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organ für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung
der schweizerischen hochschulen



Accreditation for the Universities of Applied Sciences in Switzerland

Expert Report

Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana

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

Date of version incorporating revisions in the light of institutional response: 25 April 2010

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1 Introduction

This report has been compiled according to the procedures of the Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen (OAQ). It records the outcomes of a process conducted using a carefully coordinated combination of the standards of the OAQ with those developed by the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC). In most cases, the OAQ standards and those of the AEC correspond closely; where specific AEC standards have no counterpart among those of the OAQ, they receive separate comment in the report. However, in terms of the report's formal recommendations as to accreditation, it is the OAQ standards which form the points of reference.

At the outset of this group report, the experts engaged to recommend on accreditation wish to record their appreciation of the contributions to the process made both by the staff and students of the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana and by the administrators of the OAQ and AEC. Thanks to the input of all these individuals, the group found itself able to conduct its work effectively and in an atmosphere of shared commitment to quality.

2 Presentation of the unit

The Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana is a private foundation, established in 1985, that manages three operationally autonomous schools: the Music School (non-professional section), the Pre-College Division (for high school students) and the University School of Music. It is the last of these upon which the accreditation procedure was focussed and, specifically, upon the Masters Programmes which have been offered within it since 2008.

The University School of Music (SUM) of the Conservatorio currently has fewer than 200 students. Its aim is to grow this number to 200-220. In addition, for reasons of Cantonal funding discussed more fully in Section 5.6, it aims to rebalance the present situation where some two-thirds of its students are non-Swiss to one where the distribution is roughly 50:50. In Switzerland, the SUM is the only university school of music in the Italian language and culture.

The SUM became affiliated to the Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana (SUPSI) by an accord of March 2006. Its relationship with the SUPSI is still evolving but is premised upon its maintaining the dual status of a school of the Fondazione CSI and an affiliated department of the SUPSI. The SUPSI is in the process of formulating its strategic plan for the period 2012-2020 and staff of the SUM are participating in this process.

The SUM is a member of the Konferenz Musikhochschulen Schweiz (KMHS) and its Vice Director was Chair of the KMHS Working Group which, in 2005, produced profiles for study programmes in music, distinguished by specific competence profiles or learning outcomes. The Masters programmes being considered for accreditation conform to the patterns agreed by the KMHS which, in its Masterkonzept Bologna (2005), defined the four main programme types – Music Pedagogy, Music Performance, Composition & Music Theory and Specialized Music Performance – along with the specialisms within these to be offered by each Musikhochschule within Switzerland. The four Masters programmes under consideration at the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana therefore display a pattern that is shared in common across the whole of Swiss higher music education and which, in addition to its specific national characteristics, is explicitly coordinated with more general guidelines for European music higher education produced by the AEC.

3 Accreditation procedure

The Swiss accreditation procedure for universities of applied science comprises an internal evaluation performed by the institution or study programme followed by an external evaluation by a team of independent experts. The group leader of this team produces a report (of which the present document is an example) which, after approval by the team as a whole, is sent to the OAQ. The OAQ sends the report to the evaluated unit which may express an opinion on the report's contents.

Based on these documents and the self-evaluation report, the OAQ sends its recommendation to the decision-making authority, the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA).

3.1 Group of experts

The group of experts assembled for this accreditation procedure was determined jointly by the OAQ and AEC. Its membership was as follows:

Peer Leader:	Dr Jeremy Cox Honorary Sabbatical Fellow Royal College of Music London UK
Experts:	Pascale de Groote Principal, Koninklijk Conservatorium Artesis Hogeschool Antwerpen, Antwerpen Belgium
	Simone Fontanelli Professor of Aufführungspraxis Neuer Musik University Mozarteum Salzburg Austria
	Norbert Pfammatter (student expert) MA in Specialised Music Performance Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne Lausanne Switzerland
	Valentina Sandu-Dediu Professor of Musicology National University of Music Bucharest Romania
	Michael Uhde Prorektor and Professor of Piano and Chamber Music Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe Karlsruhe Germany

3.2 Self evaluation report

The self-evaluation report produced by the University School of Music and supplied in advance of the on-site visit consisted of three elements:

- The **Main Text** – a document of 46 pages addressing each of the Areas and Standards of the OAQ procedure in turn. This document was cross-referenced to:
- A larger document of 77 **Examples**, supplementing and providing evidence for the statements in the main text. These examples were further supported by:
- A range of **Enclosures** provided in electronic form on the Conservatorio's website

Throughout the main text, references to the Examples were highlighted in yellow and those to the Enclosures in brown so as to aid cross-referral.

During the on-site visit, material previously only available electronically was also produced for the group in hard copy.

Despite the clear rationale for the division into three elements of the self-evaluation documentation, the strategy adopted and the need for constant cross-referencing did make for some difficulties from the perspective of the group of experts. Their work was greatly eased when, for example, hard copies of the shortened version of the *Guida dello Studente Universitario 2009-2010* were made available during the on-site visit itself.

The organisation of the Main Text in strict accordance with the Areas and Standards of the OAQ accreditation procedure meant that it initially read in a way that felt reactive and lacking in a strong, internally-driven vision. The group of experts was pleased to find this impression corrected by discussions during the on-site visit.

3.3 On-site-visit

The on-site visit was undertaken between Tuesday 9th February and Thursday 11th February 2010, with a briefing session for the group of experts on the evening of Monday 8th February. The various sessions comprising the visit may be summarised as follows:

Tuesday 9th February: meetings with the Director of the Conservatorio; with the Directing team (including the Director of the SUPSI and the President of the Fondazione); with those responsible for the four Masters programmes; and with students and teachers of the Masters in Composition & Music Theory. There were also tours of the main site (including the library facilities) and annexe (including the research department). Finally, the group attended rehearsals of two of the Conservatorio's ensembles.

Wednesday 10th February: meetings with teachers and students of the Masters in Music Pedagogy, the Masters in Music Performance and the Masters in Specialized Music Performance; with staff in the Department of Research & Development; and with those responsible for Quality Assurance. In the evening, the group attended a concert of varied solo and chamber works given by Bachelor and Masters students of the Conservatorio.

Thursday 11th February: meetings with members of the administrative and technical staff and with those responsible for professional development, national and international cooperation. Preparation by the group of its conclusions and debriefing session to staff of the Conservatorio.

The group felt that the range of individuals with whom it was able to meet, the nature of the discussions and the variety of supplementary material produced in response to requests during the course of the visit enabled it to make a full and well-informed appraisal of the Masters programmes being considered for accreditation and of the infrastructural and other resources of the institution necessary to underpin them. Accordingly, it was happy to make the comments and recommendations relating to compliance with quality standards which appear in Section Five.

4 Descriptions of the Programmes

4.1 Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

4.1.1 Description:

The Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy is a two-year full-time programme delivered across four semesters and with a total ECTS credit allocation of 120 credits. It is offered with two Majors: in Instrumental/Vocal Music Pedagogy and in Music Education, with a specialisation in elementary music education. A format for a 90-ECTS specialisation in secondary music education is published in the student guide, but is not yet fully developed and therefore not part of the current accreditation. The intention is for this programme to be delivered in conjunction with the SUPSI's education and professional training department, through which it would require a further professional training component of 60 ECTS.

Instrumental specialisms are offered in wind & brass, violin, other orchestral strings, harp, percussion, piano, guitar, accordion and harpsichord, recorder and viola da gamba. In all these specialisms, the curriculum is divided into practical and theoretical/pedagogical elements with more than half the credits in each year being allocated to the former. Students undertake a Masters Project, allocated 10 ECTS credits, in the second year.

The largest single component of the specialisation in elementary music education is that for professional practice, allocated 15 ECTS credits in both years. Students on this specialisation also undertake a Masters Project in the second year worth 10 credits.

The SUM benefits from sharing the same building with the Pre-College Division and Music School in terms of the opportunities this gives for pedagogy students to gain supervised teaching experience with younger age-groups. For example, the 'teaching to groups' component can draw upon a resource of some 2,500 pupils who attend the Music School. Another valuable opportunity is provided by the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* which organises concerts for families with parallel music ateliers for young children led by students of the SUM.

4.1.2 Analysis:

The curricula for the various specialist strands of this Masters programme in Music Pedagogy seem broadly appropriate for their intended purpose and in terms of generalised concepts of Masters-level study. The SUM acknowledges the potential anomaly of its offering a BA in Music & Movement and an MA in elementary music education where both programmes offer professional training for class music teachers working with pupils aged 4 to 12. Its rationale of the greater convenience of two years' training, rather than three, for most pedagogy students is not strongly compelling in itself, but there are special circumstances surrounding the delivery of Music & Movement training in Switzerland which lead to the same situation elsewhere of a BA in this specialism operating alongside an MA in Music Pedagogy.

The MA in Music Pedagogy has a fully-developed set of objectives and competence profiles. The competence profile for the major in instrumental/vocal pedagogy was developed by a KMHS working group on music pedagogy and subsequently approved by the KMHS. As befits a Masters programme, the objectives of the MA in Music Pedagogy speak of 'encouraging critical reflection and the capacity for individual judgement', alongside the more specific skills related to pedagogy. Such qualities should ideally be encouraged in all aspects of the programme and the teaching team clearly sees them as 'fundamental factors in the pedagogic formation in general'. This being the case, one would certainly expect them to be manifested explicitly in the research projects and, above all the second-year Masters project. In discussions with

students and teachers, it was not always clear that this connection was strongly felt. This may be partly a consequence of the programme's recent introduction, with its first graduates yet to be produced, but it should be borne in mind over the coming years that the Masters project needs to be integral to the programme as a whole.

The study plan contains a number of separate elements – between 15 and 19 according to specialism – each allocated its own number of ECTS credits. In practice, these are aggregated into larger modules and there appears to be significant flexibility as to which elements a student may take in a given year. There was some evidence that students felt less than completely certain about what was therefore required of them semester-by-semester, especially in the context of their being pioneers on the new programme.

4.1.3 Recommendations / suggestions:

The group would recommend that more thought be given to the kinds of Masters projects that pedagogy students might be encouraged to undertake and to ensuring that the kinds of infrastructure, support and encouragement for these point students in the direction of achieving a synthesis in these projects of the critical reflection and the capacity for individual judgement that are crucial to the programme as a whole. This is not an issue of quantity – every student has a total of 25.5 hours of individual support available to them for this element of the programme. Rather, it is a matter of ensuring that the support highlights in the most appropriate ways the qualities that students should be striving for in their projects.

The group would also suggest that the ordering of elements in the study guide and the sequence and groupings in which they appear in the individual students' learning plans be coordinated.

4.2 Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

4.2.1 Description:

The Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory is another of the four Masters types agreed by the KMHS within its Masterkonzept Bologna. At Lugano, only the specialisation in Composition is offered; again. It is a two-year full-time programme offered across four semesters and carrying a value of 120 ECTS.

The MA in Composition addresses students' skills in three areas: the deepening of their theoretical awareness; the refining of their technical capabilities; and the solidifying of their knowledge of the relevant new technologies. In relation to the last of these, the SUM collaborates with the *Accademia internazionale della Musica* (AIM) and the *Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti* (NABA), both in Milan.

Masters students in composition work with a resident tutor (15 ECTS in Year One; 8 ECTS in year Two) but also with various visiting teachers (8 ECTS in both years). They all work with live electronics, study the analysis, theory and practice of electronic music and work on the various techniques of computer-assisted composition. In the second year, they undertake a Masters project.

4.2.2 Analysis:

Programmes in composition can make heavy demands upon an institution's resources if composers are to have adequate opportunities for performances of their works. This means that a Masters programme in Composition demands a certain critical mass to be sustainable. The solutions found at the SUM are intelligent and effective; the emphasis on electronic music and the use of strategic partnerships with institutions of a high reputation and which are geographically well-situated largely eliminates the problems and concerns that might otherwise arise.

Composition students appear to have good opportunities for acoustic performances of their works as well. These include not only student performances but also collaborations with the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana*, with whom the Conservatorio has good relations.

The main workspaces for composers are co-located with the Dipartimento Ricerca e Sviluppo of the SUM, reinforcing the conceptual links between musical creativity and research that are important in the development of a Masters ethos for compositional training. Perhaps because of this, students' grasp of how their Masters project and main compositional activity might be integrated seemed relatively strong and clear compared with that of some of their peers on other Masters programmes. They also spoke of finding the formulations of the Learning Outcomes for the programme helpful in focussing their creative development.

Paradoxically, composition is not currently actively promoted as a brand of 'artistic research' by the Dipartimento Ricerca, although its associations with novelty, originality and exploration are valued. The concept of artistic research is well understood by the leadership of the research department, but it is not fore-grounded in the activities and priorities of the department, whose activities tend more to the empirical and scientific, and to the text-based in terms of their outputs. This, in turn, means that the often more problematic associations with artistic research of the kind of creative exploration that goes into a musical performance are largely avoided (see below). This picture is not untypical in Switzerland, but should be seen in an international context where artistic research is a widely-accepted, and growing, concept.

4.2.3 Recommendations / suggestions:

The group found much to commend in this programme. Perhaps its key suggestion would be for ways to be explored to spread the same ethos, in which practical and theoretical/reflective aspects are integrated, to the Masters programmes in Performance and Specialized Performance discussed below. As seen above, this might involve a reconsideration of institution's stance in relation to artistic research which, in turn, might need to be coordinated with developments across higher music education in Switzerland as a whole.

4.3 Master of Arts in Music Performance

4.3.1 Description:

The Master of Arts in Music Performance is, again, a two-year full-time programme. It is offered in three majors: instrumental/vocal music performance; wind orchestra conducting; and ensemble conducting (contemporary repertoire). The major in instrumental/vocal performance is offered with the same range of main studies as the MA in Music Pedagogy, although the structure of the MA in Performance is not differentiated between violin and harp and the other orchestral strings. The system of consecutive Masters agreed by the KMHS allows for students to take either the MA in Music Performance followed by that in Music Pedagogy or vice versa.

As is common with conservatoires, students entering the MA in performance at Lugano largely make their choice of where to study based upon the teacher of their main instrument they will find there. However, the specific focus of the Masters with the major in ensemble conducting (contemporary performance) had been the reason for two students choosing this programme.

The content of the curriculum for the instrumental/vocal music major makes it necessary for students to carry out some work as performers either in contemporary repertoire or early music – and possible for them to do so in both. As with the other Masters programmes, there is a Masters project worth 10 ECTS in the second year.

For many performers, this consists essentially of organising a concert project, although there is a minimum written requirement in all cases, even if only in the form of notes about the repertoire to be performed.

4.3.2 Analysis:

Students were aware of the support for the written or theoretical component of their Masters project work potentially on offer from staff in the research department and, in principle, welcomed this provision; in practice, however, several of those interviewed had not yet visited the department. Staff who teach the main instrument on the programme feel that the balance of theory and practice is appropriate (as opposed to the Bachelor which some feel is over-burdened with theory). They are often consulted on the Masters project and are sometimes the sole source of advice for students. This situation suggested a more varied, and sometimes more tenuous, connection between artistic practice and rigorous theoretical underpinning in the MA in Performance than that in the MA in Composition.

Situated adjacent to the Conservatorio in its main building is the *Fonoteca Nazionale Svizzera, Lugano*. This resource could be a wonderful stimulus for performance students seeking interesting project material but seems not to be used extensively at present.

Some students felt there could be still more performance opportunities but, in general, staff and students seemed to appreciate what was available and the group, too, saw the provision as comparing favourably with situations in other conservatoires. The enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers interviewed were striking and their good professional links were also used to the benefit of students. Locally, the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* and the *Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana* are both important links which provide performing and broadcasting opportunities for students. The *Orchestra* provides one solo opportunity for a Masters student each year and also organises audition-style evaluations involving panels drawn from the professional musicians.

4.3.3 Recommendations / suggestions:

In general, this programme appears to be functioning well. The area where the group would suggest that most attention be focussed is that of the Masters project and, more generally, the integration of this with the students' actions and thoughts in the rest of their studies. The twin resources of the expertise available in the Dipartimento di Ricerca e Sviluppo and the materials on hand in the *Fonoteca* are currently under-utilised and should be brought more systematically into the thinking of students on the programme and their main-instrument teachers.

4.4 Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

4.4.1 Description:

This Masters programme is unique to the Swiss system and is used in all the Swiss conservatoires. Because it does not have a counterpart outside the Swiss context, it provoked much of the discussion and questioning surrounding Performance programmes at the Conservatorio.

At the National level, two forces combined to generate a need for this programme. The first is the adoption of a three-year Bachelor programme which the KMHS, in its 2005 report, was adamant cannot be construed as a complete professional training for musicians. The threshold of professional preparedness is therefore seen as being reached at the end of the first Masters. In this context, the Masters in Specialized Music Performance offers talented students the opportunity to develop their skills still

further, whether in a deepening of their mastery of an existing specialism or in branching into other, related, specialisms.

The second driving force behind the introduction of a Masters in Specialized Music Performance is the exclusion, at least for the present, of conservatoires from participation in the third cycle of the Bologna degree structure. A consecutive Masters in Specialized Music Performance is not a third-cycle qualification, but it does give students the opportunity to focus upon their study of a main instrument at the higher education level for a total of seven years. Insofar as this programme is therefore in part a compensation for the lack of a third-cycle qualification, it has some unavoidably problematic aspects which are discussed below.

At the Conservatorio, three variants of the Masters in Specialized Music Performance are offered: for strings and wind, voice and 'other instruments', with the emphasis in each case on solo performance. Like the other three Masters programmes, this MA lasts two years full-time. Again, in common with the model for the other programmes, it includes a Masters project in the second year.

Although it is normally taken as a second Master, the MA in Specialized Music Performance can sometimes be entered directly on completion of a Bachelor qualification. In these circumstances the student's mark in the main instrument at the end of the Bachelor must be high and his or her suitability to enter directly into specialised solo-oriented study confirmed through careful interview. The group heard from one student who has begun the Masters in Performance but, subject to achievement and progress during the year, may be allowed to transfer to the Masters in Specialized Performance at the end of the first year.

Just as the mark at entry has a higher threshold than that for the Masters in Performance, the pass mark in the final examination is similarly set higher. Moreover, the recital to be performed by the student is longer than that for the Masters in Performance and other factors, such as repertoire chosen, reflect the high standards and soloistic focus of this programme.

4.4.2 Analysis:

There is a need for absolute clarity about what this programme is and what it is not. As one of a suite of four Masters programmes, it must, in general terms, be regarded as equivalent to any of the other four; and yet, as a natural follow-on from one of these, the Masters in Performance, it cannot avoid some connotations of being 'post-Masters' and therefore, in some sense, aspiring to the third cycle.

This ambiguity is not unique to the Conservatorio – it is to be found across the conservatoires of Switzerland and is not completely resolved by any of the local solutions adopted. In some ways, the model used in Lugano is clearer than some others: a differentiation of level in the marks expected both at admission and completion is made explicit and, because only solo routes are offered, there is not the need to reconcile this linear, intensifying specialization with others (eg into choir conducting) that are more lateral.

4.4.3 Recommendations / suggestions:

Here and there, the documentation provided for the programme does seem to hint at equivalence with the third cycle and all such references should be removed. Meanwhile, the growing prevalence of third-cycle qualifications offered by conservatoires across Europe and further afield makes it imperative that the situation in Switzerland should be kept under constant review and solutions sought at national level to ensure that the reputation of the country's provision in the field of higher music education does not suffer by comparison through the lack of any qualification beyond the second cycle. In the event that some such solution may be found in future, there was nothing witnessed during the group's visit to the Conservatorio that suggested

that it would be inappropriate on artistic or educational grounds for it to participate in a version of third-cycle provision that might be offered by other conservatoires in Switzerland.

5 Compliance with the Quality Standards

5.1 Area 1 Implementation and teaching objectives

5.1.1 Standard 1.01

The programme of study focuses on the learning objectives defined in the guidelines and strategic plan of the University of Applied Science, which generally prepare students for a diploma attesting to their professional qualification.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The mission statement of the Conservatorio speaks of providing high-quality training closely related to the practices and needs of the profession and this programme addresses the need for high-quality music teachers, whether in the area of instrumental/vocal training or elementary level education.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The mission statement speaks of providing high-quality training that strikes a balance between practice on the one hand, and theoretical, academic and cultural matters on the other, which this programme fulfils.

Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The same aspects of the mission statement as those for Composition & Music Theory are addressed. The Conservatorio should ensure that it continues to develop its support for the theoretical engagement of performers undertaking this Masters programme.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Within the constraints currently imposed by the national situation in Switzerland, which excludes conservatoires from third-cycle provision, this programme provides an important channel through which suitably talented performers can aspire to the highest quality of achievement in their chosen specialism.

All programmes

Standard 1.01.03 (AEC 2.3-a) 'Is the international strategy of the institution reflected in the programme(s)?' is also fulfilled. The mission statement speaks of the Conservatorio's ambition to occupy a strong position at the national level and to engage at an international level with the music profession. These Masters programmes all conform to national standards established by the KHMS and are consonant with European and international concepts of the content and level of challenge of second-cycle study.

5.1.2 Standard 1.02

The study programme is in principle determined according to international – and particularly European – criteria for the recognition of academic diplomas¹.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Criteria for the recognition of qualifications in Music Pedagogy vary from country to country, but the study programme offered is fully consistent with those offered elsewhere in Switzerland and has much in common with that found in masters in Music Pedagogy further afield.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory / Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

These programmes are consistent with Masters programmes in Performance and Composition as they are found across Europe and more widely.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Given the formal acceptance in Switzerland of the model of the Masters in Specialized Music Performance as being in accordance with the principles of Bologna, one would have to say that the standard is fulfilled, even though this type of programme is unique to Switzerland and not immediately transparent, to an outsider, in terms of its level and objectives.

5.1.3 Standard 1.03

The programme's feasibility is demonstrated.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme may benefit from some rationalisation of its numerous components but it appears to run effectively and the close synergy between the SUM and the Music School adds to the feasibility of offering plentiful opportunities for teaching experience.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

A focus upon electronic composition and some strategic partnerships make this programme feasible despite small numbers and the low critical mass of the Conservatorio as a whole.

Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

There are good opportunities for performance and resources available onsite and in the immediate vicinity which could enhance the feasibility of this programme still further.

¹ For regulated professions, both Swiss regulations concerning the exercise of the profession and EU Directives should be taken into account.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme uses essentially the same resources as the Masters in Performance. Strict control on numbers means that the kind of high-level performance opportunities which it requires can be sustainably delivered in appropriate quantities.

5.1.4 Standard 1.04

Equal opportunity for men and women is assured ² .

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Statistics suggest a culture which is not discriminatory in terms of equal opportunity for men and women. In future, it would be beneficial to have more pro-active systems in place to monitor and assure equality.

5.2 Area 2 Internal organisation and quality assurance measures

5.2.1 Standard 2.01

The decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been established and implemented accordingly.

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

Standard compliance: fulfilled / **partially fulfilled** / not fulfilled

The competencies and responsibilities of staff within the SUM are defined and published. However, in practice, decisions are not necessarily taken in conformity with this published information. Partly as a consequence of this, the information itself is not generally internalised by staff or students. Like many smaller conservatoires, the SUM relies to a large extent upon informal lines of communication and upon a small core of dedicated staff who are accessible to colleagues and capable of producing rapid responses to problems. Such an arrangement suits the prevalent anti-bureaucratic culture amongst musicians, but carries threats to long-term sustainability of an institution. The SUM needs to strengthen, and then enforce, the processes that will ensure that issues are resolved according to the published competencies and responsibilities.

Standard 2.01.02 (AEC 5.4-b) 'Is there a long-term strategy for the improvement of the organisational decision-making structure?' poses a helpful challenge to the SUM. An interim strategy for 2010 to 2012 exists in some areas but effort should now be focussed on full participation in the evolution of the strategic plan for the SUPSI 2012-2017. The dual reporting lines of the SUM – to the Fondazione CSI and to the SUPSI – have worked up to a point but it is clear that decision-making in certain areas is impeded by them. It is important for this to be addressed as part of the development strategic plan for the SUPSI.

² Standards on equal opportunity (1.04 – 4.03 – 5.02) can be processed together. However, it is essential to include the specific characteristics of each standard.

5.2.2 Standard 2.02

Teaching staff and students are appropriately consulted on decisions affecting their respective activities.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Although the lack of clear processes referred to under Standard 2.01 is relevant here, too, staff and students generally seem to feel content with the level of *informal* consultation that takes place. If anything, the student perspective seemed to be that the SUM could afford to be more decisive in its decision-making and then firmer and more consistent in the application of decisions. A concern to respond flexibly to each individual student sometimes led to delays in publishing more general information and/or late changes to such information.

After their first year of operation, all four Masters programmes seem to have undergone some modification in the light of this experience and taking into account students' views. However, this was not captured in any documented way. Ongoing monitoring and enhancement of programmes will require at least a minimum of documentation to track the changes and avoid an accumulation of minor adjustments leading unintentionally to a major departure from accredited programmes.

Standard 2.02.03 (AEC 5.5-b) 'How are former students involved in the quality process?' is partially answered by the online questionnaire provided among the **Examples** given to the group. However, this exercise will need to be repeated periodically and to become an embedded part of the quality assurance procedures of the SUM.

5.2.3 Standard 2.03

The practical orientation and quality of the programme are verified regularly. The results are used for future programme development.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As seen above, *oral* verification of the practical orientation and quality of the programme does take place frequently and there is evidence from the accounts of students and staff in these early years of the programme of the results feeding back into programme development. However, the verification processes are undocumented and are not conducted to any systematically regular timetable. This should be addressed; otherwise, over time, one would have to conclude that the full sense of this standard is only partially being fulfilled.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As above, although the small number of students and close working relationship between them and specialist staff mitigate the dangers of an informal approach. In the longer term, however, documentation from year to year will be needed here, too.

Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Music Pedagogy

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Music Pedagogy

5.3 Area 3 Curriculum and teaching methods

5.3.1 Standard 3.01

The programme has a structured curriculum which corresponds to the coordinated implementation of the Bologna Declaration in universities of applied science.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As already seen, the programme conforms to the pattern determined in the Masterkonzept Bologna (2005) developed by the KHMS.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Music Pedagogy.

Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Music Pedagogy.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Music Pedagogy.

5.3.2 Standard 3.02

The programme focuses on teaching and learning objectives and a qualification, which is generally professionally oriented with a clearly determined profile³.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme trains students either for instrumental/vocal teaching or for work in elementary music education and its learning objectives reflect this. In the former case, it complements a programme such as the MA in Performance which develops the personal performing capabilities of the students. In terms of the 'Dublin Descriptors', more thought might be given to whether the programme provides 'a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas'.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme has clear learning objectives which the students find helpful in orienting their learning. It is professionally oriented in terms of the professional

³ See the "Dublin descriptors" which regulate multidisciplinary and specific competences in the European context, and the "Diploma Supplement", which explains for each bachelor's and master's degree the main form and content characteristics of the corresponding programmes

opportunities already available to students during their studies and appears to encourage them to 'integrate knowledge and handle complexity'.

Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme provides a solid completion of the professional training for performers. It appears largely successful in its attempt to balance theory and practice but there may be further ways in which delivery could be refined so as to 'provide a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas'.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The programme meets a legitimate need for training young performers who are capable of entering the profession at a high level. More might still be done to ensure that the flexibility and individual tailoring of the programme encourages students to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous'.

All programmes

Standard 3.02.03 (AEC 3.2-a,b) 'Are graduates successful in finding work in today's highly competitive music life? How do the graduates contribute to the enhancement of cultural life locally, nationally and internationally?' does appear to be met. Even while studying, students are making a variety of contributions to local cultural life, such as the ateliers for young musicians run in conjunction with the OSI, and a certain number of graduates do appear able to make their mark subsequently on the national/international scene (although it should be remembered that evidence for this based specifically on the new Masters programmes is not yet available).

Standard 3.02.07 (AEC 2.2-e) 'What kind of role does research have in the programme?' is one that the SUM should consider closely. The Dipartimento Ricerca e Sviluppo is an extremely valuable resource and one which does figure to some extent in the lives of Masters students. However, much more could be done to encourage all students' awareness of, and engagement with, the department. Physical re-integration of the department with the main facilities of the SUM, envisaged in some of the infrastructure plans currently under consideration, would help in this respect. Meanwhile, although there is no intention to divide the library resources devoted to teaching and research, the accumulation of a small collection of research-oriented books and other resources in the research department, and therefore divorced from the main library facilities, might be seen as sending an unfortunate message about the relationship between the study programmes at the SUM and its research activity.

Standard 3.02.08 (AEC 2.2-c) 'Are the students offered opportunities to present their creative work?' is well addressed. The group felt that the range and number of performance opportunities available to students was considerable, given the size of the institution.

5.3.3 Standard 3.03

The programme has a modular structure which uses a system of credits and exams during the course of study.
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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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

All four programmes have a modular structure which uses the ECTS system of credits. The blend of exams and other criteria for allocating credits – eg satisfactory attendance – might usefully be kept under review, as might the extent to which students may progress from one semester or year to the next with more or fewer credits than the normal 30/60. Module sharing between programmes, coupled with a greater degree of student choice (or, equally, documentation which more accurately reflects the level of choice already available in practice) might also be an area for review.

Standard 3.03.04 (AEC 2.4-b) 'What kind of grading system is being used in examination and assessments?'. The SUM uses a 1-6 numerical scale where 4 is the pass threshold. This scale is sometimes used in conjunction with a letter-grading system where A-E correspond to 6-4, FX to 3.99-3.50 and F to 3.49-1.

5.3.4 Standard 3.04

The conditions for acquiring certificates of achievement and diplomas are regulated and made public.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The conditions are regulated and made public. Not all the information is immediately available in a single location and there may be some value in reviewing how information is grouped to ensure that, for example, the specific numerical threshold required at both entrance and final examination for the MA in Specialised Music Performance appears in the same place as other information about this programme, and in the most obvious place where potential applicants to the programme might be searching.

5.3.5 Standard 3.05

The competencies that must be acquired (learning outcomes) during the bachelor's and master's programmes are clearly distinguished (progressive competence profiles⁴).

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The competencies are appropriate to Masters level. The anomaly of the BA in Music & Movement having some similar competences has already been discussed in 4.1.2.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory / Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The competencies are distinguished from those of the BA and are congruent with the recommendations of the KMHS.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: fulfilled / **partially fulfilled** / not fulfilled

The objectives of this programme are expressed identically to those of the MA in Performance. By contrast, the competencies are clearly distinguished. Especially given the problematic status of the programme as both equivalent to the others and

⁴ See the cooperation agreement between the Confederation and the cantons (draft agreement of May 2007)

higher than them, the group would recommend that the objectives, as well as the competencies, be carefully distinguished from those of the Performance MA.

All programmes

Standard 3.05.02 (AEC 2.1-d) 'Does the curriculum make reference to the various aspects of the 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors' (PDDs) and/or the AEC learning outcomes?' is met implicitly by the fact that both these documents were used by the KMHS when producing its Masterkonzept Bologna, with which all these programmes comply. As section 5.3.2 shows, however, there might be some merit in the curriculum itself making more explicit reference to some of the phrases and concepts from these documents.

5.3.6 Standard 3.06

The conditions for admission to the university of applied science ensure internal coherence between the competencies acquired during a bachelor's programme and those required for admission to a master's programme.

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Other than in the case of the BA in Music & Movement already discussed, this standard is fulfilled.

Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory / Master of Arts in Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

There is clear internal coherence between Bachelor and Masters levels with these programmes.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The exceptional circumstances under which a student might progress directly from the Bachelor to this Masters programme are actually quite clearly described. The fact that progression is more usually via a first Masters in performance puts a certain strain on internal coherence, but one that is generally managed as well as it can be, in the circumstances.

5.4 Area 4 Teaching staff

5.4.1 Standard 4.01

Courses are taught by educationally competent, artistically⁵ and academically qualified teaching staff, who are graduates of a higher education institution and have several years of professional experience⁶.

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

Standard compliance: fulfilled / **partially fulfilled** / not fulfilled

⁵ „Artistically“ has been added to this specific set of standards for Music Higher Education Institutions.

⁶ In certain areas, the requirement for a “higher education institution” level diploma may, exceptionally, be waived, provided that proof is provided of a comparable competence.

In common with almost all conservatoires, the SUM employs teaching staff by no means all of whom are 'graduates of a higher education institution', but who nevertheless have the artistic competencies to be excellent teachers. It is in this sense that the Standard is regarded as being only partially fulfilled, although footnote 6, below, does address the situation in explaining that, in certain areas, the requirement may, exceptionally, be waived. One very positive consequence of the move across Europe to a Bachelor/Masters (and, in some countries, Doctorate) classification for conservatoire training is that future generations of teachers are likely to fulfil this standard without special waivers.

Standard 4.01.05 (AEC 4.2-b) 'Are policies and strategies in place for continuous development of teaching staff?' is of great relevance here. Rather than waiting for generational change to resolve the question of higher education qualifications for staff, the SUM needs to be working pro-actively to support staff wishing to gain such qualifications. Support is currently available for professional development but tends to be offered reactively, when an individual member of staff takes the personal initiative to engage in some such activity.

5.4.2 Standard 4.02

Most teaching staff are also active within a more extensive service mandate.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Again, it is not the usual pattern in conservatoires for most teachers to be active within a more extensive service mandate; on the contrary, it is felt to be a strength of conservatoire teaching that most teachers are active outside the institution and in the profession when not teaching. The range of teaching staff with more extensive service mandates at the SUM seems appropriate to this kind of institution and consistent with what would be found elsewhere.

5.4.3 Standard 4.03

Both men and women are fairly represented within the teaching staff.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

There is no evidence on unfairness in the representation but, as with Standard 1.04, a more pro-active and explicitly articulated policy would be helpful.

5.5 Area 5 Students

5.5.1 Standard 5.01

The qualifications required for admission to the programme and those to be awarded on graduation are defined, communicated and verified.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

The *Guida dello Studente Universitario* lays out these requirements in a clear manner.

5.5.2 Standard 5.02

Equal opportunity for men and women is assured and the principles of non-discrimination are applied.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

As for Standard 4.03.

5.5.3 Standard 5.03

The programme of study encourages student mobility. Study achievements (credits) attained in other higher education institutions are recognised.

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

Standard compliance: fulfilled / **partially fulfilled** / not fulfilled

In principle, the programmes of study, in that they are themselves credit-rated and structured in semesters, permit the recognition of credits achieved in other higher education institutions. Similarly, their structure in principle enables students to take credits that they have accumulated if they move to another institution.

In practice, however, the feeling is that students will wish to complete the entirety of their Masters education at the one institution, rather than taking advantage of exchange, or other mobility-enhancing, options. Hardly any mobility within the span of qualifications therefore takes place.

On the other hand, most Bachelor students at the SUM go elsewhere for their Masters study, while the institution receives a healthy number of entrants from other conservatoires for its own Masters programmes. In this sense, 'vertical mobility' can be seen to be operating very effectively, attesting to the compatibility of the SUM's programmes with those of other institutions, the quality of its BA graduates and the attractiveness of its Masters provision.

5.5.4 Standard 5.04

Appropriate guidance and support are available to students.

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

Standard compliance: **fulfilled** / partially fulfilled / not fulfilled

Students are well supported and find staff accessible when they are seeking guidance. For this reason, the standard is regarded as being fulfilled. However, as was seen in the discussion of Standard 2.01, decision-making processes and the authority to take decisions are not always clear or consistent and this can sometimes lead to confused or contradictory answers. It also places disproportionate pressure and responsibility upon a small number of individuals.

Existing published responsibilities need to be put more consistently into practice. Once this has been achieved, there should be a review of whether these processes are adequate for the demands of a growing population of Masters students.

5.6 Area 6 Facilities and premises

5.6.1 Standard 6.01

The programme has adequate resources available to attain its objectives. These resources are provided on a long-term basis.

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

Standard compliance: fulfilled / **partially fulfilled** / not fulfilled

Since its affiliation to the SUPSI, the SUM has made great strides in terms of securing its long-term viability. Staff spoke enthusiastically of beginning to move from a phase of survival to one of strategic planning. There are three elements necessary to strategic financial development and sustainability for the next decade: financial support for teaching foreign students, more adequate support for research and investments in new infrastructure. These are goals for the entire SUPSI and not just for the SUM. Current funding sources for the SUM are: the Confederation, the Cantons (inter-Cantonal Convention), the SUPSI, student fees, private donations and fundraising campaigns.

The overall goal is that the SUM should maintain its artistic independence while increasing its proximity to, and integration with, the SUPSI. The hope is that more federal funds will become available for investments in research within the period of the SUPSI's new strategic plan 2012-2017, enabling collaborations with other higher education institutions nationally or abroad. If one of the possible plans for new buildings – a campus near the railway station – were realised, this would not only enable all the activities of the SUM to be co-located but would also allow more contacts between Conservatorio and SUPSI students.

It will be important to negotiate different financing criteria with the Canton as far as foreign students are concerned (such changes could not take place before 2012). The effectiveness of the SUM in attracting foreign students is currently a financial liability but, from a different perspective, could be seen as bringing additional economic and cultural resource into the Ticino region and therefore something to be encouraged.

Standard 6.01.03 (AEC 5.3-b) 'Are policies and strategies in place for continuous development of technical and administrative staff?' is a point for the SUM to consider carefully. Administrative staff currently feel at their capacity; they do benefit from contact with their counterparts in the SUPSI and certain systems have now been adopted in conformity with those used by the SUPSI. A strategic policy for the development of administrative and technical staff, conceived at SUPSI level, will be important for the coming decade.

5.7 Area 7 Public interaction

This area is specific to AEC standards and has no equivalent with OAQ generic standards.

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

Standard 7.01.01 (AEC 6.1-a) 'Is the programme involved in the public discourse on cultural and musical policies and other relevant issues?'. The close links between the SUM, the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* and the *Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana* mean that the institution and the Masters programmes which it runs are embedded in the regional public discourse about these issues.

Standard 7.01.02 (AEC 6.1-b) 'To what extent does the programme initiate and involve itself in projects challenging existing musical policies and practices?'. Initiatives such as the concerts for families organised by the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* with parallel music ateliers for young children led by students of the SUM provide evidence of this involvement.

Standard 7.01.03 (AEC 6.2-a) 'How does the programme communicate and interact with various sectors of the music profession in order to keep in touch with their needs?'. The close ongoing involvement of most teachers with the music profession ensures that the Sum stays in close touch with the needs of that profession. Teachers maintain direct and personal follow-up with alumni, who get in touch with their teachers regularly. Because numbers are relatively small, teachers know about the careers of each one of their ex-students

Standard 7.01.04 (AEC 6.2-b) 'How does the programme participate in the exploration of new professional possibilities for musicians?'. The embracing of new technology by the MA in Composition, and of contemporary repertoire by the MA in Performance ensemble conducting major could be regarded as examples of this.

Standard 7.01.05 (AEC 6.2-c) 'Is there a long term strategy for the improvement of the links with the profession?'. Current links are good, and reflected in the attendance of representatives from the profession at a session during the on-site visit and their evident enthusiasm and commitment to the synergies already achieved. It will be important to maintain these links.

Standard 7.01.06 (AEC 6.3-a) 'Is the actual course programme consistent with the information given to the public on what the programme offers?'. Perhaps the only possible caveat here would be the impression given here and there in documentation that the MA in Specialized Music Performance has some kind of equivalence to third-cycle study. As already indicated, this should be rectified.

6 Overall impression

It should be stated straight away that the foregoing list of standards and their fulfilment does not do justice to the profound overall impression taken away by the group from their on-site visit. It was clear to everyone that the Masters programmes that have been developed by the SUM function in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, engagement and almost family-like support that are to be cherished. Students feel that they have made the right choice in coming to Lugano; teachers typically remain working at the institution for long periods and seem deeply fulfilled by their work there; senior staff display a level of dedication to, and identification with, the institution that is rare, even in conservatoires. One member of the group summed up this impression by saying that he detected:

‘...a true “vision” of the future amongst staff and students. They are pursuing it with competence and conscientiousness, but also with humility and sincere love for what they are doing’.

With this in mind, the group is aware of the risks involved in recommending, as it does frequently throughout this document, a greater level of procedural formality, more consistent documenting of activity and actions and a generally more ‘institutional’ and less ‘familial’ approach. Nevertheless, the group believes that it is vital for the next

stage of development that the SUM should take some measured but purposeful steps in the direction of formality. Its long-term sustainability depends upon it working in a more integrated way with the SUPSI and participating in an even fuller way (and one less dependent upon exceptional involvement by individuals) in national, European and international developments.

At the same time, it is important that the Conservatorio retain its special local character, its identification with the Ticino region and its close integration with the musical and wider cultural life there. It has a role to play which, in certain respects, is more crucial than that of a large conservatoire in a major capital city and it is currently discharging this role with great effectiveness. The group hopes that its recommendations will encourage the retention and strengthening of what is already successful – and special in its character – alongside the adoption of more systematic procedures and more overtly strategic planning systems.

7 Strengths and weaknesses

As just seen, the key strength of the programmes is that they take place in an atmosphere of mutual commitment and enthusiasm between students, teachers and senior staff. Staff are very loyal, and students very supportive of the institution. The level of student involvement is good, with an active student association and a general level of self-awareness and self-reliance which reflect well on the institution's ability to produce Masters graduates with appropriate generic competencies. Teachers are obviously committed to their students, but not so protective as to regret the high level of turn-over between the Bachelor and Masters stages. Senior staff maintain an 'open-door' policy, seeking to resolve problems personally and speedily when they arise. In practice, they work to offer an individually-tailored learning experience for students.

There is a general sense of making the most of whatever opportunities present themselves as, for example in the focussing upon contemporary ensemble repertoire for conductors, thereby turning the difficulty of assembling a full symphony orchestra in a small conservatoire into a positive advantage and a distinctive feature that specifically attracts a certain type of student. For performers, the range of chamber opportunities is good and even the orchestral programme is impressive for an institution of this size.

The high level of international students, the international background of many teachers and the international outlook of a number of senior staff all bode well for the direction in which the SUM will need to continue to develop. There is a young, but already more than respectable, research profile within the institution and strong ambition to consolidate this at an international level. Although there are aspects of the SUM's affiliated status within the SUPSI which need to be clarified and strengthened, there is already a sense of the necessary will on both sides to make this affiliation work.

As far as weaknesses are concerned, these mostly relate to the pivotal point at which the SUM currently finds itself. Having grown across fewer than 30 years as the top tier of a privately founded and funded institution, it has had to adapt rapidly in recent years to the far-reaching changes and reforms in higher education in Europe and to re-position itself within the national framework of Universities of Applied Science. The distance it has already travelled is little short of remarkable but, as staff are well aware, it is entering a phase where strategic planning, formalisation of processes and a rebalancing from individual tailoring to flexible, but transparent and consistent, provision for all students will need to come to the fore.

At present, there is insufficient documentation of decisions and actions for a reliable quality-assurance trail to be maintained. Existing documentation needs to be

internalised by staff and students and followed more consistently (or else changed if it proves inappropriate). The boundaries of individual flexibility need to be drawn more clearly so that one student's freedom does not interfere with the efficient learning of others. Senior staff's availability probably needs to be formalised into scheduled times, rather than their being open to interruption at almost any time.

In general, actions need to be more carefully planned and more systematically checked for their effectiveness. Without becoming too much a slave to management theory, the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycle would be a useful model to apply to more important decisions. Certain actions need to be regularised into annual cycles. This would certainly include annual monitoring of each Masters programme, whose absence in any formally documented sense is a weakness currently.

For an institution that is elsewhere adept at making the very best use of the resources available to it, the relative lack of integration of the research department into the learning and teaching of the Masters programmes and the under-use of the *Fonoteca Nazionale Svizzera, Lugano* are surprising and somewhat disappointing. Relatively small changes here could greatly strengthen the research dimension of the programmes. Both the research department and the *Fonoteca* are resources to be cherished and should be placed prominently within the SUM's strategic planning for the next period.

And finally, for this strategic planning to be effective it must be thoroughly embedded within that for the SUPSI as a whole. Although dialogue is taking place in this area, it seemed less dynamic, and less at the forefront of thinking within the SUM, than should be the case.

8 List of recommendations and suggestions for quality enhancement

The following recommendations and suggestions are collated from earlier sections of the report. The paragraphs where they originally occur are indicated.

Although the list of recommendations may appear extensive, many paragraphs offer different examples of the same fundamental points, most notably that of the need for greater systemisation and fuller documentation.

8.1 Recommendations

4.1.3 The group would recommend that more thought be given to the kinds of Masters projects that pedagogy students might be encouraged to undertake and to ensuring that the kinds of infrastructure, support and encouragement for these point students in the direction of achieving a synthesis in these projects of the critical reflection and the capacity for individual judgement that are crucial to the programme as a whole.

4.4.3 Here and there, the documentation provided for the MA in Specialized Music Performance does seem to hint at equivalence with the third cycle and all such references should be removed. Meanwhile, the growing prevalence of third-cycle qualifications offered by conservatoires across Europe and further afield makes it imperative that the situation in Switzerland should be kept under constant review and solutions sought at national level to ensure that the reputation of the country's provision in the field of higher music education does not suffer by comparison through the lack of any qualification beyond the second cycle.

5.1.4 Standard 1.04 all programmes: In future, it would be beneficial to have more pro-active systems in place to monitor and assure equality.

5.2.1 Standard 2.01 all programmes: The competencies and responsibilities of staff within the SUM are defined and published. However, in practice, decisions are not necessarily taken in conformity with this published information. Partly as a consequence of this, the information itself is not generally internalised by staff or students. [...] The SUM needs to strengthen, and then enforce, the processes that will ensure that issues are resolved according to the published competencies and responsibilities.

Standard 2.01.02 (AEC 5.4-b) 'Is there a long-term strategy for the improvement of the organisational decision-making structure?' poses a helpful challenge to the SUM. An interim strategy for 2010 to 2012 exists in some areas but effort should now be focussed on full participation in the evolution of the strategic plan for the SUPSI 2012-2017.

5.2.2 Standard 2.02 all programmes: Ongoing monitoring and enhancement of programmes will require at least a minimum of documentation to track the changes and avoid an accumulation of minor adjustments leading unintentionally to a major departure from accredited programmes.

Standard 2.02.03 (AEC 5.5-b) 'How are former students involved in the quality process?' is partially answered by the online questionnaire provided among the **Examples** given to the group. However, this exercise will need to be repeated periodically and to become an embedded part of the quality assurance procedures of the SUM.

5.2.3 Standard 2.03 all programmes: As seen above, oral verification of the practical orientation and quality of the programme does take place frequently and there is evidence from the accounts of students and staff in these early years of the programme of the results feeding back into programme development. However, the verification processes are undocumented and are not conducted to any systematically regular timetable. This should be addressed.

5.3.5 Standard 3.05 Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance: Especially given the problematic status of the programme as both equivalent to the others and higher than them, the group would recommend that the objectives, as well as the competencies, be carefully distinguished from those of the Performance MA.

5.4.1 Standard 4.01.05 (AEC 4.2-b) 'Are policies and strategies in place for continuous development of teaching staff?' is of great relevance here. Rather than waiting for generational change to resolve the question of higher education qualifications for staff, the SUM needs to be working pro-actively to support staff wishing to gain such qualifications.

5.4.3 Standard 4.03 all programmes: There is no evidence on unfairness in the representation but, as with Standard 1.04, a more pro-active and explicitly articulated policy would be helpful.

5.5.2 Standard 5.02 all programmes: As for Standard 4.03.

5.5.4 Standard 5.04 all programmes: Existing published responsibilities need to be put more consistently into practice. Once this has been achieved, there should be a review of whether these processes are adequate for the demands of a growing population of Masters students.

5.6.1 Standard 6.01.03 (AEC 5.3-b) 'Are policies and strategies in place for continuous development of technical and administrative staff?' is a point for the SUM to consider carefully. Administrative staff currently feel at their capacity; they do benefit from contact with their counterparts in the SUPSI and certain systems have now been adopted in conformity with those used by the SUPSI.

A strategic policy for the development of administrative and technical staff, conceived at SUPSI level, will be important for the coming decade.

- 7 Weaknesses: The SUM is entering a phase where strategic planning, formalisation of processes and a rebalancing from individual tailoring to flexible, but transparent and consistent, provision for all students will need to come to the fore.

At present, there is insufficient documentation of decisions and actions for a reliable quality-assurance trail to be maintained. Existing documentation needs to be internalised by staff and students and followed more consistently (or else changed if it proves inappropriate). The boundaries of individual flexibility need to be drawn more clearly so that one student's freedom does not interfere with the efficient learning of others. Senior staff's availability probably needs to be formalised into scheduled times, rather than their being open to interruption at almost any time.

In general, actions need to be more carefully planned and more systematically checked for their effectiveness. Certain actions need to be regularised into annual cycles. This would certainly include annual monitoring of each Masters programme, whose absence in any formally documented sense is a weakness currently.

Both the research department and the *Fonoteca* are resources to be cherished and should be placed prominently within the SUM's strategic planning for the next period.

And finally, for this strategic planning to be effective it must be thoroughly embedded within that for the SUPSI as a whole. Although dialogue is taking place in this area, it seemed less dynamic, and less at the forefront of thinking within the SUM, than should be the case.

8.2 Suggestions

- 4.1.3 The group would suggest that the ordering of elements in the study guide and the sequence and groupings in which they appear in the individual students' learning plans be coordinated.
- 4.2.3 Ways to be explored to spread the same ethos of the MA in Composition & Theory, in which practical and theoretical/reflective aspects are integrated, to the Masters programmes in Performance and Specialized Performance.
- 4.3.3 The area of the Masters in Music Performance where the group would suggest that most attention be focussed is that of the Masters project and, more generally, the integration of this with the students' actions and thoughts in the rest of their studies. The twin resources of the expertise available in the Dipartimento di Ricerca e Sviluppo and the materials on hand in the *Fonoteca* are currently under-utilised and should be brought more systematically into the thinking of students on the programme and their main-instrument teachers.
- 5.1.3 Standard 1.03 Masters in Music Pedagogy: The programme may benefit from some rationalisation of its numerous components.
- Standard 1.03 Master of Arts in Music Performance: There are good opportunities for performance and resources available onsite and in the immediate vicinity which could enhance the feasibility of this programme still further.
- 5.3.2 Standard 3.02 Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy: In terms of the 'Dublin Descriptors', more thought might be given to whether the programme provides 'a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas'.

Master of Arts in Music Performance: The programme [...] appears largely successful in its attempt to balance theory and practice but there may be further ways in which delivery could be refined so as to 'provide a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas'.

Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance: More might still be done to ensure that the flexibility and individual tailoring of the programme encourages students to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous'.

- 5.3.3 Standard 3.03 all programmes: The blend of exams and other criteria for allocating credits – eg satisfactory attendance – might usefully be kept under review, as might the extent to which students may progress from one semester or year to the next with more or fewer credits than the normal 30/60. Module sharing between programmes, coupled with a greater degree of student choice (or, equally, documentation which more accurately reflects the level of choice already available in practice) might also be an area for review.
- 5.3.4 Standard 3.04 all programmes: Not all the information is immediately available in a single location and there may be some value in reviewing how information is grouped.

9 Conclusion

Global compliance with the standards (accreditation recommendation)

9.1 Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy

Accreditation **recommended**, whilst noting the recommendations and suggestions in Section 8

9.2 Master of Arts in Composition & Music Theory

Accreditation **recommended**, whilst noting the recommendations and suggestions in Section 8

9.3 Master of Arts in Music Performance

Accreditation **recommended**, whilst noting the recommendations and suggestions in Section 8

9.4 Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance

Accreditation **recommended**, whilst noting the recommendations and suggestions in Section 8