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Master of Music

Hanze, Groningen

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing program
29 and 30 January 2026

Summary

On 29 and 30 January 2026, the master's programme Master of Music of Hanze University of Applied Sciences was assessed. The panel's overall judgement is **positive**. The full-time, professionally oriented programme comprises 120 EC and has a nominal duration of two years. The programme is offered by the Prins Claus Conservatorium in Groningen and has a strong international orientation. As the institution holds a positive institutional quality assurance decision, the assessment was conducted on the basis of four standards of the NVAO framework.

Intended learning outcomes

The Master of Music has a clear and recognisable profile aimed at educating reflective, independent and socially engaged music professionals who are able to develop and sustain their own professional practice in a dynamic international context. This profile is in line with the strategic ambitions of Hanze University of Applied Sciences as an engaged university and is consistently reflected in the programme's objectives.

The intended learning outcomes are based on the national profile *Opleidingsprofiel Muziek 2017* and are aligned with NLQF level 7. They are structured around six core competencies, covering artistic, creative, research-related, contextual focus, communicative and organisational dimensions. Taken together, these competencies form a coherent and comprehensive framework that corresponds to the level and orientation of a professionally oriented master's programme in music.

The programme offers three strands: *Classical Music*, *New York Jazz*, and *New Audiences and Innovative Practice*. Although the intended learning outcomes apply to all strands, the panel observes that these strands represent clearly differentiated professional orientations within the overall programme profile. Students translate the general learning outcomes into personalised assessment criteria in consultation

with their coaches, which allows for individual learning trajectories while safeguarding comparability and the required master's level.

The programme maintains structured and ongoing contact with the professional field. A broad and actively involved Work Field Advisory Committee provides regular input on developments in the music profession at national and international level. This interaction supports the continuous alignment of the intended learning outcomes with current professional and international expectations.

The panel establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The teaching-learning environment is coherent, transparent and well aligned with the intended learning outcomes. The two-year curriculum is organised around three interrelated domains: performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship. Each semester follows a consistent structure, enabling students to work in an integrated and balanced manner on artistic development, research and professional positioning.

A distinctive characteristic of the programme is the high degree of personalisation. Through Personal Study Plans, students design, monitor

and adjust their individual learning trajectories in dialogue with coaches and mentors. This approach accommodates diversity in students' artistic backgrounds and ambitions, while maintaining a shared framework and safeguarding the programme's level.

Practice-based research is firmly embedded in the curriculum and is closely connected to students' artistic practice. Students are supported by dedicated research staff and benefit from the close connection with the Research Centre Art & Society and its associated lectorates. Entrepreneurship is structurally integrated throughout the programme and encourages students to reflect on sustainability, initiative and their positioning within the professional field.

Student guidance is intensive and well organised. Each student is supported by a team of mentors with strand-specific expertise. Formative feedback, reflective dialogue and peer learning play a central role in the learning process. Students indicate that the workload is manageable, which the panel attributes to the clear curriculum structure and the continuous guidance provided.

The teaching team consists of experienced and well-qualified professionals with strong artistic, educational and professional expertise. The programme is offered entirely in English, which the panel considers appropriate given the international orientation of the music profession and the composition of the student population. The panel confirms that staff demonstrate sufficient proficiency in English to ensure high-quality education and guidance.

The panel establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

The Master of Music has an integrated and development-oriented system of student assessment that is closely aligned with the intended learning outcomes. Assessment is criterion-based and qualitative in nature, which is appropriate for the professionally oriented character of the programme.

Students develop personalised assessment criteria in consultation with their coaches. These criteria form the basis for both formative and summative assessment throughout the programme and support student ownership of the learning process. The programme has implemented a modular assessment structure, with clearly defined assessment components for performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship in each semester. The panel considers this structure to contribute positively to transparency, feasibility and consistency.

A broad range of assessment formats is employed, including public performances, research papers, project documentation and reflective presentations. Formative feedback is embedded throughout the curriculum and supports students' continuous development. Final assessments are conducted by qualified assessors, with external experts involved in an advisory capacity.

The Examination Board fulfils its statutory role in safeguarding the validity, reliability and independence of assessment. Calibration sessions, random reviews and clear procedures contribute to consistency and alignment with the required master's level.

The panel establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

The graduation phase consists of an integrated programme in which students demonstrate their development in performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship. The modular assessment structure provides clarity and supports a coherent presentation of students' professional profiles.

The panel reviewed a representative sample of recent graduation works and confirms that the level, scope and quality are appropriate for a master's degree at NLQF level 7. The graduation projects show a clear integration of artistic practice, reflection and research, and are closely aligned with students' individual professional ambitions.

Follow-up information on alumni indicates that most graduates are professionally active in the

music field, often in international and portfolio-based careers. This confirms that the programme prepares students effectively for contemporary professional practice.

The panel establishes that the programme meets this standard.

Suggestions

During the assessment, the panel has included several suggestions for further reflection and development within the descriptions of the individual standards. These suggestions are intended to support the programme's ongoing development and do not affect the panel's judgements. Apart from these suggestions, the panel has no additional recommendations to make.

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 Hanze University of Applied Sciences.

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

drs. Raoul van Aalst
Chair

drs. Linda van der Grijspaarde
Secretary

Introduction

Profile

The Master of Music programme is offered by the Prins Claus Conservatorium, part of Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen, the Netherlands.

The Master of Music is a full-time programme with a study load of 120 EC, completed over the course of two years. Each year, approximately 35 students enrol, representing a wide range of international backgrounds. The curriculum is structured around three main strands: Classical Music, New York Jazz, and New Audiences and Innovative Practice. Students shape their own professional trajectory through personalised study plans, integrating performance, entrepreneurship, and practice-based research. The programme fosters a high degree of individual flexibility and aims to prepare students for a sustainable and socially engaged professional music practice.

The assessment

Hanze 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 taken action in response (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 later 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 Master of Music at Hanze, offered by the Prins Claus Conservatorium, aims to educate innovative and socially engaged music professionals. The programme distinguishes itself through a strong focus on enabling students to develop and sustain their own professional music practice within a continuously evolving professional field.

Graduates of the programme are expected to be flexible and authentic professionals who can operate independently and collaboratively in diverse artistic and societal contexts. In line with Hanze's ambition as an 'engaged university', the programme connects with broader societal themes such as contributing to a healthy and active society.

The intended learning outcomes of the Master of Music are based on the national programme profile *Opleidingsprofiel Muziek 2017*. They are structured around six core competencies: technical skills, creative skills, contextual focus, research & development, communication skills, and organisational skills. These are made concrete in one or two learning outcomes per competence.

Each student works with coaches to translate these learning outcomes into personal assessment criteria, allowing for individualised and meaningful learning trajectories. This aligns with Hanze's broader institutional commitment to flexible, personalised education.

The programme includes three distinct strands (graduation profiles), each reflecting a specific professional orientation: *Classical Music*, *New York Jazz* and *New Audiences and Innovative Practice*. The general set of intended learning outcomes applies to the strands; no specific outcomes have been formulated for each strand.

The learning outcomes are developed and periodically reviewed in interaction with the (inter)national professional field. The programme draws on input from a wide network of partners, including local venues, festivals and professional musicians. In particular, an active Work Field Advisory Committee (WAC), consisting of 25 members, meets at least once a year to provide feedback on current developments and needs in the music profession. The WAC includes professionals such as performers, educators, programmers, and industry partners.

Considerations

The panel considers that the Master of Music at Hanze presents a clear and distinctive profile. The programme aims to educate music professionals who are not only artistically competent but also socially engaged and capable of sustaining their own professional practice in a dynamic and international music field. In the panel's view, this profile is relevant and ambitious, and it is consistently reflected in the programme's design and objectives.

The intended learning outcomes are well aligned with the national profile *Opleidingsprofiel Muziek 2017* and correspond to level 7

of the Dutch Qualifications Framework (NLQF). The learning outcomes clearly reflect the competencies expected of a professionally oriented master's programme in music and cover artistic, research, communicative, entrepreneurial, and pedagogical domains in a coherent and comprehensive manner. The panel has taken note of the newly formulated national profile, which will be implemented from the next academic year onwards. The panel observes that the programme is already developing in line with these revised outcomes.

The panel appreciates that the intended learning outcomes allow for differentiation and personalisation while maintaining a robust overarching framework. This ensures comparability of learning outcomes across student trajectories while safeguarding the programme's level and professional orientation.

The panel values the clear articulation of the programme's three strands, which it considers logical and meaningful in relation to the programme's profile. At the same time, the panel underlines the importance of continuing in-depth discussions with students and alumni about the interpretation and development of these strands, given the evolving nature of the music field. Perspectives from the professional

field, including reflections related to developments such as New York jazz, highlight both strengths and challenges and may inform future refinement or further differentiation of the strands. The panel therefore suggests maintaining reflective dialogue about the conceptual boundaries of the strands, for instance regarding what is understood as non-classical music, recognising that while the label 'classical' is relatively clear, other categories have evolved over time.

The panel also values the strong and structured involvement of the professional field. The WAC meets regularly and provides input on developments in the music sector and their implications for the programme. This ongoing engagement helps ensure that the intended learning outcomes remain aligned with current and emerging professional and international expectations, and that graduates are well prepared for a broad range of roles in the music field.

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

Programme structure and scope

The Master of Music is a two-year, full-time professionally oriented master's programme comprising 120 EC. It is structured to allow for individualised study pathways. The curriculum is rooted in three interrelated domains: artistic excellence (performance), research, and entrepreneurship. All students engage with each of these domains throughout the programme, ensuring a broad yet focused preparation for a career in music.

While the core structure of the programme is shared, each of the three strands *Classical Music*, *New York Jazz* and *New Audiences and Innovative Practice* feature specific content, learning environments and expert teaching tailored to its field. Students are admitted to one of the strands and follow a strand-specific trajectory within the overall programme.

Curriculum content

The curriculum is divided across four semesters. Each semester includes components related to Performance (15 EC), Practice-Based Research (10 EC) and Entrepreneurship (5 EC).

This modular structure is consistent across all strands, but the content within each module is tailored to the strand and the student's individual artistic direction. For example:

- In *Classical Music*, students focus on solo and ensemble classical performance and innovation in traditional repertoire and presentation formats.
- In *New York Jazz*, the emphasis is on improvisation, jazz performance and trans-

atlantic artistic exchange, including a study visit to New York or other city with a prominent jazz scene.

- In *New Audiences and Innovative Practice*, students engage in socially engaged music practices, co-creation with communities, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

In the second year, students work towards a Graduation Project in which they integrate artistic performance, research outcomes and entrepreneurial initiatives. This project reflects their development across the three main domains and is assessed as part of the final semester components.

Research integration

Practice-based research is a core component of the programme. Students complete a 20 EC research trajectory (10 EC per year), supported by dedicated research lecturers. Students are trained to formulate research questions rooted in their own artistic or professional context and to use appropriate research methods. Research is connected to the broader infrastructure of Hanze, particularly the *Research Centre Art & Society*, and its lectorates *Music in Context* and *Art Education*. These lectorates support both curriculum development and staff professionalisation in areas such as research ethics and societal engagement.

Didactic concept and personalisation

The didactic concept of the programme is grounded in *constructive alignment* and *student-centred learning*. Students create and regularly update a Personal Study Plan, in which they align their learning trajectory with the

intended learning outcomes and their individual artistic vision. This Personal Study Plan is developed and reviewed in consultation with coaches and strand leaders throughout the two years.

Electives and extracurricular activities play an important role in personalisation. Students are encouraged to engage in external projects, collaborations and performances that feed into their academic development. These activities can be formally embedded into their PSP and used as evidence in assessments.

The learning environment is both physical and digital. In recent years, digital learning platforms such as *Brightspace* and *Portflow* have been implemented to improve transparency, formative feedback and self-regulation. These systems are currently being introduced and piloted within the master's programme.

Student support and guidance

Each student is supported by a team of coaches and mentors, who guide their development in the three main domains of the programme: performance, research and entrepreneurship. Regular meetings, tutorials and coaching sessions are built into the structure, with an emphasis on formative feedback, reflective dialogue and continuous development. Mentoring is strand-specific, ensuring that students receive guidance that is relevant to their artistic field.

Students have access to the broader facilities and services of Hanze, including digital learning environments and general support systems provided by the institution. The conservatoire also offers additional guidance through mentors and coaches. Students with mental or physical disabilities can receive tailored support through mentoring, student counselling and institutional facilities provided by Hanze.

The programme has also taken concrete steps to promote social safety and inclusion within the learning environment. In 2025, a formal *Code of Conduct* was introduced, co-developed with staff and students, outlining behavioural expectations and procedures for addressing inappropriate behaviour. The conservatoire has established clear reporting protocols for incidents of misconduct and actively encourages open dialogue about diversity and inclusion. These initiatives are embedded in the mentoring trajectory, allowing students to raise personal or social concerns in a structured and supportive context. The Prins Claus Conservatorium has also formed a dedicated working group on diversity, aiming to further strengthen awareness and inclusive practices across the curriculum and the institutional culture.

Staff expertise and programme delivery

The programme is delivered by a team of experienced teachers and professionals with expertise in performance, research and entrepreneurship. Lecturers are also affiliated with lectorates that contribute to both teaching and curriculum development.

The academic leadership is structured into course leadership per strand and domain, and overseen by a master team leader. Since 2025, a new organisational model has been implemented, replacing the previous project-based approach with a more stable team structure.

Staff development is actively supported through training sessions and intervision. Recent activities have included workshops related to research ethics and artistic work in social and community contexts.

English programme

The programme is offered entirely in English and has an English title. This choice is grounded

in the international orientation of the professional music field, in which graduates are expected to communicate and collaborate across borders regardless of their geographic base. To support this, the programme ensures that all teaching, assessment, and study materials are in English. The English-taught format also facilitates the international composition of the student body and supports exchange and collaboration with international partner institutions. In line with Hanze's language policy, English proficiency is addressed within the HR development cycle. Where needed, staff members receive training through the Hanze Language Centre, with the possibility to reach up to level C2, ensuring staff are adequately equipped to teach and interact effectively in English.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the Master of Music at Hanze offers a coherent, well-structured and appropriately challenging teaching-learning environment that enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel notes that these intended learning outcomes are consistently translated into concrete educational objectives across the curriculum and individual learning trajectories, ensuring constructive alignment between programme goals, learning activities and assessment.

The programme has a clear and transparent structure, which supports both coherence and effective study progress. The modular organisation across four semesters, with consistent attention to performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship, provides students with a stable framework while allowing for individual focus and development. The panel considers the admission requirements to be realistic and appropriate in relation to the intended learning outcomes and the master's level of the

programme, while at the same time enabling a diverse and international student population.

The panel particularly values the way in which the programme accommodates diversity in students' artistic backgrounds, prior experiences and professional orientations. Through the use of Personal Study Plans, strand-specific trajectories and differentiated learning pathways, students are supported in shaping an individual route through the programme that aligns with their artistic vision within a shared curricular framework. The panel observes that the programme successfully brings together students with different perspectives and artistic profiles in a single educational structure. While value-based education may in some contexts risk exclusivity, the panel notes that within this programme it is implemented in an explicitly inclusive manner that fosters openness, dialogue and mutual respect.

The curriculum structure is consistent across all strands and semesters, with each phase addressing the three core domains of performance, research and entrepreneurship. The panel appreciates the strong and meaningful integration of these domains. Practice-based research is firmly embedded within the curriculum and closely connected to artistic practice. Students are supported in developing research questions grounded in their own artistic or professional context and in applying appropriate research methods. The integration of entrepreneurship throughout the programme further strengthens the professional orientation of the curriculum, as learning goals and assessment criteria are aligned with students' individual ambitions.

The modular design of the programme allows for differentiation across the three strands—Classical Music, New York Jazz, and New

Audiences and Innovative Practice—while maintaining a strong shared foundation. The panel considers this balance between a common structure and strand-specific depth to be a clear strength of the programme. Students experience the workload as manageable, which the panel attributes to the clarity of the curriculum design, the distribution of assignments throughout the semesters and the continuous guidance provided. Peer learning groups function effectively and contribute positively to reflection, feedback and a sense of belonging.

The programme demonstrates a clear connection with the professional field and society. Students are encouraged to engage in external projects, collaborations and performances that are relevant to their artistic development and professional orientation. These activities can be embedded in the Personal Study Plan and contribute meaningfully to students' learning trajectories. The panel observes that such activities enhance the relevance of the curriculum and support students in positioning themselves within contemporary professional contexts.

The connection with the Research Centre Art & Society and its lectorates further enriches the teaching-learning environment. These links expose students and staff to a broader research culture and current developments in the field, and support curriculum development and staff professionalisation. The panel considers this interaction between education and research to be a valuable element of the programme.

According to the panel, the didactic concept of the programme is clearly student-centred and grounded in constructive alignment. Students play an active role in shaping, monitoring and evaluating their own learning processes through the use of Personal Study Plans, continuous coaching and reflective dialogue. The

panel values the programme's strong commitment to formative feedback and notes positively the use of digital learning platforms to support transparency, self-regulation and ongoing development.

Student guidance and support are well organised and structured. Each student is supported by a team of coaches and mentors, with strand-specific expertise, who guide development in the domains of performance, research and entrepreneurship. Students are well informed about the structure of the programme, learning pathways and expectations. Based on the clear programme structure, the continuous guidance and the flexible organisation of learning activities, the panel considers the programme to be accessible and manageable, including for students who require additional support.

The programme benefits from a stable and well-qualified teaching team with expertise in performance, research and entrepreneurship. The panel is convinced that the teaching staff possess strong artistic and professional expertise as well as sufficient didactic competence to support student-centred, reflective and practice-based learning at master's level. The role of the teacher as coach is clearly articulated and consistently implemented. Ongoing staff development and the recent move towards a more stable team structure further strengthen the quality of programme delivery.

The panel notes that the programme has responded constructively and effectively to the recommendations from the previous accreditation. Developments such as the strengthening of practice-based research, the increased attention to pedagogical competencies and the further positioning of the different strands demonstrate a reflective and development-oriented approach.

The programme is offered entirely in English and carries an English title. The panel considers this choice appropriate and well justified in view of the international orientation of the music profession and the composition of the student population. The programme ensures that teaching, assessment and communication are conducted in English and that staff are adequately prepared for English-medium instruction. The panel confirms that the teaching staff

demonstrate sufficient proficiency in English to provide high-quality education and guidance. Taking all these considerations into account, the panel is confident that the programme offers a coherent, inclusive and supportive teaching-learning environment that fully enables students to realise the intended learning outcomes. 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

Assessment system and structure

The Master of Music programme employs an integrated, development-oriented assessment system that is closely aligned with the intended learning outcomes. Assessment is criterion-based and uses qualitative rather than numerical evaluation. These criteria are derived from the national Master of Music profile and are aligned with NLQF level 7.

From the outset, beginning with the audition phase, students develop Personalised Assessment Criteria (PACs) in consultation with their coaches. These PACs reflect individual learning goals and serve as the foundation for both formative and summative assessments throughout the programme. They are embedded within each student's Individual Study Plan, which articulates learning objectives across the programme's three core domains: performance, practice-based research, and entrepreneurship. The ISP is updated regularly in collaboration with mentors and course leaders and guides the student's overall trajectory.

In 2024, the programme revised its assessment structure to improve clarity and manageability. The previous system of 30 EC comprehensive semester assessments was replaced with a modular model consisting of 5 EC for Entrepreneurship, 10 EC for Practice-Based Research, and 15 EC for Performance. This restructuring allows for more clearly defined assessment moments, helps to distribute workload more evenly across the academic year, and provides students with the opportunity to retake individual components if necessary.

Assessment is structured over the two-year programme and includes both formative and summative components. Assignments and evaluations are closely tied to students' evolving professional practices. Assessment products include public performances, research proposals and papers, project plans, and reflective documentation. Throughout the programme, integration between the three domains is emphasised.

In the first semester, students focus on developing their Individual Study Plan and receive formative feedback on their initial trajectory across the three domains. This stage includes a preliminary presentation of their professional plan and early artistic output. Feedback is delivered through lessons, seminars, and mentoring sessions and is formally recorded in progress forms.

The second semester culminates in a mid-term evaluation known as 'Assessment Moment 1'. This involves a formal presentation in which students demonstrate their progress in performance, research, and entrepreneurship. The assessment focuses on students' development, depth of reflection, and ability to articulate their professional vision. This moment serves as a milestone for structured feedback and potential recalibration.

In the third semester, students are expected to present more advanced work across all domains. This typically includes a public performance, a substantial research presentation or paper, and a developed entrepreneurial initiative—such as a project plan complete with budget, collaborators, and a strategy for

execution. Feedback at this stage focuses on the internal coherence of the student's work, its feasibility, and its relevance to their chosen professional context.

In the final semester, students complete the integrated graduation assessment, which brings together their progress and outcomes across performance, research, and entrepreneurship in a concluding public presentation and final evaluation.

Assessment formats and role of examiners

The programme uses a variety of assessment formats, including written research papers, artistic presentations, oral reflections, project documentation and professional products. Examples include video documentation, reflective writing, lecture-recitals, and presentations of entrepreneurial initiatives. Assessment criteria are shared in Brightspace and OnStage, and feedback is supported via the digital platform Portflow.

Formative assessment is embedded throughout the curriculum. The programme reports that teachers and students engage in regular feedback and feedforward moments. Teachers participate in assessment calibration sessions to ensure consistency. Final assessments in the graduation phase are conducted by two qualified assessors. According to the programme, external experts are no longer formal assessors but now serve in an advisory capacity, a change intended to safeguard the independence of final assessment decisions while still including external perspectives.

The programme adheres to institutional policies that guarantee students at least two opportunities to complete each assessment per academic year. Special arrangements and accommodations are available for students with specific

personal or professional circumstances, as laid out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations.

Quality assurance and role of the Examination Board

The Examination Board holds formal responsibility for safeguarding assessment quality. It oversees the validity and reliability of assessment across the programme and ensures alignment with the intended learning outcomes and the master's level (NLQF 7). The board conducts random reviews, advises on improvements, and ensures that formal procedures are followed. The Assessment Committee, composed of internal staff members, supports the development of assessment instruments.

According to the programme, the Examination Board has advised on several recent improvements. These include the introduction of fixed assessment teams (with two assessors for each graduation assessment) and a clearer definition of the role of external professionals. The programme believes these changes contribute to more consistent assessment and feedback.

In recent years, the Examination Board has taken further steps to enhance the consistency and transparency of assessment procedures. It conducts random reviews of assessment dossiers and facilitates calibration sessions among assessors to align expectations and standards across the programme. Clear procedural instructions have been issued to assessors and chairs of assessment panels to support fair and structured assessment practices.

As part of a broader professionalisation effort, all final graduation assessments are now conducted by two qualified internal assessors, and the role of external experts has been formalised as advisory. These measures are aimed at

reinforcing the objectivity and validity of high-stakes assessment moments, while preserving input from the professional field.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the Master of Music at Hanze has implemented a sound, coherent and well-functioning system of student assessment that is appropriately aligned with the intended learning outcomes and with the level and professionally oriented character of the programme. The assessment system is clearly structured and contributes to transparency, consistency and feasibility throughout the curriculum.

The modular organisation of assessment, based on a recurring 5–10–15 EC structure per semester, provides clarity for students and supports an even distribution of assessment moments. In the panel's view, this structure enables a meaningful and integrated assessment of performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship across the programme. Students experience the assessment trajectory as logical and coherent, with interim assignments that build progressively towards summative assessments at the end of each semester.

The panel values the programme's approach to personalised assessment. Individual assessment criteria, developed in close consultation with coaches, support student ownership and ensure strong alignment between individual learning trajectories and assessment requirements. The panel notes that assessment requirements and criteria are transparent and well communicated to students, contributing to clarity of expectations and fairness in assessment.

The programme employs a wide range of assessment formats that are well aligned with the content and nature of the master's programme.

The panel considers these formats to be valid and appropriate for assessing the intended learning outcomes at master's level. A strong emphasis is placed on formative assessment, with structured feedback throughout the programme supporting students' learning processes, reflection and continuous development.

The graduation phase provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their development in a comprehensive and integrated manner. The combination of artistic output, written reflection and a final interview allows for a balanced assessment of artistic, research and entrepreneurial competencies. The panel notes positively the substantial amount of individual feedback provided during this phase. While the implementation of the renewed feedback approach is still developing and not yet applied uniformly by all assessors, the panel observes that the programme is actively working to further improve the consistency and quality of feedback. Both interim and final assessments are embedded within a coherent quality assurance framework.

Assessment is carried out by qualified and experienced staff. The panel notes that appropriate mechanisms are in place to safeguard the reliability and consistency of assessment, including calibration sessions among assessors and the use of uniform digital assessment systems. The deliberate distinction between the roles of assessors and external experts is seen as a well-considered measure that contributes to the sufficient independence of assessment and decision-making.

The Examination Board fulfils its statutory role in monitoring and safeguarding the quality of assessment. The board actively oversees assessment processes and outcomes and takes initiative in further improving assessment practices

where necessary. Annual training for examiners is viewed positively, as it supports shared standards and professional development. The Examination Board works in close cooperation with the Assessment Committee, and together they contribute to a culture of quality and continuous improvement in assessment.

The panel notes that the Examination Board is actively engaging with emerging developments in assessment, including the implications of artificial intelligence. While this topic is still under development, the panel encourages the programme to continue exploring the specific relevance of AI for music education, recognising that these considerations may differ from more general institutional approaches. The panel also suggests considering the involvement of external international assessors as advisors, in order to further strengthen international benchmarking.

Finally, the panel observes that the programme has responded constructively to relevant points

from the previous accreditation in 2020. In response to concerns regarding the consistency of feedback in graduation assessments, the programme introduced a uniform digital system for registering assessments and analysing feedback quality. In addition, assessment chairs were coached to improve clarity and consistency. According to student evaluations, these measures have resulted in demonstrably more useful and transparent feedback. Although this issue was not formulated as a formal recommendation, the programme has addressed it proactively as part of its commitment to assessment quality.

Taking all these considerations into account, the panel is confident that the programme has an adequate, reliable and independent system of student assessment that supports students' learning processes and ensures that the intended learning outcomes are validly and consistently assessed. 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 Master of Music at Hanze concludes in the fourth semester with a 30 EC graduation programme. This graduation phase consists of three integrated assessment components: a performance demonstration of the student's professional practice (15 EC), a practice-based research assessment (10 EC), and an entrepreneurship component comprising a professional practice and reflections report (5 EC). The assessments for practice-based research and entrepreneurship are completed prior to the final performance demonstration.

The graduation process is supervised by a coaching team, and culminates in an Integral Assessment, which includes a live performance, a portfolio and a criterion-based interview.

Graduation work is assessed using the personalised assessment criteria (PACs) developed by each student in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The Examination Board oversees the quality and level of graduation work through random screenings and calibration sessions. The board has also formalised the assessment procedure by requiring exactly two qualified assessors per graduation and redefining the role of external experts to an advisory one, in line with institutional guidelines.

Between 2022 and 2024, a total of 51 students graduated from the programme: 29 from the Classical Music strand, 14 from New York Jazz and 8 from New Audiences and Innovative Practice. Based on follow-up research, the programme reports that over 85% of graduates are professionally active in music, typically in varied portfolio careers involving performance,

teaching, creative projects, and entrepreneurship. Graduates represent 19 nationalities, reflecting the international reach of the programme.

The programme tracks alumni outcomes through structured follow-up activities, including desk research and data collection on graduates' career paths. In 2025, the programme conducted an update on the whereabouts of graduates from the 2022–2024 cohorts. The data show a strong alignment between the programme's goals and the actual professional engagement of alumni, who work in diverse contexts across national and international music scenes. According to the programme, this ongoing monitoring supports the evaluation of graduate preparedness and the relevance of the curriculum to real-world practice.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the graduation process of the Master of Music at Hanze provides students with a coherent, transparent and appropriate framework to demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes at master's level. The graduation programme in the fourth semester, comprising 30 EC and consisting of integrated components in performance, practice-based research and entrepreneurship, enables a comprehensive and balanced assessment of students' final level.

The graduation process is carefully structured and supervised by a coaching team and culminates in an Integral Assessment that combines a live performance, a portfolio and a criterion-based interview. The panel considers the shift from a single, comprehensive assessment to a

modular structure, applied consistently across the programme and including the graduation phase, to be a clear improvement. This structure enhances transparency for students and assessors and allows for more targeted assessment and, where necessary, reassessment of individual components.

Graduation work is assessed on the basis of personalised assessment criteria developed by students in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The panel finds that the use of these criteria supports both authenticity and ownership, while remaining firmly anchored in the programme's qualification requirements at NLQF level 7. Oversight by the Examination Board, including random screenings, calibration sessions and the formalisation of assessment procedures, ensures that a consistent and appropriate final level is maintained across the programme.

The panel reviewed a representative selection of 16 graduation works completed in the last two academic years. These works were distributed across the three strands, comprising 9 projects from the *Classical Music* strand, 4 from *New York Jazz* and 3 from *New Audiences and Innovative Practice*. Based on this review, the panel confirms that the level, scope and quality of the graduation work demonstrate that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at master's level. The integration of artistic performance, reflection and research is clearly visible in the final projects and closely aligned with each student's professional profile.

With regard to practice-based research, the panel observes that research outcomes are generally relevant and meaningfully connected to students' artistic practice. Research is clearly used as a tool for artistic development rather than as a preparation for a research career. In several cases, the panel noted a particularly

strong and sophisticated integration of research and artistic development, which compares favourably with practices observed in other master's programmes in music. This confirms the consistency of constructive alignment between current research orientation and the intended learning outcomes.

The entrepreneurship component of the graduation work is assessed as adequate overall. The panel appreciates that entrepreneurial outputs are grounded in real-life professional contexts and result in concrete professional products. At the same time, the panel notes variation in depth and integration across graduation works. In some cases, entrepreneurship is well embedded in the overall artistic profile, while in others it remains more basic in relation to the number of credits assigned. The panel sees potential for further development in strengthening the integration of entrepreneurship within the graduation work, while recognising that the current level meets the programme's requirements.

The panel is satisfied that the Examination Board effectively safeguards the final level of the programme. The requirement that graduation assessments are conducted by two qualified assessors, combined with the advisory role of external experts, contributes to reliability, consistency and independence in assessment. The panel also notes positively that the programme has followed up on feedback from the 2020 assessment by improving the consistency of graduation feedback and the transparency of assessment procedures through clearer assessment moments and digital registration and feedback tools.

Finally, the panel values the programme's systematic monitoring of alumni outcomes. Follow-up data for graduates from the 2022–2024 cohorts show that a large majority of alumni are

professionally active in the music field, often in portfolio careers that combine performance, education, creative projects and entrepreneurship. Graduates operate in a wide range of national and international contexts, reflecting the programme's international orientation. The panel also notes positive signals from the professional field regarding the quality and impact of graduates, in particular with respect to the New Audiences and Innovative Practice strand,

which demonstrates visible impact both within and beyond the programme.

Taking all these considerations into account, the panel concludes that graduates of the Master of Music demonstrably achieve the intended learning outcomes and are well prepared to enter and contribute meaningfully to the professional music sector. The panel assesses that the programme meets this standard.

Attachment 1: administrative details of the programme

Institution

Name in RIO	Hanzehogeschool Groningen
Address	Meeuwerderweg 1, 9724 EM Groningen
Website	www.hanze.nl
BRIN-number	25BE
Status (funded or unfunded)	Funded
ITK (yes or no)	Yes (positive result, 26 February 2018)

Programme

First name, as in RIO	Master of Music
Location	Groningen
Programme number in RIO	44852
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 Music, New York Jazz, New Audiences and Innovative Practice
Joint programme degree	No
Special feature	None
Degree and addition	Master of Music
Study load in EC (60, 90, 120, 180, 240, 360)	120 EC
Modes: full-time, part-time, dual	Full-time
Working with units of learning outcomes	Full-time only
Assessment cluster	HBO Master Muziek groep 1
Submission date	1 May 2026
Other (e.g. name change or extension of duration)	Not applicable

Attachment 2: assessment panel

drs. Raoul van Aalst, chair

Independent advisor and philosophy consultant, experienced panel chair and assessment expert in higher education.

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

Marloes de Nul MA, student member

Student B Docent Muziek, Conservatorium Maastricht, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

The panel was supported by drs. Linda van der Grijspaarde, 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

29 January 2026

Time	Session	Participants
12:30 – 13:00	Arrival & welcome with short performance by six students	Programme managers
13:00 – 14:15	Internal preparatory meeting (including lunch)	Panel
14:15 – 15:30	Interactive session	Lecturers and students
15:30 – 15:45	Internal panel discussion	Panel
15:45 – 16:45	Meeting with programme management (short presentation + discussion)	- Executive Board member - Director of Art, Design & Built Environment Cluster - Programme manager - Team leader Master of Music
16:45 – 17:15	Internal panel discussion	Panel
17:30 – 19:30	Panel dinner	Panel
20:00 – 21:30	Student and alumni performances / showcase	Students / alumni

30 January 2026

Time	Session	Participants
08:30 – 08:45	Arrival & welcome	Programme managers
08:45 – 09:00	Internal preparatory meeting and review of materials	Panel
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with teaching staff	6 lecturers
10:00 – 10:15	Internal panel discussion	Panel
10:15 – 11:15	Meeting with students	- 3 students CLA - 2 students NYJ - 2 students NAIP
11:15 – 11:30	Internal panel discussion	Panel
11:30 – 12:15	Meeting with Examination and Assessment Board	- Chair Examination Committee - 3 members Examination Committee - Chair Assessment Committee - Chair Study Programme Committee
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch	Panel
13:00 – 14:00	Meeting with work field representatives and alumni	- 3 external partners - 4 alumni
14:00 – 15:30	Internal panel discussion (pending issues)	Panel
15:30 – 16:00	Feedback session	All participants
16:00	Closing reception	All participants

Attachment 4: Recommendations from previous assessment

Below is an overview of the recommendations as formulated in the 2020 assessment report, accompanied by a summary of the programme's follow-up actions, as described in the 2025 self-evaluation.

Recommendation 1: Pay more explicit attention to the physical and health-related aspects of being a musician.

Follow-up: The programme has incorporated greater attention to physical awareness and wellbeing within the mentoring trajectory. Topics such as physical strain, mental resilience and stage-related stress can now be addressed in coaching conversations and, where relevant, within practice-based research projects. In addition, students may make use of existing facilities and expertise within the conservatoire and Hanze to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

Recommendation 2: Consider offering pedagogical courses as electives, given that many graduates combine their artistic practice with teaching activities.

Follow-up: The programme has introduced a pedagogy elective that combines theoretical perspectives with practical teaching experience, including a teaching internship. Pedagogical themes can also be addressed within students' research or entrepreneurship trajectories, allowing for integration with individual professional ambitions.

Recommendation 3: Broaden the perspective within the jazz strand beyond a predominant focus on New York.

Follow-up: While maintaining the New York Jazz profile, the programme has expanded its international orientation by establishing exchanges and collaborations with other jazz hubs, including institutions in Aarhus and Rio de Janeiro. In addition, Dutch jazz practices have been incorporated through project weeks, thereby broadening the contextual and stylistic scope of the jazz strand.

Recommendation 4: Investigate the relatively low intake in the New Audiences and Innovative Practice (New Audiences and Innovative Practice) strand and consider measures to increase its visibility.

Follow-up: The programme has taken steps to clarify and actively promote the New Audiences and Innovative Practice profile, including improvements to online communication and programme information. These efforts have increased the visibility of the strand and contributed to a gradual rise in interest and enrolment. The programme continues to monitor developments in this area.

Recommendation 5: Clarify the programme's vision on entrepreneurship and make it more explicit within the curriculum.

Follow-up: The programme has further articulated entrepreneurship as an integral part of professional artistic practice, emphasising initiative, sustainability and contextual awareness. This clarified vision is reflected in the curriculum structure, the formulation of personalised assessment criteria, and the coaching provided to students across all strands.

Recommendation 6: Encourage active dialogue on diversity and inclusion within the programme.

Follow-up: Diversity and inclusion are now explicitly addressed within the mentoring trajectory. A dedicated working group on diversity has been established within the Prins Claus Conservatorium, and students can incorporate diversity-related considerations into their personalised assessment criteria where relevant to their professional development.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the research component and clarify the distinction between artistic research and artistically informed practice.

Follow-up: The programme has invested in the further development of practice-based research through staff professionalisation, clearer alignment of the research trajectory with graduation requirements, and the introduction of calibration sessions. Interim research presentations and mid-term reviews have been implemented to monitor research quality and support students in maintaining an appropriate research focus

Attachment 5: reviewed documents

Self Evaluation Report and Documentation

- SER Steps Ahead 2025
- Organizational Structure Master of Music PCC 1.5
- Strategisch Beleidsplan 2021-2026 Betrokken en Wendbaar
- Opleidingsprofiel Muziek 2017
- WAC report May 2025
- WAC report May 2024
- Hanze Educational Concept part 1
- OER deel 1 Hanzebrede bepalingen 25-26 master 1.0
- Practice Based Research in the MMus
- Student charter 2025-2026
- Education Evaluation Plan PCC
- Overview Educational Staff Mmus 2025
- Analyse NSE 2025 - Master
- Competency and Assessment Matrix Mmus 2025
- Toets en Onderwijsbeleid 2027
- Annual report EC en TC 23-24
- Graduation Manual Master of Music 2025-2026

Curriculum resources

- (National) Profile and Standards
- TER and Student Charter
- PCC policy documents
- Curriculum and Assessment

Selection course materials

- Course descriptions: Representative Selection
- Assessment and feedback forms: Representative Selection
- Reader Entrepreneurship
- Reader Practice Based Research

Graduation Dossiers

- 4 Graduation Dossiers cohort 2024 (2 New York Jazz, 2 Classical Music)
- 12 Graduation Dossiers cohort 2025 (2 New York Jazz, 3 New Audience and Innovative Practice, 7 Classical Music)
- Graduation Manual Master of Music 2526
- Links to final demonstration media files

