



Bachelor of Music

Royal Conservatoire The Hague

University of the Arts The Hague - The Netherlands

Assessment report

**Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme
Accreditation**

July 2023

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Administrative data

Administrative data regarding the programme	
Nomenclature of the programme in CROHO	Bachelor of Music / Bachelor Muziek
Orientation and level of the programmes	Professional bachelor
Number of credits	240 ECTS
Length of the programme	4 years
Graduate profiles and disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical Music + instrument • Jazz + instrument/vocals • Early Music + instruments • Organ • Vocal Studies: Classical Music and Early Music • Conducting: Choral Conducting, Wind Band / Fanfare / Brass Band • Theory of Music • Composition • Sonology • Art of Sound: Producing, Recording, Sound Reinforcement
Location(s)	Royal Conservatoire The Hague
Mode(s) of study	Full-time
Language	English
CROHO registration number	34739

Administrative data regarding the institution	
Name of the institution	Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag (University of the Arts The Hague), Faculteit Muziek en Dans – Koninklijk Conservatorium (Royal Conservatoire)
Status of the institution	Publicly funded institution providing higher education
Outcome of the Institutional Audit	Positive (2020)

The bachelor programmes and the home institution are set up according to the rules stipulated in the Dutch law for higher education and scientific research (WHW – Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek). These rules regulate the funding, structure, admission and governance of Dutch higher education. The University of the Arts The Hague is one of the institutions that have been specifically mentioned as specialised institutions for higher education in an annex of the law. The formal recognition of the institution and its programmes is based on the accreditation system as currently in place in The Netherlands. In 1990, the Royal Conservatoire merged with the Royal Academy of Art to form the University of the Arts The Hague. The two faculties jointly offer the ArtScience Interfaculty and the Interfaculty School for Young Talent.

Summary

From 6 to 8 June 2023 a review team of international experts affiliated with MusiQuE visited the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague to perform an external assessment of the Bachelor of Music. This four-year full-time 240 ECTS programme is offered in English. The assessment serves two purposes: to establish the quality of the programme in view of its application for (re)accreditation according to national standards, and to assess the quality of the programme further to the internationally recognised assessment framework of MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement. This document focuses on the external assessment according to national standards. The programme's performance with regard to the standards of the MusiQuE framework is covered in a separate report.

Given that the programme and the institution fall under the Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation set-up by the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education, the review team looked at two standards of the NVAO evaluation framework: intended learning outcomes (standard 1) and achieved learning outcomes (standard 4). According to the review team, **the Bachelor of Music programme meets both standards.**

In so far as the intended learning outcomes are concerned, the Bachelor of Music programme has a distinct profile, which strongly reflects the mission, vision and priorities of the Royal Conservatoire. This profile finds its way into the programme, which is preparing artists-musicians for the current and constantly developing professional world. The review team welcomes the choice of the conservatoire and the programme to adopt the internationally recognised AEC framework of learning outcomes. The departments have translated these learning outcomes into programme objectives that do justice to the substance, level and orientation of the programme, are consistent across disciplines and allow for individual accents per specialisation. The professional field is involved in – and committed to – the institution and the programme: the review team appreciates in particular that staff, critical friends, external examiners, and professional stakeholder groups regularly monitor and discuss the relevance of the programme and its disciplines.

In order to establish whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved, the review team studied the quality of the final presentations and looked at the professional whereabouts of the alumni after their graduation. Students who graduate the Bachelor of Music programme have invariably achieved the intended learning outcomes. The sampled final presentations were, in almost all cases, good to excellent in quality, and fully met the level of expectations for typical bachelor exams. If anything, the programme could explore further how to enhance its support for students to better incorporate the artistic dimension in their presentations and to add more elements of personal vision and creativity. Given the level of competence demonstrated in the final presentations, it comes as no surprise to the review team that bachelor graduates move on to either relevant (self-) employment in the field or follow-up study in their specialisation.

In addition to its overall appreciation and positive considerations, the review team sees room for improvement in two aspects that are of a distinctly administrative order: firstly, the programme may want to collect in a more systematic way relevant materials for the final presentations, and archive these in consistent packages; secondly, the programme could keep better track of the individual

graduate careers per department/discipline, beyond the impressive anecdotal level already provided, and make the aggregated information available for internal use and external review.

In view of its assessment of the programme quality as a whole and the two accreditation standards in particular, the review team **recommends to NVAO the following weighted and substantiated final conclusion** regarding the accreditation of the Bachelor of Music programme at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague: **positive**.

The chair and the secretary of the review team hereby declare that all review team members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

On behalf of the assessment panel,

Don McLean
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Introduction

About this report

This report serves as the assessment report for the Bachelor of Music programme offered by the Royal Conservatoire, the Faculty for Music and Dance of the University of the Arts The Hague in The Netherlands. The assessment of the programme was carried out by an independent review team of international peer-reviewers. The composition of the review team was approved by the Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) prior to the assessment process. In this report the review team presents its findings, considerations and conclusions.

Overview of the assessment process

The assessment followed a three-stage process:

- the Royal Conservatoire prepared a self-evaluation report and supporting documents, offering background information and insights about the programme under review;
- an international review team studied the self-evaluation report as well as a sample of graduation projects (both in recorded format during the preparatory phase and live during the site visit), and visited the institution on-site before reaching a weighted and substantiated conclusion regarding the programme;
- the review team produced the present assessment report.

More details about the composition of the review team, the list of supporting documents studied, the site visit programme and the review methodology can be found in annexes to this report.

Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation

The University of the Arts The Hague passed an Institutional Quality Assurance Audit in 2020. Institutions which successfully completed such an institutional audit had the opportunity to apply for participation in the 'Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation'. The experiment was set up by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and is implemented by NVAO. The University of the Arts The Hague applied, and was permitted, to take part in the experiment.

Existing programmes offered by institutions which have passed an Institutional Audit are normally assessed according to the framework for limited programme assessment featuring four NVAO standards. In the context of the 'Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation', however, these programmes are being reviewed only in relation to standard 1 (intended learning outcomes) and standard 4 (achieved learning outcomes) and an external assessment report on only those two standards is presented to NVAO as part of the application for programme re-accreditation. The institution is responsible for organising the assessment of standards 2 and 3 independently, without involvement from NVAO in the review process. For this reason, the present report does not include an analysis of standards 2 (teaching-learning environment) and 3 (assessment).

International context

Because of its international profile, the Royal Conservatoire expressed the wish to not only have the Bachelor of Music programme assessed on the basis of the relevant national framework, but also to

receive feedback on other components of the programme based on the internationally recognised assessment framework of MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement. For this reason, the review team assessed the programmes both against NVAO standards 1 and 4 and against the MusiQuE standards for programme review.

Since the MusiQuE standards exceed the scope of NVAO standards 1 and 4, the review team will present its findings in relation to the MusiQuE standards in a separate report. The report based on the MusiQuE standards will be made publicly available, in line with MusiQuE's policies and as required by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Since the MusiQuE standards have been mapped against the relevant NVAO standards, the topics addressed by NVAO standards 2 and 3 will be fully covered in that report.

In addition, as an expression of their continuous preoccupation towards strengthening the external dimension of their approach to quality culture, the Royal Conservatoire developed the Critical Friend method of (self-)assessment long before the pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Education on the lighter programme accreditation was initiated, and it is now using the reports of Critical Friends as a basis for monitoring the quality of its programmes with regard to the teaching and learning environment (NVAO standard 2) and assessment (NVAO standard 3).

Critical Friends are respected international professional peers with knowledge of higher music education and an authoritative standing in the discipline they are invited to review. Each department of the programme is visited by a critical friend every three years on an ongoing basis. After each visit, the Critical Friend produces a report with reflections from an international perspective that focus on a specific department, and not on the entire programme, thus leading to more in-depth comments and specific recommendations. The input from the Critical Friend is incorporated in the improvement plans of the respective departments, and the implementation of recommendations received is presented to the same Critical Friend in the follow-up visit after three years. Furthermore, the reports of Critical Friends, and the improvement plans that these generate at department level, are then incorporated in the self-evaluation documentation produced in the framework of classical external assessment exercises. It was the case for the current external assessment of the Bachelor of Music programme where, aside from written reports, Critical Friends were also invited for an online discussion with the review team during the site visit, thus providing additional context for the panel to formulate informed opinions on the quality of the programme according to both national (NVAO) and international (MusiQuE) evaluation frameworks.

The Royal Conservatoire

The Royal Conservatoire is a centre for education, research and production. The Conservatoire presents itself as an institute that has been dedicated to excellence for decades, with internationally renowned musicians as teaching staff and where tradition and craft are inseparably linked to experimentation and innovation. The principal objective of the Royal Conservatoire is to train talented young musicians and dancers to the highest artistic and professional standards and provide them with the versatility they need to function in today's demanding, constantly changing and increasingly international professional environment. Founded in 1826, the Royal Conservatoire is the oldest music academy in The Netherlands. Together with the Royal Academy of Art, the Royal Conservatoire forms the University of the Arts The Hague.

The Bachelor of Music Programme

The bachelor of Music programme at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague is a four-year full-time programme that amounts to 240 ECTS and leads to a bachelor's qualification as a musician. In line with the conservatoire's ambition to reflect the variety of artistic and professional contexts, the degree programme embraces ten profiles (e.g. Theory of Music, Sonology, etc.) and several disciplines (e.g. Jazz drums, Classical Music guitar, etc.). The full set of profiles is provided in the administrative data section above. All Bachelor of Music students are trained to achieve a very similar set of end-level qualifications, in line with the AEC learning outcomes for first cycle studies, which were drawn up by the Association of European Conservatoires in 2017.

The departments in the conservatoire are responsible for organising and delivering the profiles and disciplines. Each discipline has its own curriculum and consists of five components: (i) artistic development; (ii) musicianship skills; (iii) academic skills, (iv) professional preparation, and (v) electives and minors. All curricula are divided in a propaedeutic (year one) and a post-propaedeutic (years two-to-four) phase. Each curriculum is designed in such a way that it encourages students to develop their craftsmanship, musicianship, and artistic vision.

The previous external assessment was held in 2016. The current Review Team noted that the Bachelor of Music programme took into account the observations and recommendations of the previous panel. Furthermore, the Royal Conservatoire has fine-tuned and continues to enhance its policies and practices that affect the bachelor programme under review. These developments are described in the main section of this report.

The review team is grateful to the Royal Conservatoire and its staff and students who contributed to the development of the self-evaluation report, for the warm welcome to the review team, and for engaging in sincere and open discussions with the team during the visit.

Judgements by standard

NVAO Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

Standard: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Guideline: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelors, or Masters) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Findings

Profile

According to its mission, the University of the Arts The Hague is educating artists who can play a prominent and inspiring role in the creation, development, performance, and innovation in the arts in a global context. In line with this institutional goal, the Bachelor of Music programme aims to lay a foundation for entry into the music profession: it provides a well-rounded education and encourages students to develop in various areas of music study that reflect the breadth of today's musical world. Hence, the conservatoire focuses its activities on three pillars: Education, Research, and Production. The university, the conservatoire, and the programme believe that musicians have the best prospect of success when they display a high level of instrumental/vocal skills and artistic quality, possess a reflective and inquisitive attitude, and have the ability to function in a diverse artistic environment in which the boundaries between genres and disciplines are blurring.

The review team gathers from the materials and the discussions that this profile is not only a relevant reflection of today's rapidly changing music profession, but it is also clearly visible in the content and structure of the Bachelor of Music programme. Nowadays music students should acquire a breadth of knowledge and skills, and this is exactly what the bachelor of music programme in The Hague is providing: an artistic and technically sound music education of a high standard that prepares students for their professional lives in the world of arts and culture, while leaving as much room as possible for the personal artistic development of individual students.

Two things stand out in the profile of the conservatoire and the implementation of its Bachelor of Music programme. Firstly, the focus on creating dynamic and active partnerships with organisations in the music profession and society at large with the aim to execute joint activities. The review team noted during the site visit that students obtain relevant professional experience during their studies and that the conservatoire, in part though not exclusively through its cohabitation with professional partners in the Amare building, is successful in meeting this ambition.

Secondly, both the conservatoire and the programme have a distinctly international dimension that is visible in each and every aspect of the institution and the curriculum, ranging from the English language of instruction and the international student and staff composition to the international qualifications framework for setting the programme learning outcomes. The review team noted with

appreciation that the conservatoire manages to combine this international dimension with a local embeddedness not only in Amare, but also in the socially disadvantaged districts of The Hague.

In addition, the review team subscribes to the conclusions of the conservatoire's Critical Friends that the aim of the programme is clearly expressed, and that its goals are aligned with the Royal Conservatoire's positioning. Both the institution and the departments are influential centres in shaping the future of professional musical life in the Netherlands and internationally. The review team also concurs with the statement that the variety of/in the curricula makes as an important contribution to the overall quality of the programme.

Intended learning outcomes

The profiles and disciplines of the Bachelor of Music programme all adhere to the 2017 AEC Learning Outcomes. This internationally agreed framework, set by the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC), has been designed to provide a shared understanding across European higher music education of what graduates will have achieved at any given level. The AEC learning outcomes for first cycle studies correspond to the bachelor's level. The review team acknowledges the choice of the conservatoire for this international framework and thinks it befits the international dimension and aspiration of the institution and its programme.

The AEC framework for first cycle studies consists of 19 practical (skills-based) outcomes, 16 theoretical (knowledge-based) outcomes, and 16 generic outcomes. Each department has adapted the learning outcomes framework to articulate the specific objectives of their own disciplines and curricula. The resulting sets of programme objectives have been published in the respective curriculum handbooks, and are available both publicly on the discipline pages of the conservatoire's website and on the internal portal. The review team has looked into the curriculum handbooks and finds that the individual 'translations' of the AEC learning outcomes in discipline-specific programme objectives befit the character of the respective specialisations.

Following its study of the self-evaluation report, the review team was wondering how the programme ensures that students from each discipline are trained, tested and in a position to demonstrate that they meet all learning outcomes upon graduation. During the visit, several stakeholders such as the programme management, the tutors and the Exam Committee indicated that the numerous learning outcomes / programme objectives are effectively covered in the courses of the respective disciplines. In fact, the review team noticed with satisfaction that in order to demonstrate the alignment between programme objectives and course learning goals, each course description in the respective curriculum handbooks contains the codes of the relevant programme objectives. Moreover, every discipline has its own overview document in which a matrix connects the objectives of the programme with the goals of the courses. The review team was informed that this explicit connection is a relatively recent development, since the previous accreditation visit. Acknowledging that it must have been a comprehensive exercise – after all there are 51 AEC learning outcomes – the review team commends the efforts invested and the results achieved. Hence, by the end of the site visit, the review team was convinced that, given that courses are organised and assessed along the learning outcomes / programme objectives described in the curriculum handbooks and matrices, the students will have had ample opportunity to acquire and demonstrate all learning outcomes during their four-year study period.

Professional field

Further to what was mentioned in the Profile section above, the conservatoire focuses on creating dynamic and active partnerships with organisations in the music profession and society at large. In addition to offering students professional opportunities as part of their curriculum, the conservatoire and its departments also maintain links with the music and arts sector to monitor the relevance of their programme objectives and curriculum contents.

The review team gathered, from the materials received and the discussions during the site visit, that this goal is accomplished in several ways. Firstly, the teachers in the departments and on the programmes are professionals in the world of music, which creates a natural and permanent dialogue with the requirements of the profession. Almost all teachers have part-time contracts and are also active both nationally and internationally as performers, composers, sound artists, and researchers.

Secondly, the Critical Friends visit the conservatoire and its programmes regularly, with the aim to provide an external perspective and to advise on the performance of the institution and the quality of its educational offerings.

Thirdly, external examiners from relevant specialisations attend final presentations and critique on the end-level that students demonstrate during their graduation performance. In addition to examining individual students, they also monitor and report back to the programme and the institution whether the students/graduates at the Royal Conservatoire perform at a level that is expected internationally of a bachelor graduate in music.

Fourthly, several departments hold regular professional stakeholder meetings with representatives of the professional community to discuss the latest trends and ongoing needs in professional practice, and the relevance of the curricula. While it is an explicit ambition of the conservatoire to organise such meetings in all disciplines, the COVID-19 pandemic somewhat reduced their number. Nonetheless, the Classical Music, Early Music, Sonology, Vocal, and Music Education departments managed to organise such meetings in recent years. One of the purposes of these meetings is to collect feedback on the relevance of the intended learning outcomes of the various disciplines to their respective professional fields.

Following its study of the self-evaluation report, the review team asked for an overview of the external partners per specialisation. The extensive document it received lists per department a number of alumni with relevant (i.e. discipline-specific) careers, a range of conservatoires, music academies and universities featuring conservatoire graduates, as well as the individuals who participate in the department's professional stakeholder meetings. With regard to those, the session on site with representatives of the professional field confirmed that these individuals, and the institutions they represent, are not only offering professional opportunities for students but also think actively with the conservatoire and its departments about the pertinence of the curricula. Acknowledging the efforts of the programme to involve the professional field in monitoring the relevance of its course offerings, the review team was impressed by the way this has been taken up across disciplines.

Considerations by the review team

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the review team considers that the Bachelor of Music programme has a distinct profile, which strongly reflects the mission, vision and priorities of the Royal Conservatoire. The review team subscribes to the choices made by the conservatoire and thinks highly of the way in which these distinctive features find their way into the Bachelor of Music programme. The curriculum structure allows students take ownership of their personalised learning experiences, and in this way, not only to display a high level of instrumental/vocal skills, but also to demonstrate artistic personality, be reflective and inquisitive, and function in a diverse artistic environment. Moreover, the review team thinks highly of the international dimension of the conservatoire and considers that internationalisation is embedded in every component of the bachelor of music programme. Similarly, the conservatoire and the bachelor of music programme definitely live up to their ambition of having their students profit from the dynamic and active partnerships with organisations in the music profession and society at large. In sum, the review team considers that the Bachelor of Music programme gracefully honours the conservatoire's ambition and dedication in preparing artists-musicians for the current and constantly developing professional world.

The review team considers that the choice of the conservatoire to adopt an international framework of learning outcomes is not only valuable as such but also befits – and confirms – the distinctly international ambitions of the institution, its departments and of the bachelor programme, which mirrors the international reality of the music profession. Furthermore, the review team has concluded from studying the documentation provided that the learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Music programme and its profiles and disciplines are formulated adequately in terms of content (discipline), level (bachelor) and orientation (professional). The review team wants to commend the programme and the departments for translating the AEC learning outcomes in programme objectives in such a way that there is both consistency across disciplines and room for individual discipline-specific accents.

Finally, the review team thinks highly of the breadth and depth of the professional field's involvement in, and commitment to, the Bachelor of Music programme, and to the conservatoire in general. In this regard, the review team welcomes the specific attention that is paid by staff, Critical Friends, external examiners, and professional stakeholder groups to monitor and discuss the relevance of the programme curricula. According to the review team, including these various perspectives instils confidence that the Bachelor of Music programme is carefully monitoring its relevance and will make the necessary adjustments when needed. This comprehensive approach, moreover, testifies to the high level of quality culture that is embedded in the conservatoire and was clearly visible to the review team in its assessment of the Bachelor of Music programme.

Judgement

On the basis of the information in the self-evaluation report, the additional documentation including appendixes, and the meetings held during the site visit, the review team scores the programme as follows in relation to standard 1.

Standard	Bachelor of Music
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Meets the standard

NVAO Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

Standard: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Guideline: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

Findings

In line with NVAO guidelines, there are two ways to establish whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved: by reviewing the quality of the final presentations and by looking at the professional whereabouts of the alumni after their graduation. The review team has looked at both elements when assessing the quality of the Bachelor of Music programme.

Quality of final works

Every Bachelor of Music student completes the four-year study with a final presentation. In this presentation students do not demonstrate all programme objectives. However, all 51 learning outcomes of the AEC framework will have been addressed and assessed in the run-up to this final graduation test. Further to what was mentioned under the Intended Learning Outcomes section, the review team obtained extensive information and clarification from management, staff, and the Exam Committee that students demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes / programme objectives by successfully passing all courses in the four-year programme. In this regard, the review team was informed that all students pass a comprehensive exam at the end of year one (propaedeutic phase), that some (depending on the discipline) pass another exam at the end of year two, and that all students are assessed again at the end of year three to establish that they are on track towards graduation. Hence, once students have passed all courses and exams, they show their accumulated competencies in a final presentation.

As part of its external assessment, the review team studied a total of 20 final presentations of students who had graduated in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The selection of these final works was made by the chair and the secretary of the review team based on the full list of 152 Bachelor of Music graduates for these two years. The selection was representative in terms of discipline and score. In addition to studying the 20 recordings of presentations (and their evaluations), the review team attended four final presentations during the site visit and observed the internal deliberations of the student performance in the examination committee.

Overall, the review team found that among its sample of twenty graduation works from 2020 and 2021, fourteen were ranging from good to excellent in terms of quality of the presentations. One final presentation (score 7) was marginally insufficient, one presentation (score 6) was indeed a borderline pass, and four other presentations were awarded a higher grade, in the opinion of the review team, than the quality of the performance implied. This observation confirmed not only the representativeness of the sample, but also the prevailing appropriateness of the final scores the examination committees had given.

In their written feedback, review team members emphasised the “strong musicality and performance presence from most students”, the “strong, distinctive, innovative artistic visions throughout the

works”, the “good ensemble support from fellow students and/or collaborative professionals”, the “level of quality of these presentations especially in terms of craftsmanship – technique and sound”, and that “in some cases the presentations also projected the artistic voice of the examinee”. As points for attention, from among the sample of twenty final works analysed, the review team noticed in several cases (about 6 to 8 of the 20) that the student was not connecting very well with the audience or that there was a preference for “in-the-box, middle-of-the-road, school-like presentations lacking projection and strong ideas”. Hence, the Bachelor of Music programme may want to consider ways to enhance its support for students to strengthen the artistry dimension of their final presentations, by providing more encouragement for them to develop an evolved artistic voice with greater evidence of individual vision, aspirational innovation, and independent creativity.

In addition to their overall positive opinion on the quality of the final presentations, the review team highlighted two elements that require further attention: (1) consistency of project documentation, and (2) quality of evaluation feedback.

(1) Firstly, the review team noticed that several documents that are normally part of an external review of final presentations were missing from the aforementioned sample of 20 presentations. While the recordings were available and almost always accompanied by a completed evaluation form, information on the performed pieces or the produced exercises (such as programme notes, project summaries or self-reflections) were often lacking. During the site visit, the institution and programme management acknowledged that there is indeed room for improvement with regard to documenting and archiving the final presentations. That said, the review team noted that it had been looking at final presentations from students who had graduated “in corona times” where additional procedural challenges applied. Moreover, some of the materials that are usually available during presentations may have been misplaced in the transfer from the old facilities to the new Amare building. The review team, in short, recognised that the final presentations it studied had been realised in uniquely difficult circumstances. Emphasising, in any case, that this is not an issue of quality but a point of administrative consistency, the review team advises the Bachelor of Music programme to systematically collect all relevant materials for the final presentations and to make them digitally available in consistently documented packages.

(2) Secondly, the review team noted that the way the examination committee connected their evaluation of final presentations to the learning outcomes in the feedback forms that students received was often limited. The review team deemed only 8 out of 20 evaluation forms had been completed in an insightful way with reference to achieved learning outcomes. During the visit, the institution and programme management informed the review team that they acknowledged the issue, and that it is being addressed as part of a broader Assessment & Feedback enhancement project at the Royal Conservatoire. This overall project started in 2021-2022 and included, among other considerations, a stronger connection between learning outcomes, learning goals, and assessment modes (see findings under standard 1), as well as the formulation of criteria for performance assessments with a view to greater transparency and objectivity.

During the site visit in June 2023, the review team attended four internal deliberations of examination committees on site, and had the opportunity to observe how this project is working in practice. The review team found that the new style of assessment and the evaluation forms now in use, constitute

a major enhancement in terms of structuring the feedback for students along the key dimensions of the intended learning outcomes, thus leading to more objectivity, consistency, clarity, and transparency.

Professional whereabouts

The review team gathered, from the self-evaluation documentation and the discussions carried out during the site visit, that the Royal Conservatoire uses different quantitative and qualitative instruments to monitor the level of achievement of its students. According to the Overall Analysis of Critical Friends Reports 2016-2022, the graduates are well prepared for the profession and demonstrate a very high level that aligns with the requirements of the discipline and the international professional field. A similar appreciation comes from the external examiners who indicated that the criteria used for the assessment of the final presentations fully correspond with the criteria in their own professional practice.

From their side, alumni are increasingly positive (in the national HBO-Kunstenmonitor, Fine Art Monitor) about the study programme and its professional integration opportunities. The HBO-Kunstenmonitor data that were shared in the self-evaluation report also indicate that, compared to their fellow graduates at other conservatoires in the Netherlands, graduates from the Royal Conservatoire are more often employed at the appropriate level, self-employed as musicians, and working exclusively as creative or performance artists.

Based on information provided in the self-evaluation report (p.53), around 30% of the conservatoire's Bachelor of Music graduates obtain one of the highly competitive positions on the Master of Music programme at the conservatoire, while a number of others do so at other institutions. About half of the alumni work as teachers. Apart from the period following the pandemic, there has been hardly any unemployment among Bachelor of Music graduates.

The review team understands from the above information that, having acquired the learning outcomes of the programme, Bachelor of Music graduates move on to either relevant (self-) employment or a follow-up study in their specialisation. This is a positive observation, which does not come as a surprise to the review team given the level of competency achieved by the Bachelor of Music graduates.

In addition to these positive findings, the review team was somewhat surprised to notice that the self-evaluation report contained little quantitative information on the individual graduate profiles in the Bachelor of Music and its respective disciplines, and that additional information of this sort was not readily available at short notice: while the report referred anecdotally to achievements of individual 'high-fliers', there was hardly any summary indication per department/specialisation regarding the professional / educational track that students follow post-graduation (e.g. how many and where do they continue their studies beyond the Royal Conservatoire, how many find employment and in which sectors of the professional field, are they still active in music or related artistic domains five or ten years after graduation, etc.). According to the institution management, the heads of department know about the individual whereabouts of "their" graduates, but do not/have not been asked to systematically collect this information. The review team agrees with the management that it should be possible to collect this information more systematically for internal use and external review. One

way to facilitate this collection of information is through the recently created and properly resourced alumni portal, which looks impressive and should allow more involvement from alumni in the life of the conservatoire.

Considerations by the review team

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the review team considers that students who graduate the Bachelor of Music programme have achieved the intended learning outcomes formulated in the AEC framework for first cycle studies. Students manage to do so because, irrespective of the discipline, the programme is set up in such a way that all programme objectives are addressed and assessed in the courses and the intermediate exams that precede the final presentation.

The sample of final presentations which the review team studied at distance and experienced on site were in almost all cases of a level that exceeds expectations of a typical bachelor exam. Following its review of the latest evaluation forms and its participation in the final presentations on site, the review team is confident that student performances are, and will continue to be, assessed in an objective, transparent, and consistent way. As a positive encouragement for the future, the review team thinks the programme could further explore possible avenues to stimulate students to strengthen the individual artistic dimension of their final presentations to better demonstrate their personal vision and creativity. The review team collected sufficient evidence to conclude that students who successfully finish the Bachelor of Music programme move on either to relevant (self) employment in the field or follow-up study in their specialisation. This appreciation does not come as a surprise given the level of competency demonstrated in the final presentations.

In addition to its positive considerations on the quality of the final works and the professional whereabouts of the Bachelor of Music graduates, the review team sees room for improvement in two aspects of a distinctly administrative order: firstly, to increase their efforts in collecting all relevant materials for the final presentations and archiving these in consistent packages; secondly, to keep track in a more systematic way of individual graduate careers per department/discipline and make the aggregated information available for internal use and external review.

Judgement

On the basis of the information in the self-evaluation report, the additional documentation including appendixes and the meetings held during the site visit, the review team scores the programme as follows in relation to standard 4.

Standard	Bachelor of Music
Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	Meets the standard

Final conclusion

The review team has assessed the quality of the Bachelor of Music programme according to two NVAO standards: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. Based on its findings and considerations, the review team has concluded that the programme meets both standards. As a result, the review team judges **positively** on the quality of the Bachelor of Music programme at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague.

Consequently, the review team recommends the following weighted and substantiated final conclusion regarding the programme.

Final conclusion	Bachelor of Music
The programmes meet all applicable standards.	Positive

Annexes

Annex 1. Overview of judgements by standard

The review team scores the programme's compliance with each standard as follows:

Standard	Bachelor of Music
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Meets the standard
Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment	Not applicable
Standard 3. Student assessment	Not applicable
Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	Meets the standard

The panel recommends the following weighted and substantiated final conclusion regarding the programme:

Final conclusion	Bachelor of Music
The programmes meet all applicable standards.	Positive

Annex 2. Review team composition

Name of panel member	Brief description
Don McLean (Chair)	Professor Emeritus and former Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto (2011 – 2022).
Mist Thorkelsdottir	Head of International Programs in the Performing Arts at the University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music
Finn Schumacker	CEO and Artistic Director of Odense Symphony, Denmark.
Claus Finderup	Programme Coordinator and Associate Professor at the Rhythmic Music Conservatoire, Denmark
Miranda Harmer	Master student in cello performance and composition at Leeds College of Music
Mark Delmartino	Secretary (certified by NVAO)

All review team members and the Secretary signed a declaration of independence and confidentiality prior to the accreditation procedure. By signing the declaration, all review team members and the Secretary indicated that for at least five years, they have had no direct or indirect ties with the institution that would lead to (the semblance of) a conflict of interest and that, for the same time span, they did not perform any consultancy work for the benefit of the programmes to be assessed or in another context within the institution, whose results could be an object of the assessment. NVAO approved the composition of the review team in advance.

Annex 3. Overview of appendices studied by the review team

The following documents were provided to the review team as appendices to the self-evaluation report in advance of the site visit:

Appendices to the self-evaluation report	
A	<i>Quality Culture at the Royal Conservatoire 2020 and beyond</i>
B	<i>Mapping Critical Friends guidelines with MusiQuE-NVAO Standards</i>
C	<i>MusiQuE Handbook for Critical Friends Review 2022</i>
D	<i>University of the Arts, The Hague Institutional Plan 2019-2024</i>
E	<i>Faculty Plan Royal Conservatoire 2022-2024</i>
F	<i>Internationalisation at the Royal Conservatoire Status Report and Policy Objectives 2021-2024</i>
G	<i>Social Safety Action Plan KC</i>
H	<i>Decision on Accreditation for the Bachelor of Music programme 2016 – NVAO</i> <i>Decision on Accreditation for the Bachelor of Music programme 2016 - MusiQuE</i>
I	<i>Overall analysis of Critical Friends Reports 2016-2022</i>
J	<i>Study Guide Royal Conservatoire 2022-2023</i>
K	<i>AEC learning outcomes 2017</i>
L	<i>Curriculum Handbooks</i>
M	<i>Bachelor Electives and Minors Handbook 2022-2023</i>
N	<i>'The Artist as Teacher' flyer 2022-2023</i>
O	<i>Royal Conservatoire – Alumni Community Explained</i>

Prior to the site visit, the Review Team asked the programme for additional information to substantiate its judgement on both NVAO and MusiQuE standards. During the visit, moreover, the programme provided materials on specific issues that had been discussed during the sessions. Additional information related to:

- deployment of teaching staff
- staff recruitment policy
- external partners of the programme and its disciplines
- artistic projects
- manual for external examiners
- procedures for and assessment of final presentations
- curriculum handbooks 2023-2024

- number of applicants and admissions
- career skills assessment
- alumni portal

As part of its review of NVAO Standard on Achieved Learning Outcomes, the review team selected a representative sample of 20 final works and their evaluation forms from Bachelor of Music students who graduated in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In line with GDPR-related requirements, information about the final projects (including the names of the graduates, their student numbers and other contextual information) has not been included in this report.

Annex 4. Site visit schedule

Venue: Royal Conservatoire, AMARE building, The Hague.

Tuesday 6 June 2023

- 08.45 Arrival Review Team
- 09.30 Tour through Amare building
- 10.30 Meeting with KC Management
- 11.45 Meeting with Heads of Department
- 12.45 Lunch break and internal meeting
- 13.45 Meeting with Students – session 1
- 14.35 Meeting with Students – session 2
- 15.10 Internal meeting Review Team
- 16.20 Final presentation Vocal Classical Music
- 18.00 Dinner
- 20.30 Final presentation Jazz Drums

Wednesday 7 June 2023

- 08.45 Internal meeting Review Team
- 09.15 Meeting with teaching staff
- 10.30 Meeting with support staff
- 11.30 Meeting with Exam Committee
- 12.15 Meeting on artistic projects, professional integration and alumni portal
- 13.00 Lunch and internal meeting
- 13.15 Final presentation Art of Sound Producing
- 14.30 Final presentation Vocal Classical Music
- 15.45 Visit to the Library
- 17.00 Meeting with representatives of the profession
- 18.00 Meeting with Critical Friends (online)
- 18.45 Internal meeting
- 19.30 End of day 2

Thursday 8 June 2023

- 08.45 Internal meeting
- 09.15 Meeting with Management KC
- 10.15 Internal deliberations meeting
- 12.00 Presentation of initial findings
- 12.30 End of site visit

In line with GDPR-related requirements, the names of individual participants to the meetings with the review team have been omitted in the site visit schedule.

Annex 5. Review methodology adopted by the review team

Assessment framework

For the assessment of the programmes, the review team made use of the NVAO assessment framework for the 'Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation' (full title in Dutch: *Beoordeling opleiding met lichtere opleidingsaccreditatie - Experiment instellingsaccreditatie met lichtere opleidingsaccreditatie - Nadere uitwerking, februari 2019*). In this framework, the assessment standards to be used are mentioned, as well as the rules for the judgements by standard. The Secretary informed the review team about the details of this framework and pointed to the differences with the regular NVAO assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of The Netherlands (full title in Dutch: *Beoordelingskader accreditatiestelsel hoger onderwijs Nederland, september 2018*) at the start of the procedure.

In the context of the 'Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation', programmes are being reviewed in relation to NVAO standard 1 and standard 4 only. The institution is responsible for organising the assessment of standards 2 and 3 independently, without involvement from NVAO in the review process. For this reason, the present report does not include an analysis in relation to NVAO standards 2 and 3.

Preparation by the review team

The Secretary and the Chair of the review team had intensive contact with MusiQuE about the preparation of the procedure, both by email and through online meetings, from November 2022 onwards. MusiQuE approached the entire review team with a comprehensive briefing about the details of the procedure in December 2022 and organized a first meeting of the review team in March 2023.

The self-evaluation report and appendices submitted by the programmes were made available to the review team at the end of April 2023. On the same day, MusiQuE provided the review team with instructions on how to study the documentation. Individual review team members were asked to analyse the materials by filling a self-evaluation report analysis template. The completed templates were compiled in an overview, which was shared with the entire review team and used as input for the online preparatory meeting on 16 May 2023. At this meeting, the team decided to request a limited amount of additional information.

In advance of the site visit, each review team member was also asked to study a selection of the final projects made available by the programmes. Given the number of disciplines within the same programme, it was decided to slightly raise the sample of final works from 15 to 20. The division of the final projects among the review team members was agreed on between the Chair, the Secretary and MusiQuE. The individual findings were reported, compiled and shared prior to the site visit.

On Monday 5 June 2023, the review team held a three-hour preparatory meeting at the hotel. This meeting served, among other objectives, to discuss the outcome of the final projects review and to identify the key questions for the respective sessions.

The site visit

The review team carried out a site visit from 6 until 8 June 2023. The visit allowed the team to compare its initial findings based on the analysis of the self-evaluation report and the final projects with their experience on site. On the last days of the visit, the review team deliberated on the information it had collected on paper and during the discussions and reached a positive weighted and substantiated conclusion regarding the two NVAO standards, and the Bachelor of Music programme as a whole. An overview of the meetings which took place during the site visit is available in annex 4 to this report. The review team presented its findings at the end of the site visit during a feedback session attended by a significant number of representatives of the institution.

Judgements by standard and assessment rules

As stipulated in the NVAO assessment framework for the 'Experiment Institutional Accreditation with a Lighter Programme Accreditation', the review team formulated separate judgements concerning the applicable NVAO standards by indicating whether the programmes 'meet the standard' or 'do not meet the standard'. The review team subsequently expressed a final conclusion concerning the programmes. In line with the relevant assessment rules, the programmes can be scored 'positive' or 'negative'. A final conclusion can only be 'positive' if the applicable standards have both been judged as 'meet the standard'.

Production of the report

The Secretary prepared a draft of the report following the site visit. The draft was checked by the Chair of the review team in July 2023 and was subsequently shared with the members of the review team. A version of the report approved by the review team was then sent to MusiQuE. The MusiQuE Office carried out a preliminary check of the report and coordinated the approval process by the Board of MusiQuE. The Board of MusiQuE reviewed the report to ensure its overall quality in August 2023. The version of the report approved by the MusiQuE Board was presented to the institution for a factual accuracy check. Comments on factual accuracy which were communicated on behalf of the programme were taken into account by the review team when finalising the report. The final report was endorsed by the MusiQuE Board and subsequently submitted to the Royal Conservatoire The Hague in September 2023.

Development dialogue

The Royal Conservatoire will arrange for a discussion to take place between the members of the review team and members of staff of the reviewed programme. The purpose of this discussion, described as a 'development dialogue', is to discuss potential improvements from a developmental perspective. The development dialogue will be held in autumn 2023 and will result in a separate document that is not part of the application for accreditation.

Annex 6. List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full description
AEC	Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen
CROHO	Central Register of Higher Education Programmes
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MusiQuE	Music Quality Enhancement
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie