

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS IN PRAGUE

Report of the Evaluation Committee of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education prepared as part of the external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (Ref. No. NAU-309/2024)

The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (hereinafter also “AVU”) is a modern, open public university that responds dynamically to current social, cultural, and artistic developments, whose activities are grounded in a long-standing tradition and international reputation in the fields of fine arts, architecture, and restoration. The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague is not divided into faculties; its basic organizational units are studios led by renowned artists and restorers, as well as architects.

In 2024, based on a decision by the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education, an external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague was initiated. An evaluation committee was appointed to conduct the external evaluation, with the following composition:

Prof. Mgr. Michal Koleček, Ph.D. – Chair
Prof. MgA. Blanka Kolegar
Prof. Ing. Darja Kubečková, Ph.D.
Prof. Mgr. Karel Císař, Ph.D.
Doc. MgA. Filip Cenek
Assoc. Prof. Marek Sibinský, Ph.D.
BcA. Vojtěch Cibulka

As of July 1, 2025, the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (hereinafter also “NAB”) was newly established, taking over the external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

The external evaluation conducted by the evaluation committee of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education focused primarily on assessing the following areas of activity at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague:

- **The administrative functioning of the Academy of Fine Arts, particularly in relation to educational and research activities, as well as the configuration of the Academy’s internal processes and tools necessary**

for integrating the academic and operational components of the institution;

- Issues related to the Academy's current staffing levels, the existing system for the professional development of academic staff, and incentive mechanisms designed to strengthen this development;
- Issues related to the development of study programs at AVU, including the definition of the scope of authority, powers, and responsibilities of its governing bodies with regard to activities and actions related to the development and implementation of study programs and which constitute a functional whole;
- Issues related to the implementation of study programs at AVU and the definition of the powers and responsibilities of academic bodies at all levels of the university's administration that ensure the quality of educational activities, scientific and research, development, and innovation, artistic, or other creative activities and related activities;
- Issues concerning the quality of creative, research, and artistic activities carried out by academic staff at AVU;
- Issues related to the conduct of habilitation proceedings and proceedings for the appointment of professors at AVU;
- The issue of the student feedback system at AVU and its use in improving the quality of educational, research, and administrative activities, as well as in strengthening the quality and openness of AVU's internal environment.

Based on the established structure of the areas under review, the NAB evaluation committee requested that AVU prepare a detailed self-evaluation report, accompanied by all relevant supporting documents necessary for assessing the activities in question—in particular, internal regulations, internal evaluation reports, minutes of meetings of the responsible bodies, etc.

After receiving and reviewing these materials, the NAB evaluation committee conducted an on-site visit on December 5, 2025, during which it had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the AVU administration, the AVU Academic Senate, the program directors of study programs offered at AVU, the heads of selected AVU studios, and student representatives from AVU.

1/ The administrative functioning of AVU, specifically in relation to educational and research activities, as well as the configuration of AVU's internal processes and tools necessary for integrating the academic and operational components of the school

The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague is a standard public university, although its organizational and operational character is significantly determined by the fact it is not divided into individual faculties, as well as by the focus of its educational and creative activities, which are predominantly directed toward authentic artistic creation

carried out by both faculty members and students. The structure of internal regulations, administrative processes, and the competencies of AVU's individual academic bodies correspond to these specific characteristics.

The evaluation committee carried out its work during a period when the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) was undergoing significant changes, which were influenced both by the transition from the original six-year master's study program in Fine Arts to a two-tier structure (bachelor's and master's) and the accreditation of professionally oriented programs, as well as changes in the school's leadership associated with the transformation of certain bodies and the development of tools and rules governing its internal operations. The evaluation committee thus took into account both the current situation and the processes aimed at significantly strengthening AVU's key activities related to its operations, the system for ensuring the quality of educational, creative, and related activities and with the preparation and implementation of new study programs, etc. In the context of the ongoing changes, an important basis for the evaluation committee's work—in addition to the submitted AVU Self-Evaluation Report, internal regulations, and other related documents—was also the Report on the Internal Evaluation of the Quality of Educational, Creative, and Related Activities at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague for the period 2020–2024/2025, prepared in accordance with applicable legislation and submitted during the external evaluation.

The organizational structure of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague is enshrined in the Statute of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague dated October 7, 2025 (hereinafter also referred to as the "AVU Statute") and in the document Rules for the Quality Assurance and Internal Evaluation System of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague dated July 19, 2017. In accordance with applicable legislation and the aforementioned internal regulations, the AVU is governed by the Rector, the Bursar, the Vice Rectors, the Academic Senate, the Art Council, and the Board of Trustees. Following the appointment of the new AVU leadership, the organizational structure was strengthened, both in terms of adjusting and integration of the responsibilities of the individual vice-rectors, as well as following the reinstatement of the position of chancellor, the creation of new departments, and the streamlining of the university's organizational processes.

Based on the documentation submitted and structured interviews conducted during the on-site visit, the evaluation committee concludes that the new AVU leadership is aware of shortcomings in the areas of administrative processes and quality assurance in the university's educational and creative activities of the university and is purposefully working to strengthen them.

Among the main newly implemented measures are an overall strengthening of staffing in the offices of the individual vice-rectors and a more precise definition of the scope of their activities; the establishment of the Evaluation and Quality Department within the office of the Vice-Rector for Quality and Development; the creation of the AVU Research Council; and, last but not least, the introduction of electronic tools for

managing academic processes. In connection with the preparation and administration of academic programs, AVU's leadership is also working to systematize procedures between the office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, the academic program coordinators, the Art Council, and the Academic Senate.

A long-standing and difficult challenge for AVU is ensuring the spatial and technological needs of individual, specialized study programs. The distribution of facilities across four historic buildings entails a whole range of limitations and complications associated with their operation. At the same time, the fields of contemporary artistic creation, the restoration of works of art, and architectural design are undergoing radical technological evolution, and AVU is faced with the necessity of reflecting these developments while simultaneously bearing responsibility for preserving forms of artistic expression that utilize traditional artistic techniques—which can also be understood as a commitment to respecting cultural and artistic traditions.

The AVU administration recognizes the need for continuous development of its workshop and technological infrastructure; however, it faces not only the aforementioned spatial constraints but also financial limitations, as maintaining and operating traditional workshops, as well as constructing, equipping, and staffing new facilities, is extremely challenging under the current system of funding for public art-focused universities.

The evaluation committee considers it a fundamental task for the new AVU leadership to develop a conceptual framework for the future development of technological equipment, including project plans related to the expansion of the school's physical facilities.

Another important task for the AVU administration is to strengthen formal internal communication tools, both in terms of online systems and the general accessibility of information across the university. This also involves, for example, ensuring that the heads of individual studios—and, where applicable, other academic staff—have the opportunity to regularly discuss, on a formal level, issues related to teaching and the organization of the school. AVU's leadership is partially aware of this issue and has already responded by providing new, largely informal opportunities for meetings and by introducing electronic tools for managing academic processes, as well as by establishing a separate Communications Department under the purview of the Office of the Vice Rector for Quality and Development, which handles public relations, website management, and photographic documentation.

A summary of specific recommendations regarding the administrative functioning of AVU, specifically in relation to educational and research activities and the configuration of AVU's internal processes and tools necessary for integrating the school's academic and operational components of the school:

- Develop a medium-term and long-term plan for the spatial and technological development of AVU in line with the development of individual study programs.

- Strengthen internal communication systems among all university departments, both in terms of building transparent and widely accessible communication tools and in terms of their technological infrastructure.

2/ Issues regarding AVU's current staffing situation, the existing system for the professional development of academic staff, and incentive tools designed to strengthen this development

In terms of its staff, AVU undoubtedly boasts a wide range of distinguished creative and pedagogical figures who are making their mark in their fields both nationally and international contexts and also represent them in the broader social sphere. The quality of the academic faculty is evidenced, among other things, by the structure and number of artistic works submitted annually to the Register of Artistic Outputs, the completion of a wide range of research projects supported under the NAKI, GAČR, and TAČR programs, as well as the editorial and publishing activities carried out through NAVU's publishing initiatives.

Nevertheless, the issue of staffing and its strategic development remains one of the key challenges that limit both the progress of accreditation processes and the long-term quality assurance of the study programs offered in accordance with the granted accreditations.

However, the evaluation committee can confirm that the current leadership of AVU is aware of this issue, is addressing it, has identified weaknesses in the staffing system regarding the preparation and implementation of study programs, and has already taken the first steps toward making the necessary adjustments to the current situation.

The current practice of offering [redacted] fixed-term employment contracts to academic staff can be identified as the main limiting factor in the strategic development of staffing for academic programs, particularly for core courses and the leadership of individual studios. The AVU Self-Evaluation Report states that this practice was a targeted, systemic response to the previous situation at AVU, in which there was no natural generational turnover among academic staff. However, it is not possible to fully agree with this assertion, as the practice in question led to the opposite extreme and to a critical weakening of the staffing of study programs, which was reflected, among other things, in the results of accreditation processes during a period when AVU was undergoing a fundamental transformation of its portfolio of study programs.

It remains somewhat paradoxical that the practice of [redacted] fixed-term contracts was applied at AVU primarily in the area of art instruction, whereas, for example, at the Department of [redacted] (hereinafter "[redacted]"), which provides instruction in [redacted] and [redacted] as well as other [redacted] disciplines across AVU, the practice of entering into open-ended employment contracts began to be applied to key academic staff holding the titles of associate professor or professor.

It emerged from the statement formulated in the AVU Self-Evaluation Report and from information obtained during the evaluation committee's on-site visit that the AVU administration is preparing to amend the existing rules set forth in Rector's Decree No. 3/2017, which introduced the practice of three-year employment contracts into the university's personnel system. One possible solution is to offer permanent employment contracts to those who serve as program directors, hold the title of professor, or teach core courses that define the program's academic profile. However, it is not entirely certain whether such a solution will be sufficient given the portfolio of study programs offered, the Academy's staffing capacity, and the requirements set forth in Government Regulation No. 274/2016 Coll., on Standards for Accreditation in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Accreditation Standards"). This fact was, in fact, already evident in the previous period, when the NAB's granting of accreditation to newly established study programs was accompanied by requests for numerous supplementary documents, and accreditation was generally granted only for a shorter period of validity and with requirements to submit follow-up reports.

From the NAB's perspective, one of the key factors limiting the development of the academic staff's qualification structure is precisely the issue of fixed-term contracts. However, another significant aspect of AVU's personnel development is the absence of a comprehensive system that would consistently address personnel issues and be based on a framework strategy for personnel development tailored to the specific needs of the university and its constituent departments. Such a strategy should also include individual staff development plans for each academic staff member. These tools enable long-term planning of both the staffing of study programs—including preparation for generational transition in the positions of study program coordinators as well as coordinators of core courses—and the professional and creative growth of individual academic staff members. This formal system should be supplemented by a wide range of other supportive tools that motivate academic staff toward professional growth. Some of these tools (workshops for the development of teaching and other competencies, support for academic mobility, updates to the Internal Salary Regulations, employee benefits, etc.) have already been implemented at AVU, but they do not form a logical and interconnected whole. A serious shortcoming is the fact that AVU lacks an internal system to support the excellent creative work of academic staff that would be linked specifically to individual staff development plans and the implementation of habilitation and professorial appointment procedures.

In connection with the issue of strengthening AVU's personnel structure, the evaluation committee noted repeated comments regarding the lack of motivation among academic staff to pursue professional advancement, particularly with regard to obtaining the titles of associate professor and professor. It is, however, indisputable that the succession of short-term fixed-term contracts, as well as the absence of a mechanism for targeted support of academic staff's creative activities—linked specifically to the achievement of outputs relevant to habilitation and professorial appointment procedures—significantly undermine this motivation. Furthermore, it is

necessary to take into account the fact that short-term employment contracts do not provide AVU employees with sufficient social security, limit their ability to make long-term plans for their personal lives, and weaken the much-needed sense of belonging between the institution and its employees.

A summary of specific recommendations regarding the current staffing situation at AVU, the existing system for the professional development of academic staff, and incentive tools designed to strengthen this development:

- Revise the current practice of  fixed-term contracts and replace them with a system of open-ended contracts upon attainment of the title of professor, or in conjunction with the position of program director or course director for core courses.
- Implement a tool within AVU's internal system for planning a personnel development strategy and the associated individual personnel plans.
- Implement, among the tools supporting academic growth, a system of internal support for the creative artistic, research, and publication activities of academic staff, linked to individual personnel plans aimed at developing their qualifications for obtaining habilitation and appointment as a professor.
- Strengthen existing employee benefits and identify new ones for AVU staff to enhance their sense of belonging to the university.

3/ Issues related to the development of study programs at AVU, including the definition of the scope of authority, powers, and responsibilities of its governing bodies regarding activities and actions related to the development and implementation of study programs, which constitute a functional whole

The development of study programs at AVU is primarily governed by the AVU Statute and the Supplement to the AVU Statute, as well as the Rules for the Quality Assurance and Internal Evaluation System of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague dated July 19, 2017. The process of preparing bachelor's and master's degree programs and the review of accreditation dossiers takes place through the following chain of command: the Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs – program guarantors – the Program Council – the Art Council, which also serves as the Internal Evaluation Council. According to available data, the Program Council—composed of key academic staff members of the Academy of Fine Arts and the program coordinators of individual study programs—should play a fundamental role in the development of bachelor's and master's degree programs. Doctoral study programs have a distinct organizational and management structure, in which the disciplinary councils of the study programs play a key role in collaboration with their program coordinators and the Doctoral Research Department. These processes also fall under the purview of the Vice Rector for Internationalization and Research.

This system appears to be clear and logically organized; however, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that in some respects it is not entirely well-designed.

The first issue regarding its functioning concerns the formal status of the Program Council within the process of developing study programs, as well as within other internal processes affecting the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) as a whole. It should be noted that the evaluation committee was unable to locate the Program Council's Rules of Procedure, which are listed on the AVU website, and was therefore unable to gain a clearer understanding of its role and institutional status. The minutes of the Program Council's meetings do, in fact, give the impression that it serves primarily a forum for discussion among the individual program directors, a view supported by the informal nature of these minutes. The second issue concerns the role of the newly established Department of Evaluation and Quality within the Office of the Vice Rector for Quality and Development in processes related to the development of study programs.

Another key component of the process for preparing accreditation applications is the Arts Council; however, according to the relevant minutes, it reviews individual accreditation files for study programs in a relatively formal manner and without much discussion or feedback. It is not uncommon for these to be approved by a *per rollam* vote, which is not the most appropriate procedure when discussing such important materials. Experience with the functioning of Internal Evaluation Councils at other universities shows that purely formal and simplified methods of reviewing submitted accreditation files occur relatively rarely. At the same time, it is clear that the agenda related to the responsibilities of the Internal Evaluation Councils may be demanding for members of the Art Councils at public universities and often places increased demands on them, which is particularly true for the involvement of external members. The evaluation committee recommends seeking a solution, for example, by appointing a rapporteur for each accreditation proposal who would be responsible for assessing their compliance with both the needs of the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) and the Accreditation Standards, and who would prepare a brief report for the Arts Council's meeting, including any recommendations.

In connection with the process of developing study programs and preparing accreditation dossiers, it is important to emphasize that the past period has placed an enormous burden on a public university of AVU's type and size, resulting in an excessive workload for academic and administrative staff. Over the past five years, AVU has prepared more than ten accreditation dossiers at all levels of study (bachelor's, master's, follow-up master's, and doctoral programs), including an accreditation dossier for conducting habilitation proceedings and proceedings for the appointment of professors, and has successfully obtained all accreditations. On the other hand, some accreditation dossiers had to be significantly revised and supplemented based on recommendations made during administrative proceedings, and a number of study programs were accredited for a shorter period of validity, with the NAB Board often taking into account precisely the uncertainty regarding staffing for individual study programs.

It is precisely this fact that should be seen as a clear signal to revise internal rules, regulations, and processes related to the development of study programs, as the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) faces a re-accreditation process in the coming years that, while perhaps not as intensive, will nonetheless be demanding—a process in which, among other things, it must be demonstrated that the specific shortcomings identified during the review of the original accreditation applications have been addressed.

In this context, the evaluation committee particularly commends the intention to create accreditation regulations, which the evaluation committee was informed about by staff of the Evaluation and Quality Department during the on-site visit.

For the reasons stated above, the evaluation committee concludes that it is necessary to strengthen the mechanisms related to the development of study programs at AVU. It recommends the creation of a clear “manual” governing the procedures for preparing study programs and defining the relationships between the individual offices of the vice-rectors involved in these processes (the Vice-Rector [REDACTED], the Vice-Rector [REDACTED], and, in the case of doctoral study programs, the Vice-Rector [REDACTED]). At the same time, following any amendments to internal regulations, this document should also formally establish the role of the Program Council within the accreditation processes, clearly define the competencies and responsibilities of the study program guarantor as well as the guarantors of individual core courses, as well as a revision of the procedure for reviewing accreditation files by the Arts Council.

The evaluation committee further recommends focusing on developing feedback mechanisms for the implementation of individual study programs, not only in the form of self-evaluation processes but also by consistently incorporating the insights gained into newly prepared accreditation applications. Last but not least, AVU should strengthen existing and establish new tools necessary to ensure the university’s personnel development, particularly to ensure long-term continuity as well as the necessary generational turnover while maintaining an academic staff qualification structure consistent with a standard higher education environment.

A summary of specific recommendations regarding the development of study programs at AVU, including the definition of the scope of authority, powers, and responsibilities of its governing bodies with respect to activities and actions related to the development and implementation of study programs, which together form a functional whole:

- Clarify the role of the Program Council in the process of developing study programs and the review of accreditation files, through the adoption of the Program Council’s Rules of Procedure, if such rules have not already been formulated.
- Strengthen the role, competencies, and responsibilities of study program guarantors in the study program development process, particularly in relation to the Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs (in the case of bachelor’s and master’s study programs) and the heads of individual studios.

- Create a clear and transparent framework governing the processes and the timeline for developing study programs and reviewing accreditation dossiers in accordance with accreditation standards, for example in the form of accreditation regulations.
- Strengthen the role of the Arts Council in the process of reviewing and approving accreditation dossiers, and in this context, consider introducing the position of a rapporteur for each accreditation dossier under review.
- Consider expanding the number of members of the Art Council (currently 7 internal and 6 external members), as its current role—which includes responsibilities associated with the Internal Evaluation Council, a body that has not been established at AVU—may be demanding both in terms of workload and the breadth of issues under discussion.

4/ Issues regarding the implementation of study programs at AVU and the definition of the powers and responsibilities of academic bodies at all levels of the university's administration that ensure the quality of educational activities, scientific and research, development, and innovation, artistic, or other creative activities, as well as related activities

AVU currently offers a relatively extensive portfolio of bachelor's, master's, follow-up master's, and doctoral study programs; this portfolio includes programs with both academic and professional profiles, as well as a program taught in English. A distinctive feature of AVU is that some study programs have very low enrollment numbers. Offering such a wide and highly diverse range of study programs places high demands on meeting their spatial and technological needs, and above all, on ensuring adequate staffing.

From the perspective of program administration, it is important to note that AVU is not organized into departments that would oversee the implementation of individual study programs with similar focuses. The vast majority of study programs (with the exception of doctoral programs) are therefore administered through the Office of the Vice Rector [REDACTED] and the individual program coordinators, or the Program Council, while feedback and evaluation processes are managed by the Office of the Vice Rector [REDACTED].

The evaluation committee commends the logical structure of the study programs but notes the absence of clearly formulated rules that would specify in detail the responsibilities of the study program coordinators, the coordinators of core courses, and the roles of the heads of individual studios, as well as the requirements placed upon them.

With regard to the implementation of study programs, it should be noted that the bachelor's, master's, and follow-up master's programs received accreditation relatively recently. Given the number of students and the number of studios, the dominant study programs are Fine Arts at the bachelor's and master's levels, which were granted accreditation in March 2024 for a period of five years each. Both study programs, which

build upon the originally accredited Fine Arts programs—which, however, did not use the credit system—are just getting underway (the bachelor's program began this academic year; the master's program has not yet started, and the original six-year master's program in Fine Arts is nearing completion, with its accreditation extended solely to allow current students to complete their studies), and it is still too early to provide a detailed assessment of them. A similar situation applies to another key program—the master's program in Art Restoration, with a standard duration of six years, which was granted accreditation in July 2024.

Of the traditional study programs that have long shaped the character of the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU), only the follow-up master's program in Architectural Design, which received accreditation in February 2021, can be viewed with some perspective. Despite the inspiring concept behind this program, it is clear that its implementation is limited by a narrow circle of faculty members who possess the necessary qualifications to ensure both the program as a whole and the individual courses that form its core. All core courses in the aforementioned program are taught by only [REDACTED] faculty members, which certainly does not contribute to the diversification of creative approaches or the theoretical knowledge presented.

This issue has deeper roots, linked in particular to the activities of two traditional AVU schools located in the Architecture Studio and in two related studios—the Restoration of Paintings and Polychrome Sculpture Studio and the Sculpture Restoration Studio—which face similar, albeit less acute, challenges in staffing the six-year, highly specialized master's program in Art Restoration. Statements from the AVU administration and the lead instructors of both of the aforementioned schools suggest a certain perspective for their future development, linked primarily to the intention of increasing the number of studios comprising these schools. However, the AVU administration is also aware of the potential financial, spatial, technological, and staffing demands that would be associated with the proposed development of these schools. In this context, the AVU administration faces the crucial task of striking a balance between the realistic development of these schools and maintaining the quality of their faculty. With regard to the Architecture Studio, the issue of faculty staffing is key to sustaining both architecture-focused programs—the follow-up master's program and the doctoral program in Architectural Design—at a level that would allow for their continued operation.

A specific group of study programs at AVU consists of newly accredited programs with a professional focus—namely, the five-year master's program in Restoration of Modern Artworks Made of Non-Traditional Materials and the two-year follow-up master's program in Art and Contemporary Technologies. The second of these programs, in particular, has faced challenges since its launch in the current academic year regarding the adequacy of the core courses required for the program's professional profile, specifically in terms of the qualifications of the academic staff involved, as required by the Accreditation Standards. During the evaluation committee's on-site visit, this situation was discussed at length with the AVU administration and representatives of

the Program Council. In addition to the recommendation to strengthen the core group of faculty members teaching these study programs, the committee emphasized the need for the relevant program director to be involved in delivering the core curriculum courses.

Another group of AVU study programs consists of four doctoral programs, though only the doctoral program in Theory and History of Contemporary Art has its own disciplinary council; the study programs in Fine Arts, Art Restoration, and Architectural Design are implemented by AVU through content- and organizational-level coordination within a joint departmental council. In this context, the evaluation committee raised the issue of the high number of doctoral programs relative to the size of AVU and the associated increased demands on the organization of studies and on adequate staffing for the individual doctoral programs. AVU is attempting to address these demands by establishing the aforementioned joint disciplinary council; however, this presents difficulties related to compliance with relevant legal regulations, particularly with regard to the program supervisors, who simultaneously serve as chairs of the disciplinary council in the doctoral study programs. The practice followed at AVU, whereby the chair of the disciplinary council is the program director of only one of the doctoral programs offered, is in this regard inconsistent with the relevant provision of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplementing Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended, as well as with the AVU's own Study and Examination Regulations.

During a detailed review of the processes related to the implementation of doctoral study programs and their outcomes, the evaluation committee also identified certain ambiguities regarding the use of "eminent figures in the field" when forming committees for state doctoral examinations and dissertation defenses, or when appointing opponents for dissertations. Under the formal designation of "eminent figures in the field," the list includes academic staff members working at the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) or at other art-focused universities who do not possess the appropriate academic qualifications. The evaluation committee recommends more precisely defining the relationship of this institution to internal academic staff, as the academic community should prioritize the application of academic qualifications associated with the attainment of the titles of associate professor and professor; conversely, prominent figures in the field should represent the involvement of the non-academic professional community in processes related to the administration of state doctoral examinations and the defense of dissertations.

However, taking the above reservations into account, the evaluation committee concludes that the implementation of doctoral study programs at the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) generally corresponds to the field-specific characteristics applied in art study programs, which naturally combine aspects of authentic artistic creation, artistic research, and social science research.

As part of its activities, the evaluation committee also addressed the structure and functionality of the quality assurance system for educational, scientific, research, and artistic and other related activities. AVU has standard tools for ensuring these activities, which are enshrined in internal regulations (in the AVU Statutes and in the Rules of the AVU Quality Assurance System and Internal Quality Assessment at AVU). In accordance with the Higher Education Act, it regularly prepares the Report on Internal Evaluation and its addenda, and in connection with the implementation of specific study programs, it conducts evaluations of those programs, which, however, given the composition of the study programs evaluated to date (these were the follow-up master's study programs Art in Context and Fine Arts and the follow-up master's study program in Fine Arts) and changes in the overall structure of the study programs offered, has only limited informative value.

The establishment of the Evaluation and Quality Department within the Office of the Vice Rector for Quality and Development can be considered a significant step forward in the context of quality assurance for educational, scientific, research, artistic, and other related activities. According to information obtained during the on-site visit, this department has a clearly defined mandate and the human resources necessary to carry out content- and time-intensive investigations related to the evaluation of the functionality and effectiveness of the university's educational, creative and related activities of the university. During this period, which is crucial for the further development of AVU—given the ongoing changes and the gradual rollout of a whole range of study programs—the appropriately directed activities of this department can significantly contribute to overcoming the difficult challenges associated with these changes.

A summary of specific recommendations regarding the implementation of study programs at AVU and the definition of the powers and responsibilities of academic bodies at all levels of the university's administration that ensure the quality of educational activities, scientific and research activities, development and innovation, artistic or other creative activities, and related activities:

- Clearly define and formally establish the role of study program guarantors in the process of implementing study programs, ensuring their compliance with granted accreditations, and in self-evaluation processes focused on monitoring their quality. Strengthen the role of the program guarantor in competitive selection processes for academic staff working within the implemented study programs.
- Clearly define the role of the Evaluation and Quality Department in the evaluation of study programs; establish a schedule for individual self-evaluation procedures.
- Define the role of the Artistic Council in the evaluation of existing study programs so that it corresponds to the standard activities of internal evaluation councils at other universities.

- In the medium term, consider the number of doctoral programs offered at AVU and, if a reduction is warranted, address this by creating a more broadly conceived doctoral program covering the fields of fine arts, art restoration, and architectural design.

5/ Issues Regarding the Quality of Creative Research and Artistic Activity Carried Out by AVU Faculty Members

AVU boasts a number of prominent figures in the fields of creative artistic and research activities, who help shape the current development of contemporary artistic discourse at the national and, not infrequently, international levels. The creative research—and above all, artistic—activities of both students and faculty members are carried out not only directly at the university and its specialized departments, laboratories, and studios, as well as within external disciplinary, institutional, national, and international contexts, exerting a significant impact on both the specialized community and the general public. In this sense, it is necessary to view the Academy of Fine Arts (just like other art universities) as a specific cultural and artistic ecosystem that intertwines with the broader social environment and possesses the potential to continuously invigorate, enrich, and critically reflect upon it through all of its institutional and individual components.

AVU purposefully develops the institutional infrastructure necessary for research in the history and theory, primarily of modern and contemporary art (the AVU Research Center); publishes the peer-reviewed journal **Sešit pro umění, teorii a příbuzné zóny** (**Journal of Art, Theory, and Related Fields**), which focuses on the reflection of contemporary visual art and has been indexed in the international Scopus database since 2023; engages in specialized publishing activities related to the creative work of AVU students and faculty (AVU Publishing House), and operates the AVU Gallery, whose program is dedicated to presenting the work of AVU students, faculty, and alumni to the general public. In addition to research and support for authentic artistic creation, it is important to emphasize that the aforementioned units also play a key role in fulfilling the so-called third role of the university, as their outputs are primarily directed toward the external environment, strengthen the general cultural milieu, and often target specific communities as well.

In terms of institutional support for the creative, research, and artistic activities of students and academic staff, in addition to the aforementioned units, the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) operates specialized centers designed to support project-based activities in the fields of traditional art history, restoration, and art research (Research Support Department), to develop specific forms of artistic research (the LARGE Art Research Department), and to provide targeted support for research conducted within the framework of AVU's doctoral programs (the Doctoral Research Department).

The evaluation committee notes that the system of specialized units and centers focused on various forms of implementing and supporting creative research and artistic activities represents a relatively robust foundation, particularly

given the size and structure of the university. It is therefore essential that AVU continuously evaluate the effectiveness of these units' activities and emphasize the synergy of their operations.

In this context, the evaluation committee reiterates the recommendation made above to create an internal mechanism at AVU to support the artistic activities of academic staff (for example, using funds from the Artistic Activities Fund). This mechanism, in the form of a grant competition, could also serve to showcase specific artistic projects, exhibitions, or exhibitions, and, through individual professional development plans, to foster the professional growth of faculty members. AVU may link the introduction of such tools to its institutional strategy for professional development and, not least, to the conduct of habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor (this issue has already been mentioned as a specific recommendation in the section on AVU's professional development).

Summary of specific recommendations regarding the quality of creative research and artistic activities carried out by AVU faculty members:

- Conduct an analysis of the activities of specialized departments and centers focused on carrying out and supporting creative research and artistic activities at AVU, with an emphasis on their effective utilization and on strengthening the synergistic nature of creative activities at the university.

6/ Issues Regarding the Conduct of Habilitation Proceedings and Proceedings for Appointment as Professor at AVU

AVU conducts habilitation proceedings and proceedings for the appointment of professors in the field of Fine Arts, which includes the areas of Architectural Design, Restoration of Works of Art, and Fine Arts; accreditation was granted in September 2024 for a period of five years. The procedures for habilitation and professorial appointment proceedings are governed by the Regulations on Habilitation and Professorial Appointment Proceedings at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, Rector's Decree No. 11/2025—Requirements for Filing an Application to Initiate Habilitation Proceedings at the Academy of Fine Arts and Rector's Decree No. 12/2025—Requirements for Submitting an Application to Initiate Proceedings for appointment as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. In this regard, the evaluation committee notes that the above-mentioned materials form a logical whole and clearly set forth the conditions and the course of habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor, including the necessary quantitative criteria.

However, upon careful review of the procedures for each process, it must be noted that their formal records and substantive framework lack uniformity, and it appears that their quality depends on the composition of the individual committees. In some cases, the formal records—the minutes—of the meetings of the habilitation committees

and the committees for the appointment of professors can be described as brief and not entirely informative with regard the conclusions reached by the committees. Similarly brief are the minutes documenting the proceedings of habilitation lectures and lectures by candidates for professorial appointment before the Arts Council, as the documentation lacks a record of the discussion.

In the opinion of the evaluation committee, another minor shortcoming is the overuse of so-called prominent figures from the given or a related field in the composition of individual committees or in the roles of reviewers for habilitation theses. The evaluation committee is convinced that the involvement of such figures is appropriate only if they are experts working outside the academic environment—that is, not academic staff who have not yet attained the titles they are helping to award to the candidates under review. In this context, it should be noted that in some cases, none of the three reviewers of a habilitation thesis held the title of associate professor or professor, and two of the five members of the habilitation committee did not hold the title of associate professor or professor, even though they were academic staff members.

In light of the above facts, it would certainly be worth considering expanding the number of members of the Art Council, particularly in connection with its focus on architectural design and the restoration of works of art. In its current composition, the AVU Arts Council does not include an associate professor or professor specializing in the field of architectural design. Moreover, a potential expansion of the Arts Council's membership has already been mentioned in connection with the exercise of the powers of the Internal Evaluation Council, a role currently fulfilled by the Arts Council at AVU. The evaluation committee is fully aware that the composition of the Art Council falls under the purview of the AVU Rector and is formulating these recommendations solely in an effort to propose possible solutions that would enhance the quality of the institutional processes carried out at the university.

The evaluation committee is convinced that AVU clearly recognizes that the authority to conduct habilitation proceedings and proceedings for the appointment of professors in the field of Fine Arts is an important tool not only for strengthening the university's internal environment, but above all for shaping disciplinary discourse and strengthening the position of the arts disciplines within the context of Czech universities and in the broader societal environment. Successful graduates of these procedures are among the prominent figures who confidently on the Czech and international art scenes and who help shape the development of Czech higher education in the arts.

Summary of specific recommendations regarding the conduct of habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU):

- Revise and clearly define the structure of the reports issued by the committees for habilitation proceedings and procedures for appointment as a professor so that, in addition to a formal record of the proceedings, they also contain an

unambiguous and comprehensible characterization of the applicant's personality and their contribution to the field.

- Revise the method of involving so-called prominent representatives of the given or related field in the composition of individual committees or as reviewers of habilitation theses so that this occurs only in cases where experts working outside academia in a professional field context.
- Consider expanding the membership of the Arts Council to include associate professors or professors working in the fields of architectural design and the restoration of works of art.

7/ The issue of the feedback system from AVU students and its use in improving the quality of educational, research, and administrative activities and in strengthening the quality and openness of AVU's internal environment

AVU is a relatively small public university whose core educational model—studio-based instruction—is built on intensive, long-term communication between students and faculty within the small groups of individual studios. The issue of student feedback must therefore be divided into developing and strengthening the tools developed across the institution and finding suitable tools that enable the capture and appropriate formalization of students' insights and suggestions arising from daily communication within the studios.

Overall, it can be stated that the AVU administration devotes due attention to the issue of obtaining feedback from students and strives to develop appropriate tools for this area. At the same time, it must be noted that at least a portion of the AVU student body perceives participation in feedback-gathering processes as an important part of their sense of belonging to the university.

The AVU self-evaluation report contains a wide range of data on the feedback system, including an assessment of the effectiveness of its individual tools, information on the practical application of the insights gained through it, and, where applicable, proposals for strengthening it and improving its user-friendliness.

However, during the on-site visit, the evaluation committee gathered a great deal of firsthand insight that appropriately supplements the information presented in the AVU Self-Evaluation Report and highlights certain weaknesses or gaps in this system. These include, above all, the insufficient development of electronic tools that could be used on an ongoing basis to gather feedback (the absence of an intranet), the insufficient involvement of student representatives in certain university bodies whose roles are currently being strengthened, particularly in the areas of curriculum development and quality assessment during program implementation (Program Council), as well as insufficiently formalized procedures for recording studio evaluations and student forums, which would allow the insights gained to be effectively incorporated into education.

In the area of the digitization of academic administration, according to statements by representatives of the Student Chamber of the Academic Senate, it would be appropriate to introduce tools for the digital reservation of AVU's specialized studios and workshops used by students.

The evaluation committee is aware that these weaknesses stem from the naturally fluid nature of academic life, the constant development of the university, changes in the technological systems used for internal communication, and from the natural generational turnover among the student body.

A summary of specific recommendations regarding the feedback system from AVU students and its use in improving educational, research, and administrative activities, as well as in strengthening the quality and openness of AVU's internal environment:

- Strengthen student involvement, particularly in newly introduced tools and university bodies focused on quality assessment and development—particularly the AVU Program Council.
- Focus on promoting student surveys and simplifying their formats and methods of collecting feedback.
- Formalize the outputs from studio evaluations and student forums in a natural and effective manner, so that the often important and constructive suggestions raised in these forums are clearly articulated for further use by AVU leadership.
- Enhance both the content and tools of the school information system.
- Introduce a tool for digitally reserving specialized facilities and workshops, which will improve the efficiency of their use and prevent sudden overloading—the FAMU Dispatch system can serve as a model.

Conclusions

The evaluation committee of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education has concluded that the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague is a properly functioning public institution of higher education that purposefully and responsibly carries out all processes related educational and creative activities as well as the fulfillment of the so-called third role of the university. Based on a detailed analysis of all submitted materials and an on-site visit, the evaluation committee recommends that the Academy of Fine Arts focus primarily in the coming period on developing and strengthening tools aimed at consolidating the formal processes associated with the preparation of accreditation applications, the implementation and ongoing evaluation of individual accredited study programs—with an emphasis on monitoring compliance with granted accreditations and meeting accreditation standards—as well as on the development of staffing, and in this area, it is essential to focus on establishing tools that support professional development both at the level of the school as a whole and at the level of individual academic staff. The evaluation committee

recommends that AVU to focus on developing standardized processes governing the agenda and functioning of the Art Council, with an emphasis on ensuring its competencies related to both the review of accreditation files and audit reports from evaluation processes conducted during the implementation of accredited study programs, as well as with the conduct of habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor. Another important area that deserves increased attention from AVU is the support and development of competencies and processes related to the role of study program guarantors and the Program Council. Here, it will be necessary to precisely and transparently define the role of these bodies in the processes of drafting and reviewing accreditation applications and in processes related to the implementation of accredited study programs, as well as to focus on the status of study program guarantors and the Program Council within the school's structure, particularly in relation to the heads of individual studios, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, and the Art Council. Last but not least, it will be essential for the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU) to focus on developing a human resources development strategy and related individual personnel plans, and in this context, to revise the current practice of fixed-term employment contracts and replace it with a system of open-ended contracts, thereby supporting the creation and development of a solid core of academic staff—primarily program coordinators and course coordinators for core courses. The evaluation committee would like to conclude by thanking AVU, and above all its leadership representatives for their openness and committed cooperation during the external evaluation process, and also notes with satisfaction that the university is fully aware of the specific shortcomings identified during the external evaluation and is working intensively to address them.

Summary of Recommendations

This summary recaps all specific recommendations formulated in the individual areas. The structure of these recommendations has been logically organized to correspond to the operational system of a public university. Topics that appeared in multiple recommendations across the areas under review have been consolidated into common points.

1. Develop a medium-term and long-term plan for the spatial and technological development of AVU in line with the development of individual study programs.
2. Conduct an analysis of the activities of specialized departments and centers focused on carrying out and supporting creative research and artistic activities at AVU, with an emphasis on their effective use and on strengthening the synergistic nature of creative activities at the university.
3. Strengthen internal communication systems among all units of the university, both in terms of building transparent and widely accessible communication tools and in terms of their technological infrastructure.
4. Strengthen existing employee benefits and identify new ones for AVU staff to enhance their sense of belonging to the university.

5. Implement a human resources development strategy and related individual career plans into AVU's internal system.
6. Revise the current practice of ■■■ fixed-term contracts and replace it with a system of open-ended contracts linked to the attainment of a professorship or to the position of program director or course director for core curriculum courses.
7. Implement, among the tools for supporting academic growth, a system of internal support for the creative artistic, research, and publication activities of academic staff, linked to individual personnel plans for developing their professional qualifications.
8. Clarify the role of the Program Council in the process of developing study programs and the review of accreditation files, through the adoption of the Program Council's Rules of Procedure, if such rules have not already been established.
9. Strengthen the role, competencies, and responsibilities of study program guarantors in the process of developing study programs, particularly in relation to the Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs (in the case of bachelor's and master's study programs) and the heads of individual studios.
10. Create a clear and transparent framework governing the processes and the timeline for developing study programs and reviewing accreditation dossiers in accordance with accreditation standards, for example in the form of accreditation regulations.
11. Strengthen the role of the Arts Council in the process of reviewing and approving accreditation dossiers, and in this context, consider introducing the position of a rapporteur for each accreditation dossier under review.
12. Consider expanding the number of members of the Arts Council (currently 7 internal and 6 external members), as its current role—which includes responsibilities associated with the Internal Evaluation Council, a body that has not been established at the Academy of Fine Arts—may be demanding both in terms of workload and the breadth of issues under discussion. Any expansion of the Arts Council's membership should also reflect the focus of the accredited habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor in the field of Fine Arts, with a specialization in Architectural Design, Restoration of Works of Art, and Fine Arts, with an emphasis on associate professors or professors representing the fields of Architectural Design and Restoration of Works of Art.
13. Clearly define and formally establish the role of program guarantors in the implementation of study programs, ensuring their compliance with granted accreditations, and in self-evaluation processes focused on monitoring their quality. Strengthen the role of the program guarantor in the recruitment of academic staff working within the implemented study programs.
14. Clearly define the role of the Evaluation and Quality Department in assessing the quality of implemented study programs; establish a schedule for individual self-evaluation procedures.

15. Define the role of the Arts Council in the evaluation of study programs so that it corresponds to the standard activities of internal evaluation councils at other universities.
16. In the medium term, consider the number of doctoral programs offered at AVU and address any potential reduction in their number by creating a more broadly conceived doctoral program covering the fields of fine arts, art restoration, and architectural design.
17. Revise and clearly define the structure of the opinions issued by the committees for habilitation proceedings and procedures for the appointment of professors so that, in addition to a formal record of the proceedings, they also contain an unambiguous and comprehensible characterization of the applicant's personality and their contribution to the field.
18. Revise the procedure for involving so-called prominent representatives of the given or a related field in the composition of individual committees or as reviewers of habilitation theses so that this occurs only in cases where the experts in question work outside academia in a professional context within the field.
19. Strengthen student involvement, particularly in newly introduced tools and university bodies focused on strengthening and evaluating quality—especially the Program Council.
20. Focus on promoting student surveys and simplifying their formats and methods of collecting feedback.
21. Formalize the outputs from studio evaluations and student forums in a natural and effective manner, so that the often important and constructive suggestions raised in these forums are clearly articulated for further use by AVU leadership.
22. Enhance both the content and tools of the school's information system.
23. Introduce a tool for digitally reserving specialized workspaces and studios, which will enhance the efficiency of their use and prevent sporadic overloading—the FAMU Dispatch system can serve as a model.

Proposal for the Submission of an Audit Report

The NAB evaluation committee recommends requiring the submission of an audit report in two or three years, the content of which would include a response to individual recommendations with an emphasis on the following areas:

1. a description and assessment of any changes in the composition and functioning of the Arts Council, specifically in relation to its responsibilities regarding the review of accreditation proposals, evaluation processes associated with the ongoing monitoring of study programs, and ensuring all necessary formal requirements related to habilitation proceedings and proceedings for appointment as a professor;

2. a description and assessment of any changes related to the role of study program guarantors and the Program Council in the processes of preparing for accreditation and the implementation of accredited study programs, with an emphasis on establishing internal regulations that transparently govern these processes and the competencies and responsibilities of the aforementioned bodies;
3. a description and evaluation of changes related to the implementation of the personnel development strategy and the associated individual personnel plans, as well as the system of permanent employment contracts necessary for the development of a core group of academic staff;
4. a description and evaluation of any changes in the structure of the doctoral programs offered, with an emphasis on analyzing the current practice of concurrently offering three doctoral programs: Fine Arts, Art Restoration, and Architectural Design.
5. A description and evaluation of the changes associated with the inclusion of so-called prominent figures in the given or a related field in the composition of individual committees for dissertation defenses, habilitation proceedings, and proceedings for appointment as a professor, as well as among the reviewers of dissertations and habilitation theses, with an emphasis on ensuring that these experts—who do not hold the academic title of associate professor or professor work outside the academic sphere in a professional field context.

This external evaluation report was reviewed and approved by the evaluation committee of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education, appointed for the purpose of the external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, on March 19, 2026.

Prof. Mgr. Michal Koleček, Ph.D.

Chair of the Evaluation Committee of the National Accreditation Office for Tertiary Education on the external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague

Conclusions of the NAB Board

The NAB Board reviewed the results of the external evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at its meeting No. 4/2026 held on May 21, 2026.

The NAB Board, pursuant to Section 83c(2)(f) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Other Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended, endorsed the Report on the External Evaluation of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

The NAB Board requests the submission of a follow-up report by September 30, 2027, in which the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague will present an overview of actions taken to address the recommendations that are listed in the External Evaluation Report.