



PO Box 5050
NL-3502 JB Utrecht
+31 30 87 820 87
www.AeQui.nl
info@AeQui.nl

Master of Music

Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing program
10 and 11 February 2026

Summary

On 10 and 11 February 2026, the Master of Music of Amsterdam University of the Arts (Conservatorium van Amsterdam) was assessed by an independent panel commissioned by AeQui. The panel's overall judgement is **positive**.

The programme is a two-year, full-time master's programme (120 EC), offered entirely in English and aimed at educating autonomous, reflective and socially engaged musicians. The programme prepares graduates for sustainable careers as performing musicians, composers, creators and artistic professionals in a rapidly evolving international landscape.

Intended learning outcomes

According to the panel, the Master of Music has clearly articulated intended learning outcomes that align with the national domain-specific framework for music education and correspond to the level of a professionally oriented master's programme at NLQF level 7. The programme is based on the 2017 national profile developed under the auspices of Netwerk Muziek, structured around seven interrelated competencies: technical skills, creative skills, contextual focus, research and development skills, communication skills, organisational skills and teaching skills. The revised 2025 national profile will be implemented in the programme in the coming period.

These competencies provide a coherent framework integrating artistic craftsmanship, research-informed practice, professional positioning and societal engagement. The panel values the programme's broadened conception of excellence, in which artistic ownership, leadership, adaptability and entrepreneurial awareness complement technical mastery. The progression from bachelor-level craftsmanship to master-level artistic autonomy and contextual positioning is clearly articulated.

The programme demonstrates active engagement with developments in the professional

field and contributes to sector-wide profile development. Consultation with the professional field largely takes place through network-based structures rather than a formal advisory board, a feature which the panel considers effective in harnessing a broad range of professional connections. Continued attention to the consistent operationalisation of transversal competencies across all departments will further strengthen coherence.

The panel concludes that the programme meets Standard 1.

Teaching-learning environment

The panel judges that the Master of Music offers a coherent, student-centred and practice-based teaching-learning environment that enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Constructive alignment between objectives, curriculum components and assessment is evident throughout the programme.

The curriculum combines intensive principal study with research, interdisciplinary projects and elective components. While credit distribution varies across Classical, Jazz and Pop departments, all tracks share a strong artistic core complemented by research and opportunities for individual profiling. The recently introduced Focus Masters and interconnected trajectories provide clearer orientation while preserving

flexibility for personalised study paths. Further harmonisation of curricula and timetables across departments remains important considering highly individualised trajectories and interdisciplinary ambitions.

Interdisciplinarity and cross-genre collaboration are visible strengths. Students participate in cross-departmental projects, international collaborations and centralised project weeks. Facilities, including rehearsal spaces, performance venues and specialised technical infrastructure, adequately support artistic and technological innovation. The panel observes that participation in socially engaged projects could be further broadened to align more closely with the programme's institutional ambition regarding societal engagement.

Research is meaningfully integrated into the curriculum and linked to artistic development. Small-group research settings stimulate dialogue and peer learning, and public presentation formats such as the Research Festival enhance professional readiness. Greater consistency in aligning artistic supervision and research guidance would further enhance coherence.

Teaching staff are professionally active, pedagogically competent and sufficiently numerous to realise the intended learning outcomes. Their engagement in the professional field strengthens authenticity and relevance. Admission procedures are selective and aligned with master-level expectations. Student guidance structures are well organised, and attention to well-being and healthy musicianship is embedded in policy and practice.

The choice for English as the language of instruction is justified by the international composition of the student body and the global

orientation of the profession. Staff demonstrate adequate proficiency.

The panel concludes that the programme meets Standard 2.

Student assessment

The panel considers the assessment system coherent, sufficiently valid and adequately reliable for a master-level programme. A broad range of assessment formats reflects contemporary musical practice and allows students to demonstrate integrated competencies. Assessment is closely connected to daily artistic practice and complemented by structured oral and written feedback.

Final examinations are assessed by committees that include multiple members and external experts, safeguarding independence and professional calibration. The programme is engaged in ongoing reflection on assessment culture, including possible adjustments to grading formats and portfolio-based approaches.

Further clarification and alignment of assessment criteria, particularly within Music in Society and in situations where students formulate individual learning outcomes, will enhance transparency and comparability. Structural embedding of assessment training for all panel members will further strengthen reliability.

The Examination Board operates independently and fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively, monitoring procedures and safeguarding quality and legality.

The panel concludes that the programme meets Standard 3.

Achieved learning outcomes

The graduation phase consists of the Principal Subject (artistic component), which the

programme designates as the formal final project. In addition, students work on the Master Research component. Based on its review of final works of students, the panel concludes that graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes at the expected master level (NLQF 7).

The artistic components demonstrate technical command, artistic maturity and a clearly articulated personal profile. Students can formulate coherent artistic concepts, realising them convincingly and positioning themselves meaningfully within professional contexts. The diversity of final presentations reflects the flexibility of the curriculum and the space for individual artistic direction.

The research components show critical reflection and a substantive connection to artistic practice. The integration of artistic work, research and contextual positioning is coherent. Public presentation formats contribute positively to students' ability to articulate and communicate their artistic and research processes.

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 Amsterdam University of the Arts.

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

drs. Raoul van Aalst
Chair

Alumni confirm that the programme provides strong artistic preparation and supports the development of an independent professional identity.

The panel concludes that the programme meets Standard 4.

Recommendations

With a view to the continued development of the programme, the panel formulates the following recommendations. In addition, several suggestions for further enhancement are included in the main body of this report:

- Continue harmonisation of curricula and timetables across departments to support interdisciplinarity and the feasibility of highly individualised learning pathways.
- Further operationalise communication, organisational and teaching competencies within curriculum design and assessment in line with the renewed national profile.

drs. Linda van der Grijspaarde
Secretary

Introduction

Profile

The Master of Music is offered by the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts. The Conservatorium operates within a dynamic international cultural environment and maintains close links with the professional music field.

The programme is a full-time, two-year master with a study load of 120 EC. It offers specialisations in Classical Music, Jazz, Pop Music, Early Music, Composition, Live Electronics and Music in Society. The curriculum is centred on the student's principal artistic practice and is complemented by research, interdisciplinary projects and elective components.

The programme aims to educate autonomous, reflective and socially engaged musicians. Students develop a distinct artistic identity and position themselves within contemporary professional and societal contexts. Through flexible and individualised study trajectories, artistic performance, practice-based research and professional development are integrated, preparing graduates for sustainable careers in an international music landscape.

The assessment

The AHK 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 (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 is offered by the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, and is fully taught in English. It is positioned as a professionally oriented master's degree aimed at developing reflective, independent and socially engaged musical professionals who can shape and articulate their own artistic identity and contributing to the international music profession.

Students specialise in a wide range of principal subjects across the Classical, Jazz and Pop departments. These include instrumental and vocal performance, composition, conducting, music production, live electronics, immersive audio, music in society and composing for film. In addition, the programme has introduced Focus Masters, which allow students to deepen a specific artistic or societal orientation. The programme is currently working towards a structure of interconnected trajectories that provide direction while preserving flexibility for individualised study paths.

The programme is aligned with the national framework for music education. Up to and including the previous academic year, it operated under the 2018 Dutch National Training Profile for Music; as of the current academic year, it has adopted the revised 2025 profile. Both profiles were developed under the auspices of Netwerk Muziek.

The programme is based on the national profile of 2017. It contains seven competencies:

1. Technical skills – the student has a wide range of professional knowledge and skills

and applies them in different musical contexts.

2. Creative skills – the student shapes musical expression based on an individual artistic vision and aims.
3. Contextual focus – the student identifies developments in the national and international professional field and in society at large and positions their work accordingly.
4. Research and development skills – the student evaluates artistic performance through self-initiated research and reflection, contributing to innovation in the field.
5. Communication skills – the student interacts effectively in diverse professional contexts using appropriate forms of communication.
6. Organisational skills – the student creates sustainable work situations and networks to realise artistic and professional goals.
7. Teaching skills – the student applies musical knowledge and skills to facilitate the musical development or performance of others.

The revised 2025 profile reflects developments in the professional field, including technological innovation, hybrid professional practices, interdisciplinary collaboration and increased attention to societal engagement and well-being. The previously seven competencies are conceptually clustered into five overarching qualities (artistic craftsmanship, cross-disciplinary collaboration, adaptability and flexibility, entrepreneurship and autonomy). This revised profile will be implemented in the programme in the coming period. The competency-based structure will remain leading in the educational profile.

The programme acknowledges in its Self-Evaluation Report (Management Review) that, although the competency framework is comprehensive, certain domains, particularly communication, organisation and teaching, require further strengthening at master's level across departments. The programme indicates that these domains will receive additional attention in the forthcoming curriculum development process.

The programme reports that it maintains structural connections with the professional field through collaboration with individual professionals, venues and cultural institutions in Amsterdam and beyond. The Conservatorium also makes use of its international network, including the Global Conservatoire, as a body of "critical friends" who provide feedback on strategic and curricular developments. The documentation does not mention a formal advisory board or work-field committee.

Considerations

According to the panel, the Master of Music demonstrates a clear and distinctive profile that is consistently reflected in its intended learning outcomes. The programme positions itself as an internationally oriented conservatoire that is firmly embedded in the cultural context of Amsterdam while preparing graduates for an international professional environment. The panel considers this dual orientation, combining local engagement with global positioning, to be coherent and appropriate for a master-level programme in music.

The panel notes that the programme is aligned with the national domain specific framework for music education. Until the current academic year, it operated under the 2017 Dutch National Training Profile for Music; as of this academic year, it has started to adopt the revised 2025 profile, both developed under the auspices of

Network Muziek. The panel values the active contribution of the Conservatorium to the development of the renewed profile and considers this engagement indicative of sectoral responsibility and professional awareness.

The intended learning outcomes are structured around seven interrelated competencies: technical skills, creative skills, contextual focus, research and development skills, communication skills, organisational skills and teaching skills. In the panel's judgement, these competencies together provide a coherent and comprehensive framework that integrates artistic, reflective and professional dimensions of musicianship. The intended learning outcomes correspond to Level 7 of the Dutch Qualifications Framework and reflect the expected degree of autonomy, complexity and professional orientation associated with a professionally oriented master's programme.

The panel considers the explicit inclusion of research, communication, organisational and teaching competencies to be appropriate and future oriented. In particular, the recognition of teaching as a full competency at master-level aligns with developments in the professional field, where musicians increasingly operate in hybrid roles that combine artistic, educational, organisational and entrepreneurial responsibilities. The panel concurs with the programme's view that such hybrid professional identities should be reflected in the intended learning outcomes.

The panel further observes that the programme clearly articulates the progression from bachelor to master-level. Whereas the bachelor phase focuses primarily on technical proficiency and craft-based excellence, the master emphasises artistic ownership, contextual positioning and research informed practice. According to the

panel, this progression is convincingly embedded in the competency framework and appropriately reflected in the formulation of the intended learning outcomes.

The recently introduced Focus Masters and four proposed trajectories are, in the panel's view, consistent with the programme's identity and ambitions. Although additional structuring could potentially reduce flexibility, the panel judges that the current balance between direction and individual freedom is appropriately maintained. Flexibility remains a defining characteristic of the programme and is coherently connected to the intended learning outcomes.

The panel also notes that the programme's internal understanding of excellence has evolved. Excellence is no longer defined solely in terms of technical and musical-stylistic mastery, but increasingly includes artistic ownership, leadership, societal engagement and entrepreneurial competence. The panel considers this broadened conception of excellence to be appropriate for contemporary master-level education and adequately reflected in the intended learning outcomes.

At the same time, the panel observes that the further operationalisation of certain competencies, particularly communication, organisational and teaching skills, requires continued attention to ensure consistent integration throughout the programme. According to the panel, systematic embedding of the renewed national profile in curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment will strengthen coherence and transparency.

While the panel notes the absence of a formal advisory board structure, it considers the existing network-based consultation with the professional field to be adequate at present; indeed, this has the benefits of harnessing a broad range of professional connections.

Overall, the panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes are clearly articulated, aligned with the national framework and appropriate to master-level education. The ongoing integration of the renewed profile represents a meaningful and forward-looking development which, once fully embedded, will further reinforce the coherence and future orientation of the Master of Music. Based on these considerations, the panel concludes 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

The Master of Music offers a teaching-learning environment centred on the student's principal artistic practice and characterised by flexibility and individualisation. The two-year curriculum (120 EC) is structured around specialisations within the Classical, Jazz and Pop departments. The intended learning outcomes are translated into learning objectives across principal study, research seminars, project work and interdisciplinary activities, ensuring constructive alignment between objectives, teaching and assessment.

While the overall volume and master-level orientation are consistent across departments, the distribution of credits reflects disciplinary differences.

In *Classical Music and Early Music*, the curriculum is structured identically. Each year consists of: Principal Subject and related practical subjects (40 EC), Research (5 EC), Free Space (5 EC) and Electives (10 EC). Across two years, the Principal Subject accounts for 80 EC, with 40 EC allocated to research and individual profiling.

In *Jazz*, the Principal Subject comprises 30 EC per year (60 EC total). The curriculum further includes theory components, ensemble work (10 EC per year), and research culminating in a thesis and presentation. Professional orientation is embedded through Music Business and Career elements.

In *Pop*, the Principal Subject comprises 22 EC per year (44 EC total). A substantial part of the programme is dedicated to individual credits (15 EC per year) and entrepreneurship-related components such as Managing your Talent. Research is integrated in both years and concludes with a thesis and presentation.

Despite differences in credit distribution, all tracks share a structure with a strong artistic core, embedded research, and space for individual development.

The didactic concept is student-centred, and practice based. One-to-one tuition, ensemble work, project-based learning and reflective dialogue form the backbone of the programme. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for shaping their own artistic and professional trajectory. Flexibility is described by the management as a defining principle of the curriculum.

In response to earlier recommendations, the programme has positioned flexibility as the core of the curriculum rather than expanding the number of formal strands. The recently introduced Focus Masters and proposed trajectories aim to provide clearer direction while maintaining individual autonomy. Centralised project weeks are being introduced to reduce scheduling conflicts and to create structured opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. During the site visit, the management informed the panel that the harmonisation of curricula and timetables across departments is still ongoing, particularly given the complexity created by highly individualised study trajectories.

Interdisciplinarity is promoted. Students participate in cross-departmental projects, international collaborations and a large annual offer of project opportunities across genres and domains. Examples include collaborations within the Global Conservatoire network, projects with cultural institutions in Amsterdam, interdis-

disciplinary productions involving film and visual arts, and technologically innovative initiatives in immersive audio and live electronics. During the visit, an example was discussed of a student applying AI technology to transform a saxophone performance into an immersive artistic experience. Students expressed appreciation for the breadth of opportunities, while some also indicated a wish for more structurally embedded collaboration between departments.

Research is embedded in the curriculum and organised in small-group settings, fostering peer learning and dialogue. Research trajectories include artistic research, thesis-based research and project-based research aligned with students' artistic practice. Presentation skills form an explicit and significant component of research assessment. Following earlier recommendations, the positioning of research within the curriculum has been clarified; feedback from students suggested that the value and purpose of Research within the practitioner's learning trajectory could be further articulated.

The programme demonstrates attention to societal engagement and outreach. Projects within Music in Society and collaborations with cultural partners aim to reflect the ambition to connect artistic practice with broader social contexts. The Conservatorium has strengthened its presence within Amsterdam's cultural ecosystem.

During the site visit, students described the programme as diverse, international and accommodating. They value the intercultural learning environment and the opportunity to develop their own artistic identity within a context that combines craftsmanship with openness to experimentation. Some students expressed a desire for more visible institutional support for self-initiated artistic projects, for example in production-related or organisational aspects.

They suggested the benefit of a clearly identifiable support point for such initiatives.

Student guidance is organised through principal teachers, coordinators and additional mentoring structures. Coaching and counselling services are available, and attention to healthy musicianship and mental well-being has increased in recent years. Students indicated that they know where to find support when needed. Staff, however, noted that internal clarity regarding support pathways could be improved. Student handbooks and formal documentation were found to be clear and comprehensive.

The teaching staff consists of active professionals with ties to the national and international music field. The Conservatorium invests in staff development, including training in inclusive education, intercultural competence and student support. The size and composition of the teaching team enable intensive and individualised education across departments. Differences between departments are visible. The Pop department operates with relatively small cohorts and benefits from the dynamic environment of the Q-Factory. At the same time, the spread across multiple locations and the limited availability of rooms create substantial logistical challenges for cross-departmental integration.

Facilities include rehearsal rooms, performance venues, multimedia laboratories and specialised technical infrastructure suitable for interdisciplinary and technologically innovative projects. Facilities are physically accessible, and support is tailored to individual student needs. Spatial capacity and housing remain ongoing challenges.

Admission to the programme is selective and holistic, focusing on artistic merit, research potential and the articulation of artistic identity. Technical proficiency alone is not considered

sufficient. The panel noted some variation between departments in admission procedures, with harmonisation envisaged.

The programme is offered entirely in English and carries the English degree title “Master of Music.” English is consistently used in teaching, assessment and communication. The human resources policy includes attention to English-language proficiency and preparation for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Staff demonstrate adequate proficiency in English. In the Self-evaluation report (Management Review), the programme states: ‘The programme is called Master of Music because this is the internationally recognised degree title for second cycle (EQF Level 7) music programmes. The programme is taught in English to align with international higher education standards and the international nature of contemporary professional music practice. English serves as a shared working language within a diverse learning environment and enables full participation of international students, staff and external experts. It also provides direct access to relevant artistic and academic literature, supports international collaboration and mobility, and strengthens the programme’s international positioning and external quality assurance. Clear admission requirements are defined regarding proficiency in English, ensuring that all students can participate fully and effectively in the programme.’

Considerations

According to the panel, the Master of Music offers a coherent, well-structured and student-centred teaching-learning environment that enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes are adequately translated into programme components, learning activities and assessment formats. The panel confirms that constructive alignment between objectives, curriculum

design and assessment is consistently realised throughout the programme. The structure provides sufficient differentiation to accommodate the diversity of admitted students while maintaining the required master-level.

The panel values the programme’s practice based didactic concept, which places artistic autonomy and student agency at its core. Students are expected to take increasing responsibility for shaping their own learning trajectory, artistic profile and professional positioning. In the panel’s view, this educational model is appropriate for master-level education and clearly supports the transition from bachelor level craftsmanship to master-level artistic ownership. The combination of intensive principal study, electives, research pathways and project-based learning provides a balanced framework for personalised yet academically grounded trajectories.

The panel positively notes that the programme has implemented the recommendation from the previous visitation to position flexibility as the leading principle of the curriculum rather than expanding predefined strands. The introduction of Focus Masters and interconnected trajectories provides clearer orientation while preserving individual choice. The panel judges that the current balance between structure and flexibility is adequate. It does observe, however, that highly individualised study paths require continued coordination. Further harmonisation of curricula and timetables across departments remains important to sustain interdisciplinary ambitions and organisational feasibility.

Interdisciplinarity and cross genre exchange are, in the panel’s assessment, meaningful and visible elements of the learning environment. Examples of cross departmental projects, international collaborations and centralised project

weeks demonstrate active exchange across genres and domains. The panel acknowledges that student experiences vary: while many students report ample collaboration opportunities, others express the need for more structurally embedded joint initiatives. Opportunities exist to further strengthen connections involving the Pop department, particularly in areas such as artistic entrepreneurship, digital presence and artistic positioning. Although physical separation of locations and space constraints pose substantial logistical challenges for cross-departmental integration, the panel confirms that facilities and technical infrastructure are adequate. Accessibility measures and tailored provisions sufficiently support an inclusive and feasible learning environment.

Regarding societal engagement, the panel observes that the programme has strengthened its presence within Amsterdam's cultural ecosystem through structural collaborations and community-oriented initiatives. Professional representatives confirm the artistic level and relevance of the programme. At the same time, the panel notes that participation in socially engaged projects remains limited relative to the central place of societal engagement in the institutional vision. According to the panel, further structural embedding of this strand within the curriculum would enhance coherence between ambition and practice.

The panel judges that research is appropriately embedded within the curriculum and aligned with master-level expectations. Small group settings support peer dialogue, and the thesis with presentation forms a substantial and clearly weighted component of assessment. The integration of artistic development and research is appropriate; however, the panel observes that artistic teachers are not yet consistently involved in research trajectories across all

departments. Stronger structural alignment between artistic supervision and research guidance, together with more explicit support for both process oriented and content related aspects of research, would further enhance coherence.

In the panel's assessment, the teaching staff are professionally active, pedagogically competent and sufficiently diverse and numerous to realise the intended learning outcomes. Their engagement in the professional field strengthens authenticity and relevance. Staff development initiatives, including attention to inclusive education and culturally diverse classrooms, contribute positively to educational quality.

The panel considers the admission requirements realistic and appropriate in relation to the intended learning outcomes and the master-level of the programme. The holistic admission procedure adequately safeguards artistic level and reflective capacity.

Student support and guidance are, according to the panel, well organised and responsive. Strengthened coaching structures, including a dedicated adviser for the Classical department, contribute to (educational) feasibility. Attention to healthy musicianship, wellbeing and social safety is embedded in policy and practice. Students generally know where to find support services. The panel does note that internal clarity among staff regarding referral pathways can be improved and advises continued attention to communication and awareness. Information provision through documentation and student handbooks is clear and complete.

The panel confirms that the programme is justified in offering instruction in English. Given the international composition of the student population and the global orientation of the music

profession, English medium instruction is functional and appropriate. The degree title Master of Music is consistent with the content and profile of the programme. Staff demonstrate adequate proficiency in English, and institutional policy sufficiently supports English medium education.

Finally, the panel values the programme's strong and well-established connections with the professional field. External representatives confirm the high artistic level of students and graduates. The panel supports the suggestion made by some alumni representatives to involve alumni more structurally in the educational process, as their contribution, on campus or online,

may further strengthen professional preparation and sustainable career development.

Taking all these considerations into account, the panel concludes that the teaching-learning environment enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The identified points for further development are developmental in nature and do not detract from the overall adequacy of the teaching-learning environment. The panel therefore concludes that the programme meets this standard.

Student assessment

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

Findings

In the programme, a broad range of assessment forms is applied, reflecting the diversity of contemporary musical practice. These include practical examinations and auditions, written and oral examinations, presentations, artistic productions, recordings and assessment of active participation. Assessment is closely integrated into students' daily artistic practice and includes structured oral and written feedback. Peer feedback is embedded to stimulate critical reflection and collaborative learning. In the principal subject, assessment is integrative in nature and addresses multiple competencies simultaneously.

While departments apply discipline-sensitive formats and terminology, shared assessment principles and the overarching competency framework apply across the programme. Assessment criteria and procedures are documented in the Study Guide. Oral examinations are, in principle, conducted by at least two assessors.

Course components are assessed by the respective teachers, while final examinations are assessed by broader committees. Practical final examination committees generally consist of a chair, the principal study teacher, a representative from the instrumental or vocal group and, where possible, a representative from another department. External members are included to ensure independence and alignment with professional standards. Final performance assessments involve multiple assessors, including at least one external member.

The organisation of final assessments is acknowledged by staff as complex, particularly given the diversity of formats and interdis-

ciplinary elements. The programme is currently exploring broader cross-departmental panels in order to strengthen calibration and objectivity. The intention is to diversify committee composition without necessarily increasing their size. Maintaining specialist expertise within committees remains a guiding principle.

The assessment system is subject to continuous development and reflection. The programme is currently exploring possible adjustments, including a shift from numerical grading to pass or fail formats for selected components. In addition, portfolio based and project driven forms of assessment are being considered, particularly in relation to interdisciplinary work. Ongoing discussions address the transparency and consistency of assessment procedures and the alignment between admission criteria, formative assessment and final assessment. While differences in assessment formats between departments are limited, efforts to further synchronise practices and digitalise documentation are underway. Within the Music in Society track, staff indicated that the articulation of assessment criteria could in some cases be made more concrete. The programme acknowledges the importance of clearly formulated and transparent criteria, especially in situations where students formulate individual learning outcomes.

Students reported that assessment procedures are generally clear and transparent and expressed appreciation for the clarity of expectations. They receive feedback from both artistic and research supervisors. Teaching staff indicated that interdisciplinary projects sometimes require adapted assessment criteria.

The Conservatorium van Amsterdam has adopted an explicit AI policy in assessment. AI is not permitted to generate written thesis content. In artistic research and artistic production, AI may be used where appropriate; however, students must demonstrate ownership of their work and the ability to articulate and critically reflect on their creative and research processes. Greater emphasis has therefore been placed on oral presentation and reflection as part of assessment.

The Examination Board operates independently in accordance with the WHW and the AHK Examination Regulations. It consists of nine faculty members, one external member and a secretary. Board members do not hold managerial or financial responsibilities and are actively engaged in teaching; many have obtained, or are working towards, formal examination qualifications. The Board appoints examiners, grants exemptions, monitors assessment procedures, attends examinations and prepares an annual report containing recommendations. It meets regularly and functions based on formally established Rules and Guidelines. In carrying out its duties, the Examination Board actively safeguards the quality, legality and independence of assessment procedures.

Considerations

According to the panel, the Master of Music has an assessment system in place that is generally coherent, sufficiently valid and adequately reliable for a programme at master-level. The assessment framework is in principle aligned with the intended learning outcomes and reflects the artistic, research-based and professional dimensions of the curriculum. The diversity of assessment formats corresponds to the nature of contemporary musical practice and supports the development of integrated competencies.

The panel observes that assessment is closely connected to daily artistic practice and is complemented by structured feedback and peer evaluation. This contributes to students' reflective development and professional growth. Overall, the system provides students with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the level expected at the end of the programme.

During the discussions, the panel paid particular attention to the alignment between intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria, especially within the Music in Society department. In some cases, assessment criteria were perceived as not sufficiently concrete or not explicitly linked to the intended learning outcomes. While this does not fundamentally undermine the functioning of the system, the panel considers that further clarification and more explicit articulation would enhance transparency and comparability across departments. This is particularly relevant in situations where students formulate individual learning outcomes, as clearly defined and assessable criteria are essential for maintaining reliability.

The composition of final examination committees is appropriate and safeguards independence and professional calibration. The inclusion of external members contributes to objectivity. The panel positively notes the initiative to broaden cross departmental committee composition, as this may further strengthen inter-subjective reliability and stimulate the use of a shared assessment language across departments, provided that disciplinary expertise remains ensured.

Assessment procedures are generally clear to students. Ongoing efforts to synchronise documentation, criteria and digital processes across departments are appropriate and contribute to consistency. The panel encourages continued

attention to the clarity and concreteness of assessment criteria, particularly in areas where practices are evolving.

The programme's exploration of alternative grading formats, including the possible introduction of pass or fail components, and portfolio-based assessment reflects a reflective and forward-looking approach to assessment culture. The panel emphasises that careful implementation will be important to safeguard transparency, reliability and comparability.

The explicit AI policy is considered balanced and appropriate. By prohibiting AI generated written content while allowing artistic experimentation under conditions of demonstrable ownership and reflective understanding, the programme safeguards academic integrity and artistic authenticity. The strengthened emphasis on oral presentation and articulation of artistic processes is appropriate at master-level.

The panel values the training initiatives for members of assessment panels. It notes, how-

ever, that not all assessors have yet participated in such training. More structural embedding of assessment training for all panel members would further enhance consistency and reliability.

The Examination Board operates independently and in accordance with the WHW and the applicable examination regulations. Its composition and expertise, together with its active role in appointing examiners, monitoring assessment procedures, attending examinations and reporting annually, provide assurance that legal requirements are met and that the quality of assessment is monitored. The panel is satisfied that the Examination Board fulfils its statutory responsibilities.

Taking all these considerations into account, the panel concludes that the assessment system ensures that students who graduate have achieved the intended learning outcomes in a valid, reliable and transparent manner. 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 culminates in an integrated graduation phase in which artistic practice, research and professional reflection converge. The graduation trajectory is designed to demonstrate that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes at master-level.

The graduation phase consists of the Principal Subject (artistic component), which the programme designates as the formal final project. In addition, students work on the Master Research component. A reflective and professional positioning element is embedded within these components rather than being assessed as a separate unit.

The Principal Subject forms the artistic core of the graduation year. In the final year, the Principal Subject comprises 40 EC in Classical Music and Early Music, 30 EC in Jazz, and 22 EC in Pop Music. This component culminates in the Practical Final Examination, in which students present a public artistic performance or professional presentation reflecting their artistic identity and level of development. Depending on the specialisation, this may take the form of a concert, recital, composition presentation, interdisciplinary project or another professional format appropriate to the discipline. The final examination is assessed by a committee including multiple members and at least one external expert, in accordance with established examination procedures.

The Master Research component is compulsory and formally carries 5 EC in the final year in Classical Music and Jazz, and 7 EC in the final year in Pop Music. Students formulate a research question linked to their artistic practice and

complete a structured research trajectory under the supervision of a research advisor. The research culminates in a research portfolio and a public presentation, for instance during the annual Research Symposium. In recent years, the programme has strengthened the outward orientation of graduation projects, with research and entrepreneurial elements more explicitly connected to the final output.

Reflection on professional development and positioning is integrated within both the artistic and research components. Students are required to articulate their artistic choices, contextualise their work and demonstrate awareness of their positioning within the professional field. Students indicated that the graduation phase offers substantial space to present a coherent artistic identity and to articulate their professional profile.

Assessment documentation for graduation work is concise and clearly linked to assessment criteria. Students indicated that they value the oral feedback received during final assessments, while some expressed a wish for more extensive written feedback.

Alumni reported that the programme enabled them to develop their own artistic direction and independent professional profile. At the same time, some alumni indicated that business skills and resilience in a demanding professional environment could have received more explicit attention during the programme. Representatives of the professional field confirmed that graduates function at a high artistic level and emphasised the importance of musicians being able to articulate their artistic identity and to engage with broader societal contexts.

Considerations

As part of its assessment, the panel reviewed 30 Final Examinations from 2024 and 2025, including works across different thematic orientations (14 Classical Music, 10 Jazz, 6 Pop) and assessment results, ranging from higher to lower graded examples. The sample size was used to reflect the large number of different main instruments that students play while graduating from the programme.

Based on this review, the panel concludes that the level, scope and quality of the graduation work demonstrate that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at a level appropriate for a professionally oriented master's programme at NLQF level 7. The artistic components of the final projects show technical command, artistic maturity and a clearly articulated personal profile. Students demonstrate the ability to formulate coherent artistic concepts, realise them convincingly and position themselves meaningfully within a professional context. The curriculum provides ample space for individual repertoire choices and artistic directions, which is reflected in the diversity of final presentations. Although innovation is not always explicitly foregrounded, the overall level is consistent with master standards and reflects authenticity and artistic ownership.

The research components display critical reflection, contextual awareness and a substantive connection to artistic practice. While the written theses generally follow a traditional format, their analytical depth and argumentation are appropriate to master-level. The panel finds that the relationship between artistic work, research and reflection is coherent and adequately integrated. Developments since the previous assessment, including increased attention to outward orientation, research integration and

entrepreneurial awareness, are visible in the reviewed works.

The public presentation formats of graduation research contribute positively to professional readiness. The panel particularly values the Research Festival as a visible platform where students present their artistic research in dialogue with an audience. Such festival style events enhance students' ability to communicate their work publicly and situate it within a professional context. The panel considers it important that final works are presented in an accessible and professionally relevant setting rather than remaining internal.

Written assessment documentation for final projects is concise and clearly linked to the assessment criteria. Students indicated that they would appreciate more extensive written feedback. The panel understands that additional oral feedback is often provided and suggests that the programme consider whether written documentation could be expanded where feasible to further enhance transparency and learning value.

Finally, the professional trajectories of alumni and confirmations from representatives of the professional field support the panel's judgement regarding achieved learning outcomes. Graduates demonstrate artistic competence, reflective awareness and the ability to articulate their professional identity. Alumni feedback indicates potential for further strengthening entrepreneurial resilience; however, graduates function at a level consistent with the expectations of the professional field.

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	Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten
Address	Jodenbreestraat 3, 1011 NG Amsterdam
Website	www.ahk.nl
BRIN-number	21QA
Status	Funded
ITK	Yes

Programme

First name, as in RIO	Master of Music
Location	Amsterdam
Programme number in RIO	44739
Orientation and level	hbo master
Research master?	No
Language of instruction	English
(Legal) professional requirements	No
All programme tracks/specialisations	Classical Music, Jazz, Pop
Joint programme degree	No
Special feature	Not applicable
Degree and addition	Master of Music
Studyload in EC	120
Modes: full-time, part-time, dual	Full-time
Working with units of learning outcomes	No
Assessment cluster	HBO Master Muziek groep 1
Submission date	1 May 2026
Other (e.g. name change or extension of study duration)	None

Attachment 2: Assessment panel

drs. Raoul van Aalst, chair

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

Armin Zanner MPhil, panel member

Vice-Principal & Director of Music Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London, United Kingdom

Marco Pignataro MA, panel member

Managing Director en docent Berklee Global Jazz Institute (BGJI), USA

Sohrab Kashani BA, student member

Student Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design, Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU)

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 programme

Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Oosterdokskade 151 te Amsterdam

Tuesday February 10

Time	Session	Participants
12:00–13:00	Preparatory meeting with lunch	
13:00–13:45	School board and programme management	• Director • Associate Director, Head of Classical Music in Education • Associate Director, Head of Jazz, Pop Music and AEMA • Secretary of the Board, Project Lead Curriculum Development • Head of Composition and Classical Voice, Leader of Master Research
13:45–14:30	Tour of the building	
14:30–15:15	Programme coordinators, curriculum development	• Associate Director, Head of Classical Music in Education • Associate Director, Head of Jazz, Pop Music and AEMA • Programme Coordinator Classical Music • Head of Jazz Wind Instruments, Head of E-learning, teacher Ensembles • Head of Pop Music • Head of Keyboard Instruments & Guitar Classical Music • Secretary of the Board, Project Lead Curriculum Development
15:15–15:30	Break	
15:30–16:15	Alumni and field representatives	2 Alumni Classical Music 2 Alumni Jazz Alumnus Pop Music Work field: Director Bimhuis Work field: Director Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ
16:15–16:30	Break	
16:30–17:15	Outreach and Innovation	• Associate Director, Head of Classical Music in Education • Associate Director, Head of Jazz, Pop Music and AEMA • Teacher researcher & Coordinator Artist in Residence • Associate Lector • CvA online & distance learning, Communications Global Conservatoire • Artistic Leader and teacher Master Composing for Film • Artistic Leader and teacher Master Immersive Audio
17:15–19:15	Dinner	
19:15–21:00	Evening programme: Showcases	staff, students

Wednesday February 11

Time	Session	Participants
09:15–09:30	Preparatory meeting	Panel
09:30–10:30	Teaching staff	• Teacher Recorder Classical Music • Teacher Fortepiano Early Music • Head Brass, Percussion & Conducting, teacher Trombone Classical Music • Head of Jazz Wind Instruments, Head of E-learning, teacher Ensembles Jazz • Head and teacher Pop Music • Course Leader and Teacher Master Music in Society
10:30–10:45	Break	
10:45–11:30	Research	• Leader of Master Research • Lector • 3 Associate Lectors
11:30–12:30	Lunch break	
12:30–13:15	Examination board and Educational committee/Participation	• Chair Examination Board • 2 members Examination Board • Chair AR/OC • Member AR/OC
13:15–13:30	Break	•
13:30–14:00	Presentation Research Project	Alumnus
14:00–15:00	Students	• Student Classical Music Ma 1 • Student Classical Music Ma 2 • Student Composition Ma 2 • Student Jazz Ma 1 • 2 students Jazz Ma 2 • Student Pop Music Ma 2
15:00–16:15	Preparatory meeting	
16:15–16:30	Short feedback with Programme Management	• Director • Associate Director, Head of Classical Music in Education • Associate Director, Head of Jazz, Pop Music and AEMA • Secretary of the Board, Project Lead Curriculum Development • Head of Composition and Classical Voice, Leader of Master Research
16:30–17:00	Feedback panel	All stakeholders

Attachment 4: Recommendations from previous assessment

The following recommendations were issued by the panel during the 2020 assessment of the Master of Music at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, as documented in the final report. The follow-up is summarised from the Management Review Master of Music 2026.

Recommendation 1:

To describe more explicitly in the programme framework and the intended learning outcomes the distinctiveness of both Conservatorium and Master of Music.

Follow-up:

This has been addressed by contributing to the revision of the national profile, resulting in a new set of seven interrelated competencies. CvA states that these now reflect the distinctiveness of the Master's profile, with more attention given to international references and institutional identity. Still, the programme acknowledges that communication as a competency needs further development.

Recommendation 2:

To develop more interdisciplinary projects involving both CvA departments and AHK faculties.

Follow-up:

Steps have been taken to increase interdisciplinary collaboration. Several project weeks now include participation from different Conservatorium van Amsterdam departments, and cross-institute collaborations within AHK have been initiated. The programme indicates that this will remain a focus area for future development.

Recommendation 3:

To provide more training in hands-on entrepreneurship-related topics.

Follow-up:

Entrepreneurship is now more structurally embedded in the curriculum, through electives and the integration of entrepreneurship in research and professional practice components. Nonetheless, the Conservatorium van Amsterdam sees further potential for expansion and formalisation in this area.

Recommendation 4:

To communicate more on the available opportunities and services, and to do so in a way that this reaches all students.

Follow-up:

The Conservatorium van Amsterdam has worked on improving communication by appointing study career counsellors (with the help of quality funds) and providing better-structured information in study guides. While improvements are acknowledged, reaching all students equally remains a known challenge.

Recommendation 5:

To pay more attention to music medicine, injury prevention and rehabilitation.

Follow-up:

The programme reports greater attention to these themes. Workshops and coaching on injury prevention and mental wellbeing are offered, but the visibility and systematic integration of these resources could still be improved.

Recommendation 6:

To provide more written feedback in the final exam evaluation forms and to do so by using a standardised vocabulary.

Follow-up:

The Conservatorium van Amsterdam has redesigned assessment forms and rubrics to increase consistency and clarity. Teachers are guided in using a common vocabulary, and the examination board monitors this. This has led to improvements in the feedback process.

Recommendation 7:

To increase the visibility of the international profile of the Master of Music and its operationalisation in the programme.

Follow-up:

The programme highlights its strong international positioning, both in its student body and curriculum. English is used throughout, international reference points are included in the learning outcomes, and an application for CeQulnt certification has been submitted

Attachment 5: reviewed documents

- Self-evaluation report: Management Review Master of Music 2026
- Artist in Residence Programme
- Code of Conduct Social Safety
- Training Profile Music 2017
- Competency Set CvA
- Study Guide General 2025–2026
- Musicians Without Borders and the Social Engagement Lab
- Master Research Guide
- Study Guide Focus Masters 2025–2026
- Curricula Overview Master's Degree
- Assessment Framework
- Rules and Guidelines Examination
- Assessment and Competence Matrix
- Study Guide Master Music in Society 2025–2026
- Study Guide Classical Music Master 2025–2026
- Study Guide Jazz Master 2025–2026
- Study Guide Early Music 2025–2026
- Examencommissie Jaarverslag 2024–2025
- Assessment Board Yearly Report (English)
- 5 Research Examples with assessment forms

Final exams (artistic work) with assessment

2024	<i>Pop Music</i>	<i>Jazz</i>
<i>Classical Music & Early Music</i>	13. Drums	21. Drums
1. Trumpet		22. Trombone
2. Baroque Violin & Viola	<i>Live Electronics</i>	23. Saxophone
3. Double Bass	14. Live Electronics & Percussion	24. Vibraphone
4. Repetiteurship		25. Voice
5. Cello		26. Guitar
6. Viola	2025	
7. Voice	<i>Classical Music & Early Music</i>	<i>Pop Music</i>
8. Baroque Bassoon	15. Choir Conducting	27. Bass Guitar
	16. Violin	28. Guitar
<i>Jazz</i>	17. Composition	29. Voice
9. Piano	18. Piano	
10. Trumpet	19. Saxophone	<i>Live Electronics</i>
11. Double Bass	20. Voice (Early Music)	30. Live Electronics
12. Bass Guitar		

