

Periodic Assessment of Research, Development, Artistic and Other Creative Activities VER 2026

Final Report of the Art and Theory of Art Panel

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Report

A. General remarks on Slovak Higher Education

The state and quality of creative arts practices in the areas of Visual Arts, as well as in Performing Arts (and their related fields) in Slovakian educational institutions that submitted applications to VER2026 is clearly shaped by a distinctive combination of historical legacy, institutional structure, evolving quality assurance systems, and contemporary pressures to modernise and internationalise.

While Slovakia is a relatively small higher education system, its provision in the arts is both specialised and increasingly aligned with broader European standards, producing a landscape that is simultaneously strong in tradition and challenged by resource and structural limitations.

At a systemic level, Slovak higher education institutions are explicitly tasked not only with teaching and research but also with “creative artistic activity,” which is formally recognised as a core mission alongside scientific output. This is significant: unlike in some systems

where artistic practice is peripheral, Slovak universities embed creative production within their institutional identity. The presence of dedicated art schools throughout the country has ensured that creative disciplines are not merely adjuncts to humanities faculties but exist as specialised centres of practice and research as clearly demonstrated by the applicants and their work.

B. Overall Quality in the Arts

The overall quality of creative arts practice cannot be understood solely through institutional prestige. A crucial development in recent years has been the introduction of national evaluation frameworks such as the Verification of Excellence in Research. This system assesses not only scholarly publications but also artistic outputs, their societal impact, and the creative environment in which they are produced. The inclusion of artistic work within formal evaluation mechanisms represents a significant step toward parity between arts and sciences. It also incentivises universities to document, disseminate, and reflect on their creative outputs more systematically.

Despite these strengths, several challenges affect the quality and sustainability of creative arts practice. One persistent issue is funding. Public universities dominate the Slovak system and are largely state-funded, meaning that fluctuations in government investment directly affect resources available for studios, equipment, and project-based work. Compared to Western European institutions, Slovak art schools often operate with more limited budgets, which can constrain access to cutting-edge technologies, particularly in fields such as film production, digital media, and interdisciplinary art. It can also constrain the resources available to research-oriented collaborations.

Furthermore, the relationship between universities and the broader cultural sector is central to assessing creative arts practice. In Slovakia, universities often play a significant role in regional cultural life, supplying artists, performers, and educators. Faculties of arts within

comprehensive universities contribute to research, teacher training, and cultural discourse. However, stronger integration with professional creative industries could further enhance faculty staff professional development, graduate outcomes and the practical relevance of artistic training and build on one of the weaker categories in the 2026 VER programme – social impact.

There was significant internationally recognized work from a number of institutions among the Performing Arts applicants. And some of these outputs showed the potential to be in a position to be recognized as internationally excellent and possibly world leading in quality with additional supports, as was clearly demonstrated by some of the applications that the panel thought had the potential to have greater impact than evidenced.

In Visual Arts, there was a significant number of internationally excellent submissions from a variety of institutions. The potential for these to become world-leading requires greater dissemination and, in some cases, translations to other languages to reach a wider global audience. As the data and the work demonstrate, the majority of creative outputs from both sub-panels fell in the range of either excellent or very good in their overall quality profile and their creative environment, which is itself an excellent achievement.

Given the need of such work to engage with as large an audience as possible, the evidence and submissions showed that social impact was the weakest category with an excellent rating being quite rare, although the evaluation system allowed for a wide range of possible approaches to social impact. This shows room for the greatest growth and possible future investment. Other countries have supports to allow for the export of visual and performing arts – Ireland, for example, has Culture Ireland which runs overseas strategic showcases to create international social impacts and build networks for international collaboration.

C. Conclusion

In conclusion, as evidenced by the submissions themselves and the rigorous review of the sub-panels, the overall quality of the outputs was very good to excellent, with an impressive number being internationally excellent. This is an excellent overall result and shows opportunities. The readiness to advance academic work across the full spectrum of knowledge transfer and societal impact should be actively promoted. To remain excellent and to further improve, the Slovak scientific culture requires enhanced financial resources, and concerted efforts should be directed toward improving the international accessibility and visibility of its research to reach a wider global audience.

Panel members

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