessments across pathways than before. They also tackled the recommendation by the previous panel to improve assessment procedures, including giving less formulaic feedback on assessments. They have now implemented improvements in assessments and cross-pathway collaborations to cater for this.

Altogether, the panel recognizes that the programme has seriously implemented all major improvements, as recommended by the previous panel.

Assessments of NVAO Standards

Standard 1 Intended Learning Outcomes

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.

Conclusion

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 1. The programme has aligned its professional profile and its intended learning outcomes with the relevant national and international master levels for comparable programmes. It adheres to the national profile from the Dutch 'Overleg Beeldende Kunsten' (OBK), which is the national platform for Fine Art and Design programmes. Thus, the profile for the MAFAD programme works from the following four points of reference: context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction. Their graduates are to be strongly involved in 'civic participation,' becoming 'creative leaders' in their artistic environment. The main aims and objectives for this programme are students doing practice-led artistic research and getting research-led teaching. Thus, student's individual studio work is both a methodology for research and a subject to be researched. The relevant Avans research centres have a facilitating role here.

The programme links arts to current and relevant developments in society, at home and abroad. The panel considers this one of the strongest features of the programme. Moreover, the pathway leaders are looking for the best ways to receive feedback from the professional practice. For the pathway leaders, their external examiners are their most important critical friends here. The MAFAD management prefers this way of working to a more formal advisory board from the professional field (Dutch: 'werkveldadviesraad').

Substantiation

Professional profile and intended learning outcomes

The MAFAD programme is developed in accordance with the national profile from the Dutch 'Overleg Beeldende Kunsten' (OBK). The OBK is the national platform for Fine Art and Design programmes. It has developed and maintained professional profiles for art and design programmes at universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands since 1999. It also bears responsibility for the framework in which art academies can shape and develop their programmes. In this process the OBK-representatives claim that professional profiles for art academies are never final products but always part of a process. They see these professional profiles as the continuous dialogue between the professional practice and the art academy, in a process of innovation. Colleagues from this Avans programme have taken part in the OBK steering group for the national Fine Art and Design Master's Profile in 2016. This particular master's profile works from the following four points of reference: context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction. The latter is also one of Avans University's more important strategic goals towards 2025. The OBK-master level is in line with the master levels mentioned in the Dublin Descriptors, the description by the Dutch universities of applied sciences, the European Qualification Framework (including NLQF, the 'Nederlands Kwalificatieraamwerk'), and the so-called tuning documents as developed by the European League of the Institutes of the Arts (ELIA). ELIA is the

key European platform for higher arts education. The MAFAD colleagues have worked out the details of the OBK platform and its points of reference in the Education Policy and in the Assessment Policy for the programme.

The representatives from the programme have formulated their mission as follows: “at our MAFAD programme, we see it as our mission to contribute to social transformation and enhancing the world around us through civic participation. We believe that the visionary power of art, and its ability to forge new concepts and ways of thinking, can build other representations of the world and other types of relations. We see it as our role to engender new creative leaders who –in dialogue with tutors, fellow students, peers and professional partners– develop an extensive support network and collaborate in the professional field to advance their career goals after completion of their master studies”. For them the words ‘civic participation’ and ‘creative leaders’ stand out, having a special meaning for them in the relation between art and society which underlies this master programme.

To realize their mission, the programme has formalized the following three pathways for students to choose from, and a fourth one that started in September 2024:

<p><i>Ecology Futures</i> (EF)</p>	<p>EF focuses on bioart and biodesign, drawing from many domains to propose a plural future that consists of an assemblage of many entities: living, decaying, human, other-than-human, forming and re-forming connections as circumstances warrant.</p>
<p><i>Situated Design</i> (SD)</p>	<p>In SD students learn to master a variety of design methodologies and practices that are situated and iterative, applying emerging technologies to create new perspectives and innovative forms of design and user experiences.</p>
<p><i>Visual Arts and Post-Contemporary Practice</i> (VAPCP)</p>	<p>VAPCP offers an interdisciplinary learning environment for students to develop a theoretically informed critical approach to create strategies and develop practices that expand the social and aesthetic sense of society.</p>
<p><i>Health by Design</i> (HxD), per September 2024</p>	<p>HxD bridges practice-based research from the broader spectrum of art and design with science and technology. HxD addresses urgent healthcare and wellbeing issues by employing critical design as a key to social change.</p>

Figure 1: the four MAFAD pathways (source: Self Evaluation Report, MAFAD, 2024)

In addition, the pathway leaders aim to realise practice-led artistic research. In their own words, this means that “we teach our students that their art practice is a methodology for research, but also a subject to be researched.” By studying their artistic context, students will acquire more insight into their own art practice. In doing so, they will also contribute to the existing artistic discourse. Simultaneously, the programme aims for research-led teaching. This involves that several teachers hold research positions at relevant Avans research centres. Their newly acquired knowledge feeds into the curriculum, also keeping it up-to-date in close connection to the relevant artistic discourse. Among others, the staff from the Centre of Applied Research in Art, Design and Technology, CARADT, plays a central role here.

MAFAD bases its master level on the OBK-profile mentioned, which outlines the following dimensions for a master’s programme in fine art and design. In comparison with bachelor programmes, these master’s programmes are to show an increase in three ways. First of all, there should be a multi- or interdisciplinary complexity of the work environment (more people involved and conflicting interests), second an increase in width and depth of knowledge and skills, and finally there should be an increase in students taking responsibility, in an independent way. The last of these dimensions for such master’s programmes is the Larger Range. This refers to the broader international stage on which these artists are active. This is also about the wider audience aimed at and the international debate in society at large. For the panel the increase in these dimensions and the intended learning outcomes here are clearly visible in the programme. They recognize that the programme aims to educate creative leaders for civic participation in an international setting.

During the MAFAD programme students develop the following competencies for master students in fine arts and design:

- Intellectual Engagement
- Research Competency
- Creative Ability
- Communication Skills
- Ability to Self-direct Own Study
- Professional Development

The programme has worked out these competencies in more detail, covering the Dublin Descriptors and the National Master Profile. The four points of reference from this profile -context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction- are clearly present in the detailed description of these competencies. There is a gradual build-up throughout the programme, with an increased level of complexity. The students need to show an increased degree of creativity, technical ability, critical thinking, independence, interpersonal skills, and other competencies in their work.

Alignment with the professional practice

The programme is looking for the best ways to receive feedback from external experts. External input is even more vital, as MAFAD aims to have their graduates play a leading role in the world outside, in civic participation by art and design. In this context, their experiences with external examiners have been positive. These external examiners endorsed the favourable appraisal the

tutors gave to their students, but they have also provided more critical comments. One example of these lies in the comments given by the Avans Mid-term panel and supported by external examiners that the management should allocate more time to the Research Seminars. The external advisers gave critical comments about the connection between graduation students' theoretical writings and their art practices. This has led to a change which now gives students a more in-depth critical feedback of their research proposals in these seminars.

The management considers their external experts as much needed 'critical friends,' with whom they would like to be going into a much more in-depth discussion about the programme's present and future needs. For now, external examiners get a form in which they can go deeply into graduating students' master level, their theoretical underpinning and their preparedness as starting practitioners. The examiners also describe the relevance of these students' work to their chosen MAFAD pathway. This year the programme will expand this form, which they expect will lead to further discussions and helpful external feedback for the programme. The MAFAD management prefers this way of working to a more formal advisory board from the professional field (Dutch: 'werkveldadviesraad').

The programme is in close connection with current debates and movements within the arts. It also links arts to current and relevant developments in society, at home and abroad. The panel considers this one of the strongest features of the programme. Furthermore, as much as the panel appreciates the support that the programme is receiving from these external examiners, it would also advise further and more diverse and further exchange with external advisers. Therefore, the panel would like to encourage the programme to take decisive next steps towards the type of cooperation with the external advisers they envisage. This will open more windows to the broader art and cultural ecosystem and the professional practice to further improve the programme's role in the local, the national and the international community it intends to play.

Standard 2 Teaching-Learning Environment

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

Conclusion

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 2. Per September 2024 this 120 EC master programme offers students four pathways to choose from, across four semesters. However, the panel has only been able to evaluate the first three ones in June 2024. The structure and contents of the programme demonstrate the students doing practice-led artistic research and getting research-led teaching. The former takes place in the students' individual studio practice, the latter during much of the students' research activities and tutorials. In line with OBK standards, the programme has an English name and is taught in English: the students will have to position themselves in the world of art and design, which has become mainly international and in English by now. MAFAD is also part of the highly international Cumulus and ELIA networks for this reason. Being a master programme with a strong focus on research, the programme has developed close links with relevant Avans professorships and research centres. For, the core element of the didactic concept of the MAFAD-programme is self-directed research, supported by a variety of other work methods. Relations between students and tutors are very good to excellent, and there are many joint activities which support students to develop into the graduate artists and designers they want to be. The tutors are of various nationalities, highly dedicated and well-trained. Yet, students and staff require better communication and information flows. Therefore, the panel advises the management to better involve the staff, in particular the pathway leaders, in managerial and strategic issues that affect education, such as housing, scheduling, the development of new pathways, et cetera. In short: the programme is in need of a transparent and inclusive consultation structure. This will help the management and the staff to aim for a better defined collective ambition for the programme in the near future.

Substantiation

Structure and Contents of the Programme

This two-year 120 EC master programme has been divided across four semesters of twenty weeks each, as follows:

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
Individual Studio Practice 1 (15 EC)	Individual Studio Practice 2 (15 EC)	Individual Studio Practice 3 (15 EC)	Individual Studio Practice 4 (Graduation project) (15 EC)
Research Seminar 1 (6 EC)	Research Seminar 2 (3 EC)	Research Seminar 3 (6 EC)	Research Seminar 4 (3 EC)
Pathway-specific Module 1 (3 EC)	Elective Modules 2 (3 x 3 EC = 9 EC)	Thesis Draft (9 EC)	Thesis Final (9 EC)
Elective Modules 1 (2 x 3 EC = 6 EC)	Rethinking the Artists Economy 1 (3 EC)		Rethinking the Artists Economy 2 (3 EC)

Figure 2: semester division of the MAFAD programme (source: Self Evaluation Report, MAFAD, 2024)

From Figure 2 it appears that the Individual Studio Practices (ISP) and the Research Seminars constitute the backbone of each semester. This is where practice-led artistic research and research-led teaching takes place for the students on a daily basis. As part of their admission process students have to hand in their individual research proposals, which are the foundation for their research-led ISPs. The Research Seminars invite students to discuss the goal of artistic research and the importance of critical thinking. They also facilitate theoretical exploration in relation to their research. Last year these seminars were significantly improved, redeveloped, and expanded, based on comments from students and external stakeholders. Furthermore, in Year 1 there is one pathway-specific module, to provide in-depth knowledge and skills for students in their chosen pathway. In addition, they will choose two cross-pathway electives out of five. Among other interdisciplinary elements, this combination of pathway-specific and cross-pathway electives guarantees students' ability to work both in their own discipline(s) and across disciplines. This should also stimulate students' self-direction and it enables the programme's research-led teaching approach. Students finalize their programme with a Thesis and with a Graduation Project. The two Thesis Draft and Thesis Final modules help the students to theoretically and methodically underpin their artistic practice. Finally, the two modules entitled Rethinking the Artists Economy especially prepare students to become the creative leaders they are intended to be after their studies. In these modules they learn how to build an extensive support network and how to collaborate in the professional field to advance their career goals.

Research skills and Professorships

As outlined above, the MAFAD programme centres on practice-led artistic research and research-led teaching at master's level. Right before entering the programme the students formulate their individual research proposals. Thus, from the outset, they already focus on artistic research, and during their studies this artistic research connects the various pathways. Similarly, as formulated in the MAFAD Educational Policy 2020-2024, art practice is both a methodology for research and a subject to be researched. Art practice and research go hand in hand in this programme. Artistic research, through documentation and reporting, opens up the process of art production. This is why research skills have been included in the curriculum to this extent. The small size of the programme enables the more individual tutoring needed here, questioning and facilitating the students during their individually chosen routes in the programme.

To create this strong link between education and artistic research, MAFAD has strong connections with Avans research centres *CARADT* (Centre of Applied Research in Art, Design and Technology), Centre of Expertise *Wellbeing Economy & New Entrepreneurship*, and the Centre of Expertise *Perspective in Health*. The cooperation between the programme and these research centres reflects the triangle among education, research, and the professional practice. Several members of the MAFAD teaching staff also work as researchers there. For example, the elective modules *Designing our way out of design* and *Scripted design research* are examples of MAFAD tutors' research projects at two different Avans centres of expertise. From these research centres, the following three professorships have the strongest links with the programme: Cultural and Creative Industries; Bio-based Art and Design; and Situated Art and Design. The Cultural and Creative Industries Research Group focuses on research questions on “escaping the hamster wheel of the contemporary,” or finding “traces of a desirable future to be found in the present.” At the Bio-based Art & Design Research Group researchers and students try to explore and understand interactions with the living organisms, such as algae, fungi, plants, and bacteria; they do this in a transdisciplinary way as a collaboration between technical and artistic experts. Finally, the Situated Art and Design Research Group aims to empower artists and designers to develop theories, tools, and methods to critically challenge the natural order of things; in the process, this is to result in a creative end product which satisfies a real user demand.

The panel is positive about the design of the programme and the approach of practice-led artistic research and research-led teaching. It has clearly noticed that the research environment in and around the programme highly contributes to the MAFAD learning environment. It considers this a very effective research line at masters level.

Internationalisation

The programme wants to reinforce its mission of enhancing the world around us through civic participation by being highly internationalized, too. It is English taught, aiming at an international student body. Dutch students comprise only 20–24% of all admitted students, so the overall majority of students come from abroad. Moreover, about half of the teaching staff is non-Dutch. The programme is living up to its international reputation by inviting international guest speakers as well. For, in this international environment the programme staff claims receiving leading international figures from art, science, politics, and culture as part of their public programme of events on a regular basis. In addition to being an integral member of the cultural community in the Netherlands, the MAFAD staff intends to expand its network with other (international) educational and cultural institutes. Two networks from Avans UAS stand out here: the Cumulus network and Avans' membership of ELIA. The former functions as an ecosystem for internationalization and global mobility, knowledge exchange, and collaboration in art and design pedagogy, research, and practice. The latter is the European League of Institutes of the Arts, a leading European network for exchange and development in higher arts education and research.

When the panel spoke with the MAFAD students, they said they were fully aware of the international exchange options in the programme. They are experiencing various kinds of educational and cultural exchanges, saying “it's all there.”

Teaching language

Apart from establishing the master standard for art education, the OBK Framework also makes it clear why this programme is taught in English. Master students in the world of art “are expected

to be working on building an international network, positioning themselves in the international world of art and design. A good command of English is a basic condition for being an influential player in the international field in future.” The panel recognizes this profile in the MAFAD programme. They see that it is obvious for a master programme based on the OBK Framework to have an English name, and the students being taught in English. For the world of autonomous visual artists and designers is not limited to the Netherlands. Thus, the programme is successfully aiming to reach an internationally mixed group of students and tutors, which facilitates the building of the students’ first -and much needed- international professional network. The panel agrees with the English name and understands why this programme is taught in English.

Design of the programme

The core element of the didactic concept of the MAFAD-programme is self-directed research, supported by interdisciplinary teaching and several other essential work methods. For developing these elements in students, the programme claims it is building a vibrant sense of community. This functions as the ecosystem for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. The concept of the programme involves much dialogue and debate on the relation between art and society. The interdisciplinary element is visible in the research done across the disciplines of art, science, technology, and economics. The self-directed research starts partly before but mainly from day one in the programme. Furthermore, this relatively small programme makes use of a large variety of didactic methods. To support this, there are both fixed and flexible modules (some optional, some mandatory), seminars and elective modules, individual tutorials and group critiques, skills-based workshops, lectures and national or international field trips in Semester 2, project work, et cetera. See Figure 3 for an overview of the didactic concept of the programme:



Figure 3: MAFAD Didactic Model (source: MAFAD Educational Policy 2020-2024)

Guest tutors and visiting speakers are part of the dialogue and debate at MAFAD. They come from a variety of disciplines, art academies, or they are independent artists, designers, scientists, and theorists, bringing the outside world in.

Obviously, the teaching staff plays the most vital role for the students, during the tutorials. These can either take the shape of individual tutorials or they are so-called group critiques for students with the teaching team. This supports students in developing a critical toolbox of forms of creative practice, as well as their more in-depth theoretical enquiry and reflection on topical questions. A tutorial is a conversation with a tutor, generally focused around a project or a student's studio practice. Advice by tutors will differ, based on their area of expertise. Students are supposed to navigate this advice and pick out the most helpful pieces of advice for their own practice. Students can book these tutorials to check on ideas, to break their creative blocking, or to ask technical questions. They are required to write summaries of the session, including any goals, deadlines, or other agreements made. This also serves to monitor the student's progress. Finally, the programme also caters for more personal routes for students. Examples of these are residencies, internships, a PhD preparatory trajectory, and research fellowships. The panel is enthusiastic about the programme, seeing true quality in the structure, the contents, and the master level.

Similarly, the panel can see that the current group of students is satisfied with the content of the curriculum. The students have indicated that they are relatively satisfied with the contents of the modules, and especially with the way that elective modules allow them to personalize their studies across pathways. The panel also recognizes that, on the whole, students are satisfied with their tutors, and they are content with their learning environment. Their satisfaction is based on the good personal contacts they have with their tutors. These tutors have taught them how to develop their creative practice. Students also value their diverse and international experience, their professional expertise, their personal support, and their tutorials. They are happy about their inspiring pathway-related and cross-pathway modules, the crash courses and the workshops which helps them to learn about different materials and techniques.

Admissions and Onboarding

MAFAD being an international programme, there are always many more applicants than finally admitted students. First of all, students must hold a bachelor's degree from a university (of applied sciences) in an art or design discipline like in new media, sound art, performance, or design research. In addition, good oral and written skills in English are also required, proven by IELTS, TOEFL or Cambridge tests in English language skills. To be finally admitted, applicants have to submit four admission assignments: a curriculum vitae, a personal statement, a practice portfolio, and a research proposal. Admission committees consisting of teaching staff review admission assignments and select applicants for the final online admission interview. At the moment the programme admits no more than 25 students per pathway in Year 1.

The study success rates at MAFAD from the last few years are generally good. It is clear that few students drop out of the programme. Part of this success lies in the onboarding procedures for the programme's mainly international student body. During the introduction week the MAFAD students get support in finding housing and they are introduced to the Dutch healthcare system. Furthermore, they get information about the Avans' student support facilities, such as student counsellors, confidentiality advisors, and student psychologists. They are also encouraged to take one of the Dutch language & culture courses on offer through Avans. A series of social events, tours of the facilities and technical workshops take place throughout the first weeks helping students to settle in. In conclusion, the panel regards the admission procedures and the way students get introduced to the programme as adequate. The panel also notes that the

international student support is limited to the first year of education. Therefore, the panel advises to extend this support to the second year of education.

Supervision

The relatively small size of the programme facilitates a close contact between tutors and students. On a total of 3.9 FTE the 16 tutors have to apply careful time management, across the tutorials, seminars, and the direct supervision of the students. From the second semester students are assigned a personal tutor, whom they meet at least twice per semester. These personal tutors guide them through semesters three and four. Students are also required to speak to the pathway leader at least once per semester. In year 2 students are assigned a separate thesis supervisor, whom they will meet four times per semester, and who will support the development of students' writing skills. Students can also book tutorials with any of the Visual Arts, Ecology Futures, or Situated Design tutors. So, the programme has seen to a basically good organisation of the supervision of their students.

In contrast, recent NSS surveys (National Student Survey, Dutch 'NSE'), however, show a decrease on virtually all scores in student satisfaction, and significantly lower than the Dutch average for similar programmes. For example, on a scale of 1-5 (very dissatisfied to very satisfied) the students give the curriculum contents and structure a 3.03 (2022) and 2.89 (2023). Within this theme, students were especially critical of organizational factors, scoring 2.72 (2022) and 2.30 (2023). Students' dissatisfaction focuses on their learning environment. When the panel talked with the students they indicated that although the tutors are great, the disorganization in the programme has become apparent in the course of their studies. They say that much is lost in communication: they have been asking for clarity, but this has appeared difficult to get. For example, students say they need more information when choosing an elective, because "if you choose one you do not like, you will have to finalize it anyway."

Moreover, in the Students' Chapter to the SER 2024, students refer to the management's lack of attention for the international students. They say they lack critical information on for example student healthcare, insurances, or housing allowances before the start of the programme. Furthermore, the nature of this programme, they claim, requires the university "to actively use its network, comprising partners, tutors, alumni, and creative hubs, to enhance our education; yet they see little emphasis on this aspect, despite promises to facilitate connections." They appreciate the pathway leaders, but they are part of the contents of the programme. The problem seems to lie with the management. The students and their representatives discuss these and similar issues in and around the teaching and learning environment in meetings of the Study Programme Committee and in the Graduate Studies Committee. However, this has not yet led to significant improvements.

The panel has noticed that at various levels much vital communication and several information streams are not maintained carefully. For example, schedules and planning were not always ready in time, nor was information about this clearly communicated to students; there were no clear answers to students' repeated requests for adequate exhibition space. At management level, it is acknowledged that there was a lack of timely information about whether the programme would become part of a graduate school or not. The latter, being part of Avans policies, caused feelings of uncertainty among staff. The tutors and the pathway leaders have done their utmost to patch up any communication gaps, but there are limits for them here. This leads to the following

recommendation for the programme: the programme leadership is to pay more attention to the needs of the programme, students, teaching staff and the pathway leaders. The management are to closely guard communication lines and information streams on the processes. This is to ensure the quality of the programme. The pathway leaders are to be further involved in strategy-making about the programme. Thus, the programme leadership can cater for tutors' needs more professionally.

Teaching Staff

There are currently sixteen tutors on a total of 3.9 FTE. This includes the three pathway leaders, who are tutors as well. These numbers result in small contracts per tutor, which are between 0.15 to 0.3 FTE. Nearly half of the programme's current teaching staff is non-Dutch (7 out of 16), which adds to the international environment of this programme. The internationally diverse group of students also requires this diverse staff profile. The majority of the tutors (70%) hold masters (7) and PhD degrees (5); four tutors have a BA-degree, and they do practice-based research or teach practical skills. However, the distinction the programme used to make between 'theory tutors,' usually holding PhDs, and 'practice tutors,' usually holding Master's degrees, is disappearing. These distinct roles have started to blend. Several tutors holding various degrees are actively involved in research, either at CARADT, at other Avans Centres of Expertise, other (research) universities, or as independent researchers. Furthermore, most of the tutors at MAFAD have their main occupation elsewhere, as independent researcher-practitioners in the field of art and design. Many of the staff also teach in other art and design programmes at other universities.

As far as their professionalisation is concerned, in general, teachers at Dutch universities of applied sciences need to have obtained BKE qualifications, which stands for 'Basic Qualification for Examination (Basiskwalificatie Examinering).' The staff overview indicates that about half of the tutors is BKE certified. Yet, the MAFAD management considers regular BKE training "typically infeasible for our staff." Therefore, tutors work on their didactic skills through a tailor-made training programme of Study Days and interventions focused on didactic and assessment skills. During these Study Days, staff and tutors share best practices and the latest didactic developments, as well as new issues on assessment. The management also discusses the latest national and Avans regulations with the staff at these events. Although the panel agrees that general BKE-training may be less suitable for arts programmes, it would like to stress that there is a special BKE-programme available for arts programmes, specifically for higher arts education. There is a similar specialist arts edition available for the BDB as well, the 'Basic Qualification for Didactic Skills' (Dutch: 'Basiskwalificatie Didactische Bekwaamheid'). Moreover, the programme's Assessment Policy (2021-2024) indicates that "tutors will be BKE-certified in the coming years." Therefore, the panel recommends the programme to have their staff participate in the BKE and the BDB for higher arts education in the next few years.

The panel has talked to an engaged group of tutors, whose quality and skills are suitable for the programme in question. As indicated above, the MAFAD students are generally satisfied with their tutors, their professionalism, their inspiration, and the knowledge they share about the professional field. They would of course be even more pleased with their tutors if these were more accessible when the students need their input or support, if tutors' small FTEs would allow for this. Yet, the panel appreciates this clear bond between the tutors (including the pathway leaders) and the students, which effectively supports the core quality of the programme. The tutors whom the panel has talked to consider themselves a self-organised

team. They feel little support from the Avans organisation, and they indicate that the management lacks influence on Avans policies and assumes that it is not in the position to take important decisions. They also feel that they still have too little time to do their work effectively, although they have discussed this with management several times before. The tutors also indicate that it is not clear how they can be held accountable. In their opinion there seems to be no way of measuring as yet what they do in their modules and tutorials. Besides, they do not consider the annual 'development talks' sufficient for this. This leads to the following recommendation by the panel: in the short run, the management is to plan a solid annual HRM-cycle between themselves and the tutors. This is necessary to make basic agreements on the work itself, tutors' tasks and responsibilities, and on issues concerning staff satisfaction. Yet, students and staff require better communication and information flows. Therefore, the panel advises the management to better involve the staff, in particular the pathway leaders, in managerial and strategic issues that affect education, such as housing, scheduling, the development of new pathways, et cetera. In short: the programme is in need of a transparent and inclusive consultation structure. Next to this, Study Days can also be used for team building activities and to work on a joint vision, a collective ambition, for the future of the programme.

Facilities

The programme is proud of the 24-hour studio access, seven days per week, for students. A major part of the facilities is constituted by the tech laboratory, the library, and the well-stocked loan facility for technical equipment. Next to this, students can make use of the Social Space, which is a multifunctional area for their international community of students. There is creative software available for students, such as an extended Adobe suite, TVPaint, Cinema4D, et cetera, facilitating them to create innovative forms of design and user experiences. Window stations support virtual and augmented reality. All these tools are supported by courses and trainings on how to actually use them. Brightspace serves as their electronic learning environment. The panel considers this a good and clear platform, with everything the student might need available for them in one efficient space.

The students appreciate the various workshops which enabled them to "dive into different materials and techniques." Yet, they would have liked having more space dedicated to their education and artistic practice. Some available space was even reduced, which made regular assignment displays a challenge for them. Nor do they find their building suitable for holding their own Graduation Show, because of the ongoing construction and space constraints. Therefore, the panel would like to advise the management to find a practical solution for this in the short run for the next generations of students, in dialogue with them.

Standard 3

Student Assessment

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

Conclusion

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 3. MAFAD's assessment policy is in line with several policy documents, including the institute's educational vision and strategy, the programme's own Education Policy, and the national profile for arts masters. These documents indicate that MAFAD's assessment is to be both practice-led and focused on learning. The former is assessment to support students to develop their individual studio projects; the latter is assessment to enable students to develop in line with their own ambitions. The programme's Exam Board monitors all this, and the basic criteria of reliability, validity, and transparency, too. Inter-subjectivity in assessment is safeguarded through the 'more-eyes' principle here. The programme has translated its assessment policy in their Examination Programme, which shows the details of all assessment available for students at MAFAD. The panel is satisfied with the assessment policy and how the programme has operationalised this, and how the Exam Board is in control of its legal tasks in quality assurance. Still, the assessment forms can still be improved by offering the possibility for less standardised options for feedback. This would reflect the approach of the programme that is dedicated to the authenticity and growth of each individual art student.

Substantiation

Assessment policy

The programme's assessment policy is in line with several vital policy documents, such as: the educational vision and strategy of the Master Institute of Visual Cultures at the St. Joost School of Fine Art and Design, MAFAD's Education Policy, and the national profile for arts masters. The last two policy documents emphasize the importance of context, disciplinarity, research, and self-direction. Resulting from these three policy documents, the MAFAD vision on assessment is based on two pillars: it should first of all be *practice-led*, supporting students to develop their individual studio projects; and second, *focused on learning*, enabling students to develop in alignment with their ambitions, on the basis of trial and error.

In addition, the Assessment Policy finds that assessment at MAFAD is to:

- aim to increase the students' independence, with a focus on a student's development, aligned to their artistic ambitions;
- focus on critical reflection and knowledge of the specialist field, developed through practice, within a broader multi-disciplinary context. Feedback and feedforward are given continuously in all sessions between tutors and students, aimed at self-directed learning;
- be interrelated, which means that students develop their competencies together as peers;
- be efficient, with well-structured procedures in Brightspace & Osiris, both form and content being clear to all tutors and students;
- focus on feasibility, reliability, validity, and transparency; tutors cooperate in examination teams to safeguard inter-subjectivity (the 'more-eyes' principle).

Moreover, tutors are trained to assess during study days, helping them to effectively describe student evaluations both verbally and in writing.

The panel is satisfied with these solid foundations for assessment at MAFAD, as laid down in the Assessment Policy. It reflects the programme's Educational Policy, and this Assessment Policy is in line with the European Qualifications Framework level 7 for masters programmes in the field of art and design.

Execution of assessment policy

The programme has operationalized this assessment policy in a more detailed Examination Programme. Per study unit, this document indicates study load, test format, number of credits, weighting, competencies, when pass/fail is applicable, et cetera. During semesters there are only formative assessments. Tutors apply both feedback and feedforward to discuss students' ideas and understanding of their learning intentions. At the end of semesters there are also summative assessments, assessed by pass/fail. According to the chair of the Exam Board, as per next year no grades will be given anymore, just pass, fail, or excellent.

The Education and Examination Regulations specify details and answer many of the questions on assessment that students might have. Moreover, at the start of each semester, all necessary information regarding modules and their assessments is distributed through Brightspace in module handouts. Assessment procedures mean that at least two assessors are involved (at least four eyes) per assessment. During more high-impact assessments -such as graduation assessments- external examiners are added. Tutors have to grade regular assessments within fifteen working days of the assessment date, which facilitates student satisfaction.

In the last few years, tutors have spent much time and effort in improving assessment quality, which was a vital topic during Study Days. In their opinion this has led to strengthening their collective understanding of assessment-related issues. Students, however, remain critical about the quality of assessments. The programme has low scores in recent NSS surveys. The programme representatives recognize that students remain critical for example about the match between assessments and course content. This also goes for the quality of assessments of 'knowledge and insight.' In contrast, the programme representatives also see that students are more satisfied now with the assessments of practical skills. They think that the usefulness of feedback by assessors has improved. The students that talked to the panel were relatively satisfied about the way they are being assessed. Yet, one of them remarked that the feedback process is sometimes difficult. She indicated that although the feedback was helpful for the greater part, some of it came across as criticism, which did not help her much further.

The panel is satisfied in general with the form and the quality of the tests that they have seen. The tests in Year 1 are a work in progress but they look fine, on the whole. Still, the panel would like to encourage the programme to further develop their ways of assessment, most of all by a continuing dialogue among tutors and with the students on this topic.

Evaluation of the graduation process

The panel is satisfied with the graduation processes and procedures. Yet, they feel that the programme is to pay some more attention to the assessment forms. The panel considers the assessment forms to be somewhat rigid, and filled in in a standardised, impersonal style.

Moreover, these forms should be true to the approach of the programme that is dedicated to the authenticity and growth of each individual art student. They should provide more relevant feedback; the format should elicit more explanatory remarks. Students also claim that they are too generic now. Similarly, the materials, the comments and the grading should be more in line. The representatives from the Exam Board confirm this, saying the forms should not be a mere checklist. They agree that assessments in arts programmes and criteria for portfolios may be very different from other programmes. Therefore, the panel wants to advise the programme to reconsider the strong standardisation of feedback, in particular of the forms used and design and apply them in a way that is appropriate to the characteristics of the programme as a whole.

Quality assurance

The Exam Board of the programme monitors the quality of assessments, supported by the GSC, the Graduate Studies Committee, which is the programme's curriculum committee. The Exam Board appoints tutors in their roles as examiners. These appointed examiners are to carry out assessments in line with the assessment policy. The GSC supports this tutor-led process. Whenever needed, the GSC also matches tutors with other tutors with more specialized assessment expertise. This committee also sees to professionalisation, addressing structural issues on assessment during study days. Finally, the GSC provides support by discussing the assessment quality with student representatives, among others, in the Study Programme Committee.

Next to this, the programme gets much feedback on assessment from their external examiners. They reflect on both the level of graduates and the quality of the graduation assessments. On the whole, these external examiners are very positive about the grading process, the criteria, and the procedures. They have witnessed constructive discussions on each of the student's work and experienced the assessment process as part of the pedagogical approach, as effective formative assessments.

The Exam Board pays special attention to the organization and implementation of exams, where the Exam Board found it striking that several assessing tutors had not been appointed by the Exam Board. However, there is more clarity now: the Exam Board has drawn up a step-by-step plan to improve these points and optimize communication with MAFAD. In the future there will be one Exam Board for all the Avans master's programmes. At this moment there is one Exam Board for Art, Design, and Cabaret, consisting of one member for design, one for art and research, one for cabaret, an official secretary, and an external member. The external member is a valued expert in the more complex legal issues. They have acquired the necessary assessments skills, all of them having (nearly) completed basic or higher qualifications for examination (Dutch BDB, BKE, SKE qualifications). Moreover, Exam Board members regularly check on the quality of the presentations as hidden customers. Any further advice on assessment by the Exam Board goes to both the GSC and the MAFAD management. Through the pathway leaders, the management then passes this on to the tutors.

Being aware of the programme's organizational, communication and other management issues, the panel still sees that the Exam Board is in control, and conscious of its responsibilities and authorities. They carefully execute their legal and quality assuring tasks, safeguarding the programme's basic quality.

Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Conclusion

The programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 4. The students achieve their learning outcomes in the Thesis and the Graduation Project at master level. The project results in their artistic product and their thesis is the theoretical underpinning of how they conceived and realized this work of art. The panel has studied fifteen Theses and Graduation Projects. With one exception, the panel endorsed the opinion of the students' examiners that the students' work reflects the intended learning outcomes of the programme, at master level. The Graduation Show gave the panel a deeper understanding of the quality of the students' art practice. Furthermore, the MAFAD alums have found work in line with their programme, being sometimes hired by MAFAD itself, having acquired grant programmes or residencies, becoming PhD candidates at foreign universities, or they may have started their own creative businesses, based on the programme's apparent emphasis on entrepreneurship. Yet, around 2020 St. Joost School of Art & Design stopped collecting data for the 'Kunstenmonitor,' which would have given the programme more recent information about their alums. For this reason, the panel advises the programme to set up a survey among alums at short notice.

Substantiation

Structure of the graduation process

The final semester students have to demonstrate that they can act independently and professionally as experts at master level. The final examination consists of a Thesis and the Graduation Project. The Thesis is the theoretical underpinning of the artistic work that is presented in the Graduation project. During the examination, students give an oral and visual presentation of their graduation project and underpin this theoretically through their thesis. The presentation is given to fellow students, an internal assessment panel, and to one or more external experts. The external experts do not assess the work of individual candidates but do provide the School Board with a written judgement on the level of the graduation work as a whole and the degree to which it corresponds to current developments in the professional practice.

The students are pleased with the supervision they get during the graduation process. In this process they become aware of the emphasis on being authentic, and what this means for their art practice at master level. The tutors stress the importance of the creative process of reading, reflecting on this, and then writing these reflections down. The goal of the thesis for students is thinking, reflection, also deeper contemplating, and incorporating this in their motives.

Products by graduates

The panel has assessed the theses and graduation projects of fifteen students. In nearly all of them the master level and the professional skills for master students of art and design were clearly there. There was one final thesis which, according to the panel, should not have been graded as sufficient. The programme indicated that the thesis in question was a resit.

They claim that this graduating student has changed and improved her work in the course of time. So, the examiners gave the pass mark because of this development in the student. In summary, having judged these theses, the panel has seen two good theses, two over-compensated ones, and one they consider insufficient; for the rest their judgement concurs with that of the examiners. Having studied these theses and graduation projects, the panel appreciates the two underlying goals even better: the students work on their research, learning to become a reflective practitioner, while they have to materialize this at art school master level at the same time.

The following are three examples of such theses made by students who graduated recently, indicating the variety of topics students have chosen. They were also assessed by the panel, who endorsed their master level. The first of these theses is entitled 'A Yarn Spun with Yesterday's Scraps.' It is a practice-led research on memory and how to reconstruct it. This methodological proposition utilises photography to distil points of reference to reflect upon, even substituting memory. The aim of this proposed methodology, supported by research, is to ground memory and demystify the usage of it. Another thesis is entitled 'How do our Body Images Become Us?' This thesis constitutes a research into the intersubjective relationship between our bodies and us, human beings. This is a familiar topic but this project aims to investigate more deeply the characteristics of the concept of 'body image' in different cultural contexts. The graduating student is contrasting body images through origami and performance photography experiments. This student combines this with social issues in different cultural contexts. The conclusion of this paper is that intersubjectivity itself shapes the body. The final one is a project that the panel appreciated most of all the theses they had seen. Under the title 'Care to Feel it till the Pain Threshold,' the graduating student writes "a personal journey of hope and exploration in the context of elderly living, undertaken by a designer who is also the granddaughter of an aging grandmother." She investigates different ways of co-living with older generations, using various research and design methods to find solutions that prioritize mutual care between older and younger generations. The problems in the care for the elderly make her reflect on the ethical consequences of design choices. She finally embraces a relational approach that involves both herself and her grandmother facing the current situation and working together to improve their mutual inter-generational care.

The panel is pleased with the master level of the intended learning outcomes in the theses they have seen. In addition, during the visitation day the panel has also made a tour of the MAFAD Graduation Show, which gave them a good impression of the visual representation of the actual graduation projects, i.e. the research and the art produced by the graduating students, and the link between research and art practice. Some of these students were present. This gave the panel members the opportunity to discuss the graduation projects with them in more detail. Altogether, the panel was impressed by the Graduation Show itself, by the originality and quality of students' work, and by the students' enthusiasm when discussing their own work.

Functioning of alums in the work field

The programme has no reliable recent data on their alums, and where they have ended up. This is because collecting these quantitative data stopped around 2020, when St. Joost School of Art & Design pulled all programmes out of the 'Kunstenmonitor,' where this data is collected and published. Besides, the programme representatives say that because of AVG/GDPR restrictions, they have not been able to send out alum surveys of their own. Nor

do they feel supported by Avans or St Joost, there being no alum office at either to support them here. However, the programme claims that they do keep in touch with many of their alums. On a structural but informal level, dozens of alums have returned to MAFAD as invited guest speakers and staff. The Rethinking the Artist Economy module is a good example, where alums have returned as lab assistants or as producers. Some alums have also ended up in valued grant programmes. Others were awarded residencies, where they are employed by a museum for a designated period of time to produce art, give advice, or take part in the museum's promotions. Moreover, four alums have become PhD candidates at the University of Genova, the University of the Arts London, Aarhus University and UCLA.

The programme's Education Policy makes clear that across the curriculum there is an emphasis on the entrepreneurial role of the artist and designer in today's creative economy. MAFAD supports this by making its own industry links available to students, whilst providing a stimulating environment within which to study. The panel has spoken with a representative from the professional practice, who is also on the Advisory Board of CARADT. She hires alums on a regular basis in her museum, MU Hybrid Art House in Eindhoven, a place exhibiting a constant mix of art, design, pop culture and new media. Another alum, present during the panel's talk with the professional practice, has set up her own art photography studio. The students with whom the panel spoke would like the programme to organise trips to start-ups set up by alumni from the programme, in addition to the excursions to museum they already do, to see where and how they exhibit their work. This would help them prepare better for life after MAFAD.

The panel has got a good impression of the professional field where alums start working after graduation. Their employment is generally as may be expected from an art and design programme at master level. However, an alumni survey will help to get an even clearer image of alum's positions. Therefore, the panel advises the programme to set up a survey among alums. This may provide valuable background information, even leading to possible adaptations or interesting changes in the programme's strategy. As a result, the programme can serve this and the next generation of MAFAD's alums even better.

Final Conclusion

Assessments of the Standards

The audit team comes to the following judgements with regard to the standards:

	M Master of Fine Art and Design (fulltime programme)
<i>Standard 1, Intended Learning Outcomes</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standard 2, Teaching-Learning Environment</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standard 3, Student Assessment</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standard 4, Achieved Learning Outcomes</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements

The judgements have been weighed in accordance with the NVAO assessment rules. On the basis of this, the audit panel assesses the quality of the existing fulltime Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design study programme of Avans University of Applied Sciences as **positive**.

Recommendations

The audit panel has the following recommendations for the study programme:

Standard 2

- management is to pay more attention to the needs of the programme, students, teaching staff and the pathway leaders. They need to closely guard communication lines and information streams on all the vital processes in order to ensure the quality of the programme. In addition, they need to organise a transparent and lasting consultation structure.
- The panel recommends the programme to have their staff participate in the BKE and the BDB for higher arts education in the next few years.
- The management needs to plan a solid annual HRM-cycle between themselves and the tutors.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme for the Site Visit on 27th June 2024

Time	Conversation	Who
9.45 -10.00	Arrival panel	
10:00-10:30	Visit Graduation Show	Quality of art work, relation between work and thesis reports; conversation with 2 nd year Students from VAPCP, SD, and EF
10:30-11:00	Break	
11:00-11:45	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EF Yr 1 - EF Yr 2 - SD Yr 1 - SD Yr 2 - VAPCP Yr 1 - VAPCP Yr 2 -
11:45-12:00	Break	
12:00-13:00	Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pathway Leader EF, practice tutor Yrs 1 and 2 - Tutor at EF, Practice Tutor Yrs 1 and 2 - Pathway leader SD, Practice and Theory Tutor Yrs 1 and 2 - Tutor at SD, Practice Tutor Yrs 1 and 2 - Pathway Leader VAPCP, Practice Tutor Yrs 1 and 2 - Tutor at VAPCP, Practice and Theory Tutor Yrs 1 and 2
13:00-13:45	Lunch & pending issues	
13:45-14:30	Professional Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manager of the Expertise Centre CARADT (Centre of Applied Research for Art, Design, and Technology) - Researcher at the Centre of Expertise Wellbeing Economy and New Entrepreneurship and practice tutor all pathways Yrs 1 and 2 - Director MU Hybrid Art House - Alum SD, graduated in 2022 - Alum Photography, graduated in 2020
14:30-14:45	Break	
14:45-15:15	Quality Assurance / Exam Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair Exam Board, Avans Creative Innovation Academy (ACI) - Member Exam Board, ACI
15:15-15:45	Conversation with Staff and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director ACI, ad interim - Assistant Director ACI - Programme Coordinator - Educationalist - Projectleader education innovation
15:45-16:30	Review meeting	Panel
16:30-16:45	Feedback	Panel and entire MAFAD Team

Appendix 2: Documents Examined

- Self-Evaluation Report 2024, Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design, Avans University of Applied Sciences
- Presentation MAFAD Programmes, Power Point
- Study Programme Committee (SPC), minutes 2023-2024
- MAFAD Educational Policy, 2020-2024
- MAFAD, Education and Examination Regulations, 2023-2024
- Assessment Policy, Master Institute of Visual Cultures, St. Joost School of Fine Art and Design, 2021-2024
- Overview of the Active Teaching Staff, 2023-2024
- National Student Surveys, 2022 and 2023 (Dutch: 'NSE')
- Interim Audit Report MAFAD, Master Institute of Visual Cultures, Avans Creative Innovation Academy, November 2022
- Annual Report by the Exam Board of Art, Design, Cabaret, 2022-2023
- Guidelines Graduation Assessments, 2023
- Final Thesis Hand-out, 2024
- External Experts Report, 2022-2023

Graduation files selected per pathway:

Pathway	Number
Ecology Futures	4
Situated Design	5
Visual Arts and Post-Contemporary Practice	6
Total	15