Expert's Report

On the degree programs:

"Professional Certificate in Design Studies"
"Master of Design"
"Doctor of Design"

Offered by the **Design Studies Institute (DSI)**, New York

Site visit to the University: 14th, 16th, and 17th November 2023

Panel of Experts:

Dr. Elizabeth Rendon Velez	Academic expert
Chimene Adoptie, MBA	Professional expert
Gerald Aistleitner, MSc	Professional expert
Julia Ehrenheim, MSc	Student expert

Coordinator (Site Visit):
Dir. Abigail Eendragt, BSc   Accreditation Agency Curacao, AAC

Coordinator (Grace Period):
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I. Preamble

The AAC carries out accreditations of doctoral, master, and bachelor programs. All accreditations are based on the AAC's standards and guidelines based on the ESG Guidelines, and/or the CHEA Quality Principles. The accreditation follows the usual procedural steps:

- Submission of a self-report
- Submission of self-documentation (Appendixes 1 to 8)
- Assessment by the Panel of Experts (PoE) including a Site Visit
- Creation of the Expert Report (ER)
- Final Decision by the Accreditation Commission (AC)

II. Procedure

The **Design Studies Institute (DSI)** requested the AAC to accredit their **"Professional Certificate in Design Studies, "Master of Design, and "Doctor of Design"** programs.

1. Methodical Procedure

The DSI applied for conceptual accreditation with the AAC by submitting the signed application on **November 21, 2022**. The Self-Report guidelines were provided to the DSI and were completed on **January 7, 2023**. The Accreditation Commission (AC) of the AAC reviewed the DSI's application request and approved it, resulting in the official opening of the accreditation procedure. The accreditation contract between DSI and AAC was signed on **February 2, 2023**.

In the contract, it was stated that the DSI had to provide the Self – documentation Report (SDR) by **April 27, 2023**. DSI requested via email on **March 29, 2023,** for an extension of the submission deadline to a month later **May 27, 2023**.

The SDR contained the following standards:
- Standard 1: Institutional overview **(ESG 1.2.;1.6; 1.7. & US ii, iv)**
- Standard 2: Ethics and diversity (ESG 1.3. & US Vii)
- Standard 3: Design of programs (ESG 1.3. & US Vii)
- Standard 4: Quality Management and Improvement **(ESG 1.1.; 1.7.; 1.9.;1.10. & US i)**
- Standard 5: Administration and teaching staff **(ESG 1.3.;1.4.;1.5.;1.6 & US iii, v)**
- Standard 6: Student and stakeholders' engagement **(ESG 1.2.; 1.7.; 1.9.; & US vi)**
- Standard 7: Learning and teaching **(ESG 1.3., 1.4. & US i, vi, VII, VIII)**
- Standard 8: Program handbook **(ESG 1.1.;1.2.;1.3.;1.8., 1.9. & US ii, iii, vii, viii, ix).**

The SDR was reviewed by the AAC for completeness according to the AAC Self – documentation guidelines. Consequently, the SDR was shared with the PoE for review (pre-site visit). No documentation or additional information was needed from the DSI.

2. Appointment of the Panel of Experts (PoE)

The DSI, being a design institution delivering its programs through a Distance Learning platform, was deemed to require expertise in Academia and QA procedures, IT, Design, Market area, and a student perspective.

The AAC selected experts through a call for Experts, where interested individuals could apply. The AAC reviewed the applications and nominated 4 experts. The AC reviewed the application and the selection procedure, approving the nominations.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the approved student expert "**Santiago Bernal del Río, MSc**" with expertise in Design, could not continue the process. This was communicated to the AAC at the very last minute before the agreed Virtual Site Visit with the DSI. The AAC proceeded by choosing "Julia Ehrenheim, MSc" – a current student at the Global Humanistic University (GHU).

The approved experts are as follows:

Dr. Elizabeth Rendon Velez	Academic expert (Design and QA)
Chimene Adoptie, MBA	Professional expert (Design and Market)
Gerald Aistleitner, MSc	Professional expert (IT specialist)
Julia Ehrenheim, MSc	Student expert (Current Student)

Site Visit (Online)

The DSI went through a virtual Site Visit on the **14th, 16th, and 17th of November 2023** via Zoom. Attendees were the AAC working group, PoE, and the DSI working group. The Standards were discussed according to the Site Visit Agenda (see attachment: Site Visit Agenda).

Expert Report

Following the Site Visit, the PoE had a virtual meeting on **November 30, 2023,** to discuss the Self – documentation again and the new information gathered from the Site Visit. The Experts concluded the meeting with the initial accreditation decision, where the Experts concluded that DSI could not be accredited. In agreement with the PoE, the AAC decided to offer DSI a "Grace Period" until September 13th, 2024. In this period DSI was given a list of 18 critical conditions to work on.

DSI submitted additional documentation in time on September 13th, 2024. In alignment with the PoE it was concluded that those issues which had led to the "Grace Period" where now taken care off. Hence a new accreditation decision was made which will be elaborated on in the report.

III.General information on the University

The Design Studies Institute is a private, nonprofit institution of higher education offering distance learning programs and is based currently in New York.

DSI offers professional certificate and graduate degree programs:
● Professional Certificate in Design Studies with specializations in Graphic & Visual Design, Fashion Design, and Interior Design
● Master of Design (MDes)
● Doctor of Design (DDes)

DSI is governed by four distinct groups that share in and contribute to organizational decision making which are the Board of Directors, the Dean, Faculty Council, and the Administrative Council.

IV.Assessment of the study program(s)

In this chapter, the experts assess the three programs: "Professional Certificate in Design Studies, "Master of Design, and "Doctor of Design".

Standard 1: Institutional overview (ESG 1.2.;1.6; 1.7. & US ii, iv)

Description
According to the Design Studies Institute's (DSI) Self-Documentation Report (SDR), the institution is a private, nonprofit higher education organization based in New York. DSI specializes in distance learning programs, offering professional certificate and graduate degree programs including a Professional Certificate in Design Studies with specializations in Graphic & Visual Design, Fashion Design, and Interior Design, a Master of Design (MDes), and a Doctor of Design (DDes).

DSI's mission is to train and empower the next generation of designers to lead within the field, emphasizing creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility. The institution aims to shape a just and sustainable society through design practice and research. DSI operates in a remote-first format, providing opportunities for learners worldwide, with its headquarters in New York, USA. The institution offers programs in online and low-residency formats, facilitating flexible learning experiences.

DSI's strategic objectives encompass various facets crucial for its growth and impact. The institution prioritizes program development, continuously refining its offerings to align with industry demands and emerging trends. Faculty recruitment and development are central, aiming to attract diverse talent and nurture expertise. Infrastructure

enhancements ensure modern facilities and technology, supporting effective learning and collaboration. Additionally, DSI fosters a vibrant research culture, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation to address societal challenges through design. These objectives collectively drive DSI's mission to empower designers and shape a more just and sustainable society.

The institution's governance structure includes a flat organizational hierarchy, with faculty and administrative appointments reporting directly to the Dean, who in turn reports to the Board of Directors.

Experts Evaluation
In Standard 1: Institutional Overview, DSI provides a comprehensive overview of its history, operations, and educational offerings, demonstrating a clear commitment to design education.

The institution effectively articulates its mission, vision, and values, emphasizing the training of future designers and its commitment to creating a just and sustainable society through design. DSI has established a detailed timeline for strategic objectives and goals, clearly specifying steps for implementation. This now adequately responds to the recommendation for a clearer articulation of strategic goals.

DSI clarified its position as a remote-first institution, with no current need for extensive physical infrastructure for most programs. However, they have provided a solution for specialized needs, such as lending equipment to Fashion Design students. Temporary infrastructure for residents is also arranged, ensuring necessary resources are available.

Furthermore, in fostering a vibrant research culture, DSI needs to establish strong connections with industry partners to ensure that research endeavors address real-world challenges and involve students in impactful projects. Engaging in research collaborations with companies not only enriches students' educational experiences but also enhances the institution's reputation and promotes its design programs effectively. DSI recognizes the importance of strong industry connections and is actively pursuing collaborations through faculty networks and global design organizations. However, this is still in the early stages of development **(recommendation 1)**.

Despite acknowledging the lack of available regional data, DSI is moving forward with market testing based on student personas through collaboration with Atomic Enrollment. This approach should provide insights before the formal program launch.

Conclusion
Standard 1 achieved a total score of 80 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are well-defined and have shown or provided sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the standard. The institution has effectively met the requirements by providing comprehensive information on its history, operations, and educational offerings, as well as articulating its mission, vision, and values with clarity.

DSI has made notable progress in aligning its strategic objectives with institutional goals and clarified the infrastructure plan for remote-first learning, improving the score.

Enhancing connections with industry partners to foster meaningful research collaborations and conducting a more thorough market analysis would further enhance the institution's strategic approach. Despite these areas for enhancement, DSI exhibits a commendable commitment to design education and the cultivation of a just and sustainable society through its institutional overview.

Standard 2: Ethics and diversity (ESG 1.3. & US Vii)

Description
According to the information provided in the SDR, the Institution demonstrates a commitment to integrity and respect for diversity in its educational environment. The institution values diversity and inclusivity as fundamental principles, reflected in curriculum design, faculty recruitment, admission processes, and learner support. DSI emphasizes ethical and socially responsible behavior, fostering a culture of inclusivity, integrity, and mutual respect among community members. To ensure transparency and accountability, DSI has established channels for reporting policy violations and promoting a safe and accessible learning environment. Policies and procedures, including academic integrity policies and the Honor Code, uphold standards of ethical conduct for both students and faculty/staff members. Additionally, information sharing is facilitated through the public availability of policies and procedures on the DSI website and internal communication channels, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the institution.

Experts Evaluation/ Conclusion
In Standard 2: Ethics and Diversity, the Institution demonstrates a commitment to fostering an inclusive environment through the implementation of various policies. These policies, including the Diversity & Inclusivity Policy, Non-Discrimination Policy, and Non-Retaliation Policy, underscore DSI's dedication to preventing discrimination and promoting diversity.

DSI has revised its policies on ethics and diversity, consolidating various documents and introducing a Learner Disciplinary Policy. There is now a greater focus on procedural details.

Additionally, DSI has established policies to ensure privacy and safety, such as the Code of Conduct and Educational Records Policy. The social media policy has been updated to provide clearer guidelines for both official and personal use by students and staff, addressing the need for more specific details.

DSI made important information regarding study programs and policies and procedures accessible on its website. By that this is further promoting openness and accessibility.

It is still recommended that DSI continuously revise and refine its policies and procedures to ensure consistency and clarity across all areas **(recommendation 2)**.

Conclusion
In conclusion, Standard 2: Ethics and Diversity has achieved a total score of 70 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are well-defined and have shown or provided considerable evidence to meet the overall requirements of the standard. The institution demonstrates a commendable commitment to fostering an inclusive environment through the implementation of various policies aimed at preventing discrimination and promoting diversity. DSI has demonstrated substantial evidence of meeting the standard's overarching requirements.

Standard 3: Design of programs (ESG 1.3. & US Vii)

Description
The information provided by DSI outlines a systematic approach to designing its programs, emphasizing data-driven methods to establish relevant Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). This approach involves an analysis of diverse sources such as job market data, academic literature, and comparative studies of similar programs. Program approval entails collaborative decision-making between the Dean and Faculty Council, considering factors like alignment with institutional goals, market relevance, faculty capacity, and financial sustainability.

DSI places a strong emphasis on supporting student progression through various means, including clear program structures, prerequisites, academic advising, course scheduling, and monitoring mechanisms. The institution strives to create a conducive learning environment where students can effectively navigate their academic journey.

Learning outcomes are formulated with both subject-specific and interdisciplinary relevance, with continuous updates to align with evolving industry demands. The curriculum is designed to offer a comprehensive education across various design disciplines, aiming to equip students with essential knowledge and skills for their chosen field.

Changes to study programs undergo an annual review process involving key stakeholders, ensuring transparency in revisions to minimize disruption for enrolled students. Overall, DSI adopts a systematic and collaborative approach to program design and evaluation, aimed at providing quality education and supporting student success.

Experts Evaluation
In the evaluation of Standard 3: Strategic Design of Programs, DSI has revised its Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and created detailed Curriculum Maps. These revisions address the alignment of PLOs with institutional strategies and ensure no course contains singular learning objectives. Additionally, students and stakeholders

are now integrated into ongoing program development through structured focus groups and surveys.

In addition to this strategic alignment, there is a visual representation that demonstrates how the program objectives integrate with the institutional strategy. The Curriculum Map provides a visual tool that facilitates understanding of the program's structure and content, enabling a more accurate assessment of its coherence and alignment with institutional objectives. Additionally, it will serve as a reference for students, faculty, and other stakeholders, enhancing transparency and communication around the program's structure and purpose.

In Curriculum design, there is a complete Syllabus for each course within the program available, showing details such as student workload, assessment types, and other pertinent information. This complete Syllabus serves as a comprehensive guide for both students and instructors, providing clarity on course expectations and facilitating effective teaching and learning strategies. The Syllabus is defined in a standardized format showing all essential elements, ensuring consistency and coherence across courses.

The expected student workload is defined by using a standardized system of credit hours. Clear articulation of the expected workload facilitates transparency and comparability across programs, enabling students to make informed decisions about their academic commitments. The workload is now shown in credit hours, if the objective is to attract also students from Europe the recommendation is to also show the workload in ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) (**Recommendation 3**).

Conclusion
In conclusion, Standard 3: Strategic Design of Programs has achieved a total score of 75 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are well-defined and have shown sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the standard. The updated program design, including the creation of detailed curriculum maps and refined Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), shows significant improvement in this area.

Standard 4: Quality Management and Improvement (ESG 1.1.; 1.7.; 1.9.;1.10. & US i)

Description
According to the information provided in the SDR, the institution has a comprehensive strategy for Quality Management and Improvement, covering several key aspects:

Regarding the Policy for Quality Management, DSI emphasizes continual improvement of study programs and institutional operations. Quality management involves reporting on and responding to collected data, implementing formal review procedures, and ensuring quality assurance.

Objectives and Concepts of Quality are expressed through various goals, such as educating graduates to a high level of competence in design, based on internationally recognized research standards. A culture of consistently achieving high quality is fostered among all institution members, and programs are developed in collaboration with employers, researchers, and regulatory agencies.

In terms of Process and Procedure Quality, established processes ensure programs run smoothly, comply with laws, and minimize administrative errors. Good process quality guarantees compliance with guidelines and smooth program operation.

Learning Quality is determined by educators delivering content professionally and students showing self-motivation and effort. Educator quality is assessed through observation and student evaluations, while student quality is measured by achievement level regarding learning objectives.

DSI promotes a Culture of Quality institution-wide, where individuals uphold high academic standards. A cohesive institutional culture guides individuals toward shared goals.

Quality of Research-Based Education is ensured by continuously updating courses with the latest research findings. Courses are delivered by researchers, practitioners, or both.

Regarding Quality Oversight, approval, monitoring, and periodic review of academic programs ensure relevance and compliance. Student assessment, instructor quality assurance, and student support are integral to oversight.

Internal Quality Assurance includes end-of-term course surveys, teaching observations, faculty performance evaluations, and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

External Quality Assurance involves regular evaluations by the Accreditation Agency of Curaçao and Curaçao's Ministry of Education to validate programs and ensure compliance.

Experts Evaluation
In the evaluation of Standard 4: Quality Management and Improvement, it is evident upon reviewing the DSI's policy for quality management that they have a comprehensive framework emphasizing continuous improvement and compliance with guidelines and standards.

DSI has implemented procedures for regular evaluations and data analysis, incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) into its improvement strategies. Monthly and quarterly reviews of these KPIs ensure continuous feedback and program enhancements. DSI has a robust policy for quality management, ensuring transparency, effectiveness, and continuous improvement in their study programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Standard 4 has a total score of 70 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are defined in this standard DSI demonstrates a comprehensive framework emphasizing continuous improvement and adherence to guidelines and standards. DSI has clearly defined its procedures for evaluations, reviews, and KPI analysis, improving their standing in this category. In summary, DSI demonstrates a commitment to quality management.

Standard 5: Administration and teaching staff (ESG 1.3.;1.4.;1.5.;1.6 & US iii, v)

Description

According to the information provided in the SDR, the Institution demonstrates a robust infrastructure and support system for both administration and student services, as well as teaching staff resources.

DSI's commitment to the student learning experience is evident through its comprehensive approach to resources:

The institute operates as a remote-first institution, with faculty and staff located across North America to cater to learners worldwide. Home offices with internet access are required for faculty and staff members, and the institute's headquarters are currently located in New York, NY, with planned student residencies in Curaçao and New York.

For the online campus, DSI utilizes advanced learning management systems and multimedia tools. Faculty and staff have access to necessary technology for online teaching, and a suite of digital tools enhances the online campus experience, including MyDSI, Zoom, Salesforce, Moodle, Google Workspace, and Slack. DSI continually evaluates instructional technology to enhance learning experiences.

In terms of learning resources, DSI emphasizes digital resources to minimize costs and ensure accessibility. Students are responsible for acquiring required materials, with support available for those facing financial hardship. Access to a digital library for research materials is provided, and there is a commitment to evolving the DSI Library based on community needs.

Administratively, DSI's structure is lean but responsive to the institute's current operational status. The administrative team consists of a Dean and a Director of Student and Career Services, with plans to expand with Associate Deans in the future. Recruitment of staff follows inclusive practices, with job descriptions developed and minimum requirements established for each role. The evaluation process involves phone screenings, interviews, and approval by the Dean and Board of Directors.

Professional development opportunities are encouraged for staff, with periodic performance evaluations and the establishment of a fund for professional development. The institute also provides course auditing and future plans for a Tuition Remission policy for staff.

Student support services are comprehensive, including Accessibility and Accommodation Services overseen by the Assoc. Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty, Student Engagement Services, Career Services, Academic Support, and Crisis Response.

DSI's teaching staff comprises highly qualified design educators, with resumes and CVs provided for each faculty member. Recruitment of faculty is overseen by the Human Resources Director, with adherence to DSI policies. Professional development opportunities are available, including teaching observations and a fund for professional development. Course auditing is permitted for faculty, with plans for a future Tuition Remission policy.

Employment regulations for faculty appointments include part-time and full-time contracts, with eligibility for course releases based on research productivity and service contributions. Faculty are encouraged to engage in scholarly activity, either independently or through collaboration with research centers/labs. Teaching innovation is promoted, with guidance and funding available for faculty initiatives.

Experts Evaluation
The human resource plan has been clearly defined, with a strategy for hiring faculty and administrative staff. DSI has also implemented workload monitoring tools and established flexible work arrangements. Recruitment for doctoral-level faculty is actively ongoing, with two new members already hired.

Looking forward, given DSI's aspirations for future growth and organizational refinement, it is strongly advised that the institution ensures the readiness of Salesforce implementation. Preparing the platform before launching new programs would enable DSI to streamline administrative processes, enhance data management capabilities, and foster seamless communication and collaboration across different departments. This technological upgrade would not only bolster the institute's operational efficiency but also contribute to the realization of its envisioned organizational structure. Although it is mentioned in the self-documentation that further implementation of SalesForce platform is planned, it is recommended that the platform should be ready before program startup **(recommendation 4)**.

The institution recognizes the significance of digital resources in its virtual operations, to conduct thorough assessments DSI ensures these resources meet the standards for a robust online learning environment. DSI provides a survey that includes questions about the effectiveness, usability, and accessibility of the existing digital resources. Include open-ended questions to allow students to provide detailed feedback about their experiences.

Additionally, the HEI's commitment to staff growth and development demonstrated through periodic performance evaluations and professional development opportunities, aligns with its vision for excellence. To fully leverage the potential of its workforce, the

institution ensures clarity and transparency in the evaluation processes and the subsequent development plans proposed based on these evaluations. This is achieved by providing procedures and templates to periodically review the teaching effectiveness, employee reviews and having a performance improvement plan to support both faculty and staff where improvements and corrective actions are needed.

The institution's encouragement of scholarly activities and innovative teaching methods underscores its dedication to academic excellence and pedagogical innovation.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the assessment of Standard 5, which encompasses Administration and teaching staff, reveals a total score of 75 points. This score indicates that the approach and implementation is outlined within this standard. An improved human resource planning, including faculty recruitment and workload management, has strengthened this area. In addition, the evaluation of effectiveness of digital resources is measured. For the faculty and staff evaluation clear procedures are established.

Standard 6: Student and stakeholders' engagement (ESG 1.2.; 1.7.; 1.9.; & US vi)

Description
The Institution provides a comprehensive approach to Standard 6: Student and Stakeholders' Engagement, incorporating elements of student and stakeholder engagement as well as collaboration and communication within its institutional framework.

Student Engagement:
DSI caters to a diverse student population, valuing both prior professional experience and academic qualifications. Through the creation of personas based on observational data and current literature, DSI ensures tailored academic programs that meet the needs of different student segments. Students are actively involved in the learning process, co-designing teaching activities, and providing feedback through End of Course surveys. Residency programs, research centers, career support, and public events further enhance student engagement, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

Stakeholder Engagement:
DSI recognizes various stakeholders, including students, faculty, board of directors, accreditation bodies, alumni, industry partners, government agencies, community organizations, and research/funding organizations. Each stakeholder group plays a crucial role in shaping the institute's curriculum, support services, and overall learning environment. Engagement with stakeholders is facilitated through mentorship programs, internships, public events, and collaboration on research projects. Additionally, DSI maintains open communication channels, such as a dedicated support email and a public website, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and efficient information dissemination.

Collaboration and Communication:
DSI emphasizes collaboration and communication both with students and stakeholders. Residence weeks, mentorship programs, and internships provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the institute's work and contribute to its mission. The institute's public website and support email serve as primary channels for communication, ensuring timely assistance and effective dissemination of information. By fostering collaboration and communication, DSI strengthens its relationships with stakeholders, enriches the learning experience, and advances its research endeavors.

Experts Evaluation
DSI has effectively integrated students and stakeholders into the development process, and this engagement is well-structured. DSI designed program meetings to collectively discuss the program quality and the instructor effectiveness. There is a clear plan on how this program quality meetings will be organized.

Research is seen as a vital component of DSI's study programs. To structure this DSI installed so called Research Labs.

To involve professional certificate students in research, aligning their profiles with industry demands and providing exposure to the research process next to the Research Lab, doctoral students will host public workshops and teaching sessions. All DSI students are welcomed to attend public talks or panels organized by DSI, which would further broaden their exposure to design research and industry trends.

Identifying current partnerships and proactively seeking collaborations with industry partners and institutions would enhance the institute's engagement with stakeholders, this is still at an early stage **(recommendation 5).**

Conclusion
In conclusion, Standard 6 achieved a total score of 75 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are well-defined and have provided considerable evidence to meet the overall requirements of the standard. The evaluation of Standard 6: Student and Stakeholders' Engagement highlights commendable aspects, such as the effective use of Personas to represent different student segments and the facilitation of student participation in learning and teaching through End of Course surveys. DSI has effectively integrated students and stakeholders into the development process, and this engagement is well-structured. Organizing program meetings for collective discussions on program quality and instructor effectiveness, further inquiry into the operations of research centers, and strategies to involve professional certificate students in research are built into the programs.

Building up proactive collaboration with industry partners and institutions will further enhance the institute's engagement with stakeholders and overall effectiveness in fulfilling the standard's objectives.

Standard 7: Learning and teaching (ESG 1.3., 1.4. & US i, vi, VII, VIII)

Description
According to the information provided by the DSI in the SDR, the institute approaches learning and teaching, assessment, research, study regulations, admission processes, study recognition and certifications, and employment fields as follows:

Learning and Teaching:
The Design Studies Institute (DSI) adopts project-based learning to align with contemporary design education trends. Rooted in Social Reconstructivism, its curriculum aims for social change through a learner-centered approach. Flexible learning paths cater to diverse student needs, motivating engagement and innovation.

Assessment:
Transparent assessment policies, including the rigorous DDes Qualifying Examination, ensure comprehensive skill evaluation. Various assessment methods and types, aligned with learning objectives, support formative and summative evaluation, adhering to clear guidelines and expectations.

Research:
DSI fosters a research-oriented culture, providing support for capstone projects and dissertations. Offering a range of research methods and resources, it facilitates personalized mentorship and scholarly engagement to strengthen students' research capabilities.

Study Regulations and Admission Process:
Clear admission criteria, including educational prerequisites and evidence of English proficiency, guide an individualized admissions process. Transparent procedures ensure equity and inclusion, with recognition of prior learning through official transcripts.

Study Recognition and Certifications:
DSI recognizes prior learning and qualifications through official transcripts. While rarely accepting transfer credits, it offers predetermined course pathways and agreements to guide students through their programs of study.

Employment Fields:
Graduates from DSI's programs find opportunities across various design fields, from entry-level to senior positions, including graphic design, digital design, product design, user experience design, and specialized roles in design research and education.

Experts Evaluation/ Conclusion
In the evaluation of Standard 7: Learning and Teaching, the Institution provided a comprehensive description of the learning and teaching methods offered. A "Challenge-Based Learning" approach is integrated in the MDes Practice Course, which should enhance real-world problem-solving and innovation". It also fosters innovation by

addressing specific issues, which could better prepare students to tackle industry challenges and contribute to meaningful solutions in the design field.

Clearer alignment between teaching methods and learning outcomes, as well as improvements in assessment strategies, have significantly increased this score.

The teaching and learning methods respect and accommodate the diversity of students and their needs. The institution can adequately accommodate individuals with disabilities such as hearing or visual impairments. Flexibility in learning paths is mentioned, these paths are accessible and adaptable to accommodate students with diverse needs.

Conclusion
In conclusion, Standard 7 has a total score of 75 points, indicating that the approach and implementation are outlined within this standard. DSI has aligned teaching methods with learning outcomes and provided clearer assessment strategies for each course. They are also exploring alternative teaching approaches such as "Challenge-Based Learning" to better address real-world design challenges.

In summary, Standard 7 outlines the framework for effective learning and teaching practices, DSI meet the basic requirements of the standard and provide an optimal learning experience for all students.

Standard 8: Program handbook (ESG 1.1.;1.2.;1.3.;1.8., 1.9. & US ii, iii, vii, viii, ix).

Description
According to the information provided in the SDR, the DSI offers program handbooks for its academic programs, including the Professional Certificate in Design Studies, Master of Design (MDes), and Doctor of Design (DDes). These handbooks serve as comprehensive guides, detailing the curriculum, learning outcomes, academic policies, and other essential information for students to navigate their educational journey effectively. Each handbook is tailored to its respective program, providing students with detailed resources specific to their course of study. Additionally, there is a separate handbook for doctoral advisors and committee members, facilitating their support and guidance for doctoral candidates throughout their program.

Experts Evaluation
In the evaluation of Standard 8: Program Handbook, the presence of a comprehensive curriculum map is crucial. DSI provided a curriculum map including a visual representation of the program's structure, including the sequence of courses, learning outcomes, and connections between different components of the curriculum. It serves as a roadmap for students and faculty, ensuring alignment between learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment methods throughout the program.

There is a syllabus available for all courses within each program. The syllabus outlines essential information about a course, including its objectives, content, schedule, and

assessment criteria. All syllabi include details about Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies, outlining how instructional content will be delivered, what methods will be used to assess student learning, and how teaching materials will be utilized. Additionally, an Assessment Scheme is provided, indicating the weighting and types of assessments used in the course. Also, a list of Learning Materials, such as textbooks, readings, and online resources, is included to support student learning. These documents provide clear guidance to both students and faculty, helping them understand the structure of the program, the intended learning outcomes of each course, and the methods by which these outcomes will be assessed. By clearly outlining learning, teaching, and assessment strategies, syllabi empower students to take ownership of their learning journey while enabling faculty to design and deliver instruction that meets established learning objectives effectively. Additionally, having standardized syllabi ensures that educational quality is maintained across all courses within the program, fostering a conducive learning environment and ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience for students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Standard 8 has a total score of 75 points, indicating a well-defined approach and implementation in this standard, accompanied by sufficient evidence to meet its requirements. The handbook includes good articulation of course sequences and assessment details. The presence of a comprehensive curriculum map is available. The curriculum map serves as a navigational tool, offering a clear visual representation of the program's structure and ensuring alignment between learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment methods throughout the program.

Each course of the programs has a syllabus. The syllabi provide essential information about course objectives, content, schedules, and assessment criteria. They include details about Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies, as well as an Assessment Scheme and a list of Learning Materials to support student learning.

V. Result

RESULT MATRIX Concept & Program Accreditation

	Total	Max. Points
Standard 1: Institutional Overview	80	100
Standard 2: Ethics and Diversity	70	100
Standard 3: Strategic Design of programs	75	100
Standard 4: Quality management and improvement	70	100
Standard 5: Administration and teaching staff	75	100
Standard 6: Student and Stakeholders' engagement	75	100
Standard 7: Learning and teaching	75	100
Standard 8: Program Handbook	75	100
Total	**595**	**800**
Percentage %	**74%**	

Minimum to accredit with or without conditions: > 300 Pts. (of 500) in total of standards 1,3,4,5,7 and in total of all 8 standards minimum > 50% (> 400 Points)　　　`375`

Scoring description	Score
Poor No systematic approach is evident. Information provided has no concrete evidence. There is a noticeable absence of any implementation of an approach.	**0 - 15**
Minimal There are indications of a systematic approach to the basic requirements of the standards. Implementation of the approach is in the early stages. Making it difficult in some areas to achieve the basic requirements of the standard	**15 - 35**
Sufficient There is clear evidence of an efficient systematic approach that addresses the basic (fundamental) requirements of the standards. The approach is considerably implemented but still has certain areas which need further implementation	**35 - 55**
Above average There is clear evidence of an efficient systematic approach that addresses the overall requirements of the standards. The approach is well implemented with no significant gaps	**55 - 75**
Excellent There is clear evidence of an efficient systematic approach that fully addresses the requirements of the standards. The approach is fully implemented with no significant weaknesses or gaps.	**75 - 100**

Result Concept Accreditation
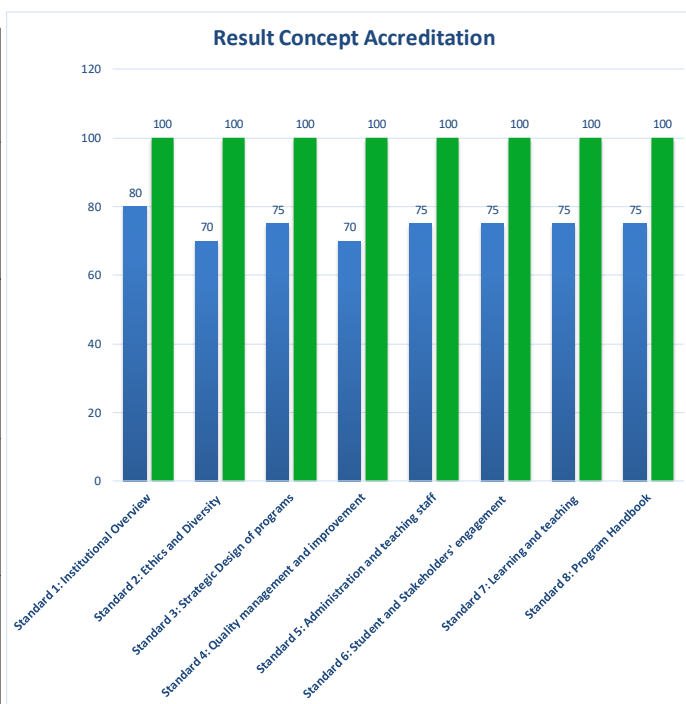
Note:

DSI has obtained a total score of 595 points out of a possible 800 (Standards 1-8), equating to 74%. To achieve accreditation, with or without conditions, DSI is required to score more than 50% in total and more than 300 points for Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. DSI's total score is 74% and score for standards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 was 375. This leads to a positive accreditation.

VI. Summary of Findings

The following tables summarize the conditions and recommendations extracted from the evaluation of the standards within the Expert Report.

Conditions:

	Conditions	Critical
Standard 1	/	
Standard 2	/	
Standard 3	/	
Standard 4	/	
Standard 5	/	
Standard 7	/	
Standard 8	/	

Recommendations

	Recommendations	
Standard 1	1. Further strengthen the industry partnerships and build up memberships as proposed in the self-documentation.	
Standard 2	2. DSI should have a process in place to continuously revise and refine its policies and procedures to ensure consistency and clarity across all areas.	
Standard 3	3. The workload is now shown in credit hours, if the objective is to attract also students from Europe the recommendation is to also show the workload in ECTS (European Credit Transfer System).	
Standard 5	4. Although it is mentioned in the self-documentation that further implementation of SalesForce platform is planned, it is recommended that the platform should be ready before program startup.	
Standard 6	5. Identifying current partnerships and proactively seeking collaborations with industry partners and institutions would enhance the institute's engagement with stakeholders, this is still at an early stage	

VII.   Recommendation of Panel (accreditation decision)

Based on the evaluation of the SDR and the Site Visit of the DSI, the Expert Panel advises the following;

- Professional Certificate in Design Studies: **Accredited**
- Master of Design: **Accredited**
- Doctor of Design: **Accredited**

The accreditation will be valid for a period of 3 years starting from 01.11.2024 and is valid until 01.11.2027.

VIII.   Final Comments

The Panel was impressed by the dedication and effort DSI has shown during the "Grace Period" and that all conditions initially mentioned where taken care of. This showed clear commitment to setting up these new design studies. We wish DSI all the very best for the future!

Attachment: Site Visit Agenda

Remote Site-Visit with the Accreditation Agency Curaçao

Day #1: Introductions, Strategic Positioning, and Institutional Processes & Procedures

Join Zoom Meeting: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83087272178?pwd=oBdjrwF0g0liM95Lwwl0CusLj9EhsG.1
Meeting ID: 830 8727 2178 Passcode: AACDSI

Time	Session
9:00 - 9:50 am	Site-Visit Overview & Introductions Key stakeholders from the AAC and DSI will discuss the purpose and goals of the site-visit, allowing for introductions and an overview of the upcoming schedule. A brief presentation of the Institutional Vision and Mission and the leadership of DSI will be given.
10:00 - 11:20 am	DSI's Strategic Positioning in the Design Education Market DSI will present its strategic positioning in the design education market and the intended impact within the context of Curaçao.
11:30 - 12:00 pm	Meet & Greet with DSI's Board of Directors Stakeholders from the AAC will meet for introductions with DSI's Board of Directors and to discuss strategic goals of DSI.
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Break
1:00 - 1:50 pm	Curriculum Design and the Learning & Teaching System Presentation and discussion of the educational framework and pedagogical approach of DSI's learning experience.
2:00 - 2:50 pm	Quality Management Presentation and discussion of DSI's strategies, policies, and processes to ensure and enhance the overall quality of education.
3:00 - 3:50 pm	Administration and Faculty Presentation and discussion of DSI's approach to managing and planning related to human capital needs.
4:00 - 4:50 pm	AAC Working Session with Optional Q&A AAC Members & PoE convene to reflect and debrief the day and prepare for Day #2. DSI Community Members can be available for optional Q&A to further discuss topics presented during Day #1.

Day #2: DSI Campus & Academic Program Deep Dives

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86701322906?pwd=28OLlRF9okCWsK3IoDA42n75BfZN4I.1

Meeting ID: 867 0132 2906 Passcode: AACDSI

Time	Session
9:00 - 9:50 am	DSI Campus/Distance Learning Platform Presentation and discussion of the technology stack that will power DSI's academic and administrative operations.
10:00 - 10:50 pm	Academic Program Deep Dive: Professional Certificate in Design Studies Presentation and discussion of the curriculum, learning outcomes, and industry relevance of the Professional Certificate in Design Studies program.
11:00 - 11:50 pm	Academic Program Deep Dive: Master of Design (MDes) Presentation and discussion of the curriculum, learning outcomes, and industry relevance of the Master of Design (MDes) program.
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Break
1:00 - 1:50 pm	Academic Program Deep Dive: Doctor of Design (DDes) Presentation and discussion of the curriculum, learning outcomes, and industry relevance of the Doctor of Design (DDes) program.
2:00 - 5:00 pm	AAC Working Session with Optional Q&A AAC Members & PoE convent to reflect and debrief the day and prepare for Day #3. DSI Community Members can be available for optional Q&A to further discuss topics presented during Day #2.

Day #3: DSI Student & Alumni Experience

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81370238624?pwd=EV9d5EIoW9q2v4Vzu2xYwzBcFIsdXJ.1

Meeting ID: 813 7023 8624 Passcode: AACDSI

Time	Session
9:00 - 9:50 am	The Student & Alumni Experience at DSI Presentation and discussion of the co-curricular programming and career support planned for DSI learners.
10:00 - 10:50 am	Residency Programming at DSI Presentation and discussion of residency programing plans for MDes and DDes learners in Curaçao and NYC.

11:00 - 11:50 am	Research at DSI Presentation and discussion of research activity via Research Centers & Labs and curricular research in the MDes and DDes programs.
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Break
1:00 - 1:50 pm	Meet & Greet with Design Students League (DSL) Alumni Stakeholders from the AAC will meet with DSL Alumni to hear about their learning experience and post-program goals.
2:00 - 5:00 pm	AAC Working Session with Optional Q&A AAC Members & PoE convent to reflect and debrief the day. DSI Community Members can be available for optional Q&A to further discuss topics presented during Day #3.