



MUSIQUE  
Music Quality Enhancement

# Annual Report 2022



MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement

The Foundation for Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Higher Music Education

Brussels, October 2024

## Contents

Contents	
List of abbreviations	3
Message from the MusiQuE Board	4
About MusiQuE	5
MusiQuE Structure	6
Peer Reviewers Register	8
Review Procedures	9
Finances	11
Internal and External Quality Assurance	12
Communication and external relations	14

## 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 Schools 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 and on the main activities that MusiQuE conducted in 2022. Some of these procedures were still conducted online (e.g. the Dance Bachelor Programme accreditation procedure at The Hague Royal Conservatory). Regardless, from feedback collected from peer reviewers and institutions alike, we may conclude that all procedures conducted in 2022 were robust, offering institutions and review teams opportunities for in-depth exploration.

As you may remember, in 2020, along with the rest of the world, MusiQuE was hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many procedures had to be postponed or cancelled, making a very challenging situation for us – but, happily, good signs of recovery were shown in 2021 and MusiQuE continued throughout 2022 to reap the benefits of an increased interest in quality enhancement procedures across higher music education institutions in Europe and beyond.

To this end, in 2022 MusiQuE invested a lot of effort in negotiating and sealing several contracts that would ensure a busy agenda throughout 2023 and 2024, while still conducting a number of procedures contracted the year before. Aside from evaluation procedures, MusiQuE continued the series of webinars on quality assurance issues it began in 2021, and finalised the revision of its Standards for Institutional and for Programme Reviews after a series of consultations with its partners and direct beneficiaries organised mostly in the fall of 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.

The work related to MusiQuE's rebranding and visual identity was also finalised in 2022, with a new logo, new explainer video and a fresh website officially launched at the beginning of the year.

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.

Jacques Moreau

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.

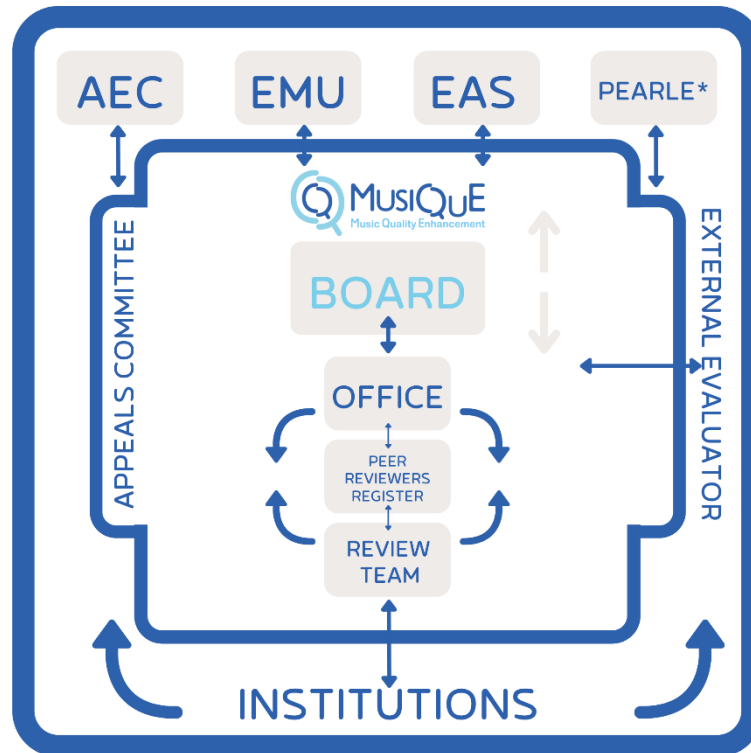
MusiQuE operates according to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and is registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). As such, MusiQuE is a leading player in higher education quality assurance in general, working with 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 2022:

- Jacques Moreau, Chair of the Board, Cefedem Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France
- 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
- Lies Colman, Royal Conservatoire Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium (from January 2022)
- Ankna Arockiam, PhD Candidate, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, United-Kingdom (Student representative)

In 2022 three meetings took place online (in March, May and December 2022) and one in Brussels (September 2022).

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 2022:

- Linda Messas, Director
- Crina Moşneagu, Policy & Review Officer
- Blazhe Todorovski, Review Officer (until September 2022)
- Ana Álvarez, Intern (until September 2022), Review Officer (from October 2022)
- Barbara Kowalczuk, Intern (from October 2022)

## 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 2022, the Register included 137 (one hundred and thirty seven) peer reviewers, including 20 (twenty) student profiles.

### Peer Reviewers Training Sessions

The 2022 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 19th October 2022, and was followed by an offline workshop on 9th and 10th November 2022. The offline sessions were offered as a pre-Congress workshop in the framework of the 2022 AEC Annual Congress hosted by the Conservatoire national supérieur musique et danse de Lyon (CNSMD). 23 participants, including representatives from higher music education institutions across Europe and beyond, attended the in-person sessions in Lyon, whilst the online session was attended in total by 22 participants. In comparison to the 2021 Training Workshop, which was held also in a hybrid form, participation was similar (20 participants in person and 31 online).

During the first day of the Training, organised online, participants were introduced to MusiQuE's structure and procedures, and to the roles and responsibilities of a Peer Reviewer, as well as the material to be used for the role-play session during the offline session.

The session in Lyon included a role-play session, where the participants had the opportunity to act as peer reviewers, which enabled the participants to familiarise themselves with the different stages of a review procedure, such as the site-visit. On the third day of the Training, feedback on the role-play was exchanged and the steps following the site visit, until the completion of the procedure, were presented. The Training session also included a World Café, which allowed the participants to take part in discussions in small groups about the challenges and opportunities during a review procedure. The Training session concluded with a final plenary session with the contribution of Michael Wilder, President of the National Association of Schools of Music in the US (NASM). More information about the training activities offered during the session can be found [here](#).





## Review Procedures

In 2022, MusiQuE carried out one quality enhancement review at programme level, two follow-up procedures of programme accreditation, two critical friends visits at programme level, one benchmarking project, one consultative visit, and initiated one project evaluation that is being conducted across a 2 year period, until 2024.

This represents a moderate decrease in the number of procedures compared to 2021. This is explained by the fact that in 2021, once the restrictions related to the Covid-19 global pandemic were relaxed to a certain extent, MusiQuE was able to finalise procedures that were put on hold in 2020. In 2022, MusiQuE's main focus was to capitalise on the revival of the institutions' interest towards quality enhancement procedures, and thus to finalise negotiations and secure sufficient contracts for procedures that would be conducted in 2023 – 2024, and beyond.

### A. Procedures conducted within the scope of the ESGs<sup>1</sup>:

#### Programme Quality Enhancement Reviews (1):

- KASK & Conservatorium, Ghent, Belgium, 22 – 24 June 2022 (Performing Music - Classical Music, Performing Music - Jazz and Pop, Composing music – Composition, Composing music - Music Production, Musical Instrument Making, Master in Music Theory / Notation): [Report](#), [Decision](#), [Summary](#)

#### Follow-up of external evaluation procedures conducted at programme level(2)

- The Hague Royal Conservatoire (KC Hague), the Netherlands, 20 April 2022, (BA Dance) \*Conducted online: [Follow-up Report](#), [Decision](#)<sup>2</sup> (programme accreditation)
- Royal Conservatoire Antwerp (AP Hogeschool), Belgium, 17 – 18 November 2022 (Visual Arts BA and MA Programmes): [Follow-up Report](#) (quality enhancement review at programme level)

#### Critical Friend Visits (3):

- The Hague Royal Conservatoire, The Netherlands, Critical Friend Review with Programme Accreditation (2020 – 2026) with the following Critical Friend Visit carried out in 2022:
  - Sonology (23 – 25 February)
- Royal Conservatoire Antwerp (AP Hogeschool), Belgium, Critical Friend Review with Programme Quality Enhancement Review (2020 – 2024), with the following Critical Friend Visits carried out in 2022:
  - Performing Music - Jazz and Pop (21 – 23 March),
  - Composition and Music Theory (14 – 16 November)

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> As it refers to a joint programme accreditation procedure conducted in The Netherlands in cooperation with NVAO, the decision for accreditation is issued exclusively by NVAO. MusiQuE issued only a recommendation for accreditation based on the findings of the review team outlined in the Follow-up Report.

The above Critical Friend visits were conducted in the framework of ongoing Critical Friend Review Procedures. More details about MusiQuE's Critical Friend Review Procedure (methodology, phases, outcomes) are available [here](#).

## **B. Procedures conducted outside the scope of the ESGs**

### Evaluation of performance at project level (including benchmarking) (2):

- [Alamire Foundation](#), Leuven, Belgium, Evaluation commissioned by the Flemish Ministry of Economy (May – December 2022)
- [ARTEMIS project evaluation](#) commissioned by the Association of European Conservatoires (2022 – 2024)

### Consultative visits (1):

- Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), quality enhancement support for the external programme review within the framework of RIAM's Quality Standards and Assurance Policy (March 2022)

All review reports for the procedures that MusiQuE carries out within the reach and scope of the ESGs are published in the '[Reports](#)' section of the website.

## Finances

Although the direct income from reviews has decreased by around 15'000 EUR from 2021 to 2022, MusiQuE's situation has improved in 2022 as several institutions showed interest in MusiQuE's services again (after putting quality assurance matters on the side for some years, as a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak). Therefore, 2022 has been intense in terms of preparing reviews for 2023 and 2024 (which income will then mostly be accounted for in future years).

MusiQuE was able to reimburse a slightly higher percentage of the total staff costs covered by AEC<sup>3</sup> (i.e. 40%, compared to 38% in 2021) as well as the overhead costs agreed upon, covering the daily operation of the MusiQuE Office (calculated on the basis of 7% of MusiQuE direct costs). A surplus of 3'120 EUR was generated and moved to the reserves.

<b>Income (in EUR)</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Direct income from Reviews	70,232	85,092
Reimbursement of Review Costs by Institutions	53,529	85,192
Income from the Training for Peer reviewers	2,500	2,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>126,261</b>	<b>180,365</b>
<b>Expenditures (in EUR)</b>		
Review Costs (Expenses & Reviewers' fees)	53,690	85,792
MusiQuE operational costs	19,429	16,577
MusiQuE Staff costs	47,093	49,377
<b>Total Costs (in EUR)</b>	<b>120,212</b>	<b>151,747</b>
Overhead costs (=7% of total costs)	2,930	10,622
Costs of external review of MusiQuE for EQAR application	0,00	10,000
<b>Total expenditure (in EUR)</b>	<b>123,141</b>	<b>162,369</b>
<b>Result (in EUR)</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>3,101</b>

<sup>3</sup> 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.

## Internal and External Quality Assurance

MusiQuE developed a robust internal quality assurance system, which provides the MusiQuE Board and MusiQuE's external stakeholders with relevant feedback on the organisations fitness for purpose.

### **Results of feedback questionnaires and improvements to MusiQuE review procedures**

Feedback from institutions reviewed, and from members of Review Teams is considered annually by the Board of MusiQuE which then decides on necessary actions to improve systems and processes, or to fine-tune the Standards during the revision process undertaken every four years. The Board of MusiQuE warmly thanks all the Peer Reviewers and institutions for helping MusiQuE work towards constant improvement, by filling in the feedback questionnaires provided at the end of each procedure.

The feedback has been very positive in 2022. Most peer-reviewers and institutions acknowledged the fluent communicative process between them, and with MusiQuE, and the well-balanced composition of the Review Team. Progressive improvement is also observed across different parts of the feedback report, referring to the technical aspects of online site-visits. While there is some concern shown during the first Critical Friend visits, taking place amid the pandemic, future procedures seem to have solved technical issues in relation to the use of online platforms when carrying out online site-visits.

Some suggestions for improvements were also made concerning the Self-Evaluation Report, collection of supporting documentation, Review Team and their division of work, MusiQuE Standards and procedure itself.

With respect to the MusiQuE Training for Peer Reviewers, attendance to the Workshop was similar to the 2021 edition (24 participants for both online and in person sessions). Participants' feedback remarked good balance between emphasis on systems as well as a human approach and diversity of learning activities. The vast majority of participants showed a strong interest in topics related to quality assurance. The opportunity to discuss these topics with other colleagues was highlighted as one of the main reasons to take part in the Training Workshop. As the main strengths they indicated role-play sessions, group discussions and networking opportunity, as well as practical advises on the site-visits and personal stories about past reviews.

### **The Revision of MusiQuE's Standards for Institutional and Programme Reviews**

In 2022 efforts were resumed in the complex process of revising the main set of standards that lay the foundation to most external review procedures conducted by MusiQuE – the Standards for Institutional and for Programme Reviews.

Feedback on the relevance of MusiQuE's standards is collected annually from peer reviewers and reviewed institutions alike, as part of MusiQuE's continuous internal quality assurance process. Furthermore, following MusiQuE's external evaluation in 2019 and the recommendations received therein, the MusiQuE Board decided to kick off a thorough revision of all of its standards. To this purpose, a Working Group (WG) was created in 2020 with representatives of all MusiQuE's partners, and an outline of the revision process as well as the methodology was discussed and decided during the group's first meeting. It was given priority to MusiQuE's Standards for Institutional and for Programme Reviews considering the frequency of their employment in MusiQuE procedures. Throughout 2021 the WG held several working meetings online.

In June 2022 MusiQuE organised an in-person meeting in Brussels to facilitate that agreement is reached within the WG for a final proposal of Revised Standards that can then be presented to external stakeholders for further consideration and collection of relevant feedback.

Following the approval of the MusiQuE Board, the Revised Standards were discussed with AEC representatives in September 2022 during the AEC Council Meeting. Further, the Revised MusiQuE Standards were presented to AEQUES in October 2022, and discussed at large with direct beneficiaries (higher music education institutions) during a special session organised at the AEC Annual Congress in November 2022. MusiQuE organised 2 parallel sessions in which the topics already highlighted as requiring further attention by the MusiQuE Board and the AEC Council were explored more in depth, and further feedback was collected on these issues.

As a final step of the revision, the Working Group included all feedback thus collected into a final version of the Standards which were endorsed by the MusiQuE Board in December 2022 and published on the MusiQuE website in January 2023.



## Communication and external relations

In 2022 MusiQuE continued to implement the actions planned during the revision of its communication strategy in 2019/2020. As such, MusiQuE continued its series of webinars on quality assurance and delivered one webinar in 2022, featuring a wide range audience amongst the higher quality assurance and higher music education sector: 'Balancing internal and external quality assurance – experiences from higher music education institutions' on 9 March 2022. 25 participants took part in this webinar.

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. Quality and evaluation indicators in the internal quality assurance system, satisfaction measurement and surveys, internal communication about quality processes, overcoming weaknesses in external evaluations. On 2 September 2022 MusiQuE participated in the 11th edition of the *ANMATalks series 'Quality Enhancement in Higher Music Education: Need a Critical Friend?'*, exploring the topic of quality assurance in higher music education institutions and presenting the Critical Friend approach.

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, completed in 2021, was launched in 2022, after a final testing of the new features.

In 2022 the MusiQuE Board commissioned the fifth Trend Analysis to Don McLean focusing on twenty-four reports stemming from twenty different procedures undertaken by MusiQuE from 2019 through 2021 inclusively. The Analysis was finalised in October 2022 and it was presented during MusiQuE's parallel session at the 2022 AEC Annual Congress, held between 9 and 12 November in Lyon. The 2022 Trend Analysis Report is available for download on [MusiQuE website](#).

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 2022, to events and conferences relevant to the sector, e.g. at the 63<sup>rd</sup> PEARLE\* Conference in Manchester, UK (May 2022), at the EQAR Member's dialogue and ENQA General Assembly and Members' Forum in Stockholm, Sweden (October 2022), at the AEC Annual Congress in Lyon, France (November 2022), as well as during formal meetings with its partners (e.g. the AEC Council meeting in September 2022).

Finally, it is worth mentioning here MusiQuE's involvement in the DEQAR 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](#).