

PEER REVIEW

# BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MUSIC MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSIC





## Date site visit

April 22, 2024 – April 23, 2024

## Panel members

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# Assessment

The peer review panel evaluates the quality of the Dutch-language and English-language **Bachelor of Arts in Music**, including the majors, as **SATISFACTORY**.

The peer review panel evaluates the quality of the Dutch-language and English-language **Master of Arts in Music**, including the majors, as **SATISFACTORY**.

The panel has conducted a comprehensive review of the Bachelor in Music and the Master in Music, thereby taking into account that there is a Dutch and an English version of both programmes. The panel looked into the specificities of the different majors as well. The five majors – in both Bachelor and Master – are the following:

- 1) Composition
- 2) Conducting
- 3) Music Theory/Writing
- 4) Instrument/Voice, further divided into:
  - orchestra instruments,
  - polyphonic instruments,
  - voice,
  - historically informed performance practice.
- 5) Jazz, further divided into:
  - jazz composition,
  - jazz instrument.

The findings and recommendations in the report concern the Bachelor's and Master's programmes, including the abovementioned variations and majors, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The panel has observed several positive aspects, leading to a generally favourable assessment of the programmes and the quality they deliver. However, there are concerns that need to be addressed to improve the quality significantly, and to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the programmes. The following summary will firstly address some specific strengths of the programmes, and secondly it will present the areas for improvement that concerned the panel the most. Further details regarding these strengths and improvement areas can be found in the full report, as well as other strengths, improvement areas and suggestions for improvement.

On the positive side, the programmes seem to have a clear, focused and ambitious **mission and vision** aimed at educating and preparing students for on-stage careers. The mission is known and supported by the majority of the internal and external stakeholders. The mission, the international focus of the programmes, the *Music Writing* major and the reputation of the teachers are considered to be unique selling points and important attractors to students. Next, the **programme-specific learning outcomes** of both the Bachelor and Master of Arts in Music are well-aligned with the domain-specific learning outcomes and the corresponding levels of the Flemish Qualifications Framework. Furthermore, the **curricula** are tailored to the needs and specificities of each major, and also provide common courses aiming at allround musical skills and promoting artistic knowledge. In the survey, students have expressed their satisfaction with the logical structure and coherence of the different curricula, thereby adding that the curricula foster personal growth. In academic year 2024-2025, the programmes will progressively roll out new curricula taking into account remarks and feedback that were given to them by the professional field, students, alumni, and previous peer review panels. The **learning environment** holds several positive aspects as well. For example, the panel was impressed by the highly appreciated study counselling, the Sequens platform, the Chamber Music tool and the increased opportunities for blended learning in some courses. Regarding the **assessment of students**, the panel noticed a good balance between continuous assessment and exams. Students receive feedback on a regular basis, mostly verbal feedback. The Master's programme relies on the integrated artistic master's exam to assess the **achieved outcome level** of its students. In this format, performance and research are combined into a comprehensive evaluation. According to the alumni survey, a majority of alumni are active in the professional field.

Despite the strengths, there are several **areas for improvement**, and it should be mentioned that some of these were already identified by the previous peer review panel in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Also, the Alumni survey 2021 pointed in exactly the same direction when it comes to suggestions for improvement.<sup>2</sup> The announced improvements to be delivered by the new curriculum do not sufficiently

match up with these findings and facts, known for quite some years. Furthermore, both the Team reflection 2023 and the Student survey 2023 reported alarming outcomes on the same points addressed earlier. The panel believes the **mission** of the programmes can be broadened, including societal expectations, thus ensuring it becomes future-proof and will prepare for sustainable careers, by relating to the changing music profession and the paradigm of the musician as a maker in society<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the panel noticed a discrepancy between the mission of the programmes and the delivery of the programmes. As also underpinned by several stakeholders: while aiming at on stage careers, it is absolutely necessary that the programmes embed more **on-stage performance opportunities** and real-life experiences in the curricula. The panel remarks that it is necessary to raise more awareness regarding the **learning outcomes** among teaching staff, encouraging an active use in teaching and assessment within every course. Further, the **quality of student assessment** needs to improve, with increased attention for transparency and validity of the assessment. In addition, the assessment criteria/learning outcomes should be more articulated in assessing the **artistic final Master's exam** to ensure that alumni achieve all learning outcomes and there is sufficient evidence to support this. The **implementation of the artistic research vision** into the teaching practice requires more attention too, because students experience significant differences in the level of support they receive from their main subject teacher for their research project. Entrepreneurial skills are missing in the curriculum, as often mentioned by students and stakeholders in the professional practice. The **infrastructural situation** is worrying as well, according to the panel. The renovation that will start soon is promising in the long term, but during the renovation period the programmes will encounter very serious challenges. The current building is not particularly appropriate for the music practice, there are severe problems with climate control, there is a shortage of practice rooms, and some musical instruments on campus are in poor conditions. A functioning room reservation system is missing. All this needs to be addressed properly by the leadership in the coming years, while taking care of students, staff and teachers who are working under these stressful circumstances. Lastly, the programmes should develop a **structural alumni policy** in order to keep a closer contact with the alumni.

**In conclusion**, the panel has observed several strengths in the Music programmes, leading to a positive assessment. Despite the identified areas for improvement, the panel feels confident about the basic quality of the programmes. The panel acknowledges the challenging circumstances which the Music programmes have navigated in recent years (such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and infrastructural difficulties). Additionally, the panel appreciates the efforts and initiatives undertaken by the different departments and individual teachers to enhance the quality. Moreover, the panel has encountered passionate staff members and teachers who demonstrate expertise in their respective domains and show a great commitment to their students. Furthermore, the connection with the EhB quality cycle provides the programmes with various tools (such as surveys and discussion fora), facilitating ongoing improvement through input and feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The programmes can count on the support of the newly installed educational developer and the quality assurance staff member as well.

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- 1 The MusiQuE Peer review 2019, final report, stated, among others, the following recommendations:
    - Embed entrepreneurial attitude in as many courses as possible.
    - Embed the research attitude in the whole educational process, especially in the main subject.
    - Invest in facilities and practicing rooms, ... and find a better system for dealing with the occupation of rooms.
    - Make more use of the Learning Outcomes in all assessments.
    - Support the student body council professionally.
    - Engage in a more structural way within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.
  - 2 Alumni survey 2021, among others, suggestions for improvement
    - Provide more possibilities for students in Composition, Direction, Music writing
    - Emphasis the importance of music theory and research - Facilitate for students to perform their own project from A to Z
    - Add more performance opportunities, inside and outside the conservatoire, in the orchestra, as a soloist etc.
    - Initiate collaboration with other arts schools and with the professional field in Brussels
    - Provide entrepreneurial skills education
    - Provide marketing training
    - Add more concrete professional preparation, like mock auditions
  - 3 The EU funded AEC project 'Strengthening Music in Society'  
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713648/full>



# Background

## Objectives of the peer review

The peer review consists of a visit to the programme by an independent panel of external experts. Through an interview with the programme, the panel checks the quality of the programme. If necessary, the peer review panel can signal to the board that the quality of the programme is not up to standard and a recovery plan must be drawn up.

## Content of the report

This report is structured according to the phases in the educational process as designed by EhB. Through six broad questions, quality is examined for each phase. These broad questions are a specific translation of the quality features from the Codex Higher Education<sup>4</sup> and the European Standards and Guidelines<sup>5</sup>, focusing on education.

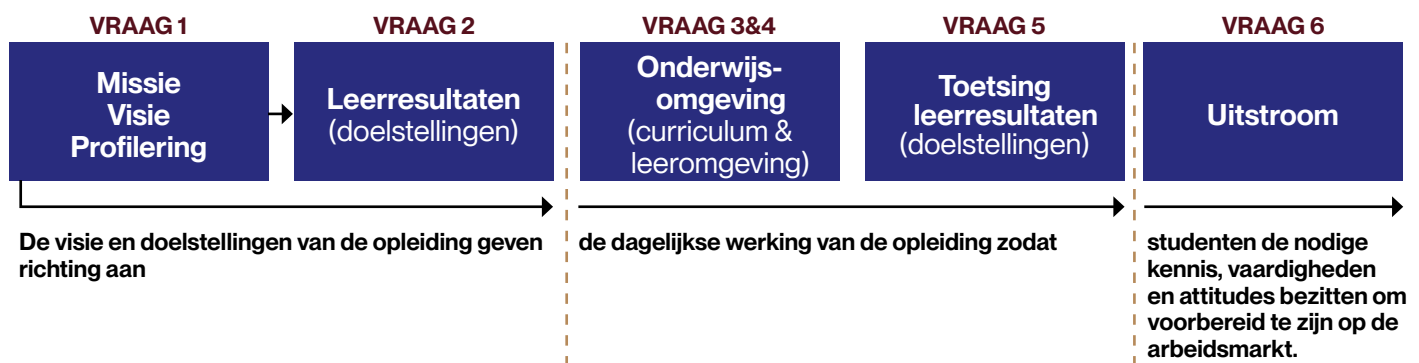


Figure 1: Educational process EhB and broad questions

This report reflects strengths, improvement areas and recommendations for each broad question.

- **Strengths** refer to good practices and/or best practices in the programme.
- **Improvement areas** are points of concern that must be addressed with priority in order to achieve or ensure the necessary quality in the programme.
- **Recommendations** are suggestions or ideas from the panel to further develop strengths or advice to strengthen certain aspects in the programme.

The strengths, improvement areas and recommendations are presented as bullet points, each of which speaks for itself. The programme can immediately start working with the improvement areas and recommendations while receiving confirmation of good practices.

## Assessment

The panel gives a final assessment covering all six broad questions, for the entire programme. If applicable, the panel gives a final assessment for each major or variation in the programme.

The peer review assessment assumes that the quality of the programme is satisfactory. The contrary must be comprehensively substantiated.

With a positive assessment, **satisfactory**, the panel confirms that the quality of the programme meets the social and international expectations. The quality can be demonstrated through the substantiation of the broad questions.

With a negative assessment, **unsatisfactory**, the panel sends a signal to the university college's management that urgent action is needed to guarantee the basic quality on one or more questions.

<sup>4</sup> *Codex Hoger Onderwijs*, Chapter 9/1, Part 1, Article II. 170/1

<sup>5</sup> *European Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)*

# Substantiation through the six broad questions

## 1. Does the programme have a clear, up-to-date, and supported mission, vision and profile.

### STRENGTHS

The programmes have a focused, coherent and ambitious and **clear mission and vision**. The programmes aim to educate and prepare students for on stage careers, thereby fully drawing the card of national and international concert practice.

The programmes have managed to obtain a distinctive **profile** in various ways. They distinguish themselves from other music programmes in Flanders, for example through the above mentioned mission and their orientation towards an international context (for example thanks to the presence of international students). The students mention that the international environment and the reputation of the teachers are some of the main reasons to choose for the Music programme at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel (shortened as KCB). Moreover, KCB is the only university of applied science and arts that offers *Music Writing*.

The programmes communicate clearly about their mission and profile to (potential) students, teachers and representatives in the professional field. Students and teaching staff show an **appreciation** for this mission.

The programmes have a clear vision on how to approach **artistic research**. Within this vision, research is closely linked to artistic practice, stating that artistic research focuses on the artists' own artistic practice.

### IMPROVEMENT AREAS

In an international context, the mission does not fulfil current expectations, and may even be seen as outdated. A **revision** is needed, to include societal expectations, professionally and academically, and to ensure that the programmes become future-proof and sustainable. Firstly, enhance the connection between the mission and the changing music profession, where careers are often characterised by a more diverse portfolio of activities. Secondly, relate to the paradigm of the musician as a maker in society by placing greater importance on creation alongside, and connected with, performance. Focus more on the societal role of musicians and cultivate the entrepreneurial and creative skills students need to fulfil this role. Include orientation on a variety of audiences, on student led- and on community-projects. Engage students, teaching staff, alumni and professional field representatives in the reviewing process and incorporate their experiences in the mission. Lastly, align expectations raised in mission and profile with the reality of the offer. (See 3, Improvement areas, for instance on the lack of sufficient performance opportunities.)

Evaluate whether the available resources are sufficient to enable the programmes to fulfil the mission for all enrolled students (for instance the availability of musical instruments, e.g. for the large number of piano students).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Create stability regarding **student admission numbers**, thereby balancing student numbers across majors. Make sure applications remain on level, quantitative and qualitative. Connect to local and regional pre-education.

Do not rely too much on the number of international students for the international profile: make more use of international perspectives in the house, consider engaging in more international projects.

## 2. Does the programme have a set of adequate programme-specific learning outcomes and indicators?

### STRENGTHS

The **programme specific learning outcomes of the Bachelor and Master in Music** are a good translation of the domain specific learning outcomes, and they reflect the mission, the vision and the profile of the programme.

In addition, the programme has concretised those learning outcomes for all the majors, thus following the **specificity of each major**. Each set of learning outcomes meets the expectations of the academic and professional field.

The learning outcomes – for both the Bachelor and the Master - are well aligned with the expected levels of the **Flemish Qualifications Framework** (FQF level 6 for the Bachelor and FQF level 7 for the Master). The learning outcomes of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes connect well, resulting in a good build-up of knowledge, skills, complexity and autonomy.

### IMPROVEMENT AREAS

The current programme specific learning outcomes were designed in 2019, but due to the COVID pandemic the (gradual) implementation was delayed until 2021. Also, during the peer review visit, teachers were generally unacquainted with the learning outcomes, and students demonstrated little awareness as well. Besides, the documents used in assessment did not reflect the full implementation of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

So:

- Raise awareness about the importance of the learning outcomes among teaching staff members. Stimulate teachers and students to **actively work with the learning outcomes** in learning and teaching. Provide support to the **teachers** so they can properly translate the learning outcomes into learning goals for their specific courses. Safeguard that the learning outcomes and goals are used for both shaping and steering lessons and courses as for student assessment. Communicate clearly about the learning outcomes (on programme level) and learning goals (on course level) to **students**, so that they are aware of what is expected from them and can play a more active role in steering their own learning process and achieving the learning outcomes.
- Improve the **feedback culture**: take a students' perspective and create and consolidate a structural and shared policy on why, when, which kind of feedback is delivered to students as part of their learning processes. Benefit from activating a feedback attitude to enhance quality conversations between all stakeholders inside and outside the programme.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Involve all **stakeholders** when updating the learning outcomes, so that stakeholders can provide relevant input in the development process and so that they can get acquainted with the (adapted) learning outcomes from the very start. When updating the learning outcomes, search for a good balance between some general learning outcomes and major specific outcomes.

Consider diversifying the learning outcomes for the different cycles (Bachelor and Master).

### 3. Do the content and structure of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

#### STRENGTHS

The Bachelor and Master in Music offer **curricula tailored to the specificity of the majors** and – if applicable the chosen musical instrument. Also, there are sufficient common courses to provide students with the necessary allround musical skills and cultural knowledge. The learning outcomes matrix gives a clear view on how the learning outcomes are mapped throughout the different curricula.

Based on the 2023 student survey, the majority of students expresses satisfaction with the curricula's **logical structure** and the **coherence between courses**. The students seem to have a clear understanding on how their main subject fits into the overall curriculum and they indicate that the programmes foster personal growth and nurture their individual talents by providing ample choices.

The Bachelor's curricula introduce students to the basics of **artistic research**, including efficient research methods and formulating research questions. In the Master's programme, the course 'Artistic Research Practices' deepens the understanding of research, preparing students to integrate research into their musical practice. All learning culminates in the artistic Master's exam, showcasing the interplay between artistic research and artistic practice.

The programmes will **progressively roll out adjusted and improved curricula per major** (Bachelor and Master) in academic year 2024-2025. The new curricula were developed in order to address feedback and signals given by the professional field, students, alumni and the previous peer review panel. Also, the programmes benefit from being in international relations, providing them **with** opportunities for benchmarking. It is positive that the programmes have benchmarked themselves with other programmes - national and international – while developing the curricula.

The Bachelor's programme introduces a new obligatory course '**Musician in Society**' in the third year of the updated curricula that will be progressively rolled out from the academic year 2024-2025. This is seen as a good initiative, but also as a bare necessity (see improvement areas).





In general, students perceive the **study load** to be well manageable and they appreciate the generous amount of time for individual practicing.

Throughout the curricula, the programmes provide a thoughtful **build-up of class concerts**, giving students opportunities to perform (from informal class concerts in the first year to semi-formal kaleidoscopic concerts to formal and public concerts at the end). This progression helps students gradually advance to the next level of proficiency and it addresses possible fear of failure by slowly building up.

The music theory programme has developed an effective test for entrance level, with very good results with regard to study success. Courses are offered on different levels, and the music theory programme innovates, for instance with the course LUP (listen understand perform).

The programmes opt for an **international learning environment** in which @home ('bringing it on campus') and mobility ('going abroad') complement and reinforce each other. Bachelor and Master students can gain several international learning experiences, for example through the presence of international projects in the curricula, masterclasses given by international experts and the opportunities regarding an Erasmus exchange. Also, the presence of the international students creates an international vibe on campus.

**Jazz** students, in contrast to their peers in most other departments, enjoy abundant opportunities for live performances in Brussels, feeling actively engaged in the city's vibrant music scene due to the well-established connections of KCB's jazz department.

The **HIPP department** (historically informed performance practice) has redesigned its curriculum into a more modular organisation of lessons, classes and projects because of the changing student profile of students that already participate in the professional practice.

## IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Create and embed **more on stage performance opportunities and real life experiences outside of the class and school context** in the curricula. There is a discrepancy between the mission of the KCB, which focuses on training students for an on stage career as a musician and the actual provision of performance opportunities. Current performance opportunities are mostly set up in class and assessment situations. Also, students are eager to have more performance opportunities. For example, Conducting students experience a lack of practice with ensembles or orchestras (and seem to not even always have a pianist available for the conducting lessons), Composition and Music Writing students have very limited performance possibilities for their work and also the students in instrumental performance majors feel like they are mostly trained to perform well in assessment situations, stating that their training does not seem to resonate or connect with real-world experience. Moreover, considering the varying student numbers per instrument, it proves to be difficult to find students for some instruments (e.g. viola) to participate in certain orchestral and chamber music projects. While Jazz and also HIPP students seem to benefit more from external performance opportunities, it is urgent to search for external partners to establish collaborations aimed at providing students with performance opportunities, similar to the successful model currently implemented at the Musical Instruments Museum. Intensify the collaboration with (art) institutions in Brussels.

Make sure that every student participates in the agreed upon amount of orchestra projects in the course **Orchestra projects**, or align/adjust the number of programme-organised projects in accordance to the foreseen 6 ECTS, because the study load seems to be less than should be.

Develop practical solutions to be able to support student initiatives. At this moment, even organising simple rehearsals for an ensemble activity are complex and time-consuming for students, which is discouraging in advance. Keep in mind that with all this, the generally as quite low perceived study load, could be meaningfully balanced.

Be more active and persistent around the **actual implementation of the artistic research vision** into the teaching practices. Align these to the vision on research, because it appears that among main subject teachers and department heads there is a lack of awareness and/or acceptance of institutional choices regarding research. Look into the system of accompaniment for research, because students experience significant differences in the level of support they receive from their main subject teacher in developing their research skills and guiding them through their research.

Reflect on how **entrepreneurial skills** can be imbedded into the curricula immediately for all current students, since "Musician in society" is only an elective course at the moment and the new curricula do not immediately apply to every student. Engage

both current students and alumni in the continued development of the "Musician in Society" course, since, at the moment, the concept nor the content for the course in development is clear; their perspectives can offer valuable insights into areas that are lacking in the curricula, particularly on the entrepreneurial skills which are essential for a career as a professional musician. Consider embedding in the curriculum elements of professional development that go beyond generic entrepreneurial skills – such as marketing strategies, self-promotion and networking – addressing the challenges of building self-led careers in the music industry.

Include not only the professional field but also the students more intensively in the **curriculum development process** – this is beneficial for students' ownership and motivation, and thus also directly helpful for learning. Only Dutch students are represented in the programme committee (due to the official language policy) – search for practical solutions to compensate the lack in representation for international students. Moreover, it seems like the student council is not always present at meetings and that there is little communication about the upcoming changes in the curricula to the student population as a whole: students are either unaware or they have heard some things about the new curricula through informal channels or word-of-mouth communication between students. Student surveys are held regularly, but response rates are overall low. The panel didn't find proof of focus meetings with students, contextualising and following the surveys. There seems to be too little perspective for the students' voice to be heard.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider including the **works of Composition students** into the repertoire of KCB's chamber music groups, ensembles and orchestras: their work should be regularly performed by fellow students.

Keep a close eye on the general study load. Take responsibility for the issues teachers report concerning attendance to courses.

Consider making **music technology skills** part of the curriculum (from basic studio recording techniques to digital audio workstations, from performing with amplified sound to understanding the acoustics of performance venues, from streaming a video of their performance to creating high quality content for social media).

Benefit more from the presence of international students. Facilitate **international learning experiences @home** to work on the international and intercultural competences of students. Stimulate exchange between and organise joint projects for national and foreign students together.



## 4. Does the learning environment (study materials, infrastructure, teachers, guidance) enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

### STRENGTHS

The **course materials** are readily available for students in Dutch and English, accommodating the needs of the Dutch-speaking and international students.

The programmes have increased **blended learning opportunities on Canvas** for some common courses, providing the possibility to differentiate between students and reaching out to those who could not attend class due to circumstances.

The programmes use **Sequens**, a valuable tool for monitoring student progress and providing written feedback to students. The platform allows teachers and department heads to see how their students are doing in other courses. Sequens enables a more holistic understanding of the student's development and it fosters exchange and collaboration among all stakeholders involved. In cases where additional support is needed, the student counsellor becomes involved, ensuring that students receive appropriate help and guidance.

The online **chamber music tool** ensures that scheduling chamber music exams goes smoothly and that the programmes can follow up on students by checking if they participate in all the exam periods and comply to certain demands (for example regarding the repertoire and the minutes they'll be performing on stage). The tool seems to function well, making the scheduling less time consuming, and giving insight in students' chamber music activities. The connected database for contemporary chamber music repertoire is an asset.

The **student support services** communicate well with students and are highly appreciated by them. However, there is talk of students depending on other students for vital information about their programme. Over the last three years, the presence and the role of the student counsellor has become more visible and accessible for students and the cooperation between the teachers, programme managers and the student counsellor has improved significantly. Students are very positive about their experiences with the student counsellor, stating that the flexibility and the openness to human aspects were quite impressive.

The new **organisational structure** is transparent and stimulates frequent dialogue at every level. This new structure is made up of 7 domains, each headed by a head of domain and consisting of 17, each headed by a section coordinator. The heads of domain and the section coordinators show great ownership, by stimulating exchange within their domain and/or sections. The needs in each domain can be different, and because of this structure domains can act more autonomously. Teachers testify they work less "on an island" since the new organisational structure was implemented.

The **teaching team** consists of passionate teachers who are expert in their domain. The expertise of the teachers is highly valued by students. Teachers act as 'mentors' and/or 'coaches' – which is in line with the EhB policy – and they speak with pride and generosity about their students.

The majority of the teaching staff embraces an **encouraging and positive way of teaching**, in which the teacher acts as coach for their students. The teachers seem genuinely interested in the best possible outcome for their students.

The programme uses a **good mix of teaching methods**, ranging from individual artistic instruction for the main subject to practicum and ateliers (either individually or in group) to lectures for the more theoretical courses (in larger groups).

Since recently, the programmes can rely on the support of the **educational developer** regarding educational issues. The educational developer also actively contributed to the creation of the new curricula by providing advice and support.

The Music programme is supported research-wise by the **departmental research committee** Trobador. This manages 8 research groups, stimulates artistic and scientific research in the conservatoire and helps draw up the research lines. Efforts have been made to strengthen the research expertise of the teaching team. For example, when hiring new teachers, the programmes specifically look for candidates with research expertise and/or the necessary research skills. Additionally, PhD students are involved in the curriculum and the student mentoring process (during the research phase of the final Master's exam). However, students mention a greater need for accompaniment in their research project.



## IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Improve the official communication of the staff responsible for the programmes to the students. Make sure students know their time schedules, and what is expected of them.

Encourage more cross-domain and cross-sectional **pedagogical discussions**, learn from each other's experiences and share best practices. Even though there are several good practices present in the programmes (for example regarding blended learning, coaching students and so on), not every domain/section/teacher is aware of those practices and/or ready to implement them. The majority of one to one teaching, as also observed in lessons, seems to remain very instruction-based.

Actively acknowledge the serious and **difficult infrastructural situation** of the programmes, which raises several pedagogical concerns. The programmes are looking forward to housing on a renovated campus, because the situation has been far from ideal. More specifically, the building is outdated, poorly insulated and lacks (well-equipped) practice rooms. The renovation plans respond to the identified problems, which is a good thing. However, during the renovation of the campus - which will begin in September 2024 and last for several years - the programmes will be in a very precarious situation as well, and permanent attention should be paid to monitoring the qualitative delivery of the curricula. Take appropriate measures, adapt the activities to the housing conditions, take care of students and teachers dealing with the situation on a daily basis and communicate openly about issues and possible solutions.

Work on the **availability of practice rooms** for students and introduce a proper reservations system, so students can get access to the practice rooms more easily without excessive waiting hours. Engage in dialogue with the students and identify their needs in this regard.

Develop a strategy to gradually replace certain **musical instruments**, because some of them are in poor condition. For example, piano students reported that many pianos quickly become ill-tuned - after tuning - and that there are simply not enough pianos of good quality available for lessons and practicing. Increase the amount of harps on campus, as it was mentioned that there is an increasing inflow of harp student and there aren't enough harps at the moment.





Invest in **the pedagogical and didactical professionalisation** of teachers. Despite of a study day, recently organised by KCB, only a very limited part of the team testified of having attended. Guarantee sufficient accompaniment (teaching hours) in the research programme.

Work towards a more versatile **leadership** style, taking into account the different perspectives of stakeholders and resulting in decisive actions, thus responding to these challenging times. Work towards more diversity in the composition of the teaching team, and also, especially, in the management team.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide a context in which students can roll out their **own initiatives** - for example organising a concert or an event - and support students both technically and logistically.

Expand **blended learning opportunities** on Canvas, where possible and desirable.

Look for opportunities to **collaborate** with other departments and programmes of EhB.

Ensure widespread awareness of the **Ethics compass** among students and (teaching) staff. Make sure that the Ethics compass is known by students, and create a safe learning environment in which students feel encouraged to address power issues and ethical questions. Communicate the Ethics compass to teachers and staff, and continue to enhance awareness and ensure enforcement.



Tom De Beuckelaer Photographer

## 5. Does the set of assessments within the programme ensure that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes?

### STRENGTHS

The programmes use a **combination of continuous assessment and exams** (at the end of a course) to assess students, thereby focusing on student growth and development throughout each course. This is a good practice within the existing assessment policy.

For the assessment of courses with an artistic practice component, the programmes set up a **jury** with at least three experts, with different backgrounds in the disciplines. The jury is always chaired by the director, the head of music or the section head (depending on the major and the subject), which is helpful in creating consistency in the assessment process. Jury members need to reach consensus, resulting in intersubjective grading.

The **chamber music repertoire**, played by students during examinations, is broad and diverse. Considering the choice of the performed repertoire, there is a good balance between choices made by the programmes and the free choice of students. Based on the overviews of the programmed chamber music exams, it could be said that these programmes relates students to a wide range of musical styles and techniques, which has positive effects on their versatility as musicians.

Sequens, recently introduced as a tool for student results monitoring, contains a **feedback** space, which is helpful for both teachers and students.

For the **subsidiary courses**, students testify that there are assessment processes that are clearly articulated.

For international students, a language test is part of the **entrance examination**. This is how the programme guarantees that admitted students are linguistically strong enough to follow the English-language programme.

### IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Enhance the **validity** of assessment by consistently using the learning outcomes as starting point for learning and teaching, and by aligning learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Very little proof was seen of a successful use of the concept of the inclusive “master proeve” – insist in its development and practical implementation, e.g. by providing more comprehensive guidelines.

Monitor the **quality of student assessment** more closely. Further develop the existing assessment policy to improve the quality of the assessment. Make sure assessment is equitable and fair, between all departments and majors.

Increase the **transparency**, regarding assessment criteria and assessment processes. Communicate the assessment criteria more clearly to students, teachers and external jurors. According to the student survey in 2021 and the statements of different stakeholders during the peer review, students don't always seem to know how they will be assessed.

Explain how the **various assessment parts within a course** contribute to the final grade, as students have indicated that this information is not always clear to them. Include the weighing of all parts of assessment within a course in the ECTS sheets.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Add more written feedback on **Sequens**, and support or demand its use.

Explore whether **second examination opportunities** are possible for those courses where they are not currently provided.



## 6. Do the outgoing students meet societal expectations academically and/or professionally?

### STRENGTHS

The targeted outcome level is assessed in the **integrated artistic Master's exam** (30 ECTS). Depending on the major, it consists of a number of artistic recitals or an artistic creation, supplemented by a discursive component. There is a great appreciation for the format of the Master's exam, which combines the assessment of research and performance into a single, comprehensive evaluation. A jury, consisting of internal and external jury members, is responsible for the final assessment of the Master's students.

There is a clear, **joint focus on excellence**, especially on instrumental level. Staff and students both aim at achieving exceptional skills in playing musical instruments. The teaching staff proudly acknowledges that students now and then exceed the teachers' own levels of proficiency. Students state that they feel that they achieve a good, professional instrumental level.

According to the alumni survey 2021, a **majority of the alumni is active in the professional field**. The programme systematically identifies alumni – across all majors – attaining exceptional achievements, resulting in a long list that was readily available to the panel.

### IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Students spoke of great doubts to whether they would have the skills to create a career. The professional field mentioned worries because of the lack of professional skills. Prioritise implementing **entrepreneurial skills**, in the largest possible way, so not only in a subsidiary subject, in the programme.

Ensure that **the substantiated jury report for the artistic final Master's exam** clearly reflects the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes and that it contains more detailed feedback. Currently, the discursive component, which assesses the research, accounts for only 20% of the final grade, allowing students to potentially graduate without passing the research component. The jury reports should be more extensive, with the necessary evidence to ensure all learning outcomes are thoroughly assessed.

Work on a structural **alumni policy**. Keep a closer contact with alumni, because their input and their experiences can be used for improving the programmes. It is also worthwhile to engage alumni on an ongoing basis, thereby creating opportunities for networking, facilitating exchange, and the development of potential collaborations and partnerships benefitting the programmes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider working with **external jury members** for exams at the end of the Bachelor's programme, not only for the assessment of the final Master's exam, for more external feedback regarding student achievements. If so, provide them with clear assessment criteria, corresponding with the learning outcomes of the Bachelor's programme.

Provide students with some kind of **career coaching** at the end of their studies to help them decide what they want to do after finishing the Master's programme and to help them navigate in the broad professional field, getting acquainted with all its opportunities.



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