

6.1 VISION OF INTERNATIONALISATION

We regard internationalisation as a term that arises from the inherent characteristics of the disciplines and the profession for which we train our students. We prepare our students for international professional practice. They will be working in an international profession, will be inspired by and work with colleagues (and competitors) from around the world and will present their work on international, as well as national and local stages and platforms, and for an international audience. They will be engaged with themes of multinational, or even global relevance and will usually make the connection between them and what is happening in the local environment. They will practice their profession wholly or partially abroad or will establish relationships with international colleagues in the Netherlands. This will also strengthen the arts in the Netherlands.

“The main thing I would say is: be prepared for what you will find here, because it's going definitely be different than what you learned in your home institution. You will find another structure, other ways of thinking and other methodologies that are not better or worse, but are really good to give you another view and enrich your own knowledge and skills.”

○ *An exchange student at KABK*

Internationalisation has traditionally been a strength of the University of the Arts and has been further embedded and expanded in recent years. With the result that both the Conservatoire and the Academy have established outstanding reputations in the Netherlands and abroad. This enables us to attract very good students and teachers and to form alliances with renowned partners. Approximately 60% of our students are from abroad. Our teaching staff and partner network are also international. Our internationalisation policy is devoted to improving the quality of teaching and research and to enriching our educational community. We have acquired a leading position in that respect both in the Netherlands and elsewhere. We will continue along this path in the coming years.

In short, internationalisation is an integral component of our strategy. Our international students and teachers and worldwide network of partners are a crucial element of our educational philosophy and our identity. Internationalisation serves as an instrument for constantly benchmarking and improving our quality in an international context.

We distinguish between three aspects of our internationalisation policy:

- Adherence to and use of international qualification frameworks.
- An international learning environment.
- International comparison and assessment by international peers.

We will discuss each of these aspects in more detail in the following sections.

6.2 ADHERENCE TO AND USE OF INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

Our curricula and learning outcomes are based on international standards and competence profiles. We work with our international partners and organise exchanges of teachers and staff members with them. By sharing our experience and knowledge with like-minded institutions in other countries we form an impression of how our learning outcomes and course curricula measure up to those international frameworks and standards. In this context, the relevant assessment framework for the programmes of the Royal Conservatoire is the AEC Learning Outcomes.¹¹ The benchmarks for the Royal Academy's programmes include the Tuning Documents for Fine Arts and for Design.¹²



6.3 AN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Naturally, the presence of international students and teachers and the use of English are essential to create an international learning environment. Almost 60% of our students are from countries other than the Netherlands, and a large proportion of our teaching staff is also from abroad. The result is a lively international learning community with a wide diversity of cultures at both the Royal Academy and the Royal Conservatoire. Furthermore, we frequently invite international artists to give guest lectures or master classes. This meeting (and sometimes also confrontation) of cultures makes an important contribution to the students' development as they experience the similarities and differences between cultures and learn to discuss and reflect on them. This dialogue broadens and deepens their perspective on international professional practice and their own position in it. The international learning environment is inherent to our educational concept. But we also encourage our students to spend time in another country. Gaining international experience at another conservatory or another academy is an extremely educational and beneficial experience in terms of our students' personal development.

We do not treat international students as a separate group; our learning environment is wholly inclusive. International is the norm.

“Studying at the KABK is a privilege. The huge amount of work students have to do is worthy of the learning and all the structure the school offers. Even facing a much different reality from my background, my time at the KABK has helped me to grow as a student and a person.”

○ *An exchange student at KABK*

We explicitly place our course curricula in an international context. We hold internal discussions about the meaning of internationalisation for the substance and quality of our education. We relate practical and theoretical education to the international context, for example by using international examples and literature and by organising foreign excursions and visits to events outside the Netherlands. We encourage our students to take part in exchanges with other countries in the course of their studies and to follow internships abroad. If necessary, we remove any obstacles that might be created by our own programmes. Our teachers and support staff also regularly take part in international exchanges and study trips to expand their horizons and gain new insights and perspectives for innovations in the courses and in their teaching methods. Almost all our courses are taught in English, both the lessons and the assessments.¹³

We take part with partners in international projects on themes of common interest or involving joint performances, for example as part of the European Erasmus+-programme. The Royal Conservatoire is involved in projects devoted to developing a common curriculum. For example, the Master's specialisation in Chamber Music was developed as a Joint European Master Programme under the auspices of the European Chamber Music Academy,¹⁴ and the Master of New Audiences and Innovative Practices was designed in association with conservatories in Europe and the United States and is offered in Reykjavik, Groningen and Stockholm, in addition to The Hague.

A good example of this is the new Master's specialisation Audio Communication & Sonology, which is offered as a double degree in a partnership between the Royal Conservatoire's Institute of Sonology and the Berlin University of Technology.

The Royal Conservatoire is also having a growing influence on the development of joint modules, for instance in the area of improvisation.

¹¹ Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (2017). *AEC Learning Outcomes 2017*. Can be downloaded from the AEC website: <https://www.aec-music.eu/publications/aec-learning-outcomes-2017-en>

¹² Interjartes Thematic Network (2004). *Design Tuning Document and Fine Art Tuning Document*. Can be downloaded from the website of the European League of Institutes of the Arts: http://www.elia-artschools.org/userfiles/Image/customimages/products/66/3_Tuning%20Design.pdf and http://www.elia-artschools.org/userfiles/Image/customimages/products/63/4_Tuning%20Fine%20Art.pdf.

¹³ The exception is the Bachelor of Music Teaching programme, which is targeted primarily at Dutch and Dutch-speaking students.

¹⁴ The European Chamber Music Academy is a consortium of institutions in Vienna, Paris, Manchester, Oslo, The Hague and Vilnius.

The Royal Academy of Art is investigating the possibility of international collaboration with EQ-Arts, a body established by the *European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA)* to promote the quality of art education. Beside that the Royal Academy of Art has taken the initiative to form an international peer group of similar academies¹⁶ with the aim of developing and operationalising definitions of quality in art education based not only on educational quality and the relationship with the labour market, but which also reflect the functions of art education in relation to a broad social orientation ('Bildung') and personal development, as described in section 4.1. The peer group will also make an inventory of instruments, and if necessary develop new ones, with a view to implementing this view of quality assurance. In the process, the sense of responsibility for and the dialogue between teachers and students about the quality of education will also be strengthened.



The policy of internationalisation is also evident in our assessments. We ask international examiners or examiners based in the Netherlands with an international professional practice to join examination committees so that the students are always assessed according to international as well as national standards. In this way, the students and the university both learn to what extent our criteria and the candidate's level of ability meet international standards.

Such an international environment makes demands on students, teachers and other staff members in terms of their proficiency in English and ability to deal with multicultural diversity. If necessary, we provide facilities to improve these skills and so guarantee that the substantive and artistic depth benefits from providing the education in an international and English-speaking environment. We reflect this objective an internationalisation strategy and explicit policy on language proficiency.

6.4 INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON AND ASSESSMENT

While the artistic quality of our students and our programmes is guaranteed by inviting international members to join the examination committees, we also want to measure our educational quality against international standards. With the likelihood that the Dutch accreditation system will in future be confined to evaluating the basic quality of programmes, it is particularly important that we assess the extent to which we exceed that basic quality in an international context.

Our partners are very important for this international perspective as they serve as a source of inspiration and a frame of reference for us. We select partners with whom we share a vision of art education, culture and quality. We use the cooperation to sustain and challenge one another and in the process ensure that our system of quality assurance meets the criteria that are regarded internationally as relevant and useful for art education. We request feedback from international examiners and from 'critical friends' who visit a programme, attend exams, question students and teachers and report on their findings. In this way, the results of quantitative feedback and satisfaction surveys are supplemented by in-depth qualitative feedback from experts from the Netherlands and abroad. This approach, which has been developed by the Conservatoire in the last few years, will be rolled out across the university in the coming years.

The Conservatoire is a participant, together with seven other international conservatories,¹⁵ in the *International Benchmarking Exercise (IBE)* and has been taking part in a pilot organised by U-Multirank since 2016. These projects generate a lot of comparative information (mainly statistical) that gives an indication of the quality of the relevant programmes in international terms. The aim is not to rank the institutions, but to identify those qualitative aspects on which the institutions differ according to the benchmark so that further research can be conducted to explain the discrepancies and so enable the institutions to learn from one another (benchlearning). The Royal Conservatoire's programmes have been evaluated and accredited by *MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement*, a European evaluation and accreditation body recognised by the *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)*, which uses criteria and procedures in which artistic standards and educational quality are interlocked.

¹⁵ Participants in the International Benchmarking Exercise (IBE) are Conservatoire de Genève, New England Conservatory Boston, Norwegian Academy of Music Oslo, Royal Conservatoire The Hague, Royal Northern College of Music Manchester, Sydney Conservatorium, University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Singapore.

¹⁶ The partners in this peer group are University of the Arts London (Central Saint Martins), Universität für Angewandte Kunst Vienna, ELISAVA Barcelona, Academy of the Arts Vilnius, Aalto University (School of Arts, Design and Architecture) and the Royal Academy of Art The Hague, with the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste as an associate partner.