



Institutional Evaluation Programme

*Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in
Romanian Universities Project*

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC BUCHAREST

EVALUATION REPORT

APRIL 2013

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Performance
in Higher Education





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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of National University of Music Bucharest. The evaluation took place in 2012/2013 in the framework of the project “Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities”, which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 Law on Education and the various related normative acts.

While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

The Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.



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The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2. National University of Music Bucharest and the national context

The National University of Music Bucharest (UNMB) was established as the Conservatory of Music and Declamation through a founding degree signed by His Highness the Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1864. It is a public higher education institution, functioning on the basis of the university charta and its own regulations based on the education law. It is a teaching and artistic/creative university committed to building upon traditional values to meet contemporary requirements and challenges. The university is already the main university of music in Romania, making significant teaching, research and creative contributions nationally and at a European level. The university is keen to become the principal university of music in south east Europe. It is committed to providing a quality framework for talented learners though:

- Advanced musical education
- Scientific and artistic research
- International strategic visibility
- High levels of musical performance

The values of UNMB include:

- The importance of music in building a multicultural and integrated society
- The necessity of an individual education for enhanced musical performance
- The creative integration of all levels of music education through lifelong learning
- Encouraging the exchange of ideas, experiences and opinions together with critical reflection

The university is structured academically around two faculties each containing departments, groups and families of disciplines as follows:

The Faculty of Musical Performance (FIM) consists of the following:

- Department 1 – Orchestra instruments
- Department 2 – Keyboard instruments and Chamber music
- Department 3 – Singing and Arts of musical performance



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The Faculty of Composition, Musicology, Musical Pedagogy (FCMP) includes:

- Department 1 – Composition
- Department 2 – Musicology, Theory and Educational Sciences
- Department 3 – Conducting and Complementary Instruments

1.3. The evaluation process

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of the National University of Music Bucharest (UNMB), together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team in November 2012. The visits of the evaluation team to Bucharest took place from 25 to 27 November 2012 and from 24 to 27 February 2013 respectively. In between the visits the university provided the evaluation team with additional documentation and data.

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Helena Nazaré, former Rector of the University of Aveiro, Portugal - Team Chair
- Mist Thorkeldottir, Dean of Music, Iceland Academy of the Arts, Iceland and European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) representative
- Blazhe Todorovski, MA Student, University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
- Karen Jones, University Registrar and Clerk to the Board of Governors, University of Wales, Newport, UK - Team Coordinator

1.4 Envoi

The team would like to express its thanks and gratitude to the Rector, Prof. Dr. Dan Dediú and his dedicated and motivated staff for their time and active engagement with the review process. Particular thanks are given to Asst. Prof. Dr Antigona Rădulescu who acted as institutional coordinator throughout the review process ensuring the needs and requirements of the team were fully attended to. Throughout the two site visits, the team met a wide range of staff, stakeholders and students all of whom demonstrated a willingness to speak candidly and thoughtfully about their experiences and views of the university.



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2. Governance and institutional decision-making

The SER highlighted the university's ambition to become the leading university of music in south east Europe. The team found evidence of consistency in this shared vision across the Senate and Administrative Council members during the first and second site visits. This shared vision was expressed by Senate and Council members individually and collectively including the Senate president, vice-president, rector and vice-rectors. This consistency and clarity of vision was considered by the team to be a considerable strength to the university and a key driving force for enabling the university to achieve this ambitious target in a timely manner.

The team was advised by differing groups of staff during its visits that the university develops its policies, practices and academic activities through consultation with staff and students. The academic curriculum was identified as being strictly monitored and permanently adapted to meet new requirements and demands for internal and external stakeholders. Significant responsibility for the decisions around the academic curriculum lay between Faculty Councils, Administrative Council and University Senate.

2.1 The University Senate

Since February 2012, the most senior committee within the university has been the Senate. Each Senator was elected by staff and students in January 2012. The unity and commitment of the University's Senate was identified by the team as a crucial feature for institutional success. The team commended the Senate composition, which included equal weighting between the two faculties and a high percentage of student representation (25%). The explicit requirement on Senate member attendance, removing any member that fails to attend three meetings concurrently, was also considered to be an example of good governance.

The team was advised during its first visit that the Rector attended Senate as an elected member. The team was of the view that as the rector should be held accountable to Senate, the rector should be required to attend Senate meetings as a co-opted member. The team recommends that the university benchmarks its Senate composition in relation to the membership of the rector against European practices and amend Senate regulations to ensure the rector is a co-opted member now and in the future rather than being permitted to be an elected member.



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2.2 The Rector

The university rector is the chief accounting and authorising officer of the institution. The rector chairs the university's Administrative Council and is responsible for conceiving and delivering the university's strategic vision and plan. Upon appointment, the team noted that the rector's election manifesto, outlining the strategic direction of the university, is automatically approved by Senate as the blueprint for the university. The team supported this process. The team was also advised that once elected, the rector played a key role in the appointment process of faculty deans. This was also commended as an effective mechanism for the rector ensuring delivery of the Senate approved programme of organisational change.

The rector utilises the Administrative Council to develop an efficient and effective management system to deliver organisational change. The standing invitation to the president of Senate to attend Administrative Council meetings was also considered by the team as a useful governance tool.

The team noted that the rector had recently worked in collaboration with other music and arts rectors to successfully lobby the government on higher education legislation in relation to the arts. The rector was encouraged to establish a formal strategic alliance with music and arts rectors to inform and lobby higher education legislation and national policies on behalf of the arts in the future. The rector was also encouraged to explore creative solutions for working with the law inside and outside of the university.

2.3 Student participation in decision-making processes

The SER states that in accordance with the Law of National Education, UNMB involves students in its decision-making and managerial processes, no matter what the level of their studies, specialisations or study programmes are. The team found evidence that students were indeed represented across all decision-making levels within the university. The number of student representatives at Senate was particularly commended by the team. Student representatives from the two faculties also were noted as participating in regular meetings organised by the Administrative Council.

From discussions with students during the first and second visits, mixed opinions were however expressed regarding the benefits of student engagement in managerial as opposed to professional activities within the university. While some students were personally reluctant to put themselves forward as formal student representatives, the majority of students that met the team considered themselves to be well represented. The team questioned whether centralised training and guidance should be provided to encourage and support student representatives and inform students of the benefits of involvement in student representation personally, collectively and professionally. The



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team recommends that the university reinforce its student representative structure and provide training, guidance and support to students that are nominated to representative roles.

2.4 Strategic planning

The university presented the team with evidence that it utilises qualitative and quantitative metrics as the basis of its annual submissions to ARACIS. The team saw the rector's latest annual SWOT analysis undertaken to assess internal and external strengths and risks. Over the past ten years the institution reported that it has monitored changes in demographics, student interest and employer needs and had made adjustments to the curriculum and business model accordingly. This approach was commended by the team and seen to place the university in a position of strength in terms of competitiveness and future financial sustainability. The team saw evidence that the aims of the university over the next four years were suitably ambitious; however, the team did not see evidence of a clearly articulated operational or strategic plan of how this ambition would be achieved.

The team recommends that the rector leads on the development of a succinct 1/2 page mission and vision statement for wide circulation. A detailed strategic and operational plan to proactively achieve the institutional vision and mission within a five-year timeframe should also be devised. The team recommends that while the plans would require leadership and guidance from the Senate, Rector and Administrative Council, a small professional administrative support office should be established to ensure the delivery, management and monitoring of the strategic vision and goals. A communications strategy should also be developed to maximise the university's assets, including its academic staff, students and alumni successes nationally and internationally through online, social media and other marketing and promotional materials (including the English and Romanian websites).

2.5 Resource allocation processes

The University's Administrative Council and Senate are the two bodies formally responsible for financial decisions within the institution. The university has an income and expense budget that is drawn up in observance of the law and is approved by the university Senate. Each year, the university signs a financial contract with the Ministry of Education, on the basis offered by the National Financing Centre of the Higher Education System (CNFIS). The amount of money UNMB receives reflects a financing algorithm which is based on the number of students and their allocated sum, as it is settled in the methodologies of financing the higher education system from Romania. The cost of a music student was highlighted to be one of the most expensive in Romania thus the number of funded places remained small. The total budget of the university supports all the activities of the academic staff, of the faculties, departments and of all the other administrative and



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structures. The fund distribution is decided at the central level, based on the substantiation plan, approved annually by the financial department.

The university has however supplemented state funding by accessing national and international private and public funds through various research programmes, sponsorships, non-refundable funds and European projects. The team encourages the university to maximise income generating opportunities to benefit the learning and teaching experiences available within the university and continue to seek alternative funding avenues to minimise its dependence on the state.

2.6 Student recruitment and selection

Taking into account the institutional capacity, approved by MECTS, which assures the financial support for the available places inside the university, the Senate approves the distribution of places according to the programmes and the study levels. The students' selection is made by robust admission procedures, differentiated through programmes and study levels, based on a methodology designed by the faculties and approved by the Senate, taking into account the current legal regulations. The team commended the university's admissions procedures as efficient and effective mechanisms for continuing to ensure the high quality of students within the university.

2.7 Employment and promotion of staff

In line with the Romanian higher education system, the university and its Senate operates recruitment and promotion processes as directed by the Ministry. The team noted in 2012/2013 the university had 204 approved teaching positions of which 115 were permanent. Eighteen professors were in place, however 55% of professors were aged 60 or older. When questioned by the team if the Senate were able to move a staff vacancy from one department to another to meet strategic, operational or academic goals, the team was advised that a degree of flexibility was possible. The policy of promoting academic staff within UNMB also takes into account the law of education regarding the possibility of obtaining the teaching positions, the minimal standards, and the frame-methodology of the contests for academic positions. To those are added the university's own standards and methodologies taking into account the specificity of music education.



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3. Teaching and learning

The university aims to conceive and promote growth in the intellectual abilities, professional knowledge, talent and aspirations of its students. It is also committed to adapting its teaching and learning tools to meet stakeholder needs.

3.1 Curriculum development

The team was informed that any new programmes designed within the university would require ministerial accreditation. One faculty confirmed that it intended to create two new programmes in partnership with other conservatoires in 2013, including a new Masters through the medium of English. Staff recognised the importance of offering programmes that appealed to a wide range of students and offered opportunities for graduates to compete in employment markets nationally and internationally. Keeping good contact with high schools across the country to bring in students was also recognised as a priority of the university.

During the first site visit, students informed the team that they felt the two faculties could work closer together. They would welcome opportunities for conducting students to work more closely with the orchestra students for example. As a result, where possible, the team felt consideration should be given to maximizing the opportunities of cross faculty working. The team were particularly impressed therefore, during the second visit to receive confirmation that the university had recently developed a joint BA programme proposal in Composition, Musicology and Conducting reflecting student and stakeholder needs. This would enable the university to draw together previously distinct programme areas and enable students to work collectively and experience a broader spectrum of learning and musical opportunities. The rector had advised the team that discussions had begun with ARACIS to amend the official “nomenclator” to permit combined courses such as the BA in composition, musicology and conducting. The team commended this and suggested that UNMB be used as a pilot for change within the ARACIS system. The rector was encouraged to lobby alongside music and arts rectors for the nomenclator to be amended using the UNMB as a pilot for change.

In relation to stakeholder demands for new programmes, the team was repeatedly informed that students were keen to study artist management programmes to enable them to consider a career as a self employed musician or within artist or event management in the future. Interest was also expressed in entrepreneurialism and digital media programmes focusing upon sound engineering and film editing. The team noted that the university was in the process of piloting short courses in some of these areas, and encouraged the university to make full programmes available as soon as



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practicable. Discussions with employer representatives further supported the need for graduates in digital and artist management fields.

The team encourages the rector to ensure that support and guidance for artist management is available to 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle students to prepare them for professional engagements in and beyond Romania. Furthermore, building upon the strategic partnerships and alliances with other rectors, the team encouraged the rector to be the driving force for developing innovative curricula within the arts, to include artistic management and entrepreneurship within UNMB. Furthermore, the team recommends that the university ensures that any new programmes developed can evidence employment opportunities for graduates and marketplace need. It should also consider establishing an annual forum with employers to build relationships with key stakeholders and receive timely feedback on the quality and employability of the university's programmes and its graduates.

3.2 Practical experience

The students who met the team highlighted the significant benefits of studying at the university academically and professionally. Students recognised the specialist opportunities available to them by participating in concerts in and outside of the university, frequently instigated by contacts between external agencies and staff within the university. The commitment and ability of the university staff to attract leading national and international professionals to deliver master classes and work with the students was considered by students and the team to be a significant achievement and highly commendable. The students reported that the calibre of teaching staff was a big attraction to them in choosing to attend the university. The amount of competitions available to students while at the university was also identified as reinforcing the development of practical and professional skills and experiences. Students did however request that there should be a facility for them to accrue credits for placements undertaken outside of the university. The team agreed and thus encourages the university to establish a system for accrediting professional placements secured and undertaken independently as soon as practicable.

3.3 Learning resources

Access to resources was identified as one of the few weaknesses experienced by students on some of the programmes and was highlighted in the last institutional review report. Access to practice rooms in particular appeared to be a common concern. It was acknowledged as a discipline-specific problem in universities nationally and internationally. Doctoral candidates also requested that the new media centre be further developed to enable them to access the full range of journals, audio and professional databases. The team recommends that the university ensure its learning resources



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and environment are suitable to support teaching and research excellence amongst staff and students. Consideration should also be given to promoting internal and external accessibility to the new media centre and the university's upgraded technical and professional facilities nationally and internationally. Income generating or collaborative opportunities may arise through such promotion. The team recommends that a regular space utilisation survey be undertaken to ensure facilities are used to maximum efficiency internally and may also be accessible to external users by incurring a fee. This would assist in the maintenance and management of practice, library and concert facilities within the university.

Finally, meetings with students identified to the team that the university had yet to develop an online learning platform for its students. The team encourages the university to explore the initial resource requirements for establishing a facility such as Moodle or Blackboard and develop the application of digital interactive technologies.



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4. Research

A stated priority of the university is encouraging excellence in research, innovation and artistic activity by creating an efficient environment for individual growth through mentorship, scholarships, prizes and other means. The vice-rector in charge of scientific and artistic research is responsible for ensuring the university's compliance with the Declarations of Bologna, Copenhagen and Lisbon, promoted by the National Strategy for Higher Education in Romania, the National Research, Development and Innovations Plan for the period 2007-2013, as well as by the documents referring to the research policy elaborated by the European Commission, centred on the creation of a European Research Area (ERA).

4.1 Doctoral programmes

The team considered the admissions process for doctoral candidates to be rigorous and noted that in line with Romanian law, doctoral supervision could only be undertaken by a professor. This could result in difficulties internally as the number of professors available to supervise doctoral candidates was limited. The recently initiated project MIDAS, financed from European structural funds, allows the university to develop advanced doctoral research studies, an important step for the institution's academic portfolio. The university currently offers two doctoral programmes, the scientific doctoral studies and the professional doctoral studies. The team commends the university for its establishment of an artistic PhD programme and its development of joint doctoral programmes. The university should ensure that its new multimedia centre is sufficiently well equipped to enable its doctoral candidates to access a wide range of online international journals, alongside audio and resource databases.

4.2 Research profile and activities

The team engaged in an interesting debate on the need to find a way of measuring international research excellence and productivity in the creative industries. The team was sympathetic to the difficulties experienced by staff within UNMB engaging with the traditional classification criteria used for assessing research excellence. Its development of an internal mechanism for measuring artistic creation against scientific production was therefore highly commended. The university is encouraged to disseminate this mechanism to other music and arts rectors within Romania as a case study for their consideration.

The staff who met the team also expressed difficulties preparing papers for international journals in English. While appreciating the resource implications of publishing in English, the team found a



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large proportion of PhD students and staff had excellent language skills, including English, with many being multilingual.

During the second site visit the team met with staff from the university's research office. It was reported that the university did not have a clear research policy or strategy identifying areas of strategic importance (flagships) to build capacity within the university. This was considered a shortcoming by the team and the university was encouraged to develop a robust research strategy as a matter of urgency.

It was also noted that the university lacked a dedicated team of staff to pro-actively support the engagement of staff with national, European and international research projects. It was noted that while academic staff from the university engaged with various research projects, it was unable to lead any projects due to financial and operational restrictions as opposed to lacking academic or professional capabilities. The team therefore recommends that the university continue to work creatively with national and international partners to access research funding. However, the university is encouraged to consider the establishment (within the institution or in partnership) of a research office(r) to enable the university to take a lead operationally as well as academically on research projects if possible, to enable it to maximise the return of engagement reputationally and financially.



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5. Service to society

The team found significant evidence that the university lies at the core of cultural life in Romania and will play a key role in its continuing enhancement. Promoting the university as a crucial element in the Romanian cultural scene is a strategic objective of UNMB. To this end, the university is involved in a wide range of academic, cultural, and employment focused activities at national and regional level. UNMB has a specific strategy of growing partnerships with representative institutions and organisations from across Romania. A list of cultural partners was shared with the team. A meeting with key partners was also held during the first site visit.

5.1 Academic engagement

The SER states that UNMB staff are prestigious specialists and personalities in Romanian society who identify, test, and implement new teaching and learning methodologies by using the most recent technology and information in the field. The university's staff and students are actively engaged with the Romanian education system through its department of musicology, theory and educational sciences. Within several meetings, staff and students of the university confirmed their personal and institutional commitment to raising the competence of music educators within Romania. The team was advised that graduates of the university taught in many Romanian high schools. Representatives from the school sector that met the team confirmed that UNMB graduates were extremely competent and they wished to encourage more students to pursue a career in teaching music.

The team noted that students within the university are offered opportunities to present their own productions within concerts, contests, and public conferences organised by UNMB in collaboration with various educational and cultural institutions, such as the "George Enescu" Philharmonie (the UNMB concerts), the Union of Composers (the concerts of the composition classes), the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation, the Bucharest State Opera House. Research done by UNMB students is published in students' journals or the UNMB journals.

5.2 Cultural engagement

UNMB plays an important part — both regionally and nationally — in the cultural life of Romania and Bucharest. The university allows its space, equipment, staff and students to be used for cultural events and activities. It organises events with other higher education institutions in Romania and recently co-organised two operas in 2011/2012 in partnership with the National University of Art,



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Bucharest who prepared the scenery and costumes for the operas while UNMB provided the students who performed. While these activities were very resource intensive and jointly financed by the two institutions, the team was advised that the university was unable to receive any income from ticket sales from these events, resulting in an inability to reinvest revenue to fund future cultural activities. The team recommends that the university liaise with similar institutions nationally and internationally to explore ways to generate income from cultural activities. The university should develop a clear strategy and designated office(r) to maximise income generating and promotional opportunities from staff and student engagement in regional and national events. It should also develop a strategic plan for maximising the opportunities alumni can provide reputationally, professionally and financially.

During the visit the team met with the president of the student association. It was noted that the association was established in 2007 and served to engage students in volunteering activities. The team was advised that the association was developing partnerships with other musical foundations including the Youth Orchestra of Bucharest. Student engagement in charitable activities was encouraged by the team. However, it was questioned whether students could gain academic credit from voluntary work undertaken within the region or nationally. While students would welcome academic recognition for volunteering, presently this was not permissible. The university was encouraged to explore ways to accredit volunteering and professional placements undertaken by students if comparable to formally secured placements.

5.3 Labour market engagement

The Centre for Continuous Music Education and Post-University Studies (CEMCSP) is diversifying the educational offer of the university in line with requests from the labour market. During the first site visit, the team met with external stakeholders who suggested that the university should consider offering Masters programmes focusing on artist management. There was agreement amongst the employers that Romanian society had a deficit of highly skilled artist managers. The university would be directly serving the needs of Romanian society if it offered courses in artist management which were currently limited nationally. The team tested the levels of interest in this area with students during the first and second visit. There was overwhelming support for artist management to be available to students at every level of study, and also a willingness by the academic staff to develop a full Masters programme in artist management as a matter of urgency. The team encourages the university to proceed at pace with the development of this programme noting it could be developed and/or delivered in partnership with another regional or international provider currently specialising in business management within the creative industries.



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6. Quality culture

6.1 Reporting and structures

The university has established a range of accountability mechanisms for assuring quality and improving standards at various levels within the university structure. The University Senate sub-committee on quality – the Commission of Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC) is formally tasked with promoting a quality culture, setting qualitative and quantitative criteria, and applying quality assurance procedures. Decisions made at the CEAC are delivered through faculty councils/commissions who in turn coordinate quality assurance and enhancement activities at departmental and programme level. The CEAC also makes suggestions and recommendations for improving quality and standards in the corporate and academic areas of the university.

In line with ARACIS requirements, the CEAC publishes an annual report on the university website highlighting the effectiveness of the evaluation and assurance processes against national standards. A detailed annual *Internal Evaluation Report*, prepared by the vice-rector, focuses on: (i) institutional capacity, (ii) educational efficiency, and (iii) quality management. Each section of the report benchmarks institutional activities against national guidelines of minimum practice. In addition, a separate *Rector's Report* produced annually contains an institutional SWOT analysis. This process identifies institutional strengths and weaknesses, identifies recommendations and measures for improvement. Each rector's report is validated by the university Senate. This was confirmed by staff and student representatives.

The SER stated that the University's *Operational and Strategic Plans* and the *Rector's Declaration in the Quality Area* confirm the ways quality assurance policies are to be delivered within the university. Unfortunately the team was unable to see examples of these documents during the visit. At a national level, the SER reported that Commission members and other staff within the university participate in conferences, training and strategic projects coordinated by ARACIS. Again no evidence was provided to confirm this.

While it was clear to the team that the vice-rector and Commission members were actively engaged with and committed to quality assessment reviews and reporting, the team believed academic input in quality assurance could be most effective if the reporting and monitoring were managed at an administrative officer level. The university was encouraged to develop a quality assurance and enhancement (QA&E) strategy to ensure the variety of quality processes employed are of maximum value internally as well as robust for external reporting and to ensure the goals for the next five years remain in line with national and European benchmarks. A dedicated officer should be



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appointed responsible for producing the annual returns to ARACIS and ensuring the internal QA&E strategy is operational and successful once approved through the committee structure.

6.2 Consistency with the European Standards and Guidelines

The team considered the university to be largely consistent with Part 1 of the European and Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the higher education area. The team received confirmation from students that learning outcomes and ECTS credits were clearly advertised for all programmes and that the information shared with them about their study requirements and assessments was accurate. Samples of diploma supplements were also shared. The team was reassured to find evidence that there was widespread use of evaluation and monitoring activities within the university. Academic staff members confirmed the use of self and peer evaluations. They also confirmed that anonymous confidential student feedback questionnaires were not only regularly distributed and analysed but the outcomes of student feedback could be directly linked to academic decision-making with examples shared with the team. Students who met the team confirmed that feedback questionnaires were regularly used. Students used a range of formal and informal mechanisms for commenting on the effectiveness of their learning experiences and generally were very happy with the standard of services and support available to them.

The team were advised that the process for managing and monitoring student feedback was manual and time consuming. The university is encouraged to consider piloting an online feedback survey in 2012/2013 with a view to rolling out across the university in future years. Reassurances should be given to staff and students that online surveys are anonymous and the outcomes would be confidentially managed. Training should be given to staff and ideally a centralised resource — a dedicated officer — allocated to support the use of online surveys. The university would require a minimal level of initial dedicated investment but this approach would save a considerable amount of time for staff and students engaging with feedback processes.

The team also sought information on the mechanisms used within the university for recognising and rewarding teaching excellence. The university was encouraged to consider establishing a teaching award scheme to assist in the promotion of teaching excellence and the dissemination of case studies in pedagogic methods being shared across the university. Several examples of award schemes are currently operating across Europe. A brief web survey could provide the basis of a model that could be swiftly operated within the university.



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7. Internationalisation

7.1 Quality and quantity of international partnerships

The university was commended by the team for its proactive engagement with European and international partners and the significant efforts made in developing high quality partnerships through the Erasmus and CEEPUS programmes. Managed through the university's Department of International Relations and Community Programmes (DRIPC), the team saw evidence of the university's involvement with higher education institutions from 21 European countries. Much of this work included Erasmus partnerships with similar institutions in 19 European countries and nine partners from the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS).

The SER states that the university has a strategy for growing partnerships with representative institutions and organisations worldwide. While the team did not receive a copy of this strategy document, it encourages the university to revise it following this review to take account of the team's suggestions to maximise promotional opportunities. A list of existing international partner organisations was however shared. These included institutions such as national philharmonic orchestras, opera houses, broadcasting companies, foundations, embassies, cultural institutes, festivals, etc. operating across Europe. UNMB was noted as being an active partner in the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) and engaged with a range of projects from the educational and artistic research fields.

7.2 Staff and student mobility

During the first and second site visits the team met with the Head of DRIPC and noted the extensive records management, student support and monitoring processes established to ensure the quality of student and staff mobility. The team also discussed mobility with staff and students that had benefitted personally and professionally from engagement with the Erasmus programme. While many examples were given of positive experiences from European exchanges, a concern raised by some students was an unwillingness to leave their Romanian professor. The team commends the level of support provided to incoming Erasmus and CEEPUS staff and students by the DRIPC and its active promotion of the mobility schemes to students within the university via events such as the annual Erasmus concert. The team recommends the university undertake an annual analysis of the Erasmus and CEEPUS programmes to develop realistic targets for incoming and outgoing staff and students.



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7.3 Maximising the impact of international engagement

The strategic importance of university staff and students engaging with the international community was identified in several meetings. Staff members confirmed they were encouraged and to teach Master classes and participate in conferences, concerts, events and competitions at an international level and were indeed successful. The team however questioned the adequacy and accessibility of funding and sabbatical leave opportunities available to enable staff to work internationally. The team noted that in most instances, international participation costs including travel costs could not be reimbursed within the university. Additionally, while Romanian law recognizes sabbatical leave formally, UNMB was struggling to offer sabbatical placements, particularly at professorial grades. During the visit, the team was also presented with numerous examples of university students performing internationally and winning prestigious competitions such as the MA student winning the Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 2011.

The team recommends that the university seek to secure a small fund to support staff and student engagement with international activities of strategic importance. This fund could be competitively bid to, based on criteria linked to the strategic goals of the university. Recipients of the fund should be required to act as ‘ambassadors’ of the university while engaging with the international activity and would undertake promotional and marketing opportunities upon their return.

The team noted instances where university staff have personal connections to leading international professionals, resulting in the students benefitting from guest visitations and opportunities to work with international conductors, singers and orchestras within Romania. While these guest visits are extremely well received by students and are seen by some as a major benefit of studying at the university, many of these guest visits appear to be organised informally and thus the ability to promote or widen attendance is underdeveloped. The university is encouraged to consider establishing a centrally maintained register of international contacts to formalise, support and indeed promote the university’s guest visitor programme to maximise the impact of international visitors internally and externally. Income generation opportunities may also be possible if external stakeholders or members of the public are willing to pay to attend guest performances.

A marketing and communications strategy should be developed to ensure staff, students and alumni that achieve success internationally are identified as ambassadors of the university. They should be provided with branding/logo materials and encouraged to confirm their connection to the university wherever possible. They should be asked to engage with publicity and marketing activities undertaken by the university. Social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram etc.) and the university’s English language website could be maximised at minimal cost to promote the university’s engagements, successes and achievements to an international audience.



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8. Conclusions

The team was impressed by the dedicated staff and students within the university who demonstrated exceptional spirit, skills, commitment and a strong sense of community. The team believes the university has the ability to achieve its vision of being a leading music university in south east Europe, in addition to enhancing its ability to proactively engage with European and international HE and professional communities.

To achieve its goals, the team encouraged the university to build on its strengths which include:

- 1) The shared ambition and vision of the Senate President, Rector (and their deputies);
- 2) The proposal of developing a joint BA programme in composition, musicology and conducting reflecting student and stakeholder needs;
- 3) Their commitment and ability to attract leading national and international professionals to deliver master classes and work with the students;
- 4) The mechanism developed for measuring artistic creation (against scientific production);
- 5) The contributions of the staff and students to regional and national cultural events;
- 6) Their commitment and concern to raise the competence of music educators;
- 7) The use of anonymous confidential student feedback to underpin academic decision-making processes;
- 8) Its proactive engagement with national, European and International partners.

Recommendations

The university is advised to undertake the following activities to enable it to advance efficiently and effectively:

- 9) Senate regulations be amended to ensure the rector's role be that of a co-opted member rather than full member;
- 10) Develop a robust institutional Strategic Plan for the next five years;
- 11) Establish a strategic alliance/consortia with music & arts rectors to inform and lobby higher education legislation on behalf of the arts;
- 12) Establish an annual forum with employers to build relationships with key stakeholders and receive timely feedback on the quality and employability of the university's programmes and its graduates;
- 13) Continue to work creatively with national and international partners to access research funding;



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- 14) Ensure that all staff and students who engage in professional, teaching and research activities nationally and internationally act as ambassadors of the university and are easily identifiable;
- 15) Establish a corporate support office (independently or in partnership with other universities) containing a small team of dedicated professional administrative staff;
- 16) Establish a system for accrediting professional placements secured and undertaken independently of the university;
- 17) Ensure the new media centre and technical facilities are suitable and available to support excellence amongst staff and students and its facilities widely promoted regionally, nationally and internationally;
- 18) Use Moodle/Blackboard (or another platform) and develop the application of digital interactive technologies;
- 19) Expand the practical support, advice and guidance (within and outside of the curriculum) available to all levels of UNMB students to prepare them for professional engagements in and beyond Romania;
- 20) Consider the income generating opportunities of external accessibility to the university's space and technical facilities;
- 21) Consider the development of a teaching award scheme within the university;
- 22) Introduce an electronic student evaluation facility.