

**The Hague University of the Arts
Royal Academy of Art (KABK)**

Advisory report to NVAO

**Master Type and Media
CROHO 49106**

October 2021

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Summary Judgement

This document reports on the assessment of the Master programme Type and Media offered by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK). As the institution is participating in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education, the panel only assessed the programme's intended and achieved learning outcomes. In the run up to the visit, the panel received useful information on the standards to be assessed. The assessment visit took place at KABK on 22 and 23 September 2021. The panel has appreciated the open atmosphere during the discussion rounds with students, staff, alumni and professional field. It sensed not only a positive spirit among all interviewees but also a clear commitment to the programme.

In so far as the intended learning outcomes are concerned, the panel considers that the Type and Media programme manages to train students up to master level in the specific field of type design in full compliance with the nation-wide competences for fine art and design. The set of learning outcomes a.k.a. study programme competences is on the one hand adequate, but on the other hand does not cover the full spectrum of competences students acquire during the programme. Given that the actual outcomes of the programme are better than the intended outcomes, according to the panel, the programme may want to reformulate the study programme competences in a set of genuine learning outcomes, which do justice to the breadth and depth of the programme, its attention to research and the specific competences it triggers by offering a studio-based education environment.

In order to establish the quality of the achieved learning outcomes, the panel has reviewed a representative sample of graduation projects. The overall quality of the materials is ranging from good to excellent and even the weaker projects passed the minimum quality threshold. Hence the panel considers that students who pass this graduation exam indeed demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a master Type and Media. Moreover, the panel established that Type and Media students graduate as individual type designers who are ready to pursue a variety of professional pathways and are attractive to employers in the field. In this regard, the panel welcomes the informal yet important role of alumni in supporting Type and Media students before, during and after their study period at KABK.

The graduation materials and the discussions on site have demonstrated according to the panel that Type and Media students at KABK graduate as designers who are in control of their creative process, who can analyse the typographic requirements of a given contexts, who have learned to learn and to collaborate, who can build their own tools and who have the technical skills to make it happen. While the panel is very positive about the quality of the graduation works, there is room to make the graduation exhibition (even) more representative, attractive and commensurate to the unique quality of the Type and Media programme.

Furthermore, the panel addressed two issues that have been of key importance for both KABK and the master Type and Media in the recent past. In so far as COVID-19 is concerned, the panel found that the pandemic has certainly had an impact on the practical and community-

building aspects of education. However, it did not have a negative influence on the quality of the student work. With regard to the newspaper article of October 2020 and an independent report of March 2021 on the social safety at KABK, the panel noticed that the revelations on transgressive behaviour in the academy have led to intensive discussions among students and staff, also at Type and Media. Moreover, the KABK has strengthened the offer of student services that handle issues of social safety in a professional way.

Based on the information provided and the discussions during the site visit, the panel considers that the Master programme Type and Media meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments and relevant for this particular external assessment visit: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the master programme Type and Media submitted for accreditation by the Royal Academy of Art The Hague.

The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

On behalf of the assessment panel,

Karel van der Waarde
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Date: 18 October 2021

Introduction

This document reports on the assessment of the Master programme Type and Media offered by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK). The programme was established in the 1990's and gained its current status as one-year master programme in 2011. With its exclusive focus on type design, it is a unique programme in the Netherlands and there are only a few similar master programmes across the world.

The assessment visit took place at KABK on 22 and 23 September 2021. The assessment was performed by an independent panel of peers, which was approved by NVAO and consisted of:

- Karel van der Waarde (NL/BE), chair
- Indra Kupferschmid (DE), member
- Sébastien Morlighem (FR), member
- Márton Kabai (HU/NL), student-member

The panel was accompanied by Mark Delmartino (BE), an external secretary who liaised between the panel and the programme and ensured that the visit complied with NVAO procedures. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. Annex 2 contains a brief presentation of the panel members.

To establish the quality of the Type and Media programme, the panel has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. As KABK, under the umbrella of The Hague University of the Arts, obtained accreditation at institutional level, its programmes can be assessed according to the limited evaluation framework of NVAO, which consists of four standards. Moreover, the university's participation in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education allows its programmes to follow a different accreditation process: the external assessment on standards 1 (intended learning outcomes) and 4 (achieved learning outcomes) needs validation by NVAO, while standards 2 (teaching-learning environment) and 3 (student assessment) can be assessed by an external panel without the involvement of NVAO. In the underlying document, the panel gives a substantiated judgement on NVAO standards 1 and 4 on a three-point scale: meets the standard, partially meets the standard or does not meet the standard. The panel subsequently recommends a final conclusion regarding the Type and Media programme on a three-point scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative. This weighted and substantiated appreciation serves as advice towards NVAO when taking a decision on the re-accreditation of the master programme Type and Media at KABK.

Prior to the visit, the panel chair and the external secretary discussed the set-up of the assessment, as well as the role of the chair and the site visit programme. The secretary was in contact with KABK representatives to work out the programme of the site visit (presented in Annex 3) and agree on the materials to be made available (listed in Annex 4). In order to allow the panel to prepare for its tasks, the master programme Type and Media produced a Self-Evaluation Report providing relevant background information on the programme and

addressing the issues covered by the NVAO standards under review. The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes is tested among others by examining a sample of end level products. The panel secretary organised the graduation project review with KABK and supported the panel members in their work. In line with NVAO requirements, the panel reviewed the graduation projects of fifteen students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. Based on a list of 35 student numbers, the chair and the secretary selected 15 students who had obtained a variety of scores and belonged to different graduation years.

In the run-up to the visit, the panel members studied the self-evaluation report, reviewed a sample of graduation projects and reported on their findings. The secretary compiled the findings in a discussion note which was used at the preparatory panel meeting on site. The programme also featured an open consultation hour for Type and Media students, teaching and support staff; eventually nobody made use of this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. KABK decided not to include a separate development dialogue during the site visit but to organise it at a later stage.

This report covers the external assessment of the master programme Type and Media. The next chapter constitutes the core of the report as it presents the findings, considerations and conclusions of the panel with regard to the intended learning outcomes and the achieved learning outcomes of the programme. After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the panel members for review and feedback. Their comments were incorporated in a pre-final version, which was validated by the chair. The final draft was sent to KABK for a check on factual errors on 12 October 2021. Their feedback was discussed in the panel that modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was sent to KABK on 18 October 2021.

The panel wants to express its gratitude to the quality assurance team at KABK who has been instrumental in ensuring a good and timely information flow from the programme to the panel.

Programme Assessment

Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes

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.

Profile

The master programme Type and Media started as an experimental postgraduate course in the 1990's. In 2011 it took its current form of a one-year full-time studio-based master programme. Students who apply to the programme often have a bachelor degree in graphic design or communication design. They are familiar with practical design processes in visual communication, have a good understanding of typography, are comfortable with different methods of drawing and have worked with all sorts of digital tools. The programme has an excellent reputation: every year about 100 students apply for a dozen places.

The self-evaluation report provides an informative introduction into what constitutes type design and how it relates to other design disciplines: graphic design is the discipline for all forms of visual communication; typography relates to the use of text; and type design is about designing and creating the building blocks for typography. All text consists of shapes that were at some point created for the purpose of communication. Type design is a specialised design discipline that is able to anticipate the requirements of any medium, analyse the circumstances in which text is to be written and read, embrace the ideas that need to be expressed and find (or build) the best ways to express them. Furthermore, the panel learned during the visit that the term 'media' in type and media refers to the particular appearance of the type: on screen, on paper, in stone, etc.

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme wants its students to become critical, independent and practical designers, who can make all sorts of type and lettering for all sorts of applications. Type design is not exclusively defined or limited by expectations and technical requirements. It is a creative iterative process and at every step the designer is free to make choices. The panel acknowledges that this is exactly what the Type and Media programme is about.

Students indicated during the discussions on site that they were really keen to apply and get accepted to the Type and Media programme: it is the one of the very few one-year master programme that focuses specifically on type design and technology for different media. It adopts an experience based approach to type design that is unlikely to be found elsewhere. Alumni are very visible in the field and constitute 'living publicity' for the programme. The reputation of the teachers is very high and their legacy in the field is noteworthy. Moreover, the learning environment is quite attractive. Students spend an important part of their study time in the type and media studio at KABK, a safe and friendly environment where students can work comfortably. They have their own fixed place in the studio with their own desk and monitor. Teachers are guests in the studio and join students for discussions and lectures. As

one student pointed out: “you know that for one year you will be together with a dozen students who are equally focussed on the same thing in a studio setting where you have your own workspace and where your ‘type heroes’ are teaching.” The panel noticed during the session with the alumni that these former students who graduated between three and fifteen years ago all gave exactly the same motivation as the current students why they were so eager to join the programme. Moreover, all alumni confirmed that they would happily start all over again.

Intended learning outcomes

At the time of the previous accreditation in 2013, the learning outcomes of the programme were based on the Dublin Descriptors at master level. The operationalisation of these broad descriptors to the programme was included in an annex to the current self-evaluation report. In 2014, the *Overleg Beeldende Kunsten* (OBK) published professional and educational profiles for art and design, identifying seven competencies in art and design education: (i) creative ability, (ii) capacity for critical reflection, (iii) capacity for growth and innovation, (iv) organisational ability, (v) communicative ability, (vi) external awareness, and (vii) capacity for collaboration. The self-evaluation report explains quite extensively how these competencies are addressed in the Type and Media programme. According to the panel, the OBK competencies are properly and convincingly incorporated in the master programme Type and Media.

The panel learned during the site visit that the set of intended learning outcomes has not changed over the past few years. The study programme competences consist of four qualities (generating, enabling, context and communication), eleven areas (ranging from design principles, to technology, history and presentation) and their respective assignments. The panel acknowledges the relevance of the qualities and the areas as well as their direct link to the assignments.

However, the panel thinks that the formulation of the study programme competences is not doing justice to the implementation quality and the actual outcomes of the programme. For instance, while the self-evaluation describes clearly – and according to the panel correctly – how the OBK competence ‘capacity for critical reflection’ is realised in the programme, there is hardly any reference to research in the intended learning outcomes / study programme competences. In this regard, the panel thinks that the quality ‘Context’ could be renamed ‘Research’. Furthermore, the panel noticed that the specific competences students (are expected to) achieve through the studio-based experience hardly find their way into the learning outcomes. In fact, the panel noticed that the actual achievements often substantially exceed the fairly general descriptions in the learning outcomes.

Ambitions

In addition to presenting the programme’s profile and intended learning outcomes, the self-evaluation report also reflected on the ambitions of the master Type and Media in the future.

Students remarked both in the student chapter of the evaluation report and during the discussions on site that the programme could benefit of more diversity among the teaching staff and the programme contents. The panel noticed that the programme management is aware of this issue and has been taking several small steps to enhance this diversity. First and foremost, the group of students is more gender-diverse than before: over the past few years almost an equal number of male and female students enrolled. This reportedly has changed the atmosphere in the Type and Media studio for the better. Secondly, the programme management is balancing the fairly white middle-aged male team of core teachers with younger and often female guest lecturers and external examiners. Several female type designers who joined for a guest lecture have been asked to teach regularly on the programme, a development students and recent alumni welcome very much. Finally, teachers have been made aware that the course contents should encompass examples from both male and female authors and cover cultures and geographical areas that go beyond the Netherlands and Western Europe. The panel gathered from the discussions that the core teachers are aware of the need to diversify their courses and are now paying attention to doing so. Students confirmed to the panel that there is indeed a shift towards treating more diverse approaches to type design in class. In this regard, students and staff mentioned last year's initiative (during the COVID-19 pandemic) where students could name three experts they would like to invite for an online seminar. As a result, several women and/or experts with diverse cultural backgrounds gave an online class. The panel welcomes this development and is confident based on the discussions on site that the programme will enhance the diversity of both the teaching team and the course contents.

A second topic that is on the mind of the Type and Media programme (management) is the duration and intensity of the current programme: on the one hand, there is much more to teach about type design than what is covered in the current one-year programme. On the other hand, the very international group of students and alumni emphasise that a one-year programme is feasible while an extension of the duration would not be affordable for many (potential) students. They clearly prefer a more intensive and packed year than the prospect of having to study full-time for two years (very often abroad with additional costs of travelling and living) without being able to earn money on the side. The panel acknowledges that the current set-up of the programme provides a very intensive and comprehensive coverage of the domain of type design and allows students to achieve master level. Hence, the panel sees no need to extend the duration of the programme. Moreover, the form of education where students spend much time at their own desk in the studio and are lectured and tutored on site by the staff allows staff to incorporate new topics and professional developments in their courses while students can learn by doing and by communicating to their peers. In this regard, the panel thought that studio based education is a proper way to introduce topics such as ethics: students and staff mentioned that ethical issues in type design are addressed in the curriculum. This happens not through a separate courses on plagiarism but as an integral part of the sessions on typefaces and in discussions during or after guest lectures.

Considerations

The panel considers that the master programme Type and Media has a very clear profile that is unique in the Netherlands and very rare in Europe and the rest of the world. Over the past twenty years, the programme has built up a very strong reputation, attracting students from all over the world with a passion for type design. The panel is satisfied to notice that while the programme structure has not changed much over the past ten years, the course contents have been adapted to reflect the latest developments in type design. It therefore comes as no surprise to the panel that students nowadays are still equally eager to get accepted to the programme as their predecessors did five, ten, fifteen and twenty years ago. Overall, the panel considers that the Type and Media programme continues to be a very solid, well organised, innovation-driven and student-focused master programme.

In terms of learning outcomes, the panel considers that the Type and Media programme aims to train students with a bachelor degree in design up to master level in the specific field of type design. The programme does so in full compliance with the seven nation-wide master level competencies for fine art and design as described in the 2014 OBK report. The set of study programme competencies is on the one hand adequate, but on the other hand does not cover the full spectrum of competencies students acquire during the programme. In that respect, the panel considers that the actual outcomes of the programme are better than the intended outcomes. The panel therefore suggests the programme to reformulate the study programme competencies in a set of genuine learning outcomes, which do justice to the breadth and depth of the programme, its attention to research and the specific competencies it triggers by offering a studio-based education environment.

Finally, the panel thinks very highly of the way in which the programme management reflects - and acts - on the suggestions from students and alumni. The panel welcomes the initiative of the programme to have the diversity of the student group reflected in the course contents, and encourages the management to further enhance the number of all sorts of (guest) lecturers. The panel considers furthermore that while the current set-up of the programme is intensive, it is feasible and does allow to recruit from a greater pool of young and eager type designers. In this regard, the value of the studio environment as a place where lecturers can deliver up-to-date course contents and students learn from each other is difficult to overestimate, according to the panel.

Conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that the intended learning outcomes are formulated in such a way that they align nicely with the objectives of the programme and the profile of the institution. Moreover, the ILOs are sufficiently concrete with regard to content, level and orientation. As a result, **the panel judges that the master programme Type and Media meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Quality of end level products

In line with NVAO requirements, the assessment panel reviewed a representative sample of graduation projects, i.e. the set of products presented by fifteen students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. In order to make a valid selection of the graduation projects, the programme provided an overview of all students whose graduation file had been submitted and accepted in 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. This overview contained the student number, the score and the graduation year. In their selection, the chair and panel secretary ensured that the fifteen students had obtained a wide range of scores and belonged to different cohorts. The programme provided the selected graduation files, as well as the written assessments by the exam committee members. Prior to the site visit, the panel members reviewed and reported on the quality of the end level products. Given that the underlying assessment report to NVAO only covers standards 1 and 4, the panel was asked to focus on the quality of the graduation projects. For each student the experts answered three questions: (i) Are the graduation projects of sufficient quality to pass? (ii) Do you agree to the score (and constituent criteria) given by the tutor? (iii) Is the score adequately motivated in the evaluation? Furthermore, panel members were asked to report on their impressions regarding the overall quality of the sample they had reviewed. Once all contributions were gathered, the secretary drafted a note which was discussed at the preparatory meeting.

At the end of the second semester, a series of typographic objects, fonts, data, books, handouts are evidence of the growth the students experienced during the year. The graduation materials indicate their understanding of design methods, the field, the technology, their grasp of shape, contrast, spacing, rhythm and proportion. Based on the individual review of graduation projects and their discussion in the preparatory meeting, the panel found that the overall quality of the graduation projects is very good, and this both in terms of research and outcomes. The quality of the graduation projects obviously differs, but this difference is in line with the range of scores that were given to the projects. In almost all cases, the panel members found that the final score was indeed representative for the demonstrated level of quality: graduation projects with a higher score were indeed of better quality than projects with a lower grade. According to the panel, all students demonstrated in their projects that they deserved to graduate; in not a single case the panel had doubts whether the project had indeed reached the minimum quality threshold.

As one panel member wrote in the graduation project review, this selection of projects is quite representative of Type and Media's lasting variety, consistency and quality. There is a significant balance of experimentation and maturity in each process, whatever the achievements can be in terms of design and potential use. There is no doubt that the students clearly demonstrate in their presentations, process books and other documents their learning outcomes with much generosity and a pinch of humour. That is even remarkable when one takes into account the manifold effects of the pandemic these past two years that affected most of us. Hence, the panel thinks that the graduation projects – whether realised in 'free

times' (2018-2019), during lockdown (2019-2020) or after a whole year of COVID-19 restrictions (2020-2021) – demonstrate that Type and Media students invariably achieve master level.

Although it is not part of the assessment standards in this accreditation exercise, the panel did notice – and informed the programme – that the assessment comments from the exam committee were not always helpful. While it clearly saw a link between the quality of the graduation projects and the scores they had obtained, the panel could not always establish a similar link between the scores and the assessment comments. In fact, most comments related to a general appreciation – an earnest and honest critique on the work and the progress the student had made over the entire year – but did not motivate why the (individual) exam committee members had given a particular score to the graduation project. Similarly, while the panel has no doubts whatsoever on the quality of the graduation projects, it could not establish from the evaluation that the student had effectively achieved all learning outcomes / study programme competences.

Performance of graduates

Another way to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes is to look at the whereabouts of the graduates. The information provided in the self-evaluation report demonstrates that while the programme does not exclusively educate for a specific position in the type design market, the majority of alumni are working in the field of type design: they design and produce original typefaces and lettering and sell and licence their work; they build and sell tools; they teach in type design, typography and graphic design courses; they participate in competitions and exhibitions. Some open up their own type shops or find jobs at established type companies, others join small graphic design practices. The discussions during the visit with both recent graduates and somewhat older alumni confirmed the findings of the self-evaluation report. In all cases, the interviewees indicated that the programme had opened their eyes, had made them discover their qualities and had made them understand what they really liked to do.

The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report and the very informative discussion with a broad range of alumni that the type and media alumni community is healthy and strong. They keep in touch, regularly visit events, open days and graduation exhibitions at KABK, and are invited to run workshops and talk about their practice and about professional life after study. Moreover, the panel was positively surprised to see how the Type and Media programme is embedded in the typography scene. In this regard, the support for the programme and its students / alumni from the professional field is strong.

The panel noticed that the programme does not prepare students immediately for an academic career or PhD but definitely enables graduates to teach type design and typography at design programmes. In fact, many alumni are dedicating part of their professional life to teaching. Students and alumni know very well what they can expect at KABK and indicated that the programme is fulfilling these expectations. Students and alumni know that there are

alternatives if they would aim for a more academically oriented programme. The ‘type design world’ is fairly small and very well connected, so it is unlikely that students select courses based on incorrect assumptions.

All in all, the panel establishes that the professional field is waiting for Type and Media students because the reputation of the programme is strong and the quality of its graduates continue to attract employers. Moreover, the panel understands that graduates move on to a wide variety of professional careers because the aim of the Type and Media programme is not so much to prepare students for a professional life but to have them graduate as individual type designers.

Ambitions

As an informal introduction to the Type and Media programme, the panel members had been invited to the graduation exhibition, which took place at KABK on 8 July. Three members attended the exhibition, looked at the graduation materials of the 2020-2021 cohort and spoke to several students who were about to graduate. It provided the participants with a good view on the wide range of graduation materials and the individual student ambitions. One panel member mentioned that “after visiting the final exhibition, meeting the students, reading the self-evaluation report and reviewing the selection of projects, I feel quite positive about Type and Media’s relevance nowadays.” The recent past (i.e. since the previous evaluation in 2013) shows that Type and Media remains a renowned and fully functional master programme, arguably, still, the most attractive in Europe.

In their feedback note to the panel secretary prior to the preparatory meeting, however, panel members also indicated that the current organisation and presentation of the graduation show does not do full justice to the (quality of the) work produced by the students and to the unique characteristics of the Type and Media programme. The panel sees two points for improvement: a first suggestion is to include and give a more prominent position to the Revival project, which is produced during the first semester of the programme and reflects among others the student’s research efforts. Given that students spend a lot of time and work on this deliverable, it would be a valuable addition in the exhibition and reveal another, less-known facet of Type and Media’s excellent teaching for the benefit of everyone. Students confirmed during the exhibition in July and the discussions in September that the Revival deliverable is indeed an intrinsic part of their efforts to become a type designer. Secondly, panel members noticed that the set-up of the exhibition could be more innovative. Given that Type and Media is a unique and specialized programme, the panel thought that a bit more curatorial work could help the visitors in making sense of what they see. The panel understood from the discussion on site that the programme management is sympathetic to both suggestions.

Considerations

Based on its review of 15 graduation projects, the panel considers that students who pass this graduation exam indeed demonstrate a level of competency that can be expected of a master Type and Media. The overall quality of the graduation materials is ranging from good to excellent. In almost all cases the panel agreed to the scores given and found that graduation projects with a higher grade were indeed of better quality than those with a somewhat lower grade. The panel had no doubts whatsoever about the minimum level graduation projects at professional master level should demonstrate. While it is very positive about the quality of the graduation works, the panel thinks that the exam committee can complement its earnest and honest critique with a more insightful assessment to motivate the final grade. Furthermore, the panel made two suggestions to the programme management to make the graduation exhibition (even) more representative, attractive and commensurate to the unique quality of the Type and Media programme.

The written information as well as the discussions with recent graduates, alumni and the professional field demonstrate according to the panel that Type and Media students graduate as individual type designers who are ready to pursue a variety of professional pathways and are attractive to employers in the field. Moreover, the panel considers that alumni play an important role in supporting Type and Media students before, during and after their study period at KABK.

In sum – and referring to a statement in the self-evaluation report on the programme profile – the graduation materials and the discussions on site have demonstrated according to the panel that Type and Media graduates from KABK are designers who are in control of their creative process, who can analyse the typographic requirements of a given contexts, who have learned to learn and to collaborate, who can build their own tools and who have the technical skills to make it happen.

Conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that students who pass the graduation project invariably achieve the intended learning outcomes and are therefore entitled to graduate. Moreover, Type and Media graduates manage to find relevant employment and very often build a career in the domain of typography. As a result, *the panel judges that the master programme Type and Media meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.*

Additional topics: COVID-19 and social safety

Although the panel is formally expected to assess only the intended and achieved learning outcomes of the master programme Type and Media, important developments in the recent past require specific attention in this report.

COVID-19 pandemic

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the KABK buildings were locked and education temporarily moved to online environments. While the Type and Media programme places great emphasis on studio-based education and learning, the unforeseen emergency situation did not make it impossible for the students to complete their projects in time and within the applicable quality criteria. Students graduating in summer 2020 had finished part of their graduation trajectory by the time of the lockdown but still had quite some work to do on the final product. As of March 2020, students were unable to access the academy at all for a number of months. This required a good deal of flexibility and improvisation from both students and teachers. Students confirmed to the panel that everyone involved has made an effort in dealing with the special and challenging situation.

At the start of the academic year 2020-2021, the KABK reopened as the Academy was recognised to provide practical education. This meant that students could work at least part of the time in the studio space again. However, structural contacts with other departments or with fellow students from other programmes were not possible. According to the self-evaluation report, this (semi-)lockdown period has underlined the importance of the physical encounter and of the studio experience as part of the creative process in the Type and Media education. While some of the practical aspects of education could not be run as foreseen and there was no opportunity for site visits, the programme did organise a successful online guest lecture programme featuring speakers who would otherwise not have been able to join. The panel shares the positive feelings of the programme management that in the end, one should be happy and proud to see how students and teachers have adapted to this new reality without making concessions to the final qualifications.

In sum, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report and the discussions on site that the pandemic has certainly had an impact on the practical and community-building aspects of education. However, there does not seem to be a major negative influence on the quality of the student work. The graduation materials remained of good quality: the work delivered is certainly comparable, the experience has been quite different in comparison to pre-COVID times.

Social safety

A newspaper article from 2020 about transgressive behaviour at KABK led to a wave of personal experiences, revelations and accusations, and an independent investigation into the safety culture of/at the academy. Following the publication of this report in March 2021, the KABK director resigned. These developments have prompted a discussion in the Academy

about the causes and extent, nature and seriousness of this behaviour and about ways of putting an end to it. Within the Type and Media programme, several teachers discussed the developments with the 2020-2021 students so that they understood what was going on and which processes KABK had started.

Furthermore, the panel was informed of two recent cases – one of harassment, the other of bullying – in which the social safety of Type and Media students was jeopardised. The panel appreciates the openness with which these cases were communicated to the panel, as well as the response given by the programme management. The panel understood from the discussions that the professional skills of the recently strengthened student services at KABK have played a positive role in handling the cases and in supporting the programme management in issuing an appropriate reaction. In addition to nominating persons of trust within the programme and the Academy, the Type and Media programme has not also scheduled structural moments for private and personal discussions.

In sum, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report and the discussions that the newspaper article and the independent report have brought along intensive discussions among students and staff, also at Type and Media. Moreover, these developments have led to strengthening the student services at KABK that manage issues of social safety professionally, and the creation of a fallback mechanism. Two cases affecting social safety at the Type and Media programme have shown that adequate procedures are in place and empower students to speak up.

Overall judgement

In sum, the panel considers that the master programme Type and Media meets the two NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes.

The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the master programme Type and Media submitted for accreditation by the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme

Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution: The Hague University of the Arts
Royal Academy of Art The Hague

Status of the institution: publicly funded

Result of the institutional quality
assurance assessment: positive (2020)

Contact person: Leo Capel (l.capel@kabk.nl)

Administrative data on the programme

Name: Type and Media
CROHO: 49106
Level: master
Orientation: professional
Credits: 60 ECTS
Location: The Hague
Mode of study: full-time
Language: English
Tracks: none

Annex 2 – Assessment panel

Karel van der Waarde, panel chair

Karel studied Graphic Design at the Eindhoven Design Academy and Leicester Polytechnic and obtained a PhD in Typography and Graphic Communication from Reading University. He currently advises the pharmaceutical industry on the accessibility of medicine information for patients. In 2013, he was member of the previous assessment panel.

Indra Kupferschmid, member

Indra studied Visual Communication at the University of Weimar. She has been teaching Typography for more than 20 years in different higher education institutions in and beyond Germany. Currently she lectures at the University of Arts in Saarbrücken and works as freelance typographer.

Sébastien Morlighem, member

Sébastien is teacher and researcher at the Ecole Supérieure d'art et design in Amiens, France. A founder of the Bibliothèque Typographique for Ypsilon Editeur, he has co-authored several books and written many articles. He curated several conferences and exhibitions on graphic design, typography, and type design. Sébastien holds a PhD from Reading University.

Márton Kabai, student-member

Márton studied Graphic Design and is currently finalising his Master programme in Arts Education at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. He teaches at St Joost Academy in Den Bosch and practices as an artist.

Mark Delmartino, secretary / process coordinator

Mark is managing director of MDM Consultancy in Antwerp, Belgium. He is certified by NVAO since 2010 and regularly accompanies panels on assessment visits.

Annex 3 – Programme visit

Venue: KABK, Director's office and Gipsenzaal

Wednesday 22 September 2021

13h00 Arrival panel, lunch – review information table

13h45 Guided tour Studio Type and Media

14h15 Internal panel meeting

16h00 Session with students and recent graduates (on site)

17h15 Session with recent graduates (online)

18h00 Internal panel meeting

18h30 End of day 1

Thursday 23 September 2021

08h30 Arrival panel – internal meeting

09h00 Session with alumni

10h30 Break and internal panel meeting

11h00 Session with teaching staff and programme coordinator

12h30 Lunch and internal panel meeting

13h00 Clarification session with programme coordinator

14h00 Internal panel meeting

15h30 Feedback to programme stakeholders

16h00 End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available on request.

Annex 4 – Materials reviewed

The panel studied following documents:

- Self-evaluation Master Type and Media, Royal Academy of Art The Hague, July 2021.
- KABK Education and Examination Regulations 2020-2021 & 2021-2022
- Type and Media learning outcomes
- Type and Media curriculum breakdown in course components and credits
- Type and Media admission requirements and selection procedure

Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 graduation projects and their evaluation forms selected among the 35 students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. A list of the selected student numbers and their graduation projects is available on request.

The panel was invited to attend the programme's 2021 Graduation Show at the KABK on 8 July 2021. Three panel members visited the exhibition.