



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of Design
at Vilniaus dizaino kolegija

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. Dr. José Teunissen (panel chairperson)**, *academic*;
2. **Prof. Julia Kühne**, *academic*;
3. **Ms Ilona Gurjanova** *academic, representative of social partners*;
4. **Mr Saulius Valius**, *representative of social partners*;
5. **Ms Ignė Astrauskaitė**, *student representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – Ms Austėja Pliupelytė

Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<i>Fashion Design</i>	<i>Interior Design</i>
State code	6531PX003	6531PX002
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle studies	First cycle studies
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180	180
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	6 October 2005	22 August 2006

Title of the study programme	<i>Graphic Communication Design</i>
State code	6531PX004
Type of studies	Professional bachelor college studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle studies
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years)
Credit volume	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	12 May 2011

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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 24 April 2023.

1. **Prof. Dr. José Teunissen** (the Netherlands), panel chair, director of the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (part of Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), former Dean of the School of Design and Technology at London College of Fashion;
2. **Prof. Julia Kühne** (Germany), panel member – academic, professor at Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Head of the Competence Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning;
3. **Ms Ilona Gurjanova** (Estonia), panel member – academic, representative of social partners, design lecturer at Tartu Art College, President at Estonian Association of Designers;
4. **Mrs Saulius Valius** (Lithuania), representative of social partners, artist, curator, art director at EKSPOBALTA Ltd.
5. **Ms Ignė Astrauskaitė** (Lithuania), student representative, third-year Professional Bachelor's student of study programme Interior Design at Vilnius College of Technologies and Design.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of document
1.	The updated governance structure of Vilniaus dizaino kolegija.
2.	Examples of final theses.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF DESIGN FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIUS COLLEGE OF DESIGN

Vilniaus dizaino kolegija (hereafter, VDK) is the only private college of art studies in Lithuania. Currently, the higher education institution offers the following study programmes in the study field of Design: Fashion Design, Interior Design, and Graphic Communication Design; the study programme in the study field of Media Arts: Applied Photography; as well as the study programme in the study field of Theatre: Performance Acting.

The governing bodies of the College are the Sole Shareholder (Owner) of the College and the Sole Governing Body, i.e., the Director of the College. The collegial management bodies of the College are the Academic Council and the Methodological Council.

The College conducts surveys of social partners/stakeholders, lecturers, students, and graduates in order to objectively assess the correspondence of the contents, goals, and learning outcomes of the programmes with the needs of society and the labour market. The monitoring of the implemented study programme also benefits from the rating of study programmes and study fields in Lithuania, the opinion of employers about the preparation of the alumni for the labour market, the level of their competencies and qualifications, and the data of the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) on the employability of the alumni (employability within 12 months after the graduation), etc.

Analysing the study programmes in the study field of Design, it is necessary to mention that they are oriented towards the current labour market in order to attract the most talented and motivated students who are able and wish to compete under today's market conditions.

In 2008-2009 and in 2013-2014, SKVC performed external assessments of the College. In both cases, the activities of the College received positive evaluations - accreditation was granted for the maximum period. The findings presented by the experts state that the College "has established conditions for students to acquire higher education and professional qualifications that meet the needs of the Lithuanian economy and the level of research and the latest technologies; <...> has established conditions for continuing education, assists economic entities in organising the professional development and retraining of persons; develops a society that is receptive to education and culture and is able to work in the conditions of rapid technological change" (SER, p. 8).

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the Design study field at Vilniaus 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	4
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
Total:		27

*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 society and/or the labour market

The aim of the study field of Design in VDK, i.e., Interior Design, Fashion Design, and Graphic Communication is to educate the students with the right skills to enter the labour market. According to the Description of the Study Field of Design (No. V-410 of 18 March 2021), design is defined as “a creative process dealing with social, cultural, and economic issues and combining creativity and technology, resulting in an innovative product or service that meets aesthetic and functional user needs and generating added value.” (SER, p. 12) All three studies in the first study cycle follow these Art & Design principles: a focus on practical skills in combination with artistic creation and critical thinking resulting in a highly qualified professional who meets the requirements of the labour market and is able to compete on a global market. Additionally, the study program integrates social, cultural and economic challenges into the curriculum using creativity, innovation and the latest technologies (and tools) to find solutions in interdisciplinary settings.

During the site visit, the panel recognised and acknowledged that the study programmes deliver competent, skill-based, knowledgeable practitioners with a creative thinking approach to be able to respond to market needs and who are able to critically analyse social, cultural and economic processes.

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

The College’s Strategic Business Plan for 2021-2025 consists of 8 goals: 1) Improvement of the management system of the College; 2) Provision of the highest quality studies that meet the expectations and needs of students and employers and are adapted to the needs of the labour market and community development; 3) Improving the qualifications of the staff of the College; 4) strengthening the administrative skills and bolstering motivation; 5) Ensuring the material, financial resources, and appropriate infrastructure required for the high-quality study process; 6) Continuity and improvement of artistic (research) activity; 7) Introduction of modern information technologies for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of studies and informing the community and concerned parties; 8) Development of internationality.

During the site visit, the panel noticed that all evaluation processes are in place to evaluate practical skills, innovation, and creative processes via a close dialogue with stakeholders as well as mobility and seminar visits. Since the last accreditation, serious improvements have been

made in the development of international relations and mobility by appointing a new dedicated head of International Relations. Modern information technologies are embedded and a serious effort has been undertaken to encourage staff to develop their research and or artistic practice.

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

Study subjects are focusing on the learning of practical skills which are highly relevant to the study field. In addition, history and theory in the field of fashion/costume, graphic design and interior design are taught, as well as Psychology of Creativity and Philosophy of Art (3ECT) which is a relevant addition. Internships are a substantial part of the study programmes and range from 30-33 ECT (full-time vs part-time). The division between taught lessons and self-directed learning having access to open studios is balanced well with 43% vs 57% (Annex 1).

The additional study subjects for all the study fields offered are: 3ECT each for Fundamentals of Business, 3 ECT for Intellectual Property, and 3 ECT for Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills, to prepare the students for the future market and eventually to start their own business.

Table No. 1. *Design study field compliance to general requirements for first cycle study programmes of College level (professional bachelor).*

Criteria	General legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	120
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	21
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	between 30-33
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one-third of the programme	between 100-110
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	ca 43%

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

The description of the assessment of learning outcomes procedures are explained in the *Description of the Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes* (Annex 5). In summary, students pass reviews, examinations or differentiated credit tests and interim reports if the

goals of the course unit have been achieved at the least the minimum required level, and have been assessed with at least a 5-point score.

Two public reviews are held each semester: interim reviews and final reviews of student work, where social partners are involved as externals. Assessment of the learning outcomes of students/unclassified students (Unclassified Student - a person studying formal, non-formal education programmes or individual course units) is based on the following principles: validity, reliability, clarity, usefulness, impartiality, and publicity (Annex 5). Assessments check the following learning outcomes: 1) assessment of knowledge and its application and 2) assessment of general and special skills.

In the case of special needs, appropriate forms and methods of assessment of learning outcomes are applied in assessing the knowledge and abilities of students/unclassified students with special needs, taking into account the individual needs and abilities.

More detailed assessment methods and systems are described in the *Study Regulations* of the College (Annex 4), and the compatibility and evaluation of the study goals, learning outcomes, teaching (learning) and assessment methods of the study programmes in the study field of Design are presented in Annex 3. The compatibility of the field goals, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods are in accordance with the study programmes.

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

Fashion Design (full-time and part-time):

The Fashion Design full-time programme is a three-year course. The Fashion Design part-time programme is a four-year course. Both cover the fundamental disciplines of fashion design. They focus on developing students' skills in expression, digital technology and creative space. Throughout the course, students learn about pattern construction, academic drawing and computer construction programmes. They also participate in creative work placements to learn about ethnographic visual expression and project presentation. Throughout the course, students participate in various creative work placements to gain practical experience.

Graphic and Communication Design (full-time and part-time):

The Graphic Communication Design (GCD) programme is a three-year, six-semester course, while the GCD part-time programme is a four-year, eight-semester course. In both programmes, each semester builds on the previous one. The first year focuses on basic skills and techniques, while the second year (and third year on the part-time programme) provides opportunities for work placements and work on real design projects. The final year focuses on advanced tasks and specialisations, including writing a dissertation and preparing for a career in graphic design.

The course covers a range of topics including art history, typography, publication design, printing technologies, interactive graphics, game design and advertising theory. Students are

also introduced to entrepreneurship and intellectual property law. The course includes both theoretical and practical components, with students gaining practical experience through internships and design competitions.

Interior Design (full-time and part-time):

The Interior Design programme offers both full-time and part-time options for students. The full-time programme is a three-year course that covers foundation disciplines in the first year, specialisation and design fundamentals in the second year, and core specialisation disciplines in the third year. The programme includes creative training placements and skills development placements in real workplaces. The part-time programme is a four-year course that covers the fundamentals of interior design in the first year, design and presentation in the second year, public spaces and spatial research in the third year, and commercial and graphic design in the fourth year. Both programmes aim to produce fully trained interior design professionals with theoretical knowledge, practical skills and personal development.

The Design programme as a whole - consisting of Fashion Design, Graphic and Communication Design and Interior Design - provides a structured approach that covers a range of important areas of design study, including skills development, creative thinking, presentation techniques and business management.

Each term builds on the knowledge and skills gained in the previous one, with a strong emphasis on practical application and hands-on experience. The inclusion of internships and the involvement of social partners and employers also help to ensure that students are exposed to real-life scenarios and prepared for the demands of the industry.

Overall, the Design field of study evaluated seems to cover a wide range of competencies, including technical skills, creative thinking, project management and entrepreneurship. The field of Design appears to be designed to ensure the continuous development of students' competencies by providing a strong foundation in the basic means and methods of expression and composition and then gradually building on this foundation through more advanced and specialised courses.

During the on-site visit by the panel of experts and in discussions with the various stakeholders, the consistent development of the above-mentioned competencies of the students became clear and the assessments outlined in the SER were confirmed.

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

There are many different opportunities for students to individualise the study programme. First of all, there are conditions for students to individualise the structure of study programmes by choosing an Individual Study Plan (individual arrangement of course units (modules) and their assessments during a semester or semesters), or they are allowed to participate in the study process by choosing the Unclassified Student Status. Second of all, students are

encouraged to fill in anonymous questionnaires about their recommendations and needs for study changes. Also, students can convey their comments to the student representative who will pass them on to the responsible persons or discuss them in a round table discussion. Therefore, in this College, there is a wide choice of how students can individualise their study programme.

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

VDK provides specific guidelines for the final thesis for each programme in the study field in a separate document (Annex 7), which is offering the students very clear guidelines around the aim and objectives of the thesis as well as guidelines on structure, length and how the content is related to the study programme.

The aim of the graduation thesis is to summarise the study achievements (knowledge and skills required to obtain a professional bachelor's degree). The thesis is an independent creative project, to be assessed by the Qualification Commission which is reviewing if the student has mastered the professional skills and knowledge provided in the study programme and is ready for the labour market. Only those who have fulfilled all the requirements of the study programme are allowed to start and defend the graduation thesis. As a next step, only those students who have successfully defended the graduation thesis internally are allowed to defend the graduation thesis at a public defence event in front of the Qualification Commission including social partners. The quality of the thesis, reviewed by a reviewer, is based on the following criteria: relevance of the concept, appropriate theoretical level, relation of the creative, practical work with the theoretical part which is all very adequate and relevant. During the visit, the panel reviewed a number of final theses in combination with the practical work. The panel evidenced that the compliance of the final theses is compliant with the field and the cycle requirements.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Competencies are consequently given, focusing on classical art skills, and learning by doing.
2. Opportunities to individualise study programmes via additional subjects such as Business and Entrepreneurship to prepare them for the market

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified in this evaluation area.

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

According to the SER, the College executes research, experimental development and artistic activities on an annual basis based on the agreements with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania and the program for the *Development of Studies and Research* in the Strategic Action Plans of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania for 2018-2020; 2019-2021; 2020-2022; 2021-2022. In 2018, the College worked on a publication *Genesis of Creative, Artistic Activities for Cooperation of Vilnius College of Design with Social Partners* dedicated to the alignment of social partners to the College with the aim to update and align the study programmes with the expertise expected in the field. In the following years 2019, 2020, and 2021, the College organised a yearly seminar (the 2020 and 2021 remotely due to Covid 19) addressing topics such as 'innovation', 'cultural development of the region' and 'lifelong learning', all with an active contribution of lecturers and students (via lecturers and workshops) during an international week.

VDK future plans are to develop a MA which will enable the College to implement artistic research into the curriculum. A recommendation from the panel is to reflect on how to more strategically embed (artistic) research into the BA programmes, especially with an eye on the final thesis. Mobility of staff and students has increased which has definitely opened the scope of VDK. The exchange in (artistic) research and innovation has strengthened the teaching staff and had an effect on the content of the curriculum.

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

The latest achievements and insights in research, art, and technology are constantly linked and used to update course content according to the SER. The input for these updates comes from social partners, student surveys and mobility exchange. For all the three areas - Fashion Design, Interior Design and Graphic Communication Design - it means that the College implements digital tools and software programs (Gerber, V Stich, Adobe and others) in line with the digitalisation of the discipline/industry. A detailed list was provided in Annex 20. Based on yearly reviews with staff and students, digital resources and computers get updated. The transparent procedures are described in 6.1.2.

There is an extended list of 76 international partners mentioned in Annex 9. On top of that, VDK is a member of Cumulus which gives them access to a huge and renowned network of Art & Design universities and yearly symposiums on the latest developments in Art & Design. Besides that, they are active users of Erasmus exchange opportunities for staff and students. The panel

is confident that VDK has the right processes and networks in place to make sure they are informed about the latest and global developments in science, art and technology.

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

Annex 21 shows that students are actively invited to take part in events: as volunteers to give them a look in the kitchen, as audience or as participants (Graphic Communication Design) of international awards. There is no overview of the percentage of number of students involved. The SER mentions on page 22 that the College is aiming to encourage greater involvement of staff and students in artistic and scientific projects. Also, the College acknowledges the need for a long-term artistic/research activity plan.

The College has set Strategic Goal 5 in the Strategic Plan for 2021-2025: *Improvement of research (artistic) activities*; and by setting this goal the College encourages and promotes the development and scope of these activities by focusing on qualitative indicators. During the meetings with students and staff, the panel was not able to find evidence that these activities are structurally implemented, except for events, seminars and international weeks. Some teachers have been supported in publishing their studies via VDK publishing, which is unique for Lithuania. However, there is no personalised and operational research plan for all staff and students in place yet. The VDK management explained that they are waiting on guidance from the government which is in the process of defining what research in art education should entail.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Support to undertake research, to engage with mobility.
2. Support for staff to publish their research.
3. Partnerships in Cumulus and Erasmus.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Strategic and operational personal development plan for staff to develop (artistic) research and enhance didactic qualifications.
2. More involvement of students in artistic/research activities (exhibitions, projects, creative workshops, etc.), which would be the next step in strengthening research and science.

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

The demographic situation in Lithuania shows a decrease in the number of applicants. However, VDK, for several years in a row, is ranked first scoring highest of those entering the first cycle studies based on the review of General Admission to Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. In 2021 the score was 9.06. Although VDK is a private college where students have to fund their own studies, this means that VDK is able to attract and select talent. During the visit, teachers highlighted that they would like a bigger involvement in the selection process to make sure VDK attracts the right talent.

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

The College does not assess foreign qualifications obtained: students who have successfully completed secondary education or equivalent education (qualification) at institutions of foreign countries are admitted automatically after receiving a decision of the SKVC on the academic recognition of foreign qualification.

Unclassified students are invited to submit an application to the Director in accordance with the *Procedure for Admission of Unclassified Students to Vilnius Design College*. After an entrance examination and a signed Study Agreement, they are allowed to start the study (clearly described in the *Study Regulations* in Annex 4).

Transfer of credits acquired at other higher education institutions is transferable by submitting the official study certificate of another higher education institution, indicating the period of study, name and content description of the course units and the number of credits, or the appendix to the diploma obtained from another higher education institution to the Department of Studies. The procedures set out to work well as evidenced during the visit. Between 2018 and 2022, 42 transfers and 33 recognitions of learning outcomes have been approved.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

Academic mobility for students is well developed due to the fact that the College actively participates in the Erasmus+ programme and also has international academic partners who help to carry out exchange programmes. During the pandemic year, mobility decreased but now it is returning to a stable level of exchange. It is known that Graphic communication design students make up the vast majority of students participating in mobility programmes, while students from other study programmes appear to be a minority, therefore this could be taken into account and improved. Students are encouraged to participate in mobility programmes through informal seminars held every February and September, where students can get all the answers to their questions, and, in addition, they are given the opportunity to improve their linguistic knowledge remotely. Graduates also have the option to attend mobility programmes 12 months after graduation.

The quality of internships performed by students and graduates is well indicated by the fact that some foreign companies and studios gladly accept the students or graduates of the College

every year (45 per cent of the companies/studios accepted students of the College for internships repeatedly during the analysed period). To summarise, the mobility activities of this higher education institution are sufficiently well developed, and judging by what was heard during the meetings, it can be said that all the necessary preparation is provided for these programmes.

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

Student support is provided in a variety of ways. A socialisation week is organised for first-year students during the first week in September, before starting the lectures, within the course of which meetings are held with the heads of departments who introduce the students to the study programme and the curriculum. Presentations of the College departments are given, and students also receive briefings on occupational safety in sewing auditoriums, workshops, and photo studios.

All students have access to the College's Information System (IS) which provides learning outcomes of the course units. Access is also provided to the Microsoft Teams platform, which is used by the College's academic staff and students for distance learning, hosting assignments, reporting materials, and communicating with the lecturers teaching the course units. Notifications are sent to a personal email address provided by the student upon admission to the College in order to provide students with relevant information (state-subsidised loans, social scholarships, targeted benefits, etc.).

The Career Centre provides information on job vacancies, internships, volunteering opportunities, various events and competitions useful for career planning. Students also have a very close relationship with all the teachers and the administration, so they can immediately discuss the problems they face on the spot but during the visit, it became clear that there is no dedicated person in the College who can professionally help with personal problems. Therefore, despite the very close and informal relationship with the school staff, which was evident during the visit, the panel would like to recommend appointing a dedicated person (psychologist or a nominated teacher) to whom students could turn for help.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Students admitted to the Design field study programme are already made familiar with the study programme, learning outcomes as well as other relevant information. The information about learning outcomes is clearly explained by the teachers when they start their modules whilst all the necessary information is also provided on the College webpage which students can access at any time. Since the students have a good and informal relationship with the school staff, they can inquire and ask questions while on-site and get a quick response. If necessary, both the administrative staff and the academic staff offer additional counselling to students throughout the study process. Both students and lecturers may choose the non-formal education services provided by the College (evening courses) to improve their skills in drawing,

composition, and computer graphics. As stated above, although there is a very close and informal relationship with the school staff, the panel would like to recommend appointing a dedicated person (psychologist or a nominated teacher) to whom students could turn for help.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Student mobility is very well organised and managed to quickly recover after the pandemic. The college has an excellent and highly relevant international network, which includes many international social partners.
2. Very close and informal students' relationship with school staff.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Lack of a dedicated person to reach out for support in case of personal and social safety issues.

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

On the basis of the information provided, it appears that the teaching and learning process of the programme takes into account the needs of the students and enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The programme offers both full-time and part-time modes of study and has adapted to the current situation of distance learning during the quarantine period. The Microsoft Teams platform is used for distance learning, which has been reported as acceptable and satisfactory by both students and lecturers.

The programme offers a range of learning methods, such as topic presentation, problem analysis and video review for practical lectures. Theoretical lectures focus on teaching theoretical material, collecting analytical material and carrying out assignments. Lecturers provide students with a work plan at the beginning of the semester, which includes contact hours, independent work hours, lecture schedules and reporting procedures. Throughout the semester, students receive online and face-to-face tutorials.

Independent learning is encouraged and students are expected to prepare for theoretical and practical work, complete individual assignments and prepare presentations. The programme aims to develop students' ability to use teaching/learning tools, to use modern information technologies, to analyse material independently, to evaluate it critically and to draw

conclusions. Students are informed of the course goals in a relatively informal manner at the beginning of the course. Consistent work throughout the semester is encouraged and monitored, and feedback is provided to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The programme uses a cumulative assessment system which includes student activity, final assessment scores and interim assessments or independent work undertaken by students. There are regular departmental meetings to agree on the intended outcomes. The assessment procedure is detailed in the *Description of the Procedure for Assessment of Learning Outcomes of Vilnius College of Design*.

Overall, the programmes appear to be well-designed and structured to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes, taking into account the current situation in terms of skills and design competencies and the needs of students. The panel noticed that VDK offers an inclusive curriculum with the right balance between practical, theoretical, critical thinking and soft skills.

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

Socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs are given the opportunity to study according to the Individual Study Plan (SER, paragraph 1.2.3). Students with special needs are provided with additional information, additional guidance, etc., whenever necessary.

The library is also equipped with workstations for students with special needs. Since April 2012, the College has been participating in the project "Ensuring Access to Studies for Students with Special Needs" supported by the European Social Fund.

The College currently has special desks, chairs, a mobile stair climber, an elevator, a portable folding ramp and a computer for visually impaired users with a keyboard for use in the reading room.

In discussion with the participants during the site visit, they were specifically asked about the process of dealing with difficult situations and personal problems. All participants described the climate as very open and friendly, and everyone could be approached at any time, even anonymously by email. However, the Commission suggested that there should be a person in charge who is ideally psychologically trained or at least has a high level of empathy. This would ensure that even shy students could find someone to talk to and raise their concerns anonymously.

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

There is informal feedback at the end of each semester. Due to the close relations between the teachers and the students, immediate feedback is possible. When students indicate areas for improvement, such as the need for more preparation time, it will be honoured. Also, VDK holds

regular formal surveys on questionnaires to evaluate each unit. Finally, VDK ensures equal feedback to every student is guaranteed.

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

The Career Centre monitors the employment and career of the graduates of the study programmes in the study field of Design. The monitoring of graduates' employment and career is carried out in a complex way: by means of surveys and by analysing the received material from the Employment Service and the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (hereinafter referred to as the STRATA). The data for the years 2020 and 2021 was provided in aggregate figures by including all fields of study at the College, i.e., Design, Media Arts, and Performance Acting. 22 graduates were registered with the Employment Service in 2020 and 12 graduates were registered in 2021). The data provided show that the majority of graduates tend to engage in individual activities and start as self-employed. The College conducts surveys of graduates about their employability, positions held as well as the completeness and applicability of the knowledge gained during their studies in the labour market. However, some graduates who have completed their studies do not feel prepared for the labour market after these studies and feel that they lack working communication skills and technical knowledge, so this might be an area of improvement, although the social partners claim that the preparation is sufficient.

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

The College has a *Code of Ethics of the College* (Annex 10) for the entire College community, including lecturers, administration and other employees as well as students. It defines the norms and values around academic freedom and academic integrity, personal behaviour directly aligned to the legislations of the Republic of Lithuania, employment contracts, and internal documents of the College. The purpose of the conduct is to create a democratic, trusting, transparent and creative atmosphere at the College. To bring together the College administration, lecturers, and students to recognise, uphold and nurture the most important values in the academic field: respect for human beings, tolerance, research and civic responsibility, honesty, and justice. The College's Code of Ethics is published on the website. The upholding and implementation are supervised by the Ethics Supervision Commission of the College, the duties of which are carried out by the Methodological Council.

Students are invited to sign a Declaration of Integrity at the start of the studies acknowledging the understanding of academic dishonesty and a commitment to comply with the College's Code of Ethics and the standards of ethical behaviour throughout the entire course of studies with a duty to actively report in case of misbehaviour and to contribute to a fair and inclusive academic environment. No cases of academic dishonesty or other breaches of the Code of Ethics were reported over the past 3 years.

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 students of the College have the opportunity/right to submit appeals in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 7 “Appeals regarding the Assessment of the Achievements of Students and Unclassified Students” of Annex 3 to the Study Regulations of the College.

An appeal is a written request of a student or unclassified student to reconsider a decision on the objectivity of knowledge assessment or credit record, the procedure for taking the final examination or the defence of the graduation thesis, the assessment of the final examination and the graduation thesis (except for the evaluation received at the defence before the Qualification Commission). The Study Regulation (Annex 3) provides detailed procedures for the submission of appeals, their examination and resolution. Students did not file any appeals or complaints during the assessment period.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Inclusive curriculum with the right balance between practical, theoretical, critical thinking and soft skills.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified in this evaluation area.

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 College employs highly qualified professionals with academic and educational qualifications to teach its design courses. Lecturers include renowned artists, practitioners and designers who provide students with comprehensive, practice-based knowledge to ensure that they acquire all the skills required for professional practice.

Of the permanent teaching staff at the College, 40 per cent are established artists, 10 per cent hold academic degrees and all are practitioners. In addition, 12% of the teaching staff are doctoral students.

A significant proportion (28 per cent) of the lecturers are involved in professional associations related to design, animation, architecture and interdisciplinary arts. They are also invited to evaluate diploma theses from other higher education institutions and participate in the social and cultural life of cities, municipalities and the State of Lithuania in order to implement the Lithuanian Cultural Policy Strategy. It is noteworthy that a majority of the staff members are actively engaged in their respective professional fields. This allows a real-world perspective to

permeate the academic institution as practitioners have a keen awareness of market trends and demands.

Overall, the College employs highly qualified and experienced professionals to provide its students with the best possible design education.

In terms of pedagogical strategies, the panel suggests that additional guidance and recommendations should be offered to new lecturers starting their teaching careers at the College. It is clear that the integration of new lecturers into the study process is often hampered by a lack of pedagogical and didactic knowledge. The recommendation of the expert committee here is to create a structure that enables new lecturers to develop professionally and didactically.

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

Teacher mobility takes the following forms: seminars abroad, teaching at foreign partner universities, targeted study tours, international conferences and exhibitions of creative work. Upon return to the College, information, good practice and contacts are shared with the academic community, thus promoting the development of all staff and students, and their exposure to and assimilation of the latest knowledge and trends. This exchange takes place through faculty meetings, management meetings, lectures and informal meetings.

The development of internationality is one of the goals of the College's strategic activities, which are specified at the level of tasks: to increase the mobility of lecturers at Vilnius College of Design, and to create conditions for lecturers to improve their competence abroad. Lecturer mobility is planned taking into account the internationalisation priorities of the study programmes in the field of design.

Since the last accreditation, mobility opportunities have increased. A head of international relations has been appointed, and the committee heard from many lecturers and staff who have been able to travel with Erasmus+ funding to gain new knowledge and insights from different universities.

The panel of experts recommends that mobility opportunities should be further developed and that teachers should be encouraged to participate actively. Short-term travel is a good option to overcome barriers and build international relationships.

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

The professional development activities of lecturers at the College are regulated by the *Procedure for Supporting Artistic/Research Activities of Lecturers at Vilnius College of Design*. The professional development activities of the lecturers at the College are divided into the following main groups: didactics, digital competencies, competencies for development/implementation of artistic activities, competencies for

development/implementation of research activities, foreign language management competencies, intercultural competencies, and personal development issues.

It is worth mentioning that the lecturers at the school, who are practitioners and actually work in the field of the courses they teach, constantly improve their personal qualifications by attending courses, participating in certifications (most relevant for lecturers teaching courses in the field of interior design, i.e., architects), attending exhibitions/presentations, etc.

The College organises annual conferences/seminars in which lecturers are involved and encouraged to carry out artistic/research activities as well as to prepare reports and exercises for Lithuanian teachers, their colleagues and students. The College also organises an annual International Week to encourage both teachers and students to engage in creative and research activities with representatives of foreign partner higher education institutions. The aim of the International Week is to promote interculturalism and exchange good practice through creative means, to discuss teaching methods and methodologies, the content and implementation of specialised course units, to broaden horizons and get acquainted with the cultural, artistic and didactic solutions of other nations (SER, p. 45-46). Before the global pandemic, the International Week was organised and held annually on the premises of the College, with visits from foreign partners, weekly artistic/creative activities and seminars for all students and lecturers, and with integration into lectures and seeking the common result, which was presented at the end of the International Week in the form of a presentation or an exhibition.

The panel of experts would like to emphasise the importance of continuing to encourage academic staff to express the need for and to participate more actively in the proposed development of artistic/research activities but also to offer a variety of options in this regard, thus enabling the College to contribute to the targeted development of the academic potential of lecturers (pedagogical/didactic).

Regarding the teaching methods, the panel of experts recommends providing more advice and guidelines, especially for young teachers starting in the College.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Teaching staff is skilled, consisting of active practitioners who constantly are educated and upskilled.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. No formats for didactic qualification (especially for young, inexperienced teachers).
2. Mobility options are not used enough.

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 College provides students and lecturers with the material resources and equipment necessary for quality study in the field of design. Specialist lecture theatres, computer equipment, photographic equipment and other equipment are available for hire, and students have access to computerised lecture theatres outside of lecture time. Lectures are held in lecture theatres spread over four floors of a building, and administrative and academic staff are easily accessible. The College uses an information system for clear and accurate recording of the outcomes of the learning process and Microsoft Teams for distance learning. The computer facilities consist of various types of computers with all the necessary licensed programs, and most lecture theatres are equipped with fixed projectors.

The College purchased additional computer equipment in 2022 and the library reading room has been equipped with 19 workstations, 26 computerised workstations with wireless internet access and a printing/scanning machine. Students are introduced to the services of the reading room and the available resources, databases and procedures in a separate session. The Department of Information is a member of the Consortium of Lithuanian Academic Electronic Libraries and the Consortium of Lithuanian Research Libraries, which provides access to various electronic databases and platforms.

In summary, the College provides students and lecturers with the necessary resources and equipment for quality studies in the field of Design. The use of an information system and Microsoft Teams ensures clear and accurate accounting of recorded results and quality distance learning. The computer facilities consist of various types of computers with all the necessary licensed programs, and the library reading room has been equipped with computerised workstations and access to various electronic databases and platforms.

During the on-site visit, the panel of experts was able to gain an impression of the equipment and quality of the premises and met motivated and well-trained staff in the workshops. Students will find all the necessary technical and material resources to complete a contemporary design study programme. The visit to the library showed that some of the stacks are outdated and that the library could be better used as a place for study and work. The panel of experts, therefore, recommends reviewing the collection to ensure that it is up to date and developing formats and services to make the library more attractive to students.

Finally, feedback from students and social partners indicated that it would be beneficial for students to have access to more digital software, especially in the area of interior design.

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

The College prepares for each academic year by drawing up a plan for the acquisition of material resources based on the approved budget and the needs of the departments. The College purchases computer equipment, other equipment needed for the study process and instruments. The Director of the College is responsible for drawing up the plan, which is used to organise the acquisition of material resources and determine the budget. Teachers and students are surveyed about available resources, but participation is relatively low. All computer equipment is connected to a wireless internet connection and a contracted service company maintains and upgrades the equipment and internet connection.

The College's Strategic Business Plan for 2021-2025 includes Strategic Objective 4 to improve the infrastructure and environment by developing equipment in the library, computer classes, examination rooms and the learning process. The College regularly allocates funds to improve the quality of teaching, the teaching environment, the technical base and the library stock. Investment to improve the learning environment is directly linked to the strategic business plan and to meet the learning needs of the College's staff and students. The library stock renewal indicator is one of the College's quality indicators and is recorded annually. Data on the refurbishment of the premises is provided in the Annual Activity Reports.

The equipment adequately meets the current needs of students, but the College should invest more in digital technologies such as AR and VR, and also train teachers in this area to prepare students for the future demands of the design profession.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Workshops are well equipped.
2. Staff is trained to help students in the workshops.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Re-think and update the library collection.
2. Invest in digital innovation techniques (VR, AR).

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

The College's Internal study quality assurance system operates via an Internal Control System. Intermediate reviews are conducted by the College in the middle of the semester (intermediate

reviews are for intermediate evaluation of the outcomes achieved by the student, assessment of the progress made within the course of the learning process) and final reviews are conducted at the end of the semester. A meeting of the lecturers of individual study programmes follows the reviews in order to analyse the students' achievements, discuss the quality of the lectures, and correct the observed shortcomings in the study process. It provides an opportunity to continuously monitor students' progress, taking into account their specific abilities, individual professional needs, overcoming students' weaknesses, and providing an opportunity to strengthen individual self-expression in order to foster the student's creativity and uniqueness. When needed, study content gets updated and approved during the spring semester and takes effect from the next academic year. In accordance with the *Study Regulations (Annex 4)*, the reviews at the College are open to the public and may be attended by the social partners and employers' representatives.

During the visit, the expert panel was able to dive deeper into College's quality mechanisms. The panel noticed real dedication, and very nice, informal and open student-staff relations where flexibility is possible and space for experimentation is encouraged. There is a robust and systematic approach to improvement of the study programme via a yearly student survey, graduation survey, lecturers and student involvement in the evaluations of the unit. During the visit, it was clearly explained by students, teachers, social partners and management how the curriculum was continuously monitored, reviewed and discussed among the different stakeholders and how it regularly gets updated according to the feedback.

Although all policies are in place, the panel recommends exploring more formal processes of engagement with the student representation body. The expert panel is very happy to see that the student union is active but it might need a more formal embedding in the College's review structure.

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

Collaboration with academic and social partners is very important for the College. They are important for academic exchange, future employers, and project activities. Therefore, the College has signed agreements but also collaborates with companies and individuals without a formal relationship. Students complete a yearly survey to give feedback on the content of the studies. On top, they complete a survey after graduation to feed back on the relevance of the programme and employment opportunities. Future employers take part in student reviews, Graduation Thesis defence, and creative project reviews, and provide feedback on student skills after internships. Via joint projects, meetings, seminars and round tables, the College keeps a close dialogue with the social partners. Their observations are analysed and used as input for quality improvement of the study programme and integrating innovations. The processes around gathering feedback from students and staff are all in place, however, the panel noticed that social partners and alumni were not directly involved in the self-evaluation process.

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

The dissemination of information around the evaluation processes and its outcomes and information on studies structure are available to all stakeholders. Meetings of the Academic Council are organised each semester and meetings of the Methodological Councils are held at least 2-3 times a semester. The results of quality improvement are introduced to the College community, collegial management bodies, and graduates and are published on the College's website (www.dizainokolegija.lt). This is an adequate process that was discussed during the visit and is publicly visible.

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

VDK shared an elaborate student survey evaluation paper (Annex 18) with detailed feedback from students generating detailed insights in students' judgement on the studies and areas where they would like to see improvements. Students are satisfied with professional teachers having their own practice, focus on practical skills, flexibility, nice atmosphere and detailed feedback a.o. They are less happy with the high cost of study and high workload. One interesting outcome is that the report highlights that quite an amount of students have a job next to their studies, which is one of the reasons why they (due to a lack of time) do not take part in creative events.

During the visit, students highlighted that they appreciated that lecturers have been made accessible online, so they can review and digest important information. They also highlighted the fact that they can access their supervisors informally and easily via teams or phone in case of questions. Students do appreciate that the College facilitates those students who have a job by adapting the curriculum to their needs.

Actions from surveys are implemented. The panel noticed this open and informal feedback culture. The importance of a better functioning Student Representation Body was raised in the meeting as well as the wish to have a dedicated student room.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Good informal and formal feedback structure.
2. Strong and big social partner network.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Formal alignment of Student Body Representation to the evaluation process.
2. Stakeholders are not directly involved in the self-evaluation process.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although serious improvements have been made in the development of international relations, and research it is recommended to further develop and strengthen those areas. 2. Also ensure the latest modern information technologies of the disciplines are implemented to make sure VDK stays on top of the latest innovations.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To strengthen research, it is recommended to actively involve students in artistic and research activities such as exhibitions, projects, and creative workshops. 2. An operational strategy and plan to systematically develop (artistic) research and practice (and didactic qualifications) via a personal development plan.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although there is a very close and informal relationship with the school staff, a dedicated person (psychologist or a nominated teacher) to whom students could turn in case of personal or social safety issues. 2. The College might explore how teaching staff can be more involved in the student selection process to make sure VDK attracts the right talent.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended that the College enhance the Design field curriculum by incorporating communication skills training to better equip graduates for the demands of the labour market, ensuring they are well-prepared and confident in their professional pursuits.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operational plan to support staff in didactic qualifications, especially for starting staff. 2. Encourage more mobility.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stay up to date with innovative digital software and expand access to a variety of digital software tools, specifically in the field of interior design. 2. Provide remote access to software. 3. Update the library's collection.

Study quality
management and
public information

1. Integrate the student representative body more strongly in the evaluation cycle and establish a dedicated student room.
2. Engage social partners more directly in the SER process.

V. SUMMARY

The Design programme - consisting of Fashion Design, Graphic and Communication Design and Interior Design - complies with the legal requirements and is in line with VDK's mission and strategy. Regarding the content, the programme covers a wide range of competencies, including technical skills, creative thinking, project management and entrepreneurship. The field of Design appears to be designed to ensure the continuous development of students' competencies by providing a strong foundation in the basic means and methods of expression and composition and then gradually building on this foundation through more advanced and specialised courses. A huge social partner network is engaged in VDK events and ensures that final theses and the curriculum stay up to date with market needs. Students have the opportunity to individualise their studies. The aims and goals of the final thesis are very well articulated and clearly integrated into the study programme and aligned with the field.

Since the last accreditation, the College has made a serious attempt in improving the relation between education and (applied) science and artistic research. The College engages actively with social partners, visits seminars, is a partner in Cumulus and Erasmus and encourages mobility and exchange with international HEIs to keep informed about the latest achievements and insights in research, art, and technology. Since 2018, the College has organised a yearly seminar with an active contribution of lecturers and students during an international week. The knowledge and input are used to update the curriculum, especially around digitalisation. The panel is confident that VDK has the right processes and networks in place to make sure they are informed about the latest and global developments in science, art and technology.

VDK future plans to develop a MA will provide an opportunity to further strengthen research A recommendation from the panel is to reflect on how to more strategically embed (artistic) research into the BA programmes, especially in regards to final theses. Mobility of staff and students has increased which has definitely opened the scope of VDK. The exchange in (artistic) research and innovation has strengthened the teaching staff and had an effect on the content of the curriculum. Students are actively invited to take part in events, however, there is no overview of the percentage of number of students involved. A personalised and operational research development plan for all staff and students is recommended as the next step in strengthening the relation between art and applied sciences, making sure design thinking and artistic research is leading to strong and relevant outputs in theses, teachers' practices and research.

Regarding the admissions and support policy, VDK has a clear admission process in place, and procedures for foreign qualifications are adequate. Student mobility is encouraged via Erasmus exchange and internships include a substantial number of international companies. Financial, psychological and personal support is available. Student information is available in briefs, manuals, websites and is explained in class. There is a very open, informal flexible exchange between staff and students where all issues and problems can be addressed easily. However, the panel recommends nominating a dedicated person (teacher or psychologist) for social safety issues.

Overall, the programme is well designed and structured to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes, taking into account the current situation in terms of skills and design competencies and the needs of students. Access is ensured for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. There is an adequate process in place to monitor study progress. There is a complex system to track careers and employability of alumni. Graduates often start as self-employed but also find their way into the industry. Academic integrity is regarded as very important and there is a clear policy in place about integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination. Students must sign an agreement of integrity at the start of their studies to ensure academic integrity. Finally, there are clear guidelines and policies for appeals and complaints. During the visit, no incidents were reported.

The panel appreciates that College employs highly qualified and experienced professionals to provide its students with the best possible design education. It is noteworthy that a majority of the staff members are actively engaged in their respective professional fields. Regarding pedagogical strategies, the panel suggests that additional guidance and recommendations should be offered to new lecturers starting their teaching careers at the College. Since the last accreditation, mobility opportunities have increased substantially via Erasmus+ funding. The panel of experts recommends that mobility opportunities should be further developed and the panel emphasised the importance of continuing to encourage academic staff to express the need for and to participate more actively in the proposed activities (development of artistic/research activities).

The necessary resources and equipment for quality studies in the field of Design are in place for students and staff. The use of an information system, computer facilities, licences, library and all the necessary technical and material resources to complete a contemporary design study programme are available for students. The panel noticed a lack of interest in the library and, therefore, the panel would recommend reviewing the collection to ensure that it is up to date and to develop formats and services to make the library more attractive to students. The equipment adequately meets the current needs of students. However, the College should invest more in digital technologies, such as AR and VR and more digital in the area of interior design. On top of that, the College should train teachers in this area to prepare students for the future demands of the design profession.

The College's internal study quality assurance system is robust and has a systematic improvement approach to the study programme via a yearly student survey, graduation survey, lecturers and student involvement in the evaluations of the unit. At the visit, students addressed that student engagement in the evaluation process could benefit from a more formal engagement with the Student Representation Body which the panel recommends for the school to explore.

In terms of the academic and social partners, they are actively aligned to VDK taking part in student reviews, graduation thesis defence, creative projects, meetings, seminars and round

tables. The information about the evaluation processes and their outcomes and information on studies structure is available to all stakeholders.

An elaborate student survey evaluation paper provided details feedback from students. Students are satisfied with professional teachers having their own practice, focus on practical skills, flexibility, nice atmosphere and detailed feedback a.o. Students do appreciate that the College facilitates those students who have a job by adapting the curriculum to their needs. Finally, the processes around gathering feedback from students and staff are all in place, however, the panel noticed that social partners and alumni were not directly involved in the self-evaluation process.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Prof. Dr. José Teunissen