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Master of Music

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing program
2 and 3 December 2025

Colophon

Institution and programme

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences
Maastricht
Institutional Audit: yes

Programme: Master of Music
Site: Maastricht
Mode: fulltime
ISAT-number: 44739

Assessment panel

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Summary

On 2 and 3 December 2025, the Master of Music of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences was assessed. The panel's overall judgement is **positive**. The two-year programme offers a small-scale learning environment and comprises a tight knit community in which students are very well supported. The programme acted appropriately on the recommendations of the previous accreditation.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with (inter)national requirements for the field of music. The intended learning outcomes are directly derived from the Dutch National Training Profile for Music 2017. The new vision on the programme, developed in 2025, is strong and relevant. The vision is currently being implemented.

The programme consciously maintains a specific jazz and classical profile while developments in the wider field show increasing interest in other styles such as pop, singer-songwriter practices, and electronic music. The panel also observes that the Jazz department has a relatively small intake and that there is an imbalance between the size and scope of both departments. The panel therefore considers it important that the programme's profile and student intake are consistent with developments in the professional field and future-oriented positioning of graduates. The professional field is actively involved in the programme. The panel concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The content and set-up of the programme enable students from both departments to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is well designed with the three pillars and the different courses.

The programme is strongly student-centred and provides a supportive and personalised learning environment that is highly valued by students.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international profile of the staff involved, the international students attending and the international character of the field of study and research. The panel concludes that the international name of the programme is more than appropriate. The panel also agrees to the fact that the programme is entirely taught in English.

The programme is highly selective and has a thorough intake procedure. This ensures that qualified and motivated students enter the programme.

The panel notes that effective use of the personal development plan currently depends on student engagement and coordination between study coaches and main-subject lecturers. The panel holds the opinion that contextual learning (for example through participating in projects and ensembles, attending concerts) and cooperation with other departments can be made more explicit in the programme.

The staff involved in the programme is very committed, highly qualified and knowledgeable and actively involved as musicians in professional practice. Moreover, sufficient lecturers are available to execute the programme.

Ample guidance is available for students (also with for students with functional disabilities). The listening students provide an easily accessible platform for students to share their concerns. The panel concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place. Effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments. These include using the more-eye principle, written feedback for students and calibration between lecturers.

The examination board effectively safeguards the quality of the assessments and the end level of the programme, and calibration is an integral part of the assessment process. The panel concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

The panel concludes that the programme has a solid and suitable graduation procedure in place. In assessing students final work multiple examiners are involved, including an external examiner in most cases.

Based on the studied 16 graduation files, the panel concludes that the level reflected in these files is adequate and that students achieve the required master's level. The studied research projects are of high quality, very engaging and show well thought out research methodologies.

All standards of the NVAO framework have been positively assessed. On this basis, the panel provides a [positive recommendation](#) regarding the accreditation of the Master of Music of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences.

On behalf of the entire site visit panel,
Utrecht, February 2026

Raoul van Aalst
Chair

In the most successful files, students were very aware of the relation between their research project and their artistic practice. The panel also noticed that approaches to communication and presentation between the performers and the audience differed in the jazz and classical music recitals. While recognising that these differences stem from established conventions within performance traditions, the panel sees scope to introduce more experimentation into classical music recitals, in line with developments in contemporary performance practice. The panel concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Suggestions

The panel concludes that the programme meets all standards. The panel has the following recommendations:

- To ensure that the new learning outcomes (based on the new national profile) have a more central role in the teaching.
- To give the PDP a more central role in the programme, by linking the PDP directly to the intended learning outcomes.
- To make professional contextual learning and collaboration with other departments/programmes and cultural partners an explicit part of the curriculum (and to allocate credit points), to ensure that all students participate.

The suggestions mentioned in the remainder of the report are noncommittal in nature.

Titia Buising
Secretary

Introduction

Profile

The Master of Music is part of the Maastricht Conservatory, which is part of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. Together with the Toneelacademie, the Maastricht Conservatory form the Faculty of Performing Arts. The conservatory aims to empower moving musicians who reach their own ambitions within diverse musical fields. The conservatory is rooted in Maastricht and the region and has an explicit international orientation. The conservatory is related to the lectorate Technology Driven Art.

The Master of Music is a full-time programme of 120 EC. The programme is taught in English. The programme comprises two departments: Classical and Jazz.

The graduation profiles in the classical department are violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute (including the special subject piccolo), piccolo (including the secondary instrument flute), oboe (including the special subject English horn), English horn (including the secondary instrument oboe), clarinet (including the special subjects E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet), bassoon, saxophone, trumpet (including the special subject D trumpet/piccolo trumpet), trombone (including the special subjects alto trombone and bass trombone), tuba (including the special subject euphonium), euphonium (including the special subject tuba), horn (including the special subjects Wagner tuba, Bach horn and natural horn), guitar, organ, piano, harp, percussion, piano accompaniment, chamber music, vocal, composition, orchestral conducting, wind band conducting, and choral conducting.

The graduation profiles in the jazz department include guitar, piano, trumpet, saxophone,

trombone, drums, electric bass, double bass, vocals, composing–arranging–performing, specialised composing and performing, and electronic music performance.

In recent years the programme established more international connections, integrated music technology in the curriculum and changed the assessment culture to a more holistic approach of development and assessment. In addition, the composition of the staff has changed with the appointment of new lecturers and a new management.

The assessment

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences has commissioned AeQui to carry out the current assessment of the programme (see Attachment 1 for the administrative details). For this purpose, AeQui, in collaboration with the programme, has assembled an independent and knowledgeable panel, see Attachment 2. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme has taken place.

The assessment was conducted based on the Accreditation Framework for Higher Education in the Netherlands, according to the programme outlined in Attachment 3. The institution has a positive institutional audit decision, and therefore four standards were assessed.

The panel oriented itself during the preparatory meeting and during the deliberation phase towards the cluster of programmes to which this programme belongs. The necessary expertise for this was present within (a part of) the panel. An open consultation hour was scheduled prior to the site visit; no registrations were received for this session.

Recommendations for further development were made during the previous assessment. The programme has acted in response. This is referred to in the standards. A complete overview can be found in see Attachment 4. The panel has integrated this follow-up into its considerations for the current assessment.

The panel conducted the assessment independently; the panel received the necessary information to arrive at a judgement. At the end

of the assessment, the programme was informed of the findings and conclusions.

This report was sent in draft to the programme; the programme's responses have been incorporated into this final report.

At the initiative of the programme, a development meeting will take place in 2026. The results of this development meeting will not affect the assessment presented in this report.

Intended learning outcomes

Standard 1: 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.

Findings

The programme aims to train students to become creative, professional and versatile musicians, capable of developing their own musical ideas and personality. It aims to prepare students for a broad and evolving professional field in which performance, creation, collaboration, research, and entrepreneurship are increasingly interconnected.

The programme recently renewed its vision document. The starting point for the programme is the further artistic development of the musician and the connection with one's 'own' professional context. This starting point is therefore the choice for participation in projects, a specific choice of study offerings and the extraction of (authentic) professionally relevant research questions. The individual student is central, and the deepening or broadening development is facilitated.

While both department (Jazz and Classical) have their own disciplinary characteristics and professional contexts, both are guided by a common understanding of artistic craftsmanship, artistic identity, and social positioning as core domains of professional development.

Students are trained to become creative, professional and versatile musicians: artists who can market their own unique and artistic personality. Musician who will make a career for themselves as an inspiring player, bandleader, conductor, composer, arranger, lecturer, producer, organiser and/or manager, on an international level.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes are directly derived from the Dutch National Training Profile for Music 2017, which was developed and validated in consultation with representatives of the professional field. The national profile is based on international reference frameworks, including the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Dutch Qualification Framework NLQF level 7, the Polifonia Dublin Descriptors, and the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Humanities and Arts. The profile will be updated in 2026. The programme translated the intended learning outcomes (and therefore the national profile) into course specific learning outcomes, work forms, content and assessments forms

The intended learning outcomes address technical skills, creative skills, contextual focus, research and development skills, communication skills and organisational skills. The programme takes part in the consultative body of Dutch conservatoires and is involved in the aforementioned development of the new national profile.

Connections to the professional field

The programme engages with the professional field at regional and (inter)national levels. These connections are embedded in the programme profile and the curriculum design. Regular consultations with representatives of the professional field are held at department level and at cross-departmental level. These include round table sessions and advisory meetings where topics such as changes in the curriculum based on developments in the professional field, the implications for the competencies students

need to master, closer cooperation with venues, workshops and other partners, and regional developments are discussed.

In addition, some of the specialisations within the departments work together closely with partners in the professional world, for example, the classical Vocal Studies department with Opera Zuid, the Jazz department with Jazz Maastricht and the international Jazz contest B-Jazz (former Jazz Hoeilaart, Belgium), the classical department with Philzuid, through the connection with MCICM and Bonnefantenmuseum.

Lecturers are active as professional musicians and affiliated with cultural organisations and initiatives. Guest lecturers, external assessors, and visiting artists are regularly involved in the programme, ensuring ongoing interaction with current professional practice.

The conservatory functions as an active cultural partner within the city of Maastricht and the surrounding region. Each year, a large number of public performances, projects, and festivals are organised in collaboration with professional venues, orchestras, ensembles, and cultural organisations. Students participate in these activities as performers, creators, and organisers, gaining experience in professional contexts and contributing to the region.

Related to the regional scene of brass and wind band orchestras the conservatory aims to strengthen its regional orientation and to train amateur conductors. Therefore, the conservatory aims to start an associate degree Leadership in Music. Master students will be involved in conducting instruction which provides them with the opportunity to explore the professional field and future career opportunities.

The conservatory is a founding partner of the European Opera Academy, which brings together higher music education institutions and opera houses across Europe.

Representatives from the professional field, the panel met with during the site visit, remarked that graduates are active as performers and educators and often combine artistic practice with other forms of work. They noted that this combination is a realistic response to current labour market conditions. The representatives value the connection to the conservatory. It was noted that students can be more active in attending concerts and performances in the city; this gives them insight into the professional field, in audiences and can be inspiring. Since students are primarily focused on their main instrument, representatives from the professional field suggest that the programme makes attending concerts and performances in the city a mandatory part of the programme.

Recommendations previous accreditation

The previous panel suggested, among other recommendations, prioritising achieving and maintaining a leading position in the region, e.g., through benchmarking exercises with institutions that are considered role models for the CM. In response to this, the programme established a structural collaboration with the conservatories of Liège and Aachen, resulting in a symphony orchestra with students from the three conservatories.

Considerations

Based on the interviews and the examination of underlying documentation, the panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes tie in with (inter)national requirements for the field of music. The intended learning outcomes are directly derived from the Dutch National Training Profile for Music 2017, which is based on relevant

frameworks, including NLQF level 7, and is externally validated. The learning outcomes clearly reflect the professional orientation of the programme, with a strong emphasis on artistic practice, performance, research embedded in practice, and positioning within a dynamic professional field.

The panel holds the opinion that the programme's new vision, developed in 2025, is strong and relevant. The panel also noticed that implementation of this vision is currently an ongoing process.

The panel notes that the programme consciously maintains a specific jazz and classical profile, while developments in the wider field show increasing interest in other styles such as pop, singer-songwriter practices and electronic music. The relatively small intake in the Jazz department and the difference in scale between

the departments require continued strategic attention. At present, the panel considers the programme's profile to be coherent and sufficiently aligned with the professional field. At the same time, sustained monitoring of developments in the field and of student intake will be important to safeguard future-oriented positioning.

The panel concludes that the professional field is actively involved in the programme, in a variety of ways.

The panel is of the opinion that the programme acted appropriately on the recommendations of the previous accreditation.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

Within both departments, the curriculum is organised around three pillars: craftsmanship, artistic identity and social positioning. These pillars form the didactical concept and the structure of the programme. The programme provides ample space for students to further develop their craftsmanship, with students intentionally refining their technique and exploring new applications. This process is closely linked to the growth of artistic identity, shaped by experience, new perspectives, and targeted research. In turn, this influences the students' social positioning, as engagement with the professional field—through performances, networking, and entrepreneurship—generates new experiences that further impact both artistic identity and required skills.

The programme notes that students start the programme on different levels and therefore, the development of craftsmanship, artistic identity, and social positioning unfolds differently for each student, at a different time, with a different focus, and a different outcome. In addition, students starting the programme often have a clear goal in mind. Therefore, customisation is important in the programme and the autonomy of the student is valued.

In both departments, the main subject has a central role. Throughout the programme, students receive 1 on 1 lessons from their main subject lecturer. In addition, in both programmes, students have free space and follow courses on entrepreneurial skills. Both

programmes are finalised with the master research project (15 EC), which is elaborated on in standard 4.

Students the panel met with mentioned that the programme meets their expectations, particularly in terms of personal artistic freedom, support from lecturers, and room for individual development.

Classical department/programme

The classical programme offers three graduation profiles: Performing Conducting/Composing, Performing Instrumental and Performing Vocal. The attention paid to the main subject varies per profile, from 60 EC for Performing Vocal to 94 EC for Performing Conducting/Composing and 84 EC for Performing Instrumental. In addition to the afore mentioned courses, students also follow courses related to their main subject, varying from opera training (performing vocal) to ensemble (performing instrumental). All classical students work on their personal development plan (4 EC). This plan is the student's reflection document.

Jazz department/programme

Within the Jazz programme, the main subject (53 EC) is complemented by Band & Performing courses (12 EC), which are also regarded as essential components of the curriculum. Moreover, students follow courses such as Find your own music (4 EC), Current Jazz (4 EC), Health & Well-being (2 EC) and Impro Lab (4 EC). The Jazz programme includes and Outreach Programme (4 EC). In this course students deepen their

teaching skills and broaden their regional network.

Within the Jazz programme, the personal development plan is part of the Your Art as Business courses. Starting this academic year, the personal development plan will be an official final project to demonstrate the development achieved and a documentation tool for the final archive. This will be evaluated next academic year.

In both departments entrepreneurial and professional skills are addressed explicitly in the Your Art as a Business course (YAB). In these courses students work on their artistic and commercial identity and gather insights in possibilities to generate income. Lecturers mentioned during the site visit that YAB focuses on artistic identity, value proposition, and positioning rather than solely on business skills, and that alignment with main-subject teaching varies due to limited time and coordination.

Students the panel met with, find YAB useful but often start to appreciate this later in the programme, when they are confronted with organising concerts, pricing, taxes etcetera. Students noted differences between jazz and classical approaches to performance, with jazz students showing more awareness of stage presence and classical students experiencing limited training in this area.

Alumni the panel met with during the site visit have different experiences (also per department) regarding guidance on possible career paths, professional options, or labour market orientation during their studies. For some alumni this is closely linked to the individual main-subject teacher rather than to the courses. Alumni also noted that the projects and performances are not always experienced as having high professional stakes. Students are focused

on their main instrument and stronger expectations and consequences regarding projects could contribute to a more professional working attitude among students.

Alumni also expressed a need for collaboration with other departments, for example theatre. Lecturers also wish to facilitate this more, the panel learned during the site visit. This is currently partly dependent on student initiative. Since the conservatory and the theatre programmes are now part of one Faculty, the expectation is that this cooperation will be explored in the near future. It was remarked that a good start would be to know of each other's concerts and performances.

Students noted during the site visit that both departments are largely separated, with little structural interaction unless students take initiative themselves. The physical distance between the departments contributes to this as well as the focus on the main instrument. Lecturers the panel met with during the site visit, recognise this and expect that the recently installed joint electives will help in this. In addition, last year the Moving Music Festival started, where students from both departments collaborate. Lecturers working for both the Jazz and the Classical department encourage students to meet each other and to learn about each other's music. Lecturers noted however, that opportunities to work with other disciplines differ per main instrument. For classical piano for example, the repertoire is so extensive and challenging to master in two years.

Classical students reported during the site visit limited opportunities for ensemble, chamber music, or orchestral projects, with some completing the programme without participating in a formal (orchestral) project. Students (in general) also noted that access to projects, electives,

and additional opportunities is not always transparent or equally distributed, and that criteria for participation are not always clear.

Development of knowledge and skills

In addition to the three pillars around which the curriculum is organised, the programme distinguishes four assumptions for the development of knowledge and skills. This is done in the first place by using study materials and technology. The study materials consist of music literature, audition repertoire and (visual) aural sources commonly used in the current professional practice. Students can also enhance their technological skills in electives.

In the second place this is done through research. When interpreting a piece of music, students need to be aware of its context, ways of playing, potential views, historical performance practice etc. to substantiate their perception and interpretation. The conservatory interprets artistic research as research that leads towards music or musical performance, and research that uses music or musical performance to answer a question. Students learn how to conduct artistic research and are challenged to formulate meaningful questions and to determine their own position in these.

The master research project is based on students own professional practice and intended to develop their own development as a musician. The master research project spans both years; in the first year, students explore their research topic and write a proposal. In the second year, students conduct their (artistic) project and reflect on their artistic project in a presentation. Students are guided in this by workshops, web lectures and in so called master circles. The latter consist of thirteen students (first and second year) and a supervisor. In addition, each student receives individual coaching from their

supervisor. During the site visit, artistic research was positioned as student-driven and open in form and content, supporting specialisation, artistic identity development, and different modes of presentation and documentation.

Third, the development of knowledge and skills is also accomplished through contact with the professional practice. Students participate in Euregional collaborations (orchestras, production houses, projects, festivals). The programme organises jazz festivals and classical projects in which students are part of the organisation and realisation. In addition, guest lecturers (and bands, orchestras, chamber music ensembles) are involved, also as external assessors and masterclasses are held by internationally renowned musicians.

And finally, this involves the focus on international orientation and entrepreneurship. The programme is an active member of international organisations such as the afore mentioned Symphonic Orchestra Project and collaborations for jazz student with conservatories of Essen and Paris. The programme has also international exchange agreements with European conservatoires and international collaborative projects and partnerships. In addition, the programme organises annual festivals with an international theme and participates in international competitions. The before mentioned Your Art as a Business course focuses on entrepreneurship.

International character

The programme has an explicit international character. It attracts students and (guest) lecturers from all over the world. In addition, it prepares students for an international career in music. A minimum English proficiency level of B2 (CEFR) is expected of all students. The conservatory offers language training for students. The

site visit made clear that the programme is in contact with the Hotel Management programme about the Global Mind Monitor that is used to address intercultural competencies.

Staff

The conservatory requires main subject lecturers to combine their teaching appointment with active careers as performing musicians on an international level. In addition, the conservatory aims to maintain or enhance the ensemble performance profile, for example by appointing lecturers for main subjects for which few students generally opt, but which are essential to maintaining an orchestra (e.g. bassoon) or a jazz ensemble (e.g. trumpet or double bass).

The team for the master's programme consists of internal lecturers who have a permanent position in the programme, professionals from the field who give lectures or workshops and guest lecturers for masterclasses or projects. The team comprises 30 FTE (excluding guest lecturers) and covers all areas and disciplines in the study programme.

Most lecturers work in various professional situations, both in music performance and professional teaching practice and have part-time positions at the programme. Lectures play in orchestras or ensembles (e.g. Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest, Brussels Philharmonic, Radio Filharmonisch Orkest), conduct professional ensembles, play in internationally well-known big bands (e.g. the WDR Big Band, Brussels Jazz Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw), are guest conductors with Dutch and foreign professional orchestras, are active at national and international venues and on the (inter)national scene of recording studios, jazz and pop ensembles and festivals.

The conservatory offers lecturers the professionalisation course Assessment in Arts and the Basic Didactical Qualification course and follow-up course. For examiners one of these courses is required. In addition, language training is in place. Lecturers are required to have at least B1 level in English proficiency.

The programme notes that it is working on the implementation of the new master vision among main subject lecturers. This vision includes a more flexible didactical approach based on students own motivation and ambitions. The site visit made clear that in the Jazz department, main subject lecturers meet regularly to discuss the (didactical) vision of the programme.

Lecturers noted during the site visit that their main goal is to support the students in their chosen path, ranging from a strong focus on repertoire and craftsmanship to more exploratory trajectories.

Student guidance

In addition to the guidance from lecturers (and especially the main subject lecturer), the programme offers various sources of support. These include study coaches for all questions related to studies or facilities, student counsellors for support and advice when problems during the studies or in their private life arise, and confidential advisors.

Study coaches have a role in guiding students in their personal development plan (PDP). The site visit made clear that involving the main subject lecturers in this is somewhat challenging. Students mentioned that the PDP is not actively used.

The student counsellors also guide students with learning disabilities. Extra facilities are available for these students such as additional

time for guidance, support during exams, additional re-sits, and the use of assistive devices. The Health Prevention Centre is available for questions about study workspaces and possible health risks and student psychologists are available.

The programme appointed so called listening students. These students listen, support, and connect students with the right people when needed. A listening student is a peer who is trained to listen confidentially to any concerns. All conversations are anonymous. The listening students meet on a regular basis and work closely with the confidential advisor.

The social safety workgroup, consisting of listening students, the dean and the heads of the departments, keeps the debate on social safety going by organising meetings for students and lecturers and by presenting and discussing the code of conduct within the conservatory.

Admission

The legal enrolment criteria apply to the programme. Students have to go through the entrance examination procedure to enter the programme. This procedure is used to select students and to test their level and competencies regarding reflection and research. The procedure consists of 1) the delivery of presentation and performed material (online part) for first selection; 2) the optional face-to-face audition committed by main subject lecturers; and 3) the interview with the study supervisor and/or the head of programme. The head of programme decides on the admission of students.

The majority of the students has an international background, both from Europe and non-European countries.

The site visit made clear that incoming students differ in expectations, ranging from a desire to deepen instrumental skills and studying with a

specific lecturer to an interest in broader artistic, research, and professional development.

Facilities

Both departments have their own location in Maastricht. The programme has the availability of musical instruments, audio-visual and sound equipment, study spaces for students and workspaces for staff, a library, access to digital music libraries and scientific national and international publications, spaces for concerts, performances and rehearsals and a professional recording studio. The conservatory is an 'all Steinway school'. The programme also uses several churches for organ lessons. The programme has a booking agency that facilitates paid performance opportunities for students. The programme notes in the self-evaluation report that it has reached its maximum capacity.

Students from the Jazz department, the panel learned during the site visit, remarked that communication about schedules and the booking of rooms can be improved. For classical students the communication is quite clear. Students are not very active in filling out the evaluation surveys. Students noted that they prefer to contact management directly if needed.

Recommendation previous accreditation

The previous panel recommended, among other recommendations, to ensure that all stakeholders (especially international ones) are clear about the concept of research, consider how this can best be expressed in strategic documents, e.g. by using the phrase 'informed, reflective artistic practice'. In response to this, the programme described its vision on 'practice-led research' in the new vision document for the programme. Both departments as well as the lecturers agreed on artistic research because of its practice-led starting point.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the content and set-up of the programme enable students from both departments to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is well designed with the three pillars and the different courses.

The panel concludes that the programme is strongly student-centred and provides a supportive and personalised learning environment that is highly valued by students. At the same time, the panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes could play a more explicit role in teaching practice. While students and staff are aware of the learning outcomes, day-to-day discussions primarily focus on students' work rather than on the learning outcomes. The panel therefore recommends the programme to ensure that the new learning outcomes (based on the new national profile) have a more central role in the teaching.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international profile of the staff involved, the international students attending and the international character of the field of study and research. The panel therefore concludes that the international name of the programme is more than appropriate. The panel also agrees to the fact that the programme is entirely taught in English. In addition, the panel establishes that the lecturers involved are experienced in English-language teaching to students from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds. The meetings during the site visit showed that both staff and students have excellent command of English.

The panel holds the opinion that the PDP is an important instrument for guiding and monitoring student development. It also notes that effective use currently depends on student

engagement and coordination between study coaches and main-subject lecturers. The panel therefore recommends giving the PDP a more central role in the programme, by linking the PDP directly to the intended learning outcomes. The study coach can have role in guiding the students in this.

The panel encourages the programme to incorporate professional contextual learning and collaboration with other departments/ programmes and cultural partners in the programme, for example through participating in projects and ensembles, attending concerts. And by introducing international students actively in the regional network. In addition, the panel sees a lot of unused potential in the co-operation between the departments and with other programmes from Zuyd University. The panel recommends the programme to make these aspects an explicit part of the curriculum (and to allocate credit points), to ensure that all students participate.

The legal enrolment criteria apply to the programme. The programme is highly selective and has an extensive selection procedure in place, which ensures that qualified and motivated students enter the programme.

The staff involved in the programme is very committed, highly qualified and knowledgeable and actively involved as musicians in professional practice. Moreover, sufficient lecturers are available to execute the programme.

The panel concludes that ample guidance is available for students, including students with disabilities or additional support needs. The guidance is in line with the independence that can be expected of master's students. The panel especially values the listening students. They

provide an easily accessible platform for students to share their concerns.

The panel is of the opinion that the programme acted appropriately on the recommendations of the previous accreditation.

Taking these considerations into account, and given the coherence of the curriculum, the

quality of staff and the supportive learning environment, the panel concludes that the programme sufficiently enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

The programme adheres to the assessment policies of Zuyd and the conservatory. Assessment is considered an integral part of learning and is used to guide students learning processes. The updated assessment policy is based on the principles of developmental assessment and examiners are trained to apply the feedback, feed-in, feed-forward principle.

Assessment must lead to valid, reliable and transparent decisions and must offer the student opportunities for further learning and development. In addition, assessment is in line with the requirements of practice, both in terms of content and design. Formative assessments and ongoing evaluation are used to encourage students to study and to structure the acquisition of complex skills. Summative assessments are used to determine whether the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

The programme uses different assessment forms such as portfolio assessment, practical exams, performances (or presenting a portfolio of music for composition), assignments, attendance, video presentations, written exam, website and workshop exercises (for the Your Art as a Business courses). Students are usually assessed individually. In addition, students have the freedom to determine the programme of the recitals, to choose their research topics and to organise ensemble and band activities.

In the Jazz programme group products are assessed (for example within the Band & Performing courses) with group criteria and individual criteria.

Within the Classical department the programme elaborates on developing more main-subject-specific criteria (that may differ per graduation profile, e.g. conducting or an instrument). With the Jazz department this distinction has already been made. The programme notes in the self-evaluation report that this has led to better quality of feedback and assessments.

The validity of assessments is ensured by aligning the learning objectives, assessment criteria, curriculum content and test assignments. Reliability of the assessments is assured by using multiple internal and external experts for assessment. The consistency of the assessment throughout the different programmes is ensured by the annual training of lecturers/examiners and jury chairs. Course tests are designed and reviewed by at least two colleagues. Presentations of oral exams are assessed by a jury of two lecturers.

For the assessment of recitals an assessment protocol is in place, and a rubric is used for the assessment of the master research presentations.

Students are informed about the assessments through the digital learning environment. Students receive the results of the assessment orally and in a written feedback report based on the assessment criteria.

The final recital serves as a test of professional aptitude, requiring students to compete at an international level. During the recital students demonstrate their readiness for professional practice. The final recital is assessed by a jury.

At the final level, the assessment criteria are discussed by assessors and jury chairmen. These activities promote consistency and ensure that assessors are on the same page. During consultation moments, lecturers and assessors discuss practical examples and challenges from the assessment process, to reflect together, learn from each other and arrive at shared insights.

The four-eyes principle is used to guarantee the quality and intersubjectivity of assessments. The four-eyes principle is applied in the assessment of the final level (main subject and research at master's level). This means that at least 2 assessors are involved in the assessment. In most cases, an external assessor is also involved in the final level for the main subject. This is guided by the jury chairman in the assessment. In all cases, an external assessor comes from practice.

Lecturers noted during the site visit that calibration is an ongoing process. This includes discussions on how to evaluate craftsmanship and, artistic concept and also the use of feedback and grades. Lecturers from the Jazz department mentioned that in assessing students also lecturers from other disciplines are involved. The different perspective these lecturers provide is very valuable.

Examination board

The examination board (consisting of six members) is responsible for safeguarding the quality of the assessments and the final level. In doing so, the board gathers information from students and teaching staff, attends examinations, and handles complaints from students and teaching staff. Based on this, the examination board can form a clear picture of the quality of testing and assessment. The members have the Senior Qualification for Examiners. The examination board gives solicited and unsolicited advice to

management. The examination board reports on its activities in the annual report.

This academic year, the examination board specifically reviews the application of the feedback, feed-in, feed-forward principle during examination reviews and analyses.

Representatives of the examination board confirmed during the site visit that members of the board attend exams, review assessments and meet with lecturers. The board is also involved in changes in the programme. In addition, the board developed the afore mentioned Assessment in Arts course for lecturers. This is a mandatory course for all examiners within Zuyd that are involved in arts programmes. The board is also involved in the before mentioned discussions around grading, feedback and calibration.

Recommendation previous accreditation

The previous panel recommended, among other recommendations, to standardise the collection of written feedback and including more explicitly the examination criteria with clearly defined levels of achievement in the written feedback forms. The programme notes that the new assessment forms explicitly include the criteria. Several main subject lecturers have already implemented grading rubrics. And the examination board is focusing on monitoring written feedback during final exams.

Considerations

The panel is of the opinion that the programme has an adequate assessment system in place that systematically verifies whether students achieve the intended learning outcomes. Effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments. These include using the four-eye principle, written feedback for students and calibration between lecturers.

The examination board safeguards the quality of the assessments and the achieved end level of the programme. In doing so, the board systematically screens the assessments and the final level, for example by attending examinations and reviewing research projects.

The panel values that calibration is an integral part of the assessment process. The panel

encourages the programme to continue this and to also calibrate across the main subjects.

The panel is of the opinion that the programme acted appropriately on the recommendations of the previous accreditation.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The programme is finalised with:

- Final recital / graduation concert.
- Personal development plan.
- Master research project presentation.

Final recital / graduation concert

Students present their work during the final recital. The programme has requirements for the duration, level and structure of the concert programme. The recital is assessed by a panel, which, apart from qualified internal lecturers/examiners, also consists of external assessors. The assessment is carried out according to a fixed protocol and based on assessment criteria. The recital is (as are all recitals) open to the public. The final jazz graduation concerts are presented at the Graduation Festival to both a jury and the public in an external high standard concert venue, and the students are tasked with reaching out to the public and organising audio/video documentation themselves, to ensure their final development step of becoming a professional musician.

During the site visit, it became clear that students have considerable autonomy in shaping their final recital, particularly within jazz, whereas classical performances were described as more tradition oriented. In light of the new vision, this will form part of the ongoing discussions within the departments.

Personal development plan

In the Classical department students build up a portfolio over several courses of the programme. Students report and reflect on the learning activities in ensemble playing, free

space, and personal and professional development. The assessment requirements are that the portfolio lists all activities and times spent, an activity report for each activity and that the time spent in ensemble activities is at least 140 hours.

In the Jazz department students demonstrate in the personal development plan that they possess reflective abilities. The assessment is part of the Your Art as a Business course and includes an assignment.

Master research project presentation

The master research project is an artistic research project aimed to contribute to students' professional development and to be integrated in their development of becoming the musician they want to be. The final outcome of the research project is a presentation in which students demonstrate their artistic outcomes and reflect on the findings and conclusions of the process. The research project has four assessment moments:

- The pitch in which students briefly present the main elements of their research proposal. This is assessed by the supervisor and an independent supervisor / examiner (go / no-go).
- The proposal, which is assessed by the supervisor (pass/fail).
- The try-out assessment, where students receive feedback and a go or no-go from their supervisor for the final presentation.
- The final presentation (online), which includes a pre-recorded presentation and a Q&A session. Students are assessed by a jury consisting of their supervisor (who is the chair and not an assessor), a first

assessor (independent supervisor), a second assessor (the main subject lecturer) and an external professional as third assessor.

Alumni of the programme participate in projects and assessments and are part of the conservatory's preparatory projects in secondary schools and music schools.

Recommendation previous accreditation

The previous panel recommended considering exploring possible connections between the artistic examination and the research project in order to ensure a better inclusion. In response to this, the programme has considered one final master presentation in which the artistic as well as the more general and research competences could be assessed. Due to the enormous diversity of students and their individual ambitions, these domains are still examined separately. The research project students undertake is always artistic research, as a key requirement is the link with performance practice. The extent to which music plays a central role in research can vary depending on the research problem/opportunity the student is exploring.

During the (current) site visit, lecturers noted that students have the option to link their research project with the recital but in practice this rarely happens. This depends for example on the choices students make for their own future practice and the involvement of the main subject lecturers.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the programme has a solid and suitable graduation procedure in place. In assessing students final work multiple examiners are involved, including an external examiner in most cases.

To assess whether students achieve the required end-level and the intended learning outcomes, the panel studied 16 graduation files: 10 from the classical department and 6 from the jazz department. Based on this, the panel concludes that the level reflected in these files is adequate and that students achieve the required master's level. The panel concludes that the studied research projects are of high quality, very engaging and well thought out research methodologies. The panel also noticed that in the most successful files, students were very aware of the relation between their research project and their artistic practice. To encourage students in linking their research to their practice, the panel suggests organising a research festival in which student present their research and inspire each other.

The panel noticed that approaches to communication and presentation between the performers and the audience differed in the jazz and classical music recitals. The jazz recitals have the feeling of a realistic jazz concert set-up with an emphasis on communicative skills with an audience. The classical recitals seemed to be more educational and less professional in the set-up, with less emphasis on transmission. While recognising that these differences stem from established conventions within performance traditions, the panel sees scope to introduce more experimentation into classical music recitals, in line with developments in contemporary performance practice.

The panel is of the opinion that the programme acted appropriately on the recommendations of the previous accreditation.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Attachment 1: administrative details of the programme

Institution	
Name in RIO	Zuyd University of Applied Sciences
Address	
Website	www.conservatoriummaastricht.nl
BRIN-number	25JX
Status (funded or unfunded)	Funded
ITK (yes or no)	Yes
Programme	
First name, as in RIO	Master of Music
Location	Maastricht
Programme number in RIO	44739
Orientation and level (wo/hbo/ad/ba/ma)	Hbo master
Research master?	No
Language of instruction	English
Legal) professional requirements (yes or no)	No
All programme tracks/specialisations	Classical and Jazz
Joint programme degree	No
Special feature	No
Degree and addition	Master of Music
Studyload in EC (60, 90, 120, 180, 240, 360)	120 EC
Modes: fulltime, parttime, dual	Full-time
Working with units of learning outcomes (full-time, part-time, dual)	N/A
Assessment cluster	HBO Master Muziek groep 1
Submission date	1 May 2026
Other (e.g. name change or extension of study duration)	N/A

Attachment 2: assessment panel

drs. Raoul van Aalst, chair

Self-employed organisational consultant, cultural philosopher and researcher

dr. Biranda Ford, member

Research Training and Development Leader - Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London UK

Keld Hosbond MA, member

Rector Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus/Aalborg Denmark

Tymon Zgorzelski, Bachelor of Music

Student Master of Music, Amsterdam University of the Arts

The panel was supported by drs. Titia Busing, certified secretary.

All panel members have completed and signed a statement of independence and impartiality, and these have been submitted to NVAO.

Attachment 3: site visit program

2 December 2025

Time		Activity (Bonnefantenstraat 15)
11.15	11.30	Arrival Jeker Room
11.30	12.00	Rehearsal string section Project Mahler Symphony nr 9.
12.00	13.15	Lunch committee and deliberation
13.15	14.15	Interview with curriculum responsables/management.
14.15	14.30	Private Consultation Committee
14.30	15.30	Interview with students
15.30	15.45	Private Consultation Committee
15.45	16.00	Visit Audio-Video Studio Heksenstraat
16.00	16.15	Break
16.15	17.30	Interview with teachers
17.30	17.45	Private Consultation Committee

3 December 2025

Time		Activity (Franciscus Romanusweg 90)
9.00	9.30	Private Consultation Committee
9.30	10.30	Interview with the academical boards and representatives
10.30	10.45	Private Consultation Committee
10.45	11.45	Interview with the field experts and alumni
11.45	12.00	Visit Jazz activity ROM
12.00	12.15	Private Consultation Committee
12.15	12.45	Guided walk back to the Bonnefantenstraat
12.45	13.45	Lunch
13.45	14.15	Optional: final interview with the management team if needed.
14.15	14.30	Debriefing Committee
14.30	15.30	Reflection and first impressions

Attachment 4: Recommendations from previous assessment

Copy from the SER of the programme: section on recommendations and follow-up from the previous assessment

Standard	Recommendations 2020 (MusiQue – NVAO)	Improvement actions taken by Conservatorium Maastricht
1	Further integration of interdisciplinary projects within the curriculum and support intra- and cross-faculty collaborations.	Interdisciplinary collaborations established (e.g. Biometrics, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy). Shared electives since 2023–2024. Moving Music Festival organised in 2025.
1	Further alignment of content, structure and methods.	Curriculum reviewed with educational specialists. Course descriptions redesigned using constructive alignment.
1	Strengthen leading regional position through benchmarking.	Structural collaboration with conservatoires of Liège and Aachen; Euregional Symphony Orchestra and Bigband projects.
2	Clarify the concept of research for all stakeholders.	Adoption of practice-led artistic research concept and redefinition of master vision.
2	Improve communication between research supervisor and main subject teacher.	Regular supervisor meetings; strengthened alignment between research project and main subject.
2	Develop students' cognitive reflection and self-awareness.	Mandatory exploratory interviews, PDP workshops, feedback training for staff.
2	Balance student autonomy with guidance.	Clear deadlines, assessment criteria, and individual study coaching.
2	Increase visibility of international office.	International officer embedded in Zuyd International Office; improved student onboarding.
3	Balance craftsmanship and artistic identity in assessment.	Revised assessment criteria and repertoire requirements; enhanced feedback culture.
3	Standardise written feedback and assessment criteria.	New assessment forms with explicit criteria; rubrics implemented.
4	Improve integration of artistic exam and research project.	Domains assessed separately but stronger conceptual integration encouraged.
4	Design consistent alumni tracking system.	Roundtable sessions with alumni and professional field initiated.

Attachment 5: reviewed documents

- Self-evaluation report
- Analysis NSE Music (M) 2024 and 2025
- Zuyd Strategy
- Vision document Master of Music Conservatory Maastricht 2025
- EER MoM Jazz 2025–2026, EER MoM Classical 2025–2026
- Dutch National Training Profile for Music 2017
- Curriculum overviews CLASS MA 2025–2026, curriculum overview JAZZ master 2025–2026
- Curriculum book MoM Classical 2025–2026, curriculum book MoM Jazz 2025–2026
- Competence matrix MoM Jazz Classical
- CM in a Nutshell 2025–2026
- Year Ambition Plan CM 2025–2026
- Policy Blended Learning CM 2021
- Cognitive Apprenticeship
- Student-Centred Instruction
- Internal Audit Report Master of Music 2023–2024
- Higher Music Education and the Professional Field – Petzold Peters 2023
- Collaborations in the professional field
- Handbook Kwaliteitszorg Zuyd
- Global Minds – Results internationalisation study Conservatorium
- Internationalisation agenda and internationalisation policy
- Organogram CM
- Policy Document Study Coaching CM 2023–2024
- Zuyd Assessment Compass
- Assessment Policy Document CM 2025–2028
- Assessment Protocol for Chairmen
- Annual Report Examination Board 2023–2024
- Handbook Examencommissies 2022–2023 (Dutch)
- Combo Exam Form Jazz
- Assessment Form Final Recital – Final Concert MoM
- MoM Portfolio handbook classical
- Recital Programme Criteria
- Report Professional Field Meet-up
- Regulations on Studying with a Disability and/or Educational Support Needs
- Guidelines for Master Research Proposal, Master Research Project Protocol 2025–2026
- Introduction to Artistic Research 01 – How to structure a master’s thesis or research report
- Jazz – Master research – How will it be assessed
- Templates for master research proposal, master research report and master’s thesis
- Graduation work of 16 students: 10 from the classical department and 6 from the Jazz department

