

Executive summary

Report

Programme Accreditation

College of Music, Mahidol University

Bachelor of Music (BM)

Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Music (MM)

Doctor of Music (DM)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

(Salaya, Thailand)

Site visit: 4 – 6 September, 2025

Introduction

Background and context

Music courses were offered for the first time at Mahidol University, Bangkok, in 1987 as electives for undergraduate students. In 1989 this was developed into a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies with emphasis on music. In 1994 the College of Music was established, offering a Master of Arts in Music (MA) with majors in music education and musicology. A Bachelor of Music (BM) programme was introduced in 1998 with majors in classical music



performance, jazz studies, Thai and oriental music, and music technology. In 2001 a three-year Pre-College program was established, followed by a Master of Music programme (MM) in 2008.

The first doctoral programme was introduced in 2005, a Doctor of Philosophy in Music (PhD) with majors in musicology and music education. This was the first of its kind in Thailand. A Doctor of Music programme was established in 2014, (DM) with majors in music performance, composition and conducting. This was the first doctoral programme of its kind in the region. The College of Music now offers music education from the pre-college level to the doctoral level within several specialisations.

The College of Music has its own campus with several buildings with dedicated rooms for teaching, practising, laboratories, library, and several concert venues. In addition, the College operates three music campuses for the general public for different outreach projects.

In 2005 the College of Music established the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) as a resident professional orchestra. The ensemble is increasingly utilised as a teaching and learning resource. The College of Music has been doing consistently well in QS World University Rankings and was ranked No 28 in QS ranking for music in 2025¹.

There are comprehensive national and university-wide quality assurance procedures in place. All higher education institutions must follow the Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF). In this context, the College of Music saw a need for more music-specific reviews and accreditations of the institution and its programmes. MusiQuE was therefore approached and carried out an institutional review in 2017 which concluded that the institution fully complies with all the standards. In 2018 and in 2019 respectively, the Bachelor of Music (BM) programme and the Master of Arts (MA) programmes participated in the MusiQuE programme reviews and were both accredited. The programmes Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Music (DM) were reviewed by MusiQuE and received programme accreditation in 2021.

Review Process

The accreditation of the BM programme was valid until 2024, and it was agreed to start a re-accreditation process for this programme as well as for the MM, the MA, the DM and the PhD programmes. In 2024 the College of Music commissioned MusiQuE to organise an accreditation procedure for these five programmes.

The procedure for the review of the doctoral programmes followed a four-stage process:

- The College of Music prepared a *Self-evaluation Report (SER)* and supporting documents, based on the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review* and structured around the *Guiding questions* for each standard.
- An international review team composed by MusiQuE studied the *SER* and documentation provided in preparation for the site visit.
- A site-visit was carried out on 4 - 6 September 2025. The site-visit comprised of meetings with representatives of College of Music leadership and management, teaching and support staff, students, alumni and representatives from the music profession, and members of governing bodies (see programme in Annex 1). There

was also a meeting with the new musical director of the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Professor Carl St.Claire. His input is referenced as notes from the meeting the review team had with alumni and members of the music profession. Classes and performances were also visited, and the review team conducted a tour of the campus.

The review team has used the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review* as the basis of its investigations and produced the review report that follows. The report is structured along the *Standards* and *Guiding questions* mentioned above as relevant.

The Review team

The review team consisted of:

- Iñaki Sandoval (Chair and Peer Reviewer)
- Ingrid Maria Hanken (Secretary and Peer Reviewer)
- Jan-Gerd Krüger (Peer Reviewer)
- Kenny Ooi (Peer Reviewer)
- Souhaila M'Barek (Peer Reviewer and Student representative)

Abra Busch participated as a peer reviewer during the initial phase but was unfortunately not able to take part in the site visit. The review team wishes to acknowledge her valuable contributions to the analysis of the SER and supporting documents.

Executive summary

The review of the College of Music, Mahidol University, highlights its position as a leading institution in higher music education in Thailand and Southeast Asia. The College has demonstrated significant progress since previous reviews, supported by a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and insightful interviews during the review visit. The cohesive efforts of faculty, students, administrators, and external stakeholders reflect a shared mission and vision, reinforcing the College's reputation for excellence. The institution excels in fostering an internationalised environment, offering diverse programmes, world-class facilities, and strong links to the music profession. The College's emphasis on community engagement, cultural integration, and student-centred learning further solidifies its standing as a regional leader.

Key strengths include robust governance and decision-making processes, transparent and inclusive admission criteria, highly qualified teaching staff, and a commitment to quality assurance. The extensive international collaborations, exceptional student support services, and state-of-the-art facilities, including concert venues and resources, also contribute to the College's success. Moreover, graduates exhibit high employability rates, and alumni maintain active connections with the institution.

Areas for development include enhancing flexibility within the curricula to better address rapid industry changes and further strengthening entrepreneurial skills for graduates pursuing freelance careers. The College is encouraged to continue its advocacy for the national recognition of artistic research and to expand lifelong learning opportunities for alumni and professionals. Additionally, streamlining quality assurance processes and



fostering more formalised discussions among staff and students about programme enhancement could further strengthen the College's quality culture.

Overall, the College of Music continues to set a benchmark for excellence, combining academic rigour, artistic innovation, and societal impact. Its commitment to continuous improvement ensures its pivotal role in advancing music education in the region.



Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

The review team concludes that the programmes Bachelor of Music (BM), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Music (MM), Doctor of Music (DM), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) comply with the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review* as follows:

1. Governance and decision making at programme level	
<p>Standard 1.1 The programme's goals are clearly stated and relevant to the national legal context. They reflect the institutional mission and vision, and they are aligned with the overarching institutional policies and strategy. They are effectively achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum, and its methods of delivery.</p>	<p>BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant</p>
<p>Suggestion for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that the College continues its efforts to find ways to increase curriculum flexibility within the TQF framework. 	
<p>Standard 1.2 The delivery of the programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure, and clear, transparent and effective decision-making processes that include a balanced representation of the programme's stakeholders (students, teaching staff, support staff, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains).</p>	<p>BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Substantially compliant</p>
<p>Recommendations for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team recommends that the College continues to explore culturally appropriate ways of formalising student participation in decision-making. The Review team recommends that the election of student liaisons should be delegated to student bodies and made more transparent. The Review team recommends that involvement of external stakeholders in decision-making should be more formalised. For instance, through the establishment of advisory committees. <p>Suggestion for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that teachers' involvement in the decision-making processes should be enhanced. 	
2. Students' perspectives	
<p>Standard 2.1 Clear, coherent, and inclusive admission criteria exist, to establish artistic / academic suitability of incoming students at programme level. Admitted students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process and to engage in critical reflection.</p>	<p>BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant</p>

<p>They are supported to achieve the intended learning outcomes through an appropriate and effective blend of teaching and learning styles and pedagogies. The programme and its methods of delivery are adequately catered by staff and support services.</p>	
<p>Suggestions for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review team suggests that curricula should be communicated in a more user-friendly form than as a complete TQF2 document. • The Review team suggests that LOs and main teaching and learning strategies should be outlined in the course syllabi. • The Review team suggests that students should be given a more active role in their learning process, fostering independence and a greater sense of ownership of learning. 	
<p>Standard 2.2 The programme has effective procedures in place to formally monitor and review the progression of its students. Assessment methods are clearly defined and effectively demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. There is an effective complaints and appeals system in place at programme level.</p>	<p>BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant</p>
<p>Suggestions for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review team suggests that assessment criteria should be included in the syllabi. • The Review team suggests that guidelines for the use of AI in assessment should be established. • The review team suggests that the College should continue to advocate for assessment methods which are more artistically relevant to the MM and DM programmes. 	
<p>Standard 2.3 The programme has effective mechanisms in place to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills that facilitate their transition towards a professional life in the music and / or related artistic domain. Procedures are in place to formally and effectively monitor students' subsequent employability and professional achievement. The information thus collected is efficiently used to maintain an active link with the music / artistic profession and to further develop the curriculum.</p>	<p>BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant</p>
<p>Suggestions for enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review team suggests that curricula should be more flexible to accommodate rapid changes in the job market, and to further strengthen the students' entrepreneurial skills in preparation for portfolio and freelance careers. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that the College should consider providing flexible learning options to graduates offering relevant professional development without requiring a new degree 	
3. Teachers' perspectives	
Standard 3.1 Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/ researchers. The size and composition of the teaching body are sufficient and appropriate to effectively deliver the curriculum. There are adequate opportunities for teaching staff for continued professional development.	BM, MA, and PhD: Fully compliant MM, and DM: Substantially compliant
Recommendation for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team recommends that the College continues its advocacy for gaining recognition of artistic research and artistic output as equal to academic research. This is of particular importance for the MM and DM programmes 	
4. External perspectives	
Standard 4.1 The programme offers a range of opportunities for students and staff to gain international perspectives and experiences.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant
Suggestion for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that the College should look for ways to increase the travel grants available for students. 	
Standard 4.2 The programme's educational processes reflect the institutional policies and strategies in place for an active social engagement. The continued development and maintenance of links with the music profession and the wider artistic, cultural, educational and/or other relevant sectors within society is an integrated part of the programme.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant
Suggestion for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that more targeted and formalised lifelong learning opportunities should be provided for alumni and the music profession at large. 	
5. Resources	
Standard 5.1 The programme has means and resources to ensure its successful delivery and to secure its sustainable development.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD:

	Fully compliant
Suggestions for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that the College continues its efforts to secure additional funding. The Review team suggests that the College should continue its efforts to reduce the number of non-skilled staff. 	
Standard 5.2 The programme ensures a safe learning and working environment. The programme provides effective support for all students and staff to preserve and improve their mental and physical wellbeing.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant
6. Communication processes	
Standard 6.1 Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme. Information provided to the public about the programme is, clear, consistent, regular, and accurate.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Fully compliant
Suggestion for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team suggests that digital versions should be developed of all documents linked on the College website. 	
7. Quality Culture	
Standard 7.1 The programme builds an environment where internal and external feedback is sought and connected, and where staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and the programme activities. The programme is thus enabled to ensure the quality of its curriculum and educational processes, and to work towards an all-encompassing quality culture.	BM, MA, MM, DM, and PhD: Substantially compliant
Recommendation for enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Review team recommends that QA procedures such as surveys and reports should be supplemented with regular and formalised discussions among students and staff, focusing on the enhancement of programme curricula and educational processes. 	

Conclusion

The College of Music, Mahidol University, has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to excellence in music education, establishing itself as a leader in higher music education in Thailand and Southeast Asia. This review, conducted in accordance with the MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review, highlights the College's robust academic framework, international outlook, and strong alignment with national and institutional goals. The five programmes reviewed—Bachelor of Music (BM), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Music (MM), Doctor of Music (DM), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)—reflect a well-structured approach to fostering artistic, academic, and professional excellence. The institution has effectively implemented mechanisms to ensure the quality of its educational processes, while fostering a vibrant community of students, faculty, and external stakeholders who share a collective mission to advance music education and cultural heritage.

Strong Points and Commendations

The review team commends the College for its clear and inclusive governance structure, which ensures transparency, effective decision-making, and alignment with national and institutional standards. The programmes are characterised by their internationalisation, cultural integration, and commitment to community engagement, providing students with opportunities to develop both artistic and non-musical skills that contribute to their professional success. The College's state-of-the-art facilities, including its concert venues, practice spaces, and library resources, as well as its extensive support services for students and faculty, are exceptional. The strong employability of graduates, combined with high employer satisfaction, reflects the relevance and effectiveness of the curricula. Furthermore, the College's strategic focus on quality assurance through both national and international accreditation processes, including MusiQuE reviews, underscores its dedication to continuous improvement.

Recommendations for Enhancement

While the College is highly successful in many areas, the review team suggests further efforts to enhance curricular flexibility to address emerging trends in the music industry and better prepare students for freelance and portfolio careers. Strengthening entrepreneurial skills across programmes will further support graduates in navigating a dynamic job market. Additionally, the College is encouraged to continue advocating for the recognition of artistic research and creative output as equivalent to academic research, thereby enabling greater opportunities for faculty development and promotion. Formalised lifelong learning opportunities for alumni and professionals, such as workshops or online modules, could also strengthen the College's engagement with the broader music community. Lastly, while the quality assurance systems are robust, the College may benefit from streamlining processes and fostering more regular, structured discussions among staff and students to ensure continuous dialogue about programme enhancement.

The review team concludes that the College of Music, Mahidol University, meets the MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review, with strong compliance across all areas and a clear commitment to quality enhancement. The five programmes reviewed—Bachelor of Music (BM), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Music (MM), Doctor of Music (DM), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)—exemplify the institution's dedication to excellence, and the review team recommends all five programmes to be accredited. The College's proactive approach to improvement, as evidenced by its comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report and the

insights gathered during the review visit, reflects a thriving institutional culture dedicated to advancing music education. With its ongoing efforts to address the recommendations and embrace future opportunities, the College is well-positioned to maintain and strengthen its leadership role in music education, both regionally and globally.

