



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

**STUDY FIELD of Media Art**

at Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija

**Expert panel:**

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2. **Mr Joris Landman**, *practitioner, academic*;
3. **Ms Gerda Paliušytė**, *representative of social partners*;
4. **Ms Roberta Kirsnickaitė**, *students' representative*.

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Report language – English

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Vilnius  
2023

## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Photographic technology</i></b>	<b><i>Multimedia design</i></b>
State code	6531PX010	6531PX011
Type of studies	Higher education college studies	Higher education college studies
Cycle of studies	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time 3 years	Full-time 3 years
Credit volume	180 ECTS	180 ECTS
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Arts	Professional Bachelor of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	25 January 2012	25 January 2012

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by HEI; 2) site visit of the expert panel to the HEI; 3) production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

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

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

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

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

## 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on **15 November 2022**.

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

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

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

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

## 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Examples of Bachelor's theses and course descriptions
2.	Video presentation of the facilities at VTDK
3.	Quality Manual (in English)
4..	List of pedagogical/didactical training Media Art field teachers have taken, and an analysis of related pedagogical competencies
5.	Short description and analysis on how the Media Art study field is using International week

#### **1.4. BACKGROUND OF MEDIA ART FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIAUS TECHNOLOGIJŲ IR DIZAINO KOLEGIJA**

The HEI is a public legal entity, formed in 2008. Its education is based on professional internship, applied research, experimental development, artistic activities, and lifelong learning opportunities. The HEI has 3 faculties (Design, Construction and Technology), which include departments. These offer 15 first-cycle study programs in 11 fields of study, most of them in the engineering cluster. 2 fields of study (including Media Art, which is assessed here) are implemented at the Faculty of Design and have been running for ten years. During the assessment period, there were two study programs in the Media Art field, namely Photographic Technology and Multimedia Design.

Faculties and their departments operate autonomously in regard to academic planning, academic activities, and social partnerships, among others, in order to enable the speedy solution of any academic issues. Administration (including student administration), material resources, and HR is centralised. To ensure a clear division of roles and interconnections, various structures are put in place, and interdepartmental teamwork is facilitated. The HEI's sole governing body is the Director. It has 2 collegiate governing bodies (the College Council and the Academic Council), and an office representing students' interests (the Students' Representative Office). Study Program Directors are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the study programmes, and they chair committees that ensure study programme quality (Study Program Committee, *hereafter* SPC).

The presence of, and possibilities for cooperation between, engineering and Media Art studies contribute to the relevance and uniqueness of the HEI in the region. This results in Media Art study programs being popular among applicants, compared to other study programs at the HEI. The amount of students in the study field has been stable during the period that is being assessed.

The Photographic Technology and Multimedia Design programs were last evaluated by an international board of experts in 2015. The external assessment results led to the accreditation of the study programs for six years until 2021.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Media Art study field* and *first cycle* at Vilniaus technologijų ir dizaino kolegija is given a **positive** evaluation.

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

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
<b>Total:</b>		26

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

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

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

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

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

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

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

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

*3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market*

Learning aims and outcomes of the Media Art programmes focus on media and technology-driven artistic practice. Its relevance is based on the National Progress Plan 2021-2030, specifically on the challenges and economic goals this plan sets for the CCI sector. The acceleration of digital media use and innovation caused by COVID-19, and the consequent growth in employment demand, have underlined its relevance. During the assessment period, the learning outcomes of the study programmes were adjusted towards matching this national plan, while considering global and national insights and research.

On pages 6 and 7, the SER presents a clear and coherent general vision on the relevance of the study programmes and connects it to national (and wider) policy, and recent developments (including the impact of COVID-19 on the development of the Media Art field). The specific relevance of the study programmes is evidenced to a good extent by giving examples of how it was updated to align with specific elements of this policy and the realities of future Media Art practitioners. Namely, three study subjects were introduced, covering environmental impact, social responsibility, legal and managerial knowledge, and economic insight in relation to design practice. The specific relevance of the study programmes are further evidenced by the restructuring and rescoping of study specialisations, to better connect with the dynamism of the technological landscape and the CCI sector. The expert panel assesses these changes to the study programmes as well-thought-out, proactive, in line with the HEI's vision, and a good demonstration of the HEI's ability to organise learning outcomes around the national sector's development.

The presence of, and possibilities for cooperation between, engineering and Media Art studies is mentioned in the SER as a key element of the uniqueness of the HEI. Student applications are



said to confirm this, but much specific evidence to this point was not provided in the SER nor found during the site visit. In conversations, it is mentioned that, in practice, study load may be an obstacle for this type of cooperation at the student level. There was indirect evidence for this type of cooperation at the level of teachers, and department heads, for example, in the presence of people from other study fields and how well they were informed about the study field that is evaluated here.

At the same time, the expert panel found that the very good facilities (equipment, spaces, expert support) for the study field contribute to the good relevance and uniqueness of the HEI and its learning outcomes. The panel assesses the audio facilities as especially very good. It also notes that the possibilities facilities provide for working with certain older technologies, and how this connects to comparative theory and practice in the curriculum, contribute to the uniqueness of the Photographic Technology programme. This is also evidenced in conversations with students, teachers, staff, and social partners of the programme. Certain outcomes (specifically, examples of Multimedia Design graduate works related to 3D visualisations and VR) were also seen as good evidence of the relevance and uniqueness of learning outcomes. This is also evidenced in conversations, mostly with department heads and social partners.

The panel notes that at all layers of the HEI, persons are very well informed by the aims and procedures of the HEI. This comes up clearly during conversations with students, teachers, staff, social partners, and management. The panel commends the HEI on this culture for the sharing of such information, which it sees contributes positively throughout the evaluation of the study field.

Photographic Technology graduates work at newspapers and magazines, news portals, advertising companies, and photo labs. Multimedia Design graduates work in advertising, film, television, computer game development, web, and design companies. Media Art graduates also set up freelance practices and companies in Media Art creation and creative direction in the creative and cultural industries.

Professional activity areas of the specialists trained under the study field analysed are generally indicated on page 7 of the SER and evidenced well during the site visit via the inclusion of a range of graduates in the groups, whose evidence is consistent with the information in the SER.

The number of programmes the HEI implements in the study field is based on the HEI's assessment of labour market needs. Due to the programmes' popularity, the HEI is able to adjust student and graduate numbers to this assessment of labour market needs, which is very good and helps the HEI in the consistent development of the study field.

The need for specialists mentioned in the SER could have been evidenced more specifically, for instance, by providing some additional information about the underlying research, which would've been very good.

Overall, these observations lead the expert panel to evaluate this indicator as good.

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

It is the HEI's mission to educate and deliver independent media professionals, who apply the latest technological and media knowledge, with an awareness of the country's and society's economic and social tasks. The HEI has been doing so, among others, by applying a rich variety of current educational methods, and by aligning their study programmes' strategy with the HEI's mission as well as with international sustainability goals.

The application of the rich variety of current educational methods is demonstrated to be very good by the examples of educational methods and study activities, which present an active and well-considered approach. The alignment of strategy, mission and sustainability goals is also demonstrated to be very good, by the specificity of the description and examples given for some of this alignment process. During conversations, management was very well able to provide a clear explanation of such points. The SER describes the application of the latest technology and media knowledge as a third core objective but does not expressly evidence how this translates into activities or strategies. This was also not expressly evidenced during the site visit, although this was indirectly evidenced to a good extent at that occasion (for example, in the quality of some of the presented facilities, and in some of the specific learning outcomes which were presented in an exhibition). Because of this, the expert panel assesses the coherence of the study programmes' aims and the intended learning outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI overall to be good (instead of very good). Although very good

conformity is evidenced for two core objectives, it is not evidenced very well for the third core objective.

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

The scope of the programmes is 180 ECTS, 135 for the study field. The final thesis is credited with 11 ECTS. The internship is 30 ECTS. Due to the nature of the field, the quantity of practice in study programmes exceeds the one-third requirement. The optional subject in the study programmes is 9 ECTS. The Study Programmes meet the legal requirements defined in the General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016) and Descriptor of Media Art Study Field Requirements (Order No. V-717 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 May 2021).

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

In the study programmes, learning outcomes of subjects are formulated in relation to those of the study field. Course descriptions identify assessment criteria and methods for everyone involved, and contain a table presenting links between learning and assessment methods. The SER provides annex 3 as evidence of the coherent alignment of aims and outcomes.

The HEI's procedures to ensure the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes are simple and robust, and communicated well throughout the organisation, which is evident from the understanding of such procedures that the expert panel observed at all layers of the organisation during conversations. These observations make the expert panel assess this point as good.

Analytical or self-evaluative evidence on this point was provided to a lesser extent in the SER. (This might be done—just for instance and to illustrate this observation by the panel—by giving an example of why a specific teaching method and assessment method were considered as most fitting to achieve a specific learning goal, and if and how outcomes indeed confirmed this.) In terms of pedagogical coherence, the panel also considers that many of the teachers are

practitioners rather than educators primarily (that is to say they don't necessarily have pedagogical training). And although the panel values the value of this for education, it also notes the risks of it. Because of this, the panel encourages the HEI to evaluate how it may benefit from some further active analysis of pedagogical principles in art, and how it applies them.

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

The HEI approaches the coherence of competency development by designing the programmes to progressively add competencies, and by presenting learning subjects and situations that start from simple and gradually increase in complexity. The programmes include foundational knowledge of artistic practice, as well as knowledge application and ability development—the main and largest element, and in which the internships also serve an important role. Additionally, a range of programme-specific subjects is offered, as well as optional subjects to help each student with one's respective specialisation and thesis. The internships included in the curriculum are set up to align with students' specialisations and theses.

The expert panel assesses this as very good, by the clear description in the SER, and by their assessment that annex 1 supports this description. Students, and teachers also convincingly presented their very good understanding of the study programmes' subjects and models. They, as well as social partners, expressed being very happy with the coherence of the curriculum.

The panel encourages the HEI to look at possibilities of coherently including certain competencies which it mentions during conversations as relevant for the continued development of the study field, specifically digital skills, transformational skills, and critical thinking. The panel would like to encourage the HEI to assess if a wider range of artistic skills may be of value in the development of their perspective.

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

The HEI creates possibilities for personalisation of its Multimedia Design programme by offering two specialisations. All three years in both programmes include optional subjects; twelve in total. All students take personalised internships. The HEI also provides the

opportunity to choose optional subjects from other study programmes, but during the assessment period, no students chose any of those.

The HEI evidences a highly structured way to personalise studies, within the programmes, which the panel assesses as good. At the same time, they represent a relatively small amount of study credits. And, during conversations, persons mentioned study load, the structure and pace of interim exams, and working outside of school—especially when not connected to the studies—as obstacles for the personalisation of studies. Because of these things, which are less good, the panel sees opportunities for the HEI to improve their strategy in ensuring students consistently use personalisation opportunities (beyond the improvement of communication about this topic, which was mentioned as an aim by management). Doing so may also help further alignment of the programmes with the HEI’s aim to prepare its students for a dynamic sector and technological advancedness. And, it may also contribute positively to interdepartmental cooperation at the student level and to the relevance and uniqueness of the learning outcomes (which are mentioned to be aims of the HEI in the SER but appears during the site visit to be mostly student-led in the study field). Additionally, although procedures for requests for personalisation (such as for specific guest lectures, workshops, or use of specific equipment) are clear, some persons expressed that they experienced it as generally difficult for such requests to be met. Also, some persons speculated on the potential value to the programmes of inviting more international guests.

Some relevant opportunities for personalisation appear to be based primarily in informal structures (for example, teachers helping students find opportunities). During the site visit, remarks about this were generally very positive, but some persons also expressed disappointment that the HEI in their experience does not use this potential to a greater extent (and speculated on the potential value of a space or event structure for interdepartmental meetings and exchange). The panel would like to encourage the HEI to assess if and how these efforts may be supported more structurally and formally, to ensure consistent access to personalisation opportunities for all students.

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

Final theses are prepared in accordance with procedures which are approved by the HEI’s academic council. Students are familiarised with these, and with methodological guidelines.

Final theses are assessed by a qualification committee composed of at least 5 members (which includes at least 50% social partners, at least 1 study programme teacher, and which may include professors from other HEIs), and reviewed by reviewers with pedagogical and/or artistic experience. Theses defences are evaluated by qualification committee members individually. The final grade of the thesis is determined in a closed meeting by the committee, after assessing the scores of each member of the committee, the thesis supervisor, and the reviewer.

Principles of thesis preparation, committee formation and defence are clearly and precisely described in the SER (with the HEI also going into some details about the COVID-19 situation of recent years), to a very good extent. A lot of time and attention is given to individual students, which is evidenced by teachers supervising a maximum of eight student theses. This is confirmed by students and teachers during the site visit.

Analysis of surveys among social partners shows that students meet the expected requirements. This is not specifically clarified in the SER but was confirmed by social partners during the site visit. The SER also lists a number of thesis titles, which generally evidence well-scoped and in-depth research connected to the study subjects, to a good degree. The thesis presentation during the site visit further confirms this. For these reasons, the conformity of the curriculum of the final theses to the field studies is assessed as good.

The expert panel encourages the HEI to look at possibilities to more clearly align thesis subject focus with the HEI's aims (such as, for example, environmental awareness, and criticality).

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

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

1. Active and well-considered alignment of strategies and programmes with current and future-forward insight and policies, and ambition to perform tasks and contribute to the sector, country and society.
2. Clear and transparent structures for and communication of programmes at all layers.
3. The application of a variety of current and relevant educational approaches.
4. Level of informal possibilities for personalisation of studies.

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

1. The extent to which cooperation between engineering and Media Art studies, and its described contribution to the uniqueness of the programme, is actualised.
2. The conformity of programme aims and learning outcomes with one of the three core objectives mentioned (the application of the latest technology and media knowledge).
3. The impact of study load, as well as structure and pace of interim exams on the consistency of opportunities for students to personalise their studies.
4. The level of formal possibilities for personalisation of studies for all students.
5. The alignment of final thesis subjects with the HEI's strategic aims (such as, for example, environmental awareness, and criticality).

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

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

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

The HEI uses funds allocated for research and experimental development (R&ED) in Media Art for the development of applied projects (such as experimental/artistic development projects), some of which are commissioned by social partners. These funds constitute around 30% of the total R&ED budget of the HEI in 2019–2021 and have increased over the assessment period (€15.000 in 2019, €21.000 in 2020, €21.000 in 2021; the SER mentions an additional €25.000 which is not dated). Additionally, the HEI set up a Science Foundation in 2020, to intensify R&ED through providing support to increase the quality, productivity, and dissemination of R&ED output via databases and conferences. Around 23% of the total budget for this (35.000€) was allocated to Media Art. Outcomes of R&ED activities are integrated back into education. The way in which this is intended to happen is generally described—R&ED done by them relates to the study field, is integrated into their classes, publications are disseminated, which ensures unity, directionality, and competence development—and examples that elaborate on the HEI's approaches, budgeting, and integration are provided. The direction for Media Art R&ED for the coming period is described in some detail.

The cooperation of the HEI with external partners in carrying out R&ED in the study field is analysed based on a table of R&ED outcomes on pages 18 and 19 of the SER. The HEI sees a significant increase in output due to an increase in teachers' qualifications, international and interdisciplinary cooperation, and increased initiative.

Plans for R&ED related to the study field are provided in a general way, via a list of general subject matters and technologies that the R&ED will be focused on. The SER does not provide information about the financial viability of R&ED for the coming period.

Clear information is provided about which R&ED activities, and which cooperations with external partners carried out by the HEI, are directly related to the field studies and how they are integrated into them. Information about the division of budgets between the two study programmes is not provided, but the examples in the SER present outcomes and information about their integration for both of these. The information is analysed mostly at the quantitative or practical level.

The expert panel encourages the HEI to evaluate if and how integrating some more critical, qualitative analysis and self-evaluation (for instance about the direction and impact of R&ED and how R&ED is connected to the HEI's partnership strategy, or about the rationale for which projects are created and with which partners) may help the HEI in the development and implementation of its R&ED.

Based on the evidence about the previous period, the panel trusts the HEI's ability to ensure the financial viability of the R&ED plans for the coming period. The panel sees good connections and coherence between the list of subjects and aims and perspectives for the field and programmes that were mentioned in the SER and during the site visit, and encourages some more critical, qualitative analysis and self-evaluation.

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

In order to ensure the relevance of the programmes' content, the latest developments in Media Art and technology are continually studied by the HEI, and insights integrated in the programmes. Students and teachers participate in activities and centres by organisations,



unions, and festivals relevant to Media Art as well as by social partners. Teachers continually research the field and their knowledge trickles down through their education. Workshops and facilities are provided to directly work with technologies (such as AR and AI, light drawing, and drone photography). The school attempts to also do this for developments which are still relatively harder to actively engage with, such as AI.

The HEI has a good strategy for linking the latest developments in science, arts and technology. On page 20, the SER gives an example of this in terms of how the Multimedia Design programme is organised in relation to actual media production workflows and uses practice-based teaching methods. For Photographic Technology, various courses and subjects have been introduced, dealing with media project management and communication, freelance photography and photographic art projects, and drone photography. The panel also sees the good efforts of the HEI to create situations in which students can engage with the latest developments. At the same time, developments related to art are evidenced to be less strongly linked in the content of studies, and R&ED is presented to focus more on the technological, scientific, or entrepreneurial components of the study field. This was evidenced in various ways, such as in the presentation of graduate works during the site visits, and by written and spoken evidence about the nature of the studies from various groups. Based on the above, the expert panel assesses this point as good.

During conversations, multiple persons mentioned that interdepartmental collaboration could be improved, in their opinion. The panel offers for consideration if and how increasing interdepartmental cooperation, especially with other fields and programmes, may contribute to the HEI's ability to link the Media Art field with the latest developments in science, art and technology. This is in mind that the HEI mentions the possibility of this type of collaboration as one of its unique features.

The panel would encourage the HEI to evaluate if and how the connection with certain areas of art and theory may contribute to opportunities for students to connect to the latest developments, insofar as it is not already part of the curriculum. Just to give some examples, art and theory concerning the role and impact of media in social processes, experimental media philosophy, critical theory concerning social and environmental responsibilities of Media Art.

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

During the assessment period, 40 presentations of student works were organised in the HEI. The HEI has a dedicated exhibition space near its entrance, as well as a general space for internal presentation, and organised digital presentation spaces during COVID-19. A number of presentations take place in spaces that are publicly accessible during publicly accessible events, such as the design festival that the HEI organises annually since 2009. Such presentations are presented by the HEI as their primary strategy for providing involvement in artistic activities. Additionally, commissions by social partners are mentioned to serve this task, and students are encouraged to participate in external presentations such as film festivals and competitions, which they do, as evidenced by examples given on page 21 of the SER. Student participation in artistic activities and experimental development projects is stable, at around 50%.

The presentations that the HEI mentions as primary evidence, are also a relevant part of the HEI's communication strategy. Although they may provide good involvement, the expert panel sees this linked approach as limited in terms of potential impact and variety of opportunities for involvement. Evidence to the contrary is not clearly provided (such as, for example, information about what activities students actually engage with as part of these presentations). During conversations, and in other parts of the SER, other types of projects are also mentioned, but at the same time, it is mentioned that involvement in some of these requires a form of selection or competition for student involvement, which is intended to motivate students. During conversations, persons also mentioned study load and work outside of the school as prohibitive for involvement in activities outside of the curriculum. These things then logically also impact student involvement through participation in contests and similar. Budgets for artistic activity are also mentioned by a person as a possible obstacle to student involvement. All combined, the expert panel assesses the quality of the structure that the HEI put in place as good, but sees opportunities for improvement for facilitating student participation.

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

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

1. The HEI provides a clear structure and active attitude for artistic activity.
2. The HEI has a strategy to link artistic activity with the Media Art field.

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

1. Student participation in artistic activity could be higher, and the artistic activity provided could be more varied.
2. The extent to which subjects on recent development in arts are linked to study content and artistic activity.
3. The HEI should stay careful in keeping the balance between providing structure, and creating possibilities for students to develop innovative practices.

### **3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT**

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

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

Students are admitted to VTDK study programmes during the General Admission period, which is the period of time during which Lithuanian higher education institutions are closely associated with LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Centralised Admissions) due to centralised admissions.

The HEI's website contains a great deal of information on the courses they offer and the requirements for applying, as well as information regarding the study programmes. The fact that the enrolment into Media Art field study programmes at VTDK is consistent over the period of time that was analysed, indicates that students are interested in the programmes being offered. No problems were detected, neither with the admission criteria nor with the information that was given to students. The information provided on the admission criteria is sufficient and clear.

Both the lowest and highest applications averages have grown over the 3-year period from 7.5 to 7.88 and from 8.53 to 9.4 consecutively. It is also clear that now a vast majority of students are admitted with funding from the government rather than as self-paid students which opens more opportunities to students who cannot self-finance their education.

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

During the course of the accreditation process, VTDK evaluates the competencies acquired by individuals according to the procedures established by the organisation. These procedures follow certain principles such as accessibility, flexibility, objectivity, transparency, comparability, and voluntariness. Learning achievements and competencies for the study programme are assessed in a number of ways, such as interviews, competency portfolio assessments, tests, practical tasks, etcetera in order to assess both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the study programme. In accordance with the Procedure for Recognition of Learning Outcomes (Formal Recognition), persons who have graduated, studied, or are studying at any Lithuanian or foreign higher education institution, according to the study programs offered by those institutions, will be eligible to receive formal recognition for their learning outcomes. Those people who have studied at the VTDK and wish to continue their studies in the same or another study programme at the VTDK are also eligible for formal recognition. In the past few years, these procedures have been successfully applied to a number of cases involving students in a number of states.

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

It is a requirement that students participating in study exchange programs enter into an agreement with their HEI prior to enrolling in their studies at the HEI they will be visiting as part of their exchange programme. There is an academic certificate from the partner that recognises the learning outcomes that have been acquired during the mobility period. If the mobility period extends over several semesters, certificates are required to be issued after every semester that the mobility period continues. VTDK faces some challenges with respect to outbound student mobility, which are mostly national in scope. Such as the issue of finance and the fact that many students work in order to support themselves while studying. In spite of this, students are aware that taking part in such opportunities can be very beneficial. According to the panel of experts, the HEI could do more to encourage students to take part in international study and internship opportunities and encourage them to pursue these opportunities

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

There are various types of financial and social support that may be available to students studying at VTDK. Some of the specific responsibilities for managing administrative and financial issues are taken on by some of the centrally located units, such as the Student Affairs Department. There are also centralised units devoted to providing counselling and career guidance to students. Furthermore, the representatives of students also have ways of assisting those who are in need, on their behalf. While there is no specific survey that the University conducts to evaluate the level of or quality of the services it offers to students, there is no systematic or accurate way of assessing students' perception of the quality of the services that are provided. Students expressed concern about the difficulty sometimes associated with taking up an internship (work placement) as some of them have to maintain other part-time jobs in order to maintain a stable financial position. It has been estimated that nearly one-third of students need to maintain other part-time jobs. In order to determine a strategy to support students so that their personal financial situation does not prevent them from being able to benefit equally from internship opportunities, it would be advisable for the department to conduct internal discussions as well as discussions with the appropriate central unit within the University. Additionally, concerning pastoral support, students had a relatively poor understanding of the specific procedures that were necessary to access various types of support, and the general tendency was to attempt to access help as they saw fit

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

The university ensures that students with a variety of needs are provided with the necessary amount of support as far as student support is concerned. Through its state-of-the-art facilities, retaining its students and making sure their basic needs are being met is a priority for the university. In the programme cycles, students receive informational emails or mention that they can always reach out to the faculty members they most trust for assistance when they need it.

In terms of providing students with study information and counselling, the HEI performs well. It is the responsibility of the students to ensure that they have all the information about the programme and the courses that they need to succeed in order to complete their studies.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. Well-organised general information on the courses offered.
2. Highly favoured academic support for students.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Inefficient outbound exchange student organisation that leads to the big gap between ingoing and outgoing exchange students.

### **3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

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

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

The SER provides a clear description of the procedures for the assessment of learning outcomes and the Study regulations. Both programmes in the assessed study field encourage the students to be active participants in the studying/learning process. The teaching methods are both passive and active: while passive teaching methods involve lectures and individual consultations, the bigger emphasis is given to the active methods, which are: practical seminars, internships, and project activities. The focus of the programmes is on project-based activities, which are seen as a key method in the development of students' practical skills.

The SER provides enough information on the evaluation process of student work. The assessment structure is systematic and well-developed. Students are provided with sufficient guidance about the procedures and the general system of assessment. The culmination of both study programmes is the presentation of the individual project in public, which has to be presented and discussed in review sessions with other students in advance.

The HEI puts a strong emphasis on the individual work of its students and ensures enough guidance for this process. Students are acquainted with the basic principles of individual work

at the beginning of their studies and assessed for it. Students are happy with the level of practical skills they can acquire during their studies. This proves the efficiency of the teaching methods applied by the HEI.

The assessment also consists of interim exams that ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes. However, the structure and the pace of interim exams seem to create some pressure and workload that may actually make it more difficult for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. During the visit of the panel, students expressed some concerns about this part of the studying process. In addition, they expressed that it also does not allow them to be more flexible in combining a more individualised studying plan and choosing more elective courses. The students also expressed a need for more informal interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration between different departments of HEI.

According to the information provided in the SER, after graduating, students can continue their studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, after completing equalising one-year studies in a selected study programme.

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

The HEI provides good access to study for students with special needs. Not only the building and the learning facilities are well adapted for students with mobility and visibility impairment, but there is an integral system designated to ensure an individualised study plan and flexible forms of assessment, that depends on the needs of the student.

Also, the HEI uses a virtual environment tool (Moodle) for distance learning and schedules individual consultations when needed. The HEI also provides funds for students with special needs and ensures equal opportunities.

However, the HEI does not provide more formalised information about the integration of students with special needs into the life of the academic community. For the future, the expert panel recommends engaging in further self-assessments on this type of integration.

Also, the HEI does not have formalised information about ensuring access to study to other socially vulnerable groups, including low-income students. The SER defines social vulnerability

only in terms of physical or neurological ability. There is also a lack of information in regard to the diversity policies of the HEI, although it was mentioned during the visit that HEI is currently working on implementing them. However, a detailed document or a time-framed strategy is missing, which the expert panel assesses as a possibility for improvement.

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

On page 32, the SER provides clear information on how students' progress is being monitored. The HEI ensures a systematic approach to the evaluation of the student's knowledge throughout the semester. One of the main methods to monitor students' progress is the system of interim exams. The HEI has an implemented strategy of analysing and discussing both the individual results of the students after the exams as well as summaries of the progress of different courses, which are discussed at the meetings of the Department and the SPC. After the results of students are analysed, the HEI ensures that the necessary measures and means, such as individual tutoring, are taken in order to solve the learning problems of each student. The possibility of individual counselling suggests that for the HEI the progress of each student is equally important.

Additionally, the SER emphasises the importance of individual feedback in regard to student progress and assessments. However, as the feedback is also provided publicly, in students' groups, with a goal to compare their level of achievement with others and to motivate them for better results, there is a risk of increased pressure and stress levels for students. Thus, the expert panel recommends introducing a variety of ways for students with different needs to provide feedback.

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

On pages 33 and 34, the SER provides clear information on the statistics of the employability of graduates and their career tracking in the study field. It shows that the HEI has implemented an efficient systematic approach to ensure this. Career monitoring at the HEI is conducted through different and interrelated means: the Career Management Information System (CMS) which is implemented the by Career Centre of HEI; surveys that are run by the Curriculum Committee; the Educational Management Information System; and data from the Employment



Service of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. As part of monitoring the careers of graduates, the Curriculum Committee also organises internal surveys and conducts such monitoring measures as Career Days or round table discussions with the graduates.

The data on graduate employment for the last 3 years of study is provided in the SER. The SER also gives information on the general opinion of the graduates of the HEI about the quality of the study programmes and the way they meet the needs of the labour market. According to page 33 in the SER, 71% of the graduates are happy with the level of knowledge they acquired during their studies and find it sufficient for the labour market competition. However, more information could be provided regarding the exact year and other means of the aforementioned survey.

The opinion of social partners is not provided by the SER, but social partners seem to be aware of the procedures at HEI. For instance, they are directly involved in assessing the teaching methods of the HEI, thus ensuring the sufficient level of skills that are necessary for student employability. The HEI pays enough attention to constructive criticism and suggestions from its social partners and uses them for improving the programmes. For instance, based on the opinion of social partners, the curricula of the field of study were supplemented with additional elective courses and the Project Management course unit. The need for the Project Management Course was also expressed by the part of graduates, during the visit of the panel. This shows that HEI is open and attentive to improvement.

The involvement of teachers in helping students to get integrated into the labour market is at a good level. Social partners are happy with the technical skills of students but emphasised the need for students to meet the pace and dynamics of the field of CCI. The graduates also expressed the need for more versatility in the study programmes and some concerns about losing touch with the interactive media.

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

In accordance with page 34 of the SER, the principles and means to ensure the academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination Policies at the HEI are described in the Regulations of the Studies, the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius College of Technology and Design,

Regulations of the Ethics Committee, and the Procedures of the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, or Stalking. The HEI also has an Ethics Committee that deals with cases of violations of academic ethics. Before starting their studies, students also sign the declaration of integrity.

However, the expert panel recommends implementing a policy of academic integrity and non-discriminatory policies that would also apply to other socially vulnerable groups.

The HEI states that there were no breaches of the code of Academic ethics at the time of the assessment period.

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

The information provided in the SER on the application of the procedures for the submission and handling of the appeals and complaints, regarding the study programme is clear. The HEI provides enough guidance for students in the procedures of handling and submitting appeals.

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

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

1. The assessment system is clear and well-developed.
2. Graduates and social partners are happy with the level of technical knowledge and practical skills provided by the study programmes.
3. There is an efficient collaboration between the HEI and social partners in ensuring the intended learning outcomes.

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

1. There could be a bigger versatility of subjects in both programmes.
2. The HEI does not have a formalised policy to ensure diversity and equal rights for the full range of socially vulnerable groups.

### 3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

*3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes*

The number of students and the teachers varies yearly so the student to teacher ratio also drifts, between 3.95 (in 2019) and 3.35 (2021). The teaching staff consists of two associate professors, three assistant professors and 21 teachers. One of the teachers has a PhD and 7 are recognised artists. The proportion of recognised artists is almost 27% of the teaching staff, which is very good and surpasses the minimum demand of 10%.

The proportion of the teachers in the study field, who work for more than 0,5 full-time equivalent (FTE) and who have more than 3-year experience in the study field, is 58% in 2021. Many of the teachers in the study programmes are practitioners, therefore, teaching for them is a side job.

The teachers in the study programmes are devoted, well-connected to the students and committed to their position. At the end of the year, each teacher's performance is assessed and opportunities for development are offered. In the meetings with students and graduates, the expert panel was convinced of the teachers' dedicated attitude towards the study programmes.

The turnover of teachers was modest in the analysed years. Some teachers ended their academic careers and others decided to become self-employed. 6 new teachers started during this period and 2 left. There is a clear method to familiarise new teachers with the procedures of the study programmes. When a lecturer leaves the study programme, and a succeeding lecturer is found in time, knowledge is transferred informally from the previous lecturer to the new one via an arrangement in which the previous lecturer familiarises the next one. Both lecturers teach at the same time but have different subgroups of students. This procedure is very good. If no substitute is found early enough, a public call for applications is launched.

When a new teacher is appointed in the study field a mentor is provided for the new teacher. This mentor advises the new teacher on all work-related issues.

All teachers in the study field are experienced. Most of them have more than 10 years of experience in teaching, some even more than 30 years. The expert panel finds this very good. The qualifications and competencies of the teachers in the study field are at a very good level.

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

There is a clear structure and funding available for the international mobility of the teachers in the study field. The outgoing teacher discusses with the Head of the Department and after shall apply to the Dean. The Dean shall decide on the possible substitution during the outgoing visit. During the assessment period, only 6 teachers from the study field participated in the teacher mobility programmes and 5 teachers arrived from the foreign institutes. All mobility was done in Europe. The duration of the mobility varies from 5 to 7 days for the outgoing and from 1 to 10 days for the incoming ones. Outgoing teachers gave lectures and participated in workshops. The expert panel is of the opinion that a higher number of outgoing and incoming teachers could benefit the study programmes. The teachers visiting VTDK gave lectures and conducted workshops. During the pandemic time, some of the workshops were organised remotely. The visiting teachers came from recognised HEIs and provided a very good opportunity for the students in the study field. However, the study programmes should ensure that the students also take advantage of these opportunities consistently.

The HEI hosts an International Week every year. During the week the lecturers from various international partner institutions visit VTDK to give lectures and conduct workshops. For example, in 2019 associate professor Chris Hales conducted a workshop on the Escape room experience. The study field uses the international week efficiently to enhance the students' and teachers' international perspectives and contacts. It has been used to establish good connections with some partner institutions and is appreciated by the teachers and students of the study field.

The study field is active in various projects with these incoming teachers. The expert panel considers that the utilisation of the visitors in the study field is at a very good level.

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

When a new teacher is appointed to the study programme, they are offered the opportunity to study at other HEIs and doctoral programmes.

The department makes plans for the staff's professional development. The scope of this for teachers is set to be 1 traineeship per tenure, 16 hours of didactical development per year and 4 hours of subject competencies development per year. The HEI also arranges opportunities for the teacher's didactical competencies development regularly. 40 academic hours (of 45 minutes) of courses were arranged for the teachers in 2019, and 16 academic hours of courses in 2021. During the assessment period, more than half of the teaching staff participated in the training on the study field subjects. The teachers may include time for the training in their working hours.

During the evaluated period, 30 different training sessions in didactics were arranged for the teachers. The subjects are divided into 5 areas: psychological problems; using Moodle, Zoom and such; study process and methods; evolving requirements for lecturers and training on documents; and improvements of the study field. The overall supply of training for the teachers is wide, and if a lecturer is interested, they can improve and update their skills and competencies. Therefore, the opportunities for teaching staff to improve their skills and competencies in the study programmes are at a very good level.

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

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

1. The teachers are devoted and committed to the study field.
2. There are very good opportunities for teachers to improve their skills and competencies, if interested.

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

1. The international mobility of teachers is at a relatively low level.

### 3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

The rooms used for studies meet the requirements of occupational safety and hygiene standards. All buildings are very well designated for students with mobility and vision impairment. A virtual learning environment and collaboration systems, like Outlook and Moodle, are available to students and teachers.

Recently, the facilities where the study programmes are conducted were renovated with EU funding, and they have been used to develop well-equipped laboratories. As observed in interviews during the visit, the laboratories are very well equipped and maintained, and provide students with very good learning experiences. Laboratories are run by lecturers-professors and by assistants. The laboratories are also used as workshop spaces by different artists and companies. This allows for cooperation between students and social partners and the enhancement of students' professional skills inside the HEI. Safety in laboratories is very well organised.

The HEI has a special exhibition space for expositions of student work. The location of the space at the main entrance of the building allows for an increase in the accessibility and visibility of student work. This element enhances the effective learning process. However, the exhibition space could be adapted better for showing the works of new media and advanced technologies. Also, the other parts of the building are not equally well adapted for the representation of student work and suggest a lack of specially designated spaces for exhibiting different forms of creative practices. At the same time, the HEI has a spacious cinema classroom, which is efficiently used for showing students' work in moving images.

The students are allowed to use the equipment inside the HEI. The usage of the equipment outside of lectures and the HEI seems to be possible, but complicated. Students expressed concern about the procedures that are required to borrow the equipment for individualised needs.

The library's collection and selection of books and periodicals could be enhanced. There is a lack of journals and periodicals that represent the latest trends and developments in art, media, and humanities. A more consistent strategy for selecting and acquiring resources could be implemented. Access to a variety of digital resources could be enhanced, including the availability of more unique and scholarly databases. The selection of books and the general display at the library do not match the contemporaneity of the laboratories.

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

The study programmes have well-equipped laboratories and modern equipment that fully meet the needs of providing quality education. Especially the equipment for working with audio. The material resources required for carrying out the study programme at the HEI are planned in the College's Strategic Action Plan. The plan for acquiring the necessary equipment is drawn each year and allows a consistent renewal of the material base. Social partners are also involved in acquiring the new equipment and providing consultation. Resources upgrading and maintenance plans work well. The HEI is constantly looking for new possibilities and partnerships to meet the needs and demands of the labour market.

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

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

1. Very well-equipped and maintained laboratories.
2. A coherent and consistent acquisition strategy that meets market needs.

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

1. Students are provided with bounded opportunities to use the equipment for their individual projects outside of HEI.
2. The resources and display at the library should meet the contemporaneity of the laboratories.

### 3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

VTDK has an Internal Quality Management System of Studies. The system is approved by the Academic Council. The HEI also has Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Manual. The Manual is available in Lithuanian and English and it describes in detail the responsibilities and structures for quality control. The quality is monitored at four levels: Institution level, Faculty level, Department level and Curriculum Committee level.

The department coordinates the collection of the performance of the teachers and the study subject issues from the social partners, thesis supervisors and reviewers etcetera and reports to the Head of the Department. Every five years, the results of the teachers are reported to the Faculty Council.

At the study programme level, both study programme committees (Photography Technology and Multimedia Design) analyse the student and social partners' survey outcomes. SPCs are the key element in the internal quality assurance system. The committees have five members: the head of the curriculum, a teacher, a social partner, a student and a graduate of the study programme. If there are proposals from social partners, employers or graduates for improvements in study programmes, the SPCs process these. At the end of each academic year, the SPCs have a meeting where the performance of the study field is evaluated. In this meeting, the final theses (quality and the relevance of the themes), the results of the surveys, and other issues of the study field are discussed.

The SPCs work effectively. In 2019, the study plan of the study field was adjusted by introducing new topics to cover the artistic trends and creative processes in the Media field. Also, the student counselling hours were increased from 10% to 20%, by an initiative made by the committee.



The study programmes adjust the number of students and graduates in the study field due to the popularity of the programmes, which is very good and helps the HEI in the consistent development of the study field.

The internal quality assurance system is at a very good level, it is effective and constantly developed.

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

Employers are involved in the development of the study programmes in various ways: having their representatives in the SPCs, supervising and reviewing theses, hosting students in internships, educational trips to social partners are arranged, and often teachers are recruited among them. When employing a graduate, partners have the opportunity to assess their skills and competencies and give feedback on the quality of the study programmes. Employers' surveys are conducted regularly. Moreover, at the end of their traineeship, the social partner assesses the student's readiness for practical activities. This survey is done every year after professional practice. Based on these analyses the Professional Practise Program has been updated. A systematic survey is made for the graduates 12 months after graduation. Employers are also invited to give presentations on new technologies to teachers and students. They are invited to follow the public defence of the final theses.

To illustrate this positive cooperation, in a round table discussion with the social partners, a need for improving the graduates' skills on project management and event photography was found. In the Photography Technology study programme, a change was made, and study subjects Media Project Management, Project Communication and Party Photography were introduced. A revision was made on the course Reportage Photography based on the graduates' feedback and the course was expanded to better meet the demands of the working life.

The Multimedia Design programme has signed cooperation agreements with various partners: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Lithuanian Advertising Producers Association School of Stage and Aesthetics and some independent companies. However, the scope of the social partners could be enhanced by adding a bigger variety of partners from the public sector.

The data is collected systematically from all the stakeholders and used to improve the study field. This system is at a very good level.

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

The study programmes collect information on many levels. At the faculty level, the Faculty Council conducts the annual assessment of the teachers. The SPCs collect and analyse the students' achievements, at least once a semester. The results of the analysis of the feedback data are presented and published on the HEI's website. This is done 3 months after those have been collected. The HEI publishes an annual report on the study quality.

The results of the surveys are discussed regularly in meetings with curriculum committees, and the Department, as well as with the Dean's office and at the faculty level. The results are also acted on; based on an observation and a suggestion, the HEI acquired an SSO system, which allows students to receive information about the assessments easily and without delay.

In a meeting with social partners, it was expressed that the graduates needed better project management and event photography skills. The curriculum committee reacted and introduced additional study subjects to cover the areas. Also after traineeships, social partners make suggestions based on the analysis of trainees' practical skills.

The expert panel sees that the evaluation and publication of the processes and the study programmes are adequate and common processes are used.

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

The results of surveys are published for students in the internal system and discussed with them. The students have a representative in the SPCs, the Faculty Council and the Academic Council. There is a very good connection between teachers and students. Teachers also involve students in their activities outside the HEI. The expert panel found evidence for this in multiple ways during the visit.

The expert panel was able to detect that it is not very clear to all students who their representatives in the committees and other bodies in the study field are. An emphasis should be put on ensuring that all students are aware of various ways to contribute to the development of the study field.

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

***(1) Strengths:***

1. The quality control structure is in place and used efficiently.
2. The quality control involves all the stakeholders.

***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. It is not very clear to the students who are their representatives in the committees.
2. The scope of social partners is limited.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
<p style="color: #008080;">Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum</p>	<p>The HEI is suggested to evaluate and address any barriers that prevent students from customising their learning experience to suit their individual needs and goals (e.g. study load, the structure and pace of interim exams); and to provide formal opportunities for the personalisation of studies. This can include offering a range of elective courses, allowing for flexible scheduling and pacing of courses, and providing access to academic advisors or mentors who can support students in developing personalised learning plans.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to look at possibilities to include certain competencies mentioned (digital skills, transformational skills, critical thinking).</p> <p>The HEI is recommended to ensure that programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the core objective of applying the latest technology and media knowledge.</p> <p>The HEI is recommended to assess if a wider range of artistic skills may be of value in the development of their perspective.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to look at possibilities to more clearly align the thesis subject focus with the HEI’s aims (such as, for example, environmental awareness, and criticality) to maximize the impact and relevance of research.</p> <p>The HEI is recommended to fully realise and prioritise cooperation between Engineering and Media Art studies to maximize the potential and unique contributions of the programme.</p>
<p style="color: #008080;">Links between science (art) and studies</p>	<p>The HEI is encouraged to evaluate its integration of critical, qualitative analysis and self-evaluation (for instance, about the direction and impact of artistic activity and research, about the rationale for which projects are created, about how artistic activity</p>

	<p>and research is connected to the HEIs partnership strategy, about the rationale for engaging in artistic activity and research with the chosen partners) in the development and implementation of its artistic activity and research.</p> <p>The HEI is recommended to look at increasing interdepartmental collaboration as a way to further link the Media Art field with the latest developments in science, art and technology.</p> <p>The HEI is encouraged to evaluate how a further connection with certain areas of art and theory may contribute to opportunities for students to connect to the latest developments. (For example, art and theory concerning the role and impact of media in social processes, experimental media philosophy, critical theory concerning social and environmental responsibilities of Media Art.)</p>
Student admission and support	It would be advantageous to give further incentives to students so that they will participate in more international mobility programmes.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	A bigger versatility of subjects in both programmes is encouraged.
Teaching staff	Finding ways to improve the international mobility of the teachers
Learning facilities and resources	Students could be provided with more opportunities to use the equipment for their individual projects outside of HEI.
Study quality management and public information	<p>Put emphasis on the delivery of the information to the students on their representatives in the committees and other bodies.</p> <p>The scope of social partners should be widened by adding a bigger variety of partners from the public sector.</p>

## VI. SUMMARY

The following summary is based on the evaluation which was carried out by an expert panel and which is mostly based on the findings of the self-evaluation report prepared by the HEI. Additionally, the expert panel visited the HEI and conducted interviews with the administration, some members of teachers, students, social partners, employers and graduates. The staff who prepared the SER were also present at the meeting with the panel and provided additional information.

The expert panel observed that the current implementation of the Media Art study field has been working smoothly and effectively, according to its social partners and the graduates. Moreover, the SER has been professionally and coherently prepared and includes clear and sufficient information, which covers all the areas of evaluation and was very helpful for the evaluation process.

Also, the SER and site visit evidence were very consistent with each other. The panel experienced this as a signal that information is well-dispersed throughout the school, and people at all layers are well aware of the HEI's activities and strategies. The panel commends the HEI on this.

During the process of evaluation, the expert panel identified the following key strengths of the Media Art study field:

1. The HEI is active, well-considered, and ambitious in aligning its strategies and programmes with current and future-forward insight and policies.
2. The HEI creates clear and transparent structures for its programmes and communicates them well at all layers.
3. The HEI applies a variety of current and relevant educational approaches.
4. The HEI provides a clear structure and active attitude for artistic activity.
5. The HEI has a strategy to link artistic activity with the Media Art field.
6. Well-organised general information on the courses is offered.
7. Highly favoured academic support for students is accessible.
8. The assessment system is clear and well-developed.
9. Graduates and social partners are happy with the level of technical knowledge and practical skills provided by the study programmes.

10. There is an efficient collaboration between the HEI and social partners in ensuring the intended learning outcomes.
11. The teachers are devoted and committed to the study field.
12. There are very good opportunities for teachers to improve their skills and competencies, if interested.
13. The HEI provides a coherent and consistent acquisition strategy that meets market needs.
14. The quality control structure is in place and used. It involves all the stakeholders

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

1. The panel sees opportunities for the HEI to improve their strategy in ensuring students consistently use personalisation opportunities.
2. Student participation in artistic activities could be higher.
3. The HEI should stay careful in keeping the balance between providing structure, and creating possibilities for students to develop innovative practices.
4. There could be a bigger versatility of subjects in both programmes.
5. The HEI does not have a formalised policy to ensure diversity and equal rights for different socially vulnerable groups.
6. Student exchange programmes could be more effective and narrow down the gap between ingoing and outgoing exchange students.
7. The international mobility of teachers is at a relatively low level.
8. Students could be provided with more opportunities to use the equipment for their individual projects outside of HEI.
9. The resources and display at the library should meet the contemporaneity of the laboratories.
10. It is not very clear to the students who are their representatives in the committees.
11. The scope of social partners is limited and could be expanded.

**Expert panel chairperson signature:**

**Riku Mika Ritalahti**