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IN.TUNE

Innovative Universities in Music and Arts in Europe

Comparative study of existing assurance processes (D7.4)

Quality assurance (WP7)



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Innovative Universities in Music & Arts in Europe – IN.TUNE is the only European University Alliance in the field of music and arts. It brings together eight universities from North, East, South and West Europe, striving to deepen their cooperation to bring about institutional transformation and the enhancement of their quality, performance, attractiveness and international competitiveness. In line with the goals set by the European strategy for universities, underlining the important role of higher education in shaping sustainable, democratic and resilient societies, IN.TUNE members are committed to the development of a joint long-term strategy with a strong artistic dimension for high quality education, research, innovation and service to society, becoming a role model for the wider higher education community across Europe and beyond.

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Executive Summary

IN.TUNE

The European University Alliance [IN.TUNE – Innovative Universities in Music & Arts in Europe](#) brings together eight universities across the continent, committed to the development of a joint long-term strategy for excellence in education, research, innovation and service to society. This strategy is built on a shared perspective on our institutions' roles within society, a joint vision and approach towards deep institutional cooperation, and a shared dedication to the European values of diversity, democracy, social and human rights.

Through the establishment of IN.TUNE, we aim to:

- Build an effective, systemic and sustainable framework for deep institutional cooperation, drawing on our previous and existing collaborations to drive transformational change across our institutions.
- Strengthen, through this deep institutional cooperation, artistic and educational innovation and research, not only within our institutions, but also throughout the higher music education sector and the broader cultural and creative sector industries, providing students and professionals unique with educational opportunities that will improve their ability to access, create and maintain sustainable careers.
- Play an active role in shaping the future of our sector and our societies by addressing contemporary educational, professional, societal, technological and ecological challenges. Together, through the joint creation of forward-looking institutional environments, we will empower students and staff to engage with these challenges through their creative work, both at institutional and transnational level.

Work Package 7: Quality assurance

Quality assurance (WP7) focuses on comprehensive [IN.TUNE Quality Assurance Plan](#) to monitor the Alliance's activities and outcomes. This plan incorporates both internal and external quality assurance processes. Internally, evaluations are conducted through surveys and activity reports based on criteria specifically developed for IN.TUNE. Externally, the plan involves MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement, a specialized quality assurance agency registered with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). MusiQuE will provide expert evaluations through site visits and intermediate external reports, with a final comprehensive review at the end of the funding period, involving a student-led review panel.

The work package also aims to develop a [long-term cooperation proposal for integrating quality assurance processes](#) across alliance institutions. This will ensure mutual trust in artistic standards

and educational quality. The plan includes a comparative study of existing internal and external quality assurance mechanisms within the alliance, facilitated by MusiQuE. It will also pilot an intra-university scheme for exchanging external examiners, allowing institutions to learn from each other's assessment processes and potentially coordinate future admission and examination standards. Lastly, an alliance benchmarking system will be developed, allowing for the comparison of key data such as student numbers, financial information, and mobility statistics. This system, supported by MusiQuE's expertise, will provide institutional leaders with valuable insights for informed decision-making at both institutional and alliance levels.

Deliverable summary

In 2025, the deliverable *Comparative study of the internal and external quality assurance procedures of IN.TUNE University Alliance partner institutions (D7.4)* was completed. 'Internal Quality Assurance Across the IN.TUNE European University Alliance', prepared by an expert from MusiQuE (Music Quality Enhancement), describes the approaches of Alliance members to various aspects of Internal and External Quality Assurance, including programme reviews, feedback mechanisms and quality assurance cycles. The report also identifies the relevant legal and institutional contexts of the Alliance members' quality assurance systems, including the division of roles and responsibilities. The resulting report identifies points of departure for the development of joint activities and for peer learning, and alignment of the quality assurance processes of IN.TUNE Alliance partner universities, which will be useful both in strengthening institutional quality assurance practice and in strengthening institutional collaboration. Plans for further dissemination of the study and follow-up activities based on the study's recommendations, including engaging broader institutional quality assurance partners and further exchange on such topics as programme reviews, student feedback, and database use and development, have been planned for the IN.TUNE Work Package 7 agenda in 2026 and 2027.

Comparative study of existing assurance processes (D7.4)

Results obtained

The deliverable, the comparative study 'Internal Quality Assurance Across the IN.TUNE European University Alliance', mapped the different existing quality assurance processes present in all alliances. The comparative study provides useful insights into the differences in quality assurance approaches and into possibilities for peer-learning and collaboration among Alliance members. It also gives recommendations for strengthening quality assurance both at the institutional and at the Alliance level, including recommendations for programme reviews, student feedback, databases and benchmarking, governance and quality culture. These recommendations will be investigated further as part of the activities of Work Package 7. Moreover, some of its results may feed directly into the deliverable *D7.5 Plan for Benchmarking System* (due at the end of Y3).

Applied methodology

The European Organisation MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement – was subcontracted for the comparative study's execution. Andr e Sursock (an experienced and influential profile on European QA matters) was the main author behind the analysis phase of the Comparative Study. The deliverable run in parallel to Milestone M66 - *Comparative study of existing assurance processes made*, and Task 7.4 - *Make a comparative study of existing internal and external quality assurance processes*.

MusiQuE and the IN.TUNE WP7 Committee¹ discussed a procedural outline for the comparative study in June 2024. The procedure comprised six steps (outlined in the Annex 2 - Outline of the QA Comparative Study):

1. Collection of data from the IN.TUNE partners – Timing: September – December 2024
2. Data analysis and development of targeted questionnaires for online interviews - Timing: December 2024 – March 2025
3. Targeted interviews with representatives of IN.TUNE partners - Timing: March – May 2025
4. Analysis of qualitative data and production of the comparative study - Timing: May – September 2025
5. Collection of feedback from IN.TUNE partners - Timing: September – October 2025
6. Delivery of the final comparative study Timing: October – December 2025

¹ The Work Package (WP) 7 Committee consists of representatives (experts in the area of quality assurance) of all IN.TUNE partner universities. All eight universities and their representatives have been actively involved in the collection of information and the further development of the study.

Regarding Step 1, MusiQuE shared with WP7 Committee the document *Data collection sheet - Template for institutions* (Annex 3). This document was discussed and finetuned together with the WP7 Committee, and it was based on existing documentation only. The submission had a hard deadline – 30 November 2024, which was respected by all partners. To facilitate completion, MusiQuE and the WP7 coordinator worked together on a Guideline on how to fill in the form (Annex 4).

The materials were collected in a shared folder in the IN.TUNE WP7 MS Teams Channel, to which MusiQuE was granted access.

MusiQuE executed Steps 2 and 3 autonomously. Regular status updates and checks regarding the interviews were carried out during the WP7 Committee's internal meetings.

A preliminary draft of the analysis was presented to the committee at the beginning of September 2025.

An important milestone regarding Step 5 was Andr e Sursock's and MusiQuE's visits during WP7 Committee live meeting in The Hague in September 2025. Andr e Sursock presented the Comparative Study's draft and had a discussion with WP7 Committee on the document's content. The group discussed the analysis, conclusions and recommendations and agreed on the necessary steps to complete the deliverable on time and on the planning of follow-up actions.

Constraints encountered

No major constraints were encountered during the process.

During the interviews (step 3) and in the discussion of the draft report (step 5), there was some discussion on scope and thematic relevance of specific topics addressed during the study. One example is the study's description of the institutional and thematic context of the IN.TUNE Alliance partners. For example, whether the partners have a dedicated IQA unit, or to what extent their quality assurance approach is part of a larger institution, with separate or integrated activities in other disciplines and a broader governance structure (the comparative study includes a comparison of the partner institutions by size, in terms of numbers of students and staff which in some cases represents a larger institutional context than only higher music education). Other discussions of scope and relevance concerned the study's presentation of part-time and seasonal staff and the presentation of organisational autonomy (based on the EUA ranking). The conclusion of these discussions was that these differences do not correspond clearly to differences in quality assurance approaches, but that they are clearly relevant within all partner institutions and that awareness of the differences will be important in future collaboration, harmonisation and peer learning.

Discussion of the final outcome

There were no significant changes in the realisation of the comparative study compared to the initial proposal. A summary look at the study itself might give the incorrect impression that the focus is solely on Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and not on External Quality Assurance (EQA). EQA is analysed in chapters 2 and 3 of the study, including differences between programme evaluation (IQA) and programme accreditation (EQA). The report title places emphasis on IQA, as a reflection of the extent to which IQA carries potential for peer-learning and harmonisation

Some changes made to the final report, following discussion of the draft in September 2025, include the placement of the analysis of IQA maturity in relation to organisational autonomy in a separate chapter from the study's conclusions and recommendations. The discussion also supported members of Work Package 7 in gaining full understanding of the value of the comparative study: the realisation that different modalities for organising IQA in an institutional context do not necessarily correspond to significant differences in IQA activities or quality of IQA; within the context of the IN.TUNE Alliance, the modalities are more a matter of organisation and of recognising roles and responsibilities.

The discussion of the draft report also focused on the report's recommendations, for example concerning the function and importance of benchmarking as an IQA tool. Annex 4 was subsequently added to the final draft of the study, to further support the alliance members in their development of such a tool.

Conclusion

'Internal Quality Assurance Across the IN.TUNE European University Alliance', the 2025 comparative study of the quality assurance procedures within the IN.TUNE Alliance, has provided useful insights into the differences in quality assurance approaches and into possibilities for peer-learning and collaboration among Alliance members. The report was completed in line with the project plan, resulting in a study that gives insight into relevant institutional and legal contexts and good practices for various IQA-tools, and that suggests next steps for further peer-learning and collaboration.

The Work Package 7 Committee of the IN.TUNE Alliance has already discussed how to move forward with further dissemination of the study, by engaging the broader quality assurance community inside the IN.TUNE institutions, and with peer learning on topics such as:

- programme reviews
- student feedback
- course evaluation (including evaluation of one-to-one teaching)
- database use in quality assurance

- how alliance institutions can share experiences and support each other in the context of institutional external quality assurance activities.

These peer learning activities should also involve colleagues working on quality assurance beyond the members of the WP7 Committee, e.g. by using ERASMUS+ Staff Training grants. A detailed plan for these activities for 2026 and 2027 will be made in early January 2026. They will not only support quality assurance for alliance activities but also be of notable use in supporting strengthening institutional quality assurance practices and inter-institutional alignment in the field of quality assurance.

Annex

[*ANNEX 1: Comparative Study on Quality Assurance Practices and Processes Across the IN.TUNE Alliance*](#)

[*ANNEX 2: Outline of MusiQuE's Comparative Study on Quality Assurance Practices and Processes Across the IN.TUNE Alliance*](#)

[*ANNEX 3: MusiQuE Data Collection Sheet – Template for Partner Institutions*](#)

[*ANNEX 4: Guidelines for Filling in the Form for the Comparative Study of Quality Assurance Practices*](#)

ANNEX 1: COMPARATIVE STUDY ON QA PRACTICES AND PROCESSES ACROSS THE IN.TUNE ALLIANCE



**Internal Quality Assurance
Across the IN.TUNE European University Alliance**

**A Comparative Study
by Andrée Sursock**

MusiQuE,
November 2025

Internal Quality Assurance Across the IN.TUNE European University Alliance

Andrée Sursock

21 November 2025

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Glossary

AEC	Association Européenne des conservatoires, académies de musique et Musikhochschulen / European Association of Conservatoires
CNSMDP	Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris / Higher National Conservatoire of Music and Danse of Paris
EQA	External quality assurance
ESG	European standards and guidelines for quality assurance
ESMUC	Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya / Higher School of Music of Catalunya
EU	European Union
FoM	Faculty of Music, University of Arts Belgrade
HdK	Stichting Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag / University of Arts The Hague – Royal Conservatoire
HR	Human resource
IQA	Internal quality assurance
L&T	Learning and teaching
mdw	Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien / University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
NMH	Norges musikkhøgskole / Norwegian Academy of Music
QA	Quality assurance
QE	Quality enhancement
UAB	Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu / University of Arts Belgrade
Uniarts	Taideyliopisto – Sibelius-Akatemia / The University of the Arts Helsinki
UNMB	Universitatea Națională de Muzică din București / National University of Music Bucharest
WP	Work package

1. Introduction

The European Universities Initiative was proposed in 2017 and launched a year later. Funded by Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, the initiative “aims to improve the international competitiveness of higher education institutions in Europe” and “promote European values and identity.”¹ Today, 65 European universities participate in this initiative. They involve more than 570 higher education institutions in 35 countries, including all 27 Member States.

The IN.TUNE University Alliance is one such example². It comprises the following eight partners:

- Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP), Higher National Conservatoire of Music and Danse of Paris
- Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC), Higher School of Music of Catalunya
- Norges musikkhøgskole (NMH), Norwegian Academy of Music
- Stichting Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag (HdK), University of Arts The Hague – Royal Conservatoire
- Taideyliopisto – Sibelius-Akatemia (Uniarts), University of the Arts Helsinki
- Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (MDW), University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
- Universitatea Națională de Muzică din București (UNMB), National University of Music Bucharest
- Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu (UAB), University of Arts Belgrade

More details on each partner are found in section 3.2 and annex 1.

As required by the Erasmus+ funding programme, each alliance has a work programme, and each of the partners coordinates one work package (WP). As part of its work, the Quality Assurance WP, coordinated by HdK, is convened regularly to discuss quality assurance issues.

This report compares internal quality assurance (IQA) across the eight partners as part of this work. The goal of this report is to contribute, through peer learning, to the further development of good IQA approaches across the IN.TUNE membership and to provide a basis for the development of IQA within the Alliance.

This report is based on data collected in two successive steps. The first phase involved a survey questionnaire (annex 2) to which all eight partners responded in writing. The analysis of their responses provided the basis for a personalised questionnaire that was developed for each partner (albeit with a number overlapping questions). This second questionnaire was used as the basis for 90-minute, online, semi-structured interviews with the staff members representing the partners in this WP. It examined issues that were raised in their responses to the survey questionnaire in greater depth.

A first draft of this report was circulated amongst the eight partners for comments and correction of factual errors.

¹ European Commission website: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative/about>

² The IN.TUNE website is available here: <https://intune-alliance.eu>

This final report provides:

- A comparative study of quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) practices and processes within the IN.TUNE Alliance
- A set of recommendations for the design and development of a QA system across the Alliance

The report is structured as follows. After this brief introduction (chapter 1), chapter 2 provides an overview of basic QA concepts. Chapter 3 presents the national and institutional contexts of each partner, and a discussion of how quality culture is conceived within this context. Chapters 4 and 5 present the tools, the roles and the governance of IQA, respectively. Examples of good practices from the partners are integrated in these two chapters. Chapter 6 discusses the factors that may have determined the IQA differences across IN.TUNE and chapter 7 identifies best practices and suggests recommendations for further development.

2. Key concepts

2.1 Introduction

The importance of the quality assurance (QA) of higher education has been rising around the world in response to several key developments. Chief among them is the expansion of higher education, which has put great pressure on the public purse and raised questions on the governments' capacity to continue to run their country's higher education sector centrally. In many countries, this has led to granting more autonomy to higher education institutions in exchange for greater accountability and resulted in the implementation of quality assurance processes, both internal to the institutions and external in the form of a QA agency.

In addition, several regions around the world, including Europe, have been striving to ensure closer regional cooperation and facilitate mobility of goods, services and people across their borders. This political and economic regional aspiration finds its translation in higher education as well. From the start of the Bologna process in 1999, quality assurance was viewed as an important building block in developing the European Higher Education Area, and in facilitating cross-border mobility and inter-institutional regional cooperation in research and teaching.

The Bologna process led to a conception of QA as consisting in three levels as follows:

- *The institutional level:* This refers to the internal quality assurance (IQA) processes that a higher education institution puts in place to ensure its quality. This is the most fundamental aspect of the whole framework and the one most likely to ensure and improve quality.
- *The national level:* This is generally carried out by a quality assurance agency, recognised by the government, which conducts external quality assurance (EQA) for accountability and enhancement purposes.
- *The regional level:* The European QA framework includes agreement on a set of principles for IQA and EQA processes and a shared basis for recognising QA agencies. These principles are spelt out in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area* (ESG 2015).

The three levels are seen as interlinked and are meant to reinforce one another to ensure that the framework provides a coherent, efficient and effective approach to quality assurance. This is illustrated in the ESG document, which is structured in three parts. Part I is focused on IQA. Part II, focused on EQA, takes its point of departure in Part I. In this cascading model, Part III describes the principles by which QA agencies are recognised as being trustworthy to the extent that they consider both Parts I and II of the ESG in their work.

2.2 What is the IQA of learning and teaching?

As stated earlier, IQA refers to the tools and processes by which a higher education institution ensures the quality of its activities and its learning environment. The scope of these tools and processes with respect to learning and teaching can be summarised as follows:

- They evaluate, approve and redesign study programmes
- They support the recruitment, evaluation, promotion and development of the academic and administrative staff
- They ensure the quality of both the learning environment and the learning support (such as labs, libraries, advising, tutoring, counselling, etc.)

In developing their IQA, higher education institutions can find guidance in Part I of the ESG, which identifies the following 10 aspects:

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
- 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 1.5 Teaching staff
- 1.6 Learning resources and student support
- 1.7 Information management
- 1.8 Public information
- 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Based on this framework, most European higher education institutions have developed the following tools:

- Student, alumni, employers and staff questionnaires
- Collecting feedback in meetings and focus groups
- Analysing performance indicators
- Study programme reviews and redesign

Some have also encompassed research in their framework and the most mature IQA also include a solid information system, staff development activities and the evaluation of the IQA system itself to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose.

2.3 What is EQA?

The purposes of external quality assurance (EQA) vary. In a nutshell, most EQA approaches combine improvement and accountability but the balance between these two aspects differs. Some systems stress improvement over accountability whilst others do the reverse.

The tools for EQA are also varied. They include institutional audits (that focuses on the evaluation of IQA), the evaluation or accreditation of study programmes, and the evaluation or accreditation of institutions. Accreditation is an evaluation that ends with a summative statement: accredited, non-accredited or accredited with conditions.

In Europe, the bulk of the national EQA were initially focused on the programme level. Today, institutional accreditations/evaluations continue to progress, but they are often combined with programme accreditations/evaluations. The autonomy scorecard of the European University Association observed that

Overall, the related administrative burden remains heavy on universities, and the slow pace of such processes remains a source of frustration. In addition to avoiding the heavy workload with programme and/or combined approaches for external QA... (a)n institutional external QA approach also takes seriously one of the key principles of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG), namely that the primary responsibility for quality and its assurance rests with the institutions, not with external quality assurance agencies. Internal quality assurance for programme level offers higher degrees of flexibility and agility, and ensure they are adapted to the institutional needs in their specific context. (EUA 2023, p.81)

2.4 The role of QA agencies in promoting IQA

The role of QA agencies in promoting IQA is complex and difficult to determine with any certainty. The observation of practices in different countries reveals that some QA agencies view their role as being restricted to examining the existence, usefulness and embeddedness of IQA whilst other agencies consider that they should define very precisely how IQA should be developed in the higher education institutions. In some countries, these guidelines are inscribed in the law and apply (uniformly or not) to all higher education institutions in the country.

Ultimately, the different approaches are shaped by the degree of autonomy that is granted to higher education institutions in a specific national context, the national appetite for promoting a diverse higher education system, and whether there is an acceptance on the part of the QA agency that IQA is a journey that needs time to develop properly.

Chapters 3 and 6 pick up these considerations and examine the extent to which they apply to the IN.TUNE partners.

3. Context setting

Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of the national and institutional contexts. Section 3.1 is focused on the types of quality assurance procedures that are required nationally in each of the eight countries or regions. Section 3.2 presents some key facts and figures about the eight institutions. The last section discusses how the different partners approach the concept of quality culture, which is a central concept to grasp the differences in internal quality assurance approaches.

3.1 National QA approaches

As mentioned in section 2.3, EQA approaches vary in their scope and philosophy. Table 1 below captures the essential features of the national EQA amongst the IN.TUNE partners.

Table 1. National EQA of IN.TUNE Partners³

Country	Programme evaluation	Programme accreditation	Institutional accreditation	Institutional quality audit
Austria				Yes
Catalunya		Yes		
Finland				Yes
France		Yes	Yes	
Netherlands		Yes		Optional
Norway				Yes
Romania		Yes	Yes	
Serbia		Yes	Yes	

The eight institutions that are part of IN.TUNE can be divided into two categories: those that undergo accreditation or evaluation (of institutions, programmes or both) and those that undergo institutional audits.

The countries can also be categorised on how demanding their national EQA is:

- Five countries are positioned on the lighter touch of the spectrum: Austria, Catalunya⁴, France, Finland and Norway albeit with differences. France⁵ and Catalunya conduct programme accreditation and the other three conduct institutional audits. The

³ As mentioned in section 2.3, both audits and accreditation involve an evaluation. The distinguishing feature of institutional audits is that they focus on internal quality mechanisms and processes. The distinguishing difference between evaluations and accreditation is that accreditation ends with a summative judgment such as accredited, not accredited or accredited with conditions.

⁴ Given that Catalunya has its own IQA approach, one that is distinctive from the approach of other Spanish provinces, it is considered as a country for the purposes of this study.

⁵ This is limited to national diplomas in France, which are the diplomas that are delivered under the aegis of either the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

evaluation/accreditation cycles tend to be longer. This indicates a greater degree of trust in the institutions: Austria, seven years; Finland and Catalunya, six years; and France, five years.

- Three are on the more demanding side: Netherlands, Romania and Serbia. All three conduct accreditation of both study programmes and institutions. In the Netherlands, programme accreditation is less burdensome if and when an institution undergoes an (optional) institutional quality audit. Their evaluation/accreditation cycle vary: Serbia, seven years for both programme and institutional accreditation; The Netherlands, six years; and Romania, five years.

With respect to national guidance regarding IQA, France does not require its institutions to implement IQA. Two countries (Romania and Serbia) provide very detailed guidance on IQA, which is enshrined in law. The other five countries provide comparatively less detailed guidance, which may or may not be prescribed by law.

3.2 The institutional contexts

The eight institutions could be distinguished between those that are stand-alone institutions and those that are part of a university, some resulting from mergers. The degree of integration of the conservatoires into those larger entities varies. Some do not seek to develop learning or research activities with the other disciplines, such as dance or theatre, that are represented in the merged structure whilst others do. The degree of centralisation varies as does the rectorate's responsibility for IQA. This responsibility is often, albeit not always, shared with the rectorate. All eight institutions have classical governance structures such as an administrative board or council, a senate, and curriculum committees. (More details are provided in section 5.2.)

These institutions are leading establishments in their country or region. Long before QA became a normal practice, they have had a very prestigious history of excellence in music education and training. Nevertheless, four of the conservatoires have an IQA unit (AT, Cat, NL, NO). These units are fairly small. The largest employs five staff members (one fulltime) and the smallest, a single staff. At Sibelius Academy, quality issues are handled as part of the development services' tasks. One person works as a part-time quality manager, but several people have quality responsibilities.

In addition, some of the partners have an ethics committee, a unit or committee that addresses equal opportunities and a unit or committee that deals with unwanted behaviour (such as sexual or sexist harassment).

The institutions are fairly small institutions. Tables 2 and 3 below provide information on the number of students and staff respectively.

The eight institutions enrol between 899 and 2992 students (median 1169). All eight institutions offer bachelors and masters in a variety of music-related disciplines; five offer the doctorate and four offer non-degree programmes. The median enrolment for international student is 18 percent.

The institutions employ between 259 and 1562 staff members (median 391) of which a portion are seasonal academic staff (median 99) and administrative staff (median 116). The small number of staff determine, to an extent, how elaborate the IQA framework is (e.g., the number of mechanisms that are used and the frequency of use).

Table 2. Student numbers (Y 2024-2025)

Partner	BA	MA	PhD	Other students	International students	Total students
MDW Austria	1190	715	164	1176	48%	2992 ⁶
ESMUC Catalunya	607	320	-	48	16%	975
Sibelius Academy Finland	502	640	151	-	23%	1363
CNSMDP France	573	739	47	44 ⁷	20%	1413
HdK⁸ Netherlands	1278	431	-	53	15%	1709
NMH Norway	320	240	49	290	28%	899
UNMB Romania	718	180	78	19	8%	976
UAB Serbia	533	212	160	18+33 ⁹	1,9%	956

Table 3. Staff numbers

Partner	Full- and part-time academic staff	Seasonal academic staff ¹⁰	Administrative and technical staff	Total staff
MDW Austria	774	348	446	1562 ¹¹
ESMUC Catalunya	166	93	76	335
Sibelius Academy Finland	224	397	119	740
CNSMDP France	385	36	182	603
HdK Netherlands	177	53	96	329
NMH Norway	178	172	77	424
UNMB Romania	117	105	136	358
UAB Serbia	199	20	40	259

⁶ Some students are enrolled in two studies.

⁷ Refers to incoming Erasmus+ students.

⁸ Figures refer to the entire University of the Arts of which the Royal Conservatoire is part. The figures in red need to be validated.

⁹ Refers to students enrolled in specialist academic studies (18) and integrated academic studies (23).

¹⁰ Staff who work 20 percent or less of the time (except for Romania and Serbia).

¹¹ Some personnel are both academic and administrative staff.

3.2 Quality culture across IN.TUNE

The institutions were asked to define their quality culture. Three institutions (FI, NL and NO) emphasised that they stress quality enhancement and have a very systematic approach to IQA.

Whilst quality enhancement is also at the heart of the five other conservatoires' approach, they differed in how exhaustive and systemic their IQA approach is. One partner noted how lack of resources resulted in an unsystematic and informal enhancement approach:

Perhaps if we had a QA office we would be able to lean more towards improvement, but for now we are just aiming at keeping up with what is required legally in terms of quality control. The improvement is done at grassroots' level – all our colleagues are interested and motivated to improve their courses – but their efforts go under the radar because they mostly stem from a direct dialogue between teachers and students that is not formally reported.

This view was confirmed by another conservatoire that recently hired an additional colleague:

Instead of just focusing on how we reach all the requirements, we can now focus more on developing a quality culture, involve our colleagues even more and try to simplify the system that we have and make it more valuable in a continuous improvement process. I hope we can introduce new things in the future – e.g., how we can benefit from external reviewers, critical friends, how to improve the student questionnaires, etc.

An important aspect of a quality culture is the extent to which it is owned by the students and the staff. One conservatoire noted that it seeks to promote an inclusive quality culture:

Ultimately, the entire staff of the university is responsible for developing their own work and quality work. Students participate naturally in quality work as members of the community and by participating in the work of institutions and working groups, as well as by giving feedback on studies and services. External stakeholders are involved in key processes (e.g., strategy, development of education, recruitment), through discussions, surveys and inviting stakeholders to join the processes as external expert members.

To promote ownership, staff members are involved in the development of new processes and tools (e.g., NL). Other ways of promoting buy-in from staff consist in encouraging teachers (FI) or departments (AT) to add their own questions to the student survey questionnaires.

Raising awareness of IQA is important but one conservatoire noted that it should not be carried too far. Its representative emphasised that

It is very important that people know what we do in the QA unit, what are the processes and the tools. If people do not know what it is about, we cannot build a system. However, managing the system is really a back-office operation and does not necessarily need to be shared.

Ownership of IQA is dependent in part on whether the results of IQA are shared and discussed. The communication mechanisms of all partners are generally extensive and include such tools as emails, newsletters, the website, and an intranet. Those responsible for IQA report that they are committed to communicating with the community regularly. However, one partner observed that

Information is available for all to see, but staff and students do not necessarily avail themselves of it. They are inundated with information whilst being singularly focused on practicing their instrument. In this context, it is also difficult to promote a sense of

community despite this being a strategic objective. Even the student clubs do not interest some students.

Indeed, ultimately, ownership of a quality culture must be bolted onto a cohesive community. Several IN.TUNE partners reported that a sense of belonging is difficult to promote given the one-on-one nature of much of music teaching as well as the reliance on part-time staff and practitioners who come into the institutions for very few hours at a time. The COVID interlude had a negative impact on the feeling of belonging, and rebuilding a community is reported to be a challenge in at least one institution (FI). Nevertheless, the feeling of belonging is promoted informally, and the small size of the institutions helps in creating a family-like atmosphere. One interviewee noted that

The informal communication works very well. We all have direct access to the top management. I imagine that it is because it is a small institution, because in the big institutions not everyone could access the rector as easily as we do, and this is an excellent thing.

Another interviewee who came to the conservatoire from a large university stated:

I was really happy about the good connections between the academic staff and administration, how we work together towards a common goal. I found that in larger institutions teaching and administrative staff are quite separate. Given that this institution is smaller, you meet the people you are actually working for and with: you meet the students daily, so the purpose of your work is right in front of you. However, I am not sure we have overcome the culture of individualism yet, and our new rector is focused on how we can build things together.

4. Scope and tools of IQA

The scope of IQA encompasses learning and teaching (L&T), research, administrative services and internationalisation. With respect to L&T, in addition to curricular reviews, the scope of IQA involves in many cases collecting data about such aspects as the admission process (AT, CAT, FI, FR, NL, NO), student progression (AT, FI, NL, NO, RO), and the evaluation of student support services and libraries (AT, CAT, FR, NO, NL, RO, SRB). These data are used internally and to prepare the self-evaluation reports when the institution or a programme is externally quality assured. The scope of the evaluation of research varies amongst IN.TUNE partners. Activities that are less frequently addressed include administrative services (AT, FI, NL), lifelong learning and orchestral projects (AT, RO), and internationalisation (AT, NL, NO and SRB).

As mentioned in section 2.2, most IQA tools include:

- Student, alumni, employers and staff questionnaires
- Collecting feedback in meetings and focus groups
- Analysing performance indicators
- Study programme reviews and redesign

The most mature systems also include a process to evaluate the IQA system itself and ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose.

The tools that are used by the IN.TUNE partners are captured in Table 4 below, which provides a snapshot of how many institutions use which tools.

Table 4. Overview of QA tools by decreasing frequency

Tool	Number of institutions using it
Programme reviews / Curricular development	ALL
Course evaluation by students	Obligatory: 6 (AT, CAT, NO, FI, RO, SRB) Voluntary: 1 (NL) Occasional: 1 (FR)
External stakeholders' involvement	Regular: 4 (FI, FR, NL, NO) Occasional: 3 (AT, CAT, SRB)
External examiners	3 (FR, NL, NO) For PhD only: 3 (AT, FI, RO, SRB) For short postgraduate programmes (RO)
Graduate tracking ¹²	Regular: 3 (FR, NO, RO) Occasional: 1 (FI)
Staff development	3 (AT, FI, NO and SRB)
Graduates' exit questionnaire ¹³	1 (AT and RO)

The institutions range on a continuum between one without a formalised IQA framework (FR) to the seven others with relatively comprehensive ones. However, even the one without an IQA

¹² Table 4 considers the graduate tracking done by institutions only and not those that are done nationally.

¹³ Graduate exit questionnaires differ from graduate tracking survey in that they occur closer to graduation and are meant to assess the overall learning experience of graduates rather than their employment.

framework uses a variety of mechanisms to ensure the quality of its activities such as external stakeholders' involvement, external examiners and graduate tracking.

4.1 Programme reviews

Programme reviews are a core practice amongst IN.TUNE partners. Boxes 1 and 2 provide two detailed examples of a programme review process¹⁴.

Box 1. 'Studierbarkeitsmonitoring' – a comprehensive study programme review mdw – University of music and performing arts Vienna

With its 'Studierbarkeitsmonitoring' (monitoring of studyability), the mdw responded to the long-standing need for evidence-based curriculum development. To this end, data from a variety of sources was collected and compiled into a report, which was made available to the Study Commissions, which are responsible for the content of the curricula, and the Rectorate, which is responsible for funding any proposed changes.

The project was developed in response to a call to universities issued by the responsible federal ministry's to closely monitor the number of ECTS credits and degrees in order to ensure the 'studyability' of programmes. Discussions between the Vice-Rector for Teaching, the Quality Management department, and a department supporting curriculum development revealed that a more holistic approach was needed for the mdw, one that also took into account aspects that are specific to arts universities (e.g., the low student–teacher ratio and the high proportion of international students).

For this reason, in addition to the above-mentioned indicators, the concept also incorporated data related to labour market integration and the sociodemographic of students, as well as qualitative data from focus groups and written surveys. Next, the various departments' responsibilities were clarified in a process that included a mandatory statement from the Study Commissions on the main points of the report and a follow-up.

An initial pilot project involved setting up some focus groups, followed by a time-consuming preparation and the analysis of all the collected data, that resulted in a very complex and extremely comprehensive report. Reviewing the report, ensuring internal coordination and drafting a statement also represented an unexpectedly large amount of work for the Study Commission, which somewhat dampened the interest in receiving the results.

The concept and the associated process were revised based on this experience. The original ambition to ensure a comprehensive coverage across all data sources was reconsidered. Instead, the precise requirements of the study commissions and the Rectorate — whose role in the curricular process has been strengthened due to recent changes in higher education legislation — are determined first, after which the focus is set jointly. Detailed narrative analyses have been replaced by bullet points, making the report much easier to read and shortening the process overall.

'Studierbarkeitsmonitoring' is now firmly established as a joint process between the Rectorate and the Study Commission, ensuring that quality assurance is embedded in the development of programmes. The main lesson learned from this project is that making data available to members of the institution demands setting a clear focus and sticking to it throughout the

¹⁴ All partners were asked to identify and describe an IQA practice that they feel particularly proud of and that they would want to share with the other members of the Alliance. These examples are included in various parts of this report.

process. This enables the report's recipients to use the findings according to their needs, rather than being overwhelmed by its exhaustiveness.

Box 2. Study programme reviews: validation, monitoring, modification, accreditation (VSMA)

Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC)

Description of the mechanism

The study programme review system is based on the procedures of the Catalan Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya). All programmes must go through a cycle of validation, monitoring, modification, and accreditation (VSMA).

- **Validation:** new study programmes are externally reviewed before implementation.
- **Monitoring:** for accredited programs: reports on programme development and results are prepared by the internal quality committees biennially; for non-accredited programmes, reporting is annual.
- **Modification:** changes are proposed and approved according to AQU standards.
- **Accreditation:** every 6 years, programmes undergo an external review with site visits, including panels of experts and student participation.

This mechanism ensures that all degrees meet the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and that continuous improvement is embedded in the institution's culture.

This year, ESMUC has introduced an internal quality monitoring system at the institutional level, complementing the programme-based reviews required by AQU Catalunya. Coordinated by the Head of Quality, Research, and Innovation together with the heads of all areas, the system uses different tools to track standards and changes throughout the year, which are then compiled into an institutional report. The initiative pursues two main objectives: preparing the institutional accreditation of the study programmes, and achieving the certification of the implementation of the internal system for quality assurance (IQAs)

Implementation

The system was introduced following legal requirements from the Catalan Government and AQU Catalunya in 2013, aligned with the Bologna Process. At the ESMUC, the decision-making process involved the Directorate, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit, academic staff and student representatives. Committees were created for each programme to coordinate reports and evidence.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges and solutions were:

- **Administrative workload:** Preparing reports and evidence required significant effort from academic staff. To overcome this, the ESMUC appointed a Quality Assurance coordinator and developed templates to streamline the process.
- **Engagement of staff and students:** At first, participation was uneven. Through clearer communication, more stakeholders became actively involved.
- **Balance between compliance and improvement:** There was a risk of seeing the reviews as a bureaucratic exercise. The solution was to connect the results of monitoring reports with strategic planning and resource allocation.

- **Implementation of institutional accreditation:** on the one hand, the institution must obtain certification for the implementation of its internal quality assurance system; on the other, it must undergo institutional accreditation. These two processes follow different frameworks —the university framework on one side and the higher artistic education framework on the other— which makes coordination complex.
- **Impact and use in decision-making**
- Study programme reviews are now integrated into institutional governance. Results inform curriculum development, teaching methodologies, allocation of resources and staff development. They also strengthen transparency, since reports are made public on the ESMUC website.

Key advice

For institutions considering similar mechanisms, we recommend:

1. Ensuring that reviews are not only about compliance but truly linked to internal strategic decisions.
2. Providing training and tools to reduce administrative burden.
3. Involving students and staff actively, as their perspective adds legitimacy and relevance.
4. Using external feedback as an opportunity for institutional learning and growth.

Although, the review process is common to the IN.TUNE partners, there are variations in their frequency, committee membership, availability and use of data, and the scope of reviews.

- Their *frequency* varies from yearly reviews (FI, FR, NO, RO) to in-depth reviews every four (NO), five (RO) or six (NL) years.
- *Membership* of programme review committees is limited in one case (CAT) to academic staff whilst in other cases they may include some or all the following: teachers, students, alumni, representatives from the socioeconomic sector such as employers and employees, and international experts.
- *Data* used for these reviews include work environment analyses (the demand, need and quality of education), stakeholder questionnaires, student feedback and statistics, and international benchmarking (FI, CAT). One conservatoire (NO) surveys the teachers who are asked about their students' engagement in their learning, whether the exam format is aligned with learning objectives, whether their course is evaluated by their students, how they see the study programme in relation to the other programmes, and the coherence and connections amongst study programmes.
- The *scope* of these reviews varies. In most cases, they are focused on the quality of the programme. In other cases, they are focused on the structure of the study programmes. In one conservatoire (FR), the review committees look at how the various higher education cycles are structured, the extent to which the programmes are backed by research, mobility and international partnerships, the development of career opportunities and the links the programmes maintain with the socio-professional world. In another case (SRB), councils review yearly such aspects as the structure of study programmes, student progression, student feedback (which is collected every three years). The programmes' structure are updated every seven years. In yet another case (NL), the following aspects must be addressed during the self-evaluation phase as

part of the accreditation process: learning objectives, procedures for student progress and assessment, and achieved learning outcomes.

4.2 Feedback mechanisms

The students' survey questionnaire is the most common way that institutions collect feedback on courses. Apart from one conservatoire (FR)¹⁵, all other seven partners use students' questionnaires, which have become inescapable despite their potential weaknesses (see section 7.2 for more details). The use of such questionnaires is required by law in three of the eight countries (AT, RO, SRB). In two conservatoires (NL, NO), this is a voluntary process at the teachers' discretion. In one case (NL), the teachers can access a standard questionnaire via a QR code and the IQA office monitor the use of the instruments and addresses social safety concerns. In the other case, the teachers develop their own survey or ask for help. A mandatory survey is done every four years.

Some of the partners report that the small size of their institution and the one-to-one teaching constitute two challenges to the anonymity of the responses. To circumvent these challenges, one institution (AT) groups all students who are taught by a given teacher to respond to the questionnaire every three years. In another conservatoire (NL), after the IQA office monitors the responses to identify trends and any social safety issue, the responses are shared with the teacher concerned. As discussed in section 5.1, however, in most cases the results of the questionnaires are more broadly shared.

Several conservatoires report that teachers are resistant to publishing the results of the students' questionnaires. For instance, one institution (AT) noted that teachers were concerned about sharing course evaluation results with students whilst other surveys, that are perceived as being less sensitive, are more widely shared. A year ago, that institution decided to require its teachers to summarise the key survey results and explain to their students how they will change to improve delivery. This is a very positive development because it should motivate students to answer those surveys thoughtfully if they know that they are being used for enhancement.

Five additional good practices stemming from individual partners are worth noting with respect to feedback mechanisms:

1. Giving feedback is not limited to commenting on the teaching received. Students are also prompted to reflect upon their own work and investment in their learning. (FI, NO.)
2. Teachers develop their teaching and study units based on the feedback received. (FI)
3. Teachers are expected to discuss the feedback they received concerning their study units in annual performance reviews with their supervisor. (FI)
4. Teachers can also reflect on this feedback and how they use it in their teaching portfolio when they self-assess their teaching competence. (FI)
5. The IQA office is available to discuss with the teachers how to respond to the results they received. (NL)

An original approach to student questionnaires is provided in Box 3 below.

¹⁵ The use of student questionnaires has progressed slowly in France as compared to other European countries.

Box 3. Informal course evaluation through qualitative reflective tasks
Faculty of Music, University of Belgrade

Description of the mechanism/process:

This mechanism represents an informal but structured approach to course evaluation, focusing on qualitative student feedback through a reflective exercise (annex 3). Its primary objective is to explore students' perceptions of their developmental progress during the course – not only in terms of knowledge and skills but also in their beliefs about teaching, learning, and their own role as future educators. It offers a deeper understanding of whether the course experience was genuinely formative.

The practice was inspired by a similar method developed by colleagues at the Faculty of Philosophy, Centre for Teacher Education, with whom I collaborated during the process of developing it. Although not mandated by our external quality assurance agency, it emerged as a complementary tool alongside the official evaluation methods. Its implementation was possible due to the openness of my immediate superior, though it was not widely institutionalized or discussed at the higher decision-making levels.

The main challenge encountered was the scalability of this reflective approach. It is best suited for small student groups, as it involves collecting and analysing open-ended, narrative data. Additionally, the absence of a standardised coding system made interpretation and reporting more complex.

Although not formally embedded in institutional decision-making processes, the insights from this evaluation method provided rich, actionable feedback. It helped identify areas for pedagogical improvement and highlighted students' evolving competencies and beliefs. This, in turn, informed future course adjustments and contributed to ongoing professional reflection.

Key advice for institutions:

When introducing informal, reflective evaluation methods, start with small-scale implementation and ensure support from academic leadership. Although not easily scalable, these methods offer deep, qualitative insights that can significantly enrich course development. Establishing a clear approach to analysing narrative data is essential for translating student reflections into actionable improvements.

The institutions also use other types of surveys. For instance, one institution (FI) collects feedback on its admission process. The online feedback questionnaire elicits opinions on the guidance the applicants received, the communication about the admission process and the entrance examination arrangements. Its current students are queried every two years on teaching, studying, wellbeing, administrative services and management. It surveys past students on the communication channels used in alumni communications, alumni events, strengths and flaws of the education provided, alumni's roles in the university community, as well as the quality of alumni cooperation.

Eliciting feedback from students is also collected through other means. In one institution (NL), departments organise regular 'student panels' with the support of the IQA office. These panels facilitate open dialogue between students and their study programme on all aspects of their experience, from curriculum to learning experience to community culture. The regular planning and the written reports ensure that the feedback loop is also 'closed', with students hearing

update on issues that are of importance to them. Another conservatoire (FR) organises regular fora with students to discuss their issues.

Some institutions (FI, NO) have set up a ticket system, that enable students and staff to send feedback on any topic using an online feedback form. All feedback is kept confidential by those who process it and dispatched to the employees who are responsible for the specific issue that is identified. An analysis of these tickets is sent to the board (NO).

Whilst these feedback mechanisms are generally formalised, informal meetings can also be very effective in gathering information and building community and promoting a shared quality culture as Box 4 illustrates.

**Box 4. NMH Education Dialogues: Promoting quality culture through informal meetings
Norwegian Academy of Music**

The notion of promoting a quality culture through informal meetings was introduced eight years ago and has since evolved in both form and content. The purpose of the meetings is to bring together program coordinators, heads of department, and administrative staff — all of whom play a role in ensuring and developing the quality of our educational programs — into a forum that emphasises sharing best practices, discussing challenges, fostering collaboration across departments, and contributing to competence development on relevant topics. The meetings are led by the Vice-Rector for Education and the Head of Academic Affairs.

There have been no obstacles in implementing this concept, as it is a low-threshold initiative that is perceived as useful by all participants. The original meeting duration was reduced, and participants can suggest topics they find relevant. It is not a decision-making body, but rather a valuable opportunity for the leadership to receive input for decision-making processes, exchange experiences, provide information about important/relevant processes, and ensure anchoring and ownership of topics and processes among the participants.

Most meetings begin with a plenary introduction, followed by parallel group discussions, and end with sharing insights from the group discussions in plenary. We have also held panel debates, involved students, and invited external contributors when appropriate. The meetings are held approximately six times a year, and we aim to vary the weekdays and times to ensure that everyone can attend some of the meetings. Toward the end of the academic year, we evaluate the meeting series and suggest topics to be included in the agenda for the upcoming year.

The following topics have been planned for this academic year:

- **September – Roles and Responsibilities in the Study Programs:** We are entering a new period with a partially renewed rectorate and new program coordinators. In the first meeting, we will review the role descriptions and responsibilities to promote a shared understanding.
- **October – Quality Culture, Quality Loop, and Systematic Quality Work:** In 2026 NMH will undergo a periodic review of our institutional quality assurance practices. In this context, we will take the opportunity to raise awareness about systematic quality work and quality loops.
- **December – Strategic Focus, linking Education and R&D:** NMH adopted a new strategy in 2025 – *Moving Music*. As part of this, a sub-strategy is being developed related to research and development in. One strategic focus area is a closer link

between education and research, and better integration of artistic research methods in the first and second cycles.

- **February – Diversity and Inclusion:** Another strategic focus area is diversity and inclusion. In this meeting, we will invite [Balansekunst](#), an association that offers training on diversity and equality-issues in the cultural sector. We will also showcase a larger strategic project related to diversity in our study programs.
- **April – Music and Health:** This meeting will focus on music and health and how we work with this topic across different environments at NMH.
- **June – Special Needs and Individual Adaption:** We are facing an increasing number of students with special needs and various types of individual adaption to manage their studies. Many staff members experience uncertainty when working with students with different diagnoses. We will address the issue and share experiences on different approaches.

4.3 Other reviews

Amongst the other reviews undertaken, the most frequent occurrence concerns the evaluation of administrative services, albeit their focus and frequency vary. As examples:

- One conservatoire (AT) administered a once-off staff well-being survey.
- One conservatoire (CAT) surveys staff about the infrastructure and the functioning of the institution. In addition, the survey includes specific questions targeted at administrative staff (e.g., on internal communication) whilst academic staff are asked about their satisfaction with their study plans, academic coordination, etc.
- At the Paris conservatoire, professional satisfaction surveys are periodically sent to teachers and members of the administrative teams (albeit not every year), with the main stated objective to prevent psychosocial risks.
- The human resource (HR) department in two conservatoires (NL, SRB) organises an employee satisfaction survey periodically, as required by law. In one of those cases (SRB), responding to the questionnaire is mandatory but staff is required to go into the HR office to fill the online questionnaire. The usefulness of this procedure is reduced by both the potential lack of anonymity and questions that are too general.
- In one conservatoire (RO), the law requires to supplement the students' questionnaires with a self-assessment by teachers, a peer-review process and evaluations by the department heads, the faculty deans and the rector.
- Yet another institution (FI) has a particularly exhaustive approach to staff surveys. In addition to asking students to comment on the functioning of student services, the administrative units are responsible for collecting feedback on their services. This may take place in connection with service requests or through feedback questionnaires aimed at specific users. A questionnaire on wellbeing at work is administered every other year and is shared with other universities in the country and with a national pension provider. A national healthcare provider carries out workplace surveys every three years. The process includes an online questionnaire and an inspection that allows the occupational healthcare provider to identify which staff members need special support

in maintaining their ability to work. This institution also undertakes regular “safety walks” to assess risk factors in the staff’s physical work environment.

The assessment of research varies in scope. With respect to research output, one conservatoire (SRB) collects bibliometrics on a yearly basis, another one (AT) collects bibliometrics as well as metadata and data in the field of research or arts on an ongoing basis and reports once a year, and yet another one (FI) conducted a once-off research assessment exercise¹⁶ (see Box 5 below). The aim of that assessment was to establish an overall understanding of the status of the university’s research activities and to improve the research environment, as well as the level and impact of its research activities. This assessment was carried out by an external international panel that provided valuable information on the status of research and the research environment and offered concrete enhancement recommendations. The other conservatoires examine some aspects of research such as funding (AT), ethics (CAT), gender balance (FR), the link of research to teaching (FR, NL), and research support (AT).

Box 5. Research Assessment 2021–2022
University of the Arts Helsinki

The research assessment that was organised in 2021-2022 was aimed at:

- Providing an overall understanding of the quality and impact of the university’s research as well as its research environment including doctoral training.
- Improving the research activities and the research environment by increasing the community’s understanding of both the status and the future of research, through a discussion of these topics.
- Setting the strategic research profiling by mapping out the existing research strengths and their future potential.
- Developing the assessment of artistic research as part of the research assessment process.

The idea for this assessment stemmed from the Universities Act, which requires the Finnish universities to evaluate their education, research and artistic activities and their effectiveness. The University of the Arts Helsinki Research Assessment 2021–2022 was carried out as a part of the university’s current strategy (2021–2030). The implementation of the assessment was decided by the Board of the University. The planning of the concept took place in the research support services under the supervision of the Vice Rector for research.

This was the first university-led research assessment in the University of the Arts Helsinki covering all research fields. As such it met three key challenges. Firstly, when the assessment concept was discussed in the community, there were critical voices that needed to be acknowledged.

Secondly, one of the challenges in designing the assessment was to find the right balance between the goal of carrying out the assessment through a method known in Finland/internationally and one that would adequately recognise the merits of artistic research. This was resolved by introducing an artistic case study template that would complement the self-assessment and allow the units to demonstrate the quality of their artistic research. The aim was to provide a platform for the units to bring forward distinctive

¹⁶ The conservatoire’s representative indicated during the interview that this might be repeated.

features of artistic research that are crucial for understanding its quality and that might not become evident through more traditional research assessment indicators.

Thirdly, there were also challenges to categorise the research-active personnel because the institution lacked a system that identified them automatically. This was resolved by identifying research-active individuals based on publication statistics.

The research assessment was used in decision-making and to support the institution's further improvement. After the research assessment, the results were widely discussed in the units of assessment and at the university level. The units were asked to identify the main development goals based on the assessment. An international **research advisory board** was established to further assist in developing the goals identified through the research assessment.

The success factors of this project included setting clear and strategic goals, openness in communicating about the concept and its implementation, an external steering group and the careful selection of experts.

<https://taju.uniarts.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/0de2ffcc-3791-4c19-93f1-41ea15817b14/content>

Three conservatoires evaluate internationalisation. One evaluates international cooperation in general (AT), whilst the others are focused on mobility (SRB, RO). In the latter cases, upon returning from their Erasmus+ exchange, every student and staff must respond to both the EU survey and an additional survey designed by the university, the results of which are analysed and used as an input to enhance mobility and improve the functioning of the international office. In addition, the international office (SRB) organises a session at least once a year in which student and staff are invited to present their experience and the skills they gained during their mobility period in the other conservatoire (RO), incoming students are asked to write short testimonials, some of the students who return after mobility write feedback articles in the UNMB ACORD magazine (*Letters from Europe* section).

Finally, one conservatoire (NL) noted that whilst the quality enhancement tools are focused mostly at the study programme level, quality enhancement is also pursued at the institutional level, for example through the regular meetings of department heads, in the exam and study programme committees, and through the HR department's periodic staff satisfaction survey and the support it provides to the department heads on HR issues.

4.4 Exchanging good practice

Exchanging good practice occurs through different activities. The most formal one is through benchmarking. Benchmarking refers to a process by which an institution measures its activities against the standards set by a select group of institutions that are considered as leaders or as peers in its field. Benchlearning is another way of referring to benchmarking and results from it. It is about learning from the selected institutions via a systematic process of observation, analysis or both. Three conservatoires (CAT, NL, and NO), are members of the International Benchmarking Group (IBG), which draws on a very exhaustive database for a formalised benchmarking work.

Aside from formal benchmarking, exchange of good practice is based on membership in national and international networks and on several kind of activities (such as the use of external examiners, advisory boards, staff development) as discussed below.

- *Networking* is seen as an important avenue for exchanging good practice and for benchmarking. The ongoing comparative work packages in IN.TUNE and membership in international associations (such as AEC) are recognised as excellent benchmarking opportunities. Exchange of good practice also occurs when IQA offices meet as a network. In two cases (AT, NL), representatives from the IQA unit meet with their counterparts in the other two music universities in the country as well as with the IQA units of all the other universities to exchange good practice via conferences and working groups. One conservatoire (RO), in consultation with two other conservatoires, initiated and conducted a three-year project to develop an approach aimed at increasing the employability of graduates. Subsequently, 39 other institutions were consulted (See Box 8, p. 36).
- The *international openness* of the conservatoires is an enhancement opportunity. This is illustrated by their participation in conferences, in various international networks, as detailed above, and in promoting staff and student mobility. The conservatoires host masterclasses from international colleagues, and their teachers deliver masterclasses at foreign institutions. This promotes good practice in teaching, albeit in an informal and non-systematised way. This international openness promotes much informal learning although this too is not systematised and, as mentioned above, only two conservatoires (RO, SRB) use student and staff mobility in a systematic way to enhance their activities.
- *National surveys* such as the National Student Survey (NL, NO), national graduate tracking (AT, NL, NO), national well-being surveys done with national actors (FI, NO) facilitate comparison and benchmarking.
- *Regular reports* to the ministry or the QA agency are required in Austria, France and Romania to provide information on the conservatoires' key performance indicators, which can be used for benchmarking. In Serbia, there is an obligation to publish a quality assurance report online every three years.
- *Staff development* is a key conduit for the exchange of good practice but is not present in many of the conservatoires, perhaps due to their small size and limited resources. One conservatoire (SRB) benefits from its university's Centre of Teaching and Learning whilst another one (AT) reports that some departments organise regular fora where teachers meet to exchange good teaching practices. In some cases, this is moderated by a didactic specialist who was appointed recently. There are also plans to set up a website where teachers can share their good practices with others. Another conservatoire (NO) offers courses to improve pedagogical practices. This conservatoire also benefited between 2014-2023 from the existence of an externally funded centre, which contributed to developing its quality culture through the exchange of good practices. IN.TUNE has an action dedicated to the further development of teachers' pedagogical skills.
- *Contact* with professionals in the field and with national and regional institutions, such as orchestra and opera, contribute to sharing good practice and to remaining updated on current trends. This is buttressed by frequent *surveys of alumni* (e.g., NO).
- *External colleagues who serve as external examiners, external evaluators, members of boards (statutory and advisory) and on hiring and promotion committees* bring additional perspective to the conservatoires' activities. External examiners are particularly instrumental in ensuring that standards and quality are at international level (UKSCQA 2022). In one conservatoire (NL), *exam committees* assure the quality of assessments in each faculty. Committee members are trained to perform this supervisory responsibility

and serve informally in an advisory function. *Stakeholder panels and “critical friends”* are enlisted by one conservatoire (NL) for regular evaluations. A “critical friend” is a respected professional peer who provides insights into the educational and artistic activities of a particular department. This is based on observation, interviews with students, and administrative and academic staff. The critical friends have access to external and internal quality assurance material, and a handbook provides guidelines on their remit. The departments also discuss education and programmes with stakeholder panels that meet periodically.

5. IQA: Roles and governance

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for IQA are generally distributed as follows:

- The first level is the IQA office. If it is lacking, one or more QA committees serve in its stead. That first level collects and analyses data and provides the results of this activity to the next managerial levels. This first level is generally responsible for monitoring any follow up as agreed. The IQA office reports generally to one vice rector and sometimes to a second one. In one example (AT), the IQA office reports to the vice rector for organisational development and has a dotted reporting line to the vice rector for academics. Another one (NO) reports to the administrative managing director and has a dotted reporting line relationship to the vice rector for academics.

The conservatoires with committees rather than an IQA office include academic and administrative staff and students as committee members. The following are two examples:

- One conservatoire (CAT) has two committees with different remits that are chaired by the Head of Research, Quality and Innovation. The Evaluation Committee, which includes academic and administrative staff and students, meets at least twice a year. It establishes, within the evaluation framework of the institution, the criteria for the assessment of students, the academic staff, the teaching support staff and the administrative and service staff, as well as the assessment of the general running of the institution. The Study Committee includes only teaching staff and meets weekly. It evaluates, informs and guides the improvement of study programmes and participates actively in monitoring them.
 - In another conservatoire (RO), the committee includes academic staff from each faculty, a representative of the staff union, students (one PhD and an undergraduate from each faculty), one employer representative and one administrative staff.
- The second levels generally include department heads, dean and vice deans, faculty councils or senates, university councils or senates, rectors and vice rectors, and ultimately the administrative board or board of trustees. Staff at this level examine the results of IQA, but at varying levels of details and frequency of reporting, reflecting their varying levels of responsibility. For instance, the department heads will have access to the course evaluations of each of their teachers whilst at the next level up, data will be aggregated into different categories (such as first-year courses, by discipline, etc.) to identify important patterns. One institution (FI) stressed that whilst the results of the big evaluations are shared with the Board, the yearly evaluations results are examined by the management group. The most important data, and the results of the surveys and a summary of these results go to the units because it is important that they act on those results.

In one conservatoire (NO), heads of departments are gathered six times a year to discuss how to improve activities. External stakeholders are sometimes invited to speak about specific issues (e.g., a psychologist to talk about students' mental health). However, care is taken to avoid referring to QA explicitly to allow the development of a quality culture. According to the

institution's representative, "these meetings could potentially be included in the quality system (i.e., become formalised) because it is one tool that helps build a quality culture, and is a very efficient way by which heads of departments feel engaged and feel they can contribute to further improvement."

These processes generally involve academic and administrative staff. Students are involved in different ways but they play an important role in all eight institutions. This is often through student representatives. As examples, one conservatoire (FR) works with a Student Representative Office and organises regular fora with students every six weeks. In another conservatoire (NL), teacher panels and student panels supplement the results of course evaluations. One conservatoire (NO) noted that students are very engaged in the evaluation of study programmes and find the results interesting and impactful. However, they are less engaged with more general questionnaires apart from the student representatives who are usually very active in trying to engage other students and explaining that their voice counts. In yet another conservatoire (RO), the deans are responsible for gathering student feedback and relaying students' concern to the appropriate staff, and in another one (SRB), the student parliament is the body through which students express their concerns. In that conservatoire, students also make up 16 per cent of the Council, the body that discusses amongst other issues, the quality of teaching and curricular developments. A student vice-dean is responsible for coordinating communication with the faculty leadership. In addition, students are members of other bodies. In Serbia for instance, they sit on the Teaching-Artistic-Scientific Council, the Disciplinary Committee, and the Committee for Awarding Points for Extracurricular Activities. They can also be invited to join other commissions, depending on the topics being discussed.

Box 6 below illustrates the importance of involving various constituencies in quality enhancement processes.

**Box 6. Involving stakeholders in quality enhancement: the *Conseils de perfectionnement* (development councils)
CNSMD de Paris**

The *Conseils de perfectionnement* (development councils) are exclusively consultative bodies established within each programme or group of programmes. Their mission is to support teaching teams in self-evaluation processes and to provide forward-looking recommendations for possible curriculum adjustments on a yearly basis. They contribute to the evolution of training content, teaching methods, articulation between study cycles, links with research, international mobility and partnerships, and employability prospects. More broadly, they ensure that programmes remain connected to professional realities and competitive within the local, national, and international higher education landscape.

The introduction of *Conseils de perfectionnement* follows the framework set by Article L. 611-2 of the French Code of Education, which allows higher education institutions to establish such bodies with professional representation. At the Conservatoire de Paris, this mechanism was formalised in a framework text discussed internally. The proposal was developed by the pedagogical leadership (Directors of Studies, Heads of Departments) and adopted under the authority of the Director of the Conservatoire. Whilst not mandated by the external quality assurance agency, it was inspired both by national regulatory provisions and by a will to strengthen institutional dialogue with professional stakeholders.

Although the *Conseils de perfectionnement* do not have decision-making power, their recommendations feed directly into pedagogical teams' discussions, the Directors of Studies,

and the institution's central leadership. Each meeting produces a written report circulated to the teaching team and a synthesis forwarded to the Director. These inputs inform programme adjustments, help identify emerging professional needs, and support the Conservatoire's strategic positioning in training, research, and international collaboration.

As the *Conseils de perfectionnement* involve diverse participants (students, alumni, faculty, professionals, and administrators), they faced several challenges. One challenge was ensuring balanced and representative membership while maintaining continuity of work. This was addressed by setting renewable two-year mandates with staggered renewal, allowing both stability and fresh perspectives. Another difficulty lay in mobilising external professionals (especially international experts) to participate regularly; this was mitigated by flexible participation options (online consultation).

Three important questions also need to be answered (and represent a challenge that has never been fully met): 1) defining the scope of the Council's actions (a degree, a profession, an educational department?); 2) monitoring the Council's work and how to follow up on its recommendations in an operational manner; 3) making it a place where speech can be as free as it is constructive.

The main lessons learned are to:

- **Ensure clarity of mission:** emphasise the consultative and forward-looking role of the *Conseil de perfectionnement* to avoid confusion with decision-making bodies.
- **Balance membership:** include students, alumni, teachers, and professionals, ensuring diversity and international perspectives where possible.
- **Integrate into institutional processes:** link the Council's work with annual activity reports and programme evaluations so that recommendations are actionable.
- **Prioritise continuity:** adopt staggered terms of office to combine experience with renewal.
- **Value communication:** circulate meeting outcomes widely to teaching teams and leadership so that the mechanism effectively supports quality enhancement.

When IQA becomes very systematised and exhaustive in its scope, it becomes important to establish a division of labour according to the focus of the evaluation. In one example (FI), all managers, supervisors and employees are responsible for the quality of the operations according to a specific division of responsibilities:

- Quality assurance of core activities: vice rectors, deans and directors of degree programmes/teaching areas/subjects
- Service quality assurance: human resources and administrative service director
- Developing the processes and operations of the unit according to common principles: managers, heads of service areas and supervisors
- Project coordination: project managers

5.2 Governance of IQA

Governance of IQA refers to two crucial aspects. The first is about the use of IQA results in decision-making processes. The second evaluates IQA itself for the purpose of enhancing its

usefulness. Without a proper use of IQA results, and if IQA is not evaluated, IQA risks becoming too bureaucratic and alienating. The next sections examine these two aspects in turn.

5.2.1 Using IQA results in governance

As mentioned in section 3.3, most conservatoires strive for quality through an enhancement-led approach to IQA. This implies that the results of IQA are used in the decision-making process. A key condition for integrating IQA into governance is the existence of a good database to buttress evidence-based decisions. One conservatoire (CAT) has a beta version of a database. The QA office at mdw has a database for its most important key figures, which is being integrated into the mdw Data Warehouse. A dashboard is in the process of being established based on these data, which will be accessible by the Rectorate and the study commissions. Care is taken to ensure that this process is planned well and supported by staff.

Furthermore, using IQA results implies communicating them to the appropriate constituencies (see section 5.1 for further details). This can be done in writing but, as one IN.TUNE partner commented astutely, if there is too much reliance on emails rather than on meetings to discuss quality, IQA cannot be embedded and systematised.

The regulations of NOKUT, the Norwegian agency, capture the importance of anchoring IQA into the management of the institution when it states that “The quality work should be anchored in the institution's board and management at all levels.”¹⁷

Formal processes that are integral to decision-making processes vary in their scope, but they all share two elements – an action plan and a follow up process:

- The results of IQA are discussed in student and teacher panels in each department. The outcomes of these panel discussions feed into discussions at the institutional level (NL).
- Based on the annual IQA report, which goes to the rector and the senate, the administrative board decides on improvements for the following year and discuss progress at its weekly meetings (RO.)
- An annual action plan is associated with the monitoring of the key performance indicators that have been agreed with the ministry. The development councils, which meet once a year and which bring together teachers, professionals, and students, discuss key performance indicators (FR).
- The summaries of the different evaluations are presented to the vice-rector and to the study programme committee, which is made up of representatives of the teaching staff and students. The two vice rectors monitor the follow up and inform the senate and the rector of the results of IQA (AT).
- One conservatoire (FI) uses a two-stage process. In the autumn, annual discussions are held under the rector’s leadership and a detailed action plan, personnel plan, and budget based on the following year's strategy, is drawn up for each unit. Subsequently, the units receive written feedback on their operations and plans from the rector in connection with the funding decision. The achievement of the objectives set in the strategy and action plans is monitored in accordance with the quality system. In March, an annual evaluation based on the previous year's qualitative and quantitative evaluation data is produced, including an analysis of the key development targets. In the spring, the Rector leads

¹⁷ § 4-1 (2), [NOKUT’s Regulations on the Supervision and Control of the Quality in Norwegian Higher Education](#)

follow-up discussions on the strategy, with the aim to deepen the understanding of the strategic implementation. In the annual planning of the following autumn, the update of the action plan is supported by feedback received from the rector, the annual evaluation, and strategy follow-up discussions.

Importantly, IQA should be embedded in strategy. In some cases (AT, FR), the strategic document is linked to a performance contract with the ministry. This performance contract model cascades down to the level of the different units, which agree strategic targets with the rectorate (AT). In one institution (FI), the quality system is directly linked to the university's management system and ensures smooth management at all levels. In other words, the quality system is also a management method that ensures the realisation of the strategy and core objectives. The rector acts as the owner of the quality system and the University's executive group as the steering group for quality work. Operational development is the responsibility of the HR and Development Director.

5.2.2 Evaluating and enhancing IQA

In the most mature systems, the IQA process is evaluated periodically to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This process is captured by the Deming wheel as shown in figure 1 below.



Figure 1. The Deming Wheel
Source: [Deming Institute website](#)

As explained by the Deming Institute,

The cycle begins with the Plan step. This involves identifying a goal or purpose, formulating a theory, defining success metrics and putting a plan into action. These activities are followed by the Do step, in which the components of the plan are implemented, such as making a product. Next comes the Study step¹⁸, where outcomes are monitored to test the validity of the plan for signs of progress and success, or problems and areas for improvement. The Act step closes the cycle, integrating the learning generated by the entire process, which can be used to adjust the goal, change methods, reformulate a theory altogether, or broaden the learning – improvement cycle from a small-scale experiment to a larger implementation Plan. These four steps can be repeated over and over as part of a never-ending cycle of continual learning and improvement. ([Deming Institute website](#))

¹⁸ Figure 1 represents the PDSA cycle, which is often referred to as PDCA, where the third step is Check rather than Study. Deming reserved PDCA for processes that could result in success or failure rather than those processes that could be improved. (Moen and Norman, 2010)

Several institutions have established such a process as follows:

In the first example (AT), the documents related to IQA are revised and reworked cyclically. This is done with the involvement of all stakeholders in clearly defined processes. The course surveys include questions eliciting feedback on the instrument from the respondents. For other procedures (e.g., graduate surveys, personal evaluations), feedback on the tool is collected via discussion groups or interviews.

In the second example (FI), management plays a key role in continuous development. The key principle of the quality system, general university management and operations management is the continuous and the bold development of work at all levels of the university. In addition to student learning, the quality system supports the learning of the staff and the entire organisation. The different stages of continuous development include planning the operations, taking action and experimenting, monitoring and assessing the work, taking development decisions and executing them.

In the third example (NL), the procedures for quality enhancement and assurance are integrated into a five-year evaluation cycle that is based on the Deming wheel. Data are collected (i) internally from student and teacher panels, through feedback from the exam and the study-programme committees and (ii) externally from alumni, stakeholder panels, external examiners, critical friends reports and accreditation reports. This is detailed in Box 7 below.

**Box 7. The Lemniscate: continuous dialogue on international standards
Royal Conservatoire the Hague – July 4, 2025**

The University of Arts The Hague – Royal Conservatoire’s approach to quality assurance has been designed and implemented as an institutional quality culture, modelled by the ‘Lemniscate of continuous improvement’ (‘∞’). This model ensures a strong link between education and the standards for quality in the professional field through ongoing dialogue with a diverse group of stakeholders. Many quality culture instruments in the Lemniscate also have a clear international dimension, reflecting the strong international profile of the conservatoire. The Lemniscate symbolises an ongoing connection between internal quality enhancement and external knowledge, feedback and accountability, together forming a strong and continuous cycle of plan-do-check-act (PDCA).

The Lemniscate of the Royal Conservatoire also connects the internal and external quality instruments for quality enhancement and assurance. For example, student surveys and external evaluations are discussed in regularly planned student- and teacher panels. Reports from those panels are actively shared in the meetings of department heads and the institute’s participatory councils. They are also shared with external stakeholders: the international experts who serve as “critical friends”, in professional consultations and on accreditation panels that review according to MusiQuE’s international standards for professional arts education. The input from all these quality culture instruments, as well as internal and international benchmarks and input from international external examiners, feed the departments’ annual plans in which the individual departments identify their priorities, in line with the faculty plan of the Royal Conservatoire.

The lemniscate model was introduced at the Royal Conservatoire in 2016. The lemniscate itself is an old global symbol for infinity, eternal movement or for value that increases without limit. The impetus for the model was a 2016 review of the quality assurance policy which flagged that:

- The information gathered often provided insufficient insight, which was a reason to set findings aside.
- Students sometimes felt their voice was not heard and so gave less feedback.
- More continuity in quality thinking was needed, with more continuity in the external monitoring, a more consistent workflow and balance between the formal and informal as well as internal and external forms of feedback.

Internal stakeholders agreed that department heads and teachers needed to be more involved and to feel more ownership of quality improvement. And that the results of surveys and evaluations should serve more often as the starting point for discussion instead of a primary indicator of performance. The quality assurance process should also recognise the international frame of reference of the study programmes at the Royal Conservatoire. Developed and guided by the Quality Culture office, and consistently spearheaded by Royal Conservatoire management, the Lemniscate continues to aid development of a community culture of regular and constructive feedback, in which all stakeholders have a voice and in which the feedback loop is maintained through the standardisation of planning and procedures.

The Lemniscate increases all stakeholders' involvement in the quality assurance process. Teachers, students, institutional staff and management and the professional educational and artistic fields have relevant perspectives on international quality standards, particularly in higher arts education. Department heads and the Quality Culture office play central roles in process coordination. A point of attention is that the increased involvement should not be perceived as an unbalanced increase in workload, or worse: non-essential tasks. The quality culture instruments are regularly reviewed and updated to maximise their usefulness and to accommodate their planning in the primary business of the conservatoire. This development is a long-term process, that should be focused on participation, trust and quality enhancement.

6. The factors that promote IQA maturity

As discussed in the previous chapters, there are differences across the eight partners, although, based on the data at hand, it is not possible to characterise each of the eight IQA. Nevertheless, two hypotheses could be considered: the degree of autonomy granted to the eight higher music education institutions, and the time and space given to the institutions to mature their IQA.¹⁹

It is important to recall that the development of IQA was given a boost when the European signatories to the Bologna process “stressed that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.” (Berlin Communiqué, 2003) The momentum was reinforced in 2005 when the European ministers endorsed the first edition of the ESG that required QA agencies to ascertain whether Part I of the ESG (which is focused on IQA) was implemented by higher education institutions.

The journey toward a good IQA system goes generally through various developmental phases that take several years. The Finnish quality assurance agency identified four such phases (FINEEC 2015, pp. 21-26):

- Absent: a situation where there is no systematic approach to IQA.
- Emerging: in this incipient stage, certain IQA elements are identified but the approach is not fully visible to the community, and it is insufficiently linked to the institutional strategy.
- Developing: the weaknesses of the previous phase have been addressed.
- Advanced: the process has matured further by ensuring greater buy-in from the community and full embedding of IQA results into the institutional decision-making processes.

The EUA’s autonomy scorecard (EUA 2023) ranks 35 countries, including the eight in which the IN.TUNE partners are located. Table 5 presents, in descending order, the ranking scores that each of the eight countries received on organisational autonomy (EUA 2023, pp. 54-70). The lower the score, the higher the degree of autonomy. Organisational autonomy measures the capacity of institutions to take free decisions on important governance aspects such as deciding the selection, dismissal, and terms of office of the executive head, the appointment of external members in governing boards and the academic structures (EUA 2023, p. 103).

The scorecard places countries into four clusters: top, medium high, medium low and low (EUA, 2023, p. 55). Whilst the first two countries are in the “top cluster” for organisational autonomy and the next two in the “medium high cluster”, there is a very wide gap between this set of four and the next four.

¹⁹ In addition to investing in human and financial resources.

Table 5. Ranking organisational autonomy

Country	Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic	Overall score
FI	3	14	8	2	6,75
NL	7	15	8	29	14,75
AT	9	22	16	10	14,25
NO	9	32	20	11	18
FR	24	27	31	32	28,5
SRB	26	30	32	26	28,5
CAT	28	25	26	19	24,5
RO	30	5	14	18	16,75

Table 6 ranks the countries based on their overall score. This table shows a different ordering: Norway moves from fourth to fifth place, Romania from last to fourth place, and Catalunya from seventh to sixth place. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the link between autonomy and IQA maturity from these two tables. Clearly, there are other factors at play that promote mature IQA system.

Table 6. Autonomy ranking of IN.TUNE partners

Country	Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic	Overall score
FI	3	14	8	2	6,75
NL	7	15	8	29	14,75
AT	9	22	16	10	14,25
RO	30	5	14	18	16,75
NO	9	32	20	11	18
CAT	28	25	26	19	24,5
FR	24	27	31	32	28,5
SRB	26	30	32	26	28,5

An important aspect of an effective quality culture is the feeling of ownership of the process by the community within the institutions. To achieve this, institutions need to be both encouraged and incited to develop IQA. The external push comes usually from the enactment of a new law or the dictate of the QA agency. However, to increase the likelihood that the institutions will develop an effective quality culture it is important to give them the time and space to do so. Both time and space are required if the end goal is to ensure broad ownership of IQA within the institution:

- Adequate²⁰ time consists often in a blank first accreditation cycle that carries no consequences for the institutions to allow them to further refine their processes based on recommendations received. This was done in Iceland and Switzerland for instance.
- Space refers to the lack of very specific and detailed legal requirements or the non-existence of an IQA manual developed by the QA agency and requiring the institutions to implement it. Such a manual usually results in academic staff feeling removed from these processes. It is best when the agency frames the process through accreditation criteria that are not very precisely formulated to provide the institutions with the leeway to decide how to adapt them to its context (EUA, 2011).

It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from these considerations, but it might be interesting for the IN.TUNE partners to explore these aspects in greater depth with the help of the 2015 FINEEC manual and the EUA autonomy scorecard.

Box 8 closes this chapter by showing how a network of institutions can serve multiple aims, including influencing the national quality standards.

**Box 8. National Consortium of Art Universities
National University of Music Bucharest**

The National University of Music in Bucharest is one of seven founding universities of the **University Arts Consortium**, which was established in 2021 (see below for the consortium membership). The establishment of the consortium was discussed and approved by each university's Senate. The consortium's leadership rotates, with each university chairing for one year. Meetings take place at the level of rectors, although depending on the needs of the situation, other parties may be involved.

The consortium aims to promote the interests of university arts education, create joint strategies, collaborate with similar academic and artistic entities, and significantly reduce academic costs by sharing teaching and research infrastructure. It also aims to promote joint academic programmes, offer students the possibility to pursue specialisations and courses on the basis of credit accumulation and transfer, and facilitate the mobility of teaching staff.

It is the first and only arts consortium in Romania, established to address specific arts-related issues, such as public debates and complaints regarding laws, emergency ordinances and government decisions relating to education. Universities are joining forces to present a united front on legislative changes and to shape the national quality standards regarding art higher education. The further improvement of the institution is ensured through joint support and strategy. One university has succeeded, at the level of the National Council of Rectors and the Ministry of Education, in obtaining an extension of the study period from three to four years for certain bachelor's degree programs (with additional funding for the extra year of study) and the introduction of artistic disciplines into the framework plans of the pre-university curricula.

Our university did not encounter any difficulties during implementation. The key advice is to consider and recognise the opportunities, benefits and added value despite the challenges.

²⁰ Interestingly, one agency amongst the IN.TUNE partners was created in the mid-1990s (CAT). According to its representative too much time elapsed before it required institutions to develop IQA. As a result, too many staff members feel that quality is not their responsibility but that of the agency.

Consortium membership

The initiative to establish this university consortium belongs to seven prestigious institutions of higher education with an artistic profile in Romania: the "I.L. Caragiale" National University of Theater and Cinematography in Bucharest, the George Enescu National University of Arts in Iași, the National University of Music in Bucharest, the University of Art and Design in Cluj Napoca, the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music in Cluj Napoca, the University of Arts in Târgu-Mureș, and the Academy of Music, Theater, and Fine Arts in Chișinău (Moldova). In addition to these, eleven other institutions offering university arts programs are permanent guests: the West University of Timișoara, the Transilvania University of Brașov, the Dunărea de Jos University of Galați, the Ovidius University of Constanța, the University of Craiova, Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, University of Oradea, University of Pitești, 1 Decembrie 1918 University in Alba Iulia, and Valahia University in Târgoviște.

7. Recommendations

Whilst chapter 6 seeks to shed light on the external conditions that promote an effective quality culture, this chapter provides a range of recommendations that are within the reach of the IN.TUNE partners. It focuses on some of the tools and processes that are generally found to constitute key elements of a good IQA. Some of the good practices were identified by the IN.TUNE partners whilst others are from further afield.

7.1 Programme reviews

Programme review is one of the key activities a higher education institution undertakes to ensure the quality of its learning offer. It seeks to ensure that the degrees it awards are of a high standard and that students are provided with a good learning experience. In general, the programme reviews result in changes to the content of the course, the pedagogical approach or both. Two types of programme reviews should be undertaken: an annual programme monitoring and a more complete programme review on a cycle (e.g., every five years).

The annual programme monitoring is a light evaluation of a programme and its component courses at the end of the academic year. Programme monitoring includes input from all relevant stakeholders. The main goals of the annual programme review are:

1. to provide information to the institution about the effectiveness of delivery (i.e., quality assurance)
2. to identify aspects of positive practice and action points, in particular any urgent action points prior to delivery of the next cycle (i.e., quality enhancement)

The programme review is a full, in-depth evaluation of all aspects of a programme over a given period, which builds on previous annual monitoring. The main goals of programme reviews are to:

- Maintain standards of learning outcomes and student achievement
- Enhance the quality of the learning experience of students
- Identify aspects of positive practice, including ideas that could be helpful to other programmes
- Ensure that the programme is fit for purpose and fit for the future

In both cases, the report should be submitted to the relevant councils or committees who should discuss it and take forward recommended action points and monitor follow-up.

More details on programme monitoring and programme reviews are found in annex 5.

7.2 Student feedback

Student surveys have become the most ubiquitous feedback tool across the world. Frequently, however, these questionnaires suffer from several weaknesses. Firstly, too often they are focused on student satisfaction rather than on the learning process, which means that they ask students if they are satisfied with the teaching but do not encourage students to reflect upon their learning. This leads academic staff to dislike and even to discount these questionnaires. Secondly, the results of these questionnaires are not always communicated to the students or used to enhance the courses. As a result, students do not take them seriously and either do not answer at all or provide perfunctory responses. Thirdly, sometimes the results of these questionnaires are used as a basis for the promotion or extension of academic staff' contracts. Given their common weaknesses, this can be very problematic and even unfair to the academic staff, notably if that is the only or main basis for these important HR decisions.

Fortunately, there are good practices in this area, which were identified in section 4.2:

1. Giving feedback is not limited to commenting on the teaching received. Students are also prompted to reflect upon their own work and investment in their learning (FI, NO).
2. Teachers develop their teaching and study units based on the feedback received (FI).
3. Teachers are asked to summarise the key survey results and explain to their students how they will change to improve delivery (AT, FI).
4. Teachers are expected to discuss the feedback they received concerning their study units in annual performance reviews with their supervisor (FI).
5. Teachers can also reflect on this feedback and how they use it in their teaching portfolio when they self-assess their teaching competence (FI).
6. The IQA office is available to discuss with the teachers how to respond to the results they received (NL).

In addition, it is good to ensure that the questionnaires are not too lengthy and are asking the most relevant questions. Involving students and academic staff in developing the questionnaire could go a long way in motivating the students to answer the questions and the teachers to use the students' responses.²¹

Whilst it is important to provide information before and after eliciting students' feedback, it is also crucial to manage students' expectations and to avoid leading them to believe that all feedback will be acted upon. A good structure for feedback to the students is as follows: "You said this / We discussed it / We decided that".

Aside from student questionnaires, the institutions are encouraged to use other ways of collecting feedback from students. These can be formal or informal, oral or written, such as focus groups, fora, and an online ticket system.

7.3 Leveraging partnerships

International cooperation is a very important vector of quality. This is clearly seen in the mediocrity of higher education institutions that have limited international partnerships, which is certainly not the case amongst the IN.TUNE partners, all of which are very internationalised.

It is helpful to think about internationalisation as an integral part of a IQA system. This will encourage institutions to formalise certain processes such as learning from students and staff who have gone abroad for periods of mobility, taking full advantage of guest lecturers, external examiners, critical friends, and advisory and statutory board members to disseminate good practices across the institution.

Furthermore, it is useful to engage in a formalised benchmarking process. Whilst it is difficult for those institutions that are leading institutions in their countries to identify other national institutions against which to be compared, international benchmarking is always a good option.

7.4 Governance, leadership and management

The link between IQA on the one hand, and governance, leadership and management on the other, is essential if IQA is to be of any use. A range of issues should be considered as follows.

²¹ Two EUA reports (2011 and 2015a) are useful references for their discussion on student questionnaires and other components and aspects of IQA.

The institution's strategy should be the starting point for the IQA system. IQA should avoid being a set of random bureaucratic mechanisms. Instead, it should support the institution's strategic development and its decision-making process.

A good database is a central component of any IQA system. An integral part of the institution's strategic management is its capacity to know thyself and to generate data that are important for its decision-making process and its communication to external stakeholders. However, agreeing which data to collect, how to analyse them and how to communicate the results constitute very sensitive steps, particularly in small institutions. Therefore, it is useful to ensure a consensual approach in defining these steps.²²

IQA requires good governance and management structures. Many of the IN.TUNE partners are the results of mergers that are at various stages of maturation and efficiency. It would be a good idea to examine the extent to which these governance structures and decision-making bodies are fit for purpose and a good foundation that optimises the usefulness of IQA. A panel of external experts could be invited to examine institutional governance and management structures if this is not done already by the national QA agency. The evaluation of administrative services is also an important aspect of an IQA (See annex 6).

A staff development scheme ensures that IQA is enhancement-led and non-punitive. This requires resources that might be a drain on small institutions. IN.TUNE could consider putting together a staff development offer of online courses and seminars. These could be piloted and then offered more extensively to the AEC membership.

Using the results of IQA is crucial to ensure its legitimacy. Beyond the storing and analysis of results, and informing the appropriate constituencies, monitoring a follow-up process is vital to an effective IQA. As one of the IN.TUNE partners put it succinctly, "the quality system is a management method". This requires that reporting and monitoring mechanisms are calibrated and adapted to the various decision-making bodies within the institution.

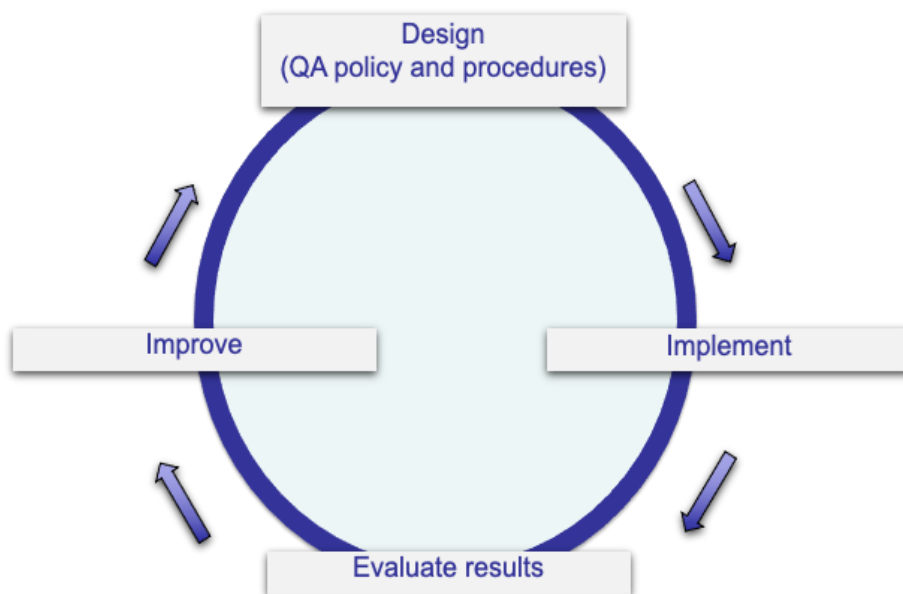


Figure 2: Aiming for ongoing enhancement
(Source: Curvale 2014)

²² A helpful discussion of the aspects to consider is found in EUA 2015a, pp. 25-27.

Following up and acting upon evaluation results ensures that IQA is effective. Figure 2 above captures this enhancement cycle.

IQA needs a cyclical reevaluation. IQA systems tend to become very bureaucratic and can mushroom into off-putting processes. An occasional reset is a good idea.

7.5 Curating a good quality culture

To ensure that IQA mechanisms are both effective and non-alienating and that a healthy quality culture thrives, it is good to keep a few principles in mind:

Start with strengths, not deficits: The culture of excellence is integral to institutions involved in performing arts. This must be recognised. However exhaustive an IQA framework is, there will always be missing gaps and aspects to improve. It is important, however, to recognise what is already done to ensure quality. In some cases, these mechanisms are not recognised by the academic staff as an IQA mechanism. This is fine if those responsible for IQA and the institutional leadership recognise them as such. This would ensure a systemic approach to quality.

IQA evaluates the past and prepares the future: This is achieved when IQA develops a two-fold approach, examining what has been done, and looking ahead to the future by linking IQA to the institution's strategy.

Community buy-in is essential: This is achieved when leadership is involved and motivates the community to engage in IQA and when IQA results are used for improvement. Communication, consultation and discussions are key in that respect as is the commitment to avoid over-bureaucratic IQA frameworks. Establishing a good division of labour about these mechanisms further ensures ownership and accountability. Ensuring visibility of QA framework but not necessarily using a QA vocabulary will motivate academic staff more effectively. As one IN.TUNE partner stated:

My key message regarding quality culture is about the value of having a systematic approach to quality development and being able to streamline it, to underline its value and benefits. It is also about documenting what you are doing and communicating it, and making sure that all the stakeholders in the organisation are on the same page and that they feel ownership of this common project.

IQA will also thrive when there is a strong feeling of community (e.g., built via social events and joint academic activities such as interdisciplinary teaching and research activities). Without a feeling of belonging, it is challenging to embed an effective quality culture.

7.6 Next steps for IN.TUNE partners

The following list of items are suggested topics of discussion amongst the IN.TUNE partners to further enhance their practice.

1. Compare and contrast the following tools and processes:
 - a. Student surveys: what questions to ask, how to ensure that students are encouraged to think about their own contribution to their learning, how to use the survey results.
 - b. Staff promotion: should student satisfaction surveys be used in staff promotion? What else to use (e.g., individual portfolio²³)?

²³ See annex 6 for further details on teaching portfolios.

- c. Staff development: is there an opportunity for IN.TUNE to develop a shared offer in this area?
 - d. Programme reviews: their frequency, who should be involved, what data to use?
 - e. Databases: what should be included? Who should have access? How should it be used? What are good examples in using surveys, performance indicators and bibliometrics?
 - f. How to organise a follow-up process: who/what bodies should receive the results of IQA, with what level of details, what should be the outcome of the reporting process, who should monitor the follow up?
2. Gap analysis of the ESG Part I: each partner to describe in a table what they do and how they do it. What is missing? How to introduce the missing elements?²⁴ (Annex 8 provides an idea of how this can be done.)
 3. Revaluating IQA based on the following questions: Are the mechanisms still aligned with the institution's strategy? Are they fit for purpose (not too little and not too many)? Are they telling the institution what it needs to know? How to organise an evaluation of an IQA system?

²⁴ See EUA 2015b for helpful tips on how to interpret ESG Part I and note that the ESG are in the process of being revised and a new version will be adopted at the next Bologna interministerial meeting (see QA-FIT 2024).

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IN.TUNE Alliance: <https://intune-alliance.eu>

International Benchmarking Group (IBG): <https://www.rncm.ac.uk/about/worldwide-partnerships/worldwide-professional-networks/>

Annex 1: The IN.TUNE partners

Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP)

Founded in 1795, the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris is an international benchmark in its fields of study. A historical model for many institutions in Europe and beyond, the school offers some of the most renowned musical and choreographic programmes in the world. True to its tradition of excellence and its pioneering role, the Conservatoire accompanies young creators and performers while integrating the latest advances in research and new technologies, for careers at the highest level.

The Conservatoire has a worldwide network of partners and participates in various European networks, such as the European Chamber Music Academy (ECMA) and its joint European Master Programme ECMaster, and in METRIC and its annual Impro Intensives. It will lead WP3 (Deep cooperation through new educational formats).

→ The institution currently has 1413 students in all levels and programs and 603 members of staff (182 administrative/support staff members and 421 academic staff members).

Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC)

The Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, founded in 2001, provides university-level education and it is the only official public institution in Catalonia that grants the Bachelor of Music within the framework of the European Space of Higher Education. It also offers 13 Master programmes in a variety of musical specialties. ESMUC is located in an artistic environment along with the Barcelona Auditorium, the Museum of Music and the National Theatre. Being part of the ESMUC means to grow up in a flexible environment, where all the specialties and musical styles are included. The mission of ESMUC is to prepare students so that they can meet professional challenges at an international level and ensure their incorporation into the professional world. To achieve all these objectives, the ESMUC puts the artistic quality and the social commitment on the same level.

ESMUC has a strong international dimension. The student population comes from 25 different countries, and the school has been involved in EU programmes on a continuous basis since its inception in 2001.

To IN.TUNE, ESMUC brings its experience in European cooperation and its expertise in research, interdisciplinary collaboration, new educational formats, entrepreneurship, and social engagement. ESMUC will lead WP5 (Capacity building and innovation in learning & teaching).

→ The institution currently has 975 students in all levels and programmes (607 in Bachelor, 320 in Masters, and 48 in continuing education) and 335 members of staff (76 administrative staff and support staff members and 259 academic staff members, out of which 45 PhD fellows).

Norges musikkhøgskole (NMH)

The Norwegian Academy of Music was established in 1973 as a continuation of the former, private, Music Conservatory in Oslo, founded in 1883 by the Lindeman family. NMH is the main institution for higher music education in Norway offering programmes at Bachelor, Master and PhD levels, in addition to further education and talent development programmes (pre-college).

NMH participates actively in several international organisations and co-operations. Among the organisations are: the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Academies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC); the Association of Nordic/Baltic Academies of Music; the IBG group of conservatoires in Europe, Canada, Singapore and Australia; the Nordic Network for Educational

Research in Music (NNMPF); the European Chamber Music Association (ECMA); and the International Consortium of nine universities with a PhD programme in music therapy. Through its large network of cooperating institutions, students are offered opportunities during their study period to gain additional skills and experience in other learning environments abroad.

In addition to its experience in international cooperation, NMH brings to the alliance its expertise in the field of curriculum innovation and performance teaching developed in the Centre of Excellence in Music Performance Education (CEMPE). The declared aim of the centre is to educate excellent music performers in a rapidly changing globalised music community. Because of its experience in European programme coordination, NMH will be the lead partner in WP1 (Effective management & joint strategy development).

→ The institution currently has 899 students in all levels and programmes (320 in Bachelor, 240 in Masters, 290 in further education/short programmes, 49 PhD) and 424 members of staff (77 administrative/support staff members, 350 academic staff members, out of which 36 PhD fellows).

Stichting Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag (HdK)

The University of Arts The Hague – Royal Conservatoire offers Bachelor, Master and PhD (in cooperation with Leiden University) programmes in music and dance to approx. 850 students, and pre-higher education level primary and secondary general and artistic education in its School for Young Talent. The primary objective of the Royal Conservatoire is to train young talent to the highest levels of artistry, craftsmanship and versatility within the powerful triangle of elements that forms the DNA of the institute: Education – Research – Production. This is done in an educational context where tradition and craftsmanship are inextricably entwined with experiment and innovation. The conservatoire is housed in the new Amare building, a performing arts hub with state-of-the-art facilities in the centre of The Hague, which also houses a symphony orchestra and a dance company.

The Royal Conservatoire has a strong international profile. Not only is almost 65% of its student population from outside the country, but the conservatoire is also actively involved in EU programmes. It has been the coordinator of the large ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music ‘Polifonia’, it has participated in many ERASMUS+ and Creative Europe projects as a partner and coordinating institution, and it is the co-founder of several European Joint Master Programmes and European Joint Modules.

To IN.TUNE, the institution brings its extensive experience in European cooperation, as well as its substantial expertise in artistic research, entrepreneurship, social engagement, innovative curriculum development and quality assurance. It is the applicant institution for IN.TUNE and will lead WP7 (Quality assurance).

→ The University of the Arts currently has 1709 students in all levels and programs (1278 in Bachelor, 431 in Masters, 229 in further education/short programmes)²⁵ and 358 members of staff (94 administrative/support staff members, 264 academic staff members, out of which 36 PhD fellows).

Taideyliopisto – Sibelius – Akatemia (Uniarts)

Sybelius Academy provides the highest level of education in music, fine arts, theatre and dance in Finland and engages in collaborative international education, arts and research activities with

²⁵ The figures in red need to be validated.

a high impact. Established in 2013, Uniarts Helsinki consists of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sibelius Academy and Theatre Academy.

Sibelius offers Bachelor and Masters degrees, open university courses, Junior Academy and doctoral education to approximately 2,000 students. The wide selection of programmes in the field of arts and productive dialogue between teaching and research make the university unique on an international scale. Uniarts Helsinki has two campuses in Helsinki – Sörnäinen and Töölö – and it also operates in Seinäjoki and Kuopio.

Sibelius brings to IN.TUNE its long and vast experience in European cooperation. Uniarts sees its role as an active participant in questions related to social engagement and actively develops its education to better respond to the needs of the changing society (e.g., digitalization). Our university is of the pioneers in artistic research and will lead WP4 (Strengthening our research dimension).

→ Sibelius currently has 1363 students in all levels and programmes (502 in Bachelor, 640 in Masters, 151 PhD and 70 exchange students) and 740 Members of staff (119 administrative/support staff members, 224 full-time academic staff members and 3907 part-time academic staff members, out of which 19 PhD fellows).

Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (MDW)

mdw - University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna as one of the globally top-ranked institutions of its kind looks back on a long tradition. Since its establishment in 1817, mdw has developed into one of the world's largest and most well-known universities for music, theatre and film, and it has received international recognition for the technical brilliance and the stylistic mastery it affords its students. mdw provides space for discovery and experience, reflection and interpretation, individuality and passion. In addition to artistic education and practice, mdw has a strong research element focusing on current academic and scientific advances in numerous fields.

mdw is actively running Erasmus+ mobility programmes and is successfully involved in numerous EU and Erasmus projects, including the function as the leading coordinator of the large-scale Creative Europe project ECMA PRO.

mdw is able to contribute to IN.TUNE a broad range of knowledge and know-how in multiple disciplines and interdisciplinary cooperation; and according to its strategic commitment to combining artistic and academic excellence with diversity, inclusion and sustainability, mdw provides a strong focus on the societal field and outreach. It will lead WP6 (Strengthening our engagement with society).

→ The institution currently has 2992 students in all levels and programmes (1190 in Bachelor, 715 in Masters, 800 Diploma students, 376 further education/shorts programmes students and 164 PhD students) and 1562 members of staff (446 administrative and support staff members and 1122 academic staff members).

Universitatea Națională de Muzică din București (UNMB)

The National University of Music Bucharest is a professional institution of education, research and music creation, with a tradition of more than 160 years. Its major values are:

- The importance of music in building an actual, multi-cultural society.
- The necessity of an individual, student-centred education as the fundamentals for reaching the highest musical performance.

- The creative integration of all levels of music education, including the lifelong learning process.
- Encouraging the exchange of ideas, experiences and opinions, to enable critical reflection in education, while learning and promoting national and international values, for the continuous development of the institution.

The university has two faculties: the Faculty of Musical Performance and the Faculty of Composition, Musicology and Music Pedagogy that provide all the levels of studies, including a Doctoral School. The faculties include various centres with regards to research, innovation and information, such as the Centre of Scientific Research and Artistic Projects, the Electroacoustic Music and Multimedia Centre, the Romanian Music Information Centre and the Early Music Centre. It has a busy portfolio with regards to international cooperation and mobility.

Based on its extensive experience in European cooperation and mobility, UNMB will be the lead partner of WP2 (Seamless mobility for students and staff).

→ The institution currently has 976 students in all levels and programmes (718 in Bachelor, 180 in Masters, and 78 PhD candidates and 19 students enrolled in short post-graduate programmes) and 358 members of staff (136 administrative/support staff members, 222 academic staff members).

Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu (UAB)

As the only state funded university in the field of arts, University of Arts unites four faculties: music, fine arts, drama, applied arts. It offers three cycle studies, with two types of doctorates: scholarly and artistic. The Faculty of Music (FoM) offers three-cycle programmes. FoM is the first HEI in the region which introduced the Jazz & Popular Music programme as well as two new Master programmes: Applied research in Music and Music Direction. All degrees are Bologna-compliant since 2006 and approved by the National Accreditation Committee (2017). FoM is the only HEI in the region that underwent an institutional quality enhancement review by MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement, a European independent accreditation and external evaluation body for music, confirming a high level of alignment with European standards of higher music education.

FoM is an AEC member and participates in many international projects and the Erasmus+ programme. Global cooperation is realised through the China CEEC Music Academies Union. The University of Arts in Belgrade was the coordinator of the successful CBHE project DEMUSIS (2019-2023): “Enhancing the digital competencies and entrepreneurship skills of academic musicians in Serbia for a culturally more engaged society”. Based on its successful coordination of DEMUSIS, the university will lead WP8 (Communication, dissemination & advocacy).

→ Currently, the institution has 956 students in all levels and programmes (533 in Bachelor, 212 in Masters, 51 further education/specialised studies and 160 PhD students) and 259 members of staff (40 administrative/support staff members, 20 seasonal academic staff and 199 academic staff members).

Associated partners

A group of associated partners have been selected to provide extra support and expertise on various topics (albeit not on the QA work package). They include the International Benchmarking Group, the Tuning Academy, the Society for Artistic Research, the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, the Dutch National UNESCO Commission, Stichting AMARE, l’Auditori de Barcelona, Musethica, Superar, Verein zur Förderung der Musik, the Conservatoire National Supérieur d’Art Dramatique, the Philharmonie de Paris, the Telemark Research Institute,

the Union of Composers of Musicologists of Romania, Mad Head Games Doo, the Belgrade Festivals Centre, the Finnish Society for Music Education, and the City of Helsinki.

Annex 2: The survey questionnaire

Tasks & responsibility: IN.TUNE partners will provide information to MusiQuE through the information sheet included below.

Important notice:

It is advised and strongly recommended that **only existing documentation be used to answer the questions listed in the questionnaire herein** that are relevant for your institution.

In cases where no documentation is available in English, **materials in the local language can be submitted** at this stage. MusiQuE will make use of Google Translate tools to process all preliminary data collected in this phase.

The preliminary data will be further refined and, where the case, clarified, through targeted interviews planned during the second phase of the study.

Expected result: Preliminary data base of quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) practices and processes across the European University

Guidelines for filling in the information sheet:

Consider the questions and the suggested evidence listed under each chapter **as guidelines that are meant to support you in selecting the relevant information and documentation to address the queries**. Their purpose is to enable MusiQuE to better contextualise and understand the QA and QE practices currently in place in each of the partner institutions within the Alliance.

You may also **use the guiding questions, to the extent that they are relevant and applicable to your institution**, in order to structure the information provided in the text box – e.g. as sub-titles.

Once you selected the information you want to provide for each chapter, the guiding questions and the list of suggested evidence can be removed from the final document.

It is not mandatory to use the text boxes in the template below to structure the data you want to provide. Their purpose is simply structural in the context of the questionnaire herein, but they can be removed if they are not helpful in editing the document.

A. Context, governance, decision making, and communication processes at institutional level

1. National and legal context

- What is the national and legal context in which your institution operates: what are the relevant national quality assurance requirements and provisions that your institution must fulfil in order to maintain its accreditation?

Suggested material that may be provided:

- State-specific regulations, criteria set up by e.g. national quality assurance and accreditation bodies, qualifications framework;
- Links to national frameworks of assessment that are relevant / applicable to your institution.

Please offer here information about the legal / national / local context that is relevant for your institution. This would help MusiQuE better frame the quality assurance and quality enhancement practices conducted within the institution.

You can include in the text direct links to national frameworks and other relevant documentation, regardless if they are in English or in the national language.

2. Institutional governance and decision-making processes

- What are the governing bodies of the institution and its organizational structure? Is your institution autonomous or part of a larger educational structure? What are the decision-making levels and how are responsibilities defined at each level?
- How are internal stakeholders (students, teaching, and non-teaching staff) being involved and how do they play an active role in the decision making processes at institutional and/or department level? How do they contribute to the design and development of institutional policies more generally, and in creating and enhancing the institutional quality assurance policy more specifically?
- How are external stakeholders (alumni, representative of the music profession and related artistic domains) being involved in the decision-making processes? How are they contributing to the creation and enhancement of the institutional quality assurance policy?
- How does the institution ensure that its decision-making processes work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Details of the organisational structure of the institution (e.g. organisational chart);
- Details of the senior staff structure of the institution and line management responsibilities;
- Examples of policies / procedures of reviewing decision making processes.

Please offer here information about the governance model, the organisational structure and the decision-making processes in your institution. Should most of the relevant information be published on your website, you can list the links to relevant pages.

3. Internal communication system / procedures / policies

- What is the internal communication system in place and how are the institution's various constituencies being connected within this system (permanent and temporary teaching and non-teaching staff, students, management, faculties, departments, external collaborators, etc.)?
- What communication tools are being used internally and how is it ensured that they work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Communication policy / guidelines
- Communication tools for the publication of information to students and staff (e-platforms, newsletter, boards, etc.)
- Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

Please offer here information about the internal communication system in place and the tools that your institution uses. Links to policy documents and any other information readily available on your website can be added herein.

B. Quality assurance, quality enhancement, quality culture: tools, practices, and processes

*Please consider including in this section all information deemed relevant for showing how your institution is enabled to ensure **the quality of its educational programmes** and how it works towards an **all-embracing quality culture**.*

1. QA system and closure of feedback loops

Please describe how internal and external feedback is sought and connected at the level of your institution and how it works towards an all-embracing quality culture.

- What **internal** quality assurance and enhancement policies are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact the periodic review of the educational offer?
- What **external** quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact internal quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How does the institution connect internal and external feedback and how does it feed into quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How is quality assurance and enhancement used at an institutional level to make institution-wide changes/changes to programmes?
- How is the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement procedures being monitored and how are they regularly revised?
- How would you describe the quality culture within your institution?

Please offer here information about the internal and external quality assurance practices your institution employs, how they are connected, how they inform each other, and how they contribute to generating change within the institution.

2. Agency and ownership in enhancing quality at institutional level

Please describe how staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and of the institutional strategies and policies.

- How are institutional stakeholders (staff, teachers, students, alumni, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains) actively involved in the creation and development of internal quality assurance and enhancement policies? How are they involved in the creation and development of external quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How does the institution position itself against similar (inter)national institutions and to learn from best QA / QE practices in the field?
- How are best practices within the institution identified and shared and how do they feed into quality assurance and enhancement processes?
- How are the institution's quality assurance and enhancement processes and their results communicated to staff, teachers, students, and external stakeholders?

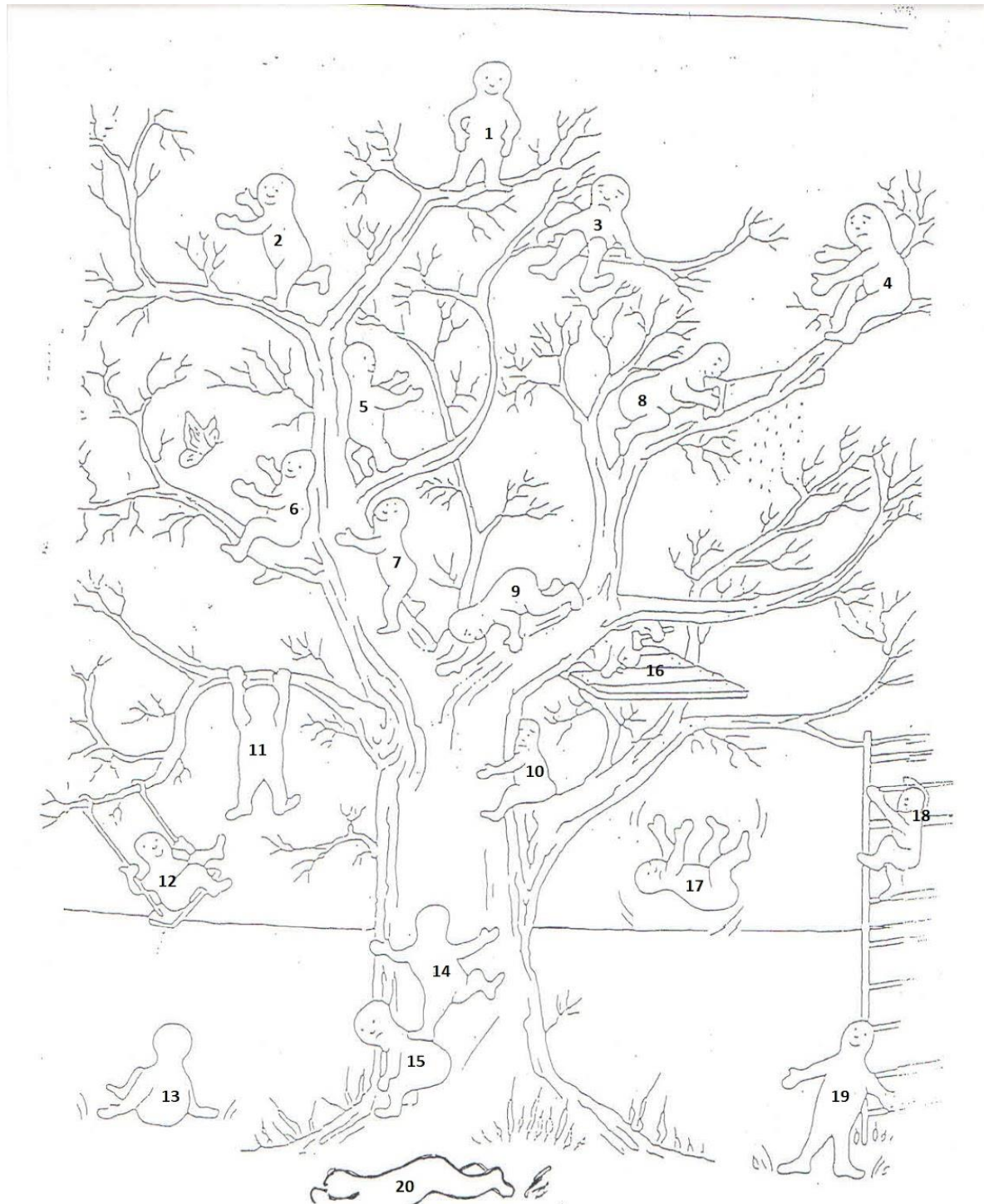
Suggested material that may be provided:

- Strategies/policies for quality assurance and enhancement system
- Documentation regarding policies and procedures related to quality assurance and quality enhancement
- Evidence of complaints procedures

Please describe here how institutional stakeholders are given an active role in the internal and external quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, and how the results of their involvement are being shared and communicated across all constituencies.

Annex 3: An original student feedback mechanism

The questionnaire was adapted from one developed by the Center for Teacher Education at the Faculty of Philosophy, originally intended for the evaluation of one of their programmes. See Box 3, p. 20, for further details.



Try to recall yourself before attending this course.

How did you perceive yourself at that moment?

Choose the figure from the image above that best represents your motivation and competence for taking on the role of a teacher at that time.

Enter the number of the selected figure in the field below the text.

Explain why you chose that particular figure.

Now, reflect on how you perceive yourself as a teacher at this moment.

Choose the figure from the image above that best represents your current motivation and competence for taking on the role of a teacher.

Enter the number of the selected figure in the field below the text.

Explain why you chose that particular figure.

Describe what has influenced your motivation and competence for the teaching profession from the beginning of the course until today.

How do you think the course you attended has impacted your motivation and competence for the teaching profession?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this!

Annex 4: Benchmarking²⁶

Benchmarking: a tool or a process?

Benchmarking is a quality management tool used when comparing one organization with another on some aspect of performance. Aspects of performance include processes, products and services. Searching to find information on these various aspects in which another organization excels, with the objective of finding ways in which to improve current performance, is benchmarking. (...)

Approach to the use of benchmarking may be strategic or operational. A strategic approach takes a high-level view and looks at *what is done*, including the organization's business strategy, structure and operational costs. In operational benchmarking, the focus shifts from what is done to *how it is done*. Those processes that are critical to the success of the organization at a number of levels are examined in this approach.

Typology of benchmarking

There are four common types of benchmarking.

1. *Internal benchmarking*: comparing similar processes performed in different parts of the organization to identify better and best practices. For example, internal systems for reviewing curricula, or service-teaching arrangements between one faculty, department or division and another.
2. *Competitive benchmarking*: comparing the performance of one organization (e.g., education institution) with that of a competitor on specific measurable terms. Comparing similar processes, practices, performance measures and identifying trends, directions, and priorities, across competitor organizations. For example, measuring student outcomes (e.g., pass rates, satisfaction ratings) compared with how throughput and satisfaction rates are tracked in other public or private education institutions which are recognized for best practice for this process.
3. *Functional benchmarking*: excluding direct competitors, organizations compare processes, practices and performance with similar processes (etc.) of other organizations in the same industry or business, e.g., financial management, library services and student enrolments in education institutions worldwide.
4. *Generic benchmarking*: comparing organizations on a best practice process or service, e.g., speed of telephone response, accuracy of payroll, time taken to order and receive an item; or benchmarking student services, such as registry procedures, with private enterprise organisations, e.g., hotels.

To be effective, benchmarking must be used in a structured procedure which follows a number of simple steps:

1. Fully understand the process, product or service to be benchmarked. This may involve a detailed process analysis as a starting point. It will always involve the collection of appropriate output measures.
2. Using the output measures as a comparator, identify organizations which appear to have superior performance and select one or more as benchmarking partners.

²⁶ Extract from Liston (1999), Chapter 6.

3. Study the process, product or service of the benchmarking partner(s) to determine if performance is superior and why.
4. Use this learning to improve.²⁷

²⁷ The rest of the chapter provides concrete examples of checklists to guide how to monitor performance, determine benchmarks and constructs reward mechanisms and policies. Examples include how to benchmark leadership, strategy, policy and planning, etc.

Annex 5: Programme reviews

Annual programme monitoring²⁸

The annual programme monitoring is a light evaluation of a programme and its component courses at the end of the academic year. Programme monitoring should include input from all relevant stakeholders. The main goals of the annual programme review are:

3. to provide information to the institution about the effectiveness of delivery of this cycle (i.e., quality assurance)
4. to identify aspects of positive practice and action points, in particular any urgent action points prior to delivery of the next cycle (i.e., quality enhancement)

Normally, evaluation and reporting should be led by the relevant teaching team. Administrative staff (e.g., quality assurance staff, staff responsible for statistics, etc.) may provide support, data and facilitation.

Inputs should include:

- Statistical information: for each course and for the programme overall including student numbers, progression, dropout, grades, etc.
- Stakeholder feedback from:
 - Students on the courses / programme, including elected representatives
 - Academic staff
 - Other relevant stakeholders
 - Institutional support services

The main output is a concise report summarising:

- Key trends in statistical information
- Messages from stakeholder feedback
- Any aspects significant for a particular component course
- Any aspects of positive practice (e.g., what has worked really well in this cycle including any new developments)
- Ideas on action points for change, in particular any urgent changes prior to the next delivery

The report should be submitted to the relevant committees and councils. It should also be made available to students on the programme and student representatives.

Programme review

The programme review is a full evaluation of all aspects of a programme over a given period and building on previous annual monitoring. It could take place on a five-year cycle. The main goals of programme reviews are:

- Maintain standards of learning outcomes and student achievement
- Enhance the quality of the learning experience of students
- Identify aspects of positive practice, including ideas that could be helpful to other programmes
- Ensure the programme is fit for purpose and fit for the future

²⁸ This annex draws from work commissioned by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education to Alan Davidson in 2022.

Programme Review should include all relevant stakeholders:

- Programme heads
- Academic staff
- Students, including elected representatives
- Alumni
- Institutional support services
- Other relevant stakeholders

Key inputs to a programme review include:

- Documents and web information describing the programme and its components:
 - The curriculum and learning outcomes
 - How the programme and courses are taught and assessed
 - Environment, resources and support for students
 - Public information about the programme
- Statistical information
 - Students and graduates
 - Staff
- Summaries of stakeholders' feedback
- Reports
 - From monitoring over the past period if available
 - From previous programme review if available

Components of a programme review include:

Learning Outcomes

Assessing learning outcomes depends on how well current documents describe the learning outcomes of the programme and the component courses. If learning outcomes are not currently used, or are poorly used, then Programme Review should be used as an opportunity to review and re-define the programme's and courses' learning outcomes. Check points for review include:

- Are the learning outcomes of the programme and constituent courses well defined?
- Are learning outcomes up to date?
- Are all the learning outcomes actually covered?
- Is there any excessive replication of learning outcomes in the constituent courses?

Student workload

- Is the student workload well defined in terms of ECTS credits?
- Is the student workload reasonable: do actual hours required relate to ECTS credits?

Programme fitness

- Is the programme up-to-date and fit for the future, considering:
 - Developments in the subject, including recent research?
 - Changing needs of society and employment?
- Considering student and staff workload, what should be added? What should be taken out?

How the curriculum is taught and assessed (Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment)

- Programme design and teaching

- Are the curriculum and modes of delivery / engagement designed in ways that are well aligned to the learning outcomes and to the profile of students admitted?
- Are teaching methods well-aligned to the learning outcomes?
- Do teaching approaches promote active student engagement?
- Assessment
 - Are assessments well-aligned to learning outcomes?
 - Are students provided with clear information about assessments?
 - Are students provided with helpful feedback on their assessments?

Programme Review coverage: who are the students, who are the staff?

- Information about students and graduates
 - Profile of students admitted, including any trends and paying attention to equality and inclusion
 - Summary of statistics on student progression, completion and dropouts
 - Graduate career paths
- Teaching staff
 - Profile of teaching staff team: numbers, qualifications and experience, roles, status (e.g., full-time, part-time)
 - Role and contributions of visiting teachers and other non-permanent staff
 - Adequacy of number of staff in relation to number of students, and institutional regulations / guidelines
 - Professional development opportunities and scholarly activity in the subject, and in the practice of teaching and assessment (including use of technology)
 - Are teachers encouraged to link research and teaching where relevant?

Programme Review coverage: environment, resources and student support

- Academic / subject
 - Environment and resources relating to the subject, including external opportunities / placements
 - Academic support for students on the programme and in individual courses
- Generic
 - Generic environment and resources (e.g., campus, virtual learning environment, library, information technology)
 - Personal support including academic advising, counselling
 - Support resources to promote equality of accessibility and participation
 - Support the international orientation of the institution (e.g., languages, visa, etc.)

Information for students and applicants

Are students and prospective applicants provided with clear, helpful information on:

- Content and curriculum?
- Methods of learning, teaching and assessment?
- Environment and resources?
- Support available?

The report should be submitted to the relevant councils or committees who should discuss it and take forward recommended action points and monitor follow-up.

Annex 6: Evaluating administrative services

The following eight questions could serve as a guide to the review of professional services. These questions are suggested as means of supporting an enhancement-led review and should help in demonstrating a coherent and comprehensive enhancement agenda for these units.

1. Does the institution's strategy include a statement about the support functions and their staff, and how they are meant to support the overall strategy? To what extent and how does each service support the institutional strategy and activities?
2. In what ways is management supportive of the mission of the various administrative/support functions (e.g., Is there a professional development plan/strategy for staff in support services? Is there verbal, financial or other forms of support?)
3. How are administrative staff included in IQA (e.g., in evaluation and monitoring)?
4. How does each central function interact with its faculty counterparts (where they exist) to ensure a coherent and complementary approach to service delivery? Is the balance between centralised and decentralised services working well or should it be adjusted and how?
5. How do central functions interact with their main constituencies: for instance, for academic affairs: how are students involved in decision-making, evaluation of the service? Are the available resources sufficient to support students and academic staff?
6. How does each service know that it is achieving its goals? Does it have an internal quality assurance process? Is there action planning around reaching specific goals in the university's strategy?
7. Would each service be able to provide examples of improvement introduced through its internal QA process and evidence of success?
8. What, if any, have been major changes in the number, type and rank of administrative staff since the last review period?

Annex 7: Teaching Portfolios

Source: Center for Teaching and Learning, Vanderbilt University, USA²⁹

What Is a Teaching Portfolio?

- Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching from a variety of sources—not just student ratings—and provide context for that evidence.
- The process of selecting and organizing material for a portfolio can help one reflect on and improve one's teaching.
- Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching as a scholarly activity.
- Portfolios can offer a look at development over time, helping one see teaching as an ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection.
- Teaching portfolios capture evidence of one's entire teaching career, in contrast to what are called course portfolios that capture evidence related to a single course.

Why Assemble a Teaching Portfolio?

Portfolios can serve any of the following purposes.

- Job applicants for faculty positions can use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
- Faculty members up for promotion or tenure can also use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
- Faculty members and teaching assistants can use teaching portfolios to reflect on and refine their teaching skills and philosophies.
- Faculty members and teaching assistants can use teaching portfolios, particularly ones shared online, to "go public" with their teaching to invite comments from their peers and to share teaching successes so that their peers can build on them. For more on going public with one's teaching, see the [CFT's Teaching Guide on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#).

General Guidelines

- **Start now!** Many of the possible components of a teaching portfolio (see list below) are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain after you have finished teaching a course. Collecting these components as you go will make assembling your final portfolio much easier.
- **Give a fair and accurate presentation of yourself.** Don't try to present yourself as the absolutely perfect teacher. Highlight the positive, of course, but don't completely omit the negative.
- **Be selective in which materials you choose to include,** though be sure to represent a cross-section of your teaching and not just one aspect of it. A relatively small set of well-chosen documents is more effective than a large, unfiltered collection of all your teaching documents.
- **Make your organization explicit to the reader.** Use a table of contents at the beginning and tabs to separate the various components of your portfolio.
- **Make sure every piece of evidence in your portfolio is accompanied by some sort of context and explanation.** For instance, if you include a sample lesson plan, make sure

²⁹ This is an old document that is no longer available on the website of the university. In addition, the Centre for Teaching and Learning is now [AdvancED](#): The Institute for the Advancement of Higher Education.

to describe the course, the students, and, if you have actually used the lesson plan, a reflection on how well it worked.

Components of a Teaching Portfolio

1. Your Thoughts About Teaching

- A reflective "teaching statement" describing your personal teaching philosophy, strategies, and objectives (see [Teaching Philosophy](#)).
- A personal statement describing your teaching goals for the next few years

2. Documentation of Your Teaching

- A list of courses taught and/or TAed, with enrollments and a description of your responsibilities
- Number of advisees, graduate and undergraduate
- Syllabi
- Course descriptions with details of content, objectives, methods, and procedures for evaluating student learning
- Reading lists
- Assignments
- Exams and quizzes, graded and ungraded
- Handouts, problem sets, lecture outlines
- Descriptions and examples of visual materials used
- Descriptions of uses of computers and other technology in teaching
- Videotapes of your teaching

3. Teaching Effectiveness

- Summarized student evaluations of teaching, including response rate and relationship to departmental average
- Written comments from students on class evaluations
- Comments from a peer observer or a colleague teaching the same course
- Statements from colleagues in the department or elsewhere, regarding the preparation of students for advanced work
- Letters from students, preferably unsolicited
- Letters from course head, division head or chairperson
- Statements from alumni

4. Materials Demonstrating Student Learning

- Scores on standardized or other tests, before and after instruction
- Students' lab books or other workbooks
- Students' papers, essays, or creative works
- Graded work from the best and poorest students, with teacher's feedback to students
- Instructor's written feedback on student work

5. Activities to Improve Instruction

- Participation in seminars or professional meetings on teaching
- Design of new courses
- Design of interdisciplinary or collaborative courses or teaching projects
- Use of new methods of teaching, assessing learning, grading
- Preparation of a textbook, lab manual, courseware, etc.

- Description of instructional improvement projects developed or carried out
6. Contributions to the Teaching Profession and/or Your Institution
- Publications in teaching journals
 - Papers delivered on teaching
 - Reviews of forthcoming textbooks
 - Service on teaching committees
 - Assistance to colleagues on teaching matters
 - Work on curriculum revision or development
7. Honors, Awards, or Recognitions
- Teaching awards from department, college, or university
 - Teaching awards from profession
 - Invitations based on teaching reputation to consult, give workshops, write articles, etc.
 - Requests for advice on teaching by committees or other organized groups

Sample Teaching Portfolios

The website from University of Virginia provides sample teaching portfolios from a variety of disciplines. As you look at these portfolios, ask yourself,

- "What components did the author choose to include and which ones are most effective at describing their teaching?" and
- "What structural and organizational decisions did the author make as they assembled their portfolio?"

[Sample Portfolios from the University of Virginia Teaching Resource Center](#)

Electronic Teaching Portfolios

How do electronic portfolios differ from print portfolios?

- **Increased Accessibility:** Teaching portfolios are intended, in part, to make teaching public. Distributing a portfolio on the web makes it even more accessible to peers and others.
- **Multimedia Documents:** Technology allows for inclusion of more than just printed documents. For example, you can include video footage of yourself teaching, an audio voiceover providing context and reflection on the portfolio, or instructional computer programs or code you have written.
- **Nonlinear Thinking:** The web facilitates nonlinear relationships between the components of your teaching portfolio. The process of creating a portfolio in this nonlinear environment can help you think about your teaching in new ways. For example, since readers can explore an e-portfolio in many different ways, constructing an e-portfolio gives you an opportunity to consider how different audiences might encounter and understand your work.
- **Copyright and Privacy Issues:** While examples of student work can be compelling evidence of your teaching effectiveness, publishing these examples online presents legal copyright and privacy issues. Talk to someone at the [VU Compliance Program](#) before doing so.

Other Resources

The following web sites offer additional resources and strategies for creating effective teaching portfolios:

- [Developing a Teaching Portfolio](#), from the Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington
- [Developing a Teaching Portfolio](#), from the Office of Faculty and TA Development, The Ohio State University
- [The Teaching Portfolio](#), an Occasional Paper from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
- [What is a Teaching Portfolio?](#), from the Office of Instructional Consultation, UCSB.
- [Curating A Teaching Portfolio](#), from the Center for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Texas-Austin
- [The Teaching Portfolio](#), from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Duquesne University
- [Teaching Portfolio Handbook](#), from Brown University
- ["The Teaching Portfolio,"](#) an article published by the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education



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Annex 8: ESG, Part I

The question marks in the table refer to the number of aspects that are covered by each standard.³⁰

		AT	CAT	FI	FR	NL	NO	RO	SRB
1.1	<p>Policy for quality assurance</p> <p><i>The standard covers two aspects: (i) a policy underpinning the individual QA processes; and (ii) the need for this policy to be linked to the institution’s overall strategy. Furthermore, the standard stresses the need to engage all stakeholders, creating a broad ownership for quality and thereby fostering a quality culture. (EUA 2015b, p. 11)</i></p>	?							
1.2	<p>Design and approval of programmes</p> <p><i>The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</i></p>	?							
1.3	<p>Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</p> <p><i>Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.</i></p>	?							
1.4	<p>Student admission, progression, recognition and certification</p> <p><i>Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</i></p>	?							

³⁰ With the exception of the explanation of ESG 1.1, the texts in italics come from the official ESG document.

		AT	CAT	FI	FR	NL	NO	RO	SRB
1.5	Teaching staff <i>Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.</i>	? ?							
1.6	Learning resources and student support <i>Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.</i>	? ?							
1.7	Information management <i>Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</i>	? ? ?							
1.8	Public information <i>Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.</i>	?							
1.9	On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes <i>Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.</i>	? ? ?							
1.10	Cyclical external quality assurance <i>Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.³¹</i>	?							

³¹ See EUA 2015b, pp. 25-26, for an explanation of this standard.

ANNEX 2: OUTLINE OF MUSIQUE'S COMPARATIVE STUDY ON QA PRACTICES AND PROCESSES ACROSS THE IN.TUNE ALLIANCE



Draft Outline of MusiQuE's Comparative Study on QA Practices and Processes across the IN.TUNE Alliance

Step 1. Collection of data from the IN.TUNE partners

Timing: September – December 2024

Tasks & responsibility: IN.TUNE partners will provide information to MusiQuE through the information sheet included in Annex 1 below.

Important notice:

It is advised and strongly recommended that **only existing documentation be used to answer the questions listed under Annex 1** that are relevant for your institution.

In cases where no documentation is available in English, **materials in the local language can be submitted** at this stage. MusiQuE will make use of Google Translate tools to process all preliminary data collected in this phase.

The preliminary data will be further refined and, where the case, clarified, through the targeted interviews described under Step 2, below.

Expected result: Preliminary data base of QA practices and processes across the European University

Step 2. Data analysis and development of targeted questionnaires for online interviews

Timing: December 2024 – March 2025

Tasks & responsibility: MusiQuE will share an interview guide with IN.TUNE partners.

Expected result:

- Preliminary analysis of shared QA practices and common trends within the European University
- Tailor-made questionnaires for a more in-depth qualitative research on QA processes at the level of the alliance

Step 3. Targeted interviews with representatives of IN.TUNE partners

Timing: March – May 2025

Tasks & responsibility:

- MusiQuE will produce a set of custom-made questionnaires for each of the nine partners in the alliance which will be shared with the participating institutions in due course.
- MusiQuE will conduct online interviews with each of the participating institutions based on a calendar mutually agreed upon.

Expected Result: A set of comparable data on quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) practices and processes within the university alliance.

Step 4. Analysis of qualitative data and production of the comparative study

Timing: May – September 2025

Tasks & responsibility: MusiQuE will produce a draft comparative study

Expected Result: draft comparative study on QA and QE practices across the alliance

Step 5. Collection of feedback from IN.TUNE partners

Timing: September – October 2025

Tasks & responsibility: IN.TUNE partners will provide factual feedback to MusiQuE

Expected Result: factual accuracy correction of the draft comparative study

Step 6. Delivery of the final comparative study

Timing: October – December 2025

Tasks & responsibility: MusiQuE will share with the IN.TUNE partners a final comparative study and recommendations for setting up a QA system at the level of the Alliance.

Result:

- comparative study of QA and QE Practices and Processes within the

IN.TUNE Alliance

- a set of recommendations for the design and development of a QA system at the level of the Alliance

ANNEX 1. Information sheet

Step 1. Collection of data from IN.TUNE partners

Please fill in the following information sheet and return it to staff@musique-ge.eu by **30 November 2024**.

The questions listed under each section are indicative, and they may be addressed to the extent that they are relevant or applicable to your institution. Comprehensive and descriptive answers to these questions would facilitate a thorough and contextualised understanding of the quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement practices and processes in place within your institution.

Please note that **we strongly advise you to (re)use all available material already produced** during the most recent self-evaluation processes linked to external evaluations that your institution underwent voluntarily or formally.

Where convenient, you can also consider the option to solely include links to already existing documents – e.g. organisational charts, policy documents, etc., from where the relevant information can then be extracted by MusiQuE. Examples of such documentation were provided under the “*Suggested material*” section for each topic. Please keep in mind that these lists are also **purely indicative** and have a guiding purpose.

A. Context, governance, decision making, and communication processes at institutional level

1. National and legal context

- What is the national and legal context in which your institution operates?
- What are the relevant national quality assurance requirements and provisions that your institution must fulfil in order to maintain its accreditation?

Suggested material that may be provided:

- State-specific regulations, criteria set up by e.g. national quality assurance and accreditation bodies, qualifications framework;
- Links to national frameworks of assessment that are relevant / applicable to your institution.

2. Institutional governance and decision-making processes

- What are the governing bodies of the institution and its organizational structure? Is your institution autonomous or part of a larger educational structure? How are responsibilities defined at each decision-making level?
- How are internal stakeholders (students, teaching, and non-teaching staff) being represented in institutional bodies and how are they playing an active role in the decision making processes?
- How do internal stakeholders (students, teaching, and non-teaching staff) contribute to the design and development of institutional policies?
- How are internal stakeholders (students, teaching and non-teaching staff) involved in creating and enhancing the institutional quality assurance policy?
- How are external stakeholders (representative of the music profession and related artistic domains) being involved in the decision-making processes? How are they contributing to the creation and enhancement of the institutional quality assurance policy?
- How does the institution ensure that its decision-making processes work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Details of the organisational structure of the institution (e.g. organisational chart);
- Details of the senior staff structure of the institution and line management responsibilities;
- Examples of policies / procedures of reviewing decision making processes.

3. Internal communication system / procedures / policies

- What is the internal communication system in place and how are the institution's various constituencies being connected within this system (permanent and temporary teaching and non-teaching staff, students, management, faculties, departments, external collaborators, etc.)?
- What communication tools are being used internally and how is it ensured that they work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Communication policy / guidelines
- Communication tools for the publication of information to students and staff (e-platforms, newsletter, boards, etc.)

- Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

B. Quality assurance, quality enhancement, quality culture: tools, practices, and processes

Please consider including in this section all information deemed relevant for showing how your institution is enabled to ensure **the quality of its educational programmes** and how it works towards an **all-embracing quality culture**.

2. QA system and closure of feedback loops

Please describe how internal and external feedback is sought and connected at the level of your institution and how it works towards an all-embracing quality culture.

- What internal quality assurance and enhancement policies are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact the periodic review of the educational offer?
- What external quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact internal quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How does the institution connect internal and external feedback and how does it feed into quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How is quality assurance and enhancement used at an institutional level to make institution-wide changes/changes to programmes?
- How is the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement procedures being monitored and how are they regularly revised?
- How would you describe the quality culture within your institution?

3. Agency and ownership in enhancing quality at institutional level

Please describe how staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and of the institutional strategies and policies.

- How are institutional stakeholders (staff, teachers, students, alumni, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains) actively involved in internal quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How are institutional stakeholders (staff, teachers, students, alumni, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains) actively involved in external quality assurance and enhancement policies?

- How is benchmarking/benchlearning included in quality assurance and enhancement procedures, enabling the institution to position itself against similar (inter)national institutions and to learn from best practices in the field?
- How are best practices within the institution identified and shared and how do they feed into quality assurance and enhancement procedures?
- How are the institution's quality assurance and enhancement procedures and their results communicated to staff, teachers, students and external stakeholders?

Suggested material that may be provided:

- Strategies/policies for quality assurance and enhancement system
- Documentation regarding policies and procedures related to quality assurance and quality enhancement
- Evidence of complaints procedures

ANNEX 3: MUSIQUE DATA COLLECTION SHEET

MusiQuE's Comparative Study on QA Practices and Processes across the IN.TUNE Alliance



Step 1. Collection of data from the IN.TUNE partners

Timing: September – December 2024

Tasks & responsibility: IN.TUNE partners will provide information to MusiQuE through the information sheet included below.

Important notice:

It is advised and strongly recommended that **only existing documentation be used to answer the questions listed in the questionnaire herein** that are relevant for your institution.

In cases where no documentation is available in English, **materials in the local language can be submitted** at this stage. MusiQuE will make use of Google Translate tools to process all preliminary data collected in this phase.

The preliminary data will be further refined and, where the case, clarified, through the targeted interviews planned during the second phase of the study.

Expected result: Data base of QA practices and processes across the European University

Guidelines for filling in the information sheet:

Consider the questions and the suggested evidence listed under each chapter as guidelines that are meant to support you in selecting the relevant information and documentation to address the queries. Their purpose is to support MusiQuE to better contextualise and understand the quality assurance and enhancement practices currently in place in each of the partner institutions within the Alliance.

You may also use the guiding questions, to the extent that they are relevant and applicable to your institution, in order to structure the information provided in the text box – e.g. as sub-titles.

Once you selected the information you want to provide for each chapter, the guiding questions and the list of suggested evidence can be removed from the final document.

It is not mandatory to use the text boxes in the template below to structure the data you want to provide. Their purpose is simply structural in the context of the questionnaire herein, but they can be removed if they are not helpful in editing the document.



Data Collection Information Sheet

Please fill in the following information sheet and return it to staff@musique-qe.eu by **30 November 2024**.

The questions listed under each section are indicative, and they may be addressed to the extent that are relevant or applicable to your institution. Comprehensive and descriptive answers to these questions would facilitate a thorough and contextualised understanding of the QA processes and procedures in place within your institution.

Please note that **we strongly advise you to (re)use all available material already produced** during the most recent self-evaluation processes linked to external evaluations that your institution underwent voluntarily or formally.

Where convenient, you can also consider the option to solely include links to already existing documents – e.g. organisational charts, policy documents, etc., from where the relevant information can then be extracted by MusiQuE. Examples of such documentation were provided under the “*Suggested material*” section for each topic. Please keep in mind that these lists are also **purely indicative** and have a guiding purpose.

A. Context, governance, decision making, and communication processes at institutional level

1. National and legal context

- What is the national and legal context in which your institution operates?
- What are the relevant national quality assurance requirements and provisions that your institution must fulfil in order to maintain its accreditation?

Suggested material that may be provided:

- State-specific regulations, criteria set up by e.g. national quality assurance and accreditation bodies, qualifications framework;
- Links to national frameworks of assessment that are relevant / applicable to your institution.

Please offer here information about the legal / national / local context that is relevant for your institution. This would help MusiQuE better frame the quality assurance and quality enhancement practices conducted within the institution.

You can include in the text direct links to national frameworks and other relevant documentation, regardless if they are in English or in the national language.

2. Institutional governance and decision-making processes

- What are the governing bodies of the institution and its organizational structure? Is your institution autonomous or part of a larger educational structure? How are responsibilities defined at each decision-making level?
- How are internal stakeholders (students, teaching, and non-teaching staff) being represented in institutional bodies and how are they playing an active role in the decision making processes?
- How do internal stakeholders (students, teaching, and non-teaching staff) contribute to the design and development of institutional policies?
- How are internal stakeholders (students, teaching and non-teaching staff) involved in creating and enhancing the institutional quality assurance policy?
- How are external stakeholders (representative of the music profession and related artistic domains) being involved in the decision-making processes? How are they contributing to the creation and enhancement of the institutional quality assurance policy?
- How does the institution ensure that its decision-making processes work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Details of the organisational structure of the institution (e.g. organisational chart);
- Details of the senior staff structure of the institution and line management responsibilities;
- Examples of policies / procedures of reviewing decision making processes.

Please offer here information about the governance model, the organisational structure and the decision-making processes in your institution. Should most of the relevant information be published on your website, you can list the links to relevant pages.

3. Internal communication system / procedures / policies

- What is the internal communication system in place and how are the institution's various constituencies being connected within this system (permanent and temporary teaching and non-teaching staff, students, management, faculties, departments, external collaborators, etc.)?
- What communication tools are being used internally and how is it ensured that they work effectively?

Suggested materials that may be provided:

- Communication policy / guidelines



- Communication tools for the publication of information to students and staff (e-platforms, newsletter, boards, etc.)
- Student/staff feedback (focus groups, internal and external surveys)

Please offer here information about the internal communication system in place and the tools that your institution uses. Links to policy documents and any other information readily available on your website can be added herein.

B. Quality assurance, quality enhancement, quality culture: tools, practices, and processes

Please consider including in this section all information deemed relevant for showing how your institution is enabled to ensure **the quality of its educational programmes** and how it works towards an **all-embracing quality culture**.

1. QA system and closure of feedback loops

Please describe how internal and external feedback is sought and connected at the level of your institution and how it works towards an all-embracing quality culture.

- What internal quality assurance and enhancement policies are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact the periodic review of the educational offer?
- What external quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place, how cyclical are they, and how do they impact internal quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How does the institution connect internal and external feedback and how does it feed into quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How is quality assurance and enhancement used at an institutional level to make institution-wide changes/changes to programmes?
- How is the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement procedures being monitored and how are they regularly revised?
- How would you describe the quality culture within your institution?

Please offer here information about the internal and external quality assurance practices your institution employs, how they are connected, how they inform each other, and how they contribute to generating change within the institution.

2. Agency and ownership in enhancing quality at institutional level

Please describe how staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and of the institutional strategies and policies.

- How are institutional stakeholders (staff, teachers, students, alumni, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains) actively involved in internal quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How are institutional stakeholders (staff, teachers, students, alumni, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains) actively involved in external quality assurance and enhancement policies?
- How is benchmarking/benchlearning included in quality assurance and enhancement procedures, enabling the institution to position itself against similar (inter)national institutions and to learn from best practices in the field?
- How are best practices within the institution identified and shared and how do they feed into quality assurance and enhancement procedures?
- How are the institution's quality assurance and enhancement procedures and their results communicated to staff, teachers, students and external stakeholders?

Suggested material that may be provided:

- Strategies/policies for quality assurance and enhancement system
- Documentation regarding policies and procedures related to quality assurance and quality enhancement
- Evidence of complaints procedures

Please describe here how institutional stakeholders are given an active role in the internal and external quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, and how the results of their involvement are being shared and communicated across all constituencies.

ANNEX 4: GUIDELINES FOR FILLING IN THE FORM FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF QA PRACTICES

General instructions for the Comparative Analysis of QA Practices & Processes

The folder dedicated to the Comparative Study on QA Practices & Processes can be accessed by clicking on this link ([00. Comparative Study on QA Practices & Processes](#)).

Inside the “parent” folder mentioned above, a folder for each of the eight IN.TUNE Partners has been created. Therein, the questionnaire that your institution needs to fill in has already been uploaded. You are invited to download the form, and to fill it in with the information that is relevant for your institution. Once the form is completed, please upload it back on the platform in the folder assigned to your institution, together with any additional documentation you consider relevant from among the suggestions included in the questionnaire.

The deadline to submit your documentation is 30 November 2024.

MusiQuE received access to the entire [04. MusiQuE](#) folder in WP7 Channel. This way, they will be able to follow the work and download all documentation you shared for the Comparative Study.

Should you need any **technical assistance** to access or to manage the virtual space that has been assigned to your institution in the framework of this study, please contact [REDACTED]

Guidelines for filling in the form

- For addressing the questions listed in the form enclosed herewith, we strongly encourage you to (re)use all available material already produced during the most recent self-evaluation processes linked to external evaluations that your institution underwent voluntarily or formally.
- Where convenient, you can also consider the option to solely include links to already existing documents – e.g. organisational charts, policy documents, **etc., from where the relevant information can then be extracted by MusiQuE**. Examples of such documentation were provided under the “Suggested material” section for each topic in the form. Please keep in mind that these **lists of suggested materials are purely indicative and have a guiding purpose**.

- If the documentation is located on your **institutional intranet** (therefore not accessible by external accounts), you are invited to copy the information into a separate document. This document will then be uploaded to your folder in the WP7 Teams channel.
- Likewise, **the questions listed under each section are mere guidelines**, and they may be addressed to the extent that are relevant or applicable to your institution. Comprehensive and descriptive answers to these questions would facilitate a thorough and contextualised understanding of the quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) practices and processes in place within your institution. **If you are unable to answer one or more questions, please mention this in the form.**
- In cases where no documentation is available in English, **materials in the local language can be submitted at this stage**. MusiQuE will make use of Google Translate tools to process all preliminary data collected in this phase.

You are encouraged to seek **further guidance for filling in the form at any stage**, should you find it helpful and necessary. Please contact [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] [@musique-qe.eu](mailto:[REDACTED]@musique-qe.eu) in this regard.