

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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## Contents

List of abbreviations.....	2
Message from the MusiQuE Board.....	3
About MusiQuE .....	4
MusiQuE Structure .....	5
Peer-Reviewers Register.....	7
Review Procedures.....	8
Finances .....	9
Internal Quality Assurance.....	10
Communication and external relations .....	11

## List of abbreviations

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

**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

During 2019, MusiQuE continued with its strong development that was started in previous years. The number of procedures reached a record high and also the increased variety of procedures is an interesting development to acknowledge: in addition to the regular ESG-based programme and institutional reviews and accreditations, MusiQuE also further developed its new concept for external review based on the work of 'Critical Friends' and started with several benchmarking exercises, showing that its strategy to innovate and diversify its services is being successful.

Another important objective for 2019 was the preparation for the review of MusiQuE at the beginning of 2020. For this review, which was carried out by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in the US as the review coordinator based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG), a complete revision took place of MusiQuE's documentation. Firstly, the Board formulated, following many discussions and consultations, a new Strategic Paper and Action Plan 2020-2025. This Paper included a new Mission & Vision, a further elaboration of the organisation's main goals and a detailed Action Plan. To accompany this important policy document, a Business Plan for the same period was also elaborated, showing the financial planning of the organisation for the next years to come. On the level of the procedural documentation, the original Framework Document was reworked into Guidelines for Institutions, Guidelines for Peer Reviewers and Internal Regulations, making the information more tailor-made for different target groups. A separate document on Complaints and Appeals was also produced, as was a Handbook for the Critical Friend Reviews.

Through the revision of its documentation, MusiQuE was able to consolidate many improvements that were made over the years to its procedures, based on feedback received by various stakeholders (institutions, peer reviewers, etc), the external evaluator and the recommendations made during the previous external review of MusiQuE in 2015. These efforts demonstrate the robustness and high level of expertise of the organisation, hopefully leading to the renewal of MusiQuE's registration with EQAR, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, in 2020. MusiQuE is still listed on EQAR as the only specialised agency in the field of the arts and humanities.

Another important document published in 2019 was the fourth Trend Analysis. This document, which is based on the analysis of 13 MusiQuE review reports, gives a fascinating insight of the current state of higher music education worldwide. It shows the sector is healthy and vibrant with overall high standards, but also points out several areas of possible improvement, such as the use of learning outcomes, assessment, staff working conditions and quality assurance. The Trend Analysis can serve as an important basis for further debate in the AEC.

The MusiQuE register for peer-reviewers is expanding. The peer-reviewers come from AEC member institutions, but increasingly also from EMU and Pearle\*. As every year, a workshop was held in Torino in November 2019 to train new and update experienced reviewers, including a growing number of students.

Due to the high number of procedures and an increased level of income, the professionalisation of the organisation continued with the further expansion of the MusiQuE Team in Brussels. The Board greatly benefited from the input of the first student member to the Board, who started in February 2018.

In the introduction to the 2018 Annual Report, the Board highlighted several challenges with regards to cross-border quality assurance processes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). National legislative frameworks are still a major impediment for organisations such as MusiQuE to function freely in the EHEA, even despite the registration on EQAR. It is hoped that the ambition of making internationally based subject-specific external quality assurance a viable option for institutions (an ambition expressed in the Bologna process) will continue to be addressed at the appropriate political levels.

Finally, we should express our sincere gratitude to all those that are working hard to make MusiQuE a success. Firstly, to our partner organisations AEC, Pearle\* and EMU for their trust and continuous support to the development of MusiQuE. Secondly, to the excellent MusiQuE Team in Brussels: we are very fortunate to have such a highly skilled and professional staff team in place. And finally, to all MusiQuE reviewers: they are all helping us to realize our mission of working internationally to uphold and advance the quality of music education.

## 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, which have become MusiQuE's direct partner 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 Organizations

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. During 2019, preparations took place for an external review in early 2020 to maintain the EQAR registration. These preparations were done in cooperation with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in US, the coordinator of the review, which was based on the European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).

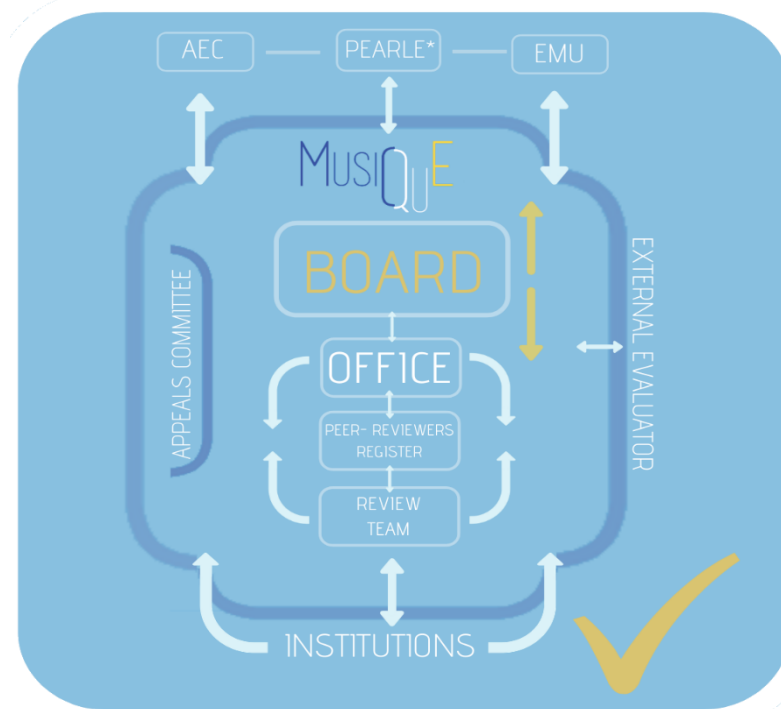
In preparation of the 2020 review, a new Mission and Vision was formulated that can be found on the website at the following [link](#).

## MusiQuE Structure

The structure of MusiQuE comprises of four elements:

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

The following diagram summarises MusiQuE's structure:



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

Board composition 2019:

- 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
- Rosa Welker, former Master Student at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste



Board meetings took place in Brussels (May and October 2019) and by several meetings via Skype. Summaries of the physical meetings can be found on the following links: [Spring Board Meeting](#), [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 2019:

- Linda Messas, Director
- Jef Cox, Policy & Review Officer (until August 2019)
- Crina Moşneagu, Policy & Review Officer (since August 2019)
- Paulina Gut, Review Officer
- Blazhe Todorovski, Review & Administrative Officer
- Chiara Conciatori, Intern (July-December 2019)

## 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 December 2019, the Register included 88 (eighty eight) peer-reviewers, including 11 (eleven) student profiles.

During the year, the MusiQuE office changed the procedure of applying for the peer-reviewers Register and moved to an online form. As part of the regular maintenance of the register that is conducted every 3 years in 2019 all experts in the registered were asked to resubmit their form if they wish to remain on the Register.

The revision of the experts listed on the Register is planned to be done by the Board of MusiQuE during 2020.

## Peer-Reviewers Training Sessions

In November 2019, the MusiQuE training session for Peer-Reviewers took place at Conservatorio di Musica “G. Verdi”, Torino, Italy. 34 experts from all around Europe, including six students, participated in the training. As in previous years, the training included various information sessions followed by Q&As, a role play of a meeting during a review visit and a World Café session on working in a review team. The 2019 session also saw a special visit by the Executive Director and President of the National Association of Schools of Music in the US, Mrs Karen P. Moynahan and Mr Dan Dressen, 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

In 2019, 14 procedures were carried out in 13 countries<sup>1</sup>, which is a significant increase compared to 2018 (11 procedures in 7 countries). Within these, MusiQuE makes a distinction 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):

### Institutional Quality Enhancement Review (3) - within the scope of the ESG

- Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore, 11-13 March ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade, Serbia, 27-30 October ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zurich, Switzerland, 20-22 May ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#)) – In cooperation with EQ-Arts

### Institutional Accreditation (1) - within the scope of the ESG

- Karol Lipinski Academy of Music, Wroclaw, Poland, 17-19 March, 18-19 November ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))

### Programme Quality Enhancement Reviews (2) - within the scope of the ESG

- Faculté de Musique et Musicologie, Université Antonine, Beirut, Lebanon, 13-16 October ([Report English](#), [Report French](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- Haute École de Musique Genève-Neuchâtel, Geneva, Switzerland, 16-18 December ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))

### Programme Accreditations (3) – within the scope of the ESG

- University of Arts The Hague – Royal Conservatoire, the Netherlands, 17-18 June ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- College of Music, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 21-23 November ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- Conservatorium Maastricht, the Netherlands, 27-29 November ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))

### Programme Accreditation follow-up procedure (2) – within the scope of the ESG

- Kazakh National Kurmangazy Conservatory, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 9-10 April ([Report](#), [Summary](#), [Decision](#))
- Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, paper based ([Report](#), [Decision](#))

### Consultative visit (1) – outside the scope of the ESG

- Conservatory of Music and Drama, Technological University Dublin – Conservatoire, Ireland, 9-11 April

### NEW PROCEDURE: Benchmarking procedure (1) – outside the scope of the ESG

- Commissioning institution: University of the Arts “Uniarts”, Helsinki, Finland, March-September  
Commissioned partner institutions:
  - Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
  - Bern University of the Arts, Switzerland
  - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, United Kingdom

All the reports from the procedures within the scope of the ESG’s have been published in the [‘Completed procedures’](#) section of the website.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes the countries where benchmarking procedures were conducted on behalf of the commissioning institution.

## Finances

2019 has been an active and successful year for MusiQuE with a substantial growth and diversification of activities, including some large-scale projects and reviews. As a result, the income and expenditure have more than doubled compared to 2018.

As in previous years, the income was mainly composed of the management fee and of the reimbursement of review costs (consisting of fees for and expenses of the peer reviewers). The income from the Training did exactly cover the subsistence costs, thus no income was transferred from AEC as in previous years (AEC being the organisation collecting the training fee as part of its Congress registration fee).

Besides the operational costs, which were maintained at the same level as in 2018, all expenditure raised substantially.

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, the profit and loss statement shows a positive result of 3,488 €.

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

### Note on the staff costs

Based on the agreement between the three founding partners of MusiQuE, AEC, EMU and Pearle\* to offer their financial support to MusiQuE in order to guarantee its financial viability in its first years of operation (without compromising its independence), staff costs of the MusiQuE Office in Brussels are covered by AEC, and progressively reimbursed by MusiQuE, until financial independence is reached. In 2019, MusiQuE reimbursed 80% of the total staff costs covered by AEC (after reimbursing 50% in both 2017 and 2018). In addition, 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 Quality Assurance

MusiQuE has developed a robust internal quality assurance system, which provides the MusiQuE Board with relevant feedback on the organizations fitness for purpose.

### External evaluator

Since 2016, Stefan Delplace, Honorary Secretary General of the EURASHE and an educationalist specialized in Business-Education cooperation, Quality Assurance, Recognition and Accreditation issues, has been serving as the External Evaluator of MusiQuE. His role is to review material documenting MusiQuE's activity, as well as to monitor the compatibility of MusiQuE's systems with ESG. In his 2019 report, Stefan Delplace acknowledged the well-deserved recognition of MusiQuE as a prominent QAA in the field of higher music education. However, he pointed out that, in the frame of accreditation procedures involving a national QAA, MusiQuE's quality-oriented input is not always recognised as the great opportunity for improvement it is. The Board therefore expresses its gratitude to Mr. Delplace for his work in ensuring the quality of MusiQuE's systems and processes, and his continuing trust and support. The reports of the External Evaluator are published on the MusiQuE website. The report for is also available [here](#).

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

The feedback has been very positive in 2019. Most peer-reviewers and institutions acknowledged the quality of MusiQuE Standards, procedures, MusiQuE staff, and Review Teams. In addition, peer-reviewers highlighted the quality of most self-evaluation reports and felt overall welcome at the institutions. Institutions, from their side, were very satisfied with the positive insight brought by the self-evaluation process, beyond the institutional or legal requirements for evaluation.

Some suggestions for improvements were also made: MusiQuE Standards should include standards about ethics and sustainability, and standards more focused on the student perspective. Students could also get a specific training regarding their role in the Review Teams.

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.

## Communication and external relations

In view of the external review of MusiQuE for its EQAR registration in early 2020, a complete revision took place of MusiQuE's documentation. In this process, the following documents were produced or reworked during 2019:

- A new Strategic Paper and Action Plan 2020-2025, including a new Mission & Vision, a further elaboration of the organisation's main goals and a detailed Action Plan. A Business Plan for the same period was also elaborated, showing the financial planning of the organisation for the next years to come.
- A detailed Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for the review, which was submitted to the external review team in December 2019. To the SER several additional documents were added, such as a Mapping Exercise with the ESG part 1 and a Mapping Exercise with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.
- The original MusiQuE Framework Document was reworked into Guidelines for Institutions, Guidelines for Peer Reviewers and Internal Regulations
- A separate document on Complaints and Appeals
- A Handbook for the Critical Friend Reviews
- The fourth Trend Analysis based on the analysis of 13 MusiQuE review reports. The Trend Analysis this gives a fascinating insight of the current state of higher music education worldwide. It shows the sector is healthy and vibrant with overall high standards, but also points out several areas of possible improvement, such as the use of learning outcomes, assessment, staff working conditions and quality assurance. The Trend Analysis can serve as an important basis for further debate in the AEC.

The MusiQuE Website was also fully revised and updated with these new documents.

Furthermore, bringing MusiQuE's activities (and the higher music education sector in general) to the attention of a wide audience is MusiQuE's continuous mission. In that regard, its services, activities and approach to quality and quality assurance have been presented on several occasions in 2019:

What was presented	Context in which it was presented	Date and venue	Audience
How to make quality assurance more meaningful to teachers	University Council of Jamaica, symposium on "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Managing Changes and Expectations"	12 March, Montego Bay, Jamaica	Higher education representatives
Alternative Models in International Higher Education Quality Assurance – Article by MusiQuE	Published in the ASIIN-Newsletter Special Issue: Trends & Developments in International Quality Assurance	March 2019	Higher Education and Quality Assurance professionals
Presentation of MusiQuE as a subject-specific QA Agency an discussion about the specificities of a subject-specific approach on quality assurance and took a closer look at how a subject-specific agency handles thematic analysis (ESG 3.4) and their relations with external stakeholders.	ENQA Webinar on Subject-specific approaches	14 June 2019	Quality Assurance Agency representatives and Higher Education professionals
A MusiQuE presentation on linking internationalisation and quality assurance	AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators	19-22 September, Academy of Performing Arts,	International relations coordinators of AEC member institutions

		Prague, Czech Republic	
A presentation about MusiQuE and its role with regards to the music profession	43 <sup>rd</sup> Nordic Orchestra Conference	22-24 October 2019, Copenhagen, Denmark	Representatives of the Nordic and Baltic orchestras
AEC Congress session <i>Re-imagining the MusiQuE Standards for success: your input needed!</i> This session collected feedback from participants for the revision of the MusiQuE Standards in 2020	AEC Annual Congress	08 November 2019, Turin, Italy	Representatives of higher music education institutions





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