

## REPORT D9.3

### Pilot QA

WP 9 Quality assurance

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**film\_eu**

European Universities Alliance  
for Film and Media Arts

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## Pilot QA

### Quality Assurance in Film and Media Arts -Pilot

In the realm of higher education, where the ever-evolving dynamics of the global job market demand continuous innovation and adaptation, collaborative efforts that promote excellence and cultivate expertise have become increasingly vital. Among such endeavors, FilmEU stands as a beacon of cooperation, bringing together the best of Europe's film and media institutions to foster a new generation of filmmakers and artists. A pivotal component of this initiative is the Kino Eyes Joint Master, an innovative program that offers an integrated, transnational learning experience for aspiring film professionals. To ensure the highest quality of education and training, FilmEU has engaged the European Quality Assurance Network for Arts and Humanities (EQARTS) to conduct a thorough quality enhancement review.

This report delves into the comprehensive evaluation undertaken by EQARTS to scrutinize the effectiveness, coherence, and impact of the Kino Eyes Joint Master within the broader context of FilmEU activities. The objective of this review is to provide stakeholders with an informed perspective on the program's strengths, areas of improvement, and its contribution to the overarching mission of FilmEU.

It is essential to acknowledge that the review made was devoted to the past years of Kino Eyes, which has rapidly evolved over the years, especially since FilmEU implementation has hastened an in depth analysis of how joint masters are being implemented across the Alliance . As such, this report does not merely aim to scrutinize the current state of the Kino Eyes Joint Master but also to provide a forward-looking perspective, offering recommendations and insights that can fuel its evolution, thereby enriching the educational landscape for the benefit of students, educators, and the broader film community.

With FilmEU's mission of uniting diverse cultures, perspectives, and talents through cinematic storytelling at its core, this review of the Kino Eyes Joint Master underscores the importance of collaborative endeavors in shaping the future of European film education. In the pages that follow, we provide with a thorough report provided by EQARTS, aiming to contribute to the ongoing excellence of the programme and its vital role within the FilmEU consortium.



# EQ-Arts Interim Review Report

## Quality Enhancement Programme review

Kino Eyes European master's (KEM)

FILMEU

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## Overview of EQ-Arts Standards and Criteria

EQ-Arts Standards	Criteria
<p><b>1. Quality Assurance Policy</b></p> <p>The institution's mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning &amp; teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.</p>	1.1 The institutions apply joint quality assurance processes and have an agreed Quality Assurance Framework and policy in place for the joint programme
	1.2 The QA policy is clearly inspired by and linked with the institution's mission, strategies, and policies for learning & teaching and research
	1.3 The institution's missions, strategic plan and policies respond to, and impact upon, the Creative, Performing Arts and Design (CPAD) sector and societal needs locally, nationally and internationally.
	1.4 The institutions have Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity strategies that cover all its operational activities
	1.5 The institutions have appropriate organisational structures, allied with, and aligned to clear, inclusive and effective decision-making processes that enable them to realise their missions and meet stated strategic objectives.
	1.6 The institution uses an appropriate set of qualitative and quantitative indicators, to critically evaluate, accurately measure and monitor its progress towards the realisation of its stated strategic objectives.
	1.7 The QA policy is designed to foster an institution-wide and partnership-wide quality culture that promotes continuous development and enhancement as well as innovation in cooperation with the CPAD sector.
<p><b>2. Student-Centred Learning</b></p> <p>The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centered approaches to learning and assessment processes.</p>	2.1 The design of the joint study programme is aligned with institutional vision, mission and strategies.
	2.2 Study programmes, and their intended learning outcomes (LOs) are designed, and regularly approved, including with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders across the partnership.
	2.3 The learning, teaching and assessment methods and criteria are effectively aligned with intended learning outcomes.
	2.4 Students are made fully aware of relevant assessment criteria and receive clear, objective, and timely feedback on their level of achievement against the learning outcomes.
	2.5 Students are challenged and enabled to take an active role in their learning processes.
	2.6 Students are provided with opportunities to engage with related professional practices and the world of work as part of their study programme.
	2.7 The curricula of undergraduate programmes are informed by leading research in the subject field. The curricula of postgraduate programmes actively engage students in research.
<p><b>3. Assuring the Student Study Experience</b></p>	3.1 The institution and its programmes consistently apply regulations on the whole cycle of the student experience addressing application & admissions, recognition for prior learning, and progression & achievement.

<p>The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience</p>	<p>3.2 The regulations pertaining to the student experience are applied according to the specific rights of the students, their individual rights and their diversity.</p>
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EQ-Arts Standards	Criteria
<p><b>4. Human Resources</b></p> <p>The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.</p>	<p>4.1 The compliment of teaching, research, academic management, and study support staff available to students is sufficient to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.2 The competences of the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.3 The institution recruits the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff in accordance with their Equal Opportunities and Inclusion &amp; Diversity Strategies.</p> <p>4.4 The institution offers its staff career opportunities that are equitable, enables them to improve their performance, to achieve their personal ambitions and engage with the strategic priorities of the institution and developments across the wider CPAD sector.</p>
<p><b>5. Learning &amp; Teaching Resources</b></p> <p>The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning &amp; teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes</p>	<p>5.1 The institutions allocate appropriate financial resources to the material support of all aspects of student learning, including intended Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>5.2 The institution makes appropriate resources available to deliver the relevant quality of research.</p> <p>5.3 The institutions ensure that the technical, digital and physical infrastructure made available to students enables them to achieve the intended Learning Outcomes.</p> <p>5.4 An appropriate range of study, research and individual well-being support &amp; guidance is readily accessible to all students.</p>
<p><b>6. Communication</b></p> <p>The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.</p>	<p>6.1 The institution’s internal communication systems are accessible to all students and staff and enable vertical and horizontal interaction between all its internal stakeholders.</p> <p>6.2 The institution’s approach to external communication, welcomes and facilitates communication from and with external stakeholders.</p> <p>6.3 The internal and external communication systems ensure that information published by the institution is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.</p>
<p><b>7. Quality Assurance Processes</b></p> <p>The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal</p>	<p>7.1 The institution’s Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system effectively monitors and reviews its formal processes and each of its study programmes on a regular basis.</p> <p>7.2 The institution and its programmes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) on a regular basis.</p>



and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.	7.3 The institution involves the participation of internal and external peers/experts and stakeholders in its IQA and EQA processes.
	7.4 The institution's IQA system, and its cycles, are designed to ensure that its outcomes both assure and enhance its provision.
	7.5 The institutions regularly monitor the interinstitutional agreement and the effectiveness of governance and management structures of the joint programme

## Introduction to the Interim Report

This interim quality enhancement report for the Kino Eyes master's programme (KEM) forms part of the EQ-Arts commitment to the *FILMEU: the European University Alliance for Film and Media* Project, which has been funded through the EU European Universities initiative. Work Package 9 of this project is aimed at the design and testing of an accreditation system for FILMEU, which includes the development of a FILMEU quality assurance framework. The role of EQ-Arts, as an associated partner organisation in this project (along with other partners), is to assist FILMEU in the development of a QA framework that can in future be applied to its suite of programmes which comprise its joint educational offer. Currently, this includes:

- Kino Eyes – The European Film Masters (KEM)
- Doc Nomads Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree (EMJMD)
- Re: Anima European Joint Master

Each of these programmes is jointly validated by a partnership of three or four institutions, some of which are also partners in the FILMEU alliance. Therefore, the KEM programme is currently subject to the internal quality assurance systems of each of the partner institutions through which it is offered and, additionally, to a FILMEU internal quality assurance system that it is currently in the process of developing and implementing.

As EQ-Arts has undertaken this quality assurance process as an associate partner of the *FILMEU: the European University Alliance for Film and Media* project, therefore, it cannot be regarded as being a wholly external process. However, EQ-Arts has undertaken the composition of the Review Team, and applied the same standards and EQA process, that it would for any external quality enhancement that it was undertaking. One of the main purposes of this review is to test the current internal quality assurance arrangements for the KEM programme for their efficacy and to provide feedback and advice to FILMEU regarding how its own internal QA system could be further developed, so that it could take a more devolved responsibility for the internal quality assurance of the programmes it manages at a future date.

The Review Team who undertook this interim review, considered and assessed the KEM provision against each of the seven EQ-Arts EQA standards. However, given the key purposes of this exercise, additional attention has been given to Standards 1 and 7, which deal most specifically and directly with matters of internal quality assurance. Therefore, there is a greater number (and specificity) of comments made by the Review Team against these two standards, as a means of assisting FILMEU in the further development of its own internal QA system.

It has been agreed with FILMEU that this report, resulting from the site-visit – which took place in Tallinn in November 2022 – will be regarded as an interim report and that, in due course, a further enhancement review process and site-visit might take place, which can produce a final report in which the implementation of any developments made as a result of the critical feedback contained in this interim report will also be assessed. It would be inappropriate at this interim stage in the review process for the Review Team to reach judgments regarding levels of compliance against the EQ-Arts Standards. Therefore, this interim report sets out the developing themes identified by the review team that – at this stage in the process – it sees as potentially leading to either commendations or

recommendations in a final report. The agreement to have an extended period of time between the first and second site-visits is designed to enable FilmEU and the KEM partnership of institutions to respond to the feedback contained within the interim report and to prepare any additional documentation that has been requested by the Review Team.

The process of undertaking two site-visits, although extended over a longer time-period than would normally be the case, is consistent with the standard EQ-Arts external quality assurance process. Under normal circumstances, the interim report provided to an institution (faculty or programme) at the conclusion of the first site-visit is delivered orally and includes any requests from the Review Team for further information and/or revisions (or additions) to the SER to be provided prior to the second site-visit. In order to better support the aims of the Project (with particular respect to Work Package 9) this interim Report is provided in written form and includes, alongside the identification of examples of good practice and areas for improvement, a list of further documentation and revisions to the SER requested by the Review Team in advance of a second site-visit (a date for which is subject to further discussion and agreement).

More information regarding the EQ-Arts Enhancement and Accreditation Review process can be downloaded from the EQ-Arts website at:

<http://www.eq-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Annex-22-EQ-Arts-Quality-Framework-for-Accreditation-and-Assessment-5.7.20.pdf>

## Introduction

The Kino Eyes European (KEM) master's programme is an Erasmus Mundus joint degree programme, delivered and awarded through a partnership between four European higher education institutions; Lusófona University (LU), Tallinn University (TLU), Edinburgh Napier University (ENU), Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT). The Review is taking place in the context of work being undertaken by FilmEU alliance to develop a joint quality assurance system which would satisfy the national and institutional requirements of each of the partners, while streamlining processes for validation, governance, monitoring and the reviewing of the programme.

Lusófona University, which is the lead institution for the KEM programme, formed in 1998, and is Portugal's largest private university, with campuses in Lisbon and Porto. It has a student body of over 16,350 and a teaching staff of over 2500. The KEM programme is situated in the School of Arts, Communication and Information Technologies, which has a 20 year history of training professionals for the Portuguese-speaking film industry. The University's mission is, *'to contribute, through science, innovation and teaching, to the scientific, cultural, economic and social development of Portugal and of all countries where the Portuguese language is spoken, and to its inclusion in a dynamic and highly competitive European space of science and higher education.'*

Tallinn University was formed in 2005 by the amalgamation of several pre-existing higher education institutions in Tallin. The Baltic Film and Media School was also established in 2005 and offers Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes in Estonian and English to more than 1200 students. Tallinn University has a commitment to, *'the strategic goal of becoming an international research university with a strong social conscience and a flexible and collegial environment for learning and personal growth, where considerable academic freedoms, which are guaranteed both to students and the faculties, are balanced by strict quality requirements.'*

Edinburgh Napier University offers 300 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and has a student body of over 20,000 studying on campus, online and at partner institutions. KEM is delivered by Screen Academy Scotland, which was established within ENU in 2005 and also offers a range of degree programmes in film and television, screenwriting, production, direction, camera, sound and post-production to over 500 students. ENU's purpose is to, *'deliver high quality education and research to add value to the social, cultural and economic capital of our communities and shape their development.'*

IADT Dun Laoghaire was founded in 1997 and is an evolution of Dun Laoghaire College of Art and Design, established in 1980. IADT was established in its current form in 2012, when three schools were amalgamated to form the Faculty of Enterprise and Humanities and the Faculty of Film Arts and Creative Technologies, incorporating the Irish National Film School. IADT is the newest partner in the Kino Eyes consortium, taking its first cohort of students in 2022. IADT's mission is *'to continue to specialise in creativity and innovation as expressed in the arts, technology and entrepreneurship and to work with learners and stakeholders as partners to develop graduates who are innovative, creative, entrepreneurial and adaptable, and who are ready to meet the challenges of the digital age.'*

Three of the partners (LU, BFM and IADT) are members of the FilmEU alliance with a fourth partner (Luca School of Arts). The alliance aims to establish a European University with joint QA and governance structures, and to establish KEM as one of its flagship programmes. Following the UK's exit from the EU, ENU is unable to participate in the FilmEU alliance.

Immediately prior to the review, national re-accreditation of the programme was successfully completed in Portugal and the programme was also validated in Ireland. The documents produced in the course of these processes were drawn upon in the production of the self-evaluation report (SER) for this enhancement review. Lusófona University, the lead partner in the Kino Eyes consortium produced the SER and compiled supporting evidence, while Tallinn University coordinated a site-visit by the Review Team in November 2022.

FilmEU assigned EQ-Arts to conduct a quality enhancement review of the KEM programme, aimed at providing peer assessment of the quality of the educational offer and student experience, and of the quality assurances systems in place to ensure the effective delivery of the joint degree. In preparation for the review, the EQ-Arts standards for enhancement review were adapted to reflect the collaborative nature of the programme and these adjusted standards form the basis of this interim report.

The procedure for the review of the KEM programme was conceived as a three-stage process:

- The consortium prepared a self-evaluation report (SER) and supporting evidence, based on the EQ-Arts standards for programme review.
- An international Review Team from EQ-Arts analysed the SER and evidence with reference to the standards and carried out a site visit to the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School (BFM) at Tallinn University on 28-30 November 2022. The site visit included a tour of the BFM buildings, studios and technical facilities, and meetings with; the Vice Rector of Tallinn University, Members of the Programme Board from each partner institution, Members of the BFM Programme Board, second year students studying at BFM, first year students studying at LU, teachers, alumni, technical, administrative and support staff from BFM, and the Academic Affairs Manager from Tallinn University.
- The Review Team produced the interim report that follows, assessing the provision against the EQ-Arts standards for program review.

As the process progressed, the Review Team found that it required additional information in order to complete a comprehensive review of the programme. This was because not all of the systems and processes outlined in the SER applied consistently across the partners and further evidence was required in order for the Review Team members to understand the current situation across the whole programme. Due to the resource-intensive demands of preparing a major EU funding bid in parallel with the undertaking of the enhancement review, FilmEU was unable to provide the additional information required. Therefore, it was agreed between FilmEU and EQ-Arts that the enhancement review would lead to the development of an interim report, that would including a set of draft commendations and recommendations for future development.

The Review Team is constituted as follows:

- Prof. Anthony Dean (Chair), Professor of Performing Arts, University of Winchester

- Prof. Anton Rey, Head of the Research Institute for the Performing Arts and Film, Zurich University of the Arts
- Marta Švecová Lamperová, Head of Producing Department at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU)
- Stef Vanpeteghem, recent graduate of Narafi School of Arts in Brussels
- Laura Witt (Secretary), Registrar and Secretary at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London

The Review Team wishes to thank staff at BFM, Tallinn University for their assistance in organising the initial site visit and for coordinating with the other partners to make meetings with staff students and other stakeholders possible. Those attending meetings engaged with the process with an openness that enabled the team to gain valuable insights into the current operation of the programme and potential future developments.

**Key data:**

<b>Programme Title</b>	Kino Eyes – the European Film Masters
<b>Partner Institutions</b>	Lusófona University, School of Arts, Communication and Information Technologies Tallinn University, Baltic Film, Media and Arts School Edinburgh Napier University, School of Arts and Creative Industries/Screen Academy Scotland Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
<b>Partnership status</b>	Consortium agreement
<b>Date of programme creation</b>	2015
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="https://www.kinoeyes.eu/">https://www.kinoeyes.eu/</a>
<b>Number of students enrolled in reviewed programme (2022-23)</b>	48
<b>Number of teaching and support staff associated with the programme</b>	LU: 23 ENU: 11 BFM/TU: 16 IADT: 14

## 1. Quality Assurance Policy

**Standard:** The institution’s mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning & teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.

### Description of Provision

#### 1.1 The institutions apply joint quality assurance processes and have an agreed Quality Assurance Framework and policy in place for the joint programme

The Kino Eyes Master’s degree (KEM) is currently accredited in each of the countries in which it is delivered, either under the auspices of the partner Universities or, in the case of Lusófona, by the national accreditation agency (A3ES)<sup>1</sup>. As such, each partner undertakes separate approval and review processes for the programme that align with the relevant institutional or national requirements. Two of these processes took place prior to the start of the enhancement review process; in Portugal, the programme was externally re-accredited by A3ES in 2021 and in Ireland, the programme was internally validated by IADT in 2022. The Review Team was provided with some of the documentation that emerged from these processes, through which the differences in criteria and approach between these two systems were evident.

The SER states that, ‘*Matching the different national systems requirements and procedures is a tremendous challenge*’ [SER, p. 11]. The KEM consortium of partners has developed a QA system specific to the programme based on a set of shared principles and has appointed Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) as the lead partner for the development and implementation of QA processes for KEM. These processes are designed to align with the European Standards and Guidelines and include an academic governance structure, internal evaluation and feedback mechanisms, external evaluation processes and a process for the analysis of programme outcomes, such as graduate employability. This QA system operates independently from the QA systems operating at the partner institutions.

FilmEU is in the process of developing a European accreditation system, with the aim of producing a toolkit aligned with the ESG for use by each of the partner institutions in the alliance. The toolkit will include a handbook describing the policies, processes and resources that form the joint QA Framework for FilmEU programmes [Annex 1 – International QA Best Practice Report, p.73]. As this framework is still in development and the individual partners’ internal QA systems all currently apply to the programme, the Review Team found that there were a number of discrepancies between current practices and that several of the QA mechanisms outlined in the SER did either not occur regularly or were not being consistently applied across the partner institutions. For example, the SER identifies the Self-Evaluation Document (SED), a critical report produced by the programme boards in each institution for each intake, as the core common QA mechanism [SER p.11]. However, the KEM consortium was unable to provide examples of these reports for all partners, though the existence of an periodic report to the EACEA is confirmed.

The KEM consortium has established an External QA Board to act as an advisory body on curriculum content, learning and teaching and evaluation processes, which last met in 2019. Members of the QA Board are expected to undertake external examination of samples of student work, in order to ensure that academic standards and marking practices are consistent across the partners, comparable with other institutions, and gather feedback from students [SER p.12]. Each member of the External QA Board produces a report with recommendations for improvement.

<sup>1</sup> Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (A3ES) the National Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education.

Two of the 2019 reports from External QA Board Members recommended changes to the first-year self-portrait project, with one suggesting that this should be reconfigured as a self-led, pre-arrival activity [Christopher Granier-Deferre Report, pp.3-4]. The Review Team discussed the process for making such a change with members of the Kino Eyes Academic Board, who confirmed that such recommendations from the External QA Board are initially referred to the Academic Board for a joint decision, before referring this to the Programme Boards at each institution. In respect of the specific recommendation in relation to the self-portrait project, while there had been some changes to the nature of task, the project had not been removed as curriculum changes are not possible in Portugal where there is a legal requirement to publish all requirements of degree programmes in advance [M2]. This indicates that there are local requirements for individual partner institutions that have not yet been fully integrated into the joint quality assurance framework for the programme.

In carrying its enhancement review of KEM, the Review Team found the gathering of relevant documentation to be a challenging process. In part, this process was hindered by there not being a single centralised repository in which a complete archive of programme documentation is held. Items of documentation that would normally be expected to form key elements of an effective centralised internal quality assurance (IQA) system are, therefore, held by individual partner institutions according to the needs of their own IQA systems and are not automatically copied into a centrally managed and accessible KEM database. Some key documents, for example the Annual Reports for each institution, are only available in the national language of the institution and so have limited value as instruments through which to assure the overall quality of the programme.

### 1.2 The QA policy is clearly inspired by and linked with the institution's mission, strategy, and policies for learning & teaching and research.

Members of the Kino Eyes Academic Board confirmed [M10] that they use the funding application for the programme to the EU's Erasmus Mundus scheme as a proxy for a strategic plan, however this document is mainly focused on the current status of the programme and any changes in progress – or anticipated – at the time of the application, therefore it is not able to present any medium and long term goals [M10]. This practice ties the strategy for Kino Eyes to the current funding period and as such, current QA practices are more explicitly linked to the partner institutions' requirements and the planning processes in each nation, than to the programme itself.

The leaders of the Kino Eyes programme saw the enhancement review as a means of gaining insights that would help them to detach their strategic planning process from the differing approaches of each partner institution and develop a coherent approach. They considered the implementation of a joint QA framework for all of the Erasmus Mundus programmes managed by FilmEU to be the key to developing joint strategies for learning, teaching and research [M10].

### 1.3 The institutions' missions, strategic plans and policies respond to, and impact upon, the Creative, Performing Arts and Design (CPAD) sector and societal needs locally, nationally, and internationally.

Kino Eyes '*envisions educating tomorrow's creative professionals who fully comprehend all dimensions of audiovisual media creation and possess the specialized skills necessary for a successful career in the highly competitive international market.*' [application EM strategic pp.5-6] Students work within their specialisation in teams that are designed to mirror professional environments and develop the entrepreneurship skills necessary to pursue successful careers. The majority of KEM graduates have returned to work in their home countries, ensuring that the programme has a wide reach and the potential to impact international film production practices.

The consortium of partners involved in KEM each make a contribution to the curriculum that focuses on its core competencies as they relate to the specialisms embedded within the programme.



Lusófona Universita (LU) draws on its experience in the areas of directing, editing and post-production, BFM brings specialised teaching in cinematography, sound and editing, and ENU offers expertise in writing, direction and production. The international mobility model enables students to move between the partner institutions, experiencing the particular specialisms of each, and complete their thesis at the partner most closely associated with their research interests. As each partner draws on its existing staff expertise, infrastructure, and facilities the programme itself acts as a mechanism for their individual strategic approaches to impact the creative sector internationally.

The strategy for the programme as outlined in the Erasmus Mundus application, demonstrates an awareness of developments within the sector and the evolving range of skills required by employers. The application Erasmus + application to the EU outlines the rationale for developing curricula content focussed on serialised fiction [Application EM strategic, p. 1]. This development, the main reason for bringing IADT into the consortium as a partner with particular expertise in this area, responds to the growth in digital subscription services across Europe and the emergence of streaming platforms as key distributors for content creators. Without changing the original scope of the programme, the introduction of IADT to the consortium has provided opportunities to expand the skills and employability of KEM graduates.

The Review Team formed a view that the Kino Eyes programme both responds to, and impacts upon, the Creative, Performing Arts and Design (CPAD) sector and societal needs within each host country, across Europe and beyond. Each cohort is internationally diverse, and the majority of graduates take the knowledge and skills gained through KEM back to their home countries, thereby expanding the reach and impact of the programme. Whilst on the programme, students also have the opportunity to learn from a diverse range of peers and to experience a number of different European cultures as a result of its mobility requirements and opportunities. Kino Eyes draws on the specific expertise of each of its partners, thereby giving its students access to specialist teaching and learning resources as they move from one institution to the next.

Internationalisation and global impact are core to the aims of the KEM programme and the introduction of an additional partner in Ireland (IADT) has enhanced the opportunities for international mobility within the programme. With the aim of expanding its reach beyond Europe, the consortium has also introduced a 'Kino Eyes Bootcamp' in Australia in partnership with Griffith University. This provides students with an opportunity to experience a further international co-production environment [Application EM strategic, p.2]

FilmEU has articulated its focus on the power of media as a tool for social change and economic impact [IM, p.7] and sees the programme as addressing EU objectives to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogues. The programme's international community of students and staff bring together individuals from a diverse range of cultures to provide a global perspective on film making. In a meeting with the Review Team, alumni indicated that they considered the diversity of the cohort and the ability to experience different cultures to be a valuable aspect of the programme [M7].

#### 1.4 The institutions each have Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity strategies that cover all their operational activities.

Many Kino Eyes students are studying on a full Erasmus Mundus scholarship, which means that they are able to focus on the programme without the necessary need to work [M4]. The funding model for the programme, which includes scholarship and self-paying students, means that it provides advanced study-level opportunities for individuals from a diverse range of countries and socioeconomic backgrounds. As an Erasmus Mundus programme, there is a limit of three students per year from the host country, which also ensures an internationally diverse cohort. [Check and ref]

Staff are also supported to travel between partner institutions, giving them the opportunity to work with colleagues across countries and cultures and to expand their knowledge of international production practices.

The Erasmus + Application for the KEM programme, sets out links between cultural diversity and innovation and asserts that, *'Europe's unique cultural diversity puts it in an envious position to embrace these opportunities.'* [Application EM strategy, p.6] The programme aims to develop new ideas and drive change through the provision of training and research activities in a culturally diverse learning environment. The mobility aspect of the programme, which also extends to teaching staff travelling between host institutions, lends itself to the development of inclusive practices.

Conversely, the mobility requirement of the programme has the potential to discourage some individuals, such as those with caring responsibilities or specific support needs, from engaging with KEM. The programme's management confirmed that advice was available for those travelling with their family and that support to obtain visas for dependents was available, however the demanding nature of KEM was emphasised [M2]. In meetings with the Review Team, students, alumni and programme staff all reported difficulties with obtaining visas, particularly those travelling initially to Portugal with no means of gaining a visa within their own country. Some students and alumni that the Review Team spoke with [meetings with second year students and meeting with alumni] reported on their difficulties in securing visas that enabled them to move between partner institutions, beyond the initial semester spent in Lisbon. In some cases, this had the effect of limiting student study choices on the programme. As such, the programme operates in a way that promotes diversity but there are potential downsides of the mobility requirements in terms of limiting accessibility for some demographic groups.

#### 1.5 The programme has an appropriate organisational structure, allied with, and aligned to clear, inclusive, and effective decision-making processes that enable it to realise its mission and meet its stated strategic objectives.

The consortium has established an academic governance framework for the programme that incorporates joint and local bodies with differing levels of decision-making responsibility. An Academic Board including two teachers with leadership responsibility for the programme at each partner institution acts as the senior decision-making authority for the programme. It oversees the governance of the Erasmus Mundus scheme on a cyclical basis and the internal monitoring and review of the programme [M2]. A separate Management Board made up of one member of each partner with responsibility for administrative issues, oversees enrolment and mobility management [SER, p.27]. A Selection Board with one teacher from each institution has oversight of the admissions process. Each of the partners also has lead responsibility for certain aspects of programme management. However, there is a significant overlap between the membership of the Management Board and that of the Academic Board. For logistical reasons, the meetings (whether on-line or face-to-face) are often sequential, with a meeting of the Academic Board immediately following a meeting of the Management Board, with very little change in the respective memberships. Consequently, it appeared to the Review Team that there was currently very little separation between the deliberative and executive functions within the academic governance framework.

The Kino Eyes consortium of partners has taken steps to develop some effective joint quality assurance processes, including the establishment of an External QA Board that provides the partners with feedback and assurances on the currency of the curriculum and the standards of learning, teaching and assessment practices evident across the programme. The QA Board is currently convened periodically rather than on a regular or annual basis, and the last meeting of this Board took place in 2019. A number of the other QA mechanisms that form part of the framework, such as

an overall annual report, are not operating in practice. The Review Team also noted that some other elements of the QA framework are not yet being implemented consistently across the KEM partners.

Programme Boards, sub-committees of the Academic Board, oversee the management, operation and review of the programme within each of the partner institutions in the context of their own operational requirements and strategic plans [SER, p. 33]. The membership of these Boards includes the relevant Head of Department, Programme Leader, all full-time and some part-time teaching staff, as well as student representatives. Teachers from BFM confirmed that the Programme Board meets at end of each semester. Content varies from semester to semester but incorporates reflection on the semester just gone and planning for the semester ahead, in addition to consideration of issues emerging from each cohort. Recent meetings of the BFM Programme Board had addressed a range of immediate concerns such as problems with mobility, visas and students' projects [M6].

The SER states that that Academic and Management Boards receive 'internal inputs' such as feedback from students and staff, feedback from the selection committee and from Programme Board members in each school. Along with external inputs from the QA Board and national accreditation exercises, the Academic Board is responsible for incorporating these various sources of information into a critical Self-evaluation Document [SER, p.11]. However, in practice the partners have not been working together to produce such a report for the purposes of internal quality assurance. There are local requirements for internal monitoring that result in the production of annual monitoring reports for each institution (or accreditation body in the case of Lusófona University) [M2]. Furthermore, annual monitoring reports are currently only produced in the language of the individual institution, so the monitoring reports produced by the programme for LU and BFM are only available in Portuguese and Estonian respectively. This makes it difficult to share important quality assurance documentation between the partner institutions.

The Review Team found that Academic and Programme Board meetings did not have consistent formal agendas, workplans or minutes. The brief notes of one Academic Board meeting were provided to the Review Team, which indicated that information about the status of each cohort at each partner was discussed but did not clearly indicate any decisions taken or actions agreed as a result of deliberation. Members of the Academic Board explained to the Review Team that they were developing a new QA framework as a way of establishing clear communication and levels of accountability between different bodies [M2].

#### 1.6 The institutions use appropriate sets of qualitative and quantitative indicators, to critically evaluate, accurately measure and monitor their progress towards the realisation of stated shared strategic objectives.

A number of mechanisms have been designed for the purpose of informing the ongoing monitoring and critical evaluation of the programme. The SER states that these include; student questionnaires issued each semester, data on student outcomes, monitoring of employability, each partner's evaluation of resources and student support, data on staff research outputs, evaluation of student performance and recruitment, evaluation of project dissemination and staff-student liaison committees [SER, p.13].

Examples of self-evaluation documents from LU and BFM indicate that there is some level of reflection on indicators such as student progression and programme resources, however these reports have been produced for the specific purpose of meeting local institutional/national requirements rather as an effective means of informing the continuous enhancement of the programme as a whole. The Review Team saw no evidence that these reports were scrutinised by the

KEM Academic Board or used in order to identify actions for the following year. It appeared to the Review Team that there were no specific agreed KPIs in place for the programme as a whole.

External reports from the last iteration of the QA Board, External Examiner reports from ENU and reports from external accreditation exercises in Portugal are generally very positive about the quality of the learning, teaching and the overall student experience offered by KEM, however they each also offer constructive suggestions for improvement. It is not clear from the evidence presented to the Review Team whether there is a structured process for discussing these recommendations, capturing associated actions or monitoring progress against these. The introduction of regular programme monitoring reports and an overarching action plan for the programme would enable more effective means of monitoring progress against the partners' shared objectives for the KEM programme.

#### 1.7 The joint QA policy is designed to foster a pan-institutional quality culture that promotes continuous development and enhancement as well as innovation in cooperation with the CPAD sector.

The SER outlines some shared key principles and policies intended to assure the quality of the programme, to evaluate and identify areas for enhancement and to engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of the programme. These include the governance and reporting structures outlined above, pursuit of external funding opportunities and engagement with external representative bodies such as CILECT (the International Association of Film and Television Schools) [SER, p.12].

During the site visit, programme managers were open about the fact that the joint QA policy was a work in progress and that further work was required in order to effectively harness the expertise within the different partners and to enable them to contribute fully to the ongoing development of KEM. FilmEU aims to gain legal status as a European University, when this opportunity arises, in order to award a single European degree, however they reported that the participation of a UK institution in the consortium represented a major obstacle and therefore an alternative model may be necessary [M10].

While there have been challenges in adapting the programme to the different pedagogical models in operation at each partner, the consortium values difference and aims to focus on the strengths of each institution. For some of the partners KEM fulfils a particularly important strategic position, functioning as an indicator of the advantages of maintaining an international focus, or of investing in resources [M10].

There is an aspiration to develop common approaches, such as a single diploma and supplement that draws together the learning experience across institutions. The Academic and Management Boards are focussed on pooling their knowledge to resolve issues with the operation of the programme and making the student experience more consistent [M10].

#### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The consortium confirmed at the time of the review that its internal QA processes were still in development and the following themes, identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, are presented for the partners' consideration as they continue to design and implement their joint approach to internal quality assurance.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The KEM consortium has established an External QA Board to act as an advisory body on curriculum, learning & teaching, and evaluation processes.

- The majority of KEM graduates have returned to work in their home countries and are, therefore, in a position to have an impact on their national film production practices. This is in line with the stated intentions of the programme.
- Each partner institution in the KEM consortium is able to effectively draw on its existing staff expertise, curriculum strengths and its resource infrastructure to enable the programme to offer students the opportunity to tailor their learning towards specific career goals.
- The introduction of IADT into the consortium has provided opportunities to further expand the knowledge, skills and employability of students.
- The international cohorts of students undertaking the KEM programme, together with the international profile of the teaching and technical support staff contributing to it, provides a global perspective on film making. This is underpinned by the funding model for the programme, which includes scholarship and self-funded students, and provides an advanced study-level opportunity for individuals from a diverse range of countries and socio-economic backgrounds.

**Developing themes (recommendations):**

- All aspects of the KEM internal quality assurance framework should be implemented on a regular and consistent basis across the programme provision of each of the partner institutions. The Management, Academic and Programme Boards should ensure this.
- The KEM consortium would benefit from establishing a central repository and database that collates all the necessary documentation and data that is required to support an effective internal quality assurance (IQA) system and, thereby, facilitate the requirements of external quality assurance (EQA) processes. All documentation should be translated into a single language, as agreed between the partners, to ensure that it is as widely accessible as possible.
- The KEM consortium should consider developing an overarching Strategic Plan and associated Action Plan for the programme. This should be separate to but informed by current and future funding applications. This should include a set of agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) that enable the consortium to accurately measure progress against strategic goals.
- The KEM consortium should consider ways in which it can provide further information and assistance to students who require visas in order to participate in the programme. In the view of the Review Team, additional guidance needs to be made available for students who need additional visas to move to partner institutions following the first semester in Lisbon.
- The KEM consortium would benefit from creating a clearer separation between the executive and deliberative functions of the academic governance of the KEM programme. There is currently a significant overlap between the respective memberships of the KEM Management Board and the Academic Board.
- The internal quality assurance and critical self-evaluation of the KEM programme could be significantly enhanced by the full and consistent implementation of its QA mechanisms. Including, for example, an overarching Annual Monitoring Report, which could draw upon the

Annual Monitoring reports produced by each partner institution, to provide a wholistic critical overview of the KEM programme, which could be deliberated upon and approved by the Academic Board and shared with each partner institution.

- The KEM Academic Board, individual Programme Boards, and the External QA Board should establish formal agendas and maintain accurate minutes of their meetings. This will enable issues, decisions and agreed actions to be effectively tracked. Protocols should also be established for reporting through the committee structure and for delegating authority from the Academic Board to its sub-committees.
- The frequency of External QA Board meetings should be formalised and a plan of activities for its members established to ensure that the KEM programme is fully benefitting from this resource on a continuous basis.
- A policy and a set of procedures for making changes to the curriculum that meets the requirements of all relevant national agencies and awarding bodies should be introduced.
- An equal opportunities policy should be developed for the KEM programme, that clearly outlines what adjustments might be made for students who find the mobility aspect of the programme challenging.
- The KEM consortium should continue with the planned development of a joint diploma and supplement that reflects each student's experience of the whole KEM programme.

## 2. Student-Centred Learning

**Standard:** The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centred approaches to learning and assessment processes.

### Description of Provision

2.1. The design of the study programme is aligned with each of the partner institutions' vision, mission, and strategies.

The KEM programme is designed with multiculturalism and mobility at its core, along with opportunities for students to collaborate across specialisms on projects that mirror professional practice in the creation of film and related audio-visual media. Through the provision of a learning environment in which students can develop their creative and professional skills, the programme aims to produce graduates who are highly adaptable and able to compete in a demanding professional environment [SER, p.24]. The experience of living and studying within different European cultures is intended to contribute to this level of adaptability and enable students to build broad professional networks during their time on the programme.

While mobility is key to the ethos of the programme, moving between countries creates practical difficulties for some students. Students and alumni reported that exposure to different environments and cultures gave them a sense of perspective, but this benefit can be somewhat

offset by the difficulties of gaining the necessary visas to move between institutions (and countries) between semesters [M5, M7]. Alumni reported that due to finding out at a relatively late stage which partner they were travelling to next, this process had been particularly difficult and, as a result, some students have had to stay in one city for an extra semester. In spite of the benefits to students of experiencing a range of environments and working with a diverse range of individuals, students informed the Review Team that the mobility aspect of Kino Eyes had caused them considerable difficulties. Several students reported that gaining visas was difficult and that the design of the programme impacted their eligibility for employment in some of the host countries. The host institutions have been addressing these issues by allocating students to production teams earlier and have made considerable efforts to provide support to such students. However, alumni indicated that more could be done to better acquaint support staff with the immigration arrangements that apply in some of the main feeder countries for the KEM programme [M7].

Students are admitted to the programme to follow a particular specialism; directors, screenwriters, producers, cinematographers, film editors and sound designers. After the first semester (which takes place at Lusófona University), the distribution of students between the partner institutions reflects these specialisms and the different focus and expertise provided by each institution. As the programme is designed to play to the strengths and experience of each of the host schools, the provision aligns with their respective strategies.

The Review Team found that there were differences between the partner institutions, regarding the integration of Kino Eyes students into the wider student community. The A3ES accreditation report for the programme at LU identified this as a negative aspect of the programme [ACEF 2021 p.12], and students confirmed that the language barrier was a significant contributing factor to this. Opportunities for integration with other students were embedded within the curriculum at BFM, where students undertake collaborative projects such a film with Dance students and participate in joint lectures and masterclasses with BA students. At ENU it was possible to take optional courses with other students [M4].

## 2.2. The study programme, and it's intended learning outcomes (LOs) are designed, and regularly approved, including with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders across the partnership.

The curriculum was designed jointly by the partner institutions to reflect each of their specific fields of expertise and to reflect the value chain of film production with the last two semesters mirroring the development of an actual production in an international context. In the initial development of the KEM programme a number of common objectives were agreed by the partners, one of which was the implementation of consultation and benchmarking with all stakeholders, including potential students, employers and sector bodies with reference to the framework of CILECT/GEECT [SER, p.16].

The common curriculum for the programme was developed by members of its Academic Board, who continue to work together to evaluate the current student learning experience and to make adjustments for future cohorts. This team has worked together to enlarge the scope of the programme to reflect major developments in the industry, most significantly the introduction of serialised audio-visual content [SER, p.16], which led to the introduction of IADT as a new partner for programme delivery.

The ongoing design and development of the programme is informed by a range of internal and external stakeholders, including current students, teaching staff, accrediting bodies and external peers, such as those sitting on the External QA Board and the External Examiner for the programme engaged by ENU. Opportunities for students to input into the curriculum structure exist in the form of regular surveys and through Student Representatives' membership of local Programme Boards. However, it appeared that not all partners host a student representative every semester. None of the second-year students – who the Review Team met with at BFM – were Student Representatives and the first-year students reported that they were unclear about whether or not a representative had been elected for their cohort.

Students informed the review team that the structure of the programme worked more effectively for some specialisms than others, for example Screenwriting where they reported that there were long periods of downtime in between writing for different projects [M4]. They also felt that the timing of some activities, for example the concurrent scheduling of the fiction package and the thesis, meant that they felt unable to fully engage with all elements of the programme equally. They felt that though they had clearly articulated their concerns, programme staff were unresponsive, and they were unaware of any significant changes made to the programme in relation to their feedback. The Review Team found that there were no clear mechanisms in place to gather, action and respond to such feedback within annual monitoring or periodic review processes.

The SER indicates Kino Eyes alumni are not currently involved in '*programme planning*' [SER, p.12]. Staff confirmed to the Review Team that this is because most alumni return to their original countries on completion, however this changed during the pandemic with a growing number of Kino Eyes students joining PhD programmes. LU recently hired a graduate to work in the management of the programme who will be directly involved in its future development. [M2]

### 2.3. The learning, teaching and assessment methods and criteria are effectively aligned with intended learning outcomes.

Kino Eyes operates on a project-based model, incorporating a team-developed project for a feature film or streamed series (with an initial episode being produced), a short-fiction film or TV pilot and an individual thesis. These projects include points at which they must pitch their ideas to teachers, peers and industry professionals. In this way, the intended learning outcomes are tied to the processes and outputs associated with group project work and an individual thesis. The programme's learning and teaching methodologies promote active learning, project development and experimentation which also embed opportunities for critical reflection and expose students to some elements of artistic research practices [SER, p.17].

The partners within FilmEU have worked together to design a pedagogical model based on the learning and teaching strategies in operation at each institution, called the SAMSARA model, which applies across the curriculum and incorporates a strong focus on project-based learning. The research element of the programme is designed to integrate a film project, a written report and a plan for the development of a film or series [SER, p.18].

These learning and teaching strategies are fully aligned to the stated learning outcomes for the programme. However, reports from members of the External QA Board, External Examiner (appointed by ENU) and the A3ES accreditation report indicate that there is a need to further develop academic writing and research within the curriculum. Students reported that the more 'academic' elements of the curriculum, such as theoretical classes and the development of research skills, could be improved [M4]. Some changes to the level of support for theses were reported by members of the Academic Board, including the introduction of more focused research methods



classes. The consortium has established a joint team of teachers who work together in development of the research elements of the KEM programme [M2].

Collaboration in, and leadership of, interdisciplinary teams is one of the programme's core learning outcomes and the assessment strategy includes the assessment of individuals participating in group tasks. The second-year projects incorporate individual and team deliverables which are discussed in a combination of one-to-one and team meetings. Mentors are responsible for balancing the assessment of individual performance and team outcomes within the assessment process [M3].

Continuous assessment is also used throughout the programme in order to authentically assess the creative production process. This can take the form of a staged assessment with defined review and feedback processes, as in the production and editing specialisms, wherein students' complete exercises throughout the semester that contribute to a final grade. Portfolio assessments are also used, for example in the screenwriting specialism [M3].

Some course units assign 20% to 30% of the overall assessment diet to attendance, whereas some course units give no assessment weighting to attendance. This is due to different national and institutional requirements, for example in Portugal there is a compulsory attendance requirement for practical subjects. For some units, attendance marks were introduced as way to encourage student engagement with certain activities at busy times in the course. The Academic Board is aware of this issue and intends to review this approach in order to resolve scheduling issues and thereby remove the need to attach marks to attendance [M2].

#### 2.4 Students are made fully aware of relevant assessment criteria and receive clear, objective, and timely feedback on their level of achievement against the learning outcomes.

The SER states that assessment tasks are accompanied by grading schemes, which are communicated to students [SER, p.26]. Syllabus documents include descriptions of assessment tasks – however, no detailed assessment criteria were included in the sample documents provided to the Review Team. Students confirmed to the Review Team that each teacher gave them assessment information and that this could easily be accessed through Moodle (the VLE).

Ongoing formative feedback is provided in classes, seminars and through the VLE and individual and group feedback sessions form part of the continuous assessment processes [SER, p. 29]. Formal summative feedback is provided for each module within three weeks of the assignment submission date.

#### 2.5 Students are challenged and enabled to take an active role in their learning processes.

The structure of the KEM programme, following the workflow of a film production process in a specialist role within a creative team, challenges students to learn within simulated real-world settings [SER, p.24] The project-based approach allows students from all disciplines to participate in shared critical reflection and to develop effective collaborative practices. Student-centred learning and assessment processes that require active student engagement include practical lab sessions, group tutorials, critiques (in which students present work in progress) and presentations of research findings [SER, p.26]. Students devise the deliverables for their research projects in agreement with project tutors and are therefore able to co-create their learning experience.

The SER underlines the importance of students engaging in critical reflection on their work, however, both student feedback and the reports from members of the External QA Board identify a

tension between time for critical reflection and the demands of the curriculum. The Programme Management Board at BFM informed the Review Team that although there are ongoing opportunities for oral reflection, they were considering how to formalise this. Classes for producers start with self-reflections (*'how are you and where are you?'*). Students are also required to analyse their own learning and development within the thesis [M3]. Producing students are required to keep a professional journal, however teachers reported that as students' schedules intensify throughout the programme, they tend to go off track. They had found differences of opinion between groups of students in terms of the programme schedule and differences in how engaged they are, however, they acknowledged that some aspects of the timetable could be improved [M3]. Students within the different specialisms expressed varying levels of satisfaction to the Review Team in respect of the learning opportunities provided by Kino Eyes. The Screenwriting students (both first and second year) and the alumni [meetings 4, 5 and 7 respectively] of this specialism, who met with the Review Team, all expressed a level of disappointment with their learning experience and indicated that, in their role as Screenwriters, they often felt detached from the film making process. Within the film production area, production meetings were found to be valuable as they mirrored the profession and therefore provided greater opportunities for student engagement than traditional classroom activities. Variations in the levels of supervision provided across the partner institutions was also an issue for the students [M4].

#### 2.6. Students are provided with opportunities to engage with related professional practices and the world of work as part of their study programme.

Kino Eyes pre-defines the number of student spaces available on the programme and admits four students per specialism. This ensures that each student is able to play a defined role within a project team in a context that mirrors professional practice. The programme also incorporates an industry engagement requirement whereby each student agrees the nature of this engagement (for example attendance at industry events) with the course team and produces a written report. Regular guest workshops by industry professionals enhance the curriculum and alumni reported that networking opportunities one of the key benefits of the programme [M7].

The SER [p.16] indicates that internships are available within the programme, however none of the students or alumni who met with the Review Team had undertaken a placement as part of the programme and students – who were based at BFM at the time of the first site-visit, reported that they were unable to work in Estonia due to visa restrictions [M4]. The partners confirmed that internships had been offered in the past but were optional and the majority of students undertaking a placement did so after graduating, through the Erasmus scheme [M10].

Results of recent alumni surveys show that graduates are very positive about the programme's contribution to their professional development. The alumni that met with the Review Team confirmed that the programme gave them a realistic picture of how film productions work and opportunities to build networks with those in the industry, including other Kino Eyes alumni. Not everyone had a positive experience in their final project, however they were still able to use this as a learning experience and to better understand what type of professional role they would be best suited to [M7]. Many of the students and alumni had been either employed directly, or connected with employers, by their teachers.

Alumni reported that the careers services available to them in each partner institution were generally unable to provide them with any meaningful guidance that would help to gain

employment. Many students were unable to legally work in the host country and in some cases found it very hard to secure a job in their particular specialisation [M7].

### 2.7. The curriculum of the postgraduate programme is informed by leading research in the subject field, and actively engages students in research.

The SER describes Kino Eyes a research-oriented MA [SER p.26]. The consortium has established a team of teachers from across the partner institutions who work together to develop the research elements of the programme. Members of the Academic Board confirmed that students are given support to develop their research methods and writing skills in preparation for their research statement and final viva [M2], however students commented that the thesis felt like an afterthought and that training in research methods was not effectively embedded in the curriculum [M4].

At ENU in the second-year writers, directors and producers complete a 'Critical Film Studies' module which is taught alongside another MAs. This gives students a grounding in – or refreshes their existing – research skills, and ENU has contracted a research methodologies teacher to strengthen this provision [M2]. Within the KEM programme there are a range of different approaches to research that students can take and the approaches to research methodologies vary between partners.

Teachers articulated to the Review Team that there was a good balance between creative practice and research in the first semester, with at least half of the content preparing students for research activities. The second-year short film and academic thesis further develop these research skills. The European Film Heritage module in the first semester is designed to bridge the gap between practice and research and is assessed on the basis of a pitch within each student's specialism [M6]. However, students expressed a need for more depth within this unit, describing it as being at a 'surface level' [M5]. The programme team had tried different approaches to this module but felt that due to its timing early in the programme, students were more focused on practice rather than contextual studies [M10].

The written thesis is itself based on students' practice thereby embedding a research element into each student's practice. This emphasis on practice emerged as a result of the programme responding to negative feedback from students in earlier cohorts about a disconnect between the compulsory written thesis and the other elements of the programme [M6].

As an indication of the developing quality of student research projects, over the past few years, students' theses have been regularly published in peer reviewed journals and several have gone on to PhD study [M2]. The programme team has noticed more applicants had expressed an intention to go on to PhD study during, or even before joining the MA [M3].

Alumni reported that they felt generally well prepared to pursue further research or scholarship and reported that the thesis element of Kino Eyes had taught them how to work with a supervisor and reference sources, and one had been encouraged to send a paper to a conference immediately after graduating, which had been published [M7]. This view is supported by the alumni survey results from 2020 and 2021.

### The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to inform the KEM consortium in their joint approach to further enhance the student-centred learning and assessment practices used on the programme.

**Developing themes (commendations):**

- The Kino Eyes curriculum, developed jointly by the consortium, enables students to benefit from the particular expertise of each institution as they each pursue their chosen specialism. The addition of IADT as a fourth partner with specific expertise in serialised content has further enhanced the relevance of the curriculum, enabling students to gain experience of a growing sector.
- The programme’s learning, teaching and assessment methodologies are centered around project development and experimentation, and continuous assessment is used effectively to enable students to progress in authentic learning environments. Alumni confirmed that the programme had given them a realistic picture of the production process and allowed them to build professional networks. For individual research projects, students co-design the deliverables with their supervisor, giving them the opportunity to undertake research that develops their practice. Students and graduates are supported to publish their research and feel prepared to go on to PhD study.
- The KEM programme appears to effectively utilise a range of assessment practices that are effectively aligned with the various learning and teaching strategies employed on the programme, thereby enhancing the overall student learning experience provided.
- The design of the KEM programme appears to enable students to contribute to the formulation and intended deliverables of their production and research projects, in agreement with project tutors and students are, therefore, able to co-create their individual learning experience.
- The alumni confirmed that the programme provided them a realistic picture of how film production works and provided opportunities to build networks with those currently working in the industry, including with other Kino Eyes alumni.
- The programme has seen a significant increase in the number of students who have had their theses published in peer-reviewed journals, and in the number of students electing to pursue PhD study on graduation from the KEM programme, indicating that there is a growing research culture within the programme.

**Developing Themes (recommendations)**

- The KEM consortium could consider establishing a list of key feeder countries for the programme, then identify the main barriers to the gaining visas for students from these countries and consider any actions that it might take in order to ease the immigration process for students.

- The KEM programme has a central ethos of multiculturalism and internationalism, and its students have a unique experience that enables them to focus on the development of specialist skills, while also collaborating with a diverse group of peers. At BFM, there appears to be good opportunities for Kino Eyes students to work with students from other programmes, and this could offer a model of good practice for the other partners for the improvement of the integration of KEM students with the local student body.
- The KEM consortium could consider establishing a system, within the planned annual programme evaluation process, to undertake a regular review of student feedback and track any associated actions.
- Both the SER and the KEM Erasmus Mundus application place a strong emphasis on the research element of the programme, the SER states that KEM is ‘*a research orientated*’ MA [SER, page 26]. However, the Review Team finds it difficult to form a clear understanding of how research is defined within the specificity of the KEM curriculum (e.g. practice-based, artistic, theoretical). The KEM consortium should consider formulating an explicit statement regarding the nature and place of research within the KEM programme.
- The KEM programme should review the current approaches taken to assessing attendance so as to ensure that any such requirements are transparent and consistently applied across the programme.
- The KEM programme should be encouraged to ensure that student-facing syllabus documentation – such as unit or project briefs – routinely include a clear set of learning outcomes, as well as detailed associated assessment criteria.
- Student and alumni feedback suggests that the programme structure perhaps works more effectively for some specialisms than others and, also, that the timing of some activities could lead to student workloads being particularly intense at certain points. Members of the External QA Board have commented on this in their reports, suggesting that these pressure points could make it difficult for students to engage in an appropriate level of critical reflection. Students reported to the Review Team that they felt that their concerns about this aspect of the programme had not been responded to or acted upon. There are no systematic requirements to address student feedback set out within the programme’s evaluation processes. The Review Team encourage the KEM consortium to consider how to increase opportunities for critical reflection within the curriculum.
- The KEM programme leadership should investigate the issues raised by the students and alumni of the screenwriting specialism with the Review Team in order to gain a closer understanding of their concerns and, if necessary, identify any actions needed to address these.
- Students have access to information about the curriculum and assessment requirements in each of the partner institutions, however this documentation has been developed according to local practices and therefore differ across the partner institutions. The KEM consortium should consider developing a standard template for syllabus documents (such as unit or project briefs) that can be used by all partners, and that include detailed assessment criteria as well as sets of clearly defined learning outcomes.

- The KEM programme leadership could seek to establish opportunities for work placements that take place within the programme, ensuring that local careers services are able to support KEM students to navigate the work restrictions associated with their mobility.

### 3. Assuring the Student Study Experience

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience.

#### Description of Provision

##### 3.1 The programme consistently applies regulations on the whole cycle of the student experience addressing application & admissions, recognition for prior learning, and progression & achievement.

Lusófona University (LU) is the lead partner in the recruitment and admissions processes for KEM. However, a Selection Board – including one teacher from each partner – is responsible for the selection of students for the programme [SER, p.27]. Students are selected for one of the six specialisms available within the programme (screenwriting, directing, production, cinematography, editing or sound). Applicants must demonstrate competence in their chosen specialisation and provide a portfolio of work. The full list of application requirements for the programme is published on the Kino Eyes website [<https://www.kinoeyes.eu/admissions>].

Alumni, who met with the Review Team commented that in the earlier years of the programme, some students came with more film making experience than others, which resulted in half the cohort trying to catch up with the other half, but they informed the Review Team that the programme had evolved in the years since [M7] and that this was no longer the case. The possession of an undergraduate degree is a requirement for all entrants. Due to national requirements in some partner countries, it is not normally possible for applicants who possess relevant industry experience but who have no formal qualifications gain entry to the programme. In Estonia, the BA is a strict requirement for entry at national level and although a recognition of prior learning process exists, it is not regularly used for admissions processes to study at MA level. Both the requisite qualifications and previous experience of candidates are considered during the application process [M3].

All students begin the first semester of the KEM programme together at LU and undertake a number of core subjects before moving into their specialisations, it is normally the choice of specialisation which determines their onward movement between the partner institutions for subsequent semesters. In the second-year four teams of six students, each comprised of all six specialisms, work to produce a short film or series pilot at each of the partner institutions. An equivalence is maintained in the general learning & teaching approach, and the assessment requirements, across and within each team [as summarised on page 25 of the SER]. However, in their meetings with the Review Team, students and alumni indicated that in their experience the study experience differed substantially according to which partner institutions they were studying, and the particular specialism they were following [M7].

Several of the regulations pertaining to assessment vary according to the partner institution at which a student is based. These include the plagiarism regulations, regulations for resitting assessments and appeals procedures whereby the host partner's own regulations are used [SER, p.30]. This indicated to the Review Team that a student failing an assessment for the same module may receive different resit opportunities depending on their location at the point of assessment.

The programme has established a Board that assures common methods for examination (SER p.27) across the degree. Assessment is either individual or team-based, with individual assessment being conducted by teachers working at each partner institution. Each partner contributes feedback on final team outputs before meeting to agree final grades [M3]. The partners calibrate their assessment practices to ensure fair outcomes for students situated each institution. A conversion table has been created as a common reference point for markers, as the partner institutions use different marking schemes. Teachers confirmed that the thesis and fiction package are marked by examination panels, including teachers from all partners [M6].

The teachers, who met with the Review Team, explained that teaching staff from all partners work closely together throughout the programme to discuss and monitor students' progress, though accepting that these mechanisms are largely informal. All teachers meet to view student work in Lisbon as students are about to progress from the first to the second semester and they come together for the Selection Panel, which gives them an opportunity to discuss any other matters relating to student progress and the programme as a whole [M6].

### 3.2. The regulations pertaining to the student experience are applied according to the specific rights of the students, their individual rights, and their diversity.

The SER states that the standards of the respective services and responsibilities of staff and students are set out based on the IADT Learner Charter [SER, p.29]. The Review Team was provided with a copy of the IADT Learner Charter and found it to be a clear and accessible document that succinctly sets out the expectations for, and of, students in relation to information provision, learning and teaching, equality, diversity and inclusion, support services, online communications, complaints, appeals and disciplinary procedures. Administrative and support staff confirmed that while a joint document based on this charter was in development, it was not yet in place [M8]. The partner institutions do produce individual welcome guides and guidance documents, which include information about what students can expect, rules such as any specific attendance requirements and information about how to raise a complaint or appeal against an examination decision [KEM Lisbon Norms and Regulations 2022-2023].

A contract is signed by each student at the start of the programme, which includes information about the structure of the programme, the marking scheme, assessment arrangements and fee regulations. The Kino Eyes Student Agreement also sets out the rules regarding intellectual property (IP), whereby the consortium retains rights to students' work but may return it to the students concerned should they wish to develop it [Student Agreement, pp.4-5].

Members of the Academic Board [M2] confirmed that, in practice, the approach to IP differs across the partners. In Portugal, Lusófona can legally pass the IP to the student once they have graduated, and the Review Team were assured that this was standard practice. At ENU the approach has changed in recent years and the IP automatically belongs to the student, whereas at IADT the IP is retained by the institution until a suitable agreement is in place between students (involved in collaborative projects) in order to manage any potential disputes. Programme Leaders confirmed that

no issues had arisen from the differing approaches, however, this demonstrates the potential for programme regulations and practices to diverge from those formally agreed with students when they sign on to the programme.

Students who met with the Review Team, stated that they were unaware of any complaints and appeals procedures, but confirmed that they felt able to ask the course co-ordinator if they needed any further information. In general, complaints are dealt with by the teacher or academic unit director, however, depending on the type of issue, students may also appeal to University level staff at the host partner institution [M9]. Kino Eyes students have full access to counselling, study skills, and careers services at each partner institution. The Review Team were, however, unable to glean any information regarding, or evidence of, mitigating circumstances, disability support or an interruption/deferral policy mentioned in the SER [SER p. 29].

The Consortium Agreement states, 'In the selection process, the [Selection] Board will make all necessary arrangements to comply with non-discrimination objectives, by ensuring gender equality, integration of the disabled, enhancement of social and economic cohesion and combat of xenophobia.' The Agreement makes no direct mention of race and no indication of how equity is achieved in practice during the admissions process, or in the provision of learning, teaching and assessment. The SER places the onus on the student to tell the KEM Consortium what they need to succeed in the programme and concludes that, 'Due to the special requirements in terms of visual and hearing faculties, the training might not be accessible for the visual and audio impaired students' [SEP, p.31].

### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to inform the KEM consortium in their joint approach to the assurance, equitability and further enhance the student study experience offered by the programme.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- Kino Eyes publishes clear information about its admissions processes and a joint Selection Panel, including representatives from each partner, is responsible for admissions decisions. The consortium has also developed joint assessment methods, and staff come together for the panel assessment of theses in one location each year. Grades are agreed between partners for group assessment, creating a shared understanding of assessment criteria and academic standards.
- While there is currently no common learner charter in place for the KEM programme, the Review Team were assured that this is currently in development, in the meantime the IADT Learner Charter is used as a proxy charter (to the extent of which local regulations allow) and also as a model for a bespoke charter for the KEM programme as a whole. The Review Team found the IADT charter document to be an example of good practice that clearly sets out expectations for students and for the institution.

#### **Developing themes (recommendations):**

- Across the partner institutions, some assessment regulations – such as those relating to academic misconduct and reassessment – varied according to local requirements. These



differences mean that students may potentially receive different re-assessment opportunities depending on their location at the time of assessment. The Review Team also saw no evidence of joint regulations or procedures for other aspects of the student experience, such as mitigating circumstances, interruption of studies or adjustments for disabled students. The KEM programme management should seek to establish a common set of assessment regulations for the programme, including procedures for considering mitigating circumstances, assessment mitigation or re-assessment, and other reasonable adjustments.

- Students and alumni indicated to the Review Team [M4, M7] that they found that their study experience could differ substantially depending on which of the partner institutions they were studying at, and in the particular specialism that they were following. The KEM programme management should seek feedback from students on this matter to further enhance its understanding of the whole student experience.
- The KEM programme management should seek to develop a common equality and diversity policy for the programme, which describes how equality and equity is achieved in practice during the admissions process, and within the implementation of the programme’s learning & teaching, and assessment processes.
- The KEM programme management should seek to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to disclose disabilities and implement a needs assessment process to ensure that disabled students are supported to participate in the programme.

#### 4. Human Resources

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.

##### Description of Provision

##### 4.1. The compliment of teaching, research, academic management, and study support staff available to students is sufficient to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes.

The Kino Eyes Consortium Agreement stipulates that each partner appoints a Course Director and sub-director with responsibility for ensuring that the programme delivered at their institution meets the required learning outcomes [KEMIII\_CA, p.4]. The Course Directors in place at each institution are experienced academics and professionals in the film making or audio-visual industries. The Course Director at LU acts as the Consortium Co-ordinator. Staff-student ratios on the programme are high, as the small cohort size of 24 students per year is distributed between the four partners. Small group tutorials consisting of two lecturers and three or four students are a core teaching methodology throughout the programme [SER, p.26].

The Review Team found that the KEM programme is well resourced by specialist staff teams in each of the partner institutions. During the site-visit to BFM (Tallinn University), the Review Team had

opportunity to witness first-hand the clear commitment of BFM teaching and professional services staff to the KEM programme. Students are taught in small groups and benefit from high levels of contact with both teaching and technical staff. There are numerous opportunities for Course Directors and other members of teaching staff to come together built into the academic calendar, ensuring that the programme team is well integrated and mutually supportive. The recent accreditation report for the programme from Portugal highlights the stability of the teaching staff and the dynamics and rapport of the teaching team across the partner institutions as a strength.

A Study Counsellor from LU is dedicated to the programme and provides support to students throughout their time on Kino Eyes. Students reflected on the importance of this resource and indicated that they would be able to approach the Study Counsellor if they were unsure who to speak to or where to find information about a particular matter, such as visas, residency or work permissions in each of the host countries [M5]. Additional support services are provided locally by each partner as students have access to library, student counselling and careers services in each of the partner institutions.

The consortium agreement makes provision for the engagement of at least one visiting teacher per semester. Staff from BFM confirmed that they had no difficulties finding visiting lecturers with relevant professional experience to lecture on specific topics, however they sometimes had difficulty finding such individuals in Tallinn that were able to teach effectively in English [M3].

#### 4.2. The competences of the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes.

Each of the host institutions delivers specialist teaching in accordance with its particular area of expertise, for example screenwriting at ENU and cinematography at BFM, and the structure of the programme is designed to fully exploit the strengths and competences of each partner. Each partner has between seven and fourteen permanent members of academic staff who teach on the Kino Eyes programme [<https://www.kinoeyes.eu/people>]. At LU, where students in all specialisms are taught together during the first semester, the permanent teaching staff includes individuals with extensive experience as producers, screenwriters, directors, cinematographers, sound designers and film editors [SER, pp.33-35].

All staff associated with the programme are required to hold a bachelor's degree and professional/technical expertise relevant to their role. Lecturers must hold a master's degree and have specialist professional experience, Visiting Lecturers must hold a bachelor's degree in film or a cognate discipline and have at least five years' relevant professional experience.

The accrediting body in Portugal (A3ES) noted in its 2001 report that the programme is supported by an infrastructure that ensures there is appropriate administrative and technical support in place for students. However, the report notes that there had been some difficulties encountered by non-teaching staff in navigating the complexities associated with student mobility and suggests that there should be more explicit requirements for the qualifications, training and continuing professional development required of non-teaching staff [ACEF 2021 Preliminary Report p.5].

#### 4.3. The institutions recruit the teaching, research, academic management and study support staff in accordance with their Equal Opportunities and Inclusion & Diversity Strategies.

Kino Eyes does not have a single recruitment or EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity) strategy. The partner institutions each have their own policies and procedures for staff recruitment and the Review Team have not had the opportunity to explore how these are individually applied across the KEM consortium up until the current stage of the review process. The Review Team found that there was no overarching recruitment strategy for the programme, as teaching staff are recruited by each partner according to its own policies and legal responsibilities. Similarly, approaches to professional development are dependent on the policies operating at each partner institution, although there are specific opportunities for staff mobility associated with the KEM programme as indicated above.

#### 4.4. The institutions each offer programme staff career opportunities that are equitable, and enable them to improve their performance, to achieve their personal ambitions and engage with the strategic priorities of the institution and developments across the wider CPAD sector.

The Kino Eyes programme promotes the mobility of staff between the partner institutions, thereby providing opportunities for professional development and to build knowledge and understanding across the consortium. Teaching staff from across the FilmEU partners have opportunities to come together at various points in the year, which provides opportunities for team building activities [M6].

Teaching staff at BFM are able to pursue professional development opportunities in line with their particular interests and development needs. Examples of development activities recently undertaken include Albert production training, EDI training, training for green consultants and PhD study. The Review Team found that technical staff have fewer development opportunities but are supported to pursue any interests identified during their annual performance review. Technical staff at BFM are encouraged to attend product demonstrations by external companies when these take place [M8].

The 2021 annual report for the AE3S (National Accrediting Body) in Portugal confirms that at LU teaching staff receive 30 hours of training per year and are supported financially to pursue doctoral studies [KEM LU Annual Report, p.23]. While professional development opportunities are offered within each institution, the Review Team identified some missed opportunities to share knowledge and understanding across the programme. For example, annual self-evaluation reports are completed in some form at each provider in the language of the host institution and are not routinely translated and shared. Further opportunities for knowledge exchange, through the sharing of research and scholarship across the consortium could help to build a community of practice, and to implement examples of good practice across the programme as a whole.

#### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to inform the KEM consortium in their joint approach to the provision of human resources.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The appointment of a dedicated Study Counsellor who acts as a first point of contact for Kino Eyes students throughout the whole programme was especially valuable to students and clearly enhanced their learning experience.

- Staff are supported to travel between the partner institutions, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the KEM programme as a whole and opportunity to share good practice with colleagues.

**Developing themes (recommendations):**

- The KEM programme leadership should consider the development of a joint EDI strategy for Kino Eyes that aligns with the requirements of each partner institution.
- The KEM programme leadership should consider developing additional opportunities for KEM staff to share knowledge and good practice, for example by sharing emerging outputs from staff research and scholarship.

## 5. Learning & Teaching Resources

**Standard:** The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning & teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### Description of Provision

5.1. The institutions each allocate appropriate financial resources to the material support of all aspects of student learning, including the meeting of intended Learning Outcomes.

The fee model for Kino Eyes incorporates both Erasmus Mundus scholarship funded fees at either 4,500 or 2,250 Euros per semester, and self-funded tuition fees at 4,500 Euros per semester. The fee level is set at a relatively high level in order to reflect the specialist resources and practice-based training required for the discipline, the mobility aspects of the programme, the number of guest lecturers, and attendance at film festivals. Approximately 25% of fee income is directed to costs incurred jointly by the consortium (for example, marketing, travel, quality assurance activities) and around 75% is directed to delivery costs incurred by each partner (including staff salaries, equipment and operational costs). Funds are allocated to the partners based on the number of students they host each year [SER, p.38].

As the KEM programme sits alongside other film programmes offered locally at each institution, the partners each make substantial 'in-kind' contributions to the operation and delivery of the programme, for example, in making equipment and specialist studio spaces available to KEM students [M2]. However, there is currently no mechanism in place to quantify this type of contribution and embed it within the overall funding model for the programme. BFM is in the process of developing a formula for tracking production spending for film production across all of its programmes through the use of project numbers [M3]. This approach is likely to provide further clarity in relation to the actual costs associated with the programme and its future financial sustainability.

At the time of the site-visit to BFM (in Tallinn), FilmEU was in the process of applying to the EU for continuation funding over and above that provided in its current contract, which runs until 2027. The consortium's longer-term objective is for the programme to be financially self-sustainable, a goal that

is aligned with plans for Film EU and the European University which are focused on the ability to award European degrees. This would enable FilmEU to charge higher tuition fees and to access the different national funding streams for joint degrees. This approach had been trialled with another programme, for which Erasmus scholarships were removed for one year and this experiment proved to be successful. The consortium believes that the European University label will enable the programme to become self-sustainable in future [M2].

### 5.2. Each institution makes appropriate resources available to deliver the relevant quality of research.

Students have access to physical library facilities at each of the partner institutions. First year students at LU reported that the University had a good library with helpful staff but that they did not know how to access academic papers from elsewhere [M5]. KEM students are able to access online journals from anywhere via a VPN connection.

BFM has a library with a good selection of film-related books and a study centre on-site where newer and more popular titles are held. Other titles are held in the main Tallinn University library. Tallinn University also provides access to a large number of databases that can be accessed both from on-campus computers and remotely, and library tours are conducted at the start of each semester. New library resources are acquired based on requests from academic staff and students.

The Review Team found that although the libraries provided materials and facilities that could be used to support research projects, there was a general lack of engagement of KEM students at BFM with the library resources. One student reported that the library facilities at ENU were adequate for their needs, but none had used the library in Tallinn. Students did confirm that they had good access to online resources provided by each of the partner institutions throughout the whole programme, regardless of their location [M4] and the Review Team considered that this contributed to the sustainability of the international mobility model in place for Kino Eyes.

### 5.3. Each institution ensures that the technical, digital and physical infrastructure made available to students enables them to achieve the intended Learning Outcomes.

KEM students have access to the range of facilities and equipment available at each of the partner institutions. Collectively, the four institutions offer over 600 computer workstations, many with relevant software installed, and all offer high speed internet connections. The consortium partners seek to provide students with state-of-the-art facilities for film and media production, including cameras, TV and film studios, post-production and projection facilities [SER, pp.39-40]. Students confirmed that IT provision across the partners met their needs and that they had access to Moodle throughout the course that enabled them to access relevant course documents when necessary [M4/M5].

Both students and alumni found that technical resources varied significantly across partner institutions and each had its strengths and weaknesses. Information about the different technical resources available at each institution was not made available to students in a single reference document for the programme. Students at BFM confirmed that its facilities, in particular the sound editing suites and mastering room, were of high quality and that the schedule allowed them sufficient access to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes for the programme, and that they are also trained to use these resources [M4]. Students and alumni found that LU had good equipment and

spaces but had experienced problems with the booking system, which they found slow and difficult to use for non-Portuguese speakers [M5]. Staff agreed that the system needed upgrading [M6]. BFM uses a commercial system that allows them to mirror the process in a real production company and is in the process of creating a web shop for student bookings [M8]. At ENU, the programme team coordinates with studios in Glasgow to enable students to produce their films in a fully equipped environment [M7]. The Review Team was unable to meet with students with experience of the facilities at IADT as it had yet to host its first cohort.

BFM had developed a production handbook to ensure that students were able to gain sufficient access to facilities and equipment throughout the programme. The Head of Production allocates each project a production number and dates, and teachers are responsible for confirming that the project is ready to start, based on the completion of a production schedule, synopsis and story board [M8]. Students are encouraged to create production budgets using a form that mirrors the application form for Estonian Film Board. Notional budgets are used across BFM but not by the other partners. The Review Team formed the view that the system for administering and organising production projects at BFM could offer a model of good practice to the other partners and help to ensure a consistent standard of support to students across the consortium.

#### 5.4. An appropriate range of study, research and individual well-being support & guidance is readily accessible to all students.

As Kino Eyes is a practice-based programme that includes the use of specialist technical equipment and resources, good health and safety practices are embedded within the curriculum and students are trained in how to use the equipment available to them at each partner institution. The Programme Director is responsible for organising this training and students are provided with an online safety manual [M8]. At BFM students are supported to gain additional micro-credentials to support their use of industry standard equipment and software, for example in Pro Tools and Avid. The 2021 ENU External Examiner report commented on the variability of students in terms of their ability to produce written work to an appropriate standard.

Study skills support is provided by programme tutors, and in terms of the thesis, by supervising tutors, matched to each student's needs [M8]. The Programme Co-ordinator and module leaders also monitor student progression and offer tailored support where necessary [M10]. At BFM support is offered on a case-by-case basis. The Library supports students with research skills such as how to search, use databases and references, however specific library inductions/tutorials were not in place for KEM students.

Non-academic support is provided through a dedicated Study Counsellor for the programme who maintains contact with KEM students throughout their programme. Students also have access to counselling services at each partner institution and these services cooperate where continuing support is required as students move between countries [M10]. First year students commented that they were unaware of the availability of student services at LU and found the language barrier to be an issue as most communication received from the University was in Portuguese [M5]. The consortium recognises that more could be done to support students to transition from the programme into industry and has hired an alumnus to work with Kino Eyes graduates for this purpose.

Through its discussions with second year students, during the first site-visit, the Review Team formed the view that the student learning experience could be further enhanced through the establishing of

a personal tutoring system. Whereby, each student would be assigned to a member of KEM academic staff who was not directly involved in the management or teaching of the students' own specialism. This would offer them an additional academic reference point with a tutor from outside of their own discipline area.

### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to inform the KEM consortium in their joint approach to the provision of Learning & Teaching Resources.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- BFM is in the process of developing a system for tracking the spend on each student production, which will help to clarify the actual costs associated with each programme and inform its financial strategy. In addition, BFM requires students to submit production budgets in a format that mirrors industry requirements for sign off before productions can commence. In the view of the Review Team, this approach could be usefully rolled-out across the consortium in order to inform future financial planning (see recommendation below).
- KEM students have access to resources to support research, study and student wellbeing and have access to online resources from each partner throughout the programme, enabling them to consistently use the same repositories of information as they move from country to country. Students reported that appropriate technical resources are provided by each partner and that they are trained in the safe use of equipment at each institution. At BFM, students also have the opportunity to gain industry-recognised certifications for the use of specialist equipment and software.

#### **Developing themes (recommendations):**

- The Review Team found that, as students moved between partners, they inevitably identified differences in the infrastructure and resources available to them and drew comparisons between institutions. Due to the relatively short time spent in each location, they were sometimes unaware of the full range of support services available to them. An induction to student support services in English for KEM students should be introduced at each partner institution and the KEM programme leadership should consider incorporating a regularly updated summary of this information into a shared student handbook.
- Students and alumni reported that they found that while LU had good equipment and spaces to make available to them, they had experienced problems with the booking system, which they found slow and difficult to use (particularly for non-Portuguese speakers) [M5]. When the Review Team discussed this matter with KEM Staff [M8], they agreed that the booking system that is currently being used at LU needed upgrading.
- LU, IADT and ENU should consider adopting a similar model to BFM to track production costs for the programme and introduce the use of notional budgets for student productions in all locations. The KEM partner institutions should seek to identify and share best practice across

institutions in relation to equipment booking to ensure that the systems in place at each institution are fit for purpose.

- The consortium should compile a single document for the programme, outlining the technical and learning resources available at each partner institution and make this available to incoming students.
- The KEM consortium should ensure that bespoke KEM library inductions are provided for students at each institution at the beginning of each semester, and to consider ways in which students can be encouraged to engage more with the library services provided.
- The KEM programme leadership should consider the development and introduction of a programme-wide academic personal tutoring system, where students were paired with teachers from outside their own discipline specialism.

## 6. Communication

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.

### Description of Provision

#### 6.1. The programme's internal communication systems are accessible to all students and staff and enable vertical and horizontal interaction between all its internal stakeholders.

Communications between partners are largely informal most often and conducted through emails or electronic communication platforms (such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams) between staff at the partner institutions. There are opportunities for internal communication between those with leadership responsibilities for Kino Eyes embedded within the governance and committee structure for the programme, and through key annual activities such as the selection and assessment panels. Internal communication is largely informal, but the Review Team found that the teaching team was well integrated and in regular contact with each other on a range of issues. There are also regular opportunities for programme staff to meet at different points in the year, such as during the recruitment week. The programme's committee structure also allows programme staff to come together to discuss programme-related issues at both the level of the consortium and within each institution. Student grades are shared by email and each student's full profile is held by each of the partner institutions in their local records systems [M9].

All partners provide students with access to a VLE through which they can communicate, and access study information provided by teaching staff. All partners use Moodle as their VLE, with the exception of IADT, which uses Blackboard Learn. There is no common communication system in use across the whole programme, however, students confirmed that they were able to access online resources via an account at whichever partner institution they were located in [M4].



The SER states that each partner holds a staff-student liaison committee meeting each semester, whereby students can offer feedback about the operation of the programme [SER, p.13], however, the Review Team learned this does not occur in practice [M3]. Instead, individual team members gather feedback from students and discuss relevant points with the other partners when travelling or during online meetings [M3]. The Review Team found that there were no minutes or action logs that would allow the consortium to track issues raised by students, or log any action taken by staff in response to these or to communicate the outcomes to students.

### 6.2. The programme's approach to external communication, welcomes and facilitates communication from and with external stakeholders.

Kino Eyes follows a common branding strategy that is used in all external communications. The consortium has developed a website for the programme, which acts as the main source of information on the programme for prospective students and external stakeholders. The website includes information about the partners, the curriculum, teaching staff, admissions requirements, and synopses of student films and research projects [<https://www.kinoeyes.eu/>]. The same branding and a summary of the programme information is also available on each partner institution's website [e.g. <https://www.ulusofona.pt/en/lisboa/masters/kino-eyes-film-directing-and-production>]. First year students indicated that they had found out about the programme through internet searches for film programmes with a scholarship, or by word of mouth from graduates [M4]. Should the programme move to a non-scholarship model the consortium may need to consider how to communicate most effectively with its target market.

Engagement with industry professionals and the general public is enacted by showcasing students' projects at external venues and submitting student films to festivals. An annual screening of student projects is organised by the programme in different European cities and an annual conference is also held. The programme also has dedicated channels on both YouTube and Vimeo, which provide platforms for the dissemination of student work to external audiences [SER, p.41]. The consortium is in the process of setting up an alumni association for Kino Eyes, as word of mouth continues to be an important source of information for prospective students.

### 6.3. The internal and external communication systems ensure that information published by the programme is clear, accurate, consistent, and readily available.

The Kino Eyes website provides a central point of reference for the programme and includes clear information about the admission's process for the programme. There is however, some variation in the amount of information available in relation to each module within the curriculum page and no information about the modules to be delivered at IADT (<https://www.kinoeyes.eu/the-master/course-curriculum>).

The Review Team found that the examples of course syllabi (curriculum files) provided have very different layouts (and in some cases content) depending on which institution they were produced by. In Portugal the format of these documents was determined by national regulations and had to adhere to a national template. Students have access to an online system at LU with documents in English and Portuguese in a more simplified version [M2]. At the other partners the format and content of these documents was determined by institutional regulations. For modules delivered by more than one partner, it was unclear where the definitive version of the module information sat and whether there was any variation between institutions.

### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to enable the KEM consortium to most effectively manage internal and external communication for the KEM programme.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The Kino Eyes website is well designed, accessible and contains relevant information for prospective students and external stakeholders and also showcases a range of student work. Student work is also disseminated through various online platforms, an annual screening event and through submissions to festivals.

#### **Developing Themes (recommendations):**

- There is no common communication system in place for the programme, as the partner institutions use different virtual learning environments, leading to varying approaches to the ways in which programme information is provided to students, which differs in both format and content across the different institutions. The KEM partners should agree a common template and/or a set of minimum content requirements for module specifications (or curriculum unit files).
- A staff-student liaison committee should be established and a formal record of the discussions, including the tracking of any actions taken, should be maintained and made accessible to students.
- While programme information is available on the main KEM website, and the websites of each of the partner institutions, the Review Team learned that many prospective students became aware of KEM through internet searches for programmes with scholarships, or through word of mouth from graduates. Should the programme move to a non-scholarship model the consortium may need to consider how to communicate most effectively with its target market to ensure that it continues to attract a good pool of applicants.
- The KEM consortium should establish a shared online repository for programme information, where the definitive version of programme documents and other key pieces of information can be stored.

## 7. Quality Assurance Processes

**Standard:** The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.

### Description of Provision

#### 7.1. The programme's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system effectively monitors and reviews the formal processes of the study programmes on a regular basis.

The SER describes the internal quality assurance processes associated with the annual monitoring and ongoing critical evaluation of KEM. These processes include consideration, during curriculum development, of the alignment of the programme to institutional strategies, national and international reference points as well as external industry expertise, likely graduate employment outcomes and the availability of adequate resources for delivery of the curriculum. Once established, the programme is monitored on the basis of performance against pre-defined indicators of academic success. Curriculum units with higher levels of failure have improvement action plans, which are monitored by the Academic Board [SER, p.42].

According to the IQA system outlined in the SER, the teacher responsible for each unit produces an annual Curricula Unit Report which critically reflects upon the syllabus and organisation of the unit, student results for the unit, and the results of student surveys conducted each semester. The Programme Director then produces an Annual Report which draws upon the unit reports. The Annual Report includes a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, and identifies actions for the following year. This report is further distilled into an overall report which is considered within the academic governance framework of each university [SER, p.43].

The Review Team found that the systems described in the SER reflected the current processes at LU but were not consistently applied across the consortium. There is no common methodology for unit or programme monitoring as each partner adheres to the reporting requirements of its own IQA system. The Curricula Unit Report (or a similar unit level report) is completed by teachers at LU and ENU but not at IADT or BFM[M3]. The LU reports are not routinely shared with the other partners, however ENU Module Reports are shared. The partners confirmed that the consortium still needed to determine where reports go and who oversees reporting arrangements [M6]. Other QA mechanisms, such as semesterly student surveys also follow local arrangements, therefore it is difficult to draw meaningful comparisons across the partner institutions. The Review Team was provided with examples of annual programme monitoring reports from LU and BFM, but these followed different approaches and no overarching programme report was made available to the Review Team. Although the Review Team were able to assure itself that a regular review of the various elements of the programme by each partner institution was taking place, it found little evidence of the programme as a whole being effectively monitored by the consortium as a single entity.

#### 7.2. The partner institutions and the programme are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) on a regular basis.

The programme is funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme and is therefore subject to regular external review of progress against the original project objectives. The consortium is required to produce regular narrative reports and associated programme data to evidence its progress and has received high ratings from the European Commission, which has flagged Kino Eyes as an example of good practice [619799 Acceptance Letter - RAPTEC].

External Quality Assurance requirements in Portugal are extensive and detailed, LU must demonstrate that the programme continues to meet national requirements. This includes the accreditation of each study location and KEM has obtained a special exemption to enable teaching to take place at premises not accredited in Portugal [M2]. LU is required to submit an extensive self-evaluation report to the national accreditation body on an annual basis.

As outlined in section 1.1, the consortium has put an External QA Board in place to review, and provide critical feedback on, the curriculum, the learning & teaching processes, and assessment practices. The External QA Board (which last met in 2019) provides external assurance of the effective operation of the programme in a similar way to an External Examiner. There is an External Examiner (EE) for the programme appointed by ENU as this is a requirement in Scotland, however the EE is only given the opportunity to review assessed work from the units taught at ENU and therefore is unable to assess the standard of the programme as a whole, or the comparability of the standard of student work across the partner institutions [M2]. At ENU the External Examiner's comments are documented in an annual report to the University's Academic Board.

### 7.3. The programme involves the participation of internal and external peers/experts and stakeholders in its IQA and EQA processes.

The IQA systems in place at each partner institution include opportunities for students and teaching staff to contribute to the quality assurance of the programme through mechanisms such as surveys and membership of academic committees. Negative student feedback gathered in these ways is referred to relevant members of staff for a response. Surveys are conducted both locally by each partner, and through a uniform survey across all partner institutions [M3]. Students and teaching staff also have opportunities to meet regularly with their Programme Director.

A student representative system is in place to enable students to communicate their views on the operation of the programme. The Review Team met with second year students at BFM, who confirmed that they had raised issues with their student reps, however they were unable to point to any specific changes to the programme made as a result of student feedback and felt that they did not always receive a satisfactory response to their comments or concerns [M4]. First year students based at LU indicated that staff had been responsive and were aware that they would also have an opportunity to complete an evaluation form at the end of their first semester [M5].

Aside from the mechanisms described in section 7.2, feedback from external stakeholders such as employers is collected on an ad hoc basis. The Review Team was unable to meet with any employers of graduates from the programme. The consortium has attempted to gather members of the External QA Board together for face-to-face meetings but finds this logistically difficult. On one occasion the programme managed to combine an 'in situ' QA Board meeting with screenings and graduation and found this to be an effective model [M2].

Alumni have not typically been involved in formal QA processes but do remain in contact with staff at the partner institutions. The review team met a number of alumni who confirmed that members of

staff from KEM have kept in touch and have continued to monitor their progress [M7]. Some had also had the opportunity to return to one of the partner institutions to meet with current students.

#### 7.4. The programme's IQA system, and its cycles, are designed to ensure that its outcomes both assure and enhance the provision.

As outlined above, the programme operates within the IQA systems of the respective partners and currently there are few formal opportunities to identify common issues across the partner institutions and no common action plan to track progress towards any identified improvements or enhancements. The programme's Academic Board provides the programme directors with a forum to discuss such matters, however there is no evidence that it routinely receives outputs from any of the QA processes in place in each institution (such as External Examiner or annual monitoring reports) or that it discusses data emerging from its joint initiatives (such as the overall student survey).

Similarly, there is a lack of formal mechanisms for sharing good practice and optimising the balance of the curriculum across partners. The process outlined in the SER attributes responsibility to the Course Director for ensuring the ongoing monitoring and development of the programme from the '*perspective of continuous improvement*' [SER, p.43]. The programme team has multiple opportunities in each study cycle to meet, both in formal committee meetings and at key points in the academic cycle, for example during the recruitment week, and they reported that they were working well together. Teaching staff use these opportunities to finetune what is offered at each institution and ensure that the programme is taught as effectively as possible, and to avoid the duplication of content. Teachers acknowledged that students have a much better overview of the whole programme than they do, and they had the impression that access to the full range of student feedback gathered across the programme could help them to make enhancements to the KEM programme [M6].

#### 7.5 The institutions regularly monitor the inter-institutional agreement(s) and the effectiveness of governance and management of the joint programme.

During the first site-visit, the Review Team explored the operation of the Consortium Agreement, and the processes through which the management and governance of the programme is monitored, with staff responsible for quality assurance at Tallinn University. The Review Team learned that the academic unit (in this case, BFM in relation to KEM) that initiates any proposal for a joint degree passes this to the University for approval before any external application is made. This process includes benchmarking the proposed programme to similar programmes across Europe. The University's Rectorate is responsible for assessing the proposal and approving it for development. The final documentation is then approved by the Senate before being submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education in Estonia [M8].

The University (TU) requires an internal report each year that includes programme data and a brief commentary on any changes made to the programme, in addition to discussing any actions required to address emerging issues. The University also undertakes a periodic review of its programmes every seven years; however, this is conducted on a sampling basis and, therefore, not all programmes are automatically considered as part of this process in any one review process. The University reviews partnership agreements each time a new one is drawn up and communicates any changes required, such as those necessary to meet national regulations, to the other partners [M9].

KEM renewed its Consortium Agreement in 2021 when IADT joined as the fourth partner. At this time additional responsibilities in relation to the quality assurance of the programme were detailed in the agreement. While the establishment of some of these mechanisms is still in progress, the agreement represents a progression towards the establishment of an effective IQA system as it formalises the roles of the Academic Board, External QA Board, students and alumni in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

### **The Review Teams Critical Reflections on Current Provision**

The following themes have been identified by the Review Team at this interim stage in the review process, to enable the KEM consortium to enhance the current QA processes in place for the programme for the KEM programme.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- (As outlined in relation to Standard 1) While the internal quality assurance processes for KEM are still in the process of being fully developed and implemented, some key processes are already in place. These include the appointment of an External QA Board. The members of which provide the consortium with an external and critical overview of the programme as a whole – providing independent critical feedback on the operation of the curriculum, the learning & teaching processes employed, and the implementation of assessment practices.
- The renewal of the KEM Consortium Agreement in 2021 – when IADT joined as the fourth partner – defined an additional set of responsibilities for each partner institution in relation to the quality assurance of the programme. While the establishment of some of these mechanisms is still in progress, the agreement represents a progression towards the establishment of an effective IQA system as it formalises the role of the Academic Board, External QA Board, and of the feedback gathered from students and alumni in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme overall.

#### **Developing themes (recommendations):**

- The Review Team noted that the External QA Board has not met since 2019. This has – in part – been due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to ongoing logistical difficulties. This has been managed successfully in the past when a meeting of the External QA Board was scheduled alongside an event of graduation screenings of student work. The Review Team suggest that this combination of events could be arranged on an annual basis to ensure that, in the future, meetings of the Board are able to be convened on a regular basis.
- The Review Team found that a number of the QA processes outlined in the SER were not yet fully operational – or were being inconsistently applied across the partner institutions. Currently, there are no joint mechanisms for regular programme evaluation or periodic review for the programme as a whole and, therefore, no means of establishing common actions emerging from such feedback or of tracking common actions to completion. Formal mechanisms for sharing good practice in a way that leads to systematic improvements across the programme are not currently in place. The KEM consortium would benefit from the establishment of a mechanism (such as the curricula unit report described in the SER) to evaluate modules that operate across the partner institutions and draw on these to produce an overarching evaluation report for the programme as a whole. This could incorporate a joint action plan and identify examples of good practice.

- The KEM consortium should investigate ways of sharing student feedback gathered locally between partners and working together to respond to this feedback such that all students understand any action taken as a result.

Enable the External Examiner engaged by ENU to gain an overview of the whole programme and review the annual report at the Kino Eyes Academic Board and/or ensure that the External QA Board has regular opportunities to review student work.

## 8. Summary of Developing Themes

The developing themes set out below are intended to be indicative of the current thinking of the Review Team at this interim stage of the enhancement review process and are based upon the evidence provided by the SER, additional documentation and the meetings with internal and external stakeholders that took place as part of the first site-visit. The revised SER, further sets of additional documentation and the meetings with internal and external stakeholders that will take place as part of the second site-visit will further inform the views of the Review Team and lead to a set of commendations and recommendations that may vary from those indicated by the developing themes presented here.

### Standard 1. Quality Assurance Policy

The institution's mission, strategic plan, and policies for learning & teaching and research effectively align with, and are developed and enhanced by, its policy for quality assurance that actively fosters a quality culture.

#### Developing themes (commendations):

- The KEM consortium has established an External QA Board to act as an advisory body on curriculum, learning & teaching, and evaluation processes.
- The majority of KEM graduates have returned to work in their home countries and are, therefore, in a position to have an impact on their national film production practices. This is in line with the stated intentions of the programme.
- Each partner institution in the KEM consortium is able to effectively draw on its existing staff expertise, curriculum strengths and its resource infrastructure to enable the programme to offer students the opportunity to tailor their learning towards specific career goals.
- The introduction of IADT into the consortium has provided opportunities to further expand the knowledge, skills and employability of students.
- The international cohorts of students undertaking the KEM programme, together with the international profile of the teaching and technical support staff contributing to it, provides a global perspective on film making. This is underpinned by the funding model for the programme,

which includes scholarship and self-funded students, and provides an advanced study-level opportunity for individuals from a diverse range of countries and socio-economic backgrounds.

**Developing themes (recommendations):**

- All aspects of the KEM internal quality assurance framework should be implemented on a regular and consistent basis across the programme provision of each of the partner institutions. The Management, Academic and Programme Boards should ensure this.
- The KEM consortium would benefit from establishing a central repository and database that collates all the necessary documentation and data that is required to support an effective internal quality assurance (IQA) system and, thereby, facilitate the requirements of external quality assurance (EQA) processes. All documentation should be translated into a single language, as agreed between the partners, to ensure that it is as widely accessible as possible.
- The KEM consortium should consider developing an overarching Strategic Plan and associated Action Plan for the programme. This should be separate to but informed by current and future funding applications. This should include a set of agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) that enable the consortium to accurately measure progress against strategic goals.
- The KEM consortium should consider ways in which it can provide further information and assistance to students who require visas in order to participate in the programme. In the view of the Review Team, additional guidance needs to be made available for students who need additional visas to move to partner institutions following the first semester in Lisbon.
- The KEM consortium would benefit from creating a clearer separation between the executive and deliberative functions of the academic governance of the KEM programme. There is currently a significant overlap between the respective memberships of the KEM Management Board and the Academic Board.
- The internal quality assurance and critical self-evaluation of the KEM programme could be significantly enhanced by the full and consistent implementation of its QA mechanisms. Including, for example, an overarching Annual Monitoring Report, which could draw upon the Annual Monitoring reports produced by each partner institution, to provide a wholistic critical overview of the KEM programme, which could be deliberated upon and approved by the Academic Board and shared with each partner institution.
- The KEM Academic Board, individual Programme Boards, and the External QA Board should establish formal agendas and maintain accurate minutes of their meetings. This will enable issues, decisions and agreed actions to be effectively tracked. Protocols should also be established for reporting through the committee structure and for delegating authority from the Academic Board to its sub-committees.
- The frequency of External QA Board meetings should be formalised and a plan of activities for its members established to ensure that the KEM programme is fully benefitting from this resource on a continuous basis.



- A policy and a set of procedures for making changes to the curriculum that meets the requirements of all relevant national agencies and awarding bodies should be introduced.
- An equal opportunities policy should be developed for the KEM programme, that clearly outlines what adjustments might be made for students who find the mobility aspect of the programme challenging.
- The KEM consortium should continue with the planned development of a joint diploma supplement that reflects each student's experience of the whole KEM programme.

## **Standard 2. Student-Centred Learning**

The institution's approved study programmes are designed and delivered to meet their specified objectives and externally referenced learning outcomes, and to foster student-centred approaches to learning and assessment processes.

### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The Kino Eyes curriculum, developed jointly by the consortium, enables students to benefit from the particular expertise of each institution as they each pursue their chosen specialism. The addition of IADT as a fourth partner with specific expertise in serialised content has further enhanced the relevance of the curriculum, enabling students to gain experience of a growing sector.
- The programme's learning, teaching and assessment methodologies are centered around project development and experimentation, and continuous assessment is used effectively to enable students to progress in authentic learning environments. Alumni confirmed that the programme had given them a realistic picture of the production process and allowed them to build professional networks. For individual research projects, students co-design the deliverables with their supervisor, giving them the opportunity to undertake research that develops their practice. Students and graduates are supported to publish their research and feel prepared to go on to PhD study.
- The KEM programme appears to effectively utilise a range of assessment practices that are effectively aligned with the various learning and teaching strategies employed on the programme, thereby enhancing the overall student learning experience provided.
- The design of the KEM programme appears to enable students to contribute to the formulation and intended deliverables of their production and research projects, in agreement with project tutors and students are, therefore, able to co-create their individual learning experience.
- The alumni confirmed that the programme provided them a realistic picture of how film production works and provided opportunities to build networks with those currently working in the industry, including with other Kino Eyes alumni.
- The programme has seen a significant increase in the number of students who have had their theses published in peer-reviewed journals, and in the number of students electing to pursue PhD

study on graduation from the KEM programme, indicating that there is a growing research culture within the programme.

#### **Developing Themes (recommendations)**

- The KEM consortium could consider establishing a list of key feeder countries for the programme, then identify the main barriers to the gaining visas for students from these countries and consider any actions that it might take in order to ease the immigration process for students.
- The KEM programme has a central ethos of multiculturalism and internationalism, and its students have a unique experience that enables them to focus on the development of specialist skills, while also collaborating with a diverse group of peers. At BFM, there appears to be good opportunities for Kino Eyes students to work with students from other programmes, and this could offer a model of good practice for the other partners for the improvement of the integration of KEM students with the local student body.
- The KEM consortium could consider establishing a system, within the planned annual programme evaluation process, to undertake a regular review of student feedback and track any associated actions.
- Both the SER and the KEM Erasmus Mundus application place a strong emphasis on the research element of the programme, the SER states that KEM is ‘*a research orientated*’ MA [SER, page 26]. However, the Review Team finds it difficult to form a clear understanding of how research is defined within the specificity of the KEM curriculum (e.g. practice-based, artistic, theoretical). The KEM consortium should consider formulating an explicit statement regarding the nature and place of research within the KEM programme.
- The KEM programme should review the current approaches taken to assessing attendance so as to ensure that any such requirements are transparent and consistently applied across the programme.
- The KEM programme should be encouraged to ensure that student-facing syllabus documentation – such as unit or project briefs – routinely include a clear set of learning outcomes, as well as detailed associated assessment criteria.
- Student and alumni feedback suggests that the programme structure perhaps works more effectively for some specialisms than others and, also, that the timing of some activities could lead to student workloads being particularly intense at certain points. Members of the External QA Board have commented on this in their reports, suggesting that these pressure points could make it difficult for students to engage in an appropriate level of critical reflection. Students reported to the Review Team that they felt that their concerns about this aspect of the programme had not been responded to or acted upon. There are no systematic requirements to address student feedback set out within the programme’s evaluation processes. The Review Team encourage the KEM consortium to consider how to increase opportunities for critical reflection within the curriculum.

- The KEM programme leadership should investigate the issues raised by the students and alumni of the screenwriting specialism with the Review Team in order to gain a closer understanding of their concerns and, if necessary, identify any actions needed to address these.
- Students have access to information about the curriculum and assessment requirements in each of the partner institutions, however this documentation has been developed according to local practices and therefore differ across the partner institutions. The KEM consortium should consider developing a standard template for syllabus documents (such as unit or project briefs) that can be used by all partners, and that include detailed assessment criteria as well as sets of clearly defined learning outcomes.
- The KEM programme leadership could seek to establish opportunities for work placements that take place within the programme, ensuring that local careers services are able to support KEM students to navigate the work restrictions associated with their mobility.

### **Standard 3. Assuring the Student Study Experience**

The institution and its programmes consistently and equitably apply pre-defined and published regulations that are fit for purpose and cover the whole cycle of the student study experience.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- Kino Eyes publishes clear information about its admissions processes and a joint Selection Panel, including representatives from each partner, is responsible for admissions decisions. The consortium has also developed joint assessment methods, and staff come together for the panel assessment of theses in one location each year. Grades are agreed between partners for group assessment, creating a shared understanding of assessment criteria and academic standards.
- While there is currently no common learner charter in place for the KEM programme, the Review Team were assured that this is currently in development, in the meantime the IADT Learner Charter is used as a proxy charter (to the extent of which local regulations allow) and also as a model for a bespoke charter for the KEM programme as a whole. The Review Team found the IADT charter document to be an example of good practice that clearly sets out expectations for students and for the institution.

#### **Developing themes (recommendations):**

- Across the partner institutions, some assessment regulations – such as those relating to academic misconduct and reassessment – varied according to local requirements. These differences mean that students may potentially receive different re-assessment opportunities depending on their location at the time of assessment. The Review Team also saw no evidence of joint regulations or procedures for other aspects of the student experience, such as mitigating circumstances, interruption of studies or adjustments for disabled students. The KEM programme management should seek to establish a common set of assessment regulations for the programme, including procedures for considering mitigating circumstances, assessment mitigation or re-assessment, and other reasonable adjustments.

- Students and alumni indicated to the Review Team [M4, M7] that they found that their study experience could differ substantially depending on which of the partner institutions they were studying at, and in the particular specialism that they were following. The KEM programme management should seek feedback from students on this matter to further enhance its understanding of the whole student experience.
- The KEM programme management should seek to develop a common equality and diversity policy for the programme, which describes how equality and equity is achieved in practice during the admissions process, and within the implementation of the programme’s learning & teaching, and assessment processes.
- The KEM programme management should seek to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to disclose disabilities and implement a needs assessment process to ensure that disabled students are supported to participate in the programme.

#### **Standard 4. Human Resources**

The institution and its programmes ensure that the student learning experience is supported by a sufficient compliment of appropriately qualified and experienced employees.

##### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The appointment of a dedicated Study Counsellor who acts as a first point of contact for Kino Eyes students throughout the whole programme was especially valuable to students and clearly enhanced their learning experience.
- Staff are supported to travel between the partner institutions, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the KEM programme as a whole and opportunity to share good practice with colleagues.

##### **Developing themes (recommendations):**

- The KEM programme leadership should consider the development of a joint EDI strategy for Kino Eyes that aligns with the requirements of each partner institution.
- The KEM programme leadership should consider developing additional opportunities for KEM staff to share knowledge and good practice, for example by sharing emerging outputs from staff research and scholarship.

#### **Standard 5. Learning & Teaching Resources**

The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to its study programmes so that they have access to an appropriate and sufficient range of learning & teaching resources that enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

**Developing themes (commendations):**

- BFM is in the process of developing a system for tracking the spend on each student production, which will help to clarify the actual costs associated with each programme and inform its financial strategy. In addition, BFM requires students to submit production budgets in a format that mirrors industry requirements for sign off before productions can commence. In the view of the Review Team, this approach could be usefully rolled-out across the consortium in order to inform future financial planning (see recommendation below).
- KEM students have access to resources to support research, study and student wellbeing and have access to online resources from each partner throughout the programme, enabling them to consistently use the same repositories of information as they move from country to country. Students reported that appropriate technical resources are provided by each partner and that they are trained in the safe use of equipment at each institution. At BFM, students also have the opportunity to gain industry-recognised certifications for the use of specialist equipment and software.

**Developing themes (recommendations):**

- The Review Team found that, as students moved between partners, they inevitably identified differences in the infrastructure and resources available to them and drew comparisons between institutions. Due to the relatively short time spent in each location, they were sometimes unaware of the full range of support services available to them. An induction to student support services in English for KEM students should be introduced at each partner institution and the KEM programme leadership should consider incorporating a regularly updated summary of this information into a shared student handbook.
- Students and alumni reported that they found that while LU had good equipment and spaces to make available to them, they had experienced problems with the booking system, which they found slow and difficult to use (particularly for non-Portuguese speakers) [M5]. When the Review Team discussed this matter with KEM Staff [M8], they agreed that the booking system that is currently being used at LU needed upgrading.
- LU, IADT and ENU should consider adopting a similar model to BFM to track production costs for the programme and introduce the use of notional budgets for student productions in all locations. The KEM partner institutions should seek to identify and share best practice across institutions in relation to equipment booking to ensure that the systems in place at each institution are fit for purpose.
- The consortium should compile a single document for the programme, outlining the technical and learning resources available at each partner institution and make this available to incoming students.

- The KEM consortium should ensure that bespoke KEM library inductions are provided for students at each institution at the beginning of each semester, and to consider ways in which students can be encouraged to engage more with the library services provided.
- The KEM programme leadership should consider the development and introduction of a programme-wide academic personal tutoring system, where students were paired with teachers from outside their own discipline specialism.

### **Standard 6. Communication**

The institution and its programmes effectively manage and facilitate communication amongst internal and external stakeholders, and publish information that is clear, accurate, consistent and readily available.

#### **Developing themes (commendations):**

- The Kino Eyes website is well designed, accessible and contains relevant information for prospective students and external stakeholders and also showcases a range of student work. Student work is also disseminated through various online platforms, an annual screening event and through submissions to festivals.

#### **Developing Themes (recommendations):**

- There is no common communication system in place for the programme, as the partner institutions use different VLEs, leading to varying approaches to the ways in which programme information is provided to students, which differs in both format and content across the different institutions. The KEM partners should agree a common template and/or a set of minimum content requirements for module specifications (or curriculum unit files).
- A staff-student liaison committee should be established and a formal record of the discussions, including the tracking of any actions taken, should be maintained and made accessible to students.
- While programme information is available on the main KEM website, and the websites of each of the partner institutions, the Review Team learned that many prospective students became aware of KEM through internet searches for programmes with scholarships, or through word of mouth from graduates. Should the programme move to a non-scholarship model the consortium may need to consider how to communicate most effectively with its target market to ensure that it continues to attract a good pool of applicants.
- The KEM consortium should establish a shared online repository for programme information, where the definitive version of programme documents and other key pieces of information can be stored.

## Standard 7. Quality Assurance Processes

The institution and its programmes systematically engage in effective internal and external quality assurance review processes to both assure and enhance all aspects of their provision.

### Developing themes (commendations):

- (As outlined in relation to Standard 1) While the internal quality assurance processes for KEM are still in the process of being fully developed and implemented, some key processes are already in place. These include the appointment of an External QA Board. The members of which, provide the consortium with an external and critical overview of the programme as a whole – providing independent critical feedback on the operation of the curriculum, the learning and teaching processes employed, and the implementation of assessment practices.
- The renewal of the KEM Consortium Agreement in 2021 – when IADT joined as the fourth partner – defined an additional set of responsibilities for each partner institution in relation to the quality assurance of the programme. While the establishment of some of these mechanisms is still in progress, the agreement represents a progression towards the establishment of an effective IQA system as it formalises the role of the Academic Board, External QA Board, and of the feedback gathered from students and alumni in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme overall.

### Developing themes (recommendations):

- The Review Team noted that the External QA Board has not met since 2019. This has – in part – been due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to ongoing logistical difficulties. This has been managed successfully in the past when a meeting of the External QA Board was scheduled alongside an event of graduation screenings of student work. The Review Team suggest that this combination of events could be arranged on an annual basis to ensure that, in the future, meetings of the Board are able to be convened on a regular basis.
- The Review Team found that a number of the QA processes outlined in the SER were not yet fully operational – or were being inconsistently applied across the partner institutions. Currently, there are no joint mechanisms for regular programme evaluation or periodic review for the programme as a whole and, therefore, no means of establishing common actions emerging from such feedback or of tracking common actions to completion. Formal mechanisms for sharing good practice in a way that leads to systematic improvements across the programme are not currently in place. The KEM consortium would benefit from the establishment of a mechanism (such as the curricula unit report described in the SER) to evaluate modules that operate across the partner institutions and draw on these to produce an overarching evaluation report for the programme as a whole, this could incorporate a joint action plan and identify examples of good practice.
- The KEM consortium should Investigate ways of sharing student feedback gathered locally between partners and working together to respond to this feedback such that all students understand any action taken as a result.

- Enable the External Examiner engaged by ENU to gain an overview of the whole programme and review the annual report at the Kino Eyes Academic Board and/or ensure that the External QA Board has regular opportunities to review student work.

## 9. Additional Documentation Requested by the Review Team

At the end of the first site-visit (November 2022), the Review Team requested of the KEM Management Board a range of additional documentation to be provided in advance of the second site-visit.

This was comprised of:

- a set of consecutive agendas and action notes from the main Management/Academic Board meetings for the last two years, up to and including the most recent ones.
- copies of the Kino Eyes annual Self-Evaluation Documents for each partner institution (we are aware that there will not be one yet for IADT) for the years 20-21 and 21-22, plus copies of the SEDs for the programme overall (if some documents are only available in Portuguese, we are able to translate these)
- overall employment data for students graduating from the Kino Eyes programme in the 17-18, 18-19, 19-20, 20-21, 21-22 academic years (5 years in all)
- copies of the summary Annual Reports from the External QA Board for 20-21 and 21-22
- Notes or action points from Staff-Student Liaison meetings

The Review Team was assured by the KEM Management Board at BFM that it would be possible to provide these. In advance of the second site-visit, the Review Team will also need to be provided with any updated versions of the documents that were already provided in preparation for, or were requested during, the first site-visit.

In addition to its request for additional documentation, the Review Team also requested that a revised version of the SER be prepared in advance of the second site-visit. The text presented in the initial iteration of the SER was largely composed of edited extracts taken from other KEM documentation, such as the application to the EU, and recent accreditation and validation documents. Therefore, the text provided did not always specifically address the individual criteria for each standard. This approach to the drafting of the SER also made it difficult for the Review Team to gain a clear understanding of which practices, services and systems – referenced in the SER – applied to the KEM programme as a whole or to parts of the programme as delivered by individual partners.

In light of this, the Review Team requested that, in advance of the second site-visit, the SER needs to be revised in the following ways (and resubmitted to the Review Team):

- That it is clarified, throughout the SER, where any examples of Kino Eyes programme practices, systems and services, etc., apply to the whole programme (at whichever partner institution it is being delivered by) and which relate to its delivery at a specific partner (or partners).
- To revise the evaluative text in the sections of the SER that relate to Standard 7 and Standard 4, to ensure that the text explicitly addresses each of the criteria listed in the Report Template.



**Important Note:**

The Review Team reserve the right to ask for additional documentation in light of the changes made to the SER and their reading of any of the additional documentation requested above.

## Annex 1 – First Site-Visit Schedule

### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022

14.00 – 18.00 Private meeting of the Review Team in the hotel

### Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

09.00 – 09.15 Review Team (operational meeting)

09.15 – 09.30 Meeting with the Institutional Liaison Person (TU)

**09.30 – 10.15 [M1] Meeting with Vice-Rector for Development**

10.15 – 10.30 Private meeting of the RT

**10.30 – 12.15 [M2] Meeting with KEM Management Board<sup>2</sup> [Zoom]**

12.15 – 12.30 Private meeting of the Review Team

**12.30 – 13.30 [M3] Meeting with Programme Board (of BFM)**

13.30 – 14.30 Working lunch in the University canteen

**14.30 – 15.30 [M4] Meeting with Second Year KEM students**

15.30 – 15.45 Private meeting of the Review Team

**15.45 – 16.30 [M5] Meeting with First Year KEM students [Zoom]**

16.30 – 16.45 Private meeting of the Review Team

**16.45 – 17.45 [M6] Meeting with Teachers from the KEM programme (BFM)**

17.45 – 18.00 Private meeting of the Review Team

**18.00 – 19.00 [M7] Meeting with alumni of the KEM programme [Zoom]**

19.00 – 19.15 Private meeting of the RT

### Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022

09.00 – 09.15 Private meeting of the Review Team

09.15 – 09.30 RT meet with the Institutional Liaison person (TU)

**09.30 – 10.30 [M8] Meeting with technical, administrative & support staff of KEM (TU)**

**10.30 – 11.30 Visit studios/workshops & teaching spaces used by the KEM programme**

11.30 – 13.00 Private meeting of the Review Team

13.00 – 14.00 Working Lunch for the Review Team

14.00 – 16.00 Private meeting of the Review Team

**16.00 – 17.00 Meeting with representatives of the profession & employers<sup>3</sup>**

17.00 – 19.00 Private meeting of the Review Team

### Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022

09.00 – 09.15 Private meeting of the Review Team

09.15 – 09.30 Review Team meet with Institutional Liaison Person (TU)

<sup>2</sup> This meeting also included one member of the KEM Academic Board who was not a member of the Management Board.

<sup>3</sup> The KEM programme was unable to gather any representatives of the profession or employers who were not also members of KEM staff to participate in a Zoom meeting with the Review Team, therefore this meeting did not go ahead.

- 09.30 – 10.15 [M9] Meeting with Academic Affairs Manager of Tallin University  
 [Zoom]
- 10.15 – 10.30 Private meeting of the Review Team
- 10.30 – 11.30 [M10] Clarification Meeting with the KEM Management Group
- 11.30 – 12.30 Private meeting of the Review Team
- 12.30 – 13.00 Interim Oral feedback to the KEM Management Group

## Annex 2 – List of supporting documents provided to the Review Team (to date)

Academic Board Notes 17/03/2020 and 01/06/2020  
 ACEF 2021 Decision of the CAE External Evaluators  
 ACEF 2021 Preliminary Report of the CAE External Evaluators  
 ACEF 2021 Self-evaluation Report from Lusófona University  
 Application for Erasmus Mundus  
 Application Requirements  
 Course Organisation at Lusófona University  
 Curricula Unit Reports 2020-21 Lusófona University  
 Curriculum Unit Files First Semester (Aesthetics and Technology, Development Ideas and Storytelling, European Film Heritage, Introduction to the Industry, Methods of Creativity)  
 Curriculum Unit Files Second Semester (Contemporary Workflows, Feature Film Cinematography, Feature Film Editing, Feature Film Sound, Reception Psychology, Critical Film Study, Fiction Film Creation, Graduation Production Development)  
 Curriculum Unit Files Third and Fourth Semester (Entrepreneurship workshop, Feature Film Package, Fiction Package, Research Report, Technical Report, Transmedia Storytelling Workshop)  
 Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (examples)  
 EACEA Feedback on KEM Technical Report 2021  
 EACEA Feedback on KEM Technical Report 2022  
 Edinburgh Napier University External Examiner Report 2021-22  
 Erasmus+ Technical Report 2021  
 Erasmus+ Technical Report 2022  
 European Commission feedback on progress report 2019  
 Fiction Package – sample work  
 IADT Learner Charter  
 IADT MA in Filmmaking validation submission  
 International QA Best Practices Report  
 KEM 7 and 8 student demographic data  
 KEMIII Consortium Agreement  
 KEM Individual Assessment Mark Sheet  
 KEM Lisbon Semester Organisation and Norms to Students 2022-23  
 KEM Template Assessment Brief  
 Kino Eyes Alumni Survey – 4, 5, 6  
 Kino Eyes Alumni Survey 2015-2019  
 Kino Eyes Self-evaluation document 2019-20 Lusófona University  
 List of festivals which KEM collaborates with

List of guest teachers  
Quality Assurance External Evaluation Board Reports 2019  
Samsara Model  
Student Agreement  
Student Films (list of examples)  
SWOT analysis  
Thesis Examples (2015-2017, 2016-2018, 2017-2019, 2018-2020, 2019-2021, 2020-2022)  
Welcome Guide Kino Eyes 2022

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