

Music Quality Enhancement

MUSIQUE

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MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement

The Foundation for Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Higher Music Education

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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 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)

QAA: Quality Assurance Agency

Message from the MusiQuE Board

2020 has been a very intense year: review procedures with site-visits in 2019 were finalised, some site-visits were organised in February and March, MusiQuE itself was reviewed by an external review panel...and suddenly MusiQuE was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many procedures had to be postponed or cancelled, bringing the organisation into a very challenging situation, and its way of operating had to be rethought: all Board meetings took place online, staff members worked mainly from home, the Training Workshop for Peer Reviewers was held, for the first time, entirely online, and MusiQuE produced a protocol for online procedures.

In November, we received the good news that MusiQuE has renewed its registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education – EQAR. This renewal took place following a very thorough external review of MusiQuE by an expert panel earlier. The registration means that MusiQuE has, at the European level, the same recognised status as all the national agencies. MusiQuE is also still the only organisation in the field of arts and humanities on this register.

In addition, MusiQuE has expanded its group of stakeholder organisations. The current partner organisations AEC, the European Music School Union – EMU and the Performing Arts Employers Associations League – PEARLE, have recently been joined by the European Association of Music in Schools – EAS, an important organisation for music teaching in general education. We now have a unique group of organisations gathered under the umbrella of MusiQuE, representing virtually all levels of music education and various areas of the music profession. MusiQuE's Board has been expanded to include a member proposed by EAS.

Finally, we should express our sincere gratitude to all those that are working hard to make MusiQuE a success.

First of all, to our colleagues from the Board who finished their mandate at the end of 2020: Bernd Clausen (Board Member) and Rosa Welker (Student member) for their years of involvement in MusiQuE; Martin Prchal, Chair of the Board from 2014 to 2020, who has been engaged in the field of quality assurance for many decades and committed to the music field throughout his career. Martin's commitment, vision and leadership enabled the very creation of MusiQuE, as well as its listing on EQAR.

MusiQuE is also grateful to its partner organisations AEC, Pearle* and EMU for their trust and continuous support to the development of MusiQuE, to the excellent MusiQuE Team in Brussels, and finally, to all MusiQuE reviewers, who are all helping us to realise our mission of working internationally to uphold and advance the quality of music education.

On behalf of the MusiQuE Board,

Gordon Munro

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 Schools Union (EMU)
- Pearle* Live Performance Europe, the European Federation of Music and Live Performance Organisations

In addition, at the end of 2020, the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS) became MusiQuE's fourth partner organisation.

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 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. In early 2020 MusiQuE underwent an external review to maintain its EQAR registration. The external review was coordinated by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in the US, and was based on the ESG. In preparation for this review, MusiQuE redefined its Mission and Vision, as published on the website at the following [link](#).

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 [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 and its composition, roles and responsibilities have a critical bearing on the effective and appropriate functioning of MusiQuE.

Board composition 2020:

- Martin Prchal, Chair of the Board, Royal Conservatory The Hague
- Gordon Munro, Secretary and Treasurer, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Bernd Clausen, University of Siegen
- Momchil Georgiev, Secretary General of Bulgarian Association of Employers in Culture
- Timo Klemetinnen, Managing Director of the European Music School Union (until May 2020)
- Michaela Hahn, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW) (from May 2020)¹
- Gerhard Sammer, University of Music Würzburg (from October 2020)²
- Rosa Welker, former Master Student at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

At the end of the year, Martin Prchal, Bernd Clausen and Rosa Welker left the Board.



Given the context of the global pandemic, in 2020 all Board meetings took place online (in January, April, May, July, August, October and December 2020). A summary of the Autumn online meeting (October 2020) can be found on the following link: [Autumn Board Meeting](#).

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 2020:

- Linda Messas, Director
- Crina Moşneagu, Policy & Review Officer
- Blazhe Todorovski, Review Officer
- H el ene Mariaud, Intern (March – October), Review & Administrative Coordinator (since November 2020)

¹ Michaela Hahn replaced Timo Klemetinnen as Board member proposed by EMU.

² Board member proposed by EAS (the European Association for Music in Schools).

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 2020, the Register included 95 (ninety-five) peer-reviewers, including 13 (thirteen) student profiles.

Peer-Reviewers Training Sessions

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 edition of the annual Training Workshop for MusiQuE Peer Reviewers was, for the first time, held entirely online. MusiQuE offered a training experience extended over 3 half-days spread over 2 weeks. The workshop took place on the 16th, the 29th and the 30th of October 2020. 48 peers, including 6 students, from higher music education institutions across the world participated in this very successful edition.

The goal of the first day of training was to give a general introduction to MusiQuE, as well as an overview of the several procedures that MusiQuE offers. The participants were also introduced to the material to be used for the role-play session on day 2.

During the second day of the training, all participants took part in a role-play session: 'acting as a peer reviewer', which they had the opportunity to prepare over the two weeks following the first session. This practical exercise allowed the participants to undertake a meeting during a mock institutional site-visit, taking either a role of review team members or representatives of the reviewed institution.

An online World Café was held during the last day, where the participants had the opportunity to work in small groups and to discuss the questions addressed by the trainers. The training session ended with a plenary final discussion and conclusions. MusiQuE was very pleased to welcome the Executive Director of the National Association of Schools of Music in the US, Mrs Karen P. Moynahan, who kindly offered several highly relevant closing remarks about the purpose and role of external quality assurance in higher music education. More information about the training activities offered during the session can be found [here](#).

Information about the Review Team composition, the Peer-reviewers Register and the annual training can be found on the MusiQuE [website](#).

Review Procedures

It became clear at the end of 2020 that MusiQuE reviews, initially planned in 2020 and postponed after the lockdown measures, would eventually need to be conducted online. For this purpose, MusiQuE produced a protocol for online procedures which has been tested at the end of March 2021.

In 2020, 4 procedures were carried out in 3 countries, two of them taking place at the same institution. This represents a downsize in comparison to 2019, mainly caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as many scheduled procedures were postponed for 2022. 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). Of the 4 procedures carried out in 2020, 2 were outside the scope of the ESGs.

Programme Quality Enhancement Reviews (1) – within the scope of the ESG

- Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, Brno, Czech Republic, 1-4 March (Music: [Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#)) (Theatre: [Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#)) *Conducted in person

Evaluation of research activities (1) – outside the scope of the ESG

- Institut de Recherche en Musique et Arts de la Scène (IRMAS), Geneva, Switzerland, 26-27 February

Benchmarking procedure (2) – outside the scope of the ESG

- Commissioning institution: International Opera Academy, Ghent, Belgium, March-November
Commissioned partner institutions:
 - School of Vocal Studies and Opera, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, United Kingdom
 - Department of Opera, Stockholm University of the Arts (UniArts), Stockholm, Sweden
 - Stuttgart Opera Institute, University of Music and Performing Arts, Stuttgart, Germany
- Commissioning institution: Orpheus Institute, Ghent, Belgium, March-November
Commissioned partner institutions:
 - Doctoral School for Artistic Research, University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria
 - Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia
 - Research and Knowledge Exchange Department, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, UK

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

Finances

MusiQuE has been highly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the direct income from reviews has decreased by more than 50% compared to 2019.

Operational costs did also significantly decrease, with all Board meetings taking place online and all external events cancelled. Given the dramatic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on MusiQuE's financial situation, MusiQuE reimbursed to AEC 37% of the total staff costs covered by AEC (after reimbursing 80% in 2019)³.

It is to be noted that additional costs were incurred in the framework of MusiQuE's external review (as a preparation for the site-visit of the external review panel planned in 2020).

Despite these exceptional costs, and thanks to the support of AEC, the profit and loss statement shows a positive result of 5,920 €.

Income (in EUR)	2020	2019	2018	2017
Direct income from Reviews	70,859	146,182	62,850	49'000
Reimbursement of Review Costs by Institutions	43,176	124,459	48,856	65.231
Income from the Training for Peer reviewers	2,550	0,00	2,400	2'030
Total Income	116,585	270,641	114,106	116,261
Expenditures (in EUR)				
Review Costs (Expenses & Reviewers' fees)	46,139	126,258	48,856	62,398
MusiQuE operational costs	7,240	18,603	18,913	16,561
MusiQuE Staff costs	45,000	88,588	32,048	23,078
Total Costs (in EUR)	98,379	233,449	99,817	102,036
Overhead costs (=7% of total costs) ⁴	7,036	16,342	6,987	7,143
Costs of external review of MusiQuE for EQAR application	5,250	17,362		
Total expenditure (in EUR)	110,665	267,153	106,804	109,178
Result (in EUR)	5,920	3,488	7,302	7,083

³ Staff costs of the MusiQuE Office in Brussels are covered by AEC, and reimbursed by MusiQuE on a yearly basis following 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).

⁴ For overhead costs covering the daily operation of the MusiQuE Office, an annual contribution to AEC calculated on the basis of 7% of MusiQuE direct costs is paid to AEC.

Internal and External Quality Assurance

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 any action 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 who took the time to fill in the feedback questionnaires for helping MusiQuE work towards constant improvement.

Given the low number of procedures conducted in 2020, the results of feedback questionnaires did not constitute a sufficiently solid base for further amendments of MusiQuE procedures, beyond the feedback already collected in previous years.

With respect to the MusiQuE Training for Peer Reviewers, the feedback was extremely positive after the 2020 first online edition, which offers MusiQuE food for thought to develop a hybrid format for the future trainings.

External evaluation process

In order to renew its registration on the [European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#), MusiQuE underwent an external evaluation process and was assessed against the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#).

Following the production of its self-evaluation report by December 2019, MusiQuE was visited on 10-11 February 2020 by an external Review Panel, composed of:

- **Mark Wait** (Chair), Dean, Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University, USA
- **Rico Gubler**, President, Musikhochschule Lübeck, Germany
- **Norma Ryan**, Higher Education Consultant, Ireland
- **Oliver Vettori**, Dean for Accreditation and Quality Management, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria
- **Mirela Matei**, PhD Student, National University of Music Bucharest, Romania
- **Pieter-Jan Van de Velde** (Secretary), Independent Quality Assurance Consultant, Belgium

The Review Panel interviewed representatives of institutions and programmes reviewed by MusiQuE, a group of MusiQuE reviewers, representatives of accreditation agencies which have cooperated with MusiQuE, as well as representatives of the three partner organisations of MusiQuE.

The Review Panel highlighted MusiQuE's impressive accomplishments in the short time since its conception in October 2014 and emphasised how MusiQuE, through its procedures, has aided the music institutions and programmes.

MusiQuE was commended in particular for its **Critical Friend Review**, which seems to be a useful, helpful, creative and productive procedure, its devotion and attention to **student-centred learning** and its **training and selection of reviewers**.

The Review Panel also shared a set of recommendations including the further development of MusiQuE's **Follow-up Processes**, the revision of its **Complaints and Appeals Policy**, setting specific **targets and goals in its operational plans** and further building its **long-term financial sustainability**.

The review report written by the Review Panel is available [here](#).

Communication and external relations

In 2019, MusiQuE had reviewed most of its strategic papers and its communication strategy. The review of the communication plan has been ongoing in 2020 as new opportunities arose, including due to the Covid-19 crisis. In this context, MusiQuE has taken the decision, in late 2020, to develop its online presence by organising webinars on quality assurance-related topics and by establishing its presence on social media. To this purpose, MusiQuE went through a complete rebranding process in 2020, developing a new logo, new promotional materials and undertaking preliminary steps for developing a new website that is to be launched by 2021. A promotional video presenting MusiQuE's services and activities is also in the process of being created.

Furthermore, 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 2020, to events and conferences relevant to the sector, that were organised online – e.g. the AEC International Relations Coordinators' meeting in September 2020 and the 2020 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, MusiQuE is involved in the DEQAR Connect Project – DEQAR is the Database of External Quality Assurance Results, which main aim is the development of a database to enhance access to reports and decisions on higher education institutions/programmes externally reviewed against the ESG, by an EQAR-registered agency. The database is accessible [here](#) and includes MusiQuE's reports.



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