MusiQuE Framework for the Evaluation of Research Activities in Higher Music Education Institutions

MusiQuE carries out evaluations of research activities undertaken by higher music education institutions. The term "research activities" is meant to describe activities with a focus on research into and through artistic practice. Such activities are generally conducted by a research institute or research unit, but can also take place as part of regular study programmes in all three study cycles offered by higher music education institutions.

A. Objectives

A MusiQuE review of research activities aims at providing:

- an analysis of the implementation of the objectives or mission of the research activities[1] within the context of the development of research into and through artistic practice;
- an analysis of the specific results of those objectives or mission, and their relevance within the European and international landscape of research into and through artistic practice;
- an international benchmarking of the impact and results in relation to the broader music sector on the basis of the aforementioned analyses and the opinion of experts in the field;
- the formulation of a review of any strategic plans drawn up by the institution or research institute/unit for the forthcoming years in light of the specific artistic context within which this institution or research institute/unit operates;
- a general conclusion written by international experts from the field on the impact of the research activities with recommendations for enhancing the quality of these activities.
- if applicable, a follow-up analysis of recommendations formulated during previous reviews and an outline of the evolution that the institution or research institute/unit has made subsequently;

B. Overview of MusiQuE review procedure

The MusiQuE office oversees the entire review process, which encompasses the following elements:

1. A critical self-evaluation report drafted by the institution or research institute/unit

To help with the drafting of the self-evaluation report, MusiQuE has produced a template with a set of specific standards that can be followed by the institution or research institute/unit. These standards have been drawn up in accordance with the *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional*

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Review[2], which were adopted in consultation with both the higher music education and the music profession sectors, and are therefore internationally accepted.

In order to increase the relevance for the evaluation of research activities, 4 domains of investigation have been formulated, each of which relate to the above-mentioned *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review*:

- **Domain 1.** The profile of the research activities or research institute/unit: to what extent is their profile relevant from an artistic, academic and social point of view to the wider context of the international music and arts sector, how is this relevance reflected in specific research programmes, and how ambitious are these research programmes?
  - Related to MusiQuE Standards 1 and 2
- **Domain 2.** The organisation of research activities: how does the internal organisation of the research activities guarantee the envisaged quality of the results of these activities, and how do alliances with external partners in the music industry and the wider sector enhance the production of qualitative research?
  - Related to MusiQuE standards 3, 4, 5 and 6
- **Domain 3.** The evaluation of the quality of the results of research activities: how are the results of the research activities verified and how are the results evaluated in an international context?
  - Related to MusiQuE standard 7
- **Domain 4.** The impact of the results of research activities: to what extent do the research activities carried out contribute to improving higher music education, the artistic performance practices that are unique to the professional music sector, and to the further artistic and academic understanding of the themes that are studied?
  - Related to MusiQuE standards 8

With the aim to create a close relationship between the above-mentioned domains that have been explicitly developed for the evaluation of research activities in higher music education institution and the originally formulated and approved MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review, these MusiQuE standards have been reformulated in the following way:

[2] The *MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review, Programme Review and Joint Programme Review* are available online at http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/musique-standards.

1. How does the institution or research institute/unit formulate its mission and vision (or aims and objectives) with regards to research activities?
2. How is this mission/vision (or aims and objectives) achieved, how do the institution's or research institute/unit's structure, activities and evaluation procedures guarantee that these will be achieved?
3. How are research activities initiated and selected, how are they supported from the beginning to their completion, and how are they evaluated?
4. How is the quality of the researchers guaranteed, how are they appointed or selected, how is their progress monitored and how is their final research output evaluated in order to guarantee quality?
5. How do the institution or research institute/unit guarantee that they have sufficient financial resources, essential facilities and support staff for their research activities?
6. What mechanisms and structures do the institution or research institute/unit have in place to ensure that internal communication, the institutional organisation and decision-making processes are optimal?
7. What structural measures does the institution or research institute/unit take in terms of internal quality assurance and quality enhancement?
8. How is the institutions or research institute/unit active in the public cultural environment and how does it anchor its activities in wider social contexts?

The self-evaluation report must cover all 4 domains and 8 standards as mentioned above, and be no longer than 20 to 30 pages. The following documents may be submitted by the research institute to accompany the critical self-evaluation report as appendices (if available):

- a strategic plan, annual budget reports and financial reports, state regulations governing the institution's or institute/unit's operations and/or articles of association;
- results of the research activities and research products relating to past and ongoing research projects of the institution or research institute/unit (it is advised not just to present the more 'successful' work but a diverse sample);
- reports of previous reviews, reports ensuing from internal quality improvement processes and the feedback generated by them;
- statistical and non-statistical data relating to the academic and support staff and human resources policy;

- methods of internal and external communication and documentation relating to the anchoring of the activities in the wider local and international context.

This list of documents is indicative and non-exhaustive. The institute under review is asked to provide the Review Team with the final versions of documentation, including appendices, a minimum of one month before the site visit – no later, and with no revisions permitted after that time.

2. An analysis of results and quality by a MusiQuE Review Team

While the institute is preparing the critical self-evaluation report, a MusiQuE Review Team will be composed, including varied expertise in research and balanced in terms of gender and nationality.

The Review Team will then study the self-evaluation report and the available documentation and, on the basis of the evidence provided by the research institute, prepare a site visit to the institute which will take between 1 and 2 days. The site visit shall include elements such as:

- attendance of events demonstrating research output (e.g. research presentations, lecture recitals, etc.);
- meetings with (among others and if applicable) the management, students, researchers, research supervisors, research team members, quality assurance officers;
- working sessions for the Review Team to review research results and start preparing its analysis;
- a feedback meeting, during which the Review Team will share its findings with representatives of the institute.

After the site visit, MusiQuE will ask the Review Team to prepare an analytical report of the research activities and of the volume and quality of the research output produced. The analysis will be based on the 4 review domains and the 8 standards as described above.

MusiQuE will also encourage the Review Team to study the most important recent literature and policy papers on research and quality assurance produced by the higher music education sector. The following publications and documents may be provided by the MusiQuE office:

- AEC Council White Paper on Artistic Research, 2015;
- Handbook on 2nd Cycle HME Programmes as routes to Artistic Doctorates;
- AEC Learning Outcomes 2017 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cycle Studies in Music;

- Pocketbook 'Researching Conservatoires';
- Guide for learning from each other: Sharing good practice through benchmarking;
- *Polifonia Dublin Descriptors* (specific competence attainment levels for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of higher music education).

3. A critical review report by the MusiQuE Review Team

On the basis of the self-evaluation and the appendices provided, and of the various meetings held during the site visit, the MusiQuE Review Team will make a reasoned assessment of the results and performances of the research activities, which will be presented in a peer-review report. The report will follow MusiQuE's structure of 4 domains and 8 standards, and will include a set of conclusions with specific recommendations for each domain. The report will also include the results of any bibliographic analysis if appropriate.

Through such an evaluation, the institution or research institute/unit will be able to reflect on the further improvement of its research activities, its internal operations and its quality culture, and make any necessary reorientation in the international research context in which it operates. In this way, MusiQuE is endeavouring to make a contribution both to the quality of the institutions and to European research in the higher music education context in general and, by extension, to the music sector at large.