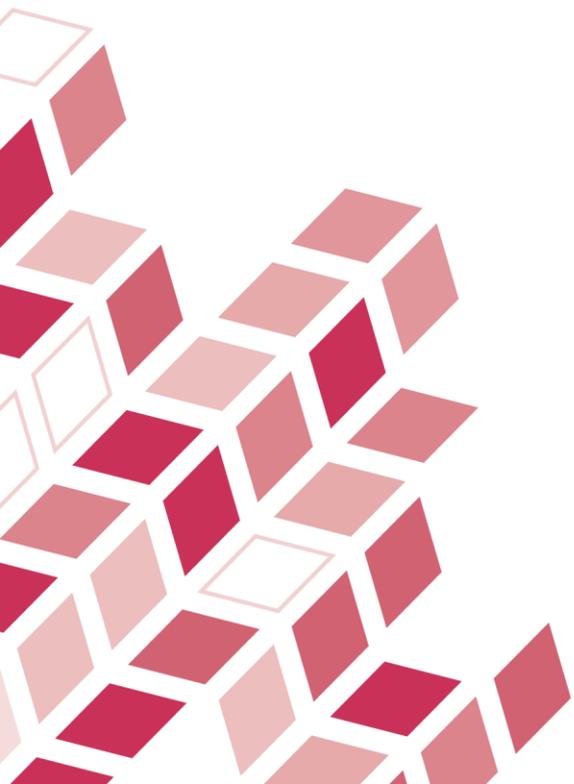


NOKUTS tilsynsrapporter

# Scenografi (Fine Arts in Scenography)

Master degree study at Østfold University College

September 2013



|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Institution:                   | Østfold University College                     |
| Name of educational provision: | Scenografi (Fine Arts in Scenography)          |
| Degree/Studiepoeng (ECTS):     | Master degree study. 120 ECTS                  |
| Date of decision:              | 1.October 2013                                 |
| Expert Committee:              | Professor Sami Juhani Rintala, NTNU            |
|                                | Scenograph Sidsel Bech, Bristol University, GB |
| Archive Number:                | 13/151   |

## Introduction

The external quality assurance performed by NOKUT consists of evaluating the institution's quality assurance systems, accreditation of new provisions and revision of accredited provisions. Universities and university colleges have different self-accrediting powers. For an institution without self-accrediting powers to establish a provision in a certain cycle an application must be made to NOKUT.

Hereby NOKUT presents the accreditation report of Master degree study of Fine Arts in Scenography at Østfold University College. The expert evaluation in this report is part of the accreditation process following Østfold University College's application for accreditation of Master degree study of Fine Arts in Scenography and Spatial Design submitted before the application deadline 1. February 2013. This report clearly indicates the extensive evaluation performed to ensure the educational quality of the planned educational provision.

The master degree study of Fine Arts in Scenography at Østfold University College fulfils NOKUT's conditions for accreditation and is accredited by resolution of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013

This decision does not have limited validity in time. NOKUT will however make a subsequent supervision of the educational provision within three years.

Oslo, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013



Terje Mørland  
Director General

Information on accreditation of educational provisions (in Norwegian):

<http://www.nokut.no/no/Laresteder/Akkreditering-av-studier-og-institusjoner/Akkreditering-av-studietilbod/Korleis-sokje-akkreditering/>

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## 1 Information regarding the applicant institution

Østfold University College offers 60 subjects of study in two regional cities - Halden and Fredrikstad. Østfold University College has approximately 4.500 students and 500 staff members. The University College offers a range of bachelor's degree programmes and a few master's degree programmes.

As a university college, Østfold University College does not have power of self-accreditation for educational provisions in the second and third cycle. The institution's quality assurance system was evaluated and approved in 2012. The following educational provisions at the institution have obtained accreditation from NOKUT (Norwegian title given):

- Master degree in «Organisasjon og ledelse», 120 ECTS (2003)
- Master degree in «Mangfold og inkludering i pedagogisk virksomhet», 120 ECTS (2003)
- Master degree in «Fremmedspråk i skolen», 120 ECTS (2008)
- Master degree in «Tverrfaglig samarbeid i helse- og sosialsektoren», 120 ECTS (2008)
- Master degree in «Psykososialt arbeid - helse og sosialfaglig yrkespraksis», 120 ECTS (2011)
- Master degree in «Spesialpedagogikk», 120 ECTS (2013)
- Master degree in «Barnehagepedagogikk og småbarnsvitenskap (0-3 år)», 120 ECTS (2013)

Østfold University College applied for accreditation of Master Degree of Fine Arts in Scenography and spatial design, 120 ECTS by the application deadline of 1. September 2013.

## 2 Description of procedure

NOKUT makes an administrative assessment to ensure that all basic conditions for accreditation are fulfilled as expressed in the Regulation concerning NOKUT's supervision and control of the quality in Norwegian higher education.<sup>1</sup> (Hereafter referred to as the Quality Assurance Regulation on Higher Education.) For applications that have been approved administratively, NOKUT appoints external experts for the evaluation of the application. The external experts have declared that they are legally competent to perform an independent evaluation, and carry out their assignment in accordance with the mandate for expert assessment passed by NOKUT's board, and in accordance with the requirements for educational quality as determined by the Quality Assurance Regulation on Higher Education.

Following their assessment, the expert committee shall conclude either with a yes or no as to whether the quality of the educational provision complies with the requirements in the Quality Assurance Regulation on Higher Education. NOKUT also requests that the expert committee advise on further improvements of the educational provision. All criteria must be satisfactorily met before NOKUT accredits an educational provision.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lovddata.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf-20110127-0297.html>

If the conclusion reached by the expert committee is negative, the report is sent to the applicant institution, which is then given three weeks to comment. Thereafter NOKUT decides whether the comments should be sent to the committee for additional consideration. The committee is given two weeks to submit the revised assessment. The director general then reaches a final decision about accreditation.

The current report presents the accreditation process chronologically. As described above, the committee is free to change its conclusion on accreditation in the course of the process, and has in fact done so in this report. The final conclusion is found in part 7.

### **3 Administrative assessment**

#### **Quality Assurance Regulation on Higher Education § 4-1: Basic conditions for accreditation**

1. Demands expressed in the Universities and Colleges Act concerning the following arrangements will be assessed:
  - a. Internal regulations and governance
  - b. Appeals Committee
  - c. Learning Environment Committee
  - d. Educational Plan
  - e. Diplomas and Diploma Supplement
  - f. Quality assurance system

#### NOKUT's assessment

The intention of this article is to make it clear and predictable what regulations in the University and Colleges Act (2002) that NOKUT supervises. Østfold University College offers accredited educational provision. Hence, it is presupposed that the demands expressed in the Universities and Colleges Act are fulfilled. Diploma supplement is evaluated as satisfactory by NOKUT's administration.

## 4 Expert Assessment

This chapter is the expert committee's assessment. The term "we" refers to the expert committee as such. The number preceding each heading refers to the corresponding provision in the Quality Assurance Regulation on Higher Education.

### Summary of the report

Overall, we believe this application to be a strong, exciting and very relevant proposal for a new Master degree in Scenography. The document is well presented and carefully addresses the relevant issues. We recommend however that the provision should not be accredited at this point, and that the institution develops the application based on the recommendations in the report relating to the weaknesses that will be pointed out in what follows.

We have two considerable concerns with the overall document:

1. The title *Scenography and Spatial Design* is illustrative of the first concern. Throughout the document the terms 'Scenography' and 'Spatial Design' are widely applied (the use of the term Spatial Design is utilized throughout, albeit less frequently and at times appears to be an add-on with no clear subject outline and research field of its own). These terms can be said to be encompassing of each other and this proposal makes no effort to clarify and provide a distinction, so there is no clear rationale between the use of the one or the other. This document will go on to suggest the use of only one term. This will create focus and outline more directly a field of study within which the candidates can strive to become masters of innovation at a high level. As should become clear in what follows, such focus, or transparency of intent, will enable the overall proposal to become stronger with only minor alterations.

We recommend the use of the term Scenography, and suggest that the degree is called Master's Degree in Scenography. (Master of fine Arts in Scenography).

2. The second concern is relating to the ability of the candidate to articulate their critical and theoretical position(s) outside of their practice.

Once the practice has been clearly focused and defined as Scenography (as outlined above), it is quite evident how the candidate will be in a strong position to develop and utilize relevant practical methods and partake in high standards of practice/research at a national and international level, and generally become practitioners with the potential to lead their field. However, it is less clear how the candidate will be in a position to articulate analytical and critical position(s) through methodologies outside of practice. We see not enough details relating to the critical reflection component in the portfolios. No academic or critical field has been defined.

We suggest simple changes or clarifications to the methods by which this degree will be critically contextualized; that to supplement the contemporary national and international contexts outlined in support of practice, some clarification be made as to how practice is

research, and how the practice is theoretically underpinned. In the section *Litteratur*, a deeper articulation is made of the writings and theories of artists and scenographers whose work might influence the candidate's own investigations.

We will also ask that a clear definition be provided, of what is expected of a reflective text, verbal exam, and the critical reflection element of the dissertation project. As will become evident in what follows we will ask that the idea of the use of laboratories be articulated and explained. What is a Laboratory and how does this differ from an expert workshop?

## **4.1 Basic conditions for accreditation**

### **4.1.1 Demands expressed in the Universities and Colleges Act.**

These demands have been evaluated by NOKUT in the administrative assessment.

The Diploma supplement must be changed in accordance with the new name of the educational provision (see 4.2.1).

### **4.1.2 Demands expressed in national curriculum frameworks, where such apply, and in relevant Regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Research must be met.**

#### Assessment

Østfold University College has applied for a master degree of 120 ECTs. The master thesis consists of 30 credits and therefore complies with the regulations: *Forskrift om krav til mastergrad*. The criteria are well documented and it is transparent how candidates will be assessed on their artistic, as well as academic ability through the submission of the project proposal. This section clearly outlines how the candidate must have obtained a BA in a relevant subject or equivalent experience and a portfolio will be assessed, proving evidence to an ability of the candidate to articulate ideas through visual means. The candidate must also provide a project proposal clearly outlining the aims and research question and provide a defined context.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the condition is fulfilled.

- The institution is advised to place a strong focus upon the ability of the candidate to articulate a discursive engagement.

### **4.1.3 Estimates of student recruitment, as relevant in relation to the establishing of a satisfactory learning environment and stable provision, must be presented.**

#### Assessment

With a planned intake of 5 students every second year, student recruitment is well achievable. While this is a small cohort of students it is clear that they are situated within an environment, both in

Frederikstad and internationally, that will be providing a satisfactory learning environment. This would be one of the only MA degrees in scenography in Scandinavia and we see no problems with the estimates.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the institution's estimates are satisfactory

#### **4.1.4 A plan of the students' expected workload must be presented.**

##### Assessment

While we go on later to raise concerns regarding clearer definitions of how the structures of practice as research are implemented, and the need to articulate the methodology of the laboratory, we find here the overall outline of the workload well considered and well mapped out. The balance of contact hours and independent study seems appropriate to meet the needs of the programme. With 100 contact hours per semester in both the theory and the laboratory sessions and 60 for the project, a structure is suggested that will enable a supported learning environment.

##### Conclusion

Yes, the institution's presented documentation is satisfactory.

#### **4.1.5 When part(s) of the provision is taught outside the degree awarding institution formally agreed documents must be in place to regulate issues of importance for the students.**

##### Assessment

HiØ has located three of the 5 projects that the candidates will be taking part in leaving two places open to project proposals by the incoming candidate. The projects are located within theatre and exhibition/museum work. We here find the documentation and the arrangements satisfactory, but strongly question the necessity to have the external companies represented in the interview process. Such an arrangement seriously jeopardizes a fair and non-biased selection process.

##### Conclusion

Yes, the institution's presented documentation is satisfactory.

- The institution is advised to rethink having external partners as part of the interview process while selecting new students.

## **4.2 Study Plan**

### **4.2.1 The educational provision must have an adequate title**

##### Assessment

As noted in the Report Summary, we find Scenography and Spatial Design to be too broad and somehow encompassing of each other. Throughout the document the terms 'Scenography' and 'Spatial Design' are widely applied, but there are no clear distinctions between the use of one or other (although scenography is most frequently applied and often used on its own, whereas Spatial Design is

always in a binary position with scenography). Scenography clearly describes the area of study this degree is planning to deliver. Spatial Design, however, is not clearly defined as anything different, and thus focus is lost.

Current discussions about the academic field of scenography and its international academic relevance mean that the focus of this degree is extremely relevant; however, the use of the term 'Spatial Design' appears as an add-on with no clear focus of its own. Why scenography and spatial design?

### Conclusion

No, the title of the provision is not adequate.

- The institution is required to either clearly define the distinction between the terms and thereby demonstrate how 'spatial design' is a useful consideration beyond scenography; or rename the degree: *MA in Scenography*.

## 4.2.2 The provision must be described with reference to learning outcomes

### a. Learning outcomes must be expressed in terms of a candidate's intended achievements in knowledge, skills and general competence, as related to the National Qualifications Frameworks.

Learning outcomes (from the application given in Norwegian):

#### Kunnskap

##### Studenten

- har avansert teoretisk og historisk kunnskap innen scenekunst, arkitektur, visuell kunst, design og teaterteknikk i utvidet forstand og spesielt i scenografi og romdesign.
- har spesialisert kunnskap innen ulike faglige teorier og praktiske arbeidsmetoder i henhold til idé- og prosjektutvikling, samt gjennomføring av arbeidsprosesser i scenografi i utvidet forstand.
- kan praktisk anvende kunnskap i nyskapende og innovative scenografiske arbeidsprosesser og prosjekter
- har forståelse, kunnskap og evne til å analysere aktuelle scenografiske problemstillinger i forhold til kunstens spesielle egenart, utvikling og funksjon i samfunnet og kultur.

#### Ferdigheter

##### Studenten

- kan analysere ulike, eksisterende kilder, materialer og kunstteorier samt bruke disse i selvstendig argumentasjon rundt scenografiske problemstillinger.
- kan analysere og selvstendig anvende metodisk, praktisk og teoretisk kunnskap for å initiere, utvikle, gjennomføre og realisere nyskapende scenografiske prosjekter.
- kan presentere og kommunisere komplekse scenografiske prosjekter gjennom presis verbal og visuell kommunikasjon, til samarbeidende kunstnere, kuratorer, teknikere og produksjonsenheter i form av tegninger og modeller.
- kan med hensyn til kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid på en selvstendig måte redegjøre for og reflektere over eget og andres kunstneriske og teoretiske arbeid
- kan selvstendig gjennomføre et kunstnerisk utviklingsprosjekt som er avgrenset i omfang, vesen, tid og kompleksitet og i tråd med gjeldende forskningsetiske normer

## Generell kompetanse

### Studenten

- kan analysere og identifisere etiske utfordringer i forhold til prosjektutvikling i scenografi og romdesign og har opparbeidet bevissthet ovenfor andre involverte parter profesjon. Kan samarbeide med andre involverte i arbeidsprosessen og opprettholde dialog.
- kan anvende sine kunnskaper og ta ansvar for utvikling av idekonsept i kollektive og individuelle kunstformer. Kan lede prosjekter og ivareta lederrollen overfor teknisk profesjonelle, håndverkere og andre spesialister under realiseringen.
- kjenner kritisk anvendelse av relevant litteratur, bibliotek tjenester, billed-, og filmmateriale og nettbaserte verktøy for innhenting av relevant kildemateriale, samt kan analysere og anvende disse til å utvikle en koherent tilnærming til sceniske kunstpraksiser og formulere faglige resonneringer og problemløsninger.
- kan formidle konsept, samarbeid, organisering, tilrettelegging og gjennomføring innen et utvidet fagområde av scenografi og romdesign.
- kan bidra til nyskapende og innovative kunstneriske prosesser i både tenkning, handling og skaping i kunsten generelt og dermed til utvikling og fornyelse av det norske og internasjonale fagområdet.

### Assessment

We find the learning outcomes well described and they meet the National Qualifications Frameworks Standards. The above LOs are encompassing all qualifications listed at Level 7 of the *'Kvalifikasjonsrammeverket for høyere Utdanning'*. The question of a lack of a distinction between the use of the term Scenography and Spatial Design becomes again apparent in the LOs. Spatial Design appears randomly added throughout and is not defined as anything other or distinct from scenography.

### Conclusion

Yes, learning outcomes are satisfactorily described, however:

- The institution is advised to remove Spatial Design from learning outcomes or clarify its distinction from scenography. The Diploma supplement must be changed accordingly.

## **b. The provision's relevance for working life and/or continued studies must be clearly expressed.**

### Assessment

While there is definite practical and vocational rigor in the provision, making it highly relevant for working life, there is less clarity regarding the academic national and international field in which the degree places itself. While artistic work and processes are in themselves academic research, the candidates must be able to articulate their critical positions and research methodologies. (This might be in writing or at viva examination.) There is no acknowledgement of recent international discourse concerning Practice-as-Research in fields such as design and scenography. Critical underpinning is acknowledged throughout the learning outcomes, but we feel that further clarification and definition of the critical framework would be extremely beneficial. This is because, as it stands, students will be tested in their written critical reflection as part of their Masteroppgave (Dissertation). There is little evidence as to how critical positions and methodologies outside of practice will be developed prior to this. There are no academic books listed in the literature section, for example: is there no part of the

degree where a literature review is conducted? To ensure that both aspects of the degree, and that students are adequately prepared for studies at PhD level, this aspect of the Master's degree must not be neglected, and must be afforded the same rigor as practical work.

#### Conclusion

No, the programme's relevance for working life and/or continued studies is not clearly expressed:

- The institution is required to articulate clearly how the candidates will be prepared for further academic studies and academic research.
- The institution is required to provide clarification regarding the nature and the content of the critical commentary and reflection that forms part of the Dissertation.

#### **c. Content and design of the provision must be satisfactorily related to the description of learning outcomes.**

##### Assessment

The first semester consists of theory and methods (10 credits), Laboratories 1 (10 credits), and productions 1 (10 credits). The second and third semesters are built up in the same way, and the students will progress and advance from one semester to the other. In the last semester the students will be writing their master thesis. Currently, the learning outcomes confuse the terms scenography and spatial design, with no clear differentiation between them. The practical content is clear and relates directly to the learning outcomes. The critical and reflective aspects of the learning outcomes are more problematic, however, in that it is less evident how the student will achieve a critical position. How practice develops a critical position therefore needs to be more clearly articulated.

##### Conclusion

No, the provision's content and design are not satisfactorily related to the description of learning outcomes.

The institution is required to:

- differentiate between scenography and spatial design in learning outcomes.
- deepen definitions of how structures of theory support practical work.
- articulate the methodology of the laboratory. What is a Laboratory and how does this differ from an expert workshop?

#### **d. Teaching and student work must be suited for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

##### Assessment

The students will be exposed to varied forms of work; from workshops and laboratories, to practical rehearsals to written papers and excursions. While it is clear that the practical teaching will ensure that the students will meet the learning outcomes, we question the theoretical underpinning. Where and how will the students be taught and tested in advanced theoretical methods and processes?

##### Conclusion

No, the teaching and student work is not suited for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.

- The institution is required to clearly define the critical framework that will ensure the students achievement of theoretical based LOs (“advanced theoretical and historical knowledge”).

**e. Exams and other means of evaluation must be suited for the assessment of the students’ attainment of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

**Assessment**

While we see learning outcomes expressed in terms of a candidate’s intended achievements in knowledge, skills and general competence, we question some of the means by which the candidates’ achievements are assessed. So while it is stated that the degree is arranged around oral examination and the structure and process of these is described, there is also mentioned critical and reflective writing as part of the assessment but little emphasis is placed upon this and the way in which this is to be developed and delivered.

**Conclusion**

No, exams and other means of evaluation are not suited for the assessment of the students’ attainment of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.

- The institution is required to give a clear definition of what would be expected of a reflective text, verbal exam, and the critical reflection element of the dissertation project.

**4.2.3 The provision must have satisfactory links to research and academic and/or artistic development work, adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.**

**Assessment**

The provision is situated in a strong network of artistic development work. To our knowledge it looks to be on an adequate level and volume. While it is clear that this network provides an exciting and high standard of national and international links to artistic practice and research, clarity regarding the enforcement of a research focused environment is needed. A clarification of the academic development work, as supposed to professional and commercial practice is needed to clearly articulate in order to establish a distinct diffraction of the Masters Student to that of the professional practitioner.

What makes this a Master’s Degree as opposed to ‘simply’ professional practice?

The problem we find with this professional focus is that the student is placed in an environment in which he/she must succeed for the commercial purpose and therefore might be pressured to produce outcome and succeed without a strong and considered process.

**Conclusion**

No, the provision needs more satisfactory links to research and academic and/or artistic development work, adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.

- The institution is required to describe more extensive and specific links to research methodologies and academic development work defining how this is a Master’s Degree as supposed to professional practice.

#### **4.2.4 The provision must be attached to student exchange and Internationalization arrangements adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.**

##### **Assessment**

The university college has over the years developed a large network of partners and collaborators. The relationships are many and of varied nature some with clear projects attached and others institutions and conference/events students can attend. The student exchange and internationalization arrangements all look well defined and very exciting. The arrangement will enable students to engage at a high level in institutions relating to scenography. These arrangements will enable the institution to deliver artistic development work at a very high international standard.

##### **Conclusion**

Yes, the provision has systems for student exchange and internationalisation arrangements adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.

### ***4.3 Discipline community/-ies attached to the provision***

#### **4.3.1 The composition, size and collective competence of the relevant discipline community/-ies must be adapted to the provision as the plan describes it and adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.**

##### **Assessment**

The study plan states (4.2.b) that the student will gain full professional competence within the fields of scenography, architecture, public art, exhibition design as well as comprehensive skills for creating exhibition design in various urban and natural situations.

The composition, size and collective competence of this discipline community are enough to guarantee a student professional competence for scenography as well as exhibition design and carry out research and development work connected to these. Yet they are not enough to guarantee a full theoretical and practical master degree education that qualifies for complete professional competence in the fields of architecture and public art. Consequently, the research and development work on architecture and public art is not on adequate level.

##### **Conclusion**

No, the composition, size and collective competence of the discipline community/-ies is not adapted to the provision as described in the plan, and is not adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.

The institution is required either to:

Adjust the study plan to better suit the discipline community's competence, or to expand the discipline community.

**4.3.2 At least 50 per cent of the academic FTEs allotted to the provision must be members of the institution's own academic staff. Of these, professors (full or associate) must be represented among those who teach the core elements of the provision.**

b. For second cycle provisions, at least 10 per cent of the relevant discipline community/-ies must be full professors, and an additional 40 per cent associate professors.

**Assessment**

The criteria for 50% rule are fulfilled: The institution's own academic personnel stands for 70% of the planned core elements of the teaching.

The criteria for second cycle provisions are fulfilled: Of the staff three out of eight have professor level competence: one professor with 100% position (1/8 persons equaling 16%, exceeds the required 10%), while the other two remaining professors and 4 associate professors (førsteamanuensis) make 6/8 persons equaling 75%, which is more than the required 40%.

In the application the core elements of the provision are named thus: Theory and Methods, Laboratories, Productions and Master Thesis. Three of the staff (2 professors + 1 associate professor) participate in all of these elements, the rest of the teaching personnel participates in one or several of them.

**Conclusion**

Yes, the criteria and the demands specific to the cycle of the present educational provision are fulfilled.

**4.3.3 The discipline community/-ies must be active in research and/or development work.**

For the second cycle, documented results at a high level of quality are demanded.

**Assessment**

These criteria are fulfilled with:

1. The widely international artistic research/ development work (KU) in the field of scenography for theater, opera and dance, as well as exhibition design. Also lecturing and workshops are part of this work.
2. The high level international publishing, writing, art exhibition and performance/ video activity
3. The art exhibitions

**Conclusion**

Yes, the criteria and the demands specific to the cycle of the present educational provision are fulfilled.

**4.3.4 The discipline community/-ies must participate actively in relevant national and international networks and collaborative arrangements/projects.**

**Assessment**

1. At national level: Active seminar and workshop activity, cooperation with several relevant national institutions like Teknisk Museum/ Oslo, Nationalteatret/ Oslo, Dramatikkens Hus/ Oslo, Black Box Teater/ Oslo, Det Nasjonale Scene/ Bergen and BIT Teatergarasjen Bergen.

2. At international level: International artists have been engaged to participate in the teaching. At the same time many of the teachers originate from and/or have active work relationship in the international field. Their networks are an asset.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the composition, size and collective competence of the discipline community/-ies is adapted to the provision as described in the plan, and is adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.

### **4.3.5 For provision with vocational practice/internship arrangements, the discipline community/-ies and the practice supervisors must have relevant experience from the practice field.**

#### Assessment

The internship arrangement partners are of high national and international standard and are able to provide high level possibilities of working with scenography and exhibition design. Also the school's own supervisors possess the necessary and relevant experience from these abovementioned fields.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the discipline community/-ies and the practice supervisors have relevant experience from the practice field.

## **4.4 Support functions and infrastructure**

### **4.4.1 The institution must have rooms, library services, administrative and technical services, ICT resources and working conditions for their students that are satisfactory and adapted to the provision as described in the study plan and the number of enrolled students.**

#### Assessment

From what we read, the resources, facilities and working conditions are fully adequate to support the predicted number of enrolled students.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the institution has adequate support functions and infrastructure.

## 5 Conclusion

On the basis of the written application with attached documentation, the expert committee concludes the following:

**The committee does not recommend accreditation of the Master degree in Scenography and Spatial Design at Østfold University College.**

The expert assessment states which demands the institution is required to meet in order to achieve accreditation. In addition, the committee has provided advice for the further development of this educational provision.

**The following demands are not met:**

**4.2.1 The educational provision must have an adequate title**

**4.2.2 b. The provision's relevance for working life and/or continued studies must be clearly expressed.**

**4.2.2 c. Content and design of the provision must be satisfactorily related to the description of learning outcomes.**

**d. Teaching and student work must be suited for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

**4.2.2 e. Exams and other means of evaluation must be suited for the assessment of the students' attainment of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

**4.2.3 The provision must have satisfactory links to research and academic and/or artistic development work, adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.**

**4.3.1 The composition, size and collective competence of the relevant discipline community/-ies must be adapted to the provision as the plan describes it and adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.**

**The following demands must be met in order to achieve accreditation:**

- The institution is required to either clearly define the distinction between the terms and thereby demonstrate how 'spatial design' is a useful consideration beyond scenography; or rename the degree, MA in Scenography.
- The institution is required to articulate clearly how the candidates will be prepared for further academic studies and academic research.

- The institution is required to provide clarification regarding the nature and the content of the Critical commentary and reflection that forms part of the Dissertation
- differentiate between scenography and spatial design in learning outcomes.
- deepen definitions of how structures of theory support practical work.
- articulate the methodology of the laboratory. What is a Laboratory and how does this differ from an expert workshop?
- The institution is required to clearly define the critical framework that will ensure the students achievement of theoretical based LOs (“advanced theoretical and historical knowledge”).
- The institution is required to give a clear definition of what would be expected of a reflective text, verbal exam, and the critical reflection element of the dissertation project.
- The institution is required to describe more extensive and specific links to research methodologies and academic development work defining how this is a Master’s Degree as opposed to professional practice.
- The institution is required either to adjust the study plan to better suit the discipline community’s competence, or to expand the discipline community.

**The committee offers the following advice to develop this educational provision further:**

- The institution is advised to place a strong focus upon the ability of the candidate to articulate a discursive engagement
- The institution is advised to rethink having external partners as part of the interview process while selecting new students.
- The institution is advised to remove Spatial Design from learning outcomes or clarify its distinction from scenography.

## 6 Commentary from the institution

### Comment on the expert assessment

#### 4.2.1.: The educational provision must have an adequate title.

In accordance with one of the two main requirements by the expert committee the title of the program is shortened to Master of Fine Arts in Scenography. Our MA program encompasses a wide field of scenography extending beyond the field of stage design which the Norwegian term “scenografi” usually is used for. Acknowledging that there is no precise distinction of the terminology between scenography and spatial design, and taking into consideration that the fields of scenography and spatial design are to a big degree identical, we agree that Master of Fine Arts in Scenography will be sufficient as well as more accurate and concise. Please find the according alterations applied throughout the attached study program.

#### 4.2.2.b. The provision’s relevance for working life and/or continued studies must be clearly expressed.

The MA program has two goals: 1) the education of professional scenographers as art practitioners on a high international level. 2) The education of researchers with a focus on artistic research. Reflecting the current international discourse, the MA program primarily relates to the Norwegian Artistic Research Program (NARP, <http://artistic-research.no>), and secondarily to other research driven programs on PhD level. The intrinsic unity of practice and theory, of a physical exploration of and conceptual studies on space are inherent to this MA program. Taking critical positions is part of our MA program, as outlined in emnene Teori og metoder 1-3 (please consult revised description). The critical reflection is not an analysis following the artistic work, but a continuous working method as the students will revise their Masteroppgave term by term, as stated in the study program Studiets oppbygging og innhold. In respect to the complexity of the field’s scope we have added according specifications in the study program as well as a literature list in an attachment to the study plan.

#### 4.2.2.c. Content and design of the provision must be satisfactorily related to the description of learning outcomes.

The title of the MA program was adjusted, in response to the first point. The progression in Teori & Metode from 1 to 2 to 3 in relation to the progression of the individual MA project as well as parallel to the progression in the Laboratories and Productions will support the students’ practical work. See additions in Teori & Metode to the study plan. The students will acquire critical positions by analyzing their own and others’ works, writing about it and organizing internal and public seminars where they discuss and disseminate their studies. This is intertwined with the practical work. The students will have to relate their own works to past and current tendencies within the arts after having investigated them as described in Teori og metoder 1-3. Practice develops a critical position by being related to research (in contrast to mere art practice) which is one of this program’s key aspects. The continuous investigation, f.ex. through the critical reflection which accompanies the whole work development process, strengthens the ability of critical practice. The laboratories as described in the “emnebeskrivelse” aim at exploring new fields and methods in relation to scenography allowing the students to acquire in-depth knowledge in a specific but confined field of artistic investigation, for example an investigation into a certain material. An expert workshop would probably rather Accreditation Application – Master’s degree in Scenography and Spatial Design, Østfold University College focus on a specific topic,

aiming at knowledge more in-depth like for example a skill. The laboratories emphasize the scope of scenographical experience and understanding of related constituents of a scenography.

#### **4.2.2.d. Teaching and student work must be suited for the achievement of intended learning outcomes as expressed in the plan.**

The critical framework that will ensure the students achievement of theoretical based LOs is taught within Teori og metoder 1-3 as outlined in the study plan. The attached reading list presents theory that the student will be introduced to during the MA program, in lectures, courses, master seminars and collective projects as outlined in the study plan. Individual reading lists relevant to the MA project will be compiled by the student and teachers, and the students will further develop their applied skills in laboratories 1-3 as outlined in the study plan.

The critical reflection of the MA project as outlined in the study plan is based on the Norwegian Artistic Research Program and revised to suit the level and size of the MA program.

Additionally the students will be embedded into HIØ's network which also consists of academic partners and festivals, e.g. Ruhrtriennale in Germany, where theory is presented and discussed with students from other theoretical and practical art educations.

#### **4.2.2.e. Exams and other means of evaluation must be suited for the assessment of the students' attainment of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

The critical reflection of the Masteroppgave relates to the practical work. When it comes to the critical reflection part, we fully relate to the regulations regarding the critical reflection part of the Norwegian Artistic Research Program under "§ 5.2 Critical Reflection: With regard to the artistic result of the work, the candidate must submit:

- Personal artistic position/work in relation to chosen subject area nationally and internationally;
- How the project contributes to professional development of the subject area;
- Critical reflection on the process (artistic choices and turning points, theory applied, dialogue with various networks and the professional environment etc.);
- Critical reflection on results (self-evaluation in perspective of the revised project description).

[...]"

Sluttvurderingen, the final examination in the 4th semester consists of the artistic part of the MA project, a critical reflection in form of a text and a discussion between the candidate and the exam committee . The according clarifications are added to the study plan.

#### **4.2.3. The provision must have satisfactory links to research and academic and/or artistic development work, adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.**

The Master degree acquired from this program will be proof of artists being highly professional experts in scenography. Additionally it will give a high international level of competence within research focusing primarily on practice-based (and secondarily on practice-led) research within the arts. The key components in the according Accreditation Application – Master's degree in Scenography and Spatial Design, Østfold University College network are the Norwegian Artistic

Research Program, the Norsk Teknisk Museum and the other national and international institutional partners. The HIØ Master Student in Scenography can be a professional practitioner. The diffraction of the master student consists in the practical research activity during the studies, leading to an articulate understanding of the field by conveying methods and an understanding of how research can and should be a driving force in the artistic process. The questioning (researching) takes place by practical art work rather than by contributing to written theory. As this education is within the arts, commercial purposes are side effects. The MA study program will be a seminal project as it constitutes a research based art education and practice at once.

**4.3.1. The composition, size and collective competence of the relevant discipline community/-ies must be adapted to the provision as the plan describes it and adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.**

The discipline community's collective competence and size is suitable to the study plan as argued in the previous points. In Norway artistic research is regarded as equivalent to academic research, which is stated in the Lov om universiteter og høyskoler, in §1-3 Institusjonens virksomhet:

“universiteter og høyskoler skal arbeide for å fremme lovens formål ved å:

a) tilby høyere utdanning som er basert på det fremste innen forskning, faglig og kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid og

erfaringskunnskap.

b) utføre forskning og faglig og kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid.

(...)

e) bidra til innovasjon og verdiskapning basert på resultater fra forskning og faglig og kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid».

The study plan does not state that the student will gain “full professional competence within the fields of scenography, architecture, public art, exhibition design (...)”. It says: “Studiet kvalifiserer for yrkesutøvelse som scenograf på et høyt nasjonalt og internasjonalt nivå innenfor et vidt spekter av scenekunst av tverrfaglig og eksperimentell art, innen utstillings- og museumsdesign, arkitektur/kunst i offentlige rom (...)”, hence working as scenographer in those fields. The mentioned fields represent fields of activities as a scenographer, not fields the scenographer masters as such. And therefore the studies do not qualify for general professional competence in those fields (the same way a civil engineer has a professional competence within architecture differing from that of an architect.) The sentence in the study plan has been adjusted to clarify this.

Summarizing we would like to emphasize the practical aspect of this Master in Fine Arts, which is in the foreground. Theory and critical thinking will be an inherent part of the study but closely linked to the art practice. It is conveyed through T&M 1-3 as well as through the methods and the studies within the laboratories and productions and not at least through the delivery of the Masteroppgave-Produksjon, Masteroppgave-Kritisk refleksjon and the final discussion. Students graduating from the MA in Scenography will also be able to proceed in an academic career within artistic research.

## 7 Expert committee's additional evaluation

### 7.1 Assessment of the institution's comments

#### 4.2.1 The educational provision must have an adequate title

*The institution is required to either clearly define the distinction between the terms and thereby demonstrate how 'spatial design' is a useful consideration beyond scenography; or rename the degree: MA in Scenography.*

#### Assessment

The name has been changed to *Master of Fine Arts in Scenography*

#### Conclusion

The answer is satisfactory and the condition is fulfilled

#### 4.2.2 b. The provision's relevance for working life and/or continued studies must be clearly expressed.

- *The institution is required to articulate clearly how the candidates will be prepared for further academic studies and academic research.*
- *The institution is required to provide clarification regarding the nature and the content of the critical commentary and reflection that forms part of the Dissertation.*

#### Assessment

The university college has successfully aligned themselves with the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme*.

The further clarification and delineation of the interrelationship between the practical explorations and the conceptual and critical studies have made the academic rigor more evident. Overall it is now transparent how a student will be equipped to progress into further academic research both nationally and internationally.

The nature and content of the critical commentary and its interrelationship to the Dissertation is explained to be a 'continuous revising of their Dissertation project, by the student term by term. The study plan and literature list have been revised to support these statements.

#### Conclusion

The answers are satisfactory and the conditions are fulfilled.

**4.2.2 c. Content and design of the provision must be satisfactorily related to the description of learning outcomes.**

*The institution is required to:*

- *differentiate between scenography and spatial design in learning outcomes.*
- *deepen definitions of how structures of theory support practical work.*
- *articulate the methodology of the laboratory. What is a Laboratory and how does this differ from an expert workshop?*

**Assessment**

The learning outcomes are redefined and scenography has been added

Laboratory is described to be more related to new fields and methods relating to scenography, facilitating a broad understanding of scenography. Expert workshop is explained to be more focused on a specific piece of knowledge or a certain skill.

The clearly outlined progression of the practical and the theoretical engagement throughout now gives evidence to an educational structure in which practice based research can take place as supposed to professional practice with little theoretical foundation.

The proposal is now outlining a situation in which critical investigation will strengthen critical practice and vice versa.

**Conclusion**

The answers are satisfactory and the conditions are fulfilled

**d. Teaching and student work must be suited for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

- *The institution is required to clearly define the critical framework that will ensure the students achievement of theoretical based LOs (“advanced theoretical and historical knowledge”).*

**Assessment**

The theoretical content has been further outlined and a list of literature has been added. The applied theoretic skills are described to be further experimented with and developed, with in Laboratories 1-3.

The critical framework has been further outlined and the teaching offered within Theory and Methods 1-3 will enable the student’s achievement of theoretical based LOs (“advanced theoretical and historical knowledge”).

**Conclusion**

The answers are satisfactory and the conditions are fulfilled.

**4.2.2 e. Exams and other means of evaluation must be suited for the assessment of the students' attainment of intended learning outcomes, as expressed in the plan.**

- *The institution is required to give a clear definition of what would be expected of a reflective text, verbal exam, and the critical reflection element of the dissertation project.*

**Assessment**

§ 5.2 from the *Norwegian Artistic Research Program* is cited and it is again clear that exam elements relating to critical reflection and critical evaluation are aligned with the content of *the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme*. Clarifications regarding final examination are added to the study plan.

**Conclusion**

The answers are satisfactory and the conditions are fulfilled

**4.2.3 The provision must have satisfactory links to research and academic and/or artistic development work, adapted to its level, volume and other characteristics.**

- *The institution is required to describe more extensive and specific links to research methodologies and academic development work defining how this is a Master's Degree as supposed to professional practice.* Assessment The answers describes the research as predominately practice-based and the applicant have provided clarity of the academic worthiness by providing strong reference to the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme*.

**Conclusion**

This condition is fulfilled

**4.3.1 The composition, size and collective competence of the relevant discipline community/-ies must be adapted to the provision as the plan describes it and adequate for the conduct of relevant research and development work.**

**Assessment**

The applicant's answer and the more detailed description of professional skills are satisfactory

**Conclusion**

This condition is fulfilled

## **7.2 Final conclusion**

Based on an assessment of the written application accompanied by relevant documentation and the commentary from the institution, the expert committee concludes as follows:

**The expert committee recommends accreditation of “mastergradsstudium i scenografi” (master degree of Fine Arts in Scenography) at Østfold University College.**

## 8 Decision<sup>2</sup>

Vi viser til Høgskolen i Østfolds søknad til fristen 1. februar 2013 om akkreditering av mastergradsstudium i scenografi og romdesign (120 studiepoeng). De sakkyndige avga sin uttalelse i rapport datert 21. juni 2013 med tilleggsvurdering av 29. september 2013.

Vi vurderer at vilkårene i NOKUTs forskrift om tilsyn med utdanningskvaliteten i høyere utdanning av 28. februar 2013 nå er fylt, og har dermed truffet følgende vedtak:

Mastergradsstudium i scenografi ved Høgskolen i Østfold akkrediteres. Akkrediteringen er gyldig fra vedtaksdato.

NOKUT forutsetter at Høgskolen i Østfold fyller de til enhver tid gjeldende krav for akkreditering. I tillegg forventes at Norges informasjonsteknologiske høyskole vurderer de sakkyndiges merknader og anbefalinger i det videre arbeidet med utvikling av studiet.

For mastergradsstudier som NOKUT akkrediterer, må institusjonen selv søke Kunnskapsdepartementet om rett til å etablere studiet.

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<sup>2</sup> The decision is not translated into English, but in the letter informing the applicant of the decision, we write the following: "It is NOKUT's assessment that the conditions in NOKUT's Regulations concerning NOKUT's supervision and control of the quality of Norwegian higher education of 28.02.2013 now are met, and the master degree program in Scenography (120 credits/ECTS ) at Østfold University College is accredited. The accreditation is valid from the date of the decision."

## 9 Documentation<sup>3</sup>

13/151-1 Høgskolen i Østfold- søknad om akkreditering av masterstudium i scenografi og romdesign (120 studiepoeng)

13/151-12 Tilsvar til sakkyndig rapport - Høgskolen i Østfold - søknad om akkreditering av masterstudium i scenografi og romdesign (120 studiepoeng)

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<sup>3</sup> The title of the document is in Norwegian, but most of the documentation is written in English.