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Bachelor Design

Design Academy Eindhoven

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing programme
December 8th, 2025

Summary

On December 8th, 2025, the bachelor's programme Design of the Design Academy Eindhoven was assessed. The panel's overall judgement is **positive**. The full-time four-year programme Design prepares the next generation of creative professionals in engaging critically and meaningfully with new technologies, materials and theories. Throughout the English-taught programme, offered in Eindhoven, the international group of students increasingly takes part in shaping their own journey in the curriculum.

Intended learning outcomes

The programme aims to deliver graduates as beginning professionals who are aware of their position within a hybrid, international and technologically changing field of work. The intended learning outcomes are based on the National Profile of Fine Arts and Design. This ensures that they meet the (inter)national requirements for level 6 of the European and Dutch Qualification Frameworks (EQF/NLQF). The involvement of professional designers in teaching and assessment guarantees a strong link to the work field. The programme's aim to prepare the next generation of creative professionals to become catalysts of positive change in an ever more complex world is well in line with the academy's Institutional Plan 2025-2028. With a view to implementation of this Plan in the organisation, the panel advises a further specification and a more tangible translation and operationalisation of the ambitions and aims. The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum combines a clear structure with an increasing freedom of choice. Students develop their foundational and creative skills in Fundamentals and deepen their critical and professional practice in the Studios. The internship and Focus prepare them for graduation. In Reflections, a continuous component that runs throughout the four years of the programme,

mixed groups of students from all academic years reflect on their studies, on design as a discipline, and on its role in society. The curriculum is student-centred. It challenges and supports students in 'designing themselves as designers'. The selection process works well: the admitted students match the programme's approach, and the international and diverse intake contributes to a rich learning environment. The panel supports the choice for English as the working language. The programme is accessible for students with a disability and offers sufficient support to students with special needs. The teaching team consists of a sufficient number of staff and is well-qualified, diverse and strongly motivated. A point of attention, with the proper functioning of the studio model in mind, is the time for communication and connections between staff, especially with tutors who are often contracted for one day per week.

The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

The assessment system consists of a well-balanced mix of formative and summative assessments. Assessments are generally valid, reliable, independent and transparent. The programme is aware of the need to improve the quality and content of feedback and the way of delivery across tutors. The Examination Board plays an important role in monitoring and contributing

to the quality of assessment. Their advice has led to major improvements.

The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

In their final semester, students work on two self-defined projects in which they integrate the content and experiences gained during their studies and through which they express their personal identity as designers. The skills level of the graduation projects is good, and the creativity of the projects is better than average. The panel notes that the format of the graduation show may be constrictive for the nature of studio programs that encourage a less outcome-driven and product-oriented understanding of design practice. Alumni can position themselves well in the professional field. The continued close link between alumni and the programme is a strong point.

The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Facilities

Students have access to a wide range of dedicated workshop spaces in De Witte Dame, the DAE building. Students use the facilities intensively and note that workshop scheduling can be problematic. The programme tries to make do within the limits of the current building, and it is understandable that the upkeep of facilities suffers a bit from the plans for a new campus in 2028. The new housing plan should, however, not be a reason to postpone all improvements. The panel advises especially more care for safety in operating the various machines.

The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Quality assurance

The quality assurance system involves students, teaching staff, alumni, professional field and

Examination Board. It combines a systematic approach and documentation with day-to-day responsiveness. Positive steps have been taken in the past years.

The panel thus concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Recommendations

The programme meets the six accreditation standards. With an eye on the future, the panel offers the following recommendations for consideration:

- Define the strategic aims in more tangible terms to make them recognisable for all involved and stimulate their implementation.
- Do not overextend the individual tutors and provide enough time for coordination and consultation.
- Improve and harmonize the quality and content of feedback and the way of delivery across tutors.
- Develop the graduation show format further and actively engage in discussion around alternative approaches.
- Do not postpone all improvements of facilities until the move to a new building and pay sufficient attention to safety in operating various machines.

Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel judges that the programme meets the criteria of the Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education:

- The intellectual depth and professional independence expected from graduates go beyond the intended learning outcomes defined in the national competence profile and are, therefore, at bachelor+ level.
- The programme includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are organised by students and involve both staff and students.

- The learning environment is rich and intense: tutors and coaches continually challenge the students to go further and deeper.
- The admissions process is designed to assess both creative potential and the ability to engage in a reflective research-driven design practice. The low drop-out rates prove the effectiveness of the admission procedure.
- The teaching team is of sufficient size and ensures a strong interconnectedness between education, the design field and the wider cultural landscape. Tutors and coaches mentor students in a reflective, process-driven way. The panel advises not overextending the tutors who almost always have a contract for one day per week.
- The facilities fit the wide field of design and support interdisciplinary learning, as well as community building. The panel advises not postponing all upkeep until the move to a new campus in 2028 and paying sufficient attention to safety issues.
- The panel considers the skills level of the graduation projects as good and the creativity as better than average. DAE and its graduates contribute significantly to the design field and the regional economy.

All standards of the NVAO framework and all criteria of the Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education have been positively assessed. On this basis, the panel provides a [positive recommendation](#) regarding the accreditation of the bachelor's programme Design of the Design Academy Eindhoven, including the special feature.

On behalf of the entire site visit panel,
Utrecht, February 2026

Raoul van Aalst
Chair

Marianne van der Weiden
Secretary

Introduction

Profile

Design Academy Eindhoven (further: DAE) combines the roles of an educational institution, a research institute and a cultural actor. DAE offers a bachelor's and a master's programme in Design. The academy aims to generate new knowledge that contributes to a broader discourse on the role of design in society. In its view, design should not be viewed solely as a tool for innovation, but also as a social and cultural practice. DAE considers its role not only as transmitting existing ideas, but also to challenge assumptions and generate new knowledge and practices. As part of the commitment to design as praxis – the bridge between theoretical knowledge and material creativity – DAE has strengthened its research capacity through the appointment of new research professors (*lectoren*). This has more firmly embedded new frameworks for understanding the role of design in relation to planetary and ethical challenges. This is the basis for preparing the next generation of creative professionals to become catalysts of positive change in an ever more complex world.

The bachelor's programme Design is a 240 EC fulltime programme, taught in English. The curriculum was renewed from the start of the academic year 2022-2023, based on the principle of 'Designing the Designer'. Students are empowered to co-shape their own educational journey and increasingly take part in shaping their own curriculum and, thus, the development of their own design profile. All students follow three main programme lines before they enter their graduation phase: Fundamentals (including Essentials), Studios and Reflections. Fundamentals and Essentials provide students with the core

skills, material knowledge and contextual insights needed for contemporary design practice. As students progress, greater emphasis is placed on the Studios, the creative core of the curriculum, where students apply their developing knowledge and shape their own design identity. Running parallel through the entire programme, also during the Graduation phase, is Reflections, in which students from all cohorts work together in mixed groups to critically reflect on their studies, the design discipline and its societal role. The Graduation phase makes up the final 1.5 years and consists of the Internship, Focus and Graduation. Focus is an intensive practice-based module where students deepen or broaden their material knowledge and production techniques in a self-chosen environment and with the use of specific research methods. In Graduation, students develop two design projects that showcase their individual profile.

The assessment

DAE has commissioned AeQui to carry out the current assessment of the programme (see Attachment 1 for the administrative details). For this purpose, AeQui, in collaboration with the programme, has assembled an independent and knowledgeable panel, see Attachment 2. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme has taken place.

The assessment was conducted based on the Accreditation Framework for Higher Education in the Netherlands, according to the programme outlined in Attachment 3. The institution does not have a positive institutional audit decision, and therefore six standards were

assessed. In addition, DAE has applied for the Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education.

An open consultation hour was scheduled prior to the site visit; no registrations were received for this session.

Recommendations for further development were made during the previous assessment. The programme has acted in response (see Attachment 4). The panel has integrated this follow-up into its considerations for the current assessment.

The panel conducted the assessment independently; the panel received the necessary information to arrive at a judgement. At the end of the assessment, the programme was informed of the findings and conclusions.

This report was sent in draft to the programme; the programme's responses have been incorporated into this final report.

At the initiative of the programme, a development meeting will take place in the spring of 2026. The results of this development meeting will not affect the assessment presented in this report.

Intended learning outcomes

Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

The programme's intended learning outcomes take the National Profile of Fine Arts and Design (2014) as their starting point. This ensures that they are in line with developments in the design field and meet the national and international requirements for the bachelor level, as expressed in the Dublin descriptors and level 6 of the European and Dutch Qualification Frameworks (EQF and NLQF). The Learning Outcomes Assurance Matrix convincingly shows how the learning outcomes relate to the competencies described in these national and international frameworks.

The national profile outlines six themes considered essential to professional practice by both education and the field and to which, therefore, the programme relates:

- Hybridisation of professional practice;
- Entrepreneurialism;
- Technology;
- Research and body of knowledge and skills;
- Internationalisation;
- Lifelong learning.

Based on these themes, DAE aims to deliver graduates as beginning professionals who are aware of their position within a hybrid, international and technologically changing field of work. They can achieve this through the critical (self-)reflection, communication skills, adaptive and entrepreneurial attitude and solid theoretical basis they acquired during the programme.

DAE effectively ensures that the programme is geared to the expectations of the professional field by involving professional designers as

studio leaders, lecturers, tutors and external examiners. The dialogue with the professional field also takes place during symposia organised by the academy and in external projects with industry, non-profit organisations and governmental institutes.

The programme's aim to prepare the next generation of creative professionals to become catalysts of positive change in an ever more complex world is well in line with DAE's Institutional Plan 2025-2028. The three strategic themes are Continuing excellence in education and research, Evolving together, and Connecting with the world. These themes have been worked out in ambitions and actions and show that the principles of the bachelor's programme and its organisation match the institution's vision on education and its profile. The panel appreciates the clearly recognisable and positive ambition and agrees that the language used, such as working for a planetary future, multivocality and inclusivity, fits a progressive institution like DAE. For an effectively strong positioning, however, the panel advises a further specification and a more tangible translation of the statements, to ensure their structural implementation in the organisation.

Since the restructuring and reformulation of the learning outcomes in 2022, they have been evaluated systematically immediately upon implementation. As a result, the learning outcomes were strengthened in subsequent years and further revised and improved for the Fundamentals, Essentials and Internship components in terms of structure and clarity, implemented in

2025-2026. A similar revision process is planned for Studios, Reflection, Focus, and Graduation in 2025-2026, to be implemented in 2026-2027. This process will be informed by the newly updated National Profile (2025).

Considerations

The panel considers the intended learning outcomes appropriate and relevant, both academically and professionally. The bachelor level is assured by the link with nationally and internationally defined competences at NLQF/EQF level 6. The continuous dialogue with and involvement of the professional field are strong and ensure that the programme is responsive to the needs of professional designers and developments in the field. The intended learning

outcomes are periodically reviewed and are in line with the academy's profile and vision on education as expressed in the new Institutional Plan. The panel recognises that DAE has a clear position in the field. The new strategic vision builds upon this and shows ambition to continue a leading role in the field of design. The panel advises defining the strategic aims in more tangible terms to make them recognisable for all involved and, thus, stimulate their implementation in the educational programme.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

Curriculum

The programme comprises 240 EC, spread over four years and divided into eight semesters. The curriculum is structured around five components: Essentials, Fundamentals, Studios, Reflections and the Graduation phase, which includes Internship, Focus and Graduation.

The programme begins with Essentials and Fundamentals, providing students with the core skills, material knowledge and contextual insights needed for contemporary design practice. In Essentials, students are introduced to the workshops and Studios at DAE and get the chance to experiment with materials and production techniques introduced in Fundamentals. This broad orientation prepares the students for the choices they will make during their studies.

Fundamentals is the first building block for students to becoming a contemporary designer by acquiring the core knowledge, insights and skills. It comprises three subject areas: (1) Design Studies (including design grammar, methodology and research, presentation techniques, time based media and form studies), (2) Production Studies (focusing on materials, production processes and technological innovation) and (3) Contextual Studies (situating design in broader theoretical, historical and social frameworks). Fundamentals extend from the first year into the third year, up to the start of the Graduation phase. During the programme, the emphasis on Fundamentals gradually diminishes to make space for the Studios.

Studios are the creative heart of the bachelor's programme. They are led by practising designers and supported by a team of tutors. Students choose four Studios altogether. They can choose a different Studio each semester to broaden their horizon or remain in the same Studio for several semesters to explore one discipline more deeply. The current offering of Studios consists of Better Matter (from 1-9-2025), Body Building, Digital-Native, Do-Make, Silva Systems, Technogeographies, Thinking Hands and the Morning Studio. Studios Turn Around and Public Private were offered until the end of the academic year of 2024/2025. Students informed the panel that they value the chance to do something familiar, something new, or diverge and focus again. This helps them to find their focus towards graduation. Studios are refreshed every four to eight years, in order to reflect evolving realities and urgencies of the professional field and offering students new perspectives and areas of exploration.

Reflections is a continuous component that runs throughout the four years of the programme. Students from all academic years come together in mixed peer groups, guided by a fixed coach, and reflect on their studies, the design discipline and its societal relevance. Activities include discussions, presentations, peer feedback, field trips, study tours and the development of personal Plans of Study and Graduation. Students told the panel that they find this a valuable part of the curriculum. Helped along by the experience of fourth year students, they learn a lot of design skills and a lot about themselves, finding out what works best for them.

The Graduation phase fills the final 1.5 years of the curriculum. It consists of the Internship, Focus and Graduation. In the internship students can gain new skills, explore different cultural contexts or test their entrepreneurial aspirations. For students, this part of the programme acts as a reality check: to find out how to position themselves in the outside world and whether the activities during the internship are matching the student's profile and ambition. After the internship, students have a year remaining to further develop their personal profile as a designer in the Focus module and with their Graduation project. Students see this as key to defining their design identity.

Focus is an intensive, practice-based module where students deepen or broaden their material knowledge and production techniques in a self-chosen environment. The programme currently offers four Focus modules: Ceramics, Reframing Textiles, Digital, and Cartographic Explorations: The Water Edition. Students may also opt for a Free Focus or an exchange period with a partner school.

Graduation concludes the programme. Under the supervision of a primary tutor and additional supporting tutors, students develop two self-defined designed projects that showcase their individual profile.

DAE offers a range of extracurricular activities, that are greatly appreciated by the students. For a further elaboration, see the chapter on the Special Feature below.

Didactic approach

The didactic approach is characterised as 'designing the designer'. The programme is student-centred, as was clear in all conversations during the site visit. Students discover their position in relation to design and as designers and are stimulated to develop a critical but open attitude that will support their professional development after graduation. Students are

challenged intellectually and supported in achieving both conceptual depth and technical excellence. 'Learning through making' and the connection between 'making and thinking' are recognisable in the curriculum and the facilities it offers.

Students told the panel that they appreciate the self-guided character of the programme and the opportunity to design their own path, diving in different subjects depending on the experience they already have. They describe the workload as intense. Although it is possible to play safe and make the study path less intense by building on the skills and knowledge they already have, teachers challenge students to explore and go beyond what they already know.

The students explicitly mention the role of the student group for their learning process. They describe the student body as very rich, offering opportunities for exchange. In the various workspaces, students work on the same table with other students. This allows them to see what everybody does, ask for advice, learn from each other and reach out to each other.

The learning environment in the bachelor's programme is evidently consistent with the DAE vision on education and its values of meaningful design practices, dialogues and community.

Intake

DAE offers a range of physical and online opportunities for prospective students to explore the content, structure and atmosphere of the bachelor's programme. In Open Days and Experience Days they get the chance to meet students, alumni and tutors and get a realistic view of the academy's educational approach. Online information and support are available in Meet the Bachelor sessions, Portfolio Advice and

Portfolio Training sessions and Enrolment Information sessions.

DAE offers a Foundation Year for prospective students, comprising 26 sessions on Saturdays. Completion of the Foundation Year does not guarantee admission to the programme but includes an admission assessment and enhances the participants' chances of acceptance, as can be seen in the admission statistics.

Candidates must possess a Dutch havo, vwo or mbo-4 diploma or an equivalent international qualification. Applicants aged 21 or older without the requisite diploma may prove their academic readiness by completing a 21+ test. Proof of English proficiency is required, either through a language test or on the basis of previous education.

The admissions process is designed to identify candidates who demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and a reflective approach to design. The portfolio they are asked to submit must, therefore, not only showcase their most recent work, but also illustrate the creative process. Two home assignments, provided by DAE, are also part of the selection process. The selection procedure includes an online interview, where candidates present their portfolios and engage in a discussion about their work. This interview assesses the applicant's ability to communicate their ideas and reflect on their design process. Their English proficiency is tested as well.

To ensure a fair and inclusive process, admissions are conducted by a diverse team of tutors and staff, representing different professional backgrounds, perspectives and areas of expertise. Applicants receive the final decision (acceptance, placement on a waiting list or rejection) in mid-April.

The students find that the selection process fits the programme and is based on suitable criteria: 'This programme is not for everybody', they say. The panel agrees with this observation. The high

success-rates reflect well on the intake procedure.

English

The language of instruction and communication in the programme is English. The programme's argumentation for this choice is the international orientation of the professional field and the international staff and students attracted to DAE. Currently, the teaching team is very diverse, with 23 different nationalities, and students come from 57 different countries. The panel agrees with the argumentation for English as the working language. Tutors, staff and students are generally accustomed to working in an international context where communication is commonly in English.

Students have to prove their English proficiency as part of the selection procedure. The academy's HR policy includes development interviews with tutors and staff in which deficiencies in English language skills are identified and the necessary steps for improvement are discussed. DAE has developed an action plan to support staff in improving their English proficiency. They can use the professionalisation budget to take coaching or language lessons. Some tutors are currently taking part in such courses. The panel observed during the site visit that the English proficiency across students and staff is sufficient to ensure clear and meaningful communication and interaction.

Guidance

Tutors and coordinators are the first points of contact for students and are responsible for handling day-to-day matters. Students who need more help or guidance can call upon the two student counsellors, e.g. when extra facilities or arrangements are needed in the case of students with disabilities. The building is sufficiently accessible for students with physical

disabilities. The open character of the workspaces can result in noise pollution, particularly affecting neuro-divergent students. Noise-reducing privacy screens between classrooms are installed to accommodate these students. Students may also use the dedicated Space of Stillness on the third floor.

DAE has drawn up a Code of Conduct, to emphasise the importance of a learning and working environment where everybody feels safe and behaves responsibly. In the event of undesirable behaviour, students and employees can contact two confidential counsellors. If contact with these DAE confidential counsellors is not appropriate or desired, students and staff can contact Mores, the independent disclosure office for undesirable behaviour in the world of art. Both types of counsellors operate independently and with strict confidentiality and speak Dutch and English.

Monthly newsletters, a study guide and the digital learning environment Canvas provide students with transparent and accessible information. Information about study progress and grades is provided via OSIRIS.

Teaching staff

In total, 129 people are involved in the bachelor's programme. A core of 35 experienced people work at the base of students in the Fundamentals programme. Also, the Head of BA, the coordinators and Reflections coaches are employed staff members. In addition to the employed staff 74 (8.5 FTE, 57%) work on a freelance basis.

Freelancers are mainly active within the Studios. Many staff members, both salaried and freelance, are involved for one day per week, combining the teaching and tutoring with their own design practice. The bachelor desk is

responsible for the organisation and planning of the curriculum, admission and recruitment.

The number of teaching staff members is sufficient for the delivery of the curriculum. The one-day-per-week contracts, however, limit the possibilities for answering students' questions about their projects during the week. Tutors try to manage expectations by explaining at the start of a semester when they are available at the academy and students say they learn to deal with it, finding ways to ask advice from each other. In the graduation phase, the tutor-student ratio is felt to be much better.

Consultations between coordinators and freelance tutors, e.g. about the delivery of a Studio or the progress of students during a semester, regularly seem to take place in the tutors' own time, i.e. without payment. The panel is concerned that this is not sustainable in the long term and advises offering tutors larger contracts, e.g. for two days per week. The panel was reassured that the tutors' time limit does not affect the care for the students' long-term development. In the new curriculum, such a monitoring role lies with the Reflections coaches. They help the students to see their overall trajectory. The Reflections group meetings can be considered the home base for students.

In all conversations, the panel heard that the introduction of the new curriculum is considered a significant improvement. The role of departments in the old curriculum led to silos without much contact. In the new set-up, the coordinators, Studio leaders and tutors have much more interaction, although, as mentioned above, more time for this would be welcome. Especially the meetings in the Cum laude committee (see for further explanation below, on Standard 3) lead to fruitful discussions between Studio leaders about the final quality the programme aims for.

The teaching staff is well-qualified. All tutors are active designers or involved in design-related professional practices. The Studios are led by leading figures in their professions. They are selected for their expertise, extensive networks and ability to inspire students in developing self-directed courses of study.

Thirty-three staff members, including many of the salaried bachelor tutors, have achieved the certificates in basic teaching and examination skills BDB (Basiskwalificatie didactische bekwaamheid) and BKE (Basiskwalificatie Examinering). The academy's goal is having all employed teaching staff certified in the coming years. Each year, an Educational Day is organised for tutors and staff as a moment of exchange and learning about education at DAE, aimed at developing pedagogical skills and encouraging connection, reflection and alignment across the academy.

Considerations

The panel considers the curriculum well-balanced: it has a clear structure with enough freedom of choice. In this way, it challenges and supports students in 'designing themselves as designers'. Students are centre stage: they have agency through the choice of Studios and keep track of their development through the Reflections component. The Reflections component is a strong point: the mixed groups with students from all cohorts help students to have a clear perspective on the programme, the coaches keep track of each student's long-term development.

The admission process succeeds in selecting students who match the programme's approach. The international and diverse intake contributes to a rich learning environment. The panel supports the choice for English as the language of instruction and communication and confirms that the English proficiency of students and teaching staff is adequate. The programme is accessible for students with a disability and offers sufficient support to students with special needs. The teaching team consists of a sufficient number of staff and is well-qualified. Their ambition and motivation are clear. The variety in the teaching team is a strong point.

The panel concludes that DAE has used the previous panel's recommendations well. The panel advises continuing this path and monitoring critically if the new system remains functioning. A point of attention, with the proper functioning of the studio model in mind, is the time for communication and connections between staff, especially with tutors who are often contracted for one day per week. Having more staff for more than one day per week can lead to more stability and more time for educational development. The panel advises keeping the current organic fluidity of the programme, without overextending the individual tutors.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

The assessment system combines formal summative assessment moments at the end of each semester with formative assessments throughout each semester, providing feedback on the student's learning process. Tutors assess not only the final outcomes but also developmental growth. The panel considers this an appropriate way to evaluate the students' personal and evolving portfolios, reflecting their unique creative development, while connecting them to clearly defined competences and learning outcomes.

Formative assessments are embedded in the learning process in various forms: critique sessions, peer feedback and Reflections conversations. They provide students with purpose and support and focus on their development. Summative assessments focus on the achievement of defined learning outcomes and are based on the assessment of a student's portfolio, final presentations or exhibitions, a project or assignment, an artist statement or reflection report. In the case of interdisciplinary or collaborative projects, formative assessments focus on teamwork and adaptability, the summative assessment on the coherence and quality of the output.

Validity and transparency of the assessments are guaranteed by the competence matrices and module descriptions: the manner and criteria of assessments are clear and communicated in advance. The use of external examiners during the final exam and the 'multiple eyes and ears' principle promote validity, reliability and

independence. Reliability of other assessments is still a point on the agenda, especially through the professionalisation of tutors, as announced in the self-evaluation report. In their conversation with the panel, the students mentioned this as a point of attention as well. They are aware and agree that, in the summative assessments, they are graded on the process of their work, not on its outcome. This is considered fair because the skills levels are very different between students, because of their previous experience and education. Regarding the feedback in formative assessments, students note large differences between tutors, both in content and style. Generally, feedback is helpful, but, at times, understanding the tutor's feedback can be difficult. The students feel that the academy should give tutors more guidance and educational support in this area.

The Examination Board has a role in both the bachelor's and master's programme. At least one member is a tutor at DAE and at least one member, the chair, is an external. Members are appointed by the Executive Board. The Board has an official secretary who is not a member. To fulfil its role in guaranteeing correct assessment procedures and the final level achieved, the Examination Board attends final presentations, interrogations and deliberations. The documentation and conversation with the Board show that they work systematically, based on a handbook, annual plans and annual reports. Each year, the Examination Board conducts a review of all examination work by comparing the assessment forms and students grades with the work presented. This tour is designed to assess

the final level achieved by the students. Issues that have occurred during the examination or that concern the final level are discussed with the Executive Board and reported to the relevant coordinator and the Head of BA.

In the past few years, the Examination Board's advice has contributed to significant improvements. The assessment framework is in place. Regarding the graduation phase, newly formulated expectations and requirements, procedures and roles have been made explicit in graduation manuals for students and tutors, and a collaboration form and format for a process log have been included. The process log is a mandatory part of the examination. In it, students may demonstrate their process in a way that is helpful for them. The panel greatly supports the use of a process log because of the programme's dual emphasis on process and product.

The Examination Board also advised a more objective way to decide on cum laudes (distinctions). The decision used to be taken by each department with their own committee and defining their own level. In the current procedure, Studio leaders, the head of the BA course and the chair of the Executive Board form a Cum laude committee. Committees of examiners nominate students for cum laude, if there is reason to do so, followed by the student's presentation and a debate in the Cum laude committee. As mentioned above (Standard 2) this leads to fruitful discussions among staff about the final quality the programme aims for.

The Examination Board is satisfied with the cooperation with the education office, the heads of education and the student counsellors. This has, for example, led to the implementation of a digital system (in Osiris) which makes it easier for students to submit their requests to the Examination Board, and more efficient for the Examination Board to come to a decision.

Considerations

The panel considers the assessment system of sufficient quality: the combination of formative and summative assessments is balanced, and assessments are generally valid, reliable, independent and transparent. Great steps have been taken since the previous accreditation. The Examination Board has played and continues to play an important role in monitoring and contributing to the quality of assessment. Their advice has led to major improvements.

The programme is aware of the need to improve the quality and content of feedback and the way of delivery across tutors. The panel advises investing in this aspect, by providing support for staff to develop their feedback skills. In addition to educational skills, preparing in-depth feedback to students requires time for reflection, formulation, and calibration with colleagues. As mentioned in the chapter on Standard 2, this may not be easy within a one-day-per-week contract.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

In their final semester, students work on two self-defined projects through which they express their personal identity as designers. They integrate the content and experiences gained in different Studios into their personal projects. Collaborations with peers, companies or external parties are possible, for which guidelines have been established. Students may choose their tutors (available from Fundamentals to Studios) for this phase: one main tutor provides up to 14 hours of guidance, and in addition a student may request up to 4 hours of extra guidance, either from their primary tutor or from other tutors. Students attend narrative classes where they are supported in making explicit the narrative underpinning their two exam projects and in finding ways to articulate this through text and visual presentations. The final projects are assessed on analysis, creativity, execution and presentation.

Graduation projects are evaluated during the Graduation Midterm (formative) and the Final Exam (summative) by the Committee of Examiners, which consists of both Studio and Fundamentals tutors. This Committee always includes internationally renowned designers as external examiners, appointed by the Examination Board. The Final Exam consists of a presentation of both projects and a presentation of the student's portfolio. Students also submit an Exam Booklet with an explanation of their projects and a process log for each project. These process documents (including samples) are meant to provide insight into the research, analysis and execution process that leads to the result of each project.

Students who pass the exam are awarded the bachelor's diploma and are given the opportunity to present one of their projects at the annual Graduation Show, which takes place during Dutch Design Week in October of the same year.

In preparation of the site visit, the panel has examined a sample of fifteen graduation projects (randomly chosen by Aequi), nine from cohort 2024 and six from cohort 2025. DAE presents the graduation projects of both the bachelor's and master's programmes in an annual catalogue, which provides a picture and short narrative per project. This gave the panel a good impression of the fifteen selected projects. In addition, several panel members were able to see all 2025 projects in more detail during the Graduation Show 2025. On this basis, the panel confirms that the graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The skills level of graduates has visibly improved over the last years. The final works show a wide variety, which feels like 'a breath of fresh air' and is a good illustration of the strength of DAE.

For some students, the format of the graduation show proves to be limiting since it requires a product to be exhibited, while they have learned to see designing as a process. The panel advises allowing space for alternative approaches and counter perspectives, e.g. by allowing students to come up with a proof of concept.

The positions of alumni after graduation are diverse. Most of them work as designers/entrepreneurs with their own studio, as design theorists, critical design activists, in collaboration with scientists, in companies, as curators, in

education or in collective studios. A number of graduates pursue further studies, mostly abroad, in a variety of programmes, e.g. architecture or product design. Students with a more academic interest can ask advice from their tutor about an appropriate internship in preparation. During the site visit, representatives from the professional field indicated their appreciation for the DAE interns and graduates.

DAE maintains close connections with many alumni. A total of 40 of the current tutors, Studio leaders, coaches and coordinators are DAE alumni. Many alumni show their commitment by offering internships, providing real-world assignments and working together in collaborative projects. The alumni coordinator liaises with the alumni through newsletters, social media and events such as the Alumni Homecoming during Dutch Design Week. Alumni contribute to the Blueprint Class, which prepares graduates for the realities before, during and after the Graduation Show.

The Brainport Region serves as a strong home base for many alumni. The environment is apparently conducive for being a designer. Clients

across the world can be served from Eindhoven, while close contacts with the academy, its teachers and fellow alumni can be easily maintained.

Considerations

The panel considers the graduation projects, the alumni's position after graduation and the feedback from the professional field convincing evidence that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The skills level is good; the creativity of the projects is better than average and alumni are able to position themselves well in the professional field. The panel considers the continued close links between alumni and the programme a strong point.

The panel advises further development of the graduation show format in order to avoid a certain repetitiveness. There may be new ways or alternative approaches for students without a concrete product as the end result of their project.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Facilities

Standard 5: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.

Findings

DAE is currently located in De Witte Dame, originally built as Philips' first large-scale lighting factory. A tour through the building showed how the available 13,000 m² is fully used for open workspaces, dedicated workshop spaces and lecture rooms. Students have access to dedicated workshop spaces for plastics, wood, metal, silkscreen printing, ceramics and textiles. In addition, they can use the digital workshop space, the 3D lab, a small Biolab and the Trans Realities Lab engaged with the exploration of new technologies. The students use the facilities intensively and note in the Student Chapter of the Self-evaluation report that workshop scheduling can be problematic. In their conversation with the panel, they said they would appreciate a more sustainable use of materials.

The building also houses a large room for lectures and symposia, an in-house library and a restaurant. For technical work, DAE has set up collaborations with specialised production centres: The TextielLab in Tilburg, the Glass Museum in Leerdam, Make Eindhoven, the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) in Oisterwijk, Phoenix Cultuur Centre in Veghel and Bruns (a model making company) in Bergeijk.

By 2028, DAE will relocate to a newly constructed campus in Eindhoven's Kanaalzone, an area of the city that is expected to develop into a new Design District. The new campus will be

sustainable and future-proof. The plan includes 250 units of student housing for first-year students. The panel understands the need for better accommodation and more facilities and expects that the new building will solve a number of the current problems, such as shortage of workspace and storage and too much noise. The panel considers it understandable that, awaiting this move, no major investments are undertaken in the current building. The students understand this as well. This does not mean, however, that all upkeep should be postponed. Students should not have to wait a further three years for a new laser cutter. An urgent issue is the need for a stricter safety policy in operating machines by students, as the panel noted during its tour through the workshop spaces.

Considerations

The panel considers the accommodation and facilities sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum. The programme tries to make do within the limits of the current building, and it is understandable that the upkeep of facilities suffers a bit from the plans for a new building. The new housing plan is, however, not a reason to postpone everything. The panel advises especially more care for safety in operating the various machines.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Quality assurance

Standard 6: The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.

Findings

Structures and processes support the quality assurance and quality culture in the bachelor's programme and DAE generally. The Bachelor Course Committee (BCC), consisting of two student representatives and two tutor representatives, is the advisory body that focuses on the quality of education. It regularly consults students and tutors and works with the Student Council and Executive Board to discuss and formulate advice on improvements. The BCC meets four times per year and can put issues on the agenda of the Institutional Participation Council (IPC).

The IPC is the official representative body of the entire DAE community. It consists of four staff members and four students. The IPC advises on strategic planning and policies.

The Student Council (SC) is the informal representative body run for and by students. Its mission is to ensure the student experience at DAE is exciting, meaningful and accessible. The SC has a meeting with the Executive Board every six weeks. One SC member serves as the student representative on the IPC.

Students are invited to evaluate their courses at the end of each semester, both by an online questionnaire and in meetings with the Educational Office and the Head of BA. The results are shared with students and staff via newsletters and a presentation for the heads. Students are also invited to participate in the annual National Student Survey (NSE). NSE outcomes are translated into new activities aimed at enhancing quality.

Tutors are asked to evaluate their courses through an online questionnaire, the results of which are discussed with the tutors and coordinators. The annual Educational Day is the place to share knowledge and ideas among tutors and instructors. The Executive Board meets three times per year with the Studio leaders and Head of BA to discuss the academy's strategy and the content and structure of the curriculum, particularly the Studio programme as the core of the curriculum.

DAE participates in the Kunsten Monitor, to gain insight in graduates' employment and their satisfaction with the programme. External validation takes place during the Graduation Show and by the external examiners during the final examination.

The Student Chapter and the conversation with students confirm that there are many opportunities for students to voice their opinions on a variety of topics and that DAE is open to feedback. The openness to student suggestions was heard in the conversations with teaching staff as well. As described in the chapter on Assessment, the programme has responded effectively to the advice from the Examination Board: the manuals and guidelines, for example, are an effective support for tutors and students, and the Cum laude committee has had a positive effect on the exchange of views between Studio leaders.

Considerations

The panel considers the quality assurance system well-balanced: it combines a systematic approach and documentation with day-to-day

responsiveness. On this topic as well, considerable steps have been taken in the past years.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Findings

A: Intended learning outcomes

In the DAE bachelor's programme, students are trained to approach design as a research method, raising questions rather than providing premature solutions. The programme offers students the opportunity to explore different approaches to design and design research, using the concept of 'thinking through making'. The emphasis is on critical reflection, autonomy of thought and speculative creativity. Students are invited to challenge their boundaries, connect their work with other disciplines and wider cultural issues, and take ownership of their development as emerging designers. The intended open and critical approach will help in their professional development after graduation, whichever path they choose to follow.

From the first year, students develop practical skills and learn to apply them in such a way that form and function are aligned with conceptual depth. Skills are assessed not only through technical results but also through their integration with narratives and contextual relevance. Graduates are expected to demonstrate ethical consciousness, ecological awareness and social responsibility. The programme emphasises autonomy, resilience and the ability to collaborate across disciplines. Within the Reflections learning line, students reflect on their own growth, build personal learning paths, build confidence in self-driven exploration and establish their position within the design field.

The programme enables students to develop their own perspectives on fundamental questions about the role of design and to explore the potential of design as a tool for positive action. Upon graduation, they are designers with a critical mindset, able to examine their practice and

its implications for society, and to define their position in dialogue with peers and the wider world. The panel noticed during the site visit that the students value the conceptual demands and intellectual autonomy required in the programme and feel encouraged to live up to them. The panel confirms that the intellectual depth and professional independence go beyond the intended learning outcomes defined in the national competence profile and contribute to a comprehensive and above-average level of proficiency in both academic and professional practice.

B: Curriculum contents

The programme actively engages with the professional field and wider society throughout the curriculum. Excursions, collaborative projects and exhibitions offer students a wide range of opportunities to test their ideas in real-world contexts. Examples of opportunities for students to exhibit their work outside DAE are the Glassroom in the city centre of Eindhoven, shared with SintLucas (a vocational school for creative talent at NLQF levels 2-4), the TextielLab in Tilburg, the site of CHV (Cultuur Haven Veghel) and Design Development Eindhoven.

In the Studios, students work on realistic assignments that reflect actual practice in the design field. Each Studio represents a different view of design and a distinct approach to design research and practice. The choice of Studios during the curriculum allows students to tailor their own path and promotes agility and responsiveness.

The Reflections programme line offers an open intellectual space, focused on students' creative and critical exploration of their own potential. In mixed peer groups with students from all

cohorts, students reflect together on their studies, the practices of design, the design world and its role in society. Field trips and study tours are part of this programme line. Students also work on their personal Plan of Study and Plan of Graduation: students are supported in the process of making choices and positioning themselves as designers.

The graduation phase includes a six-month internship, the selection of a Focus programme and the completion of two graduation projects. In Focus, students work according to the method of 'understanding, experimenting, documenting, presenting and reflecting'. Students can choose one of the four Focus modules organised by the school, spend a semester abroad with a partner institution, or choose the Free Focus module in which they design their own programme around a design-related theme or project, either individually or collaboratively with other students. Almost half of the fourth-year students choose the Free Focus module.

Various structured extracurricular activities enhance the learning experience through real-life projects while contributing to internal community building.

The Community Experimental Grant is a micro-grant scheme to support student-led extracurricular initiatives that contribute to internal community building. Students or student groups can apply throughout the academic year, with an upper limit of 300 euros per application. Examples include a feminist zine-making workshop, an inclusivity peer support group, a decolonial book club or a collective storytelling event. Students appreciate this grant system for the student body as a testing ground and as a support to organise something that benefits the design community. They find it very easy to access.

BZAR is the Material Bank of DAE and offers a student-led space where materials are collected,

reused and exchanged. Students can trade materials using the local currency 'ZARBs' or work for the bank to earn more. BZAR is part of the international Federation of Recuperatheques, connecting 22 creative institutions promoting sustainability, solidarity and knowledge exchange.

Elevator Radio is a student-run radio network, an experimental platform for voices from the student community. Students describe the Elevator Radio and the Material Bank as fundamental to the school.

The DAE Lecture Series is a student-led programme that invites on a bi-weekly basis a wide range of external speakers (designers, artist, scientists and educators) to share their perspectives and practices. The panel heard that being in the organisation of this programme feels as an important and influential part of education, a very intense, but excellent experience.

Students present themselves to their future professional field and showcase their work (inter)nationally through Dutch Design Week and Milan Design Week.

The Arena is the permanent in-house platform for debate and discussion during the Graduation Show. It engages graduates, students and professionals, also as part of the Graduation Show, in discussions on topics such as artificial intelligence, social identity, design aesthetics and public space.

The Blueprints programme is a series of events to support graduating students as they transition into professional life, building on an earlier one-day 'No Panic Class'. The programme includes talks by DAE alumni and covers practical aspects like public relations, intellectual property and event logistics. The sessions involve local, national and international stakeholders and fill in knowledge areas typically not covered in the academic curriculum.

Based upon its mission to ensure that the student experience at DAE is exciting, meaningful

and accessible, the Student Council safeguards that community building remains central in the organisation of the various events and initiatives.

The panel notes that students appreciate the ecosystem of the school: it invites and supports students to organise something outside the formal curriculum or at a different location, which leads to very valuable learning experiences. The panel agrees with this evaluation by the students.

C: Learning environment

The learning environment of the DAE bachelor's programme is small-scale and intensive. It supports individual growth while fostering community. Studio-based education is central, with close interaction between students and tutors as well as among peers. The educational format is non-hierarchical and emphasises dialogue, exchange and collaboration. The emphasis on individual development is strong, with a student-centred and personalised approach to learning. Students are active participants in shaping their educational path ('designing the designer'), with ongoing support from their Reflections coach throughout. Tutors function as critical partners and coaches.

The small-scale character of the programme is evident from the class size and intensity of guidance. In the first semester of year 1, workshop instructions are organised for 7-10 students at a time, while the workshops themselves maintain a maximum of 15 students to ensure a balance between independent work and guided instruction.

In the Studios, groups are limited to a maximum of 20 students, sometimes split into smaller units of 10 for targeted work. Tutors provide both group guidance and one-to-one sessions.

In the Free Focus module, each student receives 20 hours of dedicated one-to-one guidance for their project, as well as general support from a team of three main tutors in a 1:20 ratio.

Coaches in the Reflections programme line guide approximately 20 students throughout the four years, providing stability, continuity and personalised guidance. In addition to the bi-weekly group sessions, coaches can organise one-to-one sessions for individual study plans, small group sessions for five students on shared topics, or informal 'coach walks' outdoors. A total of 2.5 FTE is available for Reflections coaching.

Since 2022, when the new curriculum was introduced, students construct their own study path within the programme. They submit preferences for the Studio they wish to join in the next semester, four times in total throughout the programme. They also make a choice for their Focus programme. This system promotes autonomy and self-directed learning. Students told the panel that they appreciate this greatly.

The learning environment is outward-looking. Students engage in fieldwork, real-world collaborations, exhibitions and public discourse, developing a deep awareness of the context of their work.

Students describe the learning environment as rich: the diversity of the student body provides many opportunities for exchange. They also describe the programme as intense. Although it is, theoretically, possible to play safe and just continue with the skills and knowledge they have already acquired, in practice, tutors and coaches continually challenge them to go further and deeper.

The restructuring of the programme has positively affected examination success rates. Postponement rates have decreased to 2-5%, while overall success rates have improved, as an effect

of the targeted one-to-one and group guidance and the emphasis on student-led study paths. In 2024-2025, 73.7% of the graduates had a study duration of four years, for 21.8% it had taken four and a half years to complete the programme. The panel recognises the effect of the new curriculum.

D: Intake

The academy looks for students who are curious, independent and eager to explore design from multiple perspectives. Candidates should show initiative and an interest in shaping their own learning path, in line with the academy's educational philosophy. The admissions process is, therefore, designed to assess both creative potential and the ability to engage in a reflective research-driven design practice.

Applicants must meet the formal requirements of previous education and English proficiency and submit a portfolio and two assignments. A wide range of orientation activities is organised to help candidates to prepare themselves: Open Days, Experience Days, portfolio advice sessions and the Foundation Year. These initiatives help identify and support students who not only demonstrate creative and academic ability but also show an interest in engaging beyond the classroom.

Candidates have to submit a portfolio, complete two home assignments and participate in an in-depth interview during which they are invited to present their work and discuss their ideas and approach. Portfolio sessions are organised to support candidates in shaping and refining their portfolios. The home assignment is designed to reflect the core principles of the bachelor's programme. By allowing candidates to choose two out of a selection of five to six assignments, the admissions team gains further insight into each

individual's interests, motivations and way of thinking. Each admissions committee consists of two professionals, who review the candidate's portfolio and home assignments in preparation of the interview. In the interview, candidates are given space to elaborate on their work, background and personal motivations. Following the interview, the admissions committee decides whether the candidate is suitable to begin the programme. The panel considers this admission process very appropriate for selecting students who fit the quality standards and educational philosophy of the programme. The fact that drop-out rates are very low proves the effectiveness of the admission procedure.

E: Staff

The programme staff consists of a diverse team (representing 23 different nationalities) of experienced designers, artists, curators, theorists and researchers who are firmly rooted in their own professional practice. This ensures a strong interconnectedness between education, the design field and the wider cultural landscape. The number of teaching staff members (129, 25.5 FTE) is sufficient for the delivery of the curriculum. Because most tutors have a contract for one day per week, they cannot always give advice or feedback as fast as the students would prefer.

Staff are selected for their ability to mentor students in a reflective, process-driven way. Reflections coaches hold permanent contracts and the fact that they rarely leave their post provides stability and continuity for students. Vacancies for tutors and coordinators generally attract 40-50 applicants, which leads to a competitive selection process and high quality of staff. A dedicated team of coordinators keep the programme well-organised. They closely monitor the study process and ensure clear

communication, logistical support and timely resolution of any issues.

DAE's commitment to the professionalisation of its staff is evident from the pedagogical training, curriculum development sessions and peer feedback it provides, such as through the Educational Day, calibration sessions and structured opportunities for mutual evaluation. Teaching staff regularly meet to discuss educational matters and to ensure the alignment between their courses, both within the courses and between them: within Fundamentals, the learning line representatives for Design, Contextual and Production have bi-weekly meetings with the Fundamentals coordinator, and tutors collaborate with each other across Studios and Fundamentals. The panel appreciates the attention for exchange within the teaching team, but notes that most tutors have a one-day-per-week contract which does not allow much time for coordination and calibration meetings. It appears they often do this in their own time. The panel advises appointing more staff for more than one day per week as this can lead to more time for educational development.

F: Facilities

Situated in De Witte Dame, with a floor space of 13,000 m², the academy provides dedicated workshop spaces for plastics, wood, metal, silk-screen, ceramics, textiles, electronics, VR and 3D printing, a fully equipped media lab, and the Trans Realities Lab (a hybrid digital environment for research and a space for students to engage with research facilities and approaches informed by the exploration of new technologies). DAE also explores the development of a new bio-lab, for students to experiment with bio-based materials and processes. As described in the first part of this report (Standard 5), the

students use the facilities intensively and report that workshop scheduling can be problematic.

Students have access to specialised 'extended labs' beyond the campus through partnerships with other institutions, such as the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC, ceramics), TextielLab (textiles) and Van Abbe museum (curating). International partnerships with Konstfack (Sweden), Elisava (Spain) and UMRUM (Czech Republic) offer additional chances for collaboration and exchange and have led to a number of joint activities over the past three years.

The in-house library is linked with the National Library of the Netherlands and TU/e (Eindhoven University of Technology), which enhances the research opportunities. The academy's rooftop restaurant, ZBar, not only serves meals, but is also the place for students to meet, exchange ideas and build connections.

DAE is preparing to move in 2028 to a new campus in the Kanaalzone, with enhanced workshop flexibility, exhibition areas and shared spaces integrated with student housing. This new space is expected to strengthen the studio-based learning and community engagement even more. Until then, DAE offers dedicated housing support through a housing officer and a comprehensive housing guide.

The panel expects that the new building will solve a number of the current problems, such as shortage of workspace and storage and too much noise. The panel considers it understandable that, awaiting this move, no major investments are undertaken in the current building. This does not mean, however, that all upkeep should be postponed, such as a new laser cutter. An urgent issue is the need for a stricter safety policy in operating machines by students, as the panel noted during its tour through the workshop spaces.

G: Achieved learning outcomes

Graduation projects are assessed on the conceptual, contextual and material sophistication of their execution, and for their research depth, criticality and relevance to societal issues. Based on a representative sample of the 2024 and 2025 graduates, the panel considers the skills level as good and the creativity of the projects as better than average. The projects are displayed in the Graduation Show during Dutch Design Week, which gives them international visibility. Awards for bachelor graduation projects, such as the René Smeets Award (recognising exceptional professionalism in the design process and final project) and the Melkweg Award (celebrating originality and a distinctive vision) reflect the external recognition students receive. Winners receive not only a prize and a trophy, but are often also offered mentorship or support from partners in the field. The awards thus form a bridge between education and professional practice and demonstrate how graduates meet and often even exceed the standards of the professional domain. The Planetree Design Award, organised from 2021 to 2023 with mental health institution GGzE, underlined the academy's commitment to social innovation and the role of design in addressing urgent societal challenges.

Results of the Kunsten Monitor from 2021 to 2024 indicate that DAE graduates consistently report a higher level of challenge in the programme (in 2024: 84%) than the national average (in 2024: 61%). The international orientation of the programme is also rated more positively. In terms of employment, DAE graduates are more likely to work within their field of study. These outcomes are in line with what the panel heard during the site visit from students and alumni.

The 2023 Alumni Review shows that 92% of the bachelor alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2020 work in the Netherlands, with 54% of them based in the Brainport region. They work in a wide range of fields, from activism and consultancy to craft, technology and education, as well as other creative roles that contribute to their communities and the Brainport region. Many alumni take on the roles of entrepreneur or employer at different points in their careers, thereby supporting the local economy and enhancing Eindhoven's reputation as a global centre for design. A study initiated by the municipality of Eindhoven in 2024 shows both the economic significance and contribution to the city's social fabric of the academy and its graduates by bringing diversity and creative energy.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel judges that the DAE bachelor's programme in Design meets the criteria of the Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education:

- The intellectual depth and professional independence expected from graduates go beyond the intended learning outcomes defined in the national competence profile and are, therefore, at bachelor+ level.
- The programme includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are organised by students and involve both staff and students.
- The learning environment is rich and intense: tutors and coaches continually challenge the students to go further and deeper.
- The admissions process is designed to assess both creative potential and the ability to engage in a reflective research-driven design practice. The low drop-out rates prove the effectiveness of the admission procedure.

- The teaching team is of sufficient size and ensures a strong interconnectedness between education, the design field and the wider cultural landscape. Tutors and coaches mentor students in a reflective, process-driven way.
- The facilities fit the wide field of design and support interdisciplinary learning, as well as community building.
- The panel considers the skills level of the graduation projects as good and the creativity as better than average. DAE and its graduates contribute significantly to the design field and the regional economy.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel noticed that two elements require further attention. These points of attention repeat those mentioned in the first part of this report:

- Most tutors have a one-day-per-week contract which does not allow much time for coordination and calibration meetings. The panel advises not overextending the tutors and considering to appoint more staff for more than one day per week as this can lead to more time for educational development.
- It is understandable that, awaiting the move to a new campus in 2028, no major investments are undertaken in the current building. This does not mean, however, that all upkeep should be postponed. In the present situation, the safety policy should be maintained more strictly.

The panel concludes that the programme meets all criteria of the Special feature Small-scale and Intensive Education.

Attachment 1: Administrative details of the programme

Institution

Name in RIO	Design Academy Eindhoven
Address	Design Academy Eindhoven Emmasingel 14, 2nd floor 5611 AZ Eindhoven The Netherlands
Website	https://www.designacademy.nl/
BRIN-number	02NT
Status (funded or unfunded)	Funded
ITK (yes or no)	no

Programme

First name, as in RIO	Vormgeving
Location	Eindhoven
Programme number in RIO	39111
Orientation and level (wo/hbo/ad/ba/ma)	Hbo bachelor
Research master?	no
Language of instruction	English
(Legal) professional requirements (yes or no)	no
All programme tracks/specialisations	Not applicable
Joint programme degree	no
Special feature	Small-scale and intensive education
Degree and addition	Bachelor vormgeving / Bachelor of design
Studyload in EC (60, 90, 120, 180, 240, 360)	240 EC
Modes: fulltime, parttime, dual	Fulltime
Working with units of learning outcomes (full-time, part-time, dual)	no
Assessment cluster	HBO Bachelor Vormgeving DAE (uniek)
Submission date	1 May 2026
Other (e.g. name change or extension of study duration)	Not applicable

Table of assessments

Standard

1. Intended learning outcomes
2. Teaching-learning environment
3. Assessment
4. Achieved learning outcomes
5. Facilities
6. Quality assurance
- Conclusion

Judgement

- Meets the standard
- Meets the standard
- Meets the standard
- Meets the standard
- Meets the standard
- Meets the standard
- Positive

Special Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Criterion

1. Intended learning outcomes
2. Curriculum: contents
3. Curriculum: learning environment
4. Intake
5. Staff
6. Facilities
7. Achieved learning outcomes
- Conclusion

Judgement

- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Meets the criterion
- Positive

Attachment 2: Assessment panel

Raoul van Aalst, Chair
Organisational expert

Beatriz Leanza
Curator and cultural strategist, affiliated among others with the Biennale Architettura

Jonathan Pierini
Director of ISIA Urbino and lecturer in design education

Berend Floor, Student member
Student, Utrecht University – MSc Philosophy of Science

The panel was supported by Marianne van der Weiden, certified secretary.

All panel members have completed and signed a statement of independence and impartiality, and these have been submitted to NVAO.

Attachment 3: Site visit programme

Date	December 8 th , 2025
Location	Emmasingel 14, Eindhoven
Programme	
09.00-09.15	Welcome
09.15-10.00	Management
10.00-10.30	Short tour workshops, Bachelor floors
10.30-11.30	Coordinators + Studio leaders
11.30-11.45	Break
11.45-12.45	Students
12.45-13.15	Lunch Break
13.15-14.15	Tutors + coaches
14.15-14.30	Break
14.30-15.15	Examination Board
15.15-15.30	Break
15.30-16.30	Alumni and professional field
16.30-17.30	Deliberation
18.00-18.15	Feedback

Attachment 4: Recommendations from previous assessment

The recommendations arising from the previous review have been addressed within the context of broader development processes in recent years. These are outlined in the self-evaluation report, structured around the six standards. A summary of the recommendations is presented below, each accompanied by a concise description of how the programme has acted upon the respective recommendation.

"The committee noted that the departments interact very little with each other and do not yet benefit from each other's strong assets. The committee recommends exploring this."

The bachelor programme has gone through an educational renewal, with the renewed curriculum in force from the start of academic year 2022–2023. The curriculum structure where the programme consisted of a more generic first year for all students followed by specialisation within one of the eight design departments has changed for a new bachelor programme where there is no longer a clear separation between the propaedeutic year and the main phase. The curriculum now consists of continuous learning lines across the different years where, moreover, students no longer choose a single department from their second year onwards through to graduation. The above developments and the resulting increase in student choices within the programme necessitate exchange between the various components of the curriculum to ensure proper alignment.

To support this, twice a year, a lunch meeting is organised where exchange takes place between tutors, Studio leaders and coaches. This lunch follows the regular meeting between all Studio leaders and the

Executive Board. In addition, an annual Educational Day takes place in which didactic professionalisation and exchange are the main topics of discussion.

Within the graduation semester, exchange and dialogue takes place in several ways. Firstly, because pairs/groups of tutors are created, with each pair or group having 8 students together (2 or 3 tutors). The group of those students is also a peer group during graduation that comes together at various times during the semester. Additionally, exchange and calibration take place among the tutors during the midterm and the final exam. Furthermore, there is a meeting, chaired by DAE's Creative Director, where all Studio leaders jointly decide which students nominated for cum laude during the exam will be awarded the distinction of cum laude.

Finally, the admission process is a moment of exchange where tutors are paired in different formations to jointly conduct entrance exams.

"Regarding the content of the programme, the committee is of the opinion that topics such as economy and local versus global can be addressed more. In addition, the committee recommends the programme to develop a vocabulary on diversity and inclusiveness. The committee notices a lack of awareness regarding these topics."

In the current curriculum, the topics of the economy and the local versus global are particularly addressed within Fundamentals, Reflections, Studio Technogeographies, Studio Silva Systems and the Focus module Cartographic Explorations.

The Fundamentals programme in year 3 focuses specifically on entrepreneurship and economy. During this semester, students acquire specific

skills to position themselves as designers in the professional field. In doing so, they receive input from various external experts on aspects of professionalisation: positioning, communication, presentation and the business side of the profession. Students learn to present and translate their research, methods and materialisation for an audience in a context that aligns with their self-reflection and position as a designer.

Within Reflections, students work on their reflective skills and positioning as a designer, as well as the choices they make during or after their studies that align with their intended role as a designer.

Within Studio Silva Systems, the focus is on the global ecosystem. Through individual and collective research, observations, and experimental approaches to making, students explore forests as complex systems encompassing ecological, societal, cultural and economic dimensions.

Studio Technogeographies is interested in positioning students of the design discipline within the complexity of our local and global realities and their interconnected places, people, cultures and environments. It positions itself within the contemporary design landscape as a journalistic design agency. The Studio believes it is possible to navigate visible and invisible systems by starting from tangible everyday subjects with a multidisciplinary design approach and by learning methods of research, visualisation, making, activation, communication, publication and presentation.

The Focus module Cartographic Explorations encourages students to explore eco-social design by integrating more-than-human perspectives, particularly in response to the ecological impact of infrastructure in and around Eindhoven. It challenges the Dutch tradition of controlling nature and aligns with a cultural shift toward restoration and regenerative practices. Rather than offering fixed solutions, the module fosters new roles, tools, and ways of thinking to

support cohabitation with non-human life, positioning design as a key driver in reimagining our relationship with the landscape.

Regarding diversity and inclusion, since 2020, DAE has significantly advanced its diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts across policy, education, and community engagement. Driven by internal commitment and

external calls for change, DAE introduced structural reforms like a new Code of Conduct, external confidential counsellors, and inclusive recruitment policies. Students and staff actively contribute through representative bodies and initiatives. Educational programmes have been redesigned to embed D&I topics, with dedicated modules and Studios. Each course begins with a Group Agreement meeting at the start of each semester. In these meetings, tutors, the coordinator, the Studio leader and students sit together to discuss how to interact with each other in that specific course. Topics discussed include forms of address, class start times, how to create a safe learning and teaching environment, etc. The institution improved accessibility, introduced inclusive facilities such as gender-neutral bathrooms and a quiet space, and supported community projects through grants and events. Additionally, specialists have been hired, training sessions conducted, and supportive infrastructure such as student counselling and housing assistance was expanded—all reinforcing DAE's commitment to creating an inclusive, safe, and socially engaged learning environment.

"The committee notes that the inclusivity and gender balance in the composition of the staff can be improved."

In recent years, efforts have been made to increase the diversity of staff composition in terms of age, sex, gender, educational background, cultural background and migration background in all departments, including within the

management team. The recruitment and selection processes were reviewed and adjusted to attract applicants from various backgrounds. An anti-discrimination policy for recruitment and selection and a guide on conducting job interviews were developed to inform and guide hiring staff while keeping diversity and inclusion in mind. These documents explain legal limitations in the selection process and emphasise the importance of having a diverse selection committee and evaluating candidates based on competencies.

“The committee strongly recommends the programme to implement the overall competences in the departments, and in the assessment criteria used by the departments.”

Learning outcomes are embedded throughout the bachelor programme curriculum. These learning outcomes are all consistently formulated and assessed in a similar manner. The learning outcomes are based on the competences and Dublin descriptors as described in the programme profile of Fine Art and Design. The learning outcomes ensure alignment within the programme and form a solid basis for maintaining coherence across the learning lines. To ensure consistency and shared understanding in how learning outcomes are interpreted and assessed, calibration takes place regularly — for example, during the Educational Day, Studio leaders’ meetings, and through representatives of the learning lines within the Fundamentals programme.

Attachment 5: Reviewed documents

- Self evaluation report
- Institutional Plan 2025-2028
- Note on Diversity and Inclusion at DAE
- Partnerships related to the professorships
- Assurance Matrix Learning Outcomes
- Guideline Language Requirements English
- Overview of the Community Grant projects
- Staff overview
- Code of Conduct
- Letters of the Executive Board concerning global events
- Assessment Policy
- Examination Board's Annual Plan 2025-2026
- Examination Board's Annual Report 2024
- Graduation Tutor Manual
- Graduation Student Manual
- Alumni interview
- Alumni Review
- Results Alumni Survey 2021
- Results Kunsten Monitor 2024
- Information on collaboration projects
- Press release about move to new location, 16 July 2024
- Article Eindhovens Dagblad about move to new location, 17 July 2024
- Teaching and Examination Regulations
- NSE bachelor programme factsheet 2025
- Plan of Graduation, including Process Log Template
- List of 2024-2025 partner schools
- Information on the joint exhibition
- DAE Housing Guide
- Study on the Economic Value of Design Academy Eindhoven
- Graduation work of 15 students (9 from cohort 2024, 6 from cohort 2025)

