

INFO SHEET

AEC - MUSIQUE: INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS WITH A SHARED OBJECTIVE

Introduction

AEC is a voluntary coalition of Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) in Europe and beyond. AEC represents more than 90% of the European players in the field and thus can justifiably claim to be the leading voice for Higher Music Education in Europe and a powerful advocate for its member institutions.

MusiQuE stands for *Music Quality Enhancement*. MusiQuE is a legally and economically independent body which is governed by a foundation registered in the Netherlands. Since its registration with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which is effective since 2016, *MusiQuE* is the first external quality assurance organisation in the arts and humanities.

Since 2004, the AEC has supported its members through establishing working groups and running pilot projects to accomplish this task. However, it has always been clear that AEC could provide valuable help in the development and testing of music-specific quality criteria but could by no means act as an accrediting entity itself.

In this respect, the formal separation of MusiQuE and AEC in 2014 was a logical step and a necessary prerequisite for making the positive results of the trial phase sustainable. AEC and MusiQuE's independence are key to keep AEC and MusiQuE matters separate. Nonetheless, AEC and MusiQuE remain committed to shared goals, values and quality standards. The wording of the two Vision and Mission Statements of AEC and MusiQuE, giving evidence of that, can be found at the end of this document.

AEC's and MusiQuE: roles and duties

AEC sees professionally focused arts education as a quest for excellence in three areas: artistic practice; learning and teaching; research and innovation. To strive for quality is key to the daily work of the AEC and to deal with quality enhancement issues is consequently one of AEC's crucial tasks. AEC has clarified and sharpened its contribution to the quality assurance and enhancement business by outsourcing the task of carrying out formal accreditation to MusiQuE. Nevertheless, it is in AEC member institutions where excellence is made operational, defined and continuously renegotiated with regards to the three above-mentioned areas.

The duty of MusiQuE, on the other hand, is to derive reliable and transferable criteria for the assessment of artistic and artistic pedagogical quality from the results of successful artistic achievements. In doing so, MusiQuE can and must rely on expertise that has been emerging from the core of the institutions and closely linked to the process of artistic creation.

AEC contributes to Quality enhancement through:

- capacity building and the development of expertise
- acting as a kind of think-tank for renewal and ongoing innovation of the field

MusiQuE contributes to Quality enhancement through:

- conducting reviews as an operational organisation
- supporting institutions with the expertise they need and giving advices
- Using a set of internationally agreed standards that enable AEC members and other (higher) music education institutions to assess their own position in an objective and subject-specific manner

However, there are also overlaps between the tasks of MusiQuE and AEC, and for good reasons. One of MusiQuE's most compelling strengths is that MusiQuE's review system is based on criteria decided upon by the sector itself. Moreover, MusiQuE will increasingly be supporting institutions in building their internal quality assurance. Up to now, internal QA systems are checked by national quality assurance and accreditation agencies as part of institutional review / accreditation systems of larger educational institutions to which AEC members belong as faculties or departments.

How do both organisations interact?

AEC and MusiQuE should be mutually supportive. MusiQuE is helping the sector to develop in terms of quality issues and this should be acknowledged and promoted. On the other hand, because of its subject-specific focus, it is essential that MusiQuE maintains in close contact with the characteristics and needs of the sector the AEC represents.

This is being done through:

- AEC proposes members for the MusiQuE Board. Recently the *MusiQuE* Board has added a student member to the Board following the strong advice received from the Register EQAR. It should also be mentioned here that the majority of AEC members on the Board is being questioned by external reviewers in the context of the independency of MusiQuE from AEC. MusiQuE is not planning to change this but to explain it better. Board members are proposed by AEC but appointed by the MusiQuE Board on a personal (not representative or institutional) title
- AEC members consulted on the revision of the MusiQuE standards
- AEC members encouraged to apply to MusiQuE Peer-Reviewers Register
- AEC proposes a member to MusiQuE's Appeals Committee

In terms of activities it would be helpful to present MusiQuE as a part of a unique overarching sectoral approach that AEC has developed over the years towards the internationalisation of the sector: from a Sectoral European Qualifications Framework (the AEC Learning Outcomes and 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors') for an internationally based description of study programmes, towards the support to the development of an international learning environment through various tools (mobility, joint

programmes, international external examiners, etc.) and as final point an international approach towards review and accreditation (MusiQuE).

Attachment

Comparing the vision and mission statements of AEC and MusiQuE

AEC Vision and Mission Statement

Vision of the Association

AEC is the leading voice for Higher Music Education in Europe, a powerful advocate for its member institutions.

AEC sees professionally focused arts education as a quest for excellence in three areas: artistic practice; learning and teaching; research and innovation. It seeks to foster these elements and to encourage the diversity and dynamism with which they are pursued in different institutions, countries and regions.

AEC understands and supports music and arts education, together with cultural participation, as central contributors to quality in human life, and inclusive societies founded on democratic values


Mission of the Association

AEC works for the advancement of Higher Education in the performing arts, primarily focusing on music. It does this based on four pillars:

Pillar 1: Enhancing quality in Higher Music Education

Pillar 2: Promoting participation, inclusiveness and diversity

Pillar 3: Strengthening partnership and interaction with stakeholders

Pillar 4: Fostering the value of music and music education in society  AEC operates inclusively, sustainably, efficiently and effectively, enabling communication and sharing of good practice.

MusiQuE - Mission and Vision

Mission

MusiQuE works internationally to uphold and advance the quality of music education

MusiQuE delivers this mission on the basis of five principles which, collectively, define what MusiQuE stands for:

1. MusiQuE is, fundamentally, an organisation set up by and for the music education sector, dedicated to promoting and supporting quality enhancement and, thereby, strengthening the sector.
2. MusiQuE is committed to working in partnership with its founding organisations (AEC, EMU and Pearle), with institutions, with other stakeholders in music education and with national quality assurance agencies.
3. Operating throughout Europe and beyond, MusiQuE believes in the strength and added value of involving international perspectives in quality enhancement.
4. MusiQuE encourages institutions at all stages of music education to reflect on their own practices and potential in adapting to ongoing challenges in society.
5. MusiQuE pursues quality enhancement in a way that respects the values and ethos of each individual institution and strives to make quality enhancement issues more meaningful to staff and students.

Vision for 2025

MusiQuE in 2025 is the leading provider of quality enhancement services to (higher) music education institutions and a recognised, independent and well-respected contributor to higher education quality assurance in general. It has earned a reputation for working constructively and efficiently with institutions in which its procedures are applied to promote, embed and disseminate a broadly-supported quality culture that respects the specific and individual characteristics of (higher) music education and its institutions in an international context.