



MUSIQUE

Music Quality Enhancement

Annual Report 2021

MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement

The Foundation for Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Higher Music Education

Brussels, March 2022



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List of abbreviations

AEC: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen

EAS: European Association for Music in Schools

EHEA: European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process

EMU: European Music School Union

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR: European Quality Assurance Register

ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

EURASHE: European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

Pearle*: Live Performance Europe (the Performing Arts Employers' Associations League Europe)

Message from the MusiQuE Board

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Board of MusiQuE to give you, through this report, an update on our work over the past year.

You will find information on the procedures we conducted in 2021, which involved more than 50 MusiQuE peer reviewers. Some of these procedures were conducted online, and all were robust, offering institutions and review teams opportunities for in-depth exploration. As you may remember, we saw a substantial increase in the number of procedures carried out in 2019 and the early part of 2020 but then, along with the rest of the world, MusiQuE was hit hard by the pandemic. Many procedures had to be postponed or cancelled, making a very challenging situation for us – but, happily, we have good signs of recovery in 2021 and our work diary for 2022 is now beginning to fill up.

Despite the pandemic – indeed, because of it - we have been working very hard: this year saw the launch of a series of webinars on quality assurance issues and the revision of the MusiQuE standards has begun: we intend to consult members of AEC, EMU and EAS on a draft of the revised standards during 2022. We believe it is essential that institutions have a say in the formulation of the standards that will be used in the review of programmes and institutions in the sector and beyond. We have also been working this year on rebranding MusiQuE: new logo, new explainer video, new look website.

None of the work of MusiQuE would be possible without the help of many people, the peer reviewers, who have given time and expertise to help other institutions in their enhancement ambitions, the institutions that have demonstrated openness, curiosity and a desire for enhancement, the excellent MusiQuE Team in Brussels, our partner organisations AEC, EMU, EAS and Pearle*, as well as my colleagues on the Board..

I wish MusiQuE a bright future working to uphold and advance the quality of music education.

Gordon Munro

Chair of the Board

About MusiQuE

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

MusiQuE has been created in October 2014 by the following three organisations:

- the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
- the European Music School Union (EMU)
- Pearle* Live Performance Europe, the European Federation of Music and Live Performance Organisations
- From 2020, MusiQuE's structure includes a fourth partner organisation – the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS).

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

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

MusiQuE ensures the involvement of its partner organisations in its internal decision-making processes through the appointment of four members of the MusiQuE Board nominated by its partners.

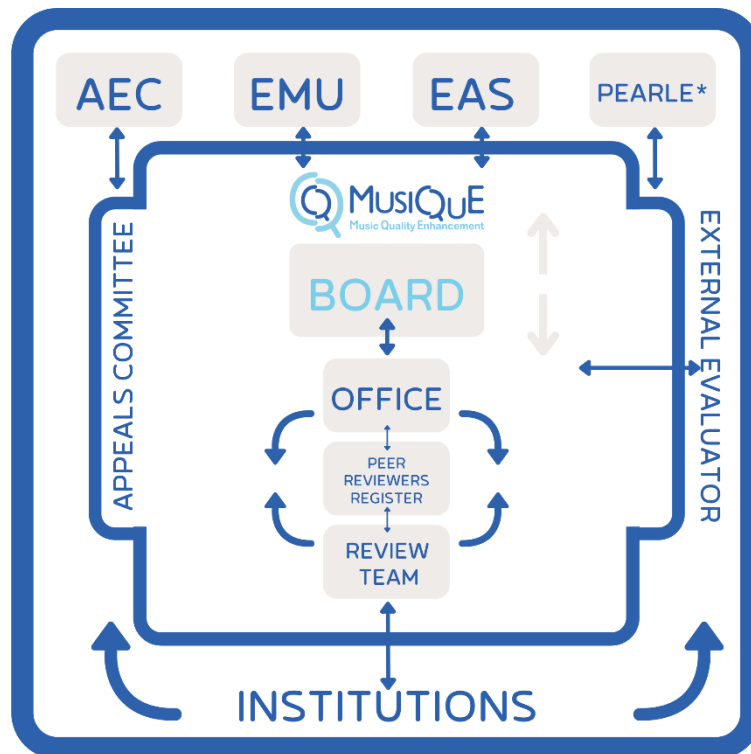
MusiQuE operates according to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and is registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). As such, MusiQuE is a leading player in higher education quality assurance in general, working with the institutions in which its procedures are applied to construct a broadly-supported quality culture tailored to the specific contexts and characteristics of higher music education.

MusiQuE Structure

The structure of MusiQuE comprises four elements:

- The MusiQuE Board (consisting of a minimum of 5 members, including a student)
- The MusiQuE Office, which carries out the work determined by the Board
- A Peer Reviewers Register of experts who form the teams that carry out the reviews commissioned by the Board
- An Appeals Committee

The following diagram summarises MusiQuE's structure:



The [MusiQuE Board](#) is responsible for all decision-making and for commissioning the actions related to the operations of MusiQuE. It is therefore the key entity in MusiQuE's structure. Its composition, roles and responsibilities have a critical bearing on the effective and appropriate functioning of MusiQuE.

Board composition 2021:

- Gordon Munro, Chair of the Board, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, United Kingdom
- Momchil Georgiev, Secretary General of the Bulgarian Association of Employers in Culture, Bulgaria
- Michaela Hahn, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW), Austria
- Gerhard Sammer, University of Music Würzburg, Austria
- Orla McDonagh, TU Dublin Conservatoire, Ireland (from January 2021)
- Jacques Moreau, Cefedem Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France (from January 2021)
- Ankna Arockiam, PhD Candidate, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, United-Kingdom (Student representative) (from January 2021)

At the end of the year, Gordon Munro left the Board, having completed his second mandate.

The MusiQuE Board and Office wish to express their sincere gratitude to Gordon for his fantastic involvement and dedication to MusiQuE.

Given the context of the global pandemic, in 2021 all Board meetings took place online (in March, June, August, October and December 2021).

The MusiQuE Board depends for its effective functioning on the continuous support provided by suitably qualified individuals. The [MusiQuE Office](#) is responsible for the day-to-day running of MusiQuE's operations and review processes, as well as for providing support to the Board and ensuring that the decisions taken by the Board are implemented.

Office composition in 2021:

- Linda Messas, Director
- Crina Moşneagu, Policy & Review Officer
- Blazhe Todorovski, Review Officer
- H  l  ne Mariaud, Review & Administrative Coordinator (until September 2021)
- Ana   lvarez, Intern (since October 2021)

Peer Reviewers Register

Peer Reviewers form the teams that carry out the reviews commissioned by the Board of MusiQuE: in line with its subject-specific focus, MusiQuE works with a pool of international experts in relevant musical fields, who are familiar with and well-informed about the specificities of higher music education.

In 2021, the Register included 116 (one hundred and sixteen) Peer Reviewers, including 24 (twenty-four) student profiles.

Peer Reviewers Training Sessions

The 2021 edition of the annual Training Workshop for MusiQuE Peer Reviewers was developed as a hybrid event, mixing online and in person sessions. The online session was held on 25th October 2021, and was followed by an offline workshop on 3rd and 4th of November 2022. The offline sessions were offered as a pre-Congress workshop in the framework of the 2021 AEC Annual Congress hosted by the Antwerp Royal Conservatoire in Belgium. 20 peers, including 7 students, from higher music education institutions across Europe attended the in-person sessions in Antwerp, whilst the online session was attended in total by 25 peers and 6 students. In comparison to the 2020 Training Workshop, which was held entirely online, participation was significantly lower, in the context of travel restrictions still affecting different countries.

The goal of the first day of the training was to give a general introduction to MusiQuE, as well as an overview of the MusiQuE Standards and the several types of procedures that MusiQuE offers. The participants were also introduced to the material to be used for the role-play exercise scheduled for the offline sessions.

In the second part of the training, hosted by the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp, participants attended a series of practical exercises aimed to foster teamwork, and to simulate real encounters that take place during review procedures. As such, role-play exercises and round tables on different topics were organised to facilitate attendees interaction and application of theoretical concepts presented during the online part of the training.

During the 2021 edition of the Training Workshop, MusiQuE was again very pleased to welcome the Executive Director of the National Association of Schools of Music in the US, Mr. Dan Dressen who shared some challenges and new ideas on review procedures conducted in schools of music in USA. More information about the training activities offered during the session can be found [here](#).

Review Procedures

A. Procedures conducted within the scope of the ESGs¹:

Programme Quality Enhancement Reviews (2):

- Royal Conservatory Antwerp (AP Hogeschool), Belgium, 28-20 March 2021 (BA Dance): [Report](#), [Decision](#) *Conducted online
- Royal Conservatory Antwerp (AP Hogeschool), Belgium, 8-10 March 2021 (BA & MA Visual Arts): [Report](#), [Decision](#) *Conducted Online

Institutional Quality Enhancement Review (1):

- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD), UK, 17-19 November 2021: [Report](#), [Decision](#)

Programme Accreditation Procedures (2):

- The Hague Royal Conservatoire, The Netherlands, 25-27 May and 23-24 June 2021, Master of Music, Master of Sonology: [Report](#) *Conducted online and on site
- College of Music, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 21-24 June 2021, Doctor of Music, Doctor of Philosophy [Report](#), [Decision](#) *Conducted online

Critical Friend Visits (5):

- The Hague Royal Conservatoire, The Netherlands, within the framework of a Critical Friend Review leading to Programme Accreditation (2020 – 2026). The following Critical Friend Visits were carried out in 2021: Early Music (25-29 October), Vocal Studies (13-15 April), Music Education (3-5 March)
- Royal Conservatoire Antwerp (AP Hogeschool), Belgium, within the framework of a Critical Friend Review leading to a Programme Quality Enhancement Review (2020 – 2024). The following Critical Friend Visits were carried out in 2021: Orchestral Instruments (22-24 November), Non-Orchestral Instruments (22-24 November)

B. Services provided outside the scope of the ESGs:

Evaluation of performance (including benchmarking) (1):

- Orpheus Institute, Leuven, Belgium: January to June 2021, Evaluation commissioned by the Flemish Department of Science, Technology and Innovation

Project evaluation (1):

- European Music Council, Bonn, Germany: December 2021, Project Evaluation Report for Year 4 of the project

Consultative visits (5):

- Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (JVLMA), Riga, Latvia, Critical Friend Consultative Visits, for the following departments: Vocal Arts (15-19 March), Choreography (15-19 March), Music Performance – Instruments (22-26 March), Music Performance – Conducting (22-26 March), Jazz Vocal & Instruments (22-26 March), and Composition and Music Theory (22-26 March).

¹ MusiQuE distinguishes between procedures within the scope of (and therefore in compliance with) ESG and those outside the scope of the ESG due to their specific nature (e.g. focusing on educational levels other than higher education or on a particular area of interest only, or consultative visits).

The review reports for the procedures carried out within the scope of the ESG's have been published in the ['Reports'](#) section of the website.

Finances

After being strongly hit by the consequences of the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, MusiQuE started a slow recovery in 2021. Institutions remained focused on their own management of the crisis and did not put quality assurance matters high on the agenda. The direct income from reviews was increased by about 15'000 euros.

It is thanks to AEC's support that MusiQuE was able to close the financial year 2021 with a provision of 10'000 euros for its next external review (in 2025) and a positive surplus of about 3'000 EUR: MusiQuE was asked to reimburse only 38% of the total staff costs covered by AEC² (after reimbursing 37% in 2020, 80% in 2019, and 50% in both 2017 and 2018). Regarding the overhead costs covering the daily operation of the MusiQuE Office, the annual contribution to AEC (calculated on the basis of 7% of MusiQuE direct costs) was paid to AEC.

| Income (in EUR) | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Direct income from Reviews | 85,092 | 70,859 | 146,182 | 62,850 | 49'000 |
| Reimbursement of Review Costs by Institutions | 85,192 | 43,176 | 124,459 | 48,856 | 65.231 |
| Income from the Training for Peer reviewers | 2,000 | 2,550 | 0,00 | 2,400 | 2'030 |
| Total Income | 180,365 | 116,585 | 270,641 | 114,106 | 116,261 |
| Expenditures (in EUR) | | | | | |
| Review Costs (Expenses & Reviewers' fees) | 85,792 | 46,139 | 126,258 | 48,856 | 62,398 |
| MusiQuE operational costs | 16,577 | 7,240 | 18,603 | 18,913 | 16,561 |
| MusiQuE Staff costs | 49,377 | 45,000 | 88,588 | 32,048 | 23,078 |
| Total Costs (in EUR) | 151,747 | 98,379 | 233,449 | 99,817 | 102,036 |
| Overhead costs (=7% of total costs) | 10,622 | 7,036 | 16,342 | 6,987 | 7,143 |
| Costs of external review of MusiQuE for EQAR application (in 2021: Provision) | 10,000 | 5,250 | 17,362 | | |
| Total expenditure (in EUR) | 162,369 | 110,665 | 267,153 | 106,804 | 109,178 |
| Result (in EUR) | 3,101 | 5,920 | 3,488 | 7,302 | 7,083 |

² Based on the agreement between the three founding partners of MusiQuE, AEC, EMU and Pearle* to offer their financial support to MusiQuE in order to guarantee its financial viability in its first years of operation (without compromising its independence), staff costs of the MusiQuE Office in Brussels are covered by AEC, and increasingly reimbursed by MusiQuE.

Communication and external relations

In 2021 MusiQuE continued to implement the actions planned during the revision of its communication strategy in 2019/2020. As such, a first series of webinars on quality assurance-related topics was launched by MusiQuE throughout 2021, which included three webinars as follows:

- A [webinar on 'Quality assurance in higher music education'](#) on 23 June, 2021
- A [webinar on 'Student involvement in quality assurance in higher music education institutions'](#) on 29 November, 2021
- A [webinar on 'Balancing connections between internal quality assurance and external quality assurance: experiences from higher music education institutions'](#) planned on 9 March, 2022

Attendance to the first webinar was slightly higher than to the second and third webinars, where numbers stabilised at around 20-30 participants. In general, participants' feedback showed a positive response to the topics addressed, and a further interest in discussing particular topics on quality assurance in higher music education institutions – i.e. the stages of a review process, and communication and engagement with different stakeholders.

Furthermore, MusiQuE's online presence has been reinforced, both through its social media channels, and through a sustained rebranding process which included the development of a new website, and a promotional video featured therein. The new MusiQuE website was completed in 2021 and will be launched in 2022, after a final testing of the new features.

Bringing MusiQuE's activities (and the higher music education sector in general) to the attention of a wider audience is MusiQuE's continuous mission. In this regard, MusiQuE's services, and approach to quality and quality assurance were presented on a few occasions in 2021, to events and conferences relevant to the sector, that were organised online – e.g. the AEC International Relations Coordinators' meeting in September 2021 and the 2021 AEC Congress. MusiQuE also participated in the annual meetings of [the European association for quality assurance in higher education \(ENQA\)](#), of the [European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and QA](#), and in the [European Quality Assurance Forum \(EQAF\)](#).

Finally, it is worth mentioning here MusiQuE's involvement in the DEQAR³ Connect Project, whose main aim is the development of a database that would enhance the access to reports and decisions on higher education institutions or programmes, externally reviewed against the ESG, by an EQAR-registered agency. The database and MusiQuE reports are accessible [here](#)

³ Database of External Quality Assurance Results

