



Quality Enhancement Review Report

Programme review

Brno University of Technology

Faculty of Fine Arts



21 – 23 October 2019

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Context of the review

The EQArts review of the Faculty of Fine Art (FFA) Brno University of Technology (BUT) was carried out in terms of an enhancement review (critical friend) approach as the current programmes are accredited until the end of 2024.

The accreditation process is specified in the Higher Education Act. The FFA has two accreditation options. The first is to apply for accreditation of its study programmes directly from the National Accreditation Office (NAU); the programmes are currently accredited under this system, or after the inclusion of Art Education in the institutional accreditation granted by BUT, to apply for accreditation directly within the University.

Both paths require the creation of a self-assessment report (SER). In the first case, direct accreditation, this serves primarily for the preparation of the accreditation file, in the second case it serves as part of the application documentation for the extension of BUT's accreditation to include the field of Fine Arts.

The Faculty leadership are currently in the process of deciding whether to apply under the auspices of the extension of the national accreditation that BUT obtained this year. The enhancement review forms part of that decision making process. The review focused on the following areas; *What is the Faculty trying to achieve, how does it know it is working, what are the QA policies and procedures in place and what does the Faculty need to do to improve its programmes and provision.*

Data on the institution/programme

The Faculty of Fine Arts (FFA) is part of the Brno University of Technology (BUT). The local artistic circles in Moravia had striven to establish an Academy of Arts since the beginning of the 18th century. The FFA started operations on January 1, 1993. The connection of the Faculty of Fine Arts with a major technical University creates very specific prerequisites for the further development of its curriculum. This also plays a part in shaping the structure of the disciplines. There are disciplines that, using the latest technologies, aim to connect art with technology. In a summary of the fields of free art, applied arts and current tendencies, the FFA covers the entire spectrum of contemporary fine art, to which the teaching provided by the Department of Art History and Theory also contributes.

The FFA's mission

As stated in the SER (page 3);

“The main mission of the FFA is education in the field of visual arts and design. As part of the University, and in accordance with its mission, the Faculty ranks among the country's top centres of education, independent knowledge and creative activity, and plays an important role in the artistic, research, cultural, social and economic development of society, by enabling access to higher education while respecting democratic principles, preparing for creative work, and obtaining appropriate professional qualifications, at all levels of University education. It also preserves and expands human knowledge, and performs artistic research, development, innovation, and other creative activities.

As part of the University, the FFA is part of a higher educational institution (HEI) that develops the artistic talents of its students and links art education and artistic practice with artistic research as a unique way of exploring the world and cultivating society. It does so

through the creative work of its teachers, staff, and students, who are active in the arts and/or research sectors.

The aim of the FFA is to educate independent-minded artistic professionals who will determine the form of Czech, European and world's visual art and design in a wide range of activities ranging from working in professional institutions to creativity manifested in the spirit of fine art practice across artistic expressions, media, and genres.

The FFA also provides other forms of education and enables the acquisition, expansion, deepening and renewal of understanding from various areas of knowledge and culture, thus contributing to lifelong learning, and the development of a knowledge-based society. It also plays an active role in generating public debate on social and ethical issues, in fostering cultural diversity and mutual understanding, in shaping free civil society, and in preparing young people for life in such a society. It also develops international and, in particular, European cooperation as an essential dimension of its activities, supporting joint projects with similar institutions abroad, the mutual recognition of studies and diplomas, and the exchange of students, Faculty, and technical staff.

According to the currently valid decree on granting accreditation,¹ the FFA provides education, in the 'Fine Arts' study programme, in all three stages of tertiary education as the main educational activity. The bachelor's and subsequent master's degree programmes are accredited in three fields of study – Design, Fine Arts, and Intermedia & Digital Arts. The core curriculum and the creative activities associated with it are organised into studios. The evaluated field of study (module)² – 'Intermedia and Digital Art' comprises seven studios (specialisations) which work with the legacy of artistic trends emergent in the 1960s, in which hitherto marginal tendencies such as intermediality, the process-and-action character of art, the local specificity of art, de-skilling, dematerialisation and the conception of a work of art as a semantic proposition, all entered the mainstream of contemporary art.

These strategies are complemented by adherence to visual culture in its broadest manifestations and artistic strategies related to it which find themselves in a dynamic dialogue with generating 'non-artistic' images. The focus of the disciplines and the studios also takes into account the links to typical phenomena of the Brno region, which differ from other art centres in the Czech context. This especially includes a strong tradition in the fields of abstract and conceptual art that continues to develop dematerialised formats of artistic production in the modern era, and is also based on the geographical proximity and historical cultural and artistic influence of Vienna (also partly as a counterweight to Prague). After the revolutionary changes in the 1990s, these tendencies continued to develop in relation to the current trends in the field of the so-called new media, and the use of state-of-art digital technologies in art. The curriculum and focus of the Faculty at the time of its establishment was thus very well integrated into the study programme portfolio of the University of Technology, and firmly anchored in Central Europe. Among other things, it has enabled further interconnection with major commercial activities operating in Brno, and more generally in the South Moravian Region”

¹ <https://www.favu.vut.cz/fakulta/informacni-tabule/akreditace>

² The term would correspond to “module” or “pathway” in the British educational system.

* <https://www.vutbr.cz/en/board>

The Review Process

The Enhancement Review followed a three stage process;

1. FFA produced a self-evaluation report (SER) with supporting annexes.
2. An international Review Team (RT) studied the SER and additional material including that provided by the Faculty and also material available on the FFA website.
3. A site visit was then conducted between October 21 – 23rd 2019.

During the site visit the Review Team had meetings with senior staff (the Dean, Programme Heads, Heads of Department and Senate members) to gain a greater understanding of the leadership, strategic managerial and operational aspects of FFA. The remaining meetings were conducted with representatives of key stakeholder groups (teachers, students, researchers, alumni, professional and support staff, employers and representatives from professional fields). An additional meeting to that on the original schedule was held on 23rd October between the Review Team and the Dean and liaison person in order to clarify some issues regarding Faculty structures and decision making bodies.

The Review Team visited a range of facilities including Studios, Workshops, and ICT facilities available in FFA. This enabled the Review Team to gain a clear overview of the resources of FFA available for individual study programmes and for student supports.

The Review Team produced a final evaluation report structured in alignment with EQArts standards. The report made a series of commendations, and recommendations for areas of improvement.

Composition of the Review Team

The Review Team consisted of the following members;

Dr Annie Doona (IR)

Institute of Art Design and Technology in Dun Laoghaire

Annie Doona is currently Chair of the Irish Film Board (IFB) and President of the Institute of Art Design and Technology in Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin, Ireland since 2011 and prior to that she worked extensively in further and higher education in the UK. She has extensive experience as a member and chair of, Quality Assurance Review Teams, Validation Panels, Programmatic and Institutional Reviews both nationally and internationally.

Mr. Manuel Jose Damasio (PT)

Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias

Manuel is the head of a young and extremely dynamic Film and Media Arts Department (SITE) that runs two European Joint Master Degrees 'Erasmus Mundus' (REFS) besides ten other honour degrees and one PhD programme, all fully accredited by the Portuguese Quality Assurance Agency (A3ES). Head of a research unit funded by the Portuguese Science Foundation and principal researcher in several EU funded projects.

Ms. Hanke Leeuw (NL)

Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht – Director of HKU Centre of Lifelong Learning and Educational Innovation

Educational specialist in curriculum design and development processes, quality assurance, accreditations and educational management, both in The Netherlands and in international contexts.

Areas of expertise: Fine Art, Fine Art & Design in Education, Music, Creative Media & Game Technology, Music and Crossover Creativity

Mr. Rainer Usselmann (UK)**Creative entrepreneur and educator**

Rainer Usselmann trained as a commercial photographer in Germany, before studying fine art photography at Bournemouth, and taking an MA in History of Art at University of Southampton with a thesis about immersive art. Rainer has since published in peer-reviewed journals on the subject of art and media, and he has presented at conferences in the UK, Germany, and the US. He collaborates regularly with designers, developers, and creatives on projects in commercial, as well as fine-art contexts and has 25 years of international experience as practitioner, entrepreneur, employer, and manager in arts and media subject areas in the UK, Germany, the US, India, and China.

Areas of expertise: Digital Media, Creative Technology, Arts Education

Student panel member

Elena Chemerska is a Netherlands based student from Macedonia, where she did her BFA. She has recently completed her MA in Fine Arts, AKVSt. Joost, 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands.

Timetable for Main Visit**Sunday 20 October 2019**

15h00 – 19h00 Private meeting RT in the hotel

19h30 Dinner

Monday 21 October 2019

9h00 – 9h15 Operational meeting – laptops, refreshments, organisation etc.

9h15 – 09h30 RT meet Liaison person

9h30 – 10h30 Meeting 1 RT meet the Head of the Institution

10h30 - 10h45 Private meeting RT

10h45 – 11h45 Meeting 2 RT meet the Head(s) of the Programme(s) to be reviewed

11h45-12h00 Private meeting RT

12h00-13h00 Meeting 3 RT meet BA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed

13h00 – 14h30 Working lunch (private RT) in the meeting room

14h30 – 15h30 Meeting 4 RT meet MA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed

15h30 – 15h45 Private meeting RT

15h45 – 16h45 Meeting 5 RT meet teachers from the programme(s) to be reviewed

16h45- 17h00 Private meeting RT

17h00 – 18h00 Meeting 6 RT meet alumni of the programme(s) to be reviewed

18h00 – 19h00 Private meeting RT

19h30 Private dinner RT

Tuesday 22 October 2019

09h00 – 09h30 Private meeting RT

09h30 – 10h30 Meeting 7 RT meet programme(s') research staff & students

10h30 – 10h45 Private meeting RT

10h45 – 11h45 Meeting 8 RT meet programme(s') technical and support staff

11h45 – 12h00 Private meeting RT

12h00 – 13h00 Meeting 9 RT meet representatives of the professions and employers

13h00 – 14h00 Working lunch (private RT) in the meeting room

14h00 – 15h00 Meeting 10 RT meet institute Quality Assurance staff

15h00 – 15h15 Private meeting RT

15h15 – 16h15 Meeting 11 RT meet Institute Senior Management Group (Senate or equivalent)

16h15 – 16h30 Private meeting RT

16h30 – 17h30 RT visit programme(s') studios/workshops

17h30 – 18h30 Private meeting RT

19h30 Private dinner RT

Wednesday 23 October 2019

09h00 – 09h15 ET meet liaison person

09h15 – 13h00 Private meeting RT and

Meeting 12 meeting with the Dean

13h00 – 13h30 Oral feedback to the Head of Institution and colleagues

14h00 Departure

1. Programme's goals and context

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

Mission, vision and aims

Citing the Strategic Plan for the mission of Brno University of Technology (BUT)³:

“BUT is a technically oriented University which emphasises creative activities, co-operation with the industry and application sphere, and providing education in technical, artistic, and economic fields. Its competencies bring added value to the industry and state administration, enriching not only the offer of high-quality education in the Czech Republic and Europe, but also the science and research in the fields of its expertise. BUT offers creative environment based on co-operation of its faculties and component parts with competencies in a wide spectrum of technical, economic, and artistic fields.”

BUT's vision is stated⁴ as striving to achieve excellence in its areas of teaching, creative activities and cooperation with industry and society. The SER identifies the aspiration below:

“BUT will continue to keep and strengthen its position of an excellent technical University, which it has in both the Czech Republic and Europe.”

BUT also recognises the importance of operating within an international context and the importance of international partnerships in relation to artistic activities and research. The Strategic Plan recognises the importance of operating not only in the Czech Republic, but also in Europe and around the world.

The Review Team in its meetings with the Dean, staff and students, found consistent support for the aspiration to grow on an international scale. It was recognized by the Dean and participants in the meetings, that a stronger international profile would add credibility and value to the reputation of the Faculty.

Rationale and aims for the programme

The Faculty of Fine Art has specified its mission towards the education of arts students⁵:

“The main institutional mission of the FFA is to develop students' artistic talent, which the institution carries out primarily through contact teaching with an emphasis on individual approach to students.”

The aims of the FFA strongly resonate with the vision of BUT, again specified for their domain and cultural practice⁶:

“The aim of the FFA is to educate independent-minded artistic professionals who will determine the form of Czech, European and world's visual art and design in a wide range of activities ranging from working in professional institutions to creativity manifested in the spirit of fine art practice across artistic expressions, media, and genres.”

³ Long-Term Plan for Educational, Scientific, Developmental, Innovative, Artistic and Other Creative Activities of Brno University of Technology for the 2016-2020 Period, p 5.

⁴ Long-Term Plan for Educational, Scientific, Developmental, Innovative, Artistic and Other Creative Activities of Brno University of Technology for the 2016-2020 Period, p 6.

⁵ SER, p. 12.

⁶ SER, p. 2.

The distinctive and unique features of the programme and graduates has been described in the SER⁷:

“A graduate of the field ‘Intermedia and Digital Creation’ is a distinctive individual, with the prerequisites to assert herself in the field of artistic operation. She is also equipped with professional abilities in related fields, such as curatorship, art education, graphic design, the commercial processing and postproduction of static and dynamic digital images, etc. The graduate is well versed not only in the history of art, the basics of aesthetics and the philosophy of art, or current cultural production, but also in current social and political situations. Her creative practice is often clearly socially anchored. The studio character of studies, with a high proportion of consultative forms of teaching, leads graduates to an independent, autonomous and active approach.”

The Review Team learned in the management panel, that this distinctiveness educates students for ‘otherness’ or even for ‘unfitting’ current practices. The Game Studio for example, aims to educate professionals who really have a different stand and perspective on the field. FFA trains students to analyse and design games and game mechanics from an artistic point of view. It was also described by the Heads of Studio as ‘trouble-making’, a perspective which is uncommon in the game industries, but which is welcomed. The alumni panel confirmed this, gaming is now considered as a form of art, which is unique in this part of Europe. The alumni panel also defined this characterisation of distinctiveness as critical thinking. Freedom of expression, disruption and activism is valued in the Faculty, for students, graduates and staff. This was confirmed in the panel with employers and the professional field. They also consider the studio of new media as a distinct feature in the programme, as does the Dean. The Dean also indicated that the focus on artistic research distinguishes FFA within the context of BUT.

Alignment of mission in the regional, national and international context

Regional representatives of the cultural industries participate in several boards of FFA. On an institutional level, the Art Research Board includes, among others, Rectors and Deans of Art Schools in the Czech Republic. This strategic board meets approximately four times per year and is composed of one-third external members.⁸ In different conversations, the Review Team found strong connections with the regional cultural context, ensuring the Faculty meets the needs of the industry (more on that in standard 8.1).

On a national level, all art schools in the Czech Republic participated in a self-evaluation process a few years ago. Four to five years ago, the Association of Art faculties was founded. FFA has chaired this association for 2 years⁹.

Staff and teachers participate in exchange programmes, which contribute to alignment at international level (more on that in standard 2.2). In terms of formal benchmarking and alignment with international contexts. The Review Team also asked the Dean and teaching staff about international good practice. Which programmes and institutions does FFA use to benchmark itself against in terms of good practice? The Review Team noticed that apart from Karlsruhe (CKM) and Dundee University Scotland, there appeared to be a lack of insight and alignment with other European Fine Art programmes. Internationalisation occurs by and large on a personal level.

⁷ SER, p. 9.

⁸ Meeting 12 with the Dean,

⁹ Meeting 1 with Head of Institution

Quality management process to ensure standards of the programme are maintained and developed

BUT has defined a University-policy for QA.¹⁰ The Review Team sought verification of the actual implementation of that system across all panels. The Review Team found a mismatch between FFA's QA practices and the introduction of the University QA framework (more on that in standard 7).

In terms of the strategic planning and quality of programmes and standards, the Guarantors, the Vice-Dean for Study Affairs, the Art Research Board, the Advisory Board, the Curriculum Board and Post-Graduate Board have responsibilities in ensuring the standards of the programme.¹¹ In different panel meetings, the Review Team heard that this structure and the different responsibilities are not clear for all.¹²

The process to ensure standards is also highly related to the implementation of level descriptors (more on that in standard 2). The QA panel in their meeting with the Review Team, was not able to provide information on the actual implementation of these frameworks, and no evidence was provided to the Review Team that these were even in place.

Quantitative and qualitative statistical information collected, and how is it used to support/enhance the study programme

For documentation and other quality management, universities use the national databases of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as MEYS), such as the Register of Information on Science, Research, Development and Innovation (hereinafter referred to as RIV), and the Register of Artistic Outputs (hereinafter referred to as RUV). These are registers that collect data on creative scientific research and the artistic performance of employees and students. Their assessment takes into account not only the quantity but also the quality of these outputs.¹³ The Review Team heard from different panels that FFA is actively using these registers.

For further quality management, the RUV and the RIV statistics, the number of applicants for study in the respective studio in the individual study stages, and the selection of applicants for higher (subsequent master's or doctoral) degrees are monitored; the Faculty is also open to graduates of other schools. One metric demonstrating good results is the relatively high completion of studies, where the high selectivity in admission procedures leads to a reduction of the risk of dropout in further studies.¹⁴ During the panel visit, additional information on dropouts was provided. The Senate and HoD's confirmed that this information is discussed in the different relevant committees.

The programme team has initiated some surveys among students and alumni. Different panels indicated to the Review Team that the response rate is problematic and that FFA capacity to send and follow-up on these surveys is lacking.

Elements and factors are involved in determining admission capacity and profile

Admissions procedures to FFA are partly determined by nationally agreed processes and criteria. Decisions on the numbers of students admitted are within the remit of the Faculty.

“There is an average of 260–280 students in the fields of study. When determining the number of admitted students to fill the capacity, the Faculty takes into account the number of graduates in relation to the personnel and space possibilities as well as the number of

¹⁰ Rules of the Quality Assurance System for Education, Creative and Related Activities

¹¹ Meeting 1 with the Head of Institution

¹² Meetings 10, 11 and 1 with QA panel, Senate, Head of Institution

¹³SER, p. 10

¹⁴ SER, p. 11

applicants for individual fields and specialisations. However, the most decisive criterion for admission is the ability to study art, i.e. talent. A balance sheet considering the employability of graduates and consideration of the needs of professional partners and institutions also plays a role in the decision-making process, but the goal remains to generate excellent graduates.”¹⁵

The Review Team was able to confirm the positive staff-student ratios in the Faculty, and the availability of a range of studio spaces. Those present at the external stakeholders meeting confirmed that the needs of professional partners was taken into consideration by the Faculty, although the Review Team did not raise this issue specifically with regard to admissions capacity and profile.

Procedures for formal approval and legal recognition of the study programme taken into consideration in its development

Currently the FFA operates within an accreditation system directly from the National Accreditation Office (NAO), which the Review Team heard from the Dean and Management, appears to work well. Consideration has been given to future accreditation processes with one possibility being institutional accreditation as identified in the SER.

“The accreditation process is specified and methodically described by an amendment to the Higher Education Act. The FFA has the option of applying for accreditation of its study programmes directly from the National Accreditation Office (NAO), or – after the inclusion of art education in the institutional accreditation granted by BUT – within the University. Both paths require the creation of a self-assessment report.”¹⁶

The Review Team note that the Faculty has not yet made a final strategic decision on the future route for accreditation. The Faculty will include its decision in the next Strategic Plan.

Engagement of key stakeholders (teachers, students & employers/professional bodies) in the development of the programme

FFA strives towards horizontal decision-making processes and support for student initiatives.¹⁷ FFA has an organisational structure with 16 Heads of Studio, 3 Vice-Deans and different boards and committees¹⁸. The Faculty has implemented this based on the suggestions of the National Education Committee¹⁹.

The Review Team found that key stakeholders are represented in the different boards and committees, although the involvement from the game industries could be improved.

Regional representatives of the cultural industries confirmed to the Review Team that they are participating in several boards of FFA. Students informed the Review Team that Faculty management supports the initiatives proposed in the Faculty Boards.

Equal opportunities embedded in the institutional/programme mission/vision

The FFA moved to its current building in 2016, which according to the Dean and Management, represented significant progress in terms of facilities. The SER did however identify that this building is not completely accessible, and that this was an area that they wish to address.

¹⁵SER, p. 11

¹⁶ SER, p. 12.

¹⁷ SER, p. 33.

¹⁸ SER, p. 4.

¹⁹ Meeting 12 with the Dean

“The Faculty has yet to obtain buildings that would allow wheelchair access. Reconstruction of the historic BUT campus, where the FFA has been located since the end of 2016, naturally envisages a handicapped-accessible solution.”²⁰

The Dean confirmed to the Review Team that this matter would be resolved. In terms of gender representation, the Review Team heard of progress in this area. In particular in their meeting with the Dean and Management.

“Equal opportunities and their defence are one of the priorities of the Faculty management declared in the relevant materials (Faculty Strategic Objectives). The statistical parameters are gradually improving, and the shortcomings of the past, particularly regarding the representation of women in Faculty Governance and Leadership, are being addressed. All written regulations of the Faculty are also under review with regard to the gender-neutral language of documents.”²¹

The Dean told the Review Team that equal opportunities would be included in the new Strategic Plan. Men have always been overrepresented in FFA staff, while more female than male students are studying at FFA. The new Dean is actively improving the gender balance on different committees and the FFA management team. He has appointed new female Vice-Deans²². The boards that have been nominated by the Dean have an adequate representation of both genders. For vacant places and tenders, it is ensured that selection committees are composed of 50% women and 50% men.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 1

Comments

- The Review Team would like to acknowledge that the Faculty is in a period of transformation in terms of its future direction and accreditation, but also in terms of its programmes, processes and ways of working. The Review Team acknowledge that the recent changes at management level and proposed changes in management structures are contributing to this transformation.
- The Review Team note that the Faculty has not yet made a final strategic decision on the future route for accreditation. The Review Team was of the view, that making the decision would enable the Faculty staff and students to be clearer about their future, and in particular about their relationship with BUT. The Review Team also note the issues raised in ensuring that the Arts Faculty is fully valued and supported at the level of the University.
- The Review Team also supports the intention of the management to implement equality of opportunity across the Faculty in terms of gender representation in management and governance and in improving disabled access to the buildings and programmes. The Review Team also note the intention to improve canteen facilities and social spaces.

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the developing focus on Gaming and 3D printing which strengthens the Faculty and provides opportunities for commercial activities.

Recommendations

- R1 The Review Team recommends the institution defines its position towards institutional accreditation and initiates the implementation of the measures related to that process.

The Review Team find that, on the basis of its distinct profile, FFA is **fully compliant** with Standard 1.

²⁰ SER, p. 11.

²¹ SER, p. 11.

²² Meeting 11 with Senate

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

Institutional mission and the aims of the programme

“The main institutional mission of the FFA is to develop students’ artistic talent, which the institution carries out primarily through contact teaching with an emphasis on individual approach to students. All types of courses (both practical and theoretical) are taught individually or in small groups, allowing students a proactive approach to artistic and personal development. Teaching in the main subject (studio) runs horizontally, i.e. teaching students of all degree levels, which supports building competent interpretational and analytical-critical comparisons. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities takes place through processes of individual research (especially in the form of research and experimentation), artistic practice (by developing free creativity), reflection (by acquiring the ability to contextualise), and evaluation (based on public exhibitions of study outputs).”

The Review Team found, in the sessions with students and teaching staff that this mission is acted upon in the different studios and programmes, and this was also outlined in the SER.

“The evaluated study programme ‘Intermedia and Digital Artistic Practice’ is currently taught in seven workplaces: Environmental Studio, Intermedia Studio, Performance Studio, Body Design Studio, Video Studio, Game Media Studio, and Photography Studio. Ideologically, this field is anchored in two areas. On the one hand, it is the neo-avant-garde tendencies of the 1960s, with which previously marginal tendencies such as intermediality, the process and action character of artistic practice, the local specificity of art, de-skilling, dematerialisation, and the concept of a work of art as a cluster of semantic propositions have entered the mainstream. This trend is followed by newly redefined visual culture and related artistic strategies which find themselves in a dynamic dialogue with the creation of ‘non-artistic’ images.

Studios of Environment, Intermedia, Performance and Body Design are not ‘media specific’ (instruction does not pass on a comprehensive set of craft or technology skills); students are consistently encouraged to enrol different optional courses, workshops and technology tutorials in other Departments as well when formulating the sub-goals of their projects. A concept of artistic practice is being developed in the Studio of the Environment, which is based on the requirement to embed artistic practice within a particular experience. The work process in this studio frequently borders (or is entirely within the realm) of artistic research. The Intermedia Studio is probably the most open in terms of discipline specialisation in the entire study programme; students are also encouraged to reach beyond the visual arts, especially to music and literature. The Performance Studio is oriented towards the border form of fine art, which is a creative act in a space-time situation. The event is conceived as an interdisciplinary manifestation of personality, including its interconnection with traditional theatre, dance, music and literary practices. In the relation of action - environment, emphasis is placed on the visual forms of multimedia presentation.

The Body Design Studio represents an exceptional space in the Czech art education environment, in which the body is viewed as a medium, and at the same time as a battlefield where the cultural, political or religious struggles take place on a symbolic and entirely material level. In its outputs, the Body Design Studio often goes beyond the gallery - seeking and stimulating a dialogue in both public and media space. Video, Multimedia and Photography Studios each develop a variety of creative thinking and skills necessary to create

*(or generate) images through digital media. Artistic practice in these sub-specialties is specific via understanding the gallery as a natural place of presenting artworks, but certainly not the only possible. Students are encouraged to think about the distribution channels of the media image, the semantic and symbolic differences associated with switching between such environments such as the gallery space (the white cube), traditional mass media (television), or a variety of Internet platforms. The same attention is paid to viewers, who often become co-creators (in a range from simple forms of interaction with a fixed programme to complex participation, in which the concept of 'open work of art' developed by Umberto Eco is fulfilled)."*²³

Involvement of student in the development of the curriculum and the learning and teaching strategy

The FFA provided the Review Team with evidence both in the SER and in the meetings with students and graduates that a range of committees are in place within the Faculty, which includes representation from students. The Review Team also heard that a BUT-wide online survey is in place. The Review Team were also told of student participation in Curriculum and Advisory Boards.

*"In addition to implicit involvement to the curriculum development process (informal feedback provided by the teacher, or interest in registering for elective courses), mechanisms are set up within the Faculty to ensure that students are directly involved in these processes. One of them is the official evaluation of the quality of teaching in the form of a University-wide distributed online survey... Students also have representatives in the academic senates of the University and Faculty, on the Dean's Advisory Board, and above all on the Curriculum Board, whose mission is, among other things, the continuous development of degree programmes."*²⁴

Students confirmed to the Review Team that they are actively participating in these committees and boards and that they are discussing ways to improve the programme with their Heads of Studio. The students that the Review Team met, also confirmed that many of them had completed the online survey, despite concerns around participation levels raised earlier by Management.

Learning outcomes and level descriptors

In the SER it is indicated that BUT and FFA are compliant with the Subject Dublin Descriptors' learning outcomes.²⁵ However, when the Review Team inquired about the mapping of the programme learning outcomes to these level descriptors, the QA panel was not able to provide information on the actual implementation of these frameworks. The Dean indicated that these level descriptors are not adopted in the context of the Czech Republic. FFA courses do however; have detailed descriptions online; most of them include the learning outcomes.

Development of individual study profiles

Students are consistently encouraged to enrol on different optional courses, workshops and technology tutorials in other Departments as well when formulating the sub-goals of their projects.²⁶

The Heads of Programme explained to the Review Team that the curriculum is founded in studio teaching (30 ECTS); students have the opportunity to take optional courses besides the studio practice. The proportion of compulsory and elective courses vary between the different years. The first year is streamlined and contains more compulsory courses; the final years allow for more

²³ SER, p. 6.

²⁴ SER, p. 13.

²⁵ SER, p. 13.

²⁶ SER, p. 6.

optional courses and as such, the fostering of individual study profiles. Students confirmed to the Review Team that they have a lot of space in their programme to develop their own study profiles and that they valued this approach.

The project of inter-University education has been running for about ten years, allowing FFA students to register for selected subjects from the study programmes of the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno, and Masaryk University. Within the last few years, the catalogue of inter-Faculty courses (the so-called 'free' courses) has been continuously expanded within the BUT – students can choose and register for a large number of elective courses from the study programmes of other BUT faculties and institutions.²⁷

Students indicated to the Review Team that they would welcome more collaboration between the different studios. Studios are not as connected as they could be; there is a lack of interdisciplinary work and a need for more social spaces to connect students from different studios.

Connection/progression between the programme and other study programmes/cycles

“After completing the bachelor’s degree, the student is able to formulate a creative intention for his/her follow-up master’s degree, both by an oral defence and an artistic conception, visualisation and contextualisation. At the FFA, he has the opportunity to continue in MA studies without entry examinations, if the overall evaluation of his bachelor dissertation earns an A, B or C. After the end of the second cycle, the successful graduate is able and ready for further education; further development is a prerequisite for a successful artistic career. Subsequent education takes place at the level of the Cycle 3 in the form of doctoral studies, and further self-education. PhD graduates are expected to contribute to culture in the broadest sense of the word, starting with publishing activities, participation in the form of exhibitions (featuring as an artist, architect or curator), and ending with commercial orders or service to the society.”²⁸

The Quality panel meeting confirmed to the Review Team that students with A-C grades are allowed to automatically progress from BA to MA. With lower grades or if students want to switch studios, students need to apply. All students need to apply for their PHD.

Most of the FFAs Masters students continue directly from the BA programme In the Czech Republic there are no other options to be admitted to the Masters programme . MA students told the Review Team in their meeting²⁹, that they value the MA programme in the FFA for its focus on contemporary art and a more active pedagogy.

Learning and teaching strategies

Requirements for study profile responsibilities include:

- a) Work in studios/laboratories/specialised classrooms
- b) Work on independent art projects – in the form of self-study or external workplaces
- c) Study of theory and history of art
- d) Research and professional practice

During the different panels, the first three elements were confirmed to the Review Team. BA and MA students and alumni indicated to the Review Team that there is a lack of formal compulsory training for entrepreneurship and business development. Some masterclasses and a module are offered, but they are sometimes oversubscribed, so students might not be able to attend. Students

²⁷ SER, p. 14.

²⁸ SER, p. 13.

²⁹ Meeting 4 with MA Students

were not clear whether the masterclasses are open for all students. The representatives of the cultural field indicated that the programme and students could benefit more from internships to enhance their practical skills.

For BA students, teaching staff focus in the first two years on the technological competencies related to the subject. After that students' progress to their own artistic projects. The MA is structured around a two-year research question and project for students.³⁰

Critical reflection and self-reflection

Students indicated to the Review Team that they receive formative feedback from different teachers of both theory and practice, and the students confirmed that the Wednesday group studio critiques contributed to critical reflection.

Research in the programme

According to the SER, all study profile responsibilities include research. However, when the Review Team inquired about training for research the research students indicated that this training in the BA is limited to finding sources and information. In the MA there are workshops on writing and doing research. Students describe the learning strategy predominantly as learning by doing, which was reflected in the SER.

“Research, carried out by teachers and doctoral students of the Faculty, is in many cases also reflected in the content of teaching – the professional profile of employees is reflected in the focus of their subjects, and doctoral students are encouraged to do their own teaching activities, where they also usually benefit from their creative and research activities. In some cases, lower-level students are actively involved in the delivery of research outputs – this is especially true for students of studios dealing with graphic design and photography, or the application of communication technologies and audio-visual elements. These students often engage in projects as designers of web publications, infographics, small prints, and separate publications. Current research can influence the content of the course and assignments from the teacher.”³¹

Academic, career and personal guidance for students

The SER identified a range of formal guidance mechanisms which operate centrally in BUT, some of which are shared with the Faculty.

“The Faculty shares formalised guidance mechanisms with the University: S-kompas and Alfons. The S-kompas service, i.e. legal and socio-legal counselling, serves as support in finding solutions to their unfavourable or difficult life situation. The Alfons Counselling Centre focuses on providing counselling and support services to students with specific needs (sensory or motor impairment, specific learning disabilities, mental illness, autism spectrum disorders, impaired communication abilities, or chronic somatic illnesses). For more, see <https://www.favu.vut.cz/studenti/poradenstvi>. The Faculty provides assistance to students with various forms of disadvantages at the University level, and it is also possible to take advantage of career, psychological, professional and study counselling (see the Institute of Lifelong Learning, BUT). ‘Academic counselling’ at the Faculty has a non-formalised form – consultation hours with teachers are available, questions can also be addressed to officials such as the Vice Dean for Study Affairs, or the Dean.”³²

³⁰ Meeting 5 with teaching staff

³¹ SER, p. 15.

³² SER, p. 15.

The students informed the Review Team that in their view the psychological care offered at FFA could be better publicised and improved.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 2.1

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the increasing number of optional courses available across the Faculty and across the University

Recommendations

- R2 The Faculty needs to simplify the structure of the studios to enable full use by the disciplines available in the Faculty and BUT and to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborative work.
- R3 The Review Team recommends the Faculty creates and implements at Master and PhD level specific programmes targeting entrepreneurship education and the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set amongst graduates.
- R4 The Faculty needs to acknowledge the importance and relevance of level descriptors for the different programmes. The Review Team recommends implementing and aligning them with European Qualification Frameworks and Tuning Documents.

The Review Team finds that, on the basis of the recommendations to improve collaborative work between studios, to strengthen entrepreneurship and business education and the adaptation of level descriptors, FFA is **substantially compliant** with Standard 2.1.

2.2 International perspectives

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

BTU places internationalisation at the centre of its strategic development. The University Long Term Strategic Development Plan states:

“Brno University of Technology considers internationalisation and its evaluation a priority. Internationalisation is perceived as openness, establishment of relations with foreign universities and other institutions, student exchange, academic staff mobility, mutual sharing of lectures etc.”³³.

The FFA SER limits these objectives to a focus on the exchange of students and the development of international exhibition projects³⁴. The Faculty’s participation in international activities and partnerships is realised in various ways, with a focus on the mobility of students and teachers, and the active participation of both staff and students in international artistic events. The SER offers a broad outline of the Faculty’s internationalisation processes in a sub-chapter named ‘*International perspectives*’³⁵, which not only encompasses mobility, but also considers international partnerships in the fields of education, namely via the active participation in more than 40 Erasmus + partnership agreements, the teaching of foreign languages and the integration of foreign students, as part of the institutional support to internationalisation.

The SER indicates that the institution is strongly involved in the international exchange of students and teachers, with over 40 Erasmus + partnership agreements in place, besides other options such

33 BUT Long-Term Strategic Plan, p:21

34 SER FFA BUT, p:15

35 SER FFA BUT, pp:15-18

as the 'free movers' programme. During the different meetings with the student body³⁶, the Review Team verified how well these practices of exchange are implemented amongst the student body that clearly benefits from them. The fact the recognition procedure of study periods abroad is a practice embedded in the institution is a positive fact that adds to the richness of the process. The full understanding of this dimension was diminished by the fact the SER was unable to present any figures, therefore, it was impossible for the Review Team to evaluate how these figures have involved in the past years and if any tendencies can be observed.

Besides international exchanges of students and teachers, the SER also identifies the need for further investment in the training of staff on English language skills³⁷ and the offer of dedicated subjects in English stating that there are:

*"currently 6 courses, in addition to another 8 courses designed exclusively for incoming ERASMUS+ students"*³⁸.

Considering the total number of subjects in the programme and related studios, this offer is still limited and the institution could clearly benefit in its ability to attract international students if it increased the number of subjects taught in English. There is a clear need to implement such offers and associated structures and further embed internationalisation in the different studios, in ways that go beyond the mere attention to the teaching of foreign languages, as is mentioned in the SER. The Review Team suggests that it would enhance the institution's internationalisation profile if it was able to clarify the extent to which it wants to proceed with its investment in programmes taught in a foreign language. This calls for further definition of a strategy in relation to this.

The Review Team suggests that the Faculty gives further attention to this key aspect of the institutional strategy, with a clearer distinction being made between the relevance of offering English language programmes and the offering of discipline-based programmes – taught in English – that could significantly increase the institution's international profile.

Of all the other areas of international focus defined in the institution's strategic plan, the Faculty states in the programme's SER³⁹, the commitment to the participation of teachers and students in international projects in the domain of the arts, in most cases in relation to the participation in international festivals or exhibitions. The participation of international staff in teaching activities has a long history in the institution⁴⁰ and the Review Team verified⁴¹ that that practice continues to exist nowadays and has a positive impact in the institution.

The SER did not contain any actual examples of the involvement of the programme in international research endeavours (i.e. participation in H2020) and during the meeting with research staff,⁴² no mention of such activities occurred with the exception of the active involvement of teachers in Erasmus Plus exchanges with a research focus.

36 Meetings 5, 6 and 8 With BA, MA students and Alumni

37 SER FFA BUT, p:16

38 SER FFA BUT, p:17

39 SER FFA BUT, p:18

40 SER FFA BUT, p:5

41 Meeting 5 with teachers from the programme(s) to be reviewed

42 Meeting 7 with research staff from the programme to be reviewed

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 2.2

Commendations

- The Review Team **commends** the levels of staff, teachers and student mobility and the opportunities for international exchanges and exhibiting abroad through Erasmus and other projects and partnerships

Recommendations

- R5 The Review Team **recommends** the institution further defines a clearer strategy for internationalisation, including the development of specific educational offerings in the English language.
- R6 The Review Team **recommends** the institution implements a strategy that fosters the reinforcement of research activities with an international dimension, to include its plans for further involvement in international research projects and applications.

The Review Team found that on the basis of not having yet defined a strategy for further reinforcement of its international strategy, in particular the offer of subjects in the English language and the development of international research projects, the programme is **substantially compliant** with standard 2.2.

2.3 Assessment

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

Methods of assessment

According to the SER, assessment methods vary depending on the nature and content of the subjects, which are focused either on practical artistic activity or on theory.⁴³ The Review Team heard from different panels that these different methods of assessments are indeed implemented. The assessment of the artistic work at the end of the semester is carried out by an exam committee and involves assessing qualities in a way that is close to artistic criticism or curatorship.

Written essays appear to be a common method of assessment for theoretical work, according to the evidence given by the Heads of Department.

Assessment criteria and procedures

FFA course descriptions are available online and are accessible to students and staff– see e.g. <https://www.vutbr.cz/en/students/courses/detail/209238>.⁴⁴ The Review Team notes that a clear description of the assessment criteria and procedures is mostly absent in these descriptions. The Review Team inquired extensively about the criteria and procedures used in the end of the semester critiques. Alumni indicated that although the structure of these exams was repetitive (and as such clear) assessment criteria in practical work were implicit. In addition, the MA students indicated to the Review Team that the composition of the panel, rather than explicit criteria, guides the topics for discussion during the critiques. The Heads of Department confirmed to the Review Team that published assessment criteria for theoretical work are common, but for practical work, it is more implicit.

43 SER, p. 18.

44 SER, p. 19.

Feedback

Multiple BA and MA students and alumni expressed the view that there is no formal process on the way feedback from the critiques was shared. Heads of Studio can personally determine how summative feedback is relayed to students; the students stated that levels of feedback differs from staff member to staff member. As is stated in the SER: *the depth of feedback ... is largely a question of the individual style of the teacher.*⁴⁵ Students indicated that written summative feedback is regularly lacking, often students only receive a grade. MA students stated that they would appreciate written feedback from external committee members. The Heads of Department confirmed that the individual style of the teacher does determine the depth of feedback.

Review of assessments, consistency and fairness

The composition of the assessment committees is a responsibility of the Vice Dean for Study Affairs. The Dean, teaching staff and MA students indicated that one committee functions across two studios to improve consistency. Panels are composed of seven members (five internal members are selected across the school and from different studios and two external representatives). The number of external panel members could be increased according to the MA students.

The deliberation between the different committee members is confidential (students are not present). Teaching staff and external representatives indicated to the Review Team that the work of students is deliberated thoroughly and in detail. The Heads of Studio determine the grade. Both BA and MA Students indicated that this process should be more transparent and stated that there is often confusion about grades and related feedback.

The Review Team also inquired about the introduction of some level of standardisation, the use of formal criteria related to the learning outcomes and a grading matrix to improve consistency. Students would appreciate such a system, although they are aware that in arts subjectivity and autonomy are important features. Teaching staff were supportive of a more clearly articulated assessment practice. They provided the example that students have to deliver written statements, but they are not always sure that these statements contribute to their final assessment and grade.

Moderation process in assessment

As stated in the previous paragraph external members are included in the critique assessment committees. These external members closely collaborate with the Faculty. The Review Team is not certain if an exam board functions on a Faculty level, although the SER references an Institute of Committee Examination.⁴⁶ The Review Team inquired extensively about the responsibilities for the assessment procedures and criteria and did not receive clear answers. It would benefit the students if the monitoring process were more systematic and improved. FFA acknowledges that more work should be done on assessments⁴⁷, but the Review Team was not able to obtain clarity on who would be responsible for leading on that, and on what specific actions and measures are planned.

In terms of (appeal) procedures in FFA the Review Team was referred to the BUT rules and regulations, which are available online.⁴⁸

Grading system

In general, assessment of courses at the FFA follows the Study and Examination Regulations, which set the system of evaluation as a scale of 100 points. On this scale, the corresponding score

45 SER, p. 19.

46 SER, p. 30.

47 SER, p. 19.

48 Study and Examination Rules of Brno University of Technology

segments are then assigned the verbal rating equivalents (from excellent to failing); another method of assessment uses the range of letter grades A (excellent) to F (failing). Where possible, i.e. in particular for written tests, the scoring is set to correspond to the 100-point scale. Where it is not possible to use a simple measurement metric, the verbal equivalents of evaluation, which represent the degree of completion of the task, completion of the assignment, etc., serve as guidelines.⁴⁹ For practical work critiques, letter grades are used, which sometimes leads to discussion. Some students indicated that they would prefer a pass/fail system, but the University does not allow it.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for standard 2.3

Recommendations

R7 The Faculty needs to articulate clear strategies, guidelines, criteria and matrixes for assessment of practical work, to implement it across all studios to ensure consistency and to improve the depth of written feedback for students.

The Review Team find that, on the basis of the work that needs to be done on assessment criteria, feedback and the moderation process, FFA is **partially compliant** with Standard 2.3.

3. Student profiles

3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications

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

The Review Team read in the SER that:

“the criteria for admission to the bachelor’s degree programme are mainly creative talent, critical thinking and study abilities, verified in the field of visual culture and art history; in the master’s degree, the evaluation criteria focus on the students’ persuasiveness and coherence of her creative attitude (given by the quality of the bachelor’s thesis in the first round of admission, and the quality of the portfolio and the project for the first semester of study in the second round of admission); in doctoral studies, the quality of the submitted project and the professionalism of the applicant during her presentation is crucial.”⁵⁰

All students demonstrated a clear understanding when it came to admission conditions and processes. BA students confirmed that they are verified by four rounds of talent examination and test, as stated in the SER.

MA students expressed the view that many of the BA students go on to pursue their MA studies at the FFA as well. Students expressed their opinion that the programme is popular in the Czech Republic due to the dynamic mode of teaching and learning. Students who have graduated from their BA studies with an A, B or C are eligible to continue in one of the MA programmes without an entry exam. Those with grades D and E have to go through an admission process. Students enrolling in the MA programmes, who are coming from different previous education institutions, need to submit a portfolio and have a project proposal for the first semester of study.⁵¹

During the admission procedure for the BA and MA programmes, the exam committee consists of the Studio Heads, as well as tutors from the Department of Art History for the general art history test at the BA level. Students apply directly for a specific studio. BA students pointed out that students are also involved in the first round of admissions and have a say into whether they as candidates feel they artistically suit the programme well.

A more detailed description of the criteria/requirements for candidates is included in the Admissions Directives, and is announced in calls for admissions. Age is not a limitation at any level of study – no criterion is formulated in such way so that it would *a priori* disadvantage a group of candidates.

“In the admission procedure for the doctoral study, the committee consists of the supervisors of all applicants – the latter two committees also include the representatives of the FFA academic leadership. The administration of the admission procedure for all levels of study is provided by the relevant Study Department officials (according to the degree of study).”⁵²

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement

The Review Team find that on the basis that the FFA manages to communicate clearly the admission process with students and candidates, FFA is **fully compliant** with Standard 3.1.

50 SER, p. 19.

51 SER, p. 20.

52 Ibid

3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability

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

In terms of monitoring student progression and achievement, certain issues were raised during the meetings with students and alumni, which reflect the assessment processes. It is stated in the SER that each student undergoes a formal public group critique each semester, where work is presented and the student's ability to contextualise and verbalise artistic intentions in front of a committee composed of internal and external members, some of which members of the cultural sector and possible future employers.⁵³ However, there are some inconsistencies in the way feedback is communicated to students. Feedback is oral and students articulated the view that there is room for improvement for example, more detailed oral feedback with written supporting information. Students have expressed the need for a written feedback supporting the grades (A to F), as well as a stronger presence of external evaluators so to have a clearer view of the real enhancement of their learning achievements.

Dropout rates are measured. The Review Team learned during the meeting with the Head of Institution that out of the 280 students roughly 25 would drop out.

Students can apply for the Development Project and Erasmus Plus exchanges. Both students and alumni confirmed that many students do make use of this opportunity. Four out of the six MA students the Panel met confirmed that they have been on an exchange. FFA's International Office organises annual presentations of students who have taken part in exchange programmes, either as part of the Erasmus+ programme, or as free movers. After completing the Erasmus+ exchange, students fill out a questionnaire, electronically distributed through the BUT Foreign Relations Department. Systematic feedback via questionnaires or analysis of that feedback has not been implemented at the FFA level.

Although it is stated in the SER that FFA strives to monitor the success of their graduates, so far they have not managed to fully develop an effective system for monitoring this. The FFA annually acquires data from the Labour Office of the Czech Republic.

"For documentation and other quality management, universities use the national databases of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, such as the Register of Information on Science, Research, Development and Innovation (RIV), and the Register of Artistic Outputs (RUV). These are registers that collect data on creative scientific research and the artistic performance of employees and students. Their assessment takes into account not only the quantity but also the quality of these outputs."⁵⁴

Graduates of FFA have been so far successful in actively contributing to both the local, the national, and to some degree, the international cultural scene. During the meeting with the professionals and employers, they expressed their view that graduates usually come prepared for the professional world; although they suggested that they could have more experience with internships. The collaboration with 'The House of Arts' has been recognised as very successful. Among the alumni, the Review Team met different professional profiles, such as independent artists and designers, PhD candidates, actors in both the private and the public sector, actors working in NGOs, game developers and owners of their own studios.

The Faculty does keep a complete database of its alumni (1404 names). Because of the close working environment, some communication continues on an informal basis after students have finished their studies. The BUT does send out surveys in an attempt to systematically monitor the employability of

53 SER, p. 14-15.

54 SER, p.10.

students but the FFA has had a minimal response rate to these. This remains to be further developed and implemented.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the levels of staff, teachers and student mobility and the opportunities for international exchanges and exhibiting abroad through Erasmus and other projects and partnerships.

Recommendations

R8 The Review Team supports and recommends the Faculty's ambition to develop an effective system for monitoring the quality of graduates.

R9 Acknowledging the Faculty's well-regarded place within the Gaming and 3D Printing sector in Brno, the Faculty needs to make more of the expertise, and opportunities its commercial and Faculty partners can bring.

The Review Team find that on the basis that despite the efforts of the FFA a formal effective tool for monitoring of the quality of graduates and their subsequent employability is yet to be developed, FFA is **partially compliant** with Standard 3.2.

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

Qualifications of programme's teaching staff

An important tool for quality management is the selection procedure for filling teaching positions, which can be used to monitor trends and developments in the field. Successful and personal development is then further verified by the Faculty management via the aforementioned registers.⁵⁵ The following criteria are required in particular: the candidate must have qualifications in the field of artistic practice and have previous experience with pedagogical activities, and must submit and present a pedagogical concept of teaching in the respective position.⁵⁶

The Dean confirmed to the Review Team that new positions in the Faculty are tendered. A committee judges the candidates and advises the Dean. The Dean bears final responsibility for appointing new staff.

Institutional strategy supporting and enhancing the teaching staff's artistic/pedagogical/ research activity

Teaching and research exchanges, which take place in the framework of international cooperation and exchange projects and are organised within Erasmus Plus and other University-wide funding schemes (e.g. the Development Projects grants or the Internationalisation grant), also serve as important institutional tools for enhancing academic qualifications.⁵⁷ This practice was confirmed by the Dean to the Review Team.⁵⁸

Competitions are used as an institutional strategy to support and enhance teaching staff's artistic and research activities.⁵⁹ The FFA uses several internal grant competitions for the systematic support of creative activities, listed as follows: support of artistic and research activities of academics aimed at innovation in educational activities (BUT internal Development Project grants), support of artistic and creative activities of teachers financed from the Institutional Support Fund, and internal competition to support publishing activities financed from the Institutional Support Fund.⁶⁰

The Review Team understood from the employers' panel and the students that teaching staff are appreciated for their artistic qualities. They are recognised artists in the Czech Republic and show their artistic work outside the institution in festivals, exhibitions and other events.

The current nature of direct state support for creative activities is limited at present mainly to funding science, research and innovation (R&D). This practice in funding R&D activities at universities in the Czech Republic greatly limits the possibility of involving academics with arts-based practice in research. The problem lies principally with the capacity of the Faculty, which has only a small number of employees who are able to build R&D teams – the majority of academic staff are focused on artistic practice (leading Studio Heads and assistants); the issue of research mainly affects employees of the Department of Art History and Theory and doctoral students.⁶¹

55 SER, p. 10.

56 SER, p. 21.

57 SER, p. 22.

58 Meeting 1 with the Head of Institution

59 Meeting 1 with the Head of Institution

60 SER, p. 22.

61 SER, p. 23.

Pedagogical training is not mandatory and the Dean indicated to the Review Team that the way it is currently offered, does not match the needs for pedagogy in arts education. The Faculty does not currently have a direct and systemic tool for the development of the pedagogical abilities and competences of its employees.⁶² The current pedagogical training is offered to PHD students.

According to the teaching staff and PHD students, a 'pedagogical minimum' is required to teach in primary and secondary education, but not in higher education. Teaching staff also indicated to the Review Team that there is no structure or basis for collegial peer review on pedagogical skills; it is not common practice in higher education in the Czech Republic.

The Review Team heard from the MA students that the pedagogical skills of teaching staff could be improved, for example, they find some of the teaching too passive. Students are listening to the teachers, while there should be more room for discussion among students. In addition, the employers stated that the learning strategies for practical work could be improved to include more discussion-based projects.

Continuing Professional Development (CDP)

The Review Team inquired of the Dean whether there was a person or Department who was responsible for CDP across the Faculty; the answer is that there is not. On the University level there is the BUT Institute of Life Long Learning. They provide trainings for educators, for example language training and pedagogical skills.⁶³ The Dean could not provide specific statistics, but indicated that most educators participate in language training. Different staff members confirmed to the Review Team that they have participated in professional activities over the last two years but this appeared to be at their own instigation rather than as a Faculty strategy for this area.

Staff appraisal and critical reflection

In the SER specific procedures for staff appraisal have been put forward to the Review Team:

"After four years of teaching at the Faculty, instructors usually have to prepare a report with an evaluation of their pedagogical and artistic activities, which includes monitoring their workload, e.g. in the number of supervised theses, or a vision of further development and a description of their personal strategies. The current leadership has tried to apply the rule to evaluation academics at least every six years".⁶⁴

However, the Review Team heard from different panels (Dean, Heads of Department, teaching staff) that this procedure is not fully implemented. None of the staff members indicated to the Review Team that they have participated in such an evaluation. A formal staff appraisal process is not yet in place. According to the SER, teachers are remunerated both for ongoing pedagogical work, and for their creative (artistic and scientific research) activities – part of the funds received in the RUV and the RIV are distributed according to reported personal results as the incentive pay in the salary has as a direct relationship to the values reported in the registers.⁶⁵ The teaching staff mentioned that their work is submitted to the RIV and RUV databases, but they are unclear on the impact on their salaries. It does not function as an incentive for them.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for standard 4.1

Comments

62 SER, p. 22.

63SER, p. 22.

64SER, p. 10.

65SER, p. 22.

- The Review Team note that students seem generally satisfied with their programmes and the teaching they receive. There was a sense of an amicable working atmosphere amongst staff and students. Staff appeared committed to their disciplines. Students generally expressed an appreciation of the close working relationship possible with individual staff and a commitment and loyalty to their programmes.

Recommendations

R10 The Faculty needs to implement a system for formal staff appraisal, including arrangements for Continuous Professional Development. The Review Team recommends consideration of compulsory pedagogical training for all teaching staff.

The Review Team find that on the basis that the artistic, research and pedagogical qualities and qualifications of staff are in general on the required level, but that improvements on pedagogical training and staff appraisal are necessary, FFA is **substantially compliant** with Standard 4.1.

4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body

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

Number and experience of teaching staff

FFA has very good staff-student ratios. For the Studio programmes 14 (full-time equivalent: 12,25) teaching staff member are involved in teaching the programme to 109 students. For FFA as a Faculty 42 teachers (full-time equivalent: 37,2) have been appointed for 277 students.

As stated in the previous standard the employer's panel and the students appreciate teaching staff for their artistic qualities. They are recognised artists in the Czech Republic and show their artistic work outside the institution in festivals, exhibitions and other events. Undergraduate and postgraduate students also told the Review Team in their meeting, that they appreciate the open culture and informal relationships with staff⁶⁶.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for standard 4.1

Comments

- The Review Team note the positive staff student ratios within the Faculty.

Recommendations

R11 The Review Team recommends the Faculty further reinforces its focus on research namely via the implementation of tailored programmes designed to reinforce training on research methods at all levels with the final goal of increasing its research activities and raising the profile of the Faculty in this domain. The Review Team recommends the Faculty take opportunity of the OP VVV project to reinforce these skills in particular at staff level.

The Review Team find, that on the basis of the staff-student ration, FFA is **fully compliant** with Standard 4.2.

⁶⁶ Meetings 3 and 4 with BA and MA students from the programme

5. Facilities, resources and support

5.1 Facilities

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

“In the winter semester of the academic year 2016/2017, the Faculty moved to the historic BUT premises at Údolní 53, based on a decision of the BUT management. It was the definitive solution to dislocation emergency that for more than 22 years kept the Faculty in dislocation uncertainty, and hampered its technical development.”⁶⁷

Across all panel discussions, it was clear that everyone expressed satisfaction with the change and confirmed that facilities have improved greatly. This was especially voiced with reference to the Game Media Studio, the Sound Studio and the Sculpture Studio, namely the use of computerised 3D modelling, optical digitisation, 3D printing, and the use of CNC robotic machining in sculpture.

This was confirmed during the Review Teams visit to the studios and workshops. Occupation of several buildings and workplaces of the campus significantly improved the spatial and technical situation of the Faculty.

“This solution includes adequate and better equipped premises for theoretical education, technical workshops, departments, a library and a school gallery. The key point is that the University management thus clearly declared direct and long-term support to the Faculty, its management, teachers and activities. In accordance with BUT's current and future Long-term Plan for 2020–2025, further development of the complex is planned.”⁶⁸

The issues with the lack of an adequate infrastructure for people living with disabilities, social spaces and a FFA canteen remain to be solved. MA students expressed that they would benefit from a better introduction to the technical workshops.

There is space for improvement in some of the workshops, in terms of Health and Safety regulations and practices. While staff members seem to be engaged with the workshop assigned to them, the Review Team noted while visiting the technical workshops, that the wood and metal workshops are both operated by a single manager, which makes it difficult when it comes to supervision across two spaces. In addition, safety signs and signals in the space were inadequate and need to be more clearly marked. In the meeting with the students, it was confirmed that students did receive health and safety briefings, but the Review Team felt that these needed to be reinforced at regular intervals.

The Review Team heard that Moodle is a modular part of the BUT information system and is available for students and teachers, but its use remains very basic. This remains to be further considered. The FFA does not use an e-learning system centrally. The Review Team found no evidence of a systematic approach to the use of Moodle or to consideration of the value that a blended learning approach would bring.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement

Comments

- The Review Team supports the intention of the management to implement equality of opportunity across the Faculty in terms of gender representation in management and governance and in improving the access of people with disabilities to the buildings and

⁶⁷ SER, p. 25.

⁶⁸ SER, p. 26.

programmes. The Review Team also note the intention to improve canteen facilities and social spaces.

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the facilities available in the 3D Printing workshops and sound studio.
- The Review Team commends the on line booking system, which students reported was working well.

Recommendation

R12 The Review Team recommends the Faculty re-evaluates its approach to blended learning and in particular, reinforces amongst staff the potential of the VLE as auxiliary tools to the teaching and learning process.

The Review Team find that FFA is **fully compliant** with Standard 5.1.

5.2 Financial resources

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

FFA BUT financing is based on the rules for financing higher education institutions set by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) policies that result in the application of a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators that then determine the Faculty budget. The SER states on page 22⁶⁹ that the situation of the institutions has recently improved due to the fact that:

“the FFA also recently reached an agreement with the BUT administration on an increase to the Economic Demand Coefficient (KEN), which previously had not been sufficient for the Faculty's operations.”

Another relevant policy change had to do with changes operated at national level in terms of the acknowledgment of arts related research outputs. The implementation of the so called RUV that complements the existing RIV greatly impacted the Faculty financial situation⁷⁰ and will be reflected in the institution's next year budget:

“new support chapter will be added from the so-called ‘Fund of Artistic Activities’ as part of the resources for the executive part of the budget from the next budget period on (2020)”⁷¹.

The RUV is a register of artistic works, which serves as a storage of information about artistic works produced within the framework of creative activities of Universities in the Czech Republic. It is similar to the RIV registry that serves as a platform for science and research. RUV was created to try to rehabilitate and reinforce the role of art in relation with research, as this is often misplaced. On what concerns the needed funding for staff development and research activities, extra funding is also expected to be generated via the implementation of the OP VVV (Operational Program Research, Development, and Education) of the MEYS⁷².

The allocation of funding to the programme is defined at institutional level and the Review Team verified this in meetings with the members of the academic senate⁷³ and the institution senior staff⁷⁴

⁶⁹ SER FFA BUT, p:22

⁷⁰ SER FFA BUT, p:23

⁷¹ SER FFA BUT, p:26

⁷² SER FFA BUT, p:22

⁷³ Meeting 11 with members of the academic senate

⁷⁴ Final meeting 12 with the Dean

that procedures are in place that assure the internal identification of needs and the correct allocation of funds. Operational procedures are slightly impaired by the fact the position of Bursar is currently vacant at Faculty level, but this seems to have no significant impact in the institution's ability to develop and fund the evaluated programme's activities.

The Faculty has in place an internal system of grants⁷⁵ targeting both teachers and students at Master and PhD level that has a very positive impact on the institution. For the long-term, the SER mentions⁷⁶ that the institution should continue to pursue its strategy of multi-source funding and, besides the already mentioned new opportunities that derive from the Artistic Activities Fund, further efforts should be made to attract private funding⁷⁷.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 5.2

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the Institution on the implementation of an internal grants system targeting both Master and PhD students and teachers, the Review Team believes is a core initiative in order to reinforce the research profile of the institution.

The Review Team considers that the institution's financial resources are already in place or planned for the near future to enable successful delivery of the study programmes, the institution being **Fully compliant** with standard 5.2.

5.3 Support staff

Standard: the programme has sufficient qualified support staff

The SER describes⁷⁸ how the support staff is organised in the Faculty along the existing structure of studios and auxiliary departments. During the meeting with the staff⁷⁹ and the tour of the facilities, the Review Team was able to assess how well the programme is served by dedicated and highly engaged staff who demonstrate a proactive approach in their support of the teaching, learning and artistic activities of the programme. A less positive aspect in terms of staff allocation results from the fact that the position of Bursar is currently vacant, but provisions are already being taken to resolve this⁸⁰. The Review Team noted that support staff actively participate in Erasmus exchange and regular staff development activities are offered and encouraged by the University.

The Review Team considers that the programme has sufficient qualified support staff, the institution being **Fully compliant** with standard 5.3.

⁷⁵ SER FFA BUT, p:26

⁷⁶ SER FFA BUT, p:27

⁷⁷ SER FFA BUT, p:28

⁷⁸ SER FFA BUT, p:28

⁷⁹ Meeting 8 with the programme technical staff

⁸⁰ SER FFA BUT, p:28

6. Communication, organisation and decision-making

6.1 Internal communication process

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

The SER describes⁸¹ the existing internal systems for communication, data storage and information processing, namely the IS *Apollo* and common network technologies such as emailing or web based services. The SER also acknowledges in the same chapter⁸² that “*forms of personal communication that exceed normal standards*” (SER, p.29) are a common denominator in terms of internal communication and this is “*both an advantage and a risk*” (SER, p.29). This informal mode of communication is clearly the norm for instance when staff and students’ communication is at stake⁸³, but also in the communication between the different levels of the Faculty, a fact that clearly impacts on the effectiveness of existing communication systems.

FFA BUT has a complex organisational structure⁸⁴, particularly when one considers the size of the institution, and that structure does include a number of bodies where students are represented. One of particular relevance is the Senate, where elected students have a seat. Student feedback is mostly informal and although the SER mentions formal mechanisms for instance for appeals⁸⁵, the Review Team observed that direct informal contact is the dominant mode of communication. The fact that the institution has been unable to fully implement a proper formal mechanism for student feedback via questionnaires, is another factor that impedes the effectiveness of the communication systems.

With reference to the communication of best practices, interesting mechanisms are in place, namely via the ‘artists in residence’ programme⁸⁶ which assures that the programme is able to communicate its best practices to the outside world.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 6.1

Recommendations

R13 The Review Team **recommends** that the Faculty evaluate the effectiveness of its internal communication systems to ensure that key strategic goals are clearly understood and acknowledged at all levels of operation. This should involve a clearer definition of job descriptors and the implementation of communication mechanisms that allow for swifter and more efficient sharing of information.

The Review Team considers that the low level of effectiveness of the institution’s internal communication system prevents the ample dissemination at all levels of the organisation of its key strategic objectives and procedures, the institution being **Partially compliant** with standard 6.1.

6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes

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

As previously mentioned, the institution has a very complex structure composed of several interlinked bodies. In the case of the programme, different bodies and individuals are involved, from

⁸¹ SER FFA BUT, p:29

⁸² SER FFA BUT, p:29

⁸³ Meetings 3,4 and 5 with Teachers and different student bodies

⁸⁴ SER FFA BUT, p:4

⁸⁵ SER FFA BUT, p:30

⁸⁶ Described in the meetings 5, 8 and 12 with teachers, external stakeholders and Dean

the Head of Studios, to the Heads of Department, Curriculum Boards and Programme Guarantors⁸⁷. The ultimate responsibility in almost all academic topics lies with the Dean of the Faculty. The main consultation bodies are the Academic Senate, where different levels of the institution, including students, are represented (4 students, 7 teachers); and the Art Research Board that includes external experts. Other relevant bodies, include the Curriculum Board and the recently set up, Dean's Advisory Board. The Review Team learned through its meetings with teaching and research staff, the Dean of Faculty and the Heads of Department, that relevant matters arising from the meetings of the Academic Senate or the Art Research Board are initially disseminated and discussed at these meetings.

This information, including any agreed proposals or recommendations is then cascaded down to the Dean who assumes the main decision-making role at Faculty level. At programme level, the Head of Studio and the Programme Guarantor, who chairs the curriculum board, have the main decision-making role. During the different meetings with these staff members⁸⁸, the Review Team observed that the roles and responsibilities of these different bodies are not always clearly defined and allocated.

The Review Team recognises the constraints imposed by the Czech Republic statutes for Higher Education, which are in many cases, prescriptive of the formal organisational structures for Higher Education Institutions, including roles and responsibilities. Notwithstanding, the Review Team felt that even within the restrictions, the Faculty was not clear on individual roles and responsibilities with lack of clarity in key roles. In some cases, responsibility for key areas for example Quality Assurance, appear to be spread across a number of individuals with no real agreement as to where accountability lay.

The Review Team recognises that the size of the institution and the dominant informal mode of communication can allow for the smooth circulation of information vertically up and down between the Leadership and the Departments. However the Review Team suggest that the Faculty reconsiders its complex structure and the overlap of responsibilities and functions it can stimulate, which may prevent the institution from implementing a more effective organisational structure. This also prevents the institution from clearly defining and communicating its positioning across all levels of the internal structure and to the outside world. Considering this, the Review Team is of the view that the Faculty needs to improve and sharpen the way it communicates its distinct proposition to the public. Current channels of communication need to better align with the strategic needs of the Faculty.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 6.2

Recommendations

R14 The Review Team recommends that the Faculty reviews the effectiveness of its organisational structure and its associated decision-making processes to ensure that the responsibilities assigned to the Senate, Boards and the Dean's Collegium at Faculty level, and the Guarantors and curriculum board at programme level, are clearly defined and allow for effective and agile decision making.

The Review Team considers that the lack of a clear definition of responsibilities and roles across the different levels of the organisational structure prevents its effectiveness, the institution being **Partially compliant** with standard 6.2.

⁸⁷ SER FFA BUT, p:30-31

⁸⁸ Meetings 2, and 11 and with academic Senate and the senior management group

7. Internal Quality Culture

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

Quality assurance and enhancement procedures

In the University's Strategic Plan, Priority goal 1 is Quality assurance and strategic management.⁸⁹ The actions involved with this priority goal are, amongst others, the use of quality indicators, support of collection of data and subsequent analytical work, and participation in a variety of networks. BUT also describes its quality assurance system in a policy document.⁹⁰

The FFA quality panel informed the Review Team that the notion of QA is quite new for the University. Recently BUT introduced the University-wide SHAP (Academic Quality Assessment System); the FFA has been actively involved in introducing categories relevant to art education in cooperation with the BUT's Academic Affairs Department.⁹¹

The Review Team asked all panels about the different responsibilities in the QA structures. The Review Team inquired along the lines of specific examples. If the content of the Intermediate and Digital Art programme is out of date, what needs to be done? The Review Team was told by the QA panel, that students should inform the Senate. Then the Senate brings it forward to the Curriculum Board. If the Curriculum Board decides to change the programme, it is moved forward to the Vice Dean for Study Affairs. However, when discussing the same example with the Senate, they indicated that curriculum changes are outside their scope and frame of interest; they are a legislative body. The different responsibilities were unclear to all with confirmation of this view from staff, students and the representative bodies in FFA.

The Review Team also used the assessment and feedback structure as an example, to inquire of different panels, who is responsible for addressing the topic. If students feel that the criteria are implicit, the deliberation process should be more transparent and the written feedback needs to be more consistent, who will act on this suggestion for improvement? Again, the Review Team found that it was unclear to many of the people we talked to, who is responsible for implementing the suggestions for improvement. It was unclear whether it was the Guarantor, Vice Dean for Study Affairs or the Curriculum Board, and furthermore it appeared that the autonomy of the Heads of Studios outweighed the collective development of an assessment framework. In the final clarification meeting of the visit the Dean shed some light on this issue, and indicated that the Vice Dean for Study Affairs has worked on a proposal to improve the critique assessment committees, which will be discussed in the near future with all teaching staff. The Dean also indicated that the Vice-Dean has an operational rather than a strategic role.

The QA panel told the Review Team that the curriculum board is the most important committee to discuss programme enhancement. The Guarantor of the Programme chairs this board. The board meets three times per year. During the curriculum board, several proposals for curriculum improvement are submitted and evaluated. The only QA data that is used to inform these proposals are the electronic student evaluations, which it was confirmed by the Dean, have a low response rate. Both BA and MA Students indicated that in the studios they constantly talk about what can be improved, in an informal manner with the Heads of Studio. The Heads of Department confirmed that as well.

The Dean provided the Review Team with a specific recent example. The MA students raised an issue in the electronic surveys. They felt that there was a lack of courses for master studies. Such a topic is addressed in the Curriculum Board. The Curriculum Board discussed this matter and suggested a change in the structure of studies. The Curriculum Board has the authority to decide on

⁸⁹ Strategic Plan, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Rules of the Quality Assurance System for Education, Creative and Related Activities

⁹¹ SER, p. 32.

changes to the programme. The Vice-Dean is not necessarily involved in such a decision, but implements and executes the decision of the Board. The Dean indicated to the Review Team that decisions on what needs to be improved happens often outside board meetings, due to the informal nature of the Faculty. However, he stated that they always go through the formal process as well.

The Review Team also learned from the Dean that there are two types of Guarantors. The first type of Guarantor bears responsibility for the whole programme. One is appointed for the BA and MA; another is responsible for postgraduate studies. The second type of Guarantors are the Heads of Studio, who function as Guarantors of their own studios. The Guarantor of the programme also explained that that he is the Registrar and coordinator of staff's artistic outputs.

According to the QA policy document the Guarantor regularly writes an evaluation report on the study programmer. It was explained to the Review Team, that this consists of a self-evaluation report, which has to be submitted every five years in the context of the accreditation. Since the Faculty has not made a final decision on the institutional accreditation, this report has not been produced. A system of annual QA reports to academic and other teams has not been introduced in the Faculty.

Review and monitoring of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures

The quality assurance and enhancement procedures have been defined by the University Academic Affairs Department. The Review Team learned that within FFA the Vice-Dean of Quality Assurance and Research bears the main responsibility for communicating with the BUT Rectorate on matters of QA. FFA's Vice-Dean for QA and Research confirmed to the Review Team that she is collaborating with the University to widen the range of QA measures and instruments to reflect the specifics of Fine Art. FFA has different content and processes than the rest of the University, specific to arts education rather than technical education. FFA's QA panel indicated that FFA is setting up a new process to collect and evaluate data.

Institutional benchmarks/metric for programmes to measure success

The FFA Strategic Plan mentions the use of quality indicators, the collection of data and subsequent analytical work. The FFA quality panel and Senate informed the Review Team that these indicators are limited to the number of students interested and admitted dropout rates, student access, alumni, RUV, and RIV data.

Representation of stakeholders in QA and enhancement procedures

The Curriculum Board meets regularly, with the participation of representatives of the Faculty leadership, members of the Department of Art History and Theory, Studio Heads, instructors, representatives of the student community, and representatives of the professional public (chaired by the study programme). Instructors' meetings are held regularly and are attended by The FFA leadership (convened and chaired by the Dean).⁹² Teaching staff confirmed to the Review Team that these meetings are held two to three times per year.

Students and staff are represented in the Senate. Students indicated to the Review Team that they could submit problems to the Senate. The last topic discussed was the canteen. Students were aware of who represents them in the Senate.

The Review Team found that key stakeholders are represented in the different boards and committees, although the involvement from the gaming industries could be improved.

⁹² SER, p. 32.

There are written minutes of all committees, which are accessible to all. The QA panel indicated that teaching staff have access online to basic metrics. Staff are not obliged to respond to or reflect upon student evaluations.

So far, the FFA has no effective mechanism for monitoring the quality of graduates. One criteria used in budgeting is the degree of employability of graduates in practice; this data is taken from the Labour Office every year. However, the FFA makes use of strong individual ties to external studios, with the number of students in all years ranging from 10 to 20 per studio. The Faculty has a complete database of its alumni (1404 names), including the last-known correspondence and email addresses.⁹³

Quality culture

In the SER, the programme indicated that, since the election of new Dean in February 2019 and the consequent partial changes of personnel representing the FFA leadership, the quality assurance, which had been executed in a managerial manner, has shifted to more horizontal decision-making processes and more emphasis has been placed on the existence and support of student initiatives.⁹⁴

The Review Team found evidence among all panels that this is indeed the case. The Review Team concludes that there is a strong collective and self-determined QA culture among FFA management, staff and students. At the same time, this culture contrasts with the introduction of the University's QA system, which is regarded as much more system-controlled and managerial.

Comments, commendations and recommendations for standard 7

Recommendations

- R8 The Review Team supports and recommends the Faculty's ambition to develop an effective system for monitoring the quality of graduates.
- R15 The Faculty needs to develop a QA plan and system, which fits the culture of the Faculty and balances informal and formal procedures, quantitative and qualitative data and criteria. This would involve making smarter use of quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide better and more effective feedback on the quality of its provision.
- R16 The Faculty needs to create stronger feedback loops between its programmes and the evolving needs of the creative sector. While the gallery, and curatorial sector seems very well represented on Faculty bodies, Gaming, and 3D Printing and the Applied Art and Design sector are underrepresented.

The Review Team find that on the basis of the lack of clarity in the responsibilities for QA actions, the limited use of quantitative and qualitative data and criteria, FFA is **partially compliant** with Standard 7.

⁹³ SER, p. 10.

⁹⁴ SER, p. 33.

8. Public interaction

8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts

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

The FFA at BUT brings considerable exposure to the cultural and educational sector in Brno, the region, and the Republic as a whole. The Faculty, its staff, students, and alumni play an important part in local, regional, and national networks of practitioners, and are involved with a number of initiatives, festivals, exchanges, and programmes that enrich cultural life in Brno and beyond. A commendable volume of print and online publications, produced by Faculty staff and students, betrays a notable depth of artistic, theoretical and cultural output that helps inform contemporary debates within the sector.

On the whole, the FFA, mainly through its broad and deep network of personal contacts, particularly from within the fine arts community, appears to be well involved in cultural, social and artistic projects at local, regional and national level. As a founding member of the *Czech Association of Art Faculties*, FFA makes its voice heard with peers and policy makers on a national level.

Furthermore, the FFA enjoys strong links with the local gaming community, and local manufacturers of 3D printing equipment, which support the Faculty with hardware and expertise. The Review Team noted the unique and as yet not fully realised opportunities that these partnerships can bring, particularly in terms of the programmes under review, as well as FFA's proposition and positioning within the education sector in general.

At the same time, the FFA continues to build on its existing public profile by providing support to student and staff mobility at a regional, national and international level. Furthermore, the FFA aspires to setting up 'incubators' that offer opportunities to the best graduates, in order to encourage more alumni to remain in Brno and the region. The Review Team noted FFA's first such initiative, the 'House of Art', and supports FFA's ambition to create additional, similar opportunities locally, further bridging University and professional life in Brno and the region.

FFA's reach beyond national borders comprises of projects that fall mainly under *Free Mover*, and *Erasmus* programmes, as well as competitions and initiatives in concert with other institutional partners and colleagues. The SER acknowledges, however, that 'from an international point of view [...] the position of the Faculty is not very significant yet,'⁹⁵ while Alumni noted that, as yet, there were no on-going, systemic programmes for regular staff visits from international partner institutions beyond those organised as a result of Faculty members' personal contacts.⁹⁶ The Review Team acknowledges FFA's ambition to attract more regular visits from a wider range of foreign lecturers, and Review Team welcomes the idea of making 'open studio' workspaces available for visitors.⁹⁷

While the Review Team finds that, on the whole, the FFA, and its *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme engage well with the local, regional, national cultural, artistic, and educational contexts, question marks remain as to whether FFA and the programme prepare students sufficiently well to advance society through their knowledge, and skills acquired.

Students agreed, "*We care about actual politics, climate, LGBT (...) and we do art which is connected to the [political] situation*"⁹⁸; students are also encouraged to visit off-site galleries, and make use of

⁹⁵ SER, p.33

⁹⁶ Meeting 6 with Alumni

⁹⁷ Meeting 1 with Head of Institution

⁹⁸ Meeting 4 with MA students

two on-campus galleries; FFA stakeholders regularly enter the public debate,⁹⁹ and enjoy great freedom to develop their individual identities.

Despite evidence of good external relationships, the Review Team found evidence in a number of meetings that, on the whole, FFA's provision of teaching, specific to the needs of the *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme, and focussed on tangible, professional skills in preparation of entrepreneurial, artistic, and commercial practice was at best inconsistent, and at worst non-existent.¹⁰⁰ Internships are optional, rather than compulsory, and feedback from a broader-based sample of the professional sector, beyond the immediate artistic community, is not yet captured systematically and consistently. The Review Team noted that this constitutes an unnecessary impediment to the ability of graduates to advance their own careers, and society as a whole.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.1

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the Faculty on its ability to outreach to the local regional and national community and implement a system of best practices in relation both to intervention in the local and regional public sphere and the insertion of students in the local scene.
- The Review Team commends the fact that the Faculty through its network of personal contacts between its teachers and external stakeholders, particularly from the fine arts sector, seems well involved in cultural and social projects at local and national level

Recommendations

R17 The Review Team recommends that the programme provide greater focus on tangible professional skills and mandatory internships, to better prepare students for entrepreneurial, artistic, and commercial practices.

The Review Team find that, the FFA at Brno University of Technology is **substantially compliant** with Standard 8.1.

8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions

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

The SER states that 'the composition of the {...} study programme reflects the focus of traditional art disciplines'¹⁰¹ like sculpture, painting, drawing and graphics, with many of its Studio Heads respected members of the artist community in the Czech Republic. As such, the programme seems to engage very well with stakeholders from the fine art, public art and gallery sector in Brno, and beyond. Largely maintained through personal contacts, a network of curators, artists, and members of the public art sector are represented by a number of stakeholders in advisory and operational Faculty bodies, such as the *Art and Research Board*, the *Gallery Advisory Board* and various *Critique-*, and *Final State Exam Committees*.

Beyond classical fine art disciplines, however, the Review Team found less than clear evidence of stakeholder representation from other creative sectors.¹⁰² This seems somewhat at odds with the Faculty's ambitions for its *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme, and the closely related, fast

⁹⁹ Meeting 2 with Head of Programmes

¹⁰⁰ Meetings 3 and 6 with Alumni, BA Students from the programme

¹⁰¹ SER, p.34

¹⁰² Meeting 1 with Head of Institution

evolving new practices that are relevant to the remit of the programme, not least Gaming, and 3D printing.¹⁰³

While FFA clearly promotes the notion of its *Intermedia and Digital Art* students as ‘distinctive individuals’¹⁰⁴, who bring creative ‘trouble-making’, and ‘disruption’¹⁰⁵ into the context of commercial practices (such as gaming), it is not obvious whether FFA has established reliable feedback mechanisms with the commercial sector that would provide a credible backdrop for this assertion.

At the same time, the Review Team acknowledges that the Faculty does seem to want to position its *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme in the context of thriving local, regional, and national creative ecosystems, not least the games industry in and around Brno. Internships however do not appear to be mandatory across all programmes; preparation for the professional world is inconsistent across studios, and visits from professional stakeholders, or indeed members of other disciplines largely depend on personal contacts, rather than formalised processes.¹⁰⁶

The Review Team is unclear, beyond a network of individual, personal contacts between Faculty members and outside stakeholders, what systemic mechanisms exist that enable evolving insights from commercial creative sectors to inform the *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme in particular. The Review Team is not clear how the programme intends to assess and monitor reliably the needs of the professions beyond its more loosely stated concepts of ‘Intermediality.’¹⁰⁷ The Review Team heard that feedback from the professional sector seems largely based on personal contacts, rather than a wider, robust sample of reliable quantitative and qualitative data relating to graduate, and alumni career paths; this presents a considerable tension that remains to be resolved convincingly.

At the same time, the Review Team was pleased to hear that staff and students were generally well supported to undertake outside initiatives, and external projects. In their meetings with the Review Team, both, teachers and staff confirmed that grants, technical and production expertise are made available through open application processes, competitions, and other initiatives. Students also noted as a positive that ‘tutors can always find us someone to talk to outside the Faculty.’¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Review Team was told that some Faculty members are engaged in teaching life drawing and sculpture courses that are open to the public, as part of the *University of the Third Age* at the Institute of Lifelong Learning at BUT. The Review Team was told that Lifelong Learning opportunities and support for programme teachers and FFA employees are also available through Erasmus Plus, and the Centre of Next Education. Even so, it was less than clear, what formalised appraisal processes exist for Faculty staff that encourage, or indeed mandate uptake of CPD, and lifelong learning opportunities.

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.2

Commendations

- The Review Team commends the Faculty on the implementation of the programme ‘artists in residence’ one example of which is the partnership with ‘The House of Arts; the Review Team view this as an example of best practice to be further reinforced.
- The Review Team commends the developing focus on Gaming and 3D printing which strengthens the Faculty and provides opportunities for commercial activities.

Recommendations

¹⁰³ Review Team meeting with

¹⁰⁴ SER, p.9

¹⁰⁵ Meeting 2 with Heads of Programme

¹⁰⁶ Meeting 3 with BA Students

¹⁰⁷ ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Meeting 4 with MA students

- R9 Acknowledging the Faculty's well-regarded place within the Gaming and 3D Printing sector in Brno, the Faculty needs to make more of the expertise, and opportunities its commercial and Faculty partners can bring.
- R18 The Review Team recommends that greater effort is made to capture more representative samples of quantitative and qualitative data in order to better integrate the needs of the professional sector with teaching and learning at programme level.
- R19 The Review Team recommends that the Faculty define clear guidelines and procedures in relation to the management of Intellectual Property, protection of authorship and commercialisation of education and research outputs.

The Review Team find that, the FFA at Brno University of Technology is **substantially compliant** with Standard 8.2.

8.3 Information provided to the public

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

FFA disseminates a selection of self-published materials, ranging from press releases to information brochures, leaflets, posters, banners, newsletters, as well as various online resources, including the Faculty website. Furthermore, both BUT, and FFA maintain a presence on Social Media.

The Review Team was told that the Faculty does not have a single point of reference for its publication activities. Instead, a number of stakeholders seem to be involved with publication activities, and content moderation: the current Head of IT, who also serves as webmaster, the Head of the FFA Production Department, as well as the leadership of FFA.¹⁰⁹

With the publishing remit shared between various stakeholders, areas of responsibility do not appear to be particularly clear. According to the SER, the Production Department at FFA 'performs proactive monitoring and continuous information collection,'¹¹⁰ while 'information freely distributed by the students is reviewed retroactively, yet it is not clear who monitors this information retroactively. At the same time, the SER states that 'the mechanism of checking the content of official information published by the FFA is ensured both by the FFA Department of Production, the leadership of FFA, and the webmaster of the FFA.'¹¹¹ The SER further notes that 'the content of announcements and access to the administration of the website is limited to a few people.'¹¹² It does not detail exactly who these people are, nor does it outline exactly how responsibilities are divided.

With responsibilities shared as described, the Review Team was therefore unable to get a clear idea in terms of what formalised mechanisms, policies or processes exist to ensure that information is consistently reviewed before it goes public, and that it is in line with the content of the *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme in particular, or indeed that ethical considerations are being addressed before going public.

It was also not clear to what degree FFA shares, or indeed intends to share, with the public beyond the publication of final BA and MA theses, any results of its QAE processes that are specific to the *Intermedia and Digital Art* programme.

¹⁰⁹ Meeting 8 with Technical Support Staff

¹¹⁰ SER, p.35

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² *ibid*

Comments, commendations, and recommendations for improvement for Standard 8.3

Recommendations

- R20 The Faculty needs to improve and sharpen the way it communicates its distinct proposition to the public. Current channels of communication need to better align with the strategic needs of the Faculty.
- R21 The Review Team recommends that FFA assesses and streamlines the mechanisms that are in place to review information before it goes public.
- R22 The Review Team recommends that FFA review its policy of sharing QAE-related information with the public with the aim of providing greater transparency to the public.

The Review Team find that, the FFA at Brno University of Technology is **partially compliant** with Standard 8.3.

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

EQ-Arts Standards	Compliance: Fully – F Partially - P Substantially - S Not - N	Remarks
<i>Standard 1</i> The programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission.	Fully Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R1
<i>Standard 2.1</i> The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.	Substantially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R2, R3 and R4
<i>Standard 2.2</i> The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.	Substantially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R5 and R6
<i>Standard 2.3</i> Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R7
<i>Standard 3.1</i> There are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.	Fully Compliant	No recommendations
<i>Standard 3.2</i> The programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R8 and R9
<i>Standard 4.1</i> Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers.	Substantially Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R10
<i>Standard 4.2</i> There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.	Fully Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R11
<i>Standard 5.1</i> The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.	Fully Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R12
<i>Standard 5.2</i> The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.	Fully Compliant	No recommendations
<i>Standard 5.3</i> The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	Fully Compliant	No recommendations
<i>Standard 6.1</i> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R13
<i>Standard 6.2</i> The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendation R14
<i>Standard 7</i> The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R8, R15 and R16
<i>Standard 8.1</i> The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Substantially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R17

<i>Standard 8.2</i> The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Substantially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R9, R18 and R19
<i>Standard 8.3</i> Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate.	Partially Compliant	Refer to Recommendations R20, R21 and R22

10. Summary of strong points, recommendations and conditions

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

List of strong points

- *The Review Team commends the developing focus on Gaming and 3D printing which strengthens the Faculty and provides opportunities for commercial activities.*
- *The Review Team commends the increasing number of optional courses available across the Faculty and across the University*
- *The Review Team commends the levels of staff, teachers and student mobility and the opportunities for international exchanges and exhibiting abroad through Erasmus and other projects and partnerships*
- *The Review Team commends the facilities available in the 3D Printing workshops and sound studio.*
- *The Review Team commends the on line booking system, which students reported was working well.*
- *The Review Team commends the Institution on the implementation of an internal grants system targeting both Master and PhD students and teachers, the Review Team believes is a core initiative in order to reinforce the research profile of the institution.*
- *The Review Team commends the Faculty on its ability to outreach to the local and regional community and implement a system of best practices in relation both to intervention in the local and regional public sphere and the insertion of students in the local scene.*
- *The Review Team commends the fact that the Faculty through its network of personal contacts between its teachers and external stakeholders, particularly from the fine arts sector, seems well involved in cultural and social projects at local and national level*
- *The Review Team commends the Faculty on the implementation of the programme 'artists in residence' one example of which is the partnership with 'The House of Arts; the Review Team view this as an example of best practice to be further reinforced.*

Recommendations for further development

- R1** *The Review Team recommends the institution defines its position towards institutional accreditation and initiates the implementation of the measures related to that process.*

- R2** *The Faculty needs to simplify the structure of the studios to enable full use by the disciplines available in the Faculty and BUT and to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborative work.*
- R3** *The Review Team recommends the Faculty creates and implements at Master and PhD level specific programmes targeting entrepreneurship education and the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set amongst graduates.*
- R4** *The Faculty needs to acknowledge the importance and relevance of level descriptors for the different programmes. The Review Team recommends implementing and aligning them with European Qualification Frameworks and Tuning Documents.*
- R5** *The Review Team recommends the institution further defines a clearer strategy for internationalisation, including the development of specific educational offerings in the English language.*
- R6** *The Review Team recommends the institution implements a strategy that fosters the reinforcement of research activities with an international dimension, to include its plans for further involvement in international research projects and applications.*
- R7** *The Faculty needs to articulate clear strategies, guidelines, criteria and matrixes for assessment of practical work, to implement it across all studios to ensure consistency and to improve the depth of written feedback for students.*
- R8** *The Review Team supports and recommends the Faculty's ambition to develop an effective system for monitoring the quality of graduates.*
- R9** *Acknowledging the Faculty's well-regarded place within the Gaming, and 3D Printing sector in Brno, the Faculty needs to make more of the expertise, and opportunities its commercial and Faculty partners can bring.*
- R10** *The Faculty needs to implement a system for formal staff appraisal, including arrangements for Continuous Professional Development. The Review Team recommends consideration of compulsory pedagogical training for all teaching staff.*
- R11** *The Review Team recommends the Faculty further reinforces its focus on research namely via the implementation of tailored programmes designed to reinforce training on research methods at all levels with the final goal of increasing its research activities and raising the profile of the Faculty in this domain. The Review Team recommends the Faculty take opportunity of the OP VVV project to reinforce these skills in particular at staff level.*

- R12** *The Review Team recommends the Faculty re-evaluates its approach to blended learning and in particular, reinforces amongst staff the potential of the VLE as auxiliary tools to the teaching and learning process.*
- R13** *The Review Team recommends that the Faculty evaluate the effectiveness of its internal communication systems to ensure that key strategic goals are clearly understood and acknowledged at all levels of operation. This should involve a clearer definition of job descriptors and the implementation of communication mechanisms that allow for swifter and more efficient sharing of information.*
- R14** *The Review Team recommends that the Faculty reviews the effectiveness of its organisational structure and its associated decision-making processes to ensure that the responsibilities assigned to the Senate, Boards and the Dean's Collegium at Faculty level, and the Guarantors and curriculum board at programme level, are clearly defined and allow for effective and agile decision making.*
- R15** *The Faculty needs to develop a QA plan and system, which fits the culture of the Faculty and balances informal and formal procedures, quantitative and qualitative data and criteria. This would involve making smarter use of quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide better and more effective feedback on the quality of its provision.*
- R16** *The Faculty needs to create stronger feedback loops between its programmes and the evolving needs of the creative sector. While the gallery, and curatorial sector seems very well represented on Faculty bodies, Gaming, and 3D Printing and the Applied Art and Design sector are underrepresented.*
- R17** *The Review Team recommends that the programme provide greater focus on tangible professional skills and mandatory internships, to better prepare students for entrepreneurial, artistic, and commercial practices.*
- R18** *The Review Team recommends that greater effort is made to capture more representative samples of quantitative and qualitative data in order to better integrate the needs of the professional sector with teaching and learning at programme level.*
- R19** *The Review Team recommends that the Faculty define clear guidelines and procedures in relation to the management of Intellectual Property, protection of authorship and commercialisation of education and research outputs.*

R20 *The Faculty needs to improve and sharpen the way it communicates its distinct proposition to the public. Current channels of communication need to better align with the strategic needs of the Faculty.*

R21 *The Review Team recommends that FFA assesses and streamlines the mechanisms that are in place to review information before it goes public.*

R22 *The Review Team recommends that FFA review its policy of sharing QAE-related information with the public with the aim of providing greater transparency to the public.*

Conditions for further development (if appropriate)

No conditions.

11. Conclusion

The Review Team welcomed the invitation to review the Faculty and its provision and quality assurance and enhancement. Our intention as a panel was to act a critical friend and offer recommendations to enable the Faculty to enhance the quality of provision of its programmes, quality systems and the student involvement and experience. We are aware that the Faculty is in the process of developing its next Strategic Plan and we hope that the recommendations we make will be useful in informing the future direction of the Faculty.

We understand fully the nature of the Faculty and recognise the need to maintain the unique focus of an Arts Faculty and its outputs at the same time as ensuring that robust systems to assure and enhance quality are in place. The Review Team also note the issues raised in ensuring that the Arts Faculty is fully valued and supported at the level of the University. We also noted that the relationship between the larger BUT and the Faculty would be important to develop from a position of mutual respect and valuing the role of the Arts within the overall University provision.

The Review Team would like to acknowledge that the Faculty is in a period of transformation in terms of its both future direction and accreditation, but also in terms of its programmes, processes and ways of working. The Review Team acknowledge that the recent changes at management level and proposed changes in management structures are contributing to this transformation.

The Review Team note that the Faculty has not yet made a final strategic decision on the future route for accreditation. The Review Team also note the issues raised in ensuring that the Arts Faculty is fully valued and supported at the level of the University to support a potential application for accreditation.

The Review Team note that students seem generally satisfied with their programmes and the teaching they receive. There was a sense of an amicable working atmosphere amongst staff and students. Staff appeared committed to their disciplines. Students generally expressed an appreciation of the close working relationship possible with individual staff and a commitment and loyalty to their programmes. The Review Team note the positive staff student ratios within the Faculty.

The Review Team also supports the intention of the management to implement equality of opportunity across the Faculty in terms of gender representation in management and governance and in improving disabled access to the buildings and programmes. The Review Team also note the intention to improve canteen facilities and social spaces.

The features that made the strongest impression on the Review Team during the site included the levels of staff, teachers and student mobility and the opportunities for international exchanges and exhibiting abroad through Erasmus and other projects and partnerships and the positive relationships between staff and students.

The Review Team also acknowledged the Faculty's success in relation to outreach to the local and regional community and implement a system of best practices in relation both to intervention in the local and regional public sphere and the insertion of students in the local scene.

The Review Team commends the fact that the Faculty through its network of personal contacts between its teachers and external stakeholders, particularly from the fine arts sector, seems well involved in cultural and social projects at local and national level

The Review Team commends the Faculty on the implementation of the programme 'artists in residence' one example of which is the partnership with 'The House of Arts', the Review Team view this this as an example of best practice to be further reinforced.

There were a number of areas for improvement noted by the Review Team. A critical one for FFA is the need to evaluate the effectiveness of its internal communication systems to ensure that key strategic goals are clearly understood and acknowledged at all levels of operation. This should involve a clearer definition of job descriptors but also a reinforcement of the Faculty marketing and branding strategy namely via the implementation of communication mechanisms that allow for swifter and more efficient sharing of information.

A clearer and more universally understood organisational structure would also support the development of the Faculty going forward. The Review Team recommends that the Faculty reviews the effectiveness of its QA processes, its organisational structure and associated decision-making processes, to ensure that the responsibilities assigned to the Senate, Boards and the Dean's Collegium at Faculty level, and the Guarantors and curriculum board at programme level, are clearly defined and allow for efficient and agile decision making and review .

The Review Team would like to thank all the staff and students and teams we met, we valued the openness of the discussion and their hospitality. Thanks also to Richard Fanor for the liaison and for helping us understand key issues and the education system in the Czech Republic

Annex 1 – List of supporting documents

- The Statute
- BUT Annual Report 2018*
- BUT Strategic Plan 2016–2020*
- Plan of implementation of Strategic Plan BUT 2019*
- Consolidated Version of The Study and Examination Rules of BUT
- Rules of the Quality Assurance System
- Consolidated version of The Rules of BUT Programmes
- Consolidated Version of The Rules for Selection Procedures at BUT
- BUT Rules of Habilitation Procedure and Procedure to Attain Professorship
- Rules of Procedure of the Internal Evaluation Board of BUT
- Applicants and Students with Special Need at BUT
- Disciplinary Rules for Students
- Code of Conduct BUT
- Format, Submission and Publication of Final Theses
- Accommodation Grant and Scholarship for Students in Difficult Social Situations
- Entrance examination statistics