

Music Quality Enhancement

MUSIQUE

GUIDELINES FOR
INSTITUTIONS

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Glossary of terms

AEC	Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen
DEQAR	Database of External Quality Assurance Results
EMU	European Music Schools Union
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG	European Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area
MusiQuE	Music Quality Enhancement, The Foundation for Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Higher Music Education
Pearle*	Pearle* Live Performance Europe, the European Federation of Music and Live Performance Organization

Summary

The guidelines herein provide institutions that have applied for a MusiQuE procedure with information and guidance on their roles and responsibilities during the various phases of MusiQuE reviews.

In the Introduction, the document provides an overview of MusiQuE, of characteristics for quality assurance in higher music education at the core of MusiQuE's reason for being, and of basic principles for MusiQuE review procedures. It then continues, in Chapter 1, with a detailed description of MusiQuE procedures and how they can serve specific needs of applicant institutions. Further, in Chapter 2, an overview of shared responsibilities between the different parties involved in MusiQuE procedures is provided. Chapter 3 offers information on the principles and the process of selection employed to assign peer reviewers from among the MusiQuE Register and beyond in various MusiQuE procedures.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer in depth information on two core phases of most MusiQuE review procedures - the self-evaluation phase (in Chapter 4) and the review visit (in Chapter 5). Recommendations, guidance and practical information that will ensure a smooth and successful completion of these phases is listed therein.

The outcomes of review procedures, their consequences, and the process of producing and publishing the review report are thoroughly detailed in Chapter 6. In turn, Chapter 7 provides information on follow-up procedures: the process, the tools and the methods employed are being explained in detail.

Chapter 8 explains the feedback mechanisms, and the impact that reviewed institutions can have on the continuous improvement of MusiQuE processes and procedures. Lastly, Chapter 9 offers information on MusiQuE's Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

List of annexes enclosed to the guidelines herein:

- Code of Conduct for MusiQuE Peer Reviewers
- Template for a review visit schedule
- Summary and overall timeframe of a MusiQuE procedure

Introduction

An Overview of MusiQuE

MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement is an external evaluation agency dedicated to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher music education across Europe and beyond and, through its accreditation, quality enhancement and advisory services, to assisting higher music education institutions in their own enhancement of quality.

MusiQuE has been created by the following three organisations, which have become MusiQuE's direct partner organisations:

- the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) ;
- the European Music Schools Union (EMU);
- Pearle* Live Performance Europe, the European Federation of Music and Live Performance Organizations.

Through such a stakeholders' model, MusiQuE is able to involve in its governing body, as well as in its procedures, not only representatives of higher music education institutions but also stakeholders from the profession and the cultural sector, such as:

- music schools, which employ higher education graduates, but also train students at pre-college level (before they enter professional education), and reach out to society at large, from children to adults;
- national associations of orchestras, ensembles, theatres, festivals and other music organisations and venues.

MusiQuE operates according to the European Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and is registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

Characteristics for quality assurance in higher music education

Music shares many common features with other disciplines in terms of assessment and quality assurance at higher education level. However, in order for a quality assessment procedure to be accurate as well as fair, it is necessary to consider the individual discipline's special characteristics. This section describes features which should be taken into account in quality assurance and accreditation reviews in higher music education.

To be effective in reviewing professional music schools and conservatories with respect to music content and institutional mission, the review procedure should¹:

¹ Statement from the document [Characteristics of an Effective Evaluation System for Music Schools and Conservatoires](#) produced by AEC and the U.S. based National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in the framework of the project collaborated on a project entitled "Music Study, Mobility and Accountability" conducted in 2002-2004

- I. Respect the content and nature of music and their relationships to education and training in music at the professional level.
- Recognize music as a unique, nonverbal means of communication, discourse, and insight.
 - Respect music as a medium for intellectual work expressed both in music itself and in words about music.
 - Work with a conceptual understanding of the elements in the content of professional music study including, but not limited to, performance, composition, musicianship, music theory, music history and repertoire, and pedagogy.
 - Exhibit understanding and respect for the multiple ways these elements are ordered, prioritised, and integrated to develop and synthesize the artistic, intellectual, and physical capabilities of students.
- II. Respect the fundamental characteristics of education and training in music at the professional level.
- Recognize and support the necessity of curricula that include one-to-one tuition, ensembles, courses, and final projects such as recitals and compositions.
 - Recognize fundamental necessities for time allocations that grow from the nature of music and music learning, including the time requirements for developing the integration of artistic, intellectual, and physical knowledge and skills.
 - Understand the necessity of resources essential to music study such as expert specialized personnel, facilities conducive to various types of instruction, and financial support.
 - Be able to connect issues of financial allocation to necessities regarding time and resources.
 - Understand that students must demonstrate significant levels of artistic and technical mastery in order to be admitted.
 - Recognise that musical, instrumental, vocal, or compositional technique—while essential for entrance, continuation, and graduation—enable high levels of artistry but are not a substitute for artistry.
- III. Respect the nature, achievements, aspirations, and structures of individual institutions.
- Conduct evaluations with respect for, and in light of, the various missions, goals, objectives, and methodologies chosen by the individual institutions.
 - Have a sophisticated understanding of how music schools and conservatories are the same and how they are different.
 - Respect the fact that various structures and approaches to music and music study work effectively and produce outstanding results.
 - Understand both individual and group responsibilities for the development of musical and educational quality.

IV. Maximize the use of evaluation systems and methods consistent with the nature of music, music study, and the operation of music schools and conservatoires.

- Recognise the intense evaluation and assessment pressures that come from the public nature of music performance and composition.
- Respect that the concept of multiple effective approaches extends into teaching and learning as well as to matters of interpretation in performance and aesthetic accomplishment in composition.
- Understand the continuous, moment-by-moment evaluation and assessment essential to both the preparation and presentation of performances and to the composition of music. In music, assessment is integrated continuously into the work as well as being applied to completed work.
- Make use of high levels of expertise in music, music teaching, the operation of education and training institutions, and the relationships among the three. Peer evaluation is essential for credibility in reviews of music schools and conservatoires.
- Describe in advance the purpose of any review and the specific criteria on which the evaluation is to be based. Do not attempt to conflate artistic and educational criteria with economic and market criteria.
- Make clear to all evaluators that the focus is on functions to be served, rather than methods to be employed.
- Have protocols indicating that individual evaluators are to make judgments about effectiveness with regard to the criteria chosen for the evaluation and not on personal preferences regarding choices in areas where there are many correct answers.

Basic principles of MusiQuE review procedures

MusiQuE review procedures are based on the twin principles of their being designed from a subject-specific perspective and conducted by peer reviewers with specific subject expertise.

The services offered by MusiQuE are conceived as offering an important service to higher music education institutions, aimed at assisting them in their quality enhancement activities. Although its accreditation procedures necessarily involve evaluating institutions in relation to a set of standards, this principle of assistance in quality enhancement applies even in this context.

The role of peers is at the core of the system. Their expertise is combined with an intimate understanding of the realities that apply in higher music education institutions. They are perfectly placed to engage with the procedures as ‘critical friends’², delivering their judgements in a spirit

²Faithful to its principle of assisting higher music education institutions in their quality enhancement activities, MusiQuE’s procedures are not conceived as top-down, management-driven exercises but more as an engagement of equals, even for accreditation procedures that necessarily involve assessing the performance of institutions and programmes against a set of standards. Bringing the ‘critical friend’ philosophy to the next level, MusiQuE has recently introduced in its portfolio a new procedure - the Critical Friend Review. Further details about the Critical Friend Review are provided in the [Handbook for Critical Friend Review](#) published on the MusiQuE website.

of constructive dialogue with the institution, its leaders, teachers, students and administrative staff, thus emphasising the peer-to-peer aspect of all MusiQuE procedures.

The expertise of the peer reviewers is primarily as teachers within their discipline, but many of them also possess significant administrative experience and understand the issues of higher music education from this perspective as well. In general, Review Teams are assembled in such a way that the individual expertise of each team member complements that of the others.

The other most important constituency within higher music education institutions is that of the students. Students are systematically included as members of the Review Teams assembled under the procedures organised by MusiQuE. The role of students is the same as that of the other peer reviewers, and their perspective is equally valued.

MusiQuE conducts its review procedures in a manner that is characterised by the following principles:

- Respecting the special characteristics of higher music education and the contexts and traditions in which music is created;
- Encouraging higher music education institutions to reflect on their own practice, development and challenges;
- Assisting them in the enhancement of their quality by focusing on learning and experience-sharing;
- Striving towards a higher level of objectivity (through the involvement of international review teams);
- Bringing a European/international dimension to the procedure;
- Striving for the improvement of higher music education as a whole.

A comprehensive overview of all MusiQuE services and procedures is included in the first chapter below.

1 MusiQuE procedures

MusiQuE makes a distinction between procedures within the scope of (and therefore in compliance with) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and those outside the scope of the ESG due to their specific nature (e.g. focusing on educational levels other than higher education or on a particular area of interest only [e.g. research], benchmarking processes or consultative visits)³.

MusiQuE conducts the following procedures:

Within the scope of the ESG:

- Quality enhancement reviews for institutions, programmes and joint programmes;
- Accreditation processes for institutions, programmes and joint programmes;
- Bilateral collaborations with national and international quality assurance agencies.

Outside the scope of the ESG:

- Quality assurance support desk for institutions;
- Evaluations of research activities;
- Reviews of pre-college institutions and programmes;
- Consultative visits;
- Coordination of benchmarking projects.

The various types of review procedures offered by MusiQuE are described below in a detailed manner. Any aspect of the procedures might, however, be altered and adjusted to the specific needs of institutions or (joint) programmes. MusiQuE review procedures aim to be flexible and are designed in such a way that they can be easily adapted to different circumstances. MusiQuE will therefore be open to consider in consultation with the institution or (joint) programme how the services described below can be reshaped in order to fit better to its specific needs and national context.

³ Such a distinction is in line with the document 'Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies' issued by EQAR in November 2017, and MusiQuE follows the *Guiding principles for the separation between agencies' activities* stipulated in Annex 5 of this document.

1.1 Procedures within the scope of the ESG

1.1.1 Quality enhancement reviews for institutions, programmes and joint programmes

Regular QE Review

Under this procedure, higher music education institutions have the opportunity to engage in a Quality Enhancement Review, i.e. a peer-review visit, either for the whole institution or focused on one or more programmes, which results in an advisory report.

Objectives

- To stimulate the process of internal reflection on quality issues and, where relevant, to assist institutional leaders in implementing quality-related reforms;
- To provide the opportunity for higher music education institutions to choose to be evaluated through a procedure devised and implemented by those with specialist knowledge and understanding of such institutions;
- To offer a procedure that is intrinsically international in its outlook and in the range of countries from which experts are drawn;
- To bring fresh ideas and wider perspectives into institutions, encouraging the principle of ‘many correct answers’ to questions concerning the pursuit of quality in higher music education;
- Under certain circumstances, to serve as a ‘rehearsal’ for an impending formal review event and, in the process, to furnish the institution with evidence, in the form of impartial external evaluation, that may then be used for its self-evaluation report.

Process

- The institution is asked to prepare an analytical self-evaluation report, which is sent to the peer reviewers at the latest a month before the site-visit.
- The peer reviewers (at least four persons, including a student), accompanied by a Secretary, conduct a site-visit of a minimum of 1.5 days for a programme review and 2.5 days for an institutional review, during which they meet members of the Management Team, of the Academic, Artistic and Administrative Staff, Students, Representatives of the Profession, etc., and have the opportunity to visit classes and lessons, and attend concerts/recitals.

Outcome

- The outcome is an advisory report, highlighting good practice and including a set of recommendations for further improvement, written by international specialists in the relevant musical fields.
- The report is published on the MusiQuE website on a [page dedicated to reports resulting from the procedures undertaken within the scope of the ESG](#).

Critical Friend Review

In this innovative approach to external quality enhancement reviews, annual visits by ‘critical friends⁴’ to various departments or programmes are combined with a modified version of MusiQuE’s regular review visit. A ‘Critical Friend Review’ has the following objectives, in addition to those pertaining to the regular quality enhancement review, listed above:

- To link the internal and external quality assurance cycles in a manner which better integrates these within the quality culture that institutions are aiming to achieve;
- To bring a more content-driven focus to external quality assurance processes;
- To increase the relevance of the quality enhancement processes to students and teachers, since the results of the visit and the feedback are more specific, more personal and more recognisable.

Further details about the Critical Friend Review procedure are included in the [Handbook for Critical Friend Review](#), produced by MusiQuE and available on the MusiQuE’s website.

1.1.2 Accreditation procedures for institutions, programmes and joint programmes

It is central to the rationale of MusiQuE that higher music education institutions should also have the opportunity to engage in formal accreditation procedures coordinated by it. This would mean that, in countries where evaluation and accreditation bodies other than the national agency are authorised to operate, institutions could combine with a MusiQuE quality enhancement review the accreditation procedure required by law. Under these circumstances, the subject-specific and enhancement-oriented process would not be an additional burden for the institution, over and above its national accreditation obligations, but would fulfil the two functions in one exercise.

Any such procedure will continue to be subject to the national legislative framework where the institution is located, and to other factors of suitability.

Objectives

- 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 procedure devised and implemented by those with specialist knowledge and understanding of such institutions;
- To offer a procedure that is intrinsically international in its outlook and in the range of countries from which experts are drawn;

⁴ A ‘critical friend’ is a respected professional peer whose visit focuses entirely on the performance of a specific programme, section or department.

- 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 procedure 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.

Process

- As with the Quality Enhancement Review, the institution is asked to prepare an analytical self-evaluation report, which is sent to the peer reviewers at the latest a month before the site-visit.
- The peer reviewers (at least four persons, including a student), accompanied by a Secretary, conduct a site-visit of a minimum of 1.5 days for a programme review and 2.5 days for an institutional review, during which they meet members of the Management Team, of the Academic, Artistic and Administrative Staff, Students, Representatives of the Profession, etc., and have the opportunity to visit classes and lessons, and attend concerts/recitals.

Outcome

- The outcome is a report, written by international specialists in the relevant musical fields, which, in addition to highlighting good practice and including a set of suggestions for improvement, concludes with a formal recommendation as to the awarding of accreditation.
- The report may call for accreditation without any recommendations or conditions, accreditation with recommendations only or accreditation subject to certain conditions, whether on their own or in addition to recommendations.
- Any conditions will be framed in such a way that the outcome required and the timescale in which it should be achieved are clear, although, as far as possible, the institution will be given autonomy in terms of the methods by which it achieves the necessary outcome(s).
- If conditions have not been met in the set timeframe, the recommendation will be not to accredit the institution. Under such circumstances, a clear set of remedial steps will be outlined to guide the institution in the reforms considered necessary. The institution will then be free to re-apply for accreditation after a period of one year.
- The report is published on the MusiQuE website on a [page dedicated to reports resulting from the procedures undertaken within the scope of the ESG](#).

1.1.3 Bilateral collaborations with national and international quality assurance agencies

An alternative to a review process conducted solely by MusiQuE is for MusiQuE to operate in collaboration with a national or international quality assurance agency through a merged set of

standards and procedures. This option is especially attractive for institutions wishing to benefit from the joint expertise of:

- a national agency and a subject-specific and internationally-based agency. Both MusiQuE and national quality assurance agencies have their own strengths, expertise and accumulated history; it makes obvious sense to combine these in a complementary way;
- two international subject-specific agencies complementing each other when institutions provide education in other artistic fields than music.

Objectives of bilateral collaborations with national quality assurance agencies

- To provide the opportunity for higher music education institutions who are obliged to work within their national system, or who find positive benefits in doing so, to choose to be evaluated through a process which combines the best of both approaches. It does this by offering a procedure that is both attuned to national priorities and informed, in its design and delivery, by those with specialist knowledge and understanding of such institutions;
- To offer a procedure that, while respecting national patterns and priorities, 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 procedure 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.

Process (for all types of bilateral collaborations)

- Once a request of proposals is received, MusiQuE checks if the potential partner agency is listed on EQAR, in order to know if it will need to ensure ESG compliance of the parts of the work performed by the agency.
- A collaboration agreement is signed outlining the steps of the procedures and the responsibilities of each party.
- A comparison is made of the (inter)national agency’s standards with those of MusiQuE – except when the national agency is keen on working with the MusiQuE Standards rather than its own standards. Arising out of this exercise, a merged set of standards is produced ensuring that no aspect found in either of the separate standards is omitted. Generally, the level of correspondence between standards is found to be high, and the comparison process results in enhanced mutual trust and, from time to time, a productive sharing of practice. The joint framework of assessment thus created, is subjected to the approval of the agencies’ Boards or general management at the beginning of the review process.
- The selection process of experts is also characterised by cooperation. The final review team seeks to blend subject-specific expertise with a familiarity with any particular national circumstances. Precisely how this is done, and the division of responsibilities

such as Chairing amongst members of the finally constituted panel will be subject to negotiation but, again, the guiding principle will be one of equality between the partners.

- The contact with and support to the institution is handled by one of the partners (in order to facilitate the process for the institution).
- The organisation of the site-visit is handled by one of the partners (in order to facilitate the process for the institution and the Review Team).
- The checking process of the report is usually performed by both agencies, and each Board does usually approve the final report.
- The follow-up procedure is agreed on by both agencies.
- The complaints and appeals procedure is agreed on by both agencies.

Outcome

- The precise outcome will depend upon the nature of the cooperation but will always take the form of a report written by international specialists in the relevant musical field.
- The fulfilment of any recommendations or conditions will be subject to the procedures of the national agency or, where the legal framework allows, to the collaboration agreement between the agencies involved.
- In the case of accreditation procedures:
 - Although terminology may vary, the report will conclude with a call for accreditation without any recommendations or conditions, accreditation with recommendations only or accreditation subject to certain conditions, whether on their own, or in addition to recommendations.
 - As with MusiQuE's own procedures, there will generally be a possibility that accreditation might be withheld when conditions are not met in the timeframe set, in which case, appropriate remedial steps would be outlined.
- The report is published on the MusiQuE website on a [page dedicated to reports resulting from the procedures undertaken within the scope of the ESG](#).

1.2 Procedures outside the scope of the ESG

1.2.1 Quality Assurance Support Desk for institutions

As a complement to the procedures operated by MusiQuE, its staff and experts also provide targeted advice on quality assurance procedures to higher music education institutions. The main 'portal' to this advice is the MusiQuE Quality Assurance Support Desk. For most of the year, this exists in 'virtual' form as a space on the MusiQuE website for submitting by email a specific query. The MusiQuE Office can offer specific guidance in relation to MusiQuE tools/guidelines (including the MusiQuE Standards) and, where appropriate, will provide references to sources on internal and external quality assurance. The MusiQuE Office can also organise, on request, a preparatory visit to explain how an institution can apply for a review undertaken by reviewers from the MusiQuE peer reviewers Register.

Finally, the MusiQuE Quality Assurance Support Desk is available in concrete form at the AEC's Annual Congress and, by request, at the annual meetings of EMU and Pearle*. Delegates can bring their inquiries directly to MusiQuE Board and Office in a face-to-face interaction, which can then be followed up by email, etc. if necessary.

1.2.2 Evaluation of research activities

These evaluations aim to provide an analysis of research objectives and results within the higher music education context. They are based on a dedicated evaluation framework developed by MusiQuE, the MusiQuE Framework for the Evaluation of Research Activities in Higher Music Education Institutions, derived from the MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review. These evaluation procedures are structured in four domains of investigation: 1) the profile of the research activities or research institute/unit, 2) their organisation, 3) the quality of the research activities' results and 4) the impact of these results.

Objectives

A MusiQuE review of research activities aims at providing:

- An analysis of the implementation of the research mission or objectives of the institution within the context of the development of research into-and-through artistic practice;
- An analysis of the specific research outcomes generated in response to these objectives or mission and of their relevance within the European and international landscape of research into-and-through artistic practice;
- An international benchmarking of the impact and significance of these outcomes in relation to the broader music sector on the basis of the aforementioned analyses and the opinion of experts in the field;
- The formulation of a review of any strategic plans for research drawn up by the institution or research institute/unit for the forthcoming years in light of the specific artistic context within which this institution or research institute/unit operates;
- A general conclusion written by international experts from the field, on the impact of the research activities, with recommendations for enhancing the quality of these activities;

- If applicable, a follow-up analysis of recommendations formulated during previous reviews and an outline of the evolution that the institution or research institute/unit has made subsequently.

Process

- The institution is asked to prepare an analytical self-evaluation report, which is sent to the peer reviewers at the latest a month before the site-visit.
- The peer reviewers (at least four persons, including a student), accompanied by a Secretary, conduct a site-visit of a minimum of 1.5 during which they meet members of the Management Team, of the Academic, Artistic and Administrative Staff, Pupils, Representatives of the Profession, Parents etc., and have the opportunity to visit classes and lessons, and attend concerts/recitals.

Outcome

- The outcome is an advisory report, highlighting good practice and including a set of recommendations for further improvement, written by international specialists in the relevant musical (research) field.
- The report is published on the MusiQuE website on a page dedicated to [activities undertaken outside the scope of the ESG](#).

1.2.3 Reviews of pre-college institutions and programmes

Under this process, pre-college institutions and programmes have the opportunity to engage in a Quality Enhancement Review, i.e. a peer-review visit which results in an advisory report. These quality enhancement reviews of pre-college institutions and programmes are based on a specific set of standards (Standards for Pre-College Music Education) which aim to guide pre-college music education providers in evaluating their activities and enhancing quality.

Objectives

- To stimulate the process of internal reflection on quality issues and, where relevant, to assist institutional leaders in implementing quality-related reforms;
- To provide the opportunity for pre-college institutions and programmes to choose to be evaluated through a procedure devised and implemented by those with specialist knowledge and understanding of such institutions;
- To offer a procedure that is intrinsically international in its outlook and in the range of countries from which experts are drawn;
- To bring fresh ideas and wider perspectives into institutions, encouraging the principle of 'many correct answers' to questions concerning the pursuit of quality in higher music education;
- Under certain circumstances, to serve as a 'rehearsal' for an impending formal review event and, in the process, to furnish the institution with evidence, in the form of impartial external evaluation, that may then be used its self-evaluation report.

Process

- The institution is asked to prepare an analytical self-evaluation report, which is sent to the peer reviewers at the latest a month before the site-visit;
- The peer reviewers (at least four persons, including a student), accompanied by a Secretary, conduct a site-visit of a minimum of 1.5 during which they meet members of the Management Team, of the Academic, Artistic and Administrative Staff, Pupils, Representatives of the Profession, Parents etc., and have the opportunity to visit classes and lessons, and attend concerts/recitals.

Outcome

- The outcome is an advisory report, highlighting good practice and including a set of recommendations for further improvement, written by international specialists in the relevant musical fields;
- The report is published on the MusiQuE website on a page dedicated to [activities undertaken outside the scope of the ESG](#).

1.2.4 Consultative visits

The procedure consists of a site-visit by a MusiQuE Reviewer to advise the institution in relation to matters concerning (e.g.) governance or quality assurance. The process includes the provision of material by the institution to the Reviewer, a site-visit by the Reviewer and the production of an advisory report. The MusiQuE Standards are used as internal check-list by the Reviewer during the site-visit and the reporting format is free and based on the needs of the institution. In practice, the MusiQuE Peer-reviewer is asked to act as a consultant, and is put in direct contact with the institution in order to ensure that she/he understands well the mission and prepares adequately.

Objectives

- To provide an opportunity for institutions or programmes to be advised on specific areas, such as governance or quality assurance.

Process

- The institution is asked to provide supporting material and documents that will help the Reviewer during the consultative visit at the institution.
- The Reviewer will conduct a site-visit of a minimum of 1.5 days (in agreement with the institution) during which the Reviewer will meet with institutional representatives and stakeholders.

Outcome

- The outcome is an advisory report of the consultative visit, based on the needs of the institution, but highlighting good practice and including a set of recommendations for further improvement, written by international specialists in the relevant musical fields.
- The report is kept confidential.

1.2.5 Coordination of benchmarking exercises

MusiQuE can be commissioned by an institution to conduct a benchmarking exercise on its behalf. The method of benchmarking is proposed as a tool for quality enhancement and for internationalisation. It involves choosing appropriate partners at international levels, evaluating and comparing the practices and/or performance of the institution with those of its partners, and sharing best practice. The benchmarking questions (or points of reference) are derived from the MusiQuE Standards.

Objectives

- To improve performance based on the comparison between institutions / departments / programmes that share common objectives and operate under comparable conditions;
- To provide institutions with a process that is based upon internationally recognised standards and principles.

Process

- The commissioning institution and MusiQuE jointly agree on partner institutions that will join the benchmarking.
- Appointment of external expert(s) nominated by MusiQuE but approved by the commissioning institution.
- Production of a questionnaire by the commissioning institution and MusiQuE in the jointly defined area.
- The benchmarking partner institutions, including the commissioning institution are answering the questionnaire that is later analysed by the external expert(s).

Outcome

- The outcome is an advisory report, highlighting the areas that have been agreed and including a set of recommendations for further improvement, written by external experts.
- The report is kept confidential.

1.3 Conflicts of interest to be considered when applying for MusiQuE procedures

When an institution to which MusiQuE has provided any of its services in the previous years, requests another service from MusiQuE, the following principles apply:

- When the service initially provided is a consultative visit, MusiQuE will not carry out any external quality assurance (within the scope of the ESG) of the same unit (e.g. institution, faculty, department or study programme) to which it has provided the consultative visit, and this for a period of six years. In addition, the reviewers who have conducted a consultative visit will not be selected for any external quality assurance activity requested by the institution where the consultative visit has taken place.
- When the service initially provided was not a consultative visit, the MusiQuE Board first considers whether any conflict of interest would arise, that might compromise the result and quality of the service to be provided. If no potential conflict of interest is found, the MusiQuE Board approves the request for this new procedure. A fresh Review Team will normally be composed.

2 Shared responsibilities in MusiQuE procedures

All MusiQuE procedures assume shared responsibilities between all parties involved, as follows:

The institution/programme applying for a MusiQuE procedure will:

- Designate a contact person, upon signing the contract for the MusiQuE procedure the institution chose to undergo, who will be responsible for all contact with the MusiQuE Office in relation to the procedure in question.
- Organise the self-evaluation process or, where the case, the process circumscribed to the production of the necessary documentation requested by the ‘critical friend’, or other type of advisor, as presented in MusiQuE Guidelines for Institutions made available for applicant institutions at the beginning of the procedure.
- Depending on the national regulations and the type of procedure chosen, suggest specific profiles and expertise that should be taken into account by the MusiQuE Office and Board in the composition of the Review Team, in the selection of the critical friends, or of other advisors assigned to conduct the procedure.
- Provide any additional documentation requested by the MusiQuE Office on behalf of the Review Team or, where applicable, on behalf of the ‘critical friend’, or other type of advisor, that is deemed necessary for the preparation of the site visit, or for the benchmarking exercise, respectively.
- Cooperate with the MusiQuE Office in planning and implementing the site visit, where a site visit is part of the MusiQuE procedure the applicant institution chose to undergo.
- Supply the Review Team, the ‘critical friend’, or the advisor conducting the procedure with all information required during the site visit, where a site visit is included in the chosen MusiQuE Procedure.
- Provide factual comments to the draft review report or, where applicable, the advisory report, as requested by the MusiQuE Office.

The Review Team, the critical friend, or the advisor assigned to conduct a specific MusiQuE procedure will:

- Partake in the MusiQuE Annual Training for Peer Reviewers or, where applicable, in the online training provided by the MusiQuE Office.
- Study the documentation provided by the institution and the tools provided by the MusiQuE Office related to the procedure (briefing documents, guidelines for peers, code of conduct, applicable standards, analysis templates, report templates, guiding questions etc.) and conduct the evaluation or the benchmarking exercise accordingly.
- Produce or contribute to the production of the review report, or of the advisory report where applicable.
- Address or, where applicable, support the Secretary of the Review Team to address the comments to the Draft Report made by the MusiQuE Board or by the institution.

- Comply with all other protocols related to the procedure, including the clause of confidentiality.
- Transfer to MusiQuE the intellectual property of all works created in relation to the procedure.
- Respect all deadlines related to the procedure, partake in all its phases, and submit all information deemed necessary, as indicated in the relevant documentation provided by the MusiQuE Office.

The MusiQuE Office will:

- Select a shortlist of profiles from among the peers listed on the MusiQuE Peer Reviewers Register that are deemed suitable to respond to the specific needs of the applicant institution, and present them to the Board, ensuring that the peers selected for a particular procedure form a well-balanced and qualified team, or hold the specialised expertise to conduct the procedure in question;
- Where necessary, seek the approval of the Board for a reviewer not yet listed on the Register whose special expertise is needed to complete the team, or to respond to particular needs defined by the applicant institution;
- Provide support to institutions during the self-evaluation process or the process leading to the production of requested documentation, if necessary;
- Perform a preliminary check of the self-evaluation report to ensure it follows the MusiQuE guidelines (e.g. coverage of all MusiQuE Standards, size, list of annexes and how they are referenced);
- Cooperate with the institution and the Review Team, the ‘critical friend’, or other type of advisor, in planning and preparing for the site visit, where such a visit is part of the MusiQuE procedure the applicant institution has selected;
- Brief the Review Team, the ‘critical friend’, or other type of advisors, on the specificity of the applicable procedure, if required;
- Organise an online training for Review Team members, for critical friends or other advisors, if required;
- Perform a preliminary check of the report and coordinate the approval process by the Board and the factual accuracy check by the institution;
- Submit the final report to the institution with the formal decision by the MusiQuE Board and ensure its publication on the MusiQuE website, where applicable;
- Coordinate the follow-up process, where applicable;
- Register complaints and appeals, where the case, and notify the Board on the necessity to take appropriate measures;

- In the case of procedures undertaken jointly with national quality assurance agency, coordinate the cooperation process (exchange of practices, comparison of standards, of templates used, etc.).

The MusiQuE Board will:

- Assess and approve proposals for Peer Reviewers selected from the Register by the MusiQuE Office for each review procedure and advisory process, based on the relevance of their expertise;
- In the case of procedures conducted on the basis of another set of standards than the MusiQuE Standards, review and approve the mapping of standards and the merged set of standards prepared by the MusiQuE Office;
- Review all reviewers' reports before these are first submitted to the institution for the accuracy check and once they are finalised, and notify the applicant institution in writing about the final outcome of the review or advisory service requested:
 - In the case of MusiQuE Quality Enhancement Reviews, the Board:
 - ensures the overall quality of the report and its consistency with the other review reports;
 - ensures its relevance to the review standards;
 - issues a formal decision accompanying the final report, by which it confirms that the institution, programme or joint programme have been reviewed by MusiQuE;
 - monitors the follow-up process, with the support of the MusiQuE Office.
 - In the case of accreditation procedures, the Board:
 - ensures the overall quality of the report and its consistency with the other review reports;
 - checks if the justifications listed by the review team for each standard support the proposed level of compliance with that standard;
 - takes the final formal decision on the accreditation of the institution/programme/joint programme based on the proposal of the Review Team;
 - when a decision for conditional accreditation has been taken, agrees and approves the conditions set to the institution;
 - monitors the follow-up process relating to conditions and recommendations formulated in the report, with the support of the MusiQuE Office.

- In the case of consultative visits and benchmarking projects, the Board:
 - ensures the overall quality of the reports and their relevance to the applicable review standards or, where the case, the expectations of the institution or programme visited or benchmarked.
- Receive complaints and requests for appeals from institutions and decide whether they meet the grounds for their formal acceptance; subsequently activate the Appeals Committee following the steps described in [MusiQuE's Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#) and communicate the result of the complaint or appeal to the institution.

3 Selection of peer reviewers in MusiQuE procedures

For all MusiQuE procedures, the general principles that apply in selecting the peers from amongst MusiQuE's Peer Reviewers' Register to act as members of Review Teams, as critical friends⁵ or simply as advisors in tailor-made consultative visits, are as follows:

- the particular needs of the applicant institution⁶ in terms of specialised expertise (e.g. expertise in jazz, in early music, in composition, etc.) and on the number of peers⁷ necessary to conduct the procedure appropriately are addressed; in case of joint procedures with national quality agencies, specific requirements might need to be taken into account concerning the composition and selection of Peer Reviewers, and these will be clearly set in the cooperation agreements.
- an overall balance with respect to specialised knowledge in terms of institutional management and governance, artistic and academic management, and artistic and professional experience across the review team shall be ensured.
- knowledge of the country-specific system of higher music education and of the legislation applicable in that country will be addressed where possible and as appropriate.
- Peer Reviewers assigned on a procedure will have been professionally active principally outside the country in which the institution is located and are not in a position of conflict of interest⁸ with the applicant institution.
- where more than one peer reviewer is assigned to conduct a procedure, the MusiQuE Board is to make sure that, although some familiarity with the national system of the country of the applicant institution is desirable, an international perspective can be properly conveyed by the review team; in this regard, diversity in terms of nationality and geographical profile across the Review Team is to be ensured.
- all Peer Reviewers appointed to conduct MusiQuE procedures shall be proficient in English; except in rare cases, the language of the review and the documents provided by the institution shall be in English⁹, unless agreed otherwise between MusiQuE, the institution and the Review Team.

⁵ See section 1.1 above and the [Handbook for Critical Friend Review](#) for further details about the procedure.

⁶ In some cases, where the national regulations require, the institution is also consulted in the selection of peers appointed to conduct the procedure chosen by the applicant institution.

⁷ For quality enhancement reviews and accreditation procedures, a minimum of 5 Peer Reviewers are considered for a review team, including the Chair, the Secretary and the student peer. In case of tailor-made advisory services - e.g. consultative visits, benchmarking exercises or variations of the Critical Friends Review, a single peer reviewer may be tasked to conduct the procedure.

⁸ See section 3.2 below - Conflicts of interest.

⁹ At the same time, it is essential that institutional representatives have the opportunity to express themselves in the language of the country where the review is being conducted. It is therefore recommended that the Review Team include at least one member who is able to understand/speak the

3.1 Process

Once a contract for a certain MusiQuE procedure has been signed with the applicant institution, depending on the institution's specific needs, the MusiQuE Office will preselect from among the Peer Reviewers' Register the profiles that best fit the pre-defined requirements. A wide range of factors are being considered during this preselection: the number of peers needed, the areas of expertise identified by the institution, the profiles of the peers (level of experience in reviewing institutions, languages spoken, etc.) as well as gender balance. More emphasis will be put on the collective level of competence and experience of the team than on individual competences and experiences. Hence, where appropriate, a team may also include a newcomer in order to allow for an element of training / learning-by-doing to take place.

The proposal is then submitted for approval to the MusiQuE Board and it should include at least two names for each type of expertise considered necessary for the exercise or, when a Review Team is being composed, two names for each position in the panel (Chair, Secretary, or regular peer). This is meant to ensure that, in case of unavailability of certain peers, the composition of the panel will not be delayed. The Board members agree on the final proposed composition of the Review Team either during their regular meetings or by email, depending on the timeframe of the procedure. In the event of contradictory views, the Chair of the Board is asked to make the final decision.

Having in mind the subject specificity and the small world of higher music education, institutions may be allowed to suggest experts deemed suitable to conduct the procedure. Furthermore, if the required profile for experts is not covered by peers from the Register, the MusiQuE Office may conduct a call for proposals and suggest to the Board an expert outside of the Register. However, the MusiQuE Board has full discretion on the final decision regarding the Review Team composition, the appointment of a critical friend, or of other advisors as per the specific procedure implemented. Following the Board's approval, MusiQuE Office will ensure that appropriate training is provided for the new recruit(s) either during the MusiQuE annual training or through an online training prior to the site visit.

Student members are considered as equal members of the Review Team. They are selected from among the students listed on the Peer Reviewers Register, taking into account that they be enrolled on a programme at least at the level of studies being considered during the review (e.g. the student recruited for a review concerning Bachelor programmes will be enrolled in a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral programme). Recently graduated students (up to 2 years upon graduation) can be included and considered as student members of Review Teams. The MusiQuE Office selects the student based on the expertise required. In case of unavailability of the students listed on the Register, the MusiQuE Office will contact representatives from higher music education institutions for support in identifying alternative student profiles. Should students not listed on the Peer Reviewers Register be assigned on particular procedures, they too will either take part in the MusiQuE annual training or will undergo an online training prior to the site visit.

language in question. In cases where it is felt necessary, the institution will be asked to hire (provide) a translator.

3.2 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may arise from past, current or planned association between a peer reviewer and members of the institution. It is the responsibility of all parties (MusiQuE, the reviewers and the institution) to make an immediate disclosure should they become aware of a potential conflict of interest.

First of all, as mentioned above in section 1.3, reviewers who have conducted a consultative visit will not be selected for any external quality assurance activity requested by the institution where the consultative visit has taken place.

Once the MusiQuE Board has decided on the composition of the Review Team, or on the appointment of critical friends or other types of advisors to conduct a specific procedure, the MusiQuE Office will formally invite the selected peers to take part in the procedure. The invitation includes a short questionnaire meant to prevent any possible conflicts of interest - namely that the peers have no direct or indirect affiliations, nor have they maintained such connections or ties with the institution / programme to be assessed during the past five years. In cases of doubt, where a connection of some sort is acknowledged but is either slight or well in the past, the MusiQuE Board will be consulted as to whether it disqualifies the individual.

At this stage, peers will also be asked to sign a “Declaration of Honour” certifying that they are free of conflicts of interest and they agree with the code of conduct included in the MusiQuE Guidelines for Peer Reviewers and provided as an annex herein (see Annex 1).

Subsequently, the institution is also asked to point out any potential conflict of interest from its own perspective and it can request that a peer reviewer be replaced or removed, if duly justified. In cases when the institution has been involved in the discussions on the Review Team’s composition (depending on the national regulations), such a consultation is not applicable.

4 The Self-evaluation phase

Most MusiQuE procedures emphasise the self-evaluation as a key process in the review exercise, and a crucial link between internal and external quality assurance cycles designed to integrate the envisaged quality culture within applicant institutions, departments, or programmes.

The self-evaluation phase represents an opportunity for a collective reflection at the level of the institution, department, or programme, with the intention to foster an open dialogue between leadership and internal stakeholders which would lead towards a shared understanding and acceptance of the key areas that require further attention, as well as of the main strengths and the ways they can be best exploited.

The institutions are therefore urged to involve all relevant stakeholders in the process, and to approach the self-evaluation as a *process* rather than a mere report that falls under the responsibility of the Quality Assurance department. The self-evaluation report is only one outcome of this process, while the goal of the self-evaluation phase is to stir the institution's capacity for improvement and change through self-reflection and internal dialogue. A maximised engagement across all institution's various communities - e.g. management, administrative staff, teaching and artistic staff, students, alumni, representatives of the profession, should therefore be aimed in the production of the self-evaluation report (SER). Should an institution require that a particular strategic priority be addressed more in-depth throughout the chosen MusiQuE procedure, it should consequently pay particular attention in emphasising this priority in the self-evaluation process and report.

Given its crucial importance in ensuring the success of the selected review procedure, the self-evaluation phase - conducting the self-evaluation *process* and writing the self-evaluation *report* - should be offered a substantial investment of time and human resources, usually over a period of approximately **three months**. It is recommended that roles and responsibilities of institutional actors undertaking the endeavour are clearly defined. While the leadership may maintain a steering role throughout the process, it is of utmost importance that the outcome of the self-evaluation process is owned and shared by all internal stakeholders.

To this purpose, it is advised that the leadership of the institution / department / programme will:

- appoint an institutional representative to act as liaison person in all communication with the MusiQuE Office with regard to the review procedure in question;
- explain the aims, the phases, the timeline, and the outcome of the whole review procedure, as well as its intended benefits across the various communities to be involved in the process;
- set up a self-evaluation team once the institution's application for a MusiQuE procedure has been accepted and MusiQuE's offer has been signed;
- clarify the responsibility of the self-evaluation team towards staff and students (through student representatives), emphasising the importance of institution/department/programme-wide discussions in the process, and facilitate the open dialogue that is necessary to support the self-evaluation team conduct its work.

In composing the self-evaluation team (SET) at the level of the institution / programme / department, it is advised that the following guiding principles are taken into account:

- the size¹⁰ of the team is fit for purpose: it ensures, on the one hand, that all major constituencies¹¹ are represented and, on the other hand, that its members can work efficiently together;
- the leadership does not exclude itself from the team, but it does not forestall the process either;
- the members appointed are in a good position to convey opinions about the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities that the institution / department / programme encountered, and the extent to which these have been exploited and, respectively, addressed;
- its work is tailored to facilitate a broad self-reflective discussion within the institution / department / programme, and to foster a shared understanding and ownership of the self-evaluation process and report across all constituencies involved;
- its role will be:
 - to coordinate and distribute the work to further sub-groups from among the constituencies involved, if necessary;
 - to tailor the guiding questions included in the [self-evaluation report template](#) provided by the MusiQuE Office in a way that speaks to the particular context of the institution / department / programme, and that is relevant to the strategic priorities chosen to be addressed in-depth through the review exercise;
 - to gather, select, process and compile all data provided by the constituencies involved, in a self-evaluation report that addresses, in an individualised manner, all themes listed in the relevant [self-evaluation report template](#) received at the beginning of the procedure;
 - to submit the self-evaluation report to the MusiQuE Office **8 weeks** before the site visit is planned to begin;
 - to address all subsequent requests for further documentation and clarification conveyed by the review team through the MusiQuE Office **no later than 5 weeks** before the site visit is planned to begin.

¹⁰ Depending on the size of the institution / department / programme, not more than 10 people should be assigned to work on the self-evaluation report.

¹¹ While it is important that all internal stakeholders be represented - administrators, teaching and artistic staff, students, the self-evaluation team is not to be understood as an *agora* where all units and departments delegate a representative.

4.1 The Self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process at the level of the institution / department / programme should be guided by the applicable framework of assessment - namely, the set of [MusiQuE Standards](#)¹² relevant for the procedure or, in the case of joint procedures with national agencies, the mapped set of standards resulting from the overlapping between MusiQuE standards and the standards of the national agency involved in the joint procedure.

MusiQuE's different sets of standards¹³ have been designed to meet different institutional needs. Depending on the context and aim of the review procedure, one of these sets of standards will apply and shall be used by the self-evaluation team in producing the self-evaluation report and compiling all supportive evidence.

MusiQuE Standards are equally used outside review procedures, as a tool of reference for reviewers and institutions alike partaking in consultative visits or benchmarking exercises tailor-made to fit specific needs.

All sets of standards share a common philosophy and address similar areas; their differences lie in the way that they are specifically tailored to the review task in question.

With the exception of the evaluation framework for research activities which contains 8 standards distributed across 4 domains of investigation, each set of standards is divided into three columns as follows:

- The first column, '**Standards**', lists the 17 standards to be met, in the context of a self-evaluation process but mostly of an external evaluation process. These standards are distributed across the 8 themes/domains of enquiry listed below and serve as threshold (minimum) standards. The domains are as follows:
 1. Institutional Mission, Vision and Context/Programme's Goals and Context
 2. Educational Processes
 3. Student Profiles
 4. Teaching Staff
 5. Facilities, Resources and Support
 6. Communication, Organisation and Decision-making

¹² The MusiQuE Board has the responsibility of ensuring that the MusiQuE Standards are in line with Part 1 of the [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). In this regard, the Board performs regularly a mapping of the MusiQuE Standards against Part 1 of the ESG. This mapping is included among the tasks assigned to the Working Group responsible for the revision of the MusiQuE Standards.

¹³ All MusiQuE sets of standards are published online at: <http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/musique-standards>. Depending on the type of procedure chosen by the institution, the relevant set of standards is sent by the MusiQuE Office to the liaison person at the level of the institution, at the beginning of the procedure.

7. Internal Quality Culture

8. Public Interaction

- The second column, '*Questions to be considered when addressing this standard*', includes a series of questions for each standard; these questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each standard and at illustrating the range of topics that could be covered by that standard. The function of these questions is not that they are rigidly adhered to and answered separately in detail, but rather that they are tailored and addressed according to the specific context in which the institution / department / programme operates, to the strategic priorities defined by the applicant institution at the beginning of the procedure, and the type of review procedure being used. As such, these questions are meant to provide guidance to the self-evaluation team all throughout the self-evaluation process and, equally, to the review team all throughout the review process. Thus, they are intended as a link between internal and external quality assurance processes that should unravel possible gaps between inner and outer perception in the ways that the institution / department / programme conducts itself.
- The third and last column, '*Supportive material/evidence*', should not be seen as a mandatory list, but rather as an example of the kinds of supporting material which the self-evaluation team could provide to peer reviewers as evidence of good practice.

4.2 The Self-evaluation report

Once the self-evaluation team has collected, filtered and analysed the information and documentation provided by the relevant constituencies, it will synthesise the material gathered and compile it in the self-evaluation report. Institutions and programmes to be reviewed will receive an [indicative template for their self-evaluation report](#) based on the MusiQuE standards. As mentioned above, each of the 17 standards listed in the first column needs to be addressed, while the second and third columns are meant as guidelines for the self-evaluation process.

The self-evaluation report is not only the business card by which the institution / department / programme presents itself to the external reviewers. It should be embraced as an occasion to critically reflect upon the ways in which its managerial and operational levels connect and interact, upon how strengths and opportunities are fructified, and how weaknesses and challenges are being addressed and rectified. The self-evaluation report should therefore go beyond a mere description of the state of the art and present the institution / department / programme in an analytical, evaluative and self-reflective way both in terms of present status as in terms of future plans. As such, it should provide a solid framework, substantiated by relevant quantitative and qualitative data, that the peer reviewers can use as basis for their on-site investigation.

Practical aspects to be considered in preparing the self-evaluation report:

- The self-evaluation report should be seen as a *synthetic* document; a maximum length of **30-40 pages** is advised, excluding annexes. This relative shortness is precisely intended as an incentive for the self-evaluation team to provide an **analysis** rather than a description of the state of the art, and to maintain focus on the specific strategic priorities defined, rather than venturing too deeply into specifics. Making use of any pre-existing

data and documents is encouraged, as long as it is tailored to the scope and reach of the review exercise in question.

- The list of recommended annexes to the self-evaluation report suggested in column 3 of the applicable set of [MusiQuE Standards](#) is by no means exhaustive. The self-evaluation team should feel free to include any sets of data deemed relevant in support of the analysis provided in the self-evaluation report. Where possible, links to resources available online should be prioritised, rather than physical enclosure of documentation among the annexes to the self-evaluation report.
- Unless otherwise agreed with MusiQuE, the self-evaluation report and all its supporting documentation should be provided in English. The costs of translation are supported by the applicant institution. Summaries of extensive strategy documents can be provided, in order to reduce costs of translation.
- The self-evaluation team should write the self-evaluation report with its audiences in mind. Aside from internal constituencies, a team of international peer reviewers will be among the audiences of the self-evaluation report. While knowledgeable in subject-specific matters pertaining to higher music education, and in matters related to quality assurance in higher education, the international peer reviewers may lack in-depth knowledge on the particularities of the national context in which the institution operates. References to particularities of the legal framework in which the institution functions are therefore welcomed information. Institutions are required to provide in the self-evaluation report a brief description of the national music educational structure or system and the place of their institution within the structure. Institutions are encouraged to use the [National Overviews of Higher Music Education Systems produced by AEC](#). It is also recommended that specific terminology, concepts, or translated names of operational or governance bodies be shortly explained when first referenced in the self-evaluation report.
- It is advised that a glossary of terms and abbreviations used is provided at the beginning of the self-evaluation report.
- The self-evaluation report should be shared **and owned** across all internal constituencies, and should be made available to all groups selected to partake the interviews with the external peer reviewers during the site visit.
- The MusiQuE Office and the MusiQuE peer reviewers will treat the self-evaluation report as confidential and will not share any information contained therein with third parties.
- The self-evaluation report will be submitted to the MusiQuE Office **8 weeks** before the start of the site visit.
- All subsequent requests for further documentation and clarification conveyed by the review team through the MusiQuE Office shall be addressed by the self-evaluation team, and communicated to the MusiQuE office, **no later than 5 weeks** before the site visit is planned to begin.

5 The Review visit

Like the self-evaluation phase, the review visit is an integral part of many MusiQuE procedures. It is designed to provide Review Teams, critical friends or other types of advisors with the opportunity to explore more in depth the priority areas of concern, and the particular features of the institution, department, programme or joint programme reviewed, and thus enable them to mirror any existent gaps between projection and reality in the ways the institution perceives and presents itself.

5.1 Aim and focus

The main aim of the visit is for peer reviewers to collect evidence and information on the various areas of enquiry in order to complete and, where appropriate, to verify the picture of the institution/programme as described in the self-evaluation report and in the supporting materials. Thus, the external perspective brought in by MusiQuE reviewers, and informed by their expertise and international experience, takes as its point of departure the internal perspective as expressed in the self-evaluation report.

More specifically, the visit will give peer reviewers a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of the specificities of the institution/programme as these are experienced 'on the ground', and of the extent to which there is consistency between these and the way in which the institution presents itself. In addition, the peer reviewers will be able to explore whether, how and with what results the institution's strategic policies and procedures for quality enhancement are implemented throughout the institution – and, indeed, have the desired impact. Both of these foci are equally important. All the scheduled encounters with internal and external stakeholders of the applicant institution should aim at exploring issues that, in one way or another, have a direct bearing on them.

5.2 Duration

Review visits vary in length depending on the applicable MusiQuE procedure. For instance, site visits have a minimum length of **1.5 days** for programme reviews, and of **2.5 days** for institutional reviews, while a visit of a Critical Friend may last for a minimum of **3 days**. Review visits' duration is therefore subject to variation depending on circumstances, on particular features and requests of the applicant institution, on the institution's size and level of complexity, on the number of programmes reviewed, on the scope and reach of the chosen review procedure. Regardless of all these elements, a review visit will never be shorter than 1.5 days.

5.3 Review visit schedule

The schedule of the review visit is proposed by the institution based on a template relevant for the procedure in question, provided by the MusiQuE Office. A sample of such a template is available in Annex 2 below. Based on the documentation submitted by the applicant institution beforehand, the peer reviewers may request adjustments to the proposed schedule as they see fit. These will be communicated in due course by the MusiQuE Office to the liaison person at the level of the institution, and the requested amendments will be arranged internally with the self-evaluation team. Once the review visit schedule has been agreed upon, the institution will be asked to confirm the names and functions of all members of constituencies invited to meet with

the external peer reviewers. Ideally, the review visit schedule will be finalised at the latest **2 weeks** before the start of the site visit.

As a rule of thumb for most of MusiQuE procedures though, the elements to be included in the programme of a review visit are as follows:

- Meetings with the head of institution and institutional/departmental/programme leaders;
- Meetings with the Chair and/or a member of the relevant Board/Council (e.g. Academic Council, Conservatory Council);
- Meetings with artistic and academic members of staff (professors and teachers);
- Meetings with senior administrative officers (responsible for quality assurance and enhancement, the international office, financial services, the alumni office, the planning unit, coordination of artistic and research activities, public relations, etc.);
- Meetings with students representing all study cycles and different levels and subjects (including, where relevant, a representative of the student union/council); in the case of programme reviews the students enrolled in the programme will be invited for the meetings with external reviewers;
- Meetings with former students;
- Meetings with representatives of the profession (employers, organisation representatives, etc.) from the region;
- [For a Critical Friend Review] Meetings (possibly by skype) with the Critical Friends
- Review of facilities (studios, concert venues, practice facilities, libraries, etc.);
- Review of assessed student works such as concert recordings, compositions and final papers to consider the standard and modes of assessment and the learning achievements of students;
- Attendance of concerts or other public presentations of students' work and/or visits to classes delivered at the time of the review;
- Attendance at performance examinations including the follow-up discussion by the examination committees.

The list of meetings might be adapted to take into account the specific nature of a certain procedure. Moreover, the institution may combine the personnel of meetings for the sake of efficiency – e.g. representatives of the profession and former students, or students and former students. However, conflicts of interest should be avoided at all costs. For example, members of staff should not be met by peer reviewers together with current students; members of the leadership team should not be met together with representatives of the profession, different levels of institutional hierarchy should not be mixed, etc.

In procedures where the site visit is conducted by a Review Team the schedule will also include:

- **A private briefing session of the Review Team** at the beginning of the site visit, before the meetings with institutional representatives are scheduled to take place.

It is recommended that a 3 hour time slot, and an appropriate meeting room, be considered when designing the schedule, as private time for the Review Team to prepare for the coming dialogues with representatives of the institution.

- **Private reflection and debriefing meetings** of the Review Team after each meeting with institutional representatives (including one for the preparation of the feedback session).

The schedule should allow the Review Team time meet on its own between meetings. It is recommended that 15 to 30 minutes be included for this purpose after each meeting with institutional representatives. Alternatively, a more extended period of time may be included after every two meetings. The Review Team might also reserve lunch breaks to work privately in between meetings with institutional representatives. Furthermore, there will be a private meeting of the Review Team at the end of each day reserved for final conclusions, and preparation for the interviews of the following day. Hence an appropriate meeting room should be arranged for this purpose by the hosting institution.

- **A feedback session** by the Review Team to the institution/programme at the end of the visit. It is recommended that this session be open to any student, staff member or person linked with the institution, who wishes to attend.

During this meeting, the Chair of the Review Team will present the preliminary findings of the Team and clarify the further steps of the review procedure. At this moment, the Review Team should not be expected to engage in an in-depth discussion with the representatives of the institution/programme about the preliminary findings, but to offer an overall feedback on the main areas of inquiry that will be reflected in the report. It is recommended that a 2 hour time slot, and an appropriate meeting room, be considered when designing the schedule, as private time for the Review Team to prepare for this final session.

It is to be considered that the Review Team will not be able to examine every aspect of the institution. The schedule should therefore be designed to give the Review Team as full a picture as possible of the institution and/or the specific programme(s). It is advised that special emphasis be given to strategies and measures adopted to enhance the quality and relevance of the study programme(s).

5.4 Further practical aspects of the review visit

The following considerations regarding the schedule and logistics will help to ensure a smooth visit:

- **Language employed:**

Meetings during the review visit will normally be conducted in English. However, it is essential that institutional representatives have the opportunity to express themselves accurately and with

confidence during the review visit, and this will often mean doing so in the language of the country where the review is being conducted. If the experts are not conversant with this national language, appropriate translation arrangements should be decided in advance.

Institutions expecting much of the discussion during the review visit to be conducted other than in English will normally be asked to hire and cover the costs of a professional interpreter – acquainted with the music field – in order to provide experts who are unfamiliar with the language with the best possible real-time translation of what is being said. Additional time for meetings with various groups of institutional representatives shall be taken into account under such circumstances.

In some special cases (where there is cooperation with national agencies, etc.) another language than English may be agreed upon for the whole procedure (preparation and coordination, self-evaluation report, site visit and final report).

- **Length of the meetings:**

Most meetings should last between 60 and 90 minutes. Initial and final meetings with the leadership may be extended. Visits to classes will normally not last longer than 30 minutes. Adjustments will be made to the length of the session in cases where translation is provided. Where applicable, private working time for the Review Team should be included in the schedule as indicated in section 5.3 above (15 to 30 minute slots in between meetings with representatives of the institution, a 3 hour slot for the initial briefing session of the Review Team, and a minimum of 2 hour slot for the preparation of the final feedback session).

- **Participants in meetings:**

The institution should select participants who are able to speak and discuss with authority on the areas of enquiry relevant to the meeting. The number of participants in each meeting should normally be between 5 – 12 persons for a 90 minute meeting. Representatives of the management should only be present in those meetings indicated for that purpose on the schedule.

All meetings should be interactive and participants should not prepare any presentations. The peer reviewers or, where applicable, the Review Team, will come prepared with questions in order to start a dialogue. All meetings will be treated confidentially by peer reviewers or, where applicable, the Review Team. Individuals will not be quoted and the report shall not include statements that could be traced back to a specific participant.

- **Parallel meetings:**

When the site visit is undertaken by a Review Team, it is possible – by agreement between the Team and the institution – to run parallel meetings of sub-groups from the team with different groups of representatives of the institution.

- **Flexibility of the schedule:**

The institution is encouraged to leave one to three hours free at some point in the programme so that peer reviewers may explore more thoroughly specific areas, meet other representatives.

Furthermore, schedules should be drawn up in a way that minimises the risk of delay and disruption. If the peer reviewers or, where applicable, the Review Team have to move from one location to another (e.g., to another building of the faculty), the time required for this should be

taken into account. If the institution is spread across several sites, careful consideration should be given as to whether visits to several sites are necessary.

In view of maximising the efficiency of the schedule, unnecessary visits to different sites should be avoided in order to keep travelling time at a minimum. To the same purpose, it is advised that participants in the meetings receive in advance information about the peer reviewers, about the objectives of the review procedure in general, and of the meeting in which they are involved in particular. Likewise, the names and functions of the interviewees in each meeting shall be provided beforehand to the MusiQuE Office and further communicated to the peer reviewers in preparation for the site visit. As such, the introduction time during each meeting can be reduced to a minimum.

- **Informal meetings/encounters:**

It is advised that peer reviewers be offered the opportunity to meet informally (perhaps at dinner or lunch) with the leadership and other key members of the institution. Such encounters will underline the important concept of peer review rather than inspection. The peer reviewers may also engage with students informally if, for instance, they act as guides to classes, facilities and events.

- **Concerts, recitals and visits to classes:**

The institution is encouraged to provide the reviewers with a schedule of all the activities taking place in the institution during the timeframe in which a visit to classes is planned, such as concerts, recitals, master-classes, lessons, etc. On the basis of this schedule, reviewers will then choose the classes they wish to visit (individually or in groups, by themselves or led by students) in order to gain a fuller picture and understanding of the provision. Institutions are requested to inform all staff members about the potential visit of the reviewers.

- **Performance examinations:**

If the review visit takes place during a practical examination period, the institution may provide peer reviewers with the opportunity both to attend the performance part of the examination and to observe the deliberation of the jury that follows.

- **Logistics on site:**

It is important that peer reviewers be offered appropriate working conditions while on site. To this purpose, the hosting institution will ensure that:

- the hotel booked for the external peer reviewers be within walking distance from the institution, or that transfers between locations be provided by the host;
- where applicable, a meeting room properly equipped be booked at the hotel for the briefing session of the Review Team scheduled on the day of their arrival;
- distances between sites be minimised to the extent possible (hotel - institution - restaurants reserved for dinner);
- a separate meeting room for the duration of the review be set up for individual work as well as for group meetings. This room should be big enough to accommodate all meetings.

A copy of the key to this room will be provided to the Secretary of the Review Team in order to ensure that the Team's belongings are safe while the Team is away;

- water is available in the meeting rooms at all times;
- name plates for peer reviewers and representatives of the institution alike be prepared in advance and provided to all meetings;
- a computer with internet access (wireless if possible) and a printer are available for the peer reviewers to use on site;
- lunches and coffee breaks are organised on site through a catering service; where this is not possible a nearby restaurant will be reserved under the assurance of fast service. It will be taken into account that the Review Team may wish to meet on its own during lunch periods;
- a list of all classes/activities available to visit be provided in advance. It is recommended that each reviewer is guided in the building, for example by students.

5.5 Financial arrangements

If not otherwise agreed with MusiQuE, all costs related to travel, subsistence and accommodation of the external peer reviewers conducting the procedure will be covered by the hosting institution. Travel arrangements for peer reviewers are generally made by the MusiQuE Office and invoiced back to the institution, while arrangements regarding accommodation and subsistence on site are generally made by the hosting institution directly.

6 Report and outcomes

This chapter broadly refers to MusiQuE procedures conducted by Review Teams composed through the process described under Section 3.1 above. Reports produced by critical friends within the Critical Friends Review procedure, or by peers assigned to conduct consultative visits or other types of MusiQuE procedures tailor-made to fit particular needs of an institution, while they follow the same pathway for approval by the MusiQuE Board, may be subjected to a shorter timeline depending on the quantity and quality of the materials provided by the institution for the specific exercise, on the length of the site visit where applicable, and on the deadlines agreed with the institution for the respective exercises.

6.1 The Review report

The Review Team will draft a report in English (unless agreed otherwise between MusiQuE, the institution and the Review Team), normally **within eight weeks of the site visit**. This report will be based on all the information made available to the Review Team through the institution's own self-evaluation report and on insights gained during the site visit.

6.1.1 Structure and creation process of the draft report

The first version of the draft report is prepared by the Secretary, building on written contributions made by the other Review Team members. The report follows a template that reflects the applicable framework of assessment. More broadly, all reports contain the following elements:

- Table of Contents;
- Introduction (information on the context of the review, and key data on the institution/programme and composition of the Review Team);
- Analysis of how each standard is met:
 - Description of the situation in the institution or programme, based on elements from the self-evaluation report and on findings from the site visit properly referenced;
 - Analysis of the situation and related recommendations;
 - Statement assessing the compliance of the institution/programme/joint programme with the standards that represent the framework of assessment for the procedure in question.
- Final conclusion;
- A summary of the compliance with standards and related recommendations; in case of accreditation procedures, the conditions imposed for each standard, if applicable;
- A list of relevant annexes, as deemed necessary for the procedure in question.

In the case of an accreditation procedure, the Review Team is asked to conclude its report with a proposal to the MusiQuE Board concerning the accreditation of the institution/programme/joint programme that has been reviewed. The proposal should be expressed as follows:

“Based on the institution’s/programme’s/joint programme’s compliance with MusiQuE standards, it is proposed that the institution/the (joint) programme be accredited/ be accredited with conditions/should not be accredited”.

Within **six weeks** after the site visit, the Secretary is expected to send the draft version of the report to the other members of the Review Team, who will be given **two weeks** to provide their input and feedback. The revision process of the draft version is organised internally by each Review Team. The final draft of the report is subject to the Chair’s approval and, subsequently, it is submitted to the MusiQuE Office for scrutiny.

6.1.2 Statement on compliance with the MusiQuE standards

There are four levels of compliance that the Review Team will assess for each MusiQuE Standard, as follows:

- **Fully compliant** - A standard is fully compliant when the approaches, structures or mechanisms relevant to that standard are fully implemented in a coherent and consistent way.
- **Substantially compliant** - A standard is substantially compliant when the standard is in place, while minor weaknesses have been observed but the manner of implementation is most effective. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a recommendation as to how full compliance can be achieved.
- **Partially compliant** - A standard is partially compliant when the standard is in place, while significant weaknesses have been observed or the manner of implementation is not sufficiently effective. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a recommendation as to how full compliance can be achieved or a condition.
- **Not compliant** - A standard is not compliant when the approaches, structures or mechanisms relevant to that standard are lacking or implemented inadequately. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a strong recommendation or a condition.

The judgement on compliance levels should be thoroughly substantiated and clearly justified in the review report.

6.1.3 From draft to final report: approval and decision-making process

Once the Draft Report has been approved by the Chair, it is submitted to the MusiQuE Office. Here the Draft Report is checked for adequate referencing, for relevance and consistency with the applicable framework of assessment, for language, tone and their fitness with the enhancement-led focus of MusiQuE procedures, for the relevance and substantiation of the arguments provided in support for the Review Team’s decision on compliance levels. The Secretary and the Review Team will address the preliminary comments by the MusiQuE Office as they see fit. Following these amendments, the Draft Report is submitted for the approval of the MusiQuE Board.

In turn, the MusiQuE Board will consider whether the draft report is consistent and relevant to the applicable framework of assessment, and whether the Review Team’s analysis and argumentation for each standard support its decision with regard to levels of compliance. Comments and recommendations by the MusiQuE Board issued in this phase will be addressed by the Review Team. The dialogue between the MusiQuE Board and the Review Team in this

process will be mediated by the MusiQuE Office until an agreement is reached with regard to the version of the report that will be submitted to the institution for the accuracy check.

Once the comments by the MusiQuE Board are addressed by the Review Team, the MusiQuE Office invites the institution to comment on the factual accuracy of the Draft Report within a maximum of four weeks since the reception of the report. The factual comments submitted by the institution will be shared by the MusiQuE Office with the Review Team. A further amendment of the Draft Report aimed to ensure factual accuracy will be thus implemented by the Review Team, making sure that consistency between the corrected factual information and the conclusions drawn is maintained.

Subsequently, the revised report is submitted again to the MusiQuE Board for the final endorsement or, in the case of accreditation procedures, for the formal decision on the accreditation of the institution/programme/joint programme based on the proposal of the Review Team. With the endorsement or formal decision of accreditation issued by the MusiQuE Board, the review report can be considered final and the review procedure closed.

6.2 Review outcomes and consequences

6.2.1 Outcomes of a MusiQuE quality enhancement review

In the case of a Quality Enhancement Review, the result of the procedure is the final report itself, which includes the list of standards met, substantially met and not met, highlights the institution's/programme's strong points, and provides advice and suggestions/recommendations for change.

The institution will receive a letter from the MusiQuE Board stating that the institution/programme/joint programme has been reviewed by MusiQuE with reference to the MusiQuE standards and procedures and referring to the summary of compliance with standards. The letter will also inform the institution about the possibility of a follow-up process, involving the filling in of a follow-up template within 6-12 months after the delivery of the final report (see section 7).

6.2.2 Outcomes of a MusiQuE accreditation procedure

In the case of an accreditation procedure, in addition to the report and advice, the result will include a decision on the accreditation of the institution/programme/joint programme, with the following possibilities:

- Accreditation
- Conditional accreditation
- Institution/programme/joint programme not accredited (in cases where there is non-compliance with a significant proportion, usually defined as six or more, of the 17 standards or, exceptionally, when non-compliance is less substantial than this, but the extent and seriousness of the conditions needing to be met is such that the Review Team deems it unrealistic for them to be fulfilled within the maximum period allowable – see below).

In all these cases, additional recommendations may be developed by the Review Team in order to assist the institution with its further improvement.

Where the decision is to grant accreditation, this will be for a period of 6 years unless national legislation sets a different interval. In this case, the institution receives the decision with the accreditation results, as well as accreditation certificates.

Where conditions are attached to accreditation, the institution will be given a period of 12 months to show that the conditions have been fulfilled (with adjustments to national contexts if the requirements are different) by filling in the follow-up template (see section 7.1). In exceptional, well justified cases, this period can be shortened or extended (to a maximum period of two years).

If, by the expiry of the maximum period allowed, an institution that has been given conditional accreditation fails to show that the conditions have been fulfilled, the MusiQuE Board will make an evaluation of progress achieved and, on that basis, take one of the following three actions:

- authorise a further extension to allow the fulfilment of any remaining conditions;
- call for a team of 2 people from the initial review team to visit the institution a second time, at the cost of the institution, to determine 'in situ' whether the condition has, in practice, been fulfilled or is close to fulfilment;
- in extreme cases, withdraw the conditional accreditation. If this should be the Board's decision, the institution has available the same courses of action to redeem matters as an institution not granted accreditation at the original decision (see below).

Where the decision is not to grant accreditation, clear reasons should be given. An institution is free to re-apply for accreditation after a period of one year. In such a case, a new self-evaluation document is required (but may be largely focussed on how the institution has addressed the previous reasons for withholding accreditation), and a new Review Team will be assembled.

6.3 Publication of results

6.3.1 Process

MusiQuE makes a clear distinction between its activities within the scope of the ESGs and its activities outside the scope of the ESGs. Subsequently, all reports resulting from activities outside the scope of the ESGs include a statement in this regard and, where not subject to a confidentiality clause, they are published on the MusiQuE website, but [in an area clearly separated](#) from the reports of the quality enhancement and accreditation procedures. Concurrently, the institutions undergoing a quality enhancement or an accreditation procedure conducted by MusiQuE are compelled to act in full compliance with ESG 2.6., and agree with the publication of the reports resulting from such procedures, together with the formal decision issued by the MusiQuE Board in relation to these reports. MusiQuE publishes all reports resulting from activities within the scope of the ESGs [in a designated section of the website](#) and on the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR).

Reports are being uploaded on the MusiQuE website at the end of the procedure, when the final report is sent to the institution.

In case of accreditation procedures where conditions are formulated, the extent to which these conditions have been fulfilled is checked after 12 months, during the follow-up process. The follow-up report and the related decision issued by the MusiQuE Board will be also published after having been officially communicated to the institution.

The institution is entitled, and encouraged, to use the summary of the report's findings, or extracts from it, in any responsible way that it sees fit – as part of the evidence base for formal quality assurance procedures or, where relevant, in its own institutional publicity and internal quality assurance processes.

6.3.2 The use of MusiQuE label

The MusiQuE label can be used for a maximum period of 6 years only by institutions that have undergone a quality enhancement review, or an accreditation procedure for which a decision of accreditation has been issued by the MusiQuE Board. Where conditions are attached to accreditation, the institution is given a period of 12 months (with adjustments to national contexts if the requirements are different) to act on the conditions imposed. After re-assessment through a follow-up procedure, the MusiQuE label can be used should the Board decide that the conditions to receive accreditation have been fulfilled.

6.3.3 The use of EQAR label

Institutions reviewed by MusiQuE may not make use of the EQAR label even though the registration on EQAR is an attribute of MusiQuE. As such, the EQAR label is used as follows:

- On MusiQuE's website: it appears on all pages (bottom of the page, under "Quality Assurance Networks"). The list of services provided by MusiQuE on its website clearly distinguishes between activities within and outside the scope of the ESG.
- On the accreditation certificates issued by MusiQuE.

7 Follow-up procedures

While not compulsory except for accreditation procedures where a decision of conditional accreditation was issued, the follow-up process has been embedded in the design of most MusiQuE procedures and services, regardless if these are implemented within or outside the scope of the ESGs. As such, with minor exceptions (e.g. benchmarking exercises), a follow-up procedure is included in the cost and among the services listed in offers extended to all institutions applying for services provided by MusiQuE. Given that MusiQuE consistently applies the same general principles for all its procedures, the section herein addresses the follow-up procedure in relation to quality enhancement reviews and accreditation procedures which form insofar the largest body in the MusiQuE portfolio. Peer reviewers involved in the initial review procedure will be contacted by the MusiQuE Office to partake in the corresponding follow-up procedure when such a procedure is undertaken by the institution in question.

7.1 Process

In order to assist visited institutions in implementing the recommendations listed in the review report, and to enable MusiQuE to assess its impact, a paper-based peer-reviewed follow-up procedure is offered to all institutions reviewed by MusiQuE.

[A three-column template](#) has been developed as a tool to facilitate the follow-up process, as follows:

- The issues pointed out by the Review Team as elements to be developed/ further developed are listed in the first column. In the case of an accreditation procedure, the conditions imposed by the Review Team as well as the recommendations are listed.
- The second column, initially empty, is to be filled in by the institution with short reports of the actions undertaken for each element of improvement/each condition and each recommendation announced by the Review Team. In cases where the institution has not followed one or more conditions or recommendations, the reasons for this will need to be explained in this column.
- The third column, initially empty will include the comments of the Review Team on the reports drafted by the institution in the second column.

The template is sent to the institution together with the letter informing the institution of the MusiQuE Board's endorsement of the review report or of the accreditation decision. The letter also indicates the deadline by which the template needs to be sent back to the MusiQuE Office. In the case of accreditation procedures where formal conditions have been imposed, the accompanying letter stresses the crucial importance of observing this deadline and the potential threat of accreditation being jeopardised if satisfactory reporting on the fulfilment of the conditions is not made by that deadline.

7.2 In the case of quality enhancement reviews

There are no conditions, but only recommendations in the case of quality enhancement reviews; the follow-up process is therefore voluntary. Institutions are still systematically asked to fill in the MusiQuE follow-up template within 1 year and to provide evidence of what has been improved during that period. An extension of the deadline may be requested by the institution.

The MusiQuE Board will consult the Review Team which conducted the initial review of the institution/programme. One or more members of the team will be asked to study the template filled in by the institution, as well as the evidence provided, and to fill in the third column of the follow-up template with comments and, if appropriate, further recommendations.

The MusiQuE Board will endorse the follow-up report and send it back to the institution with a letter by the Board.

The costs related to this follow-up procedure are included in the initial offer that has been signed by the institution.

If it is felt by the Review Team or the MusiQuE Board that the material is not sufficient to assess the fulfilment of the conditions then, subject to the agreement of the institution, a team of two individuals from the initial Review Team will be asked to visit the institution a second time at the cost of the institution. The same additional action can be implemented at the request of the institution itself if it wishes an actual site visit as part of the follow-up process.

7.3 In the case of accreditation procedures

In the case of an accreditation, there are 2 levels of follow up: recommendations and conditions.

7.3.1 Recommendations

The recommendations will be clearly listed in the review report and will need to be addressed by the institution in its self-evaluation report at the next renewal of accreditation. In addition, it is systematically proposed to the institution that the follow-up procedure applied to any conditions made by the Review Team also applies to the recommendations made. The procedure detailed below will therefore apply to the recommendations as well as the conditions.

7.3.2 Conditions

The follow-up template will list all the conditions formulated by the Review Team. The institution will have up to 1 year to provide evidence that the conditions have been implemented and to complete the follow-up template accordingly. In exceptional circumstances, the MusiQuE Board may shorten or extend the deadline.

- The MusiQuE Board will proceed as for voluntary follow-up procedures: the template will be sent to the Review Team, who will study all the material and fill in the third column “sur dossier” to assess whether the conditions have or have not been met.
- The MusiQuE Board will then consider the completed template and recommendation by the peer reviewer(s) and decide whether the conditions have been met or not.
- If it is felt by the Review Team or the MusiQuE Board that the material is not sufficient to assess the fulfilment of the conditions, a team of 2 reviewers from the initial Review Team will be asked to visit the institution a second time at the cost of the institution.
- If the evidence “sur dossier” suggests that the conditions have not been met, the Board may offer an extension of the deadline, arrange a follow-up visit as above or, in extreme cases, withdraw conditional accreditation as described in Section 6.2.2. above.

7.4 Periodicity of review procedures

In as much as internal quality assurance processes should be continuously undertaken to ensure a constant care for quality and a constant improvement of all provisions, external review procedures should additionally take place at regular intervals.

The period of time between two reviews will inevitably vary, as MusiQuE operates all across Europe, with different periods set by national regulations. All institutions choosing MusiQuE for their review will be encouraged to be reviewed every six years: the institution will normally be approached by the MusiQuE Office in the fifth year following the last review with a proposal to start a new review procedure. However, when the interval between two reviews set by the national legislation is shorter or longer than six years, it is this interval which will be taken as a reference and the timing of the approach from MusiQuE Office will be adjusted accordingly.

8 Feedback mechanisms

As part of its internal quality assurance processes, MusiQuE will collect feedback from institutions involved in its procedures on two occasions throughout the length of the procedure:

- after the completion of the review visit in procedures where such a visit is included;
- after the final review report has been officially sent to the institution and published on the MusiQuE website.

Questionnaires addressed to reviewed institutions aim at collecting feedback on:

- the institutional experience of producing the documentation (number of persons involved in the production of the self-evaluation report, ownership of the process, difficulty in collating the documentation, relevance of the questions to the institution/programme, usefulness of the self-evaluation questions and process, usefulness of the MusiQuE material, etc.);
- the composition, efficiency and professionalism of the peer reviewers assigned to conduct the procedure;
- the clarity of the report;
- the relationship of the MusiQuE procedure to the national accreditation context and framework;
- communication with the MusiQuE Office during all phases of the review.

When MusiQuE cooperates with other external quality assurance agencies, joint versions of these questionnaires are produced together with the partner agency in order to collect feedback on the joint procedure.

Once every year, usually between January and March, the MusiQuE Office compiles all results of the questionnaires received following procedures coordinated in the previous year and makes an analysis of any trends discernible in these results. The results, their analysis and a set of proposed actions for improvement are then considered by the Board, which also has access, if required, to the original questionnaires. The Board, normally at its Spring meeting, decides on any actions that it believes should be undertaken to improve the procedures. Any suggestions to change the Standards will be fed into the process for the revision of the standards.

If answers given to the feedback questionnaire, or through direct contact with the MusiQuE Office, reveal issues within the Review Team or in relation to the attitude of one of the peer reviewers, the following procedure applies:

- After informing the Director of MusiQuE, members of the MusiQuE Office investigate the matter further by contacting the liaison person in the hosting institution, and possibly other representatives of the institution, in order to understand the issue. The matter may be pursued by the Director of MusiQuE.
- If deemed necessary, the Director will inform the Board, either verbally at the following Board meeting, or by email.

- Where there is found to be an issue, action will be taken to prevent another occurrence of the problematic situation. The MusiQuE Office may, for example, decide to add notes in the Peer Reviewers' Register concerning relationships between some reviewers, who should not serve together on the same team again; it may take action to remind a peer reviewer of his/her obligations in relation to the guidelines and Code of Conduct; or, should there be ground for such a measure, the Board may decide to suspend or remove the peer reviewer in question from the Register.

9 Complaints and appeals procedures

For all the services provided, MusiQuE has procedures in place for dealing with complaints and appeals. The following definitions are to be considered for this purpose:

- **Complaints:** An institution may submit a formal complaint when it considers that the service provided by MusiQuE has not been delivered in line with the MusiQuE Guidelines applicable for the procedure, and/or with the MusiQuE Code of Conduct for Peer Reviewers. A complaint may therefore concern a procedural failure, or may relate to the conduct of one or more individuals involved in the process. Complaints submitted to challenge the outcome of a review are considered invalid. The Appeals process, described below, should be used for this purpose.
- **Appeals:** An institution may submit an appeal when it considers that the statements in the review report constitute a flagrant misjudgement and all other means of obtaining what is considered a just outcome have been exhausted. Since, according to MusiQuE guidelines, institutions are given the opportunity to correct factual errors in review reports before these reports are deemed final, issues pertaining to factual accuracy will not be considered as valid grounds for appeal. The appeal represents an action of last resort for revising the judgements expressed in the review report. As such, the procedure should be undertaken only in the following circumstances: failure to explore relevant facts, disregard for, or misinterpretation of the evidence provided, or judgements contrary to the weight of evidence provided.

Further details on related rules and processes are included in [MusiQuE's Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#), published on the MusiQuE website.

Annexes

Annex 1. Code of Conduct for MusiQuE Peer Reviewers

At the time of first contacting potential peer reviewers selected to conduct a certain MusiQuE procedure, all those responding positively are asked to confirm that they subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Peer Reviewers. This states that all MusiQuE peer reviewers should:

Integrity

- a) be free of conflicts of interest (as defined in the declaration of honour and the corresponding questionnaire);
- b) handle all data with the utmost confidentiality;
- c) observe and report any potential detection of fraud or corruption at the institution immediately to the Chair;
- d) refrain from using any information related to review procedures as a means of making monetary profit without notifying MusiQuE;

Review attitude

- e) ensure that a fruitful dialogue takes place during the site visit;
- f) be committed to acting as members of a team at all times, i.e., to work cooperatively, under the direction of the Chair;
- g) avoid referring to their own (institutional) experience, as well as giving informal advice and feedback, unless by permission of the Chair;
- h) avoid voicing any directly comparative value judgment during the meetings (be it negative or positive);
- i) avoid interruptions of colleagues or institutional participants, leaving time for the latter to have their say;
- j) consider the internal objectives and strategies of the institution in addition to the QA/accreditation standard (rather than the QA/accreditation standards only);
- k) consider the relationship between all aspects examined (such as facilities, teaching, research);
- l) reference the evidence provided in careful and specific terms while ensuring the anonymity of interviewees (e.g. by mentioning “students met by the Committee” instead of just “students”);
- m) agree to transfer the intellectual property of all works created in connection with this procedure, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in MusiQuE. The results of services provided by the peer-reviewer may be incorporated into reports issued by MusiQuE and shall not be attributed to the peer-reviewer personally, except insofar as this is made clear in the published report;

Ethical/Cultural Considerations

- n) respect the local culture of the institution;
- o) be free of perpetrating any form of discrimination;
- p) report any case of emerging conflict or cultural discordance timely to the Chair, and avoid taking any individual action in such instances;
- q) notify the Chair in case of any unanticipated material exchange with the institution (such as receiving gifts).

Annex 2. Template for a review visit schedule of 1.5 days

Meeting with representatives of the institution	Colour codes
Review Team private meeting	
Break/Lunch/Dinner or Social activities/free time	

Day 0 - Arrival Day (DD/MM/YYYY/)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting	Location
17:00-20:00	Preparatory meeting of the Review Team (Briefing Session)		
20:00 -	<i>Dinner</i>	Review Team alone	

Day 1 – (DD/MM/YYYY/)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Names and functions of participants from the visited institution <i>(The participants invited to the meetings can be combined taking care to ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest)</i>	Location
9:00-10:30	Meeting 1 <i>Example: Meeting with the management of the institution</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: Head of institution, institutional/ departmental/ programme leaders</i>	
10:30-10:45	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)		
10:45-11:00	<i>Break</i>		
11:00-12:30	Meeting 2 <i>Example: Meeting with senior administrative staff/QA office</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: Heads of Finance, Administration, Library, Quality Assurance and the International Office</i>	
12:30-12:45	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary		
12:45-13:45	<i>Lunch</i>	Review Team alone	
13:45-15:15	Meeting 3 <i>Example: Meeting with teachers/lecturers</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: 5 - 10 professors and teachers from different departments</i>	
15:15-15:30	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)		
15:30-15:45	<i>Break</i>		
15:45-17:00	Guided tour - Review of the facilities (studios, concert venues, practice facilities, libraries etc.) <i>(Guides as proposed by the institution – may include students).</i>		
17:00-18:30	Review Team meeting: Reflection on the first day and preparations for day 2		
19:00-	<i>Dinner as proposed by the institution</i>		

Day 2 – (DD/MM/YYYY/)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Names and functions of participants from the visited institution <i>(The participants invited to the meetings can be combined taking care to ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest)</i>	Location
9:00-10:30	Meeting 4 <i>Example: Meeting with students</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: 5-10 students from different years/cycles, studying different subjects, including if possible a representative of the student union/association. All study cycles should be represented.</i>	
10:30-10:45	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)		
10:45-11:00	<i>Break</i>		
11:00-12:30	Observation of student performances during class and / or exams <i>Attendance of concerts or other public presentations by student's work and/or observations of classes, as proposed by the institution.</i>		
12:30-12:45	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary		
12:45-13:45	<i>Lunch</i>	Review Team alone	
13:45-15:15	Meeting 5 <i>Example: Meeting with members of the relevant board/academic council</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: the Chair and/or members of the relevant board/academic council</i>	
15:15-15:30	Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)		
15:30-15:45	<i>Break</i>		
15:45-17:00	Meeting 6 <i>Example: Meeting with alumni and representatives from the music profession</i>	As proposed by the institution <i>Example: former students at different stages of professional life. Representatives of the profession and from other external agencies with whom the institution has formal and informal links.</i>	
17:00-18:30	Review Team meeting <i>Reflection on the first day and preparations for day 3</i>		
19:00-	<i>Dinner</i>	Review Team alone	

Day 3 – (DD/MM/YYYY/)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Names and functions of participants from the visited institution <i>(The participants invited to the meetings can be combined taking care to ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest)</i>	Location
9:00-10:30	Meeting 7 <i>Extra session if required by the Review Team (members of the team may explore more thoroughly specific area, meet other representatives of their choice)</i>	As notified by the Review Team	
10:45-11:00	<i>Break</i>		
11:00-13:00	Review Team meeting - Preparation for the feedback meeting		
13:00-14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Review Team alone</i>	
14:00-15:30	Meeting 8 Feedback to the institution	Leadership of the institution (normally the same group as in the first meeting)	
END OF THE SITE-VISIT			
16:00-	Departure of the Review Team members / Free time		

Annex 3. Summary and overall timeframe of a MusiQuE procedure

The table below is an example of the normal timeframe for MusiQuE Quality Enhancement Reviews and accreditation procedures. Any changes to this timeframe will be mutually agreed by MusiQuE and the institution.

Self-Evaluation Phase		
Who	What	Time frame
MusiQuE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sends the applicable framework of assessment (MusiQuE Standards or a mapped set of standards in joint review procedures). Sends the MusiQuE Guidelines for institutions together with the relevant templates for the procedure – self-evaluation reports, site visit schedule, etc. Undertakes the Review Team composition / selection of Critical Friends / appointment of other peer reviewers depending on the type of procedure contracted (together with the institution or with a partner agency, where applicable). Briefs the assigned peer reviewers on the specificities of the procedure in question and, where necessary, conducts the (online) training of the peer reviewers selected. Mediates the communication between the Review Team / Critical Friends / other peer reviewers and the institution, the exchange and feedback related to the self-evaluation report and connected documents, the finalisation of the site visit schedule. 	Since the offer has been signed until the site visit [over a period of approximately three months].
The management of the institution / department / programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoints a liaison person to maintain contact with MusiQuE. Sets up a self-evaluation team and explains the aims, phases, timeline, and outcome of the whole procedure, as well as its intended benefits across the various communities of stakeholders involved in the process. Clarifies the responsibility of the self-evaluation team towards staff and students and facilitates the open dialogue necessary to support the self-evaluation team conduct its work. 	
The Self-Evaluation Team of the institution / department / programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates and distributes the work to further sub-groups from among the constituencies involved, if necessary. Tailors the guiding questions included in the MusiQuE Self-Evaluation Report Template in a way that speaks to the particular context of the institution / department / programme and is relevant to the strategic priorities chosen to be addressed through the procedure. Gathers, selects, processes, and compiles all data provided by the constituencies involved, in a self-evaluation report (SER) that addresses in an individualised manner, all themes listed in the MusiQuE SER Template received at the beginning of the procedure. 	

The Self-Evaluation Team through the liaison person assigned by the institution / department / programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submits the SER to the MusiQuE Office. 	8 weeks before the site visit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses all subsequent requests for further documentation and clarification conveyed by the Review Team / Critical Friends / other peer reviewers through the MusiQuE Office. 	5 weeks before the site visit
Site Visit Phase		
MusiQuE and Institution	Practical organisation of the review visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flights and hotel booking for the Review Team Organisation of lunches, dinners, coffee breaks 	Between 10 and 4 weeks before the site visit
Institution (in consultation with MusiQuE and the Review Team)	Finalising the site visit schedule	3 weeks before the site visit
Secretary and Review Team (RT)	Preparation of the collated SER analysis and meeting sheets based on the templates received from MusiQuE	1 week before the site visit (at the latest)
Institution & RT	Site visit (see schedule template in Annex 2)	As agreed
The Review Report		
Secretary & RT	Preparation of the First Draft of the Review Report	8 weeks after the site visit
MusiQuE Office	First consideration of the report: checking its overall quality and relevance to the MusiQuE Standards or the mapped set of standards representing the applicable framework of assessment. whether the levels of compliance selected by the Review Team are well substantiated	1 week since the receipt of the First Draft Report
Secretary & RT	Addressing the first sets of comments received on the Draft Report and amending the report, as deemed fit, in preparation for the MusiQuE's Board approval	1 week since the receipt of the feedback
MusiQuE Board	Checking its overall quality of the Draft Report and whether the levels of compliance selected by the Review Team are well substantiated.	2 weeks since the receipt of the Draft Report

Secretary & RT	Preparation of a revised draft review report (if necessary), based on the comments received by the MusiQuE Board.	1 weeks since the receipt of the feedback
MusiQuE Office	Submission of the draft report to the institution for the factual check	Upon receipt of the Draft Report from the RT
Institution	Submission of response to the draft report to the Secretary	2 weeks since the receipt of the report
Secretary & RT	Preparation of the Final Report based on the feedback from the institution.	1 week since the receipt of the feedback
MusiQuE Board	Second consideration of the report and confirmation that the report is consistent with, and relevant to, the MusiQuE procedures and standards and communication of this to institutions	2 weeks since the receipt of the Final Report
MusiQuE Office	Submission of the final report to the institution with a letter from the Board Publication of the report in full on the MusiQuE website http://www.musique-qe.eu/completed-reviews	Upon receipt of the final approval by the Board
Follow-up Procedure		
Institution	Submitting the request for a follow-up procedure and the follow-up template provided by MusiQuE.	12 months after the closure of the review procedure.
MusiQuE	Appointing one or two Review Team members, involved in the initial procedure, to conduct the follow-up procedure.	3 weeks since the receipt of the request for the follow-up procedure
MusiQuE, Institution & RT members	The calendar of activities is to be fixed on a case by case basis, depending on the type of follow-up conducted – paper based or with a site visit.	



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