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**Master Choreography
Master Theatre
Academy of Theatre and Dance
Amsterdam University of the Arts**

*Report of the limited programme assessment
15-16 June 2020*

Utrecht, The Netherlands
September 2020
www.AeQui.nl
Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

Programmes

DAS Graduate School, Academy of Theatre and Dance, Amsterdam University of the Arts

Master Choreography

Master Theatre

Location: Amsterdam

Mode of study: 2 years, fulltime

Croho: 49103 (M Choreography), 44874 (M Theatre)

Result of institutional assessment: positive

Panel

R. van Aalst, chair

V. Perez Royo, domain expert

S.Z. Lotker, domain expert

J. Nabbe, student

M.J.H. van der Weiden, secretary

The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of AeQui Nederland

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This document is best printed in duplex

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Summary

On 15 and 16 June 2020, an assessment committee of AeQui performed an assessment of the master's programmes DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre at the Amsterdam University of the Arts. This was an online assessment. The committee judges that both the master's programme DAS Choreography and the master's programme DAS Theatre meet each standard; the overall quality of both programmes **meets the standard**.

Both two-year full-time programme of 120 ECTS offer international artists the opportunity for further reflection and development through knowledge generation and research. The committee considers it justified that the programmes run in English because the world of theatre and dance is international, students and staff are recruited internationally and graduates go out in both the Dutch and international field.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are based on the national sets of competencies at master's level in dance and theatre, as agreed upon in 2019, and are formulated in final criteria. The committee considers the intended learning outcomes to be at the internationally accepted master's level. The aim of both programmes is to offer practicing artists the opportunity to develop their research and reflection skills, while continuing their artistic practice. Students learn to use research as a tool to expand and deepen their practice. The tailor-made and personalised approach in both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre is clear to the professional field and potential applicants. Both programmes have strong links to the professional field at various levels and have been able to use these connections to continually adapt to changes in the field. The assessment committee assesses that the intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Teaching-learning environment

DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are professional master's programmes, supporting students in doing practice-based artistic research. The contents of both programmes are guided by the research questions of the admitted students and by the common ground covered by these questions. DAS Choreography is a non-residential programme, while DAS Theatre is a residential programme. DAS Theatre is more structured and the group process plays a more prominent role, but DAS Choreography offers greater engagement with each student's individual research trajectory, which makes the practical difference between the two smaller than might be

expected. Selected students are a diverse and international group of professional artists with a bachelor background or professional experience at a comparable level and with the ambition to deepen their practice by research and rethinking. In such personalised programmes the role of the tutors is crucial. The committee has established that the qualifications and engagement of the educational staff in both programmes fit the needs of the students very well. The artistic director, tutors, mentors, advisors and support staff guide students in their development. Study guides and mentors provide students with the necessary information. The facilities in the Grootlab building are of high quality. The assessment committee assesses that the teaching-learning environment of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Student assessment

The committee considers that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have a strong assessment system. In both programmes individual learning goals are based on the student's research plan and linked to the general programme qualifications. The student's progress toward these learning goals is assessed systematically during the programme and documented in the student dossiers. At the end of each semester an integral assessment takes place, providing the student with feedback on how best to move forward. The graduation procedure in both programmes is well-considered and involves independent external examiners. The quality of assessment is monitored and safeguarded by the Exam Committee of the Academy of Theatre and Dance. By attending and observing assessment meetings they are able to provide useful feedback to the artistic directors. The

assessment committee assesses that the student assessment of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Achieved learning outcomes

The graduates of both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have achieved the intended learning outcomes of their programme. The student dossiers show the high level of the work and the new ways and formats the graduates have been able to develop. The alumni are well-positioned in the field. Representatives from the work field confirm the innovative power and intellectual level of the alumni. The assessment committee assesses that the achieved learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Recommendations

The programmes are strong and well aware of their surroundings and upcoming challenges. To support the programmes in the continuation of their high quality, the committee formulates the following advice, in line with the observations made by the programmes themselves during the site visit:

- Organise more links and support from the local field if you feel you need alliances, e.g. by installing a dedicated advisory board and using local students as allies;
- Maintain the international influx of students;
- Maintain exploration of diversity of new performative forms;
- Protect the focus on process and exploration in student assessment.

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework are assessed positively for both programmes; the assessment committee therefore awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the master's programme DAS Choreography and the master's programme DAS Theatre.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,
Utrecht, September 2020

R.R. van Aalst,
Chair

M.J.H. van der Weiden,
Secretary

Introduction

This report describes the outcome of the evaluation of the master's programmes DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre at DAS Graduate School, Academy of Theatre and Dance of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, on 15 and 16 June 2020. The Amsterdam University of the Arts offers bachelor's and master's programmes and shorter courses in fine arts, architecture, music, film, museum and heritage studies, theatre and dance. DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are full-time two-year programmes, offering international artists the opportunity for further reflection and development through knowledge generation and research.

The institute

The Amsterdam University of the Arts trains students for the national and international world of art, culture and heritage. In supporting exceptionally talented students to develop their artistic identity and cultivate an innovative vision, the university's tutors provide a solid grounding in skills and tradition, in collaboration with the international trend-setting cultural community of which Amsterdam is the centre. The bachelor and master programmes are organised in six academies, one of which is the Academy of Theatre and Dance (ATD). In 2018, the ATD formulated a new vision: a clear statement that art matters, that artists can make a vital contribution to society, and that the educational and professional domains share responsibility for ensuring greater inclusivity and justice, so that all voices are heard. Within the ATD, the master's programmes of Choreography, Theatre and Creative Producing and DAS Research comprise the DAS Graduate School (DAS GS). The Graduate School is an operationally independent institution housed in a separate, purpose-built facility, the Grootlab building in North Amsterdam. DAS GS emphasises practice-led and practice-based research in connection with the professional field, open to a diversity of artistic propositions, with flexible support structures in education and an eye for ethical concerns.

The programmes

Both master's programmes are two-year full-time programmes of professional orientation, amounting to 120 ECTS. DAS Theatre is a residential programme, while DAS Choreography is non-residential, offering three seminars each year, residencies in Amsterdam and individual mentoring.

Both programmes admit international artists who have a bachelor's degree, have established a professional practice and are seeking possibilities for further reflection and development with the aim to contribute to the theatre(s) of the future and the field of critical and contemporary dance practice respectively. Each year, DAS Theatre admits 8-10 students and DAS Choreography admits 4 students.

The programmes run in English because the world of theatre and dance is international. Students from other parts of the world form a significant portion of the student bodies, collaborations and exchanges take place with international institutions, and teaching staff and residency connections are sourced from a broad international base. Students go out into both the Dutch and international professional field. The committee considers it justified that the programmes run in English.

The assessment

The Amsterdam University of the Arts assigned AeQui VBI to perform a quality assessment of its master's programmes DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

In the run-up to the site visit, the assessment committee has studied the self-evaluation report

on the programmes and reviewed a sample of fifteen final works per programme accepted during the last four (Choreography) or three (Theatre) years. The findings of the report and the results of the review of final works were input for discussions during the visit.

The site visit was carried out on 15 and 16 June 2020. Due to the covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on physical meetings, it was decided to organise this as an online visit. The programme is presented in attachment 2. During the preparation and the site visit, the panel has discussed and considered the several programme assessments in the cluster. The committee has assessed the

programmes in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programmes and the institution.

In this document, the committee reports on its findings, considerations and conclusions according to the NVAO framework for limited programme assessment (2018). A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management of both programmes; their reactions have led to this final version of the report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are based on the national sets of competencies at master's level in dance and theatre, as agreed upon in 2019. The aim of both programmes is to offer practicing artists the opportunity to develop their research and reflection skills, while continuing their artistic practice. Students learn to use research as a tool to expand and deepen their practice. The tailor-made and personalised approach in DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre is clear to the professional field and potential applicants. Both programmes have strong links to the professional field at various levels (students, tutors, assessors, advisors) and have been able to use these connections to continually adapt to changes in the field over the years. The assessment committee assesses that the intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Findings DAS Choreography

The master's programme DAS Choreography targets artists who have established a professional practice and are seeking possibilities for further reflection and development. The programme offers these artists the opportunity to enhance their research capabilities, while maintaining their professional practice. The artistic practices represent a great variety in terms of choreography, dance and performance. This reflects the profile of self-directed and independent performance maker, capable of organising their work in accordance with the standards for a master's education as defined in the Dublin descriptors.

The programme is guided by the seven competencies for Dance Master's study programmes, defined in 2019 by a national network of related master's programmes: creative potential, craftsmanship, investigative and reflective abilities, potential for growth and innovation, entrepreneurial and organisational ability, communicative ability, and collaborative ability. The programme has translated these national competencies into five final criteria:

- articulation of research propositions and research questions;
- development of specific terminologies in relation to the research questions;
- reflection on processes and methods of the research;
- identification of the research process in relation to contexts;

- evidence of projects in the field and collaboration in the research processes.

The programme's staff members keep in touch with developments in the field through exchanges with related master's programmes in e.g. Scandinavia and Germany, through the accreditation of PARTS (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, Brussels) and through the (international) activities of individual staff members in the field of dance and performance scholarship and education. Also, the students themselves bring the professional field into the programme because they are expected to maintain their activities in the field and to account for them in their documentation of activities. Finally, guest artists are invited for lectures and workshops and as external assessors.

Findings DAS Theatre

The master's programme DAS Theatre aims to enable theatre artists and/or curators to consolidate and broaden their artistic practice, using research as a working mode and as a tool to expand and deepen their practice. Students are supported in their attempt to rethink, or even radically reimagine, forms, aesthetics, practices and ethics, thereby widening the understanding of what theatre is, and envisioning the theatre(s) of the future. As a postgraduate programme, DAS Theatre focuses on knowledge generation rather than knowledge transmission. Its approach is question-driven, research oriented, interdisciplinary

and intradisciplinary, with agency and self-determination through the student's learning goals and research trajectory.

The programme is guided by the seven competencies for Theatre Master's study programmes, defined in 2019 by a national network of related master's programmes: creative ability, craftsmanship, investigative and reflective ability, development potential, entrepreneurial ability, communicative ability, and collaborative ability. The programme has translated these national competencies into final qualifications in four assessment areas:

- process: developing artistic or curatorial work by deepening and broadening their artistic and curatorial modes of working;
- work: delivering significant theatrical work or curatorial projects, resulting from deepening and/or broadening of a personal artistic and curatorial vision;
- reflection: developing their own reflective tools to arrive at artistic judgements;
- positioning: possessing an artistic vision for initiating and organising their work and practice and being capable of communicating about this within the professional field.

The professional field is an intrinsic part of DAS Theatre because all students are practicing artists and/or curators in the field. Also, the programme's staff members (artistic director, tutors and advisors) are all practicing artists and/or active agents in the local and international field. A broad pool of external advisors complements the core educational team, bringing their connections and networks into the programme. In addition, external mentors and guest teachers engage in dialogue about relevant thematic questions and experimental pedagogical methodologies. Finally, DAS Theatre is part of the cultural and social landscape of the city of Amsterdam and has recently established a number of structural collaborations for the period 2021-2024.

Considerations

Throughout the discussions, the assessment committee gathered that both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are personalised tailor-made programmes for professional artists, working from the artistic practice that students bring in. Both programmes aim to bring about a shift from producing to reflection in their students.

The committee appreciates the relationship of the intended learning outcomes of both programmes to the national sets of competencies in dance and theatre, and how the programmes elegantly place the individual student trajectories to these generic learning outcomes. The committee assesses the intended learning outcomes as being at least at the internationally accepted master's level.

The committee is satisfied that the tailor-made and personalised character and aim of both programmes are clear to applicants, students and the professional field. This is the result of consistent information and the reputation DAS has built up over a good number of years. The programmes are open to developments in the field and have been able to adapt to changes.

Both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have strong links to the professional field at many levels. Both programmes are well aligned to their respective subfields. Most connections are with the professional practice in Europe, but the committee notes from the origins of students and the backgrounds of guest lecturers and advisors that they are open to other regions as well. The committee agrees with the programmes that stronger links with the local field could be useful and recommends to organise more support from the local field, e.g. by installing a dedicated advisory board and using local students as allies.

The programmes have an English name and run in English because the world of theatre and dance is international. Students from other parts of the world form a significant portion of the student bodies, collaborations and exchanges take place with international institutions, and teaching staff

and residency connections are sourced from a broad international base. Students go out into both the Dutch and international professional field. The committee considers it justified that the programmes have an English name and run in English.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard.**

2. Teaching-learning environment

DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre are professional master's programmes, supporting students in doing practice-based artistic research. The contents of both programmes are guided by the research questions of the admitted students and by the common ground covered by these questions. DAS Choreography is a non-residential programme, while DAS Theatre is a residential programme. DAS Theatre is more structured and the group process plays a more prominent role, but because DAS Choreography includes a series of commitments in Amsterdam, the difference between the two is smaller in practice than might be expected. Selected students are a diverse group of professional artists with the ambition to deepen their practice by research. In these personalised and tailor-made programmes the role of the tutors is crucial. The committee has established that the qualifications and engagement of the educational staff in both programmes fit the needs of the students very well. The facilities in the Grootlab building are of high quality. The assessment committee assesses that the teaching-learning environment of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Findings DAS Choreography

Orientation

The degree course in DAS Choreography provides a two-year full-time programme that runs in English, aligned to each student's practice-as-research. DAS Choreography is a professional master's programme. The type of research in DAS Choreography is practice-based artistic research, rooted in the choreographic and performance practices of the students. Sharing research plays a continuous role in the programme, through shared reading and sharing perceptions and observations. Each student learns to develop, along the contours of their own path, the importance and function of theoretical engagement in their artistic practice. Throughout their studies they write reports, essays and an artistic statement to build their dossier.

Contents

Students enter the programme on the basis of a preliminary research plan. Each student is expected to present and share their questions and progress with the other students and the tutors, with techniques and in ways that suit their research trajectory. Students look at their own practice through lenses of their peers. They hold a collective inquiry, practice modes of sharing artistic research, and apply practical and conceptual experimentation. Together, they select the course

readings and the guest artists to be invited for seminars. The reading assignments are based on students' research interests, with some general readings for the benefit of all. One of the tutors explained that, after the first seminar, it becomes clear what students want and need to read, based on the discussions about the first set of readings. Texts are not only on choreography, but from other fields as well, e.g. philosophy, to provide (inter)disciplinary contextualisation, key concepts and relation to practice. Individual students are asked to focus on different aspects, e.g. context, contents, outcomes. Working with two texts gives the opportunity to investigate two different standpoints and how they speak to each other, thus opening up the field of discussion. The readings invite the students to develop rigour in reading and to answer the question of how the text at hand relates to or is meaningful for someone's artistic practice.

Structure

The programme is non-residential, in order to allow students to maintain their professional practice. The curriculum structure includes four individual residencies in Amsterdam; eight intensive group seminars (four per year); continuous mentoring by both internal and external practitioners;

monthly Skype sessions for each year group; platforms for presentation of both research and artwork.

During the residency periods of three weeks each, students have dedicated studio space in Amsterdam. The residencies are designed by the individual student with the support of the teaching staff and may involve collaborators (e.g. performers, dramaturges, designers, etc.). They are intended to help develop the student's making practice.

The seminars are for both year groups together. Each year four seminars are organised: on artistic research, choreographic practice, diffractive practice and the second year Studio Showings and Master Presentations. Students present their research question, methods and processes and receive feedback from their peers and tutors. Reading and writing assignments are discussed, which leads to a shared collective thinking and language, in turn leading to the opening up of new practices. During each seminar, studio praxis is a core element in order to share the research in progress.

Individual mentoring supports the student's independent study and provides the necessary continuity of engagement between the student and the course. It is provided by core staff tutors and mentors of choice.

Monthly two-hour Skype mentoring sessions for each student group and core staff provide continuity of connection over the year.

Towards the end of the programme, Master Presentations are organised. Students give evidence (through documentation, demonstration, lecture, performance and other means) of the quality, reflexivity, rigour, relationality and integrity of their two-year arts research process.

Incoming students

Four students are admitted each year out of 55-60 applications. DAS Choreography aims for a diversity of nationalities, backgrounds and orientations. Requirements are (1) a bachelor's degree in dance, or related field in the arts; (2) three years' work experience in the professional field of dance as performer and/or choreographer; (3) a well-

articulated motivation to expand practice-based research activities that demonstrates: (a) a desire and an openness for encounters with and the exchange of knowledge and practices, and (b) compatibility with the educational vision of the programme (c) an ability to manage a predominantly independent, self-steered study programme; and (4) a clearly formulated research plan. The first selection round is on the basis of the written applications, including a clearly formulated research plan. A number of applicants is then invited in the second round for a two-day selection procedure, based on their past work and their motivation and research plan. In the second round, applicants must already give a draft design of their first residency so that the committee can assess the applicants' abilities to design an artistic research process as the foundation of their studies. The procedure also includes an adequate command of English of the applicant.

Staff

DAS Choreography staff comprises an artistic director, two tutors, a seminar mentor, a production manager and administration support. The biographies provided with the self-evaluation show their experience and expertise in the field of artistic research, dance, choreography and performance, and their pedagogic skills for the specific group of mature DAS Choreography students.

Mentoring and student information

As described in the paragraph on programme structure, mentoring is an essential element of the programme. Individual mentoring ensures that the link between student and programme is maintained, even when the student is not in Amsterdam. Each student can allocate 20 hours annually for their individual mentoring. Site visits by the mentor outside Amsterdam are possible, but contact is mostly via Skype, iChat, email, blog et cetera. Mentoring focuses on the year-long processes rather than project related matters. In addition, group mentoring sessions with the core staff are organised monthly via Skype.

Students receive information on the programme in the Study Guide, Practical Guide and planning overviews.

Student appreciation

When asked their opinion of the programme, students told the assessment committee that they especially value the chance to deepen conceptually, the discourse with colleagues, which is both exciting and supporting, the international composition of the group and the rich environment offered by the programme. They would appreciate stronger links with the local artistic scene. A programme in the city was prepared, but put on hold because of the covid-19 pandemic.

Findings DAS Theatre

Orientation

DAS Theatre is a full-time, two-year residential master's programme that runs in English, taking the form of a creative laboratory for international artists and curators. Research, and artistic research in particular, play a pivotal role in the programme's educational vision, not with the goal of producing artistic researchers, but to support artists and curators to use research as a working mode and as a tool to expand and deepen their practice. Students in this professional master's programme learn how to engage imaginatively with the philosophical, social and political issues they are confronted with, how to formulate hypotheses about present and future entanglements and how art practices can contribute to constantly 'imagine otherwise'.

Contents

DAS Theatre comprises different kinds of theatre makers (directors, performers, dramaturges) and curators within the same definition of 'artists'. The programme addresses both artists and curators and includes curation both in its vision and the curriculum.

The programme is shaped by the students' artistic research questions. At the start of the programme students present an initial outline of themes, forms and questions they intend to explore. In the introduction weeks the artistic exchange among

students leads to a collective agenda and curriculum. This process is repeated several times during the two years. The individual trajectories are designed by the student in conversation with their tutor.

The Educational Platform, consisting of the artistic director, the student counsellor, a team of five tutors and the programme coordinator, follows each student over the whole course and monitors long-term developments. Both the Educational Platform and cluster meetings among tutors provide consistency and continuity within the study programme and the daily pedagogy. In the new curriculum (implemented per September 2019), theory and writing sessions are an integral part of the group and individual trajectories. The DAS Theatre theory advisor supports students in constructing the discursive agenda around their artistic research, providing meaningful literature and insights, and guides the students in the process of writing the artistic essays. Seminars and labs are organised ranging from dramaturgy labs to writing workshops, from theory seminars to curatorial practices lectures. Students are involved in the collective preparation of readers and labs, based on the artistic materials they bring in.

Structure

The first year of DAS Theatre focuses on research and expanding the artistic practice of students, while the second year centres on in-depth investigation, which forms the foundation of the Master Project.

The first and third semester begin with a joint introduction period for both first-year and second-year students. The first-year students then participate in a nomadic block (first semester) and a house block (second semester) for the collective exploration of a research question related to an artistic field. The nomadic block provides the opportunity to connect to other localities and contexts, and to travel and live together as a group. During two-weeks in-house research residencies students can count on the support of their peers to explore and materialise artistic ideas and test their inquiries.

In addition, students organise individual residencies, internships, studio visits and/or field trips throughout the year. In the second semester, a collective field trip is also part of the curriculum, as an opportunity to engage with a particular artistic scene, programme or theme. At the end of the first year, the students present their Master Project Plan.

In the third semester, students organise the Contextual, an educational project that can take any form relevant to the topic, theme, methodology or question that has been chosen by the students. They continue their studio work and work on presentations. At the end of the semester they submit their Artistic Essay, which gives a comprehensive insight into a student's artistic process as well as how they reflect on it.

The fourth semester focuses on the individual trajectories, culminating in the public presentation of an artistic project.

In each of the four semesters, three to five labs and seminars are organised, focusing on different aspects related to the assessment perspectives (process, work, reflection, positioning).

Incoming students

Eight to ten students are admitted each year from a variety of countries. Requirements are (1) a BA education in the performing arts or related areas or equivalent professional experience, and an existing body of work; (2) the need and ambition to develop their work, also experimenting with new forms and formats, and reflecting on it; (3) an openness and an eager attitude towards being within an international peer environment with exposure to diverse practices, where the sharing of practices can provoke new approaches to aesthetics, ethics and politics; (4) the capacity to organise their time independently and to initiate and develop artistic processes as well as establishing new collaborations; (5) a desire to engage with the structure and conditions offered by an educational context and to share their artistic questions and discourses with DAS Graduate School community.

The first selection round is on the basis of the written applications including a research proposal

and a portfolio. Approximately fifteen applicants are then invited to DAS GS in the second round for a three-day live audition, consisting of interviews, assignments and practical exercises. The procedure also includes an adequate command of English of the applicant.

Staff

The Educational Platform, as mentioned above (see Contents), follows each student over the whole course. They take on various roles in the guidance of the students: (1) the artistic director as a strategic artistic advisor, (2) the student counsellor who supports the student's general development and who acts as a team coach for each year group, and (3) a tutor who is the primary discussion partner with regard to their artistic development.

In addition, each student counts on the support of three advisors during the programme: a theory advisor and an artistic advisor assigned by DAS Theatre, and an external advisor chosen by the student. DAS Theatre also brings in external experts for students' presentations, who offer both individual and collective feedback. Mentors are called in for the nomadic and house block in the first year. The school's technical and production coordinators assist in the implementation of the student trajectories in practical, economic or technical matters.

The biographies provided with the self-evaluation show the (international) experience and expertise of the artistic director, tutors, in house advisors, block mentors and a pool of external advisors.

Mentoring and student information

Students receive information on the programme in the Study Guide, Process Guide and Content Guide. In three-hour briefing sessions at the beginning of each semester one of the tutors explores the curriculum and timeline, addressing potential questions from students.

As described above, students are guided by a number of advisors throughout the programme. Students meet with their tutor individually for

three hours a month on average. Students are offered 16 hours for the external advisor in the first year, 32 hours in the second year.

Student appreciation

When asked their opinion of the programme, students told the assessment committee that they especially appreciate the space to reflect and re-think and the time to explore, together with a diverse group of like-minded people, learning how to use feedback methods and a critical approach. They value the individual and democratic approach, without losing the rigour of a master's programme, and the chance to expose themselves to new unfamiliar voices. They would appreciate more attention to non-European approaches in the school and fear that the expected raise in fees for non-European students will be counterproductive.

Findings general

Diversity

Students of both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre commented on the limited number of people of colour in the staff. They are satisfied with the diversity of the student population, but feel that it is threatened by the increase in tuition fees for non-European students, mentioned above.

Infrastructure

As part of DAS Graduate School, DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre share the space in the Grootlab building, a purpose-built facility in North Amsterdam. The assessment committee was given a short video showing the various studios, work spaces, class rooms and conference rooms, library, kitchen et cetera. A studio can be booked through a scheduling programme. There can be competition for the available studio space. Although the staff appreciates the facilities of the building, they think it has the atmosphere of an educational institution, rather than of an art space. They find it difficult to connect to the neighbourhood. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic competition for space may become stronger and it will possibly be necessary to rent

additional space elsewhere. Representatives of the work field suggested that their facilities could be useful for DAS programmes, but are currently not used as such.

Considerations

The committee considers that both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have achieved a good balance between the interests and particular poetics of the students and what is hosted, through a system of listening to the students to help them formulate and investigate their questions and trying to find a common ground between them. The committee advises to maintain the exploration of diversity of new performative forms. The committee is aware that not having a set programme creates more difficult conditions to organise a rigorous programme, and appreciates that although the contents of the programmes are different each year, the level of what is offered is maintained well: students confirm that not 'anything goes'. Although DAS Choreography is non-residential and more loosely structured, while DAS Theatre is residential and more regulated, the difference is in practice smaller than one would expect: DAS Choreography offers greater engagement with each student's individual research trajectory, while DAS Theatre offers its students sufficient freedom to maintain (part of) their professional practice. The main difference is a stronger role of the group and group processes in DAS Theatre.

Both programmes are able to select groups of interested and self-directed students and engage them. Students of both programmes emphasise the importance of the group's international composition and diversity. In view of the proposed raise in tuition fees for non-European students, this is a concern, explicitly mentioned by the students of DAS Theatre. The assessment committee agrees that it is important to maintain the diversity of the student groups in both programmes.

Key to the programmes' success is the role of the tutors. The committee is able to confirm on the basis of the documentation and the interviews

that in both programmes they are qualified, caring and engaged: they are open, able to listen with empathy to the students' questions, respect the artists and their practice, understand artistic research and its complexity. Furthermore, the committee establishes that the command of English among teachers is adequate, and appreciates that the programme has policies in place to guarantee that staff has extensive international experience and skills.

The committee is convinced that in such personalised and tailor-made programmes the staff's confidence in the potential of each student's artistic practice and the method of immanent criticality are essential: creating and thinking with the student, giving feedback from the inside with an understanding of the process. The assessment committee clearly recognises this approach in the staff of both programmes. The assessment committee would like to stimulate both programmes

to increase the diversity of staff and to attract more people of colour.

DAS Graduate School has good facilities at a great location. Students have access to studios and all the equipment they need. The building could be more open to its surroundings. In view of the need for more space as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic the school could use the facilities of other organisations more often. It seems that there are some unused opportunities here. Both options would meet the students' wish to have a stronger connection with the local art scene.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet this standard**.

3. Student assessment

The committee considers that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have a strong assessment system. In both programmes individual learning goals are based on the student's research plan and linked to the general programme qualifications. The student's progress toward these learning goals is assessed systematically during the programme and documented in the student dossiers. At the end of each semester an integral assessment takes place, providing the student with feedback on how best to move forward. The graduation procedure in both programmes is well-considered and involves independent external examiners. The quality of assessment is monitored and safeguarded by the ATD Exam Committee. By attending and observing assessment meetings they are able to provide useful feedback to the artistic directors. The assessment committee assesses that the student assessment of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Findings DAS Choreography

On the basis of the student's research plan appropriate individualised learning goals are generated. In the course of the programme, students build a dossier of required writings, documenting their research trajectory and process. Fifteen student dossiers were made available for the assessment committee. The continuous dialogue with peers, tutors, mentors and collaborators is made part of their own analysis. At the end of the first year, they write a self-evaluation related to the five central criteria (see standard 1). Tutors respond to the student's documents with in-depth qualitative assessments, closely following the student's research propositions. These tutor reports are included in the student dossier and are an indication of their development and progress. An internal mentor responds to the student's half-yearly report and essay with a written commentary relating to the broader aims of the programme. The programme emphasises the dialogical approach to feedback and assessment: a practice of immanent criticality in continuous practice, debate and conversation.

At the end of each semester an integral assessment takes place. The artistic director and tutor take the role of examiners. The materials assembled by the student in the past half year are assessed in line with the five core criteria. A detailed protocol for integral assessments has been drawn up to safeguard the quality of assessment. On the basis of a positive outcome at the end of the year,

the credits for that year are awarded. The assessment is followed by a written report that summarises the integral assessment and includes points of attention and recommendations for the future.

During the September seminar in the second year each student meets with the internal assessors for the so-called 'green light procedure', to determine that the student is on track to complete their studies as planned or that adjustments will be needed. The tutors told the committee that a red light is rarely given, but that in some cases additional work is asked to meet the programme's expectations. Sometimes, a student's professional practice takes so much time that the study programme suffers.

At the end of the programme the master's presentations take place for a selected wider audience. They give evidence of the quality, reflexivity, rigour, relationality and integrity of the two-year research process. The assessment committee consists of two external members and one internal member. The externals come from the international field of choreography and performance and have specific expertise in relation to the works to be presented. The internal member is a tutor of the programme. The committee bases its judgement on documentation of the research provided by the student, the presentation itself, and the conversation with the student on the day

after the presentation. The artistic director moderates the assessment process. Each assessor provides a written statement.

Findings DAS Theatre

The assessment policy at DAS Theatre is based on regular evaluation of the student's trajectories. At the end of each semester the student has an assessment interview with the tutor and artistic director. This is an integral assessment, meaning that students are not evaluated in relation to the individual components of the curriculum, but in relation to their own development through and across them. The agenda for this interview is prepared by the Education Platform, ensuring that the perspectives of other tutors and the student counsellor are included. The assessment is followed by a written report that summarises the integral assessment and includes points of attention and recommendations for the future.

In the first semester, the students write an Expanded Practices plan, that later evolves into a Master Project plan in the third semester. This is considered a 'living document' in which students formulate their learning goals and research plans as they develop during the programme. The documents are framed in line with the four assessment criteria Process, Work, Reflection and Positioning. The results of all evaluations and assessments are kept in individual student dossiers. Fifteen of these student dossiers were made available for the assessment committee.

The graduation phase consists of multiple interconnected elements, starting with the writing of the artistic statement which complements the Master's Project plan. This one-page text, describing and contextualising the participant's artistic practice, is one of the components assessed by examiners, while the Artistic Essay -which is already assessed in the third semester- is offered to them as an extra input. For the three weeks before the master's presentations, students get an in-house residency with dedicated studio time, technical and production support and peer exchange.

The master's presentation is an artistic or curatorial finished project, presented publicly and with invited Dutch and international guests. Additional assignments are a reflective report in which the student reflects on their work and includes insights gained after the public presentation of the work, and, finally, the exam talk in which the student is interviewed by an exam committee. The exam talk is the last input for the final assessment. The committee of examiners is composed of the student's tutor, the artistic director and two external experts. The tutor and the artistic director will focus primarily on the artistic process and positioning. The external examiners will concentrate on the presentation and the level of reflection. The artistic director is the chairperson and moderator of the exam interview. After the exam talk, the examiners will -in the absence of the student- decide whether or not a student has fulfilled the master criteria.

Findings general

The Exam Committee of the ATD plays an important part in ensuring consistency in the quality of review and assessment. The Exam Committee consists of four permanent members of the teaching staff from various bachelor's and master's programmes, two policy and quality assurance officers and an external member. The function of the committee is to advise, to monitor and to identify and signal issues. Members periodically attend assessment meetings of the study programmes, read the student dossiers and attend performances and productions. The committee meets five times per year. At an annual plenary meeting the Exam Committee conveys its observations and recommendations to the ATD board and the artistic directors. The Exam Committee's annual reports and observation reports of assessment meetings were available for the assessment committee. In its online interview with the assessment committee the Exam Committee expressed its appreciation of the integral assessment method and how the programmes are able to fit the individual student's learning goals to the general intended learning outcomes, although the assessment committee understands that

there is also an ongoing discussion about the potential tension between the amount of freedom for the student and the steering role of the programme.

Considerations

The assessment committee considers that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have a clear and well-thought-out assessment system, in which the individual student's learning goals are consistently linked to the programme's end qualifications. The assessments are carried out coherently and the documentation of progress and outcomes is extensive. The methodology is well explained in the documents and was further clarified in the interviews. The committee is satisfied with the rigour of the assessment system as applied in the formal moments during the programme, such as the green light procedure. The committee appreciates the variety of assessment tools and the way in which they come together in the integral assessment per semester. This shows that assessment in both programmes is used as a

feedback tool to help the student move forward. The committee feels it is important to protect this assessment system, when at times tendencies of academisation come up. The committee also advises to protect the focus on process and exploration in student assessment.

The assessment committee compliments the Exam Committee on the seriousness with which it takes its work. Attending and observing assessment meetings and providing feedback are useful methods to safeguard the quality of assessments in the academy. Based on a reading of the student dossiers of both programmes in the documentation, the assessment committee confirms the quality and level of the students' work and the high quality of feedback they are provided with.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet this standard**.

4. Achieved learning outcomes

The committee establishes that graduates of both DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre have achieved the intended learning outcomes of their programme. The student dossiers show the high level of the work and the new ways and formats the graduates have been able to develop. The alumni are quite positive about their studies and are well-positioned in the field. Representatives from the work field confirm the innovative power and intellectual level of the alumni. The assessment committee assesses that the achieved learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet the standard**.

Findings DAS Choreography

The assessment committee has studied fifteen student dossiers of DAS Choreography. On this basis the committee confirms that the students have achieved the intended learning outcomes and that they are able to show this convincingly. In the self-evaluation, the programme states that they invest in how students develop their performative presentations and their ability to demonstrate in writing how they have expanded their research and reflection skills. The effect of this investment is visible in the quality of work. The level of writing is higher than average in artistic master's programmes.

During and after their studies students remain active in the professional field in various ways. An alumni survey held in fall 2019 shows that virtually all of them have continued in the field of professional artistic production, although most of them combine their artistic practice with e.g. teaching or research. A substantial number of graduates (11 out of 47 who have entered the programme since 2004) have started a third-cycle artistic research trajectory. The self-evaluation provides an overview of alumni practices and their affirmative feedback on the programme. The positive evaluation of the programme was confirmed in the interview with representatives from the work field: graduates take new steps when they come back into the field and can make a necessary difference within the field. The work field considers the high intellectual level in content as very specific for DAS Choreography graduates

Findings DAS Theatre

The assessment committee has studied fifteen student dossiers of DAS Theatre. They demonstrate that the students have achieved the intended learning outcomes, are able to create new forms and formats of performance and show a high political and social engagement.

After completing their studies, DAS Theatre graduates further pursue their artistic and/or curatorial practices in the field of contemporary theatre and performance or a related field. The working practices cover a broad spectrum of places where alumni apply the competences and qualifications acquired at DAS Theatre. At the same time, alumni practices inform the work at DAS Theatre and many alumni remain involved with DAS Theatre as advisors, mentors, external examiners or guest speakers. DAS Theatre is committed to be a home-base for at least the first year following graduation, to support the graduates in creating the basis for sustainable artistic and curatorial practices. The self-evaluation lists the kind of venues and places where graduates work in and outside the Netherlands and Europe, such as theatres, museums, galleries, festivals and academic or more socially-oriented venues. In the interview with the assessment committee one of the representatives from the work field described DAS Theatre as an innovative power amidst fixed structures in the cultural field in the Netherlands.

Considerations

The committee establishes that graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes of DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre. The level is high

in both programmes. Students have obviously done a lot of reading and writing, and have been stimulated to create new forms and new ways of thinking and making. The committee is impressed by the great diversity of formats, concerns and issues the students develop in their projects.

Graduates are well positioned in the field and have their influence there. The committee thinks

it is a strong point that alumni are thus shaping and contributing to the field.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre **meet this standard.**

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Raoul van Aalst is researcher and consultant in organizational science and philosophy. Until 2020 he was programme manager HRM. Panel chair on behalf of AeQui.

Victoria Pérez Royo is full-time associate professor in Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts at University of Zaragoza, Spain (since 2016). She is editor of the AAV (Artea Archive of Live Arts) and member of the Area research group and director of several independent study programmes offered by art centers. She was co-director (until 2019) and is adviser of the MA in Performing Arts Practice and Visual Culture (MEPCV) of University of Castilla-La Mancha and University of Alcalá Madrid and Museo Reina Sofía.

Sodja Lotker is course leader of and lecturer in the BA and MA in Devised and Object Theatre at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts (KALD DAMU), Prague, Czech Republic. She is co-researcher in cooperation with Oslo National Academy of the Arts. She is dramaturg, artistic director and curator at international theatre and European projects.

Julia Nabbe studies Liberal Arts and Sciences at Utrecht University.

Marianne van der Weiden, NVAO-certified panel secretary.

All panel-members and the secretary signed a declaration of independence and confidentiality, which were submitted to NVAO.

Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

All sessions online via Zoom

Monday 15 June 2020

12.30 – 14.00 Start-conversation, panel only

14.00 – 14.15 Break

14.15 – 14.45 Introduction to management

14.45 – 15.30 Showing of work, focus on important topics in the educational programmes

15.30 – 15.45 Break

15.30 – 16.15 Artistic Directors

16.15 – 16.30 Break

16.30 – 17.30 Tutors of both programmes

17.30 – 18.00 Conversation panel only and studying of material.

Tuesday 16 June 2020

08.45 – 09.45 Exam Committee, chairperson Academy Council and chairperson Education Committee DAS

09.45 – 10.00 Break

10.00 – 11.00 Students year 1 DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre

11.00 – 11.15 Break

11.15 – 11.45 Showing of learning environment, specific facilities at Grootlab

11.45 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 13.00 Students year 2 and alumni DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre

13.00 – 13.45 Lunch, including call-in consultation for students and personnel

13.45 – 14.45 Work field DAS Choreography and DAS Theatre

14.45 – 16.15 Conversation panel only

16.15 – 16.45 Closing the day, first feedback

Attachment 3 Documents

Amsterdam University of the Arts

- Strategisch Plan AHK 2018-2023
- AHK Kwaliteitskader 2018-2023
- Report NVAO instellingstoets 2013

Academy of Theatre and Dance

- ATD Policy Plan
- ATD Organogram
- Strategic plan ATD 2019-2024, Performing Arts in Transition
- Internal organisation ATD
- Minutes of meetings Team Bedrijfsvoering ATD 2018-2020
- Quality Assurance Plan Education and Research ATD 2019-2024

DAS Graduate School (DAS GS)

- Vision DAS GS May 2015
- Draft Bedrijfsplan DAS GS May 2016
- DAS GS Organogram
- DAS GS Manual 2019-2020
- Minutes DAS Domain 2019-2020
- Education and Exam Regulations MA ATD 2019
- Annual reports Exam Committee ATD 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019
- Observation reports assessment meetings Choreography and Theatre, December 2016
- Protocol for integral assessment

DAS Choreography

- Self-evaluation
- Dossiers and Graduation Projects of 15 students
- Study Profile Dance 2016
- Evaluation dossiers 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019
- Accreditation Report hbo-ma Choreografie December 2012
- Study Guide, planning overviews, newsletters
- Information on admission and selection (applicant information, overview of applications and outcomes)
- Instruction for mentoring, overview of mentors in the last 10 years
- Reading materials since 2014, article Doruff and Fabius about the practice of theory within DAS Choreography, an overview of reading assignments, and a recording of a reading session in 2018.
- Relations to the artistic field: policy documents, overview of concrete relations with the artistic field, guest artists, lecturers, external assessors. various projects with partners in the field and academic world.
- Student feedback
- Alumni feedback
- Mid-termevaluation 2017
- Pilot project Collaborative artistic research
- Team meetings DAS Choreography: agendas and reports from team meetings
- Staff bio's
- Video, audio, photo & more: MP presentations, lectures held during seminars.

DAS Theatre

- Self-evaluation
- Dossiers and Graduation Projects of 15 students
- Study Profile Theatre 2017
- Evaluation dossiers 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019
- Accreditation Report hbo-ma Theatre April 2014
- Official documents 2019-2020:
 - study guide
 - process guide
 - content guide
 - curriculum overview
 - annual planning
 - tutor distribution
 - framework for assessment policy
- Detailed information about parts of the curriculum:
 - block programmes of the past 3 years
 - contextual programmes of the past 3 years
 - master presentations 2018 and 2019
 - reader 2019 –2020
 - feedback: a guideline in the DasArts feedback method, written by Manolis
 - student budgets
- Curricula vitae of the artistic director, tutors, in house advisors, block mentors and a pool of external advisors
- Information concerning tutors, mentors, advisors:
 - DAS Theatre tutor –description and principles tutoring hours 2019–2020
 - external advisors 2019 –2020: tasks and conditions
 - block blueprint for (possible) block mentors
- Selection process: open call for 2020, the online application form 2020, figures and names related to the selection procedures of the past 3 years
- Minutes Educational Platform since September 2018
- Task forces 2016 –2018 to develop the curriculum, the assessment policy and the new creative producing profile of the programme: reports, minutes, evaluations.
- Accreditation conversations as part of the preparations for this accreditation
- Professional life after DAS Theatre –recent alumni (2017, 2018 and 2019)
- Information on effects of the corona crisis: updates, proposals for changing the curriculum, communication with the invited participants for next year.