



# EQ-Arts Review Report

## Programme Enhancement Review

AUDIOVISUAL ARTS PROGRAMME

KASK & Conservatorium School of Arts Gent (BE)

27 – 30 April 2025

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## Overview of EQ-Arts Standards and Criteria

EQ-Arts Standards	Criteria
<p><b>1. Quality Assurance Policy</b></p> <p>The institution's mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning &amp; teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.</p>	<p>1.1 The QA policy is clearly inspired by and linked with the institution's mission, strategy, and policies for learning &amp; teaching and research</p> <p>1.2 The institution's mission, strategic plan and policies respond to, and impact upon, the Creative, Performing Arts and Design (CPAD) sector and societal needs locally, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>1.3 The institution has Equal Opportunities and Inclusion &amp; Diversity strategies that cover all its operational activities</p> <p>1.4 The institution has an appropriate organisational structure, allied with, and aligned to clear, inclusive and effective decision-making processes that enable it to realise its mission and meet its stated strategic objectives.</p> <p>1.5 The institution uses an appropriate set of qualitative and quantitative indicators, to critically evaluate, accurately measure and monitor its progress towards the realisation of its stated strategic objectives.</p> <p>1.6 The QA policy is designed to foster an institution-wide quality culture that promotes continuous development and enhancement as well as innovation in cooperation with the CPAD sector.</p>
<p><b>2. Student-Centred Learning</b></p> <p>The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centered approaches to learning and assessment processes.</p>	<p>2.1 The design of the study programmes is aligned with institutional vision, mission and strategies.</p> <p>2.2 Study programmes, and their intended learning outcomes (LOs) are designed, and regularly approved, including with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>2.3 The learning, teaching and assessment methods and criteria are effectively aligned with intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>2.4 Students are made fully aware of relevant assessment criteria and receive clear, objective, and timely feedback on their level of achievement against the learning outcomes.</p> <p>2.5 Students are challenged and enabled to take an active role in their learning processes.</p> <p>2.6 Students are provided with opportunities to engage with related professional practices and the world of work as part of their study programme.</p> <p>2.7 The curricula of all undergraduate programmes are informed by leading research in the subject field. The curricula of postgraduate programmes also actively engage students in research.</p>
<p><b>3. Assuring the Student Study Experience</b></p> <p>The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience</p>	<p>3.1 The institution and its programmes consistently apply regulations on the whole cycle of the student experience addressing application &amp; admissions, recognition for prior learning, and progression &amp; achievement.</p> <p>3.2 The regulations pertaining to the student experience are applied according to the specific rights of the students, their individual rights and their diversity.</p>

EQ-Arts Standards	Criteria
<b>4. Human Resources</b>  The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.	4.1 The compliment of teaching, research, academic management, and study support staff available to students is sufficient to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes. 4.2 The competences of the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes. 4.3 The institution recruits the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff in accordance with their Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity Strategies. 4.4 The institution offers its staff career opportunities that are equitable, enables them to improve their performance, to achieve their personal ambitions and engage with the strategic priorities of the institution and developments across the wider CPAD sector.
<b>5. Learning &amp; Teaching Resources</b>  The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning & teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes	5.1 The institution allocates appropriate financial resources to the material support of all aspects of student learning, including intended Learning Outcomes. 5.2 The institution makes appropriate resources available to deliver the relevant quality of research. 5.3 The institution ensures that the technical, digital and physical infrastructure made available to students enables them to achieve the intended Learning Outcomes. 5.4 An appropriate range of study, research and individual well-being support & guidance is readily accessible to all students.
<b>6. Communication</b>  The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.	6.1 The institution collects, analyses and uses relevant to support the effective management of its programmes and other activities. 6.2 The institution's internal communication systems are accessible to all students and staff and enable vertical and horizontal interaction between all its internal stakeholders. 6.3 The institution's approach to external communication, welcomes and facilitates communication from and with external stakeholders. 6.4 The internal and external communication systems ensure that information published by the institution is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.
<b>7. Quality Assurance Processes</b>  The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.	7.1 The institution's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system effectively monitors and reviews its formal processes and each of its study programmes on a regular basis. 7.2 The institution and its programmes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) on a regular basis. 7.3 The institution involves the participation of internal and external peers/experts and stakeholders in its IQA and EQA processes. 7.4 The institution's IQA system, and its cycles, are designed to ensure that its outcomes both assure and enhance its provision.

The outcomes of all EQ-Arts quality assurance and quality enhancement reviews will be a report written by a Review Team composed of international subject specialists in the CPAD sector. All such reports will be permanently lodged in the public domain via the EQ-Arts website. All reports will identify areas of good practice, potential areas for further development and perceived weaknesses. Accreditation and Validation reports will, additionally, include a formal recommendation on the accreditation/validation outcomes along with any conditions or requirements that may, or may not, be attached to these.

Each finding determined by the review is substantiated within the information provided by the institution (including the SER and its appendices) and/or evidence gathered during the Evaluation Team's discussions with the groups of staff, students, graduates and other stakeholders during the on-site visits.

The EQ-Arts Board will base its decisions concerning recommendations, conditions and accreditation on the basis of the recommendations as set out in the report they receive from the Review Teams.

Review reports conclude with a set of judgments, collectively agreed by the Review Team – and based upon the evidence provided by the institution and/or evidence gathered during the site visits – in respect of each of the seven EQ-Arts standards. There are three levels of judgment available to review teams in making their judgement against each standard:

- **Fully compliant** (the institution meets the standard in all respects);
- **Partially or substantially compliant** (the institution meets the standard in most, or some, respects);
- **Not compliant** (the institution fails to meet the standard in all, or almost all, respects).

More information regarding the EQ-Arts Enhancement and Accreditation Review process can be downloaded from the EQ-Arts website at:

<http://www.eq-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Annex-22-EQ-Arts-Quality-Framework-for-Accreditation-and-Assessment-5.7.20.pdf>

## 0. Introduction

The Audiovisual Arts Programme at KASK & Conservatorium, part of HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Ghent, Belgium, delivers higher education in the creative and performing arts through dedicated programmes in Film and Animation. The School of Arts is one of the key faculties of HOGENT, which itself is a publicly funded institution and part of the Flemish higher education landscape. The School of Arts comprises of the Conservatorium and KASK, both of which are located on the Bijloke site in Ghent, with Audiovisual Arts (hereinafter 'AVA') offered alongside Music, Fine Arts, Drama and the Educational Masters.

KASK & Conservatorium's mission emphasises critical artistic development, reflective thinking, and interdisciplinary practice. The Education Plan outlines a commitment to fostering inclusive, flexible, and student-centred learning environments that support diverse artistic trajectories. AVA is built around small-scale education and an intensive mentorship model, with students encouraged to develop their own voice through exploration, dialogue, and close contact with practicing artists and researchers. Artistic freedom and autonomy are hallmarks of the programme's pedagogical approach, supported by a curriculum that balances individual development with collaborative learning and sector engagement.

AVA KASK offers a three-year Dutch-taught academic BA of Audiovisual Arts and a one-year academic MA degree, available in both Dutch and English. The BA is divided into two specialisations: Film and Animation. These continue into MA level, where students produce a final artistic project accompanied by a written thesis, supported through critical feedback, mentorship, the expertise of the technical staff, and research-informed teaching. The programme awards academic degrees under the Flemish Qualifications Framework (Vlaamse Kwalificatiestructuur – VKS), aligned with EQF Level 6 (BA) and Level 7 (MA).

The EQ-Arts external quality enhancement review was initiated in response to the School of Arts' commitment to continual quality enhancement and international benchmarking. The review covered both institutional processes and programme-level provision. KASK & Conservatorium submitted a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report (hereinafter 'SER') supported by annexes, including a curriculum matrix, Education Plan, strategic documentation, and evaluation reports. The review process followed EQ-Arts' four-stage methodology, including desk analysis of the SER and annexes, a site visit, stakeholder meetings, and production of a final report.

The review visit took place in April 2025. The Review Team met with a wide range of stakeholders including students, teachers, heads of programme, researchers, alumni, professional field representatives, technical staff and senior management. The visits also included tours of the educational facilities, exhibition spaces, and KASKcinema. The Review Team would like to acknowledge the considerable effort and openness shown by the AVA KASK community throughout the process, and the warm hospitality shown to the Review Team during their time in Ghent. The SER was honest, reflective, and forward-looking, providing a clear framework for evaluating the current state of the programme and identifying areas for development.

This report evaluates the AVA Film and Animation programmes against the seven EQ-Arts Standards for Programme Review, with reference to both the BA and MA levels. The Review Team has provided evidence-based commendations and recommendations for each of the EQ-Arts standards with the aim of supporting the School of Arts in its ongoing commitment to academic and artistic excellence. **It is important to emphasise that this review has been conducted as a quality enhancement exercise.** Any indicative gradings or levels of compliance referenced in the report should be understood as reflective guidance rather than formal accreditation outcomes. They represent the Review Team's considered judgement on current practice and are intended to support the institution and programmes in achieving their strategic, academic, and educational ambitions.

The Review Team was constituted as follows:

- Prof. em. Anton Rey (Chair) – Head of Institute for the Performing Arts and Film, Zurich University of Arts, Switzerland;
- Marta Lamperová - Vice Dean of Study Affairs, FAMU Prague, Czech Republic;
- Dr Tina Ohnmacht – Co-Head of Master of Arts in Film, responsible for MA Animation; Lucerne School of Design, Film and Art, Switzerland;
- Kristaps Opīcāns – PhD student, Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia;
- Anna Brown (Secretary) – Research Impact Manager, University of Westminster, UK

## 1. Quality Assurance Policy

**Standard:** The institution's mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning & teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.

### Description of Provision

1.1 The QA policy is clearly inspired by and linked with the institution's mission, strategy, and policies for learning & teaching and research.

KASK & Conservatorium's quality assurance (hereinafter 'QA') policy is embedded within the broader institutional framework of HOGENT's Strategic Plan and Financial Plan for 2023–2028. QA processes are structured around a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle that supports a culture of continuous improvement and strategic responsiveness. Programme-specific action plans for AVA KASK are developed in alignment with this institutional strategy and are subject to two-year review through formalised internal procedures. These localised action plans are designed collaboratively between programme leadership and central institutional stakeholders and are informed by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, including student feedback and performance indicators (*Source: SER, pg. 46; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

The institutional mission and educational values of KASK are central to the development of QA processes. The educational plan articulates a dual function, it is both descriptive and directional, and frames the student's academic journey as a personal project rooted in artistic inquiry, reflection, and self-determination (*Source: SER, pg. 8*). The school promotes pedagogical approaches that are practice-based and interdisciplinary, while fostering an atmosphere of trust that stimulates students and allows for research, experimentation and innovation (*Source: SER, pg. 8*). This philosophy is reflected in both curriculum design and extra-curricular activities, including KASKcinema, KIOSK gallery, and partnerships with cultural organisations and festivals. Through these, the institution connects its teaching to broader societal and global contexts, in line with its ambition to contribute to a critical, creative and open society (*Source: SER, pg. 7; Meeting with Heads of Institution*).

Strategic development is overseen at both institutional and programme levels. Senior leadership confirmed that programme-specific QA goals are updated every two-years, and linked to institutional key performance indicators, reinforcing the alignment between operational planning and the institution's core mission (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Institution; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). Among the students, awareness of the QA structures underpinning academic programmes is still limited with some students (*Source: Meeting with BA students*).

Although students engage in feedback activities such as surveys and evaluations, few could explain how their input informs programme development or decision-making. Some reported learning of committee involvement “through word of mouth” rather than formal nomination and election, and some expressed uncertainties about whether their feedback leads to action, citing a lack of follow-up communication (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA students*). This indicates a slight disconnect between the formal QA framework and student understanding and highlights the need to continue to improve transparency and involve students actively in quality processes.

**1.2 The institution’s mission, strategic plan and policies respond to, and impact upon, the Creative, Performing Arts and Design (CPAD) sector and societal needs locally, nationally, and internationally.**

At institutional level, HOGENT’s QA framework mandates the involvement of external stakeholders in the design and review of academic provision. Within the School of Arts (KASK & Conservatorium), this is implemented through Professional Field Committees, which act as formal advisory bodies. Each programme, including Film and Animation at AVA KASK, convenes these committees to ensure alignment with sector developments and graduate employability. The committees “advise on the programme profile, student competencies, curriculum relevance, and employability trends,” with outcomes shared with staff and students to inform curriculum updates (*Source: SER, pg. 46*).

At programme level, AVA KASK maintains strong and embedded relationships with the CPAD sector through both formal and informal mechanisms. During the review, external stakeholders confirmed close collaboration with the Film and Animation programmes. One noted they had employed several people from the school and described long-standing partnerships on creative projects. A regular contributor to the Commission of Resonance described it as an open, generous conversation, where AVA KASK are open to hearing feedback (*Source: Meeting with Employers and Professional Field*). These engagements directly shape course content and assessment practices. The programmes also organise initiatives such as Ani Meet, which connects students, alumni, studios, and employers through talks and networking events. Graduation films are screened publicly at venues like Sphinx Cinema, and alumni work is regularly showcased at international festivals. These activities reflect AVA KASK’s active role within both the local and international CPAD landscape (*Source: SER, pg. 26; Meeting with Employers and Professional Field*). Alumni maintain close ties with the school, with several founding initiatives such as Avila, Animal Tank, and Sabzian. These organisations often return to mentor, teach, or commission student work, reinforcing both curriculum relevance and sector visibility (*Source: SER, pg. 31*;

*Meeting with Alumni*). Some students expressed to the Review Team some of the limitations on how they understand that professional input shapes their programme. Others noted that opportunities to participate in externally facing events or committees were informally arranged and not always consistently communicated. This suggests a need for AVA KASK to formalise student involvement in professional engagement activities and better articulate how these connections inform teaching and learning (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA students*).

### 1.3 The institution has Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity strategies that cover all its operational activities

At institutional level, HOGENT and the School of Arts (KASK & Conservatorium) express a clear and structured commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion and diversity strategies (which is embedded in the QA policy and aligned with broader strategic objectives.) The institution seeks to provide an open and respectful environment and identifies inclusivity as a key principle underpinning its educational and organisational culture (*Source: SER, pg. 33*). The implementation of this policy is overseen by a dedicated steering group, which coordinates activities across the School of Arts. The steering group's work is guided by a designated coordinator, who leads on inclusive recruitment, accessibility planning, and student support initiatives (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Institution-wide initiatives include gender-neutral facilities, systems for updating preferred pronouns, and internal training on inclusive language, mental health, and multilingual teaching (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). In terms of outreach, the institution works with local organisations to foster participation from underrepresented communities in the creative and performing arts (*Source: SER, pg. 33*).

At programme level, the Film and Animation departments at AVA KASK have taken a range of measures to align with these institutional goals. Students benefit from Personalised Learning Tracks (GIT), with flexible arrangements available for medical, psychological, or professional reasons. Support is also available for neurodiverse students and those requiring adapted assessments (*Source: SER, pg. 27; Meeting with QA and Support staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). While many students described the learning environment as inclusive and responsive to their needs, feedback also indicated that awareness and application of some provisions vary between the programmes, suggesting a need for clearer and more consistent communication at programme level (*Source: Meeting with BA students*).

In terms of staffing, AVA KASK has made recent efforts to embed inclusivity into recruitment practices. Job adverts have been updated to use inclusive, non-gendered language and now include reference to reasonable accommodations and the institution's commitment to diversifying the teaching body. Practical adjustments have also been made to support staff with accessibility requirements (Source: *Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Research Staff and Students*). Discussions with the Senior Management Team also acknowledged the continuing challenge of ensuring diversity among the teaching team and embedding inclusive and decolonial practices into the curriculum. While positive steps have been taken, the need for further development in these areas is recognised and will be addressed in more detail under Standards 2, 4 and 5.

During the meeting with the Senior Management Team, the Review Team heard that sustainability is a growing strategic priority for the institution, particularly in the areas of social inclusion and equitable access. The Head of Internationalisation serves as KASK & Conservatorium's representative on the HOGENT-wide Sustainability Working Group, helping to ensure that sustainability initiatives reflect the specific values and needs of the arts school within the broader institutional framework (Source: *Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

**1.4. The institution has an appropriate organisational structure, allied with, and aligned to clear, inclusive, and effective decision-making processes that enable it to realise its mission and meet its stated strategic objectives.**

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK operate within the governance and QA structures of KASK & Conservatorium and the wider HOGENT framework. Institutional quality assurance is guided by HOGENT's Strategic Plan and operationalised at programme level through action plans and formal committee structures. The QA system emphasises horizontal governance and shared responsibility (Source: *SER, pg. 45 - 48; Meeting with Heads of Institution; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

The primary decision-making body for the programmes is the Training Programme Committee (hereinafter TPC) (Source: *SER pg. 5; Meeting with Heads of Institution*), which oversees academic content, curriculum design, assessment, and quality assurance. The TPC includes academic staff and student representatives and consults with external professionals and technical staff as needed (Source: *SER pg. 47 - 48*).

While the formal structures are inclusive, some student understanding of governance processes is limited. Some students reported not knowing who their TPC representatives were or how they had been appointed. Several described learning about their involvement through informal channels, indicating a need for more consistent communication and transparent selection procedures (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA students*). Decision-making processes have enabled responsive updates to the curriculum, such as the restructuring of the MA programme. Although the governance structure is robust and participatory, further attention to visibility and communication, particularly with students, would enhance its effectiveness.

**1.4 The institution uses an appropriate set of qualitative and quantitative indicators, to critically evaluate, accurately measure and monitor its progress towards the realisation of its stated strategic objectives.**

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK operate within a QA framework that combines institutional and programme-level indicators to support planning and improvement. The school uses both qualitative and quantitative data to monitor performance, including annual student surveys, graduate feedback, course evaluations, and institutional metrics on study progress and completion (*Source: SER, pg. 45 – 47; Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Tools like Power BI and the BI-link system enable staff to access dashboards on enrolment, student progression, and study efficiency at the level of programme and specialisation (*Source: SER, pg. 9*)

At the programme level, regular surveys target current students, graduates, non-enrolling applicants, and deregistered students. These data sources are used in constructing action plans and are discussed at committee level, though some students indicated they were unaware of how their feedback was reviewed or used in practice (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA students; Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Students also described variable awareness of past survey outcomes, noting that while they provided input through evaluations, they felt they sometimes didn't receive updates or follow-ups. Staff acknowledged that feedback is reviewed internally and that recurring concerns are also addressed through programme meetings and ad hoc focus groups, but that visibility of these processes could be improved (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Focus groups and jury feedback also contribute to qualitative assessment, however more structured KPIs and clearer benchmarks would help support the alignment of local planning with institutional goals (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

**1.6 The QA policy is designed to foster an institution-wide quality culture that promotes continuous development and enhancement as well as innovation in cooperation with the CPAD sector.**

At institutional level, KASK & Conservatorium promotes a participatory and enhancement-led approach to quality assurance, aligned with HOGENT's broader governance framework. The SER describes the system as "flexible and adaptable, responding dynamically to specific needs," and notes that it is designed to "feed directly back into the educational process" (Source: SER, pg. 45). Quality culture is fostered not through top-down enforcement, but through collaborative mechanisms that engage internal stakeholders across staff, student, and leadership groups.

In the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK, this culture of quality is embedded in the operation of the TPC, annual and biennial action planning, and curriculum-specific working groups. Staff, students, and technical support are involved in ongoing self-reflection, course evaluation, and programme review (Source: SER, pg. 27–28, pg. 47; *Meeting with QA and Support staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Tech and Support staff*). The SER also references alignment between programme-level actions and institutional planning such as the Quality Enhancement Plan and Covenant Agreements (Source: SER, pg. 45; Annexes 7, 15 & 16; *Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

During the review visit and articulated in the SER, the Review Team was informed that the Quality Assurance Coordinator position at AVA KASK had been vacant for several months (Source: SER pg. 3; *Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Despite this, staff-maintained QA processes internally and expressed confidence in the strength of the committee structure to support continuity. Several mentioned that responsibility for tracking and responding to quality issues had been redistributed informally within programme teams and administrative support staff. While this ensured operational continuity, it was also noted that the vacancy had placed some additional burden on individual staff members and slowed strategic development in some areas (Source: *Meeting with QA and Support staff*).

Staff also reflected on areas where the culture of quality could be further developed. In meetings, staff highlighted the need for increased opportunities for pedagogical peer exchange, more structured support for curriculum innovation, and clearer processes for communicating the outcomes of QA actions, particularly to students (Source: *Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with QA and Support staff*). Closing the feedback loop and improving documentation and follow-up as active has been identified as a priority (Source: *Meeting with Senior Management Team*). Engagement with the professional field plays a key role in sustaining a culture of relevance and innovation. AVA KASK actively involves external professionals through advisory roles, jury participation, and committee consultation. These

interactions ensure that curricular review and development remain responsive to changes in the CPAD sector (Source: SER, pg. 26 and pg. 46).

## Review Team's analysis

The Review Team confirms that the QA policy at KASK & Conservatorium is clearly inspired by and aligned with the institution's mission, strategic priorities, and policies for learning, teaching, and research. The policy is operationalised through HOGENT's five-year Strategic Plan and embedded in local action planning at programme level. In the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK, these action plans are reviewed biennially and updated regularly to align with institutional objectives. The Review Team **commends** (C1.1 / 1.2) the coherent integration between institutional QA structures and programme-level processes, and the use of the PDCA model to support strategic planning and continuous improvement.

The Review Team recognises that AVA KASK makes a meaningful contribution to the CPAD sector. Programmes are informed by regular engagement with professional stakeholders, alumni, and external partners. External participation in curriculum review, assessment, and events such as Ani Meet support ongoing alignment with professional practice. The Review Team **recommends** (C1.2) that AVA KASK better communicate how external stakeholder input is integrated into programme development and raise awareness among students of these sector-facing activities.

The Review Team **commends** (C1.3) the institution's commitment to equal opportunities, and inclusion and diversity strategies, which is clearly reflected in AVA KASK's programme-level initiatives, including inclusive recruitment practices, flexible learning pathways, and accessibility measures. The Review Team **recommends** (C1.3) that further efforts be made to diversify the teaching team and embed inclusive and decolonial approaches consistently across programme delivery and curriculum design, including supporting the participation of non-Dutch-speaking students in all aspects of the learning environment and governance structures.

The Review Team **commends** (C1.4) the decentralised and participatory governance structure in place at AVA KASK, which empowers staff and students through the TPC, programme track meetings, and collaborative working groups. However, the Review Team **recommends** (C1.4) that the process for selecting or electing student representatives be formalised and clearly communicated to ensure transparency and consistency.

The Review Team confirms that a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators are used to monitor and support quality assurance, including student and graduate surveys, programme-level data, and peer and stakeholder feedback. While these are used in action planning and strategic monitoring, the Review Team **recommends** (C1.5) that AVA KASK continues to improve the transparency and visibility of how feedback is used, particularly by strengthening communication with students to demonstrate how input leads to meaningful change.

The Review Team **commends** (C1.6) the AVA KASK programme team for sustaining quality assurance activity during a period when the QA Coordinator post was vacant. This reflects a strong culture of shared responsibility and collaboration. The Review Team **recommends** (C1.6) that future quality management planning include succession strategies and appropriate workload distribution to ensure continuity of leadership and oversight.

### **Compliance with Standard 1**

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s) have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 1:*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Substantially compliant

## **2. Student-Centred Learning**

**Standard:** The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centred approaches to learning and assessment processes.

### **Description of Provision**

#### **2.1. The design of the study programmes is aligned with institutional vision, mission, and strategies.**

The study programmes in Film and Animation at AVA KASK are closely aligned with the broader mission and strategic vision of KASK & Conservatorium and HOGENT, aiming to foster creative autonomy, critical reflection, and interdisciplinary thinking (*Source: SER, pg. 7 - 9*). The curriculum is designed to support students' individual development while preparing them for diverse roles in the contemporary audiovisual and creative sectors.

The AVA programme offers a three-year BA degree, taught in Dutch, and a one-year MA programme, available in both Dutch and English (Source: SER, pg. 4). The structure of both programmes is underpinned by fifteen domain-specific Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), developed through a collaborative process across Flemish higher education arts institutions. These PLOs define the core competencies expected of graduates and serve as the basis for curriculum planning and assessment (Source: SER, pg. 18; Annex 28 - Curriculum Matrix).

The mapping of these PLOs to individual courses is documented in the curriculum matrix, which ensures alignment between intended learning outcomes, teaching content, and forms of assessment (Source: SER, pg. 18). Staff emphasised that the PLOs have recently been reviewed and are being used to guide updates to curriculum content, particularly in relation to evolving artistic practices and technological developments (Source: *Meeting with Heads of Programmes*).

Curriculum planning and programme design are overseen by the TPC, which includes academic staff, students, and administrative support. The TPC is responsible for defining the programme's final objectives, course structure, and evaluation approach (Source: SER, pg. 45). It works alongside year-based focus groups and programme track meetings ("leerlijnen") to support coherence and progression across the curriculum, especially within the key specialisation areas such as Fiction, Documentary, Audiovisual Research, and Film Theory (Source: SER, pg. 28; *Meeting with Teachers*). Input from Professional Field Committees helps ensure that programme content remains relevant to sector expectations and aligned with graduate employability. These committees offer feedback on curriculum alignment with professional practice and have been described as valuable contributors to curriculum development (Source: SER, pg. 47; *Meeting with Employers and Professional Field*).

While the curriculum structure is generally robust and well-articulated, the Review Team heard from students, particularly in Film, that some aspects of learning progression could be communicated more clearly. Specifically, students expressed a desire for clearer guidance on how early exploratory phases connect to later stages of production and assessment. Staff noted that certain elements are still being updated to reflect recent curricular revisions and may require further clarification to improve student understanding (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Heads of Programmes*).

**2.2. Study programmes, and their intended learning outcomes (LOs) are designed, and regularly approved, including with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.**

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are developed through participatory and cyclical processes that integrate input from internal and external stakeholders. Programme design and revision are overseen by the TPC, which includes academic staff and student representatives, and is supported by the institutional Office for Educational Development (Source: SER, pg. 18.) The TPC ensures that the programme structure, content, and assessment remain aligned with national qualifications frameworks and institutional ambitions.

The process is informed by regular programme meetings, “leerlijnen” (track-based coordination), and year-specific focus groups. These support horizontal collaboration across teaching teams and vertical reflection on student progression (Source: SER, pg. 18, pg. 27; *Meeting with Teachers*).

Staff confirmed that recent curriculum updates, including revisions to learning outcomes and assessment formats, have emerged from these group processes and are subject to peer review and consensus-based decision-making (Source: *Meeting with Heads of Programmes*).

External stakeholder involvement is a key feature of the design process. Annual Professional Field Committee meetings bring in sector perspectives on graduate competencies, employability trends, and curriculum relevance. The outcomes of these meetings are formally documented and feed into programme review and future planning cycles (Source: SER, pg. 46; Annexes 21 & 22; *Meeting with Employers and Professional Field*).

Students participate in programme design primarily through representation on the TPC, focus groups, and informal feedback mechanisms. While opportunities for involvement exist, meetings with students revealed some variation in their awareness of these channels. Some students noted they were not always informed about how feedback is escalated or how decisions are made, suggesting a need for more transparent communication and formalised routes for input (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA Students*). Interdisciplinarity is embedded through project-based formats and cross-disciplinary dialogue. Students engage in work that bridges fiction, documentary, animation, sound, and performance and hybrid practices are encouraged (Source: SER, pg. 18; *Meeting with BA and MA Students*). This is supported by the school’s commitment to artistic experimentation and its broad interpretation of the audiovisual field.

Internationalisation is actively supported through English-medium delivery of the MA, Erasmus+ mobility partnerships, and a regular programme of international guest lecturers and events. It was

acknowledged that embedding international perspectives more fully into core curriculum design remains a developmental priority (*Source: SER pg. 20; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

**2.3. The learning, teaching and assessment methods and criteria are effectively aligned with intended learning outcomes.**

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK employ a wide range of teaching and learning methods that reflect the institution's emphasis on artistic experimentation, process-based learning, and critical reflection. The programmes are structured to allow students to develop their own artistic language through iterative practice, guided by staff who combine professional and pedagogical expertise (*Source: SER, pg. 16 - 17*). Learning is primarily studio-based and supplemented by theory seminars, project supervision, cross-disciplinary labs, guest lectures, and feedback sessions with peers and external professionals. In response to recent curriculum reform, a programme-wide exercise was undertaken to ensure stronger alignment between Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), course content, and evaluation criteria. This process involved mapping individual course components against the domain-specific Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and was coordinated through the TPC and programme track ("leerlijn") meetings (*Source: SER, pg. 18; Annex 28 - Curriculum Matrix; Meeting with Heads of Programmes*).

Teachers reported that this mapping has helped to clarify the intended progression across study years and to differentiate expectations between BA and MA levels (*Source: Meeting with Teachers*). However, some inconsistencies remain in how learning outcomes are interpreted and applied in course-level evaluation, particularly when assessing process-oriented work. Staff acknowledged that a number of assessment criteria are still being refined to ensure they reflect the pedagogical intentions of the course and the competencies outlined in the updated ILOs (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Teachers*). The Review Team also heard from students, particularly in the Film specialisation, that the connection between exploratory exercises and final project expectations is not always clearly articulated. Several expressed a desire for more transparent communication of learning goals at each stage, and greater consistency in how evaluation criteria are applied across teaching staff (*Source: SER, pg. 22; Meeting with BA and MA Students*). A summary of the internal Evaluation Study Day in 2023 reflects similar feedback from staff and students, with "transparent communication of criteria" and "dialogue-based feedback" highlighted as areas for improvement (*Source: SER, pg. 22; Annex 19 - Summary of Evaluation Day*).

Teaching methods across the programmes are diverse and include lectures, practice-based workshops, self-directed projects, group critiques, seminars, and juried evaluations. The balance between theory and practice varies by course and is intentionally flexible to allow students to follow an individualised trajectory. Cross-pollination between Film and Animation is encouraged where appropriate, particularly at MA level. Interdisciplinary collaboration is also supported through institutional initiatives and public-facing events such as Ani Meet and KASKcinema screenings (Source: SER, pg. 21; pg. 28, *Meeting with BA and MA Student; Meeting with Teachers*).

Pedagogical decisions and innovations are discussed in regular teacher meetings and programme track groups. Proposals for significant revisions, such as to assessment methods or study pathways, are reviewed by the TPC, where they are discussed alongside student feedback and institutional priorities (Source: SER, pg. 46; *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

#### **2.4 Students are made fully aware of relevant assessment criteria and receive clear, objective, and timely feedback on their level of achievement against the learning outcomes.**

Assessment practices across the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are underpinned by a student-centered and process-oriented approach that evolves over the course of study. As detailed in the SER, assessment criteria for each course component are clearly outlined in the course descriptions and study guide, accessible to all students and staff. The school employs a 1–20 ECTS grading scale, with both oral and written forms of evaluation depending on the nature of the course. In theoretical courses, student competencies are evaluated through examinations, essays, and classroom participation, while in practical courses, continuous feedback and juried evaluations serve as the main assessment formats (Source: SER, pg. 24 - 25).

Process and product evaluations are deliberately weighted differently across the programme trajectory. In the early years of the BA, the emphasis is placed on exploratory learning and the development of creative processes, with a gradual shift towards final results in the later stages. This distinction is formalised in assignments such as 'Film Project 2' and 'Master Project' in both disciplines, where the grading balance becomes more result-oriented. For example, in the MA, the master project is evaluated by an external jury, with 70% of the grade based on the final outcome and 30% on the process, as assessed by mentors over the course of the year (Source: SER, pg. 25).

To support transparent and structured evaluations, the programmes use a range of feedback methods. These include regular mentor check-ins, peer reviews, and juried screenings. For instance, in Film, R&D sessions and KASKcinema screenings provide group-based feedback

environments, while in Animation, 'Master Moments' serve as reflective forums for discussing ongoing projects. The institution also plans to consolidate assessment practices through the update of an Evaluation and Feedback Guide and the creation of a knowledge-sharing platform to capture best practices in feedback and grading (Source: SER, pg. 23–25).

Feedback gathered during meetings with students revealed an inconsistent understanding of how grades are awarded. Several BA students expressed confusion around the assessment process and the criteria used, particularly in earlier years. Some reported receiving unexpected grades and limited explanation of how marks were derived. Others shared that feedback is often dependent on the individual teacher, with some providing clear guidance and others offering little beyond a numeric grade. Students also noted that formal feedback sessions are only held for those who fail, reducing opportunities for those who pass to reflect and improve (Source: *Meeting with BA Students*). Meetings with the teaching staff provided an alternative view that verbal feedback was always offered alongside a numeric grade, uncovering a disconnect between the student and teacher experience (Source: *Meeting with Teachers*). These findings point to a robust assessment philosophy, yet one that would benefit from increased clarity, formalisation, and student communication, to rebalance this disconnect. The balance between formative and summative feedback is a clear strength, but ensuring consistency in how criteria are presented and how feedback is delivered across teaching teams remains an area for ongoing attention.

## 2.5 Students are challenged and enabled to take an active role in their learning processes.

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are deeply rooted in student-centred learning. From the outset, students are encouraged to take ownership of their artistic trajectory through self-initiated projects that foster individual expression, experimentation, and collaboration. This pedagogical approach is supported by continuous mentorship, informal feedback loops, and structured peer-to-peer interaction, enabling students to reflect critically and independently on their practice (Source: SER, pg. 24–27). Learning is tailored to individual strengths through flexible study pathways, including Personalised Learning Tracks, part-time options, and support for students with neurodiverse profiles or personal and medical needs. These mechanisms allow students to pursue their studies at a pace and structure suited to their personal, professional, or creative contexts (Source: SER, pg. 26- 27).

Student initiative is actively encouraged both within and beyond the curriculum. Students create and curate their own collectives, organise events, and frequently collaborate across departments (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Teachers*). The school fosters a culture

in which interdisciplinary interaction and informal learning are seen as essential components of creative development. To paraphrase one student's feedback during the site visit: your project is centred around yourself, not what the teacher thinks. This reflects the autonomy afforded in defining individual learning paths (*Source: Meeting with BA Students*). While many students value the high level of autonomy, some reported that the freedom can at times feel overwhelming, particularly in the early stages of the programme. A few students expressed a desire for more structured guidance, clearer expectations, and stronger framing around key milestones in the learning process. This was especially noted in relation to defining project briefs, setting goals, and understanding how their work would be assessed (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students*). Staff acknowledged that this level of autonomy may not suit every learner and noted ongoing discussions about how to scaffold student independence more effectively (*Source: Meeting with Teachers*).

A key aspect of this student autonomy is the institutional stance on intellectual property. Students retain full ownership of their creative work, while the school requests permission to use selected works for promotional or educational purposes (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). However, the Review Team heard mixed feedback from students regarding their awareness of this policy and related rights. Some students admitted they were unfamiliar with the concept of intellectual property or unsure how it applied to their projects. Teachers, on the other hand, explained that IP-related topics are embedded in specific courses and occasionally addressed through dedicated workshops, though acknowledged this may not always be visible to all students (*Source: Meeting with BA Students; Meeting with Teachers*). The School clearly stated that the films belong to the students, with full responsibility of production budget resting with them. While teachers indicated that students are supported with contracts, insurances and production formalities (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Programme*), the Review Team noted that this practice differs from professional industry models where distinct production roles and responsibilities exist. This indicates that job roles according to industry standards are not always fully reflected in the curriculum, but focused on individual artists in animation and film production. The Review Team considers that students would benefit from clearer integration of these professional frameworks into the teaching to better prepare them for sector expectations (*Source: Meeting with Professional Experts*), and for more consistent communication and clearer integration of both intellectual property and professional production practices across the curriculum.

**2.6. Students are provided with opportunities to engage with related professional practices and the world of work as part of their study programme.**

Engagement with the professional field is a prominent feature of the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK and is embedded across both the BA and MA curricula. Throughout the academic year, students encounter multiple opportunities to connect with industry professionals, often facilitated through their teachers, many of whom are active practitioners. This professional integration ensures that students benefit from staff networks, as well as from expert-led activities like guest lectures and industry-specific workshops (*Source: SER, pg. 28; Meeting with BA and MA students; Meeting with Teachers*).

In the BA Film programme, the course *Initiation in the Field of Audiovisual Arts* introduces students to the business, legal, and organisational aspects of the sector. Topics include financing, distribution, film festivals, marketing, pitching, and copyright law, helping students develop a practical understanding of the field. The course is enriched by guest speakers such as producers, distributors, and legal professionals, who share insights into the realities of working within the audiovisual industry (*Source: SER, pg. 27; Meeting with Heads of Programmes*).

In the MA programme, students undertake the *Arts in Practice* internship module, where they contribute to external projects or peer-led productions. These internships are tailored to reflect students' individual artistic interests and professional goals and are evaluated for their educational and developmental value. The programme also allows for flexible credit allocation, ranging from 3 to 10 ECTS, depending on the scope and complexity of the internship (*Source: SER, pg. 28; Meeting with MA Students*).

Beyond formal modules, AVA KASK fosters sector engagement through events such as Ani Meet, a networking initiative that brings together studios, alumni, and students. Film students participate in public screenings, such as the 'Night of the Palms' at KASKcinema, and connect with professionals through festival-linked masterclasses at Film Fest Gent and Anima in Brussels. These events provide both inspiration and professional orientation (*Source: SER, pg. 29-31; Meeting with Heads of Programmes*). Alumni involvement is another strength. Graduates regularly return to teach, mentor, and commission student work through initiatives such as Sabzian, Avila, and Animal Tank, many of which are housed on campus. These enduring connections between alumni and the school help ensure that students are exposed to current practices and evolving professional norms (*Source: SER, pg. 32; Meeting with Alumni*). While professional engagement is strong, as noted above, student understanding of legal frameworks, particularly intellectual property rights, was inconsistent. Some students reported not receiving clear instruction on

copyright, for example, while teachers stated that this content is embedded within modules or offered through external workshops (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Teachers*). This suggests a potential gap in awareness or communication.

**2.7. The curricula of all undergraduate programmes are informed by leading research in the subject field. The curricula of postgraduate programmes also actively engage students in research.**

At AVA KASK, research is closely integrated into the pedagogical structure of both the BA and MA programmes, though this integration varies in emphasis and execution between Film and Animation. Across the department, the commitment to research-led teaching is evident in the strong culture of critical inquiry, the artistic research activities of staff, and the incorporation of reflective practices into student work (*Source: SER, pg. 29; Annex 13; Meeting with Research Staff and PhD Students*).

For MA students, research is most visibly embedded through the thesis, a substantial reflective document of at least 10,000 words. This is designed to demonstrate the student's ability to critically engage with a self-defined topic within the artistic domain. The thesis is supported by at least three mandatory research mentoring sessions across the year, with mentors responsible for guiding the development and ensuring alignment with learning outcomes. (*Source: SER, p. 26; Annex 13; Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with MA students*).

In Film, the research culture is particularly strong and closely tied to the production process. Students benefit from a rich ecosystem of support, including individual mentorship, R&D sessions, and frequent presentations of work-in-progress during KASKcinema screenings. These screenings, often attended by peers, mentors, and external collaborators, provide an open forum for dialogue and feedback, reinforcing the connection between theory and practice throughout the creative process (*Source: SER, pp. 28–29; Meeting with MA Film Students; Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with Research Staff*).

In Animation, weekly "Master Moments" allow students to present their ideas and receive feedback on topics related to practice, such as editing or storyboarding. These sessions, initially perceived by some as burdensome, have come to be recognised as valuable for fostering critical reflection and peer learning. Informal structures such as the "Mentorencafé" and "Mastercafé" provide space for open-ended dialogue between students and faculty and have proven

particularly effective in building research confidence and articulation skills (Source: SER, pg. 23; *Meeting with MA Students*).

The Review Team heard that many staff are active researchers and regularly incorporate their own artistic practice and inquiries into teaching. This helps expose students to a diversity of research methods and positions them within wider disciplinary and societal conversations. During meetings, staff and students discussed the centrality of independent inquiry in the MA year, with research staff noting that the right moment for research and practice to intersect is often student-led, emerging organically as projects evolve (Source: *Meeting with Research Staff; Meeting with MA students*).

Despite these strengths, some areas for development were also noted. While Film demonstrates a high degree of alignment between research and teaching, the Animation programme may benefit from more formal structures to support research development, particularly in relation to thesis supervision and the articulation of research outcomes. Additionally, while most students understood the expectations around research, some MA students indicated that clearer communication regarding research methods and expectations at the outset of the programme would help scaffold their progress (Source: *Meeting with MA Students*).

### Review Team's analysis

The Review Team found that the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are thoughtfully designed and align with the institutional vision and sector expectations. The curriculum supports the development of individual artistic voices through a strong emphasis on process, critical reflection, and independent inquiry (C2.1). The structure of the programmes demonstrates a coherent progression from exploratory practice in the early BA years to research-led production in the MA. Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are in place and mapped across modules, although the Review Team **recommends** (C2.1) that documentation of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) be updated and more clearly communicated to students at all levels to strengthen transparency and support self-directed learning.

The Review Team **commends** (C2.2) the inclusive and cyclical approach to programme design, which draws on input from staff, students, and external stakeholders. The use of Professional Field Committees and “leerlijnen” (programme track meetings) ensures alignment with industry developments and supports coherence across specialisations. The Review Team **recommends**

(C2.2) that student participation in curriculum governance be formalised and better communicated, to ensure that all students are aware of how they can influence programme development.

Learning and teaching methods are diverse, exploratory, and anchored in critical dialogue (C2.3). Students are encouraged to work autonomously and pursue self-initiated artistic trajectories. The Review Team **commends** the use of peer learning environments which foster critical engagement and community-based reflection. The Review Team **recommends** (C2.3) that staff continue to develop shared practices around feedback and learning outcome alignment, particularly to ensure consistency of assessment expectations across departments.

The assessment framework across the programmes is grounded in a balanced approach to process and product, with clearly defined evaluation structures (C2.4). While written feedback and mentoring are key features, the Review Team **recommends** (C2.4) that staff strengthen transparency around grading and criteria, especially in the early BA years, where students reported variable understanding of expectations. The planned Evaluation and Feedback Guide will be a helpful update in this regard.

The Review Team **commends** (C2.5) AVA KASK's commitment to artistic freedom and student-led learning. Students benefit from high levels of autonomy, flexible pathways, and access to interdisciplinary opportunities. However, some students reported that the open structure can feel overwhelming. The Review Team **recommends** (C2.5) that the school explore strategies to scaffold autonomy with clearer framing and support, particularly for new students. The Review Team also **recommends** (C2.5) that the institution formalise and consistently communicate policies relating to intellectual property, as student understanding of intellectual property rights and responsibilities and mechanisms of film production, distribution and film ownership, including professional roles and responsibilities, varied. The Review Team **commends** (C2.6) the high level of professional engagement across both programmes. Students interact regularly with sector professionals through internships, screenings, workshops, and other networks.

The nexus between research and education is particularly strong in the Film MA, where research-led teaching and critical reflection are structurally embedded (C2.7). The Review Team **commends** (C2.7) the use of thesis supervision, peer screenings, and open dialogue as a research methodology. While Animation students also engage in reflective practices, the Review Team **recommends** (C2.7) that the Animation curriculum further formalise research integration,

particularly around methods, supervision, and articulation of research questions, to ensure parity of experience across both programmes.

### ***Compliance with Standard 2***

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s) have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 2:*

<b><i>Programmes</i></b>	<b><i>Compliance level</i></b>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Substantially compliant

### 3. Assuring the Student Study Experience

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience.

#### Description of Provision

3.1 The institution and its programmes consistently apply regulations on the whole cycle of the student experience addressing application & admissions, recognition for prior learning, and progression & achievement.

AVA KASK employs clear and structured admission procedures for the BA and MA programmes in Film and Animation. For entry into the BA programme, candidates must hold a recognised secondary education diploma (or equivalent) and pass an entrance examination consisting of three parts: a portfolio submission, a written motivation, and an interview. This process is designed to assess not only the applicant's creative potential but also their reflective and communicative abilities. Selection panels place emphasis on the applicant's individual voice, openness to feedback, and ability to contribute to a collaborative learning environment (Source: *SER pg. 30; Meeting with Teachers*).

For the MA programme, internal BA graduates are automatically eligible to enrol, while external applicants must submit a comprehensive dossier including a film proposal, thesis concept, personal motivation, and audiovisual portfolio. These materials are reviewed by an Orientation Committee, followed by an interview. If gaps in prior qualifications are identified, the committee may prescribe a bridging programme to address these before full admission into the MA level (Source: *SER pg. 30; Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with Heads of Programmes*). Admission to both programmes is selective, and student numbers are deliberately capped to ensure the low student-to-staff ratio and personalised supervision that characterise the AVA KASK educational model. The school explicitly values its small scale, describing it as key to maintaining intensive guidance and hands-on learning (Source: *SER pg. 9; Meeting with Heads of Institution*).

Guidance to prospective students is provided through open days, participation in study information events, and clear written instructions available on the AVA KASK website. These materials detail portfolio expectations, the admissions calendar, and the evaluation process. Students who met the Review Team reported that their experience of the application and interview process was positive and that the selection panel was supportive and clear in its communication (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA students*). As part of recent internal review, the Review Team learned from teaching staff that the admissions process has been streamlined

slightly: where previously three separate interviews were conducted, this has now been reduced to two stages. This change was introduced to reduce the administrative and workload burden on teaching teams, while maintaining the robustness of the selection process (*Source: Meeting with Teachers*). The admissions process reflects the institution's inclusive and student-centred ethos. Staff confirmed that while the programme seeks to be as open and encouraging as possible, there is ongoing reflection about the balance between openness and academic alignment, particularly in cases where creative potential is evident but students may struggle with the programme's structure or intensity (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Teachers*). These reflections are discussed within TPC meetings and inform continuous review of admissions practices.

### **3.2. The regulations pertaining to the student experience are applied according to the specific rights of the students, their individual rights, and their diversity.**

AVA KASK demonstrates agility and flexibility in responding to individual student needs and feedback. Both students and teachers reported that much of the support and adaptation within the Film and Animation programmes takes place through informal channels, such as direct conversations between students, teachers, and administrative staff (*Source: Meetings with BA and MA students; Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Teachers*). These individualised responses have created a strong foundation of trust and care. The Review Team noted, however, that this informal culture could benefit from the further formalisation of certain feedback processes to ensure consistency across cohorts and teaching teams (*Source: Meetings with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Teachers*).

Complaints, feedback, and general student issues are typically channelled through class representatives or discussed directly in meetings with staff. While these processes are in place, students indicated that the system is not always consistently applied or well understood. Several students mentioned that they had not been clearly informed about who their representative was or how to escalate an issue formally. Although the TPC includes student representation, it was reported that student engagement with this process is often reliant on informal recruitment and lacks transparency in some areas (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students*).

Student-facing information, including academic policies and exam regulations, is made available through the institutional learning platforms (WALDO and iBamaFlex) and student handbooks. The Review Team heard that efforts have been made to improve the clarity and accessibility of these materials, particularly at the BA level. However, students in early years reported inconsistent

awareness of what support is available or where to find relevant policies (*Source: Meeting with BA students*). Students experiencing financial hardship can access support services coordinated through KASK & Conservatorium and HOGENT. These include guidance from student advisors and referral to institutional financial aid schemes, ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in their learning due to socio-economic constraints (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

The institution's wider commitment to student diversity is operational and visible across many aspects of student life. Students described the atmosphere at AVA KASK as inclusive and supportive. Initiatives such as gender-neutral facilities, encouraging use of preferred pronouns, and individual learning track adjustments for neurodiverse students reflect the institution's commitment to individual rights and dignity. AVA KASK is well adapted to supporting students with a wide range of needs, particularly those requiring modified academic pathways or learning accommodations, including part-time or non-linear progression (*Source: SER pg. 27 and Meetings with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with BA and MA Students*). These initiatives are supported and coordinated at institutional level by a steering group, which oversees projects on accessibility, inclusive documentation, and student support, ensuring that principles of equity and diversity are reflected in the day-to-day student experience (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

The Review Team heard that while efforts have been made to support students with specific learning needs, some felt that the process could be more structured and consistent, while remaining adaptable to individual circumstances (*Source: Meeting with BA Students*). For example, it was noted that in some cases, students were provided with extensive reading materials explaining the learning support process, an approach that may unintentionally disadvantage those with difficulties such as dyslexia. Some staff and alumni noted that while the student body has become more diverse, the teaching staff still lacked some diversity. This was identified as a longer-term challenge in ensuring that the institution's inclusive ethos is reflected in staffing as well as policy (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Alumni*). AVA KASK has made progress in offering gender-neutral and inclusive documentation, however staff acknowledged that this is still being refined. There are ongoing efforts to ensure consistency in language across official documents and communication channels, particularly as these relate to identity and access (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

### **Review Team's analysis**

The Review Team confirms that the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK apply clear and consistent admissions criteria at both BA and MA level. The admissions process is well structured, combining portfolio review, motivation, and interview, with decisions made by academic panels.

The Review Team **commends** (C3.1) AVA KASK for its thoughtful and inclusive admissions model, which allows applicants to demonstrate their artistic potential through multiple formats. The recent decision to streamline the process from three interviews to two was confirmed by teaching staff as a positive step that has reduced workload while maintaining rigour. The Review Team further **commends** (C3.1) the inclusion of tailored bridging programmes at MA level, which enable external candidates to meet entry expectations while maintaining academic integrity.

The Review Team **commends** (C3.2) AVA KASK for its personalised and student-centred support model, which includes flexible learning pathways, counselling services, and access to mental health and wellbeing provision. Students spoke positively of the inclusive and open environment fostered by the programme. The Review Team also **commends** (C3.2) the institution's Culture of Care initiative, gender-inclusive policies, and use of the Personalised Learning Track (GIT) to support students facing complex academic or personal circumstances, and for its commitment to student wellbeing, particularly the clear referral pathways and support structures in place for students facing financial hardship. The availability of institutional resources through HOGENT, and the active role of student advisors in connecting students to these services, reflects a holistic approach to supporting student success and inclusion beyond the academic sphere.

However, the Review Team notes that while the informal support culture is strong, there is a need for greater consistency and visibility in how complaints and feedback are handled. Students reported that representation processes and complaint escalation routes were not always clearly communicated or consistently applied across departments. Therefore, the Review Team **recommends** (C3.2) that AVA KASK introduce a clearly accessible complaints procedure, supported by improved onboarding and student guidebook content.

The Review Team also heard that, although support for neurodiverse students is available, experiences varied. The Review Team **recommends** (C3.2) that AVA KASK review the accessibility and individual responsiveness of its support mechanisms, particularly for students with specific learning needs.

### ***Compliance with Standard 3***

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s) have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 3:*

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
BA	Fully compliant
MA	Fully compliant

## 4. Human Resources

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.

### Description of Provision

#### 4.1. The compliment of teaching, research, academic management, and study support staff available to students is sufficient to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes.

The AVA department is supported by a broad teaching team, reflecting the complexity and interdisciplinary scope of the programme. The Animation track comprises approximately 17 staff (equivalent to 5.5 FTE) for around 87 students, while the Film programme includes 33 educators (approximately 9.5 FTE) serving roughly 118 students (Source: *SER* pg. 35). These figures exclude freelance technical staff who support studio work and academic staff who deliver cross-school theoretical courses. The flexibility of this staffing model allows the programme to draw on a wide range of professional expertise, particularly from practitioners active in the creative sector. However, it also presents coordination challenges, especially in Film, where seven staff hold contracts of 20% or less, complicating scheduling, workload management, and communication. Full-time contracts are increasingly rare, and the predominance of fractional appointments requires careful coordination by programme heads and administrative teams. These issues were echoed in meetings with the Senior Management Team and Heads of Programme, who explained that staffing plans are revised annually to respond to changes in enrolment, course needs, and budgetary conditions (Source: *Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Heads of Programme*). QA staff also highlighted the operational strain of maintaining cohesion across a teaching body with such varied time allocations (Source: *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

Efforts have been made to formalise staff roles and increase clarity regarding expectations. Teaching roles are now defined by updated competency profiles and evolving job descriptions that reflect responsibilities in teaching, mentoring, and, where applicable, research. Although implementation is ongoing, this framework is gradually helping to improve consistency and accountability (Source: *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

Despite the limitations of the part-time staffing model, students consistently praised the commitment and accessibility of their teachers, highlighting strong relationships, responsive support, and regular individual feedback as key strengths of the learning environment (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA Students*).

**4.2. The competences of the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes.**

The teaching staff within the AVA programme at KASK & Conservatorium are selected on the basis of both pedagogical and artistic qualifications, with many staff maintaining an active professional practice alongside their teaching commitments. Most teaching staff are part-time and include tenured, untenured, freelance, and guest lecturers. Many combine their roles at KASK with careers as filmmakers, animators, artistic researchers, and cultural practitioners, ensuring that students are exposed to current developments within the audiovisual field (Source: SER, pg. 35). This dual professional engagement enriches the learning environment by enabling students to be taught by active practitioners who bring current industry perspectives into the studio and classroom. Staff are involved in areas such as editing, sound, post-production, and cinematography, with specialized freelancers supporting students during specific studio exercises (Source: SER, p. 35; *Meeting with Teachers*). The integration of research-active lecturers also supports a reflective, inquiry-driven approach to artistic education. These staff often contribute to the curriculum through seminars, mentoring, and the supervision of student research trajectories, particularly at MA level (Source: *Meeting with Research Staff and Students*).

Students and alumni confirmed that one of the programme's strengths lies in the access it provides to a wide variety of voices and perspectives from the professional field. They reported that being taught by active filmmakers and animators helped them understand the realities of the industry and positioned them well for future careers (Source: *Meeting with BA and MA students*; *Meeting with Alumni*). The Film and Animation programmes also regularly invite guest lecturers and organise masterclasses with external professionals from Belgium and beyond, which further expands the students' exposure to current practices in the field (Source: *Annex 5: Guest Lecturers, Masterclasses & Exhibitions; Meeting with Employers and Professional Field; Meeting with Teachers*).

Internally, coordination roles, such as those held by the programme coordinators, ensure pedagogical and organisational coherence, despite the fragmented staffing model. While the part-time structure enables flexibility, it also means that workload management, communication, and cross-programme alignment rely heavily on the work of a small group of coordinators and support staff (Source: SER, pg. 13 *Meeting with Heads of Programmes*)

**4.3. The institution recruits the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff in accordance with their Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity Strategies.**

KASK & Conservatorium demonstrates a structured and evolving commitment to embedding equal opportunities and inclusive recruitment practices. While the current teaching and support staff remain relatively homogenous in terms of ethnic and cultural background, the institution acknowledges this and is taking proactive steps to diversify its workforce. The gender balance is more evenly distributed than in previous years, although staff and students alike recognised the need for broader representation across other axes of diversity (e.g., ethnic background, disability, socio-economic status) in the teaching team (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

In line with institutional policy, recruitment procedures have been updated in collaboration with external partners to remove bias from job descriptions and broaden the range of applicants. These measures include the use of gender-neutral and decolonised language in job advertisements, pre-application accommodations for applicants with access needs (e.g., workspace visits or ergonomic support), and adjustments to selection criteria that previously overemphasised masculine-coded competencies. The SER outlines that these changes form part of a wider effort to implement more inclusive hiring practices across the School of Arts (*Source: SER, p. 36; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). Staff with disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, or mental health needs can access individualised support, with some teachers in AVA having already benefited from personalised accommodations arranged through the HR team. These supports were described as effective and discreet during staff interviews (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

Despite these positive developments, both staff and institutional leadership acknowledged that long-term change will require structural transformation in recruitment pipelines, career pathways, and mentoring support. Teaching positions with low FTE percentages may not offer sufficient stability or visibility to attract candidates from underrepresented backgrounds. As such, the institution is exploring ways to redistribute workload more equitably while maintaining the diversity of specialisations offered within the AVA programme.

**4.4. The institution offers its staff career opportunities that are equitable, enables them to improve their performance, to achieve their personal ambitions and engage with the strategic priorities of the institution and developments across the wider CPAD sector.**

KASK & Conservatorium supports a flexible and adaptable approach to staff career development, which is especially important in a practice-based arts environment. Faculty working within the Audiovisual Arts (AVA) programme benefit from career interruption policies, including contract suspensions and sabbaticals that allows them to

temporarily pause their teaching contracts in order to pursue professional, artistic, or research activities such as film production, exhibitions, or residencies (Source: SER pg. 36 & 37). This system is highly appreciated by staff and aligns with the institutional mission to integrate research and artistic practice into education (Source: SER, pg. 37 ; *Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Teachers*). While this flexibility is a clear strength, staff also reported that the heavy administrative and teaching workload, particularly for those holding multiple small contracts, can make it difficult to engage in additional professional development or institutional initiatives (Source: *Meeting with Teachers*). Although leave is available, the opportunity to fully participate in development activities is often constrained by scheduling pressures and time limitations.

There is currently no formal career progression or promotion structure in place within KASK or the wider HOGENT system. However, staff may access internal support structures including opportunities for artistic research funding, training in inclusive education, and institutional mandates such as participation in committees or advisory roles (Source: SER, pg. 38; *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). Heads of programme also play an informal mentoring role in supporting staff to develop new pedagogical skills and reflect on their teaching practice. The institution is working toward a more systematic approach to professionalisation and academic development through ongoing collaboration with HOGENT's HR services. Initiatives include the development of training pathways, workshops on inclusive practices, and internal support for artistic research applications (Source: SER, pp. 36 - 37; *Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

### Review Team's analysis

The Review Team confirms that the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are delivered by a committed and professionally active teaching staff. The team comprises around 50 educators across both programmes, equating to approximately 23 full-time equivalents (FTE). Staff contracts vary widely, with the majority employed part-time or on fractional bases—particularly in Film, where many educators hold contracts of 20% or less. This model provides access to a wide range of professional expertise and enables students to learn from active practitioners embedded in the cultural and creative sector (C4.1). However, the fragmented nature of staffing requires careful coordination to ensure continuity, workload balance, and effective communication across teaching teams. These challenges were acknowledged by both staff and senior leadership. The Review Team **commends** (C4.1) the dedication and accessibility of teaching staff, who were consistently praised by students for their support, engagement, and mentorship despite the constraints of part-time employment. The Review Team **recommends** (C4.1) that AVA KASK

consider ways to consolidate smaller contracts and introduce structured coordination time for both teachers and Heads of Programmes to support continuity and team cohesion.

The Review Team further **commends** (C4.2) the strong professional integration of the teaching team. Staff are actively involved in contemporary artistic, research, and industry contexts, and these connections are reflected in the curriculum through mentoring, studio teaching, and guest events. Students highlighted this direct access to working professionals as a key strength of the programme. The Review Team **recommends** (C4.2) that the institution continue to monitor the balance between teaching responsibilities and external professional practice to ensure that student support and curricular delivery remain consistent.

In relation to equality and diversity, the Review Team found that KASK & Conservatorium has implemented meaningful changes to recruitment policies in line with institutional goals. Inclusive and bias-sensitive language is now standard in job advertisements, and accommodations are made available for applicants with access needs. These reforms were developed in collaboration with external experts and are part of a broader commitment to inclusive hiring (C4.3). The Review Team **commends** (C4.3) efforts to create more equitable recruitment practices and encourage diverse applicants. However, the current staff profile remains relatively homogenous, and both staff and students noted the importance of improving representation. The Review Team **recommends** (C4.3) that AVA KASK take further steps to diversify the teaching body and examine how contract models can support more sustainable inclusion.

The Review Team also **commends** (C4.4) the institution's flexible career interruption policies which enables educators to take time away from teaching to pursue professional and artistic projects without severing their connection to the School. This model supports artistic growth and aligns well with the institution's mission. However, several staff reported that heavy workloads, unpaid overtime, and the challenges of coordinating teaching across multiple contracts significantly limit their capacity to engage with broader professional development and collaborative activities. It may be beneficial for the institution to consider formally allocating a defined proportion of paid time to coordination duties and ongoing training, to better support staff development and workload management. The Review Team **recommends** (C4.4) that AVA KASK explore ways to create more time and structural support for career development, particularly for part-time and freelance staff.

#### ***Compliance with Standard 4***

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s) have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 4:*

<i>Programmes</i>	<i>Compliance level</i>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Substantially compliant

## 5. Learning & Teaching Resources

**Standard:** The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning & teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### Description of Provision

5.1. The institution allocates appropriate financial resources to the material support of all aspects of student learning, including intended Learning Outcomes.

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are supported through a decentralised but coordinated system of financial and infrastructure planning, embedded within the broader budgetary framework of KASK & Conservatorium. Long-term financial planning is handled at the institutional level, with budgets approved annually by the KASK Board (*Source: SER pg. 38; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). These include staffing costs, technical infrastructure, and facilities management. Within this structure, departments retain a degree of autonomy in managing their own operating budgets and can submit requests for major investments, defined as exceeding €20,000, which are considered by the deanery in consultation with the Department Council (*Source: SER, pg. 38- 39*).

The AVA department receives a working budget for annual operational expenses, including a dedicated line for technical purchases. As noted in the SER, Film receives approximately €30,000 annually from the investment fund, and Animation approximately €15,000, though final amounts are subject to discussion within the Department Council. The Review Team heard that in 2024, previously postponed investments were reinstated and in some cases increased, as part of a broader institutional effort to improve resource availability following a period of financial constraint (*Source: SER pg. 39; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

Both programmes benefit from a strong technical infrastructure. Film is housed across several spaces, including a large recording studio, eight editing rooms, a sound mixing suite, and the KASKcinema. Animation has 25 individual workstations with centralised server access, as well as a dedicated multi-purpose workshop space (*Source: SER, pg. 40*). Additional resources include access to the Kunstenbibliotheek (Art Library), licenses for Adobe Creative Suite, Dragonframe and ToonBoom, EDUROAM Wi-Fi, and support from technical staff and IT services (*Source: SER, pp. 40-41; Meeting with Teachers; Tour of Facilities; Meeting with Technical and Support Staff*).

Despite this solid foundation, several ongoing challenges were raised during meetings. The Review Team noted the current reliance of the Film programme's technical support primarily on two staff

members responsible for equipment rental (*Source: Meeting with Technical and Support Staff*). While the recent introduction of a new booking system represents progress towards formalisation, the Review Team was concerned that the overall structure remains vulnerable due to this dependency, posing potential risks for operational continuity. Additionally, some students in Animation noted that they sometimes struggled to access computers during peak times, even when arriving on campus early, and that they would appreciate more private spaces for working in, similar to the set up in Film (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students*). Space constraints in the Film programme were also identified as a growing issue, particularly as student numbers have increased. A spatial audit is underway, and the institution is currently developing a relocation plan to optimise studio space across departments (*Source: Meeting with Heads of Programme; Meeting with Technical Staff*). Accessibility issues were also noted, and while some measures have been implemented, such as a wheelchair-accessible ramp at KASKcinema, further adaptations are awaiting city approval (*Source: SER, p. 41; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). The Review Team also heard that financial pressures linked to inflation, equipment costs, and building maintenance have intensified (*Source: SER, pg. 38; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

#### 5.2. The institution makes appropriate resources available to deliver the relevant quality of research.

Research at KASK & Conservatorium is deeply embedded in the institutional culture and is supported by substantial physical, technical, and financial infrastructure. KASK organises its research through thematic research clusters, each comprising artists, designers, and theorists collaborating around shared fields of inquiry. These clusters enable interdisciplinary exchange and generate a wide range of activities, including seminars, publications, exhibitions, and symposia (*Source: SER, pg. 29; Meeting with Research Staff and Students*). Dedicated infrastructure supports this activity. For example, the Hercules Lab focuses on sound-based audiovisual research, providing resources like a 5.1 mixing studio, media archive, and editing spaces. The OPlab functions as both a digitisation space and a site of artistic experimentation for students and researchers (*Source: SER, p. 29*).

Researchers have access to this equipment and facilities, along with an operating budget managed by the Research Department, which can be used to fund project expenses such as renting facilities or acquiring materials. This is complemented by robust digital infrastructure and library support: staff and students benefit from access to software tools (e.g. Adobe Suite), the EDUROAM network, and the Kunstenbibliotheek (Art Library), which includes dedicated acquisition budgets and hosts creative events (*Source: SER, p. 39; Meeting with Research Staff and*

*Students).* A strong connection between education and research is fostered through collaboration between researchers, teachers, and students. Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers contribute to teaching through master seminars and mentorship activities. During the site visit, the Review Team learned that artistic assistants are employed on a 70:30 contract model. Staff indicated that this model provides a valuable framework for integrating research and pedagogy, while also supporting the professional development of early-career researchers (Source: *Meeting with Research Staff and Students*). Film is strongly embedded in this nexus, with a clear presence in practice-led research; however, the Review Team heard that Animation, while supportive of research-based approaches, is sometimes less systematically connected to the institution's research ecosystem at present (Source: *Meeting with Teachers; Meeting with Research Staff and Students*). Animation students participate in theoretical courses and are exposed to research outputs, but some expressed uncertainty about how to access structured research opportunities or integrate them into their final projects (Source: *Meeting with MA students*). Staff in the Animation department also acknowledged this and indicated that further integration is a goal.

### **5.3. The institution ensures that the technical, digital and physical infrastructure made available to students enables them to achieve the intended Learning Outcomes.**

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK are housed on the Bijloke site, with access to both shared institutional resources and dedicated departmental infrastructure. The Film department benefits from a well-equipped recording studio with a loading dock, makeup and wardrobe space, and post-production facilities, including eight editing rooms, a sound mixing studio, and a shared sound lab. Students also have access to an equipment lending service and a tool room with on-site repair capabilities. These facilities are supported by KASK's central technical services and are used for both instructional and independent student projects. The Animation department is located in the Cloquet building and features 25 individual workstations connected to a centralised server, as well as rooms for analogue drawing, computer-based animation, stop-motion, and sound recording (Source: SER, pg. 40; *Tour of the Facilities*). Staff explained that the setup is designed to support diverse media and technical processes while offering flexibility for student-led work (Source: *Meeting with Technical and Support Staff*).

Beyond discipline-specific spaces, students from both programmes can access institutional resources such as the Kunstenbibliotheek (Art Library), which maintains a dedicated annual budget of €2,500 for AVA acquisitions (Source: SER, pg. 39). Digital infrastructure is robust, with full access to Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, FileSender, and the EDUROAM Wi-Fi network (Source: SER, pg. 39; *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*), although some students noted that

there were additional packages that they would like to be able to access, and sometimes fund from their own budgets (*Source: Meeting with MA Students*).

Despite the strengths of the current infrastructure, several challenges were identified in the SER and confirmed during meetings. For Film, increasing student numbers and limited spatial capacity have led to constraints during peak production periods. The department currently uses overflow spaces such as SEM7 and an area above the KASKcinema to alleviate congestion (*Source: SER, pg. 41; Meeting with Heads of Programme*). A broader spatial audit is underway to address this and align facility planning with projected enrolment trends (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team*). The Animation department, while more self-contained, is in need of a second screening room for pedagogical use, as demand for the existing cinema space, shared with other departments and public programming, often exceeds availability, as well as more computers and workstations for production work (*Source: SER, pg. 40; Meeting with Teachers*). Additionally, students and staff raised minor concerns about lighting, furniture quality, and room acoustics in some buildings, suggesting that further investment would improve day-to-day learning conditions (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Technical and Support Staff*).

Accessibility remains a cross-cutting issue. The SER (pg. 41) notes that an audit of the Cloquet building has been completed, with small adjustments already implemented, such as a wheelchair-accessible ramp at the KASKcinema. However, several larger adaptations await approval from city authorities. Both students and staff highlighted the importance of continuing this work to ensure all spaces are welcoming and functional for users with access needs (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with BA and MA Students*). Despite these limitations, many students described the working environment as collaborative and supportive, with particular appreciation for the dedicated workspaces and autonomy afforded in their use (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students*).

#### 5.4. An appropriate range of study, research and individual well-being support & guidance is readily accessible to all students.

The Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK provide a structured and responsive framework for academic guidance and personal support. The institution uses a combination of individual supervision, peer feedback, and group coaching to support students' learning trajectories (*Source: SER pg. 8 & pg. 22 - 23 Meeting with Heads of Programmes*). In the Film programme, academic support is delivered through one-on-one sessions, pitch meetings, and mentoring. Animation uses a structured critique method based on the DasArts feedback model, which facilitates regular peer

review and encourages constructive dialogue between students and staff (Source: *SER, pg. 22 - 23; Meeting with Heads of Programme*).

MA students benefit from additional layers of academic engagement, including dedicated R&D sessions and “Master Moments,” which provide cross-cohort opportunities for reflection, critique, and exchange (Source: *SER, pg. 23*). During the Review Team’s meetings with teaching staff, these activities were described as central to fostering independent learning and developing critical and reflective practices (Source: *Meeting with Teachers*). However, the Review Team also heard that in some instances, the limited frequency of extensive formal feedback, such as collective mid-trajectory presentations held once per semester, was experienced by some students as insufficient to fully support their artistic progress (Source: *Meeting with MA Students*).

Alongside academic guidance, KASK & Conservatorium has implemented a broader institutional framework for personal support. The SER (pg. 15 & 33) outlines the institution’s “Culture of Care” initiative, which includes formal onboarding for new staff covering topics such as boundary-crossing behaviour and inclusive communication. A dedicated misconduct reporting mechanism is available to students, facilitated by trained student confidants who operate under strict confidentiality protocols (Source: *SER, pg. 33; Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). These systems were discussed positively during meetings with the Senior Management Team and QA Staff, who emphasised their role in ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment (Source: *Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

For psychosocial support, students can access STUVO, the central HOGENT student services department. STUVO provides guidance, counselling, and referrals to affordable therapy, as well as assistance with financial aid, housing, and access to equipment (Source: *SER, pg. 33; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). Students requiring individual support due to neurodiversity, physical health conditions, or psychological needs are referred to learning track supervisors and can request adaptations such as part-time study, modified deadlines, or exemption from certain components of the curriculum (Source: *SER, pg. 27; Meeting with BA and MA Students*). In meetings, students confirmed that they felt comfortable approaching staff and appreciated the programme’s personalised, student-centred approach to wellbeing. At the same time, some students noted that awareness of available support services varied, particularly among newer cohorts, and suggested that onboarding and handbooks could be improved to increase visibility of support mechanisms (Source: *Meeting with BA Students*).

## Review Team's analysis

The Review Team confirms that the Film and Animation programmes at AVA KASK benefit from a robust and evolving infrastructure of financial, technical, academic, and personal support resources. Financial planning is embedded at the institutional level, with departmental budgets allocated annually and reviewed through a combination of central and departmental governance processes. Film and Animation each receive annual investment funding to support equipment and operational needs, and major purchases are reviewed by the deanery (C5.1). In 2024, postponed investments were reinstated, demonstrating the institution's responsiveness to evolving departmental demands. The Review Team **commends** (C5.1) the School's continued reinvestment in facilities and technical infrastructure and recommends that long-term spatial planning continue to address space shortages, particularly in the Film programme.

The Review Team **commends** (C5.2) the extensive research infrastructure available to students and staff, including purpose-built labs such as the Hercules Lab and OPlab, and a strong institutional commitment to interdisciplinary research clusters. These clusters foster collaboration across disciplines and provide a supportive environment for research-led teaching. However, the Review Team **recommends** (C5.2) that the Animation programme be more systematically integrated into the broader institutional research ecosystem, including clearer pathways for staff and student engagement with research clusters and funding mechanisms.

Physical infrastructure across both programmes is generally strong, with well-equipped studios, editing rooms, and post-production facilities (C5.3). Students benefit from access to technical staff, software, centralised servers, and the Kunstenbibliotheek. Nonetheless, limitations were identified, particularly regarding space constraints in Film and the need for an additional screening room for Animation. The Review Team **commends** (C5.3) the commitment to improving accessibility and **recommends** that continued investment be directed toward optimising learning spaces and addressing gaps in infrastructure as student numbers increase.

The Review Team found that academic and personal support systems are a particular strength of the AVA programmes (C5.4). Students receive mentoring and individual supervision across all study years, and the "Culture of Care" initiative reflects a thoughtful institutional approach to wellbeing. Access to STUVO and the learning track supervisors supports students with diverse needs, and students confirmed that the environment is responsive and inclusive. The Review

Team **commends** (C5.4) the integrated support framework, including confidential reporting mechanisms and access to psychosocial services. The Review Team **recommends** (C5.4) that the institution enhance the visibility of these services, especially for new students, through improved onboarding and communication.

### **Compliance with Standard 5**

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s) have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 5:*

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Substantially compliant

## 6. Communication

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.

### Description of Provision

#### 6.1. The institution collects, analyses and uses relevant information to support the effective management of its programmes and other activities.

The AVA programme at KASK & Conservatorium has established comprehensive systems for collecting and analysing information to support programme management, strategic planning, and quality enhancement. A wide range of data is routinely gathered, including student intake, progression, graduation rates, and student feedback from various points in the academic journey (Source: SER, pg. 43). These include annual surveys for first-year students, graduating students, and deregistering students; periodic surveys of alumni (every five years); and ad hoc evaluations of specific course components or themes. Quantitative data such as study credit progression, efficiency, and completion rates are monitored using digital tools such as Power BI and the BI-tool, which allow programme teams and the Quality Assurance office to track and analyse performance at both the programme and specialisation level (Source: SER, pg. 10 & 43). The results of student surveys are shared through multiple channels. General survey outcomes are made available to all students and staff via the student intranet (WALDO), while more specific feedback, such as course evaluations, is shared with the TPC, chairpersons, and the Dean (Source: SER, pg. 43). In addition to surveys, tailored focus groups are organised to explore specific issues or themes at the level of the programme, studio, or specialisation. This data is used to inform action plans and course improvements. Survey outcomes and performance indicators are discussed within the TPC, the departmental leadership, and across relevant administrative teams including student affairs, internationalisation, and infrastructure. The Review Team heard that this ensures multi-level accountability and supports timely responses to emerging issues (Source: *Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

Programme action plans, updated biennially, are shaped by these data and reviewed by the Education Council to ensure alignment with institutional strategy (Source: SER, pg. 46). Every six months, progress is formally reviewed within the TPC, and findings are reported to the Board of KASK & Conservatorium. These reports highlight both areas of achievement and priorities for development.

As noted previously, the Review Team found that while internal data management is effective, the use of this information could be made more visible to students (*Source: Meeting with BA Students; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*).

**6.2 The institution's internal communication systems are accessible to all students and staff and enable vertical and horizontal interaction between all its internal stakeholders.**

Internal communication at AVA KASK is supported by a multi-platform infrastructure that enables regular interaction between students, staff, and external collaborators. The institution combines physical meetings with a suite of digital tools to ensure information is accessible and up-to-date. All students, teaching, and support staff receive a HOGENT account, which grants access to official email, the Chamilo learning environment, iBaMaFlex for academic administration, and Asimut for class scheduling and room reservations (*Source: SER pg. 43*)

Since 2024–2025, a student-specific intranet, WALDO, has been launched to centralise access to academic policies, deadlines, services, and documentation relevant to all students. WALDO complements existing communication tools, streamlining access to links and platforms that had previously been dispersed. It connects directly to the broader HOGENT student intranet, Wallie, and integrates announcements with notifications on Chamilo (*Source: SER, pg. 43*).

Microsoft Teams is widely used across departments for meetings, document sharing, and messaging. While this platform was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains an essential communication tool, particularly among technical staff, who use it for troubleshooting and internal coordination (*Source: Meeting with Technical and Support Staff*). Teachers and students also reported that Teams continues to serve as a hub for digital interaction, though the number of platforms used across HOGENT can sometimes feel confusing and burdensome (*Source: Meeting with Teachers*). Formal communication is supported by regular bilingual student newsletters and Dutch staff newsletters. Programme updates, policy changes, and institutional events are communicated through email bulletins and institutional websites. Information on teaching schedules, room bookings, and key processes is regularly updated and accessible through Asimut and iBaMaFlex (*Source: SER pg. 43*).

The institution ensures vertical and horizontal communication through multiple governance bodies. The TPC, Department Council, and Education Council serve as key structures for cascading and receiving information between leadership, staff, and student representatives. Coordinators

also act as liaisons for guest lecturers and part-time staff, ensuring continuity in messaging and access to relevant updates (Source: SER, pg. 43; *Meeting with Teachers*).

The Communication Office monitors the effectiveness of internal channels through analytics (e.g., newsletter engagement), usage statistics, and regular student feedback. Surveys and QA questionnaires assess whether communication systems are clear and accessible, and improvements are made based on these results. As noted previously, the Review Team heard that while information flow is generally strong, some students, particularly newer cohorts, found it difficult to navigate the range of platforms used and suggested greater clarity on which system to use for what (Source: *Meeting with BA Students*).

### **6.3 The institution's approach to external communication, welcomes and facilitates communication from and with external stakeholders.**

External communication at KASK & Conservatorium is coordinated centrally through the Communication Office, staffed by a dedicated team of three full-time employees. This team collaborates with HOGENT's institutional communications department and works closely with programme coordinators and staff to ensure accurate and timely updates across platforms. Editorial content for websites, study guides, and printed materials is reviewed in consultation with department heads and TPC chairpersons, with yearly updates conducted at the start of the student recruitment cycle (Source: SER, pg. 44)

The institution actively engages with external audiences through a wide range of public-facing initiatives. These include KASK Lectures, KIOSK exhibitions, KASKcinema, Club Telex, the Zwarte Zaal, and the Master Project Space (MAP), as well as curated projects and guest lecture series tailored to each programme. These events are promoted through posters, newsletters, social media campaigns, dedicated websites, and industry-specific publications (Source: SER, pg. 44)

Alumni engagement, while not organised through a formal alumni association, is actively fostered through ongoing professional and personal connections. The school maintains a GDPR-compliant contact database for targeted outreach to alumni and sector professionals. Graduation work is showcased through platforms like [kaskfilms.be](http://kaskfilms.be), with access granted via codes for industry contacts and prospective students during recruitment events. A print booklet is also distributed annually to highlight graduate projects (Source: SER, pg. 45). Although no structured alumni association exists, the school supports its graduates through informal mentoring, newsletters (such as The Graduate), and targeted communications regarding festival submissions, awards, and

job opportunities. Events like Ani Meet offer structured opportunities for current students and alumni to connect with professionals and studios, particularly in the field of Animation. Staff regularly stay in touch with alumni and use these networks to support work placements, mentoring, and guest contributions (*Source: SER pg. 31; Meeting with Alumni*). The Review Team heard that while outreach is broadly effective, the institution recognises the need to further develop consistent follow-up mechanisms with alumni, including tracking long-term graduate outcomes and creating structured opportunities for collaboration (*Source: Meeting with Senior Management Team; Meeting with Heads of Programmes; Meeting with Alumni*).

The 2023 launch of a bilingual Dutch-English website has significantly improved accessibility for international audiences. The new editorial platform “Read, Watch, Listen” has replaced the former Onrust Magazine, offering podcasts, photo essays, and articles to expand the institution’s reach and share its artistic and research output more dynamically (*Source: SER, pg. 44*)

#### **6.4 The internal and external communication systems ensure that information published by the institution is clear, accurate, consistent, and readily available.**

KASK & Conservatorium has implemented a robust editorial and review process to ensure that all internal and external communications are clear, consistent, and accurate. All public-facing materials, such as the website, social media content, printed brochures, and newsletters, are managed centrally by the Communication Office, in close collaboration with HOGENT’s institutional communications department (*Source: SER, pg. 44*). Editorial content is initially drafted by programme coordinators or teaching staff and then reviewed by the Communication Office and the Student Affairs Office. At the start of each recruitment cycle, all programmes are consulted regarding updates to the institutional website and study guides. This review includes editing of text, new lesson schedules, and updates to photo and video material, which are coordinated with study track supervisors (*Source: SER, pg. 44*)

The school’s external website was relaunched in 2023 as a fully bilingual Dutch-English platform to improve accessibility for both local and international audiences. It now includes an event calendar, programme information, student work showcases, and an editorial platform - Read, Watch, Listen - which replaces the former print magazine Onrust (*Source: SER pg. 44*). This platform offers multimedia content including podcasts, photo series, and written articles, helping the school reach broader public and artistic communities with timely and engaging content (*Source: SER, pg. 45*). Information about graduate work is published annually through a professionally designed print booklet distributed at the Graduation Festival and through the

online platform [kaskfilms.be](http://kaskfilms.be), which is accessible to external audiences via password-protected links. This ensures consistent branding and promotion of student work in alignment with institutional messaging (*Source: SER, pg. 45*).

Internally, communication systems such as WALDO (student intranet), Chamilo (learning environment), and staff newsletters provide structured updates about policy, programme information, quality assurance, and support services. The Communication Office uses analytical tools and survey data to track engagement and make ongoing improvements to clarity and accessibility (*Source: SER, pg. 43; Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). While systems are well established, the Review Team noted that some students, particularly in their first year, were not always clear on where to find the most current information. This was echoed in several meetings, where students and staff highlighted that overlapping digital platforms occasionally lead to confusion (*Source: Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Teachers*). Nonetheless, the processes in place are detailed, centralised, and subject to regular review, offering a strong foundation for the school's commitment to maintaining transparent and reliable communication with both internal and external audiences.

### **Review Team's analysis**

The Review Team confirms that the AVA programmes at KASK & Conservatorium are supported by established internal and external communication systems, underpinned by dedicated coordination from the institutional Communication Office. Internally, information is shared via multiple digital platforms including WALDO, Chamilo, iBaMaFlex, and Microsoft Teams. These systems allow for administrative, pedagogical, and practical information to reach students and staff efficiently (C6.2). Students confirmed that communication is generally timely and effective, though some reported confusion due to the number of platforms in use. The Review Team **recommends** (C6.2) that AVA KASK continue to clarify communication workflows and platform usage, particularly for incoming students and visiting staff.

Vertical and horizontal communication within the institution is facilitated through governance structures such as the TPC, Department Council, and Education Council, all of which include student representation. Regular student and staff newsletters complement face-to-face meetings and digital updates. The Review Team **commends** (C6.2) the institution's effort to maintain open

channels of communication across all levels, and its ability to adapt these channels in response to feedback.

The Review Team also confirms that the institution gathers and uses a wide range of internal data to support decision-making (C6.1). Programme teams and quality assurance staff have access to student survey data, academic performance metrics, and feedback from structured consultations. Digital tools such as Power BI and iBaMaFlex are used to analyse indicators such as study progress, graduation rates, and student satisfaction. The Review Team **commends** (C6.1) the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in programme planning and **recommends** (C6.1) that more explicit communication of outcomes and resulting actions be shared with students to close the feedback loop.

Externally, the institution maintains strong engagement with its public and professional audiences (C6.3). A wide range of cultural programming, including KASK Lectures, exhibitions, film screenings, and public events, provides visibility for staff and student work. The Review Team **commends** (C6.3) KASK's continued investment in high-quality outreach, and in particular the recent redevelopment of its bilingual website and the launch of the "Read, Watch, Listen" platform. These efforts ensure that the institution's voice is accessible, contemporary, and aligned with its values.

Alumni engagement is well-supported through informal networks and targeted communications. While there is no formal alumni association, platforms such as [kaskfilms.be](http://kaskfilms.be), The Graduate newsletter, and events like Ani Meet allow students and alumni to stay connected. The Review Team **recommends** (C6.3) that KASK explore opportunities to formalise alumni tracking and communication, which could strengthen community ties and support long-term impact assessment.

The institution has well-defined processes for reviewing and publishing external content. All programme information is reviewed annually in consultation with department chairs and programme coordinators. The Review Team **commends** (C6.4) the institution's editorial oversight process and **recommends** that further steps be taken to ensure that information across digital platforms is streamlined and accessible for international audiences and new users.

### **Compliance with Standard 6**

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s)/Institution have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 6:*

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Compliance level</i>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Fully compliant

## 7. Quality Assurance Processes

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.

### Description of Provision

7.1. The institution's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system effectively monitors and reviews its formal processes and each of its study programmes on a regular basis.

The internal quality assurance (IQA) framework at AVA KASK is structured around the broader institutional system of HOGENT and is aligned with Flemish higher education legislation. The institution has developed a lean, transparent QA system that is responsive and flexible, aiming to foster a participatory quality culture rather than a purely top-down model (Source: *SER* pg. 45; *Meeting with Senior Management Team*). This system operates through four key dimensions: policy and governance, consultation structures, quality instruments, and external validation. Strategic planning is driven by HOGENT's five-year cycle based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model, supported by annual action plans and covenant agreements between KASK and HOGENT. These agreements allow the school to align its programme-level objectives with broader institutional goals (Source: *SER*, p. 45; *Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

Programme quality is formally overseen by the TPC, which is composed of staff and student representatives. The TPC plays a central role in monitoring the structure, content, and delivery of the programmes, as well as reviewing student surveys and coordinating follow-up actions. The committee is supported by departmental councils, faculty groups, and other school-wide QA forums. These bodies ensure regular consultation and foster broad ownership of quality enhancement across stakeholder groups (Source: *Meeting with Heads of Institution*; *Meeting with Senior Management Team*; *Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). Engagement with external expertise is also built into the QA process. Peer-to-peer reviews, professional field committees, and external jury participation help ensure that the programmes remain aligned with professional standards and artistic developments. Biennial action plans for each programme are presented to the Education Council and reviewed within the TPC every six months to assess progress and shape future directions (Source: *SER*, pg. 46).

The Review Team heard that while QA is well embedded structurally, there is variation in how staff experience and participate in these processes. Some staff noted that QA-related responsibilities, in the temporary absence of a full-time QA staff member (the newly recruited QA staff member started just after the EQ-Arts visit on May 2nd 2025), are not always clearly recognised in their roles and that administrative coordination

can be burdensome without dedicated QA staff in place (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff*). Nonetheless, the culture of reflection and dialogue is strong, and improvements to the QA system, such as expanding student-facing documentation on WALDO, are underway. The school also seeks to balance formal QA mechanisms with more informal, pedagogically driven dialogue. Teacher meetings, peer exchange, and collaborative working groups are regularly used to share insights and improve course delivery (*Source: SER, pg. 46; Meeting with Heads of Programme*).

#### **7.2. The institution and its programmes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) on a regular basis.**

KASK & Conservatorium, as part of HOGENT, is subject to regular external quality assurance (EQA) through national accreditation and institutional review processes governed by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders). The Flemish quality assurance framework is a fully integrated system that includes periodic institutional reviews, programme assessments, and accreditation based on compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Based on the outcomes of these reviews, KASK's programmes are officially recognised and its students receive legally accredited degrees (*Source: SER, pg. 6*). The most recent institutional review of HOGENT took place in 2022 and was positively concluded.

In addition to national accreditation mechanisms, KASK & Conservatorium has proactively sought external validation through subject-specific quality reviews. The Audiovisual Arts programme, including both Film and Animation, underwent an EQ-Arts review in 2018, the results of which helped inform several internal QA improvements, including greater transparency in action plans and more systematic communication of quality assurance procedures to students and staff (*Source: SER, pg. 47*). Preparation for external reviews is carried out through a collaborative process involving faculty, QA coordinators, students, and external stakeholders. The Review Team heard that lessons learned from the 2018 EQ-Arts review and the 2022 HOGENT institutional review have been actively used to refine quality procedures, enhance stakeholder involvement, and strengthen alignment between internal and external QA mechanisms (*Source: Meeting with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with Senior Management Team*). Feedback from external evaluations is formally discussed at various levels, including the TPC, departmental leadership meetings, and institutional governance bodies. This ensures that insights gained through EQA are translated into actionable changes at both the strategic and operational levels (*Source: SER, pg. 47; Meeting with Senior Management Team*).

**7.3. The institution involves the participation of internal and external peers/experts and stakeholders in its IQA and EQA processes.**

The QA culture at AVA KASK is strongly participatory, with clear mechanisms for involving internal and external stakeholders across both IQA and EQA processes. The institution explicitly values the contribution of students, staff, alumni, and professionals in developing and reviewing its study programmes and strategic priorities (Source: *SER, p. 47; Meeting with Heads of Institution*).

Internally, staff are actively involved through structured governance bodies such as the TPC, Department Council, and working groups. These platforms allow staff to shape programme development, contribute to action planning, and respond to survey findings. Teachers also engage in peer-to-peer review and are regularly consulted during self-evaluation and curriculum alignment processes. While most staff feel engaged and see QA as embedded in their teaching practice, some noted that their contributions to QA are not always formally recognised or well documented (Source: *Meeting with Teachers*).

Student participation is formalised through elected roles on the TPC and Student Council, although the Review Team heard that not all student representatives are elected through transparent procedures. Some students described being invited by teachers or peers, or were suggested by their predecessors, rather than nominated through an open process. Nevertheless, student feedback is gathered systematically through surveys, focus groups, and direct involvement in review meetings. There is a strong appetite among students to be more involved in quality assurance, and several reported participating in peer-led initiatives and informal channels of influence (Source: *SER, pg. 47; Meeting with BA and MA Students*).

External stakeholder involvement is well integrated into the QA framework through the Professional Field Committees. These committees are composed of active professionals in the audiovisual sector and advise on programme content, employability, and curriculum relevance. Meetings are convened by the TPC chair in collaboration with industry partners, and reports are shared with staff and students (Source: *SER, pg. 46; Meeting with Employers and Professional Field*). Additional forms of external engagement include peer review for teaching practices, guest jury participation, and research collaboration.

Although alumni involvement is largely informal, it remains consistent and valued. Many former students maintain strong ties with staff, contribute to events, and participate in mentoring and guest talks. While the school does not have a formal alumni association, regular surveys and

sustained personal relationships help ensure graduate voices remain present in QA processes (Source: SER, pg. 31; Annex 6; *Meeting with Alumni*).

7.4. The institution's IQA system, and its cycles, are designed to ensure that its outcomes both assure and enhance its provision.

The IQA system at KASK & Conservatorium is structured to both safeguard academic standards and drive ongoing enhancement across its programmes. Aligned with HOGENT's five-year Strategic Plan and based on a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model, the QA system facilitates continuous reflection and responsive action planning at both institutional and programme levels (Source: SER pg. 45). Each programme, including Film and Animation within AVA, develops a dedicated action plan every two years. These plans are reviewed every six months within the TPC, which includes both staff and student representatives. The action plans are shaped by student feedback, professional field committee input, and external review outcomes, and they are reported to the Education Council and ultimately to the Board of KASK & Conservatorium. This cycle ensures alignment between local decision-making and broader institutional goals (Source: SER, pg. 46).

As outlined in the SER and confirmed in meetings, survey tools and data analytics allow programme leaders and QA staff to track progress, identify priorities, and adjust actions throughout the cycle. Input is drawn from student surveys (e.g. first-year, graduating, alumni), focus groups, and thematic evaluations of specific course units. Feedback is reviewed by the TPC, department heads, the Dean, and relevant administrative units such as student affairs and infrastructure (Source: SER pg. 46). The school acknowledges the need to improve the visibility and understanding of QA processes among students and staff. While feedback mechanisms are in place, several students and teachers mentioned during meetings that the loop between feedback collection and resulting improvements is not always transparent, particularly for newer cohorts (Source: *Meeting with QA and Support Staff; Meeting with BA and MA Students; Meeting with Teachers*). Efforts are underway to enhance communication on this front, including updates through the student intranet (WALDO) and targeted briefings.

The school also recognises the importance of making QA processes a shared responsibility, not just the remit of management. Faculty engagement in action plan implementation is facilitated through clearly defined tasks and regular follow-up, although some teachers indicated that clearer role definitions and additional support would enhance their ability to contribute effectively (Source: *Meeting with Teachers*). Overall, the QA system is designed to be cyclical, inclusive, and

enhancement-led, with mechanisms in place to document decisions, track follow-up, and maintain a clear audit trail. It reflects a dynamic and maturing approach to quality assurance that supports long-term programme development while embedding a culture of reflection and shared responsibility.

### Review Team's analysis

The Review Team confirms that KASK & Conservatorium has an established internal quality assurance (IQA) system that supports both compliance and enhancement across its programmes. The structure is decentralised yet clearly embedded within HOGENT's institutional framework, and is supported by regular data collection, participatory governance structures, and ongoing stakeholder engagement (C7.1). The Review Team **commends** (C7.1) the breadth and regularity of the IQA cycle and its alignment with institutional strategic goals. However, the Review Team **recommends** (C7.1) that clearer documentation of QA responsibilities at staff / teacher level would improve transparency and support a more consistent implementation of actions.

The institution's approach to external quality assurance (EQA) is robust and consistent with national and European standards. As part of HOGENT, KASK participates in regular NVAO-led reviews and has also sought subject-specific validation through EQ-Arts evaluations. These engagements inform internal practices and reinforce alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) (C7.2). The Review Team **commends** (C7.2) the institution's proactive use of external review processes to inform continuous development and enhance institutional learning.

The Review Team found that KASK & Conservatorium fosters a participatory QA culture, involving students, staff, and external professionals in decision-making and review processes (C7.3). Internal stakeholder engagement is formalised through committee membership and structured consultation, while external professionals contribute via Professional Field Committees, jury membership, and curriculum feedback. The Review Team **commends** (C7.3) the institution's inclusive and dialogic approach to QA, and **recommends** (C7.3) that the role of alumni in formal quality assurance processes be strengthened through more systematic engagement and feedback collection.

The Review Team found that the QA cycle at KASK is designed not only to monitor compliance, but also to generate actionable improvement plans (C7.4). Biennial action plans are reviewed at multiple levels and used to track programme development. However, the Review Team heard

from both students and staff that the feedback loop, particularly communicating what changes result from evaluations, is not always closed. The Review Team **recommends** (C7.4) that KASK improve the visibility of follow-up actions taken in response to stakeholder feedback, especially for students and part-time staff.

### **Compliance with Standard 7**

*The Review Team concludes that the programme(s)/Institution have achieved the following level of compliance with Standard 7:*

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
BA	Substantially compliant
MA	Substantially compliant

## 8. Profile of compliance with the standards

### Standard 1. Quality Assurance Policy

The institution's mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning & teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level: BA: Substantial MA: Substantial
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	

### Areas of Good Practice

- The coherent integration between institutional QA structures and programme-level processes, supported by the PDCA model for strategic planning and continuous improvement. (C1.1 / 1.2)
- Meaningful engagement with professional stakeholders, alumni, and external partners through curriculum review, assessment participation, and sector-facing events such as Ani Meet. (C1.2)
- The institution's commitment to equal opportunities, inclusion, and diversity, reflected in inclusive recruitment, flexible learning pathways, and accessibility measures. (C1.3)
- The decentralised and participatory governance structure, empowering staff and students through the TPC, programme track meetings, and collaborative working groups. (C1.4)
- The strong culture of shared responsibility and collaboration that sustained QA activity during a vacancy in the QA Coordinator position. (C1.6)

### Recommendations

- Improve communication regarding how external stakeholder input is integrated into programme development and raise student awareness of sector-facing activities. (C1.2)
- Further diversify the teaching team and embed inclusive and decolonial approaches consistently across programme delivery and curriculum design, including enhancing participation of non-Dutch-speaking students in all aspects of learning and governance. (C1.3)
- Formalise and clearly communicate the process for selecting or electing student representatives to ensure transparency and consistency. (C1.4)
- Strengthen communication with students to increase transparency on how feedback is used and how input leads to meaningful change. (C1.5)

- Include succession planning and appropriate workload distribution in future quality management planning to ensure continuity of leadership and oversight. (C1.6)

## Standard 2. Student-Centred Learning

The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centred approaches to learning and assessment processes.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Substantial</b> <b>MA: Substantial</b>

### Areas of Good Practice

- Thoughtfully designed curriculum aligned with institutional vision and sector expectations, supporting the development of individual artistic voices through process, critical reflection, and independent inquiry. (C2.1)
- Inclusive and cyclical approach to programme design involving staff, students, and external stakeholders through Professional Field Committees and programme track meetings (“leerlijnen”). (C2.2)
- Diverse, exploratory learning and teaching methods anchored in critical dialogue, peer learning environments fostering critical engagement and community-based reflection. (C2.3)
- Balanced assessment framework combining process and product with clear evaluation structures, including written feedback and mentoring. (C2.4)
- Strong commitment to artistic freedom and student-led learning, offering high levels of autonomy, flexible pathways, and interdisciplinary opportunities. (C2.5)
- High level of professional engagement across both programmes, including internships, screenings, workshops, and sector networks. (C2.6)
- Strong nexus between research and education in the Film MA, with research-led teaching structurally embedded through thesis supervision, peer screenings, and open dialogue. (C2.7)

### Recommendations

- Update and more clearly communicate Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to students at all levels to strengthen transparency and support self-directed learning. (C2.1)

- Formalise and better communicate student participation in curriculum governance to ensure all students are aware of their influence on programme development. (C2.2)
- Continue developing shared practices around feedback and learning outcome alignment to ensure consistency of assessment expectations across departments. (C2.3)
- Strengthen transparency around grading and criteria, particularly in the early BA years, where student understanding of expectations varies. (C2.4)
- Explore strategies to scaffold autonomy with clearer framing and support, especially for new students. (C2.5)
- Formalise and consistently communicate policies relating to intellectual property, as student understanding of IP rights, film production, distribution, and ownership varied. (C2.5)
- Further formalise research integration in the Animation curriculum, particularly regarding research methods, supervision, and articulation of research questions to ensure parity of experience. (C2.7)

### Standard 3. Assuring the Student Study Experience

The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Full</b> <b>MA: Full</b>

#### Areas of Good Practice

- Clear and consistent admissions criteria at both BA and MA level, with a well-structured admissions process combining portfolio review, motivation, and interview. (C3.1)
- Inclusive admissions model allowing applicants to demonstrate artistic potential through multiple formats. (C3.1)
- Streamlined admissions process (from three interviews to two), reducing workload while maintaining rigour. (C3.1)
- Tailored bridging programmes at MA level enabling external candidates to meet entry expectations while maintaining academic integrity. (C3.1)
- Personalised and student-centred support model, including flexible learning pathways, counselling services, mental health and wellbeing support, and financial hardship assistance. (C3.2)

- Culture of Care initiative, gender-inclusive policies, Personalised Learning Track (GIT), and clear referral pathways through HOGENT and student advisors, reflecting a holistic approach to student success and inclusion. (C3.2)

### Recommendations

- Introduce a clearly accessible complaints procedure, supported by improved onboarding and enhanced student guidebook content. (C3.2)
- Review the accessibility and individual responsiveness of support mechanisms, particularly for students with specific learning needs. (C3.2)

## Standard 4. Human Resources

The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Substantial</b> <b>MA: Substantial</b>

### Areas of Good Practice

- Dedicated and professionally active teaching staff, praised by students for their accessibility, support, engagement, and mentorship. (C4.1)
- Strong professional integration of teaching staff, who are actively involved in artistic, research, and industry contexts, enriching the curriculum through mentoring, studio teaching, and guest events. (C4.2)
- Implementation of inclusive and bias-sensitive recruitment policies, developed in collaboration with external experts, reflecting a strong commitment to equitable hiring practices. (C4.3)
- Flexible sabbatical system allowing educators to pursue professional and artistic projects while maintaining their affiliation with the institution, supporting artistic growth and aligning with institutional mission. (C4.4)

### Recommendations

- Consider consolidating smaller contracts and introduce structured coordination time for both teachers and Heads of Programmes to support continuity, team cohesion, and effective workload distribution. (C4.1)
- Continue monitoring the balance between teaching responsibilities and external professional practice to ensure consistent student support and curricular delivery. (C4.2)
- Take further steps to diversify the teaching body and review contract models to support more sustainable inclusion. (C4.3)
- Explore ways to create more time and structural support for career development, particularly for part-time and freelance staff, by allocating a defined proportion of paid time for coordination duties and ongoing training. (C4.4)

## Standard 5. Learning & Teaching Resources

The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning & teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Substantial</b> <b>MA: Substantial</b>

### Areas of Good Practice

- Continued reinvestment in facilities and technical infrastructure (C5.1), with responsive financial planning at institutional and departmental levels.
- Extensive research infrastructure for students and staff, including Hercules Lab, OPlab, and interdisciplinary research clusters fostering collaboration and research-led teaching (C5.2).
- Strong physical infrastructure across both programmes, with well-equipped studios, editing rooms, post-production facilities, and access to technical staff, software, central servers, and the Kunstenbibliotheek (C5.3).
- Commitment to improving accessibility within facilities (C5.3).
- Integrated academic and personal support framework (C5.4), including mentoring, individual supervision, the Culture of Care initiative, confidential reporting mechanisms, STUVO services, and responsive support for students with diverse needs.

## Recommendations

- Continue long-term spatial planning to address ongoing space shortages, particularly in the Film programme (C5.1).
- Systematically integrate the Animation programme into the broader institutional research ecosystem, including clearer pathways for staff and student engagement with research clusters and funding mechanisms (C5.2).
- Direct continued investment toward optimising learning spaces and addressing gaps in infrastructure as student numbers grow (C5.3).
- Enhance the visibility and communication of academic and personal support services, particularly during onboarding for new students (C5.4).

## Standard 6. Communication

The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Substantial</b> <b>MA: Full</b>

## Areas of Good Practice

- Established internal and external communication systems, supported by the institutional Communication Office and a range of digital platforms (WALDO, Chamilo, iBaMaFlex, Microsoft Teams) ensuring timely and effective information sharing (C6.2).
- Open channels of communication across all levels, including vertical and horizontal governance structures (TPC, Department Council, Education Council), student representation, newsletters, and adaptable communication practices (C6.2).
- Integration of quantitative and qualitative data in programme planning, using tools such as Power BI and iBaMaFlex for informed decision-making (C6.1).
- Strong public and professional outreach, including cultural programming (KASK Lectures, exhibitions, film screenings, public events), redevelopment of the bilingual website, and the “Read, Watch, Listen” platform (C6.3).

- Well-defined processes for reviewing and publishing external content, with annual review cycles involving department chairs and programme coordinators (C6.4).

## Recommendations

- Clarify communication workflows and platform usage, particularly for incoming students and visiting staff to address confusion caused by the number of digital platforms (C6.2).
- Communicate outcomes and resulting actions more explicitly to students, to close the feedback loop and make data-informed decisions more visible (C6.1).
- Formalise alumni tracking and communication, to strengthen alumni relations and support long-term impact assessment (C6.3).
- Streamline and increase accessibility of digital information for international audiences and new users, ensuring consistency across digital platforms (C6.4).

## Standard 7. Quality Assurance Processes

The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.

Title/level of Institution/Programme	Compliance level:
BA and MA Programmes - AVA	<b>BA: Substantial</b> <b>MA: Substantial</b>

## Areas of Good Practice

- Established internal quality assurance (IQA) system, embedded within HOGENT's institutional framework, using regular data collection, participatory governance, and stakeholder engagement (C7.1).
- Breadth and regularity of the IQA cycle, aligned with institutional strategic goals (C7.1).
- Proactive use of external review processes (EQA), including NVAO reviews and EQ-Arts evaluations, ensuring compliance with national and European standards (C7.2).
- Inclusive and dialogic approach to QA, involving students, staff, external professionals, Professional Field Committees, jury members, and curriculum feedback mechanisms (C7.3).
- QA cycle designed for both compliance and enhancement, with biennial action plans reviewed and used to track programme development (C7.4).

## Recommendations

- Clarify documentation of QA responsibilities at staff/teacher level, to improve transparency and ensure consistent implementation of QA actions (C7.1).
- Strengthen alumni involvement in formal quality assurance processes, through more systematic engagement and structured feedback collection (C7.3).
- Improve visibility of follow-up actions resulting from stakeholder feedback, particularly for students and part-time staff, to ensure the feedback loop is effectively closed (C7.4).

## 9. Conclusions

KASK & Conservatorium, as part of HOGENT, demonstrates a well-established academic and organisational structure with a clear institutional mission that supports autonomy, experimentation, and critical reflection within the arts. The AVA programmes in Film and Animation are delivered within a pedagogical model that values student-centred learning, artistic freedom, and a deep connection to contemporary professional practice. The Review Team found the AVA department to be grounded in strong institutional values and supported by a dedicated teaching staff, many of whom are practicing artists and researchers.

The Review Team appreciates the open, reflective approach taken by the AVA programme team in preparing for this review. The SER presented an honest and insightful reflection of current practices, and it was clear that the review process had been used as an opportunity to critically assess and refine aspects of the quality assurance system. The site visits were characterised by a high level of engagement, transparency, and willingness to discuss both strengths and challenges.

The Review Team confirms that the internal quality assurance system at KASK is well developed and aligned with both HOGENT's institutional framework and the European Standards and Guidelines. The QA cycle is embedded at multiple levels and supported by governance structures that include students, teachers, and professional field representatives. The use of biennial action plans, programme data dashboards, and regular committee review cycles has established a culture of shared responsibility for quality and enhancement. The Review Team encourages the institution to continue improving the visibility of QA outcomes to all stakeholders and to support staff in formalising their roles within these processes. In doing so, particular attention should be given to the

evolving balance between part-time and full-time teaching staff, as this has implications for long-term sustainability and consistent engagement with quality assurance.

External engagement is a strong feature of the AVA programmes. There are active partnerships with the professional sector, including alumni-founded organisations, and a visible presence in international festivals, events, and publications. While alumni relationships are often informal, they remain vibrant and valuable. The Review Team encourages KASK to develop more systematic mechanisms for alumni engagement that would support long-term impact tracking and programme enhancement.

The Film and Animation programmes are underpinned by robust technical infrastructure and learning environments, although increasing student numbers are placing pressure on space, particularly in Film. Accessibility and inclusion have been prioritised through recent modifications, and further improvements are planned. The Review Team found a clear institutional commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, supported by training, inclusive recruitment practices, and personalised learning pathways for students. These values were reflected in the student voice, with many describing the learning environment as respectful, inclusive, and supportive. The Review Team encourages the institution to continue embedding these values consistently across all operational levels, ensuring that the Culture of Care is not only experienced informally but also structurally integrated into institutional practices and decision-making.

Research is a key strength of KASK & Conservatorium, and the AVA programmes benefit from access to purpose-built labs, research funding, and interdisciplinary clusters. Film is closely integrated into this research ecosystem, while Animation is still in the process of building stronger links. The Review Team recognises the potential for both staff and students in Animation to deepen their engagement with research and encourages KASK to continue developing these pathways. The Review Team found the Film and Animation curricula to be coherent, well-articulated, and aligned with the institutional mission and EQF levels. Learning outcomes, assessment practices, and professional preparation are clearly defined, though some students requested greater transparency around feedback processes and project progression. The institution has made efforts to address these concerns, and further development in communication and onboarding practices will enhance the student experience.

The Review Team recognises that KASK operates within a complex institutional structure as part of HOGENT, but it has maintained its identity as a School of Arts with a distinct mission and educational approach. Within this context, the AVA programmes have successfully fostered a culture that

balances artistic exploration with academic rigour and professional relevance. In reviewing the evidence, and through detailed engagement with staff, students, alumni, and external partners, the Review Team has identified areas of strength across all seven standards, as well as areas where continued development would strengthen existing good practice. In doing so, the Review Team is broadly in agreement with the institution's own analysis of its strengths and priorities for improvement.

The Review Team would like to express its sincere thanks to KASK & Conservatorium, the AVA programme team, and all those who contributed to the review process. The openness, energy, and collegiality shown throughout the site visit reflects the strong institutional culture of care, dialogue, and critical engagement that characterises this School of Arts.

## Annex 1 – Site-Visit Schedule

### Monday, 28 April

Time	Activity
09:15 – 09:30	Review Team (RT) meets Liaison Person
09:30 – 10:30	RT meets the Head(s) of the Institution
10:45 – 11:45	RT meets the Head(s) of the Programme(s) to be reviewed
12:00 – 13:00	RT meets BA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch onsite + Studio Visit – Film Department</i>
14:30 – 15:30	RT meets MA students from the programme(s) to be reviewed
15:45 – 16:45	RT meets teachers from the programme(s) to be reviewed
17:00 – 18:00	RT meets alumni of the programme(s) to be reviewed

### Tuesday, 29 April

Time	Activity
09:30 – 10:30	RT meets programme(s') research staff and students
10:45 – 11:45	RT meets programme(s') technical and support staff
12:00 – 13:00	RT meets representatives of the professions and employers

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch onsite + Studio Visit – Animation Department*

14:00 – 15:00 RT meets Quality Assurance and Support Staff

15:15 – 16:15 RT meets Senior Management Group

16:30 – 17:30 RT meets Liaison Person for clarifications

**Wednesday, 30 April**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
09:00 – 09:15	RT meets Liaison Person
11:00 – 11:30	Oral Feedback to the Head of Institution and colleagues

## **Annex 2 – List of supporting documents**

**Annex 15:** Action Plan AVA 2024–2026

**Annex 29:** Animation Schedule Bachelors

**Annex 6:** AVA Alumni

**Annex 13:** AVA Artistic Research Projects 2014–2025

**Annex 2:** AVA in numbers

**Annex 26:** AVA Student Mobility 2020–2023

**Annex 28:** AVA PLO matrix

**Annex 3:** AVA Curriculum Overview

**Annex 16:** Covenant KASK & Conservatorium – HoGent

**Annex 9:** Education and Exam Code KASK & Conservatorium 2024–2025 (Dutch)

**Annex 8:** Educational Plan KASK & Conservatorium

**Annex 12:** Evaluation Policy HoGent (Dutch)

**Annex 5:** Guest Lecturers, Masterclasses & Exhibitions

**Annex 1:** Institutional Organizational Chart

**Annex 4:** NVAO Programme Learning Outcomes

**Annex 27:** Infobrochure Staff Statutes

**Annex 24:** Summary of School Wide Survey 22–23

**Annex 23:** School-wide Survey AVA 22–23 (Dutch)

**Annex 25:** Programme Change 2022–2023 Master's Programmes Fine Arts, AVA & Drama

**Annex 7:** Quality Enhancement Plan KASK & Conservatorium

**Annex 11:** Study Guide (Dutch)

**Annex 20:** Summary of Study Load Meeting Film

**Annex 22:** Summary of Professional Field Committee Animation 2024

**Annex 21:** Summary of Professional Field Committee Film 2024

**Annex 19:** Summary of Evaluation Study Day Discussion AVA

**Annex 14:** Supporting Services Policy KASK & Conservatorium

**Annex 18:** Strategic Plan HoGent 2023–2028 (Dutch)

**Annex 17:** Vision Study Guidance and Counselling

**Annex 10:** Vision Internationalization KASK & Conservatorium

**Additional documentation requested by the Review Team and provided by AVA KASK in advance of the site visit:**

**Annex 29:** Animation Teaching Schedule (BA)

**Annex 30:** Film Teaching Schedule (BA)