



# Quality Enhancement Review Report

## Programme review

Pre-college programme (PRE)

Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana



**26 October 2018**

Please note that this report results from a quality enhancement review undertaken outside the scope of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as it does not relate to teaching and learning in higher education.

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
1. Institutional/School mission, vision and context .....	8
2. Educational processes .....	11
2.1 The programme and its methods of delivery .....	11
2.2 National and international perspectives.....	11
2.3 Assessment .....	11
3. Pupil profiles .....	14
3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications .....	14
3.2 Student progression, achievement and suitability for higher music education .....	14
4. Teaching staff .....	16
4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity.....	16
4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body.....	16
5. Facilities, resources and support.....	18
5.1 Facilities .....	18
5.2 Financial resources.....	19
5.3 Support staff .....	20
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making.....	22
6.1 Internal communication process .....	22
6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes.....	22
7. Internal Quality Culture .....	24
8. Public interaction .....	26
8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts .....	26
8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions.....	26
8.3 Information provided to the public.....	26
9. Summary of the programme's compliance with MusiQuE Standards .....	29
.....	31
Conclusion .....	32

## Introduction

### Data on the institution/programme

The *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana* (CSI) is a private foundation with public mandate and public support, that manages three operationally autonomous departments: the *Scuola universitaria di musica*/University of Music (SUM), affiliated with the *Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana* (SUPSI); the *Pre-Professionale/Pre-College* (PRE), for high school students; and the *Scuola di musica*/Music School (SMUS), non-professional section. The three departments have financial autonomy, operate separately as regards contracts, accountability, and public support (SER, p. 9). The SUM is mainly financed by cantonal and federal contributions, through the intermediation of the SUPSI; the PRE is partly financed by cantonal subsidies, and responds to the Cantonal Division for professional education (*Divisione della formazione professionale DFP*); and the SMUS is partly financed by cantonal and municipal subsidies, and responds to the Cantonal Division for Culture and Academic studies (*Divisione per la cultura e gli studi universitari DCSU*).

The governance of CSI is further referenced in the Self Evaluation Report (SER, p. 6) and outlined in the following documents: the Charter of the Foundation (*Statuti della Fondazione*), the “constitution” of the Foundation, which determines its Mission; the Organisation Regulations (*Regolamento d'organizzazione - RO*), which govern the bodies, their function, rights and duties, and the internal control system (*Sistema di controllo interno SCI*), accompanied by regular risk analysis, which establishes the principal processes and the control mechanisms. The principal bodies of the Foundation are outlined in the self-evaluation document (SER, p. 7), along with an Executive Summary (SER, p. 9), a history of the institution and of the programme (SER p. 9) and a context for the national music education system (SER, p. 10).

A significant moment of change in the Swiss educational framework occurred in 1999, when the Baccalaureate became a formal condition to enter a SUM. As high school students could not access specialized music education at a decisive early point, the CSI decided to create a special programme to support the talented students' development and to prepare them for admission to a SUM: thus the pre-professional curriculum was developed (SER, p.9). Initially the vision was to start with 5-10 students, who qualified for formal and financial support from the Cantonal Division for Professional Education DFP. This was supported by the argument that earlier selection at a pre-college level would make more economical and financial sense. The curriculum was designed with the following objectives:

- to support high school students who had the necessary level and potential to become professional musicians;
- to create a programme based on core activities:
- to reduce all non-fundamental subjects to a minimum;
- to invest most energy into the main subject area of instrumental/vocal training, and ear training, both of which require long term commitment in order to buildup adequate competencies (SER, pp. 9-10 and meeting with institutional management team).

Cooperation with the DFP and also with the professional school for top athletes, SPSE, has continued to an excellent level, however this has not been the case with the cantonal public school division. This poses a problem for a small

number of PRE students, who are enrolled in normal high school studies and aim for a “normal” - rather than vocational - baccalaureate (SER, p.10). The cooperation with the cantonal office for the promotion of sports and arts talents is excellent, and this office accepts that the admission to the CSI pre-college programme is a pre-condition for eligibility in its relevant activities (SER, p.10 and meeting with representatives from partner institutions.)

In 2008, the PRE department was formed within the Foundation CSI, arising from the former curriculum *pre-professionale*. The PRE, along with the other two departments, SUM and SMUS, have separate accountability and separate contracts. As a result there is no automatic appointment of a SUM or SMUS teacher to the PRE department (SER, p. 10). A mutually beneficial cooperation with a high school partner started a few years later. The *Liceo diocesano* is a private High school of the Diocese of Lugano, situated within a short distance from CSI, and offering a Swiss – rather than a cantonal - baccalaureate. The *Liceo diocesano* relies on the CSI for the preparations of its students who choose music as an option subject for the specialist exams. The arrangements involve some provision of the music history element, which is a part of the PRE programme and delivered by a CSI/PRE teacher in the *Liceo diocesano* and the others being delivered in the CSI building. The cooperation has had excellent results, based on the high school examinations for music – in 2018, the final examination mark was 6.0 (out of 6.0) for the four 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and an average of 5.92 (out of 6.0) for the three 4<sup>th</sup> year students (SER, p.10 and meeting with representatives from the partner institutions).

However, the public schools offering music as an option cannot cater for the needs of students with professional musical potential. There does not seem to be either recognition or desire on the part of these schools to avail of the resources and model that the PRE programme has to offer and no agreement has been found so far to effect a change in this regard. Further funding and recognition of the merits of the PRE programme are necessary, and the MusiQuE quality enhancement review is a potential way to assist in achieving these goals (SER, p.10 and meeting with institutional management team).

A further defining moment took place when the universities of music became integrated with universities of applied sciences, where four of them were cut off from preparatory pre-college programmes. In the case of three Swiss institutions, Basel, Lausanne and Lugano, a compromise solution was found, although its legal basis is somewhat fragile (SER, p.11). A more formal legal basis and an increase in stable funding are highly desirable, particularly in the light of the federal constitutional article from 2012, which specifically mentions the promotion of talents. This would also align with the SUM and SUPSI strategy of increasing the number of Swiss students in the BA and MA programmes (SER, p.11 and meeting with institutional management team).

SUM is the target programme for the PRE students, and 67% of them progress to the BA in Music programme there (SER, p.14). The SUM became affiliated to the *Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera italiana* (SUPSI) by an accord of March 2006.

Since 2008, additional federal contributions has allowed CSI to develop much needed internal services, to raise the number of students and courses, and to work on the consolidation of the system and the improvement of quality. The opening of the new LAC cultural centre in Lugano in 2015 has offered new perspectives for CSI productions, and has worked as a real catalyst in CSI's performance development and regional awareness. Orchestral productions have now finally found an adequate and wonderful acoustic context and a large and representative public. Specific data on

the institution is provided as part of the self-evaluation report (SER, p. 9). The institution is able to exercise a reasonable amount of flexibility with respect to students with artistic potential in regard to both admission and completion requirements, including being able to offer a year in the PRE programme to potential SUM students who need further preparation before entering the BA programme (meetings with institutional management team, meeting with students.) The PRE department has 55 students, SMUS circa 1200 students and the SUM currently holds 200 places (in full time equivalents FTE) in the Bachelor and Master programs, which translates in effect to 230-240 persons.

The PRE statistical data for 2017 is as follows: the total number of students is 57, 54% of whom are female, while 46% are male. Of these students, 91% are Swiss and 9% are foreigners. Admission rate is 72% (SER, p. 9).

## **Context of the review**

The *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana* in Lugano commissioned MusiQuE to organise a programme quality enhancement review of six SUM programmes (two Bachelor programmes, four Master programmes) and separately, a review of its PRE college programme.

The rationale for the PRE college programme review is centred on the desire of CSI to raise both awareness of the PRE programme and support for the creation of a national pre-college label. Feedback from an international panel after twenty years of existence and the aim of becoming 'fit' for the future were additional reasons (SER, p.8). This will be the first time a Swiss Pre-college programme has been the subject of an international review. The institution feels that the review of its PRE programme can pave the way for a fruitful national debate in relation to the implementation of the federal constitutional article about music education, in particular the support and provision of specialized music education for talented youth (meeting with institutional management team).

The CSI strives to ensure that students of the Pre-Colege Programme are integrated into the life of the institution as a whole and, where appropriate and feasible, are encouraged to share in workshops, classes, instrumental lessons and ensembles organised as part of the provision for students enrolled on higher education programmes. Consequently, the institution's policies which are not specific to the level of study are seen as applying in general to the Pre-College Programme as well.

The peer review team was asked to review the PRE programme in the light of the MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review and to present their objective findings, as well as their recommendations, in a quality enhancement report.

## **Procedure and composition of the Review Team**

The procedure leading up to the writing of the report was the following:

- CSI prepared a Self-evaluation Report for the PRE programme (*SER*) based on the *MusiQuE Standards for Pre-College Music Education*, and supported by many other documents, which were made available in hard copy and online to the review team.
- An international review team convened by MusiQuE studied the *SER* and conducted a site-visit at CSI on 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2018. The site-visit comprised meetings with representatives of the CSI senior management team,

President of the CSI Foundation, teaching and administrative staff, students, alumni, employers and external stakeholders, including parents.

- The review team produced the following review report, which is structured according to the Standards mentioned above.

The MusiQuE Review Team consisted of the following peers:

- Janet Ritterman (Chair) - Chancellor, Middlesex University; Vice-President, Royal College of Music, London
- Helena Maffli (Review team member) - Former President of the European Music School Union (EMU)
- Gabriela Mayer (Secretary) - Head of Department of Keyboard Studies (and Erasmus Coordinator), CIT Cork School of Music, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland

### **Executive Summary**

The peer review team felt that the PRE programme occupies a central strategic place in the CSI. It is highly significant that this was the first quality enhancement review of a pre-college programme within Switzerland. This attests to the commitment of the institution to the provision of high quality education to the pre-college segment of talented young musicians. In addition, it is a significant step in the definition of a Swiss label for the pre-college programme, which should have the benefit of attracting much-needed formal legal recognition and associated funding from cantonal and federal government levels and also gain a higher degree of visibility. Furthermore, it is this kind of focused programme that could help to deliver the increased target in the number of Swiss students who pursue the BA and MA programmes at CSI and elsewhere.

The review team was impressed with the professional approach and the total commitment of the CSI and the various groups that were present at the meetings during the site visit. They sensed a great sense of common purpose and a willingness to work together that is admirable. The review team greatly appreciated the contributions to the process made by the institutional management team, teachers and students, stakeholders, parents and external partners of the *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana*. As a result, the review team felt that it could gather a rich and clear picture of this distinctive programme offered by CSI. While the institution considers itself relatively young and small, they also feel that this allows them to adapt quickly and pride themselves on the informal, close-knit atmosphere of the school. The synergy between the PRE, SMUS and SUM within the CSI attests to an excellent formula of collaboration, maximizing opportunities for all.

## Key data on the CSI

Key data	
<b>Name of the institution</b>	<i>Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana</i>
<b>Legal status</b>	Private Foundation with public support/mandate
<b>Founded</b>	Founded in 1985
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.conservatorio.ch/it">http://www.conservatorio.ch/it</a>
<b>Departments</b>	SUM - <i>Scuola universitaria di musica/</i> University of Music (affiliated to SUPSI), PRE - <i>Pre-Professionale/Pre-College</i> , SMUS - <i>Scuola di musica/</i> Music School (SMUS), non-professional section
<b>Number of students</b>	Numbers for academic year 2017-2018: (Source: <i>SER</i> , p. 9) · Total number of students in the PRE department: 57
<b>Programmes offered</b>	PRE college programme Bachelor of Arts in Music, Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement, Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, Master of Arts in Music Performance, Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory
<b>Programme reviewed</b>	PRE college programme

## Overview of meetings

Site-visit meetings held with the CSI Team	Site visit meeting number
Meeting with institutional management team	Meeting 1
Meeting with teachers	Meeting 2
Meeting with representatives of partner institutions	Meeting 3
Meeting with students	Meeting 4
Meeting with parents	Meeting 5

## 1. Institutional/School mission, vision and context

### **Standard: the institutional/school mission and vision are clearly stated.**

The institutional mission is clearly stated as established in the article 3 of the Foundation Charter:

*The Foundation's mission is to promote, in the Italian speaking part of Switzerland, the diffusion of musical culture, through basic and professional education, as well as the promotion and the accompaniment of artistic activities.*

*The Foundation pursues targets of public interest, without exception, avoiding any profit-making or personal interests.*

The Board of the Foundation has recently developed a new strategy of the Foundation, which is in course of implementation in the separate departments. A significant restructuring started in 2017, partly as a result of significant personnel changes, and partly as a strategic rethinking of quality enhancement with new roles and responsibilities being defined for a number of people (meeting with institutional management team). The strategy document itself contains a summary of the mission, vision and governance of the CSI, as well as values, objectives for individual departments, a list of challenges, and a commitment to research and provision of continuous professional development according the needs of the market (see *Strategia della Fondazione Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana*).

The specific mission and vision for the PRE department is to provide specialized musical education for high school students with professional potential in order to maximize their chances of successfully entering a SUM programme and to prepare them for an eventual life as professional musicians. There is a keen awareness of balance issues and challenges, such as the proportion of time and effort that has to be divided between regular school subjects and music preparation, and the balance between practical and theoretical activities within the PRE programme (SER, p. 13 and meeting with the institutional management team).

The review team felt that the mission and vision of the CSI were clearly stated and were derived from mission of Foundation, and that the PRE has a clear connection to both SMUS and SUM as an autonomous department of CSI (SER, p.13 and meetings with institutional management team).

The rationale for the PRE programme and its unique features are aligned with the institutional vision and mission and based in particular on regional and local needs, as well as those relating to provision for Swiss and international students who might need an extra year of preparation before entering a BA programme. The CSI programmes are the only programmes in Switzerland offered in the Italian language. In addition, another unique feature of the programme delivery is that of a bridge function, which is manifested in the multilingual dimension. While they are expected to learn Italian so that they can fully participate in the study programmes, students are fluent in more than one of a group of four languages. This was reflected in the discussions with the students, where they were invited to respond in a language of their choosing and all four languages were used - Italian, French, German and English. Guest lectures and masterclasses are also conducted in one of these four languages (meetings with teachers and students).

The Swiss funding situation and national policy offers incentives for university level programmes where Swiss students are enrolled. Strategically, the management of CSI and SUPSI are in agreement in respect of increasing the proportion of Swiss students and indicated as realistic a future target of 25-30% in the future (meeting with management leaders

from CSI and SUPSI). The activities of the PRE department in particular are crucial in this context, and the adoption of a pre-college label would be a logical step towards national recognition (SER, p.12).

The CSI is a member of the *Konferenz Musikhochschulen Schweiz* (KMHS) and this is significant for both the PRE and the SUM departments, as a national framework exists for both areas. The Vice-Director was Chair of the KMHS Working Group, which in 2005 produced profiles for study programmes in music, distinguished by specific competence profiles or learning outcomes. The Bachelor programmes offered by CSI presuppose a high level of musical competency at entrance, and the PRE programme is designed to develop and train high school students for these educational and career paths.

Some significant factors, which are involved in determining admission capacity and profile, are the current space capacity, the range of programmes which the CSI is entitled to offer under Swiss law and the national *Konferenz* agreement. Recruitment of a larger number of Swiss students to a Bachelor programme in Switzerland is recognised as a priority. The leaders of the Foundation feel that the value and importance of maintaining the entire continuum of education through the operations of the three autonomous units needs to receive greater recognition and support, as well as additional funding for the PRE programme (meeting with institutional management team).

The goals of the educational programme have been published in the Pre college Department brochure (p. 9). The outgoing competences profile are clearly laid out with reference to the expected competences for admission to a Bachelor degree at a Swiss University of Music, according to the Bologna model issued by the KMHS. They include specific skills in respect of instrumental performance, ear training, music theory, rhythmic sense, experience in ensemble playing, improvisation and general cultural education; methodological skills, including knowledge of work techniques, concepts of interpretation and ability to put knowledge into practice; as well as social and personal skills.

The review team felt that the mission and vision of the institution are linked with a very strong sense of identity, clear goals and plans for the future, all of which provide a rich context for the PRE programme. The programme's goals are integrated with the needs of the young population in the regional areas, providing a clear training platform for aspiring young musicians. There is a path of progression to SUM programmes, in the CSI or elsewhere, and a great rate of success in admission for those students who elect to pursue music at university level. As the only PRE music programme in the Italian language in Switzerland, but most importantly, as the oldest PRE programme in the country, this programme occupies a unique space in Swiss music education. It is perfectly poised to lobby for and be granted the use of a Swiss Pre College label of excellence. The review team support this concept and hopes that the Federal Office of Culture will approve it soon.

The affiliation of the CSI–SUM with SUPSI is very positive and mutually beneficial, and realistic targets for increasing numbers of Swiss students have been agreed for the future. The institution could consider possibilities to create links with other Pre-College programmes in order to improve the chances that a pre-college label can be recognised at national level.

The outgoing competence expectations of the PRE programme align with the Swiss model of music education provision and cater for the national requirements. The performance programmes benefit from an international outlook, both in terms of access to international teachers and visiting artists, and from an environment where four languages are constantly spoken, and therefore offer extremely valuable experience for students seeking employment in a national and international market.

The institution is firmly rooted in the region, with a vision that integrates the provision of education and cultural activities across the entire continuum of music education. The personalized approach is complemented by a strong involvement in national and international frameworks (KSMH, VMS, AEC).

Formal, legal recognition at cantonal and federal levels would have a positive impact on many aspects of the PRE programme, and a more secure financial underpinning of the PRE department is highly desirable. A related aspect is the need for more scholarships and subsidies, ideally public (cantonal) scholarships. This was a common concern expressed by the partner institutions and CSI. To this end, the review team encourages the maintenance and development of the relationship with the cantonal School division.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with MusiQuE Standard 1.***

## 2. Educational processes

### 2.1 The programme and its methods of delivery

**Standard: The goals of the institution/school are achieved through the content and structure of the study programmes and their methods of delivery**

### 2.2 National and international perspectives

**Standard: the institution/school offers a range of opportunities for pupils to gain a national and international perspective.**

### 2.3 Assessment

**Standard: assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.**

The programme curriculum reflects the institutional mission in that it focuses on instrumental and practical education and training of young musicians to prepare them for entry to a Bachelor of Music programme. The BA programmes were developed according to the Swiss legal requirements within the framework of the KMHS, which is characterised by 'common principles, but individual application'. The CSI describes their approach as 'a model of growing specialisation and individualisation' (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 21). Crucially, the instrumental and theoretical competences needed for entry to the BA in Music programmes at any Swiss university of music are not addressed in a public school curriculum. Under Swiss law, students can access two consecutive Masters degrees, leading to a total of seven years education, supported by appropriate funding, yet the PRE College programmes do not have adequate recognition or support.

The PRE programme of study spans four years and encompasses eight semesters. Students receive a one hour weekly lesson on their main instrument, ear-training classes and secondary piano as appropriate throughout the four years. Orchestra and Chorus provision also form an integral part of the course. Students receive an introduction to music history, accompaniment, and harmony as part of their study. Special courses can be accessed by permission from the Head of Studies. Admission to a particular semester presupposes reaching the necessary level, and students can be admitted to any year based on their audition tests. The Study Plan is published as part of the Pre-College Department brochure (p. 11).

The institution has given considerable thought to the competence profiles, which are based on the KMHS Bologna paper (2005). Most recently, the Study Regulations were revised in view of the discussions at national level (SER, p.15). Two study plans are offered in parallel, one for the regular studies, and one for the Baccalaureate programme in cooperation with the *Liceo Diocesano*, Swiss federal law and regulations govern the second study plan.

The study plan is clearly established, with scope for individual freedom, and is designed to reflect the needs of individual students (SER, p.15). Each student discusses his/her study plan for the year with the PRE Director (who acts as the Head of Studies) (SER, p.16). There is considerable flexibility, for example if competencies are already acquired, students can be placed in a more advanced course (semester), and exemptions can be obtained for subjects such as

complementary piano. The final examination in theoretical subjects can be taken whenever the student is ready, in order to maximize the time spent on the instrumental and high school studies (SER, p.15).

Opportunities exist for PRE students to be part of SUM activities, such as masterclasses, with the goal of improving interaction with the SUM (SER, p.16). The objective is to guarantee at least one lesson every year with a SUM teacher who is not already the primary teacher of a particular student, and cooperation also exists at an informal and personal level. PRE students are treated as independent partners, and they are directly involved in discussion of their study plans and feedback sessions. The parents can be involved when the students wish it, but this happens fairly rarely (SER, p.16). Advanced PRE students take part in other SUM activities, such as orchestral projects, chamber music, Youth Choir, or 900presente productions (SER, p.18).

Advanced PRE College students also have access to special courses offered for SUM students. All seminars, activities and projects are free of any additional charge. The topics are arranged by area range from orchestral projects, to improvisation, performance practice, musicians' health, practice and performance seminars, community music, modern and contemporary music, research and pedagogical thematic events (publication *Seminari, attività ed eventi 2018-19, pp. 4-7*).

The assessments methods are both formal and informal and are described in the Study Regulations, with appeal procedures also outlined. However, the main aim of the PRE programme is to help students in their development, and consequently, there is no general grading system (an exception in some isolated cases is when the cantonal grading system applies). Examinations are formally rated as Pass/Fail (SER, p.18). The value of feedback is central to the philosophy of the teachers and to the PRE programme, and considered to be the most efficient way of supporting students in their development (SER, p.19 and meeting with teachers and institutional management team.)

The institution is aiming to increase the impact of research on the practical pedagogical area, which can benefit PRE and SMUS students, as well. There is generally an attitude of keeping an open mind in looking for new ways to develop and deliver pedagogy in CSI, and research is considered highly relevant in this process (meeting with institutional management team).The programme is aligned with the international strategy of the institution through the recruitment of international staff and students, availability of delivery and submission of courses and assignments in multiple languages, and engagement in masterclasses and projects delivered by international guests. The international strategy was implemented over thirty years ago with a view to cater for an international student body. The collaborations with the professional music organisations in Lugano, as well as the large-scale project-based collaborations offer many opportunities for the students to engage with international visiting artists. The *Seminari* offer a substantial variety of topics and guest lecturers. Because teachers are involved in exchanges and external examinations at other institutions, they feel that they are very aware of overall standards in their respective areas (meetings with teachers). International students may be offered a pre-college year before enrolling in the BA programme. There are many international teachers delivering parts of the curriculum and many teachers on the SUM and the PRE programmes have international experience and continue to travel and participate in international activities. This benefits the PRE students who receive lessons and masterclasses from SUM teachers. (meeting with institutional management team).

### 2.1

The review team felt that several strengths exist in the PRE programme that attest to the overall quality and care towards students. These include: the specialized nature of the one-to-one tuition for main practical study, small groups for theoretical subjects, choice and variety of electives, flexibility to receive exemptions for certain subjects and opportunities to participate in SUM activities such as orchestral projects and masterclasses.

Synergies exist between the CSI programmes and study areas, for example between composition and performance, pedagogy and education and research departments in CSI and SUPSI.

The review team felt that the curriculum of the programme was thought out for optimal preparation of students wishing to pursue a degree in music at university level.

### 2.2

The review team felt that the international perspectives and opportunities for students enrolled in the CSI programmes in general are wide-ranging and extremely valuable. Some of these have a beneficial impact on PRE students who have access to international teachers and can observe concerts, projects and guest artists hosted by the institution.

### 2.3

In general, the review team felt that there was a culture of caring for each individual student. Progress is encouraged and monitored through frequent feedback, individual study plans and advice from specific teachers for each discipline. The nature of the feedback, linked to the pass/fail assessment grading, tends to be informal and focused on informing students on aspects that need improvement.

The activities of the choir in particular are very successful. Students also have a chance to engage in chamber music and 900presente concerts. The orchestral projects tend to be ambitious and innovative, and students get a chance to work with excellent conductors. Overall, high school students get an excellent chance to experience a wide range of activities, which enhance their chances of success to enter university level education in music performance. The assessment procedures rely on a large amount of informal feedback. This approach seems to be fit for purpose in the context of the small-size institution. However, in the long run it could become important to formalize the procedures and methods more.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with MusiQuE Standards 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.***

### 3. Pupil profiles

#### 3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications

**Standard: clear admission criteria exist, which establish artistic/academic suitability of pupils**

#### 3.2 Student progression, achievement and suitability for higher music education

**Standard: the institution/school has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression and achievement of its pupils**

The PRE programme has clear and appropriate criteria for admission, which are published in Italian and English on the website and in the PRE College Department Brochure (p.13) and the Study Regulations. The central part of the audition process is the instrumental assessment, which takes into account the potential of each candidate. The theoretical elements are also examined to determine aptitude and inform the decision to accept a student. Entry into the fourth year of the programme presupposes a projected ability to enter the SUM programme after one year, with a separate admission procedure. In these cases, it is customary to assign a SUM instrumental/vocal teacher as students have an advanced level of proficiency (SER, p.19 and meetings with teachers).

PRE group courses take place on Saturdays (ear training, harmony, music history, orchestra), while individual lessons are arranged directly with the teachers. A few other classes, including choir, a mixed ear-training course for Italian students and the specific collaborative programme for the *Liceo diocesano*, take place on Thursdays. The course is designed to cater for interested students who travel from Italy, and Lugano will become better connected to the northern part of the canton as a result of improvements in transport connections by 2020 (SER, p. 20).

There was abundant evidence to support the attention given to the 'double burden' of PRE students, who have to juggle schoolwork with an intense schedule of practice and performance. The shared understanding between the CSI teachers and management team and their educational partners translates into practical initiatives that can lighten this load: music teachers take school schedules into consideration, school directors and teachers look for flexible solutions, such as developing online platforms to enable students to catch up on school subjects and informing colleagues about upcoming absences due to concerts or competitions. Students and parents were positive about the possibility of managing the double school and musical preparation (meetings with institutional management team, teachers, representatives from partner institutions).

One of the main threats to the growth of the programme is the absence of a formal pre-college status, which excludes PRE students from public (cantonal) scholarships. The Association of the CSI's Friends gives major support to students with financial problems, helping to avert the withdrawal of talented students. The institution provided a list of scholarship recipients as part of the documentation (Pre-College Scholarships 2015-2018). The hope of this institution is that more talented students could access the PRE programme if it were properly recognized and adequately funded by the governmental bodies.

From the perspective of CSI-SUM, the PRE students who enroll in a BA programme are excellent students, with a drop out rate of 0%. Students who complete the full PRE programme have a success rate of nearly 100%. Informal data supports the effectiveness of the programme, with graduating pupils registering admission success at other prestigious

institutions, in Switzerland and abroad (e.g. Lausanne, Basel, Geneva, Paris and Berlin). In total, 67% of PRE students enter a higher music education programme in music (SER, p. 20 and meeting with institutional management team). The institution recognizes both the challenge and necessity of developing a coherent data collection system, in view of the bid for the Swiss Pre-College label. Establishing links with alumni is also an aim for the future (SER, p. 20 and meeting with institutional management team).

### 3.1

The review team felt that admission procedures were clearly documented and accessible to prospective candidates. There is a clear focus on the recognition of potential of candidates and on the adoption of specific mechanisms for 'closing the gap' for promising students (for example when theoretical or language issues emerge). Monitoring of individual students' progress and feedback mechanisms are fit for purpose and combined with fostering a sense of independence in young high school students. Commendable strengths include successes in the context of the Swiss Youth Music Competition, which acts as a quality benchmark for Swiss students up to the age of twenty; high quality of teaching; flexibility in progression arrangements and the high level of success in respect of admission to higher music education institutions.

The review team noted that links between the PRE and the SUM departments were well developed and felt that; this could be reinforced and diversified further. Some examples include more frequent access to SUM teachers, increase in chamber music and more provision of improvisation classes.

### 3.2

The monitoring of individual students' progress is achieved through intense involvement of teachers and management. The emphasis on informal feedback is designed to help the students prepare for the final stage of the programme and for formal BA entrance examinations. The review team recommends that the arrangements for feedback could be formalized and better documented as part of quality assurance processes. The institution could explore developing a wider network for the recruitment of students beyond the local areas and increase the awareness of the level of success achieved by students of the programme. The review panel felt that the plans of the institution to develop a regional Ticino network and utilize its connections to alumni now teaching in music schools outside of Lugano are worth pursuing.

Other recommended areas of development are a more systematic monitoring and data collection, and raising the profile of the SUM programmes for outgoing and prospective PRE students.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with standard 3.1 and standard 3.2.***

## 4. Teaching staff

### 4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity

**Standards: members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers**

### 4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body

**Standard: there is sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programme**

The cooperation between the three departments (PRE, SUM, SMUS) makes recruitment of qualified teachers less difficult than it might otherwise be (SER, p. 22). There is a large pool of potential PRE teachers (SMUS and SUM), and care is taken to identify appropriate teachers for PRE students. The shared philosophy in the institution can be summed up as the aim to find the best teacher for each student, at a given moment (SER p. 21).

One of the crucial tasks of the examination commission is the decision they take where they feel a change of teacher is appropriate (meeting with institutional management team). The students have to accept the move, and have a chance to meet the CSI Director to discuss concerns, when and if they arise. However, the students seemed to understand the motivation and usefulness of a change of teacher, and pointed out that most of them did not need to change teacher (meeting with students).

The total teaching hours in the PRE programme is 103, which represent the equivalent of 4.04 FTE. Most PRE hours are taught by SUM teachers, with some other teachers crossing between SMUS and PRE. While the appointment to the PRE department is separate from the SUM and SMUS, and in no way automatic, all PRE teachers are also teaching in another CSI department. This is due to the small size of the PRE programme (meeting with institutional management team, PRE document - Size of the teaching staff body').

The institution has rigorous selection procedures ensuring that all members of the programme's teaching staff have appropriate qualifications as educators. Pedagogical competencies are regarded as essential. Teachers are encouraged to continue their professional and artistic activities, and are aware that the institution supports these activities. They are able to reschedule teaching, and to travel and accept professional engagements. Teachers are also able to invite guest artists to give masterclasses. The constant presence of external guests is another way of providing a wide range of up-to-date expertise (SER, BA and MA programmes, pp.93-94). In general, the institutional attitude towards teachers was found to be supportive (meeting with teachers).

In addition, a policy document describing existing practice in respect of continuing professional development of teaching staff is being developed (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 36). Teachers are engaged in a variety of activities relating to the programmes, from regular teaching to specific projects and courses (*Seminari, attività ed eventi* 2018-19 publication and meetings with teachers).

The programmes and student numbers have been set as part of the national educational policy (see also discussion in Standard 1). This ensures a stability of provision and also means that the number and experience of teaching staff are adequately planned to cover the volume and range of disciplines. The admissions take into account vacant places, and new teachers are recruited and match the needs and profile of projected student numbers. Some flexibility is built

into the programmes (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 38 and meetings with institutional management team). Some of the challenges that the institution faces relate to the very small number of administrative staff and to the participation in non-teaching activities of highly qualified teachers who may not be living locally (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 38).

Flexible employment contracts allow for changes in student numbers in individual areas, with a substantial proportion of teaching being provided by hourly-paid teachers. For certain specialist instruments, it is difficult to find qualified teachers. However, the institution seeks to make more attractive offers by offering joint SUM contracts with the PRE and SMUS in order to attract qualified teachers to the city. Furthermore, the recruitment takes into account secondary specialist areas and new developments (for example, the position of Violin teacher with Baroque knowledge, and two flute appointments – for solo/contemporary/ baroque and orchestral (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 38).

#### 4.1

The review team felt that the PRE-College programme benefits from a large and highly qualified teaching staff, who interact in an atmosphere of collegiality. They are viewed as a major asset within the institution, both in terms of the excellence of teaching and the international expertise they offer to students. The recruitment process for teachers takes into account both the didactic competences of the candidates, as well as their activity in the professional world. As a result, the profile of the teaching staff is varied in provenance, and provides a broad spectrum of expertise.

#### 4.2

The review team recommends that a formal policy for continuing professional development for teachers be developed and documented, and plans for this already exist. Another area of exploration is finding ways to engage individual teachers in the decision-making processes, and in the development of the institution as a whole. For example, the diverse expertise of different teachers can inform matters related to new professional requirements and changes to the curriculum. The review team commended the attention given to the diversification of the competences and profiles among the teaching staff and supported the policy of recruiting new teachers with extended subject expertise.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with standard 4.1 and 4.2.***

## 5. Facilities, resources and support

### 5.1 Facilities

#### **Standard: the institution has appropriate resources to support pupil learning and delivery of the programme**

A very attractive benefit of being a PRE student is the ability to access the CSI facilities in the same way as a SUM student, including access to a student card (SER, p.23). A designated member of the administrative staff acts as the official contact person for the PRE College department (SER, p.24). The pressures on the room occupancy affect all students in the PRE and SUM departments, particularly in terms of practice and rehearsal spaces.

While the institution considers that CSI's physical infrastructure is currently sufficient to cater for existing needs, they have also prepared concrete plans for expansion. The institution is currently in discussions and hoping to reach an agreement to take over the entire building, with the possibility to build additional rooms, install acoustic treatment for existing rooms, and add an orchestra practice hall and a concert hall, complementary to the LAC (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 39-40, and meeting with management). The pressures on physical space are due to factors such as the increase in the number of students, a higher proportion of whom are now living in Lugano, and the fact that the space is shared between the three CSI departments, the PRE, SUM and the SMUS. The institution prides itself on the efficient use of space, which is achieved through a flexible management of rooms via an online system across all three departments. The facilities are open from 5 am until midnight, including holidays and summer vacations, and students can reserve rooms online, through their personal accounts. Additional space has been secured in the same building, in the section occupied by the *Scuola infermieristica*, in a nearby building that belongs to the Swiss Radio, and in the old administration building in Breganzona, a fifteen-minute walk from the main building (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 39 and meeting with senior administrators, tour of the facilities).

Drawbacks to the current situation in terms of facilities are that many activities are located outside the main building. In terms of rehearsal and performing spaces, the Aula Magna is considered ideal for recitals and chamber music, but there is a lack of a dedicated space for orchestral rehearsals. The collaboration with LAC is beneficial, but the CSI needs its own spaces for large ensembles and performances (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 40, and meeting with management).

In general, the number of keyboard instruments and current available space match. There is a specific annual budgetary allowance for instrument renewal, and pianos are tuned regularly. The situation is described in the SER as 'quite good' (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 41). The maintenance of brass and wind instruments was specified as a concern, but overall there was satisfaction with the instrument provision. The percussion section in particular is well supplied with instruments, in line with the contemporary emphasis of the programmes (meeting with students).

The IT provision and other technological facilities are appropriate to the general needs of the staff and students, with provision made for access, connection and printing needs. While CSI has a policy of moving towards higher usage of electronic platforms, the institution is bound by the copyright law in respect of printed material. For acoustic and performing aspects, streaming, and videos on the CSI's website, the CSI and the KMHS have found an agreement with the Swiss Copyright Society SUISA (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 41, and meeting with senior administrative

officers). The Library and Media centre on the 3rd floor has significantly increased its collection and the number of users over the last few years. Purchase of new books, scores and CDs are mainly requested by and assigned financially to the programs, and not the library itself. The service could be improved by a more central position and more space, but the available space is well utilized. Staff and students expressed general satisfaction with the service (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 41, visit to the library, meetings with students and teachers).

The review team admired the pragmatic approach to the total use of available CSI spaces, and the ways in which the institution maximizes access to practice spaces for students in the PRE-college programme. In addition to the online booking tool developed, the cooperation with the nursing school and the other departments in CSI, as well as the long opening hours, are commendable. The review team supports the institutional plans to secure the entire building in which it is currently housed and concentrate activities in one place. Plans to expand via a new building with dedicated rehearsal and performing space for large ensembles and a new electro-acoustic recording studio in particular are ambitious and justified. In the short term, plans for improvement of existing spaces should be prioritized, in particular sound proofing of practice and rehearsal spaces. Acoustic panels and risers, particularly for use in orchestral rehearsals in order to protect the health of all players, should also be prioritized.

A dedicated space where teachers can prepare their classes and providing additional support with respect to set-up needs would be highly recommended. In addition, professional event management in terms of logistical support for concerts outside CSI could be very beneficial in dealing with potential problems when organizing large orchestral events.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme substantially complies with Standard 5.1.***

## **5.2 Financial resources**

### **Standard: the institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the programme**

There was strong evidence of effective financial management of the PRE-College programme. The economic cost of a PRE student place, the lowest in Switzerland, is made possible by a combination of good management and cost savings in terms of administrative and facilities through sharing arrangements between the departments of CSI. State funding amounts to 60% of the budget (SER, p. 23 and meeting with institutional management team).

The Consultative Council confirmed that the financial management of the CSI is very effective, but it would be good to aim for an additional 'comfort-zone' in the long-term financial planning. The management confirmed in the meetings that the long-term financial plan is taking into account sustainability and potential growth of all CSI programmes (meeting with Advisory Board member, meeting with management). The main challenge is due to some unpredictability in the political situation and its effects on funding, which are outside the control of the institution.

The PRE programme is financed largely by public contributions. The total costs are 0,52 million Swiss francs, of which 0,31 million are granted by the Canton (through the DFP). School fees add up to 0,19 million. Global costs are divided between personnel costs (0,44 million; teachers' costs are 0,41), material costs (0,08 million) and infrastructure (0,01

million). Costs per student are almost 10'000 a year, compared to an estimated 12'000-15'000 in the rest of Switzerland.

Long-term planning is determined by reliable public contributions and clear criteria, such as number of students, lessons, teaching staff salaries, but lacks formal security since no legal base or formal agreement yet exists (SER, p.23 and Financial Report Pre-College 2017, also Cantonal Contribution 2018).

The reason that the PRE and SUM programmes are offered at the lowest cost in Switzerland is explained primarily by low administration and overhead costs: by far the lowest in Switzerland (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 42). There was general agreement that resources were focused primarily on the delivery of programmes, and that the support administrative structure could benefit from additional resources (meetings with management, and senior administrative officers).

The review team felt that there was strong evidence of effective financial management, with clear plans for the expansion of facilities. There are budget allocations for instrument maintenance and renewal, and for improvement of existing facilities. There was acknowledgement that a large proportion of the overall budget was dedicated to teaching and related student costs, and that the senior administration and general support services were managed on a very tight budget, which could benefit from an increase.

The review team commends the institution for its efforts to provide scholarships for talented students.

The review team recommends that the institution continues to pursue avenues that might lead to the formalization of the legal status of the PRE programme, so that sustained funding and national recognition can follow. Additional funding could support further improvements to the programme, such as additional student places, more chamber music tuition and an increased scholarship fund. It would also make it possible to consider lowering the fees for high school students.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with Standard 5.2.***

### **5.3 Support staff**

#### **Standard: the programme has sufficient qualified support staff**

The number of qualified support staff has increased in recent years, to the benefit of all CSI programmes. The majority of support staff members have musical backgrounds, and many are former students of the CSI. This is seen to contribute to overall efficiency, as administrative processes are understood as a support for music and music education. The institution describes the support staff as 'sufficient in quantity, excellent in quality' (SER, BA and MA programmes, p.43). Support staff members are facilitated in terms of time and can avail themselves of funding for staff development, receiving 50 % funding for courses they elect to do (meeting with senior administrative officers).

As described under 5.2 above, the majority of the funding has always been used for the delivery of courses and the effect of this on the support staff, as a whole, is that a great deal of responsibility is concentrated on relatively few

people. Other issues are the lack of a back-up system, and the need to develop more formal divisions of workload and areas of responsibility. The Foundation Board has already discussed these issues in 2017, as a result of a report completed by the President of the Advisory Committee. The current restructuring efforts will reduce risks and diversify roles and responsibilities, but need more time and more financial support to be fully developed. The plan is to formalize and document procedures and processes and to diversify roles and responsibilities, as well as defining back-up systems.

The review team felt that the atmosphere of dedication and understanding that support staff offer to the students enrolled in the programmes is a very positive factor. This arises from a combination of their own musical backgrounds, as most of them are graduates of the school, and their personal commitment to the institution and its ethos. The creation of formal policies for continuing professional development of support staff would be of benefit to the institution. Notwithstanding this, members of support staff were aware that they could apply to attend courses of their own choosing and receive partial financial support to cover fees.

The review team supports the plans of the institution to formalize and document procedures and processes and to diversify roles and responsibilities, as well as formally defining and implementing comprehensive back-up systems. The review team also recommends that the decision-making authority attached to individual roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with Standard 5.3.***

## 6. Communication, organisation and decision-making

### 6.1 Internal communication process

**Standard: effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme**

### 6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes

**Standard: the programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and decision-making processes**

The organizational structure and responsibilities are defined in the CSI organisational regulations document (Regolamento d'organizzazione Fondazione Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana, 2018, § 5). Both SUM and SMUS directors are responsible for the PRE section. Teachers are involved on a regular basis in the yearly conference or the examination boards, although formal decision is assigned to the PRE's director or the Direction of the Foundation (SER, p. 24).

In general, the communication culture is informed by the fact that the institution is a close-knit community, where everyone knows everyone. For this reason, the main type of communication tends to be informal, where staff and students have easy access to the management, senior administrative officers, Heads of Studies and Areas and teachers. Dissemination of information is done also by email and via school publications, including Events Guide and a monthly newsletter, as well as the newer school website, where general information about studies, services, and regulations is available. A variety of channels of communication is regularly used. Support staff members are actively involved and review the materials before they go out. The PRE College brochure in particular, is comprehensive, thorough and well designed, and is available in Italian, German and English.

6.1

The review team recognized the existence of a communication culture that is generally felt to be effective. A dedicated team, approachable management and academic leaders, and an ethos in which adaptability is encouraged lead to a climate where problems are solved quickly. In the case of the PRE programme, the Director has direct involvement with decisions that affect PRE students and is committed to resolving any issues that arise with the pupils and their parents.

The information on the PRE programme is clearly laid out, with an excellent brochure design and available in several languages, as well as online, on the new, updated website.

## 6.2

The review team felt that there was a general positive response from various groups about the recent restructuring of roles and responsibilities. The review team recommends that the delegation of authority be continued and expanded, and that the roles for the PRE and SMUS Directors and staff be more clearly defined. The mechanisms for participative decision-making, particularly for the involvement of teachers, should be specified and supported through formal meetings in addition to the annual conference. The new roles should be defined in terms of authority as well as specific responsibilities, and also have clear lines of communication and input. Formal communication with parents and collection of feedback from parents could also be beneficial. The plans to involve PRE students in the student organization are also a positive feature.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with Standard 6.1 and 6.2.***

## 7. Internal Quality Culture

### **Standard: the programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures**

The PRE programme relies on general CSI quality enhancement procedures, without a separate formal quality control system for the PRE. The study programme and the regulations are clearly set out, and students have immediate access to the PRE's staff. As a result, CSI has confidence that its informal procedures are quick and efficient (SER, p.25 and meeting with institutional management team).

A measurement of external quality assurance is provided via the masterclasses provision, the examination commissions and the benchmarking exercise of the excellent results at the Swiss Youth Music Competition. Another indicator of the quality of the programme is the success in admission examinations for the SUM programmes in CSI and other institutions (SER, p. 25, and meetings with institutional management team and teachers). Appeal procedures are laid out in the Study Regulations, although it is worth noting that no appeal has ever been presented (SER, p. 25.) CSI also engages in various activities in respect of its programmes (for example, feedback from staff, students, external stakeholders; analyses of statistical data), which would generally be regarded as key elements within an institution's standard quality assurance and enhancement arrangements. However, these activities tended not to be referred to as representing quality assurance mechanisms, indicating a need to develop further the understanding of this concept in general (meetings with teachers). The peer review visit itself was construed as a help to enhance awareness and good practice in terms of quality enhancement, as well as prepare for the SUPSI institutional review, which will encompass SUM's programmes and procedures. The relationship with SUPSI and the requirement to adopt arrangements that reflect SUPSI's approach to quality assurance are likely to assist CSI in developing ways of engaging in quality assurance and enhancement on a more overtly systematic basis for both its SUM and PRE programmes. It will, however, be important to ensure that the strong aspects of CSI's current approach, which is attentive to student outcomes, are not overtaken by an emphasis on procedural issues. The CSI is already aware of this delicate balance as it proceeds towards formalizing quality assurance procedures (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 48 and meeting with institutional management team).

During the review team visit it was clear that CSI is moving towards seeking more formal definitions of quality assurance for its SUM programmes, and that this will also in turn influence the approach taken in the PRE programme. The undertaking of a voluntary quality assurance review in itself signals the willingness of the institution to engage with international quality assurance processes.

The review team felt that the PRE programme could be held up as a model of good practice in the Swiss context and as a worthy candidate for a Swiss Pre-College label. This would be greatly helped by finding ways formally to record the success of the programme and information about the PRE students and alumni.

Currently, CSI has a quality culture which strongly reflects its values - responsive, alert to the needs of students and keen to support them on an individual basis where appropriate, strong in its sense of collective engagement and collaborative effort, and committed to making improvements that will enhance the quality of the students' experience and the outcomes of their studies. It will be important to maintain a balance between retaining the strong student focus and implementing more formal quality assurance processes.

CSI has a strong internal quality culture and the PRE programme will benefit from formally documented evidence of its success as it moves towards its goal of recognition at national level.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme substantially complies with Standard 7.***

## 8. Public interaction

### 8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts

**Standard: the institution engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts**

### 8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions

**Standard: the institution actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.**

### 8.3 Information provided to the public

**Standard: information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate**

The Pre-College Department has a very successful, multi-year institutional collaboration with the *Liceo Diocesano* of Breganzona and the *Scuola Professionale per gli sportive d'élite* - SPSE of Tenero, which provide special programmes reserved for musically talented students enrolled in the Pre-College section of the conservatory. The *Liceo Diocesano* of Breganzona offers a study plan that leads to the Swiss baccalaureate. This programme substitutes certain subjects with music courses offered through the CSI PRE college department in the context of external services (SER, p.25).

Through the sustained efforts of the institution's leaders and teachers, the programmes offered within CSI, encompassing its three departments, engage in cultural and educational policy development at both cantonal and federal level (SER, BA and MA programmes, pp. 16, 88, 89). Students are encouraged to advance society through using their knowledge and skills. This is recognized as a priority not only in the mission statement of the Foundation, which refers to "the diffusion of musical culture, through basic and professional education, as well as the promotion and the accompaniment of artistic activities," but is also evident in the strong involvement of students in musical activities in the area. This was also apparent from discussions with external partners, who outlined engagement in teaching, performing, broadcasting and composition activities by current and former students and staff of the CSI (meeting with teachers, and with external partners).

The SUM and PRE programmes also benefit from engagement with many layers that create a very attractive wider picture in terms of cultural, artistic and educational contexts. The larger CSI institutional context and interaction between the CSI departments – PRE, SUM and SMUS, is a prime example of this, as is the affiliation to SUPSI, a close collaboration with local media, such as the *Corriere del Ticino* Group, the main newspaper and private TV station in Ticino, and the RSI, the national TV and Radio station (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 49). Musical events are reckoned in hundreds, and range from large scale performances in the LAC in Lugano, which attract public audiences and support from both local and international sponsors, to 900presente concerts at the Radio Hall, ensemble concerts in smaller cities such as Arogno, services for public administration, USI, SUPSI and for private clientele (SER, BA and MA programmes, p.49).

The opinion of alumni and the representatives from the cultural organisations in Lugano is that CSI offers the possibility to receive a high professional music education locally in Ticino, and as a consequence also has a significant impact on the cultural scene and the wider community (meeting with alumni and representatives from the profession). The

ability of PRE students to witness and participate in some of these activities offers a great incentive for them to choose a musical career upon completion of the programme. The CSI is a crucial musical player in the artistic environment of Ticino and Switzerland, with very high standards and specialisation in contemporary music (SER BA and MA programmes p. 74, and meeting with representatives from the profession). There are cycles of chamber music concerts with teachers from SUM and soloists from OSI organised by *Lugano Musica* Festival, attesting to the successful collaboration and cultural influence in the region. Finally, there are also opportunities for students to present their work in public concerts held in venues in the city (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 96).

The CSI also involves students in discussions about culture and its relation with society. Through its programmes, CSI is able to open students' minds, and not only offer a musical education (meeting with alumni and representatives from the profession).

The institution is also actively involved with the AEC and other international platforms such as EAS where further opportunities exist in terms of connecting to international education networks. At the Swiss level, the cooperation within the KMHS operates at a cross-institutional level, with the Association of Swiss Music Schools (VMS) being identified as an 'anchor' partner in the discussions about the implementation of the constitutional article voted in 2012 and in the Federal Experts group (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 50).

The PRE department is dedicated to a transparent communication policy in the territory and dedicates considerable time to giving advice to prospective students and their families, both Swiss and foreign. In addition, feedback and advice are regularly also given to candidates who have failed the entrance examination for the PRE programme (SER, p. 26). The most difficult challenge identified by the institution is the need for a more profound public understanding of what professional music training involves for the age group for which the PRE programme caters (SER, p.27).

In terms of interaction with the public, the institution uses a variety of delivery systems to ensure that information about student activities and developments within the CSI are conveyed to the public, both in the immediate area and further afield. Internal control systems are in place to ensure that the information that is provided is clear, accurate and issued in a timely manner. The Communication Office coordinates the outgoing information, while the *Manifestazioni* office issues information about concerts and other events. The academic services, Heads of Studies and management are also involved in checking that communication is accurate. Some information is provided in more than one language, and plans are in train to ensure that the website, which carries detailed information for prospective students and which is currently only in Italian, is also available in English. The institution issues a monthly newsletter, which also reaches a list of external subscribers, including a group of supporters called '*Amici del Conservatorio*'. Participation in SUPSI activities is also noteworthy, for example in platforms such as *Espoprofessionisti* or the Next Step. Contacts with media are regular and manifold, and range from advertising musical events, to interviews with conductors, soloists and teachers (SER, BA and MA programmes, p. 52 and meetings with institutional management team.) An excellent example of collaboration with local media can be found in the activities of the Radio *della Svizzera italiana*, which broadcasts a recording of concerts from the series 900presente almost every week as well as five or six of the CSI Orchestra concerts each year, as well as interviews with students and other musicians (meeting with alumni and representatives from the profession).

### 8.1

The review team felt that the institution (CSI) had visible engagement in the society through collaborations with venues around the city, including big orchestral projects, chamber music concerts and contemporary music events. The provision of podcast and live streaming is growing and there are a number of projects with social impact, for example the 'tragedies' and 'Art for ages'.

### 8.2

There is strength gained from the coexistence of the three CSI departments, with the PRE and SUM programmes benefitting from this context. The excellent reputation of the institution is also in part due to the rich involvement of the teachers and students in the cultural life of the region and beyond. There is strong participation and influence in both cultural and educational networks at local, regional, and national levels.

The review team recommends that the promotion of student concerts could be increased, particularly for the events taking place in other venues. A clear policy of collaboration with external partners could be developed, including formal links with alumni. Furthermore, a policy for a feeder system to the PRE programme could be developed in order to attract more candidates from Ticino and other areas, who could ultimately become SUM students.

### 8.3

The new CSI website is an effective channel of communication with current and prospective students, collaborators, and the general public. In addition, the monthly newsletter of CSI, which is available to the public via voluntary subscription and free of charge, reaches a large constituency of potential concertgoers, as well as the staff and students enrolled in the programmes. Prospective students can access information about admission procedure and requirements on the website, which will also be available in English as well as Italian. The association with the RSI radio station is an excellent portal for the dissemination of musical events from the institution and its collaborating partners.

***The Review Team concludes that the PRE-college programme fully complies with Standard 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3.***

## 9. Summary of the programme's compliance with MusiQuE Standards

MusiQuE Standards	Compliance	Remarks
<i>Standard 1</i> The institutional/school mission and vision are clearly stated.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.1</i> The goals of the institution/school are achieved through the content and structure of the study programmes and their methods of delivery.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.2</i> The institution/school offers a range of opportunities for pupils to gain a national and international perspective.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.3</i> Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 3.1</i> : Clear admission criteria exist, which establish artistic/academic suitability of pupils.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 3.2</i> The institution/school has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression and achievement of its pupils	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 4.1</i> Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/ researchers.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 4.2</i> There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programme.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 5.1</i> The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.	Substantially compliant	Rehearsal spaces and additional improvements needed.
<i>Standard 5.2</i> The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.	Fully compliant	

<i>Standard 5.3</i> The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 6.1</i> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the institution.	Substantially compliant	Internal communication within the programme often relies on informal means of dissemination, which on some occasions may benefit from more formal approaches.
<i>Standard 6.2</i> The institution/school has an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	Substantially compliant	The organisational structures do not consistently facilitate participative decision-making.
<i>Standard 7</i> The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	Substantially compliant	CSI has a strong internal quality culture but the procedures and processes used to review, monitor and enhance the quality of provision need to be more clearly documented and systematically applied.
<i>Standard 8.1</i> The institution actively engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Fully compliant	

<i>Standard 8.2</i> The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 8.3</i> The institution actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Fully compliant	

## Conclusion

The *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana* (CSI) occupies a unique position in the landscape of Swiss musical education, and its PRE programme should be recognised as a model of good practice for specialised instrumental and vocal training at the pre-college level. As the oldest programme of its kind in Switzerland, it has evolved over the last twenty years and can boast excellent results. These are quantifiable in terms of admission success to third level music schools in Switzerland and abroad, as well as in terms of competitive successes in the Swiss Youth Music Competition.

It became clear to members of the review team during the visit that the PRE College programme occupies a central strategic place in the CSI. The institution sees music education as a continuum, and is committed to delivering music education across a wide spectrum of ages, through the work of its three departments (SMUS, PRE and SUM). For PRE College students, access to the institution's facilities is offered on the same basis as for students in the other two departments.

While the mandate for each of the three departments is distinctive and clear, synergies have been consciously developed between them, and students enrolled on the PRE College programme benefit significantly from these – in particular, from synergies with the SUM programmes. These provide PRE College students with access to high quality teaching, and encourage them to raise their sights, by observing and, when appropriate, by participating in music-making at a level more advanced than they would otherwise experience (e.g. in masterclasses and performance projects).

For the CSI, the region and the country as a whole, there are further potential benefit from this approach, since such interaction is likely to help in raising the number of Swiss students who are motivated and able, should they wish to do so, to choose music as a career. The review panel recognised that it would be beneficial if the PRE College programme could be expanded to benefit more students over the Ticino territory and reach other potential candidates. It was clear that for this to happen, more public support, in the form of subsidies and scholarships (ideally cantonal scholarships) would be needed. The review team encouraged the CSI to continue to press for these. The possibility of a 'feeder' system for the PRE College programme was also felt to be worth consideration.

The goals of the PRE College programme and the outgoing competences, which link with the expected competences for admission to a Bachelors degree at a Swiss University of Music, are clearly documented. They inform the admissions procedures as well as the teaching and assessment of the programme, offering each student a clear path of progression. All PRE College students have individual, personalized study plans, and receive regular feedback and advice. Conscious efforts are made to recognize and nurture potential, and appropriate measures are taken to enable students to make good any gaps in their experience or skills. Similar flexibility was evident in discussions with CSI staff and with the educational partners responsible for the mainstream education of the PRE students, which confirmed that pragmatic solutions are developed to enable these students to manage the concurrent demands of schoolwork and musical activities.

The review panel recognised that some of the success of the PRE College programme and its ability to respond to students' needs, has traditionally relied on the institution's culture of quick, direct responsiveness and flexibility. While not wishing to undermine this, the review team encouraged the institution to develop systems for formalizing and documenting certain arrangements on which the successful operation of the PRE College programme relies. While the review panel did not doubt that PRE College students were receiving helpful feedback and appropriate support, there appeared to be scope for a more structured approach to monitoring progress and to data collection in general – an approach that should only help to demonstrate even more conclusively, the strengths and the achievements of this PRE College programme.

It was evident that formal legal recognition and proper financial support are crucial for the future and the sustainability of the PRE programme. The review team believes that continued efforts in pursuit of the conferment of a Swiss label for pre-college music education are essential, if the high quality pre-college provision which the CSI is offering to students is to remain internationally recognised. The review team would urge the CSI management team and the Board of the Foundation, to give its support and encouragement to these efforts.

The review team wishes to commend the institution as a whole for its enthusiasm and dedication to music education and to the wellbeing of all its students.

*Supporting materials/ documents were provided by the institution before and during the review.  
The supporting documents can be accessed at the following address, on a page, which was made  
accessible to the peer-reviewers.*

*[cdn.conservatorio.ch/peerreview2018](http://cdn.conservatorio.ch/peerreview2018)*

*Annex 1. Site visit schedule*

**Annex 1**

26/10/2018			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting (names and positions of the participants from the visited institution)	Location
9:00-10:00	<b>Review Team meeting</b>		Main building, room 405
10:00-11:00	<b>Meeting 1</b> Meeting with the institutional management team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ina Piattini Pelloni, President of the CSI Foundation Board</li> <li>▪ Christoph Brenner, CSI Foundation General Director, SUM Director, Head of Pre-College</li> <li>▪ Luca Medici, CSI Foundation Direction member, Director of the School of Music, Deputy Head of Pre-College</li> </ul>	Main building, room 405
11:00-11:15	<b>Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</b>		Main building, room 405
11:15-11:30	<b>Break</b>		
11:30-12:45	<b>Meeting 2</b> Meeting with teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anna Modesti, violin teacher</li> <li>▪ Brunella Clerici, choir teacher</li> <li>▪ Redjan Teqja, piano teacher</li> <li>▪ Stefano Bragetti, recorder teacher</li> <li>▪ Valentina Londino, ear-training teacher (arriving at 12:00 due to conflicting schedules with other schools)</li> </ul>	Main building, room 405
12:45-13:00	<b>Review Team meeting: Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary</b>		Main building, room 405
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Review Team alone</b>	
14:00-15:00	<b>Meeting 3</b> Meeting with representatives of partner institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alberto Moccetti, Liceo Diocesano</li> <li>▪ Paolo Paolantonio, coordinator “Maturità Musicale”</li> <li>▪ Francesca Pedrazzini-Pesce, Head of sportive and artistic talents education, DECS</li> <li>▪ (Ms. Pedrazzini-Pesce will try to bring a school teacher as a guest, but unfortunately the name of the teacher has not been shared with us)</li> </ul>	Main building, room 405
15:00-15:15	<b>Break</b>		
15:15-16:15	<b>Meeting 4</b> Meeting with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dario Plozner, PRE-College student</li> <li>▪ Samara Santarelli, PRE-College student</li> <li>▪ Matteo Moccetti, PRE-College student</li> <li>▪ Samuel Schmid, PRE-College student</li> <li>▪ Daniele Dindo, PRE-College student</li> <li>▪ Emma Urriani, PRE-College student</li> </ul> <p>Note: some students may not be fluent English speakers. A translator will be available should the need arise.</p>	Main building, room 405
16:15-16:30	<b>Meeting 5</b> Small refreshment with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Katharina Jermini, parent</li> <li>▪ Ezio Plozner, parent</li> <li>▪ Mireille Plozner, parent</li> <li>▪ Michael Rast, parent</li> <li>▪ Elena Martignoni, parent</li> </ul>	Main building,

16:30-17:15	<b>Review Team meeting – Preparation for the feedback meeting</b>		Main building, room 405
17:15-18:00	<b>Feedback to the institution</b>		Main building, room 405
18:00-	Departure of Review Team members		