

## Assessment report

**Programme: Doctoral Programme**

**Department:** Research Centre

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

- Florian Dombois, professor, Department for Cultural Analysis, Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich Switzerland, external subject specialist and chair
- Gesa Marten, Professor for Artistic Montage Fiction and Documentary Film, Film University Babelsberg, Potsdam, Germany, external subject specialist
- Martin Forsberg, Choreographer and Artistic Director for Norrdans, Härnösand, Sweden, working life representative
- Eliot Moleba, PhD student, Academy of Theatre, Oslo Academy of the Arts, Oslo, Norway, doctoral student representative

**Chairperson of the group: Florian Dombois**

**Students/doctoral students have participated as follows: —**

**Date of submission of assessment report: 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

## Purpose and Instructions

Programme evaluations are part of the quality management system at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH). The purpose of evaluations is to generate regular feedback and the necessary systematic knowledge to assure and develop the quality of education at the SKH. A programme evaluation consists of four steps: start-up, self-evaluation, collegial review and measures. All programmes at first, second and third-cycle that lead to the award of a degree must be evaluated. Programmes are evaluated on a six-year cycle, meaning that every programme is evaluated once every six years. All programmes must be judged 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 must 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.

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

## 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.

Our feedback relies on the *self-evaluation report, General Syllabus 3rd-cycle SKH* and *Overview of qualitative targets third-cycle SKH*.

The report is of outstanding quality, in its descriptive, analytical and speculative parts alike. In the following 11 chapters, it is a great pleasure to share our reflections on the report and offer suggestions for further areas of development. In the last chapter, we will summarize and rank the suggestions from our point of view.

## Introduction

### About the programme

#### The programme's structure and KPIs

We appreciate the overview given in the first pages (pp. 2-3) highlighting the strengths of the programme. It clearly articulates how SKH provides a student-centred learning through an interdisciplinary approach that is supported by a responsive environment to meet the needs of the PhD candidates. We would like to add, that the Swedish governmental support for artistic PhD is of high quality and high value, also for the international community. Funding the education, the facilities, and even the PhD candidates should be a blueprint for the international development of artistic PhD. The high number of international applications compared to the available positions (only 3% success rate) symbolizes this

importance. And it is also exemplary, how SKH values artistic research as a meaningful contribution to the artistic field and the world beyond. We read the Introduction (pp. 4-10) with great interest, and have decided to group all comments and suggestions along the following criteria:

## 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 institution's routines of self-evaluation are impressive and they obviously work in a very convincing way. The programme meets the requirements.

It provides a concise breakdown of how the documented artistic research project (doctoral thesis) is to be assessed. As part of the reflected areas for development, it is re-emphasised that additional capacity is required to expand the supervision pool and ensure that profile professors have sufficient support when needed. Much of the smooth running of the programme rests on them, and it is clear that their (prolonged) unavailability can have negative effects on the programme and hamper its ability to deliver on some of its core functions, which can compromise its integrity. For this reason, we recommend that providing additional support be prioritised (see 3.1 below for further elaboration).

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflection:

(1.1) A special attention is given to a case of a failed doctoral examination in 2020. Naturally, a public debate about a failed defense shakes all people involved – PhD candidates and professors –, and the analysis in the report is distilled and the conclusions drawn provide concrete, actionable measures to avoid the same oversights in the future. It is commendable that SKH took this as a learning opportunity to also improve and strengthen the programme.

We noticed that what is not described in the report is the aspect of public relation, as the case apparently received some media attention. Was this a blind spot or simply a minor aspect of the case that did not warrant further attention?

Suggestion: In case not already done we suggest to study the way, that the institution communicated with the public, after the press picked up on the issue. What has been the effect of this case on how the media and the general public relate to artistic research?

**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 structure of the programme and the methods of teaching are oriented towards the needs of the PhD candidates by focusing on the individual artistic research project. The programme also supports the formation of an interdisciplinary research community of doctoral candidates at SKH who accompany each other critically and creatively. Capacities are built here for peer review processes, something that the international artistic research community constantly needs and renews.

Furthermore, the doctoral candidates are each assisted by two supervisors, one of whom is a member of the SKH, so that the doctoral candidate's research activity can be meaningfully situated in the context of the SKH's research environment. Whether the supervision time granted is sufficient – both from the perspective of the supervisors and that of the doctoral candidate – cannot be inferred from the documents submitted. Even though candidates have the right to be mentored by two supervisors, considering the situation at SKH that sometimes only two or three profile professors are available for supervision, it seems at times that realism stands in the way of this right. Still, we recognise that SKH is aware of this issue and are in the process of developing measures that would meet this need (see criteria 5).

The structuring of the programme into percentage seminars, to which expert counterparts/peers are invited, seems to be a good way of ensuring the quality of the research. It also builds a research network and micro-ecosystem of support (for the candidates and the programme) while maintaining focus on the individual research project.

Electives – as opposed to compulsory seminars – are designed to allow PhD candidates to focus on their individual interests and needs. It is not clear here how the content of the elective seminars is designed and how it is ensured that the seminars fit the individual research processes as intended. However, based on candidates' evaluations, various desired contents are additionally offered: Writing Practices, Black Studies, Scientific Work.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflection:

(2.1) SKH's willingness to organise its courses and processes around the individual learning needs of the candidates and to address specific needs are seen as very positive.

Suggestion: To ensure effective communication of these needs, we recommend the implementation of another regular dialogue format "Critical Reflection" with all those involved in the programme (doctoral candidates, supervisors, teachers and research officer), in which aspects of the research and learning process are

reflected upon and critiqued together at eye level. The aim here is to motivate candidates to actively shape the processes through continuous, systematic evaluation with collection of ideas.

See also chapter 6, where it is described that there are various institutionally implemented possibilities for PhD candidates to influence the programme. However, at some places in the self-report, it seems PhD candidates feel too loosely connected to the programme from the third year onwards and their activity in relation to the design of the programme decreases.

**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 assessment indicates a diverse range of subject matter that provides substantial benefits to doctoral candidates. The combination of content appears to create a fertile environment conducive to both artistic and scientific innovation. The integration of expertise from doctoral candidates, faculty members, and artistic professionals is a judicious strategy for placing each individual doctoral candidate's artistic practice at the forefront of their own learning. The richness of study material and focus on artistic practices is excellent and exemplary, also from an international perspective.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(3.1) It is noteworthy that the profile professors bear significant responsibility, which corresponds to a heavy workload. This observation also implicates potential workplace concerns that, if unaddressed, could be detrimental to the well-being of faculty and candidates, as well as the reputation and desirability of SKH.

Suggestion: We strongly support the effort to involve more professors from the other study programmes into PhD education. And if financially possible, a fifth profile professor position would be of highest value.

(3.2) In the chapter "Formats" (p. 17) the courses are described as "Seminars". The Self-evaluation report is not detailed about it, so we can only assume from the wording, that academic formats of learning and teaching are still dominant.

Suggestion: We suggest to vary the formats of interaction in the courses. As much as the seminar is a good match for academic research, especially in the humanities (in one space, research can be shared, challenged and new research results produced), it is only partially good for practice-based research i.e., the experimental sciences, especially engineering have developed the lab as one of the alternative formats of research education. Artistic research might take inspiration from these practices. What qualities come with the room of meeting? How is the

"talking about research" interacting with the "researching" itself, and how does the representational practice co-exist with the research practice? Who takes which roles during the encounter?

We suggest to reflect also on the format and the spatial setting of the percentage seminars (if not already done), e.g. in the Post Percentage Seminar Seminar. We see a great potential in the PPSS in developing variations and alternatives of the setting beyond e.g. the seminar room and the lecture hall.

**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 measures outlined in the self-evaluation report suggest a clear direction for fostering communication and building sustainable relational networks between PhD candidates, alumni and various artistic fields. In addition, the exchange between academic institutions and visiting artists is recognized as a vital component in strengthening connections to these fields. Of particular significance is the invitation of the public to engage with research through Research Week, which serves to legitimize the position of artistic research in society.

As art plays a crucial role in shaping our consciousness, it is imperative that artistic research is demonstrated as beneficial for innovation and social change. To this end, initiatives such as the Future Brown Space project are essential for attracting diverse voices to artistic research. Moreover, the development of international network building for doctoral candidates will enhance the university's attractiveness.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(4.1) Networking is a bi-directional activity. Following the report, a lot of effort has gone into the outreach of SKH's research activity.

Suggestion: We strongly support the efforts to also invite research in. The new developed 'affiliated researcher' is a promising format and could develop into a residency program (cf. also criterion 7, areas of development). The cooperation with other art universities could go beyond the biannual conference and allow e.g. for a researcher exchange program. Also, the involvement in the International Summer Academies could look for more partners beyond the European North. Here the individual networks and international relations, that the PhD candidates bring in, could be institutionally supported by (short-term) cooperations with other art schools along the research fields of the candidates.

(4.2) In Stockholm the art scene and many locals are not English-speaking. Some literature is only available in Swedish.

Suggestion: For international fellows, a Swedish language course would be useful for their future careers, especially if they are to remain in Sweden.

(4.3) The PhD programme opens up the artistic research community – in Sweden and also internationally. Beyond the artistic work in the art context, this is a significant expansion of the PhD candidate's possibilities in research.

Suggestion: One of the tasks of the PhD candidates is to teach at SKH, which means that they learn to design lessons and develop pedagogically meaningful strategies. This enables them to teach at art schools and apply for international post docs and professor positions.

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

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 current profile professors have considerable experience in the academic and artistic research fields and seem very open to experimentation and new pedagogical concepts. Their competence is based on their broad expertise and experience in a relevant artistic or artistic research field within SKH, as well as outside SKH on an international level and on their broad knowledge of contemporary artistic practices in the fields of performance, film or media. In the academic context, the professors have many years of experience in teaching, in carrying out research projects and in supervising 2nd and 3rd cycle candidates, as well as in leading modules at doctoral level. The profile professors are represented on relevant Swedish and international professional juries and committees. Not only in Sweden, but also in Vienna and Brussels, Australia and New York, they have been involved in training doctoral candidates at higher education institutions for the arts. Numerous publications, keynote lectures at conferences and participation in internationally funded artistic and transdisciplinary research projects ensure a lively transfer of current artistic research practice out of the SKH and back into the institution.

The 3rd cycle programme includes courses that have clear learning objectives, but which, as "containers", allow for different interpretations of the teaching methods and content by the teachers. In this way, the diversity of perspectives and approaches is embodied by the teaching staff and the interdisciplinarity and diversity of artistic research methods and forms of presentation are taken into account and given space.

In order to support the didactic and artistic research competence of the teachers, a change was made from a non-compulsory, theoretical course to encouraging the teachers to practice artistic research and to participate in peer-to-peer exchange formats on methods and research results (e.g. Wednesday Seminars, Research Week). The teachers also receive further training in issues of higher education

pedagogy. Two one-day seminars are held annually for the supervisors of the doctoral candidates. They serve to exchange knowledge and experience and to build up and expand supervision skills within and outside the SKH. Also, because many doctoral candidates switch to part-time studies, the teaching staff have to supervise up to 30 doctoral candidates in parallel. Currently, the profile professors do most of the supervising. With the admission of each new candidate to the programme, it becomes increasingly urgent to accelerate the competence development of additional supervisors.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(5.1) The listing of professorial activities and participations in Sweden and abroad in the self-report is impressive.

Suggestion: Nevertheless, it would be worth considering whether listing the involved professors and supervisors by name, each with a specific profile, could illustrate the convincing manpower in a more personal and lively way.

(5.2) The measures to build up the competence of the teaching staff in the field of artistic research make a lot of sense to us. However, it is not entirely clear whether the measures are already sufficient today to ensure that PhD candidates receive adequate supervision. Or whether the ratio between supervisors and number of PhD candidates is not yet satisfactory.

Suggestion: We recommend a thorough evaluation of whether an additional fifth position is necessary. (cf. above, 3.2)

(5.3) Doctoral candidates are employed by SKH and have to complete teaching. Do doctoral candidates from the 4th year onwards teach subsequent doctoral candidates?

Suggestion: The program could profit from peer to peer teaching among the PhD candidates. All PhD candidates bring an established artistic professional practice, and with this a lot of peer competence. Even though, a PhD candidate cannot formally act as a supervisor, the cohort of senior PhD candidates can contribute significantly to the program's educational goals and research climate, and by this would relieve the supervisors, if they are approachable for subsequent generations of doctoral candidates. They could also receive specialised didactic training and participate in the supervision days.



**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 four established contexts in which doctoral candidates have opportunities to exert influence over planning, implementation and follow ups provide comprehensive platforms for meaningful engagement and concerns of the candidates to be picked up and addressed at different levels.

Supervisors are well-placed to play this role, and it is great to see their supportive characteristic being leveraged in this effective way to mediate between the candidates' needs and how they interface with/in the institutional processes.

We think it is great that at the beginning of each course the course leader presents evaluations from the previous course and describes steps taken to address any concerns or proposals. This builds transparency and continuity, allowing the new cohort to see that SKH takes their feedback seriously, and act upon it. This will encourage the candidates to engage more with the evaluations. It is also great to make decisions together about how to shape the course with the benefit of understanding the context of how the course used to be.

Providing the candidates with a chance to talk among themselves, without the admin staff involved, allows room for more voices to speak frankly.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(6.1) It sounds in some places in the self-report (espec. criteria 2, 6, 7) that PhD candidates feel too loosely connected to the programme from the third year onwards and that their activity in relation to the design of the programme decreases. In the areas of development, it is mentioned that the programme is struggling to get doctoral representatives on the Research Education Committee.

Suggestion: We suggest an analysis on why it is that despite the many offerings and initiatives, candidates are less engaged throughout the program. There seem to be a lack of motivation, that might have structural reasons: Are there times/gaps when PhD candidate's concerns are not heard or considered? If so, what steps are taken to ensure that this does not compromise their influence over the PhD programme?

Also, it could be asked whether the four established contexts for exerting influence are sufficient. Looking closely ad 1, it shows that a supervisory relationship is at the same time a dependency relationship. Looking ad 2 the course evaluations merely react to existing ones. How open is the inquiry integrated to develop new ways of teaching/learning? Looking ad 3, how do the results of candidate meetings systematically reach the programme designers? Looking ad 4, we think that involving candidates in committee work should be prioritised.

A lack of motivation might also come from the overall situation, that is centred around the individual PhD projects. What can be done, to create groups of PhD candidates with common interests and goals, either on a thematic level, an infrastructural level (a lab, a workshop space) or on an idealistic level (e.g. sharing as a basic principle of research, commons in research etc.)?

(6.2) It is important to facilitate a culture where getting attention from highly respected teachers is not what motivates PhD candidates to participate in further activities of the programme, but where the peer group is valued as a self-reflective and mutually reflective body. The task of the more experienced artistic researchers is to stimulate and motivate the emerging researchers to take responsibility for their own individual and collective learning process. The ability to actively shape the processes is the real goal.

Suggestion: What if the four mandatory seminars were not limited to the first two years of study, but extended over four years of study? One compulsory seminar per year or four additional compulsory seminars, so that one compulsory seminar must be attended in each of eight semesters? Then there would be more time in the first years to focus on the individual artistic research project. In addition, this not only strengthens connections between different generations of doctoral cohorts but the candidate's ongoing connection to the institution.

(6.3) SKH is undergoing major changes, including structural reorganization and a new building project, so doctoral candidate representation on boards linked to these projects is needed. The report is reflecting on the difficulty to recruit doctoral candidates for this level of engagement with SKH even though participation on such boards is included toward the 20% departmental duties.

Suggestion: If it is not already 'practically' feasible, the school needs to make it possible for international candidates to qualify for this responsibility, which will have implications for SKH's language policy. To pull from the widest pool of PhD candidates, either the relevant meetings and documents need to be available in English, or international fellows need to get a language course upon entering the programme, to allow them to take up such responsibilities in the future. This will also enable the international fellows to use this possibility as a way to prolong their tenure.

(6.4) The report mentions the option of the establishment of a SKH doctoral student union (Doktorandkår) at the students' initiative.

Suggestion: We think, for the moment, there are enough platforms to engage. Instead we encourage the programme leaders to work on good reasons for intrinsic motivation of PhD candidates (cf. above).

**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.

Infrastructure, facilities and studio spaces are crucial for research and PhD development, as much as a salary to allow for investing time into research and to justify the open access of its outcome. Also, infrastructure functions as a hub between third, second and first cycle education, so care is really needed for the production facilities.

SKH is in an international comparison here in a good situation, that should be kept up under any circumstances and carefully studied, where to improve.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(7.1) Even though the general situation seems to be good, SKH has a lack of purpose ready, suitable, and flexible laboratory spaces for research projects.

Suggestion: First priority should be given to the long-term investment of research working spaces. As a short-term solution, maybe this could help: For PhD candidates with studios (on or off campus), perhaps one could arrange an internal 'residency programme' – where fellows offer their working space for other fellows. This would also allow to share or meet each other's work. Cross-departmental collaborations of this nature could yield interesting ways fellows would use each other's spaces and potentially give rise to unexpected collaborations. Research fellows travel quite a bit or take prolonged leaves, that would give opportunity for take-over. We also support the idea to create doctoral residency opportunities via partnerships with small to medium arts organisations in Stockholm.

(7.2) Often after completion of the obligatory courses, doctoral candidates drift away from the community environment. "There is low doctoral student attendance at Wednesday Research Seminars, percentage and final seminars, Making Publics and defences, contexts which could constitute a research community."

Suggestion: As well intended as these initiatives are, one first need to create the value and culture of informal/voluntary sharing from the institution (cf. above, criteria 6, suggestion 1). Furthermore, the engagement for the research community could be an issue raised already during the application process, where the prospective candidates can be asked, where they see the value in being part of the larger research community and how they would be willing to uphold that value in their tenure.

**8. that the programme is continuously monitored and developed, including through the use of 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 SKH's routines for course evaluations and ISP are well integrated into the programme and allow PhD candidates room to continuously shape the courses to meet their current and future needs as they arise.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(8.1) Valuing the ISP high in relation to the overall curriculum is convincing, when intending to allow for an individualized development. Nevertheless, the idea that research can be represented in a study plan beforehand has also been always questioned for good reason. The format of a "study plan" is not neutral, it relies on a specific idea of the future and how to deal with it.

Suggestion: We suggest to reflect on the inherent dynamism of planning, when dealing with art and artistic research. We suggest to be open and playful in the format of the ISP and give special awareness to the relation between the written and the unwritten, the explicit and the non-explicit in the process of planning.

We see a related situation with the mandatory Percentage Seminars. Measures such as 30, 50 and 80% can be understood as a cumulative concept of research and knowledge. How can these percentage seminars best support the research development of the candidate and avoid that the candidate only complies with the institution?

(8.2) It is obvious, that the institution is obliged to make sure, that the quality of PhD is provided on all levels. Nevertheless, this duty needs a tightrope walk between trust and control, between fully monitoring the process versus reviewing only the outcome.

Suggestion: We suggest to be careful with obligations like the mandatory involvement of a profile professor at the moment of feedback, as it can also be experienced as an act of mistrust and control. And we suggest also to vary the formats of feedback beyond the online questionnaire and the oral conversation at the end of the course.

(8.3) The artistic hierarchy between the PhD candidates and the professors is –in a good way– not always clear. It makes no sense to us to see it as a pupil-teacher relation.

Suggestion: We suggest to think about, how the responsibility of the institution for good education and research environment can be shared within the PhD group. How can the seniors (professors) and the juniors (PhD candidates) collaborate on the working environment of the programme? How can a climate of co-researching

be created? This might also support solving the problem, that PhD candidates seem to be hard to motivate to be present beyond the obligatory courses (see criteria 7, p.28 and criteria 8, p.32 in the self-evaluation report).

**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.

The access to the research environment matches good standards.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflections:

(9.1) One of the problems with being in smaller departments without a deeper connection to the teaching staff, PhD fellows end up being too fragmented to ever really exist as a visible community.

Suggestion: We support the proposal in the "Areas of Development", to house the candidates from across all departments in one 'space' or floor, and to give the research centre the responsibility for the employment and education of all doctoral candidates. If they were all put together, the level of sharing and engagement could make 'working in the office' a higher opportunity cost than being at home or separate/collective studio elsewhere. Fellows often stop going to the academy because they have superficial engagements with the staff. This would also encourage a lot of cross departmental collaborations in order to further strengthen SKH's interdisciplinary approach.

(9.2) In the self-evaluation report the research environment is looked at from the perspective of the institution. We see no reason to add more here, as all proposals are comprehensive and plausible. Instead we want to take the opportunity and shift attention to each PhD candidate's individual research environment outside the institution.

Suggestion: We suggest to collectively map the research environment also outside the institution and how this could be made fruitful for the whole research group without being exploitative. Would it make sense to have meetings housed at candidate's individual studios? How can networks and facilities inside and outside the institution be shared? How can the institution be a host one day and a guest the next? We think it would be worth (like in 8.3 above) to build (faculty and PhD cohort) the common environment collectively.

(9.3) There is a proposal (p. 32) to extend the partnerships of SKH in Stockholm. This has two sides: on the one hand it would connect especially non-resident PhD candidates better to the Stockholm art scene, which surely is attractive; on the other hand, it would add more courses to the curriculum, which might be repelling.

Suggestion: We suggest to discuss with the PhD candidates, which aspects of SKH's ongoing collaborations are actually rewarding for the individual PhD project (courses, facilities, faculty or other peer PhD candidates etc.)? We also suggest to hold a workshop on the SKH's strategy for (international) collaboration. At the moment, all universities mentioned are from Nordic countries (except Zurich). Where/who would the PhD candidates want to link with, nationally and internationally? And how could the PhD candidates, especially the international ones, do to support this network to grow?

## **10. Other**

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

The issues raised in the report are of high importance and the proposals to cope with their demand seem very convincing. It is good to strengthen internationalisation through modernisation of administration and recruitment. Also, the effort to strengthen diversity of doctoral candidates and supervisors will pay back in the short, mid and long run for the institution as much as the quality of research.

We hope to trigger fruitful discussion with the following reflection:

(10.1) For an internationally recognised university, it is of course necessary to maintain an international officer position, someone to aid incoming international candidates and staff from all education cycles with migration, relocation and settlement processes.

Suggestion: We suggest hiring someone (if not already done) whose job is to take care for the issues of immigration processes, cultural navigation, etc. Without a systemic response to think through the processes, the institution will rely on the pain the newcomers experience to catch the bugs in the process.

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

(11.1) Throughout the whole document, the wording like "PhD student", "opponent", "examination", implies a sense of hierarchy between the PhD candidate and the institution. However, since the PhD candidates are required to have an established artistic career before entering the programme, and if we want to understand research as a collaboration of peers to work in the interest of their

field (in our case the arts), it should also mirror a research culture on eye level, starting from the language used.

Suggestion: We suggest to reflect the language of documents and change wordings for example to: "PhD candidate" or "PhD researcher" instead of "PhD Student"; "peer dialogue" or "peer involvement" instead of "opponent"; "negotiation / negotiatio" instead of "examination".

## **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.

Overall, the self-evaluation report is very clear and comprehensive. All important areas have been described and analysed in a detailed but focused way, and the critical self-reflection is open, intelligent and convincing. We consider this programme to be outstanding – also in international comparison.

The evaluation of the 3rd cycle programme coincides with a significant departmental restructuring in the SKH. This is a great opportunity to take the evaluations and feedback into account in the redesign of the organisation.

We strongly support the analysis of the report and the areas of development, as they are addressed in the overview (p. 3), i.e. "Expanding the supervision pool", "Elective course development" and the "Internationalization issues". We see the first and the last the most pressing ones.

In summation, the most important areas needing attention from our reflections and suggestions are as follows:

- Expanding the supervision pool, cf. 3.1 & 5.1
- Internationalization issues, cf. 4.1 & 4.2 & 6.3 & 9.3 & 10.1
- Strengthening the diversity of doctoral candidates and supervisors, cf. 10.1
- Analysing the motivation of PhD candidates to involve or not to involve in the programme's activities, cf. 6.1 & 6.4 & 7.2 & 8.3 & 11.1
- Supporting research grouping and collaborative working modes, cf. 4.1 & 5.3. & 6.2 & 7.1 & 8.3 & 9.1
- Studio and workings spaces, cf. 9.2
- Revisioning the interaction between bureaucracy and research activities, cf. 8.1 & & 8.2 & 11.1
- Elective course development, cf. 2.1 & 3.2 & 4.3 & 6.2

## Appendices

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

General Syllabus Third-Cycle SKH.pdf

Overview of qualitative targets third-cycle SKH.pdf