



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

**VILNIAUS DAILĖS AKADEMIJOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS FOTOGRAFIJA IR MEDIJOS
MENAS (61204M101, 612W60001)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA ARTS (61204M101,
612W60001)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS ACADEMY of ARTS**

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Fotografija ir medijos menas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	61204M101
Studijų sritis	Menos studijos
Studijų kryptis	Audiovizualinis menas
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Iššęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais ¹	160
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Audiovizualinio meno bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997 05 19

¹ – vienas kreditas laikomas lygiu 40 studento darbo valandų

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	Photography and Media Art
State code	62104M101
Study area	Arts
Study field	Audiovisual Art
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Level of studies	First cycle
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4years)
Scope of the study programme (in national credits)	160
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Audiovisual Arts
Date of registration of the study programme	19 May 1997, No 565

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Vilnius Academy of Arts is a well-established and respected institution. Its institutional origins go back to the founding of the Vilnius School of Arts in 1940 as a consequence of the reorganisation of Vilnius University of Steponas Batoras. According to Soviet government decree in 1941, the Vilnius School of Arts became Vilnius Academy of Arts (since 1944, the Vilnius State Institute of Art). In 1951 on the basis of the then-Union Ministry of Higher Education order, Vilnius Academy of Arts and Institute of Kaunas Applied and Decorative Arts two were merged into one – the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic State Institute of Art which regained the name of Vilnius Academy of Arts in 1990. The Academy is based in Vilnius but has faculties in Kaunas, Klaipėda and Telšiai.

The programme being evaluated is located in the Faculty of Visual and Applied Arts, one of five faculties in the Academy. The programme was established at the Vilnius Academy of Art in 1996. At that time the programme was unique both at the Academy and in Lithuania. Later, similar programmes started to emerge at the Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas) and Šiauliai University. The programme was designed to meet the country's need for specialists in this subject area. The programme was last evaluated in 2001.

The expert panel met senior staff of the Academy, the authors of the self assessment report, administrators, academic staff, students and employers. The self assessment report provided a suitable basis for the evaluation and was supplemented with additional documentation. The evaluation was further informed by responses of Academy staff to questions from the expert panel who provided an oral feedback at the end of the evaluation visit. The Panel is indebted to colleagues at the Academy, students, graduates and employers, for their cooperation.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims

1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme

The demand for the programme is presented in the self assessment report (paragraph 1.1) based on requirements for photography and media artists. However, the programme is not unique among similar programmes offered in other higher schools and therefore its identity is expected to be considered more extensively.

1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with institutional, state and international directives
The programme complies with institutional, state and international directives.

1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims

The aims of the programme, focused on the development of students' creative approaches and critical reasoning and formation of a broad outlook in the subject field (Self-assessment report paragraph 1.1.3), are relevant. The content of studies shows, however, that professional skills predominate over generic artistic education. Therefore it is advisable to ensure that students are provided with the means of attaining the necessary level of generic artistic skills required for specialists in photography and media art.

1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes are, in general, articulated clearly, with considerable emphasis on more generic transferable skills, which is not always reflected in the content of the programme. The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined in the self-evaluation report (paragraph 1.2.1) as knowledge and skills ‘to define the field of creative interests, to develop personal abilities, to formulate creative aims, to select means that correspond to the artistic products created by, and thus be able to participate and compete in the art market’. From the description of the intended learning outcomes, the level of professional proficiency aimed at, however, is not clear enough and requires more elaboration.

1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes of intended learning

The intended learning outcomes are subject to clearly designed consecutiveness of acquiring knowledge and skills in the following fields: Genesis of the Image; Moving Image; Space and Time in the Image; Image and Sound Systems; Objecthood; Installation and Contexts; Artist’s Statement; Final Project (paragraph 1.2.2). The intended learning outcomes pertaining to professional education are consistent and comprehensive, although better harmony with the programme aims should be ensured.

1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes

The self assessment report states that the intended ‘learning outcomes are updated annually with regard to the current developments in contemporary art by changing the focus within different components of the Programme’ (paragraph 1.2.3). Such a frequent reviewing of the intended learning outcomes (unless mistaken for the curriculum of the programme) calls into question the relevance of the general aims of the programme and should be approached systematically. As far as the aims of the programme prove to be appropriate and attainable, it is expected that the Academy will take the opportunity afforded by this review to focus on the intended learning outcomes in order to ensure the coherence of the programme and to meet students’ expectations.

2. Curriculum design

2.1. Programme structure

2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume

The programme meets the requirements of legal acts relating to a first cycle study programme. This is set out clearly in the self assessment report (paragraph 2.1.1). In general, the study volume is consistent with enabling students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The ratio of contact hours to self-study hours ranges from 45:55 per cent to 80:20 per cent. Given the nature of the subject one might expect there to greater emphasis on self-study and the Panel recommends that a more appropriate balance of student work-load is considered.

2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects

In general, the sequence of subjects studied is logical, providing appropriate building blocks for student understanding. Elements of compulsion and choice are reasonable. The potential danger is that the curriculum provides little opportunity for students to choose subjects of particular interest to them. Annex 1 of the Self assessment report shows that 55 credits are available for individually chosen subjects from the list of the blocks I.2, II.2 and III.2; there are no credits for studying subjects not directly related to professional field.

2.2. Programme content

2.2.1. Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

The programme complies with the necessary legal acts.

2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

The programme content is comprehensive as far as basic qualifications of photography and media are concerned. Some related fields that are covered by the programme, for example, film directing and sound design, require elaboration to meet the basic requirements. To develop the more advanced skills required by the profession, the availability of supporting courses in the chosen field would be helpful.

The programme also requires more emphasis on pursuing the field-related generic skills claimed by the programme's aims. It is also the opinion of students and graduates that artistic creativity should not be deduced from merely professional attitudes. On the content level it is also suggested to cover the practices of photography and media form outside the Western world to ensure a global perspective.

The research papers reviewed during the site visit indicate that research methodology should be strengthened. The expert panel suggest that this requires greater emphasis on applied, rather than pure, research. It is important for an artistically-orientated programme to include sufficient opportunities for students to develop practice-driven analytical competences.

Neither the self assessment report nor the syllabuses refer to external practical training. It is therefore recommended that students are provided with opportunities for practical training outside the Academy before completion of studies.

3. Staff

3.1. Staff composition and turnover

3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition

Teachers hold recognised qualifications in appropriate subjects and meet the state requirement that at least half must hold a scientific qualification or be established artists. The self assessment report (paragraph 3.1.1) states that the professional part of the programme is taught by 12 permanent teachers, 11 of whom work on full-time basis. All are established artists, but none holds a scientific degree. There are also 14 teachers, 10 of whom hold a scientific degree, who teach mainly generic or art history subjects. During the reference period over 20 foreign teachers delivered lectures or intensive courses in the programme on temporary basis. The expert panel considers the teaching staff to be of high quality and committed.

Teachers have a nominal 40 hours per week workload. However, the ratio of classroom hours to those for research and/or artistic activities and/or methodical work is not fixed. It is stated in the self assessment report (paragraph 3.1.1, p. 14) that in specific circumstances (such as work on a sophisticated artistic project, an artistic project abroad, preparation of methodological material, or writing a text-book), the teacher has the opportunity to reduce the academic workload and concentrate on artistic or other projects. It is recommended that the Academy establishes a methodology for calculating teachers' workload to reinforce their motivation and expectations of opportunities for professional development.

The programme is supported by three technical staff, including two practical training specialists and one IT engineer.

3.1.2. Turnover of teachers

Turnover of lecturers in the programme is minimal. It is related chiefly to the curriculum improvement processes and inclusion of new specialists trained by the Department. Even though on small scale, turnover of teachers has a positive effect on the programme as it gives the department the opportunity to improve the curriculum, purposefully update the content of the programme, bring younger members of staff into the programme and promote competitiveness among lecturers (paragraph 3.1.2).

3.2. Staff competence

3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

The academic experience of staff ranges from one to 42 years; the average is 16 years. Some lecturers have joined upon gaining experience of academic work in the Academy, the Vilnius Gediminas University of Technology, or schools of art.

Staff have sufficient experience in the practical field. A number of the teachers are acknowledged professionals and meet high standards of artistic competence. Teachers are active in their professional fields as evidenced by the production of artistic works and events, and publication of academic papers. These are used to inform their teaching on the programme and enrich the students' learning experience. A number of teachers hold positions in relevant associations and committees.

The head of department is the nominated coordinator of the programme. While heads of department have traditionally been highly regarded and recognised in their field, the experts suggest that the considerable benefit would accrue from having a member of staff, other than the head of department, fulfil the role of the committee chair. Such a person, unencumbered by departmental duties, would be able to provide academic leadership, as well as management, of the programme at a level which would enable the incumbent to engage more fully in day-to-day programme-related activities.

3.2.2. Consistency of teachers' professional development

As stated in the self assessment report, the improvement of teachers' skills takes place in professional creative activities, consistent methodological work, participation in conferences and creative workshops, and international exchange. Incentives for professional development are executed by nomination for academic titles and institutionally managed financial support (Self assessment report, paragraph 3.2.2). The expert panel, however, found no evidence of a paid sabbatical scheme at the Department. While the experts recognise the immediate financial imperative, the Academy must be mindful that its reputation depends to a large extent on the credibility and recognition of its staff in their respective fields. If staff are not to stagnate, but to maintain their standing and remain at the forefront of their professional field, they need to refresh their knowledge and skills. The Academy needs to provide further opportunities for staff to engage in professional development activities such as scholarship and research and general updating of subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Notwithstanding the lack of a sabbatical programme, staff continue to enhance their professional standing through teacher exchange programmes, conference, inter-academy projects and creative workshops participation. It is important that the outcomes of these activities are linked clearly to programme delivery and development in order to enhance the student learning experience.

4. Facilities and learning resources

4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

Since December 2009, the Department of Photography and Media Art has been located in new premises, a reconstructed and newly equipped building at Maironio St. 3, which has considerably improved the facilities available to support the programme.

The premises and equipment are divided into functional zones, for theoretical, practical and independent work, self-study. All undergraduate and postgraduate students are provided with a sufficient number of rooms for group theory work, such as lectures, study/laboratory facilities for practical work, and access to space for self-study, whether theoretical or practical..

The students may use analogue and digital facilities in the photography workshop, animation workshop, audio-video montage room, and photo-video studio. For lecturing purposes there are three halls. One of them, a multi-functional auditorium able to accommodate 30 students, is also used for meetings with visiting lecturers, artists, etc. Corridors and lecture halls are also used for the presentation of students' work. A conference hall at the Design and Innovation Centre (Maironio St. 3) is used for video screenings. Workplaces are sufficient and very comfortable. All the premises meet high hygiene standards.

In addition, at students' service there is a departmental mediateque with eight workplace and central library with few reading rooms. All the premises are provided with wireless internet facilities.

Students and teachers have access to the library, reading rooms, and the mediateque. However, opening times are limited: the library and reading rooms are open from 0900 to 1800 (1600 on Friday), and the audio and video libraries for even shorter periods. The Academy is advised to consider extending the opening times to facilitate greater access of students and teachers to these resources.

4.1.2. Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies

The Self assessment report (paragraphs 4.1.3) indicates and the site visit proved that students of the Department use a range of facilities available that are updated according to possibilities. The Department lacks some types of facilities (for example, a cabinet for drying films). The resources available include computers and other digital equipment such as video cameras, photo cameras, lighting fixtures, projectors.

All the premises of the Department are equipped with computer hardware and internet access. Specific software is used depending on the function of the premises. All software is either licensed or free of charge Open Source software.

4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

Resources for practical training comply with the aims of the programme. Department has sufficient technical equipment: two video cameras, five digital cameras, three film and plate cameras, two video projectors and an audio player, two portable flash sets with accessories and two halogen sets. Besides, sound equipment is also available in number.

The ratio of available practical training places to the number of students is appropriate. Resources for practical trainings are suitable, while their accessibility is just enough.

4.2. Learning resources

4.2.1. Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications

The self assessment report (paragraph 4.2.1) indicates that the library has benefited from individual donations by the visiting lecturers who worked at the Academy under the Fulbright Programme. Occasionally, the library bookstock is augmented in response to a list provided by the Department. The expert panel considers that this method of library acquisitions does not ensure sufficient information circulation. The experts consider the library provision to be limited and in urgent need of considerable augmentation. Book and journal stock should be enhanced, particularly in international texts and there is a need to increase the provision of multiple copies, particularly of compulsory readings, for borrowing. The Academy may wish to consider providing English language newspapers and periodicals in the lending library area. Consideration should also be given to an extension of the currently limited hours of opening to facilitate greater accessibility, especially for part-time students.

4.2.2. Suitability and accessibility of learning materials

The Self assessment report admits (paragraph 4.2.2) that the number of publications available at the Academy's library is limited. Lecturers also use their personal libraries for teaching on the programme. Methodological material is still lacking and a solution to this problem requires additional funds.

The methodological materials prepared by the staff are suitable, but their range and accessibility are limited. Greater accessibility of methodological materials, especially that in manuscript form, could be achieved by uploading it to the institutional intranet or teachers' personal web pages.

5. Study process and student assessment

5.1. Student admission

5.1.1. Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies

Admission requirements meet the regulations of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania which were updated in 2009. The applicants for admission are ranked according to the composite score of admission competition which consists of secondary school graduation examination on Lithuanian language and annual mark of the foreign language, and entrance examination.

Prospective entrants are required to take the entrance examination which consists of visual expression tasks and speciality composition tasks. This is aimed at determining the special capabilities of future students such as photographic observation, the sense of composition, drawing skills, and the capability to articulate a creative idea. The Department considers that this is sufficient to identify in prospective students the necessary ability and motivation to succeed.

5.1.2. Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students

Motivation of prospective students is enhanced by provision of open days, speciality consulting, delivering courses through the use of media, also by encouraging future students to visit reviews of students' term works. Students are offered scholarships, provision of studio-work facilities, opportunities to study abroad and to become involved in a variety of professional activities.

5.2. Study process

5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule

The rationality of the programme schedule is appropriate and the students' workload is reasonable. The lectures, classes, workshops and self-study workload are allocated evenly. Examination sequence is uniformly arranged during the exam session.

5.2.2. *Student academic performance*

Interruption of studies for family or financial reasons, or leaving for studies abroad are the most significant reasons for fluctuations in student number over the study period. The dropout rate ranges from 10 to 28 per cent (table in paragraph 5.2.2). It is evidenced that the number of dropouts varies from two to five students and statistically depends on the number of admissions which has varied over the period from 21 in 2005, to 16 in 2007 and 26 in 2009. The reasons for this dropout rate, along with sometimes even more frequent instances of interruption of studies (as many as six in 2007-08) should be addressed by the Department and measures taken to ensure better student retention.

Data gathering of students' academic performance is weak and its analysis is not sufficient.

5.2.3. *Mobility of teachers and students*

The self assessment report (paragraph 5.2.3) demonstrates that teachers are well involved in international professional and pedagogical activities. However, mobility of the programme's students should be encouraged. Over the period from 2005 to 2010 the percentage of outgoing students ranged from 4 to 11 per cent. The Erasmus programme and inter-academy projects are student mobility instruments most often used. Even though the Self assessment report states that '...the Programme is still not widely known internationally', the data about incoming students indicate that programme management is conscious of the benefits of such mobility in enhancing the programme.

There are *Erasmus* programme links, but consideration should be given to establishing further links such as *Erasmus practice* and other fellowship programmes.

The number of foreign academics coming to the Academy has fallen consistently, from 2005-06 when there were eight visiting academics, to three in 2009-10. The Department is recommended to increase its efforts to attract foreign academics to spend time there in order to support staff professional development and to expose students to a wider range of perspectives on their subject. To this end the Department is encouraged to adopt a more proactive approach to encouraging student and staff mobility, including greater provision of opportunities to develop foreign language competences.

5.3. Student support

5.3.1. *Usefulness of academic support*

Students can access information about the programme (for example, forms of study, specialisations, financing, intended learning outcomes, assessment, optional subjects, timetables and mobility opportunities) from the Academy's and Department's websites, published documentation and by attendance at open days. The Department's website is updated regularly and user-friendly.

Students report that staff are accessible and helpful. Students are free to approach whoever they feel can best help with their queries and concerns about study issues. However, some form of allocated personal tutor system, with timetabled meetings, would help to formalise the arrangements and provide an opportunity for the less proactive students to access help and for staff to monitor their progress.

Information on employment possibilities and careers is available in various forms. Teachers' close contact with the professional world ensures that they are up to date on employment and career opportunities. In addition, students may contact the Academy's central administrative office.

Students are provided with the opportunity to repeat a subject course and to retake examinations. A student may retake an examination within two weeks of the start of the next term without repeating the course. Any student failing to retake a failed examination cannot continue his/her studies without interruption (Self assessment report, paragraph 5.3.1).

5.3.2. Efficiency of social support

The Academy's physical education centre provides opportunities for students to participate in sporting activities. This includes free use of the Academy's gymnasium and fitness facilities. The Academy provides conditions for creative expression of its students, including the availability of the Academy's galleries for students' exhibitions.

Psychologist's consultations could provide an important and useful form of social support for students with particularly sensitive personalities. So far the Academy has no psychologist on its staff.

Scholarship funds are allocated to faculties within the Academy on the basis of the numbers of students registered. Only students with no academic arrears are entitled to receive scholarships. A variety of scholarships is available, some of which, 'incentive scholarships' are reserved for students performing at a high academic level, 'social scholarships' are provided for socially exposed students, while one-off grants are available on application basis.

The Academy provides dormitory accommodation in Vilnius for 139 students, including six which are allocated for the use of international students. The experts concur with the Self-assessment that such accommodation is insufficient.

5.4. Student achievement assessment

5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity

Assessment criteria reflect the intended learning outcomes of the courses and address knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, subject syllabuses appended to the self assessment report are not sufficiently informative, and are fully understandable to the local expert of the panel only, since the majority of information is in Lithuanian.

The final assessment score is based on intermediate and final performance. The self assessment report states that 'The system of the assessment of [...] is based on the level of knowledge of the subject and the level of skills, with the widely used principle of a cumulative grade' (paragraph 5.4.1). However, the site visit proved that courses, particularly in non-domain-specific subjects, employ an end-of-course examination, to contribute to the majority of the final grade. Given the developmental nature of the subject the Panel would expect continuous assessment to contribute significantly to the final grade awarded. Although the self-assessment report states that the cumulative grade takes into account essays, the students' contribution to classes, lectures and workshops, and consistent and systematic work or other criteria in line with the nature of the individual subject, this was not evident in the documentation provided. Assessment criteria are made available to students, often through discussion at the start of a semester and in subject documentation. Students expressed satisfaction with the information they receive. The expert panel, however, considers a need to follow a more transparent methodology of linking assessment with the intended learning outcomes, by more explicit, written reference to the latter.

5.4.2. Feedback efficiency

Students receive feedback on their submitted work, but would benefit from more explicit mapping of assessment criteria to intended learning outcomes and therefore more measurable assessment criteria (see 5.4.1). However, students reported that they found informal communication and feedback on their work to be highly motivating.

5.4.3. *Efficiency of final thesis assessment*

The final art project is expected to demonstrate students' acquired theoretical and practical experience. Evidence suggests that there is often no clear link between the art project and the research paper. There is, therefore, a need to facilitate and enhance the integration of the two components.

5.4.4. *Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education*

Self-education and creative activities beyond the Academy are encouraged and recognised as a positive factor in the study process. Students present these activities in the form of a portfolio. Notwithstanding this possibility, seemingly very few students use opportunities provided by this system, which reflects limited opportunities for students to tailor the curriculum to meet their individual interests and requirements.

5.5. Graduates placement

5.5.1. *Expediency of graduate placement*

The nature of employment undertaken by the graduates generally corresponds to the objectives of the programme, with the skills acquired during studies applied to work. The graduates are employed as photographers, designers–layout makers by photographic studios; creative managers, work in mass media and printing, in the sphere of commercials producers, directors of editing and directors of photography in television, cinema and advertising and lecturers in art schools. Some graduates have established creative studios of their own which in some cases create further employment opportunities for graduates. However, in meetings with the expert panel, students and employers said they would welcome a more structured and focused business component and better preparation for employment generally. Complete statistics for graduate employment were not provided making it difficult for the experts to validate the Academy's statements on students' progression to employment. However, all the graduates who met the experts were in directly relevant, or related, employment. Compilation of up-to-date statistics, informed by an alumni association and an employer advisory body, would help the Academy to monitor the acceptability of the programme's graduates in the employment market.

6. Programme management

6.1. Programme administration

6.1.1. *Efficiency of the programme management activities*

The programme is managed by the programme committee which comprises nine people, representing a wide range of stakeholders. The programme committee, directed by the head of the department, draws up its conclusions on and proposals for the programme quality assessment. However decisions on the programme update are required to be approved by the Faculty Council and the curriculum for the next academic year by the Academy's Senate. It is a top-down process. However, it is the teachers who have the direct experience and understanding of the programme and, through external contacts, its place in society. Appointment of a programme leader from staff teaching on the programme would allow for devolution of decision-making to programme level and offer a greater sense of ownership of, and identity for, the programme.

The paucity of information on key performance indicators for the programme has been referred to earlier. The collection, collation and analysis of statistical information on student progression,

graduate attributes, employer requirements and employment patterns is vital if the Academy is to secure the continued relevance of the programme.

6.2. Internal quality assurance

6.2.1. Suitability of the programme quality evaluation

The self assessment report (paragraph 6.2.1) confirms that the Academy's internal quality assurance system has been formalised recently. Since the beginning of academic year 2009-10 a new study programme evaluation methodology has been introduced based on the principles of the Tuning Project and Bologna Process. As a result, all programmes undergo an internal quality assessment which is aimed at assessment of the overall strategy of the programme, its place within the Academy, evaluation of lecturers' competences and assessment of students' achievements.

The Academy's programme quality evaluation methodology does not identify a clear set of key performance indicators with which to conduct a quality assessment. The experts consider that, as a matter of urgency, the Academy needs to implement a robust quality assurance system with clearly articulated performance indicators against which the programme can be evaluated. A prerequisite for this is the collection, collation and analysis of robust statistical data.

6.2.2. Efficiency of the programme quality improvement

Programme quality improvement is generally a result of feedback from students; a more systematic approach to programme quality improvement is lacking. The expert panel suggests that this needs to be addressed. Further advancement of the programme should be directed at developing a stronger internationalisation and openness to the rapidly changing professional field in order to meet the strong competition from institutions of higher education.

6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholders participation.

Students can inform quality improvement through student representatives and informal contact with teachers. However, no examples were provided of how students have effected change in the programme. The Academy is advised to formalise and generally improve means of obtaining and using student feedback in order to enhance the provision.

Teachers can inform quality matters through formal participation in task forces or departmental meetings. However, once again, no specific instances of teachers influencing the programme were presented.

There is a need for more effective communication of the objectives of the programmes to external stakeholders and, in turn, a greater awareness of the labour market for graduates of the programme. There is a need to establish a more formal and effective system to engage with local organisations to support student learning and curricular enhancement, such as an employers' forum or advisory board.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Compulsory

- 3.1. The library provision is in need of improvement, particularly in international texts and in increased stock available for borrowing.
- 3.2. The Academy needs to implement as a matter of urgency a robust quality assurance system with clearly articulated performance indicators.

- 3.3. **Suggested** The Academy is expected to consider more extensively the identity of the programme compared with similar programmes offered elsewhere.
- 3.4. It is advisable to ensure that students are provided with the means of attaining the necessary level of generic artistic skills required for specialists in photography and media art.
- 3.5. The programme committee is recommended to set a more appropriate balance of student work-load in terms of contact hours and self-study.
- 3.6. The Academy needs to introduce a more structured and focused business component to the programme and improve students' preparation for employment generally.
- 3.7. The Academy is recommended to develop a methodology to ensure the relevance of research work to the development of students' relevant professional skills.
- 3.8. The Academy needs to introduce more formal arrangements for cross-Academy cooperation and support, including sharing of good practice and coordination of research.
- 3.9. It is recommended that students are provided with opportunities for practical training outside the Academy before completion of studies.
- 3.10 The Academy is recommended to consider extending the library's opening times to facilitate greater student and teacher access.3.11 The Academy may wish to provide English language newspapers and periodicals in the lending library area. The Academy is advised to formalise and generally improve means of obtaining and using student feedback in order to inform enhancement of the provision.
- 3.12 The Department is advised to address the rate of dropout and interruption of studies with appropriate measures taken for better student retention.
- 3.13 There is a need for students to benefit from an allocated personal tutor system, with timetabled meetings to formalise the arrangements and provide an opportunity for the less proactive students to access help and for staff to monitor their progress.
- 3.14 There is a need to employ a more transparent methodology mapping assessment to the intended learning outcomes through more explicit written reference to the latter.
- 3.15 The Department is recommended to entrust coordination of the programme to an academic member of staff other than the head of the Department, to provide academic leadership and day-to-day management.
- 3.16 There is a need to establish a more formal and effective system to engage with local organisations and other stakeholders to support student learning and curricular enhancement, such as an employers' forum or advisory board