Quality Enhancement Review Report

Programme Review

Visual Arts – Faculty of Multimedia Communications

Tomas Bata University

Zlín

Czech Republic

Tomas Bata University
Faculty of Multimedia Communications

18 – 20 November 2019

Contents

Introduction

The EQ-Arts programme review of the study programme *Visual Arts* was undertaken in terms of an enhancement review, based on the eight EQ-Arts Standards and sub-standards[1]. EQ-Arts was invited by the Tomas Bata University in Zlín (TBU) to review the study programme *Visual Arts*, which is based in the Faculty Multimedia Communications (FMC) of TBU.

The review visit took place 18th – 20th November 2019.

In 1996, the Faculty of Technology of TBU in Zlín opened the first studio focusing on graphic design. In the following two years the faculty expanded, and more studios followed: Industrial Design, Advertising Photography, Animation, Audio-visual Arts, Spatial Design, and Shoe Design. This happened under the roof of the Institute of Advertising and Marketing Communications, founded by the Technical University in Brno. The Institute's primary aim was to focus on advertising and to distinguish itself from classic art academies. In 2002, the Institute transformed itself into the Faculty of Multimedia Communications (FMC), which - after Faculty of Technology and the Faculty of Management and Economics - became the third faculty of Tomas Bata University in Zlín, founded in 2001.

Within the framework of the Czech educational system, Thomas Bata University (TBU) is a public school. The University today provides education in technical, chemical, and economic disciplines, in humanities and art programmes. FMC thus is an art faculty located within a technical university. In the Czech Republic there are four other similar faculties as well as four art academies.

Since 2001 the spectrum of specialisations of FMC gradually expanded into the current state of nine specialisations (design studios), two studios which focus on audio-visual and animation production, and the Department of Marketing Communications. A total of 1,150 students currently study in the Faculty's three programmes. The Visual Arts/Multimedia and Design B.A. programme offers have a common theoretical foundation (Academic Writing, History of Visual Culture, Marketing Communications and English) for all specialisations. These are: Shoe Design, Fashion Design, Glass Design, Digital Design, Graphic Design, Product Design, Spatial Design, Industrial Design and Advertising Photography. A specialised course called *'Studio'* has the biggest time allocation in the curriculum. Subject-related courses (focusing in specific tools and technologies) which are related to character of the individual specialisations complete the curriculum. Out of these a roster of elective courses is formed which are open to students from all studios. The original focus on advertising, has been widened by the expansion of specialisations, and advertising has become only a part of assignments in the studios. The link of the Visual Arts Programme to the Marketing Communications programme is based on several shared courses and above all in the so-called Communication Agency, where students from the whole faculty cooperate on a number of live projects.

FMC defines its mission on a unique professional focus, which combines art, design, audio-visual and marketing studies. The Faculty aims to educate professionals in the field of design, audio-visual production

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[1] See http://www.eq-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EQ-Arts-Standards-mapped-to-ESG-2015.pdf

and marketing who are fully equipped to succeed in the current competitive professional environment, where they act as autonomous personalities in the creative industries or as independent artists. FMC cooperates with leading Czech and international institutions and organisations, which supports graduates' ability to also work abroad.

As its vision, FMC wants to continue to be a prestigious educational institution with a distinguishing focus on professional ties and skills and a specific form of tuition and individual approach to students' education. Graduates thus shall demonstrate a high-quality technical and technological base which reflects national and international standards of Higher Education.

Production of the SER

FMC has been involved in projects of the Central Development Program (CRP) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports aimed at preparing and implementing evaluation processes. Cooperation with EQ-Arts was initiated within the scope of one such project in early 2019. According to FMC the self-evaluation process was organised in several steps:

1. Familiarising the faculty management and Heads of individual studios with the idea, objectives and benefits of evaluation

2. Putting together the implementation team consisting of the following people:

   a) doc. Irena Armutidisová – Dean, responsible for creating strategy and setting up processes,

   b) doc. Jana Janíková – Faculty Dean in 2009 – 2017, creator of strategic materials, coordinator of study programmes accreditations,

   c) Ing. Martina Juříková, Ph.D. – analyst, expert on use of datamining in marketing activities of tertiary education institutions, former Vice-Dean for Creative Activities, main coordinator of the CRP project, within the framework of which the cooperation with EQ-Arts is implemented,

   d) Mgr. Pavel Krutil – Vice-Dean for Internationalisation, former Vice-Rector for International Relations, responsible for communication in English and for translations of documents.

- During the evaluation process, Heads of Studios were involved as well as staff from the Rectorate and administrative staff from the Faculty (e. g. HR department) depending on the competences and self-evaluation requirements.

Data and Appendices was collected data from various sources.

Review Team

<u>Ian Farren (Chair)</u>

Independent consultant and CEO/Director IFEC UK Ltd

Previously: Principal and Director of Education, Arts Institute KEAS, Chengdu and Chongqing China; Associate Dean (Academic Development) Head of the Graduate School and International, Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth - UK

<u>Maren Schmohl</u>

Vice-Rector, Merz Academy, Stuttgart – Germany
Founding Member of EQ-Arts, quality Enhancement Agency, Amsterdam – The Netherlands

<u>Polly MacPherson</u>

Associate Head of School, Associate Professor of Design, School of Art, Design and Architecture University of Plymouth, Plymouth – UK

<u>Weronika Zalewska</u>

Student Panel Member – Currently an Exchange Student, Sculpture Department at the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw - Poland

<u>Ingrid Grunwald</u>

Co-ordinator BA Graphic Design and MA Non-Linear Narrative, Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague – The Netherlands

Schedule

Tomas Bata University (TBU)
Faculty of Multimedia Communication (FMC)
Visual Art (BA/MA/PhD)

<u>Sunday</u>
14h00 – 18h00   private meeting RT in the hotel
19h00   Dinner

<u>Monday</u>
9h00 – 9h15   Operational meeting – laptops, refreshments, organisation etc.
1 9h30 – 10h30   RT meet the Head of the Institution (Dean of Faculty, Vice-Dean of Internat. & Liaison person)
10h30 - 10h45   private meeting RT
2 10h45 – 11h45   RT meet the Head(s) of the Programme(s) – degree guarantor Prof.

11h45-12h00	private meeting RT
12h00-13h00	Studio tour
13h00 – 14h30	working lunch (private meeting RT) in the meeting room
3 14:30-15:30	RT meet BA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed (Fashion Design, Shoe Design, Product Design, Graphic Design, Advertising Photography)
4 15h45 – 16:45	RT meet MA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed (Fashion Design, Shoe Design, Product Design, Graphic Design, Advertising Photography, and Digital Design)
16h45 – 17h00	private meeting RT
5 17h00 – 18h00	RT meet teachers from the programme(s) to be reviewed
18h00 – 19h00	private meeting RT
19h30	private dinner RT

Tuesday

09h00 – 09h30	private meeting RT
6 09h30 – 10h30	RT meet programme(s') research staff & students (Chair: dr. Silvie Stanická – Vice-dean for Creative Activities and Doctoral students, prof. Petr Stanický – Ph.D. Supervisor, Hana Auerová Nováková (arts and marketing, virtual reality in art) – PhD Student, MgA. Tomáš Krejčí (glass design) – PhD Student
10h30 – 10h45	private meeting RT
7 10h45 – 11h45	RT meet programme(s') technical and support staff Miloš Cettl – technician, Digital Design and Product Design, Ondřej Lacina – technician, Advertising Photography
11h45 – 12h00	private meeting RT
8 12h00 – 13h00	RT meet representatives of the professions and employers Ing. Čestmír Vančura (Head of the Zlín Creative Cluster), Petr Dubovský (ZCC, project manager), Jitka Alexová – (UPPER – Center of Creative Industries and Business), Jan Blažek (Little Greta), Richard Vodička (Designcité)
13h00 – 14h00	working lunch (private RT) in the meeting room
9 14h00 – 15h00	RT meet institute Quality Assurance staff dr. Eva Šviráková (Vice-Dean for Quality and Strategy), dr. Michal Stránský (Vice-Dean for Study Affairs)
15h00 – 15h15	private meeting RT
10 15h15 – 16h15	RT meet Institute Senior Management Group (Senate or equivalent) Assoc. prof. Libor Nemeškal (FMC Academic Senate member – academic staff), Milan Nguyen (Senate member – student)
16h15 – 16h30	private meeting RT
11 16h30 – 17h30	RT meet Alumni Alumni of Digital Design, Fashion Design, Product Design, Industry Design, Spatial Design
17h30 – 18h30	private meeting RT
19h30	private dinner RT

Wednesday

09h00 – 09h15	RT meet liaison person
09h15 – 13h00	private meeting RT
13h00 – 13h30	Oral feedback to the Head of Institution and colleagues

1. Programme's goals and context
Standard: the programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission

The Review Team found that there is no overarching vision statement about the Visual Arts programme, nor is there a programme description with qualification statements. Rather its nine studio specialisations (or rather the Heads of Studios) appear to be at great liberty to define the mission and outcomes of their specialisations. In general, however all studios seemed to support the stated aim of the Faculty of Multimedia Communications *"to educate experts in the fields of design, audio-visual arts and marketing who are fully equipped for practical life and succeed in today's highly competitive environment or become autonomous personalities active on the creative and art scene"* [2]. UTB and FMC define their educational goals as strongly oriented towards practice, usability and applicability *("University with an entrepreneurial spirit"*[3]) and consider ties to the regional creative industries sector as one of its defining features. The Dean noted that, as a consequence of preparing the SER, some senior faculty members had started to define a (new) version of FMC's vision (which had not yet been introduced to the staff).

The FMC Study programmes aim *"to simulate a professional environment in which advertising/marketing and design blend"*[4]. Strong industry ties, 'real-life' projects with industry partners and interdisciplinary working groups to participate at design events like the Zlín Design Week are part of its distinctive feature. The institution's strategy to ensure that the programmes align with its mission and/or in the regional, national and international context, thus is based not so much on defined processes or rules, but rather by inclination and a shared understanding by staff across the specialisations of FMC's mission.

Since studios operate their studies with great independence and there is as yet no defined qualitative standards of the programme, the Review Team found little evidence that such processes of quality management ensure that standards of the programme are maintained and developed are in place. A rather rigidly structured curriculum across all specialisations and study cycles, as well as an onerous process to change study plans, or introduce or change subjects does ensure that all specialisations work according to the same (quantitative) standards.

In order to determine admission capacity, the number of student intake is a fixed part of budget calculation, handed down by the Dean and Bursar. Studio Heads have some discretion to deviate from these numbers. Admission is organized in a rigorous manner based on longstanding traditions. Portfolio examinations, tests and interview are successive filters to identify 'the best' applicants by the Studio Heads. Some students noted that the interviews included 'personal' questions by the Studio Heads, which they found difficult to answer.

The programme has been accredited by the national accreditation agency and is currently undergoing re-accreditation by the University itself. As an institutionally accredited University, UTB has the right to accredit its own programmes.

An Annual Report is produced by the Faculty and includes data on all staff and student numbers.
According to FMC the success of a specialisation is defined by:

- figures of employment rates provided by the Ministry of Labour;

[2] SER p.2
[3] SER p.7
[4] SER p.9

- the points achieved in the RUV database;
- the participation in competitions;
- the number of applicants.

This data is collected and made available from the UTB. Senior staff noted that this data is evaluated for a period of several years. However, the Review Team did not find convincing evidence that this data was used in a systematic way to develop and enhance the programme.

Programme development is primarily done by teachers with little formal involvement by students and external stakeholders.

It was difficult for the Review Team to assess the Faculty's sense and understanding of equal opportunities, possibly also due to language and translation issues. The Review Team did find out that issues related to this area are handled in a case by case manner, based on an implicit understanding of fairness in relation to existing rules, strictures and options. Certainly, there were no guidelines or standards embedded in institutional vision.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 1

Commendations

- The focus on entrepreneurship and ties to the creative industries of Tomas Bata University (UTB) is clearly reflected in the ethos and mission of FMC and the Visual Arts (VA) Programme.

Recommendations

- Whilst there are some descriptions of the work within the specialisations as well as course and module descriptions, the Review Team has not found a clear statement of overall goals and learning outcomes for the VA Programme or its 9 specialisations.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **not compliant** in Standard 1 for the Visual Arts programme.

2. Educational processes

2.1 The curriculum and its methods of delivery

Standard: the goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.

TBU gained Institutional Accreditation in January 2019 and even though there are four more Universities with a separate art Faculty in the country, FMC was the first art Faculty to be granted Institutional Accreditation within in the Czech Republic. It therefore has the power to approve its own programmes. The Visual Arts programme was accredited six years ago by the Ministry of Education via the National Accreditation Commission. The (internal) re-accreditation is currently underway.

This process starts with an approval by the Study Programme Board at the Faculty of Multimedia Communications and then the document is presented to the Rector's Advisory Board.

Comments made by the Rector, Vice-Rectors and Deans of other Faculties of TBU are incorporated in the proposal. The document must then be approved by the Academic Senate of the Faculty as well as the Scientific and Artistic Board of the Faculty. It is then submitted to the TBU Internal Evaluation Board, which grants final approval. As part of the approval process, the document must be reviewed by two independent experts[5]. The internal accreditation period may last as long as 10 years.

According to senior staff, the process to start a new programme is started by the Faculty, following a perceived demand from the field, or a course offer from a staff member and then follows the same trajectory as described above. There is no formal process to close down a programme, which, according to staff, has not happened in the history of the Faculty.

Staff who are involved in the accreditation process told the Review Team that the accreditation process was onerous and long-winded. While some suggestions made 'along the way' were considered helpful, re-accreditation of programmes may take two years or longer during which time the old accreditation is extended. The Review Team noted that the process included every Board of the Faculty, which seems to point to overlapping authorities, particularly between the Senate and the Scientific and Artistic Boards.

The FMC Study programmes aims to simulate a professional environment in which advertising/marketing and design blend and thus fit well in TBCs mission to be *'a University with an entrepreneurial spirit'*. The Review Team found that there is no overarching curriculum for the Visual Arts (VA) programme, rather each of the 9 specialities ('Ateliers') has its distinct study plan, albeit structured in an identical way. All curricula are divided in (A), (B) and (C) sections.

(A) consists of compulsory courses of a speciality including Studio Practice.
(B) consists of compulsory electives, often made up of courses offered by other specialities, *"so that students can gain an overview of the frontier disciplines and better integrate into practical life after graduation"*[6].
(C) consists of optional courses which offer a wider range of courses, including offers from other departments of UTB. The curriculum includes basic theoretical courses (i.e. Academic Writing, History of

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[5] SER p.9
[6] ibid

Visual Culture, Marketing Communication and English) which are common to all nine specialisations. The Masters programmes include a mandatory internship within the creative industries. The volume of classes in terms of study hours and ECTS are the same across all specialisations.

The (A), (B), (C) partition is the basis of the B.A., M.A. and PhD curricula (with a diminishing number of study hours).

A unique element of education at FMC is the Faculty Project Course which is offered in collaboration with the Communication Agency. Here students of all VA specialisations as well as other FMC programmes, work in interdisciplinary teams on real-life projects in collaboration with outside companies or events. M.A. students (who are remunerated) function as a project manager, a PhD student provides further oversight of the Communication Agency. The Communication Agency is the hub and node for organising and/or participating in various prestigious events such as Zlín, Tokyo and Milan Design Weeks.

Students clearly support and value FMC's approach of a strongly practice oriented approach to education and consider it one its unique strong points. The students repeatedly noted that this was the main appeal of FMC and had motivated their choice to study at FMC. They had no difficulty navigating the study plan which is supported by the internal STAG Information System. Some students also noted a dearth of (attractive) choices in the elective and optional parts of their studies.

Students similarly did not question or critique the organisation of study programmes along relatively small and discreet specialisations offered by the nine studios. They noted that there were opportunities to work together across studios and even to change studios (particularly at the early stages of the B.A. and in between B.A. and M.A.). Advanced students and alumni did note however, that due to the limited number of staff within each studio, they felt they had exhausted their capabilities at a certain point and found little support to develop skills, or an individual profile that went beyond what staff could support, based on their own abilities. They desired more opportunities to work with outside/international staff.

There is no formal involvement of students in the development of the curriculum. The student evaluation of courses is made by a voluntary semester feedback survey. The Review Team was told that participation was approximately 40%. The results are evaluated by the Vice-Rector for Studies who discusses them separately with Heads of Studio. Conclusions should be taken into account in the development of 2-year study plan for each studio. The student evaluation functions as a suggestion and the Review Team found no tangible structure of systematically using this feedback for enhancement. Students also felt that anonymity in small classes was not guaranteed. They noted that they do not receive information about the results of the survey.

Students are included in the accreditation process in the form of meetings with the Dean, which are held at least once a year (informally) and formally as members of the two Senates. There is no representation of students on the Study Programmes Board.

Students may propose to collaborate with an external teacher or industry partner, but it is up to the Studio Heads to respond to it, as they are in charge of the budget of each studio. At times, personal initiatives of motivated students are responded to by providing new equipment or project collaborations. The students may direct grievances or suggestions to the Faculty Senate and University Senate, whereas the Student Council does not commonly function as an appellate body. There is also a box next to the Dean's office to post complaints or grievances.

The Review Team could sample very few descriptions of learning outcomes of individual courses while accessing the STAG Information System. These seemed to conform to international standards of describing learning outcomes in a general, taxonomical way.

FMC argues that small classes and teaching studio formats supports education *"on an individual level"*[7]. The studio system however does not allow the combination of two specialities or including courses from other specialisations (apart from the roster of electives).

The collaborative projects of the Communication Agency are an opportunity for students to focus on certain areas of interest, e.g. Zlín Design Week provides students with a choice between different thematic, cross-departmental working groups and group projects.

For those student's wishing to change to another studio, there is a 2-week period at the beginning of the programme for possible switches in specialisation. The possibility for change is dependent on the number of students in each of the studios. Changes after this period may be made through taking the respective study plans into account. Extra study-time might be added to compensate for the switch.

The Masters programme is more strongly focused on the student's Master's proposal. The PhD educational path usually follows the Master's specialisation of a student, but each case is individually reviewed based on the doctoral proposal and the portfolio.

While working in the studios, students of all cycles meet and have opportunities to work together (particularly in the projects offered by the Communication Agency). PhD students teach regularly on the B.A. and M.A. level. The B.A. and M.A. programmes are closely connected as they follow the same trajectory, format and organisational structure. The consecutive programmes are offered by the same members of staff, within the same discreet studio structure (i.e. the B.A. specialisation in Fashion Design is offered by the Fashion Design Studio, as is the M.A. specialisation). PhDs are similarly placed in specific specialisations and supervised by the Head of the Studio. If anything, the Review Team found that the connection of the three study cycles might be considered too close, offering a deep yet limited range of experiences and skills in the field of Design (or Visual Arts), which is developing ever more interdisciplinary and across traditional subject lines. M.A. and PhD. students noted that they had been encouraged by their teachers to apply to the next study level. All M.A. students which the team met had completed their B.A. at FMC.

Students experience a variety of teaching methods throughout their studies. The majority of obligatory theory classes are given by the teachers of the Faculty of Humanities, the subjects of choice and electives are taught by various teachers of FMC whereas design and technology classes are taught by teachers of the Visual Arts studios. Theory is taught in the form of lecture/seminar classes. Electives are mostly conducted on a smaller scale and allow more critical interaction.

The learning process of students in the studios is based on projects (often in the form of assignments and tasks) given by the studio teachers. These are also communal semester projects. The teaching strategy in the studios is based on individual consultation and group sessions, depending on their studio teachers' preferred teaching style.

[7] SER p.10

Students noted that they valued working on external real-life projects. Collaborative group projects provide an experience of extensive group work with students of other specialisations. They found that project-based tasks situated in a professional, real-time context offered practical experience of industry, enhancing their professional experience as well as enriching their networks and portfolios.

The variety of external studio activities such as the organisation of trips, shows and collaborative projects depend on studio teacher's initiative and network.

The Faculty provides the students with a possibility of creative involvement outside the curriculum. Platforms such as G18 gallery, Marketing Lab and Communication agency are open to student proposals and collaborations. UPPER is a Faculty-funded platform which links students/alumni with the professional realm, making space for collaborations and start-ups.

Students are encouraged to show their work through a variety of channels. The Faculty provides students with collaborative and showcase spaces. The semester work presentations are organised regularly, and the graduate works are presented in a graduation show. Many studios have their own networks that allow external projects to be showcased at regional, national and international level. These relationships are usually not defined formally and for the most part depend on the efforts of individual studio teachers.

Critical reflection and self-reflection are part of the studio practice in which presentation of individual work (often based on assignments) is an important element. Some studios foster structured feedback between the students, others do not. The same applies to feedback by teachers: students were very clear about the fact that the quantity and quality of received feedback about their work/assignments varied strongly from studio to studio and depended on the individual teaching style of the teacher (Head of Studio). While it was noted that students could *'voice their opinions'* about assignments and their expected solutions, it was also noted that many assignments at B.A. level were quite strict and focused on the mastery of particular technical problems and technique. M.A. students noted that they had a higher degree of freedom to develop and express their individual style. In general, the Review Team found there was little mention of a focus on critical self-reflection. Both students and alumni stressed the importance of a skill-based learning, practical outcomes and (especially the alumni) the importance of having practical skills relating to running a business, knowing about the production of real objects and other practical skills relating to the workplace.

Semester examinations, usually with the presence of one external juror from industry, are opportunities for oral feedback on students' s work. The Review Team found no evidence of specific training to prepare these external participants for their task. In general, critical reflection is more encouraged in postgraduate courses. The format of both Master's and PhD studies give greater possibility for critical reflection and requires an input of theory, referencing and insights into research.

Bachelor and Master students receive introduction to research by way of an introduction to academic writing. PhD studies provide a more extensive background to research practice such as Intercultural communication, History of Advertising, Methodology, Journalism and Semiotics.

The Review Team found little evidence that the introduction to research and its integration in the curriculum was a particular focus of FMC. Research is part of the studio practice in the sense that students are asked to consider different design styles and to acquaint themselves with the history and (current) practices in their fields and include such findings in the documentation of their work (again, this varies from studio to studio). Research is primarily understood as an academic/scientific activity (i.e. the

writing of academic theses) which accompanies the development of techniques, technology, applications, or products in the various design fields. The weighting of the academic thesis in the PhD programme is at least 50%.

Artistic and creative outcomes (i.e. exhibitions, design, products) are valued in equal terms in the important national RUV databases, which measure research success and this has an impact on the budget allotted by the national government. Thus (academic) research, development and innovation as well as artistic and creative activities are referred to communally as *'creative activities'* and valued equally. The Review Team did not encounter a specific discourse, or practice within the Faculty relating to artistic research.

The UTB offers some counselling services, in particular personal counselling was mentioned by students.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 2.1

<u>Recommendations</u>

- Clearly defined goals and outcomes of the VA Programme and all specialisations will help the effective strategic planning of curricula and the learning and teaching strategy.

- An overall learning and teaching strategy would also address the great variance of strategies the team has found over the 9 studios.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **partially compliant** in Standard 2.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

2.2 International perspectives

Standard: the programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective

The Review Team was not given access to, or made aware of, a defined international strategy for FMC or UTB. Students and staff were proud to describe numerous ways in which students could gain international experience or gain an international perspective. Student mobility is commendably high, and students describe that they are often encouraged to participate in Erasmus exchanges. They also noted that the opportunities offered by some specialities to travel to events like the Milan Design Week were particularly valued. The Review Team found that some specialisations are more active in international contacts than others.

The International Office of TBU cooperates with the student organisation *Buddy System Zlín*, which is designed to help foreign students adapt to life in the Czech Republic. It organises leisure activities related to the Czech Republic and to Czech culture. Students from abroad are assigned to a Czech student who helps them to integrate. Due to often small classes, particularly in the studio practice, international students benefit from individual tuition and contact to teachers. Some consultations in the studio are held

in English. The SER notes that *"approaches to international students varies from studio to studio and depends on the approach of the head of the studio and the type of foreign student."[8]*.

Some staff members have extensive international contacts and are present at international events in their field as well as at other universities in Europe and worldwide. There are lower numbers of guest staff and students working/studying in the programme than home staff and students engaged in international experiences.

It is a strategic goal of FMC to strengthen the international aspect of its education by providing tuition in English, offering English language classes as well as maintaining the (high) number of outgoing students and strengthening teacher mobility. (SER, p. 8). Data of outgoing and incoming students and staff, as well as participation in national and international events are part of the Annual Plan of FMC which is discussed in the Senate and published. The report is in Czech and was made available to the Review Team in a limited fashion. It was not clear to the Review Team how and if the data is collated over a period of several years in order to pick up on trends and developments.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 2.2

Commendations

- The programme clearly offers a range of extensive opportunities for students to gain an international perspective which enhances the students experience and education. Students clearly see this a one of the strong USPs of the VA programme.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 2.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

2.3 Assessment

Standard: assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes

Assessment of studio work takes the form of an end-of-semester exam in which external experts from the field are often involved as examiners. Other forms of assessment are presentations, handing-in of assignments, as well as oral exams. Forms of assessment for each course are published in the STAG Information System. Some subject/module descriptions also include assessment criteria. Each subject has a professorial 'guarantor' who oversees assessment if the class is not taught by her/himself. The grading system is based on the A-F scale, also pass/fail.

As noted above students were very clear that quality and quantity of constructive feedback on their assignments and their personal progress varied strongly from studio to studio and the general dearth thereof was a recurrent theme in the Review Team's discussion with students and alumni. The Review Team also noted that there was no possibility in the STAG system for teachers to log feedback when a grade is given.

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[8] SER p.12

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 2.3

Commendations

- Assessments methods are noted in the STAG System.

Recommendations

- A formalised approach to (written) feedback on assessment, which is rigorously applied and reviewed, should be instituted across the VA programme.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **partially compliant** in Standard 2.3 for the Visual Arts programme.

3. Student profiles

3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications

Standard: there are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme

During the different meetings with the Guarantor, tutors, students and alumni the Review Team checked if there are clear criteria for student admission.

"The basic creative, technical and academic admission requirements are defined by the admission directives. Applicants can enrol in preparatory courses, use the Open Day, or arrange a private consultation at a given studio to clarify the requirements and the required level of their work if they have doubts or are interested in extending their knowledge or consulting their works."[9]

The Review Team found that commendable efforts are made by the different studios to communicate the programme of the studio through preparatory courses, private consultation, presentations by students in their secondary schools, Open Days and events. It was clear that tutors and students perceive themselves as active ambassadors of their own studio.

"The selection of applicants for the bachelor's degree is two-round. The first round consists of the assessment of the works/portfolios submitted by the applicants with focus on a given specialization/field. They are assessed by a committee consisting of academics of a given specialization (5 experts per specialization).
The second round of the admission examination takes three days and consists of the following parts:

> *a) a written test – test of general knowledge in the field of visual culture and knowledge in a given field/studio;*
> *b) creative exam – applicants work on assignments typical for the field (studio) to which they apply. (The creative examination assesses the invention and creative abilities of the applicant and his/her ability to communicate by means of artistic expression);*
> *c) oral exam – a 15-minute discussion during which the motivation of the applicant to study in the selected field is assessed."[10]*

Both the Programme Guarantor and the students confirmed the admission procedure is as stated in the SER. Students found that the 3-day admission process was rather long – possibly too long, a sentiment that was shared by some staff members.

Obviously one of the unique selling points (USP's) for attending the FMC is the collaboration with the Marketing & Communication Department and the international opportunities that are created during the 3-year BA programme. The Review Team found that this profile was recognised by staff and students and formed the basis of the admission criteria as well.

At the Master's and Doctoral level, the admission procedure is one-round. For the Master's degree the portfolio is evaluated by 5 teachers from the specialisation/field and for PhD the committee is composed of representatives of all specialisations. The admission examination includes a 'talent' and oral exam. The creative development of the applicant (especially the creative aspects of talent) in the recent past, the ability to think individually, and the ability to implement creative ideas are all evaluated. The oral

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[9] SER p.16
[10] ibid

examination evaluates the applicant's presentation of the Master/Doctoral Study Plan, the applicant's professional profile and his/her prerequisites for creative work.[11]

Teaching staff of the B.A. programme encourage their students to continue with a Master's programme to find more artistic freedom. The BA programme is a much more structured than the MA programme. Tutors do stimulate the students to exercise this *'freedom'* by opening their personal professional network to the students. This is to encourage them to continue onto the MA programme. Some of the BA students are looking for the possibility for more experimentation and freedom and other inputs by choosing MA offers at other institutions nationally and internationally. The entrepreneurial 'DNA' of the programme at FMC combined with the opportunities to study, participate in international festivals, or engage in an internship abroad, are incentives to study the MA at the TBU.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 3.1

Commendations

- There is a rigorous admission process which is based on longstanding traditions.

- Criteria for student admission is based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 3.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability

Standard: the programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students

The Review Team was informed by academic and administrative staff and students about mechanisms to monitor and review student progression. A live demonstration of STAG clarified information and confirmed this information. STAG is a versatile and efficient Management Information System, which is kept well up-to-date and clearly sufficient to facilitate the communication to students about their grading, study progress, schedule etc.

That being said STAG is only an administrative system, which focuses on grades and the formal aspects of progression. Study progress as a wider concept includes the topic of individual feedback to students, which students felt they were lacking in some studios. Some felt, they did not understand grading standards, but this was not the case in all Studios. The Review Team was informed by one of the Heads of Studios, that a weekly peer review took place within classes. This resulted in a more open way of assessing at the end of the semester. Students were better informed about their progress.

The Review Team noted that while many students agreed upon the lack of feed-back they did not perceive this to be a major deficiency of the programme but rather a cultural norm of Higher Education in their

[11] SER p.16

country. Certainly, they did not feel that this was reason to terminate their studies at FMC. The drop-out rate is minimal, which may be seen as an indicator of a shared understanding of what to expect of Higher Education in the Czech Republic, although there certainly are signs that students' awareness and demands regarding getting feedback and transparency about grading processes are changing.

"FMC has space for graduates and students mainly from TBU who would like to start their own business in UPPER – Centre of Creative Industries and Business, which offers advice and facilities for business especially in the field of creative industries and an informal environment for forming a creative community"[12]

In the assignments for semester projects of Bachelor and Master students, the Faculty responds to offers for conducting live projects with companies or units within FMC. Examples are the production of calendars for Oxalis (Graphic Design and Advertising Photography Studios), leaflets for the Glass Design Studio, or a successful collaboration of the Spatial Design Studio with Meopta Přerov. "Collaboration with industry is based on contractual research, licensing and employment contracts (register of contracts). These collaborations are linked to individual studio assignments, so as not to disturb the balance in independent academic teaching".[13] This statement was corroborated by the Review Team.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs delivers employment information about (un)employment rates which are included in the annual report and form part of the data that is being collected at FMC for internal and external reporting.

The Review Team encountered a very commendable involvement of the teaching staff in relation to the preparation of students for the work field: they open up their network for projects and internships, encourage participation in contests, and design weeks. *'Upper'* (a start-up organisation founded by one of the alumni) and the Communication Agency meet the demand from students and alumni. Recent and older Alumni described various career options and trajectories (as both individual entrepreneurs, as well as employees within the creative sector) and provided evidence that many students successfully enter in the marketplace.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 3.2

Commendations

- Progression and achievement data are collected for the annual report which is published. (Rudimentary) Employment data is received from national sources.

Recommendations

- A rigorous analysis on a programme and studio level against a set of benchmarks and goals, would enhance the strategic development of the programme.
- The introduction to collect more nuanced alumni data and feedback would be helpful to critically reflect the development and enhancement of the programme.

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[12] https://upper.utb.cz/co-je-upper/
[13] SER p.30 https://fmk.utb.cz/o-fakulte/uredni-deska/vyrocni-zpravy/

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **substantially compliant** in Standard 3.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

4. Teaching staff

4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity

Standards: members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers

The Review Team spoke on the first day with 6 members of the teaching staff, and had two meetings with students of the BA and MA programmes, in which the role of the teaching was also discussed. Additionally, the Review Team had meetings with the Dean and Programme Guarantor.

In general, the policy of the University is to give tutors/Heads of Studio an indefinite contract. Tutors start with yearly contracts, which can last for a few years and after which they will be given an indefinite contract. Faculty reports state that it is hard to find replacement tutors as there are not that many specialists in the region. This is stated as the reason why there is little turnover/change in the teaching staff team.

Teaching staff are in general stimulated to keep on 'learning' by pursuing a PhD and carry out research, or by participating in (international) conferences and events in the field. Participating in competitions and Design Weeks to profile themselves and FMC are part of the job. That being said the Review Team also found out there was no incentive to pursue pedagogical or didactical courses. Courses offered were about the field the staff were working in and about gaining contemporary knowledge of their field of study. Tutors have to arrange technical updates within the field on their own and in their free time. This also is something staff members and Heads of Studios have to take into account and have to facilitate at the same time, if possible.

"All academic staff of the FMC register their creative activities in the field of specialisation in RUV monitoring system. Compulsory courses and courses of profiling are provided theoreticians from a given field and experts from industry."[14]

All tutors agreed that there is no directive/guidelines to give feedback to teaching staff and that there are different methods/systems being used across the studios. There are staff meetings, yet the Review Team found there was no consensus, or process about sharing and adopting best practices.

There is a possibility to bring in guest tutors for specialisations within the field. Staff noted that there was even a directive to spend the budget that was allotted for guest teachers. The Review Team also found that strong collaborations are built with other schools. The teaching staff however do not get the opportunity to attend classes to improve their teaching qualifications, about methods for coaching and mentoring etc. Nor is there a requirement by the national Ministry to have pedagogical qualification in order to teach. Currently, there is a six-year grant from the EU for staff development.

That being said the Review Team found the passion of many staff members for their design field and their students commendable; many regard their working position as a way of life, rather than merely a job. Many tutors are practicing designers in addition to their teaching position. There is no fixed quota in the contractual hours for this professional work, teaching staff have to make/find time for this themselves. Staff pointed out that the system mandates them to be active in the field in order to participate in the

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[14] SER p.19

RUV/RIV database, which is part of their job requirements. The RUV/RIV system does not reward commercial work but does take into account artistic work (e.g. producing a catalogue).

In the teaching staff there is little change of personnel, which means that Heads of Studio and tutors are working in the same position for an extended period of time and develop their own way of delivering the programme. As teaching professionals, they are measured be their results in the RUV/RIV database, yet the Review Team found little evidence that there are procedures in place to monitor if the quality of the programmes for their students is contemporary and up to date. The Review Team noted that the Head of Studio writes a report on his/her studio, which will be externally reviewed, and the public can see what and how the studio is participating in international events like the Milan & Tokyo Design Weeks, or winning international prizes.

The Review Team found that it is difficult for students to give a critique about the studio because the studios are small which means anonymity is difficult and there is a lot dependency for the assessment and possibilities within the professional field. The Review Team recommends finding a way to address this and suggests this could be a confidential counsellor or an anonymous survey which addresses these subjects – someone outside the assessing staff. Heads of Studio then can take students suggestions (and can hopefully find solutions) to integrate into their Annual Plans.

The Review Team asked in different meetings with students, teaching staff, Heads of Studios and staff about the integration of research and critical reflection. Research is integrated in the Bachelor programmes from an early stage, as an integrated part of the assignments, as well as later in writing the thesis for both the BA and MA programmes. The Heads of Studio and teaching staff encourage their BA students to continue onto the Master's programme and Master's students are encouraged to progress onto a PhD.

The Review Team noted that there is no independent student Counsellor present to give academic, career and/or personal guidance to the students. Because the studios are working with small numbers of students the Head of Studio and the teaching staff deliver most of this kind of guidance, also opening their professional networks for their students during and after graduating from the programme (for internships, live project etc.). There is a Career Counsellor at TBU university. The Review Team did not have a chance to talk to the Counsellor, or hear from the students about any experiences with him/her.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 4.1

Commendations

- Nationally and internationally connected and engaged staff members are clearly valued by students, which enhances their learning experience.

Recommendations

- Further development of pedagogical skills for all staff

- Equitable support for staff for keeping up to date and developing their professional and artistic field including contemporary trends and developments

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **partially compliant** in Standard 4.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body

Standard: there is sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programme

During their meetings with both the senior management[15] and teaching staff[16] the Review Team were informed that it was a requirement by law for teaching staff to have an MA or PhD and whilst sometimes specialisms make exceptions there is no teaching qualification or certificate needed. The Dean[17] expressed that she would like staff to have this as a requirement and that the Faculty had some resources for Continual Professional Development (CPD).

The SER[18] states, *"The staff development plan is related to the activities of UPPER – Centre of Creative Industries and Business, the G18 faculty gallery, where it is necessary in both cases to stabilize the staff for their successful operation. In connection with the widening of the offer of the Graphic Design, Glass Design and Arts Management studios, it will be necessary to create more new positions and involve more experts from business",* however, the Review Team found no evidence of proposed staff development plans.

The SER[19] states, "During their employment, teachers can attend a number of courses, e. g. within the TBU Strategic Project (Project Registration Number: CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/16_015/0002204), which focuses on strategically oriented and systematic improvement of the quality of educational activities and access to education at Tomas Bata University in Zlín (TBU) and on improvement of its process management and quality evaluation of all TBU activities." These courses are not mandatory.

Additionally, the Review Team found little structural evidence of how staff are supported through Lifelong Learning opportunities, or engagement with external projects.

When discussing how a new 'subject' was initiated and developed the Review Team were informed by senior management[20] that there were two ways of doing this, via the studio & the specialism. This was clarified by stating that the interest can come from students or staff and relates to the *"need for"* or *"personality"* of the studio and specialism. Whilst there is limited physical space *"if there is an interest then why not"*.

The senior management stated that is was *"difficult"* to ensure the standards of the programme were maintained and developed as whilst the Heads are required to provide two-year plan which is checked, *"Each of the Heads is one big ego".*

In the meeting with the current students[21] many of them agreed that: curriculum and teachers were well connected with the industry and technology; they enjoyed the professional talks; learnt new skills in marketing communication and they accessed high quality equipment. It was however suggested that with

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[15] Meeting 10 with Senior Management
[16] Meeting 5 with Teaching Staff
[17] Meeting 1 with the Dean
[18] SER p.19
[19] SER p.20
[20] Meeting 10 with Senior Management
[21] Meetings 3 and 4 with Students

staff in some studios there was a lack of skills, *"only one Master"* and *"Not all were skilled"*. These comments were echoed in the Review Team's meeting with staff[22] which included comments such as *"staff not qualified enough"* and *"Head of Department not qualified"*.

The Review Team were unable to find evidence of staff development that would support new professional requirements and changes to the curriculum.

The programme has excellent relationships with external creative agencies who encourage and support new developments within some of the studios, however the Review Team were unable to find evidence of any official recruitment policy, which would support or develop this.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 4.2

Recommendations

- Equal support for all staff to stay up to date in order to ensure they are current in their professional and artistic field, including contemporary trends and developments, will enhance the quality of the programme and the student experience.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **partially compliant** in Standard 4.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

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[22] Meeting 5 with Teaching Staff

5. Facilities, resources and support

5.1 Facilities

Standard: the institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme

The Review Team carried-out a tour of the facilities/studios/workshops available for delivery of the programmes of the Faculty on day one of the site visit and these were accessible to all students. These were of a good standard and appropriate to deliver the programmes under consideration.

All students expressed very positively that the resources/studios/workshops were very accessible and for extensive periods each day. Evidence seen on the tour would also indicate that new technology and new media are most positively resourced across the Faculty.

There was evidence of good studio practice throughout and the *'Bureau'* (Print Centrum) demonstrated professional high-quality studio outputs by the students and staff. There was evidence which additionally indicated engagement with commercial partners, with posters and displays of national and international companies who collaborated with the Faculty. The Review Team witnessed active current engagement with forty commercial partners.

It was useful on the tour of facilities to see in diagrammatic form, the delivery pattern of the graphic design programme across all levels. This is evidence of good practice and could be usefully applied across the Faculty.

The Review Team additionally requested the opportunity to see the library and learning resource centre, which is a central University facility. This was facilitated and clearly demonstrates they are fully adequate for the delivery of these programmes.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 5.1

Commendations

- There are appropriate physical, financial resources and qualified support staff to deliver the programme successfully.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 5.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

5.2 Financial resources

Standard: the institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the programme

The Chair of the Review Team and another team member arranged a meeting with the Bursar in order to determine the financial aspects, which support the delivery of the programmes. This was the only opportunity to explore the financing of the Faculty at a senior level, as the University had not thought it

appropriate to make this senior member staff available to the Review Team. This discussion was very useful, and the Review Team were able to gain clarity about the funding of the programmes.

Funding is determined by student numbers and specific performance indicators (employment and research metrics, etc.). Art and design programmes carry a weighted funding, which is determined by central government. This funding is appropriate and distributed in a transparent manner for all courses and additionally on predetermined criteria for excellent performance.

Funds are then distributed to studios and workshops on the basis determined by student numbers. The gallery and *UPPER* are also supported centrally from Faculty funds.

From discussions with the technical staff, both on the tour and those the Review Team met on day two of the site-visit, indicated that sufficient funds were available to resource some workshops and studios, which was allocated on a transparent, per-capita basis. However, when this was discussed with the student representatives, this was said to be inconsistent and there was some evidence that resources were not shared across all programmes.

There is an additional Dean's Fund, which is distributed at the Deans discretion and ESF monies, which is distributed on the basis of a state determined employment metric, requiring graduates to '*sign-on*' at the job centre.

The budgetary allocation is carefully considered and allocated in accordance with good governance and approved by the Faculty Senate.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 5.2

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 5.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

5.3 Support staff

Standard: the programme has sufficient qualified support staff

All technical staff are appropriately qualified and keep up to date through training courses and were supported by the University to undertake CPD.

The Review Team could find no evidence that technicians and support staff were represented on academic planning committees.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 5.3

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 5.3 for the Visual Arts programme.

6. Communication, organisation and decision-making

6.1 Internal communication process

Standard: effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme

Many programme details are published in a clear way on the website for prospective students, also students play an active part in the recruitment process.

Additional information is given on the STAG database, parts of which are public. This tool supports a lot of the communication between administration, staff and students. Despite its 'database look' it is a sturdy, effective way of communication and is valued as such by staff and students. After successful application students are registered and can access a personalised space. All relevant information can be found including study plans, schedules, course and module descriptors, grades. The module/course descriptions include content/topics, schedule, teachers/tutors, assessment formats, learning outcomes, grade schemes etc. There is information about partner schools and templates about ECTS recognition for studies at other (international) schools. The students enter the topic of their final thesis themselves. Teachers can communicate with various student groups (participants of courses e.g.) and students can see which courses/modules they have completed, which are still open etc. There is also the end-of-term survey.

There is also a mobile application. The system is used nationally by 14 schools, including 11 public universities and 3 private HEIs, so ongoing training and support is guaranteed. The tool is also used by part-time staff.

The Review Team found the channels and procedures of internal communication within the programme satisfactory.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 6.1

Commendations

- There are effective tools for communication between teachers, administrators and students.

Recommendations

- Regular and formalised communication (meetings) would support greater consistency and the sharing of best practice.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **substantially compliant** in Standard 6.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes

Standard: the programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and decision-making processes

TBU provides education in technical, chemical, and economic disciplines, in humanities and art programmes, and this is the reason why FMC is an art faculty active within a technical university. Art schools in the Czech Republic include four other similar faculties as well as four academies, i. e. specialist art schools. These academies take up a privileged position from the point of view of financing as well as from the point of pushing through legislative changes. This led to the founding of an association of art faculties at non-art higher education institutions within the framework of a Central Development Programme financed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The organisational structure of the programme remains under the supervision of Faculty's Dean, alongside two collective decision-making bodies which are the Faculty's Senate and the Artistic Board. The Dean supervises the Vice-Deans, whose responsibilities are divided into the specialised fields of: Creativity, Internationalisation, I/E Relations, Quality and Strategy, Study Affairs, and Economics, each field being the responsibility of one of the Vice-Deans, with an additional staff assistance. The Dean's advisory bodies are the Faculty Management, the Dean's Council, the Study Programme Board, the IT Systems Board, the Investment Board, the Dislocation Board and the Disciplinary Board.

Within the Study Departments, the Department of Theoretical Studies is independent from the practical studios and is additionally linked to the input of the Faculty of Humanities, whose teachers also give courses in the Faculty of Media Communications. The nine studios function independently from one another and divide into: Graphic Design, Spatial Design, Digital Design, Product Design, Fashion Design, Shoe Design, Commercial Photography and Glass, with the addition four extra courses (Marketing Communications, Arts Management, Animation and Audio-visual Art), which are not a part of the programme, but as the part of Faculty, also function under the supervision of the Dean. There are four collaborative/showcase platforms within the Faculty: the Communication Agency, Project Centre, UPPER and G18, and these also remain under the Dean's supervision.

The self-governing bodies of the FMC are:
>   a) **Academic Senate** - which approves the Faculty's internal standards, its budget and financial management;
>
>   b) **Scientific and Artistic Board** – members of the Scientific and Artistic Board (SAB) – are appointed by the Dean with the prior approval of the Academic Senate. SAB members are important representatives of fields in which the Faculty carries out educational and scientific research, development, artistic or other creative activities;
>
>   c) **FMC Disciplinary Board** – which discusses and proposes sanctions for violations of obligations stipulated by legal regulations or internal regulations of TBU and its units.

Another key role in the FMC is the Faculty Secretary, who manages and controls the budgets of the Faculty.

The academic community of the FMC consists of academic staff organisationally integrated into the Faculty and students enrolled in degree programmes taught within the Faculty.

While the Faculty has its own Senate, which provides space for proposals and problem-solving with the representation of both teachers and students, the large-scale or cross-Faculty proposals can be taken into the consideration of University's Senate which includes the student and teacher representatives of each Faculty.

Strategic decisions are made on the basis of the meetings of the Faculty Management and of the Dean's Advisory Council. Strategic documents are prepared in close cooperation between the Vice-Deans and the Deans Advisory Council (i.e. heads of studios), approved and discussed in accordance with the Higher Education Act.

Relevant councils and committees make decisions according to the nature of the matter (grants, exhibitions, editors, etc.).

The Study Programme Board is jointly responsible for evaluating the quality of study programmes, updating curricula, extending or reducing accreditation, submitting proposals for new accreditation and re-accreditation. The 2-year studio curriculum plans are prepared by the Studio Heads and are the subject of Dean's supervision. Studio budgets are distributed by the Studio Heads.

The responsibilities of middle management are defined in organisational rules within the scope of their agendas. Meetings of Vice-Deans are held every two weeks, and minutes are sent to individual Faculties and Faculty staff are informed as needed. The Dean also attends the meetings of the Rector's Advisory Council; extensive minutes from the meetings are sent to the Dean, the Vice-Deans and Faculty Secretary. The Faculty Secretary attends regular meetings with the University Bursar, talking mainly about economic issues related to the running of the Faculty; all issues are solved immediately.

Meetings of the studios and departments are held regularly at various intervals, where all their employees – teachers and other staff – are informed about the operation of the school, both organisationally and from the pedagogical point of view[23].

The staff responsibilities are clearly defined through the Faculty's structure.

Students are represented in the TBU and FMC Academic Senate. A representative of TBU students is a member of the Rector's Advisory Board as well as in the TBU Internal Evaluation Board. There are no students present in the Scientific and Artistic Study Board. There is also no tangible/structural involvement of students in the development of curriculum and the student's semester curriculum feedback doesn't have a structural appliance, but only serves as a suggestion.

Industry experts are represented in the Artistic and Scientific Board as well as in the TBU Internal Evaluation Board. Externals are most often present at student evaluations, but this is not defined structurally.

There is no structural involvement of alumni representation.

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[23] see Organizational Rules of the FMC

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 6.2

Commendations

- The Review Team commends an intention to move towards more strategic planning at the senior level.

Recommendations

- A clearly defined roles and responsibilities of a Head of Programme (or Programme Director) would help strategic planning, delivery and enhancement of the Programme*.*

- Stronger staff engagement in the formal decision-making processes (e.g. Senate) would significantly help to build a collegial Quality Culture across the Faculty.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **partially compliant** in Standard 6.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

7. Internal Quality Culture

Standard: the programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures

There was limited opportunity to gather detailed information around the *'Internal Quality Culture'* as there was limited information in the SER. The Dean of Study Affairs, responsible for QA within the Faculty is very new in post and the Quality Department had no involvement, nor made any contribution to the SER and was only able to answer a limited number of questions at the Quality Assurance meeting on day two of the site-visit.

The Vice-Dean for Study Affairs described a *'special p*rocess' for institutional accreditation and this only happened every ten years and takes approximately four years. Government approved templates are completed and submitted to an '*Internal Board of Quality'* for approval. FMC, were at the time of the review, going through this process. The Vice-Dean for Study Affairs described part of this process as an attempt to, *"… try to get the Heads together."*[24]

There was little understanding of how Standards were monitored, other than through studio exhibitions and competitions, which attract points towards the RUV and contributed to the monitoring of standards on the programme.

There appeared to be no systematic student involvement in the QA processes and student feedback was described by the Head of Programmes Guarantor[25] that students, *"only participate minimally"*. However, it was mentioned that, *"… students mark/evaluate the classes…"* although the Review Team was unable to find any formalised, systematic collation, or evidence of this feedback and that it was acted upon. Evaluation was described as being undertaken, twice per year, but again the Review Team could find no evidence of the information or data collected and that it was acted upon. The students described the approach to feedback[26] as *"inconsistent"*, as they were uncertain about the rationale for the feedback, being the outcome of the assignment/project, or the class. The students also felt that the complaints process was not a *"transparent"* one and that because the group sizes were so small, that anonymity was a problem, *"… so the student surveys and feedback can be problematic."*

A different experience was expressed by the postgraduate students[27], and the Review Team felt that the Master's students had a quite different experience overall, with group critiques being cited as a good opportunity for feedback in some studios. However, again inconsistent feedback was evidenced with some students getting oral feedback, others merely a grade and none had any written feedback or felt that they could undertake a student evaluation of their experience.

Additionally, in discussion with staff teams[28], evidence of an inconsistent and unsystematic approach to feedback was apparent; *"Each Head of Studio is different; therefore, each approach is different."*

The Dean and the staff teams describe a meeting with students, which happens once per year, but there is no verifiable outcome to this meeting or evidence provided to the Review Team to indicate that changes to delivery and/or organisation are made.

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[24] Meeting 9 with the Quality Assurance staff
[25] Meeting 2 with the Programme Guarantors
[26] Meeting 3 with Undergraduate Students
[27] Meeting 4 with Postgraduate Students
[28] Meeting 5 with Teaching Staff

In the Review Team discussion with the research staff and doctoral candidates[29], the group indicated that there was no formal mechanism for feedback.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 7

<u>Recommendations</u>

- A transparent quality enhancement framework and a set of regulations needs to be applied systematically and rigorously across all studios within the programme.
- Whilst there are different approaches to collecting data, there needs to be a rigorous analysis, informed by strategic goals and quality standards, in order to have purposeful impact on the programme.
- There should be a consistent policy and procedure across all studios to regularly gather and meaningfully engage with feedback from students, alumni and externals.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **not compliant** in Standard 7 for the Visual Arts programme.

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[29] Meeting 6 with the Research Staff and Doctoral Candidates

8. Public interaction

8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts

Standard: the programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts

Throughout the SER and additional documents, such as catalogues and online sites, there are many examples in which the programme and representatives from the programme, make regular contributions into cultural and artistic communities at local and national levels. This is achieved through a range of activities including participation in Zlín Design week, the numerous projects related to the Communication agency and staff exhibiting work nationally and internationally.

The Faculty has a space called *UPPER* which aims to help the Universities students and graduates in set up businesses. This area has recently had a new manager who is currently working to develop a relevant programme of supportive activities. The 1st Zlín '*Techstarts'* start-up weekend was planned for the weekend after the Review Team's visit.

As part of the programmes offer, the Faculty and its studio Professors have established offsite collaborations with two secondary schools. These provide woodworking and glass workshop making and technical assistance in order for student designs to be made into objects. Other school involvements include some students voluntarily go to their previous high schools to discuss and promote the Visual Arts programmes.

The SER states[30] that good relationships with external experts has resulted in some cases in developing significant roles in teaching through lectures and workshops.

At all the Review Team's meetings with staff, professors, students and alumni we heard that the programme has exceptional relationships with external experts, and this was echoed and evidenced in our meeting with the professional representatives and employers[31].

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.1

Commendations

- Collaboration with outside partners is a longstanding part of the ethos of the programme. The Faculty proactively engages with local and regional creative industries in a variety of ways, which clearly enhances the student's experiences.

Recommendations

- More formal arrangements would ensure the sustainability of the VA programmes activities in these areas and enhance the experience for all participants.

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[30] SER p. 30
[31] Meeting 8 Professional Representatives and Employers

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **substantially compliant** in Standard 8.1 for the Visual Arts programme.

8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions

Standard: the programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the artistic professions

The SER states[32] that TBU was awarded the *"so-called institutional accreditation on 9 January 2019 and therefore has the competence to approve its own programmes"*.

Whilst the approval process is a multi-stage one with the need for documents to be approved by internal committees such as the Academic Senate, the document must also be reviewed by two independent experts. One of its long-term goals is to *"Introduce a system of monitoring feedback from graduates and employers, internships and other forms of cooperation and incorporate the feedback into curriculum updates"*.[33]

In its meeting with the representatives of the professions and employers the Review Team heard that *"The students are very 'real world' aware"*[34], 'There is a real entrepreneurship spirit in the city and that the *"Employers are very positive about the graduates from FMC. They did recommend however that English language skills are taught and developed within FMC, as they would like to see more 'internationalisation' encouraged"*.[35]

The most regular example of visual art staff and students contributing to the community at the local culture level is through the Communication Agency course (CA). In a meeting with agency's manager two of the Review Team learnt that each year there are six CA projects presented in the curriculum. Each project as one lead project manager with five additional line managers who focus on fundraising, promotion, production, PR and Art. Over the three years of their studies student's voluntarily participate in the 1st year, compulsorily participate in the 2nd year and elect to take part in the 3rd year.

Before being selected prospective project, managers write a statement of intent/vision. Successful project managers (Master's students who are paid) start in September and are fully responsible for the planning, developing and implementing it. Academically this includes the participation and credit grading of the undergraduate students. These projects are documented in a catalogue and on-line. Zlín Design Week is one of the six yearly projects.

The SER states[36] that all educators and Heads of Studios staff are nationally and internationally successful in their professional orientation including awards and patents, this is evidenced via the RUF credit system. During their meetings the Review Team were informed that it was requirement by law for teaching staff to have an MA or PhD and whilst sometimes specialisms make exceptions there is no teaching qualification or certificate needed. Additionally, the Review Team found little structural evidence of how staff are supported with Lifelong Learning opportunities or engagement with external projects.

[32] SER p.9
[33] SER p.7
[34] Meeting 8 Professional Representatives and Employers
[35] ibid
[36] SER p.30

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.2

Commendations

- The extensive links to various regional, national and international professional and artistic activities and events is commendable.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 8.2 for the Visual Arts programme.

8.3 Information provided to the public

Standard: information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate

Information on the Faulty including structures, Governance Boards and promotion is provided on an extensive home page of on the FMK.UTB.CZ website[37]. Additional to this the Communication Agency and UPPER have separate but connected websites. There is some variation of content for each programme, such as some show visual images of work produced on their course, others do not. The University also uses several social networks to place University news and events and performances by both students and staff.

FMC uses a comprehensive electronic campus management system (STAG).

Comments, commendations and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.3

Commendations

- The Management Information System (STAG) provides consistent and accurate information to applicants and interested parties about the programme.
- There is a variety of recruitment activities to attract interested applicants.

The Review Team find that FMC Zlín is **fully compliant** in Standard 8.3 for the Visual Arts programme.

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[37] https://fmk.utb.cz/en/

9. Summary of the programme(s)' compliance with EQ-Arts Standards

EQ-Arts Standards	Compliance: Fully – F Partially - P Substantially - S Not - N	Remarks
Standard 1 The programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission.	Not compliant	Refer to Recommendation 1
Standard 2.1 The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.	Partially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 2
Standard 2.2 The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.	Fully compliant	
Standard 2.3 Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes	Partially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 3
Standard 3.1 There are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.	Fully compliant	
Standard 3.2 The programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.	Substantially compliant	Refer to Recommendations 4-5
Standard 4.1 Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers.	Partially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 6
Standard 4.2 There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.	Partially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 7
Standard 5.1 The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.	Fully compliant	
Standard 5.2 The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.	Fully compliant	
Standard 5.3 The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	Fully compliant	

Standard 6.1 Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.	Substantially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 8
Standard 6.2 The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	Partially compliant	Refer to Recommendations 9-11
Standard 7 The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	Not compliant	Refer to Recommendations 12-14
Standard 8.1 The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Substantially compliant	Refer to Recommendation 15
Standard 8.2 The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Fully compliant	
Standard 8.3 Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate.	Fully compliant	

10. Summary of strong points, recommendations and conditions

This section offers a summary of the institutional attributes which stand out as being strong relative to the EQ-Arts standards for programme review, as well as an outline of the areas in which potential for further development emerged.

List of strong points:

- Strong point 1: The focus on Entrepreneurship and ties to the creative industries of UTB is clearly reflected in the ethos and mission of FMC and the Visual Arts Programme.
- Strong point 2: The programme clearly offers a range of extensive opportunities for students to gain an international perspective, which enhances the students experience and education. (Students clearly see this a one of the strong USPs of the Visual Arts programme.)
- Strong point 3: Assessment methods are noted in the STAG System.
- Strong point 4: There is a rigorous admission process, which is based on longstanding traditions.
- Strong point 5: Criteria for student admission is based on an assessment of their artistic and academic suitability for the programme.
- Strong point 6: Progression and achievement data is collected for the annual report, which is published.
- Strong point 7: (Rudimentary) Employment data is gathered from national sources.
- Strong point 8: Nationally and internationally connected and engaged staff members are clearly valued by students, which enhances their learning experience.
- Strong point 9: There are appropriate physical, financial resources and qualified support staff to deliver the programme successfully.
- Strong point 10: There are effective tools for communication between teachers, administrators and students.
- Strong point 11: The Review Team commends an intention to move towards more strategic planning, at the senior level.
- Strong point 12: Collaboration with outside partners is a longstanding part of the ethos of the programme.
- Strong point 13: The Faculty proactively engages with local and regional creative industries in a variety of ways that clearly enhances the student experience.
- Strong point 14: The extensive links to various regional, national and international professional and artistic activities and events, are commendable.
- Strong point 15: The Management Information System (STAG) provides consistent and accurate information to applicants and interested parties about the programme.

Recommendations for further development:

- Recommendation 1: Whilst there are some descriptions of the work within the specialisations, as well as course and module descriptions, the review team has not found a clear statement of overall goals and learning outcomes for the Visual Arts Programme, or its nine specialisations.
- Recommendation 2: Clearly defined goals and outcomes of the Visual Arts Programme and all specialisations, will help the effective planning of curricula and the learning and teaching strategy. (An overall learning and teaching strategy would also address the great variance of strategies; the Review Team has found over the nine studios.)

- Recommendation 3: A formalised approach to (written) feedback on assessment, which is rigorously applied and reviewed, should be instituted across the Visual Arts programme.
- Recommendation 4: A rigorous analysis on a programme and studio level against a set of benchmarks and goals would enhance the strategic development of the programme.
- Recommendation 5: The introduction to collect more nuanced alumni data and feedback, would be helpful to critically reflect the development and enhancement of the programme.
- Recommendation 6: A further development of pedagogical skills for all staff should be developed.
- Recommendation 7: Equal support for all staff to stay up to date in order to ensure they are current in their professional and artistic field, including contemporary trends and developments, will enhance the quality of the programme and the student experience.
- Recommendation 8: The introduction of regular, formalised meetings would support internal communication, ensure greater consistency and the sharing of best practice.
- Recommendation 9: A job description with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for a Head of Programme (or Programme Director) would ensure strategic planning, delivery and enhancement of the Programme.
- Recommendation 10: Stronger staff engagement in the formal decision-making processes (e.g. Senate) would significantly help to build a collegial quality culture across the Faculty.
- Recommendation 11: University and national regulations notwithstanding, the introduction of further meaningful inclusion of student representation would enhance a quality culture within the Faculty.
- Recommendation 12: A transparent quality enhancement framework and a set of regulations needs to be applied systematically and rigorously across all studios within the programme.
- Recommendation 13: Whilst there are different approaches to collecting data there needs be a rigorous analysis, informed by strategic goals and quality standards, in order to have purposeful impact on the programme.
- Recommendation 14: There should be a consistent policy and procedure across all studios to regularly gather, and meaningfully engage with feedback from students, alumni and externals.
- Recommendation 15: A more formal arrangement would ensure the sustainability of the programmes activities in these areas and enhance the experience for all participants.

11. Conclusion

A quality review is based to a large degree on two sources of information: the SER provided by the Institution and candid interviews with staff, students and stakeholders during the visit. In this instance, both provided a limited view of the Visual Arts programme at FMC.

At 38 pages, the SER was compact. Although following nominally the structure provided by EQ-Arts, some of the sections did not address the respective questions posed by the headings. Many if not most of the appendices were in the Czech language. The Review Team requested, but was not provided with, student data to allow the team to evaluate the programme's development over a period of years (i.e. staff and student numbers, gender distribution, applicants, student progression, graduation, employment rate etc.), nor an overall programme description or study plan of the Visual Arts Programme and an organigram of the Faculty.

There was a judicious amount of (copy and paste) repeating commentary, which is clearly advised against in the EQ-Arts guidance.

The SER contained some (repeated) detailed information about what the Faculty was doing (theoretically), but little detail of how, and areas that were felt to be not working as well and what they were doing to improve the situation.

The number, names and positions of people participating in meetings were made available to the team on the day before the visit started so it was not possible to discuss the schedule with the Faculty and ask for a wider participation in the meetings. Some crucial meetings thus offered a very limited view on the programme and little relevant information. The meeting with the Head of Programme was particularly disappointing as the staff member told the team that his role as 'Guarantor' of the Programme did not put him in a leading position and that there was in fact no 'Head of Programme'. The Review Team thus met only one of nine Heads of Studio. The meeting with teachers was limited to three teachers and one former staff member, whose presence was not appropriate in this meeting. The meeting with members of the Senate(s) was attended by two staff and one student representative. The meeting with the Quality Assurance staff was hindered by the fact that both Vice-Rectors attending the meeting were very new to their job and could not answer many questions posed to them. Meetings with several important staff members/representatives of units had to be requested at the last minute, or happened rather 'by accident' – unprepared by staff and team.

The Review Team fully recognises that the preparation and organisation of an external visit is difficult and demanding and it may be difficult, or even impossible to engage some staff members who are unwilling to participate. However, the Review Team feels these facts must be noted here because the limited amount of information impacted its ability to form well founded conclusions.

Annex 1 – List of supporting documents

- Higher Education Act No. 111/1998 – http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/tertiary-education/the-higher-education-act

- Act No. 404/2000 Coll. on the Establishment of TBU in Zlín

- Statute of the Faculty of Multimedia Communications

- Study and Examination Regulations (effective from 1 September 2018)

- Strategic Plan and Annual Plans for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan of the University and its Relevant Constituent Parts

- Strategic Plan of TBU in Zlín and Implementation Plans for the Strategical Plan of TBU in Zlín – http://www.utb.cz/o-univerzite/dlouhodoby-zamer

- Strategic Plan of the FMC and Implementation Plans of the Strategic Plan of the FMC

- Annual reports about the activities of the university

- Tomas Bata University in Zlín annual reports – http://www.utb.cz/o-univerzite/vyrocni-zpravy

- FMC Annual Reports

- FMC Organisational structure