

# MUSIQUE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

## Institutional review

Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium



**Site visit date: 31<sup>st</sup> January - 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
1. Institutional mission, vision and context.....	5
2. Educational processes .....	9
2.1 The programmes and their methods of delivery .....	9
2.2 International perspectives .....	13
2.3 Assessment.....	15
3. Student profiles.....	16
3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications.....	16
3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability .....	17
4. Teaching staff .....	19
4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity .....	19
4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body .....	20
5. Facilities, resources and support.....	22
5.1 Facilities .....	22
5.2 Financial resources .....	23
5.3 Support staff.....	25
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making.....	26
6.1 Internal communication process .....	26
6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes .....	27
7. Internal Quality Culture .....	30
8. Public interaction .....	33
8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts.....	33
8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions .....	34
8.3 Information provided to the public.....	36
9. Summary of the institution's compliance with MusiQuE Standards .....	37
Annex 1 - Site-visit Schedule .....	39
Annex 2 - Supporting documents .....	41

## **Introduction**

In February 2016, the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium (VLK) requested an institutional quality enhancement review with MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement in order to receive external feedback and input on its strategy and development.

The review followed a three-stage process:

1. VLK wrote a self-evaluation report (SER) based on, and structured according to, the *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review* (see MusiQuE Standards for Institutional, Programme and Joint Programme Review, pp. 18-29).
2. An international Review Team studied the self-evaluation report and conducted a site visit at VLK on 31<sup>st</sup> January - 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017. This comprised meetings with the VLK Artistic and Business Directors, Study Area Coordinators, Artistic and Academic Staff Members, Students, Senior Administrative Officers, Employers and Partners from the sector, as well as a guided tour and concerts. The Review Team used the *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review* noted above as the basis of its investigations.
3. The Review Team produced the report that follows, structured following the *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review*.

The Review Team consisted of:

- Philippe Dinkel (Review Team Chair), Director of the Haute École de Musique de Genève, Switzerland
- Ursula Brandstätter, Rector of the Bruckner Private University in Linz, Austria
- Ingrid Maria Hanken, Professor, em., former Director of the Centre of Excellence in Music Performance Education (CEMPE), Norwegian Academy of Music, Norway
- Antoine Gilliéron, MA student in specialised performance (piano), Hochschule für Musik, Luzern
- Linda Messas – Review Team Secretary, MusiQuE

The Review Team would like to thank the representatives of the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium for the production and timely delivery of the self-evaluation report and all supporting documents, for the organisation of the site-visit and for the hospitality they demonstrated. The Review Team was able to meet various stakeholders and the atmosphere of all meetings was open and collegial. The Review Team hopes that all stakeholders who took part in the review will be duly informed about where the report can be accessed.

## Key data on VLK

<b>Name of the institution</b>	<b>Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium</b>
<b>Legal status</b>	<b>Private institution under public law</b>
<b>Date of creation</b>	<b>1977</b>
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.vlk.ac.at/">http://www.vlk.ac.at/</a>
<b>Departments</b>	<p>Music theory          Wind instruments and Percussions          String Instruments          Keyboard Instruments and Singing</p> <p><i>Source: VLK Self-evaluation report – Annex 13</i></p>
<b>Programmes offered</b>	<p>Study Area Professional Studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BA Programme in Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy (in cooperation with the Mozarteum University Salzburg)</li> <li>- Courses of study in Artistic Diploma Studies (State Diploma) (composition, piano, harpsichord, organ, accordion, violin, viola, violoncello, double bass, harp, guitar, flute, recorder, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion and singing)</li> </ul> <p>Study Area Promoting Gifted Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic Artistic Studies (incl. music grammar schools in Feldkirch and Schiers/CH)</li> <li>- Promoting Talents Plus (under 14-year-olds with their main subject taught at the Landeskonservatorium)</li> <li>- Promoting Talents (cooperation programme with the Vorarlberg music schools)</li> </ul> <p>Study Area Further Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course of Studies Elementary Music Pedagogy (two years)</li> <li>- Course of Studies Choir Direction (two years)</li> <li>- Advanced course Choir Direction (one year)</li> <li>- Focus Area Elementary Music Pedagogy (series of individual classes)</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: VLK Self-evaluation report</i></p>
<b>Number of students</b>	<b>320 students (172 in ‘Professional Studies’ Area and 148 in ‘Promoting Gifted Students’ Area) and 21 ‘Further Education’ course participants</b>
	<i>Source: VLK Self-evaluation report – Annex 6</i>
<b>Number of teachers (FTE)</b>	<b>43</b>

## **1. Institutional mission, vision and context**

### **Standard 1: the institutional mission and vision are clearly stated.**

"Das VLK ist die führende höhere Musikausbildungsstätte im Bodenseeraum" [Annex 2, Vision Statement / Zukunftsbild des VLKs, 2008]. "Das Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium (VLK) ist das Kompetenzzentrum für die höhere Musikausbildung in Vorarlberg. Das Landeskonservatorium ist nicht nur Ausbildungsstätte auf hohem Niveau, sondern bietet auch für andere Einrichtungen eine Plattform für Aus – und Weiterbildung. Dazu bringt sich das VLK intensiv in das regionale Kulturleben ein und ist zentraler Ansprechpartner für die Musikvermittlung. [Annex 1, Zielbild VLK, 2016]".

VLK's mission is described as follows:

- Training of music teachers and musicians at an artistic/educational-research level in accordance with international standards;
- Promotion of young music artists with a focus on preparing them for professional music studies;
- Further education/training in particular in the pedagogy of the arts and exercise of the profession of musician, as well as facilitating further qualifications;
- Organisation and conducting of research studies as well as participating in projects of other organisations that in the broadest sense deal with music/music pedagogy;
- Organisation/realisation of and participation in artistic/cultural activities and events; fostering the musical heritage at a high level with the institution's own students and teachers, taking into account the cultural life of the region [SER, p. 5].

The development of the vision statement in 2008 was described as an unprecedented process: the institution reflected on his work, on the challenges ahead, on its raison d'être, etc. [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. The Heads of the Department contributed to the development of the vision statement and all members of staff were consulted about it [idem]. The Directors indicated that the vision they developed in 2008 when they took their positions had now become a reality and that the outcome of the MusiQuE external review would assist them in preparing a new vision statement [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. The representatives of the profession met by the Review Team confirmed that an important change had taken place in the last ten years, mostly in relation to the quality of the education provided by VLK [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession].

It is important to note that, "like the state conservatories in Innsbruck, Klagenfurt and Eisenstadt, [VLK] does not have university status and, after the Bologna reform, cannot offer any Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Since 2005 there has been a cooperation arrangement with the Mozarteum Salzburg. Students of the study area Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy (IGP) can obtain a Bachelor's degree in this field from the Mozarteum within the scope of the cooperation. However, all the courses of study programmes are held at [VLK]. This constellation also offers one of the greatest strategic challenges for [VLK], as further courses of study offered with a Bachelor's or Master's degree require cooperation with a university. [SER, p.4]".

The following elements concerning the institutional vision were brought up and discussed during the various meetings:

- There is a shared desire from the management and the teaching staff that VLK becomes an autonomous institution (i.e. a private university) with its own vision and offer of programmes [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members and Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].
- There is a shared desire from the management and the teaching staff that VLK starts offering Masters studies, possibly focusing on Music Pedagogy, although without introducing a strict separation of pedagogy and artistic training [idem]. Music school teachers and directors - many of them being former students of VLK and some of them following further education courses at VLK - may be interested to complete a Masters programme in VLK [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. Representatives of the profession met by the Review Team were supportive of this idea [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession].
- There are different visions among teaching staff members as to the geographical scope of the institution: some members of the teaching staff would wish for a more international pool of students in order to enhance the artistic level and multiculturalism, while others would set the priority on enhancing the links with the region and educating individuals from the region [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members].
- The management highlighted the necessity to expand to non-classical music, such as jazz and popular music, in order to meet the needs of the community, and regretted that budgetary limitations did not enable such a development [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. The representatives of the profession met by the Review Team confirmed the need for teachers to be versatile; the development of new subjects in electronic instruments, editing and arranging was mentioned [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession].
- The management team wishes to shift the balance between the amount of pre-college students (currently about 50% of the body of students) and the amount of higher education students and to increase the latter,

as far as the budget enables it (given that higher education students have a higher cost) [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

The Review Team would like to commend VLK management and staff for the thorough and inclusive process undertaken within the institution to develop the 2008 strategy and for the achievements that have been reached since 2008 to turn the strategic vision into reality (See also Section 8).

Concerning the future perspectives, the Review Team strongly recommends that VLK develops a new clear and explicit vision for the next 10-15 years (where does VLK wants to be then?) as well as a detailed strategy/method to reach this vision. Yearly action plans addressing the necessary steps towards the different elements in the vision should then also be developed.

The Review Team supports the central wishes expressed by the institutional representatives met during the site-visit and believes that, in order for VLK to further develop, i.e. to gain autonomy and to develop Master programmes on its own, the only way is to become a private university. This perspective seems sensible and feasible to the Review Team.

The Review Team therefore recommends that VLK explores the possibilities to change its status into the one of private university: VLK should investigate the precise requirements set by the national accreditation agency AQ Austria, what this would mean for VLK and what would be on the one hand the opportunities of becoming an independent institution and on the other hand the challenges linked to such a new status.

Based on the material provided and the site-visit, the Review Team identified three key areas in which important change will be required:

- The communication to external stakeholders (See section 8.3)
- The participation of staff and students (See Section 6.2)
- The formalisation of processes and collection of documentation (see Section 7)

In addition, in order to define more precisely its strategic positioning, VLK is advised to undertake a benchmarking exercise by comparing itself to other similar institutions and to private universities in Austria, in order to measure the institution's strengths and weaknesses (i.e. to establish a SWOT analysis) and to determine the steps that are necessary to reach the goals VLK sets for itself.

In terms of the methodology to develop the new vision, the first step is to have all collaborators agree on it (e.g. which kind of Master programme could be offered, how regional, national and international the VLK should be, what is the social responsibility of the VLK, etc.). VLK is advised to: a) develop an agenda for the discussion, listing the top priorities (such as Pedagogy, Research, Early music, Contemporary music, Popular music), and b) set up focus groups at different levels (e.g. of students, teachers, advisory Board, study coordinators, heads of departments) to collect their perspectives on the various agenda points.

The Review Team recommends that the strategy is declined in several items: a strategy for programme development (i.e. Master), a strategy for staff, a strategy for research, a strategy for internationalisation, a strategy for genres (pop and jazz, folk music, electronic music), and is flexible enough so that the goals can shift. All these topics should be considered as central and addressed in relation to the institution's wish to become a private university. Elements concerning VLK's social responsibility should also be addressed: the possible changes in the coming years in terms of music life, employment market, as well as of priorities of the government need to be analyzed and ways in which VLK would respond to them should be explored.

Finally, it is important that VLK continues with its efforts to explore how more freedom could be created within the current cooperation with Mozarteum (with regards to the BA programme currently offered): there may be room to interpret the contract and the written curriculum; VLK may become more pro-active and work on reinforcing the cooperation in terms of teacher exchanges and/or of students attending masterclasses and joining projects in Salzburg. The Review Team understands that the situation is difficult and that VLK's attempts to change the situation have not been successful. It is however crucial to keep trying in order to ensure that BA students are well served during the transition period until VLK becomes autonomous.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with MusiQuE Standard 1.**

## **2. Educational processes**

### **2.1 The programmes and their methods of delivery**

**Standard: the goals of the institution are achieved through the content and structure of the study programmes and their methods of delivery**

The educational offer and methods of delivery differ from a Study Area to another:

- Within the Study Area “Promoting Gifted Students”, the focus is on “the promotion of young musicians”: “selected young people can complete basic artistic studies by the age of fourteen. During the two-year training the young singers and instrumentalists acquire basic skills for their later professional studies. To extend and deepen their knowledge the young musicians have a free choice of additional modules. The cooperation with two grammar schools enables students to attend a secondary school for general education where they can qualify for university entrance. In addition to instruction at the upper grammar school level the young people are taught the main musical subjects, music theory, chamber and orchestral music [SER, pp. 3-4]”.
- Within the Study Area “Professional studies”, students can choose between Bachelor of Arts studies in Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy (IGP) - programme offered across 8 semesters in cooperation with the music university Mozarteum Salzburg - and artistic studies in 12 semesters leading to the State Diploma [idem]. “Both subject areas can be completed in all orchestral instruments, piano, organ and singing. Master classes with internationally renowned artists as well as periods spent abroad at partner universities broaden the range of courses offered [idem]”.
- Finally, within the Study Area “Further Education”, VLK offers both workshops and courses for professionals in areas such as Elementary Music Pedagogy (addressing for example diversity, music for children with special needs, music for all ages) and Jazz and popular music – 10 days delivered in 2 blocks of 5 days, and courses, as well as Choir conducting and church music – 3 hours per week for 4 semesters [Annex 8 - Brochures and prospectuses].

Within the Study Area “Professional studies”, both study programmes are 1<sup>st</sup> cycle level programmes [SER, p. 8]. In terms of connection with other study cycles, students indicated that, following their Bachelor studies at VLK, they would apply for Masters programmes, and that some students with the artistic diploma had managed to enter Masters degrees in Luzern, Nürnberg or Salzburg [Meeting with Students]. The objectives of the courses are presented in competences [Meeting with the Director and Study Area Coordinators and Annex 4 - Curriculum IGP 2017 (new), p. 2]. “[T]here are numerous opportunities for individual choices as a result of free optional subjects and

compulsory elective modules, which amounts to about 35 ECTS credits depending on the profile selected and/or the course of studies" [SER, p.8]. Students also indicated having "about 25% of playing room" in the new curriculum, including in terms of course planning (e.g. planning all courses on the same day), and being guided by the student advisor/administrator to ensure that no subject is omitted [Meeting with the students].

Concerning teaching methods, "[t]here is full academic freedom (...), which means that methodological structures can be freely formulated by each course supervisor. The Director of the Landeskonservatorium addresses and supports new forms of teaching, some of which are implemented, for example team teaching or using the learning platform Moodle. Also, the classrooms have been equipped with the necessary technical aids (e.g. Visualizer, WLAN etc.) and further additions will be made step by step" [SER, p. 9]. Examples of team teaching, joint project among teachers and teachers exchanging students on a regular basis were indeed given to the Review Team [Meeting with members the Artistic and Academic Staff].

Students listed many opportunities to perform and present their work: monthly opportunities within the institutions to perform in front of teachers and fellow students, VLK productions, including a Christmas concert and concerts for the sponsors, solo opportunities in VLK's choir and orchestra, participation in VLK's chamber music and ensembles (e.g. in percussion classes, in guitar and brass section), small concerts in the city, regular performances in the Vorarlberg Museum in Bregenz, singing auditions with the Bregenzer Festspiele, yearly violin auditions with the symphony orchestra [Meeting with the Students]. They are directly informed by the administration (via email) about opportunities for performances in the region [idem].

Students met by the Review Team referred to a course in "jazz and popular music" that is compulsory in the IGP programme, and the wish to be able to follow more courses in this field, as well as in rock music was expressed by some of them [Meeting with Students]. There is no requirement to play a contemporary classical music piece at the exam [idem].

Students met by the Review Team shared their satisfaction with the degree to which they are prepared for the profession: they enjoy the strong focus on pedagogy, the time for teaching practice in local music schools, the pedagogy courses related to their instrument ("Fachdidaktik"), the interaction with children from "Kindergarten" as part of the course on early childhood development [Meeting with Students]. They regretted however that several courses in pedagogy are given in the first semester while students also need them in further years and indicated being confused about what was expected from them in the last year of Elementare Musikpädagogik, especially in

terms of literature to be read [idem]. The Management shared its willingness to start training students in the field of entrepreneurship and indicated that a music management course will start in Spring 2017 [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. The representatives of the profession expressed themselves in very positive terms about the quality of the education received in the institution - including in comparison to other institutions, and specifically concerning the preparation for music schools roles - and highlighted as a strength its very personalised aspect (given the size of the institution, the care given to students and the close link with stakeholders in the region) [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession].

Concerning the role of research in the programmes offered, all BA students are required to write a Bachelor thesis and are free to choose the topic of their investigation; due to the richness of the library inherited by VLK in relation to folk or traditional music, there is a significant amount of BA works completed by students in this field [Meeting with the Researcher]. As part of the "Wissenschaftliche Arbeit" subject, students are taught to make excerpts, annotated biographies [idem]; they are also provided with supervision to write their thesis [Meeting with Students]. In addition, VLK has started to develop research in the field of local folk music: a researcher has been hired partly to conduct research in this field and partly to teach [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. "The aim on the one hand is to enhance the quality of the music-pedagogical education and on the other to promote development of the arts. (...) A further important field is seen in research projects in the field of the rapidly changing school system and the accompanying developments in the area of music schools and of teaching music in compulsory schools. A possible increase in research is being discussed at the Landeskonservatorium" [SER, p. 9]. VLK is involved in a research network under the umbrella of the Internationale Bodenseehochschule (IBH) (see more information about IBH in Section 2.2), and projects are developed in this context that will progressively involve students and teachers [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

Concerning academic, career and personal guidance for students, a protocol is in place in case of problem arising between a student and a teacher: a conversation with one of the student body members is first offered before higher levels in the hierarchy are consulted [Meeting with the Students]. Students met by the Review Team however indicated feeling quite close to their teachers and being able to talk to them freely; they also referred to several resource staff: the psychologist, who is well-known by students as she also teaches, a teacher for body posture available in case of any physical problem, and a didactics teacher available one hour per week for any questions concerning their teaching practice [idem]. Members of the teaching staff confirmed the importance of the personal contact with students [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members].

According to the Review Team, the goals of the institution are achieved through the content and structure of the study programmes and their methods of delivery.

The Review Team would like to draw VLK's attention to the systemic ambiguity resulting from the co-existence, under the same roof, of the "Bologna" Bachelor degree offered in cooperation with Mozarteum and of the Staatsdiplom: the international positioning of the latter is less readable.

The Review Team would like to encourage the institution to be more explicit in its description of the programmes' objectives and to develop learning outcomes to go further in the operationalisation of the curriculum, and move from a content-driven curriculum to a student-centred curriculum. Learning outcomes also make it easier to communicate with the students about the curriculum: students need to be informed about what the goals are and how the goals will be reached. VLK is advised to consult the AEC Learning Outcomes for 1st cycle studies in music. In addition, more optional strands could be developed and VLK could explore the opportunity to provide local tutors (for example a Bachelor student for a pre-college student, an alumni for a Bachelor student, etc).

Students have many opportunities to perform and practice their teaching and are encouraged to develop critical reflection by commenting on each other's work, for example during team teaching events.

Although the freedom of teachers to organise the learning process is to be commended, this freedom should be framed: teachers should be encouraged to continue taking initiatives while being guided and inspired through conferences and invited to discuss and question the various teaching models and to learn about other ways of teaching. Project-oriented classes could also be further promoted.

The Review Team was impressed by the researcher and the various projects she has undertaken in the institution. However, based on the discussion with the teaching staff, the Review Team feels that the connection with the rest of the institution and with the curriculum is problematic. The Review Team therefore recommends that VLK starts with pedagogical research in order to connect research with the curriculum and generate more interest from the teachers, who all regard themselves as music pedagogues and believe in the value of pedagogical research. The Review Team would like to encourage VLK to involve the teachers, by enabling them to initiate small projects connected to their own practice (e.g. how to teach students to practice; how to conduct group teaching, etc.) and to hire a person who would coach them and provide them with the methodology (i.e. a researcher who also teaches), arrange seminars for the teachers conducting research (see paragraph above) and promote collaborations between teachers.

If priority is put on this in VLK strategy, financial resources could be moved around to support this goal. Finally, a policy aiming at recruiting teaching staff who are also attentive/receptive to the importance of research for the institution could be conducted: the development of research could be linked in a systematic way to the teaching staff recruitment policy.

The Review Team found evidence that VLK provides students with a good preparation and support writing their BA thesis. This is a very good foundation if VLK chooses to introduce a Masters programme.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with MusiQuE Standard 2.1.**

## **2.2 International perspectives**

**Standard: the institution offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.**

Students are able to contribute to and/or attend study concerts and concert cycles in Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Germany within the curricular framework, as well as master classes, workshops and joint research projects organised under the umbrella of the Internationale Bodenseehochschule (IBH) and the Lake Constance International Festival. IBH is “an association of the universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of education and other higher education establishments in the international Lake Constance area, [which] goal (...) is to put into effect teaching and research cooperation programmes between the partner institutions [SER, p. 10]”.

Students enrolled in the BA Programme in Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy have the opportunity to complete their teaching placement in schools in neighbouring countries [Meeting with representatives of the Profession].

Students can also take part in ERASMUS exchanges: the list of partners currently includes 30 partner institutions in 11 countries. There were no outgoing students in 2015/16 and 2017/18 and one student in 2017/18; there were 2 incoming students in 2015/16 and in 2017/18 and 3 incoming students in 2016/17 [extra documentation provided during the site-visit “International Mobilities”]. Students coming to VLK for an ERASMUS exchange do often continue their studies in VLK [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. Some students met by the Review Team were coming from South Africa and from Poland; they indicated following a German language course in order to meet the requested B2 level [Meeting with Students]. The need to create an administrative position dedicated to international relations and in particular to ERASMUS exchanges was expressed; due to a lack of time, exchanges are not

adequately promoted (e.g. sufficiently nor early enough), which can generate in some cases an obligation for students to extend their studies by one or two semesters in order to complete their teaching practice [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officer].

"The teaching staff (...) consists of teachers from almost all the continents" partly resulting from the "consistent tendering of vacant positions throughout the German-language area [SER, p. 10]". The teaching staff members met by the Review Team had all either studied abroad (Germany, Switzerland, Argentina) or were teaching in parallel in higher music education institutions in Germany, Switzerland, Russia [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. In addition, "both international and external national teachers are regularly invited to curricular and extracurricular master classes, seminars and workshops at VLK [SER, p. 10]. Students expressed their wish that VLK would invite external conductors [Meeting with Students].

Although there were divergent views within the teaching staff with regard to the internationalisation strategy (See Section 1), the management team mentioned in the very last meeting that VLK had the intention to focus on the region of Bodensee, which is small but international [Final Meeting with the Directors].

The Review Team was informed about many opportunities for students to gain international perspectives and experiences, but was surprised about the small numbers of students but also of staff exchanges.

The Review Team recommends that VLK states explicitly its vision/focus in terms of internationalisation, and includes this domain in its strategy and in its action plan (as mentioned in Section 1). The concept of "Internationale Regionalität" could apply well to VLK if it is the direction in which it wishes to go. International contacts could also be sought with other institutions with a similar profile, operating in a similar context in Europe. VLK's specificities should be analyzed so that VLK could profile itself.

The Review Team found evidence of good conditions to foster international exchanges and would like to recommend that administrative support is provided in order to increase ERASMUS exchanges, for students and staff. These exchanges increase opportunities for students and staff to further develop and enrich the institution. In some conservatoires in Europe, an administrative position as "international coordinator" is allocated to teaching staff in addition to their teaching hours; this could possibly be an example to follow for a start.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with MusiQuE Standard 2.2.**

## **2.3 Assessment**

**Standard: assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.**

"The evaluation procedures are described in module handbooks for teachers and students [SER, p. 11]". Examination by a panel and assessment of the student artistic development take place at intervals of two years; "these exams are always accompanied by feedback from the exam panel and are offered to the students as a constructive recommendation for their further studies [idem]".

Students confirmed that the recital takes place every two years, while written examinations are organised every semester in theoretical subjects [Meeting with Students]. They indicated receiving constant feedback from teachers but also from fellow students and being given concert opportunities once a month in an intimate space enabling free discussions [idem]. The expectations for the final examination and the criteria used for the assessment were not clear for the students met by the Review Team and they expressed the wish to receive written feedback after the exams.

The assessment procedures are precisely and thoroughly described. The Review Team recommends that the assessment criteria are clarified, and made more easily accessible. VLK is also encouraged to map the assessment criteria to the learning outcomes that will have been developed for the courses/modules so that the assessment really enables to check the achievement of the Learning Outcomes by the students.

In order to ensure consistency in the assessment across the students and the subjects, VLK could regularly appoint a member of its staff to attend each examination and the following jury discussion and to check which grades are distributed on average.

Finally, the Review Team recommends that the provision of feedback to students (i.e. when and how feedback is provided) is formalised in the written curriculum description.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with MusiQuE Standard 2.3.**

### **3. Student profiles**

#### **3.1 Admission/Entrance qualifications**

**Standard: clear admission criteria exist, which establish artistic/academic suitability of students.**

"The criteria for the admission of applicants and/or the conditions for participating in the entrance examinations are defined in detail and are communicated to those interested in printed form, on the website and in events providing information for students. There are various admission requirements depending on the course of studies. These requirements may range from motivation talks with the applicants to complex admission procedures involving an examination panels for the main instrument, the secondary subject piano, knowledge of music theory and auditory sense as well as motivational aspects. The evaluation and approval are generally based on a points system. [SER, p. 12]"

The amount of places per subject taught is determined by the number of hours for which each staff member is contracted; places can however remain empty if teaching staff members have doubts concerning the level of the student [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. In practice and depending on the subject, some VLK teachers are approached by students interested to enter VLK and can therefore advise them to apply or not [idem]. The overall profile of the institution in terms of number of students per instrument (and the possible change of profile) is discussed in the Forum, which involves the Heads of Departments [idem].

The admission procedure is very precise, with the award of points and the involvement of several individuals and seems systematic. Given the lack of information on drop-out rates, it is difficult for the institution to check how the criteria assess the abilities (artistic/technical/academic/pedagogical) of the applicants to complete the institution's study programme, nor how effective the preparation for higher music education delivered within the Study Area "Promoting Gifted Students" is. The Review Team recommends that detailed statistics are collected on success/failure at entrance examination, on the level of grades awarded and on the drop-out rates - with a clear indication of the pre-college training followed by the applicant.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with MusiQuE Standard 3.1.**

### **3.2 Student progression, achievement and employability**

**Standard: the institution has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.**

The SER refers in this part to the various assessments and concert opportunities (See Sections 2.1 and 2.3 above) [SER, p. 13].

Concerning data collection on alumni, “[t]here are isolated data surveys of graduates, but so far no strategy for the regular collection of the appropriate data. The data collected is generally used for the purpose of evaluating study programmes [idem]. VLK has planned to enhance data collection on alumni with the help of the new campus management system currently being introduced [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

“Compared with Austria as a whole and other European countries, the federal state of Vorarlberg has the highest density of music schools and music students. The career prospects for IGP graduates here continue to be excellent [SER, p.4]. “Since the founding of [VLK] in 1976/1977 its graduates have made an important contribution to the successful development of the music schools in Vorarlberg and the Lake Constance region. (...) Mostly, the graduates (...) are to be found in music-pedagogical professions at music schools, music universities and also at general education schools. In addition, graduates also work in media-related professions (e.g. Austrian Radio) or in cultural management (e.g. the San Francisco Opera House). (...) Graduates (...) are often characterised by a patchwork career consisting of freelance artistic activities and work in the field of music pedagogy [SER, p. 13]”. The SER lists several ensembles or concert series created by former students [idem].

The lack of music teachers in general schools in Austria, and the resulting employment of teachers who are not properly trained, was highlighted as an area of concern [Final Meeting with the Directors].

Given the close contacts between students and staff (See Section 2.1), the monitoring of student progression and achievement takes place on a daily basis.

Students are very successful in finding work and building a career, and actively contribute to the enhancement of cultural life in the region but VLK is not able to provide any data on this success. The Review Team would like to encourage VLK to systematically keep track of alumni, in order to give students an overview of various job

opportunities, to allow them to build up a network of contacts they would be able to activate when looking for a job, but also to use alumni feedback to identify early signals of changes in the employment market, to further develop VLK's educational offer and to contribute to the promotion of the institution. VLK could start by sending a questionnaire to graduates at regular intervals.

The employment market is not highly competitive at this moment and the Review Team noticed a strong feeling of safety in the institution. It is however crucial to be aware that there are potential challenges. In other countries in Europe, the genres taught in music schools are shifting completely based on the needs expressed by society. Higher music education institutions therefore need to adjust their educational offer in line with the employment market. VLK may need to consider expanding the genres covered in the study programme, by introducing for example popular music and rock, and to hire individuals with experience in these genres (song-writing, pop composition) so that students can learn these competences within VLK.

Finally, given the concern expressed in relation to music in general schools, VLK is advised to consider offering a study programme in this field, possibly at Masters level.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with MusiQuE Standard 3.2.**

## **4. Teaching staff**

### **4.1 Staff qualifications and professional activity**

**Standard: members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers.**

The results of the questionnaires distributed to students to evaluate the quality of teaching "were very satisfactory" [SER, p.15].

Concerning the recruitment of new teaching staff members, the self-evaluation report describes in detail the "multistage" procedure implemented by VLK, which includes an international invitation to tender, a review of the written applications by the Artistic Director and an internal (and sometimes external) panel of specialists, as well as a demonstration lesson and an artistic performance by each shortlisted applicant [SER, p.15]. Staff members are first proposed a one-year contract and after this, a permanent contract [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

The institution provides the following support to teaching staff members: "special leave and other arrangements" enabling them to remain active performers, "organisation of music-pedagogical conferences dealing with the latest music-pedagogical findings and methods", coverage of costs of "qualified advanced training courses and international exchange programmes" [SER, p.15] and coverage of conference fees [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers].

All members of the teaching staff have the same title of "Professor of the VLK" [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. Members of the teaching staff met by the Review Team indicated that career development was depending on their own initiative: there had certainly been no restrictions or obstacles set by the institution but the opportunities had not been actively promoted either; they were aware that a reduction of teaching load would be granted easily if they would want to start a PhD, but that no costs would be covered [Meeting with Members of Artistic and Academic Staff]. The Senior Administrative Staff indicated that a budget for the further education of employees was available and that they were encouraging staff members to take part in such programmes [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers].

The Review Team would like to commend the institution for its staff recruitment procedure, and especially the test teaching, which enables the institution to properly verify the applicant's qualifications as educator. The Review Team

found evidence that teaching staff members are also engaged with the activities of the institution (committees, concerts, organisation of events).

The Review Team recommends that VLK formalises its support to teaching staff's artistic/pedagogical/ research activity, for example by systematically publishing the possibilities for support and actively promoting the use of the ERASMUS mobility grants for teaching staff. The questionnaire filled in by students is also an important tool in identifying possible areas for further development of the teaching staff. The Review Team suggests that a staff appraisal system is put in place in order to communicate the results of the evaluation to the teachers and enable them to share their needs in terms of support by VLK: it is important that teaching staff members keep on, have room to develop and change. A system of promotion of teaching staff members linked to their continuing professional development could also be considered.

Staff and staff continuing professional development should be addressed specifically in VLK's overall strategy, especially in view of a possible change of status of the institution.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with MusiQuE Standard 4.1.**

#### **4.2 Size and composition of the teaching staff body**

**Standard: there are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.**

"There are 43 full-time equivalents in teaching" [SER, p.18]. The management indicated that many full-time positions are in the instrumental area and that teaching staff members do also teach at pre-college level [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. However, several teachers retired in 2016 and were replaced by many new and rather young teachers, including international ones, interested to perform and therefore keen to teach no more than 8 to 10 hours per week; this development has led to an enhancement of the quality [idem].

The Review Team would like to encourage the institution to look forward as much as possible and to plan ahead. As mentioned above, part of its strategy should be dedicated to staff (teaching, administrative and support staff). VLK is encouraged to analyse new professional requirements (e.g. the changing situation in the music schools) on the one hand and on the other hand the requirements in terms of staff composition if VLK becomes a private university. The

Review Team would like to highlight the importance of hiring the right individuals (for example in the fields of pedagogical research or international coordination) and the responsibility of the institution to make space in its budget to hire these specific persons, even if sacrifices have to be made. Thus, in the context of staff planning, the upcoming retirement of a staff member generates space that can be used innovatively to implement the institution's strategy and action plan: for example, a full-time instrumental teacher position could be divided into a 75% contract with an instrumental teacher and a 25% contract with a teacher offering courses to all students, undertaking research activities or taking on administrative responsibilities.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with MusiQuE Standard 4.2.**

## **5. Facilities, resources and support**

### **5.1 Facilities**

**Standard: the institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programmes.**

VLK is based in a former Jesuit boarding school, built around 1900 [SER, p. 16]: “the rooms/halls give it a special appeal that is inherently ideal for running a music university. The event and concert halls are of outstanding quality. (...); however the size of some of the rooms is not quite consistent with the teaching requirements [idem]: rooms are too big while there is a need for more rooms [Meeting 1 with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. The building belongs to the state of Vorarlberg, which has planned (without a fixed term) an expensive project of renovation, mostly to improve the room situation [idem]. Students expressed that their main concern was indeed the lack of practice rooms; they would also welcome an online room reservation system [Meeting with Students]. The lack of teaching rooms was also mentioned [meeting with Senior Administrative Officers].

“The provision of computers and other technical aids basically meets requirements. At present a new campus management system is being introduced” [SER, p. 16]. The Review Team was informed during the site-visit of the existence of a recording studio [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession and Alumni].

“The library has approx. 50,000 titles and is the largest music library in the Lake Constance region [SER, p. 16]. New acquisitions are based partly on the wishes of students and teachers and partly on the policy to further develop the library; the importance of digitalisation was highlighted [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. Students also have access to the catalogues of the Vorarlberg library and of the Fachhochschule library and to the collection of the Mozarteum University and the library is part of the Austrian Library Union (ÖPAC) [idem]<sup>1</sup>. Students indicated being satisfied with the opening hours of the library and finding all the material needed [Meeting with Students].

Based on its visit of the facilities, the Review Team confirms that the library and its associated equipment are

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<sup>1</sup> In its response (dated from 08.05.2017) to the draft report of the Review Team, VLK indicated that students and teachers have free access to the library of each of the 30 international universities and “Hochschulen” which are members of the Internationale Bodenseehochschule (IBH).

appropriate, as well as the number and standards of instruments. However, the building facilities are generally not appropriate, especially in relation to classrooms and practice rooms. The Review Team could observe the strong need for a renovation of the building in order to rationalise the space.

In the meanwhile, VLK is encouraged to improve the management of rooms: teachers may be asked to indicate clearly when they are not using the rooms and a solution should be found to enable students to reserve rooms online.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with Standard 5.1.**

## 5.2 Financial resources

**Standard: the institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.**

The budget of VLK amounts to ca. 5.8 million euros per year; it is composed of a subsidy of ca. 5.2 million from the state of Vorarlberg and of income such as tuition fees, rentals and sponsoring [SER, p. 17]. The SER indicates that "there is clear and repeated political commitment articulated by leading representatives of the federal state of Vorarlberg" [idem].

The budget is approved yearly, but VLK is able to plan investments over several years (e.g. for instruments), to report any profit to the following year and build reserves [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. More than 80% of the budget is allocated to staff depending on the amount of teaching hours [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. The decision about the allocation of resources is the responsibility of the Business Director [idem]. Besides a small budget for masterclasses, the budget is not spread out in the departments; the Business Director indicated however that he would feel comfortable with a more spread-out allocation of the budget [idem].

The Review Team considers that the current funding enables VLK to successfully deliver its programmes. There is however a strong need to reinforce the administration (see Section 5.3 below).

The decision-making process concerning the allocation of resources is very top-heavy (see also Section 6.2 below). The Review Team recommends that allocations are transferred to the departments, in line with more responsibilities. The top management would still retain the full responsibility and control. On one hand, the Business director would be able to focus on more strategical aspects and on long-term funding. On the other hand, new ideas and projects may be generated by the departments.

The Review Team would like to encourage the management team to develop long-term financial planning (i.e. anticipate), in a direction or another: on the one hand, scenarios should be prepared in case VLK would have an increased income, on the other hand VLK needs to have a risk management strategy and plan how it would manage and rationalise its activities in case there would be a budget cut. This recommendation is especially valid as VLK depends on funding from the State of Vorarlberg which is approved yearly.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with Standard 5.2.**

### **5.3 Support staff**

#### **Standard: the institution has sufficient qualified support staff.**

"The VLK has a very small support staff. (...) There are 12 full-time equivalents including the Artistic Director and the Managing Director working in the administration, which also includes the technical staff (caretaker, event management) [SER, p. 18]".

Members of the administration have a wide range of responsibilities: the librarian is responsible for the marketing (compiling the Ostinato, etc.); the Management Assistant is responsible for the International Office, for which she has very little time [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. The situation was described as vulnerable in case a member of the administration would become sick, although the new management system may enable in future a better sharing of the information within the administration [idem].

Students indicated their high satisfaction with the support provided by the administration [Meeting with students] and the SER refers to the "exceptional dedication" of the administrative staff [SER, p.18].

The Review Team considers that the support staff is not sufficient. The Review Team is concerned with the vulnerability of the situation and strongly recommends that VLK strengthens its administration, also in line with other recommendations (See section 2.2 on international perspectives and section 7 on internal quality culture and the need to collect and document data).

The work and dedication of the support staff is commended by students and by the management, but, as is often the case in small institutions, some activities are undertaken by individuals who are not professionals in the field. It is therefore important that VLK encourages its administrative staff to take part in continuing professional development activities. For this purpose, the Review Team recommends the use of the ERASMUS Staff Mobility Scheme.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK does not comply with Standard 5.3.**

## **6. Communication, organisation and decision-making**

### **6.1 Internal communication process**

**Standard: effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the institution.**

“For us the overriding principle is open and, as far as possible, personal communication with the teaching staff, the administration and above all the students [SER, p. 18]”.

The institution also communicates with its teaching and non-teaching staff through regular meetings (so-called conferences), many of which involve a representative of the students (see details in Section 6.2 below). Regular patterns (in terms of day and time) are set for the meetings in order to maximise attendance; this facilitates for example the attendance of part-time teachers at the “Departmental Conference” [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. Additional meetings were mentioned in the conversation, such as a weekly meeting of the Directors and Study Area Coordinators [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators], a weekly meeting of the administrative staff [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers], a bi-monthly meeting between the student representatives and the Director [Meeting with the Students].

Other communication channels such as email and phone are very much used between teaching staff members [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. There are information events for the new students about the curriculum, and the administration regularly informs students by email about opportunities to perform [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. In addition, “communication between the teaching staff and students is generally direct with the help of the usual media available today; in some cases written notices are also displayed in the area of the student secretariat [SER, p. 18]”. Finally, the new campus management system is expected to “become a central communication tool for the teaching staff and students” [idem].

The Review Team appreciated the high quality of the informal contacts as well as the good atmosphere and the high degree of trust in the institution. The internal communication mechanisms work well, with many regular meetings enabling the different stakeholders to share information and discuss on a regular basis.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK fully complies with Standard 6.1.**

## **6.2 Organisational structure and decision-making processes**

**Standard: the institution has an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.**

VLK key strategies are discussed and approved by the Advisory Board, which also monitors the development of the institution [SER, p.20]. The Advisory Board is chaired by a representative of the Vorarlberger state government (usually of the Education or Culture Ministry) and includes four other members nominated by the State of Vorarlberg, including the coordinator of the association of music schools in Vorarlberg and a representatives of the Mozarteum University [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

VLK is managed by the Artistic-Pedagogical Director and the Business Director. "The two together act as a sort of business management; the important questions are dealt with jointly [SER, p.20]". They report four times a year to the Advisory Board on VLK's activities and finances.

VLK is divided into "Organe": on the one hand, Study Areas (Pre-College, Professional Studies and Further Studies) coordinated by Study Area Coordinators appointed internally by the management and on the other hand Departments (Music theory, Wind Instruments and Percussion, Strings Instruments and Keyboard Instruments and Singing) coordinated by Heads of Departments elected by the teachers belonging to the department [Annex 13. the Geschäftsordnung des Vorarlberger Landeskonservatoriums].

The following Committees (Gremien) are in place:

- The "Teachers Conference" (die "Lehrendenversammlung") – meeting of all the teaching staff at least three times a year for reports and information.
- The "Forum" – meeting of the Directors, all Study Area Coordinators and all Heads of Departments, a representative of the student body and a representation of the employees – at least once per semester for information, exchange and discussion. Once per year an additional Quality Assurance Forum is organised.
- The "Allocation Conference" (die "Zuteilungskonferenz") – meeting of the Artistic Director, all Study Area Coordinators and all Department Coordinators and the student secretariat three times a year to allocate students to the main teacher.
- The "Study Area Conference" (die "Studienbereichskonferenz") – once a semester per study area, meeting of the concerned Study Area Coordinator with the Artistic Director, the Heads of Department, the student secretariat and the student representative for information and coordination with the departments and partners and for developmental planning of the study area.

- The "Departmental Conference" (die "Abteilungskonferenz") – at least 2 meetings per semester per department with the teachers, the Head of Department and a student representative for information, artistic coordination, overall department planning and development of recommendations to the management.

[Annex 13. the Geschäftsordnung des Vorarlberger Landeskonservatoriums].

Minutes of the various meetings, including those with students (mentioned in Section 6.1), are kept for the collective memory and shared with all meeting participants [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators].

In case of problems, teachers meet on an individual basis with the Artistic-Pedagogical Director [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. Some of the Heads of Department would wish to have more autonomy and more responsibility, as well as a higher level in the hierarchy [idem]. They suggested that certain issues could be solved at their level without the involvement of the management and referred to a "de facto" authority through which they were overstepping their duties and which was not always accepted by members of the teaching staff [idem].

Students representatives are elected every year; they meet with the director once every second month and are free to address any topic of their choice [Meeting with Students]. The representatives feel able to give their opinion and share their needs, but were not informed about changes made following their comments [idem]. The level of involvement and contribution of the students to the decision-making processes is highly dependent on the elected students: students receive the agenda of the various meetings and are able to suggest topics, and critical students are welcome [Meeting with the Directors and the Study Area Coordinators].

Based on the good atmosphere in the institution and the similarity of messages received from various constituencies met, the Review Team finds the organisational structure and decision-making processes effective. The structure described above is clear.

The Review Team noticed however the strong "top-down" character of the structure and processes (strategic decisions are almost exclusively taken by the directors and the Advisory Board) and recommends that VLK explores how responsibilities could be shared, and how the articulation between the various layers ("Organe") could be rethought: Study Area Coordinators could be given more responsibilities and decision-making power, in order to create a proper "leadership team". The role of the Heads of Departments should also be clarified and possibly rethought to increase their decision-making power - possibly also in relation to human resources.

A revised organigram leading to a decision-making power more spread throughout the institution is very important if

VLK becomes a private university. Indeed, in university context, participation is constitutive in terms of academic autonomy. A significant cultural change will therefore have to be undertaken. Such a cultural change will have to be desired and considered as a positive process. The fact that Heads of Departments are elected by the teachers should therefore not be seen as an obstacle to this process but rather as a way to reinforce teachers' representation in the decision-making processes. Other benefits linked to a reorganisation of the decision-making power are to secure the future of the institution (for example if the management changes) and simply to enable the Directors to delegate some of their tasks (for example, dealing with student complains) and focus more on strategical matters.

Finally, student representation in the different decision-making bodies also needs to be formalised if VLK becomes a private university. The Review Team recommends that the student association adheres to the national umbrella organization representing students' interests.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with Standard 6.2.**

## **7. Internal Quality Culture**

**Standard: the institution has a strong internal quality culture, supported by clear and effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.**

The following quality assurance tools are in place or being developed:

- 1) Evaluation of courses by the students [SER, p. 21 and meeting with Students]:

The students met explained that anonymous questionnaires were distributed by teachers: a similar form for all subjects with closed questions as well as room to write their own comments [Meeting with Students]. It was however unclear to them if also the instrumental teacher was handing out such a questionnaire nor how often they were distributed [idem]. Teaching staff members regretted that these standard forms provided by the Mozarteum University were not bringing forward any interesting matter [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members]. In addition, “courses offered in the Study Area “Further Education” are evaluated regularly towards the end of the study programme and an evaluation report is drawn up [SER, p.21].

- 2) Internal evaluation of programmes:

“The courses on offer are reviewed and modified at irregular intervals. Regular modifications only take place in the study area Further Education. (...) Quality assurance recommendations are discussed and proposed within the framework of the conferences “Forum”, “Study Area Conference” and “Departmental Conference [and] regular meetings take place with the student representatives and the Directors [SER, p.21]. Members of staff/students/graduates/representatives of the music sector are (...) integrated in the Landeskonservatorium in relation to the development or modification of the courses on offer.”

- 3) External evaluation of courses:

“At irregular intervals the cooperation courses of study with the Mozarteum University Salzburg are also evaluated externally by the corresponding department of the Mozarteum [SER, p. 21].

“The results of quality assurance procedures are communicated to the members of staff in personal and individual talks as well as at conferences; (...) Students will be informed about changes via digital communication channels (email), a notice board or at information events [SER, p. 21]. However, the students met by the Review Team were not aware of the actual results of the questionnaires filled in by students nor of any action undertaken by the institution as a follow-up of the results received [Meeting with Students].

In terms of data collection, the new campus management system being introduced should enable the collection of data on alumni in future [Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators]. VLK receives a substantial amount of informal feedback and is aware of the need to formalise it [idem].

The Review Team would like to commend VLK for its internal quality culture. The Review Team noted a commitment for quality and the small size of the institution certainly facilitates the exchange of feedback and ideas for change.

However, this quality culture is not supported by clear and effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The Review Team supports the view of the management that the ongoing practices should be formalised, especially if VLK becomes a private university. For example, VLK needs to develop systems/mechanism to ensure that teachers systematically give feedback to students and that students are able to formally share problems and voice critics (an environment that is too cosy or friendly can prevent individuals from expressing certain issues). VLK could possibly also develop a system to collect student feedback on teaching that would be more efficient/beneficial than the evaluation forms currently distributed.

It is crucial that VLK systematically collects more and better statistical data (e.g. on students from student admission to their employability; on the amount of concerts organised yearly, etc.) and gathers documentation (e.g. a list of all partner organisations) in order to be able to draw conclusions and identify trends. This will be helpful when discussing the strategy of the institution, and in particular elements that need to be prioritised or changed, but also to show evidence of VLK's activities and results, and possibly for VLK to increase its own awareness of what it does and can be proud of. The Review Team therefore welcomes the move to the new campus management system. Once it is in place, VLK could select a small number of areas and indicators of which to keep track.

It is indeed crucial that all stakeholders (students, teachers, former students, external stakeholders) are involved systematically in the process, both by giving feedback on various issues (education offered, learning environment, facilities, etc.) but also by being informed about the results of the process, i.e. the feedback received and the

improvements measures taken by the institution. Results need to be shared transparently and used for further development. The AEC Handbook *Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Music Education*<sup>2</sup> may be of help to VLK in setting up a formal internal quality enhancement system.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK partially complies with Standard 7.**

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.aec-music.eu/userfiles/File/AEC%20Handbook%20-%20Internal%20Quality%20Assurance%20in%20Higher%20Music%20Education%20-%20EN.pdf>

## **8. Public interaction**

### **8.1 Cultural, artistic and educational contexts**

#### **Standard: the institution engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.**

"Members from [VLK] and also [VLK] itself (frequently in the person of the Director) are constantly involved in discussions of regional cultural, artistic and educational policy topics in Vorarlberg and further afield (e.g. development of the Lake Constance Festival). (...) With its events and courses of study, [VLK] is one of the most important cultural and educational organisations in the field of classical music in the entire international Lake Constance area (...). [SER, p. 23].

VLK organizes on average 100 events per year, including about 80 student concerts and 4 to 5 orchestra productions [Meeting with the Management]. Many examples were given of how VLK students and teachers, as well as alumni, contribute to developing the local culture like: VLK students and teachers playing in the Landesorchestra, the baroque orchestra including many former VLK students and many VLK teachers, students being encouraged to perform outside the institution, for example in hotels, hospitals and elderly homes [Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members], students playing with children from the 'Kindergarten' as part of the course "Early Childhood development" [Meeting with Students], VLK taking part in a project of the Internationale Bodenseehochschule (IBH) about political migrants from Syria [Meeting with the researcher].

In addition, VLK issues various publications (See Section 8.3), including its "Ostinato" magazine, disseminated to 5000 recipients.

The representatives of the profession met by the Review Team highlighted VLK's goal to be a major cultural player in the region and were very pleased with the main changes brought by the current management: VLK is now a capacity-building center aimed at creating highly skilled/qualified teachers, and this for all levels of music education and for the whole region; VLK is now fully embedded in the higher education offer at national level [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession]. The need for VLK to offer a very broad artistic education to future teachers was mentioned given the great diversity of contexts in which music schools operate in Austria (e.g. from rural contexts with, for example, a focus on brass training, to urban contexts with immigrant culture emerging in the music school); talks about a possible MA programme that would train students to work with immigrants were mentioned [idem]. Finally, VLK's

efforts to be in close contact and work with various stakeholders (such as choirs, brass bands) were also noted [idem].

The Review Team would like to comment VLK for being so well embedded in the region. The fact that VLK is involved in all levels of education, from pre-college education to further education, increases its importance and influence in the region.

As mentioned in Section 1, VLK is encouraged to include in its strategy elements concerning its social responsibility: the possible changes in society in the coming years need to be analyzed (e.g. changes in the audience, changes in the genres taught in music schools, etc.) and ways in which VLK will respond to them should be explored.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK fully complies with Standard 8.1.**

## **8.2 Interaction with the artistic professions**

**Standard: the institution actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.**

VLK cooperates with various music schools in the region: the programme “Promoting Talents” is offered in close coordination with the regional music schools [SER, p. 23]; students enrolled in the Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy programme teach in music schools in the region for 50 minutes per week during 4 semesters as part of their teaching internship [meeting with students]; and by offering further study courses, VLK is directly in contact with the professionals (see Section 2.1 for more details on further study courses). In addition, music schools’ directors or teachers are invited to take part in VLK entrance examination panels and in regular assessment panels (members of the jury) but also in recruitment panels for the recruitment of teachers [Meeting with representatives of the profession]. Finally, on an institutional level, “VLK is a member of the Pedagogical Advisory Board of the Vorarlberg Music School Association and maintains close personal contacts with music schools in Vorarlberg, on the German side of Lake Constance as well as in eastern Switzerland [SER, p. 23]”.

VLK cooperates with the following festivals, theatres and orchestra: the state theatre in Bregenz and the Bregenzer Festspiele, the music theatre in St. Gallen [SER, p. 23] and the orchestra in St. Gallen [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession], the music theatre in Lindau, the Symphony Orchestra Vorarlberg (e.g. for simulated auditions for

violin) [Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers], and with the Landestheatre. A cooperation with the Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie Konstanz is planned for 2018 [SER, p. 23].

The representatives of the profession met by the Review Team referred to a recent meeting organized by VLK during which they were asked to share their feedback on the education provided by the institution and on the needs of society and of the music schools [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession]. During the meeting with the Review Team, the openness of VLK to discuss the current and future needs of music schools was highlighted, as well as the accessibility of VLK Director [idem]. Representatives of the profession also raised the necessity for VLK to develop a vision on how to bring together general schools and music schools in a common place/system; finally, they regretted the absence of a professional high level discussion platform on how to meet changes: there are many informal discussions but no institutional and organized discourse about the transmission of music in the region.

Based on the various meetings held, the Review Team notes that VLK engages actively with the profession, both in the area of education and in the area of performance.

As VLK's ambition is to initiate resources for the region, the Review Team would like to recommend that it takes responsibility for education for the arts: VLK is encouraged to take the initiative to become a platform that brings together the various professional stakeholders. This would ensure a more organized sector, with a more powerful voice when it comes to lobbying, and would also enable VLK to play a leading role (for example in relation to audience development). VLK has the support of its students and their parents, teachers, former students and from representatives of the profession.

In addition, VLK is encouraged to involve more systematically the representatives of the profession in relation to the development of the institution, in order to regularly assess and monitor the ongoing needs of the professions.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK substantially complies with Standard 8.2.**

### **8.3 Information provided to the public**

**Standard: information provided to the public about the institution is clear, consistent and accurate.**

"In its communications with the public the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium is supported by a press agency. Its own publications include a periodical (Title: "OSTINATO", circulation ca. 5000), a regular newsletter, several CD series, a book series (Title: "Feldkircher Musikgeschichten"/"Feldkirch Music Stories") as well as an online research journal (Title: "impuls:vlk"). The communication systems are supplemented by its own website as well as by using popular social media networks. All communications to the public are checked and approved by the Directors of the Landeskonservatorium. [SER, p. 24]".

Senior Administrative Officers referred to the substantial amount of work realized in the last years in relation to public interaction and marketing with a focus on reaching society at large and working with broadcasting companies and newspapers; they indicated that positive echoes were now received and that the reputation of the VLK had much improved: VLK's orchestra is asked to deliver concerts outside the institution and the number of applicants to the institution has increased [meeting with Senior Administrative Officers]. The representatives of the profession met by the Review Team highlighted the professional quality of the flyers distributed by VLK to the music schools [Meeting with Representatives of the Profession].

The Review Team commends VLK on its work in relation to communication and publication: several communication channels are used; various publications are produced and distributed widely and regularly; clear, informative and attractive brochures are produced about the institution, its events programme, its master classes and further education courses. The website, although it could be modernized, is informative and clear, with many documents available for downloads. VLK can be encouraged by the positive reviews and echoes it is now receiving and by the very encouraging comments from representatives of the profession (see also Section 8.1 above).

The Review Team strongly recommends that work on communication is pursued, mostly in relation to how VLK is presented and marketed, also in view of future accreditation processes. The Review Team was struck that many aspects of VLK's work and usual practice and many of its achievements were not mentioned in the self-evaluation report and only appeared through the discussions with VLK staff and students. It is essential that VLK is more assertive in its communication, including with accreditation agencies and politicians.

**The Review Team concludes that VLK fully complies with Standard 8.3.**

## 9. Summary of the institution's compliance with MusiQuE Standards

1. Institutional mission, vision and context	
<b>Standard 1.</b> The institutional mission and vision are clearly stated.	Partially compliant
2. Educational processes	
<b>Standard 2.1.</b> The goals of the institution are achieved through the content and structure of the study programmes and their methods of delivery	Substantially compliant
<b>Standard 2.2.</b> The institution offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.	Partially compliant
<b>Standard 2.3.</b> The assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.	Partially compliant
3. Student profiles	
<b>Standard 3.1.</b> Clear admission criteria exist, which establish artistic/academic suitability of students.	Substantially compliant
<b>Standard 3.2.</b> The institution has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.	Substantially compliant
4. Teaching staff	
<b>Standard 4.1.</b> Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/ researchers.	Substantially compliant
<b>Standard 4.2.</b> There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.	Substantially compliant
5. Facilities, resources and support	
<b>Standard 5.1.</b> The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programmes.	Partially compliant
<b>Standard 5.2.</b> The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.	Substantially compliant
<b>Standard 5.3.</b> The institution has sufficient qualified support staff.	Non compliant
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making	
<b>Standard 6.1.</b> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the institution.	Fully compliant
<b>Standard 6.2.</b> The institution has an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	Partially compliant

<b>7. Internal quality culture</b>	
<b>Standard 7.1.</b> The institution has a strong internal quality culture, supported by clear and effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	<b>Partially compliant</b>
<b>8. Public interaction</b>	
<b>Standard 8.1.</b> The institution engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	<b>Fully compliant</b>
<b>Standard 8.2.</b> The institution actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	<b>Substantially compliant</b>
<b>Standard 8.3.</b> Information provided to the public about the institution is clear, consistent and accurate.	<b>Fully compliant</b>

## Annex 1 - Site-visit Schedule

**Monday, 30.01.2017**

Time	Session (venue as notified by the institution)	Names and functions of participants from the visited institution
14.30-16.00	Preparatory meeting of the Review Team	N/A
16.30-18.00	Meeting 1 Meeting with the Directors and Study Area Coordinators	Jörg Maria Ortwein (Artistic Director) Peter Schmid (Business Director) Judith Bechter (Study Area Coordinator Promoting Gifted Students) Marlene Müller (Study Area Coordinator Professional Studies) Birgit Gebhard (Study Area Coordinator Further Education)
18.00-19.00	Guided tour - Review of the facilities (studios, concert venues, practice facilities, libraries, etc.)	
19.15-21.00	Dinner	

**Tuesday, 31.01.2017**

9.00-9.30	Review Team Meeting	
9.30-10.30	Meeting 2 Meeting with Students	Wojciech Latocha (Singing, Professional Studies 5. Semester) Tom Raule (Percussion, Professional Studies 7. Semester) Katharina Lechner (Guitar, Professional Studies 9. Semester) Philip Tratter (Bassoon, Professional Studies 5. Semester) Mookho Rankhala (Viola, Professional Studies 3. Semester) Xenia Rubin (Violine, Promoting Gifted Student 7. Semester)
10.30-11.00	Break and Review team members share conclusions with Secretary	
11.00-12.00	Meeting 3 Meeting with Senior Administrative Officers	Peter Schmid (Business Direktor) Marion Müller (Student Administration) Michael Rückner (Accounting) Gerhard Fend (Head of Library) Judith Altrichter (Management Assistant)
12:00-12:30	Addition Meeting Meeting with the Researcher	Evelyn Fink-Mennel (Research Coordination Office)
12.30-13.30	Lunch	Bistro
13.30-14.30	Review Team Meeting	

14.30-16.00	Meeting 4 Meeting with Artistic and Academic Staff Members	Vivian Domenjoz (Department Coordinator Musik Pedagogy and Theroie) Fabian Müller (Department Coordinator Wind Instruments and Percussion) Johannes Hämerle (Department Coordinator Keyboard Instruments and singing) Francisco Obieta (Department Coordinator String Instruments) Gerhard Vielhaber (Teacher Piano) Rudolf Rampf (Teacher Violine) Clemens Morgenthaler (Teacher Singing)
16.00-16.30	Break and Review team members share conclusions with Secretary	
16.30-17.30	Meeting 5 Attendance at concerts or other public presentations of students work an/or visits to observe classes	Concert in Concert Hall
17.30-19.00	Review Team Meeting	
20.00	Dinner	

**Wednesday, 01.02.2017**

9.00-9.30	Review Team Meeting	
9.30-11.00	Meeting 6 Meeting with Representatives of the Profession and Former Students	Christoph Thoma (Alumni, Management Consulting for cultural projects) Markus Pferscher (Alumni, Director music school) Rainer Thiede (Director music school Switzerland) Klaus Christa (Alumni, Teacher Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium, Artist) Peter Heiler (Director music school, Head of Music School Association)
11.00-11.30	Break and Review team members share conclusions with Secretary	
11.30-12.00	Lunch	
12.00-14.00	Review Team Meeting - Preparation for the feedback meeting	
14.00-15.00	Feedback to the institution	Jörg Maria Ortwein (Artistic Director) Peter Schmid (Business Director)

## **Annex 2 - Supporting documents**

Self-evaluation report (SER) (25 pages)

Annexes to the SER

- Annex 1. Mission statement
- Annex 2. Vision
- Annex 3. Statutes
- Annex 4. Curriculum IGP 2017 (new)
- Annex 5. Implementation regulations IGP 2017 (new)
- Annex 6. Student statistics
- Annex 7. Periodical OSTINATO (various issues from the last three years)
- Annex 8. Brochures and prospectuses
- Annex 9. Statement on higher education policy (EU)
- Annex 10. Results from the evaluation circle
- Annex 11. Various employment advertisements
- Annex 12. Examples of the teachers' academic degrees
- Annex 13. Proceeding
- Annex 14. Various press releases,
- Annex 15. Press overview