

# Executive summary



## Report

### Programme accreditation

### Visual and Performing Arts Programmes **Kazakh National University of Arts** **(Astana, Kazakhstan)**

**Site-visit: 14-16 March 2017**

## Introduction

The Kazakh National University of Arts (KazNUA) in Astana, Kazakhstan has commissioned MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement to organise a procedure for the accreditation of 36 programmes: 19 music programmes and 17 visual and performing arts programmes. The review of the 17 Visual and Performing Arts programmes were commissioned to EQ-Arts – Enhancing Quality in the Arts. The programmes were assessed against the MusiQuE - EQ-Arts Standards & Guidelines for Programme review, jointly agreed on by MusiQuE & EQ-Arts.

The review followed a three-stage process:

- KazNUA prepared a Self-evaluation Report (SER) and supporting documents, based on *MusiQuE - EQ-Arts standards and guidelines for programme review*



- an international review team studied the SER and conducted a site-visit at KazNUA on 14-16 March 2017. The site-visit started with three meetings with representatives of the KazNUA management team (the Rector, Vice Rectors and Supporting Administration) to enable the Team to gain an institutional perspective and understand its mission and vision. This was followed by splitting the Visual Arts Team into two groups to review each of the programmes, which were also divided between them. The two groups A & B met senior managers, teaching staff and students from each programme and alumni, employers and external stakeholders collectively. The Teams were able to visit classes, exams, performances, studios and workshops for all programmes as well as central learning resources (library, IT etc.). This enabled the review team to gain a clear overview and understanding of each programme to enable them to confidently arrive at their assessment. The review team used the *MusiQuE - EQ-Arts standards and guidelines for programme review* as the basis of its investigations.
- the review team produced the report that follows, structured along the Standards.

The site-visit took place from 14-16 March 2017.

The review team consisted of the following members:

- Professor John Butler (Chair) – CEO EQ-Arts
- Roza Abenova - Head of Centre of Modern and Contemporary Art National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Robert Baker - Independent QA&E consultant
- Paula Crabtree - Rector, Stockholm University of the Arts, Sweden
- Professor Anthony Dean - Dean Faculty of Arts, University of Winchester, UK
- Gulmira Jamankulova (student member)
- Sally Mometti (Secretary) – General Manager EQ-Arts
- Maren Schmohl - Vice Rector, Merz Akademie, Stuttgart, Germany

## Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

This section offers a summary of the institutional attributes which stand out as being strong relative to the MusiQuE/EQ-Arts standards for programme review, as well as an outline of the areas in which potential for further development emerged.

### Commendations:

- Both faculties show strong relationships between professional bodies and the programmes.
- Student's individual talents and trajectories were fostered and supported by staff.



- There was ample evidence that the University support the students to organize exhibitions and participate in national and international competitions.
- Students feel well cared for and felt that they could find guidance for most of their concerns.
- Alumni show a strong positive connection to their school and former staff and feel well guided and supported after graduation.
- The Faculty of Art has undertaken to apply for a PhD licence.
- The University supports various student-led clubs and activities (e.g. newspapers), which are also used to discuss and propagate international material and perspectives.
- KazNUA's strong desire to become more internationally connected on all levels of staff as well as students.
- The University's support for students and staff in undertaking national and international activities (festivals, conferences, mobility).
- Assessment criteria and procedures are clearly defined and easily accessible to staff and students.
- Teaching staff requirement to write extensive syllabi of courses (including assessment procedures and criteria), which are approved by the Heads of Department and reviewed on an annual basis.
- External moderators are part of the final assessment.
- Students were satisfied that they received exhaustive feedbacks on all forms of assessment.
- Lecturers provide consultancy for applicants with the purpose of assistance to preparation for examination and clarifications of requirements and criteria.
- The individual study plan, which allows the students to construct and develop their own learning path.
- The structure of the departments actively promotes interdisciplinary work between the programmes, enhancing the student's learning experience.
- An advisor for students in each specialism.
- Well-established good practice in the close connection between employers and the University in curriculum design as well as planning for future employment needs.
- The positive and constructive relationships fostered with students, graduates and professional partners. These relationships provide an effective basis for the strong focus that teachers maintain on the continual improvement of the quality of the student experience that the programmes offer.
- The 'open classes' policy providing critical reflection and sharing best teaching practice amongst staff and the opportunity for experienced staff to mentor newly appointed staff; and for experienced staff to see at first hand the fresh ideas and approaches that newer staff were engaging in.
- The activities and professional engagement of the staff feeding directly into the quality of the programmes and impacting on the students' conviction and ambition to become quality professionals at a future date.
- Effective formal and informal channels of communication in place between students and staff.

- How supportive and appreciative the students are of the activities and professional engagement of the staff and that they perceived the staff as professionally exemplary figures.
- The effectiveness of the consultancy and decision-making processes for curriculum developments that have been implemented by the University and individual programmes as a direct result of feedback gathered from employers and representatives of related fields of professional practice.
- The processes by which the University informs itself of the needs and changing demands of the professions are embedded into the formal processes of the institution.
- The Teachers provide excellent student support and guidance in all programmes.
- There are very good student advisors in all programmes.
- Students are able to comment on the curriculum and the review team found examples where their suggestions were acted upon.
- Every term the Educational Council analyses the quality system of student's marks, student's grades and the students can discuss them with the Dean.
- The final examination results are moderated.
- The close connection between employers and the University in curriculum design as well as in planning for future employment needs.
- The formal and informal links between the University and the professional organisations and employers resulting in their direct impact on the curriculum and learning and teaching.

#### **Recommendations for further development:**

- The University would benefit in aligning and integrating the broader range of more localised (and qualitative) quality assurance mechanisms that operate at departmental and faculty levels with the Quality Management system that operates at University level to create a more secure QA system, capable of both assuring the academic standards of individual programmes and the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- The review team strongly recommends that the University implement formal student representation within the institutional committee at all levels.
- The review team recommends that the outcomes for BA and MA programmes include descriptions of the level of independence in further education that is expected upon graduation.
- The review team encourages the departments and faculties to take a more formal approach to the ways in which the students are engaged in the development of the curriculum and the learning and teaching strategy.
- The review team recommends to strengthen critical reflection and self-reflection by students as formal elements in the curriculum and to further develop the experimental, independent side of the artistic programmes.
- The review team recommends that KazNUA or the respective state agents address the miss-match between the national and the ECTS credit system in order to ensure transparency and compatibility for international exchanges.

- The review team recommends the faculties to develop a (small) number of well defined, overarching MA programmes, which allow for inter- and trans-disciplinary studies.
- The review team recommends to train teaching staff in the international discussions and practices surrounding artistic and practice-based research and include it both in its bachelor and master curricula and on PhD level.
- The review team encourages the University to explore the introduction of VLE in order to support new developments in learning and teaching.
- The review team recommends the faculties to take more even approach across all curricula concerning the integration of an international dimension in order to provide all students with a similar study experience.
- The review team encourages the faculties to explore the possibilities offered by issuing an international Diploma Supplement.
- The review team recommends KazNUA to consider examples of subject specific learning outcomes to further develop existing assessment formats.
- There is room for improvement in the way that the programmes formally collect and analyse the data from graduates and employers as an enhancement tool.
- To include students in Boards and Councils that can impact upon the student learning experience.
- Acquiring some more basic entrepreneurial and business management skills would be useful as part of the education.
- Develop a policy and strategy to provide staff members with continuing development with the latest skills and knowledge in teaching and learning and recent developments such as the requirements and guidelines published in the European Standards and Guidelines document published in 2015.
- The review team strongly recommends that the University when recruiting teaching staff, the following factors are considered as essential; the importance of the gender of new staff in relation to the average student cohort in the subject; to search for teaching staff with more diverse educational backgrounds, possibly in foreign universities; to search for teaching staff with more significant international experience.
- The University moves to a more purpose designed building as soon as possible as the building is not appropriate, nor fit for its purpose as an arts academy.
- The University introduces a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at the earliest opportunity.
- More international and contemporary books written in English should be added to the libraries.
- As part of KazNUA's quality management risk-assessment, in line with its Strategic Plan, it prepares a rolling Programme Budget for all its programmes.
- Although a programme of Staff Development and Training has recently been introduced for Support Staff, there is a need to help them understand new developments in learning and teaching (around Learning Outcomes) and in learning English if the programmes want to fully engage in the international dimension.
- The review team strongly recommends the University to find ways to involve students and teachers in the decision-making process at all levels of management – in its Boards and Councils etc.



- Quality metrics are largely quantitative and the review team recommend the University consider adding more qualitative measures.
- The University organises a staff development programme and student training leading to improvement and development of a quality culture.
- The University to align and integrate the broader range of more localised (and qualitative) quality assurance mechanisms that operate at departmental and faculty levels with the Quality Management system that operates at University level to create a more secure QA system; capable of both assuring the academic standards of individual programmes and the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- The quality system wasn't embedded in the programmes and there was an inconsistency in application and practice across the programmes (some much better than others); the University should find a way to share best practice to build on their strengths.
- The University to put a system in place where programmes can formally collect and analyse the data/feedback from graduates and employers that can be used as an enhancement tool not simply as a control instance.
- The University to include students in Boards and Councils that can impact upon the student learning experience.
- The University brings together the various individual quality assurance procedures into an integrated quality assurance and enhancement policy and process.
- The 'quality culture' within the programmes generally is at a development stage and the review team believes the University must provide more staff training to help the staff to take greater responsibility for the quality process and be less compliancy driven, building on the good critical self-evaluation procedures in place as an enhancement process to make things stronger.
- Employers feel more marketing actions for the renowned University should be done to attract talent from the regions.