

Conservatorium van Amsterdam –
Amsterdam University of the Arts
Bachelor of Music

*Report of the limited programme assessment
25th & 26th April 2023*

Colophon

Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de kunsten
Programme: B Music
Location: Amsterdam
Mode of study: fulltime
Croho: 34739
Result of institutional assessment: positive

Panel

R.A. (Raoul) van Aalst, chair
K. (Keller) Coker, domain expert
P R. (Robert) Ehrlich, domain expert
N. (Nadine) Serhalawan, student
Tineke Kleene, secretary

The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of
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This document is best printed in duplex

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Summary

On 25th and 26th April 2023 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the Bachelor of Music at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (CvA). The committee judges that the quality of the programme is positive.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme tie in with (inter)national requirements for a Bachelor of Music and are in tune with the demands of the professional field. They also meet the international requirements of a bachelor's programme.

The CvA has positioned itself very clearly as an institution with not only an international mission, but also a local and a regional mission. By taking this position the CvA is "bringing itself back to the streets of Amsterdam again". The assessment committee sees this as a positive development.

The CvA has a clear picture of what it wants its students to be: professionals who excel in the field and who have developed their own identity. The assessment committee is glad to see that (especially in the Pop Department) the focus is shifting toward questions regarding branding, positioning yourself in the music business and on financial issues. In the professional field the highest standard of music-making is expected, but the supporting competences are just as important for enduring professional success.

The assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes meet the standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The CvA is an open, tolerant, supportive, humane, and intelligent organisation at all levels. Both management and teachers are open for feedback and focussed on development. The assessment committee is impressed by the humanity and deep thought with which the conservatory leadership addressed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and evidently employs consistently when dealing with students' needs. The committee regards this as a result of a positive management culture.

The formal support system consists of a dedicated and student-oriented support team. The lines of communication both within the team itself, and between them and the students are short, which makes

the system efficient. In addition to this the teachers and the management are always approachable and willing to help the students solve problems. The CvA has managed to build an exemplary support culture.

Although the CvA wants its students to gain interdisciplinary experiences scheduling problems within the AHK framework often seem to block such activities. This problem can only be solved at management level.

Students can make many choices to tailor the programme to their own interests. The assessment committee is positive about the way the curriculum enhances a student's agency. In the Pop Department this is especially fostered by the requirement to organise every aspect of the final performance independently with appropriate assistance and feedback.

The CvA is housed in two excellent buildings in Amsterdam and is therefore able to offer its students and staff appropriate facilities for an institution of its size and aspirations. The buildings cater for a wide range of users with differing requirements for teaching and performing environments. The committee appreciates the investments that have been done to keep the facilities up to date.

A critical note concerns the physical distance between the two buildings, one housing the Classical and Jazz Departments, the other the Pop Department and related disciplines in electronic music. Although students have access to the facilities of both buildings and can follow subjects in each other's departments, in practice this does not happen frequently. By extending the existing focus on Classical, Jazz or Pop music by creating a greater range of specific opportunities for interdisciplinary work the management could stimulate both staff and students to get to know each other better and work together more systematically, across musical genres. This is both what the students ask for and what is

increasingly required of practitioners in the professional field. Although several cross-departmental activities already take place, these do not yet reflect the inherent potential of the institution.

The CvA not only has a fine physical infrastructure but has also developed an impressive digital teaching and learning environment. "CvA Online" was already well-established before the Covid-19 pandemic; its rapid extension in response to lockdown conditions played an important role in securing the quality of the learning environment. The investment in low- and zero-latency infrastructure has been matched by great creativity in developing new didactical, methodological, and artistic formats. The facility with which the current generation of CvA students have adopted these new possibilities is a tribute to the institution's effective response to the pandemic. This forms a very good basis to further develop digital learning and teaching capabilities to meet future demands.

To conclude, the assessment committee establishes that the CvA is fulfilling its mission in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and internationally successfully, and indeed earns praise for doing so.

The assessment committee establishes that the teaching-learning environment meets the standard.

Student assessment

The assessment programme covers all competences. The assessment forms fit the content and level of the courses. The assessment committee is particularly impressed by the thorough way in which the Pop Department uses students' portfolios as an effective assessment instrument.

In the assessment programmes of the CvA feedback and feedforward play an important role. This matches the ambition of letting students develop their own individual profile and stimulates student agency. It also connects with the professional field where professionals are constantly being assessed (by their audience, by reviewers, in their peer group, etc.).

In the Pop department the feedback system has been formalised by using the same assessment

forms throughout the programme. The assessment committee was impressed by the AMACK assessment forms which are used in the Pop Department to systematically address Attitude, Motoric, Auditive and Creative development and Knowledge. In the Jazz department a similar approach is being developed (AMIGO) but has yet to be fully implemented after a delay necessitated by prioritising the pandemic response. The assessment committee regards the use of these forms and the quality of the feedback written on them as a best practice, which should also be extended to the Classical Department.

The quality of assessments is overseen by the Examination Board (EB) which covers all departments and plays a proactive role. Many teachers have finished the BKE course (basic assessment qualification) thereby gaining awareness of what is involved in developing good assessments. The assessment committee expects the continued rollout of BKE to further enhance the quality of assessments.

The assessment committee establishes that student assessment meets the standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

The assessment committee establishes that the graduates of the CvA demonstrate outstanding artistic and creative qualities. At the end of their programme students not only have developed their own identity, but also possess the basic skills required to perform at bachelor's level.

In their performance students show they have developed the three core competences (creative skills, technical skills, and contextual focus) at a high level. The committee applauds the fact that external examiners are systematically employed for the assessment of final performances. The other (supporting) competences are assessed in other parts of the programme.

The assessment committee is positive about the fact that students of the Pop Department make a portfolio and write reflectively as part of their graduation. The preparation for their final performance is an appropriate way of emphasizing the importance of the supporting competences in the professional

field, which could serve as a best practice example for the Jazz and Classical departments.

The assessment committee establishes that the achieved learning outcomes meet the standard.

Recommendations

For further improvement of the programme, the committee suggests the following:

- To solve scheduling problems which cannot be fully addressed at a departmental level, the assessment committee recommends that bold action be taken by the senior management, e.g., by allocating blocks of time for (planned or unplanned) cross-genre activities across the institution. This would not only help to free up space in the different schedules, but also allow physical space to be reserved for various groups to work and learn together.
- The assessment committee recommends all departments to offer opportunities for students to curate their own work and collaborate on projects where they can be responsible for curation for an event.

- The assessment committee suggests that in addition to the CvA's vertical organisation (in three departments), innovative forms of horizontal organisation be explored, e.g., by introducing a composition department which operates across the three existing departments.
- The assessment committee recommends that existing cross-genre activities be better communicated to stimulate more active participation.
- The assessment committee regards the use of the AMACK forms and the quality of the feedback written on them as a best practice and recommends the CvA to roll it out to the other departments.
- In line with the first recommendation the assessment committee welcomes the stated aim of the Jazz and Classical Departments to see the core competences and supporting competences integrated in the final assessment, e.g., by expanding the use of a portfolio and reflection (as in the Pop Department).

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework (2018) are assessed positively; the assessment committee therefore awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the assessment committee,
Utrecht, July 2023

drs. R.R. (Raoul) van Aalst
Chair

drs T. (Tineke) Kleene
Secretary

Introduction

The institute

With approximately 1.100 students, the CvA is the largest provider of professional music education in the Netherlands. The size of the institution makes it possible to provide both large-scale orchestra and ensemble projects alongside a wide range of small-scale highly specialised classes.

Departing from a strong classical music tradition, the conservatory now offers education in Early Music, Classical Music, Orchestral Conducting, Opera, Jazz, Music in Education, Pop and Electronic Music. The Bachelor of Music-students have their homebase in one of the three musical departments (Jazz, Pop, and Classical Music).

The programme

The programme is a four-year full-time bachelor programme of professional orientation, amounting to 240 ECTS.

The programme runs in Dutch and English. Recommendations of the former assessment were followed-up by the programme.

The assessment

The Conservatorium van Amsterdam assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its Bachelor of Music programme. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

In the run-up to the site visit, the assessment committee has studied the self-evaluation report on the programme and reviewed a sample of student work. The findings were input for discussions during the site visit.

The site visit was carried out on 19th and 20th April 2023 according to the programme presented in attachment 2. The panel has carried out its assessment in relation to, and in consideration of, the cluster of programmes in which this programme is placed. The contextualisation of the programme within its cluster was conducted by the complete panel during the preliminary meeting and the final deliberations. The knowledge required for this was present in (part of) the panel.

The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair presented the initial findings to representatives of the programme and the institution.

In this document, the committee is reporting on its findings, considerations, and conclusions according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue will be planned in the course of 2023. The results of this development dialogue have no influence on the assessment presented in this report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme tie in with (inter)national requirements for a Bachelor of Music and are in tune with the demands of the professional field. They also meet the international requirements of a bachelor's programme.

The CvA has positioned itself very clearly as an institution with not only an international mission, but also a local and a regional mission. By taking this position the CvA is "bringing itself back to the streets of Amsterdam again". The assessment committee sees this as a positive development.

The CvA has a clear picture of what it wants its students to be: professionals who excel in the field and who have developed their own identity. The assessment committee is glad to see that (especially in the Pop Department) the focus is shifting toward questions regarding branding, positioning yourself in the music business and on financial issues. In the professional field the highest standard of music-making is expected, but the supporting competences are just as important for enduring professional success.

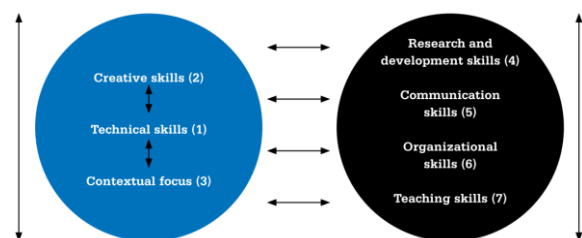
The assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

Findings

The learning outcomes are based on the Dutch National Profile and shaped by the mission of the CvA and in dialogue with the professional field.

1. Technical Skills - The student has a wide range of professional knowledge and skills and applies them in different musical contexts.
2. Creative Skills - The student can shape musical expression based on their own artistic vision and aims.
3. Contextual focus - The student identifies developments in the national and international professional world and in society at large, positioning themselves and their work in relation to these.
4. Research and development skills - The student constantly evaluates their own artistic performance through self-initiated research and reflection on their own identity, actions, and work with the aim of improving that performance and simultaneously contributing to innovation in their field.
5. Communication skills - The student interacts effectively in various professional contexts, using appropriate forms and means of communication.
6. Organisational skills - The student creates sustainable work situations and networks, enabling themselves to achieve his/her goals.
7. Teaching skills - The student uses their own musical knowledge and skills to facilitate the musical development or performance of others.

The following picture shows that the CvA distinguishes between core competences and supporting competences.



The CvA aims to develop their students into outstanding music professionals, educators, and artists with the highest level of technical skills and craftsmanship with their own identities. Students indicate a need to relate instrumental craftsmanship to societally relevant topics as well as forming an artistic vision. A new dimension or layer therefore will be added to the Contextual focus

and Creative Skills. Representatives from the industry confirm they need professionals who can integrate the core competences and supporting competences. They claim that the supporting competences may even be more important to future professionals than before.

The CvA installed an Advisory Board, comprised of executives from industry, research and media. On a regular basis the Advisory Board meets with the Board of Directors to discuss strategic matters. This could be on developments in the field, but also on social themes or property management and finance. Currently the CvA is reviewing the composition and profile of the Advisory board and in doing that, it takes into consideration societal change and include new types of expertise that have become a necessity (e.g., social safety, sustainability).

Considerations

The intended learning outcomes have been derived from the Dutch National Profile for the Bachelor of Music. They were developed in dialogue with the professional field and customised to the Conservatory of Amsterdam (CvA). They are formulated at bachelor's level. The CvA makes a distinction between core competences and supporting competences; the assessment committee recommends the CvA to integrate the two sets of competences (instead of regarding them as two separate sets).

The CvA has positioned itself very clearly as an institution; it not only has an international mission, but also a local and a regional mission. The assessment committee appreciates the fact that by taking this position the CvA is "bringing itself back to the streets of Amsterdam again".

The CvA has a clear picture of what it wants its students to be. Although the assessment committee acknowledges that it will not be possible to only educate excellent professionals it appreciates the CvA's aim to educate professionals who excel in the field and who have developed their own identity. Traditionally the focus in this aim has been on artistic excellence, but the assessment committee is happy to see that there is a tendency (especially in the Pop Department) to focus more on questions regarding branding, positioning yourself in the music business and on financial issues. The assessment committee thinks this is what all graduates (also those graduating in the Jazz and Classical Department) should be able to deal with and recommends the other departments to also shift in their ambition toward a focus on the supporting competences.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

2. Teaching-learning environment

The CvA is an open, tolerant, supportive, humane, and intelligent organisation at all levels. Both management and teachers are open for feedback and focussed on development. The assessment committee is impressed by the humanity and deep thought with which the conservatory leadership addressed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and evidently employs consistently when dealing with students' needs. The committee regards this as a result of a positive management culture.

The formal support system consists of a dedicated and student-oriented support team. The lines of communication both within the team itself, and between them and the students are short, which makes the system efficient. In addition to this the teachers and the management are always approachable and willing to help the students solve problems. The CvA has managed to build an exemplary support culture.

Students can make many choices to tailor the programme to their own interests. The assessment committee is positive about the way the curriculum enhances a student's agency. In the Pop Department this is especially fostered by the requirement to organise every aspect of the final performance independently with appropriate assistance and feedback. Although the CvA wants its students to gain cross-genre experiences, scheduling problems within the AHK framework often seem to block such activities. This problem can only be solved at management level.

The CvA is housed in two excellent buildings in Amsterdam and is therefore able to offer its students and staff appropriate facilities for an institution of its size and aspirations. These cater for a wide range of users with differing requirements for teaching and performing environments. The committee appreciates the investments that have been done to keep the facilities up to date. A critical note concerns the physical distance between the two buildings, one housing the Classical and Jazz Departments, the other the Pop Department and related disciplines in electronic music. Although students have access to the facilities of both buildings and can follow subjects in each other's departments, in practice this does not happen frequently. By extending the existing focus on Classical, Jazz or Pop music by creating a greater range of specific opportunities for cross-genre work the management could stimulate both staff and students to get to know each other better and work together more systematically across musical genres. This is both what the students ask for and what is increasingly required of practitioners in the professional field. Although several cross-departmental activities already take place, these do not yet reflect the inherent potential of the institution.

The CvA not only has a fine physical infrastructure but has also developed an impressive digital teaching and learning environment. "CvA Online" was already well-established before the Covid-19 pandemic; its rapid extension in response to lockdown conditions played an important role in securing the quality of the learning environment. The investment in online and remote learning infrastructure and platforms has been matched by great creativity in developing new didactical, methodological, and artistic formats. The facility with which the current generation of CvA students have adopted these new possibilities is a tribute to the institution's effective response to the pandemic.

To conclude, the assessment committee establishes that the CvA is fulfilling its mission in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and internationally successfully, and indeed earns praise for doing so.

The assessment committee assesses that the teaching-learning environment **meets the standard**.

Findings

The CvA offers a four-year bachelor programme for Classical Music (including early music), Jazz, and Pop. The Bachelor programmes are organised in clusters: for each section there is a team of instrumental/vocal teachers and theory/general subject teachers, collaboratively taking care of the curriculum. There is not one set path through the programme. The wide offer and teamwork within the clusters enable a diversity of paths.

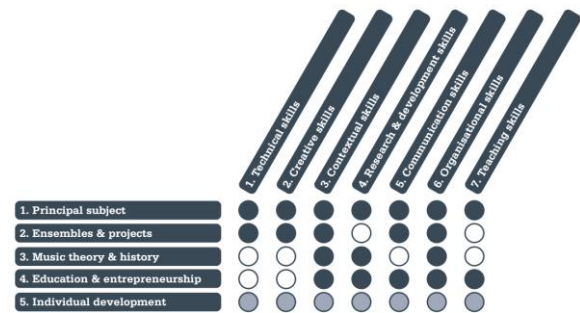
Orientation

A substantial element of all curricula is the frequent masterclasses and workshops by international guest artists, renowned international soloists, ensemble players and pedagogues. The Pop Departments started with a focus on the national professional field and, based on the needs of students and the professional field, is becoming increasingly international as well. As the CvA is situated in a metropolitan environment it engages and motivates its students to take full advantage of the many musical opportunities it offers and to exercise and influence it.

The teachers combine their activities at the CvA with (inter)national engagement as music professionals or scientists and therefore form the first and direct link with the professional practice. In the Pop and Jazz Departments, maintaining an industry-active teaching body poses a challenge.

Contents

The learning outcomes are translated into the different courses. The principal subject integrates all competences. Each course description in the study guide (part 2) refers to the intended learning outcomes which are addressed in the specific course. The programme covers all the intended learning outcomes.



The curriculum contains 240 EC spread over 4 years. It covers five areas: the principal subject (core of the programme), Ensembles & projects, Music Theory and History, Education and Entrepreneurship and Individual development. According to the student chapter the students like working in ensembles, big bands etc.

During the programme there is a gradual shift of focus. In year 1 and 2, the curriculum focuses on a solid foundation of practical and theoretical skills. The subjects are mostly compulsory. In year 3 and 4 students have more opportunities to choose which areas they want to explore, develop, or deepen.



According to the student chapter students really appreciate the fact that they must make their own programme in the 3rd and 4th year, because this is what you need to be able to do after graduation. In general students regard the level of the programme as being high. The results of the National Student Survey (NSE) 2022 show students of all departments are satisfied with the study in general and with the atmosphere.

Structure

The CvA programmes are based on four didactic principles.

Competence-oriented teaching in a realistic environment. The training and testing system reflects

the working methods and demands of the (international) profession. Increasingly, theory training is linked to the principal subject and other performance topics. This link becomes stronger as the students' progress in the programme. During the programme the students gain (performing) experience in realistic professional situations at home and abroad, continually taking new steps in their professional development.

Developing individual talent. The programmes provide each student with all basic abilities and knowledge. During the programme, students make choices to accommodate their ambitions and needs. This is supported by mentoring in the main subject classes and by student coaches and advisors. During their studies, students will encounter all the relevant styles, genres, methodologies, and didactic approaches.

Involving the International community of learners. The CvA feels the obligation to enhance conscious awareness of culturally and socially diverse perspectives within society and music. Especially within the Jazz and Classical music departments, the principal study lessons reflect the international perspective offered at the CvA.

Reflexive practice in education. To enhance an open and reflective attitude of students both formal and informal reflection are embedded in the programme and organisation. CvA has ambitions in strengthening the role of research and reflection in its BA programmes. Introducing artistic research early on in a BA programme can help cultivate a certain mindset, and the skills needed for artistic research projects to be developed in the master and beyond. The assessment committee has already seen some evidence of this in the Pop Department where students are asked to write reflections.

In the programmes a multitude of different teaching and learning activities are used:

1. Individual lessons
2. Instrumental / vocal group lessons
3. Ensemble playing

4. Concerts
5. Working groups
6. Projects
7. Research
8. Online and hybrid education

Depending on the department, a range of didactic working formats are used, increasingly including team teaching.

It was both a recommendation from previous accreditations as well as a wish of the students to provide more opportunities for cross-genre and -disciplinary activities. According to the student chapter students really appreciate this. Examples are the adaptation of the available electives, the use of individual credits and the option to work beyond departments during the different project weeks.

The CvA is embedded in the Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK). In recent years the CvA has made several steps in opening up both within the CvA and beyond. At the site visit several examples of this were given. Close to the CvA, the AHK founded the Makers Space and the Culture Club that fosters cross disciplinary activities. Both project weeks and the electives provide platforms for exploration and specialisation in interdisciplinary endeavours. It is the ambition of the CvA to further develop these opportunities. At the site visit the assessment committee discussed this issue intensively with different stakeholders. It became clear that everybody (especially the students) longs to participate more in multidisciplinary activities, but that practical issues (like scheduling and physical availability of space) are often in the way.

From the administrative side it is challenging to keep track of all the different routes a student can follow within the CvA. The many options also carry the risk of schedules becoming too full. After years of growing opportunities CvA wants to simplify the existing structures. E.g., streamlining the annual calendars of different departments or

to evaluate and connect the individual choice options in the different programmes.

Recent developments

In 2020 the programme was offered online for a larger part. During the first lockdown, starting in March 2020, all CvA's venues were closed and all classes and assessments moved online. The CvA made sure to be in contact with each individual student. In some cases, instruments and other materials were delivered to the students' homes. With the support of the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation (NMF), the CvA was able to deliver high quality pianos to student accommodations to support their ongoing development.

As of September 2020, the conservatorium was allowed to open its building for classes and for practice. Thanks to the investment in 'ZOOM-trolleys', online and hybrid classes remained possible.

Incoming students

The distribution of Dutch and foreign students has been quite stable over recent years, showing approximately 40% students from the Netherlands, 45% from 'Europe' (EEA) and 15% international/non-EER students.

The entrance exams ensure a minimal level of practical and theoretical skills, but the level and the contents students bring can vary. The potential for the development of a musical personality and solid basis of musical skills are among the requisites for the entrance exam. For many students, starting at the CvA means starting to be involved in music fulltime for the first time. The foundational years help the students to settle in.

Staff

The assessment committee received an extensive list of staff members. This list shows that the teaching team consists of people with different backgrounds and nationalities and a with a lot of experience in the field and of whom who can be expected to adequately provide the programme. According to the student chapter the quality of the lecturers is high. The teacher-student ratio

(7,8 students per FTE teaching staff) ensures personal attention and opportunities for custom-made solutions.

Assessing the educational skills of potential teachers is part of the recruitment process; a trial lesson is part of the application procedure and, when necessary, training, and on-the-job coaching is offered at the start of an appointment. At the site visit teachers told the assessment committee that teachers experience a lot of support from each other.

Continuing development of staff is an important part of the didactic approach. In 2022, the CvA launched a new teachers' development programme which aims to develop a reflective and learning culture among the teachers and increase the general pedagogical level of the faculty. Trainings contain indepth- courses like the BKE and SKE (basic/senior qualification examinations), intervision trajectories with teams, short courses on specific themes like diversity and inclusion or social safety, and student well-being. The CvA also launched platforms to meet, exchange and reflect. In 2022 the CvA also started with the Pickup: two inspiration days for all teachers, striving to reconnect after holidays with a range of workshops, panel discussions, and keynotes.

The programme for guest lectures and masterclasses also contributes to staff development. Teachers are also invited for masterclasses and guest performances at partner institutions in Europe and beyond.

Since audio and video has become a more and more integral part of music practice, a dedicated Audio and Video (AV-)team is formed. The team runs the studio and provides training and courses for students to improve their skills. At the site visit the assessment committee talked to some members of this team.

Language

The language used for education is both English and Dutch. Considering the intrinsic international character of the field and the composition of the

student body, English is an important language in the programmes. The committee agrees with this point of view.

Infrastructure

In 2008 the conservatory moved to a new building in the centre of Amsterdam at Oosterdokskaade, specifically designed for music education. Architect Frits van Dongen chose the 'Engawa model' for the design, a model derived from the Japanese style for building private homes, where the corridors are on the outside of the building and the 'user spaces' (halls, teaching and study rooms) are on the inside. The ground level houses the 'playing heart,' with four halls (100-400 seats). The building also has several fully equipped professional recording studios.

To house all music disciplines. The Pop department is situated at Q-Factory: a center that houses parts of the Amsterdam music-industry and performing arts organizations, in particular for popular music. It hosts several organizations and businesses such as music schools, studios, offices, and music promoters.

Very recently, investments were made in facilities at Q-Factory and the recording studios at Oosterdokskaade.

At the site visit the assessment committee was given a tour of the CvA buildings and at several showcases had the opportunity to talk to different stakeholders, ranging from students to members of the support team.

According to the student chapter, students of the Pop Department do not meet the other students and they think this is a weak point. This issue also came up at the site visit. Students studying in the different buildings hardly get to meet each other, while most of them indicate this is something they miss, because they can learn from each other and work together, just like they will have to do in the professional field.

In addition to the abovementioned buildings numerous additional facilities are available to the students and for education.

Tutoring and student information

Throughout the years, especially during and after COVID-19, the support structures have become an integral part of the teaching-learning environment. For information and advice on course contents, the course of study and academic progress; exemptions; additional subsidiary subjects; 'free space'; or a modified study plan, students can contact the academic advisors. At the start of the programme all students are appointed a personal study coach. The student counsellor informs and guides students when it comes to practical and personal matters relating to the student's situation and being a student. In the student chapter one of the students talks about their autism and how she feels adequately supported by the counsellor. All conversations with the student counsellor are confidential. Besides the student counsellor, academic advisors, and coaches, the AHK also has a confidential advisor.

At the site visit the assessment committee talked to some members of the support team, who appeared to be very much involved with the wellbeing of the students. At the start of the programme students are informed about the support system (orally and via a booklet "this is how it works") and they feel safe to contact the support team. However, most problems are solved by the teachers who are also very much approachable for the students.

In addition to the coaches, a Student Information Point (StIP) was opened where students can go with questions on practical issues related to living in Amsterdam as a student.

Throughout the years different platforms have been used for communication: on the level of the AHK, the CvA and teachers. Together with the students CvA is going to develop new internal communication paths. This includes the further development of the digitalisation of student files and

schedules. At the site visit students told the assessment committee they are not always informed about relevant issues of events on time, sometimes leading to e.g. missing an interesting masterclass or guest lecture.

According to the student chapter the study load is quite high, especially in the first two years, and students get overworked, but they think altogether it's not too much to ask, as it's "just like in the real world".

Considerations

The assessment committee was touched by the openness, humanity, and intelligence at all levels in the organisation. Everyone breathes tolerance and helpfulness. Not only is there an extended formal support system, but there is also a good atmosphere of students and teachers working together and supporting each other. Everybody is open for feedback and is focussed on development. The committee regards this as a result of a positive management culture.

The formal support system consists of several people who each play their own specific role. The lines between them and with the students are short, which ensures that students are always directed to the right person. The assessment committee has met a very dedicated and student-oriented support team. Apart from this the teachers are very approachable and willing to solve problems together with the students. The CvA not only has a support system but has managed to realise a support culture. Students can not only approach members of the support team for help, but even to the management, which is quite exceptional.

One thing that could be improved is the coordination of booking and scheduling. The assessment committee noted that people are working on this very hard and that they are being creative about it, but scheduling problems persist, which hinders efforts to increase interdisciplinary cooperation. There is not enough room for spontaneous cross-genre activities. The assessment committee recommends taking bold action, e.g., by

blocking specific moments for (planned or unplanned) interdisciplinary activities in all study schemes. This not only requires space in the different schedules, but also physical space for various groups to work and learn together. The management should play an important role in this. The fact that the AHK is already organising interdisciplinary activities looks promising.

The curriculum is set up in such a way that students can make many choices to tailor the programme to their own interests. The assessment committee is positive about the way the curriculum enhances students' agency. Especially in the Pop Department students' agency is enhanced even more by letting them organise their own concert from start to finish. Also, in the other departments students long for opportunities to curate their own work. This is where the Jazz and Classical Department can learn from the Pop Department.

The conservatory is in two different buildings in Amsterdam: The departments of Classical Music and Jazz music are in one building while the Pop Department is located elsewhere. The assessment committee thinks the buildings of the CvA are phenomenal. They offer staff and students everything they need and more. The CvA offers the best possible facilities for an institution of its size. It caters for many different users with many different repertoires. The committee is impressed by the number of rooms where students can practice their instrument, individually as well as in an ensemble.

A critical note concerns the fact that the two buildings of the CvA enhance the distance between the Classical and Jazz Department on one hand and the Pop Department on the other hand. Although students have access to the facilities of both buildings and can follow subjects in each other's departments, in practice this does not happen frequently. Students generally do not know a lot about what's happening in the other departments, as there are not many formal connections. The assessment committee thinks

causes for this lie in communication and in the way the organisation is structured and therefore pleads for *de-silo-ing* the organisation. It would help if the organisation was not only structured vertically (in three departments), but also horizontally, e.g., by introducing a composition department which operates across the three existing departments. By not only focusing on Classical, Jazz or Pop, but also on commonalities the management could stimulate both staff and students to get to know each other better and work together more systematically. This is what the students ask for and what is needed in the professional field. Both the vertical and the horizontal system could exist next to each other. At the same time the assessment committee has also noticed that many cross-departmental activities already take place, but not everyone is as aware of this. Better communication could stimulate a larger participation in already existing cross-genre activities.

Not only the buildings, but also the digital teaching and learning environment deserves to be

mentioned. Just a few days after the lockdown CvA education was up and running. Before Corona "CvA Online" already existed, but during the pandemic this was extended and has led to even more didactical possibilities, like students working together making music internationally. CvA Online seems to have taken advantage of the pandemic and has helped the CvA get through the difficult period. The assessment committee is impressed by humanity and deep thought the conservatory leadership has put into dealing with the pandemic and dealing with the students.

The assessment committee concludes that the CvA is fulfilling its mission in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and internationally and for this deserves to be assessed *cum laude*.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

3. Student assessment

The assessment formats fit the content and level of the courses. The assessment committee is particularly impressed by the thorough way in which the Pop Department uses students' portfolios as an effective assessment instrument. In the assessment programmes of the CvA feedback and feedforward play an important role. This matches the ambition of letting students develop their own individual profile and stimulates student agency. It also connects with the professional field where professionals are constantly being assessed (by their audience, by reviewers, in their peer group, etc.).

In the Pop and Jazz departments the feedback system has been formalised by using the same assessment forms throughout the programme. The assessment committee was impressed by the AMACK assessment forms which are used in the Pop Department to systematically address Attitude, Motoric, Auditive and Creative development and Knowledge. In the Jazz department a similar approach is being developed (AMIGO) but has yet to be fully implemented after a delay necessitated by prioritising the pandemic response. The assessment committee regards the use of these forms and the quality of the feedback written on them as a best practice, which should also be extended to the Classical Department.

The quality of assessments is overseen by the Examination Board (EB) which covers all departments and plays a proactive role. Many teachers have finished the BKE course (basic assessment qualification) thereby gaining awareness of what is involved in developing good assessments. The assessment committee expects the continued rollout of BKE to further enhance the quality of assessments.

The assessment committee establishes that student assessment **meets the standard**.

Findings

Assessment at the CvA has three distinctive purposes:

1. Summative assessment: establishing and safeguarding the quality of the final level.
2. Formative assessment: gaining and insight into a student's development and encouraging the learning process.
3. Long-term assessment: allowing students to guide their own learning process.

The most important summative assessment moments occur when students are tested for their musical and artistic levels at their admission, transition, and final exams. Based on these assessments, decisions are made about admission, continuation or finalising the studies

Instant verbal feedback is offered by the teacher, for instance, during main instrument lessons, or chamber music and ensemble sessions. On a regular basis students discuss their progress with

(depending on the department) the chair of their instrument group, their study coaches, or their mentors. The objective is to support and encourage the student towards the optimum development of his or her talent. These assessments are formative.

Testing and assessment are used for teaching students to guide their own learning process. Therefore, they learn to reflect on their own performance and development, to make realistic evaluations and to set goals fitting their personal ambitions and potential.

A variety of testing formats are used within the CvA. All performance auditions and examinations are assessed by a committee consisting of multiple examiners. The principal subject is assessed on a formal (summative) basis. The audition is assessed by a panel consisting of teachers from the student's own subject group, including their own principal subject teacher and often a teacher from

a different department. The Pop Department always uses mixed panels with teachers from different instrument groups. The panels use established assessment protocols. All committee chairs are instructed in working with the examination protocols, and in leading the assessment discussions.

Other formats of testing are:

- Written examinations and papers (history, theory, arranging, research, electives).
- Oral examinations (ear training and solfège, harmony, analysis, electives).
- Presentations (entrepreneurship, methodology, electives).
- Active participation (conducting, ensemble participation, internship, electives).
- Recordings.

Oral examinations take place before at least two teachers. The study guide describes for each subject the assessment criteria and procedure for each element of the course.

The CvA has many different procedures in place to ensure validity, reliability, and transparency of testing. Validity is ensured because the assessment criteria for testing reflect the objectives of the subjects and thus contribute towards the attainment of competences. The formats of testing coincide with the nature of the learning objectives. The Pop Department has recently introduced the so-called AMACK assessment forms which systematically address Attitude, Motoric, Auditive and Creative development and Knowledge. In the Jazz department similar forms (Amigo) are used. As the criteria on the forms coincide with the competences they enhance the validity of the assessments.

Reliability of practical exams and auditions is safeguarded by the composition of the committees of examiners, consisting of members with considerable experience in holding practical tests. Objectivity is also safeguarded by using inter-subject assessment by experts in their disciplines.

The assessment of practical auditions and examinations is always based on the use of established protocols and report sheets.

Transparency is ensured by announcing test criteria in advance on the website and in the study guide. Test formats and assessment criteria are also shown in the study guide. The student receives a report sheet on each examination.

The quality of assessments depends for an important part on the quality of assessors and therefore assessment has a prominent role in the Teachers Development programme. Besides this official qualification trajectory, assessment is a theme in the Teachers Café and the annual Pickup at the start of the year.

The examination board (EB) consists of nine members from different departments of the CvA and meets on average five times a year. The Executive Board holds meetings with all the chairpersons of the AHK examination boards twice a year. The EB has an external member and a secretary for administrative support. The members have expertise in education and testing. Multiple members have been trained or are currently trained with either the Basic Qualifications in Examination (BKE) or the Senior Qualifications in Examination (SKE). Members participate actively in panel discussions within the CvA Teacher development programme and work sessions offered by the AHK and Vereniging Hogescholen. The board organises annual internal visitation of practical examinations and, in addition, each year attends to different aspects of the assessment process. Each member of the board attends one or two examinations and fills out an evaluation form on the examination process. The forms are discussed in the EB, best practices are shared and might lead to a recommendation for the next year's process and procedures for examinations.

Recent developments

In 2020 the programme was offered online for a larger part. In spring 2020, students did their final exams by means of portfolios with recordings,

written reflections, and reports by a minimum of two teachers. After graduation the CvA offered these graduates the possibility for a staged performance or a recording.

Considerations

The assessment programme covers all competences. Different formats of assessment are used, and the chosen formats fit the content and level of the courses. The assessment committee is enthusiastic about the fact that the Pop Department uses student portfolios as an assessment instrument and encourages the other departments to also think about implementing something similar.

In the assessment programmes of the CvA feedback and feedforward play an important role. Thinking about their own goals and ambitions, reflecting on them, and getting feedback from their teachers and peers on their performance helps students in their personal development. This matches the ambition of letting students develop their own individual profile and stimulates student agency. It also connects with the professional field where professionals are constantly being assessed (by their audience, by reviewers, etc.). Constantly getting feedback during the programme and having to deal with that will get students used to what they will experience in the field.

Especially in the Pop and in the Jazz Departments, the feedback system has been formalised by using the same assessment/ feedback forms

throughout the programme. The assessment committee was impressed by the A-MACK assessment forms which were introduced in the Pop department and systematically address Attitude, Motoric, Auditive and Creative development and Knowledge. In the Jazz department similar forms (Amigo) are used. The assessment committee regards the use of these forms and the quality of the feedback written on them as a best practice and recommends the Conservatory to roll it out over the rest of the programmes.

The CvA had made big steps in improving the assessment system and the assessment committee encourages the CvA to keep on doing this, especially by implementing best practices in one place in other parts of the organisation as well.

The quality of assessments is overseen by the Examination Board (EB) which covers all departments of the CvA. The assessment committee is positive about the proactive role that is played by the EB. The committee also likes the fact that many teachers have finished the so-called BKE course (basic assessment qualification) and therefore are more aware of what is involved in developing good assessments. The assessment committee expects the BKE to be a boost for the quality of assessments.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard.**

4. Achieved learning outcomes

The assessment committee establishes that the graduates of the CvA demonstrate outstanding artistic and creative qualities. At the end of their programme students not only have developed their own identity, but also possess the basic skills required to perform at bachelor's level.

In their performance students show they have developed the three core competences (creative skills, technical skills, and contextual focus) at a high level. The committee applauds the fact that external examiners are systematically employed for the assessment of final performances. The other (supporting) competences are assessed in other parts of the programme.

The assessment committee is positive about the fact that students of the Pop Department make a portfolio and write reflectively as part of their graduation. The preparation for their final performance is an appropriate way of emphasizing the importance of the supporting competences in the professional field, which could serve as a best practice example for the Jazz and Classical departments.

The assessment committee establishes that the achieved learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

Findings

The graduation consists of a public performance. The focus in this performance lies on the three core competences (creative skills, technical skills, and contextual focus) which are reflected in the content of the assessment forms. The other competences (research and development skills, communication skills, organisational skills, and teaching skills) are assessed in other parts of the programme.

The Pop Department has its own signature for the final projects. Students of this department submit a portfolio in preparation for their final project, that they also perform.

Before the site visit the assessment committee received video materials of the final performances and the report sheets of 15 selected graduates. The committee also read the portfolios and accompanying project plans of the graduates of the Pop Department. At the site visit the assessment committee has seen performances of students of the three departments. It also had the opportunity to look at several other assessments in which the supporting competences are assessed.

External experts in the committee of examiners play an important role regarding the assessment of the achieved level. They are independent experts that have not been involved with the training of the student, have not been teaching in the last 4 years and have no (formal) relations with the teachers involved. They are formally appointed by the examination board.

In a 2020 survey among alumni of the past 10 years, 59% of the alumni indicated they continued in a master's programme: 39% remained at the CvA and 20% decided to study at another institutions. The *Kunstenmonitor*, taken eighteen months after graduation, shows that 95% of the recent graduates work as a performing artist.

When students leave the institution, the CvA keeps an eye on them and their professional practice, the international venues where they play, the competitions they take part in and the prizes they win. CvA follows them as their careers develop, invite them to the alumni events and CvA projects.

At the site visit the assessment committee talked to several alumni and other representatives of the

professional field. The representatives of the field were very positive about the quality of the alumni. They talked about many different initiatives of working together with students and alumni of the CvA. According to one of the representatives, the vibrant Jazz scene in Amsterdam has a lot to do with the presence of the CvA. Alumni told the panel that many ensembles have emerged at the CvA where students meet each other, due to the openness of the CvA.

A critical note that was made by both the representatives from the field and the alumni is the fact that the administrative part (making a project plan, a financial plan, etc.) and the question of "how to promote myself/ my band" got less attention during the programme and are not assessed explicitly as part of the graduation project. One of the alumni said: "I still don't know how to get a gig". Alumni would have liked to learn more about this, earlier in their programme. A representative from the field added that it's very important to be able to reflect on your artistic development, to reflect on your work and to achieve this it would be a good idea to pay attention to subjects like poetry, philosophy, psychology, etc.

Considerations

The assessment committee establishes that the graduates of the CvA show an outstanding artistic and creative quality. In their performances students show they have developed the three core competences (creative skills, technical skills, and contextual focus) at a high level. The feedback and the grades that are written on the assessment forms match the performances well.

The committee is very positive about the fact that external examiners are now appointed systematically by the Examination Board (EB), (which was a recommendation of the former assessment committee).

The additional information about the assessment of the other (supporting) competences shows that these are assessed as well. In line with what was recommended in standard 1 the assessment committee would like to see the core competences and supporting competences to be integrated in the final assessment and assessed holistically. The programme already has plans to do so.

The assessment committee is very positive about the fact that students of the Pop Department make a portfolio and write a reflection as part of their graduation. The committee thinks this can be exemplary for the Jazz and Classical Departments and encourages these departments to introduce these elements as well. The professional field needs musicians who can not only produce a good artistic performance, but who can also deal with the organisational and financial aspects. These other competences are becoming more and more important to survive in the field and should therefore be an integral part of the examination programme. This might also mean that the programme needs to be looked at, because students must learn first what they will be assessed on at the end.

The assessment committee establishes that at the end of their programme students not only have developed their own identity, but also possess the basic skills required to perform at bachelor's level. They also think the results of the Kunstenmonitor show convincingly that the programme meets the requirements of the professional field. The assessment committee is also impressed by the number of graduates who continue their education in a master's programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard.**

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Name	Role	Short description of background
drs. R.R. (Raoul) van Aalst	Chair	Raoul van Aalst is an independent management consultant, culture and organisation philosopher. He often chairs audits in higher education and is trained conform the guidelines of NVAO.
K. (Keller) Coker	Member	Dean, School of Jazz & Contemporary Music, and Associate Dean, College of Performing Arts, The New School NY.
MPhil R. (Robert) Ehrlich	Member	Robert Ehrlich is tenured professor at the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig and visiting professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama London. He was principal of the Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin until 2019.
N. (Nadine) Serhalawan	Student-member	Nadine Serhalawan studies B Music at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague, dept. Jazz. She is also studying BSc Mathematics at the University of Leiden.

The panel was supported by Tineke Kleene, registered secretary.

Attachment 2 Program of the assessment

Tuesday 25th of April 2023

Time schedule	Auditees	Topics
11.00 – 12.30	Preparatory meeting of audit panel members	Incl. lunch
12.30 – 13.30	Presentation of the Bachelor Programme with School Board / Programme Management: director interim – vice director / head Classical Department vice director / head Jazz and Pop Department lector and research co-ordinator secretary of the board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mission & strategy - developments in the curricula - developments in professional field - interaction with professional field - international position - results of alumni - check on today's and tomorrow's programme
13.30 – 14.15	Tour of the building by the board	- assessment of educational facilities for the Bachelor of Music
14.15 – 15:00	Programme co-ordinators, Teaching learning environment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. head Pop & Jazz Department 2. Coordinator Pop Department 3. Study leader Strings and Early Music 4. Senior policy advisor _ coordinator chamber music 5. Study advisor Jazz 6. Teacher Pop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - curriculum - study coaching - developments in the professional field - interaction with professional field - international focus - quality assurance learning assessments
15:00 – 15:15	Break	-
15h15 – 16h30	Bachelor of Music - Market: with presentation and exchange on (student) projects, with students, teachers and others involved	
16.30 – 17.15	Alumni <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alumnus Jazz 2. Alumnus Pop 3. Alumnus Classical Music <p>--</p> Field representatives (uitnodigen voor de avond) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Field Jazz 2. Field Pop 3. Field Classical Music 4. Field General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - overall quality of the programme & its teachers - practical relevance of curriculum - involvement professional field - intrinsic backbone of the programme's contents - distinctive features of the programme - learning assessment - overall quality of the programme & its graduates - practical relevance of curriculum - alumni success rate - CvA and the professional field
17.15 – 19.15	Dinner break – dinner panel	

Time schedule	Auditees	Topics
Until latest 21.00	<p>Showcase program Blue Note and Haitink – ‘Bachelor of Music - showcase’ met publiek.</p> <p>19:15 ontvangst en toelichting showcase docenten -</p> <p>19.30 Show case Classical Music – Haitink zaal</p> <p>20.00 pauze – mezzanine</p> <p>20.15 Show case Jazz – Blue Note</p> <p>20.45 Drinks and talks with students, alumni and teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - final level and relation to the professional field - quality of assessment - quality assurance learning assessment - assessment: involvement of the professional field - assessment expertise

Wednesday 26th of April 2023 – start in Q Factory

Time schedule	Auditees	Topics
09.30 – 10.00	Preparatory meeting	
10:00 10:45	Teaching staff members 1. teacher percussion, study leader Classical Voice department 2. teacher clarinet Classical 3. teacher voice Jazz 4. teacher music theory and coordinator Jazz 5. teacher voice Pop 6. teacher Music & Technology 7. teacher Music pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement professional field - intrinsic backbone of the programme's contents - distinctive features of the programme - practical components - learning assessment (methods, standards, parties involved, scoring & feedback) - tutoring - education performance / success rate - interaction with the management - quality of assessments
10.45 – 11.30	Students 1. Classical Music 2. Classical Music 3. Jazz 4. Jazz 5. Pop 6. Pop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality of teachers - learning assessment / feedback - tutoring (incl. practical periods) - feasibility and workload - educational facilities - final projects/exams - information and communication facilities - degree of student participation in the school's decision making
11.30 – 12.30	Show case Pop and tour facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review of additional documents - students or staff members are invited to bring forward issues to the audit panel
12:30 – 13:15	Short break – travel back to CvA	
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 – 14.45	Examination Board 1. Chairman Examination Board 2. Four members of the EB 3. Secretary Examination Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - curriculum development - education performance / success rate - quality assurance learning assessment - authority of the examination board - assessment: involvement of the professional field - assessment expertise - relation to the management - involvement in decision making
14.45-16.00	Preparatory meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retrospective - internal consultation and preparation
16.00-16.15	School Board / programme management director interim – vice director / head Classical Department vice director / head Jazz and Pop Department lector and research co-ordinator secretary of the board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief feedback session - Pending issues, if any
16.15 – 16.30	Open to everyone invited by the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brief feedback to the school and follow up arrangements

Attachment 3 Documents

1. Study Guides and Curriculum information
 - 1.1 Study Guides
 - 1.1.1 Study Guides Classical Music
 - 1.1.1.1 Bachelor Classical Music Curriculum Guide
 - 1.1.1.2 Bachelor Classical Music Course Descriptions
 - 1.1.1.3 Bachelor Early Music Curriculum Guide
 - 1.1.1.4 Bachelor Early Music Course Descriptions
 - 1.1.2 Study Guides Jazz Music
 - 1.1.2.1 Bachelor Jazz Curriculum Guide
 - 1.1.2.2 Bachelor Jazz Course Descriptions
 - 1.1.3 Study Guides Pop Music
 - 1.1.3.1 Bachelor Pop Curriculum Guide
 - 1.1.3.2 Bachelor Pop Course Descriptions
 - 1.1.4 General part Study Guide
 - 1.2 Overview Bachelor curricula 2022 - 2023

2. Regulations and Guidelines for examination
 - 2.1 Educations and Examination Regulations 2022-2023 (OER)
 - 2.1.1 Educations and Examination Regulations 2022-2023 (OER)
 - 2.1.2 Addendum to the OER during COVID
 - 2.2 Guidelines Examination Board
 - 2.2.1 Additional Regulations with Respect to Reviews and Examination
 - 2.2.2 Procedure practical final exams
 - 2.2.3 Procedure practical transitional exams
 - 2.2.4 Format for portfolio final exams

3. Previous recommendation and surveys
 - 3.1 Surveys
 - 3.1.1 NSE
 - 3.1.1.1 Factsheet NSE 2022 Conservatorium van Amsterdam
 - 3.1.1.2 Factsheet NSE 2022 Bachelor Classical Music
 - 3.1.1.3 Factsheet NSE 2022 Bachelor Jazz
 - 3.1.1.4 Factsheet NSE 2022 Bachelor Pop
 - 3.1.2 Factsheet KUO NED 2021
 - 3.2 Recommendation and summary programme assessment BaMu 2026

4. Other
 - 4.1 List of Faculty Members CvA
 - 4.2 National Training Profile for Music
 - 4.3 List of Pop bands and Prizes
 - 4.4 Organigram Extern CvA

- Graduation Projects of 15 students