



MusiQuE Strategy Paper

2020-2025

What is MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement?

MusiQuE is a recognised European independent accreditation and external evaluation body for music, contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher music education across Europe and beyond. Its operations are underpinned by independent, skilled and authoritative international peers. MusiQuE operates according to the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and is registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

MusiQuE's work is discipline-specific and aims to be characterized by flexibility, diversity, transparency and accountability in its treatment of quality enhancement in music. Through its accreditation, quality enhancement and advisory services, MusiQuE assists higher music education institutions, across Europe and further afield, in their enhancement of quality.

With its extensive expertise in the field of music, and knowledge of diverse national systems, MusiQuE participates in the public debate about musical quality and it contributes to the broad dissemination of information, new ideas and strategies concerning quality enhancement, learning, education and research, especially where these impinge upon the discipline of music and how it is taught, practised and researched.

Why this Strategy Paper

The establishment of MusiQuE in 2014 was an important milestone in the provision of quality enhancement services to the specialised European institutions offering higher music education. After a five-year start-up phase, during which it has successfully shaped its identity as an independent foundation dedicated to music quality enhancement, MusiQuE is now in a position to look beyond embedding its own structure and procedures.

The period 2020-2025 will therefore be a time for MusiQuE both to consolidate its early achievements and to press forward with further developments, planning its future development and expansion strategically with confidence. The Board of MusiQuE envisages developments in four key areas: the first is in relation to the (higher) music education sector; the second is in relation to higher education and quality assurance more generally; the third with regards to supporting institutions to set up their own quality culture, and the fourth is in terms of the foundation's own operations and sustainability.

This Strategy Paper sets out the current thinking of the MusiQuE Board: how the foundation stands currently and how it should evolve over the five-year period from 2020 to 2025. It starts with a newly formulated Mission and Vision, describes four goals for 2025 that are related to the four areas of development mentioned above, presents an action plan based on these goals and is complemented by a Business Plan, Communication Plan and a Risk Register. The document provides a route-map for MusiQuE, for its partner organisations, for the institutions it serves, for the MusiQuE Office and for external stakeholders.

MusiQuE's achievements during the past few years

Over the past few years, MusiQuE has seen a significant growth in terms of the number of procedures, the development of new services and approaches to external quality assurance, and its international reach. The organisation has also significantly professionalised its overall operation by expanding its staff, broadening the scope of the Board by adding a student member, taking a rigorous approach to its own self-evaluation through surveys and the feedback from an external evaluator, implementing several measures to increase its independence, expanding and developing its register of peer reviewers, and developing approaches to follow-up procedures and the production of trend analyses. Its efforts have been acknowledged in a recent report by the European Commission about the latest developments in quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, in which MusiQuE was identified as an example of good practice¹.

Despite these impressive achievements over a short period of time, MusiQuE is also facing challenges. Most of these are connected to the situation that cross-border quality assurance is still not a fully accepted phenomenon in all countries belonging to the European Higher Education Area: even despite its registration on the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR), MusiQuE is still not able to function independently in all EHEA countries and in some countries where it can, it has to charge fees while national agencies do not have to do so, giving an uneven level playing field for MusiQuE. Furthermore, the functioning of MusiQuE as an international quality assurance agency is challenging in that it requires significant investment in terms of time and resources to meet the many different national requirements and rules with regards to external quality assurance.

It is in light of this situation that this Strategy Paper has been written. In the process, the MusiQuE Board has chosen to review and rephrase the mission and vision statements of MusiQuE, which can be found below.

¹ Study to evaluate the progress on quality assurance systems in the area of higher education in the Member States and on cooperation activities at European level. Published:2019-01-21. Corporate Author(s): Austrian Institute of Technology ; Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission) ; Lukas Bischof Hochschulberatung ; PPMI.

Mission and Vision

Mission

MusiQuE works internationally to uphold and advance the quality of music education

MusiQuE delivers this mission on the basis of five principles which, collectively, define what MusiQuE stands for:

1. MusiQuE is, fundamentally, an organisation set up by and for the music education sector, dedicated to promoting and supporting quality enhancement and, thereby, strengthening the sector.
2. MusiQuE is committed to working in partnership with its founding organisations (AEC, EMU and Pearle), with institutions, with other stakeholders in music education and with national quality assurance agencies.
3. Operating throughout Europe and beyond, MusiQuE believes in the strength and added value of involving international perspectives in quality enhancement.
4. MusiQuE encourages institutions at all stages of music education to reflect on their own practices and potential in adapting to ongoing challenges in society.
5. MusiQuE pursues quality enhancement in a way that respects the values and ethos of each individual institution and strives to make quality enhancement issues more meaningful to staff and students.

Vision for 2025

MusiQuE in 2025 is the leading provider of quality enhancement services to (higher) music education institutions and a recognised, independent and well-respected contributor to higher education quality assurance in general. It has earned a reputation for working constructively and efficiently with institutions in which its procedures are applied to promote, embed and disseminate a broadly-supported quality culture that respects the specific and individual characteristics of (higher) music education and its institutions in an international context.

MusiQuE's goals for 2025

In order to support the journey of MusiQuE towards the achievement of its vision, four overarching goals, each with a set of proposed actions aimed at achieving it, have been devised.

1. By 2025, MusiQuE is the leading provider of external quality enhancement services to (higher) music education institutions

Through its accreditation, quality enhancement and advisory services, MusiQuE assists higher music education institutions, across Europe and further afield, in their enhancement of quality. It is a virtuous circle: the more institutions work with MusiQuE, the more quality will be enhanced. Furthermore, the international functioning of MusiQuE gives an added value to its procedures, which enhance objectivity and afford the opportunity to provide fresh perspectives.

MusiQuE aims to achieve this by:

- [INTEGRITY] Demonstrating a high level of integrity in all its activities through a rigorous commitment towards transparency, independence and objectivity.
- [DIVERSIFICATION] Developing new services and innovative methodologies tailor-made for music education institutions at different educational levels and answering their increasingly diverse needs.
- [COMMUNICATION] Increasing its visibility and expanding the channels through which it communicates about its services, in Europe and beyond.
- [COOPERATION & CONSULTATION] Keeping abreast of the latest development and changes in society in general and in the world of music in particular by maintaining strong relations with its partner organisations AEC, EMU and Pearle*, and with other organisations in the area of music and higher education more generally.
- [COMPLIANCE] Ensuring that the MusiQuE procedures are fully compatible with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG), so that institutions can see the procedures formally recognised in their national contexts.

2. By 2025, MusiQuE is a recognised and well-respected contributor to quality assurance in higher education.

MusiQuE treats quality assurance and enhancement from a subject-specific viewpoint, enabling institutions to engage with the improvement of the art-form and its curricula from artistic, practical and other relevant perspectives. Through its advocacy work, MusiQuE promotes a subject-based approach across the whole spectrum of higher education in the European Higher Education Area. In doing so, it can develop creative and innovative approaches for quality enhancement that may resonate with other disciplines.

MusiQuE aims to achieve this by:

- [MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS] Continually analysing the latest developments in the quality enhancement field.
- [PARTNERSHIPS] Strengthening synergies with organisations in the area of higher education quality assurance, such as ENQA, EQAR and the other E4 organisations².
- [COLLABORATIONS WITH QA AGENCIES] Pursuing collaborations and exchange with quality assurance and accreditation agencies active in other disciplines and in the area of quality assurance in general with the aim to share its expertise in the area of subject-specific quality assurance and learn from partner agencies about generic quality assurance processes.
- [ADVOCACY FOR SUBJECT-SPECIFIC QA] Actively contributing to the debate about quality assurance within the European Higher Education Area, advocating for subject-specific quality assurance alongside other organisations engaged in this area.
- [ADVOCACY FOR INTERNATIONAL QA] Advocating for the benefits of international, cross-border external quality assurance and for the removal of obstacles to it.

² The E4 group consists of ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU.

3. By 2025, MusiQuE's procedures continue to promote, embed and disseminate a broadly-supported quality culture with respect to the specific contexts and individual characteristics of (higher) music education and its institutions.

MusiQuE can provide support to institutions in the development of their internal quality cultures through its subject-specific and internationally based external quality assurance services. In order to do so, it needs to constantly refine its view on quality issues in the area of music and at the same time seek compliance with broader frameworks for quality assurance.

MusiQuE aims to achieve this by:

- [SUPPORT TO INSTITUTIONS] Further supporting institutions with the development of quality cultures and systems enabling them to fulfil their missions and objectives.
- [EXPERTISE OF QA IN MUSIC] Participating vigorously in the public debate about musical quality and contributing to the broad dissemination of information, new ideas and strategies concerning quality enhancement, learning, education and research, especially where these impinge upon the discipline of music and how it is taught, practised and researched.
- [SUPPORT TO INTERNAL QUALITY CULTURES] Supporting institutions in the development of their internal quality culture by promoting the benefits of external and internationally based quality enhancement procedures that are tailor-made to institutional needs and contexts.
- [RELEVANCE] Underlining the subject-specific basis for the MusiQuE standards and procedures by adhering to a concept of quality that combines a focus on artistic standards with one on educational quality.
- [RECOGNITION] Ensuring that in the support MusiQuE provides to the development of institutional quality cultures the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance (part 1 of the ESG) are addressed through its procedures.

4. By 2025, MusiQuE is a well-established organisation relying on high personnel expertise and on a sound financial basis

For MusiQuE to continue to grow its activities, institutions need to have confidence in its sustainability. The larger the number of activities it is engaged to carry out, the firmer its financial basis grows, the more practised its review teams become and the wider its reputation spreads. MusiQuE's own continuity and sustainability is therefore crucial to enabling it to continue to grow and to continually enhance the quality of higher music education.

MusiQuE aims to achieve this by:

- [PEER-REVIEWER REGISTER] Ensuring that its register includes sufficient experts in specialist musical fields, taking account of new trends and developing areas.
- [PEOPLE'S SKILLS] Constantly developing the skills of Board members, Office staff and experts.
- [COMMUNICATION] Creating and implementing a 5-year Communication Plan setting out the main objectives and actions for MusiQuE communication strategy.
- [FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY] Creating and implementing a 5-year business plan aimed at securing financial sustainability by the end of the period.

MusiQuE's action plan for the period 2020-2025

In the table below, objectives and actions are listed that are related to each of the four goals described above. The actions are considered in relation to the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. They are also linked to the Risk Register, Business Plan and Communication Plan of MusiQuE.

Goal nr 1: By 2025, MusiQuE is the leading provider of external quality enhancement services to (higher) music education institutions

Objective	Actions	Who is responsible?	Deadlines	Link to Risk Register
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uphold the principles that have been agreed upon about the independence from partner organisations and other stakeholders 	Develop an agreement with each of the partner organisations describing roles and rules on independence, and review this regularly	Director/Board	Agreements signed by Jan 2020, reviewed on an annual basis	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and further develop the principle that MusiQuE works with international peers to ensure objectivity 	Prepare and review a statistical analysis of the peer reviewer register; and recruit peers appropriately to maintain a balance in terms of geography, gender and expertise.	Office staff/Board	Review annually	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and further develop, in line with the MusiQuE Communication Plan, the website as the main information platform where transparent information can be found on MusiQuE's procedures, standards and outcomes of review processes 	<p>Update MusiQuE website sections regularly (e.g. adding information about new MusiQuE Services and completed reviews).</p> <p>Plan in advance a promotion of different sections of the MusiQuE website in the form of a regular news items (i.e. documents, news, articles).</p> <p>Promote including MusiQuE news items in communication channels Partners.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of developing and including a calendar to the MusiQuE website (additional costs, depending on financial resources)</p>	Office staff	Review monthly	1 and 5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversify the portfolio of MusiQuE activities by (further) developing, promoting and implementing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New quality enhancement tools for higher education ○ Procedures for other levels and types of music education ○ Bi-annual Brussels-based information meetings on QA in education and the role of MusiQuE. 	<p>Implement, promote and (further) develop Critical Friends Reviews as a new methodology for quality enhancement reviews in higher music education institutions (see also actions regarding Goal 3 below).</p> <p>Implement, promote and (further) develop activities in higher education outside the scope of ESG: research reviews and benchmarking exercises.</p> <p>Implement, promote and (further) develop activities in other levels and types of education: pre-college (pre-higher education level) reviews and reviews of programmes for classroom music teachers through connections with EMU and EAS (see also actions regarding Goal 3 below).</p> <p>Bi-annual Brussels-based information meetings for QA managers in higher (music) education institutions and institutions at other levels of education.</p>	<p>Staff & Board</p>	<p>Critical Friends Reviews tested and first procedures implemented by January 2020. Further development and implementation on a continuous basis.</p> <p>Research reviews and benchmarking exercises tested and first procedures implemented by January 2020.</p> <p>Pre-college reviews tested and first procedures implemented by January 2020. Further development and implementation on a continuous basis. Aim to begin in 2021 with testing and implementation of reviews of programmes for classroom music teachers.</p> <p>Aim to develop this activity in 2021 for the first time.</p>	<p>1 and 5</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep standards up to date and relevant with regards to latest developments through regular consultations of partner organisations and other stakeholders 	<p>Devise and implement process for review of standards, taking account of feedback from reviewers, reviewed institutions and partner organizations.</p>	<p>Sub-group of the Board</p>	<p>Next proposal with revised standards done by November 2020, and every three years thereafter</p>	<p>2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen connections with music education organisations and networks internationally 	<p>Creating formal connections to organizations such as NASM, SEADOM and others to be identified by signing agreements of cooperation and/or ensuring attendance at international conferences and congresses</p>	<p>Staff & Chair of Board</p>	<p>Identify organizations by Jan 2020; attendance ongoing</p>	<p>5</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undergo reviews for EQAR 	<p>Undergo regular review for EQAR registration in 2020 and post MusiQuE reports on DEQAR on a continuous basis.</p>	<p>Staff & Board</p>	<p>EQAR review during 2020 and every 5 years thereafter</p>	<p>3</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with the current practice of employing an external evaluator to ensure continuous external evaluation 	Employ external evaluator on a continuous basis for two-year periods.		External evaluator employed for 2020 and afterwards for 2-year periods.	
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Goal nr 2: By 2025, MusiQuE is a recognised and well-respected contributor to higher education quality assurance in general

Objective	Actions	Who is responsible?	Deadlines	Link to Risk Register
<p>Follow latest developments by keeping in touch with relevant organisations in the area of QA in higher education (E4, EQAR, European Commission, EASPA, etc.), studying relevant documentation, participating in relevant conferences, initiating articles and cooperating in projects.</p> <p>In these activities, advocate for subject-specific and international cross-border external quality assurance.</p>	<p>Collecting and studying relevant documentation and discussing these at Board meetings.</p> <p>Continue with ENQA Affiliate Membership.</p> <p>Participate in annual ENQA meetings</p> <p>Participate in EQAF conferences as regular participants and authors for papers.</p> <p>Actively participate in EASPA and its activities, and keep in close contact with other subject-specific organisations in QA (e.g. EQ-Arts)</p>	<p>Staff & Board</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Staff & Chair of Board</p> <p>Staff & (Chair of) Board</p> <p>Staff & (Chair of) Board</p>	<p>Every main Board meeting</p> <p>Membership renewed on an annual basis</p> <p>On an annual basis, MusiQuE co-organises ENQA Annual Meeting 2020)</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	2, 3 and 5
Continue cooperation with national agencies	<p>Review existing co-operation agreements with national agencies</p> <p>Develop new co-operation agreements with national agencies</p> <p>Apply for approval to operate in Germany through the German Akkreditierungsrat</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Staff & Board</p>	<p>Ongoing, in relation to the expiry date of each agreement</p> <p>As required by the need to undertake reviews in specific territories</p> <p>To be arranged during 2020</p>	3 and 5

Goal nr 3: By 2025, MusiQuE's procedures continue to promote, embed and disseminate a broadly-supported quality culture with respect to the specific contexts and individual characteristics of (higher) music education and its institutions.

Objective	Actions	Who is responsible?	Deadlines	Link to Risk Register
Review and improve existing procedures with regards to quality enhancement and accreditation of institutions and (joint) programmes	Send out surveys to the main stakeholders (reviewed institutions, reviewers, etc.) to collect feedback on existing procedures and improve these based on this feedback.	Staff & Board	Continuous	2
Further refine and promote 'Concept of Quality' as used by MusiQuE	Present and discuss 'Concept of Quality' during sessions at MusiQuE Peer Review Trainings and events organised by AEC, EMU and/or Pearle	Staff & Board	Annual MusiQuE Peer Review Trainings in November. At AEC, EMU and/or Pearle events as agreed with partner organisations.	2 and 5
Further develop, promote and implement procedures in other levels and types of music education, and in other artistic disciplines	Implement, promote and (further) develop activities in other levels and types of education: pre-college (pre-higher education level) reviews and reviews of programmes for classroom music teachers through connections with EMU and EAS (see also actions regarding Goal 2 above). Co-operate with other subject-specific agencies (e.g. EQ-Arts) to implement review procedures in other artistic disciplines.	Staff & Board	Pre-college reviews tested and first procedures implemented by January 2020. Further development and implementation on a continuous basis. Aim to begin in 2021 with testing and implementation of reviews of programmes for classroom music teachers. Continuous. Cooperation agreement with EQ-Arts reviewed every two years.	5
Expanding MusiQuE's scope within the music education sector by exploring the involvement of other European organisations in the area of music as MusiQuE formal partners	Explore the feasibility and interest of the European Association of Music in Schools (EAS) to become a formal MusiQuE partner.	Staff & Board	Contacts and discussions with EAS finalised by February 2020.	4 and 5
Further develop and implement new Critical Friend reviews	Implement, promote and (further) develop Critical Friends Reviews as a new methodology for embedding quality culture in higher music education institutions (see also actions regarding Goal 2 above).	Staff & Board	Critical Friends Reviews tested and first procedures implemented by January 2020. Further development and implementation on a continuous basis.	2

Ensure that the activities presented by MusiQuE are in line with ESG part 1 with a view of a formal recognition of these activities	Execute a mapping exercise of MusiQuE standards and ESG part 1 for EQAR reviews	Staff & Board	Engage in mapping exercises of MusiQuE standards and ESG part 1 for EQAR reviews	3
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Goal nr 4: By 2025, MusiQuE is a well-established partner relying on high personnel expertise and on a sound financial basis

Objective	Actions	Who is responsible?	Deadlines	Link to Risk Register
Organise annual peer review training sessions and especially encourage students to participate	Undertake 1 peer review training session per year	Staff, Board & trainers	November each year prior to the AEC Congress	4
Increase number of EMU and Pearle* peer reviewers by targeted activities and a review criteria for peer reviewers	Review criteria for registration of peer reviewers	Staff & Board	2020; thereafter every 3 years	4
	Recruit 2 Pearle and 2 EMU peer reviewers each year	Staff	From 2020 onwards	4
Identify relevant Board members and make a succession plan for the MusiQuE Board for the coming years.	Draft and implement a succession plan for the Board	Director/Chair of the Board	Spring 2020	4
Offer continuing professional development to MusiQuE staff based on annual staff appraisal interviews	Identify continuing professional development opportunities and ensure staff attendance	Director & Staff	On an annual basis following annual staff appraisal interviews	4
Enhance MusiQuE's communication with all stakeholders	Develop Communication Plan for 2020-2025 and execute its proposed actions.	Director & Board	Communication plan completed by February 2020, actions reviewed annually by staff and during Board meetings	1 and 5
Ensure MusiQuE's financial sustainability	Develop and execute Business Plan for 2020-2025	Director & Board	Business plan completed by February 2020, actions reviewed continuously by staff and during each Board meeting	1