NVAO-MusiQuE Assessment Framework for the Limited Programme Assessment (Accreditation) of Music Programmes in The Netherlands

Full version

Introduction

MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement is an independent European-level external evaluation body which has the aim to assist higher music education institutions in their own enhancement of quality and to improve the quality of higher music education across Europe and beyond.

Higher music education institutions have the opportunity to engage in formal accreditation procedures coordinated by MusiQuE. By organizing an accreditation procedure, MusiQuE aims:

- to provide a procedure that satisfy the legal obligations in terms of accreditation as described in the national regulation of the country in question;
- to provide the opportunity for higher music education institutions to choose to be evaluated through a process devised and implemented by those with specialist knowledge and understanding of such institutions;
- to offer a process that is intrinsically international in its outlook and in the range of countries from which experts are drawn;
- while observing appropriate formality in the proceedings, to stimulate a process of internal reflection on quality issues and to bring fresh ideas and wider perspectives into institutions, encouraging the principle of 'many correct answers';
- to deliver a process which, although its primary purpose may be to fulfil a legislative requirement, can be of genuine benefit and enhancement to the institution, its teachers and students, both in the debate and reflection it stimulates and in the changes that it may initiate.

MusiQuE has been commissioned to organise a limited programme assessment of music programmes in a cluster accreditation procedure. The assessment framework for limited programme assessments developed by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) is the frame of reference for this procedure.[1] The NVAO standards for limited programme assessment have been mapped against the MusiQuE standards for programme review.[2] As a result, the MusiQuE standards and areas of inquiry have been added under each NVAO standard in order to both express and reinforce the correspondence between both sets of criteria and to complete the NVAO framework with criteria relevant for music programmes.

The critical reflection (i.e. self-evaluation report) shall follow the NVAO standards outlined for the limited programme assessment framework and reinforced by the MusiQuE questions and describe the programme's strengths and weaknesses. Each of the standards listed needs to be addressed. The '*Questions to be considered when addressing this standard*' suggest areas to be covered in the answers, if relevant. These questions/indicators aim at facilitating the understanding of each standard and at illustrating the range of topics covered by that standard, but not all the questions need to be taken into consideration separately. The lists of supportive material/evidence suggest the kind of existing documentation or materials that should be used to support the self-evaluation description and analysis written in relation to each standard.

After the site-visit, the main content of the assessment report shall feature the Review Panel's judgements regarding all the standards incorporated in the NVAO assessment framework. Based on this report, NVAO may decide to accredit the programme, not accredit it or grant an improvement period. The Accreditation Decree of the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act stipulates how, on what grounds and under what circumstances NVAO may grant an improvement period.

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[1] NVAO, *Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands*, Version 1.1, 19 December 2014.

[2] MusiQuE, *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review, Programme Review and Joint Programme Review*, 2015.

NVAO Standard 1:   ***Intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.***

Explanation: As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Corresponding MusiQuE standards

MusiQuE Standard 1:   ***The programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission.***

Explanation: Programme reviews will find it relevant to take into consideration the relationship between the educational aims and objectives of the programme and the vision and mission statements of the institution. All reviews should also consider the national legal and educational frameworks within which institutions and programmes operate.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) What is the institution's mission, vision or goal?
 	
 b) What is the rationale for the programme and what are its unique features (in alignment with the institutional mission and/or in the regional, national and international context)?
 	
 c) What elements and factors are involved in determining admission capacity and profile?
 	
 d) What are the goals of the educational programme and how have these goals been identified and formulated?
 	
 e) Were procedures for formal approval and legal recognition of the study programme taken into consideration in its development?
 	
 f) What statistical information is collected, and how is it used to support the study programme?
 	
 g) How are equal opportunities embedded in the institutional mission/vision?
	• Mission and/or policy statements
	 • Admission profile of the study programme and description of the framework for admission
	 • An overview of the educational programme and its goals
	 • Description of the programme's profile (e.g. level of study, unique features - joint degree programme, distance learning programme, further education study programme)
	 • State-specific regulations, criteria set up by e.g. national quality assurance and accreditation bodies, qualifications framework
	 • Statistical data:
	    o Number of students/number of graduates (by semesters, gender, field of study, national/foreign)
	    o Number of students completing within the normal duration of the programme
	    o Number of students that have changed to other institutions or dropped out (incl. analysis of the reasons for this)
	    o Number of student applications each year (if possible by subject area/instrument)
	    o Numbers of students accepted each year (if possible by subject area instrument)
	 • Policies on equal opportunities
	 • Evaluative reports on equal opportunities (e.g. results of surveys)

MusiQuE Standard 2.1: The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.

Explanation:　　　　　The educational process is the sum total of the work that takes place in teaching rooms, studios, performance spaces, reading rooms, practice rooms and during individual study. It should be based on a written curriculum that relates to the institutional mission and vision and states formal objectives and learning outcomes that are both clear in their purpose for all students and flexible enough to allow for individual study patterns.

Standard 2.1 addresses the extent to which programme teams, having established what they want to do and why, have succeeded in translating this into the content and structure of the curriculum.

The ways in which, as part of this process, programme teams have used international sectoral tools, such as the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors and/or AEC learning outcomes[3], either following them or consciously reacting against them for clearly articulated reasons, should be taken into account as part of considering the educational process.

Where research is a part of the institutional vision and mission, it should also inform the educational process. Because higher music institutions engage with research at different levels of intensity, this element is not addressed in a separate standard; nevertheless, its importance is considerable, and only likely to grow in future, and reviews will look for ways in which and programmes can be encouraged to introduce it or to develop it further.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 2.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) How does the curriculum reflect the institutional mission and address the goals of the programme? b) What are the learning outcomes of the programme and how do they take into account the various aspects of the 'Polifonia Dublin Descriptors' (PDDs) and/ or the AEC learning outcomes? c) How does the programme enable students to develop individual study profiles? d) Where appropriate, is there a connection/ progression between this programme and other study programmes/cycles? e) How is the programme utilizing different forms of teaching in the delivery of the curriculum?	• Course handbook and syllabi showing: ○ Overall structure of the curriculum ○ Learning outcomes of the programme ○ The use of ECTS credits ○ Characteristics of individual modules (credits, content, specific learning outcomes, assessment methods) ○ Availability of options for personal study profiles within the course structure ○ Any additional features such as in the case of Masters study, additional qualifications compared to a bachelor's degree • Evidence of how the curriculum is linked to the PDDs and/or the AEC learning outcomes, or information about plans for the introduction and use of these • Educational approaches: information on teaching methods and techniques (individual/group tuition, relationship to professional practice, use and integration of e-learning tools and appropriate music technology, projects, internships, etc.) • Student performance opportunities: ○ Seasonal concert calendars

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[3] The AEC learning outcomes and the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors can be found in the brochure Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Music (appendices A, page 51 and B, page 55).

f) How are students offered opportunities to present their creative, musical and artistic work?	○ Schedules for internal and external student concerts – other arenas for the exposure of students' work
g) How does the programme encourage critical reflection and self-reflection by the student?	○ Information on methods for giving students feedback on their public presentations. • Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)
h) What role does research[4] play within the programme?	• Examples of activities drawing on staff research, samples of students' research projects, dissertations and other research projects
i) How does research inform curriculum development and teaching?	• Documentation outlining the structure for academic, career and personal guidance
j) How does research feed into students' assignments/activities/tasks?	
k) Are there formal arrangements for students to receive academic, career and personal guidance?	

MusiQuE standard 2.2: *The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.*

Explanation: Standard 2.2 reflects the fact that programmes should not only strive for internal coherence between institutional mission and the content and structure of the curriculum; they also need to be aware of the wider context and, especially, the link that is increasingly made at the political level between modernisation and internationalisation, whether in terms of higher education or the professions. The EU agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems includes strengthening quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation and supporting the internationalisation of higher education. Reviews will take into consideration the programme's internationalisation strategy, where it exists, the extent to which the international perspective is embedded in the curriculum, the scope of international partnerships and activities and the opportunities presented by these for students and staff. It is important that the review should also look into the support provided to incoming international students by the institution/programme.

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[4] The word 'research' is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'. *Source: Glossary of the Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards.*

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 2.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) How is the programme aligned with the international strategy of the institution?
 	
b) To what extent do the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities offer international perspectives?
 	
c) Is the programme participating in international partnerships/exchanges?
 	
d) How are international students on the programme supported?
 	
e) Does the programme have international teachers delivering parts of the curriculum?
 	
f) Do teachers on the programme have international experience (either as a student/teacher?)
	• Internationalisation strategy
	• Any other strategies to promote international cooperation, the inclusion of foreign students and staff and student and staff exchanges
	• Language policy
	• Information and services available for foreign students
	• Overview of international partnerships, co-operation agreements and participation in European/ international projects
	• International activities within and outside the curriculum
	    o Masterclasses
	    o International projects
	    o Visiting performers/lecturers
	    o Etc.
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)
	• Statistical data:
	    o Numbers of foreign students and staff
	    o Numbers of foreign visiting guest lecturers
	    o Numbers of incoming and outgoing student and staff exchanges

MusiQuE standard 7: The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

Please note that MusiQuE Standard 7 is optional.[5]

Explanation: Standard 7 underlines the fact that quality assurance and enhancement cannot thrive in an environment where they are only considered at the points where a programme is undergoing external review. Attention to quality assurance and enhancement must be embedded in the day-to-day working patterns and procedures such that it becomes almost automatic.

    The different cultures surrounding music in higher education and in the profession can make it difficult to engage part-time and hourly-paid teaching staff in an approach to quality based on procedures and systematic documentation, rather than on musical instinct and a simple passion for excellence. Recognising that either approach is incomplete without the other, the review will examine systems and procedures, but will also consider how effectively the whole learning and teaching community is brought 'onside' in terms of its appreciation of the purpose and value of these tools for internal quality enhancement.

    Programme review will be focussed on programme management and systems of quality assurance and enhancement that operate at this level.

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[5] The programme will agree with the Review Team in advance whether MusiQuE Standard 7 will be included in the review.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 7 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) What quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place within the programme? How often is the programme being reviewed?	• Documentation of policies and procedures related to quality assurance and quality enhancement
	• Feedback from staff/students/alumni/representatives of the music profession/quality assurance experts (focus groups, internal and external surveys)
b) How are the quality assurance and enhancement procedures monitored and reviewed?	• Agendas and minutes of meetings
	• Actions leading to improvements of the programme
c) How do quality assurance and enhancement procedures inform/influence each other?	• Strategies/policies for improving the quality assurance and enhancement system
	• Monthly newsletters, website updates, emails
d) How are staff/students/alumni/representatives of the music profession/quality assurance experts involved in the quality assurance and enhancement procedures and how is their feedback used to enhance the programme?	
e) How are these procedures used to inform decision-making?	
f) How are students and staff informed if their feedback has led to change?	
g) How would the overall quality culture within the programme be characterised?	

MusiQuE standard 8.1: The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.

Explanation:

A music conservatoire is a huge resource in society, first of all through staff's and students' knowledge and experience, but also through its physical facilities. Institutions are often expected to be present in the public sphere, through artistic and scholarly manifestations, and through participation in, and contribution to, arts, educational and cultural policies. This final domain is therefore an important additional measure of an institution or programme's quality within the field of higher music education.

Standard 8.1 assesses the extent of a programme's external engagement. Such engagement may take a variety of forms, some of them bringing the wider public into the programme and others taking the programme out into the wider public. Engagement may also involve the programme contributing to the broader community or being itself a recipient of expertise and advice from external public agencies for its own activities and programmes.

External engagement is an area where an individual programme, can develop a distinctive profile, attuned to local, regional or national conditions. Reviews will be interested in examples of innovative practice or responsiveness to local needs.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 8.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) Does the programme engage with the public discourse on cultural/artistic/educational policies and/or other relevant issues, and if so, how? b) What are the contributions of the programme to cultural/artistic/educational communities at the local, national and international level? c) Does the programme prepare its students to advance society through the use of their knowledge and skills, and if so, how?	• Supporting evidence of external activities (e.g. projects, community activities, educational initiatives and partnerships, membership of programme personnel on relevant external committees, etc.)

MusiQuE standard 8.2: The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.

Explanation:

The focus of Standard 8.2 is linked to, but distinct from, that of 8.1. Whilst, there, the emphasis was on public engagement, here the primary concern is on collaboration at the professional level. Students in higher music education are already, in some sense, members of the music profession, practising their art at a professional or near-professional level and frequently being paid for their musical activities outside their studies. Curricula increasingly recognise, and even encourage, this merging of the educational and professional spheres and one important manifestation of this is the emergence of the concept of the musician as 'creative entrepreneur', with elements of the curriculum being designed to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of music graduates.

The active promotion of links with the profession is an important component of helping students to think and act in a professional manner and begin to build professional contacts. It assists their transition into full professional status and is therefore an important component of quality enhancement in terms of the professional relevance of institutions and their programmes.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 8.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) How does the programme engage with various sectors of music and other artistic professions?
 	
b) What are the long-term plans for the (continued) development of the links with the artistic professions?
 	
c) How does the programme assess and monitor the ongoing needs of the professions?
 	
d) How does the programme engage in and promote Lifelong Learning opportunities?
	• Documentation showing:
	    ○ structures for communication with relevant sectors of the music and other artistic professions
	    ○ initiatives taken to support students, graduates and staff in programme projects
	    ○ evidence of the programme's commitment to Lifelong Learning activities and examples of specific initiatives
	• Details regarding the interaction with the professions, its influence on the programme and its impact on the student experience
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

	• Action plans for meeting the needs identified through interaction with the professions

MusiQuE standard 8.3:   Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate

Explanation: Standard 8.3 addresses the important area of transparency. Institutions have a responsibility to present themselves in an honest, open and reliable way, whether inside their communities or in the public sphere. Transparency is also promoted or inhibited according to how well the information that is provided is attuned to the level of prior specialist knowledge of a particular audience. Public interfaces such as websites should be user-friendly, while someone with a more detailed or specialist enquiry should be able to access the relevant information without undue difficulty. The review will address all of these aspects and will also focus on the consistency between the public image that the institution projects of itself and the reality that the review team finds on the ground with regard to educational programmes, resources, facilities etc.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 8.3 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) What resources and delivery systems are used to convey information to the public? b) How does the programme ensure that information given to the public (students, audiences, parents, music education institutions at other levels, etc.) is consistent with the content of the programme? c) What mechanisms are in place to review information before it goes public? d) How is the accuracy of the information ensured on an ongoing basis?	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys) • Programme handbooks • Institutional information policies (recruitment policies, website and other information materials if appropriate). • Organisational structure

NVAO Standard 2:   *Teaching-learning environment. The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

Explanation: The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

Corresponding MusiQuE standards

MusiQuE Standard 2.1: The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.

Explanation: The educational process is the sum total of the work that takes place in teaching rooms, studios, performance spaces, reading rooms, practice rooms and during individual study. It should be based on a written curriculum that relates to the institutional mission and vision and states formal objectives and learning outcomes that are both clear in their purpose for all students and flexible enough to allow for individual study patterns.

Standard 2.1 addresses the extent to which programme teams, having established what they want to do and why, have succeeded in translating this into the content and structure of the curriculum.

The ways in which, as part of this process, programme teams have used international sectoral tools, such as the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors and/or AEC learning outcomes[6], either following them or consciously reacting against them for clearly articulated reasons, should be taken into account as part of considering the educational process.

Where research is a part of the institutional vision and mission, it should also inform the educational process. Because higher music institutions engage with research at different levels of intensity, this element is not addressed in a separate standard; nevertheless, its importance is considerable, and only likely to grow in future, and reviews will look for ways in which and programmes can be encouraged to introduce it or to develop it further.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 2.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

l)   How does the curriculum reflect the institutional mission and address the goals of the programme?
 	
 m)   What are the learning outcomes of the programme and how do they take into account the various aspects of the 'Polifonia Dublin Descriptors' (PDDs) and/ or the AEC learning outcomes?
	• Course handbook and syllabi showing:
	    o Overall structure of the curriculum
	    o Learning outcomes of the programme
	    o The use of ECTS credits
	    o Characteristics of individual modules (credits, content, specific learning outcomes, assessment methods)
	    o Availability of options for personal study profiles within the course structure
	    o Any additional features such as in the case

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[6] The AEC learning outcomes and the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors can be found in the brochure Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Music (appendices A, page 51 and B, page 55).

n) How does the programme enable students to develop individual study profiles?	of Masters study, additional qualifications compared to a bachelor's degree
	• Evidence of how the curriculum is linked to the PDDs and/or the AEC learning outcomes, or information about plans for the introduction and use of these
o) Where appropriate, is there a connection/ progression between this programme and other study programmes/cycles?	• Educational approaches: information on teaching methods and techniques (individual/group tuition, relationship to professional practice, use and integration of e-learning tools and appropriate music technology, projects, internships, etc.)
p) How is the programme utilizing different forms of teaching in the delivery of the curriculum?	• Student performance opportunities:
q) How are students offered opportunities to present their creative, musical and artistic work?	o Seasonal concert calendars o Schedules for internal and external student concerts – other arenas for the exposure of students' work
r) How does the programme encourage critical reflection and self-reflection by the student?	o Information on methods for giving students feedback on their public presentations.
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)
s) What role does research[7] play within the programme?	• Examples of activities drawing on staff research, samples of students' research projects, dissertations and other research projects
t) How does research inform curriculum development and teaching?	• Documentation outlining the structure for academic, career and personal guidance
u) How does research feed into students' assignments/activities/tasks?	
v) Are there formal arrangements for students to receive academic, career and personal guidance?	

MusiQuE standard 4.1: Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers.

Explanation: Having the right teachers with the right skills and experience is indispensable to the quality of a programme. Increasingly, the question of the formal qualifications held by teaching staff is also becoming an important consideration, although this issue takes on special characteristics in relation to higher music education because of its blend of the artistic and academic.

Standard 4.1 is concerned with the qualification of teachers to carry out the activities asked of them by the programme. Teachers in HME may be qualified for this through their professional profiles as musicians and/or the diplomas or degrees they have

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[7] The word 'research' is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'. *Source: Glossary of the Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards.*

obtained. Institutions should have a clear policy in relation to the appropriate qualifications of staff for particular roles. There should be clear policies on staff development, including ongoing professional activity, updating of qualifications and/or conducting research.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 4.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) How does the institution ensure that all members of the programme's teaching staff have appropriate qualifications as educators?	• Information on staff recruitment procedures • Artistic, professional and/or academic record of the teaching staff (e.g. curriculum vitae) • Evidence of teaching staff's activities in international contexts (networks, conferences, competitions, festivals, articles, concerts etc.) • Relevant policy documents • Records of staff participation in continuing professional development • Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)
b) Is there an institutional strategy that supports and enhances the teaching staff's artistic/pedagogical/ research activity?	
c) Is there a policy in place for continuing professional development of teaching staff?	
d) How are teaching staff engaged in the different activities of the institutions (committees, concerts, organisation of events, etc.)?	
e) How are teaching staff encouraged to engage in ongoing critical reflection and to develop this quality in their students?	

MusiQuE standard 4.2: There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.

Explanation: Standard 4.2 builds on Standard 4.1 by making explicit the link between teachers' competences and the demands of the programmes they expected to deliver. As curricula are updated to reflect the continuously evolving musical profession and increased internationalisation, it is necessary to ensure that suitably qualified teaching staff are available. This may require updating of skills or the recruitment of new staff. Institutions need to have policies in place to achieve this.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 4.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) How does the programme ensure that the number and experience of teaching staff are adequate to cover the volume and range of disciplines?	• Teaching staff details:
	    o Number of staff in various subject areas (in fte[8])
	    o Total number of hours taught
	    o Equal opportunities
	 • Strategies for maintaining flexibility in the teaching staff
	 • Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

b) How does the composition of the teaching staff allow adaptation to new professional requirements and changes to the curriculum?	
c) How does the recruitment policy foster new developments within the programme?	

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[8] Fte stands for full-time equivalent.

MusiQuE standard 5.1: The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.

Explanation:

While teaching staff may be in the 'front line' of quality in terms of learning and teaching, they and their students depend upon a range of supporting facilities and infrastructure. Inadequacies here can undermine the institution's striving for quality just as seriously as those elsewhere, and ensuring appropriate standards in this area can often be heavily dependent upon financial support – often determined at ministerial level and therefore a matter beyond the direct control of an institution. Reviews are sensitive to this aspect, but reviewers will feel free, when appropriate, to record their observations concerning the funding regime under which the institution operates and whether this is demonstrably introducing obstacles to quality enhancement.

Standard 5.1 recognises the fact that higher music education has special and diverse requirements in terms of concert venues, teaching rooms, instruments, technologies, libraries and other learning resources. Strategies should be in place to ensure that resources properly support the learning and teaching of the institution. Where this may not be an immediately realisable prospect, there should still be a longer-term and incremental plan to move in the direction of enhancement.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 5.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) Are the building facilities (teaching and practice studios, classrooms, concert venues, etc.) appropriate?
 	
b) Are the number and standard of instruments (pianos, organs, percussion, etc.) appropriate?
 	
c) Are the computing and other technological facilities appropriate?
 	
d) Is the library, its associated equipment (listening facilities, etc.) and its services appropriate?
	• Information on facilities:
	   o rooms and associate equipment available to students
	   o quality of rooms relative to acoustical standards
	   o computing and technological facilities available to students
	   o supporting statistical evidence
	   o libraries, associated equipment and services available to students
	   o opening hours of libraries and practice facilities.
	   o feedback from staff and students
	   o evaluative reports/documentation
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

MusiQuE standard 5.2: The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.

Explanation:

Standard 5.2 is especially relevant to higher music education, which is based on one-to-one and small-group teaching in dedicated facilities. Institutions should therefore be able to demonstrate, within the context of their national situation, appropriate measures to maintain a secure and sustained funding stream for the delivery of their programmes.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 5.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) Does the programme have sufficient resources for its effective delivery?
 	
b) Is there a long-term financial plan in place to ensure the continued delivery of the programme?
	• Budget data:
	  o for teaching staff
	  o for support staff
	  o for running and upgrading facilities, instruments, and equipment
	  o for artistic/academic/research activities.
	• Strategies for improving the funding of the programme

MusiQuE standard 5.3: The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.

Explanation: Standard 5.3 turns to the question of whether the support staff of a programme have the appropriate skills. Higher music education depends upon both specialist and general support staff (technical, administrative, non-teaching staff, etc.). As programmes are modernised, some of the skills required from these individuals will change correspondingly. Institutions should ensure that policies are in place for the appropriate deployment and the professional development of their support staff.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 5.3 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) Are there sufficient qualified support staff (technical, administrative, non-teaching staff, etc.) to support the teaching, learning and artistic activities of the programme?
 	
b) Are policies in place for continuing professional development of support staff?
	• Statistical data on support staff (technical, administrative, non-teaching staff, etc.):
	  o number in full-time equivalent
	  o composition and roles
	  o competency and qualifications
	• Policies on continuing professional development
	• Evaluative documents/reports
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys

MusiQuE standard 6.1: Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.

Explanation: For all of the domains described above to function properly, adequate communication, organisation and decision-making are essential. Moreover, as described below, there are particular challenges to the effective functioning of these elements in the higher music education environment; the review therefore examines them as a domain in their own right.

Standard 6.1 examines the appropriateness of the communication mechanisms at programme level. Higher music education involves an unusually large proportion of part-time and hourly paid teaching staff. It is therefore a major challenge to make them feel part of the institution. This should be taken into consideration when looking at the effectiveness of mechanisms for internal communication.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 6.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) How does the programme communicate with its students and staff? b) How do students and staff communicate? c) How does the programme communicate with part- time and hourly-paid teaching and non-teaching staff and with external collaborators (guest teachers, examiners, etc.)? d) How does the programme ensure the continued effectiveness of its communication systems?	• Communication tools for the publication of information to students and staff (newsletter, boards, etc.) • Policies/procedures on communication process • Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

MusiQuE standard 6.2: The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.

Explanation: Standard 6.2 looks at how organisational structures can support or inhibit effective communication; it focusses specifically on how decisions are made and whether these processes help or hinder the efficient operation of the institution or programme. Higher music education has traditionally been structured around the individual instruments and disciplines within music. These must be accommodated within the managerial structures adopted and decision-making processes employed. The organisational structure should be transparent and inclusive and should optimise the delivery of the study programmes.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 6.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) What is the organisational structure of this programme and how is it linked with that of the institution?
 	
b) What are the decision making processes within the programme?
 	
c) Are staff responsibilities in the programme clearly defined?
 	
d) Is there sufficient and appropriate representation (e.g. students, staff, external representatives, etc.) within the programme's organisational structure and decision making processes?
 	
e) What evidence exists to demonstrate that the organisational structure and the decision-making processes are effective?
	• Details of the organisational structure of:
	    ○ the institution (e.g. organisational chart)
	    ○ the study programme (e.g. details of programme management, its committees [e.g. membership, links between committees, number of meetings per year, etc.])
	• Examples of programme decision-making processes (e.g . agendas and minutes of meetings)
	• Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

NVAO Standard 3:   ***Assessment. The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.***

Explanation: The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The programme's examining board safeguards the quality of the interim and final test administered.

Corresponding MusiQuE standards

MusiQuE standard 3.1: There are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.

Explanation: This domain addresses the ways in which programmes manage the entire 'life-cycle' of their students, from entrance through progression to completion and in terms of their subsequent destinations. It looks for evidence of good management in two directions: the quality of the information with which students are provided to complete their journey satisfactorily and the quality of the information that programmes gather about students to assess how well their needs are being served.

Standard 3.1 focusses on the admission of students to the institution or programme and how their suitability is reliably evaluated. As the programme standards show, suitability depends on both artistic and academic considerations. In order to address the former, an audition is an important requirement for admission to any of the three cycles of higher music education. This form of selection at the beginning of each cycle is also a critical mechanism for the institution to achieve balance between the various disciplines and instrumental groups so that certain ensembles can be formed and relevant repertoire can be studied. Student admission process should enable the programme to identify artistic potential in students of all types and to evaluate their suitability, artistically and academically, for the programme offered.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 3.1 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) Does the programme have clear and appropriate criteria for admissions? b) In what ways do the entrance requirements assess the abilities (artistic/technical/academic/pedagogical) of the applicants to successfully complete the study programme?	• Formal admission requirements • Audition procedures • Reports of any evaluations of the admission requirements and procedures

MusiQuE standard 2.3: Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.

Explanation: Standard 2.3 underlines the need to connect learning and teaching with the way that the competences gained through these are then measured in assessment. Student achievement in higher music education is commonly assessed by a range of methods including practical as well as written examinations. Choosing the appropriate mode of

assessment to the competence that is being assessed is critical. In all forms of assessment there should be clarity and consistency in what is being assessed and why, and a strong relationship between assessment criteria and learning outcomes. As well as delivering valid and reliable verdicts (ones that truly do measure what they set out to and ones that come to the right conclusion) assessments should also contribute to the learning process through the provision of feedback. Feedback should be timely and constructive.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 2.3 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	
a) What are the main methods for assessment and how do these methods show the achievement of learning outcomes? How are they being reviewed to consider issues such as consistency and fairness? b) Are the assessment criteria and procedures easily accessible to and clearly defined for students and staff? c) What kind of grading system is being used in examinations and assessments? d) Are students provided with timely and constructive feedback on all forms of assessments?	• Samples of recordings of examination concerts, examination papers, coursework, reports and other relevant examples of assessed work of students • Regulations concerning the assessment of student performance, including appeals procedures • The transparency and publication of these rules and standards • Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys) • Any other documentation relating to and explaining the institution's grading system • Methods for providing timely feedback to students

NVAO Standard 4:   ***Achieved learning outcomes. The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.***

Explanation: The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

Corresponding MusiQuE standard

MusiQuE standard 3.2:   *The programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.*

Explanation: Standard 3.2 examines how the programme team gathers and retains information on everything that happens to students during their study and subsequently. Reviews consider the mechanisms for monitoring the progression of students through the study period and their achievement of the programme's final qualification/award. They also consider the mechanisms in place to monitor employability and the contribution of graduates to the enhancement of cultural life.

List of questions to be considered when addressing MusiQuE standard 3.2 and supportive material/evidences to be provided.	

a) How are student progression and achievement monitored within the programme?
 	
 b) What are the recognition mechanisms (prior learning, study abroad)?
 	
 c) What information does the programme collect on the professional activities/employment of the students after they complete the programme, and how is this information used?
 	
 d) Are graduates successful in finding work/building a career in today's highly competitive international music life?
	• Statistical data on student progression and achievement:
	     o Completion rate
	     o Pass rate
	     o Retention rate
	• Evaluative reports on student progression and achievement
	• Examples of diplomas/diploma supplement/transcripts of records that are handed out to students when finishing studies
	• Data on alumni career activities
	• Alumni perspectives on the value of the education offered
	• Employers perspectives (national and international) on the value of the education offered
	• Any other relevant documentation/reports

Required supporting documents

During the assessment process, the programme will need to provide the assessment panel with a limited number of documents, which are listed below. NVAO assumes that these are existing documents, available within the institution, rather than documents prepared especially for the programme assessment. The documents serve as a substantiation and if need be as verification. In addition to the documents listed below, programmes are encouraged to provide the review team with the supportive material suggested underneath each MusiQuE standard.

1. Basic data concerning the programme

Administrative data regarding the programme

1. Nomenclature of the programme in CROHO [central register of higher education programmes];

2. Orientation and level of the programme;

3. For professional higher education programmes, the suffix to be added to the degree. See the regulations provided by the Ministry of Education, the reference list contained therein and its elaboration by NVAO (Government Gazette 2013, 35337). Any deviations must be validated by the assessment panel;

4. Number of credits;

5. Specialisations;

6. Location(s);

7. Mode (s) of study: full-time, part-time, work-based learning, three-year tracks for VWO graduates enrolling in bachelor"s programmes with professional orientation;

8. Joint programme (if applicable), stating the partner institutions involved and the type of degree awarded (joint/double/multiple degree);

9. Language of instruction;

10. CROHO registration number.

Administrative data regarding the institution

1. Name of the institution;

2. Status of the institution (publicly funded or legal body providing higher education);

3. Outcome of the institutional quality assurance assessment.

2. Required appendices to the critical reflection

(Institutions may also choose to provide appendices in digital format only. The list of appendices studied and the quantitative data will be incorporated into the assessment report.)

1. Subject-specific reference framework and the learning outcomes of the programme;

2. Overview of the curriculum in diagram form;

3. Outline description of the curriculum components, stating learning outcomes, attainment targets, teaching method(s), assessment method, literature (mandatory/recommended), teacher and credits;

4. Teaching and examination regulations;

(Items 2 to 4 are usually reflected in a study guide, in which case this can be annexed to the report or be provided in digital format.)

5. Overview of allocated staff with names, positions, scope of appointment, level and expertise;

6. A full and anonymized list of graduates for the last two completed academic years. This list should, as a minimum, contain: the student numbers, the titles of the final projects, the graduation dates, the modes of study and the locations of the programmes, the results achieved in the final study phase (for example, the assessment mark given for final project(s), mark for oral defence, final mark). (The selection and assessment procedure is set down in the NVAO guidelines for the assessment of final projects (www.nvao.net));

7. Drop-out rates, success rates and/or average duration of studies of graduates;

8. Teacher -student ratio achieved;

9. Teacher quality (proportion of teachers holding a master"s degree and proportion of teachers holding a PhD);

10. Average amount of face-to-face instruction per course year.

3. Documents made available during the site visit (limited programme assessments)

(Institutions may also choose to provide appendices in digital format only. The list of material studied will be incorporated into the assessment report.)

1. The annual report by the examining board and the reports by the programme committee (if a programme committee is required);

2. Test questions with relevant assessment criteria and mark system (answer models);

3. A representative selection of reference books and other study materials.