

Executive summary

Report

Programmes Quality Enhancement Review Bachelor and Master of Arts in Music programmes Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel Erasmushogeschool Brussel (Brussels, Belgium)

Site-visit: 16 – 17 May 2018

Introduction

The conservatoire was founded in 1832. In 1967 the unitarian Belgian conservatoire was split into an independent Dutch and French speaking institution. Following a merger in 1995 of several art and non-art related Brussels based higher education institutions, Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel (from now on: KCB) became a part of the Erasmushogeschool Brussel. In 2004 the two-cycle programmes, including the basic music training, were changed into an academic programme fully integrating research and study of the arts. In 2012 a decree was passed turning KCB into a School of Arts within the Erasmushogeschool Brussel, with its own responsibilities in the field of organisation of music education and research (Source: *SER*, p. 3-6).

Since 2003, Flanders has developed an external quality assurance system of programme evaluations for its University Colleges. An external independent panel monitored each programme. Since 2005, an accreditation was added to the external quality assurance



system. Until 2015, all study programmes of Flemish higher education institutions were evaluated each eight years.

Due to the decree of June 10, 2015, institutions underwent an extensive institutional review which is an institutional review extended with an additional assessment that focuses on the conduct exerted on programme evaluation by the institution rather than assessing the actual quality of the programmes.

Since the changes to the quality assurance and accreditation scheme within the Flemish higher education system in 2015, Erasmushogeschool Brussel has been responsible for ensuring the quality of its own study programmes. KCB took the decision to commission MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement (MusiQuE) to organise a procedure for a quality enhancement review of its Bachelor and Master of Arts in Music. In Flemish higher education it is customary for students with an academic Bachelor's degree (BA) to follow a subsequent Master's programme (MA). MusiQuE coordinated the organisation of the quality enhancement review and carried out the review of the music programmes.

The procedure for the review of the music programmes followed a three-stage process:

- KCB prepared a *Self-evaluation Report (SER)* and supporting documents, based on the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review*,
- An international review team composed by MusiQuE studied the *SER* and conducted a site-visit at KCB on 16-17 May 2018. The site-visit comprised meetings with representatives of the KCB management team, teaching and support staff, students, alumni, employers and external stakeholders, and visits to classes and performances. The review team used the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review* as the basis of its investigations;
- The review team produced the review report that follows, structured along the *Standards* mentioned above.

The review team consisted of:

- Georg Schulz (Chair), Associate professor at, and former rector of, the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria
- Jacques Moreau, Director of the Cefedem Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, Centre de formation des enseignants de la musique, Lyon, France
- Hannie Van Veldhoven, Head of jazz and pop at HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, The Netherlands



- Ankna Arockiam (Student member), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom
- Patrick Van den Bosch (Secretary), Advisor quality assurance at VLUHR KZ, Brussels, Belgium

Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

The review team concludes that the KCB programmes comply with the *Standards for Programme Review* as follows:

1. Programme's goals and context	
Standard 1. The programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission.	Fully compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Establish a more proactive managerial approach to achieve the goals faster with a long term strategical planning. · Choose and prioritise targets you want to develop in a structural way. · Benchmark your profile with other conservatoires in Belgium, in regards to future collaborations. · Raise awareness in the conservatory's culture about equal opportunities by taking concrete steps. 	
2. Educational processes	
Standard 2.1. The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.	Substantially compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Guarantee that in all courses the learning outcomes are used as a clear guideline to teach and assess the courses. · Share good practices of teaching methods among the teaching faculty. · Embed entrepreneurial attitude in as many courses as possible. · Embed the research attitude in the whole educational process, especially in the main subject instead of having additional courses. · Raise awareness about multimedia production skills. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a more widely developed student-centred approach. <p>Consider a proper and independent counselling system that is easily accessible to students.</p>	
Standard 2.2. The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.	Fully compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / 	
Standard 2.3. Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.	Partially compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make more use of the learning outcomes in all assessments. Use the good examples on feedback for a conservatory wide mechanism approach. 	
3. Student profiles	
Standard 3.1. There are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.	Fully compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise the admission interviews to check the potential of the candidate based on the vision of the conservatoire and the role of a musician in the society. Make language proficiency in one of the 4 languages spoken at the conservatoire a prerequisite for international students. 	
Standard 3.2. The programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.	Fully compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a more explicit career guidance policy for alumni. Raise awareness on mental and physical wellbeing of students. 	
4. Teaching staff	
Standard 4.1. Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/ researchers.	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer continuous professional development for teachers e.g. research skills, knowledge on new teaching methods, entrepreneurial education. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop a policy on hearing protection as part of raising awareness on mental and physical wellbeing of whole staff. 	
Standard 4.2. There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programme.	
Recommendations Discuss the staff balance between active artist and regular teaching.	
5. Facilities, resources and support	
Standard 5.1. The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Invest in facilities and practising rooms. · Extend the opening hours of practicing rooms and find a better system for dealing with the occupation of the rooms. 	
Standard 5.2. The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the programme.	
Recommendations /	
Standard 5.3. The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	
Recommendations /	
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making	
Standard 6.1. Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.	
Recommendations Ensure that all teachers use SEQUENS.	
Standard 6.2 The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and decision-making processes.	
Recommendations Support the student body council professionally.	
7. Internal quality culture	
Standard 7. The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	

Recommendations /	
8. Public interaction	
Standard 8.1. The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Partially compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Engage in a more structural way within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts. · Communicate the strengths of this institute more: be proud of what you have. · Prepare students as well as teachers better for the societal role of the musician of the future. 	
Standard 8.2. The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Substantially compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Take active responsibility for graduates after the achievement of the diploma. · Promote links with various sectors of music and other artistic professions in a more active way. 	
Standard 8.3. Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate.	Fully compliant
Recommendations /	

Conclusion

The KCB music programmes succeed in producing students that develop into good musicians. The review team witnessed that KCB's graduated musicians are of an excellent quality. High-qualified teaching staff teaches them. The review team commends this extremely high artistic level that is intended, involving the high quality of teachers and based on a long tradition.

The review team commends also the international environment that is created in the BA and MA programme. The programmes attract many international students. In addition, a lot of international teachers deliver masterclasses and the local staff shows great language knowledge to support all students.

The programme leaders have a clear view on the kind of musicians they want to produce. The institutional management and programme leaders are very eager to achieve their goals

and reach their ambitions. It is, nevertheless, important that they choose and prioritise targets they want to develop in a structural way.

The teachers of the BA and MA programme are the driving forces behind the programmes. Almost all initiatives come organically from teachers. The review team perceived 'leadership on distance'. On the one hand, this bottom up approach can be very stimulating and innovative. On the other hand, the review team strongly recommends a more proactive managerial approach. This is considered necessary to achieve the goals faster with long term strategical planning. The review team recommends going through all recommendations and to discuss in the management which of them could be achieved faster by applying a more proactive managerial approach.

The programme leaders have to establish policies that stimulate the professional development of the teaching staff such as research skills, knowledge on new teaching methods and entrepreneurial education. An advantage can be obtained by having the teaching staff share good practices. The implementation of SEQUENS is a good practice that shows that the programme leaders implement effective improvement measures to the benefit of both students and teachers.

The review team invites the BA and MA programme to play a bigger role in the local community, as stated in the learning outcomes about the musician's artistic-societal positioning. This awareness for the wider public has to be embedded in the curriculum so that the students can acquire entrepreneurial and social skills. Currently, the societal role of the musician remains underexposed.

In their communication to society, the programmes should show more what they achieve. They can be proud of what they realised, but this remains (too) unknown to the wider public.