



# Quality Enhancement Review Report

Institutional review  
&  
Design Programme Review

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

Zurich University of the Arts

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Zürcher Hochschule der Künste  
Zurich University of the Arts

**1<sup>st</sup> visit**

**5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**2<sup>nd</sup> visit**

**25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
1. Institutional mission, vision and context .....	6
2. Educational processes .....	15
2.1 The curriculum and its methods of delivery .....	15
2.2 International perspectives .....	21
2.3 Assessment .....	24
3. Student profiles .....	27
3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications .....	27
3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability .....	29
4. Teaching staff .....	32
4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity .....	32
4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body .....	34
5. Facilities, resources and support .....	35
5.1 Facilities .....	35
5.2 Financial resources .....	36
5.3 Support staff .....	37
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making .....	39
6.1 Internal communication process .....	39
6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes .....	41
7. Internal Quality Culture .....	43
8. Public interaction .....	49
8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts .....	49
8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions .....	50
8.3 Information provided to the public .....	51
9. Summary of the Institutes compliance with EQ-Arts Standards .....	53
10. Summary of strong points, recommendations and conditions .....	55
11. Conclusion .....	62
Annex 1 – List of supporting documents .....	63

## Introduction

- **Context of the review**

At the invitation of the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) the EQ-Arts Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the EQ-Arts General Manager met with the President Thomas Meier and senior staff on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in Zurich.

The agreed outcome of this meeting was EQ-Arts will conduct a two-visit review with ZHdK in 2018. Both parties signed the Agreement concerning Quality Assurance and Enhancement Review Visit on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The process will comprise an Institutional Review of ZHdK, as well as a Programme Review of its Bachelor and Master's programmes in Design.

These reviews were based on ZHdK's *Peer Review Framework Concept* and have two objectives: (1) to identify the University's strengths, weaknesses and potentials from an external perspective and (2) to support its further development based on substantiated findings. The University Board also expects *"the review process to further deepen its understanding of quality as well as to enable it to initiate concrete improvements and to exploit the University's potentials even more effectively"*. The intention is that these reviews help prepare the University for institutional accreditation, which is planned for 2021.

ZHdK's evaluation concept envisages that all five departments will carry out a review within the next seven years. The Department of Design will start the series, followed by the Department of Music in 2019.

- **The University**

The current University ZHdK was founded in 2007 as the result of a merger between two existing institutions: Zurich University of Music and Theatre (HMT) and Zurich School of Art and Design (HGKZ).

HMT was the result of a merger (in 1999) between Winterthur and Zurich conservatories, established as institutions of higher musical training in 1873 and 1875 respectively. 1999 saw also the inclusion of Zurich Jazz School (established in 1977), the Swiss Computer Music Studio (founded 1985), the Theatre Studio (established in 1937), the later Zurich Drama Academy (Schauspiel Akademie Zürich) and the Swiss Ballet School (Schweizerische Ballettberufsschule) (established in 1986).

In 1878 the Arts and Crafts School of the City of Zurich was established. Later this became Zurich School of Design (Schule für Gestaltung Zürich), Zurich Higher School of Design (Höhere Schule für Gestaltung Zürich) and, in the year 2000, Zurich School of Art and Design (Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich, HGKZ).

As a state university ZHdK is bound by a statutory performance mandate. This comprises teaching (undergraduate/postgraduate studies and continuing education), research, artistic production, services, knowledge and technology-transfer.

The University comprises of five departments, with 2,100 Bachelor and Master's students, 1,200 foundation and continuing education students and 1,400 employees. It offers degree and research programmes in the fields of design, film, fine arts, music, dance, theatre, trans-disciplinary studies, as well as art and design education.

ZHdK's approach to the review has been through engaging in a broad-based dialogue during the self-evaluation process, which provided a good opportunity to take stock of the 'as-is' situation, from both an internal and external perspective.

- ***The Review Process & Team***

For the ZHdK Institutional Review the University invited EQ-Arts to apply their methodologies (aligned to the European Standards & Guidelines – ESG) for evaluating the internal and external institutional quality assurance. The University also considers to carryout Programme Reviews of all the 5 Departments over the following two years. The Review Team would investigate how the quality culture and QA measures are embedded and implemented at programme level. In the first instance the University requested the Review Team to look at the Design Department programmes, which included all three cycles (BA, MA and PhD) of the Design (Cast/Audio Visual, Game Design, Industrial Design, Interaction Design, Knowledge Visualisation, Trends & Identity, Visual Communication).

The review followed a three-stage process:

- ZHdK prepared a Self-evaluation Report (SER) and supporting annexes, using the EQ-Arts SER template and based on EQ-Arts standards and guidelines for institutional review. This evaluation was also aligned to the Swiss national Quality Standards for accreditation;
- An international Review Team studied the SER and conducted two site-visits at ZHdK, a preliminary visit<sup>1</sup> on 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and the main visit<sup>2</sup> on 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The first visit enabled the Team to gain a better understanding of the University and the national context and focused on the Institutional evaluation aspect of the review. The second looked mainly at the Design programme as a reference to understand how the institution guides, monitors and enhances the quality of its study programmes.

During the Preliminary Visit the Review Team had five meetings with senior staff (Governance, QA, Research & Enterprise, Support & Administration) to gain a greater understanding of the leadership, management and operational aspects of ZHdK's quality culture. The remaining five meetings were with representatives of key stakeholders across ZHdKs academic provision (students, teachers, researchers, alumni and employers/professional representatives).

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<sup>1</sup> see Annex (1) *Schedule for Preliminary Visit*

<sup>2</sup> see Annex (2) *Schedule for Main Visit*

During the Main Visit the Review Team had nine meetings with senior staff (Governance, student Council, Finance, Equal Opportunities Office, Digital Development Office & Department Committee) for an update on recent developments and the remaining seven meetings with key stakeholders specifically in the Design programmes (students, teachers, researchers, mid-tier staff, administrative-technical staff, alumni, employers and professional representatives).

At both visits the Review Team was able to visit studios and workshops for all study programmes as well as exhibitions and presentations and was able to access central learning resources (library, IT etc.). This enabled the Review Team to gain a clear overview and understanding of the overall resources of ZHdK as well as those available for each study programme, to enable them to confidently arrive at their assessment.

- The Review Team produce a comprehensive evaluative final report that follows and is structured in alignment to the EQ-Arts Standards. It assesses the University against each Standard as it currently stands as guidance to where they are compliant and not compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines 2015.<sup>3</sup>

The Review Team (Team):

- Professor John Butler, artist, Chief Executive Officer of EQ-Arts, former Head of Birmingham School of Art, UK ([j.butler@eq-arts.org](mailto:j.butler@eq-arts.org));
- Dr. Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir, Director Division of Quality, Research and Teaching, Iceland Academy of the Arts ([olofgerdursigfusdottir@gmail.com](mailto:olofgerdursigfusdottir@gmail.com))
- Hanna Karkku, Planning Officer, International Relations, Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Finland, ([hanna.karkku@aalto.fi](mailto:hanna.karkku@aalto.fi))
- Rainer Usselmann, *Happy Finish*, Co-founder & non-Executive Board member, London, UK, ([mail@rainerusselmann.net](mailto:mail@rainerusselmann.net))
- Henk van Der Meulen, composer, Principal, The Royal Conservatoire, Den Hague, The Netherlands, ([h.vdmeulen@koncon.nl](mailto:h.vdmeulen@koncon.nl))
- Sophie Schasiepen, student representative, PhD candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria, ([sophie.schasiepen@gmail.com](mailto:sophie.schasiepen@gmail.com))

**This report will address both the Institution Review, mainly carried out during the first visit 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018, and the Programme Review of the Design Department 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Both elements will be commented on and graded against the ESG/EQ-Arts Standards (i.e. fully, substantially, partially and non-compliant). EQ-Arts would hope to review the Institutional comments/grades as we return for future Programme Reviews.**

**With the Recommendations the Review Team have identified where appropriate whether they are specifically addressed to the Institution (I), or the Design Department (D) or to both (B). In Standard 1 these are clustered under the Institution or the Design Department.**

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<sup>3</sup> see Annex (3) *European standards and Guidelines 2015*

# 1. Institutional mission, vision and context

**Standard: the programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission**

## a) The University's mission, vision and aims

### University

The mission of ZHdK is *“to create informed, diversified, disciplinary and trans-disciplinary contexts for diverse and relevant contents, positions and approaches in its programmes, teaching and research.”*<sup>4</sup>

The Review Team believes, based on feedback during our meetings and your documents (including the SER) the identity and uniqueness of ZHdK is not sufficiently concise or clearly presented, but we would like to stress this not a criticism more a missed opportunity.

Between the Review Team's first visit in November 2018 and the second in February 2019 the University concluded its old *'2014-18 Strategy Plan'*<sup>5</sup> and introduced its new *'2019-23 Strategy Plan'*<sup>6</sup>, which has been ratified by the FH-Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The University upholds the principle of: personal *“responsibility (of its students, teaching faculty and other staff)”*<sup>7</sup> and devolves considerable autonomy to the Departments to manage their curriculum, teaching staff and finance.

As a state University, ZHdK is bound by a statutory performance mandate, which covers teaching at undergraduate, postgraduate levels and continuing education, research, artistic production, services, knowledge and technology transfer. The University Board continuously reviews the level of implementation of the strategic goals through assessing key performance indicators<sup>8</sup>, as well as through documentation/reports as a result of the University internal quality assurance processes. The Review Team endorses the way the University monitors the on going quality of its programmes but recommends the ZHdK revisits its key performance indicators to balance the preponderance of quantitative with more qualitative indicators.

The Review Team commends the University on the range and appropriateness of the University's aims<sup>9</sup>:

- The introduction of a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle PhD level – move to the position of independently awarding ZHdK PhDs to strengthen its research position and enhance its learning and teaching strategy at all three cycles;
- Internationalisation strategy;
- Autonomy – sustaining Department *'diversity and autonomy'*<sup>10</sup> while promoting greater collaboration and sharing *'best'* practices through aligning its processes and structures;
- Research - strengthen the University's position in artistic research, strengthen the link between research and teaching, intensify the discourse on quality
- Interdisciplinary and flexibility of programmes linked to major & minor pathways;

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<sup>4</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institution Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* [p.9]

<sup>5</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_3e) *ZHdK Strategy 2014-18*

<sup>6</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_3) *ZHdK Strategy 2019-23*

<sup>7</sup> see Annex (4) *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_5e) *ZHdK Key Performance indicators*

<sup>9</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institution Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* [p.11]

<sup>10</sup> see Annex (4) *ibid* [p.10]

- Student centred learning – embedding the policy and strategy;
- embedding of new quality processes and the development of a 'quality culture';
- moving from 90 to 120 credit MAs - ;
- digitalisation strategy – developing a comprehensive digital strategy;
- sustainability - ensure programme sustainability and improve social, economic and ecological sustainability
- language – addressing issues of recruitment, curricula, learning and teaching.

The dichotomy between devolved Department autonomy and the ambitious aims of the University for improved *'student-centred'* learning, greater consistency in standards and introducing greater interdisciplinary practice, the Review Team perceives is an issue and recommends the University to make strategic directives to be followed. *"Some internal stakeholders would find implementing the University's mission and strategy easier if the University Board adopted explicit positions regarding content."*<sup>11</sup>

Through the meetings held at both visits and reading the documents provided the Review Team observed that as a consequence of the scale of transformation at the University, there is a growing sense of *'change-fatigue'* setting in amongst internal stakeholders, especially with the teaching and support staff.

The *'Toni-Areal'* building is central to the University's development strategy and is a key factor in the promotion of ZHdK and the Review Team acknowledge the uniqueness of this campus and the potential to be an internationally leading centre for higher arts education. The Review Team endorses the Design Department's view that *"the Toni Campus offers A Unique Ecosystem. Zurich University of the Arts offers us inspiring views of culture and interdisciplinary collaboration. Here, at the Toni Campus, the fields of music, theatre, dance, film, art and arts education complement and challenge design as a discipline. Here we find contradiction, discourse and support. This multidisciplinary biotope is contained with our unique campus."*

*"The potential of the joint campus has not yet been fully exploited."*<sup>12</sup> The Review Team endorses this University statement and believes there is a need to articulate more clearly the value added of the Toni Campus as a unified site housing all 5 departments - more than the sum of its parts

### **Commendations**

- The ZHdK approach to the self-evaluation process<sup>13</sup>, which includes the Peer Review Framework Concept with: the concept and mandate; self-evaluation; peer review; discussion of results and implementation phases; **(I)**
- The rigor, quality and clarity put into the preparation, translation and presentation of the documentation (*'Description, Reflection & Perspectives'*) produced for the Review Team, both in the SER and the Annexes; **(B)**

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<sup>11</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.10)

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> see Annex (Doc. 0\_2) Production of the SER

## Recommendations

- A need for the University to develop clearer strategy and guidelines for the implementation and alignment of such a broad set of ambitious *Mission* aims, in relationship to ‘3<sup>rd</sup> cycle PhD level’, ‘internationalisation’, ‘flexibility of programmes linked to major & minor pathways’, ‘student centred learning’, ‘alignment of outcomes-based learning with assessment’, ‘embedding of new quality processes and the development of a quality culture’, ‘interdisciplinarity’, ‘moving from 90 to 120 credit MAs’, ‘language issues’ etc. Maybe there is a need to prioritise these aims in order to better manage the workload? **(I)**
- A need to articulate more clearly the value added of the *Toni-Areal Campus* as a unified site housing all 5 departments - more than the sum of its parts. **(I)**
- A need to address possible conflicting aims/goals such as autonomy v standardisation, internationalisation v focus on German language etc. **(I)**

## Design Department

The vision of the Design Department states: <sup>14</sup>

*“Design is inherently driven by innovation. There are three relevant fields of action:*

- **Responsibility:** *We understand sustainability in a comprehensive sense: ecologically, socially and economically. Shaping our environment entails far-reaching social responsibility, which we assume.*
- **Technological Innovation:** *We are fascinated by the new technological possibilities and by material innovation, which we use reflexively, critically and playfully.*
- **Aesthetics:** *We are a discipline that understands and uses aesthetics as language, code and tool. Without design many things would be functional but not human, practical yet without meaning.*

*Amid this constellation of sustainability, innovation and aesthetics, we focus on people and their genuine needs.”*

The Design Department is guided by two basic principles: the iterative four-phase process for improvement (PDCA cycle) and the principle of ‘*radical candor*’. The Review Team fully endorses the rigorous process and methodology the Design Department approached this self-evaluation and the engagement with the majority of key stakeholders.

As the University is in such a period of major transition, the Review Team believe this has had considerable impact on the Design Department. This is highlighted by the Department being in a state of limbo, waiting on the University to endorse its new Strategy Plan and give clear guidance on new developments as outlined in the University’s aims listed above.

## Commendations

- The clarity and ambition of the Design Department’s objectives, values and its alignment to the University’s mission; **(D)**
- Design focused on technical innovation, social transformation and economic change, addressed in an analogue-digital, interactive and interdisciplinary manner. **(D)**
- DDE strives to play a leading part in shaping the role of Design within a changing digital world **(D)**

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<sup>14</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.5)

- The ambition of the Head of DDE for formulating a *'Manifesto of Design'* to help galvanise and guide the department through important changes (major/minor, 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, entrepreneurship, knowledge-transfer) **(D)**

### **Recommendations**

- The impact on the Design Department waiting for internal and external validation of structural changes delaying the University and the Design Department in:
  - presenting a clear vision, mission and strategy statement
  - defining more clearly a 'Zurich Model'
  - digital strategy
  - research **(D)**

### **b) The University's major threats and challenges**

Through reading the SERs, supporting annexes and meeting all the key stakeholders during both visits the Review Team identified the following as threats and challenges for the University:

- a) Leadership – the importance and impact of the current President– the need for a succession plan if he departs;
- b) Finance – global financial stability (identified as a possible threat by both senior advisors and finance) and the ability to divert/allocate funds to strategic goals;
- c) Diversity – the preponderance and lack of diverse communities;
- d) Language – the reliance on the German language when aiming for internationalisation;
- e) Communication – no clear strategy or clarity of process;
- f) Fractional 'professional' teachers impacting on 'quality culture';
- g) Estate – demand on popular spaces, change in culture from department 'owned' space to shared bookable space;
- h) Tradition v change – gaining buy-in in a period of radical change;
- i) Digitalisation – introducing changes and new developments in learning and teaching;
- j) Autonomy v standardisation – need for the introduction of more standard procedures;

### **c) The University's long-term strategy in relation to its mission**

The University has identified its mid to long-term key strategic goals in the ZHdK Strategy Plan 2019-23<sup>15</sup> under the headings of *'Teaching, Research, Promotion, Continuing Education, International, Digitisation, Organisational Structure, Participation, Sustainability and Quality Development'*. The following are key elements in the long term strategy of the University including:

- a) To implement a university-wide major/minor model in the curriculum;
- b) To consider offering part-time programmes;
- c) To pursue an active policy to obtain the right to award doctoral degrees through offering a 3rd cycle appropriate to the arts and design;
- d) To be one of the leading national and international research institutions of its kind in selected research areas;

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<sup>15</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_3) ZHdK Strategy 2019-23

- e) To establish cross-departmental professorships in selected areas of teaching and research and to introduce programmes designed to achieve this goal;
- f) To establish a career model and corresponding qualification positions that open up perspectives for junior faculty both inside and outside the University;
- g) To further strengthen the intercultural and transcultural competencies of its members and to open up international perspectives for the University as a whole;
- h) To actively involve and promote the digital competencies of faculty, researchers and staff;
- i) To ensure that participation is an integral part of ZHdK culture, effective at all levels and contributing to quality assurance;
- j) To provide an environment that promotes the development of solutions for sustainable ecological, social and economic transformation;
- k) To ensure that ZHdK members engage with quality issues and play an active role in shaping the University's quality culture.

### **Commendations**

- On the rigour of the self-evaluation process, which has led to such an ambitious set of aims, all of which the Review Team fully supports with a reservation about a). **(I)**

### **Recommendations**

- A need for the University to develop clearer strategy and guidelines for the implementation and alignment of such a broad set of ambitious *Mission* aims and the Review Team reiterates the probable need to prioritise these aims in order to better manage the workload and reflect on the impact? **(I)**
- The University should carryout a full analysis and an in-depth dialogue with all key stakeholders on the demand, appropriateness and impact of introducing an institutional major/minor structure to academic programmes to see if it is the most appropriate model to achieve its goals? **(I)**

### **d) The University's educational programmes in relation to the institutional mission**

During the two visits to ZHdK, the Review Team carried out tours of the studios, observed student work presented in exhibitions and illustrated in high quality publications of international exhibitions. It is clear, in line with ZHdK's mission, the programmes are committed to developing the skills and ambitions of the individual students. There were examples of good practice in various educational aspects across the Departments (research and enterprise)

Through the practice and aims as expressed and delivered for each of the study programmes being reviewed, the Review Team were able to conclude that – on the basis of the evidence seen – the study programme goals largely reflect the current institutional mission and aims. It is also clear to the Review Team that the institutional mission of the University and the purposes of its study programmes are closely aligned with the needs of the professional workplace.

However, the Review Team found it was evident through the documentation and through the meetings with senior management and teachers that it is increasingly becoming harder to gain external financial support (*"the altered SNSF funding policy makes it challenging to maintain the current level of funding.*

*Dependence on the SNSF is significant.*<sup>16</sup>) given to practice-based research and enterprise. This aligned to the absence of an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle Doctoral programme and a Masters' programme only offering 90 ECTS, makes it extremely difficult for the University to be competitive and operate at the same level as leading international higher arts education institutions. This also has a negative impact on the longer-term career possibilities of the Doctoral students within the University. The result of this action is detrimental to the student learning experience, as research underpins the currency of the curriculum and new strategies in learning and teaching. It enhances the teacher's knowledge, expertise and promotes job satisfaction, all to the benefit of the learner. An institution that is engaged at the cutting edge of research attracts the best teachers and post-graduate students, which places it at the forefront of the international arena. It also enables the University to generate considerable external funding, essential in today's economic climate. This finance facilitates the creation of centres of excellence, both in terms of people and resources/equipment, which again enables all learners to observe/share these experiences. The Arts are a major contributor to the creative economy, which is internationally one of the fastest growing economies. To restrict entry into the European Research Area has a far-reaching negative impact on the University and significantly on its learners, which is contrary to the *Bologna* principles. Therefore we recommend the Ministry to reconsider its policy and give the University the capacity to independently award 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Doctoral degrees and support practice-based research, in line with many of its European partners.

### **Commendations**

- Providing research units with core funding and seed funding for strategically relevant research projects and new researchers. **(I)**

### **Recommendations**

- The University has to more clearly define what their understanding is of '*student-centred learning*', and how it practices it, and ensure this is clearly communicated and understood by all the key stakeholders; **(I)**

### **e) The University's priorities (in the regional, national and international context) and which areas are emphasised**

At the Review Team's meeting with the University Board the following was identified from the recently endorsed ZHdK 2019-23 Strategy as institutional priorities (in a regional, national and international context):

- a) Building/Studies more accessible to students
- b) Bring teaching and research together
- c) Internationalisation: Moving from project mode to a programme mode
- d) Dealing with digitisation
- e) Sustainability
- f) Standardise processes to become more efficient, despite the diversity

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<sup>16</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_3) ZHdK Strategy 2019-23 (p.5)

## Commendations

- The Review Team fully supports and endorses these priorities. **(I)**

### f) What is the national legal context/framework in which the University operates

ZHdK is largest of Switzerland's 17 arts, music and design higher education universities<sup>17</sup>. Although it is part of Zurich University of Applied Sciences and Arts (ZFH), unlike other Swiss arts universities, ZHdK has legal and financial independence. It is a state university and funded by the Canton of Zurich. Under Swiss law, arts universities are universities of applied sciences and are not entitled to award doctoral degrees in their own right. The ZHdK current 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Doctoral students are only possible through direct links with Arts Universities abroad.

With the introduction of the Higher Education Act (HEdA) in 2015, programme accreditation was replaced by institutional accreditation. The universities have since been responsible for the quality, creation and closure of their programmes. Prior to 2015 all degree programmes offered at universities of applied sciences and arts required approval from the Federal Government.

Integral to the compulsory Institutional Accreditation process is the assessment of the internal quality assurance system, with the criteria defined in Article 30 HEdA. In Switzerland institutional accreditation is conducted by accredited agencies and the final decision-making body is the Swiss Accreditation Council.

All Swiss universities offer their degree programmes in accordance with the *Bologna Declaration* and have adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTs). Programmes are based on the tiered Bachelor and Master structure. Under applicable law, universities of applied sciences and thus also arts universities are not eligible to award doctoral degrees in their own right.

## Recommendations

- To achieve the HEdA Act 2011 Article 3 Objectives<sup>18</sup>: "*a.) conditions that favour high-quality teaching and re- search; c.) to raise the profile of higher education institutions and encourage competition, particularly with regards to research; d.) the federal policy to encourage research and innovation; f.) creating uniform study structures, study levels and transitions and ensuring mutual recognition of qualifications;*" the Review Team firmly believe it is imperative that the University is able to carry-out and award independent 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle Doctoral degrees that can involve practice-based research, utilising appropriate arts-based research methodologies and engaging their own staff as supervisors. This is necessary for ZHdK to be recognized as a leading international higher arts education institution on a level with the best in Europe and globally. **(I)**
- Similarly to be equivalent to European Standards the Design Masters' programme at ZHdK needs to be awarded with 120 ECTs. **(I)**

### g) The University's equal opportunities policy as embedded in the institutional mission/vision

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<sup>17</sup> see Annex Doc. (0\_7e) Higher Education System

<sup>18</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_8) HEdAe (p.2)

The University has developed a clear Gender Policy<sup>19</sup>, Diversity Policy and a 2017–2020 Action Plan that provide the basis for gender equality and diversity work at ZHdK. This policy defines the goals, objectives, principles, as well as the lines of action and the structures needed to ensure equal opportunities and diversity within the University community.

The 2017-2020 Action Plan covers the four fields identified by the University in which measures will be taken during this timeframe: *“(1) the promotion of young researchers and careers, (2) awareness-raising and reducing stereotypes in choosing programmes and careers, (3) the expansion of diversity competencies in higher education and (4) gender and diversity in research and teaching.”*

The Review Team acknowledges the University has a clearly defined policy for Equal Opportunities (EO), but through meeting the different stakeholders perceived the urgent need for both better information and professional support to embed this policy. Currently the University’s Equal Opportunities Office is supported by a 0.7 post and a trainee. Additionally every department has an EO post. The Design Department staff member started in January 2019 on 8 hours per semester, which the Review Team considers insufficient for so many students and University staff. This was also indicated by the lack of awareness of the Office by the majority of stakeholders interviewed.

### **Recommendations**

- There is a need for a greater level of investment in, and promotion of, ‘equal opportunities’ across the University. **(I)**

#### **h) Quantitative and qualitative data/information collected, and how is it supports the University’s mission/ vision**

The University has a well-defined process for reviewing and measuring “the artistic quality, the quality of learning and teaching, the quality of research and institutional quality are the four thematic dimensions” along which ZHdK structures its QAE.<sup>20</sup> These are described and defined in a ‘Quality map’, a ‘List of Dimensions’, ‘Key processes’, ‘Instruments and ‘Responsibilities’<sup>21</sup>, as well as a list of ‘key performance indicators’<sup>22</sup>

### **Recommendations**

- ZHdK revisits its key performance indicators to balance the preponderance of quantitative with more qualitative indicators. **(I)**

#### **i) How internal quality assurance processes support the University’s mission and vision**

Although Quality Assurance didn’t feature very much in the 2014-18 Strategy Plan<sup>23</sup>, the University has introduced in 2015 key performance indicators<sup>24</sup> as *“measures adopted to achieve its defined strategic goals”*<sup>25</sup> and a Quality Strategy 2016-20.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_4) ZHdK Equal Opportunities & Diversity

<sup>20</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_2) ZHdK Quality Assurance & Enhancement\_e (p.3)

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* Figs. 1 & 2 (pp. 3 & 8)

<sup>22</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_5e) ZHdK Key Performance indicators

<sup>23</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_3) ZHdK 2014-18 Strategy Plan

<sup>24</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_5e) ZHdK Key Performance indicators

<sup>25</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.9)

<sup>26</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_1) ZHdK Quality Strategy 2016-20

The University is establishing a development-oriented, “*trust-based*” QAE system and the University Board is the legally responsible committee for Quality Assurance and defines the key QAE processes. The University has created an Accreditation and Quality Development Office (AQO) to support these actions and monitor the process. Implementation is supported, verified and documented by the Accreditation and Quality Development Office (AQO), under the direction of the Office of the President. Together with the Quality Commission, the AQO develops instruments and processes for QAE and supports executive staff in fulfilling their responsibility for QAE.

The Review Team fully endorses the University’s intentions as outlined in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement document<sup>27</sup> as key actions for embedding and creating a quality culture.

### **Commendations**

- The development of a clear, comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement policy and strategy, well supported by the AQO office. **(I)**

### **Recommendations**

- The need for the University Board to make more QAE strategic decisions and give the AQO greater responsibility and power to develop the implementation of the QAE policy and ensure the standards of the academic programmes; **(I)**
- The ‘*closing of the loop*’ through faster and better analysis of the surveys and ‘*quality tools*’ to give feedback to the key stakeholders and demonstrate impact. **(I)**
- Improve the alignment of instruments and processes **(I)**
- Involve internal and external stakeholders more strongly in decision-making **(I)**

The Review Team in a formal assessment process would find the Institution and the Design Department is substantially compliant with this Standard.

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<sup>27</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_2) ZHdK Quality Assurance & Enhancement 7.2 Perspectives (p.9)

## 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**

ZHdK offers degree programmes in accordance with the Bologna Declaration standards, and in the context of the Swiss Higher Education system, as mandated by national, and cantonal law. There are currently 17 arts, music and design schools in Switzerland, offering places to approximately 7000 students, of which, in 2017, there were 2068 students enrolled at ZHdK alone, with DDE's share of student numbers at 404 BA and Master students.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike other Swiss arts universities, ZHdK has legal and financial independence, and as part of Zurich University of Applied Sciences and the Arts, ZHdK receives federal funding but is largely financially supported by the Canton of Zurich. ZHdK, like all Swiss universities, has adopted the European Credit Transfer System.<sup>29</sup>

At federal, and cantonal level, several state bodies provide oversight, such as the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK), the Cantonal Department of Education, the Office of Universities, and the Council of Zurich Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts.

ZHdK's performance mandate in the areas of teaching, research, artistic production, services and transfer is fulfilled in five departments:

- Department of Art & Media (DKM)
- Department of Cultural Analysis (DKV)
- Department of Design (DDE)
- Department of Music (DMU)
- Department of Performing Arts and Film (DDK)

Spanning all five departments at ZHdK are 5 dossiers, which coordinate university-wide tasks: teaching and learning, research, continuing education, international affairs, and events. Within this structure, the Head of DDE is currently responsible for the Centre for Continuing Education as well as the Dossier for Learning and Teaching.

Degree programmes at ZHdK are based on tiered Bachelor, and Masters structures, as mandated by the *Qualifications Framework for the Swiss Higher Education Area nqf.ch-HS*, which describes levels and qualifications currently on offer in the higher education sector in Switzerland. Accordingly, BA programmes at ZHdK encompass three years of study (180 ECTS), while Masters programmes usually take between 3, and 4 semesters (90 to 120ECTS).

The MDE at ZHdK is limited to 90 ECTS, as is the case with Master degrees in Design at all other Swiss Universities of Applied Arts. This was brought up as an impediment on a number of occasions during our

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<sup>28</sup> see Annex (Doc 3\_1.4 IR 3\_3) *Key Figures Students\_e* (p.2)

<sup>29</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_7) *Higher Education CH\_e*

meetings with MA, and Research students,<sup>30</sup> with Design Research staff,<sup>31</sup> the Head of the Design Department,<sup>32</sup> and indeed the SER Programme Review.<sup>33</sup>

Arts & Design Universities, like ZHdK, are classified as Universities of Applied Sciences, and are therefore not eligible to award doctoral programmes independently. Instead, ZHdK offers 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle programmes in association with ETHZ and UZH, or universities abroad. The restriction placed on Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts wanting to offer their own PhD programmes was brought up in a number of meetings as a limiting factor in need of addressing, if ZHdK wants to further realise its ambitions of embedding research culture more fully.<sup>34</sup> The SER talks about the need to “*pave the way for the introduction of the right to award PhD degrees through outstanding achievements.*”<sup>35</sup> Review team found some encouraging signs of support from the Head Office of Universities of the Canton of Zurich, the Cantonal Parliament Academic Advisory Committee, and the Council of Zurich University of Applied Sciences and Arts, yet a broader sense of political urgency would be welcome.<sup>36</sup>

The *General Regulations for Studying at Zurich University of the Arts* mandates that “*The taught degree courses at ZHdK enable students to acquire and design their artistic, design, pedagogic and scientific knowledge and experience in their chosen subject area. Coursework qualifies students in the areas of art and design through developing their creativity, expressiveness, communication skills, receptiveness, and cultural education. In particular, coursework enables students to apply the skills, knowledge and methods developed during their studies in their future professional activities.*”<sup>37</sup> At DDE, the Review Team found commendably high standards of student work with particular emphasis placed on in-depth preparation for subsequent professional practice.

According to its SER, ZHdK has processes and procedures in place, which govern the design, approval, and re-approval of programmes University-wide.<sup>38</sup> Departments, the University, as well as the Council of Zurich Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts (ZFH Council) discharge their responsibilities at their respective levels, with ZFH having ultimate decision-making powers regarding the introduction of new programmes. At DDE, in the majority of specialisations, the Review Team found students engaged well in the development of the curriculum, and learning and teaching strategy. BA programmes in Design were found to offer unique studies, and seem to follow well the department’s vision of technology-centred and interdisciplinary design. On the whole, the processes in place for programme approval, and re-approval appear to be clear, and functioning well.

The *Curricular Concept*, and department-specific *Degree Programme Regulations* define programme objectives, and how they relate to the University’s mission and strategy. They also detail admissions requirements, programme structure, information about ECTS attainment, course content, occupational fields, and course achievement, student performance and graduation requirements.

The SER states “*Learning Outcomes are aligned with the ngf.ch-HS qualifications framework and take into account the recommendations of the respective National Conferences, and the technical tuning*

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<sup>30</sup> meeting with MA, and Research students from the Design programmes

<sup>31</sup> meeting with Design Research staff

<sup>32</sup> meeting with Head of Design

<sup>33</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.11)

<sup>34</sup> meetings with the Rector and Review Committee, meeting with Design Research Staff,

<sup>35</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.15)

<sup>36</sup> meeting with representatives of employers, professional bodies

<sup>37</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_1 e) *General Regulations for Studying at Zurich University of the Arts*,

<sup>38</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.12)

documents.”<sup>39</sup> However, the Review team found that the considerable legacy of programmes and specialisations at ZHdK seems to have engendered a wide gamut of practices, methodologies and processes. Inconsistencies exist in terms of how learning outcomes are applied, and to what extent standards mandated by the Quality Office are followed.<sup>40</sup>

As outlined in its SER, ZHdK currently explores the viability of a University-wide major-minor system. The idea is that major-minor could facilitate more programme flexibility, and better cater for individualised learner journeys, taking advantage of the considerable range of disciplines, courses and programmes on offer at close proximity to each other at Toni Areal. “*Spatial proximity of the various disciplines at the University’s Toni Campus has created numerous inter- and transdisciplinary offerings (e.g. comprehensive elective modules, courses or transdisciplinary projects accessible regardless of discipline).*”<sup>41</sup> However, to what extent spatial proximity at Toni Campus has, in practice, helped to achieve greater inter-permeability between departments is less than clear.

The Review Team found some examples of good practice at programme level, such as student mentoring, and the facilitation of flexible study paths (Theatre, MA Trans, Fine Art), however, on the whole, there appears to be a lack of fora for sharing good practice beyond established silos at programme and departmental level.

There are considerable inconsistencies in the understanding of interdisciplinarity across the University, going hand in hand with a perceived lack of curricular space to accommodate cross-disciplinary modules in some programmes. While students appear to welcome the range and scope of cross-disciplinary possibility at ZHdK, all too often, their experience on the ground seems to suggest that the realisation of this largely relies on their own initiative alone.<sup>42</sup> This appeared to be in evidence also in the results of the 2018 student survey, which highlighted a number of related areas with scope for improvement, such as course organisation, individual support, personal development, and the opportunity to determine personal course content.<sup>43</sup>

While the Review Team saw examples of good interdisciplinary practice, there is, as yet, not enough evidence of cross-departmental teaching on collaborative projects. The SER states that, “*as the departments have mainly sought to establish internal permeability and have aligned their offerings, cross-departmental flexibility has tended to diminish. The wide range of offerings is not yet accessible across the University to a satisfactory extent.*”<sup>44</sup> Inconsistencies also exist across different specialisations regarding students’ ability to design their personal study programmes. While the Review Team found commendable ambition to broaden interdisciplinary practice at ZHdK, the University has yet to conclude a comprehensive impact analysis of the major/minor system on the quality of the programmes.

Across ZHdK, student learning is facilitated by teaching faculty, chiefly through individual tutoring, mentoring and coaching. In keeping with the practice-based focus of Swiss Universities of Applied Arts in general, degree programmes at ZHdK place great emphasis on practical relevance. This is supported by teaching faculty of varying workloads, who are active in their own professional practice outside of ZHdK. The number of active practitioner-teachers represents an undoubted strength, as well as a considerable challenge in terms of aligning a very heterogeneous body of teaching staff of, at times very small workloads, with university-wide, as well as departmental standards and processes. At departmental

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid* (p.13)

<sup>40</sup> *meeting with students from across the university, meeting with senior management for QAE, meeting with BA students from the design programmes*

<sup>41</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)*

<sup>42</sup> *meeting with students from across the university, meeting with BA students from the design programmes*

<sup>43</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_4 IR 7\_3) *Student Survey\_e*

<sup>44</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.14)

level, in its SER, DDE commendably recognises that, “at present, methods, their application and discussion are a matter of individual discretion, and are thus not formalised.”<sup>45</sup> In meetings with the Review Team, BDE students agreed strongly that there is currently not enough consistency in the methodologies used by different teaching staff at DDE.<sup>46</sup> The SER acknowledges this when it states that there needs to be “closer interaction between DDE executive staff and faculty (...) to further develop teaching along more unified lines.”<sup>47</sup>

DDE is structured into seven subject areas: Cast/Audiovisual Media, Game Design, Industrial Design, Interaction Design, Knowledge Visualisation, Trends and Identity, Visual Communication. Since 2014, the department has undergone significant structural change that aligns it more clearly with the disciplinary logic of a higher education institution. As a result, its individual subject areas are now responsible for the development of topics and content in respect of the respective cycles (Bachelor, Master, continuing education, and research). The intention is to elevate subject areas into stand-alone organisational structures, which give the Department, its faculty, students and staff, as well as its projects, labs and modules a stronger sense of identity.

However, in its SER, DDE recognises that its new disciplinary logic is not without significant challenges, not least the risk, inherent in the new structure, of increased “disciplinary isolation”, and the propensity of efficiency losses due to the creation of too many, fine-grained structures.<sup>48</sup> These risks need to be managed carefully, especially as they run counter to the stated institutional ambition of less siloed structures, and greater inter-permeability and interdisciplinarity. This process of structural transformation, ahead of other departments at ZHdK, has placed DDE somewhat at the vanguard of organisational change within the University as a whole. On-going critical appraisal and review are necessary before changes are to be rolled out more broadly across the institution. The Review Team, however, feels confident in the Department’s ability for self-appraisal, having encountered, within DDE, throughout the external accreditation process, a great spirit of “Radical Candour.”<sup>49</sup>

The programme structure of BDE consists of specialisation modules, cross specialisation modules, and cross-department modules. These fall into three types of offers at programme level: compulsory, compulsory elective, and elective. Courses are delivered through lectures, seminars, exercises, projects, colloquia, tutorials, mentorships and excursions. The MDE programme is made up of a Major, which consists of six specialisations, and a cross-specialisation Minor. Both, Major and Minor are intended to align with each other.

On the whole, the BDE is perceived as “densely scheduled”<sup>50</sup> and thus less flexible at providing opportunities for individual study paths. The Review Team acknowledges the complex dichotomy between commendably high standards of tightly packed, in-depth, practice-based education on offer at DDE, and the University as a whole, and the strategic ambition to offer more hybrid, interdisciplinary, less than linear learner journeys, particularly at Bachelor level. Successfully reconciling both, tradition and ambition represents a significant challenge for DDE, and the University.

Careful consideration also needs to be given to students’ workloads, and the need of a considerable cohort of students to generate supplementary income, while studying fulltime at ZHdK.<sup>51</sup> According to figures provided by ZHdK, only 62% of students complete their studies within the standard period of

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<sup>45</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.14)

<sup>46</sup> meeting with BA students from the Design Programmes

<sup>47</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.14)

<sup>48</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

<sup>49</sup> meeting with the Head of Design Department, meeting with BA, MA, and Research Design Programme Leaders

<sup>50</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.14)

<sup>51</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_4 IR 7\_3) Student Survey\_e (p.18)

study.<sup>52</sup> While the Review Team acknowledges that there are likely to be a number of reasons for the low number of students finishing within their designated study time, the Review Team nonetheless welcomes ZHdK's ambition to increase flexibility, and also look at providing better opportunities for part-time studies.<sup>53</sup> In this context, it is noted that the opportunities opening up through increasing digitisation and e-learning are also in need of further, accelerated development in order to better facilitate some of the university's broader ambitions in teaching and learning.<sup>54</sup>

As is the case with all higher education institutions in Switzerland, ZHdK is required to engage in teaching and research, to provide continuing education, and offer services to third parties. Research at Swiss art and design universities generally focuses on practice-based scientific, and artistic approaches. Research funding bodies include Innosuisse, SNSF, the European Union, and various other foundations.<sup>55</sup> In its *Research Competency Development Impact Analysis*, commissioned by the University Board in 2017, ZHdK states that an increasing number of students are interested in research, and therefore expects ZHdK to reflect this in its curriculum offer at programme level.<sup>56</sup>

Like all departments at ZHdK, DDE has its own research institute - the Institute for Design Research. Its remit is to coordinate *"and provide decisive support to research projects undertaken by the seven DDE subject areas"*. The *2017 Design Research Institute Annual Report* states that *"IDE research plays a key role in positioning the Department of Design in the areas of 'Social relevance', 'Technical Innovation', and the Emancipation of economic models' with a view to generating an independent concept of design geared towards addressing and resolving the pressing questions of contemporary society"*<sup>57</sup> However, research does not yet appear to be consistently embedded at all programme levels at DDE, and across ZHdK.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, there appears to be a lack of adequate permanent lab space for researchers at DDE.<sup>59</sup> The Review Team also missed sufficient clarity about the boundaries between artistic research, practice-based research, action-based research, and academic research. Further inconsistencies in teaching of research methodologies across ZHdK, and at DDE point at some wider concerns that are in need of addressing, if ZHdK wants to realise its strategic ambition of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle offerings.

The SER acknowledges this when it states that *"research has yet to attain the importance in teaching and learning attached to it by the University"*<sup>60</sup> In this context, the Review Team acknowledges the introduction of tenure-track Professorships, whose remit combines leadership in research, with a commitment to teaching and learning. Yet only a small number of new positions appear to have been filled to date.<sup>61</sup>

The Review Team recommends that greater effort is made to ensure that research becomes more fully integrated at all levels of study.

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<sup>52</sup> see Annex (Doc 3\_3) *Key Figures Students* (p.13)

<sup>53</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.15)

<sup>54</sup> *meeting with Digital Development Office*

<sup>55</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_7) *Higher Education CH\_e*

<sup>56</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_6) *Research Competency Analysis\_g* (p.17)

<sup>57</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_11) *Jan19 2017 Design Research Institute Annual Report.pdf* (p.1)

<sup>58</sup> *meeting with students from across the University, including full-time & part-time BA, MA and research students, meeting with MA & research teaching staff, meeting with MA and Research students from the Design programmes*

<sup>59</sup> *meeting with Design research staff*

<sup>60</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.14)

<sup>61</sup> *ibid* (p.26)

### Commendations:

- On the whole, and across the institution, the Review Team encountered a commendable atmosphere of respectful, interaction between teachers and learners. **(B)**
- The Review team saw evidence of a strong culture of informal communication, feedback, exchange, and collaboration between various institutional stakeholders. **(B)**
- There appears to be, across the University, a commendable willingness to critically examine institutional structures, processes and practices in order to continue to improve (PDCA Cycle). **(B)**
- The Review Team found, across the University, evidence of a clear process for programme approval, and re-approval. **(I)**
- The Review Team found some encouraging examples of good practice at programme level, such as mentoring, and flexible study paths (Theatre, MA Trans, Fine Art) **(B)**
- The Review Team found commendable clarity and ambition of the Design Department's objectives, values, and their alignment to ZHdK's mission.
- In the majority of DDE specialisations, students appear to be engaged well in the development of the curriculum, and teaching and learning strategy. **(D)**
- The DDE programme offers unique studies, and seems to follow the department's mission/vision of technology-centred and interdisciplinary design education. The balance of freedom and strict structure within modules appears to work well. **(D)**

### Recommendations:

- The balance at ZHdK between healthy heterogeneity on the one hand, and the need for standardisation on the other, needs to shift in order to deliver greater consistency, and a stronger, more unified quality discourse in teaching and learning across the institution. **(B)**
- Informal communication processes that are largely contingent on the ability, and good faith of individual stakeholders should not, and cannot replace more formalised mechanisms and fora. **(B)**
- ZHdK needs to mandate suitable fora, processes and standards for sharing good practice in teaching and learning across programme-, specialisation- or departmental boundaries. **(B)**
- There is a greater need at ZHdK for cross-departmental teaching on collaborative projects, and an increase in scope of cross-disciplinary opportunities. At the same time, review panel recommends a careful impact assessment of the proposed major/minor system before a decision is taken to implement. **(B)**
- In the light of the strategic ambition for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, we recommend that research becomes more fully embedded at all levels of study, across all programmes and departments. **(B)**
- The University needs to address inconsistencies across programmes and departments in the teaching of research methodologies. **(B)**
- In order for ZHdK to fulfil its institutional ambitions vis-a-vis its international peers, the Review Team recommends that political stakeholders apply a greater sense of urgency to resolve the University's statutory restriction of offering 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle programmes. **(I)**
- In order to avoid jeopardising much needed consistency of teaching and learning practices, particularly amongst teaching staff on low work-loads, the Review Team recommends that the proposed reform of the staff directive (Personalverordnung) is examined very carefully in terms of its likely impact, and possible concerns fed-back to Cantonal legislative bodies. **(I)**
- We recommend that e-learning should continue to be developed and deployed further in order to help facilitate evolving teaching and learning practice in the context of ZHdK's digital strategy. **(I)**

## 2.2 International perspectives

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

In its SER, ZHdK articulates its international vision as a key part of its institutional strategy. According to ZHdK 2014-2018 strategy, *“careers in the arts and design are international. Our teaching and research are firmly orientated towards internationalisation, which we regard as vibrant exchange beyond discipline and national boundaries”* and *“our staff are directly involved in the University’s activities in pursuit of internationalisation and embrace mobility as an integral part of studying and working.”*<sup>62</sup> The University’s website states that *“art and design know no national or geographical borders”*<sup>63</sup>. In fact, the word *“international”* features approximately 1400 times on the University’s website.<sup>64</sup>

ZHdK defines the core task of internationalisation as *“critical consideration of globalisation models, and the role played by the arts and design community in these ongoing developments”*<sup>65</sup> It lists as key areas *“implementing sensitive intercultural and cross-cultural practices and treating social, economic and political asymmetries in an informed manner”*<sup>66</sup>

In its SER ZHdK states that its *“teaching and research are firmly oriented toward internationalisation.”* Accordingly, ZHdK *“strives to enable its students and teaching staff to play an active role in the international environment”*.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, internationalisation is considered to be part of each Department’s performance mandate.

According to its 2014-2018 Strategy, ZHdK is committed to *“aligning our international activities purposefully and functionally with our overall organisational development”*, *“pooling our international cooperation and by defining the strategic commitments and partnerships needed to systematically extend our international network”*, *“fostering global competency among our staff and students by introducing courses and programmes aimed at further enhancing language and intercultural skills”*, *“developing and implementing a mobility policy for staff and students”*, and *“creating further education programmes for the international market”*.<sup>68</sup>

And yet, the internationalisation policies and practices of the institution don’t appear to be sufficiently clear, or consistent. Further clarification is needed of ZHdK’s internationalisation strategy at programme level, beyond mere numbers of international students and projects. The SER states that *“internationalisation has occurred chiefly through the activities of ZHdK members and the integration of*

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<sup>62</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_3) 2014-2018 Strategy\_e.pdf (p.6)

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.zhdk.ch/en/international/internationalization-zhdk-648>

<sup>64</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_8) International Impact Analysis\_g (p.11)

<sup>65</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_7) International Affairs\_e.pdf (p.2)

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.16)

<sup>68</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_3) 2014-2018 Strategy\_e.pdf (p.6)

*international and global issues into learning, teaching, and research,*<sup>69</sup> and it acknowledges that there is a need to *“take an informed approach to heterogeneity and diversity,”* further *“develop ‘diversity literacy,’ strengthen intercultural and transcultural competence.”*<sup>70</sup>

At departmental level responsibility for internationalisation rests with designated members of faculty. In this, the departments are supported by the International Affairs Dossier, the Head of International Relations, and the International Office.

According to the DDE SER programme review, intercultural skills, and interdisciplinarity are understood as situated in a global context. The strategic ambition of internationalisation at institutional level is therefore seen as integral to teaching, learning and research at programme level.<sup>71</sup>

Across its departments and programmes, ZHdK offers a range of exchange initiatives with a total of 160 international arts universities worldwide. The SER states that *“approximately 20% of ZHdK Bachelor’s (sic) students complete a mobility semester during their studies.”*, while the uptake among masters students is *“lower.”*<sup>72</sup> The Review Team noted the wide availability of travel grants, which the University provides in order to facilitate international exchanges, and visits. This was also acknowledged in meetings with students and alumni.<sup>73</sup>

In the absence of an association with the Erasmus programme, the Swiss European Mobility Programme (SEMP) helps align student achievement according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). However, the Review Team found inconsistencies regarding the allocation of ECTS in exchange semesters. According to students, this can act as a disincentive towards the uptake of an exchange with an international partner institution, with some students having to extend their study programme to ‘catch-up’<sup>74</sup>

ZHdK has focussed on two initiatives in particular, which, it is hoped, will act as catalysts for the University’s international ambitions: The University hopes to develop further its *“Arts for Change”* programme, an initiative that focuses on social transformation through arts and design at home and abroad. ZHdK has also been working on the establishment of a network between Asian, and European Arts universities, a project that builds on ZHdK’s experience with *“Connecting Spaces”*, its Hong Kong hub.

However, in its meeting with Alumni, the Review Team was told that the level of meaningful student exchange on some of the international initiatives has been somewhat limited. *“We went to Hong Kong, but we didn’t collaborate with anyone from Hong Kong. They had a space called ‘Connecting Spaces’. When we went there, there weren’t any students – it was just us. As a designer, I didn’t take anything away from that experience”*<sup>75</sup> The Review Team acknowledges that this particular account is not, by itself, representative of the considerable gamut of internationalisation initiatives undertaken at ZHdK (including the creation of a double degree programme with Hong Kong Baptist University, Transcultural Collaboration Semester programme etc.), however the Review Team welcomes, and strongly encourages, ZHdK’s own on-going, and rigorous examination of the University’s internationalisation strategy.

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<sup>69</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.17)

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*

<sup>71</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.16)

<sup>72</sup> see Annex (2\_2.4 IR2\_8) *International Impact Analysis\_g* (p.16)

<sup>73</sup> *meeting with Alumni*

<sup>74</sup> *meeting with BA students from the Design programmes*

<sup>75</sup> *meeting with recent graduates/alumni from across the programme levels*

An important part of internationalisation, the proportion of international students enrolled at ZHdK has remain largely stable between 2014, and 2017 at just under 30%. In its International Impact Analysis, ZHdK acknowledges that, provided the share of international students doesn't grow too large, political considerations will not interfere.<sup>76</sup> In some departments, fluctuations in the share of international students relative to total student numbers are, however, more pronounced. While DDK experienced a noticeable uptake in international student numbers between 2014 and 2017, DKM's share of international students dropped, and DDE's remained largely stable.<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting that for students from some countries the admissions process appears to be more cumbersome due to Swiss visa requirements, language issues, and the cost of travel.<sup>78</sup>

The Head of DDE also noted that ZHdK is not yet ready for on-boarding English-speaking staff.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps correspondingly, out of a total of 1421 staff at ZHdK, only 8% of teaching staff originate from non-German speaking countries. At DDE, out of a total of 141 teaching staff, 9 originate from non-German speaking countries.

The SER recognises that *"the question of using English language in teaching and research has not yet been resolved."*<sup>80</sup> The Review Team noted the absence of a clear, university-wide language policy. While ZHdK seems to want to attract international students and teachers, the inconsistent availability of English language tuition, and English language communication across the University provides a considerable impediment for achieving and sustaining this goal. The DDE SER notes that *"Bilingualism is increasingly challenging the university as a whole,"*<sup>81</sup> and *"standard 2.2 clearly reveals a persuasive tension between strategy and implementation."*<sup>82</sup> The DDE SER recognises that *"a discrepancy exists between the German language of instruction anchored in the Degree Programme Regulations, and students' actual language skills,"*<sup>83</sup> and *"Publishing programme information in English raises expectations about course delivery (in English) that cannot always be met in day-to-day teaching."*<sup>84</sup> The University must take an executive decision, whether it intends to deliver its programmes in German, or in English, on the basis of which students ought to be recruited, so that they are subsequently able to study at the appropriate level. Alternatively, ZHdK might prefer to work in a number of languages, in which case all teaching and learning materials must be available in those languages.<sup>85</sup> The Review Team finds that the inconsistencies currently in place at ZHdK, particularly its language policy, are in need of addressing, if the University wants to deliver towards its own internationalisation strategy.

### Commendations:

- Commendable ambition across the university towards greater internationalisation. **(I)**
- Commendable exchange programmes, visits, international guests, and co-operations. **(I)**
- Commendable level of grants, and financial support available to enable student visits, collaborations, and exchange semesters. **(I)**

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid* (p.5)

<sup>77</sup> see Annex (2\_2.4 IR2\_8) *International Impact Analysis\_g* (p.15)

<sup>78</sup> *meeting with MA and research students from the Design programmes*

<sup>79</sup> *meeting with Head of DDE*

<sup>80</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_7) *International Affairs\_e.pdf* (p.8)

<sup>81</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.11)

<sup>82</sup> *ibid* (p.16)

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_2c) *Confidential Annex Minutes\_Workshops\_g.pdf* (pp.11&17)

## Recommendations:

- Internationalisation policies of the University are not clear, or consistent. ZHdK must make an executive decision whether it wants to deliver its programmes in a language (German), on the basis of which students are recruited, and able to study at appropriate level. Alternatively, ZHdK takes the decision to work in a number of languages, in which case all teaching and learning materials must be available in those languages. This should also include support structures which need to be put in place to facilitate institutional internationalisation policies (eg. on-boarding of English-speaking staff, better support for international faculty exchanges) **(B)**
- Further clarification of ZHdK's internationalisation strategy at programme level is needed, beyond numbers of international students, and projects (internationalisation at home, or in a global setting?). **(B)**
- Clearer guidance regarding visa requirements is needed, and needs to be better communicated to prospective foreign students. **(I)**
- ZHdK needs to increase its efforts to promote greater diversity literacy (SER p.17) amongst staff, students and faculty. **(B)**
- Inconsistencies regarding the allocation of ECTS in exchange semesters need to be addressed. **(B)**

## 2.3 Assessment

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

Assessment and examinations at the University are governed by the 'General Regulations for Studying at Zurich University',<sup>86</sup> the specific 'Degree Programme Regulations'<sup>87</sup>. These set out general evaluation criteria, and grading systems that are to be used. Assessment Regulations (*Prüfungsreglement*), *Curricular Concepts*, and *Course Handbooks* describe aims, structure and content at programme level. Degree programmes have their own criteria, with module descriptors providing further detail of student performance and credits.

At DDE, depending on their specialisations, students attend a range of compulsory, compulsory elective, and elective modules in order to achieve the required learning outcomes. The SER states "*the university's competency-orientated assessment scheme relates to the goals (learning outcomes), the context and the form of a particular course or module*" and "*evaluation criteria are derived directly from the individual project. Formative or summative assessments are carried out depending on the status and significance of a project within the programme.*"<sup>88</sup>

The SER further states, "*examination details and requirements are communicated in good time either by teaching staff, or by the responsible administrative units.*"<sup>89</sup>

MDE students have an examination at the end of each semester, whereas BDE students are required to accumulate a specific number of ECTS points across various categories, and modules in each semester.

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<sup>86</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_1) *General Regulations Study\_ASO\_e*

<sup>87</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_1 IR 2\_3) *Degree Programme Regulations\_e*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid* (p. 19)

<sup>89</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)*. (p. 18)

Assessment settings include but are not limited to ensemble production, exhibition of artistic works, commissioned work. Grades range from A for *outstanding* to F for *clear fail* (three gradations providing further differentiation). At MDE level, completed modules are either marked *Pass*, with attendance being a significant factor, or with an A-F grade.

The SER states “*great importance is attached to providing individual oral or written feedback.*”<sup>90</sup> At departmental level at DDE, assessment results are communicated in a number of different ways, orally, partly orally, partly in writing, or in writing only. Additionally, some grades are accessible on the Intranet. *Doc 2\_3 Assessment\_g\_e.pdf* states “*there is a defined deadline until when feedback and grades have to be handed to students. All lecturers receive this information by email before the start of the modules. The programme reminds them if the deadline hasn’t been met.*”<sup>91</sup>

Degree programmes are in charge of organising, and running assessments and examinations, with the results being recorded in the University’s administrative system. A *Transcript of Records* is then issued by the respective departments to students at the end of their studies.<sup>92</sup>

Assessment regulations, and policies notwithstanding, the Review Team found considerable inconsistencies of assessment practices between departments at ZHdK, and across DDE. On the whole, assessment practices seem predominantly contingent on individual teachers’ preferences, rather than unified standards.<sup>93</sup>

The application, and use of learning outcomes, as well as the alignment of assessment criteria to learning outcomes were found to vary considerably across the University, as well as at DDE. In its SER, the University acknowledges the need to consistently provide assessment criteria prior to module commencement. The SER states that, at departmental level, MDE and BDE regulations are accurate and understandable. And yet, at the same time, the SER acknowledges, “*there are conflicting perceptions as to whether the current assessment methods are clear*”<sup>94</sup>

Furthermore, there appears to be a lack of comparability among grading systems used at programme level. In their meetings with the Review Team, Design students also drew attention to unsatisfactory assessment practices governing ‘*group work*’, where all students appear to be given the same grade, with no individual feedback on individual contribution, although students perceive a large level of differences in the level of individual student input.<sup>95</sup>

There are also inconsistencies across the University, and within DDE in terms of providing student feedback after assessment. Some assessment feedback is given orally, some written – with some students not receiving written feedback after their final exams at all.<sup>96</sup> The Review Team also found considerable variations in terms of timeliness of assessment feedback at DDE, both in BDE and MDE programmes.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *ibid*

<sup>91</sup> see Annex (Doc 2\_3) *Assessment\_g\_e.* (p. 2)

<sup>92</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER).* (p.18)

<sup>93</sup> *meetings with BA, MA, and doctoral teaching staff, with students from across the university, with BA students from the Design programmes, with alumni, with BA, MA & Doctoral Design teaching staff & Annex (Doc 0\_2c) Confidential\_Annex Minutes\_Workshops\_g*

<sup>94</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.18)

<sup>95</sup> *meeting with BA students from the Design programmes*

<sup>96</sup> *meeting with recent graduates/alumni from across the programmes,*

<sup>97</sup> *meeting with BA students from the Design programmes*

Finally, where examples of good assessment practices do exist, these tend not to get shared widely. Sharing of *'good practice'* does not appear to be formalised, but instead relies on informal channels, which are clearly limited in efficacy, and which, more often than not, seem to be confined to existing silos. According to the SER, *"self-evaluation revealed that teaching staff and heads of programmes exchange little information about successful and less successful examination models, and respective practices."*<sup>98</sup>

In summary, the Review Team finds that current assessments practices at ZHdK, as well as at DDE in particular need improving in order to make sure they better align with standards, and do so consistently across modules, programmes, and departments.

### **Recommendations:**

- Considerable inconsistencies of assessment practice across departments, and programmes at ZHdK need to be addressed. **(B)**
- The application and use of learning outcomes, and the alignment of assessment criteria to learning outcomes at programme level is inconsistent, and needs further standardisation. **(B)**
- The provision, at programme level, of timely student feedback after assessments is inconsistent, and needs to be improved. **(B)**
- Across the institution, assessment practices should be less contingent on individuals, and instead, to a greater extent, on unified standards. **(B)**

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<sup>98</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.19)

### 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 institution**

Judging from the institutional SER, the SER of DDE and the respective formal documents containing the admission regulations for the Design Department, formal criteria for student admission are clearly communicated. In conversations with current students and alumni, most people stated that they felt well informed and that information was easily accessible. In regard to the documentation given to the Review Team, it is not fully comprehensible why not each of the respective documents detailing the admission process for the Design Department contains the same full description of all necessary enclosures to the application form. However, information on the website of ZHdK is easy to find, clearly communicated and comprehensive.

In a few cases, students perceived a gap between the programme description and the actual unfolding of the courses on offer in that programme. However, most of the critique was directed towards one specific programme, the MA in Product Design. Students felt that there were insufficient courses in their level available, a lack of guidance and information for compiling one's own study schedule. It was stated that the whole programme did not actually provide the education suitable for a master's degree in the field. Therefore, the premises of admission had been misleading. The level of misinformation and disregard that was detailed appeared deeply concerning but remains difficult to evidence for the team.

During the meetings, ZHdK's foundation courses were brought up as very valuable preparation for the expected level of artistic skills and knowledge requirements. Opinions varied about how difficult it was to understand the required quality and content of the work in order to be admitted to ZHdK successfully without having accomplished such a course. From the documentation available and ZHdK's website, there is little explanation about what defines a portfolio or master project description worth considering admission of the applicant in the eyes of ZHdK.

The institutional SER states *"The composition of the student body in terms of social characteristics (e.g. origin, educational or immigrant background) does not reflect the composition of the Swiss population."*

<sup>99</sup> This was evidenced throughout the interviews with the teachers and the students<sup>100</sup>.

ZHdK's courses are held predominantly in German. Applicants are required to have sufficient knowledge of the German language to follow classes. Students confirmed that they were aware of this obligation. Admission requirements are therefore also clearly communicated in this area. However, although applicants are aware of the level of German skills that they are required to have as students of ZHdK, language appeared to be one of the major difficulties of the institution. German speaking students face difficulties when classes switch to English to accommodate international students; international students face difficulties because some of the official documents are translated to English and they need

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<sup>99</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.22)

<sup>100</sup> interviews with the management, students and teachers both visits

to be able to carry out all administrative and course work in German. Also, the common usage of Swiss German complicates communication for international students.

Online registration processes<sup>101</sup> are proposed to be introduced in Spring 2019 to centralise admission processes. Due to the timing of the Review Team's visits it was not possible to evaluate these efforts.

The DDE SER<sup>102</sup> states that *“BA: Bachelor students perceive juries of up to seven experts as disproportionately large and have requested better information about the roles of experts at admissions interviews. Some students feel like the current admissions process involves long waiting times.”* The Review Team agrees with the student concerns and suggests the University reviews the scale of the panels and give the interview candidates a better understanding of the process and the roles of the interview team.

Considering the demographic changes of the Swiss population, ZHdK should work on their measures for achieving the institution's goal of social sustainability. As evidenced by the meetings<sup>103</sup>, ZHdK needs to invest more into diversity literacy across all levels. Campaigns and other work done by the Equal Opportunities Office seem to be virtually unknown to the majority of people working and studying at ZHdK. Specific measures for easier accessibility of the foundation-course might also be considered as a tool to appeal to a broader range of the Swiss population. It might also help to have more information made available online about what a high quality portfolio is characterised by. Language politics at ZHdK need to be reviewed. Considering the institution's goal of internationalisation, it might be recommendable to set up the administrative structure at least bilingual and to offer courses in German as well as in English. Otherwise it might be necessary to enact language requirements with a stricter regime throughout the admission process.

### Commendations:

- from feedback received, and the documentation provided to panel, students appear to be largely satisfied with the admissions process, and felt the documentation reflected the subsequent programmes of study **(B)**
- commendable focus on entrepreneurship in preparation of students for professional life **(D)**
- some of the competences measured during the admissions process for programmes within the design department might be applied to other (presentation skills, collaborative talent) departments **(D)**

### Recommendations:

- further develop the strategy to address the composition of the student body in terms of social characteristics (e.g. origin, educational or immigrant background) to reflect the composition of the Swiss population **(B)**
- a clear language strategy and requirements **(I)**
- eradicate inconsistencies experienced by international students in terms of language requirements stated during the admissions process, and the subsequent reality at programme level **(I)**

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<sup>101</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.21)

<sup>102</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)\_DDE (p.21)

<sup>103</sup> interviews with the management, students and teachers both visits

### 3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability

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

The Review Team found inconsistencies in the monitoring and reviewing processes of student progression and achievement across the University and within the Design Department. Because of ZHdK's specific history, the different departments follow their own directories for these processes. Students are provided with an overview of their accomplished course works and assessments via the online system *Evento*.<sup>104</sup> Students confirmed that this is where they can access their individual coursework history and the marks they received.

There was wide agreement of a lack of consistent feedback in terms of overall progression within the field of study and general advice and mentoring<sup>105</sup>. This is partly, but not predominantly connected to the high percentage of fractional teaching staff and their relatively little presence on campus. Within the University and within the Design Department, different models of informal exchange between students and teaching staff exist that many perceive as efficient (regular lunch or dinner meetings, informal conversations, general accessibility of individual teaching personnel). However, these cannot replace regular, formal feedback and mentoring.

The responsibility for recognition processes of prior learning and studies abroad lies with the Heads of Programme. Clear guidelines for the recognition process are missing. DDE BA students report that studying abroad usually costs them a year of study because they are required to do certain courses at ZHdK to fulfil their study goals and fall out of rhythm when studying a semester abroad.

ZHdK's engagement with its alumni also varies across the different departments and within the DDE. While some programmes seem to have a well working exchange with their alumni and regularly invite them back to give talks or engage them as lecturers, some don't seem to make use of that resource at all. ZHdK's official alumni network *netzhdk* operates at varying degrees of independence of these departmental structures. Alumni's engagement in the network appeared rather low.

ZHdK does not conduct its own graduate survey but uses the data of the general Swiss graduate survey, but DDE has participated in a trial version of a final-degree survey in 2017. Internal quality management is working on implementing structures that enable the institution to make use of this data. The results of the national graduate survey are positive when it comes to graduates from the Design Department.

Most students felt that preparation for their professional careers could be better embedded within their respective programmes. Although experiences with the Z-Cubator are positive, it's role as supporter of specific entrepreneurial projects cannot cover the need for students' overall career preparation within their respective fields of study. Specific modules on practical aspects of prospective professional careers were seen as positive and helpful, but where they existed, they only existed as electives and could not be taken by all students of the same year. Alumni attested that they had felt lost after graduation. Similar to other areas of support and guidance, the majority of students seemed to be uncertain about where to go to seek advice for their professional lives. There seemed to be agreement amongst students

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<sup>104</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.23)

<sup>105</sup> interviews with the students and teachers both visits

that ZHdK was overall focussing on preparing its students for a career as entrepreneur, rather than employee. As much as the support of entrepreneurial careers was seen as positive, students wished for more preparation for situations of employment, too. Placements are generally not part of the DDE studies. But students felt very positive about regular visits of professionals in their fields and felt that there was generally a high accessibility to the professional world.

Alumni observed that as amazing as the facilities at ZHdK are, they also result in the strange situation of students getting used to much better equipment than they can find in the outside/professional realm.

Employers' feedback<sup>106</sup> attested ZHdK a high quality of education and facilities. However, they felt that students were lacking a certain drive or "*hunger*".

Students need to be mentored and guided more consistently, across all departments and programmes. Responsibilities in terms of support structures within the study programme and on University level need to be communicated more clearly. Double roles should be avoided – i.e. the Head of Programme should not be the person to go to for confidential issues at the same time, etc. Formal points of thorough evaluation of students' progress need to be established in all programmes.

While there is great effort on ZHdK's side to provide its students with contact to and preparation for the professional world, these need to be better embedded within the respective study programme.

More time needs to be dedicated within the actual course of the studies to introduce students to different ways of using their skills professionally and creatively. Integrating placements within the study program might be a helpful measure. When backed up with sufficient legal and ethical support and protection, further initiatives for collaborations with the professional world throughout students' studies may also nurture students' capacity to develop their individual careers. International collaborations might help students gain a better understanding of their own position globally and provide them with perspectives that may instil a bigger urge to make a difference in society.

#### **Commendations:**

- examples of good practice at departmental level in terms of preparing students for professional life (Z-Cubator) **(B)**
- examples of synergetic collaborations with industry that create subsequent employment opportunities **(D)**
- graduate survey shows that graduates are largely successful in finding employment in their practice **(D)**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Heads of Programmes are ultimately responsible for a large range of duties including: the recognition of prior learning; the required number of credits that must be earned in one programme stage to be eligible to progress to the next stage; professional practice guidance and graduate tracking. How does ZHdK ensure consistency of practice across the Departments? **(I)**
- resolve conflicting policies regarding the allocation of ECTS for exchange semesters **(I)**
- a more consistent practice for student guidance in entering the professional sector **(B)**
- students need more support structures concerning their general well-being and extra-curricular issues **(I)**

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<sup>106</sup> interviews with the employers

- the enhancement of students' professional skills needs to be addressed at curricular level **(B)**
- areas of good practice at departmental level in terms of preparing students for professional life not consistently applied across all programmes **(I)**
- learning outcomes and assessment criteria of individual modules don't always align with the overall programme learning outcomes (B)
- mixed feedback in terms of students' ability to monitor and track their progress clearly **(B)**
- better sign-posting and referral to guide students to appropriate support mechanisms at ZHdK **(I)**

## 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**

As members of teaching staff at ZHdK, professors, lectures and associate lecturers are active as both university teachers and practitioners in their field. A high number of teaching staff are on fractional contracts (down to 30%), which gives them an opportunity to continue practicing their profession outside the University. The Review Team noted that teaching staff took pride in being part of ZHdK while also having a professional career of their own, although this sometimes creates a friction between the two roles. The Review Team noted that at the same time the University is well aware of the tension between standardisation and autonomy<sup>107</sup>, it struggles to find successful ways to reconcile the large number of fractional teaching staff with the need for an integrative institutional quality culture. Members of teaching staff are required to have a university degree, several years of relevant professional experience and either teaching experience or a university teaching qualification. Professors are required to hold additional scientific or artistic qualifications and above-average competencies in their subject area. Heads of programmes are also required to possess leadership and management skills. Artistic/scientific mid-tier staff must hold a university degree<sup>108</sup>. The University has a firm staff appointment procedure in place<sup>109</sup> and vacancies are advertised publicly, sometimes also in English. For positions involving a workload of at least 30% selection committees are appointed to review applications and propose candidates. Selection committees include a member of Equal Opportunities and Diversity Office, in addition to line managers, domain-specific experts and members of the participatory committees and students. Lecturers are appointed by Heads of Department, while lecturers with managerial duties are appointed by the University Board. Once appointed, the University provides tailored in-house training to enable teaching staff to gain higher education teaching qualifications, where needed.

A staff appraisal process is in place<sup>110</sup>, where teaching faculty meet their direct superiors to discuss their professional, methodological and didactic objectives and plans for further development. These are either biannual, or on a yearly basis, depending on the staff members contract. The meetings are documented in a written record and revisited the following year. Free in-house courses for staff development and life-long learning include *Teaching & Learning*, *Leadership & Working Techniques*, *Research & Methods*, and *Language & Communication*, in addition to access to courses external to the University. Currently staff have the freedom to chose to study on these courses, or by recommendation of a superior, but not as compulsory part of a formal staff development plan.<sup>111</sup> 10% of staff contracts are defined as either professional development or research, with them being able to choose one or the other. Talent promotion is available for artistic and scientific mid-tier staff/assistants to gain further qualifications in teaching, research and administration, some of whom are doctoral candidates<sup>112</sup>. The Review Team found that mid-tier staff are not entirely aware of what the talent promotion entails for them, although they generally feel supported by the University in any initiatives relating to further development<sup>113</sup>. Furthermore, the Review Team recommends that a more directive-led approach be

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<sup>107</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.10) and Meeting with Rector, first visit.

<sup>108</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.25)

<sup>109</sup> see Annex (Doc 4\_1) *Staff Appointment Procedures*.

<sup>110</sup> See Annex (Doc 4\_2) *Performance Review*.

<sup>111</sup> Meetings with Teaching & Research Staff (first and second visit) and with BA, MA & Research Design Teaching Programme Leaders.

<sup>112</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.26)

<sup>113</sup> Meeting with Design Mid-Tier Teaching and Support Staff (second visit).

taken to staff development and continuing education of faculty, especially in regard to the provisioned enhancement of research.

The University has plans to implement a new framework for Professorship<sup>114</sup>. The framework will provide a new definition of the teaching and research remit of Professors, as well as placing a greater emphasis on research than in the current structure. The University has high expectations for the new Professorship model and recognises that this process will take time and involve some overlap with the current structure<sup>115</sup>. In order to facilitate the implementation of this new framework, the Review Team recommends a consistent approach to research be embedded in the curriculum at all levels of study, as well as a clear institutional approach to research and consistency of research training among teaching staff.

Teaching staff are generally well represented in the University structure although some discussions revealed a top-down decision-making process, and that engagement of teaching staff with QAE processes was not sufficiently wide-spread at the departmental level.

### Commendations

- The University staff engagement with the professions is commendable, and a large proportion of teaching staff seems well embedded within current professional practice. **(B)**
- The Review Team commends the University on the range of staff development opportunities available but recommends this should not just be left to staff to initiate. **(I)**
- The Review Team fully supports the mandatory nature of research as part of the new professorships to be implemented. **(I)**
- A number of PhD candidates employed as junior teaching staff is commendable and is likely to contribute to a further interrelation between research and teaching. **(I)**

### Recommendations

- The Review Team recommends a more systematic directive (mandatory) for teacher qualification, both for newly appointed staff as well as more experienced teachers. The Team commends that it is mandatory for teaching staff to have a teaching qualification, but that this is followed through in practice. Here, an opportunity could be seen in exploring the use of expertise in the Art Education department. **(B)**
- The current staff development processes don't appear to align sufficiently to the appraisal processes. Career perspectives of teaching staff are not sufficiently clear, and more effective use could be made of the annual and biannual performance reviews. This applies particularly to mid-tier staff, who often do not see a viable career path within the University. **(B)**
- The Review Team recommends that the University fully invests in the development of mid-tier staff. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned with the teaching staff not being sufficiently engaged in research practice. The University needs to develop a clear position on and concept of research at both institutional as well as departmental levels. **(B)**
- The University will need to enhance the cantonal policy of only offering sabbatical leave after 8-10 years of service only. This seems counterproductive to achieving the commendable ambition of establishing 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle programmes or a successfully embedded research culture within the institution. **(B)**

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<sup>114</sup> See Annex (Doc 4\_4) *Professorship Award Regulations*

<sup>115</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.26)

## 4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body

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

The University has a structure of diverse staff posts with clear division of roles between Professors, Heads of programmes and Heads of specialisations, lecturers, associate lecturers, mid-tier staff/assistants, and guests. Senior staff pointed out the heavy workload accompanying managerial roles, wearing several hats at once<sup>116</sup>. Faculty task profiles are being expanded to include new and challenging tasks, like research and digitisation.

Student-teacher ratio is very good across the whole institution. The majority of faculty are employed part-time, at the average of 30% contracts. As mentioned in the section above, the advantage of this flexibility is to give teachers the opportunity to continue their practice in their professional fields parallel to their academic work. However, the downsides make integration of this teacher group into the University structure challenging, a situation the University is aware of at the same time it seeks to recognise and respect different cultures within different disciplines<sup>117</sup>. The Review Team would like to stress the importance of finding solutions in this respect, particularly in relation to teacher training and general formalisation of quality standards in relation to teaching and learning.

The Review Team experienced some inconsistencies with assessment, grading and feedback procedures, which can be traced to this problem. However, in general the student's perception of the teachers was of them being highly qualified at the artistic level, whether in relation to studio-based teaching or technical courses and workshops<sup>118</sup>. Students also felt that the close ties between teachers and their professions was among the strongest traits of their programmes. Furthermore, students reported on being generally well prepared for independent career paths (i.e. starting their own business/studio), although some reported a lack of guidance for work placements in the professional world<sup>119</sup>. Language problems seem to be recurrent in relation to delivery of teaching in international MA-courses, another challenge that the Review Team was made aware of during the time of its visit<sup>120</sup>.

### Commendations

- The Review Team commends the University on a very healthy teacher/student ratio. **(B)**
- The Review Team commends the University on the quality of its mid-tier staff and research assistants. **(B)**

### Recommendations

- The Review Team is concerned about the high percentage of fractional teaching and its impact on developments in learning & teaching, teacher qualification and administration. The Team also expresses its concerns with the impact this has on their integration into the University, especially in regard to implementation of new Institutional Strategy 2019-2023, as well as the Quality Strategy 2016-2020. **(B)**

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<sup>116</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.28)

<sup>117</sup> Meeting with Rector, first visit.

<sup>118</sup> Meetings with students on both visits.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Meetings with BA students, and with MA and Research Students, second visit.

## 5. Facilities, resources and support

### 5.1 Facilities

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

The University campus *Toni Areal* offers a state-of-the-art infrastructure, with highly impressive facilities for learning, teaching and research. The campus, finalised in 2014, incorporates purpose-built spaces for concerts, theatre performances, cinema, exhibitions and music performances, in addition to excellent teaching spaces for practice-based and experimental learning, studios, workshops and tech labs equipped with the latest technology and machinery<sup>121</sup>. Recognising the exceptional standard of University housing and facilities, the Review Team was also made aware of lack of working space for staff involved in research, and some discomfort with the “clean desk policy” was expressed.<sup>122</sup>

Facilities and resources were repeatedly brought up by students and alumni when asked about the strengths of the University and individual programmes<sup>123</sup>. However, the high standard of facilities comes with a challenge. The alumni expressed their concern that this high standard is rarely matched in professional practice outside the University, making adaptation to the professional world somewhat difficult.<sup>124</sup>

Students and staff have access to an impressive library with adequate material for arts and design learning, teaching and research. Especially supportive of DDE students and staff are the Material Archive and the Design Museum collections, which offer research facilities, archives and IT services.

During the review the Review Team was given two tours of the campus, which made a strong impact on the Team members. The positive impression was confirmed by students, alumni and representatives from the professional fields, who commented on the exceptionally high quality of the facilities, resources and equipment. Nevertheless, some staff expressed issues with the room booking system and were uncomfortable with stressful and chaotic periods at the beginning of semesters, there not being enough appropriate teaching spaces, which in turn seems to create clashes in the booking system.

The issue of interdisciplinarity and cross-collaboration is fundamental to the vision of the Toni campus, following the merger of the 35 locations into Zürich University of the Arts in 2007. The University aspires the Toni campus to realise the idea of a university that unites all arts and design disciplines under one roof, creating physical and disciplinary proximity between staff and students within the new building<sup>125</sup>. The major/minor model is also seen to bring about a “huge potential” in terms of utilising the full potential of the new building<sup>126</sup>. However, the move towards greater flexibility in practice has proven to be more of a challenge than anticipated, despite architectural and organisational design. Organisational challenges are of concern to the Review Team, whether in relation to timetabling, badge-systems, booking-systems, not least with the introduction of the major/minor model. Students were very appreciative of opportunities for collaboration between disciplines, especially in Z-Modules. Nonetheless, they also pointed out problematic issues with the actual design of the building itself in regard to the particular issues of cross-disciplinary practice, as well as the badge system being an

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<sup>121</sup> Meeting with Mid-tier and Support Staff, second visit.

<sup>122</sup> Meeting with Design Mid-Tier Teaching and Support Staff (second visit).

<sup>123</sup> Meetings with BA students and with MA and Research Students, second visit.

<sup>124</sup> Meetings with BA students and with MA and Research Students, second visit. This was also reflected in meetings with Alumni and Professionals from the occupational fields, on both visits.

<sup>125</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p. 30)

<sup>126</sup> Meeting with Office of the President, first visit.

obstacle in this regard<sup>127</sup>. Furthermore, students expressed the common experience that cross-disciplinary activity mostly happens at their own initiative<sup>128</sup>.

The ongoing digitisation affects all aspects of the University; whether it is learning & teaching, research, administration or support services. The University places considerable emphasis on the digital by defining 'digitisation' as one of the main fields for institutional development<sup>129</sup>. The University recognises its need for a comprehensive digital strategy and E-learning, a view that was clearly reflected in on-site meetings with administrators, programme leaders and managers. A Digital Council has been established, whose task is to develop this strategy and implement digital awareness and promote digital literacy among staff, who are described as "digital immigrants"<sup>130</sup>.

### **Commendations**

- The Review Team commends ZHdK for the exceptionally high quality of the resources on offer (library, workshops, studios etc), as well as the high standard of equipment, tools, and machinery. The exceptional infrastructure for design students (library, material archive, equipment in workshops) should be commended for the range and quality of materials. **(B)**
- DDE is commended on its use of state-of-the-art collaborative tools. **(D)**

### **Recommendations**

- The Review Team expresses its concern with availability and accessibility to rooms (exacerbated by the badge system) and timetabling, especially with the proposed introduction of major and minor programme pathways. **(B)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern about the lack of adequate physical space for researchers at DDE. **(D)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern over the inconsistent use of VLE platforms to support student learning, including an overabundance of information flow through email. E-learning needs to be implemented with a clear strategy and with staff support. **(B)**

## **5.2 Financial resources**

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

The University receives federal and cantonal funding as a state university, the Canton of Zürich being the main funding body. *The Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector 2011* and *The Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the HE Sector 2015* are the legal frameworks that guarantee the University sufficient funding<sup>131</sup>. Generally, funding is based on number of students, enabling the University to apply for additional funding if the total student number grows by 10% or more. Financial planning is made four years in advance, developed in the first quarter of each calendar year. Heads of departments are responsible for managing departmental budget, followed up by quarterly monitoring<sup>132</sup>. The DDE proves to be a role model to institutional organisation

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<sup>127</sup> Meeting with BA students, second visit.

<sup>128</sup> Meetings with students on both visits.

<sup>129</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.10)

<sup>130</sup> Meeting with members of the Digital Council, second visit.

<sup>131</sup> Meeting with representatives of the University Board, first visit.

<sup>132</sup> Meeting with Finance Office and Controlling DDE staff, second visit.

(between central finance services and DDE), the department running a Master Cost Centre (MCC) serving to account for actual staff costs in all department areas. As the DDE SER states, the MCC is complicated and difficult to grasp, but the management is putting monitoring and follow-up processes in place as well emphasising transparent communication, guidance and support<sup>133</sup>.

### Commendations

- The Review Team commends the University on its good forward visibility, solid long-term financial planning and security in terms of funding (*'Planungssicherheit'*), as well as its sound financial management and adequate reserves. **(I)**
- The Review Team commends ZHdK on its transparent financial planning processes in regard to departmental budgets. **(I)**
- The University has a commendable degree of flexibility of spending cost within departments. **(I)**
- The University has a commendable support for students participating in exchanges, field trips and excursions. **(I)**

### Recommendations

- The Review Team is concerned that political factors could adversely affect long-term funding due to the financing system. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned about the dependence on third party funding for research, and the change of eligibility of funding from SNF to go towards covering 30% of the cost. **(B)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern about strategic areas at ZHdK that appear to be in need of more funding to help deliver the strategic ambitions, such as Digital Transformation and Communication, and other tasks by the Digital Council. **(B)**

## 5.3 Support staff

### Standard: the institution has sufficient qualified support staff

Students reported on the strengths of their programmes being the University infrastructure, support from technical staff as well as general support services through their experience at the ZHdK<sup>134</sup>. The Review Team observed this view reflected in the University's body of qualified administrative and technical staff that supports learning & teaching, research as well as management. Requirements are defined for each position, vacancies are advertised publicly, and the recruitment process is regulated by law<sup>135</sup>. Staff planning is based on staff appointment plans, and line managers and staff meet on a yearly basis for standardised performance reviews and employee assessment. These meetings are guided by HR regulations of the Canton of Zürich. In addition, the University has been implementing a staff development concept since 2017.

Staff reported on feeling supported in any initiatives they would like to pursue in relation to their professional development. They reported on a positive attitude to staff development and of being encouraged to reflect on their jobs, but at the same time commented on a disorienting structure and uncertainties in terms of which path to choose<sup>136</sup>. They also reported on easy access to E-learning support, digital support and other similar services for teacher support.

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<sup>133</sup> see Annex (5) DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.30)

<sup>134</sup> Meeting with MA and Research Students, second visit.

<sup>135</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.34)

<sup>136</sup> Meeting with Mid-tier and Support Staff, second visit.

The University has a policy on Equal Opportunities and Diversity in place and prospects an emphasis on 'social sustainability' in its new strategy<sup>137</sup>. The Review Team felt in their conversations on both visits that a general awareness on equal opportunities, socio-economic diversity and general wellbeing could be strengthened, especially among students. Here, support for international students and students from less privileged backgrounds could be strengthened.

### **Commendations**

- The Review Team commends the University on the quality and commitment of its support staff, including mid-tier/assistants, technicians and other administrative staff. **(B)**

### **Recommendations**

- The Review Team recommends stronger encouragement and guidance for ATS to make better use of the training opportunities (in-house courses) offered at the University. **(B)**
- The Review Team recommends staff appraisals be better embedded in staff development. **(D)**

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<sup>137</sup> See Annex (Doc 0\_3) Jan19 Strategy.

## 6. Communication, organisation and decision-making

### 6.1 Internal communication process

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

The Self-Evaluation Reports of both the institution and the department give a clear understanding of how the various committees, councils, working groups and administrative bodies are committed to the idea of keeping the University community well informed. To ensure that, they produce a considerable amount of information shared through diverse channels<sup>138</sup>, such as email, newsletters and intranet as well different platforms used by individual programmes<sup>139</sup>. The information covers rules and regulations, decisions made by different bodies, information on contents and timetables of study units, contact persons as well as information on for example events and project calls<sup>140</sup>. Thus, the Review Team acknowledges and recommends both the University as a whole and the Department of Design on their efforts to ensure that the University community has available the information it needs for carrying out its daily affairs.

In addition to official communication channels, there is a diversity of informal ways of exchanging information between senior staff, teachers and the students (for example lunches, after course parties)<sup>141</sup>. The importance of the unofficial information exchanges varies between the University's departments and within the Department of Design. The Review Team considers also the existence of a communications specialist within all the Departments good practice. The on-going collaboration including everyone interested in creating the Department of Design '*Manifesto*' could also be seen as a communication exercise, and a model useable in other development and improvement projects.

However, one of the recurring topics – albeit already well recognised in the SERs<sup>142</sup> - in almost all the meetings where the question of communications came up<sup>143</sup> was the general agreement that there are serious communication problems within both the University and the Department of Design. These problems include for example email deluge, difficulty of finding information on the intranet, difficulty of interpreting information concerning the contents of studies and finding the relevant contact persons for academic, administrative or welfare matters<sup>144</sup>. Similarly, teachers on fractional contracts feel often under-informed on university and department matters and on the other hand, they do not always know how to further their own ideas about the course content, for example.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, it appears the existing fora for exchanging information, including best practices, between different department and

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<sup>138</sup> see Annex (4) *Institutional review Report (SER)* (pp.36-37 )and Annex (5) *DDE Design Department SER Report* (p.34)

<sup>139</sup> Especially meetings with the Digital Development Office and BA, MA and Research programme teachers

<sup>140</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p. 34)

<sup>141</sup> Meetings with Head of the Design Department, BA and MA students, Student Council and BA, MA and Research programme teachers.

<sup>142</sup> see Annex (4) *Institution Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (pp.36-37) and Annex (5) *DDE Design Department SER Report* (p.34)

<sup>143</sup> Some aspects of communication were discussed in every meeting, however, the most urgent ones were the ones taken up by all students and guest lecturers as they are the least involved in the administrative and decision making processes producing the information communicated.

<sup>144</sup> Meetings with students at both University and Departmental levels, the problem was also recognised in meetings with teachers.

<sup>145</sup> Especially in meetings with the guest lecturers and mid-tier staff at both University and departmental levels, but the problem was acknowledged by the senior staff.

programmes are not supporting dialogue efficiently enough – this is especially evident with small-workload teachers, whose contracts cover only teaching hours<sup>146</sup>.

There is also worrying unevenness in the flow of information within the institution as a whole – certain programmes appear to be more efficient in ensuring communications between senior management, teachers and students, whereas in others, there are considerable gaps in even basic issues like course registration or evaluation criteria<sup>147</sup>. This unevenness is evident also in cases where informal communication appears to work better than the formal communication. However, it should be remembered that informal communication is not equally available for everyone, for example, for language and cultural reasons and thus it should not bypass official channels, such as the Student Council VERSO, student representatives in different bodies or class speakers. There are issues and procedures where diversity is commendable, necessary, and fruitful, but there should be no diversity in the way members of the University community have equal, easy, well-designed and uncomplicated access to the information they need.

Language issues in general came up especially in meeting with the students.<sup>148</sup> The Review Team recognises that the question of the teaching language is a part of a larger political discussion and not completely solvable by the institution alone. However, the actual possibilities of carrying out studies in English should be communicated clearly to the international students, as well as opportunities for developing their German language skills. Similarly, the Swiss/German speaking students should be aware of situations requiring them to use English in advance – especially if sudden changes have impact on the evaluation of their academic performance<sup>149</sup>.

### **Recommendations**

- Both the University and the Department should start with developing their respective communication strategies and implementation plans immediately to better recognise and respond to different informational needs and choosing relevant media for communicating for each need. Investment in new technologies should be secondary to strategy work in the initial stage of the development work. **(B)**
- The University and the Department already have bodies (Digital Council, VERSO), Subject Areas (for example the Interaction Design) and individuals (communication specialists, who are interested and/or knowledgeable in communication issues and they should be involved in communication strategy development work. Similarly, all shareholders should have their say in the process. **(B)**
- Special focus should be on developing and designing information targeted at students. In addition to academic information, it should also cover for example well-being issues. **(B)**
- Not all forms of communication need to be digitised, for example, the physical proximity of different departments and programmes on the Toni Campus should be used even more efficiently for creating (informal) fora for exchanging best practices and encouraging people to get to know what the other programmes and departments are doing. **(I)**

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<sup>146</sup> Meetings with guest lecturers both on the university and department level.

<sup>147</sup> Meetings with students during both visits, but the issue was recognised by the teachers the Review Team met.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> The case where the thesis language was changed into English with very little advanced notice.

- The student representatives and the Student Council VERSO could be more visible to the student body. (I)

## 6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes

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

The President leads the University and manages the President's Office. The University has five departments managed by the Heads of Departments, and Services are managed by the Head of Administration. The President's Office and Services are managed by the Head of Administration. The University Board is the most important collective body consisting of the heads of organisational units. The President, leads the University and represents it internally and externally, he is Chair of the Board and makes decisions on the overall budget. The University Board coordinates the University's internal activities, such as teaching and research, develops University strategy and plans for development and finances. It is also responsible for appointing staff, although that power can be delegated to the Departments. In addition, there are five dossiers (Teaching and Learning, Research, Continuing Education, International Affairs, Events), which are led by a Board member and have delegates from all the Departments. The Head of Administration is in charge of services such finance, human resources and facilities, whereas the Office of President is in charge of for example communications, quality assurance and legal services.<sup>150</sup>

University Assembly has 30 members from across the institution. The Assembly consists of the 15 members of the University Senate, 4 delegates of the Mid-Tier Staff Council, 4 delegates of the Staff Council and 7 delegates of the Student Council. The Assembly has one non-voting member on the Board<sup>151</sup>. The four member bodies represent the interests of different staff groups and students through consultation, petition and participation in different bodies, for example the Department Committee. In addition to the core organisational structure, there are a number of other bodies, committees and institutes, both with a decision-making capacity and advisory roles.<sup>152</sup>

The Department of Design has a matrix organisation – on vertical axis the Department is divided into seven subject areas, each of them (with the exception of the Cast/Audiovisual Media who only offers a BA) providing teaching at BA and MA levels, research and continuing education and led by the Head of the Subject Area. The four fields form the horizontal axis of the matrix and are led by Heads of BA and MA Programmes, Research and Continuing Education. The matrix also allows research to be in close connection with departmental activities, thus potentially supporting its integration into teaching. The Head of the Department of Design is responsible for the overall management of the Department, including strategic development, communication and budgets. The Head is a member of the University Board and in the case of the present Head, in charge of Teaching and Learning as well as Continuing Education Dossiers at the University level, The Head of the Department has regular discussions with the President on development areas of the Department. The administrative and technical staff offer operational support to the Department activities.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> see Annex (4) *Institutional review Report SER* (pp.38-39)

<sup>151</sup> see Annex (Doc 6\_8) *Participation at ZHdK*

<sup>152</sup> see Annex (Doc 6\_3) *Bodies, Committees, Responsibilities for the University* & Annex (Doc 0\_8) *Overview Committees DDE for the Department of Design*.

<sup>153</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.36)

The most important collective body of the Department is The Department Committee, which is in charge of contributing to strategic development and implementation of the Department's business activities. The Committee is chaired by the Head of Department and its members include Heads of Programmes and Subject Areas as well as (non-voting) representatives from the Staff and Student Councils. Overall, the Department of Design has seventeen committees<sup>154</sup>

The monitoring of efficiency is the remit of the University Board, which commissions follow-up reports on issues raised and decisions made. Furthermore, the Heads of Department discuss regularly with the President on their issues and plans. The measures of the effectiveness of Board decisions are an *Open Task List* and commission the Quality Office to conduct analysis/evaluation on specific topics, and the person responsible reports to the University Board in regular reviews.<sup>155</sup>

The core University and Department structures are relatively simple and the division of labour appears clear on paper. However, in practice there appears to be some confusion on the tasks and roles for example the new management operational structure has created some uncertainty in the Department of Design, although the department has commenced with leadership training to help executive staff to adapt to their new roles<sup>156</sup>. Another source of confusion is the large number of committees with partly overlapping remits and unclear relationships to each other and the apparent lack of feedback loops in some cases.<sup>157</sup> The Department of Design plans to review the committee structure, and the Review Team finds that a commendable action<sup>158</sup>. The abundance of committees and groups also increases the workload of executive staff (for example, the Board meets fortnightly for the whole afternoon). Furthermore, within the Department of Design, key executive staff can hold many positions, which can lead for example, to lack of clear demarcation of responsibilities.

The Review Team recognises that the organisational structure and the decision-making process of the University and the department are partly due to Cantonal Act on the Universities of Applied Science and partly to the historical development of the University, and thus not always easily changed if, and when, there is a need to change them. Thus, for example the issue of student participation cannot be solved without a wider discussion. However, the University and the Departments are showing keen interest in developing the practices with the possibilities they have. Especially the way Department of Design is creating its Manifesto is a good example of involving all members of the community into development of the discipline.<sup>159</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

- The University and the Department of Design should focus on streamlining their committee structure, ensuring that tasks and responsibilities of the staff are clearly defined and connect discussions and decision-making better. (B)
- Find ways to ensure that students and (especially part-time) teachers are aware of their rights and responsibilities and support structures/services available for them. (I)

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with the Design Department Committee, Document 0\_8 Overview Committees DDE for the department of Design,

<sup>155</sup> Interview with the University Board, first visit

<sup>156</sup> interview with the Head of Design Department, second visit

<sup>157</sup> Interview with the Rector, first visit

<sup>158</sup> see Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.37)

<sup>159</sup> Interview with the Head of Design Department, second visit.

## 7. Internal Quality Culture

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

### **a) Quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place within the institution**

The University has a well-defined process for reviewing and measuring “the artistic quality, the quality of learning and teaching, the quality of research and institutional quality are the four thematic dimensions” along which ZHdK structures its QAE.<sup>160</sup> These are described and defined in a ‘Quality map’, a ‘List of Dimensions’, ‘Key processes’, ‘Instruments and ‘Responsibilities’<sup>161</sup>, as well as a list of ‘key performance indicators’.<sup>162</sup> The issue for the Review Team is the need for a systematic implementation of the policy and process. The external Institutional Review cycle is every 7 years, with internal reviews happening between them.

During the two visits and at meetings with key stakeholders the Review Team were informed of the relatively new (started in 2016) QAE processes<sup>163</sup> and procedure being put in place and the Team found inconsistencies in the internal QAE process across departments. Quality assurance is still commonly perceived as an external process and the enhancement value of the QAE process at ZHdK does not appear to have been fully realised. The Review Team believe the institution should make departments fully aware of what the Swiss National QAE process (Institution & Programme) involves in order to achieve its strategic ambitions. There is also a need for the Quality Office to develop and introduce instruments and processes for quality assurance, which includes producing clear guidelines and devolving responsibilities for QAE process. These include responsibilities for carrying out actions, responsibility of implementing actions, and for checking impact of changes implemented. The Review Team found the implementation of QE still seems disproportionately contingent on individual’s willingness to engage. While we acknowledge the increasing uptake of QE processes, tools and standards, these are yet to be fully embedded at department level.

There is a real need to get buy-in from staff, and students. QE tools and data (e.g. surveys) are increasingly more present, yet it is not always clear what needs to be done with this information and there is little action to ‘close the loop’. Students and staff complain that they provide feedback but receive little information as to actions/outcomes resulting from it.

The Review Team also observed a lack of awareness, tools and investment to further facilitate diversity literacy at ZHdK

### **Commendations**

- The ambition to improve alumni participation and collaboration in QE processes; **(B)**
- Inclusion in QE of stakeholders from the professions. **(B)**

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<sup>160</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_2) ZHdK Quality Assurance & Enhancement\_e (p.3)

<sup>161</sup> *ibid* (Figs. 1 & 2 pp.

<sup>162</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_5e) ZHdK Key Performance indicators

<sup>163</sup> see Annex Qualitätsstrategie 2016-2020

## **Recommendations**

- The University should invest more in increasing awareness of the need to develop a ‘*quality culture*’ and increase awareness in responsibilities to generate it; **(I)**
- Increase alignment and efficiency between the University Board, Quality Commission (QC) and the Quality Office (AQO), empowering the QC and AQO to be more instrumental in monitoring, developing and directing QAE across the departments. **(I)**

### **b) How often and by whom are the programmes being reviewed?**

External Programme Review is programmed every 7 years and in the interim Internal Programme Review is planned to be carried out to help prepare for the external event. *Heads of programmes reflect together with faculty, staff and students on the findings of various QAE processes and further develop programmes.*<sup>164</sup>

### **c) How and by whom are the quality assurance and enhancement procedures monitored and reviewed at both institutional and programme levels?**

#### Institution

Legal responsibility for QAE at ZHdK lies with the University Board<sup>165</sup>. The University Board defines the key QAE processes. By delegating the respective tasks, it assigns responsibility for QAE to the heads of the organisational units.

Implementation is supported, verified and documented by the Accreditation and Quality Development Office (AQO), under the direction of the Office of the President. Together with the Quality Commission, the AQO develops instruments and processes for QAE and supports executive staff in fulfilling their responsibility for QAE.

#### Programme

The Head of Department is responsible for carrying out the departmental QAE processes and when a new cycle starts, they are invited by e-mail to instruct their staff. When the Departmental Priorities Agreement (Doc 6\_5) between the President and the Head of each Department was systematically introduced, QAE processes became part of the agreements.

## **Recommendations**

- The Review Team supports the action that the Accreditation and Quality Development Office (AQO) plans to draw up an annual plan so the units can better plan their tasks. **(I)**

### **d) How do quality assurance and enhancement procedures inform/influence each other?**

The Quality Commission, through department representatives, is the forum where the departments/programmes discuss and share their experiences. This group were meeting monthly, but this year they have changed to meeting every two months. The representatives are responsible for

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<sup>164</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_2) ZHdK Quality Assurance & Enhancement\_e (p.5)

<sup>165</sup> ibid (p.2)

implementing the actions decided by the Commission within their respective Departments, but proposed changes to the programmes have to be ratified by the University Board.

### **Recommendations**

- The Quality Commission should introduce more formal procedures for the sharing of ‘best practice’ across the programmes/departments. **(I)**

### **e) Does the institution set clear benchmarks/metrics for programmes to measure their success?**

The University has a well-defined process for reviewing and measuring “the artistic quality, the quality of learning and teaching, the quality of research and institutional quality are the four thematic dimensions” along which ZHdK structures its QAE.<sup>166</sup> These are described and defined in a ‘Quality map’, a ‘List of Dimensions’, ‘Key processes’, ‘Instruments and ‘Responsibilities’<sup>167</sup>, as well as a list of ‘key performance indicators’<sup>168</sup>

Through the documentation received and the meetings held at both visits the Review Team observed, and the University acknowledged, that the majority of metrics are quantitative and there is a need to identify qualitative measures to evaluate the success of the teaching programmes at all levels.

The Review Team has not seen evidence of clear benchmarks set for the majority of the areas being assessed (e.g. learning and teaching, student failure, progression, completion, employment etc.), to define whether a programme is meeting the required University standards.

### **Recommendations**

- The University should define qualitative and quantitative metrics to be used for both, institutional and study programme quality reviews (seven yearly and annual) as well as develop the benchmarks/targets it wishes to set to measure the success or failure of the institution and their study programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. **(I)**

### **f) What happens to the programme if they do not achieve these measures?**

Although there are clearly defined processes and quality tools, the Review Team has yet to see evidence where the University has taken action to instruct and/or ‘enforce’ a department/programme to make adjustments/changes. Nor has the Team seen a formal response by a programme or a ‘signing off’ by the Academic Board, demonstrating the required achievement of the benchmarks.

### **Recommendations**

- The University to develop reporting processes demonstrating the monitoring and achievement of the standards. **(I)**

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<sup>166</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_3) ZHdK Quality Assurance & Enhancement\_e (p.3)

<sup>167</sup> *ibid* Figs. 1 & 2 (p.3)

<sup>168</sup> see Annex (Doc 1\_5e) ZHdK Key Performance indicators

**g) How are staff/students/alumni/representatives of the creative industries profession/quality assurance experts involved in the quality assurance and enhancement procedures and how is their feedback used to enhance the institution/programme?**

The Review Team through its meetings with the key stakeholders were informed that some had seen the Institutional SER, but they had not really been engaged in the writing process nor formally invited to contribute to the evaluation process. Some students had voluntarily participated in surveys, but it is hard for the Review Team to understand the impact of these questionnaires in the quality process. Similarly, alumni and employers expressed over the institutional review visits that none had been asked or contributed to the review process, but all were very positive and would like to contribute more.

Through the Review Teams meetings with Senior Management and reading key quality documents such as ZHdK Quality Strategy 2016-20<sup>169</sup>, it is clear the University has clear plans to engage more with all key stakeholders - *"Involve stakeholders more strongly in decision-making."*<sup>170</sup>

**Recommendations**

- The University should formalise the procedures that demonstrate how key stakeholders will contribute to the QA and enhancement process at institutional and programme levels; **(I)**

**h) How are these procedures used to inform decision-making?**

The Review Team believes the University is at such an early stage of implementing its quality strategy and is still in the process of evaluating the information gained through its quality tools that it is difficult to assess how the procedures and findings directly inform decision-making.

**i) How are staff and students informed of changes made?**

As previously stated staff and students both complain about the frustration of giving their opinions/ideas through meetings and surveys and not receiving any feedback or being made aware of any actions by the University as a result of their input.

**Recommendations**

- The *'closing of the loop'* through faster and better analysis of the surveys and *'quality tools'* to give feedback to the key stakeholders and demonstrate impact. **(I)**

**j) How are students and staff informed if their feedback has led to change?**

See above i)

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<sup>169</sup> see Annex (Doc 7\_2) ZHdK Quality Strategy 2016-20

<sup>170</sup> *ibid* 7.2 Perspectives (p.9)

**k) How would the overall quality culture within the programme be characterised (e.g. individual vs. collective – innovative vs. traditional – self-determined vs. system-controlled – managerial vs. professional)?**

As the University is at an early stage in embedding QAE into its structure the Review Team currently finds it difficult to answer this question but firmly believes that the ethos and process by which both the Institution and (very strongly by) the Design Department addressed this review process and the policies and processes being put in place, it will be an inclusive, top-down/bottom-up, innovative and professional quality culture.

**l) What external quality assurance activities take place and how does it affect internal quality assurance and enhancement policy?**

The *'Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the Higher Education Sector (HEdA Accreditation Ordinance)*<sup>171</sup> states that higher education institutions shall be admitted for institutional accreditation if they meet the following requirements:

- a. They respect the principles of freedom and the unity of teaching and research;
- b. They correspond to one of the following types of higher education institution:
  1. Tier-one university;
  2. University of applied sciences or university of teacher education;
- b. They meet, if applicable, the admission requirements for the first level of studies under Articles 23 25 and 73 HEdA. Universities of applied sciences shall also fulfil the regulations on the structure of studies under Article 26 HEdA;
- c. They have a quality assurance system in place (Art. 30 para. 1 let. a HEdA);
- d. They are compatible with the European Higher Education Area;
- e. They have infrastructure and staff in Switzerland for teaching, research and services appropriate to their type and profile;
- f. A cohort of its students has completed a study programme;
- g. They have the resources to continue their operations over the long-term (Art.30 para. 1 let. c HEdA) and have taken measures to ensure that their students can complete a study programme; and
- h. They are legal entities in Switzerland.

The *HEdA Accreditation Ordinance* states the quality standards for Institutional Accreditation<sup>172</sup> include:

- a) The higher education institution shall define its internal quality assurance strategy;
- b) At all levels, all representative groups of the higher education institution shall be involved in developing the quality assurance system and in its implementation,
- c) The quality assurance system shall ensure that the organisational structure and decision-making processes enable the higher education institution to fulfil its mission and to achieve its strategic objectives;
- d) The quality assurance system shall provide for a periodic evaluation of teaching and research activities, of services and of results achieved in these areas;
- e) The quality assurance system shall ensure that principles and objectives linked to the European Higher Education Area are taken into consideration;

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<sup>171</sup> see Annex (Doc. O\_10) *'Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the Higher Education Sector (HEdA Accreditation Ordinance)* May 2018

<sup>172</sup> *ibid* *Quality Standards for Institutional accreditation* (Annex 1 Art.22 pp.10-12)

- f) the higher education institution shall assure that its personnel resources, infrastructure and financial means allow for operating on a going concern basis and for achieving its strategic objectives;
- g) The higher education institution shall make public its quality assurance strategy and ensure that the provisions corresponding to quality assurance processes and their results are known to employees, students and if necessary external stakeholders.

Similarly the *HEdA Accreditation Ordinance* states the quality standards for Programme Accreditation<sup>173</sup> include:

- a) The study programme shall show clear objectives, clarifying its special features and complying with national and international requirements;
- b) The study programme shall pursue educational objectives corresponding to the mission and strategic planning of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector;
- c) The content of the study programme and the methods applied shall allow students to attain their learning objectives;
- d) The content of the study programme shall include academic knowledge and development of the professional field;
- e) The methods of assessing the performance of students shall be adapted to the learning objectives. The admission requirements and requirements for being awarded a qualification shall be regulated and published;
- f) The available resources (supervision and material resources) shall enable students to attain their learning objectives;
- g) The teaching staff shall have the competence appropriate to the special features of the study programme and its objectives;
- h) Managing the study programme shall take into consideration the interests of the relevant interest groups and allow for the necessary developments to be achieved;
- i) The study programme shall be an integral component of the quality assurance system of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector.

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<sup>173</sup> *ibid Quality Standards for Programme accreditation* (Annex 1 Art.22 p.13)

## 8. Public interaction

### 8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts

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

The Review Team finds ample evidence in both the University and Department of Design Self-Evaluation reports on extensive, high-quality interaction with public including educational collaboration (for example with upper-secondary schools), participating in collaboration projects, exhibitions and competitions, research cooperation with cultural institutions, providing for continuing education professionals and so forth.<sup>174</sup> The Self-Evaluation reports have been supported by annexes<sup>175</sup> provided for the Review Team and interviews with both external and internal stakeholders<sup>176</sup>. Moreover, the University has excellent connections with politicians involved in decision making influencing its future and participates actively in educational policymaking<sup>177</sup>

On the local level the University relies on the attractiveness of the Toni Campus as a powerhouse of cultural activities (with 600 events happening annually<sup>178</sup>) provided for by the different Departments, even to the extent of perhaps neglecting other forms of outreach, such as direct collaboration with local communities.<sup>179</sup> On the regional level, connections with diverse businesses and other universities appear to be solid. Nationally, the department of Design is part of the Swiss Design Network, and internationally, the University is member of a number of networks (ELIA, CUMULUS, CILECT, EUA among others) in addition to collaboration of with extensive network of partner schools.<sup>180</sup>

The University's website is informative, and student works are well presented, the printed materials are also of good and consistent quality.

The University and Department of Design offer their students good opportunities to prepare for life after graduation. During the studies, there are, for example excursions to companies at home and abroad, with students supported financially enabling everyone the possibility to participate.

Entrepreneur support units and Z-modules help to create interdisciplinary understanding and contacts, alumni present their own work, and a large part of the teacher body are professionals working on part time contracts with the University. After graduation, the University offers continuing education, Z-cubator and the alumni network for its graduates<sup>181</sup>. However, in the interviews with the recent graduates, it was apparent that not all participants were aware of the Alumni services available<sup>182</sup>.

Overall, the University is well connected with relevant external partners and the students, if they so choose, can be quite well prepared for their professional lives – here again the Review Team found there is unevenness between departments and programmes<sup>183</sup>. However, there appears to be some

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<sup>174</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (pp.46-47) and Annex (5) *Design DDE Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.41)

<sup>175</sup> see Annex (Doc 8.01) *Cultural, Artistic & Educational Contexts*

<sup>176</sup> Interviews with the external stakeholders during the first and second visits

<sup>177</sup> Interview with external stakeholders during the first visit

<sup>178</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.47)

<sup>179</sup> Interview with the external stakeholders during the first visit

<sup>180</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.46)

<sup>181</sup> Annex (5) *DDE Design Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (pp.13-14, and p.42)

<sup>182</sup> Interviews with the recent graduates during both visits.

<sup>183</sup> Interviews with students during both visits

communication problems with the outside world. For the Department of Design, they are very much engaged with communicating the changing nature of design, and design education – the Manifesto work should create internal clarity supporting the external communication on those issues. In both meetings with the external stakeholders, the opinion was that the University and Department of Design are better than their reputation.<sup>184</sup> It was acknowledged that it is largely due to the relatively young age of the University and, in the case of Department of Design, the changed and changing content of design education, and that it could be solved with time, and clarification of communication strategies and implementation plans as well as content of information shared.

## 8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions

### Standard: the institution actively promotes links with various sectors of other artistic professions

The University and the Department of Design have a very lively contact with the artistic professions. On the official side, there are for example the Academic Advisory Committee, Z-Cubator and netZHdK<sup>185</sup> on the more informal side are for example excursions, visits to trade fairs, guests, festivals and collaboration formats such as Kein Kino<sup>186</sup>. Furthermore, practicing professionals appear to be increasingly interested in the continuing education opportunities (albeit need for further development on course offer is acknowledged<sup>187</sup>). As Occupational Field Monitoring is still a very new activity of connecting with the professional field, its usefulness remains to be seen - an issue to be tackled there is how much the University provides for the existing needs of the professional field and to what extent it will create demand for new ideas.<sup>188</sup>

One of the most important ways of linking with the professional field, both for the University and the Department of Design, is the employment of practicing professionals as part-time teachers. As discussed elsewhere in this report, there are ways of supporting this practice, for example integrating part-time teachers better into the University community, supporting their pedagogical development and letting them bring their understanding and experience also to planning of education and course content, in order to ensure that there is a flow of ideas in both directions.

Overall, the Review Team found many good examples of collaboration between the University and the Department of Design and various external stakeholders, for example the IKEA collaboration, the Art Directors Club and the Morocco project<sup>189</sup>. In general, the collaborations appear to be mutually beneficial and there is the will on the University side to further develop their interactions with the external stakeholders. However, there seems to be an inadequate IP framework for guiding interactions with external partners<sup>190</sup> – this hampers especially research and development projects with other universities and companies, and building one should be prioritised.

### Commendations

- The Review Team found many good examples of collaboration between the University and the Department of Design with various external stakeholders. In general, the collaborations appear to be mutually beneficial and there is the will on the University side to further develop their interactions with the external stakeholders. **(B)**

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<sup>184</sup> Interviews with the external stakeholders during both visits

<sup>185</sup> see Annex (4) *ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER)* (p.49)

<sup>186</sup> see Annex (5) *Design DDE Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER)* (p.42)

<sup>187</sup> *ibid* (p.43)

<sup>188</sup> *ibid* (p.43)

<sup>189</sup> interview with external stakeholders second visit

<sup>190</sup> interview with the research people second Visit

### 8.3 Information provided to the public

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

The main tools for communicating with the general audience are the University website, supported by social media, printed materials and events organised on the Toni Campus. The overall responsibility of external communications is with the President's Office, including marketing and events communication. The Department of Design has a designated communications officer from the University Communications, and the mid-tier staff are responsible for communication of their specific area – they form the communications group led by the Communications Officer.<sup>191</sup> The information published goes through the President and the Media Office and there has to be consensus on publishing the information, decisions are made ad hoc, as there is no ethics handbook or other relevant regulations<sup>192</sup>.

On the departmental level, there appears to be problems in division of labour, defining content to be communicated and channels used. This is acknowledged to be at least partially due to lack of shared understanding of the existing communication strategy, but also lack of communication awareness. There is also a concern that the information communicated does not reflect correctly the strength and special qualities of the institution. Both the internal and external communication issues require development of a robust communication strategy and implementation plan, including clear division of labour with instruction available for those responsible (for example the mid-tier staff, who have explicit communication requirements).<sup>193</sup>

Another issue worth consideration is what is expected from the Toni Campus as a way of interacting with the public, and whether there is too much reliance in it as an outreach tool – both the external stakeholder groups the Review Team met expressed their concern with the lack of more direct interaction with especially the local communities<sup>194</sup>. This is not to suggest it should not be considered an important asset, but that there should be more attention paid to collaborations with the public with information moving to both directions.

The language question is a special issue, and as the Review Team again acknowledges, not one the University can solve on its own, but in order to support the institution's internationalisation vision, there needs to be at least a partial solution to present a compelling vision of the University to the international partners and prospective students.

#### **Recommendations**

- Creating an overarching communication strategy and implementation plan should be prioritised – for more detailed discussion on this section 6.1. Internal Communication Process (p.41) It should also contain processes to ensure the accuracy of information and ethicality of the information communicated. **(I)**

Despite the lack of a transparent process and documentation ensuring the accuracy and ethicality of communications and lack of institutional communications strategy and implementation plan causing confusion especially on the Departmental level, the Review Team considers the institution to be

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<sup>191</sup> see Annex (4) ZHdK Institutional Self-Evaluation Review Report (SER) (p.50)

<sup>192</sup> interview with the President first visit

<sup>193</sup> see Annex (5) Design DDE Department Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (p.44) and Interviews with the external stakeholders during both visits.

<sup>194</sup> Interviews with the external stakeholders

substantially in compliance with the standard *information provided to the public about the institution is clear, consistent and accurate.*

## 9. Summary of the Institutes compliance with EQ-Arts Standards

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

<i>Standard 5.3</i> The institution has sufficient qualified support staff.	F	F	
<i>Standard 6.1</i> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the institution.	P	P	
<i>Standard 6.2</i> The institution is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	S	S	
<i>Standard 7</i> The institution has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	P	P	
<i>Standard 8.1</i> The institution engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	F	F	
<i>Standard 8.2</i> The institution actively promotes links with various sectors of the other artistic professions.	F	F	
<i>Standard 8.3</i> Information provided to the public about the institution is clear, consistent and accurate.	S	S	

**\* Standard(s) that could carry conditions in a formal accreditation assessment.**

## 10. Summary of commendations and recommendations

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

***In a formal accreditation assessment some of the recommendations could be registered as conditions for the University. Those marked with an \* are indicative of which recommendations would be conditional on the institution achieving accreditation.***

### Commendations

#### Standard 1

- The ZHdK approach to the self-evaluation process<sup>195</sup>, which includes the Peer Review Framework Concept with: the concept and mandate; self-evaluation; peer review; discussion of results and implementation phases; **(I)**
- The rigor, quality and clarity put into the preparation, translation and presentation of the documentation (*'Description, Reflection & Perspectives'*) produced for the Review Team, both in the SER and the Annexes; **(B)**
- On the rigour of the self-evaluation process, which has led to such an ambitious set of aims, all of which the Review Team fully supports with a reservation about a). **(I)**
- Providing research units with core funding and seed funding for strategically relevant research projects and new researchers. **(I)**
- The Review Team fully supports and endorses the University's priorities. **(I)**
- The development of a clear, comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement policy and strategy, well supported by the AQO office. **(I)**
- The clarity and ambition of the Design Department's objectives, values and its alignment to the University's mission; **(D)**
- Design focused on technical innovation, social transformation and economic change, addressed in an analogue-digital, interactive and interdisciplinary manner. **(D)**
- DDE strives to play a leading part in shaping the role of Design within a changing digital world **(D)**
- The ambition of the Head of DDE for formulating a *'Manifesto of Design'* to help galvanise and guide the department through important changes (major/minor, 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, entrepreneurship, knowledge-transfer) **(D)**

#### Standard 2

- On the whole, and across the institution, the Review Team encountered a commendable atmosphere of respectful, interaction between teachers and learners. **(B)**
- The Review team saw evidence of a strong culture of informal communication, feedback, exchange, and collaboration between various institutional stakeholders. **(B)**
- There appears to be, across the University, a commendable willingness to critically examine institutional structures, processes and practices in order to continue to improve (PDCA Cycle). **(B)**
- The Review Team found, across the University, evidence of a clear process for programme approval, and re-approval. **(I)**
- The Review Team found some encouraging examples of good practice at programme level, such as mentoring, and flexible study paths (Theatre, MA Trans, Fine Art) **(B)**

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<sup>195</sup> see Annex (Doc. 0\_2) *Production of the SER*

- The Review Team found commendable clarity and ambition of the Design Department's objectives, values, and their alignment to ZHdK's mission.
- In the majority of DDE specialisations, students appear to be engaged well in the development of the curriculum, and teaching and learning strategy. **(D)**
- The DDE programme offers unique studies, and seems to follow the department's mission/vision of technology-centred and interdisciplinary design education. The balance of freedom and strict structure within modules appears to work well. **(D)**
- Commendable ambition across the university towards greater internationalisation. **(I)**
- Commendable exchange programmes, visits, international guests, and co-operations. **(I)**
- Commendable level of grants, and financial support available to enable student visits, collaborations, and exchange semesters. **(I)**

### **Standard 3**

- from feedback received, and the documentation provided to panel, students appear to be largely satisfied with the admissions process, and felt the documentation reflected the subsequent programmes of study **(B)**
- commendable focus on entrepreneurship in preparation of students for professional life departments **(D)**
- some of the competences measured during the admissions process for programmes within the design department might be applied to other (presentation skills, collaborative talent) departments **(D)**
- examples of good practice at departmental level in terms of preparing students for professional life (Z-Cubator) **(B)**
- examples of synergetic collaborations with industry that create subsequent employment opportunities **(D)**
- graduate survey shows that graduates are largely successful in finding employment in their practice **(D)**

### **Standard 4**

- The University staff engagement with the professions is commendable, and a large proportion of teaching staff seems well embedded within current professional practice. **(B)**
- The Review Team commends the University on the range of staff development opportunities available but recommends this should not just be left to staff to initiate. **(I)**
- The Review Team fully supports the mandatory nature of research as part of the new professorships to be implemented. **(I)**
- A number of PhD candidates employed as junior teaching staff is commendable and is likely to contribute to a further interrelation between research and teaching. **(I)**
- The Review Team commends the University on a very healthy teacher/student ratio. **(B)**
- The Review Team commends the University on the quality of its mid-tier staff and research assistants. **(B)**

### **Standard 5**

- The Review Team commends ZHdK for the exceptionally high quality of the resources on offer (library, workshops, studios etc.), as well as the high standard of equipment, tools, and machinery. The exceptional infrastructure for design students (library, material archive, equipment in workshops) should be commended for the range and quality of materials. **(B)**
- DDE is commended on its use of state-of-the-art collaborative tools. **(D)**

- The Review Team commends the University on its good forward visibility, solid long-term financial planning and security in terms of funding (*'Planungssicherheit'*), as well as its sound financial management and adequate reserves. **(I)**
- The Review Team commends ZHdK on its transparent financial planning processes in regard to departmental budgets. **(I)**
- The University has a commendable degree of flexibility of spending cost within departments. **(I)**
- The University has a commendable support for students participating in exchanges, field trips and excursions. **(I)**
- The Review Team commends the University on the quality and commitment of its support staff, including mid-tier/assistants, technicians and other administrative staff. **(B)**

#### **Standard 6**

#### **Standard 7**

- The ambition to improve alumni participation and collaboration in QE processes; **(B)**
- Inclusion in QE of stakeholders from the professions. **(B)**

#### **Standard 8**

- The Review Team found many good examples of collaboration between the University and the Department of Design with various external stakeholders. In general, the collaborations appear to be mutually beneficial and there is the will on the University side to further develop their interactions with the external stakeholders. **(B)**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Standard 1**

- A need for the University to develop clearer strategy and guidelines for the implementation and alignment of such a broad set of ambitious *Mission* aims, in relationship to *'3<sup>rd</sup> cycle PhD level'*, *'internationalisation'*, *'flexibility of programmes linked to major & minor pathways'*, *'student centred learning'*, *'alignment of outcomes-based learning with assessment'*, *'embedding of new quality processes and the development of a quality culture'*, *'interdisciplinarity'*, *'moving from 90 to 120 credit MAs'*, *'language issues'* etc. Maybe there is a need to prioritise these aims in order to better manage the workload? **(I)**
- A need to articulate more clearly the value added of the *Toni-Areal Campus* as a unified site housing all 5 departments - more than the sum of its parts. **(I)**
- A need to address possible conflicting aims/goals such as autonomy v standardisation, internationalisation v focus on German language etc. **(I)**
- A need for the University to develop clearer strategy and guidelines for the implementation and alignment of such a broad set of ambitious *Mission* aims and the Review Team reiterates the probable need to prioritise these aims in order to better manage the workload and reflect on the impact? **(I)**
- The University should carryout a full analysis and an in-depth dialogue with all key stakeholders on the demand, appropriateness and impact of introducing an institutional major/minor structure to academic programmes to see if it is the most appropriate model to achieve its goals? **(I)**
- The University has to more clearly define what their understanding is of *'student-centred learning'*, and how it practices it, and ensure this is clearly communicated and understood by all the key stakeholders; **(I)**

- To achieve the HEa Act 2011 Article 3 Objectives<sup>196</sup>: “a.) conditions that favour high-quality teaching and re- search; c.) to raise the profile of higher education institutions and encourage competition, particularly with regards to research; d.) the federal policy to encourage research and innovation; f.) creating uniform study structures, study levels and transitions and ensuring mutual recognition of qualifications;” the Review Team firmly believe it is imperative that the University is able to carry-out and award independent 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle Doctoral degrees that can involve practice-based research, utilising appropriate arts-based research methodologies and engaging their own staff as supervisors. This is necessary for ZHdK to be recognized as a leading international higher arts education institution on a level with the best in Europe and globally. **(I)**
- Similarly to be equivalent to European Standards the Design Masters’ programme at ZHdK needs to be awarded with 120 ECTS. **(I)**
- There is a need for a greater level of investment in, and promotion of, ‘equal opportunities’ across the University. **(I)**
- ZHdK revisits its key performance indicators to balance the preponderance of quantitative with more qualitative indicators. **(I)**
- The need for the University Board to make more QAE strategic decisions and give the AQO greater responsibility and power to develop the implementation of the QAE policy and ensure the standards of the academic programmes; **(I)**
- The ‘closing of the loop’ through faster and better analysis of the surveys and ‘quality tools’ to give feedback to the key stakeholders and demonstrate impact. **(I)**
- Improve the alignment of instruments and processes **(I)**
- Involve internal and external stakeholders more strongly in decision-making **(I)**
- The impact on the Design Department waiting for internal and external validation of structural changes delaying the University and the Design Department in:
  - presenting a clear vision, mission and strategy statement
  - defining more clearly a ‘Zurich Model’
  - digital strategy
  - research **(D)**

## Standard 2

- The balance at ZHdK between healthy heterogeneity on the one hand, and the need for standardisation on the other, needs to shift in order to deliver greater consistency, and a stronger, more unified quality discourse in teaching and learning across the institution. **(B)**
- Informal communication processes that are largely contingent on the ability, and good faith of individual stakeholders should not, and cannot replace more formalised mechanisms and fora. **(B)**
- ZHdK needs to mandate suitable fora, processes and standards for sharing good practice in teaching and learning across programme-, specialisation- or departmental boundaries. **(B)**
- There is a greater need at ZHdK for cross-departmental teaching on collaborative projects, and an increase in scope of cross-disciplinary opportunities. At the same time, review panel recommends a careful impact assessment of the proposed major/minor system before a decision is taken to implement. **(B)**
- In the light of the strategic ambition for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, we recommend that research becomes more fully embedded at all levels of study, across all programmes and departments. **(B)**
- The University needs to address inconsistencies across programmes and departments in the teaching of research methodologies. **(B)**
- In order for ZHdK to fulfil its institutional ambitions vis-a-vis its international peers, the Review Team recommends that political stakeholders apply a greater sense of urgency to resolve the University’s statutory restriction of offering 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle programmes. **(I)**

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<sup>196</sup> see Annex (Doc 0\_8) HEdAe (p.2)

- In order to avoid jeopardising much needed consistency of teaching and learning practices, particularly amongst teaching staff on low work-loads, the Review Team recommends that the proposed reform of the staff directive (Personalverordnung) is examined very carefully in terms of its likely impact, and possible concerns fed-back to Cantonal legislative bodies. **(I)**
- We recommend that e-learning should continue to be developed and deployed further in order to help facilitate evolving teaching and learning practice in the context of ZHdK's digital strategy. **(I)**
- Commendable ambition across the university towards greater internationalisation. **(I)**
- Commendable exchange programmes, visits, international guests, and co-operations. **(I)**
- Commendable level of grants, and financial support available to enable student visits, collaborations, and exchange semesters. **(I)**
- ZHdK needs to increase its efforts to promote greater diversity literacy (SER p.17) amongst staff, students and faculty. **(B)**
- Inconsistencies regarding the allocation of ECTS in exchange semesters need to be addressed. **(B)**
- Considerable inconsistencies of assessment practice across departments, and programmes at ZHdK need to be addressed. **(B)**
- The application and use of learning outcomes, and the alignment of assessment criteria to learning outcomes at programme level is inconsistent, and needs further standardisation. **(B)**
- The provision, at programme level, of timely student feedback after assessments is inconsistent, and needs to be improved. **(B)**
- Across the institution, assessment practices should be less contingent on individuals, and instead, to a greater extent, on unified standards. **(B)**

### **Standard 3**

- further develop the strategy to address the composition of the student body in terms of social characteristics (e.g. origin, educational or immigrant background) to reflect the composition of the Swiss population **(B)**
- a clear language strategy and requirements **(I)**
- eradicate inconsistencies experienced by international students in terms of language requirements stated during the admissions process, and the subsequent reality at programme level **(I)**
- Heads of Programmes are ultimately responsible for a large range of duties including: the recognition of prior learning; the required number of credits that must be earned in one programme stage to be eligible to progress to the next stage; professional practice guidance and graduate tracking. How does ZHdK ensure consistency of practice across the Departments? **(I)**
- resolve conflicting policies regarding the allocation of ECTS for exchange semesters **(I)**
- a more consistent practice for student guidance in entering the professional sector **(B)**
- students need more support structures concerning their general well-being and extra-curricular issues **(I)**
- the enhancement of students' professional skills needs to be addressed at curricular level **(B)**
- areas of good practice at departmental level in terms of preparing students for professional life not consistently applied across all programmes **(I)**
- learning outcomes and assessment criteria of individual modules don't always align with the overall programme learning outcomes **(B)**
- mixed feedback in terms of students' ability to monitor and track their progress clearly **(B)**
- better sign-posting and referral to guide students to appropriate support mechanisms at ZHdK **(I)**

### **Standard 4**

- The Review Team recommends a more systematic directive (mandatory) for teacher qualification, both for newly appointed staff as well as more experienced teachers. The Team commends that it is

mandatory for teaching staff to have a teaching qualification, but that this is followed through in practice. Here, an opportunity could be seen in exploring the use of expertise in the Art Education department. **(B)**

- The current staff development processes don't appear to align sufficiently to the appraisal processes. Career perspectives of teaching staff are not sufficiently clear, and more effective use could be made of the annual and biannual performance reviews. This applies particularly to mid-tier staff, who often do not see a viable career path within the University. **(B)**
- The Review Team recommends that the University fully invests in the development of mid-tier staff. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned with the teaching staff not being sufficiently engaged in research practice. The University needs to develop a clear position on and concept of research at both institutional as well as departmental levels. **(B)**
- The University will need to enhance the cantonal policy of only offering sabbatical leave after 8-10 years of service only. This seems counterproductive to achieving the commendable ambition of establishing 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle programmes or a successfully embedded research culture within the institution. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned about the high percentage of fractional teaching and its impact on developments in learning & teaching, teacher qualification and administration. The Team also expresses its concerns with the impact this has on their integration into the University, especially in regard to implementation of new Institutional Strategy 2019-2023, as well as the Quality Strategy 2016-2020. **(B)**

#### **Standard 5**

- The Review Team expresses its concern with availability and accessibility to rooms (exacerbated by the badge system) and timetabling, especially with the proposed introduction of major and minor programme pathways. **(B)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern about the lack of adequate physical space for researchers at DDE. **(D)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern over the inconsistent use of VLE platforms to support student learning, including an overabundance of information flow through email. E-learning needs to be implemented with a clear strategy and with staff support. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned that political factors could adversely affect long-term funding due to the financing system. **(B)**
- The Review Team is concerned about the dependence on third party funding for research, and the change of eligibility of funding from SNF to go towards covering 30% of the cost. **(B)**
- The Review Team expresses its concern about strategic areas at ZHdK that appear to be in need of more funding to help deliver the strategic ambitions, such as Digital Transformation and Communication, and other tasks by the Digital Council. **(B)**
- The Review Team recommends stronger encouragement and guidance for ATS to make better use of the training opportunities (in-house courses) offered at the University. **(B)**
- The Review Team recommends staff appraisals be better embedded in staff development. **(D)**

#### **Standard 6**

- Both the University and the Department should start with developing their respective communication strategies and implementation plans immediately to better recognise and respond to different informational needs and choosing relevant media for communicating for each need. Investment in new technologies should be secondary to strategy work in the initial stage of the development work. **(B)**

- The University and the Department already have bodies (Digital Council, VERSO), Subject Areas (for example the Interaction Design) and individuals (communication specialists, who are interested and/or knowledgeable in communication issues and they should be involved in communication strategy development work. Similarly, all shareholders should have their say in the process. **(B)**
- Special focus should be on developing and designing information targeted at students. In addition to academic information, it should also cover for example well-being issues. **(B)**
- Not all forms of communication need to be digitised, for example, the physical proximity of different departments and programmes on the Toni Campus should be used even more efficiently for creating (informal) fora for exchanging best practices and encouraging people to get to know what the other programmes and departments are doing. **(I)**
- The student representatives and the Student Council VERSO could be more visible to the student body. **(I)**
- The University and the Department of Design should focus on streamlining their committee structure, ensuring that tasks and responsibilities of the staff are clearly defined and connect discussions and decision-making better. **(B)**
- Find ways to ensure that students and (especially part-time) teachers are aware of their rights and responsibilities and support structures/services available for them. **(I)**

#### **Standard 7**

- The University should invest more in increasing awareness of the need to develop a *'quality culture'* and increase awareness in responsibilities to generate it; **(I)**
- Increase alignment and efficiency between the University Board, Quality Commission (QC) and the Quality Office (AQO), empowering the QC and AQO to be more instrumental in monitoring, developing and directing QAE across the departments. **(I)**
- The Review Team supports the action that the Accreditation and Quality Development Office (AQO) plans to draw up an annual plan so the units can better plan their tasks. **(I)**
- The Quality Commission should introduce more formal procedures for the sharing of *'best practice'* across the programmes/departments. **(I)**
- The University should define qualitative and quantitative metrics to be used for both, institutional and study programme quality reviews (seven yearly and annual) as well as develop the benchmarks/targets it wishes to set to measure the success or failure of the institution and their study programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. **(I)**
- The University to develop reporting processes demonstrating the monitoring and achievement of the standards. **(I)**
- The University should formalise the procedures that demonstrate how key stakeholders will contribute to the QA and enhancement process at institutional and programme levels; **(I)**
- The *'closing of the loop'* through faster and better analysis of the surveys and *'quality tools'* to give feedback to the key stakeholders and demonstrate impact. **(I)**

#### **Standard 8**

- Creating an overarching communication strategy and implementation plan should be prioritised – for more detailed discussion on this section 6.1. Internal Communication Process (p.41) It should also contain processes to ensure the accuracy of information and ethicality of the information communicated. **(I)**

## 11. Conclusion

The Review Team believes ZHdK is a high quality institution in a period of major transition to become an internationally leading arts academy. It is a well-led University with a very loyal and supportive team of staff and students.

The Review Team fully acknowledges the rigour and approach to the self-evaluation process, utilising the basic guiding principles of: the iterative four-phase process for improvement (PDCA cycle) and the principle of “*radical candour*,” in which the University has carried out this process. The Review Team commends the University’s approach, which includes the ‘Peer Review Framework’, Concept<sup>1</sup> with: the concept and mandate; self-evaluation; peer review; discussion of results and implementation phases. The Review Team also commends the rigor, quality and clarity put into the preparation, translation and presentation of the documentation (*Description, Reflection & Perspectives*) produced, both in the SER and the Annexes. This comprehensive range of documents is amongst the best that EQ-Arts has ever received and greatly supports the Review Team in carrying out this process.

The Review Team would like to express its gratitude to the Rector, his colleagues and students for the professional manner in which the review was carried out and the positive and constructive attitude of all parties to this enhancement process. We would also like to give special thanks to Michèle Graf, Alice Schwab and Teuta Telaku for the excellent organisation of the site-visits and for the generous support given to the Review Team.

## Annex 1 – List of supporting documents

### University

#### **Annex 0.**

Annex 0\_1 Peer Review Framework Concept

Annex 0\_2 Production of the SER

Annex 0\_3 Strategy Process + Strategic Plan 2019-23 (Jan.19)

Annex 0\_4 Organisational Chart

Annex 0\_5 Educational Programmes

Annex 0\_6 Research

Annex 0\_7 The Swiss Higher Education System

Annex 0\_8 Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector

Annex 0\_9 Cantonal Act FaHG

Annex 0\_10 Ordinance of the Higher Education Council on Accreditation within the HE Sector

#### **Annex 1.**

Annex 1\_1 Mission Statement

Annex 1\_2 Leadership Principles

Annex 1\_3 Strategic Plan 2014-18

Annex 1\_4 Equal Opportunities & Diversity

Annex 1\_5 Performance Indicators

#### **Annex 2.**

Annex 2\_1 General Regulations for Studying at ZHdK

Annex 2\_2 Programme Design. Approval & Re-approval

Annex 2\_3 Degree Programme Regulations – BA at ZHdK

Annex 2\_4 Curricular Concept BA in Arts in Design

Annex 2\_5 University-wide Modules

Annex 2\_6 Research Competency Development Impact Analysis

Annex 2\_7 International Affairs

Annex 2\_8 International Impact Analysis

Annex 2\_9 Examples of Diploma, Diploma Supplement & Transcript of Records

Annex 2\_10 Appeals

#### **Annex 3.**

Annex 3\_1 Admission Requirements

Annex 3\_2 Tuition Fees

Annex 3\_3 Key Figures - Students

Annex 3\_4 Career Guidance

#### **Annex 4.**

Annex 4\_1 Staff Appointment Procedures

Annex 4\_2 Performance Reviews

Annex 4\_3 Professional Development

Annex 4\_4 Professorship Award Regulations

Annex 4\_5 Talent Promotion

Annex 4\_6 Key Figures – Staff

**Annex 5**

Annex 5\_1 Toni Campus + Floor Plan (Jan.19)  
Annex 5\_2 Media & Information Centre  
Annex 5\_3 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)  
Annex 5\_4 Finance  
Annex 5\_5 Performance Agreement  
Annex 5\_6 Annual Report 2017

**Annex 6**

Annex 6\_1 Communication  
Annex 6\_2 General Regulations  
Annex 6\_3 Bodies, committees & Responsibilities  
Annex 6\_4 Examples of University Board Minutes  
Annex 6\_5 Departmental Priorities Agreement  
Annex 6\_6 Departmental Regulations  
Annex 6\_7 Rules & Procedures  
Annex 6\_8 Participation

**Annex 7**

Annex 7\_1 Quality Strategy 2016-20  
Annex 7\_2 Quality, Assurance & Enhancement  
Annex 7\_3 Student Survey 2018  
Annex 7\_4 Graduate Survey  
Annex 7\_5 Occupational Field Monitoring  
Annex 7\_6 Staff Survey 2016

**Annex 8**

Annex 8\_1 Continuing Education  
Annex 8\_2 Sustainability  
Annex 8\_3 Academic Advisory Committee  
Annex 8\_4 Code of Conduct for Research

**Design Department****Annex 0**

Annex 0\_2 Production of the SER  
Annex 0\_3 Catalogue of Needs  
Annex 0\_4 Subject Areas: Short Description  
Annex 0\_5 Organisational Chart  
Annex 0\_6 Departmental Regulations  
Annex 0\_8 Overview Committees

**Annex 1**

Annex 1\_1 Degree Programme Regulations (IR 2\_3)  
Annex 1\_2 Curricular Concept BA & MA  
Annex 1\_3 Programme Approval (IR 2\_2)  
Annex 1\_4 Equal Opportunities  
Annex 1\_5 Zurich Model 'Hochparterre'

Annex 1\_6 Graduate Survey

## **Annex 2**

Annex 2\_1.1 Design Course Handbook & Syllabi

Annex 2\_1.2 Design Student Internal & External Presentation, Performance & Exhibition Opportunities

Annex 2\_1.3 Student Contribution to Consultation on Learning, Teaching & Assessment strategies

Annex 2\_1.4 Structure for Academic, Career and Personal Guidance

Annex 2\_1.5 University-wide Modules (IR 2\_5)

Annex 2\_2.1 International Perspectives, Curriculum Activities

Annex 2\_2.2 International Affairs (IR 2\_7)

Annex 2\_2.3 Key Figures: Students (IR 3\_3)

Annex 2\_2.4 International Impact Analysis (IR 2\_8)

Annex 2\_3 Assessment

Annex 2\_8 International Impact Analysis Summary (Jan.19)

Annex 2\_9 Assessment Reports (Jan.19)

## **Annex 3**

Annex 3\_1.1 Admission Entrance Qualifications

Annex 3\_1.2 Design Admission Requirements

Annex 3\_1.5 Analysis Admission Criteria

Annex 3\_2.1 Design Student Progression, achievement & employability

Annex 3\_2.4 BA Design Self-evaluation Slides

## **Annex 4**

Annex 4\_ Staff Qualifications & Professional Activity

Annex 4\_1 Staff Appointment Procedures

Annex 4\_2 Faculty Staff Performance Review Statistics (Jan.19)

Annex 4\_6 Key Figures: Staff

## **Annex 5**

Annex 5\_1 Facilities

Annex 5\_2.1 Financial Resources

Annex 5\_3 Support Staff

Annex 5\_3.3 ATP Profile

Annex 5\_3.5 Organisational Chart

Annex 5\_3.6 Performance Reviews (IR 4\_2)

## **Annex 6**

Annex 6\_1.1 Internal Communication Process

Annex 6\_1.3 Design Newsletter

Annex 6\_1.4 Examples Design Postmaster

Annex 6\_1.5 ZHdK Annual Report 2017

Annex 6\_2 Organisational Structure & Decision-making Processes

Annex 6\_8 Student Council Participation in, and Impact on Decision-making (Jan.19)

## **Annex 7**

Annex 7\_1 Internal Quality Culture

Annex 7\_2 Quality Strategy 2016-20 (IR 7\_1)

Annex 7\_3 Quality Assurance & Enhancement (IR 7\_2)

Annex 7\_4 Student Survey (IR 7\_3) + Salient Points (7\_3 Jan.19)

Annex 7\_5 Staff Survey 2016 (IR 7\_6)

Annex 7\_6 Student Masters' Survey Questionnaire  
Annex 7\_7 Graduate Survey + Salient Points (7\_4 Jan.19)  
Annex 7\_8 QAE Agreements (Jan.19)

**Annex 8**

Annex 8\_1 Cultural, Artistic & Educational Contexts  
Annex 8\_2 Interaction with the Artistic Professions  
Annex 8\_5 Engagement with the Creative Industries (Jan.19)  
Annex 8\_6 Intellectual Property (Jan.19)

**Annex 9**

Annex 9\_ Research  
Annex 9\_1 Summary of the IDE Research Report  
Annex 9\_2 Summary of the Evaluation of the ZHdK Research Institutes  
Annex 9\_3 IDE Governance  
Annex 9\_4 Annual Research Reports 2015-17  
Annex 9\_5 Summary of the R&D Self-evaluation Report 2018  
Annex 9\_6 Strategic Set-up and Research Funding IDE