

Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering (IDE) of Delft University of Technology

Development perspectives based on the recommendations of the accreditation assessment committee, January 14, 2020

The accreditation organisation NVAO¹ has officially re-accredited IDE's four educational programmes, for a period of six years until 1 November 2026. This concerns the bachelor degree programme of Industrial Design Engineering (IO), and the master degree programmes Integrated Product Design (IPD), Design for Interaction (Dfi) and Strategic Product Design (SPD). Accreditation is of importance since under Dutch law, only accredited degree programmes may issue government-recognised bachelor's and master's degrees and can count on government funding. The decisions of the NVAO are published on their webpages.

Preceding the decision of the NVAO, an accreditation assessment committee visited the IDE faculty on 1 and 2 April 2019. Based on the self-evaluation report of the faculty, the committee interviewed management, staff, Board of Examiners, students and alumni. Moreover, they reviewed 60 bachelor and master theses. The committee concluded the assessment with a positive judgement and some food for thought by providing recommendations for further improvements.

In January 2020 the accreditation process was completed by a 'development dialogue' in which representatives of the IDE faculty (Prof. R. Balkenende and Drs. N. Pouw) and the assessment committee (Prof. A. de Goeij and Prof. A. Heylighen) discussed future developments for IDE's educational programmes.*

The discussion included four topics:

Elective space in the programme

The domain of industrial design engineering is fairly broad. Therefore, the committee recommended to provide more opportunities for students to choose their own learning path right from the beginning of the programme and within courses. IDE creates such opportunities in the new BSc programme that is currently developed. Within a number of courses student will then be able to choose a direction within a course. In the fourth semester students will be able to choose electives to deepen their knowledge according to their interest. Students will also be stimulated to develop a personal profile. In the master programmes the aspect of extending the possibilities of choices will be discussed in future plans for updating the programmes.

Systematic formative assessment

In contrast to the product development courses, the feedback provided to students in a number of the content course is rather implicit. Suggestions were made for working formats like peer feedback, peer review, flipping the classroom, which will address formative assessment in a more systematic and explicit way, even taking the large number of the IDE students into account. IDE will take up the challenge to improve the formative assessments in the content courses in the next years.

Even more future-proof programmes

IDE agrees with the assessment committee the need to stay in close connection with the developments in the field of industrial design engineering. Changes go fast and there is the need to keep a keen eye on the developments going on. As part of the permanent effort of evaluating the curricula, IDE will keep monitoring future developments in the field. Opportunities will be specifically provided by the professors and teachers of practices who are working both in industry and university and by the Education Advisory Board, Applied Labs and Delft Design Labs in which the faculty collaborates with a variety of industrial and societal stakeholders.

¹ NVAO: Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, see <https://www.nvao.net/en>

Domain Specific Reference Framework (DSRF)

The assessment committee has proposed to discuss the status and function of the DSRF document for IDE programmes, in addition to the three previous topics which were initiated by TU Delft.

In the current DSRF the profile and labour market position of the academic IDE graduate is described by the three universities that offer academic IDE programmes in the Netherlands (TU Delft, TU Eindhoven and U-Twente).

The assessment committee has performed a cluster assessment for all eight degree programmes at the three universities and considers the DSRF as a useful document which is relevant for all stakeholders, including students, teachers, programme constructors, graduates and the labour market. Moreover, it is argued that a DSRF which describes the essentials that IDE programmes should entail, will also leave enough opportunity for each university to shape their own profiles, such as specific areas of focus, or unique features in intended learning outcomes, learning environment and assessment. This may stimulate diversity in IDE programmes, which is of interest for the stakeholders, in particular students and labour market.

However, the current DSRF needs improvement with respect to actualisation, content and structure. Therefore, the committee advises the three universities involved in IDE programmes to develop and reach consensus on a renewed DSRF that describes the required minimum with regard to intended learning outcomes, including the graduate profile (standard 1), essential elements of the learning environment (standard 2), essential elements of the student assessment (standard 3), and the labour market positions of IDE graduates.

* All participants in this Development Dialogue of IDE programs at Delft University of Technology agree with this report.

February 7, 2020