

## Assessment report – Master Programme in Choreography

**Programme:** MAKOR

**Subject unit:** Dance

**Assessment Group (name, title, organisational affiliation):**

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Björn Säfsten, dansare och koreograf, Säfsten Produktion, arbetslivsrepresentant

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**Chairperson of the group:** Janne-Camilla Lyster

**Students/doctoral students have participated as follows:** N/A

**Date of submission of assessment report:** March 25<sup>th</sup> 2024

### 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 the 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.

The final report shall be submitted by the chairperson of the Assessment Group to Stockholm University of the Arts, i.e. the responsible officer at the Research Office or the Educational Administration Department.

## 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.

The self-evaluation report underscores the programme's success in meeting its educational goals and its commitment to student centred teaching and creativity. One of the programme's notable strengths is its focus on 'expanded choreographic practices,' offering students a milieu for learning, research, and choreographic creation. This approach supports student artists in deepening their understanding of choreography as speculative, ontological practices. The programme emphasizes student autonomy, critical thinking, and the integration of diverse artistic and theoretical perspectives, facilitated by a blend of workshops, seminars, and creative processes.

The report also highlights areas for development, chiefly concerning resource limitations. The insufficient personnel resources and the overburdening of the Head of Programme are identified as the most consistent issues hindering the programme's vision and implementation. These challenges affect the programme's ability to fully realize its ambitions and support its students effectively.

Furthermore, the report elaborates on the programme's structure, pedagogical approaches, and the integration of quality targets aligned with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. It outlines the curriculum's content, including the focus on choreography, artistic research methods, and the critical engagement with social, ethical, and political questions through choreography. The evaluation sections reveal ongoing actions to address improvement areas, emphasizing the need for streamlining course descriptions, recalibrating intended learning outcomes, and unburdening the Choreography modules.

Additionally, the report addresses the programme's efforts in focusing on students' learning through various modes of teaching, such as workshops, mentoring, peer-to-peer relations, and self-directed education. It discusses the content and form of teaching activities, underlining the programme's commitment to providing an artist-led education that promotes experimentation and engagement with current choreographic practices.

The programme's relevance to students' future careers, the engagement with professional actors in the field, and the preparation for third-cycle opportunities are also examined. The report stresses the importance of situating one's work within

the professional dance field and highlights the support offered to students in navigating their professional activities and leveraging opportunities for postgraduate development.

The self-evaluation concludes by addressing the continuous monitoring and development of the programme, supported by course evaluations, exit interviews, and the engagement of students in the planning and implementation processes. It acknowledges the need for an accessible, fit-for-purpose study environment and outlines actions to address identified shortcomings in technical equipment, theatre resources, and accessibility.

## Introduction

### About the programme

### The programme's structure and KPIs

This assessment report is based on the self-evaluation report dated December 27th 2023, in addition to the self-evaluation seminar held on January 29th 2024 and supporting documents received 10th of October and 12th of December 2023, including the Program Syllabus.

The Master Programme in Choreography (Makor) at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH) is a two-year full-time academic endeavor designed to foster a creative and experimental environment for students in choreography. Established in 2008, Makor presents itself as a program offering an innovative approach to choreography education, emphasizing 'expanded choreographic practices' that extend beyond traditional boundaries to embrace the needs and curiosities of contemporary artists. The program, led by Jennifer Lacey, is structured to support student artists in exploring, deepening, and challenging the potentials of choreography. The program is international in scope yet aims at emphasizing the importance of local connections, challenging the conventional dominance of English in contemporary art through support for multilingual study.

The Master Programme in Choreography is assessed to be designed to equip students with advanced skills in the field of choreography. The program aims to blend theoretical knowledge with practical application, preparing students for diverse careers/trajectories in the arts sector.

Makor is influenced by the rich legacies of 20th-century Northern-European and American concert dance, along with experimental practices, post-modern, and contemporary dance within these traditions. This historical and cultural reverberation provides a foundational backdrop against which the program positions itself. However, Makor's ambition is to reach beyond the continuation of these traditions. It actively seeks to transcend them, encouraging students to explore and integrate new perspectives, methodologies, and forms of expression that reach beyond the established paradigms of concert dance and choreographic practice.

Somatic practices are within Makor approached as experiential anatomy. This is further enhanced by incorporating touch-based practices, which emphasize the significance of tactile experiences in movement discovery and expression. The program encourages an exploration of the body as both a conceptual framework and a medium of presentation, underpinned by a commitment to care and experiential processes.

Central to this program is the active participation of students in defining the contours and focus of their study, allowing for a curriculum that is both personalized and reflective of individual artistic inquiries. This bespoke approach to education underscores the program's commitment to fostering innovative thinkers and creators who are equipped to challenge and expand the boundaries of choreography.

The assessment committee comments that the presence of a student representative in one or more meetings would have been beneficial.

## 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 section of the self-evaluation report focused on requirement number 1 meticulously outlines how the Master Programme in Choreography at Stockholm University of the Arts aligns with the Swedish Higher Education Act and the System of Qualifications. This alignment is demonstrated through the program's adherence to intended learning outcomes (ILO) that correspond to qualitative targets (QT) and ensure legal certainty in examinations.

The program effectively integrates a variety of pedagogical approaches, including workshops, seminars, lectures, and creative processes, to address qualitative targets related to autonomous creative work, critical thinking, and field knowledge. The inclusion of a diverse reading list and participation in a project to expand the range of authors and subjects studied further exemplifies the program's commitment to comprehensive education.

The curriculum is structured to encourage a dynamic interplay between theory and practice across its terms, with courses like Choreography: Bodies, Theories and Ways of Doing and Methods in Artistic Research offering students opportunities to explore choreographic methods, movement practices, and the role of artistic research. These courses are designed to support students in developing their

choreographic practice while also engaging in critical reflection and dialogue with peers from different disciplines.

However, the program faces challenges with overdetermined course descriptions and ILOs, which have resulted from numerous adjustments and may cause confusion among course leaders and students. The report suggests streamlining course descriptions and ILOs to improve clarity and functionality of the syllabus. Additionally, there's an acknowledgment of the need for flexibility in attaching exam forms to specific credit numbers, recognizing that this requirement has hindered the program's responsiveness to evolving educational needs.

The evaluation acknowledges the program's strengths in fostering a learning environment centered on student creativity and process, supported by a collaborative cohort and dialogue with the artistic community. It also notes the strategic decision to replace the third Methods in Artistic Research module with Advanced Independent Study to better align with the program's focus and student needs.

Actions proposed include streamlining course descriptions, recalibrating ILOs to better match content and QTs, and adapting the program syllabus to replace certain modules. These changes aim to enhance the syllabus's functionality for course leaders and students and support the program's existing quality of content. The need for support in implementing these changes is highlighted, with a goal to accomplish them by fall 2025 for the next intake.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee would like to raise a contemplative point regarding the potential benefits of offering a clearer profile description of Makor. This suggestion stems from an observation that while the program's inclination towards multifaceted and almost, it seems, boundaryless exploration fosters a rich, creative environment, there might be value in establishing a more defined framework. Such a framework could serve a dual purpose: firstly, to align students' expectations more closely with the realities of the program, and ensuring they are well-prepared for the intensity and nature of the workload; and secondly, to provide a context that could relieve the head of the program's workload. The committee posits that a more delimited program profile could introduce a productive friction, where the clarity of structure and the freedom of exploration coexist. This balance might not only off-load the operational aspects of the program but also enrich the educational experience by providing a scaffolded yet open-ended landscape for artistic inquiry.

The self-assessment report describes how there is a problem of deadlines for assignments and exams being met. The assessment committee suggests that this underlines the need for off-loading, as well as a clearer, perhaps more predictable structure for students and teachers alike.

## **2. that teaching focuses the students'/doctoral 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.

The section on requirement number 2 from the self-evaluation report underscores the program's student-centric approach to learning. It delineates five distinct teaching modes—workshops and classes, mentoring and supervision, peer-to-peer learning, self-education/self-directed education, and engagement with university programs – each tailored to foster students' creative processes, critical thinking, and professional development.

The workshops and classes, often led by invited artists and staff, not only support the students' creative endeavors but also encourage an active exchange of ideas, underscoring the program's emphasis on integrating theory and practice. This integration is further enhanced by the program's structure, which allows students to bring their creative inquiries into various learning scenarios, fostering a dynamic and responsive learning environment.

Mentoring and supervision play a critical role in guiding students through their educational journey. Regular meetings with the Head of Programme ensure that each student's educational trajectory is closely monitored and supported, allowing for personalized guidance that aligns with their individual creative and professional goals. This bespoke support is extended through the allocation of resources for students to engage external supervisors for their degree projects, emphasizing the program's commitment to cultivating deep, introspective, and professionally relevant artistic practices.

Peer-to-peer learning is highlighted as a cornerstone of the program, promoting a collaborative and supportive educational culture. Through direct interactions and shared responsibilities, students leverage their collective knowledge and skills, enriching the learning experience for the entire cohort. This mode of learning not only fosters a sense of community but also encourages students to view each other as valuable resources for feedback and inspiration.

Self-education and self-directed learning underscore the program's recognition of the importance of autonomy in artistic development. Students are encouraged to pursue learning opportunities beyond the formal curriculum, reflecting the program's understanding of the diverse and evolving nature of artistic practice. This approach not only broadens the students' educational experience but also prepares them for the realities of professional life in the arts, where self-motivation and independent learning are key to sustained success.

The program's engagement with broader university initiatives further expands students' learning horizons, positioning them as active participants in the academic and research communities. This exposure to a wider array of scholarly and creative

practices enhances their understanding of the field and fosters a more nuanced approach to their own work.

However, the report also acknowledges challenges, particularly in ensuring clarity and direction in such an open-ended learning environment. The flexibility and breadth of the program, while strengths, can also lead to feelings of disorientation among students. The program's commitment to addressing these concerns is evident in the proposed actions, which aim to refine and further develop the educational framework to better support student needs.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

There appears to be limited internal contact and follow-up within the institution, and the assessment committee underscores a potential for the institution to offer greater support to students in the general study environment.

This seems also to be true on a program level, in regard to the students' learning situations. The prevalent use of peer-to-peer guidance raises important questions regarding how to ensure the quality of feedback and follow-up, highlighting the necessity for a careful balance between student-led initiatives and formal instructional support.

The assessment committee would also like to raise a point of contemplation in relation to the adequacy of supervision hours provided to students, with an overreliance on peer-to-peer evaluation and support potentially detracting from the depth and quality of the educational experience, as students might share the same confusion and/or tiredness due to the study situation at certain times. A continuous relationship to an external or internal supervisor would ensure a stable source of guidance, personalized feedback, and professional development opportunities. A supervisor can perhaps to a larger degree offer the emotional support and motivation that are crucial for students' well-being and persistence through the challenges of studying at master level.

As mentioned under the section "Learning Outcomes and Legal Certainty", a similar unclarity seems to be expressed also in this section. As mentioned when discussing "The ethos of the program" and its "horizontal plane of interactions" a confusion within the students position and role in different courses seems to create an unclarity of responsibility and expectations. The assessment committee wishes to highlight the importance of providing explicit guidance on the roles students are expected to assume—be it as collaborators, leaders, or participants—in various courses or workshops. Recognizing the value of adhering to the educational ethos, the committee expresses concern that without clear definitions of student responsibilities, which may vary from one course to another, the intended collaborative structure could inadvertently result in confusion and increased workload. A clarification would benefit both the leader of the program as well as the students.

**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.

The third part of the self-evaluation report focuses on the requirement of ensuring that teaching activities are founded on a solid artistic and/or scientific base and proven experience. This section outlines the program's commitment to integrating rigorous artistic practice with innovative pedagogical methods, facilitated by a carefully curated team of artist-teachers and the incorporation of distinctive programs like the Methods in Artistic Research course (MAR) and the Nordic Choreographic Platform (NCP).

The program emphasizes the importance of experimental and horizontal teaching methods that foster a co-researcher dynamic among students and faculty. This approach is evident in the selection of teaching artists, who are chosen for their active engagement in the dance community, their experimental art practices, and their ability to contribute diverse artistic perspectives to the program. These artists are invited to share their expertise and engage with students' works in a manner that encourages dialogue and exploration, effectively bridging the gap between artistic practice and academic research.

The teaching activities within the program are designed to encourage students to explore new territories in choreography, engaging with a wide array of artistic processes and methodologies. For instance, workshops led by artists like Florence Peake and Sara Manente offer students unique opportunities to engage with materials and concepts outside traditional dance paradigms, such as clay work integrated with movement practices or the exploration of documentation as an artistic practice in itself. These examples highlight the program's commitment to expanding the students' understanding of choreography through direct engagement with innovative artistic practices.

The involvement in the Nordic Choreographic Platform further exemplifies the program's dedication to fostering a broad, collaborative learning environment that extends beyond the confines of the university. This network facilitates student participation in workshops and events that emphasize collective study and creative exchange, contributing to a richer, more diverse educational experience.

However, the report acknowledges challenges associated with an artist-led program, particularly the potential for a narrow focus limited by the head of program's personal artistic vision. Efforts to address this include inviting a wide range of guest teachers and integrating feedback and reflections from students to ensure a varied and comprehensive educational approach.

The evaluation suggests actions for further development, including more structured discussions with students to reflect on teaching offerings, adjustments to the Methods in Artistic Research course to better integrate it into the curriculum, and



exploring additional funding opportunities to support the development of jointly designed courses. Additionally, there's a recognition of the need for administrative support to alleviate the workload on the head of the program, ensuring that the program can continue to evolve and respond to the needs of its students.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee sees the need for the planned employment of a part-time programme coordinator as a good suggestion to help unburden the Head of Programme. (change proposed over)

The assessment committee is contemplating whether the students inadvertently assume the role typically reserved for a program council, influencing the structure and direction of the curriculum more than might be constructive in the long run. This observation prompts the committee to urge the program to reflect on the value of delayed gratification, encouraging an educational approach that moves away from immediate satisfaction or a transactional mindset.

Furthermore, the committee questions the extent to which the program upholds the responsibility when using the phrase "the choreographic nature of an invitation." The committee would like to ask if there is a point where the creative exploration has to step aside in favor of more formal and dry requests and communication?

The committee is concerned that the program may inadvertently set excessively high expectations among students. By inviting students into such a dynamic and potentially environment without clear limits to push against, there seems to be a risk that the program is generating confusion within the student groups, beyond what is productive in a learning perspective.

**4. that the programme is useful to students/doctoral 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 fourth requirement of the self-evaluation report discusses the program's efficacy in preparing students for their future careers. This examination delves into the multifaceted strategies employed by the program to ensure students are well-equipped for professional success. These strategies include fostering connections with established professionals in the field, enabling students to adeptly position their work within the broader dance community, facilitating academic and professional exchanges through programs like Erasmus, supporting the students' professional activities, and laying the groundwork for further academic pursuits in third-cycle programs.

The program emphasizes consistent interaction with a wide range of professionals, including artists, programmers, and funders, through various channels such as teaching activities, lectures, and public series. This approach not only acquaints students with the operational dynamics of the dance field but also positions them as emerging professionals within these networks. A notable initiative is the encouragement for students to include working artists in their degree project supervision, broadening their professional exposure and mentorship opportunities.

Through partnerships with networks like the NCP and Erasmus programs, the program offers students invaluable opportunities for international exchange and professional placements. These experiences are designed not just as standard academic exchanges but as platforms for innovative project development and extended professional networking, significantly enriching the students' artistic and professional growth.

A core component of the curriculum is assisting students in the critical positioning of their work within the dance field. This includes formal coursework focused on the exploration of context, audience engagement, and professional production skills. Such activities are integral to developing a nuanced understanding of the contemporary art landscape and enhancing students' ability to navigate it successfully.

The program actively supports students in publicizing their work and engaging with the broader public and professional communities. This support encompasses practical aspects of artistic production, such as budget management, public relations, and documentation, ensuring that students acquire a comprehensive skill set for managing their future projects and careers.

Recognizing the importance of research in artistic practice, the program introduces students to the principles and practices of artistic research, aiming to equip them with the skills necessary for engaging in third-cycle studies or incorporating research methodologies into their professional practice. This aspect of the curriculum underscores the program's commitment to fostering critical thinking and research competencies among its students.

The report identifies areas for enhancement, including increasing engagement with the professional field throughout the education process, developing post-graduate opportunities, and refining the integration of exchange programs into the student experience. Additionally, the program acknowledges the need for continuous adaptation and development to meet the evolving needs of its students and the wider artistic community.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee recognizes the program's intention to establish a strong local connection within its Swedish context. However, there seems to be a discrepancy between this aim and the apparent focus on non-local artists within the guest lectures. One could also question if a MA education could, or even should cater to both? Within a clear communication to the students of this potential conflict they could then choose and make choices regarding their own interests and desires.

Moreover, the desire of students for international visibility, including invitations to international programmers, is understandable, yet the committee points out that such expectations may not be entirely reasonable to expect the program to fulfill. Our view is that the primary responsibility of the program should be to provide a relevant and enriching educational context through a well-curated selection of teachers, invited artists, and supervisors. This ensures that students are exposed to a diverse range of influences and professional networks, which indirectly supports their international visibility without the program having to explicitly cater to this demand. The program emphasizes "choreography in the expanded field" and hence suggests an innovative and exploratory approach to choreography, which seems to be potentially at odds with more traditional notions of "the art market place." This divergence highlights a tension between fostering a boundary-pushing artistic ethos and aligning with the conventional expectations of the art market. This observation ties back to the program's focus on students to "situate their own work" within the broader artistic and cultural landscape. It suggests that while the program aims to empower students to define their artistic identity and navigate the complexities of the art world, there may be a need for clearer guidance and support in reconciling these innovative ambitions with the realities of the art market. This balance is crucial for ensuring that students can effectively translate their education and artistic visions into sustainable practices within the art market and beyond.

**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 fifth requirement of the self-evaluation report addresses the necessity for all associated with the program to possess current and relevant knowledge within the field of choreography, as well as expertise in both subject-specific didactics and the pedagogy of higher education. This requirement underscores the importance of innovative and experimental teaching methods that are reflective of the program's commitment to a speculative practice of choreography that is continuously evolving and adapting to new forms and ideas.

The program has a diverse list of external teaching artists and faculty who bring a rich variety of skills and experiences to the educational environment. These individuals are selected based on their active engagement in artistic practices, innovative pedagogical approaches, and their ability to contribute to the speculative and experimental ethos of the program. The criteria for selecting guest staff focus

on their artistic work in the expanded field of choreography, pedagogical innovation, specific practice expertise, and academic credentials directly enhancing their art practice.

Teaching artists are integrated into the program as collaborators, invited to tailor their contributions to align with their current artistic practices and the specific needs of the course modules. This approach not only enriches the curriculum with fresh and varied perspectives but also allows for the development of a dynamic learning environment that is responsive to the evolving landscape of choreography.

The practice of re-inviting teaching artists for further exploration and depth, as well as the strategic balance between local and international teachers, illustrates the program's commitment to creating a sustained and enriching educational experience. This strategy not only fosters continuity and depth within the program but also ensures a broad and diverse exposure to contemporary practices in choreography for the students.

The report acknowledges the strength of the program's curated approach to selecting guest teachers, which has generally been met with positive feedback regarding their pedagogical competence and contemporary knowledge. However, it also recognizes the importance of diversifying teaching styles and the value of including less experienced teachers to foster innovation in pedagogical practices. The ongoing dialogue between students, teaching artists, and the program leadership is highlighted as crucial for the continuous development and adaptation of teaching methods.

Proposed actions for further enhancing the program include exploring beyond the current expertise of the program leader, allocating resources for hiring advisory artists, responsibly inviting and supporting new teaching artists, and continuing to curate teaching staff that reflects a wide range of dance cultures and aesthetics. These actions are aimed at expanding the scope of choreographic exploration within the program and ensuring a rich, diverse, and contemporary educational experience for students.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee is curious regarding the conceptual framing of the pedagogical environment as an avenue for creativity. It prompts a reflective question: Who benefits from this creative pedagogical approach – is it designed primarily for the educators, the students, or both parties? The committee advocates for a deeper contemplation and discernment of the roles and identities within the educational ecosystem, specifically the distinctions between being a student artist and a professional. It emphasizes that understanding these roles' unique contributions and needs in the context of learning and support is pivotal.

Regardless of the chosen approach, it is imperative that this philosophy is communicated with clarity to the students. The objectives of workshops and other pedagogical activities should be transparent, ensuring that the educational intentions are well-understood and align with students' expectations and needs.

Furthermore, the committee reiterates its question regarding the possible absence of Swedish guest teachers and artists within the program, suggesting this might indicate a potential oversight in embracing local pedagogical and artistic resources.

Lastly, the committee revisits the topic of the program's profile versus the expectations set forth. We would like to highlight the necessity for a congruence between the program's stated objectives and the actual learning outcomes and opportunities provided to students. Ensuring that these expectations are aligned and communicated clearly might help mitigate any discrepancies between the program's offerings and the students' aspirations.

**6. that students/doctoral 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 sixth requirement of the self-evaluation report emphasizes the importance of allowing students to influence the planning, implementation, and follow-up of their program. This approach is fundamental to Makor, reflecting a commitment to creating an educational environment that is responsive to student needs and aspirations.

The Head of Programme actively engages with students to understand their external commitments and endeavors to adjust the educational schedule to accommodate these activities. This level of flexibility is facilitated through various platforms, including a shared calendar on Canvas, allowing students to have visibility into and input on upcoming semesters' plans. Students also have significant roles in organizing events, with their feedback through course evaluations and exit interviews directly influencing future program offerings. This direct line of communication between students and the program's leadership ensures that their suggestions and preferences are considered in the program's evolution.

The program is distinguished by its emphasis on student-led creative work, with teaching and learning activities designed to incorporate students' active participation. This engagement is further enriched by one-on-one meetings with the Head of Programme, where students discuss their progress and influence within the program. The choice of supervisors by students, in consultation with the Head of Programme, exemplifies the program's acknowledgment of the importance of student agency in their educational journey.

The initiative "Touchback," initiated by the former Head of Dance/SKH, underscores the program's effort to incorporate feedback from alumni to guide future developments. This comprehensive approach to gathering insights from past students provides valuable perspectives that inform the program's ongoing refinement.

While the program strives for adaptability in response to student feedback, there are inherent limitations due to predetermined curriculum structures and scheduling constraints. Efforts to integrate students' professional experiences into the curriculum, such as the engagement with Peter Mills in 2022, highlight the program's innovative approaches to enriching the educational experience. However, administrative challenges and the need for a more efficient use of platforms like Canvas have been identified as areas requiring further attention and resources.

Recognizing the crucial role of student input, the self-evaluation report identifies the need for additional support within the program to ensure that student feedback is effectively translated into actionable improvements. Proposed solutions include the appointment of a program coordinator or additional course leaders and enhanced training for both students and teachers on using Canvas. These steps aim to enhance the responsiveness of the program to student needs, thereby enriching the educational experience and ensuring that the program remains aligned with contemporary practices in choreography.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee observes that the student influence within the program is markedly strong. This engagement undoubtedly contributes to a vibrant and interactive educational environment.

As previously acknowledged, there seems to be an overload of work on the Head of program, and the assessment committee would like to encourage a rethinking of the program opening for students engaging in external activities, integrating these activities into the study program itself – as this puts enormous demands on the Head of program to adjust, approve and reorganize. One could envision that there instead was a requirement of the students committing to a full-time engagement in the program.

The committee would also like to suggest the idea of introducing a mentoring program, ideally spearheaded by study and professional advisors. This initiative could serve as a valuable resource, aiding students in seamlessly integrating their academic pursuits with professional ambitions. By distributing mentoring responsibilities across a broader array of faculty members, not only can the burden on the program's leadership be alleviated, but students can also benefit from a diversity of insights and support, enriching their journey through the program.

Finally, we deliberate on the role of students as contributors to the learning environment within the program. The strategy of leveraging peer-to-peer learning is, without doubt, beneficial; however, it necessitates a careful balance to ensure that the educational burden does not disproportionately fall on the students themselves. Establishing clear guidelines for group work and peer evaluation could help in maintaining this balance, ensuring that the pedagogical approach both enhances the learning experience and upholds fairness and equity in academic assessment and recognition.

**7. that all students/doctoral 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 section of the self-evaluation report addressing requirement number 7 focuses on ensuring that all students are offered an accessible, fit-for-purpose study environment, including spaces, technical materials, theater resources, and accessibility to understand how these elements contribute to the educational experience at the Makor program.

The Makor program benefits from its location at Brinellvägen 58 (B58), which is equipped with studios and various rooms designed to support dance and choreographic activities. This environment is conducive to both theoretical and practical learning, offering students the resources to pursue their creative processes independently. The provision of a small office and dedicated storage space for the Makor cohort enhances their ability to collaborate and manage their projects effectively. While the program facilitates interaction with other dance-based programs and encourages resource sharing, the challenge of scheduling shared spaces to meet the diverse needs of these programs is noted. Efforts to manage these challenges include direct support from the Head of Programme and the utilization of a shared calendar for better planning and access to spaces.

Access to technical equipment, such as video projectors, cameras, and sound systems, is facilitated through an in-house borrowing system. However, challenges in communication and the borrowing process have been identified, along with a noted disparity in the quality and accessibility of technical resources compared to those available in other subjects within SKH. Efforts to address these issues include proposals to improve the borrowing system and enhance the availability of high-quality technical materials for MA students, recognizing the importance of technical proficiency in the artistic output of dance and choreography students.

Studio 16, intended as a black box theater space, lacks the necessary staff and setup to function effectively for student experimentation with theatrical productions. This limitation impacts students' ability to explore and learn from the dynamics of a standard theatrical environment, which is an essential aspect of choreographic

education. The report suggests the need for a dedicated technician to manage Studio 16, enabling it to serve as a practical learning resource for students.

The formal policy of SKH emphasizes equal opportunities and support for students with functional variances. While the program itself does not directly manage accessibility accommodations, it fosters an environment where students' needs and vulnerabilities are acknowledged and integrated into the group dynamics through the support of the Head of Programme and the existing student support systems at SKH.

The self-assessment report acknowledges the strengths and challenges of the study environment offered by the Makor program. Actions proposed to enhance this environment include optimizing the use of B58's facilities, improving access to high-quality technical resources, ensuring Studio 16 can function as a practical learning space, and maintaining the supportive framework for students with functional variances. These actions aim to ensure that the program continues to provide an accessible, fit-for-purpose study environment that supports the diverse needs of its students and doctoral candidates, fostering a conducive atmosphere for artistic and academic growth.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee notes the significance of the theater facilities and acknowledges that students in the Master Programme in Choreography (Makor) seems to highly value the opportunity to work within a conventional theater space. This appreciation underscores the importance of such facilities in fostering a comprehensive and practical learning environment for choreography students, enabling them to explore and integrate various aspects of theatrical production into their choreographic work.

In light of this, the committee endorses the actions described by the program in making effective use of these facilities and extends a recommendation for SKH to facilitate and support interactions with other student groups specializing in related practices, such as sound and light design etc. This suggestion aims to enhance the interdisciplinary learning experiences for the students, encouraging collaboration across different domains of theater production. By fostering such cross-disciplinary engagements, students can gain a holistic understanding of the theatrical process, enriching their creative practice and potentially leading to collaborations that benefit all involved disciplines.

The assessment committee wishes to emphasize that collaboration with other artistic fields and resources, such as lighting design and sound, seems essential for a choreography education. This is unless opting out of such collaborations is a deliberate decision aligned with the study program's defined profile. This necessity underscores the strength of integrating multiple perspectives and skills, enriching the educational experience and broadening the students' understanding and



capabilities. Such interdisciplinary collaboration not only enhances the learning environment but also mirrors the complexities and demands of professional artistic practices, thereby strengthening the students' preparedness for their future careers. This approach reinforces our belief in the importance of a collaborative educational model that leverages diverse talents and resources to foster a more comprehensive and realistic learning experience.

**8. that the programme is continuously monitored and developed, supported by course evaluations and, for doctoral students, individual study plans**

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 eighth requirement of the self-evaluation report for the program emphasizes the necessity for ongoing monitoring and development, underpinned by systematic course evaluations. This systematic approach ensures that the program remains responsive to the evolving needs and feedback of its student body, facilitating continuous improvement and adaptation.

The process of continuous monitoring and development within the program is methodically structured around student feedback collected through course evaluations conducted at the end of each semester. This feedback mechanism is crucial for identifying areas of strength and opportunities for enhancement within the course offerings. The Head of Programme plays a pivotal role in this process, analyzing the feedback and collaborating with the Head of Subject to propose actionable changes aimed at addressing any shortcomings and bolstering the program's strengths. This collaborative review process culminates in a presentation to the Board of Education at SKH, where structural changes are considered and implemented as needed.

The adherence to SKH policy mandates the allocation of time within a specific study day for students to complete their course evaluations. Despite changes in digital platforms for course evaluation, the program has maintained a commendable response rate of approximately 70 percent over the past six semesters. The responsibility for maintaining the anonymity of student responses falls to the Head of Programme, who designs, distributes, and processes the evaluations. This task, while administratively burdensome, is instrumental in capturing detailed and actionable feedback from students.

In addition to the mandatory surveys, the program incorporates an "exit interview" as a qualitative feedback mechanism. This interview offers graduating students a platform to reflect on their experiences, identify teaching artists who made significant impacts, discuss the pacing of studies, and offer advice to the program. These interviews, approached as a "score," facilitate a horizontal relationship between staff and students, allowing for a deep dive into the program's pedagogical effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Feedback from students has highlighted communication and organization as areas needing improvement. The program has responded by optimizing the use of platforms like Canvas, email, and Signal to enhance efficiency and clarity in communication. The intimate nature of the program, characterized by close interactions between students and the Head of Programme, underscores the importance of maintaining an anonymous forum for feedback to preserve the program's cultivated horizontality.

The program commits to refining the course evaluation process, adopting Microsoft Forms as the standardized platform to streamline the evaluation process and reduce confusion. The exit interview, valued for its qualitative insights, will continue to inform the program's developmental trajectory over a more extended period, complementing the more immediate feedback gathered through course evaluations. Additionally, the program recognizes the need for administrative and organizational support, planning to engage an additional teacher to share the load of course leadership and further enrich the program's educational offerings.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The committee wishes to highlight that clarity in roles, communication, power dynamics, and expectations does not necessarily conflict with a broader and more speculative artistic exploration. On the contrary, these clear frameworks can provide the foundation for such exploration, offering the security needed for students to venture further into the specific practices they aim to experiment with. This perspective on structure and clarity as enablers of artistic innovation underscores the importance of establishing well-defined boundaries within which creative exploration can thrive.

If the perspective of "everything is choreographed" permeates the program's philosophy, it's understandable that issues related to communication and organization become prominent points of concern within the student group. This viewpoint, while enriching the program's creative depth, might inadvertently lead to complexities in administrative and operational structures. Emphasizing choreography in such a broad sense can blur the lines between creative exploration and the practicalities of program management, potentially resulting in challenges in effectively communicating expectations and organizing the curriculum. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that the program's innovative approach to choreography enhances rather than complicates the educational and administrative experience for both students and staff.

**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.

N/A

**10. Other**

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

This section emphasizes the need for Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH) to enhance its support for non-EU students, highlighting historical challenges in providing equitable assistance due to tuition fee barriers. This situation has led to missed opportunities for enriching the program with diverse talents. The self-assessment report acknowledges the necessity for increased financial and structural support to foster a more inclusive environment. To achieve broader internationalization and recruitment, the Makor program, in collaboration with the Education Administration, is committed to implementing strategies that encourage diversity. These include diversifying teaching staff, promoting wider network engagement among students, and developing alumni relations, all aimed at gradually building a more diverse and supportive educational setting.

**The assessment committee recognizes the relevance and comprehensiveness of the actions outlined in the self-evaluation report and appreciates their potential impact.**

With a view to enriching the discussion and furthering the objectives outlined, the committee would like to contribute with these additional perspectives:

The assessment committee would wish for a more detailed explanation of how the proposed strategies for internationalization and broadened recruitment will enhance the study quality of the Makor program. This clarification would further underscore the direct correlation between the diversity of the student body and the enrichment of the program's academic and cultural milieu.

**11. Any other comment from the Assessment Group**

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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 assessment committee, having reviewed the self-evaluation report of the Master Programme in Choreography at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH), along with supplementary materials and seminar, commends the program for its commitment to fostering a creative and experimental environment for students in choreography. The innovative approach to education, with its emphasis on 'expanded choreographic practices' and a blend of theoretical knowledge with practical application, sets a commendable standard in the field.

### Strengths and good practices:

- The program's integration with the Swedish Higher Education Act and the System of Qualifications, demonstrating a clear alignment with intended learning outcomes and qualitative targets.
- A robust curriculum that encourages a dynamic interplay between theory and practice, supported by a diverse range of pedagogical approaches and a commitment to student-centred learning.
- An active engagement with both local and international artistic communities, fostering a broadened perspective for students.
- The program is notably strong in pushing the boundaries of contemporary choreography, fostering an environment where students engage with cutting-edge artistic practices. This emphasis not only positions the program at the forefront of choreographic education but also contributes to the evolving discourse in the arts.

### Areas for development:

#### Program profile clarity:

While the inclination towards a multifaceted exploration is valued, there might be benefit in establishing a more defined program profile to align students' expectations more closely with the program's realities and workload.

#### Integration of pedagogical and administrative clarity:

Addressing challenges in communication and organization highlighted by students, potentially by clarifying roles, power dynamics, and expectations within the program.

#### Support for Non-EU Students and increased diversity:

Increasing support for non-EU students to foster a diverse and inclusive environment, as well as including a wide range of demographics present within Sweden, enriching the program's cultural and academic landscape.

## **Recommendations:**

### Program profile clarity:

Develop and communicate a clearer profile description of Makor, establishing a balance between structure and creative exploration to further align student's expectations of the program and facilitate a productive educational environment.

### Further student support:

- Foster a balance between peer-to-peer learning and formal support to ensure high-quality follow-up. This includes re-evaluating the adequacy of supervision hours provided.
- Implementation of a mentoring program or supervision throughout the course of study.

### Clarity of roles:

How can clarity of roles be addressed in a context where the desire to work within an expanded field at multiple levels simultaneously may potentially cause confusion rather than encouraging speculative thinking?

### Further interdisciplinary collaboration:

Encourage collaborations with other artistic fields and resources, such as sound and light design, to enrich students' educational experience and prepare them for multifaceted career paths in choreography. This kind of collaboration would require not only suitable facilities and equipment, but also a dedicated budget for engaging with diverse professional skills.

### Administrative and organizational support:

Increase administrative support to alleviate the workload on program leadership and improve operational efficiency.

### Inclusivity and diversity initiatives:

Efforts toward diversity and inclusivity should include non-EU students.

In summary, The Assessment Group commends the Master Programme in Choreography for its innovative approach and commitment to excellence in choreography education. The recommendations provided aim to enhance the program's strengths further and address areas for development, ensuring the program's continued success and relevance in the evolving field of choreography.

## **Appendices**

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

Programme syllabus (first- and second-cycle)

Overview of qualitative targets.