



Activity Report 2019-2020

Curating
Department of Culture and
Aesthetics



Stockholms
universitet

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Enhancement of the Master's Programme

The subject area maintains working with continuous development and enhancement of the master's programme Curating Art, including management and law. Throughout the current academic year this has involved comprehensive restructuring of the delivery models of the master's thesis course in the first term of the second year, and also of the arts management course in the second term of the first year.

The thesis course now encompasses an increased number of peer-review seminars, a more robust and demonstrative framework for approach to, and completion of, thesis work within the given timeframe, together with additional support for students, through a more closely integrated supervisory process, as well as the bi-monthly group sessions. The aim is to increase completion, and thus improve achievement rates of the qualification – this also in line with some of the findings of the recent external evaluation of the programme. Historically, on-time completion of the thesis has been something of an issue for a number of students. However, early indications this year show that over half of the current second year cohort will complete their theses by the end of the academic year, and the aim going forward is to continue to enhance this success rate.

Similarly, the arts management course has been a point of contention for many years, with uncharacteristic levels of student dissatisfaction in terms of content, delivery and outcomes. This being markedly uncharacteristic in relation to student satisfaction rates across the rest of the programme, which in general are very high.

Therefore, steps have been taken to institute a new, and somewhat innovative, tripartite delivery model for this course. This has included a research-led theoretical component involving leading national researchers in the field and workshops developing practical skills in key areas such as project management, budgeting, funding and PR and marketing (run with a selection of our institutional partners including Magasin III and Färgfabriken). This component has been further enriched by an ambitious scheme involving the application of student learning through a series of practical production projects. This gave rise to a highly-successful student co-curated exhibition at Köttinspektionen in Uppsala, together with student involvement in events programming for the opening of Accelerator in autumn 2019 (see below). The restructuring of arts management has been partially developed in collaboration with Stockholm School of Economics (Handelshögskolan), establishing a platform not only for exchange and partnership institutionally, but also at the student level, laying foundations for future development.

Economic and Budgetary Restructuring

Following the submission of the external evaluation, discussions have been ongoing at departmental and faculty levels, for the most part regarding the economic situation of the programme.

An extensive overview and analysis of the programme's expenditure over the last three-year period has been undertaken, and was used as the basis for developing the budget for the current financial year. Furthermore, the scheduling and monitoring of outgoing payments has been reconsidered, bringing it more into line with course delivery and also with the university's financial calendar.

The subject area remains committed to working with departmental, faculty and university management to find a more stable and sustainable economic basis for the programme.

External Professional Courses

Partially in response to working with the betterment of the financial situation of the subject area, and partially in response to external enquiry, the potential of developing and delivering external professional development courses is being investigated.

Following an enquiry from Stockholms Läns Landsting (Region Stockholm) Kulturförvaltning, Avdelningen för konst for a short course/seminar series for their employees, negotiations are currently underway for the first of such initiatives. Further potential exists for a short professional development course in the area of Art Law, based around the legal component of the master's programme. Such a development has been of interest and enquired about by several of our institutional partners for a number of years.

Retrospective Book Project and Publication

Preparations are underway for the publication of a retrospective book of the Curating Art programme, to be published in collaboration with Art & Theory Publishing.

This has been made possible through external funding from Långmanska kulturfonden, together with additional internal funds from the university. The book will likely take the form of an edited collection containing new contributions from individuals who have worked with and taught on the programme throughout the years, a series of spreads presenting archive materials from selected student projects, as well as further contributions from alumni and current students. It is envisaged that the book will be ready for publication towards the end of 2019 or beginning of 2020.

Additionally, the fourth number of the student-edited publication series Studies in Curating Art is currently in preparation, as the outcome of the second year Publication elective course. This year the graphic design for the publication is being handled as a collaboration between our students and bachelor's and master's students at the Graphic Design department at Konstfack. The new number will be released at the end of May 2019.

Development of Ongoing Collaboration with Accelerator

Since the inception of the Accelerator public programme in 2016, prior to the commencement of the building works on the space, an ongoing dialogue has been in place regarding the role and contribution of the Curating Art programme in relation to Accelerator's emergence as a new institution for contemporary art.

Students from the programme have made key contributions to each successive project, and this year has been no exception. As part of the newly-designed arts management course (mentioned above) first year students have been working with curating a series of events to form part of the programming around the first three exhibition projects at the new venue. The resultant events will be presented from September 2019 – January 2020.

Discussions continue as to how this relationship will progress, with further innovative initiatives in prospect, to the benefit of both Accelerator and the subject area.