

ERASMUS NETWORK FOR MUSIC

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QUALITY

Trend analysis Institutional and programme review visits (2008-2012)

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Trend analysis: introduction

The 'Polifonia' Working Group (WG) on Quality Enhancement, Accreditation and Benchmarking members analysed a large number of reports of reviews conducted between 2008 and 2012, in order to identify trends in issues faced by the institutions during the reviews and to understand how the review process could be further improved. The trend analysis aims to suggest how the review process can be enhanced with a special focus on the review reports produced.

Part one contains general remarks on the way review reports are written and how this could be improved. In part two a number of examples of good practices implemented in the reviewed institutions and programmes that were identified by the peer-reviewers in their reports are highlighted. The list of analysed reports can be found in part three. In total, eleven programme review reports and eight institutional review reports were analysed by the WG members. The other reports were jointly discussed during the WG meeting in Barcelona, March 2013. Part four contains the separate analyses of each studied report.

1. Remarks on the improvement of review reports

The overall impression of the reports is very positive, and the work achieved and the way strengths and weaknesses are highlighted is to be commended. All reports reflect an atmosphere of dialogue with the institution, which is appreciated, and it seems that every Review Team was willing to help the institution: even if there were concerns, the review seems to have been done under a positive approach. The reports are in the right spirit and trust-building.

There are strong differences in terms of length of the reports, in terms of level of detail, but also in terms of their formulation: some reports include very concrete advice (such as reference to a specific handbook to read) while others give less precise advice (such as areas which could be developed/explored). These differences can be understood given the diversity of institutions (and of their expectations), teams and national systems.

Several suggestions are made to improve the structure of the reports. Firstly, it should be a requirement that the provided template is respected for the self-evaluation report in the framework of review processes (except for joint procedures with national agencies, where the report may be structured around the standards of the agency). Secondly, lay-out matters: a table of content should be included in all future reports and the frame surrounding the comments should be kept as it clarifies the report content. With regard to the overall structure, each report should have clear recommendations at the end of each main section part, rather than at the end of the report. The Review Team may also want to check with the reviewed institution which level

of detail is expected for the comments, or judge when they need to express recommendations very precisely or where they can suggest that progress needs to be done in a certain area and leave it to the institution to decide how. The most important is that institutions should be able to understand the reports.

It is suggested that reports could be proof-read by a native speaker and that the wording of recommendations is looked at more carefully to ensure clarity and understanding. In addition, reviewers also have to find the right balance between strong and weak points. Finally, it may be necessary to train experts specifically in report-writing (with a focus on wording recommendations) for procedures in which they are not assisted by a review secretary (i.e. joint procedures with national agencies).

There is also a need to clearly define the target audience of the reports and in some cases to whom the comments are addressed (institutions, potential students, governments). For example in the Oviedo report, some comments from the Review Team are addressed to the government and are actually stronger than those addressed to the institution. Adapting the report content to the audience or producing another report for external parties could therefore be considered.

Institutions often lack a proper understanding of 'quality culture', meaning clear processes for decision-making, effective structure management and relevant internal quality management. At the very beginning of each evaluation procedure, the institution could be sent a thorough explanation of what 'quality culture' embraces. The most important aspects of 'quality culture' should be decision-making processes, institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management. Also the relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management should be stressed, as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms. Finally, it would be beneficial for the institution to prepare a follow-up report after a programme or institutional review has been conducted, in order to report on any changes implemented and analyse if the review was beneficial.

It is also felt that the review system could be further promoted by pointing out its distinctive features: a strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase, a European and international perspective focused on the higher music education sector, a peer-review approach and a support to improvement. Institutions are willing to actively support the creation of a European framework for accreditation and quality assurance but at the same time they have to face the limitations imposed by national legislation. As a consequence, the main challenge for institutions is to be compliant with the national legislation. Therefore, it could be helpful to invite national or local policy makers during the review processes.

2. Examples of good practice indicated by peer-reviewers

The WG also identified a number of innovative approaches and/or practices implemented by the institutions reviewed. These examples can be highlighted as good practices which can represent sources of inspiration for other institutions:

Development of a student-generated study plan: before entering the programme, each student writes a Master plan which sets out their motivation, the principal study they wish to follow and/or the goals they wish to accomplish, the research project and its relationship with the principal study and any other personal wishes for the course. Once admitted, the student Master plan is discussed in detail with the corresponding research coach and revised if needed.

Provision of a programme combining Music and Media studies: the programme (three-year full-time programme delivered across six semesters with a total of 180 ECTS credits) aims at providing basic training for journalistic professions in the media with a strong musical foundation. This is achieved through a combination of education and training in music performance, musicology, and music theory with basic knowledge and skills in media, journalism and media production. The programme strongly focuses on professional practice: students produce their own radio programmes that are transmitted from the institution radio studio on a daily basis and all students are required to do internships in regional and national radio stations.

Support for the teaching staff's artistic and scholarly/research production: the institution allocates 30% of some of the teaching staff members' time for research, following-up those activities through regular interviews. This way, the institution proves its commitment to provide the staff with growing developmental support, e.g. through the establishment of an online database listing staff research activities, the creation of a research conference, as well as an on-going work on protocols for sabbaticals and on evaluative procedures connected to research awards and research outcomes.

Creation of a platform merging transdisciplinary studies and research: this is a tool to bring together actors from diverse disciplines and institutions, create bridges between individual subjects and link in innovative ways music performance with other artistic disciplines. The implementation of projects should be planned and organized by the institutions in cooperation with external partners.

Development of a course to promote "musical diversity": this course is available at all levels in order to encourage students to deal a wide range of music styles. A tailor-made study plan is

developed to support students to find their way in a labour market under constant change. This contributes to an analysis of the constant changing description of the artist and his role in our society, tackling the audience demand for trained versatile musicians..

Provision of opportunities for performance and presentation of student work: students are encouraged to take part in masterclasses, festivals or competitions organised by the institution itself or by partner institutions. In addition, all final examination concerts are open to public. Another possibility for students to present their work can be found in class recitals that take place once per semester, where students have the opportunity to meet graduates. This initiative also includes extra-curricular workshops, symposia, and conferences planned by the institution or by the students themselves, where both students and staff present their work.

Development of designed programmes aiming at actively building a new concept of musicianship: the programmes include interdisciplinary courses where students are requested to work for two weeks in small groups (led by a teacher) towards different kind of projects leading to final results in the form of a performance, lecture or any kind of happening, where different ideas and methods will be the focus point. The projects cover external community settings, lectures, field visits, workshops, collaborations and interactive seminars.

Institutional policy to foster a 'research culture': a research strategy has been developed by the institution that includes the goal to strengthen research-based study programmes. This can be implemented through the inclusion of research in the programmes: a final dissertation at undergraduate level and a research thesis in the Composition Masters. The institution's research outputs are fed into their own teaching and some modules build directly on this research. This research culture is supported by the creation of a discussion forum and the setting up of a research conference.

3. List of analyzed reports of conducted programme and institutional reviews

	Dates	Institution	City, Country	Type of review	Reviewed programme(s) (where appropriate)	Remarks
1	27-30 April 2008	Conservatorio Superior de Musica "E. Martinez Torner"	Oviedo, ES	Institutional		
2	23-25 April 2009	Staatliche Hochschule für Musik	Trossingen, DE	Programme	Master of Arts OrganExpert	Under the auspices of the German Agency ACQUIN (Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut)
3	8-11 February 2010	Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana	Lugano, SW	Programme	Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy; Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory; Master of Arts in Music Performance; Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Under the auspices of the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAQ)
4	15-19 February 2010	Haute Ecole de Musique de Geneve	Geneva, SW	Programme	Master en Pédagogie musicale; Master en Interprétation musicale; Master en Interprétation musicale spécialisée; Master en Composition et Théorie musicale	Under the auspices of the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAQ)
5	8-10 March 2010	Musik-Akademie Basel, Musikhochschulen FHNW	Basel, SW	Programme	Master of Arts in Musikpädagogik; Master of Arts in Musikalischer Performance; Master of Arts in Spezialisierter Musikalischer Performance; Master of Arts in Komposition und Musiktheorie	Under the auspices of the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAQ)
6	28 -30 March 2010	Akademia Muzyczna im. Grazyny i Kiejstuta Bacewiczow	Lodz, PL	Institutional		
7	30 March-1st April 2010	Akademia Muzyczna im Feliksa Nowowiejskiego	Bygdoszcz, PL	Institutional		

8	21-23 April 2010	Zürcher Hochschule der Künste	Zurich, SW	Programme	Master of Arts in Musikpädagogik; Master of Arts in Music Performance Master of Arts Specialized Music Performance	Under the auspices of the German Agency ACQUIN
9	29 April 2010	Hochschule der Künste Bern	Bern, SW	Programme	Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy; Master of Arts in Music Performance; Master of Arts Specialized Music Performance	Under the auspices of the German Agency ACQUIN (Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut)
10	11-13 May 2010	Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie	Krakow, PL	Institutional		
11	10-13 May 2010	Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espectáculo	Porto, PT	Programme	Jazz programme (Bachelor); Early Music Programme (Bachelor)	
12	26-28 May 2010	Academia de Muzica Gheorche Dima	Cluj-Napoca, RO	Institutional		Under the auspices of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
13	2-4 June 2010	Universitatea Nationala de Muzica Bucuresti	Bucharest, RO	Institutional		Under the auspices of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
14	4-7 July 2010	Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe	Karlsruhe, DE	Programme	Bachelor Instrumente, Gesang, Dirigieren, Komposition, Musiktheorie; Master Instrumente, Gesang, Dirigieren, Komposition, Musiktheorie, Klavierkammermusik, Liedgestaltung, Korrepetition Historische Tasteninstrumente; Bachelor Operngesang; Master Operngesang; Bachelor Musikjournalismus für Rundfunk und Multimedia; Master Musikjournalismus für Rundfunk und Multimedia; Bachelor Musikwissenschaft/Musikinformatik; Master Musikwissenschaft; Master Musikinformatik	Under the auspices of the German Agency ZeVA (Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur)
15	20-25 Sept 2010	Lietuvos Muzikos ir Teatro Akademija	Vilnius, LT and Kaunas, LT	Programme	Bachelor Music Performance Art; Bachelor General Music Didactics; Bachelor Composition; Master Music Performance Art; Master General Music Didactics; Master Composition; Master Pedagogy of Music	Under the auspices of the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE)

16	16-18 February 2012		Gnesins Russian Academy of Music	Moscow, RU	Programme	Bachelor, Master and Specialist's diploma in Academic Choir Conducting	Under the auspices of the Russian Center of Public Accreditation (NCPA)
17	2-4 2012	April	Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University in Brisbane	Brisbane, AU	Institutional		
18	8-10 2012	May	Department of Music of the Iceland Academy of Arts	Reykjavik, IS	Institutional		
19	11-13 2012	June	University of the Arts the Hague, Royal Conservatoire	The Hague, NL	Programme	Master of Music; Master of Sonology	AEC was mandated by the Conservatoire to operate as an independent evaluation agency for the accreditation of two Masters programmes within the assessment framework of the Dutch national Accreditation organisation NVAO.

4. Detailed analysis of reports

A. Conservatorio Superior de Musica del Principado de Asturias "E. Martinez Torner"

Name of Institution reviewed: Conservatorio Superior de Musica del Principado de Asturias "E. Martinez Torner" (CONSMUPA) in Oviedo

Date of review: 28-29 April 2008

Programme or institutional review: Institutional

Quality Enhancement Process

What is your general impression of the report?	<p>The report shows a friendly and supportive attitude towards the Conservatory. Negative statements are always combined with suggestions and offers to improve the situation.</p> <p>Critical statements, which are addressed to policy makers are sometimes formulated less friendly than those that are addressed to the institution itself.</p>
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	<p>Yes. Clear and unequivocal language. Short phrases. There are no frills. The report only contains statements, which are worth to be stated.</p> <p>The summary is clear and understandable, but the weak points tend to be formulated "soft" and "polite". It could be even helpful for the institution to get them described in a more tough and straight manner.</p>
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	<p>As mentioned above, this is a friendly and supporting report. But the institution's standing could also be seen more critical as the country's HEIs in music do not have a long tradition and are just in the beginnings. The report's attitude can be seen as the result of a tactical and strategic decision to supply as much support as possible to the institution in order to improve its situation. In this regard the report is balanced out excellently!</p>
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly	<p>Yes, they are clearly understandable. But sometimes the measures to be taken require extensive changes, which certainly cannot be implemented in one single process step.</p> <p>This fact might not always be considered in an appropriate manner.</p>

understood)?	
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B. Master of Arts Organ Expert - Staatliche Hochschule für Musik

Name of Institution reviewed: Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Trossingen

Date of review: 23-25 April 2009

Programme or institutional review: Master of Arts Organ Expert

Joint Collaborative Review with ACQUIN

What is your general impression of the report?	It's a very readable and thorough report that gives a clear impression of the programme and the strengths and weaknesses that the committee identified
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	I like the references to the meetings were specific themes were discussed and clarified. For instance the conclusion on page 10 that the PDD and AEC learning outcomes were taken into account in the curriculum, which the committee saw confirmed in meeting 2 with the programme coordinator and the management. The same goes for the references to the report and the several appendices that prove the conclusions of the committee. It could have a table contents to make it clear in advance were certain aspects (f.i. The standards summary on page 30. can be found)
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	The list of 'points for improvement' is much longer than the list of strengths, but that could be the reality of the situation. However, some 'weaknesses' are stressed very elaborately in different suggestions for improvement, for instance the suggestions that all courses within the programme should be on a master level is mentioned in 'curriculum delivery, page 31', in entrance examinations, page 31 and in 'master level page 31. To comprise these suggestions in one 'area for improvement' could have a balancing effect.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way	Yes, but maybe they could be included in the report in a different manner visually. And more consistently. Now, sometimes there is a specific set of recommendations

<p>(so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>mentioned f.i. page 8, and in other sections recommendations are discretely included in a conclusion and could be more clearly discernible. It would be nice if you could just scan the document on recommendations quickly.</p> <p>Later I found out that these points are listed later in the document (which is handy, but I would preferred to have found out earlier, with a table contents), but this list does not include all suggestions for action that I saw in the document. For instance the suggestion of developing a formal plan for acquiring more additional instruments on page 17 or the need for formalisation of assessment procedures mentioned on page 21 are not mentioned in the standards summary on pages 30-32.</p> <p>I really like the very concrete suggestions made in the recommendations used in the report for further information. For instance the reference to an AEC handbook (in German!) on page 25 which could be helpful to the institution.</p>
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C. Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana

Name of Institution reviewed: Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana in Lugano

Date of review: 25 April 2012

Programme or institutional review: Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy; Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory; Master of Arts in Music Performance; Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Joint Collaborative Review with OAQ

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>First impression: So may programmes in one report, is that possible?</p> <p>How did the committee experience this challenge?</p> <p>And how was the report written, and by who? There seems to have been no secretary on the panel.</p>
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<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>Although the structure of the on-site visit is summarised on page 5, I would have preferred to be able to see the detailed programme of the visit, in order to get a better impression of who was involved in which discussions and in which sequence.</p> <p>It's not always easy to read because of the large amount of different abbreviations used and references to specific standards of either the AEC and or the OAQ.</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?</p>	<p>Yes, and the specific chapter on page 23-24 was very easy and enjoyable to read</p>
<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>Suggestions for approval are formulated clearly but sometimes could be more concrete. For instance 'there may be further ways' or 'more might still be done to ' are much used terms. What exactly is the difference between the 'recommendations' and the 'suggestions' that are made in different paragraphs on page 24-26?</p>

D. HEM Genève-Lausanne, HES-SO

Name of Institution reviewed: HEM Genève-Lausanne, HES-SO

Date of review: April 2010

Programme or institutional review: programme

Joint Collaborative Review with national agency OAQ

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>Very detailed, rich. Long and complex site-visit (5 sites, 4 programs): the report goes into this complexity, but manages to give a global image of the context as well as de detailed analysis of each local (or program) situation.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>Clear and very well written. However, in some parts, a little bit "too much written", a lot of text. Some tables would be welcome (e.g. p. 6 & 7 a schedule could be clearer than a written description), or even more titles/under-titles, underlining,</p>

	<p>because of the 4 different MA.</p> <p>It is sometimes difficult to differentiate abstracts from the SER (no explicit references) from the findings of the reviewers (e.g. p. 7 & 8: the description of the program contains elements of analysis).</p> <p>In the 2 other reports, conclusions and findings are presented in a “square”, and all the statements are referenced (SER, meeting, etc.), this would be clearer.</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?</p>	<p>Yes, although the weaknesses are almost always presented first. Conditions, recommendations, suggestions are formulated carefully (in bold), so that the hierarchy between them is comprehensible.</p> <p>MA in Music Pedagogy (pages 9 & 10): I could find very few remarks about the “instrumental and vocal” Major, although the 2 other Majors are discussed in profound details. It’s likely that this major presents less weaknesses than the 2 other ones, but the strengths could have been highlighted.</p>
<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>Yes, especially those that implicate a follow-up at institutional-, local -, national level.</p> <p>E.g.: School music requirements, Master in specialized Music performance/ 3rd cycle.</p>

E. Hochschule für Musik, Basel

Name of Institution reviewed: Hochschule für Musik in Basel + Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

Date of review: 12. July 2010

Programme or institutional review: Master programmes review

Joint Collaborative Review with OAQ

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>It is a very well organised report: succinct, clear structured, balanced.</p> <p>The report envisages four master programmes of two Basel institutions which are united (Hochschule für Musik, Schola Cantorum).</p>
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Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Yes. The report follows some precise points (collaboration between AEC and OAQ standards), which are stated and then briefly explained.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	Yes. There is a summary of strengths and weaknesses at p.29-30. More than this, one can follow through the whole document the highlight of strengths and weaknesses, combined with suggestions. For instance, p.14: Students and teachers are ideally involved in the process of taking decisions, but the quality management should be stronger defined (as in information gathering, analysis, implementation and communication).
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Yes, for example the suggestion regarding the Alumni (p.15), or the one about credit points (p.18), etc.

F. Academy of Music Lodz

Name of Institution reviewed: Academy of Music Lodz

Date of review: 29-30 March 2010

Programme or institutional review: Institutional Review

Quality Enhancement Process

What is your general impression of the report?	Good Impression, very readable report. Missed the table of contents. Liked the framed feedback from the committee.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	See the above
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	yes

Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Very much so. The references to earlier discussions during the visit and to the original reflection document are very informative and all suggestions are described with concrete examples of what could be done or considered.
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G. Akademia Muzyczna im Feliksa Nowowiejskiego Bydgoszcz

Name of Institution reviewed: Bydgoszcz

Date of review: March 2010

Programme or institutional review: Institutional

Quality Enhancement Process

What is your general impression of the report?	I can feel differences in approach (or in culture) between the committee and the HEI. However, it's a good report, and probably very useful for the institution.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Sometimes difficult to understand how the committee comes to an "impression", e.g. page 19: "Although no detailed data... the C gained the impression...", and "The C had the impression...", page 27: "While there was no evidence..." "the C did not have the opportunity to discuss.... but gained the strong impression..." That might seem a "diplomatic" formulation to the reader, or subjectivity?
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	The strong points seem better highlighted in the summary than throughout the report itself. So, in the summary, the balance seems OK, but in the report, the weaknesses seem more important.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Prudent and diplomatic formulations, but the suggestions are clear and frank, and even very concrete [page 25 below: pointing on AEC Handbook]. Some are even "warnings" or comparisons, tending to benchmarking (page 25).

H. Hochschule für Musik Zürich

Name of Institution reviewed: Hochschule für Musik Zürich

Date of review: 21-23 April 2010

Programme or institutional review: Programme

Joint Collaborative Review with AQUIN

What is your general impression of the report?	It is quite ok, but not outstanding. The report was written following the AQUIN-rules and standards with added AEC-comments. This is not a problem in matter of the results as 95% of the criteria are identic. But it seems that in some extend AQUIN highlights different points as the AEC does. This does not affect the report's quality, but might make the report less comparable to other AEC-reports.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Yes, in general it is. It is concentrated on issues which are worth to be reported.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	The reviewed institution was obviously above average, so that there are not many really weak points mentioned. Nevertheless, there are some points mentioned on both sides. All in all there seems to be a good balance between strength and weaknesses.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	In general they are formulated clear and understandable, but do let some open range in order to find appropriate solutions to solve the problem in question. There is one issue, which seems not to be formulated in a satisfying manner: the modul structure is seen to be critical, but it is not very clear what to change in order to improve them.

I. Hochschule für Musik Bern

Name of Institution reviewed: Hochschule für Musik Bern

Date of review: 29th april to 1st may 2010

Programme or institutional review: Programme

Joint Collaborative Review with AQUIN

What is your general impression of the report?	Good! All in all above average The report was written following the AQUIN-rules and standards with added AEC-comments.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Yes. It is not too long, restricted on the main points, clearly understandable statements.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	Yes, there are few points mentioned on both sides, but strength and weaknesses look as to be quite balanced out.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Yes. The report recommends strongly to work over the module descriptions and handbook. The advices what to do and why this should be done are clear and transparent.

J. Academy of Music in Krakow

Name of Institution reviewed: Academy of Music in Krakow

Date of review: 11-13 May 2010

Programme or institutional review: Institutional review

Quality Enhancement Process

What is your general impression of the report?	Advisory, responsive to section questions, thoughtful and place-sensitive, diplomatic, analytical, and reflective of serious deliberations among experts.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Yes. It speaks directly to academy conditions and practices. Each criterion-based question is addressed specifically and succinctly. The summary is consistent with the preceding analysis.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	Yes, particularly in terms of their respective weight within the report. The contrast on pages 34 and 35 is helpful.

<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>Suggestions are stated clearly, but not always justified in terms of actual student learning results observed or expected. Some suggestions are oriented toward the development, improvement, or acceptance of systems or processes. Regarding internal assessment, for example, it may be more helpful for institutions to know what the evaluation of student work observed by the team reveals is missing in the curriculum or in expected areas of student achievement. Otherwise, as noted in the report, it is hard for many students and successful professionals to understand why a new kind of assessment format and reporting system is necessary, or what creating such a system has to do with producing higher levels of artistic learning and student achievement in the institution. Without this connection, systems or formula recommendations can be construed as simply promoting certain methods for their own sake or conformity for non-artistic reasons. By contrast, the analysis of the library includes recommendations that seem clearly linked to needed improvements in student learning.</p>
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K. Jazz programme and Early music programme - ESMAE

Name of Institution reviewed: Escola Superior de Musica e das Artes do Espectaculo (ESMAE) in Porto

Date of review: May 2010

Programme or institutional review: Programme review

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>The report is very thorough and well balanced. Many details are discussed in a positive manner and suggestions are given as to how to address defined problems.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>Yes. The text is clear and consistently expresses often complicated issues in a manner that is coherent and easy to understand. The text is to-the-point and rarely strays off theme. Careful choice of wording in the report indicates the Committees' constructive approach to the review process. In particular, I found it to be a very good idea to refer to the numerous resources that the AEC can offer to individual</p>

	institutions (handbooks, seminars, Platform activities...). This communicates to the Institution that they are part of a larger community in their quest for quality enhancement.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	There appears to be a fairly good balance in the way strengths and weaknesses are expressed. However, more attention is given to 'Potential for development' than is given to 'Strong points' and this could lead to the impression that the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. Strengths are objectively stated but it seems they could have been elaborated upon in a few instances. The Committee highlighted several weaknesses that had already been exposed by the Institution's representatives (students, teachers, directorial staff...) recommending formal attention to these areas. This seems to be a very effective way of presenting weaknesses and eventual recommendations.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Yes. Most suggestions take into consideration the local/national context and internal realities. The suggestions for actions to be undertaken, being external viewpoints, do not risk appearing to be prescriptive in nature.

L. The Gheorghe Dima Music Academy in Cluj-Napoca

Name of Institution reviewed: The „Gheorghe Dima” Music Academy in Cluj-Napoca

Date of review: 26-28 May 2010

Programme or institutional review: Institutional review

Joint Collaborative Review with ARACIS

What is your general impression of the report?	The report is very good prepared and written.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	The report is very readable and clear. The majority of „Questions to be answered” from AEC Framework Document was addressed and interpreted in the right way. In comparison with other reports this report seems to be very good because it

	adhere closely to the standards formulated in the Framework Document.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	It seems that there is a good balance between strengths and weaknesses of the institution but in some way superficial. In my opinion the use of categories like „area of strength, fully compliant, substantially compliant, needs improvement, non-compliant would be more descriptive and helpful for the institution.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	All the suggestions are formulated in a clear way, but from my experience I wouldn't see this institution in Cluj-Napoca so perfect. I would recommend much more elements to improve.

M. Bucharest University Of Music

Name of Institution reviewed: Bucharest University Of Music

Date of review: May 2010

Programme or institutional review: Institutional Review

Joint Collaborative Review with ARACIS

What is your general impression of the report?	The report contains a great deal of information describing institution and its policies and procedures. It is very descriptive in nature tending to describe the institution and what it does as opposed to evaluating it. I would ask the question as to who the report is aimed at. If it is aimed at the institution, then it is simply describing they probably know already. If it is for an external audience, then it could be useful in terms of them being made aware of the activities of the institution and its associated policies and procedures. If it is to be of use to the institution, it would benefit from being shorter and more concise. It would also benefit from having clear recommendations at the end of each main
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	<p>section of the report rather than at the end of the report. There is no reference in the report the evidence on which it is based. It is therefore difficult to know whether the information contained within the report is based on written evidence or information obtained within meetings. It would be useful to reference the main source of evidence either as footnotes throughout the document or in a separate evidence-based document.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>The report is readable and clear. However, the language seems to change throughout from being formal in some cases, to being informal and almost chatty in other areas. There should be consistency in the language used within the report and this should be aimed at a specific type of audience. If the report is aimed at the institution, to be used as a document to enhance practice, the language needs to be clearer, more concise, and contain clear recommendations based on evidence. If the report is aimed at a wide group of institutions, then again, it could be clearer in terms of the key policies and procedures institution has the good points of these, and how they need to be improved. Some of the information seems sensitive or confidential and I would ask if it is appropriate for this to be shared. Generally, the report is written in a very non-confrontational way and reads as a dialogue between the review panel and the institution. Whilst this is to be commended, it may not necessarily help the institution improve, or enhance their activities as it is, to a large extent, describing what the institution will already know.</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?</p>	<p>There is a good balance between good points and points that need improvement at the end of the report. However, it would be useful if these were highlighted at the end of the relevant sections of the report rather than the end of the document. In some paragraphs the report does allude to areas that need improvement, but the reader has to wait until the end of the document for these to be clearly presented.</p>
<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so</p>	<p>Some of the points for improvement are stated in quite a vague manner and it may therefore be difficult for the institution to fully understand what areas they need to address. Each point should</p>

that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	be clear, concise, and make very clear to the institution exactly what they need to do to improve their particular policy, procedure or activity. Where strategies need to be improved, the action point should state clearly which strategy and by whom. The language here is extremely important.
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N. Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe

Name of Institution reviewed: Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe

Date of review: 26.10.2010

Programme or institutional review: Bachelor and Master Programmes Review

Joint Collaborative Review with ZEvA

What is your general impression of the report?	This is a remarkable report: extremely thorough and detailed. It follows the ZEvA/AEC set of criteria in the evaluation of 9 programmes (Bachelor and Master). It summarizes in a comprehensive and narrative way the meetings with staff, students, etc.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	The report is clear structured: its first part concentrates on explaining and commenting general criteria (for example quality management, internationalization, admission procedures, examination, facilities, etc.), in order not to repeat the same conclusions for each programme. Then other components of the report concentrate on the individual profile of each programme discussed.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	The strengths are always highlighted, and followed (if it is necessary) by recommendations or suggestions (see p.8 about student's internships, p. 12-13 about the library, p.15-16 about international aspects, etc.). In analysing each of the 9 Bachelor and Master programmes, very useful are the final observations ("Zusammenfassende Bewertung" + "Empfehlungen"), p.45... One can read here a very clear summary of positive appreciations on one hand and recommendations on the other hand.

<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>The suggestions and recommendations are formulated within a positive context, in a clear and elegant way, giving concrete solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - see p.7, about adopting the PDDs, providing learning outcomes, reshaping some module descriptions; - see p.14..., about the quality management;
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O. Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre

Name of Institution reviewed: Lituian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius and Kaunas

Date of review: 20-21 September 2010

Programme or institutional review: Programme review: Music Pedagogy Master Programme

Joint Collaborative Review with CQAHE

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>The report is generally well written. I would caution against using the term "experts" to refer to the review panel.</p> <p>Occasionally, word choice seems to obscure the meaning of sentences.</p> <p>The review team seems to mostly embrace the Conservatory's Self-Assessment report but perhaps relies too much on data and statements presented in it. There is very little evidence of first hand information collecting from students, educators and staff on the part of the review team.</p> <p>The structure of the report is slightly different from other reports, nevertheless the report is very descriptive and probably very useful for the management of the programme.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>The report is clear but not very readable. There are not summary of experts recommendations concerning each programme' area under evaluation.</p> <p>Occasionally, word choice seems to confuse the intent: « The general effort towards free and open information must also be especially appraised in the context of post-Soviet transformations. ». (p. 14)</p> <p>The word <i>appraised</i> implies an evaluation that involves political considerations going beyond the scope of an AEC programme</p>

	<p>review. Perhaps the writer meant to use the word <i>appreciated</i> instead of <i>appraised</i>.(?)</p> <p>Another example of imprecise word choice can be found on page 17:</p> <p>« To the visiting experts, the process at this point appears reactive to problems and difficulties. ».</p> <p>The word <i>reactive</i> implies an action that is involuntary. Perhaps the writer meant to use the term <i>to respond to</i> or <i>to react to</i>.</p> <p>The use of the Assessment Form at the end of the report seems to be a very useful tool for the evaluation of a programme.</p> <p>In the report you can find all the most important items of programme evaluation, though some recommendations and remarks are not very readable.</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?</p>	<p>Strong points and weaknesses are integrated throughout the text. Final "Recommendations" are listed towards the end of the report and deal with practical suggestions to addressing perceived weaknesses. Perhaps the report could have achieved a better balance by also listing the Strong points of the institution in the same format as the Recommendations.</p> <p>The structure of the report makes it impossible to highlight any balance between strengths and weaknesses of the institution. Instead there are some tables, in which experts assess the programme giving points (from 1 – unsatisfactory to 4 or 5 – very good). Probably this way of assessment was obligatory in the CQAHE procedure.</p>
<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>The suggestions are clear and understandable (with the exception of occasional dubious word choice mentioned above) however, putting the suggestions into boxes, separated from the rest of the text, seems to be more effective format for understanding the actions needed for change.</p> <p>Because of lack of summary after each area of evaluation, the suggestions for actions to be undertaken are not very readable (but, of course, they exist).</p>

P. Gnesins Russian Academy of Music

Name of Institution reviewed: Gnesins Russian Academy of Music

Date of review: 16-18 February 2012

Programme or institutional review: Institutional review

Joint Collaborative Review with NCPA

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>Thorough descriptions. Focus on self-study and institutional processes. Direct. Openly critical, at times, harsh: “passivity and immaturity of students,” for example. A panel-consensus view that exhibits commitment, expertise, and place-based knowledge, and that emphasizes the panel’s perspective on what is good practice or appropriate for the institution. Overall, supports and shows respect for the academy and its achievements.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>The report is readable and clear in terms of its language, but not always clear in terms of meaning. Two illustrations: (1) The word ‘science.’ Does ‘science’ mean ‘research’ of certain kinds, or of any kind? Does it mean work that uses the scientific method in the manners of the physical sciences and their associated applications and technologies? Does it exclude, or can readers construe it to exclude, other advanced approaches to analysis, such as those of the humanities, or the use of blended approaches involving the methods of the sciences and humanities? (2) Until one gets to the standards issue in 4.6, it is ambiguous whether the items listed as recommendations are standards issues or recommendations. And, with respect to 4.6 itself, the standards point is made under a heading titled ‘Recommendations.’ Even after that section, making distinctions between what is a standards issue and what is a recommendation is difficult in light of the fact that the review results in an accreditation decision, and the headings of sections speak to various levels of compliance with accreditation standards. It might help if the report included specific references to or citations of specific NPAC and AEC standards language as a basis for making clear distinctions between</p>

	standards compliance issues and recommendations; or, if the analysis for each standards area were followed by a section titled 'Standards Issues' and one titled 'Recommendations.' There are other methods for making the distinction clearer, especially to the outside reader. The report indicates the high quality of the faculty. It appears that the institution continues to give this matter its most serious attention.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	Yes, based on the issues evaluated. However, the effort does not seem to provide a focused analysis on the quality of student work. Concerns are expressed about languages and solfeggio, but it is difficult to place these in a larger context of student achievement.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	In many respects, suggestions are admirably clear, but there are some apparent inconsistencies across various sections of the report. On student learning assessment, for example, it is easy to wonder about the statements in 3.2., paragraphs 2 and 3, and 4.2., paragraphs 4 and 5, in light of the conclusion and associated suggestions presented in 4.6 and repeated in 5.1. In another instance, section 4.7 indicates that public information is an area of strength. The description and analysis in this section focuses almost exclusively on the Academy's participation in the musical life of Russia, memberships in other organizations, and information associated with the admission process. However, in a number of other sections, the Academy is faulted for lack of openness or transparency.

Q. Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

Name of Institution reviewed: Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (QCGU)

Date of review: June 2012

Programme or institutional review: Institutional review

What is your general impression of the report?	The report is very thorough but not all of the feedback is as in-depth as it could have been. The report states from the onset that the Conservatorium did not follow the AEC Criteria for
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	<p>institutional review thereby limiting the team's ability to give more specific feedback concerning international benchmarking and activities. Occasionally the Review Team seems to be a little too Euro-centric. Perhaps this is inevitable being that the team represents a European (AEC) position but I question whether this approach is entirely necessary when reviewing a non-European institution.</p> <p>« The Review Team did not find any evidence that the programmes' outcomes had been mapped with AEC Learning Outcomes, while this would be a first essential step to increase the compatibility of QCGU programmes with the international system, at least with regard to European institutions. » (§2.1-a, p. 9)</p> <p>The report offers a large amount of critical reflection that could certainly benefit the Conservatorium if taken positively.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>The report is readable although there are portions that could use further clarification. For example, point 2.2a commends the <i>"innovative curriculum of the Bachelor of Popular Music (BPM) and its mode of delivery"</i> without explaining what makes it innovative.</p> <p>Explaining and articulating why the team thought the BPM programme was exemplary could help other departments within the Conservatorium to improve.</p> <p>The delicate question of balancing Research with Performance within a Conservatory was treated very eloquently (p. 11). The suggestions regarding the question of International students and International exchange are complete and well formulated. Statistical data is provided and measured against the institution's declared ambitions to become a "global player" and the results that have been achieved so far. After this clear analysis, the team found several potential strong points and provided suggestion that could help the Conservatorium further develop its International Policy. (p. 13-14).</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and</p>	<p>Both <i>Strong points</i> and <i>Issues for further development or consideration</i> are summarized in 10 points producing a good</p>

weaknesses highlighted?	balance between them.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Yes. Most suggestions are very practical and easy to understand. A few suggestions are limited to simply stating an impression or judgement regarding the question with no real suggestions being offered. Occasionally, the suggestions (critical reflections) seem slightly harsh in tone but overall the suggestions are well formulated and understandable.

R. Department of Music of the Iceland Academy of Arts

Name of Institution reviewed: IAA Reijkjavik

Date of review: May 2012

Programme or institutional review: Institutional

Quality Enhancement Process

What is your general impression of the report?	Gives a very positive and detailed image of the institution. Very relevant: although the SER and the school seems to be excellent, some suggestions help the institution to improve/address short term elements (in the perspective of the accreditation process; lots of practical advice), as well as long term strategy.
Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)	Very clear structured, well written. Excellent summary at the end.
Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?	Apparently, nothing can really be seen as “weakness” in this institution. However, the review team formulates “potential for development” at numerous places.
Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?	Very clear, but they remain “open”, so that the institution can adapt. No “solutions clés en main”. Maybe the institution might wish more detailed suggestions? <i>Maybe the demand of the institution in this matter could be defined/discussed during the visit?</i>

S. Master of Music and Master of Sonology - Royal Conservatoire, The Hague

Name of Institution reviewed: Royal Conservatoire, The Hague

Date of review: 11-13 June 2012

Programme or institutional review: Programme review

Quality Enhancement Process

<p>What is your general impression of the report?</p>	<p>Thorough, supportive, focused, well structured, carefully referenced to AEC statements and criteria, projective, useful to readers and constituencies beyond the institution or the field of music. Reflects the wisdom and communication skills of experts with significant long-term experience in this type of evaluation.</p>
<p>Is the report readable and clear? (Please explain)</p>	<p>Yes. These are strengths of the report. It is carefully reasoned and reasonable. It is clear in itself, and in terms of its evaluative purpose. The short paragraphs and the point-by-point approach in each section help the reader gain an understanding of conditions, situations, and next steps quickly and efficiently. Assessment of student learning is treated in terms of what is being accomplished in terms of music itself, and in terms of institutional procedures and approaches found consistent with those that are internationally accepted, i.e., in terms of what has worked and what continues to work in the field of music. Please note that page 24/65 contains repeated paragraphs.</p>
<p>Is there a good balance between strengths and weaknesses highlighted?</p>	<p>Yes. The institution's focus on artistic achievement comes through in the text. Artistic purposes are the basis for discussing procedures, methods, possibilities, and next steps. The expression of trust in local expertise and stewardship as a basis for continuing excellence is refreshing and commendable.</p>
<p>Are the suggestions for actions to be undertaken formulated in a clear way (so that the actions needed for change can be clearly understood)?</p>	<p>Yes. Recommendations are stated in a manner that makes their status and purpose clear. The clarity of the text facilitates local analysis and action.</p>