

8 Preparing a review

8.1 Request for a review

A higher music education institution wishing to be reviewed (whether on an institutional or a programme basis) should submit a request to the MusiQuE Board in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board. This should be signed by the Rector or equivalent. The letter should be submitted by email to info@musique-qe.eu a minimum of twenty weeks before the review visit is expected to take place. In addition, a paper copy may be sent by post.

The request should include:

- The type of review requested by the institution (programme or institutional).
- A motivation for requesting a review.
- The preferred period (month and year) for the visit of the review team.
- Any specific areas of expertise required for the review (this will enable MusiQuE to recruit the appropriate experts).
- Information about the institution (departments, study areas, degree structure and number of students) or about the programme (level of degree, study focus and number of students).

Where a joint programme review is being requested, either the letter itself should carry the signatures of the Rectors (or equivalent post-holders) of all institutions or it should be submitted by one Rector but with accompanying letters from heads of all the other institutions involved confirming that their request is unanimous.

Upon acceptance of the request, the MusiQuE staff will liaise with the institution on matters relating to planning, financial details and process.

8.2 Preparing material for a review

The material assembled in preparation for a MusiQuE review, whether of the institution or of specific educational programmes, should include the following:

- A self-evaluation report based on the standards for institutional, programme or joint programme review, as appropriate (see <http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/musique-standards>). The report should be the product of a full institutional self-evaluation process.
- Supporting documentation providing evidence for the claims made in the self-evaluation report.

8.2.1 The importance of self-evaluation

The self-evaluation process is an important element in most quality assurance and accreditation procedures. This process is the means by which an institution critically examines itself and/or its programmes, and it is expected that staff and students will be involved in full. A well-conducted self-evaluation process offers a major opportunity for significant quality enhancement of all aspects of the institution. Self-evaluation normally results in a report, which forms the basis for the review that is then conducted by the Review Team.

A self-evaluation process may be structured and implemented in a variety of ways. The following points may be helpful to institutions undertaking such a process:

Useful points in the self-evaluation process	
• Senior Management advocacy:	The success of the process is dependent on the wholehearted support of the self-evaluation process by the Senior Management. It should strongly encourage all levels of staff and the student body to be involved in the process.
• Preparation:	Thorough preparation is vital for success. All those involved need to know what is expected of them and clear and comprehensive guidelines should be drawn up.
• Briefing:	Heads of departments, student representatives and other key officers require thorough briefing. It is advisable that members of staff who are required to work towards the review (in the drafting of documents, etc.) be given advice and briefing information well in advance.
• Structure:	A self-evaluation process will normally involve all levels of the institution. The structure of the review should be decided well in advance, giving clarification of the context of the review and what might be achieved as a result.
• Issues:	As indicated below, the self-evaluation process will focus on a number of issues, many of which are fairly broad. It is important that the questions to be discussed in the various fora and groups in the course of the self-evaluation process are selected carefully for each forum or group, and that they are formulated with a high degree of accuracy.
• Working environment:	Discussing quality issues is difficult in itself, and it is particularly challenging to take a critical perspective on one's own work and institution. However, working for improvement and quality enhancement is an important aspect of being professional, indeed for artists and scholars. It is of great importance to create an atmosphere of confidence and openness around the process in order for all to feel secure when sharing their thoughts and ideas.
• Past, present and future:	Most institutions are proud of their history and traditions, which may be rooted in specific historic events and/or individuals' outstanding achievements. Quality enhancement should indeed find energy and impulses in the past. At the same time it should relate very concretely to the present situation – personnel, students, resources, facilities, etc. Above all, it should be aimed at the future, in the knowledge that it may take time to establish change.
• Documentation:	It is important to document all the various stages of an internal self-evaluation process thoroughly. Such documentation is used as evidence for the leadership to draw conclusions and initiate change if relevant.

Both internal self-evaluation and external review should be measured against the institution's stated mission, vision, objectives and priorities. The challenge of self-evaluation is to make clearly defined and well-supported statements about how these translate into the profile and operations of the institution, including its internal decision-making processes. These statements will help the Review Team to make its own assessments and

recommendations based on the evidence provided by the self-evaluation report and the review process itself.

8.2.2 The self-evaluation report in preparation for a review by MusiQuE

The self-evaluation report is the most important document in the external review procedures carried out by MusiQuE. Because these procedures are based on peer review by subject experts, the experience of the Review Team will enable it to derive a considerable amount of information from the way in which an institution presents itself in this document. Through the document, the institution conveys information about, and reflection on, itself and/or the programme(s). The report is used by Review Teams as not just the starting point but also a recurrent point of reference for their enquiries.

8.2.2.1 The self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report should:

- Be no longer than 30 pages (excluding supporting documents).
- Be written in English unless otherwise agreed by the MusiQuE staff.
- Be organised in accordance with the way in which the standards themselves are listed and numbered.
- Be analytical and reflective, and include, if possible for each standard, an assessment of the situation described and some thoughts about future directions envisioned.
- Include:
 - An introduction including a brief account on how the self-evaluation process was organised and how the report was produced.
 - An executive summary including some key facts and data about the institution.
 - A short chapter on the history of the institution.
 - A brief description of the national music educational structure or system and the place of the institution within the structure. This will provide important contextual information for the Review Team.
- Provide easily readable statistical overviews and supporting information in relation to students, staff, graduates, alumni, applicants etc.
- Be presented on behalf of and signed by the Rector(s) (or equivalent).
- Be sent electronically to the MusiQuE staff with a list of the proposed supporting documents, a minimum of eight weeks in advance of the Review Team's visit.
- Be sent both electronically and by post in hard copy to each member of the Review Team a minimum of five weeks before the Review Team's visit. The supportive material is provided on a memory stick, sent electronically to each member of the Review Team or uploaded on an online platform which can be accessed by all Review Team members.
- Be circulated to all members of staff and students who are to meet the Review Team.

The self-evaluation report should address each MusiQuE standard in turn, and should show appropriate balance between description, on the one hand, and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses on the other. Institutions should adopt an open and self-critical approach towards quality assurance.

In order to assist institutions with the structure of the report, an indicative template for the self-evaluation report (institutional, programme and joint programme review) is provided by MusiQuE (see <http://www.musique-ge.eu/documents/templates>). It is suggested that, for each standard, the report should include an analysis of challenges faced, how the institution has reflected on these and the changes that are envisioned to address them. Brief historical accounts of changes that have recently been implemented, and their effects, may also help to place future strategies for quality enhancement into context.

The ‘*Questions to be considered when addressing this standard*’ listed in the second column of the Standards document suggest areas to be covered in the answers, if relevant. These questions/indicators aim at facilitating the understanding of each standard and at illustrating the range of topics covered by that standard.

Finally, the self-evaluation report should be supported by documentary evidence (see next section).

8.2.2.2 Supportive material/ evidence

The third column in each set of standards lists the ‘Supportive material/ evidence’. This column suggests the kind of existing documentation or materials that should be used to support the self-evaluation description and analysis written in relation to each standard. Three types of material are recommended:

- a) Statistical data (number of students, teachers, financial information, etc.);
- b) Documentation relating to curricula, artistic activities, facilities, biographies of teachers;
- c) Strategic and policy documents, which describe the institution’s/the programme’s (new) goals and methods applied to reach them, and/or provide an assessment of the institution’s/programme’s current work.

It is understood that institutions may not always have pre-existing comprehensive supporting documentation or materials and that these may still be in development. If this is the case, institutions are asked to give succinct answers to areas of enquiry and to provide details explaining the stage of development of the information.

Institutions are recommended to:

- Adhere closely to the list of ‘Supportive material/ evidence’ given in the standards and ensure that all the standards are supported by appropriate documents.
- Include any relevant statistical information (students, staff, graduates, alumni, applicants, facilities etc.) in an easily readable format.
- Include any documentation relevant to the national educational system, the institution and/or the programme.

- Contact the MusiQuE staff to discuss the language of these materials. It is normally agreed that larger documents (catalogues, comprehensive study plans, etc.) may be presented in the original language provided that comprehensive summaries are provided in English.
- Number the attachments and establish easily visible cross-references between the self-evaluation report and each of the attached documents. The self-evaluation report should list the supporting documents in full.
- Include, by special agreement with MusiQuE, a representative selection of students' work (recordings/coursework, etc.).

8.2.3 Confidentiality and publication

The self-evaluation report will be treated by the MusiQuE staff and by all members of the Review Team as confidential (as stipulated in the code of conduct to which all Review Team members are asked to commit). All self-evaluation reports are kept in digital and printed format by the MusiQuE staff at their base of operation, currently co-located with the offices of AEC in Brussels, Belgium.

Institutions are, however, free to publish their own self-evaluation report on their website if they so wish.

8.2.4 Review Costs

Review fees are determined on a case-by-case basis, starting from a number of standard unit costs, but adjusting these according to a number of factors:

- Gross national income (GNI) of the country where the institution is situated
- Scope of the review (size of the institution, amount of programmes to be reviewed)
- Number of reviewers involved in the Review Team
- Length of the review visit

The MusiQuE staff will construct an individualised fee quotation for the proposed review, taking into account the factors mentioned above, and send it to the institution.