

Outline of the Social Safety Code and action plan for art education

20 May 2021

Introduction

The art education sector is keenly aware that social safety in education is crucial, consists of a variety of facets, requires structural attention and is therefore an integral part of studying and working.

Art education is a form of education where the focus is not just on development in the discipline, but also on personal development. Physical and mental proximity plays an important role here. This is both a great quality of art education and a vulnerability that we as a sector are aware of. There are relatively many teaching methods, and students and lecturers work together intensively. This makes it all the more necessary to pay attention to social safety.

The art education sector has got together to identify the facets of social safety in a Social Safety Code. All art degree programmes have committed to publishing on their own websites no later than 1 September 2021 how they will implement the facets listed in this Code. In addition, a partnership will be set up between the art programmes to share knowledge and experiences regarding the various facets of social safety.

An outline of the Social Safety Code for art education is presented below. The Code will be adopted in its definitive form at the end of June. It will be implemented, with an annual evaluation, as of the 2021/2022 academic year in accordance with the activities of the 2021-2025 Sector Agenda for art programmes in higher professional education.

The Code consists of three parts:

1. The social safety framework for art education, which defines social safety and sets out the Code's general objectives;
2. Organisational elements of social safety, which defines the minimum organisational elements required to ensure social safety in the art programmes. In addition, a partnership will be set up to share knowledge and experiences and to raise these to a higher level together;
3. Social safety policy and monitoring, which describes the elements that should be included in a social safety policy document to be drawn up by each institution.

Part 1 – Social safety framework for art education

Definition of social safety

An educational institution is safe when the social, psychological and physical safety of students and staff is not compromised by the actions of others. This means there is a safe and positive atmosphere at the institution. It also means that bullying, discrimination, (sexual) intimidation, aggression, violence and other forms of undesirable conduct are unacceptable, and that the institution will take action against such conduct and prevent it to the maximum extent possible. It is up to the individual art programmes and universities of applied sciences to decide on the content of their social safety policy and how they will account for their policy. The Code provides a framework of topics and activities that will in all cases be pursued and implemented on a sector-wide basis.

The following basic documents provided input for the Social Safety Code for art education: the Social Safety Code of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU)¹ and the sector code of the

¹ See also https://vsnu.nl/nl_NL/nieuws.html/nieuwsbericht/512

umbrella organisations for primary and secondary education². Art education, part of higher professional education, endorses the Good Governance Sector Code of higher professional education, which guarantees that an integrity code (II.1.3) is in place and is published. In addition, art education endorses sections II.1.5 and II.1.6 of the Sector Code, which ensure a safe environment for both staff and students.³ These sections implement what the Collective Labour Agreement for Higher Professional Education says about social safety: 'Social partners want to create preconditions that promote the ability of employees of universities of applied sciences to do their work in safe and healthy conditions and with enjoyment, so that they can contribute optimally to the provision of high-quality education and research.'⁴

Description of the general objectives

In art education, everyone should be able to work and study in a positive, safe and transparent atmosphere. It is absolutely clear that undesirable conduct such as bullying, discrimination, (sexual) intimidation, aggression, violence and other forms of transgressive behaviour are unacceptable and must be prevented. This extends from education to the professional fields for which students are being trained and with which intensive partnerships exist. In addition to prevention, art education works in various ways on other goals that contribute to reinforcing a professional and respectful culture at the art programmes. Important pillars include following up on every signal and never looking away, but instead always taking action. It is also important for students and staff to be able and to feel confident to point out behaviour to each other, and for it to be clear where complaints and objections can be lodged.

Part 2 – Organisational elements of Social Safety

The art programmes ensure that the following elements are embedded in their organisation in a way that is recognisable and easy to find. They report on this on their websites under the heading 'Social Safety Code for art education' (*Code Sociale Veiligheid KUO*).

- The presence of independent confidential advisers both for students and for staff;
- Currently there are consultations to decide whether Meldpunt Mores, with which all art programmes are affiliated, might be able to take on a role as a shared ombudsperson;
- Complaints Procedure for Undesirable Conduct;
- A demonstrable, active policy for inclusion and diversity, for which at a minimum there is a designated officer or similar function.

In addition, the art programmes will enter into a partnership in which they will all be active participants. A central coordinating body will bring together people from the various art programmes along three theme-specific pathways, and will develop instruments for knowledge sharing. The pathways are:

- a. Didactics and teaching and assessment methods; a platform is being considered where experts on this theme from the various art programmes can meet. This is where knowledge is exchanged and/or generated on the subject of pedagogical and didactic practices tailored to art education. Additionally, the networks of the art programmes affiliated with the sector are actively engaged in collecting and exchanging knowledge and best practices in the field of inclusive education. This comprises making training available as part of professionalisation.

² See the Education Inspectorate's definition for primary and secondary education;
<https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/onderwerpen/sociale-veiligheid>

³ <https://www.vereniginghogescholen.nl/kennisbank/thema-s-en-subthema-s/artikelen/goed-bestuur-governance>

⁴ Preamble to the 2020 Collective Labour Agreement, p.9

- b. Gathering and sharing knowledge in the field of inclusive education and inclusive curricula. The platform of professors of cultural diversity is specifically engaged for this purpose. This may include the development of a 'scan' of social safety measures that the art programmes could implement.
- c. Inclusion and diversity; a student advisory council is being considered that can advise the Sectoral Advisory Board for art programmes, as well as a platform where officials and researchers on this theme from the various art programmes meet.

Part 3 – Social safety policy and monitoring

The art programmes ensure that they have adopted and implemented a policy document on social safety in consultation with the Representative Advisory Council. They publish this policy document on their websites under the heading 'Social Safety Code for art education' (*Code Sociale Veiligheid KUO*).

At a minimum, the policy document addresses the following aspects:

- Social safety policy (including inclusion and diversity)
There will be an annual review of the activities and progress made by the institution in relation to the following subjects:
 - A sustainable and social personnel policy
 - Interpersonal behavioural standards at the institution (code of conduct or similar)
 - Didactics and safe teaching and assessment methods
 - Elaboration and implementation of inclusion policies
- Regularly putting the subject of social safety on the agenda of the various departments and the Representative Advisory Council at the art programmes (in order to keep up the discussion and attention).
- Attention for social safety in student evaluations and, for example, surveys
- Annual social safety-related risk assessment
- Monitoring the perceived social safety of students and staff

The present phase of this document was coordinated (informally) with the inspector of social safety in higher education. Once the executive council for art education has adopted this outline of the Social Safety Code for art education, it will be formally discussed with the Education Inspectorate.