

Legal Notice: This is a translation of the original document, entitled “Studienordnung für den Masterstudiengang Cultural Critique der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste” and issued in German. Under applicable law, solely the German version shall be deemed binding.

Zurich University of the Arts

Master of Arts in Cultural Critique

Degree Programme Regulations (DPR MCC)

13 December 2023

Based on § 2 para. 3 of the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree Programmes at Zurich University of the Arts of 2 November 2021, the University Board hereby decrees:

A. General Provisions

1. Subject

In addition to the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes at ZHdK (RF), the Degree Programme Regulations (DPR) set out here govern the Master of Arts in Cultural Critique.

2. Programme Objective

¹ The Master of Arts in Cultural Critique is a practice-oriented programme that prepares graduates for demanding professional roles, among others, in shaping debates at the interface of the arts, media and society, and with a focus on curating, transfer and outreach, critical analysis, writing and storytelling, and documentation.

² The master’s programme leads to a professional qualification.

3. Majors in Cultural Critique

¹ The master’s degree programme comprises the following majors, each awarded 90 credits:

- a. Major in Curatorial Studies
- b. Major in Cultural Publishing

² The annexes to these DPR describe the MA Majors in Cultural Critique.

B. Admissions

4. Admissions

Programme admissions are governed by the provisions of the Regulatory Framework (RF).

5. Admissions Process and Entrance Examination Committee

The admissions process comprises four stages:

- a. The University Office establishes whether applicants meet the University’s admissions requirements (i.e. previous education, fulfilment of additional requirements in accordance with § 6, language proficiency and application documents),
- b. Applications are reviewed to verify whether applicants fulfil the admissions requirements for the subject-specific aptitude test;
- c. The Entrance Examination Committee verifies whether applicants fulfil the additional requirements and conducts the subject-specific aptitude test;
- d. Admissions decision.

² The Head of Programme appoints an Entrance Examination Committee, comprising at least two persons (professors, members of the teaching and research staff or assistants) from the degree programme and the Head of Major.

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6. Additional Admissions Requirements

¹ To be admitted to the MA Major in Curatorial Studies, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification in art or design, art history or cultural studies, education or a related area of study from a recognised or an accredited higher education institution.

² To be admitted to the MA Major in Cultural Publishing, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification in art or design, communication studies, media studies, languages, art history, cultural studies, pedagogy or a related field² of study from a recognised or an accredited higher education institution.

7. Evidence of Language Proficiency

¹ Students must provide evidence of an adequate knowledge of German and English.

² Students can demonstrate their adequate knowledge of German in one of the following ways:

- a. Native speaker;
- b. German as a subject that was examined as part of their previous education (passed or at least grade 4);
- c. B2 certificate in German that was earned under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or
- d. A university degree (BA/MA) in a programme that was taught and examined in German.

³ Students can demonstrate their adequate knowledge of English in one of the following ways:

- a. Native speaker;
- b. English as a subject that was examined as part of their previous education (passed or at least grade 4);
- c. B2 certificate in English that was earned under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or
- d. A university degree (BA/MA) in a programme that was taught and examined in English.

⁴ Proof of the required language skills can be provided in the first two semesters. In this case, programme admission is subject to students providing evidence of their language proficiency at the latest by the end of their second semester. Students who fail to meet the language requirements may be expelled.

8. Verification

The University Office reviews the documents listed below to verify whether applicants meet the admissions requirements (previous education, additional requirements, language proficiency):

- a. Application form;
- b. CV;
- c. Digital documentation of artistic practice (visual material, links to published projects);
- d. Motivation letter;
- e. Students applying for the MA Major in Cultural Publishing are required to submit one or two project ideas for a master's thesis; proposals are not binding for subsequent coursework;
- f. Bachelor's degree in accordance with the RF, as well as previous education certificates in accordance with the RF and overarching legislation.

9. Admission to Subject-Specific Aptitude Test

Students who fulfil the requirements set out in § 8 and who have submitted the required application documents are admitted to the subject-specific aptitude test.

10. Subject-Specific Aptitude Test

¹ The subject-specific aptitude test has two parts.

² The first part of the aptitude test consists of the assessment of the application documents. Positive assessment of these documents and a high ranking are essential for being invited to the second part of the aptitude test.

³ The second part of the aptitude test consists of an individual admissions interview and, in the case of the MA Major in Cultural Publishing, of an examination.

⁴ Programme admission is subject to the positive overall assessment of the application documents, the admissions interview and, in the case of the MA Major in Cultural Publishing, the outcome of an additional examination.

⁵ Candidates who fail their subject-specific aptitude test may repeat this only once for any degree programme.

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11. Assessment Criteria

The following criteria are used to assess candidate aptitude:

- a. Suitability and developmental potential for the professional field as well as genuine motivation and commitment to pursuing a master's degree,
- b. Very good subject-specific and methodological competence in one's original discipline,
- c. Differentiated aesthetic perception and the ability to express oneself clearly and coherently,
- d. A strong interest in current developments, discourses and positions in the fields of art and design, culture and society, art and cultural education.

C. Student Performance

12. Credit Requirements

The number of credits required to pass the majors in cultural critique is stipulated in the respective programme structures (see Annexes).

13. Assessment Criteria

¹ The following criteria are used to assess student performance:

- a. Timeliness and relevance of one's questions and interests,
- b. Appropriate consideration of the current state of research and critical debate (state of the art),
- c. Independent approach,
- d. Appropriate and feasible methodology,
- e. Structure and formal organisation of one's work,
- f. Linguistic and visual appropriateness,
- g. Self-reflexivity, transparent positioning.

² These criteria are assessed in terms of the programme outcomes stipulated in the Annex.

D. Programme Organisation

14. Practical Experience (Internship)

¹ The Head of Programme must approve the type, content, duration and crediting of an internship prior to commencement.

² Internships are credited only if they meet the content and organisational requirements, which must be specified in a corresponding agreement.

³ Students must arrange internships themselves.

E. Graduation

15. Major Graduation Requirements

¹ Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Cultural Critique must fulfil the following requirements:

- a. Master's thesis³,
- b. Diploma colloquium: Presentation and defense of the master's thesis before the Examination Committee and examination of knowledge and reflective skills in the thematic context of the curriculum³.

² The Head of Programme appoints an Examination Committee, comprising the Head of Major, at least one person (professor, member of teaching and research staff or assistant) and one person external to the programme with expertise.

³ Students who wish to graduate from the MA Major in Cultural Critique must be awarded a "Pass" or at least a grade of 4.0.

⁴ Students who are awarded a "Fail" or a grade below 4.0 may repeat their final examinations only once, at the next possible examination date.

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F. Intellectual Property Rights

16. Copyright Ownership

¹ Copyright in all inventions, designs and copyrighted works created in degree programmes is owned by ZHdK.

² ZHdK reserves the right to decide on the licensing and transfer of intellectual property rights.

G. Final Provisions

17. Enactment

¹ These Degree Programme Regulations were enacted on 1 February 2024.

² These Regulations apply to all students who enter their programme in the 2024/25 autumn semester or thereafter.

18. Transitional Provision

¹ Master's students who began their studies before the 2024/25 autumn semester will graduate from their programme in accordance with the Degree Programme Regulations for the ZHdK Master of Arts in Art Education of 26 August 2009 and with the respective curricular concept.

² In accordance with previous legislation, students must complete their degree programme before the end of the maximum period of study.

³ Students who interrupt their studies are subject to the new legislation. The terms and conditions of resumption as well as the accreditation of previous achievements are governed by § 34 of the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor's and Master's Programmes.

¹ Resolution of the University Board of 3 July 2024. In Effect since 1 August 2024.

² Resolution of the University Board of 2 July 2025. In Effect since 1 August 2025.

³ Resolution of the University Board of 14 January 2026. In Effect since 1 February 2026.

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Master of Arts in Cultural Critique Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Curatorial Studies

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Cultural Critique with a Major in Curatorial Studies»

Entry-Level Competencies

Newly admitted students will possess:

- Profound interest in the medium of exhibitions and in exhibition design and communication (i.e. museum education),
- Differentiated aesthetic perception and the ability to express themselves clearly and coherently,
- Above-average self-motivation and self-reflection skills,
- Initial professional experience (e.g. internships).

Non-Combinable Programmes

While the Major in Curatorial Studies and the Minor in Curatorial Practice can be combined, modules or coursework cannot be credited twice.¹

Programme Outcomes

Graduates will:

- Possess subject-oriented knowledge and the ability to productively appropriate historical and contemporary discourses in curatorial studies, art and cultural education as well as the theory of art, design, culture and society, which they will be able to relate to their curatorial practice in a conceptual, critical and well-reflected manner,
- Be able to reflectively combine different disciplines and media and to engage in transdisciplinary cooperation with experts with different professional profiles,
- Be able to productively apply the research-based findings and insights gained during the programme to the discourse- and practice-oriented further development of their subject and profession,
- Be able to take a distinctive, well-reflected and independent position in the field of exhibiting and museum education,
- Be able to professionally conceptualise and mount exhibitions and educational offerings in cultural and commercial contexts,
- Be aware of their social responsibility, be team players and cooperative, and be able to take resourceful and well-integrated action,
- Possess the skills needed to occupy high-profile positions as freelance or employed curators and art and culture educators for traditional platforms such as cultural and art museums, art galleries, galleries or new platforms such as festivals, projects in public spaces or to work as self-employed or employed staff in projects, institutions, organisations and enterprises in the cultural industries, cultural funding and education.

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Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Curatorial Studies must earn at least 90 credits.

In accordance with the programme regulations, students must complete modules and earn credits as specified below:

Exhibiting and Education	min. 33 Credits, of which 23 Credits ² from C-Modulen and 10 Credits ² from CE-Modules ¹
Practice and Projects	min. 27 Credits, of which 12 Credits ² from C-Modulen and 15 Credits ² from CE-Modules ¹
Graduation	min. 30 Credits from C-Modulen

Key: C = Compulsory Module; CE = Compulsory Elective Module

Enactment and Effectiveness

¹ This Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations was enacted on 1 February 2024. It was approved by the University Board on 13 December 2023.

² This Annex applies to all students who enter their programme in the 2024/25 autumn semester or thereafter.

¹ Resolution of the University Board of 19 June 2024. In Effect from 1 August 2024.

² Resolution of the University Board of 2 July 2025. In Effect since 1 August 2025.

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Master of Arts in Cultural Critique Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Cultural Publishing

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Cultural Critique with a Major in Cultural Publishing»

Entry-Level Competencies

Newly admitted students will:

- Possess experience in at least one area of cultural publishing,
- Possess a differentiated understanding of texts and language as well as accurate perception and observation skills,
- Be able to convincingly explain their choice of programme.

Non-Combinable Programmes

While the Major in Cultural Publishing and the Minor in Creative Writing can be combined, modules or coursework cannot be credited twice.

Programme Outcomes

Graduates will:

- Possess a subject-specific knowledge of the theoretical and contemporary discourses in the arts, culture and media, based on their individual areas of specialisation, which they can relate to their professional practice in a conceptual, critical and well-reflected manner,
- Master the core competencies of cultural publishing (conceptualising, writing, editing, proofreading and correcting texts),
- Possess proven skills and experience in researching, conceptualising and producing publications and contributions in defined media and organisational contexts,
- Be able to observe and reflect on the structures, arrangements (*dispositifs*) and strategies of the cultural public sphere and help shape these further,
- Be able to receive and communicate knowledge from scientific and non-scientific contexts in a qualified manner, apply a set of research methods guiding their own practice in a well-reflected manner and use this competence for the practice-oriented further development of their subject and profession,
- Be able to contribute to selected fields of discourse with their own publications and contributions and to network accordingly,
- Be able to perform demanding tasks in cultural and media organisations and assume responsibility for projects and teams.

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Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Cultural Publishing must earn at least 90 credits.

In accordance with the programme regulations, students must complete modules and earn credits as specified below:

Reading / Interpretation	min. 10 Credits, of which 4 Credits from C-Modules and 6 Credits from CE-Modules ¹
Writing / Creation	min. 16 Credits, of which 6 Credits from C-Modules and 10 Credits from CE-Modules ¹
Producing / Conception	min. 24 Credits, of which 16 Credits from C-Modules and 8 Credits from CE-Modules ¹
Discourse / Research	min. 12 Credits, of which 12 Credits from C-Modules ¹
Graduation	28 Credits from P-Modules ¹

Key: C = Compulsory Module; CE = Compulsory Elective Module

Enactment and Effectiveness

¹This Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations was enacted on 1 February 2024. It was approved by the University Board on 13 December 2023.

²This Annex applies to all students who enter their programme in the 2024/25 autumn or thereafter.

¹ Resolution of the University Board of 2 July 2025. In Effect since 1 August 2025.