Assessment report - Bachelor's Programme in Mime Acting 180 credits

Department: Acting

Assessment Group (name, title, organisational affiliation):

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Chairperson of the group: Mads Thygesen

Students have participated as follows: –

Date of submission of assessment report: 24th of March

Purpose and instructions

Programme evaluations are part of the systematic quality work at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH). The purpose of the programme evaluations is to generate regular and systematic knowledge needed to ensure and develop the quality of SKH's educational programmes. A programme evaluation consists of four steps: start-up, self-evaluation, peer review and measures. All programmes at first-, second- and third-cycle leading to a degree shall be evaluated. Programmes are evaluated on a six-year cycle, which means that every programme is evaluated once every six years. All programmes shall be assessed against the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions' (SUHF) criteria based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). All programmes shall be assessed against all criteria.

The template for assessment report is part of the Guidelines for Programme Evaluations; its use is obligatory. The template reflects the template for self-evaluation report.

Assessment is based on the self-evaluation report and the compulsory appendices: general syllabus for third-cycle programmes or programme syllabus for first- and second-cycle programmes, and an overview of qualitative targets. If the Assessment Group has requested additional supporting documents assessment, this should be stated in the assessment report.

Based on the criteria (see Section 2.2 of the Guidelines for Programme Evaluations), the assessment report shall offer recommendations concerning strengths and areas of development, aimed at developing the programme. A recommendation should be problem-based and thus differ from more general tips and advice, which may be included in the assessment under each criterion but not in the overall assessment. The Assessment group shall clearly justify its assessment, preferably using examples. The assessment should **not** result in a grade for the entire programme.

The report should not exceed 15–25 pages including the text in the template.

Before the report is submitted to Stockholm University of the Arts, the responsible officer at the Research Office or the Educational Administration Department shall have the opportunity to correct any factual errors and misunderstandings.

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Summary of strengths and areas for improvement according to the self-evaluation

> • A summary of the strengths and areas for development identified in the self-evaluation.

Assessment Group's comments.

The submitted material and discussions with teaching staff and students provide ample evidence supporting the self-evaluation conclusions. The strengths and development areas align with our impressions of the programme. The Bachelor's programme in Mime Acting is unique nationally and internationally, grounded in a strong artistic tradition. However, it faces various opportunities and challenges. We hope this evaluation process will help address these challenges, and our intention is to foster programme development.

A significant area for clarification, and therefore improvement, is internationalisation, as the revised curriculum specifies English as the language of instruction since the year 2021. SKH and the programme must take a clear stance on the complexities of internationalisation and the strategies to navigate this process. The programme's established traditions may face challenges in light of these efforts. It is essential to accommodate and nurture the artistic, linguistic, cultural, and professional diversity associated with this process. To enable students to gain in-depth knowledge of mime and understand other movement practitioners and practices, a space that appreciates diversity and fosters collaboration in the performing arts is crucial.

We commend the self-evaluation's ambition to provide an overview of when and how various processes, tools, and concepts are introduced across subjects. It is vital to continue refining the teaching framework and learning objectives to enable students to focus on the artistic process and deepen their understanding of the programme's pedagogical progression. Clarifying the relationship between tradition and method is essential, and the programme should become more research-based, continuing the discussion about conceptual development in the subject areas the programme is affiliated with.

The reviewed material indicates a strong tradition developed over many years by the teaching staff. However, with a new programme head, it is crucial to clarify how the programme's methodological and theoretical foundation will evolve and outline the intended research activities.

The term 'mime acting' (*mim-skådespeleri*) poses translation challenges, occasionally leading to uncertainty about the programme's direction. We suggest adopting a broader identity for the programme to train mimes, actors, and creators capable of working across the contemporary performing arts spectrum. While the strong methodological foundation supports independent and collaborative creation, it should be clear that the programme equips students with knowledge and skills in mime acting and movement-based performing arts. Students should develop their

abilities as performers and creators, focusing on physical expression and movement. We recommend clarifying the definition of movement-based performing arts and how it relates to 'mime acting.'

The current representation of the mime technique within the programme appears somewhat narrow and lacks explicit contextualisation within the broader historical and heterogeneous landscape of mime practices. Considering how this tradition is situated may be beneficial, as omitting this context could lead to misunderstandings. We believe that clarifying this aspect could enhance the programme's academic integrity.

The report begins by highlighting the uniqueness of the bachelor's programme in mime acting, as it is the only one of its kind in the Nordic region and one of only two in Europe. However, it is worth considering that there are many other mime schools. This leads us to consider the following question: What does it mean for this particular artistic programme to be offered in the context of a university bachelor's degree? Could the special characteristics be primarily related to the emphasis on ethics and theory in the submitted material? Or are there other elements, such as artistic practice and artistic research, that play a central role as well? Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate whether these aspects are adequately addressed in the current bachelor's degree programmes.

Introduction

> **About the programme**
>
> **The programme's structure and KPIs**

Upon reviewing the programme's key figures, we observe that there are many applicants, likely due to its unique position in the performing arts field. However, discussions revealed that students find the programme's identity unclear at the time of application. However, they gain a strong understanding of the subject as they progress through the programme. Additionally, we note that the completion rate is satisfactory.

As the programme continues to attract a diverse pool of applicants, it is vital to focus on how the education presents itself, particularly regarding inclusivity and diversity. With its intention of increasing the number of international students, the programme must consider how it will accommodate and celebrate this diversity in the future. Understanding the unique perspectives that international students bring can enhance the educational experience for all.

It would also be beneficial to gather and share data on the number of international versus domestic applications, specifically identifying how many applicants come from outside the EU. This information can help the programme tailor its approach to better support a multicultural environment, ensuring that all students feel welcomed and valued in their educational journey.

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The report identifies a challenge related to prior knowledge: "The programme requires a combination of practical skills, critical reflection, and the ability to collaborate within artistic expressions. Students enter the programme with varying experiences and interests in these areas. To meet the diverse needs of students, we must work more differentially within the same framework. For instance, some students desire more theoretical discussion, while others require additional support to feel comfortable in these discussions." This raises the question of potential strategies to establish a more common foundation among students, thereby minimising the labour-intensive process of individual adaptation. Would the introduction of a preparatory course be a viable solution?

Assessment report

> 1. **that the programme meets the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) and the System of Qualifications, Annex 2 to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) in that the intended learning outcomes correspond to the qualitative targets and that examination is legally certain**
>
> Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

The curriculum fails to adequately define the programme's identity and the subject of 'Mime Figuration'. As noted in the self-evaluation, there is no sufficient description of how this subject is defined or its origins, which is problematic for understanding the relationship between tradition and research. We recommend clearly defining these concepts in the curriculum and on the SKH website.

The BA programme in mime acting is designed to transition students from method-focused training to independent artistic work. Early semesters (1–2) focus on foundational skill development through intensive instructor-led training. In semesters 3–4, students integrate their skills into independent projects and elective courses, gaining artistic autonomy. The final semesters (5–6) emphasise applied practice and self-directed work, culminating in a degree project that consolidates their learning.

The programme's division into numerous smaller courses obscures the educational trajectory. A more streamlined structure or thematic grouping could enhance students' sense of progression and coherence in their artistic development. Emphasising independent projects would better prepare students for freelance, interdisciplinary, and self-driven careers across diverse contexts, including mime acting and motion capture.

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SKH 2024/185/1.3.2

> **2. that teaching focuses the students learning**
>
> Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

In discussions with both the programme's staff and students, we gained valuable insights into the programme's engagement with movement-based performing arts. Notably, the student representative highlighted the importance of immersing oneself in various methods, which they found crucial for their artistic development. This immersion appears to foster a deep understanding of how to incorporate these methods into their individual practice. Overall, the programme's commitment to nurturing independent artists capable of navigating the diverse landscape of performing arts and crafting their performances and scenic language stands out as a significant strength.

However, from the students' perspective, we learned that while the relationship between theory, method, and more open approaches feels intertwined it could benefit from further clarification in the curriculum. There is a pressing need for improved integration of research-based work and a clearer definition of learning outcomes throughout the programme. We recommend that this strategy be further developed, ensuring a clear progression from the beginning of studies towards the bachelor project, outlining which components will be facilitated by educators and the projects that students can define independently.

> **3. that the content and form of teaching activities rests on an artistic and/or scientific foundation and proven experience**
>
> Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

Upon evaluation of the criterion concerning the artistic and scientific foundation of teaching activities, it is our impression that the programme's expertise predominantly stems from its established traditions. This knowledge is perpetuated by the faculty and supplemented by external professionals with significant experience in the field. While this foundation is indeed a strength, there exists a notable concern regarding the documentation of this knowledge, particularly in relation to artistic research.

The lack of sufficient documentation may hinder the programme's ability to fully articulate and leverage its strengths in educational practices. To address this issue, we recommend implementing a systematic approach to document and analyse the

artistic methods utilised within the programme. This could involve establishing frameworks for artistic research that align with contemporary practices, ensuring that the rich expertise of the faculty is effectively integrated into the educational curriculum.

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4. that the programme is useful to students in their future careers

Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

The Bachelor's Programme in Mime Acting offers substantial utility in preparing graduates for diverse career opportunities within the performing arts. The aims articulated—enabling students to collaborate across various artistic disciplines—are particularly relevant in today's theatre and performing arts. Former students have successfully transitioned into roles as mime actors, directors, choreographers, animators, puppeteers, and motion capture actors, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in cultivating versatile artists.

The integration of practical training with theoretical analysis equips students with essential tools to navigate artistic practice. Moreover, the emphasis on collective creation fosters collaboration, a crucial skill in any artistic endeavour. However, it is imperative to continually assess and adapt the curriculum to ensure that it remains aligned with industry development and demands in the professional field, thereby maximising the relevance and applicability of the education provided.

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5. that those working in the programme have relevant, up-to-date knowledge of the subject and competence in subject didactics and higher education pedagogy

Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

The programme's staff demonstrate a commendable level of relevant, up-to-date knowledge in their respective fields, coupled with strong competence in subject relevant didactics and higher education pedagogy. This expertise significantly enhances the quality of education provided to students, ensuring that they receive instruction rooted in current practices and theories. The dedication of the teaching staff to remain informed and engaged with the evolving landscape of the arts is a noteworthy strength of the programme, fostering an enriching learning environment for all participants.

The extent of autonomy afforded to students is commendable: "The choices students can make occur within the existing course framework in dialogue with teachers, for example, regarding how they wish to approach a task to enhance their knowledge and artistry, as well as the types of skills they seek to acquire." However, it is essential to consider which teachers are available for this dialogue. In light of the need for broader recruitment and admissions, it is our belief that the mentorship capacities should also reflect the desired diversity within the programme.

A limited number of professors, particularly for the mime subjects, may lead to challenges in maintaining the programme's overall robustness. What considerations have been made regarding the potential impacts of this structure on the educational experience? Exploring the possibility of additional faculty involvement could enhance the programme's resilience and diversity of teaching methods.

> **6. that students can exert influence over the planning, implementation and follow-up of the programme**
>
> Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

The feedback from students regarding the dialogue with faculty is generally positive, indicating a willingness to engage and discuss their educational experiences. However, there are notable concerns regarding communication issues between teachers and students, as highlighted in the self-evaluation. These challenges in communication may hinder the overall learning experience and can lead to misunderstandings that affect student satisfaction.

Additionally, there appears to be minimal connection between the bachelor's programme and the doctoral programme. This lack of integration may limit opportunities for students to engage with advanced research topics or pursue academic advancement within the institution. Strengthening this connection would enhance the academic continuum and provide students with a more comprehensive educational experience.

Regarding Evaluations

Student feedback indicates a notable concern regarding the assurance of anonymity in evaluations, particularly given the small cohort size. It is imperative to emphasise that anonymity serves as a cornerstone for honest and constructive feedback, fostering a safe space for students to express their views without reservation. To enhance the evaluation process, it is suggested that a format akin to the final programme evaluation be adopted. This format could involve the student group engaging in discussions with an independent facilitator, thereby safeguarding anonymity while allowing for a comprehensive reflection on individual courses.

This approach addresses the existing concerns and cultivates a collaborative and supportive environment for all participants.

It is a little difficult for us to assess how these evaluations take place. Still, it appears to some extent that the students themselves are responsible for taking these issues further if necessary. We also believe that a plan is needed to overcome the low participation rate and ensure the students' anonymity in critical reviews of the programmes.

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7. that all students are offered an accessible, fit-for-purpose study environment

Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

The emphasis on creating a supportive work environment is especially crucial in an education programme that prioritises diversity, independent artistry, and collaboration. The commitment of SKH to provide accessible and functional study spaces, along with the necessary technical support for complex processes, is commendable. Continuous efforts to allocate resources equitably are vital for maintaining a positive working atmosphere. Additionally, the implementation of the preventive action plan to address shortcomings in the psychosocial work environment should remain a top priority. By focusing on these areas, the programme can enhance the overall educational experience for its students.

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8. that the programme is continuously monitored and developed, supported by course evaluations

Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

It is commendable that the continuous monitoring and development of courses and educational structures are already in place. To further enhance this process, we recommend considering the following areas for improvement:

1. Implement a more structured and transparent quality assurance process that fosters regular dialogue among teaching staff, facilitated by the programme coordinator. This will strengthen collaboration and shared understanding.

2. Enhance procedures for providing constructive feedback to students, ensuring they have the guidance necessary to succeed.

3. Improve the communication of outcomes from final educational evaluations to relevant parties, ensuring that they are adequately addressed.

4. Establish a systematic approach to addressing students' reflections on ethical issues, integrating value-based work into the curriculum effectively.

5. Review and diversify methods for course evaluations throughout the programme to capture comprehensive and actionable feedback.

By focusing on these areas, the programme can continue to thrive and adapt to the needs of its students.

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9. Specific to third-cycle programmes:

- **that doctoral students have access to an active research environment with adequate depth, breadth and scope in their subject**
- **that doctoral students have opportunities to collaborate on research nationally and internationally and with the surrounding community**

Report on the strengths and areas of development of the programme in relation to this criterion and recommend measures to develop the programme where appropriate.

While we have no specific comments regarding this criteria, it is important to note the existing lack of connection between the Bachelor's programme and the third-cycle programmes at SKH. This disconnect may hinder the potential for students and teachers to fully engage with an active research environment that offers sufficient depth, breadth, and scope in their subjects. Additionally, opportunities for collaboration on research, both nationally and internationally, as well as with the surrounding community, appear limited.

To enhance this relationship, it is recommended that the programme explore avenues for integrating the Bachelor's programme with third-cycle initiatives. This could involve establishing mentorship opportunities between bachelor and doctoral students, fostering collaborative research projects, and creating joint events that promote interaction between the different academic levels. Such measures could significantly enrich the educational experience for all students involved.

[Note: This criterion is only to be assessed when the third-cycle studies are evaluated, hence the assessment group did not have this in the self-evaluation report. /Quality Coordinator.]

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10. Other

Describe, analyse and evaluate any other aspects, such as internationalisation, broadened recruitment, sustainable development and gender equality.

We want to commend the initiative to create an analysis and communication plan for the internationalisation of the programme. A greater focus on incoming and outgoing exchanges with different disciplines will enrich the programme. However, we suggest improving the reach by fostering links with other mime programmes across Europe, both at university level and elsewhere. Establishing these relationships could significantly enrich the programme's internationalisation efforts and provide valuable insight into language choice.

Collaborating with existing mime programmes can bring the programme's ambitions in line with practical reality and increase its overall credibility. We look forward to seeing how these suggestions can be integrated into the programme's planning and strategy.

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11. Any other comment from the Assessment Group

None.

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12. Summative assessment

The Assessment Group shall clearly and concisely summarise its previous considerations and positions, as well as its previous recommendations. The summary assessment should also provide feedback on good practice and areas for development.

The Bachelor's Programme in Mime Acting stands out nationally and internationally for its distinct artistic profile, deeply rooted in a strong theatrical tradition that continues to attract a diverse and talented applicant pool. The curriculum is coherently structured to guide students from foundational training to independent artistic practice, emphasising collaboration and practical engagement. The programme demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and the internationalisation of its student body, and benefits from a teaching staff with substantial expertise and professional experience, significantly enriching the pedagogical environment.

However, several areas for development have been identified. Chief among these is the need to more clearly articulate the programme's identity and, in particular, to define the concept of 'Mime Figuration' as a guiding artistic and pedagogical principle. Strengthening this conceptual framework's clarity would reinforce the curriculum's coherence. Additionally, further attention is required to advance the

programme's internationalisation strategy—especially about using English as a language of instruction—to support broader accessibility and engagement.

The integration of research-informed approaches remains underdeveloped, and the articulation of learning outcomes could benefit from greater specificity. Communication between staff and students could also be improved through the implementation of a structured feedback mechanism. Introducing a preparatory course may offer a means of establishing a more consistent foundation for students entering with varied levels of prior experience.

Key Recommendations

- Clarify and communicate the programme's identity and the notion of 'Mime Figuration' within both the curriculum and its public-facing materials, such as the SKH website.
- Foster inter-institutional connections with other European mime programmes to enhance artistic diversity and exchange.
- Establish systematic methods for documenting and analysing artistic practices, leveraging the faculty's expertise as a resource for reflection and development.
- Develop a structured quality assurance process to support ongoing dialogue and collaboration among teaching staff.
- Explore links between the Bachelor's programme and third-cycle research initiatives to strengthen the programme's research environment.

In conclusion, the assessment recognises the Bachelor's Programme in Mime Acting as a significant contribution to higher education in the performing arts. By addressing the outlined areas for enhancement and adopting the recommended strategies, the programme is well-positioned to deepen its support for independent artistry and cultivate collaborative practice across diverse cultural and educational contexts.

Appendices

The Assessment Group has received the following compulsory appendices to the self-evaluation report:

General syllabus for third-cycle programmes

Programme syllabus (first- and second-cycle)

Overview of qualitative targets.

List any other documents on which the assessment is based.