

Executive summary

Report

Music Programmes accreditation

Kazakh National University of Arts (Astana, Kazakhstan)

Site-visit: 14-16 March 2017

Introduction

The Kazakh National University of Arts (KazNUA) is one of the three main higher education institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan providing education in the sphere of culture and art. In November 2016, the Academic Council of the KazNUA took the decision to commission MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement (MusiQuE) to organise a procedure for the accreditation of 36 programmes, including 19 music programmes and 17 visual and performing arts programmes. MusiQuE coordinated the organisation of the accreditation procedure and carried out the review of the 19 music programmes. The review of the 17 visual and performing arts programmes was subcontracted to EQ-Arts (Enhancing Quality in the Arts). The report that follows covers the review of the 19 music programmes. The review of the 17 visual and performing arts programmes resulted in a separate report.

The procedure for the accreditation of the 19 music programmes followed a three-stage process:

- the KazNUA 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 the KazNUA on 14-16 March 2017. The site-visit comprised meetings with representatives of the KazNUA 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 accreditation report that follows, structured along the *Standards* mentioned above.

The review team consisted of:

- Jacques Moreau, Director of the Cefedem Rhône-Alpes, Centre de formation des enseignants de la danse et de la musique, Lyon, France (Chair)
- Mist Thorkelsdottir, Senior Advisor to the Dean for International Relations at the Thornton School of Music, University of Southern California, US
- Darius Kucinskas, Vice-Dean of Music Academy at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania
- Elisabeth Gutjahr, Rector of the University of Music Trossingen, Germany
- Tony Woodcock, President of Scolopaxarts and Visiting Professor for music and social entrepreneurship at Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus, Spain
- Kamarsulu Ershatovna Ibrayeva, Associated Professor of music education and choreography at the Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Kazakhstan
- Daniyar Berzhaprakov Bagdatovich, student bachelor in composition at the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory, Kazakhstan
- Jef Cox, staff member at MusiQuE, Belgium (Secretary)



Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

The review team concludes that the KazNUA 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.	Substantially compliant
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">· The review team recommends describing programme goals for each programme in each cycle, and recommends linking these goals more explicitly to the content of the curricula.· In order to reach full compliance with the Bologna Process reforms, the review team recommends the programmes to fully embrace the principles of student-centred learning by considering students as active participants in their own learning at the one hand, and by fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving and reflective thinking at the other hand.	
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">· The review team recommends the programmes to further broaden the educational provision and to review the curricula in order to introduce students to new skills and competences in the field of cultural entrepreneurship, self-management and lifelong learning, new technologies, critical reflection, international networking and communication.· In order to introduce these new skills into the curricula, the review team recommends studying the tools developed by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) such as the dedicated website on entrepreneurship in music and the <i>AEC Learning Outcomes 2017</i>.· The review team strongly recommends increasing the artistic focus of the master programmes by including forms of practice-based and artistic research.	

- The review team strongly recommends applying the ECTS transfer rate stipulated in the transfer guidelines in a consistent manner, and adapting the incorrect transfers as soon as possible.
- In order to further improve the quality of the vocal programmes and to increase the amount of performing opportunities for its students, the review team recommends considering the creation of an opera studio.
- The review team recommends the KazNUA to consider further expanding its educational provision in the field of the historically informed practice of baroque and early classical music.
- In order to further improve the quality of the conducting programme, the review team recommends creating a laboratory orchestra which conducting students can work with on a regular basis, and forming ensembles with diverse stylistic focuses in order to increase the experience of the conducting students with the historically informed practice of baroque and early classical music repertoire.
- The review team recommends to further increase the amount of innovative collaborations across the music programmes, and in addition, to extend such collaborations to joint projects with the performing and fine arts programmes offered in other faculties.

Standard 2.2. The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.

Substantially compliant

Recommendations

- The review team recommends the KazNUA to host an AEC International Relations Coordinators (IRC) meeting.
- In order to attract more students from abroad, the review team recommends the KazNUA to investigate the possibility to offer special fees for foreign students.
- To provide the KazNUA students with more chances for international experiences, the review team recommends the programmes to advise the Ministry of culture and sport to make more grants available for international mobility.

Standard 2.3. Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.

Substantially compliant

Recommendations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommends the programmes to encourage teachers to communicate precisely what is expected from students during the assessments. 	
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"> The review team recommends the KazNUA to promote its programmes, and in particular the traditional music programmes, more actively abroad in order to attract students from neighbouring countries where similar musical traditions are practised. 	
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"> Although the review team acknowledges that the amount of master students is dependent on the funding which the Ministry of culture and sport provides for grants each academic year, the review team recommends the programmes to consider exploring new ways to fund more master students, and as such, to reach a 'critical mass' of students to both ensure the effective delivery of the programmes and to increase the possibilities for master students to interact with each other. In this context, the review team would like to reiterate its recommendation to renew the programmes' educational provision in order to introduce students to new skills and competences in the field of cultural entrepreneurship, self-management and lifelong learning, new technologies, critical reflection, international networking and communication. 	
4. Teaching staff	
Standard 4.1. Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/ researchers.	Substantially compliant

Recommendations

- The review team recommends the programmes to investigate the possibility of setting up an international mobility scheme in order to make teachers' international activities less dependent on invitations of foreign HME institutions or grants provided by third parties.
- To further facilitate international exchanges, the review team recommends the programmes to provide English language training to an increasing number of teachers as part of the continuous professional development provision.

Standard 4.2. There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programme.

Fully compliant

Recommendations

- In relation to its recommendation to consider the creation of an opera studio (as mentioned under standard 2.1), the review team recommends the vocal programmes to hire professional opera coaches who could work with the students on topics such as style and interpretation, acting and movement, opera repertoire, dramaturgy, etcetera.

5. Facilities, resources and support

Standard 5.1. The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.

Substantially compliant

Recommendations

- The review team recommends updating the collection of the library on a regular basis with contemporary literature, and to increase the share of international publications in English.
- The review team welcomes the KazNUA's plans to develop an online learning platform and recommends making it operational at the earliest opportunity.
- The review team found the musical instruments of good quality but recommends tuning pianos more regularly in order to keep them in optimal condition in Astana's changeable climate with warm summers and very cold winters.

Standard 5.2. The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the programme.

Substantially compliant

Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purposes of future review and accreditation procedures, the review team recommends the KazNUA to prepare budget overviews for each individual programme in order to provide both review teams and all stakeholders of the institution with more transparent information about the actual financial situation and long term financial sustainability of the programmes. 	
Standard 5.3. The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	Substantially compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommends the programmes to offer all support staff members English language courses as part of the recently established continuing professional development scheme for support staff. 	
6. Communication, organisation and decision-making	
Standard 6.1. Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.	Fully compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No recommendations. 	
Standard 6.2 The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and decision-making processes.	Substantially compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommends formally embedding the student council in the decision-making framework. The review team recommends the programmes to make full use of the input shared by employers by introducing their formal representation in the programmes' organisational structures. 	
7. Internal quality culture	
Standard 7. The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	Partially compliant



Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The review team strongly recommends the programmes to introduce a more qualitative approach to the internal quality assurance system. · In order to develop the internal quality assurance system from a monitoring instrument into an actual tool for the enhancement of the programmes, the review team recommends anchoring the quality assurance procedures more firmly at programme level. 	
8. Public interaction	
Standard 8.1. The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Fully compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The review team likes to reiterate its recommendation to organise an international networking event in order to exchange ideas and practices. 	
Standard 8.2. The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Fully compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No recommendations. 	
Standard 8.3. Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate.	Partially compliant
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The review team recommends publishing the existing materials (including the curriculum overviews, the amount of ECTS credits per course, information about the admission procedure and criteria, etcetera) for each individual programme on the appropriate online pages. 	

Conclusion

The KazNUA's music programmes have made an impressive development over the past two decades. The programmes demonstrate a progressive character and have taken considerable efforts to implement the various features of the Bologna Process reforms.

Despite their rapidly changing and increasingly international context, the programmes have managed to remain deeply rooted in the national music traditions. The contribution which the programmes' teachers and students make to the preservation and study of



Kazakh traditional music is one of the main strengths of the programmes, and the depth of the traditional music programmes can be considered as exemplar for any similar programme in other HME institutions.

The programmes feature close connections to the Kazakh music industry and the world of work: the internship arrangements which the programmes have made with various employers, the annual job fairs and the survey and feedback mechanisms through which representatives of the profession can make suggestions for curricular renewal can be considered as examples of good practice.

Graduates of the programmes benefit greatly from the beneficial market situation which currently characterises the Kazakh cultural sector. However, future graduates might face difficulties in finding career opportunities in case the constellation of the Kazakh cultural sector would change. It is impossible to predict if and when the market situation will change, and if a free-lance market for musicians similar to those in Europe or the United States will develop within the next decades. The programmes have, however, the opportunity to now already anticipate such changes and are recommended to renew their educational provision in order to introduce students to new skills and competences, so as to further strengthen their employability both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

In conclusion, the programmes find themselves 'in the middle of something new': although the programmes still feature elements from previous educational systems, they are eager to internationalise and fully integrate in the EHEA. Such a process inevitably takes time and can only be completed step by step. The programmes are therefore encouraged to persist in their strive to meet the Bologna Process reforms, and to make full use of the recommendations presented in this report to continue their journey.

