



# REPORT

Bachelor of Arts in Music  
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement  
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy  
Master of Arts in Music Performance  
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance  
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory

**Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana**  
**Scuola Universitaria di Musica**  
**Lugano, Switzerland**

**19-21 November 2025**

## CONTENTS

List of abbreviations .....	4
Introduction .....	6
Executive summary.....	8
Main strengths.....	8
Main points of development.....	8
Key data on Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana .....	10
Alignment with Institutional Goals and Strategy.....	11
1. Governance and decision making at programme level.....	12
1.1. The programme goals and context.....	12
1.2. Programme's stakeholders role in decision making .....	17
Educational processes .....	21
2. Students' perspectives .....	22
2.1. Admission and student-centred learning .....	22
2.2. Students' Progression and Assessment.....	29
2.3. Students' employability.....	33
3. Teachers' perspectives .....	37
3.1. Staff qualification, professional activity and development.....	37
4. External perspectives .....	41
4.1. International perspectives and experiences for students and staff .....	41
4.2. Engagement within the external institutional and social context.....	45
Learning resources and student support .....	48
5. Resources .....	49
5.1 Finances, facilities, services and support staff.....	49
5.2 Health and wellbeing.....	54
6. Communication processes .....	57
6.1. Internal and external communication processes .....	57
Quality Culture .....	61
7. Quality Culture.....	62
7.1. Quality Culture at programme level .....	62
Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations.....	65
Conclusion.....	71
Annex 1. Site-visit schedule.....	72



Annex 2. List of documents provided to the review team ..... 77  
Annex 3. Definitions of compliance levels ..... 82



## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full form
AEC	<i>Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen</i>
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BIP	Blended Intensive Programme
CdM	<i>Città della Musica</i>
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CHF	Swiss franc
CSI	<i>Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana</i>
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EDK	Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESKAS	Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships
ESU	European Students' Union
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FSO	Federal Office of Statistics
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
HEdA	Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act)
IRC	International Relations Coordinator
KMHS	<i>Konferenz Musikhochschulen Schweiz</i> (Conference of Swiss Universities of Music)
LAC	<i>Lugano Arte e Cultura</i>
LHEdI	Cantonal Law on Higher Education Institutions
MA	Master of Arts
OSI	<i>Orchestra della Svizzera italiana</i>
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
PRE	Pre-College

<b>QA</b>	Quality assurance
<b>QM</b>	Quality management
<b>RSI</b>	<i>Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana</i>
<b>SEMP</b>	Swiss European Mobility Programme
<b>SER</b>	Self-evaluation report
<b>SERI</b>	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
<b>SMUS</b>	<i>Scuola di Musica</i> (School of Music)
<b>SUM</b>	<i>Scuola Universitaria di Musica</i> (University of Music)
<b>SUPSI</b>	<i>Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana</i> (University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland)
<b>USI</b>	<i>Università della Svizzera italiana</i>

## Introduction

The *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana* (CSI) is a private-law foundation of public interest located in Lugano, Switzerland, operating —for its University of Music— under a public mandate from the Canton of Ticino, one of 26 cantons forming the Swiss Confederation, and the only one where Italian is the exclusive official language. Founded in 1985 by private initiative, CSI was recognised by the Conference of Swiss Universities of Music in 1988 and formally acknowledged by the Canton of Ticino as a music education institution through agreements signed in 1994 and 1998. In 2000, the Canton granted CSI a formal mandate to transform the Conservatoire programmes into degree-level study courses, which were subsequently developed in line with the Bologna process, leading to the introduction of bachelor's degrees in 2005 and master's degrees in 2008, the last of which were accredited in 2010. Since 2006, the *Scuola Universitaria di Musica* (SUM) — CSI's higher education department — has been an affiliated school of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI), a status that enables access to public funding and grants the right to award recognised university degrees<sup>1</sup>.

CSI operates three interconnected but formally distinct educational departments: the *Scuola di Musica* (SMUS), a preparatory and amateur music school with over 1,000 pupils; the Pre-College (PRE), a pre-professional talent school for approximately 55 high-school aged students; and SUM, with 264 students in 2025-2026<sup>2</sup>. SUM's mandate encompasses four key areas: degree programmes, continuing education programmes, research and development, and provision of services. The higher education sector in Switzerland is governed by the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act, HEdA), which establishes institutional accreditation as a prerequisite for the right to award university titles and to receive federal contributions. The SUPSI was accredited in 2021 and is preparing for a second round of accreditation in 2027–2028; this accreditation encompasses all affiliated schools, including SUM<sup>3</sup>.

The six programmes subject to this review are:

- Bachelor of Arts in Music (majors in Performance and in Composition)
- Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement
- Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy
- Master of Arts in Music Performance
- Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance
- Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory

The present programme quality enhancement review follows a previous MusiQuE review of the same programmes, which took place in October 2018<sup>4</sup>. The current review is voluntary and was initiated by CSI within the framework of its quality assurance system as part of the degree programme portfolio assessment process.

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<sup>1</sup>Self-evaluation report (SER), p.10–11.

<sup>2</sup>CSI Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2028, p.3.

<sup>3</sup>SER, p.12.

<sup>4</sup>Comparative Analysis 2018 Review – 2025 SER, p.1.



The review procedure consisted of three stages. In the first stage, CSI prepared a self-evaluation report (SER), produced through a participative process that involved a steering committee comprising the quality management (QM) delegate, the Head of Studies, and the SUM Director. A first draft was developed by the QM delegate, drawing on the 2018 SER and updated to reflect current realities. This draft was then shared with the conference of field representatives, representatives from the Student union, and SUM Directorate, all of whom provided feedback before the final version<sup>5</sup>. In the second stage, an international review team conducted a site-visit to CSI in Lugano from 19 to 21 November 2025, during which it met with representatives of all stakeholder groups. In the third and final stage, the review team produced the present report, setting out its findings, analysis, suggestions for enhancement, recommendations, and compliance with each of the MusiQuE standards for programme review.

The review team was composed of the following members:

- **Lamberto Coccioli** (chair and secretary after completion of the site-visit), Professor of Music Technology at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Director of CreaTech Frontiers at Birmingham City University, United Kingdom.
- **Gal Faganel**, Professor of Cello and Quality Assurance Committee Chair, University of Ljubljana Academy of Music, Slovenia.
- **Paolo Girol**, Lecturer of Audiovisual Composition and Head of the Department of Composition and Improvisational Music, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Tallinn, Estonia.
- **Muireann O’Keeffe** (secretary until completion of the site-visit), Faculty Head of Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Technological University Dublin, Ireland
- **Mar Pino Charlez** (student member), student of the Master of Classical Voice, Conservatorium Maastricht, The Netherlands.

The review team wishes to express its appreciation to the CSI and SUM community for the thoroughness of the self-evaluation documentation provided in advance of the site-visit, and for the open, collegial, and constructive spirit with which all meetings were conducted throughout the three days in Lugano.

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<sup>5</sup> SER, p.7



## Executive summary

### Main strengths

The most distinctive strength of the programmes under review is SUM's clearly articulated institutional identity at the heart of the regional cultural landscape. This identity permeates all six programmes and is reinforced by deep and longstanding partnerships with the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* (OSI), the *Radiotelevisione Svizzera* (RSI), the *Lugano Arte e Cultura* (LAC) arts centre, and the early music ensemble *I Barocchisti*, among others. Together with SUM's commitment to contemporary music, these relationships create a rich and professionally oriented performance environment — encompassing orchestral productions, the *900presente* contemporary music series, electro-acoustic projects, and chamber music — that is rare among comparable European conservatoires and represents a unique asset for student development.

Significant progress has been achieved in programme documentation since the 2018 review. The completion and publication of comprehensive programme handbooks for all six programmes, effective from the 2025–26 academic year, provides a structured and transparent mapping of goals, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and evaluation criteria. This achievement, together with the formalisation of the quality enhancement framework through a Quality Manual based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act approach, demonstrates the institution's capacity to translate external recommendations into concrete improvements.

Further strengths are the internationally distinguished teaching body, whose artistic standing raises the quality of instruction and drives student recruitment, and the coherent design of the Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy and the Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory.

### Main points of development

The most pressing area for development concerns the Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance, which has not evolved substantially in many years and lacks essential components in entrepreneurship, career development, and portfolio building. The proposed revision, including the introduction of two new majors, should be finalised and implemented without further delay. More broadly, the review team suggests that SUM develops a structured, compulsory module addressing professional readiness and entrepreneurial skills, designed to be shared across programmes and taken before the last year of the master's programme.

Several areas relating to student access, progression and support require attention. The provision of all official programme documentation exclusively in Italian creates accessibility barriers for the significant proportion of international students enrolled on the master programmes who do not have Italian as their first language, and a systematic approach to multilingual access is needed. The communication of available mental health and support services to students — both those offered internally and through SUPSI — should be strengthened by giving clear information, beginning at induction. Scheduling practices should also be reviewed with explicit reference to student wellbeing. The Amadeus student management system is acknowledged by the institution itself as obsolete and prevents students from accessing their own academic records independently; its upgrade or replacement should be treated as a priority. Outgoing student mobility is near-absent and



unlikely to improve without an internationalisation strategy that sets measurable targets and identifies priority partnerships.

The future opening of the *Città della Musica* represents a transformative strategic opportunity. In the meantime, the review team encourages SUM to implement concrete interim measures to address current infrastructure limitations — particularly the absence of dedicated recording facilities and the inadequate acoustic treatment of practice rooms — so that current students are not left without support before the new campus opens.



## Key data on Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana

<b>Name of the institution</b>	Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana (CSI) — Scuola universitaria di Musica (SUM)
<b>Legal status</b>	Private law foundation of public utility ( <i>Fondazione di diritto privato di pubblica utilità</i> ), affiliated to the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI)
<b>Date of creation</b>	Professional section (SUM) recognised from 1988
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.conservatorio.ch">www.conservatorio.ch</a>
<b>Departments</b>	Three departments: School of Music ( <i>Scuola di Musica</i> , SMUS); Pre-College (PRE); University of Music ( <i>Scuola universitaria di Musica</i> , SUM)
<b>List of reviewed programmes</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Music; Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement; Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy; Master of Arts in Music Performance; Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance; Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory
<b>Number of students enrolled in the programmes reviewed</b>	264 students (headcount), corresponding to approximately 210 full-time equivalents (FTEs), for the academic year 2025–2026, distributed as follows BA in Music: 52 BA in Music and Movement: 1 MA in Music Pedagogy: 43 MA in Music Performance: 151 MA in Specialized Music Performance: 10 MA in Music Composition and Theory: 7
<b>Number of teachers serving the programmes reviewed</b>	97 staff (headcount), equating to 30 FTE

## Alignment with Institutional Goals and Strategy

# 1. Governance and decision making at programme level

## 1.1. The programme goals and context

**Standard 1.1** *The programme's goals are clearly stated and relevant to the national legal context. They reflect the institutional mission and vision, and they are aligned with the overarching institutional policies and strategy. They are effectively achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum, and its methods of delivery.*

### National and legal context

The six programmes under review operate within a complex and multilayered regulatory framework. The Higher Education Act (HEdA) and its associated ordinances establish that “institutional accreditation is a prerequisite for [the] right to use titles [e.g. University, Bachelor, Master], granting of federal contributions, and [voluntary] programme accreditation”<sup>6</sup>. Swiss universities of music are classified as universities of applied sciences and arts, which are permitted to award degrees at bachelor and master’s level<sup>7</sup>. SUPSI, to which SUM is affiliated, was institutionally accredited in 2021 and is preparing for a second accreditation cycle in 2027–2028.

Within this framework, Swiss universities of music are governed by a matrix of three actors: the Canton in which the school operates, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) for pedagogical matters, and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) for federal funding and supervision. The Canton of Ticino also has specific legislation for its higher education sector (LHEdI), which permits SUM’s affiliation to SUPSI while preserving its administrative and operational autonomy<sup>8</sup>. The management of the institution confirmed that there is a common strategy for the whole of SUPSI, reviewed every ten years, alongside a four-year action plan drafted specifically for SUM as an affiliated school, which is connected both to cantonal policy priorities and to the CSI Foundation’s own strategic orientation<sup>9</sup>.

The programmes are coordinated at federal level through the Swiss Conference of Universities of Music (KMHS), which has established a common base for the Bologna system comprising two Bachelor and four coordinated master’s programmes, with shared competence profiles developed collectively across institutions. As the SER notes, “the offering in Lugano is therefore not very different from the offerings in Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne or Zurich, but, as agreed within the KMHS, each school has developed its own specific profile as a centre of competence”<sup>10</sup>. The approval of new or substantially revised programmes requires endorsement by the SUPSI Council, which establishes a transversal commission for this purpose<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> SER, p.12.

<sup>7</sup> SER, p.13.

<sup>8</sup> SER, p.12.

<sup>9</sup> Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>10</sup> SER, p.13.

<sup>11</sup> Meeting with management of the institution.

## Alignment with institutional policies and strategy

The programmes operate under a dual strategic framework: the SUPSI-wide strategy and the CSI Foundation's own Action Plan 2025–2028, which covers the Foundation's three departments and addresses areas including logistics, finances, and corporate identity as well as those delegated to SUM under the terms of its affiliation agreement<sup>12</sup>. The strategies are connected to cantonal policy and are “double-focused”, linking to both the SUPSI system and the Foundation's own priorities<sup>13</sup>. The programmes are aligned with CSI's broader institutional policies on ethics and conduct through the CSI Code of Conduct, which promotes a teaching and learning environment that discourages discrimination, sexual misconduct, bullying, and violence, while encouraging respect for integrity, diversity, sustainability, and self-reflection<sup>14</sup>. A dedicated Gender and Diversity Service is also in place<sup>15</sup>.

## Programme goals, rationale and distinctive profile

The goals of each programme are set out in individual programme handbooks, which were comprehensively updated and published at the start of the academic year 2025–2026. For the Bachelor of Arts in Music, the handbooks for both the performance and composition majors include the programme description, goals, learning outcomes, competence profile, admission requirements, programme structure for each instrument or instrument family, examination regulations, and descriptions of individual modules and mandatory subjects. The SER describes a process of regular revision “at all levels”, including a general evaluation every seven years via an external peer review and constant evaluation through the work of teaching staff and programme leadership<sup>16</sup>.

The **BA in Music** (BA Music) is a three-year programme (180 ECTS) that does not lead directly to a professional qualification, as professionalisation in the Swiss music context is achieved at master's level. Its curriculum is structured to allow students to develop skills across three broad areas: approximately 60% of the workload is devoted to practical studies and performance, with 20% to theoretical studies and 20% to transfer studies, including supervised written work and the final project. This structure is designed to enable students to access a master's programme “with excellent instrumental skills, academic development and critical and artistic thinking capabilities”<sup>17</sup>. Teachers confirmed that there is no imposed repertoire for any instrument, with the condition that students study repertoire from a variety of styles and periods, thereby allowing them to shape their own artistic paths<sup>18</sup>.

The **Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement** (BA Music and Movement) is the only Swiss bachelor's degree granting a professional qualification. It defines a path of growing specialisation: two years of overview studies and complementary instruments, followed by a third year dedicated to the main instrument and the development of pedagogical

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<sup>12</sup> CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>14</sup> SER, p.48.

<sup>15</sup> CSI Gender and diversity service brochure.

<sup>16</sup> SER, p.14.

<sup>17</sup> SER, p.15.

<sup>18</sup> Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

competences. Graduates obtain a qualification permitting them to teach pupils aged four to twelve. The programme handbook provides a cross-reference between programme-level and subject-specific learning outcomes. However, the SER acknowledges a significant challenge: for the academic year 2025–2026, only one student remains active in this programme, and the recognition of the teaching qualification is regulated at cantonal rather than national level, limiting graduate mobility across cantons<sup>19</sup>.

The **Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy** (MA Pedagogy) is offered with two majors — instrumental and vocal music pedagogy, and elementary music education — both of which are part of a strongly coordinated national framework involving the KMHS, the Association of Swiss Music Schools (SAMS), the Swiss Music Pedagogy Society, and Rhythmik Schweiz. The programme is delivered exclusively in Italian, which limits its accessibility to students with the requisite language competence, principally those from the Canton of Ticino or from Italy. Graduates from the major in instrumental and vocal pedagogy have demonstrated relatively easy access to the local job market, although international recognition of the qualification can be complicated by differing cantonal and national regulations<sup>20</sup>. The challenge of having Swiss qualifications recognised in neighbouring countries, particularly Italy, was raised as a recurring issue during meetings, with the management noting that pragmatic bilateral solutions have to be found on a case-by-case basis<sup>21</sup>.

The **Master of Arts in Music Performance** (MA Performance) is the largest programme in terms of enrolment, with 151 students (headcount) for 2025–2026. It is offered with two majors: instrumental and vocal performance, and ensemble conducting (contemporary repertoire). The major in instrumental and vocal performance is described in the SER as “a very generalist study programme in which students mainly perform their instrument”, with almost 70% of the workload allocated to the main subject<sup>22</sup>. The major in ensemble conducting devotes 40% to the main subject, 45% to complementary subjects including 20 ECTS for assistantships and traineeships, and the remainder for electives. The latter major is explicitly aligned with the programmes’ strategic orientation towards contemporary music, providing students with the skills to develop careers in this “very competitive and highly specialized field”<sup>23</sup>. A plan to introduce different minors within the MA Performance, which had been anticipated at the time of the 2018 review, has not been implemented “due to sustainability aspects”<sup>24</sup>.

The **Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance** (MA Specialized Performance) traces its origins to the pre-Bologna Soloist diploma and is oriented towards students with the potential to develop an international career as soloists or to secure a position as a solo player in an orchestra. The curriculum dedicates approximately 80% of the workload to instrumental performance — mainly solo and chamber music repertoire — accompanied by in-depth studies in early and contemporary music and other electives<sup>25</sup>. The programme is highly selective, admitting only four or five students per year, and benefits from a strong collaboration with the OSI, which allows students to perform their final solo concert with

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<sup>19</sup> SER, p.63.

<sup>20</sup> SER, p.71.

<sup>21</sup> Meeting with management of the institution; Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

<sup>22</sup> SER, p.79.

<sup>23</sup> SER, p.79.

<sup>24</sup> SER, p.80.

<sup>25</sup> SER, p.89.

the orchestra<sup>26</sup>. The programme is currently undergoing a revision phase to introduce two majors: instrumental and vocal performance, and solo performance, the latter requiring specialisation in contemporary repertoire. The SER identifies challenges, including the absence of components dedicated to entrepreneurship, career development, portfolio building, and a structure that does not readily allow students to build an international career while studying, as complementary subjects are all delivered on-site<sup>27</sup>.

**The Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory** (MA Composition) is a small programme (seven students in 2025–2026) that benefits from SUM's strong profile in contemporary music, reinforced by the *900presente* contemporary music concert season and the *OggiMusica* platform.

A notable feature of several of the programmes is the inclusion of early music and contemporary music as compulsory subjects. The effectiveness of this approach has been questioned previously, and it had already been raised in the 2018 review. In the MA Performance, these mandatory subjects are delivered exclusively in Italian, which creates difficulties for students who do not speak the language<sup>28</sup>.

There is a clear progression pathway from the BA to the MA programmes. The BA Music is explicitly designed to prepare students for entry to a MA programme. The MA Specialized Performance shares the same entrance requirements as the MA Performance, and is often completed as a second subsidised MA programme with 90 ECTS (30 credits being recognised from the first MA)<sup>29</sup>. With regard to research capabilities, many teachers in theory-related subjects hold a PhD, are involved in research projects, or are explicitly employed as researchers<sup>30</sup>. The advisory board has provided advice on developing research within the programmes, resulting in the appointment of three professors for artistic research. Under the Swiss system, third-cycle degrees (doctoral programmes) may only be awarded by universities, not by universities of applied sciences, and the development of a PhD pathway would require a partnership with an appropriate university as a partner institution<sup>31</sup>.

The review team commends the clarity and comprehensiveness of the programme handbooks, which have been substantially enhanced since the 2018 review. The strong connection between the programmes and the local cultural context is also worthy of mention, including the collaborations with RSI, OSI, and LAC, which supports the alignment of the programmes' goals with the broader institutional mission and the cultural life of the Ticino region.

The emerging investment in research, including the appointment of new research professors, is a positive development. The programmes should continue embedding research capabilities within the student profile, including at bachelor level, in anticipation of potential future doctoral-level provision through partnership with a suitable university.

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<sup>26</sup> SER, p.87.

<sup>27</sup> SER, p.89.

<sup>28</sup> SER, p.80.

<sup>29</sup> SER, p.13, Admissions requirements for MA in Specialized Music Performance.

<sup>30</sup> SER, p.35.

<sup>31</sup> Meeting with members of advisory board.

Regarding the inclusion of early music and contemporary music as compulsory subjects across the master's programmes, this has been a point of discussion since the 2018 review and that questions remain about the effectiveness of this approach, particularly when these subjects are delivered only in Italian within the MA Performance. The pedagogical rationale and mode of delivery of these compulsory components should be reconsidered, ensuring that they are taught with a sufficiently practical approach and are accessible to the entirety of the student body.

The review team recognises the ongoing revision of the MA Specialized Performance as a step in the right direction. However, this programme currently lacks components related to entrepreneurship, career development, and portfolio building, and its on-site delivery model may limit students' ability to build international careers while studying. The review team recommends that these gaps are addressed in the revised curriculum.

### **Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Continue embedding research capabilities at all levels, including bachelor, in anticipation of doctoral-level provision through university partnership

### **Recommendation 1**

Reconsider pedagogical rationale and delivery of compulsory early/contemporary music subjects; ensure practical approach and accessibility for all students

### **Recommendation 2**

Address gaps in entrepreneurship, career development, and portfolio building in the revised MA Specialized Performance curriculum

### **Recommendation 3**

Consider a blend of on-site and remote study offer for the revised MA Specialized Performance, to better support the developing international careers of young musicians.

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 1.1 as follows:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialised Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 1.2. Programme's stakeholders role in decision making

**Standard 1.2** *The delivery of the programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure, and clear, transparent and effective decision-making processes that include a balanced representation of the programme's stakeholders (students, teaching staff, support staff, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains).*

The governance structure that supports decision-making across the six programmes under review is rather complex. The SUPSI Council and CSI Council formally approve new study programmes and key reference documents; SUM Council oversees the implementation of the affiliation contract with SUPSI; the CSI Directorate holds direct responsibility for strategic and administrative aspects; SUM Director is responsible for the quality of the programmes and their alignment with cantonal, national, and international standards, while SUM Directorate<sup>32</sup> is responsible for changes relating to programme structure, sustainability, feasibility, regulations, internal communication, and the allocation of resources. Below this level, the heads of study areas may propose changes within their respective areas of competence — following consultation with teaching staff — with proposals submitted to the Head of Studies; the academic council acts as the consultation body for all educational matters; the conference of field representatives (*Conferenza dei capigruppo*) may propose changes to study programmes or quality enhancement measures, with proposals submitted to SUM Director; the student union may propose changes affecting specific groups of students, with proposals submitted to SUM Director or SUM Directorate; and administrative staff may propose changes within their areas of expertise, forwarded to the Head of Academic Services or the SUM Director<sup>33</sup>.

The roles and responsibilities assigned to these bodies have been progressively formalised through successive revisions of the Organisation regulations, most recently amended in December 2024. The SER acknowledges that this revision “fully satisfies all suggestions from the previous review team” with respect to the 2018 MusiQuE recommendation calling for “further definition of roles, decision-making authority and clear delegation of responsibility”<sup>34</sup>. Despite this, the SER also recognises that the revised framework “has yet to be fully assimilated by the broader SUM community”<sup>35</sup> — a finding confirmed during the site-visit, where different stakeholders indicated some uncertainty about the precise distribution of responsibilities and decision-making authority. This gap between the formalised structure and its practical assimilation is a common challenge across all six programmes.

Teaching staff participate in programme-related decisions through formal channels regulated by the Organisation regulations, which provide for teacher involvement — either directly or through their representatives — in the definition of new regulations, the awarding of scholarships, and the appointment of new teaching staff<sup>36</sup>. The principal mechanism through which teachers contribute to curriculum-related discussions is the *capigruppo*: instrument-group or area representatives who communicate between the broader teaching

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<sup>32</sup>The SUM Directorate comprises the SUM Director, the Head of Studies, the Head of Academic Services, and one of the Heads of Performance Studies, the last three of whom are denominated vice-directors. SER, p.19.

<sup>33</sup>SER, pp.19-20.

<sup>34</sup>SER, p.22.

<sup>35</sup>SER, p.22.

<sup>36</sup>SER, p.21.

body and governance bodies. The *capigruppo* convenes regularly to discuss matters concerning their respective groups. However, the communication that flows back from governance decisions to the teaching body has remained informal in character. The SER acknowledges that the model of teacher participation “should be updated and defined in a more granular and formal way” and that a “deeper discussion should be opened on whether teachers should be more directly involved in the decision-making processes, as opposed to merely consulted”<sup>37</sup>. This observation was reinforced during meetings with teachers and lecturers, where a number of teaching staff demonstrated limited awareness of governance structures and the formal channels available for programme input<sup>38</sup>.

A significant recent development is the creation of the Didactic Council (*Consiglio Didattico*), established in March 2025. This body brings together heads of each study area, *capigruppo*, and a representative from the student union, with a stated remit to define study plans and the elective offer across the programmes. The Didactic Council is intended to create “different opportunities to engage stakeholders and get their opinions and suggestions”. Given that the body had only recently commenced operation, there is insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of this mechanism across all six programmes<sup>39</sup>.

The student union (*Associazione studenti*) is formally empowered under the Organisation regulations to propose changes affecting specific student groups, including students enrolled in a particular family of instruments or a particular study programme<sup>40</sup>. In practice, student representation is channelled primarily through this body. At the time of the site-visit, the student union was preparing to participate in a Didactic Council meeting for the first time. Students indicated that their contributions to programme development had to date been largely informal<sup>41</sup>. The SER acknowledges that the student representative body “see a constant re-composition of members which at times results in a passive, rather than active, representation”<sup>42</sup>.

Administrative staff are empowered to propose changes within their areas of expertise via the Head of Academic Services or the SUM Director<sup>43</sup>. The SER identifies the formalisation of certain procedures — such as the systematic cataloguing of minutes of the meetings — as a persistent challenge which may limit the traceability and transparency of decisions taken across the programmes<sup>44</sup>.

The advisory board (*commissione consultiva*) is composed of renowned higher education and music professionals from Switzerland and abroad. The Board is tasked with supporting the strategic development of the school and the study programmes and is involved in the recruitment of new staff<sup>45</sup>. However, there are no formal mechanisms through which professional practitioners are systematically consulted in the development or review of

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<sup>37</sup>SER, p.21.

<sup>38</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>39</sup>Meeting with management of the institution; Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

<sup>40</sup>SER, p.20.

<sup>41</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>42</sup>SER, p.22.

<sup>43</sup>SER, p.20.

<sup>44</sup>SER, p.22.

<sup>45</sup>SER, p.21.

individual programme curricula<sup>46</sup>. The advisory board has suggested the model of professional engagement “should be updated and defined in a more granular and formal way”<sup>47</sup>. External stakeholders — such as partner organisations involved in productions — contribute to specific aspects of the educational offer, particularly in relation to the MA Specialized Performance. While this constitutes a meaningful point of contact with the music profession, it is not a structured channel for curriculum input across all the programmes under review.

The governance structure supporting the six programmes under review is clearly articulated and has been greatly developed since the 2018 MusiQuE review. The creation of the Didactic Council in March 2025 is a timely initiative with potential to strengthen the role of teaching staff and students in curriculum development across all programmes.

The review team has identified three issues that affect equally the six programmes. The first issue concerns teaching staff awareness and engagement. Despite the formal provisions set out in the Organisation regulations, several teaching staff have limited awareness of governance structures and the channels available for programme input. The capigruppo system operates in a largely horizontal and informal manner, and the communication of decisions back to the teaching body lacks consistency and documentation. Deliberate steps should be taken to ensure that teaching staff are systematically informed of, and able to engage with, programme-level decision-making. This could be achieved through the Didactic Council, provided that its terms of reference are formalised, its decisions are documented, and outcomes are communicated in writing to the wider teaching body.

The second issue concerns student representation. The review team acknowledges the formal role of the student union and welcomes the inclusion of a student representative in the Didactic Council. However, the persistent challenge of passive or episodic student representation needs a more proactive response. Students should be better supported to take an active and informed role in governance, for example through induction to student representation roles and regular, well-documented opportunities to contribute to programme review across all six areas of study.

The third issue concerns the involvement of external professional stakeholders in curriculum development. There is no mechanism through which independent representatives of the music profession are regularly and formally consulted on the content and development of the six programmes. This is a particular concern for the MA practice-based programmes, such as the MA Performance and the MA Specialized Performance, where the alignment of the curriculum with an evolving professional context is critical. A formal mechanism for periodic professional consultation should be introduced, distinct from the advisory board’s strategic function, to address specifically curriculum content and learning outcomes.

### **Recommendation 1**

Ensure teaching staff are systematically informed of and able to engage with programme-level decision-making, e.g. through formalised Didactic Council with documented decisions and written communication to teaching body

<sup>46</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>47</sup>SER, p.21.

**Recommendation 2**

Support students to take an active and informed role in governance, e.g. through induction to representation roles and regular, documented opportunities to contribute to programme review

**Recommendation 3**

Introduce a formal mechanism for periodic professional consultation on curriculum content and learning outcomes, distinct from the advisory board's strategic function

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 1.2 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## Educational processes

## 2. Students' perspectives

### 2.1. Admission and student-centred learning

**Standard 2.1** *Clear, coherent, and inclusive admission criteria exist, to establish artistic and academic suitability of incoming students at programme level. Admitted students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process and to engage in critical reflection. They are supported to achieve the intended learning outcomes through an appropriate and effective blend of teaching and learning styles and pedagogies. The programme and its methods of delivery are adequately catered by staff and support services.*

#### Admissions

Admission criteria for the six programmes under review are documented in the Study Regulations, the individual programme regulations, and the respective programme handbooks that set out the prerequisites for entry, the required competence profiles, and the structure of entrance examinations. For the BA Music, the admissions process is multi-staged: applicants must first submit a video recording for pre-selection, followed by a live audition for performance majors, an ear-training examination, and an interview; applicants for the composition major are required to present a portfolio of three or four original works. The MA programmes require applicants to hold a bachelor's degree or recognised equivalent, with programme-specific competence profiles articulated in dedicated admissions documentation. All admission-related information is made publicly available through dedicated pages on CSI's website, which describe procedures, competence requirements, costs, financial support options, and — notably for the large number of international applicants — visa and accommodation information<sup>48</sup>.

The programmes operate with an inclusive admissions ethos. Applicants are encouraged to apply “regardless of age, origin, religion, gender identity, or any other condition that may discourage anyone from applying”, in line with CSI's *Code of conduct*. The programmes also accommodate students who face professional or personal constraints by offering the option to extend a three-year BA in Music to four years, or a two-year MA programme to three years<sup>49</sup>.

An important factor for a significant proportion of enrolled students is the requirement that instruction and assessment be delivered in Italian, as prescribed by cantonal legislation. To mitigate the linguistic barrier for the many non-Italian-speaking students across the programmes, a number of practical measures are in place: Italian language courses worth 4 ECTS are embedded in the curriculum, certain courses are offered bilingually in Italian and English, and the acceptance of written submissions in other languages (English, French, and German) for students whose Italian language proficiency is limited<sup>50</sup>. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level B2 is referenced in documentation as an Italian-language requirement for admission; however, this threshold is applied with some flexibility, according to the degree of theoretical instruction a student

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<sup>48</sup>SER, p.23.

<sup>49</sup>SER, pp.23-24.

<sup>50</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff; SER, p.16.

is required to undertake<sup>51</sup>. Assessment documentation, including evaluation criteria, is provided exclusively in Italian, which may present challenges for students who do not speak the language<sup>52</sup>.

## Programme structure and learning outcomes

All programmes under review provide programme handbooks that contain a cross-reference between programme-level and subject-specific learning outcomes, showing students and teachers how individual subjects contribute to the overall competence profile. The depth and clarity of this documentation represent a significant improvement since the previous review cycle.

The BA Music dedicates approximately 60% of student learning time to practical activities — encompassing the main subject, complementary instruments, and ensemble work — and approximately 20% each to theoretical studies (music history, analysis, harmony) and transfer activities (supervised written work and the final project). The structure is designed to be progressively personalised: from a clearly defined core in the first year to a third year centred on the main subject and the final project<sup>53</sup>. The BA Music and Movement organises study across three parallel domains — instrumental skills, theoretical skills, and pedagogical skills — with the aim of developing musicians equipped to integrate movement-based approaches into their practice<sup>54</sup>.

At MA level, the MA Pedagogy is structured across two years: the first builds core teaching competences, and students who are more experienced may begin supervised independent teaching activities; the second year requires students to apply their knowledge in real, supervised teaching contexts<sup>55</sup>. The MA Performance offers two majors — instrumental and vocal performance, and ensemble conducting — with progressively demanding performance requirements and a final recital<sup>56</sup>. The MA Specialized Performance is a highly selective programme offering intensive focus on the main instrument alongside a reduced complement of theoretical and elective subjects<sup>57</sup>. The MA Composition devotes approximately 80% of the workload to the main field of study, with complementary studies and electives accounting for 15% and 5% respectively, within a structure intended to encourage students to develop their own artistic personality in the context of the contemporary music landscape<sup>58</sup>.

## Teaching, learning, and critical reflection

Across the programmes, teaching is delivered through a blend of one-to-one lessons, small-group instruction, large and small ensemble productions, seminars, and supervised independent study culminating in a final project or recital. The one-to-one lesson with the main instrument, voice or composition teacher constitutes the primary pedagogical vehicle in the performance and composition programmes, providing highly personalised

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<sup>51</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>52</sup>SER, p.27.

<sup>53</sup>SER, pp.23-24.

<sup>54</sup>SER, p.63.

<sup>55</sup>SER, p.72.

<sup>56</sup>SER, p.82.

<sup>57</sup>SER, p.88.

<sup>58</sup>SER, p.96.

engagement with individual artistic development. Mandatory theoretical and analytical subjects in the BA in Music are typically delivered in small groups, allowing for a degree of interactive learning<sup>59</sup>.

Students are actively encouraged to reflect on their technical and artistic development and to engage in public performance. Main instrument teachers regularly organise class concerts in the recital hall, using these occasions to deliver feedback to their class. Students may also register to perform in solo and chamber music concerts via a dedicated platform, subject to their teacher's approval. The range of performance contexts available — including orchestral productions, contemporary music ensemble projects forming part of the *900presente* concert series, Electro-Acoustic Room (EAR) projects, and choral productions — creates a stimulating and professionally oriented environment<sup>60</sup>.

Research and academic reflection are integrated into the programmes at varying levels. In the BA Music, students are required to present two written papers in music history at the end of the second year and a final project in the third year; supervision is frequently provided by members of the research division, who also hold teaching responsibilities and supervise final projects<sup>61</sup>. The MA Composition engages students in research-informed practice through both one-to-one and group sessions with SUM teachers and guest composers, across a range of compositional domains extending to electronic and mixed media<sup>62</sup>.

### Study plan flexibility and workload

The programmes provide partially personalised study plans. Students may exercise choice over elective subjects alongside the mandatory components. The study plan allows for meaningful personalisation, particularly in the final year of the BA in Music and across the MA programmes, with the newly established Didactic Council beginning to address structural questions of curriculum design and ECTS mapping<sup>63</sup>.

However, students reported that, whilst they may in principle select elective subjects, the rules governing allocation are not clearly communicated — including how competing requests are resolved and what credit entitlement applies. Access to electives also varies across programmes and instrument groups. Some students indicated that selecting an elective does not guarantee enrolment, and that the criteria for prioritisation are not transparent. It was further noted that the mandatory curriculum — particularly its theoretical component — leaves limited time for meaningful engagement with electives<sup>64</sup>.

Workload distribution across the programmes emerged as an additional area of concern. In the BA Music, the concentration of compulsory theoretical subjects in the first and second years results in a particularly heavy workload at the most formative stage of the programme<sup>65</sup>. Students also drew attention to an imbalance between the two years of study of the MA Performance. The second year has a disproportionate mandatory element at a

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<sup>59</sup>SER, p.24.

<sup>60</sup>SER, p.25.

<sup>61</sup>SER, p.25.

<sup>62</sup>SER, p.96.

<sup>63</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

<sup>64</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>65</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

point when students would ideally be devoting the majority of their time to independent practice and professional auditions. In the BA Music and Movement, at least some students have experienced difficulty in understanding the requirements of their study plan, including the expectations associated with the final project, suggesting that the clarity of study plan communication is not uniform across all programmes<sup>66</sup>.

A related concern is the role of attendance in assessment. The review team understands that an 80% attendance threshold is applied across the programmes as a condition for sitting examinations. However, students reported that attendance also functions as a component of the grade awarded in some subjects, rather than operating solely as an eligibility condition. It seems that this distinction between a threshold requirement and a graded element is not applied consistently across courses and is not clearly signalled to students in advance<sup>67</sup>.

### Performance opportunities and equal access

The programmes offer a rich and varied performance calendar, including three major orchestral productions per year, five or six contemporary music productions through the *900presente* series, ensemble productions, EAR projects, and choral productions<sup>68</sup>. The MA Specialized Performance benefits from a notable partnership with the OSI, offering students the opportunity to perform their final solo concert with a professional orchestra. They also perform regularly with the *900presente* ensemble and in solo or chamber music ensemble recitals at LAC<sup>69</sup>. Composition students have access to dedicated performance forums including the Composers' Lab and collaborative projects with visiting ensembles and *OggiMusica*<sup>70</sup>.

Notwithstanding this breadth of provision, the review team received consistent feedback raising questions about the equity of access to performance opportunities. The process by which students are selected for major ensemble productions and paid artistic engagements is managed centrally, with allocation determined through criteria described in the SER as based on degree requirements, student level, and instrument distribution<sup>71</sup>. These criteria do not seem to be always understood or visible to the student body. Some students indicated that they were unaware of auditions taking place, that communication of performance opportunities through the booking and scheduling systems was inconsistent, and that not all students receive an equitable share of performance opportunities<sup>72</sup>.

### Support services

The programmes are served by a support infrastructure comprising four academic service offices: a logistics service, an orchestral and ensemble projects team, a services provision office, and a secretariat responsible for scheduling, room bookings, and the issuing of

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<sup>66</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>67</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>68</sup>SER, p.25.

<sup>69</sup>SER, p.88.

<sup>70</sup>SER, p.96.

<sup>71</sup>Meeting with productions.

<sup>72</sup>Meeting with students; Meeting with productions.

certifications<sup>73</sup>. Pastoral and welfare support is provided through a gender and diversity service, which offers counselling and can facilitate referral to a psychologist; complementary psychological support is available through the SUPSI counselling service<sup>74</sup>. Needs-based scholarships are administered through a defined allocation process, and dedicated administrative support is available for international students to help with study permits, health insurance arrangements, and other requirements<sup>75</sup>.

Awareness of available support services — particularly those offered at SUPSI level — remains limited among students. Several students indicated that they were not aware of psychological support resources or that access to them was unclear. Given the small size of the student body, staff are generally able to identify students experiencing difficulties informally, but the absence of an orientation process means that at the beginning of their studies students may not know what is available to them<sup>76</sup>. This point is addressed further under Standard 5.2.

The review team recognises a number of significant strengths in the way the programmes approach admissions and student-centred learning. The multi-stage admissions process provides a well-rounded assessment of artistic and academic suitability, and the commitment to inclusive admissions — evidenced in the alignment with CSI's Code of conduct and the adjustments offered to students with linguistic or personal constraints — is commendable. The recent completion and publication of a full programme syllabus, and the introduction of cross-referenced learning outcomes in the programme handbooks for academic year 2025–2026, represent important improvements that the review team warmly welcomes. The variety of performance contexts available to students, and the intensity of one-to-one teaching, constitute clear strengths across all programmes.

There are nonetheless a number of areas that require attention. Workload distribution should be reviewed systematically across all programmes. For example, the heavy load of theory subjects in the early years of the BA Music and the uneven distribution of mandatory requirements across the two years of the MA Performance should be addressed by programme coordinators. Ideally, a formal benchmarking of ECTS allocation against actual student workload should be carried out. The review team recommends that the Didactic Council take a leading role in this review and establish a timeline for implementation.

The elective allocation system requires greater transparency and consistency. The review team recommends that all programmes communicate to students a clear policy on elective credit entitlement and the criteria by which competing requests are adjudicated. This policy should be made available to students at the start of their studies and reflected in the programme handbooks. The programmes should consider implementing a mechanism for recognition of prior learning to prevent students from repeating content that they have already studied.

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<sup>73</sup>SER, p.25.

<sup>74</sup>SER, p.47.

<sup>75</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>76</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff; Meeting with students.

The application of the 80% attendance requirement needs clarification at programme level. The review team recommends establishing an unambiguous policy that distinguishes between attendance as a threshold condition for examination eligibility and attendance as a graded component of a subject's assessment.

With regard to performance opportunities, the review team recommends establishing a more transparent mechanism for the allocation of places in ensemble productions and paid artistic engagements. Open, clearly announced audition processes would both strengthen equity of access and provide students with valuable professional preparation.

The Italian language represents a significant barrier for a portion of the student population. While the review team acknowledges the constraints of cantonal legislation, SUM should implement practical measures to increase the accessibility of key documentation for non-Italian-speaking students. The systematic use of machine-translation tools, reviewed by staff before distribution, represents one feasible and low-cost option that could be prioritised in the near term.

**Recommendation 1**

Review workload distribution systematically across all programmes; Didactic Council to lead with implementation timeline

**Recommendation 2**

Communicate clear elective credit entitlement policy and adjudication criteria to students at the start of studies; consider recognition of prior learning

**Recommendation 3**

Establish unambiguous attendance policy distinguishing threshold condition for exam eligibility from graded assessment component

**Recommendation 4**

Establish transparent mechanism for allocation of ensemble production places and paid engagements, e.g. open, clearly announced auditions

**Recommendation 5**

Explore practical measures to increase accessibility of documentation for non-Italian-speaking students, e.g. machine-translation reviewed by staff

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 2.1 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant

Master of Arts in Specialised Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 2.2. Students' Progression and Assessment

**Standard 2.2** *The programme has effective procedures in place to formally monitor and review the progression of its students. Assessment methods are clearly defined and effectively demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. There is an effective complaints and appeals system in place at programme level.*

### Student Progression

Each student is supported by a Head of studies, the relevant Heads of study areas, the Head of academic services, and their individual teachers, with ultimate responsibility for student progression resting with the SUM Directorate<sup>77</sup>. In practice, the system is largely informal: monitoring typically takes the form of one-to-one meetings and verbal follow-ups, drawing on the advantage of a relatively small student body<sup>78</sup>. Senior administrative staff similarly described the approach as highly personalised, noting that the small scale of the institution allows staff to identify students at risk informally and respond swiftly<sup>79</sup>. Where students encounter difficulties — whether for health reasons or professional commitments — semester deferrals are available, reflecting a degree of flexibility in managing student pathways<sup>80</sup>.

For the BA Music, teachers of theoretical subjects convene at the end of each semester with the Head of the theory area to review individual cases, and this information is subsequently shared with the Head of studies. Formal verbal feedback is provided at end-of-year examinations (*esami di passaggio*) and at preliminary admission examinations for final exams<sup>81</sup>. For the MA Performance, there is one examination in the first year, while the second year has three separate assessments<sup>82</sup>. Withdrawals are generally due to outside factors such as financial difficulties, professional employment, or misunderstandings about study requirements<sup>83</sup>. There were 27 student withdrawals in 2023 and 20 in 2024<sup>84</sup>.

Students wishing to check their own progression must contact the Head of studies to obtain an overview of acquired ECTS; an official transcript — which records ECTS only, without grades — is available from academic services at a cost of CHF 30. Students do not have direct access to a complete overview of their progression through institutional systems<sup>85</sup>.

### Assessment Methods and Examinations

A common assessment framework applies across the programmes. The SER states that, from the academic year 2025–2026, “assessment methods and evaluation criteria are now clearly defined throughout the documentation,” with programme handbooks for all programmes and the seminars booklet now including explicit indications of how students

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<sup>77</sup>SER, p.27.

<sup>78</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes.

<sup>79</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>80</sup>SER, p.28.

<sup>81</sup>SER, p.27.

<sup>82</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes.

<sup>83</sup>SER, p.28.

<sup>84</sup>Student statistical data for all programmes.

<sup>85</sup>SER, pp.29-30.

are assessed and against which criteria<sup>86</sup>. The handbooks also articulate the correlation between subject-specific outcomes and assessment methods, addressing a gap identified in the 2018 MusiQuE review, which had found that “assessment methods are not always clearly defined in all areas, and links to learning outcomes not demonstrated”<sup>87</sup>.

Final examinations across all programmes are conducted before evaluation committees comprising at minimum three members: an external expert, a Head of study area, and the student’s teacher; in some cases, additional external experts or teachers are involved<sup>88</sup>. This model provides external benchmarking and helps ensure that evaluations reflect the standards of the wider music profession. For the MA Pedagogy, both end-of-year and final examinations follow this format<sup>89</sup>. Teachers from SUM are also engaged as external examiners at other Swiss institutions, which contributes to the broader consistency of standards.

Two grading scales are in use across the programmes: a numeric scale running from 1 to 6 (with 4 as the pass mark) for final examinations, and a pass or fail statement for all other subjects and assessments. The final grade is defined as the weighted average of all final examination components and is communicated to students through a certification document<sup>90</sup>.

The MA Specialized Performance has two specific limitations: evaluations of the four mandatory recitals (two solo and two chamber music) and the concluding orchestra concert with the OSI remain private and are not included in any official documentation accompanying the diploma or diploma supplement. This represents a structural asymmetry between this programme and the others under review with respect to the transparency of summative evaluation. Additionally, the repertoire for the final solo concert with the OSI is effectively limited by the orchestra’s programming schedule: larger scale works that require a full ensemble, or longer works that require more concert time than a shared evening permits, are frequently not admissible. This limits the degree of artistic choice available to students at the point of their final summative assessment.

The programmes operate a recognised system for prior learning and transfer. Students arriving with fully completed foreign qualifications are assessed individually. For students arriving with partially completed studies from other Swiss institutions, direct interinstitutional dialogue is pursued; in other cases, specific examinations are arranged to determine whether the learning objectives have been met. ECTS acquired during recognised exchange periods abroad are formally recognised upon the submission and completion of a learning agreement prepared prior to departure<sup>91</sup>.

## Feedback to Students

Feedback to students following assessments is predominantly verbal given by teachers during lessons and at examination juries. While several students expressed satisfaction with the continuity of dialogue with their individual teachers, others noted the absence of

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<sup>86</sup>SER, p.29.

<sup>87</sup>Comparative Analysis 2018 Review – 2025 SER, p.2.

<sup>88</sup>SER, p.29; p.55.

<sup>89</sup>SER, p.73.

<sup>90</sup>SER, pp.28-29.

<sup>91</sup>SER, p.28.

mid-year formal evaluation for certain subjects. Students also raised concerns about the application of attendance as an assessment criterion, indicating that inflexible attendance requirements — particularly given scheduling overlaps — had in some cases affected their marks regardless of their demonstrated competence<sup>92</sup>. Some teachers reflected on the inherent complexity of grading artistic work and expressed the view that performance, in particular, does not lend itself readily to formalised rubrics, while acknowledging that rubrics might be more appropriate in non-performance subjects<sup>93</sup>. The SER identifies the exclusive provision of verbal feedback as a challenge, noting that students lack access to a documented overview of their progression<sup>94</sup>.

## Appeals and Complaints

A formal appeals procedure is in place and applicable to all programmes. The SER outlines a three-stage process: appeals are submitted first to the SUM Directorate, then escalated to the SUM Council, and ultimately, if unresolved, to the cantonal administrative tribunal<sup>95</sup>. The study regulations govern this procedure<sup>96</sup>. Formal complaints are documented and, in assessment-related cases, the external examiner may be involved in the review process<sup>97</sup>. The SUM quality report for 2022–2023 records one appeal in each of the two years covered<sup>98</sup>.

The review team acknowledges the significant effort undertaken since the 2018 review to systematise and document assessment frameworks across all programmes. The publication of a comprehensive syllabus mapping evaluation criteria and their alignment with learning outcomes is commended. The examination panels with external experts are a valid mechanism for benchmarking student achievement against professional standards.

A few areas were identified where further development would strengthen compliance with this standard. The reliance on verbal feedback to communicate assessment outcomes to students is an area of concern, particularly given the significant proportion of international students and the linguistic barriers faced by some of them. The programmes are encouraged to develop a framework for assessment feedback — such as the use of descriptors or assessment rubrics — that can complement verbal feedback rather than substituting it. At a minimum, written feedback should be a formal requirement in cases where assessments result in a negative outcome, in order to ensure transparency and support students in understanding how their performance can be improved.

The review team recommends that the programmes address the limited accessibility of assessment documentation, both in terms of language (currently Italian only) and online visibility, in order to ensure equity of information for all students. Practical steps could include the translation of key assessment criteria into English.

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<sup>92</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>93</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>94</sup>SER, p.29.

<sup>95</sup>SER, p.27.

<sup>96</sup>Study regulations, Articles 25 and 27.

<sup>97</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>98</sup>SUM Quality report 2022-2023, p.9.

The constraints affecting the final examination of the MA Specialized Performance are concerning. The limitation of admissible repertoire for the OSI concert requires a compromise between pedagogical intent and scheduling considerations. There is a risk that it reduces fairness of the summative assessment. SUM is encouraged to work with the OSI to allow greater repertoire flexibility, or to develop complementary assessment opportunities that allow students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. The review team further recommends that the evaluations of the four mandatory recitals and the OSI concert be incorporated into the official diploma documentation for the MA Specialized Performance, consistent with the other programmes.

**Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Develop assessment feedback framework (e.g. descriptors or rubrics) to complement verbal feedback; provide written feedback for negative outcomes

**Suggestion for enhancement 2**

Work with OSI to allow greater repertoire flexibility for final concert, or develop complementary assessment opportunities

**Recommendation 1**

Address limited accessibility of assessment documentation in terms of language and online visibility; translate key assessment criteria into English

**Recommendation 2**

Incorporate evaluations of the four mandatory recitals and OSI concert into official diploma documentation for MA Specialized Performance

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 2.2 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 2.3. Students' employability

**Standard 2.3** *The programme has effective mechanisms in place to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills that facilitate their transition towards a professional life in the music and/or related artistic domain. Procedures are in place to formally and effectively monitor students' subsequent employability and professional achievement. The information thus collected is efficiently used to maintain an active link with the music/artistic profession and to further develop the curriculum.*

The programmes approach the professional preparation of the students through a combination of curriculum-embedded activities, access to professional performance environments, and surveys conducted at and after graduation. An important structural distinction between the programmes under review should be noted: under the HEdA, Art. 26, "on completion of the first level of studies, students normally obtain a qualification that enables them to work in a given profession". In practice, for five of the six programmes, the bachelor's degree is not the terminal qualification, and students are expected to proceed to master level before entering the labour market. This has implications for how graduate employability is monitored. Federal data collected by the Federal Office of Statistics (FSO) is calibrated to bachelor-level graduates, creating a gap in available statistical evidence for performance, composition, and pedagogy programmes<sup>99</sup>. The BA Music and Movement is different, as it is in principle a terminal professional qualification for work in elementary music education and rhythmic. However, its graduates face additional challenges related to cantonal regulation<sup>100</sup>.

The programmes offer students a variety of activities designed to build professional competencies before graduation. Performance students on both the BA and MA pathways, have opportunities to perform in professional venues, including at LAC, RSI, as well as participation in a Mock Audition seminar. Pedagogy students are offered the opportunity to teach at CSI's junior music school and, in the case of elementary music education students, in local pre-schools. Composition students have their work presented at the LAC within the framework of dedicated performance seminars<sup>101</sup>. During the site-visit, representatives of the profession confirmed that graduates demonstrate strong musical preparation and are considered competitive within the regional Ticino market<sup>102</sup>. Alumni who remain in Ticino after graduation have been able to find employment within six months, and several alumni hold positions in the OSI, including the Concertmaster, first oboe, and a number of tutti string players<sup>103</sup>.

The situation differs across programmes with regard to professional skills provision. The Mock Audition seminar, which simulates real audition conditions and constitutes a meaningful preparation tool for performance students, is referenced primarily in the context of the MA Performance<sup>104</sup>. During the site-visit, representatives of the programmes confirmed that an elective module addressing professional and entrepreneurial skills is

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<sup>99</sup>SER, p.31.

<sup>100</sup>SER, p.66.

<sup>101</sup>SER, p.32.

<sup>102</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>103</sup>SER, p.32.

<sup>104</sup>SER, p.32.

included at master's level for performance students, though this is not currently available in a compulsory format across all programmes or at bachelor level<sup>105</sup>. Meeting with alumni revealed that graduates, while appreciative of the high quality of their musical training, lacked adequate preparation in areas such as self-management, professional networking, understanding the music market, and administrative competencies<sup>106</sup>. Representatives of the profession similarly noted that, while graduates' musical abilities are of a high standard, there are identifiable gaps in organisational and managerial skills that are increasingly required in professional contexts<sup>107</sup>.

The situation for the BA Music and Movement presents particular challenges with regard to employability. Although the degree is recognised at a national and international level, the possibility to teach in public schools depends on cantonal regulations, which vary across Switzerland. Graduates wishing to work in cantons other than Ticino may face barriers related to language, professional networks, and local qualification requirements, factors that contribute to consistently low enrolment numbers in the programme. For the academic year 2025–2026, only one student is enrolled in this programme<sup>108</sup>.

With respect to the monitoring of graduate outcomes, both SUPSI and the FSO conduct surveys at regular intervals of three to five years<sup>109</sup>. The SUPSI also administers a survey tracking graduate employability one year after graduation. Results from 2015 to 2023 demonstrate positive employability outcomes for master-level graduates<sup>110</sup>. Surveys after graduation for the BA Music and BA Music and Movement, the MA Pedagogy, and the MA Performance were conducted in 2024. Participation rates in these surveys are very low, amounting to one or two respondents per survey cycle<sup>111</sup>. For the international market — which is of considerable relevance given that between 85% and 90% of students come from abroad — feedback relies on informal channels, such as personal contacts maintained by teaching staff.

The absence of an alumni association represents a persistent gap in the programmes' capacity to maintain a link with graduates and the profession. The programmes “still heavily rely on the personal connections that alumni and staff maintain throughout time”<sup>112</sup>. Meeting with alumni confirmed that the primary channel of post-graduation contact currently consists of a newsletter with information about concerts, supplemented by occasional invitations to serve as external examiners<sup>113</sup>.

The continuing education offer — thirteen certified programmes, including five Master of Advanced Studies pathways — provides an important avenue for lifelong learning and professional development beyond initial studies<sup>114</sup>. This offer is one of the mechanisms contributing to the programmes' engagement with the profession over time, and is a strength of the overall educational offer at CSI.

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<sup>105</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

<sup>106</sup>Meeting with alumni.

<sup>107</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>108</sup>SER, p.66.

<sup>109</sup>SER, p.32.

<sup>110</sup>SER, p.31.

<sup>111</sup>SER, p.32.

<sup>112</sup>SER, p.31.

<sup>113</sup>Meeting with alumni.

<sup>114</sup>SER, pp.11-12.

The review team recognises the professional opportunities offered by the programmes, in particular the access to professional performance venues and the Mock Audition seminar for performance students, as well as the encouraging employment outcomes reported for master-level graduates remaining in the Ticino region. The rich continuing education offer further demonstrates a meaningful commitment to lifelong professional development.

There are three areas that require attention. First, the provision of professional and entrepreneurial skills is only available to MA Performance students, and largely absent in a compulsory format at bachelor level and across other programmes, with the partial exception of the MA Pedagogy. Many students graduate without the additional skills required for a successful professional career. The review team recommends that SUM develops and introduces a compulsory shared module across all programmes to address professional skills. The module should cover non-musical skills related to career readiness – entrepreneurship, self-promotion, career management, and an understanding of the music market.

Second, the current participation rates in graduation surveys are statistically negligible. The review team urges SUM to take active measures to increase survey participation, including embedding survey completion in the graduation process, simplifying the survey instrument, adding small incentives, and communicating clearly to students the purpose and value of the data collected.

Third, the absence of an alumni association and a formal mechanism for alumni engagement is an unresolved recommendation from the 2018 review. Establishing an alumni network would serve multiple purposes simultaneously: improve the quality and volume of employability data, maintain active links between current students and graduates, and enable systematic involvement of the profession in curriculum review. Even a modest implementation — such as an online network with one annual event — would be a significant improvement on the current reliance on personal channels.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Develop and introduce a compulsory shared module on career readiness across all programmes (entrepreneurship, self-promotion, career management, music market)

#### **Recommendation 2**

Take active measures to increase graduation survey participation, e.g. embed in graduation process, simplify instrument, add incentives

#### **Recommendation 3**

Establish an alumni network, even modest (e.g. online platform with one annual event), to improve employability data, maintain graduate links, and enable professional input into curriculum

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 2.3 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant

## 3. Teachers' perspectives

### 3.1. Staff qualification, professional activity and development

**Standard 3.1** *Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists, pedagogues and researchers. The size and composition of the teaching body are sufficient and appropriate to effectively deliver the curriculum. There are adequate opportunities for teaching staff for continued professional development.*

The recruitment of permanent teaching and research staff is governed by the “Regulations regarding the hiring process of new teaching staff”, which refers to the “Organisation regulations” and the “Teaching personnel regulations” of CSI. The process is conducted through an international open call for applications. The selection procedure comprises three stages. An initial shortlisting is conducted on the basis of submitted dossiers, with between five and fifteen candidates typically invited to a second stage. This second stage — open to all internal stakeholders — includes a thirty-minute recital (for main-subject teachers), two twenty-five-minute lessons taught with enrolled students, and a thirty-minute interview. A shortlist is then established with input from a member of the advisory board, members of the conference of field representatives (*capigruppo*), and members of the student union. The final appointment decision is taken by the SUM Directorate and approved by the CSI Directorate. For the appointment of guest teachers delivering seminars and workshops, an internal procedure involving the conference of field representatives and the Heads of study areas is in place<sup>115</sup>.

No formal pedagogical qualification is required as a condition of appointment. Teachers are assessed primarily on the basis of demonstrated professional experience and their ability to teach, as observed during the second stage of selection. Meeting with teachers corroborated this approach: those interviewed had substantial careers prior to joining the programmes, and many had been teaching at SUM for between ten and twenty years, having also held or continuing to hold positions at other institutions, including internationally<sup>116</sup>.

The statistics for 2024–2025 provide a detailed picture of the teaching body across subject categories. The total teaching load amounts to 665.6 hours per week, equivalent to approximately 30 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions<sup>117</sup>. The overwhelming majority of teachers hold part-time contracts. This is partly a consequence of the programmes' scale, but primarily reflects a deliberate policy of recruiting professionals who remain active in the music sector, thereby ensuring that teaching across all programmes is grounded in current professional practice<sup>118</sup>. This characteristic was consistently noted during the site-visit: in several meetings it was reiterated that the strong international profile of the teaching body is a primary factor in the programmes' attractiveness to students from across Europe and beyond<sup>119</sup>. Many teachers serve simultaneously at institutions in other countries, which

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<sup>115</sup>SER, pp.33-34.

<sup>116</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>117</sup>SUM teaching staff statistics

<sup>118</sup>SER, p.34.

<sup>119</sup>Meeting with management of the institution; Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes; Meeting with representatives of the profession.

contributes to the internationalisation of the programmes. For non-performance subjects — most directly relevant to the MA Composition and to theory components within the BA programmes — a number of teachers hold doctoral degrees or are active in research projects, either internally or in collaboration with external partners<sup>120</sup>.

Beyond their teaching duties, staff contribute to the programmes' musical activities both as performers — as soloists, conductors and chamber musicians — and by facilitating connections with guest conductors and visiting teachers for ensemble productions, workshops and masterclasses. Teachers' involvement in decision-making happens primarily through the conference of field representatives and, more recently, through the newly established Didactic Council, created in early 2025<sup>121</sup>. Management and heads of studies and study areas acknowledged that creating opportunities for teachers to contribute meaningfully to programme development remains an ongoing challenge, as many of them are based outside Lugano<sup>122</sup>. The Didactic Council represents a significant step in this direction, though its establishment is too recent for its effectiveness to be fully assessed.

Continuing professional development remains reactive and individualised: financial support for participation in external courses is available on demand, and some staff access courses offered by SUPSI at reduced or no cost, but no structured, proactive policy involving all members of the teaching body has yet been implemented<sup>123</sup>. The SER acknowledges this gap explicitly: “dedicated continuing education interventions, or career development processes are not defined, nor they are imposed”<sup>124</sup>. Participation in internally organised workshops and lectures has also been low. Pedagogical support for newly appointed staff is informal and collegial in nature, with more experienced colleagues or heads of area providing guidance where requested<sup>125</sup>. The recent appointment of a dedicated human resources officer is a positive development with potential to address some of these gaps going forward<sup>126</sup>.

The review team recognises the exceptional artistic profile of the teaching body across all six programmes. The international standing of many teachers is a genuine strength: it raises the quality of instruction, reinforces the programmes' connections with professional practice, and is widely cited as a key factor in student recruitment. The commitment of part-time staff — including their voluntary participation in recruitment panels — further demonstrates a culture of collegial engagement.

At the same time, the very features that make the teaching body so artistically strong also carry inherent risks. Teachers with demanding international careers and part-time contracts have limited availability for engagement beyond the delivery of teaching hours, which can constrain their participation in curriculum development, quality processes and student support. The review team encourages the programmes to explore mechanisms — such as dedicated thematic sessions once or twice a year —

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<sup>120</sup>SER, p.35.

<sup>121</sup>SER, p.34; Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>122</sup>Meeting with management of the institution; Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes.

<sup>123</sup>SER, p.34.

<sup>124</sup>SER, p.35.

<sup>125</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>126</sup>Meeting with management of the institution.

through which the expertise of international staff can be more systematically channelled into the development of the programmes, rather than relying primarily on informal channels.

The absence of a formal, proactive policy for the continuing professional development of teaching staff is a recognised gap. The review team recommends that the programmes, building on the recent appointment of a human resources officer, develop and implement a continuing professional development framework that applies to all members of the teaching body — potentially including part-time staff — and that sets out clear expectations, available pathways and monitoring mechanisms.

Furthermore, the review team draws attention to the absence of any pedagogical training or induction for newly appointed teachers. Several teachers noted the adjustment required when transitioning from professional performance to teaching at bachelor level in particular. SUM is encouraged to consider an onboarding process with a pedagogical component, even if light-touch in design.

Finally, scheduling of lessons with international teachers has at times been raised as a concern by students during the site-visit. While the review team understands the logistical complexity involved, it encourages the programmes to seek an approach to scheduling that better supports student wellbeing and continuity of learning.

**Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Explore mechanisms (e.g. dedicated thematic sessions once or twice a year) to channel international staff expertise into programme development

**Suggestion for enhancement 2**

Consider an onboarding process with pedagogical component for newly appointed teachers

**Suggestion for enhancement 3**

Seek scheduling approach that better supports student wellbeing and continuity of learning

**Recommendation 1**

Develop and implement a continuing professional development framework for all teaching staff – potentially including part-time staff – with clear expectations, pathways, and monitoring mechanisms

**Compliance with Standard 3.1**

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 3.1 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant

Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 4. External perspectives

### 4.1. International perspectives and experiences for students and staff

**Standard 4.1** *The programme offers a range of opportunities for students and staff to gain international perspectives and experiences.*

The programmes operate within a distinctly international environment. Across all six programmes, between 85% and 90% of enrolled students originate from outside Switzerland, representing approximately 40 different countries. This is a defining characteristic of SUM and shapes the day-to-day learning experience for all students. The international character of the student body is most pronounced in the MA Performance and MA Specialized Performance programmes, where the international reputation of principal instrument teachers is cited as a primary driver of student recruitment from across Europe and beyond. The MA Composition similarly attracts an international cohort, partly owing to the programmes' strong profile in contemporary music<sup>127</sup>. The MA Pedagogy and, to a greater degree, the BA Music and Movement occupy a somewhat different position: both programmes are delivered exclusively in Italian and draw predominantly on students from the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland and neighbouring Italy<sup>128</sup>. To support the integration of its diverse student body, all programmes allow written work to be submitted in any Swiss national language or in English. Italian language courses are offered to students, particularly in the BA Music programme, where proficiency in Italian is required. Dedicated administrative support is in place to assist international students with visa and permit applications, and CSI has concluded preferential health insurance agreements for non-EU students with the Canton of Ticino's public health services. The SER lists a range of documentation made available specifically to incoming international students, covering accommodation, permits, and insurance<sup>129</sup>.

In terms of mobility activity, the programmes participate in the Swiss European Mobility Programme (SEMP), Switzerland's equivalent to Erasmus+. Student and staff exchanges take place, but in small numbers, and more frequently among teaching staff than among students. Prior to departure, students must complete a learning agreement that ensures full recognition of ECTS earned at the partner institution upon return. New funding schemes are being progressively introduced, including SEMP worldwide mobilities and SEMP Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), which represent a developing area of activity. CSI has been for several years among the most successful Swiss art schools in securing federal ESKAS (Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships) for international students, and complements these with private scholarships funded from its own resources<sup>130</sup>.

The international dimension of the programmes is further reinforced through the composition of the teaching body. Many teachers across all programmes hold positions at multiple institutions in different countries, and their employment contracts accommodate

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<sup>127</sup>SER, p.37.

<sup>128</sup>SER, p.71.

<sup>129</sup>SER, p.37.

<sup>130</sup>SER, pp.37-38.

this<sup>131</sup>. During the site-visit, teachers noted that this parallel engagement with other institutions amounts to a form of staff mobility in practice, even if it is not formally defined as such<sup>132</sup>. All programmes also regularly benefit from the presence of distinguished guest artists for seminars, masterclasses, and ensemble productions; the SER cites a substantial list of internationally recognised conductors and performers who have worked with students in recent years. CSI holds membership of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) and participates actively in its events, including the annual AEC International Relations Coordinators Meetings and the AEC Congress. Through active involvement in the Konferenz Musikhochschulen Schweiz (KMHS) CSI also maintains relationships with partner institutions in Germany, Austria, and France<sup>133</sup>.

Notwithstanding these strengths, outgoing student mobility is very limited across all programmes. The SER acknowledges this openly, attributing the situation in part to the predominantly international character of the student body: students who have already relocated to Lugano specifically to study with a particular teacher are difficult to “motivate to become ‘more mobile’ for a semester or two”<sup>134</sup>. During the site-visit, teaching staff expressed the view that time spent at a partner institution — whether for a full year or a single semester — would represent an insufficient gain to justify absence from their own teacher’s studio<sup>135</sup>. Students who indicated an interest in outgoing mobility noted that no dedicated mobility window is embedded in any of the six programmes, and periods abroad would need to be organised around existing study plan obligations<sup>136</sup>. A further structural consequence of low outgoing student numbers is financial: the programmes are not in a position to accept a larger number of incoming exchange students, since federal and cantonal funding mechanisms do not provide support for incoming students in the absence of reciprocal outgoing flows<sup>137</sup>.

The human resources dedicated to international relations at programme level are limited: management confirmed during the site-visit that the function is staffed at approximately 30% of a full-time equivalent position, with an additional person handling relations with institutions in East Asia<sup>138</sup>. While this model may be adequate when exchange activity remains low, it is unlikely to support an increase in mobility without further investment. At the time of the site-visit, no dedicated internationalisation strategy had been adopted at programme level. Members of the advisory board raised this absence explicitly, suggesting that a focused strategy — potentially including joint degrees with a small number of carefully selected partners — would provide a stronger basis for developing meaningful international collaboration<sup>139</sup>.

A further dimension of international recognition that merits attention is the status of qualifications awarded by the programmes in neighbouring Italy. The academic degrees themselves are fully recognised at national and international level in accordance with the

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<sup>131</sup>SER, p.34.

<sup>132</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>133</sup>SER, p.37.

<sup>134</sup>SER, p.37.

<sup>135</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>136</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>137</sup>SER, p.37.

<sup>138</sup>Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>139</sup>Meeting with members of advisory board.

Bologna framework, and a diploma supplement accompanies all graduating students<sup>140</sup>. However, the recognition of these qualifications for entry into the teaching profession in Italy has been persistently inconsistent, at times requiring bespoke administrative interventions and the involvement of external bodies to resolve individual cases. During the site-visit, programme representatives noted that the situation is resolved on a case-by-case basis through pragmatic means rather than a systemic agreement<sup>141</sup>. This issue is of particular relevance given the high proportion of students from Italy enrolled across the BA Music, MA Performance, and MA Pedagogy programmes who intend to return to work in Italy upon graduation.

The review team recognises as a strength the international diversity of the student body and the high calibre of international teaching staff across all programmes. The regular presence of distinguished guest artists at seminars, masterclasses, and productions enriches the learning environment and brings current professional practice directly into the curriculum. Membership of the AEC and active participation in the KMHS represent further assets in maintaining the programmes' international positioning.

However, the very limited outgoing student mobility to be a significant gap in the programmes' international offer, and one that applies equally across all six programmes. Mobility is discouraged by teachers, unsupported in the curriculum, and disincentivised by the funding model. It is unlikely to improve without deliberate intervention. The review team recommends that SUM develops a formal internationalisation strategy that sets measurable targets for both student and staff outgoing mobility, identifies a small number of priority partner institutions for deeper collaboration, and is backed by adequate resourcing of the international relations function.

As a concrete step, SUM should explore whether an optional mobility window could be introduced within the MA Performance and MA Specialized Performance programmes, where the more flexible study plan could accommodate such a provision. At the same time, SUM is encouraged to consider how teachers might actively promote outgoing mobility as a valuable complement to study in Lugano.

#### **Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Explore whether an optional mobility window could be introduced within the MA Performance and MA Specialized Performance

#### **Suggestion for enhancement 2**

Encourage teachers to actively promote outgoing mobility as a complement to study in Lugano

#### **Recommendation 1**

Develop a formal internationalisation strategy with measurable targets for outgoing mobility, priority partner institutions, and adequate resourcing of the international relations function

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<sup>140</sup>SER, p.28.

<sup>141</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes.

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 4.1 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 4.2. Engagement within the external institutional and social context

**Standard 4.2** *The programme's educational processes reflect the institutional policies and strategies in place for an active social engagement. The continued development and maintenance of links with the music profession and the wider artistic, cultural, educational and/or other relevant sectors within society is an integrated part of the programme.*

CSI and SUM operate within a richly interconnected cultural ecosystem in the Canton of Ticino, and the programmes benefit extensively from this positioning. As part of the broader CSI Foundation structure — which encompasses also the pre-college department and the *Scuola di musica* (SMUS) — SUM's programmes belong to a deep network of partnerships with major regional cultural organisations. OSI, the LAC centre, RSI, I Barocchisti, the Corriere del Ticino Group, provide learning and performance opportunities embedded within the curricula. The *900presente* concert series, co-founded with and co-produced by the RSI, brings together students from the performance and composition programmes in approximately five productions per year of varying scale, performed at the Stelio Molo RSI Auditorium. Three major orchestral productions take place annually at the LAC, alongside chamber music and solo recitals, ensemble concerts in smaller venues across the Canton, and productions extending to nearby northern Italy<sup>142</sup>. Music professionals confirmed during the site-visit that SUM graduates are well regarded within the Ticino market and are actively employed by partner organisations<sup>143</sup>.

For the MA Specialized Performance, students have the specific opportunity to perform their final concert with the OSI<sup>144</sup>. The MA in Music Performance and the BA in Music both incorporate participation in orchestral productions and the *900presente* season as curriculum-embedded activities, with students selected through an internal audition process at the start of each academic year<sup>145</sup>. The MA Composition benefits from a distinct but complementary model: composition students collaborate with performance students through the Composers' Lab and the Electro-Acoustic Room (EAR) series, and engage in collaborative projects with *OggiMusica* and visiting ensembles on tour in Lugano<sup>146</sup>. Electronic music concerts in particular attract strong public audiences, demonstrating cultural impact beyond the immediate conservatoire community<sup>147</sup>.

The programmes also demonstrate engagement with society beyond the concert hall. The *Musica per gli altri* (Music for the others) initiative, listed in the 2025–26 curriculum booklet, connects students with community-based musical practice. Past projects include collaborations with the *Provvida Madre* Institute, which supports people living with serious mental illness, and a project with the Swiss Red Cross working with young people considered to be at risk<sup>148</sup>. The SER additionally notes support for Ukrainian refugee music students, for whom a dedicated fund was established, with five of these students continuing to study at the time of writing<sup>149</sup>. These activities point to a commitment to music's social

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<sup>142</sup>SER, p.39; Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes.

<sup>143</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>144</sup>SER, p.39; SER, p.92.

<sup>145</sup>SER, p.39; Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes.

<sup>146</sup>SER, p.97.

<sup>147</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>148</sup>SER, pp.40-41.

<sup>149</sup>SER, p.40.

function that permeates the programme environment, even if the curricular embedding of socially engaged practice varies in depth across programmes.

Looking ahead, the CSI's strategy for 2025–2028 identifies the *Città della Musica* (CdM) — a major new campus planned for completion by 2028–2029 — as a transformative opportunity to strengthen the programmes' cultural presence in the region<sup>150</sup>. CdM will bring together the CSI, OSI, RSI, I Barocchisti, the Swiss National Sound Archive, and other cultural partners within a single hub, covering over 21,000 square metres and including renovated and purpose-built concert, rehearsal, and production facilities<sup>151</sup>. Representatives of the profession commented on the institutional willingness to expand the programmes' cultural role in the region, and viewed CdM as a vehicle for this ambition<sup>152</sup>. The CSI strategy document articulates a specific objective to “develop and consolidate collaborations with external musical institutions, at the cantonal, national and international level (OSI, LAC, RSI, Festivals)”<sup>153</sup>.

One area where the evidence base is less complete concerns the extent to which these external links actively feed back into curriculum development and programme design. The SER does not describe a systematic mechanism by which the profession's views are gathered and formally acted upon at programme level. This point was raised by representatives of the profession during the site-visit, who noted that they are not regularly consulted regarding curriculum development<sup>154</sup>. The CSI strategy document acknowledges the importance of responding to labour market changes with “punctuality and flexibility”<sup>155</sup>, but how this ambition translates into a feedback loop between external partners and programme teams is not yet articulated in the available documentation.

The review team recognises the extensive and well-established network of partnerships with cultural organisations in the Canton of Ticino as a significant and distinctive strength of the programmes. The *900presente* series and the major orchestral productions at the LAC offer students genuine professional performance contexts within their studies, and the programmes are to be commended for the breadth and ambition of this public-facing activity. The engagement with socially oriented musical practice, through projects such as *Musica per gli altri* and past collaborations with community-focused organisations, further reflects a mature sense of civic responsibility.

The review team suggests that the programmes consider how students might be more actively engaged in concert curation and programme design, not merely as performers. Participation in the artistic decision-making processes surrounding productions — including audience engagement, programme note writing, and event planning — would equip students with skills that representatives of the profession explicitly identified as currently underdeveloped, particularly in the performance-oriented programmes.

Finally, with regard to the *Città della Musica* project, the review team encourages the programmes to develop a clear and resourced action plan for how the expanded physical and institutional footprint will translate into enhanced social engagement at

<sup>150</sup>CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.9; SER, p.44.

<sup>151</sup>SER, p.44.

<sup>152</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>153</sup>CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.9.

<sup>154</sup>Meeting with representatives of the profession.

<sup>155</sup>CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.9.

programme level, ensuring that quality of educational delivery is sustained during the transitional period and that the ambitions of the new campus are matched by appropriate preparation.

**Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Engage students more actively in concert curation and programme design (e.g. audience engagement, programme notes, event planning)

**Suggestion for enhancement 2**

Develop a clear, resourced action plan for how *Città della Musica* will translate into enhanced social engagement at programme level

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 4.2 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Fully compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Fully compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Fully compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Fully compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Fully compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Fully compliant

## Learning resources and student support

## 5. Resources

### 5.1 Finances, facilities, services and support staff

**Standard 5.1** *The programme has means and resources to ensure its successful delivery and to secure its sustainable development.*

#### Financial framework

The programmes under review are funded through a combination of public and private sources. SUM's total income for 2024 amounted to CHF 9,449,100, of which federal and inter-cantonal contributions accounted for CHF 4,118,800, cantonal contributions from Ticino for CHF 3,826,600, and private contributions for CHF 1,503,700. Costs per student stand at approximately CHF 33,000 per year, which the SER describes as the lowest among Swiss higher music education institutions, thanks to low administrative and overhead costs<sup>156</sup>.

This funding structure presents structural vulnerabilities. Cantonal contributions from Ticino for the education mandate fall below the Swiss average for the same mandate, as the SUPSI–Ticino contract significantly limits cantonal support for international students — a population that constitutes a substantial part of SUM's student body across all programmes<sup>157</sup>. The strategy and action plan for 2025–2028 identifies the current financial situation as “rather stable thanks to cost containment” while characterising certain aspects as “particularly fragile” owing to what it terms “substantially insufficient” funding and challenges in long-term planning<sup>158</sup>. Management confirmed the financial constraints facing the programmes, with explicit concern expressed about insufficient cantonal contributions. These are structured around four-year federal and cantonal financial cycles. Public funding for classical music and the arts more generally are not seen as a cantonal priority, and many projects depend on private donations<sup>159</sup>. The philanthropic dimension is actively developed, and a capital campaign is under way in support of the *Città della Musica* project<sup>160</sup>. On the other hand, other activities like continuing education and provision of services must, by regulation, be self-financed<sup>161</sup>.

#### Physical infrastructure and equipment

The programmes are currently delivered across three rented campuses in Lugano: the Centro San Carlo (main building, 48 rooms), the Swiss Radio building (24 rooms), and the Breganzona building (15 teaching and practice rooms). These facilities present several significant limitations: the number of teaching and practice rooms is relatively small; the main Aula Magna is too small for orchestral productions; there are no dedicated recording studios; soundproofing is below standard or fully absent; and there is no space for a

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<sup>156</sup>SER, p.42.

<sup>157</sup>SER, p.43.

<sup>158</sup>CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.14.

<sup>159</sup>SER, p.41.

<sup>160</sup>SER, pp.44–45.

<sup>161</sup>SER, p.42.

canteen or a staff common room. Since all three buildings are rented, the programmes have very limited scope for structural modifications<sup>162</sup>.

These limitations have concrete pedagogical consequences that vary across the programmes. Students pursuing the BA Music and the MA Performance noted that the number of practice rooms is insufficient and that access is constrained<sup>163</sup>. The building operates seven days a week, partly as a response to space scarcity — a situation that, whilst practical in intent, has implications for student rest and wellbeing that are discussed further under Standard 5.2. For the student enrolled on the BA Music and Movement, the situation is noted as particularly acute: the dedicated teaching space for movement and pedagogical practice is not always available or consistently maintained to the required standard<sup>164</sup>.

The absence of adequate recording facilities is a concern. The Aula Magna is effectively the only space available for recording activities, a limitation that affects the MA Performance, MA Specialised Performance and the MA Composition in particular. Students and teachers raised this issue consistently, and the view was expressed that students in need of professional-quality recordings for auditions, competitions, or doctoral applications face a real disadvantage<sup>165</sup>.

Regarding musical instruments, the programmes maintain a regularly updated inventory available for loan to students, encompassing string instruments, baroque bows, harps, and a range of less commonly available wind instruments<sup>166</sup>. The quality and condition of pianos in some practice rooms was noted as uneven during the site-visit, with some instruments in rooms not designated as primary piano-teaching spaces in need of maintenance or regulation<sup>167</sup>. The library holds a collection of around 33,000 books, scores, recordings, and videos; new acquisitions are ordered on a weekly basis, and the catalogue is available online. Due to financial constraints that precluded outsourcing, the process of data migration from the library to the Swisscovery national catalogue is taking longer than planned<sup>168</sup>. Students across programmes expressed general satisfaction with library resources<sup>169</sup>.

### **The *Città della Musica* project**

To address the infrastructure limitations described above, SUM is preparing for a move to *Città della Musica*, a new campus of over 21,000 square metres expected to be inaugurated in 2028–2029<sup>170</sup>. The project will incorporate a renovated Swiss Radio building, two new structures (an orchestral hall and a performance building), 40 practice rooms, 53 teaching rooms, a new chamber music hall usable as an orchestra hall (with acoustic design by Nagata Acoustics), a black box for multidisciplinary productions, a canteen, a green park

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<sup>162</sup>SER, p.43.

<sup>163</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>164</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>165</sup>Meeting with students; Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>166</sup>SER, p.45.

<sup>167</sup>Meeting with teachers and lecturers.

<sup>168</sup>SER, p.45.

<sup>169</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>170</sup>SER, pp.44-45.

and, potentially, an open-air arena<sup>171</sup>. The project is the institution's most significant strategic priority, featuring as a key component in five of seven main strategic objectives on the 2025-2028 Action Plan<sup>172</sup>. The renovation of existing buildings should be completed by the end of 2027, enabling an initial partial move by 2028.

## Support staff, IT systems, and digital tools

Administrative support for the programmes is provided by a compact team led by the Head of Academic Services, who coordinates four operational areas: registry and scheduling, teaching operations, events and productions, and other academic resources<sup>173</sup>. A range of functions — including communications (four part-time staff), IT management (one person), logistics, fundraising, and production — are distributed across several individuals holding multiple combined roles<sup>174</sup>. The SER acknowledges that the reduced staffing model at times leads to staff carrying complex and multiple responsibilities, with attendant risks of excessive workload. A formal policy for the continuing professional development of administrative staff is absent; while on-demand financial support is available, it is not systematically communicated<sup>175</sup>, and senior administrative staff described their career trajectories in largely informal terms<sup>176</sup>.

The programmes use several digital tools in parallel. The USI/SUPSI implementation of Moodle – *iCorsi* – is used for e-learning; The ASIMUT room booking software is functioning well for that purpose; and Amadeus — a bespoke campus management system developed in-house and in operation since 2001 — is used for student data management, academic records, and study plan tracking across CSI<sup>177</sup>. The SER characterises Amadeus as “obsolete, buggy, and inefficient” and notes that its “potential for short term improvement is very low”<sup>178</sup>. This assessment was strongly echoed by students, who reported difficulties in accessing their own academic records through the system and who in some cases were unaware that it existed<sup>179</sup>. Administrative staff confirmed that the system presents significant usability challenges, notably because of the high degree of individual study plan variation across students<sup>180</sup>.

Wi-Fi provision across campuses is reliable, and students and staff have access to Microsoft Office 365 licences through SUPSI, as well as conferencing software and specialised software for relevant programmes. Access to specialised databases, particularly for composers, is limited<sup>181</sup>.

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<sup>171</sup>SER, pp.44–45.

<sup>172</sup>SER, p.12; CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028, p.14.

<sup>173</sup>SER, p.45.

<sup>174</sup>SUM administrative staff statistics.

<sup>175</sup>SER, p.45.

<sup>176</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>177</sup>SER, p.45.

<sup>178</sup>SER, p.47.

<sup>179</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>180</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>181</sup>SER, pp.45–47.

The review team recognises the financial stewardship demonstrated by CSI and SUM, which have maintained a balanced budget within a constrained funding environment and have successfully diversified income through philanthropy and private contributions. The ambition and cultural vision embedded in the *Città della Musica* project is highly commended, and the review team is confident that, upon completion, the new campus will address the majority of the infrastructure deficiencies identified in this report.

However, the current institutional focus on the future campus has, in some respects, displaced attention from the resource needs of students and staff in the present. The following suggestions and recommendations are offered in this spirit. The review team recommends that a set of concrete interim measures are developed and implemented, to address current infrastructure limitations before the move to the *Città della Musica*. Specifically, the review team encourages the identification and designation of at least one dedicated recording space to enable students across all programmes, but particularly those in performance and composition, to produce recordings of sufficient quality for professional and academic purposes. This does not need to involve substantial structural investment: low-cost acoustic treatment of existing practice rooms and the main performance hall, such as the application of sound-absorbing panels on flat reflective surfaces, would represent a proportionate and achievable improvement to the current acoustic environment, and should be considered without delay.

Regarding the BA Music and Movement, the review team urges that the teaching and movement practice space allocated to that programme be maintained to a standard consistent with safe use. The current situation, as described during the site-visit, falls below minimum expectations.

The review team recommends that the programmes undertake without delay a review of the Amadeus system with a view to its substantial upgrade or replacement. The rationale for maintaining a separate system from SUPSI — which does not accommodate pre-college-level students nor music school pupils — is understood, but the current tool fails to meet the basic needs of students seeking access to their academic records, and creates an unnecessary administrative burden for support staff. CSI and SUM should consider whether an off-the-shelf solution — or an extension of existing SUPSI systems to cover the specific needs of the CSI context — could provide a more reliable and accessible alternative.

The review team further recommends that a formal policy for the continuing professional development of administrative and support staff be established. The current reactive model is insufficient given the scope and complexity of the roles carried by a small team, and the demands of the *Città della Musica* transition will require proactively developed competencies.

Finally, the review team wishes to draw attention to the structural financial vulnerability of the programmes, and encourages them to continue to advocate, through the SUPSI framework, for increased cantonal contributions commensurate with the scale and cultural significance of the educational offer.

### **Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Continue to advocate through SUPSI for increased cantonal contributions commensurate with the scale of the educational offer

### **Recommendation 1**

Identify and designate at least one dedicated recording space; consider low-cost acoustic treatment of existing rooms

### **Recommendation 2**

Maintain BA Music and Movement teaching/movement space to a standard consistent with safe use

### **Recommendation 3**

Develop and implement concrete interim measures to address infrastructure limitations before the move to *Città della Musica*

### **Recommendation 4**

Upgrade or replace the Amadeus student management system without delay

### **Recommendation 5**

Establish a formal policy for the continuing professional development of administrative and support staff

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 5.1 as follows:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Partially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Partially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Partially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Partially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialised Music Performance	Partially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Partially compliant

## 5.2 Health and wellbeing

**Standard 5.2** *The programme ensures a safe learning and working environment. The programme provides effective support for all students and staff to preserve and improve their mental and physical wellbeing.*

SUM's approach to health and wellbeing is based on the CSI code of conduct and the CSI Gender and Diversity Service. The code of conduct establishes the behavioural norms for the learning and working environment, promoting respect for individual integrity and diversity, the development of social responsibility, and open and constructive communication; and actively discouraging discrimination, sexual misconduct, bullying and violence. In cases of identified misconduct, the SUM Directorate intervenes through a progression of measures: from facilitating dialogue between parties and involving external expertise, to, in the most serious cases, the termination of employment contracts or exclusion from studies<sup>182</sup>.

Physical wellbeing and the prevention of musician-specific occupational hazards are addressed primarily through the Musicians' health module (*Modulo salute dei musicisti*), coordinated by an internal specialist within the research division. The module is available to students across all reviewed programmes and combines theoretical content on the physical dimensions of music-making with practice-based sessions in disciplines such as yoga, the Alexander technique and Körper balance. The module is well regarded by students across study levels, with approximately a fifth of the student body participating each year. As part of the affiliation with SUPSI, students may additionally access sport facilities and associated activities at discounted rates, though the review team notes that, in practice, uptake of SUPSI-based services across the student body remains limited<sup>183</sup>.

Mental health support is delivered through two complementary channels. The CSI Gender and Diversity Service provides a dedicated counselling pathway coordinated internally, with the possibility of referral to an initial free session with a psychologist where specific situations require further evaluation. This is supplemented by the SUPSI Counselling and psychological help service, which offers a distinct provision. The coordinator of the internal counselling service is "still in the process of acquiring all necessary competences"<sup>184</sup>. During the site-visit, students raised concerns that the SUPSI psychological support offer — which is available at no cost for a limited number of sessions per academic year — was largely unknown to them and difficult to navigate, given that access is through the SUPSI portal rather than through SUM's information channels. The student union operates as an informal mechanism for identifying students in difficulty, but wellbeing-related interactions of this kind are not systematically documented<sup>185</sup>.

Particular challenges exist for the MA Performance and the MA Specialized Performance, where students predominantly come from abroad. The Swiss healthcare system presents specific difficulties for international students for its cost and administrative complexity. The programmes have sought to mitigate this through special agreements with health insurance providers and with the Cantonal Institute of Public Health, offering non-EU

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<sup>182</sup>SER, pp.48–49.

<sup>183</sup>SER, pp.48–49; Meeting with students.

<sup>184</sup>SER, p.49.

<sup>185</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

students access to health insurance at reduced rates<sup>186</sup>. Where physical health concerns arise, a network of internal and external contacts is used to help connect students with appropriate local healthcare professionals<sup>187</sup>.

The formal procedures governing complaints and appeals with relevance to student wellbeing are set out in the study regulations<sup>188</sup>. At the operational level, initial concerns may be brought to the secretary's office, where a designated staff member coordinates referrals to internal or external support, with escalation available through the SUM Directorate. It is not clear if this process is fully documented beyond the study regulations, potentially affecting access for students and staff who may need to use it<sup>189</sup>.

With regard to teaching and administrative staff support structures are less developed than those available to students<sup>190</sup>. Plans are in development within the new human resources function to improve support for staff wellbeing, but at the time of the site-visit a systematic process to address staff wellbeing was not in place<sup>191</sup>.

Scheduling practices across the programmes carry direct implications for student wellbeing. This includes teaching activities arranged on Sundays, unevenly distributed contact periods across the academic year, and holiday periods too short to allow adequate rest<sup>192</sup>. Alumni reflected that mental health support had not always been sufficient to balance the demands of high-level performance study<sup>193</sup>.

The review team recognises the strong commitment to student wellbeing across the programmes. The Musicians' health module is commendable and distinctive, directly engaging with the occupational health realities of music study and professional practice. The Gender and Diversity Service, the code of conduct, and the availability of a first psychological consultation at no cost to students are equally positive features of the current offer.

The review team identifies also several points that require attention. The SUPSI counselling offer appears to be poorly communicated at programme level, with many students unaware of its existence. The review team suggests that the programmes provide comprehensive information on health and wellbeing services —at induction and at key points during the academic year — making explicit to students exactly which services are available, how to access them, and what is provided free of charge.

The complaints procedure relevant to wellbeing concerns should be presented in an accessible summary separate from the full study regulations and communicated to all students and staff at the start of each academic year.

The Musicians' health module currently reaches approximately a fifth of the student body each year. The review team suggests exploring whether the module's core content —

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<sup>186</sup>SER, p.39.

<sup>187</sup>SER, p.49.

<sup>188</sup>Study regulations, Art.25, 27 and 42.

<sup>189</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>190</sup>SER, p.49.

<sup>191</sup>Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>192</sup>Meeting with students.

<sup>193</sup>Meeting with alumni.

particularly awareness of occupational hazards — could be integrated across all programmes, ensuring broader and equitable access.

The review team recommends that scheduling of classes across the programmes is reviewed with student wellbeing in mind, reducing teaching activities at weekends and ensuring that holiday periods provide adequate time for rest and recovery, particularly for international students.

Support for teaching and administrative staff is less developed than the provision for students. The review team recommends that SUM develop and implement a staff wellbeing framework. This framework should include structured support and clear communication of available pathways for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

**Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Provide comprehensive health and wellbeing information at induction and key points during the academic year and explore integrating Musicians’ health module core content across all programmes for broader access

**Suggestion for enhancement 2**

Present complaints procedure in an accessible summary, communicated to all students and staff annually

**Recommendation 1**

Review scheduling of classes with student wellbeing in mind: reduce weekend teaching and ensure adequate holiday periods

**Recommendation 2**

Develop and implement a staff wellbeing framework for both teaching and non-teaching staff

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 5.2 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

## 6. Communication processes

### 6.1. Internal and external communication processes

**Standard 6.1** *Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme. Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent, regular, and accurate.*

The programmes under review rely on two primary channels for internal communication with students and teaching staff: institutional email and the institutional website. Formal communications with legal or administrative consequences – for example, those relating to appeals – are additionally delivered through the post<sup>194</sup>. Responsibilities for communication are distributed across several offices: Academic services handle study organisation, formal correspondence, student permits and health insurance matters; Events and Operations offices manage communications relating to ensemble and orchestral productions; and the heads of studies and study areas are the primary points of contact for matters specific to individual academic areas<sup>195</sup>. Scheduling information – including the timing, location and participants of lessons and examinations – is managed efficiently through the ASIMUT room booking platform<sup>196</sup>.

A culture of informal and verbal communication coexists with the institutional channels, given also the relatively small size of the student body<sup>197</sup>. Students confirmed that official channels are not always consistently used or read by all students. The observation that informal communication is prevalent in practice was already made in the 2018 MusiQuE programme review<sup>198</sup> and the SER acknowledges that this is a persistent challenge<sup>199</sup>.

Internal communications are also affected by the absence of a student-facing platform through which students could access information about study progression, assessment results, quality enhancement survey outcomes, and other key data. Students are currently unable to access the Amadeus student records system independently; information must instead be obtained via the secretarial office<sup>200</sup>. This is a source of frustration for the students and is recognised as a significant issue, rendering communication processes “inefficient and prone to errors, as everything needs to be handled via email”<sup>201</sup>.

All official programme documentation – including regulations, syllabi and examination information – is currently published in Italian only, in conformity with cantonal legislation. Instruction cannot be delivered in a language other than Italian without specific approval<sup>202</sup>. This presents real accessibility challenges, particularly for international students enrolled in the MA Performance, the MA Specialized Performance, and the MA Composition, where the proportion of non-Italian-speaking students is overwhelming. Mitigating measures are

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<sup>194</sup>SER, p.50.

<sup>195</sup>SER, p.51.

<sup>196</sup>SER, p.44.

<sup>197</sup>SER, p.50.

<sup>198</sup>Comparative Analysis 2018 Review – 2025 SER.

<sup>199</sup>SER, p.22.

<sup>200</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>201</sup>Meeting with students; SER, p.52.

<sup>202</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible for the programmes; see also SER, p.52.

in place: an Italian language course worth 4 credits, the provision of some courses in Italian and English, the acceptance of written submissions in the other Swiss national languages and English, and in-person explanations of syllabi by administrative staff<sup>203</sup>. However, the absence of systematic multilingual documentation remains an issue across the programmes as a whole.

The Communications office coordinates and produces outgoing content across several channels. A monthly newsletter is distributed to students, staff and a broad external list, covering upcoming events and noteworthy developments<sup>204</sup>. A dedicated publication, the CSI Magazine, was launched in September 2022 and it is seen as a high-impact initiative generating positive engagement from the local community<sup>205</sup>. Cooperation with regional media partners is well-established and regular: programme activities and productions are announced via newspapers and radio, and staff are routinely involved in broadcast and press coverage<sup>206</sup>. Public attendance at major events grew from 5,346 in 2022 to 6,147 in 2023, which may be taken as an indirect indicator of the reach of external communication efforts<sup>207</sup>.

Responsibility for accuracy and consistency of public information is shared according to content type: event-related information is managed by the Events office; study programme material by the head of studies; student life information by the Academic services office; and promotional content by the head of communications<sup>208</sup>. Outgoing communication is coordinated with the Communications office before release, and an effort is made to avoid overloading teachers with external information by filtering incoming material before dissemination<sup>209</sup>.

The most significant development in the area of external communication is the renewal of the institutional website, currently under development, with a launch anticipated in the first trimester of 2026<sup>210</sup>. The process was initiated in 2023 following an internal working group – involving teachers, students and staff – that concluded the existing website was “inefficient and out of date” in terms of both its technical architecture and information structure<sup>211</sup>. A further limitation is the heavy reliance on PDF documents – including scanned versions of originals – which present accessibility barriers for users with visual impairments, dyslexia, or those accessing the website on smaller screens<sup>212</sup>. The review team learned during the site-visit that the project is approximately 75% complete<sup>213</sup>.

The programmes benefit from a clearly structured external communication function, with well-defined responsibilities distributed across dedicated offices, a high-quality public-facing magazine, strong regional media presence, and an active newsletter.

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<sup>203</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>204</sup>SER, p.51.

<sup>205</sup>SER, p.51; SUM Quality report 2022-2023, p.7.

<sup>206</sup>SER, p.51.

<sup>207</sup>SUM Quality report 2022-2023, p.9 (indicator P22).

<sup>208</sup>SER, p.51.

<sup>209</sup>Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>210</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>211</sup>SER, p.51.

<sup>212</sup>SER, p.52.

<sup>213</sup>Meeting with management of the institution.

These are strengths that serve both the visibility of the programmes and their connection with the local community.

However, the review team notes that several of the internal communication challenges identified in the 2018 review remain substantially unresolved in 2025. The continued reliance on informal channels, the absence of a self-service student platform, and the limited availability of programme-critical information in languages other than Italian collectively represent a pattern of slow progress in an area that directly affects students' ability to navigate their studies.

The review team offers the following recommendations:

SUM is strongly encouraged to address the limitations of the current student records management system as a priority. Whether this is achieved through the development of a dedicated student portal or through a significant upgrade of the existing Amadeus system, a timeline and roadmap for implementation should be established and communicated (see also recommendation under Standard 5.1).

Given the international composition of the student body, particularly in the MA programmes, the review team recommends that the programmes develop a systematic approach to making core documentation – including regulations, examination criteria, and study plan information – accessible in English alongside Italian. The regulatory constraints imposed by cantonal legislation and the complexities of translating legally binding documents are acknowledged. Nevertheless, SUM is encouraged to explore pragmatic solutions, including professionally reviewed summaries or guidance documents in English. Technology-assisted translation may support this effort, provided that appropriate editorial oversight is maintained (see also recommendations under Standards 2.1 and 2.2).

The planned launch of the renewed institutional website is welcome, and SUM is encouraged to resolve the identified accessibility limitations with the new website. The review team recommends to re-engage students in the final stages of the website's development, given that their initial involvement took place at an early phase of the process, approximately three years before the anticipated launch.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Address Amadeus/student records system limitations as a priority; establish a timeline and roadmap for implementation

#### **Recommendation 2**

Develop a systematic approach to making core documentation accessible in English alongside Italian, e.g. professionally reviewed summaries or guidance documents

#### **Recommendation 3**

Re-engage students in the final stages of the renewed website development; resolve accessibility limitations in the new site

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 6.1 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
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Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition	Substantially compliant

## Quality Culture

## 7. Quality Culture

### 7.1. Quality Culture at programme level

*Standard 7.1: The programme builds an environment where internal and external feedback is sought and connected, and where staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and the programme activities. The programme is thus enabled to ensure the quality of its curriculum and educational processes, and to work towards an all-encompassing quality culture.*

The reviewed programmes operate within a quality assurance framework shaped by two complementary and partly overlapping regulatory systems. At the national level, Article 27 of the Swiss Higher Education Act (HEdA) requires higher education institutions to “review the quality of their teaching, research and services” at regular intervals and to “pursue long-term quality enhancement,” while Article 30(1) mandates an active quality enhancement system to ensure that “teaching, research and services are of high quality”<sup>214</sup>. At the cantonal level, the Cantonal Law on Higher Education Institutions (LHEdI) regulates CSI’s affiliation with SUPSI, requiring SUM to adhere to SUPSI’s strategy and general academic rules<sup>215</sup>. The result is a dual quality framework: SUM’s Quality Manual integrates SUPSI’s quality enhancement policies, models and procedures with those of the CSI Foundation, retaining SUPSI-aligned processes for all matters of academic integration and SUM-specific variants for areas of administrative independence, such as finance, information technology, communication, libraries, procurement and collaborators<sup>216</sup>.

The Quality Manual is organised around 16 processes. These include the evaluation of the learning process, evaluation of teaching by students, degree programme portfolio assessment, development and support of teaching staff, and risk assessment. Each process follows a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, and the manual itself is subject to external peer review every five to seven years. The present programme review falls, in this framework, under Process 5, degree programme portfolio assessment. Operational responsibility for coordinating quality activities across all six programmes rests with the Quality Management (QM) delegate, who also serves as a member of the SUPSI quality coordination commission<sup>217</sup>. This function is currently performed at 25% of one person’s working time, a resourcing level confirmed during the site-visit<sup>218</sup>.

Internal feedback channels across the programmes include end-of-course and end-of-seminar surveys completed by students, one-to-one meetings between students and heads of study areas, and feedback provided after final examinations. Teaching staff contribute to quality enhancement through the conference of field representatives, in direct collaboration with heads of study areas. The student union and the advisory board provide further channels through which strategic and operational quality matters are considered<sup>219</sup>. External perspectives are incorporated into quality processes through the systematic

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<sup>214</sup>SER, p.53, citing HEdA, Art. 27 and Art. 30 cv. 1.

<sup>215</sup>SER, p.53, citing LHEdI, Art. 12.

<sup>216</sup>SER, p.54.

<sup>217</sup>SER, pp.54-55.

<sup>218</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>219</sup>SER, p.53.

inclusion of at least one external expert on every final examination panel across all six programmes. The SER identifies this as an important mechanism for benchmarking student outcomes against professional standards, and notes that SUM teaching staff are also called upon as external evaluators in other Swiss and international institutions, enabling reciprocal benchmarking of their own practice<sup>220</sup>.

The progress made since the 2018 MusiQuE programme quality enhancement review is considerable. The first cycle of SUPSI's institutional accreditation period has been the primary driver of QA formalisation. The SER describes this as "one of the biggest and most impactful changes in the past 7 years"<sup>221</sup>. Several improvements directly linked to quality enhancement processes are documented: the full revision of the study regulations, with the active participation of the student union, the conference of field representatives, and heads of study areas; the comprehensive revision of programme documentation, initiated in direct response to the 2018 review; the establishment of the position of Delegate for orchestral and ensemble projects; and the implementation of updated information technology resources that have reduced administrative burden. These examples demonstrate a commitment to quality processes to drive change across the programmes.

Notwithstanding this progress, there are persistent challenges. The quality enhancement system is described as "at times too cumbersome" and "slightly over-dimensioned, considering the relative small size of the school"<sup>222</sup>. During the site-visit, senior administrative staff confirmed that the demands of the SUPSI QA framework are significant for a small institution, while noting that ongoing dialogue with SUPSI has permitted some adaptations. The QA system is described as a "living system" in which those engaged in day-to-day programme delivery also carry responsibility for quality monitoring<sup>223</sup>.

Regarding the feedback loop across the programmes, the responses given in meetings were based primarily on informal relationships, verbal exchanges, and personal knowledge rather than documented processes<sup>224</sup>. Students expressed limited awareness of how their input was acted upon and described the complaints and feedback process as unclear in practice<sup>225</sup>.

The review team recognises a strong commitment to quality enhancement across all six programmes, deeply embedded in the ethos of the teaching and administrative community. The commitment to musical excellence is evident; the formalisation of the quality system achieved since 2018 represents substantial progress. In particular, the inclusive production of the SER, the high quality of the report - giving an honest, accurate, and deeply self-reflective account of the programmes - and the impressive online document repository created in support of the SER, are to be commended.

The review team offers the following recommendations:

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<sup>220</sup>SER, pp.29, 55.

<sup>221</sup>See Annex 2 List of documents below for the full list.

<sup>222</sup>SER, p.56.

<sup>223</sup>Meeting with senior administrative staff.

<sup>224</sup>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programmes; Meeting with management of the institution.

<sup>225</sup>Meeting with students.

The allocation of 25% of one staff member’s time to the QA function across six programmes operating within a complex set of regulatory frameworks, is clearly insufficient. The current allocation of the QA function should be increased at least to 50%.

The “closing the loop” dimension of quality culture requires strengthening. A mechanism should be developed — differentiated by programme where relevant — through which students, teaching staff, and external stakeholders are informed of the actions taken in response to their feedback. For example, a simple record of decisions made in response to quality feedback could be shared at the end of each academic cycle through existing communication channels.

The tendency to rely on informal channels for quality enhancement reflects the programmes’ collegial spirit but creates a risk that improvements remain undocumented and non-transferable, particularly during periods of staff transition. The review team encourages SUM to identify a way of capturing quality enhancement in writing, proportional to the available administrative capacity.

Finally, regarding quality monitoring of the programmes, the review team encourages the programmes to consider the experience of students across the full spectrum of performance and engagement levels — not only those whose outcomes are most visible — so that quality culture is authentically inclusive in its reach.

**Suggestion for enhancement 1**

Consider the experience of students across the full spectrum of engagement levels in quality monitoring

**Recommendation 1**

Increase QA function allocation from 25% to at least 50% of a staff member’s time

**Recommendation 2**

Develop a “closing the loop” mechanism to inform students, staff, and external stakeholders of actions taken in response to feedback

**Recommendation 3**

Capture quality enhancement activity in writing, proportional to available administrative capacity

The Review Team concludes that the programmes comply with Standard 7.1 as follows:

Programme	Compliance level
Bachelor of Arts in Music	Substantially compliant
Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance	Substantially compliant
Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory	Substantially compliant

# Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

The review team concludes that the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana programmes comply with the *Standards for Programme Review* as follows:

1. Governance and decision making at programme level	
<p><b>Standard 1.1</b> The programme’s goals are clearly stated and relevant to the national legal context. They reflect the institutional mission and vision, and they are aligned with the overarching institutional policies and strategy. They are effectively achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum, and its methods of delivery.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue embedding research capabilities at all levels, including bachelor, in anticipation of doctoral-level provision through university partnership</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsider pedagogical rationale and delivery of compulsory early/contemporary music subjects; ensure practical approach and accessibility for all students</li> <li>• Address gaps in entrepreneurship, career development, and portfolio building in the revised MA Specialized Performance curriculum</li> <li>• Consider a blend of on-site and remote study offer for the revised MA Specialized Performance, to better support the developing international careers of young musicians</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Standard 1.2</b> The delivery of the programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure, and clear, transparent and effective decision-making processes that include a balanced representation of the programme’s stakeholders (students, teaching staff, support staff, representatives of the music profession and related artistic domains).</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure teaching staff are systematically informed of and able to engage with programme-level decision-making, e.g. through formalised Didactic Council with documented decisions and written communication to teaching body</li> <li>• Support students to take an active and informed role in governance, e.g. through induction to representation roles and regular, documented opportunities to contribute to programme review</li> </ul>	

- Introduce a formal mechanism for periodic professional consultation on curriculum content and learning outcomes, distinct from the advisory board's strategic function

## 2. Students' perspectives

**Standard 2.1** Clear, coherent, and inclusive admission criteria exist, to establish artistic/academic suitability of incoming students at programme level. Admitted students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process and to engage in critical reflection. They are supported to achieve the intended learning outcomes through an appropriate and effective blend of teaching and learning styles and pedagogies. The programme and its methods of delivery are adequately catered by staff and support services.

**Substantially compliant**

### Recommendations

- Review workload distribution systematically across all programmes; Didactic Council to lead with implementation timeline
- Communicate clear elective credit entitlement policy and adjudication criteria to students at the start of studies; consider recognition of prior learning
- Establish unambiguous attendance policy distinguishing threshold condition for exam eligibility from graded assessment component
- Establish transparent mechanism for allocation of ensemble production places and paid engagements, e.g. open, clearly announced auditions
- Explore practical measures to increase accessibility of documentation for non-Italian-speaking students, e.g. machine-translation reviewed by staff

**Standard 2.2** The programme has effective procedures in place to formally monitor and review the progression of its students. Assessment methods are clearly defined and effectively demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. There is an effective complaints and appeals system in place at programme level.

**Substantially compliant**

### Suggestions for enhancement

- Develop assessment feedback framework (e.g. descriptors or rubrics) to complement verbal feedback; provide written feedback for negative outcomes
- Work with OSI to allow greater repertoire flexibility for final concert, or develop complementary assessment opportunities

### Recommendations

- Address limited accessibility of assessment documentation in terms of language and online visibility; translate key assessment criteria into English
- Incorporate evaluations of the four mandatory recitals and OSI concert into official diploma documentation for MA Specialized Performance

<p><b>Standard 2.3</b> The programme has effective mechanisms in place to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills that facilitate their transition towards a professional life in the music and/or related artistic domain. Procedures are in place to formally and effectively monitor students' subsequent employability and professional achievement. The information thus collected is efficiently used to maintain an active link with the music/artistic profession and to further develop the curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and introduce a compulsory shared module on professional skills across all programmes (entrepreneurship, self-promotion, career management, music market)</li> <li>• Take active measures to increase graduation survey participation, e.g. embed in graduation process, simplify instrument, add incentives</li> <li>• Establish an alumni network, even modest (e.g. online platform with one annual event), to improve employability data, maintain graduate links, and enable professional input into curriculum</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Teachers' perspectives</b></p>	
<p><b>Standard 3.1</b> Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers. The size and composition of the teaching body are sufficient and appropriate to effectively deliver the curriculum. There are adequate opportunities for teaching staff for continued professional development.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore mechanisms (e.g. dedicated thematic sessions once or twice a year) to channel international staff expertise into programme development</li> <li>• Consider an onboarding process with pedagogical component for newly appointed teachers</li> <li>• Seek scheduling approach that better supports student wellbeing and continuity of learning</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a continuing professional development framework for all teaching staff – potentially including part-time staff – with clear expectations, pathways, and monitoring mechanisms</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. External perspectives</b></p>	
<p><b>Standard 4.1</b> The programme offers a range of opportunities for students and staff to gain international perspectives and experiences.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>

<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore whether an optional mobility window could be introduced within the MA Performance and MA Specialized Performance</li> <li>• Encourage teachers to actively promote outgoing mobility as a complement to study in Lugano</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a formal internationalisation strategy with measurable targets for outgoing mobility, priority partner institutions, and adequate resourcing of the international relations function</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Standard 4.2</b> The programme’s educational processes reflect the institutional policies and strategies in place for an active social engagement. The continued development and maintenance of links with the music profession and the wider artistic, cultural, educational and/or other relevant sectors within society is an integrated part of the programme.</p>	<p><b>Fully compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage students more actively in concert curation and programme design (e.g. audience engagement, programme notes, event planning)</li> <li>• Develop a clear, resourced action plan for how <i>Città della Musica</i> will translate into enhanced social engagement at programme level</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Resources</b></p>	
<p><b>Standard 5.1</b> The programme has means and resources to ensure its successful delivery and to secure its sustainable development.</p>	<p><b>Partially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advocate through SUPSI for increased cantonal contributions commensurate with the scale of the educational offer</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and designate at least one dedicated recording space; consider low-cost acoustic treatment of existing rooms</li> <li>• Maintain BA Music and Movement teaching/movement space to a standard consistent with safe use</li> <li>• Develop and implement concrete interim measures to address infrastructure limitations before the move to <i>Città della Musica</i></li> <li>• Upgrade or replace the Amadeus student management system without delay</li> <li>• Establish a formal policy for the continuing professional development of administrative and support staff</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Standard 5.2</b> The programme ensures a safe learning and working environment. The programme provides effective support for all students and staff to preserve and improve their mental and physical wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide comprehensive health and wellbeing information at induction and key points during the academic year and explore integrating Musicians' health module core content across all programmes for broader access</li> <li>• Present complaints procedure in an accessible summary, communicated to all students and staff annually</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review scheduling of classes with student wellbeing in mind: reduce weekend teaching and ensure adequate holiday periods</li> <li>• Develop and implement a staff wellbeing framework for both teaching and non-teaching staff</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Communication processes</b></p>	
<p><b>Standard 6.1</b> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme. Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent, regular, and accurate.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address Amadeus/student records system limitations as a priority; establish a timeline and roadmap for implementation</li> <li>• Develop a systematic approach to making core documentation accessible in English alongside Italian, e.g. professionally reviewed summaries or guidance documents</li> <li>• Re-engage students in the final stages of the renewed website development; resolve accessibility limitations in the new site</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Quality Culture</b></p>	
<p><b>Standard 7.1</b> The programme builds an environment where internal and external feedback is sought and connected, and where staff and students are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of education and the programme activities. The programme is thus enabled to ensure the quality of its curriculum and educational processes, and to work towards an all-encompassing quality culture.</p>	<p><b>Substantially compliant</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions for enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the experience of students across the full spectrum of engagement levels in quality monitoring</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations

- Increase QA function allocation from 25% to at least 50% of a staff member's time
- Develop a “closing the loop” mechanism to inform students, staff, and external stakeholders of actions taken in response to feedback
- Capture quality enhancement activity in writing, proportional to available administrative capacity

## Conclusion

The six programmes offered by the *Scuola universitaria di Musica* of the *Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana* benefit from a distinctive institutional identity rooted in the cultural life of the Canton of Ticino, and operate within a mature but complex regulatory environment. The review team found an institution that has made considerable progress since the 2018 MusiQuE review, demonstrating its capacity to translate external recommendations into structural improvements. This is an ongoing process that reflects the changing landscape for higher music education and the music profession, and it comes as no surprise if a number of areas still require development if the programmes are to realise their full potential.

The review team commends SUM's deep and well-established partnerships with regional cultural organisations, giving the programmes a unique profile and providing the students with professional performance opportunities. The completion and publication of comprehensive programme handbooks for all six programmes, together with the formalisation of the QA framework through the Quality Manual, represent substantial achievements. The internationally distinguished teaching body is a defining strength. The review team further commends the coherent design of the MA in Music Pedagogy and the MA in Music Composition and Theory, the inclusive admissions ethos, the Musicians' health module, and the quality and honesty of the self-evaluation report.

Among the most important recommendations, the review team urges SUM to finalise the revision of the MA Specialized Music Performance without further delay, addressing the identified gaps in entrepreneurship, career development, and portfolio building, and to develop a shared module on professional skills across all programmes. The upgrade or replacement of the Amadeus student management system should be treated as a priority, as should the development of a systematic approach to making core documentation accessible in English alongside Italian. An internationalisation strategy to improve outgoing mobility is also needed. Concrete interim measures should be implemented with a degree of urgency to address current infrastructure limitations — particularly the absence of dedicated recording facilities — to improve the student experience for the remaining years before the move to *Città della Musica*. The review team also recommends strengthening the involvement of teaching staff and students in programme-level governance, establishing a formal mechanism for professional consultation on curriculum content, and implementing a continuing professional development framework for all staff.

The review team is confident that, with the bold strategic vision already in place, the commitment demonstrated by its leadership and teaching community, and the transformative opportunity presented by the *Città della Musica*, SUM is well positioned to address these recommendations and to strengthen further the quality and international standing of its programmes.

## Annex 1. Site-visit schedule

Day 0 – (18/11/2025)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting (names and positions of the participants from the visited institution)	Location
	<i>Arrival of Review Team members</i>		
19:00-	Dinner	Review Team alone	
19:30-21:30	<b>Preparatory meeting of the Review Team (Briefing Session)</b>	Review Team alone	Hotel

Day 1 – (19/11/2025)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting (names and positions of the participants from the visited institution)	Location
9:00–10:00	<b>Meeting 1</b> <i>Meeting with management of the institution</i>	CSI General Director CSI Council Vice-President CSI Directorate member SUPSI General Director and SUM Vice-Directors	305
10:00-10:15	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		305
10:15-11:15	<b>Meeting 2</b> <i>Meeting with representatives responsible of the programme</i>	Head of Pedagogical Studies Co-Head of Performance Studies Head of Continuing Education Programmes Co-Head of Performance Studies (online) Head of Studies Head of Theory and Composition	305

11:15-11:30	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary</i>		305
11:30-11:45	Break	Review Team alone	
11:45-12:45	<b>Meeting 3</b> <i>Meeting with senior administrative staff</i>	Head of IT Resources Administrative Director Head of Academic Services Logistics Service Operational Manager QM delegate and IRC Head of Events and Services Head of Philanthropy Head of Human Resources Head of Secretary Office Head of Communications Office	305
12:45-13:00	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		305
14:00-15:00	Lunch		Osteria Penel
15:00-15:00	<b>Meeting 4</b> <i>Meeting with productions</i>	Delegate for Ensemble and Orchestral Activities Choir Conductor Head of Events and Services 900presente Season Producer	305
15:00-15:15	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		305
15:15-16:15	<b>Meeting 5</b> <i>Meeting with teachers and lecturers</i>	Ear Training Teacher Voice Professor Viola Professor Organ and Cembalo Professor Piano Professor Cello Professor Associate research Professor in Music Composition and Theory	305
16:15-16:30	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Reflection on the first day and preparations for day 2</i>		305

16:30-16:45	Break	
16:45-17:45	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guided tour – Review of the facilities</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(studios, concert venues, practice facilities, libraries etc.)</p> <p>(Guides as proposed by the institution – may include students).</p>	Radio building
19:00-	<p>Dinner as proposed by the institution, including Review Team</p> <p>Representative from MusiQuE  CSI General Director  Administrative Director  SUM Advisory Board president  CSI Directorate Member  QM Delegate and IRC  CSI Directorate Member  SUM Vice-Director</p>	Fattoria Moncucchetto

Day 2 – (20/11/2025)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting (names and positions of the participants from the visited institution)	Location
9:00–10:00	<p><b>Meeting 6</b></p> <p><i>Meeting with students</i></p>	MA Composition student BA Music, composition student BA Music and Movement student BA Music, composition student MA Performance, piano student BA Music, violin student MA Specialized Performance, clarinet student MA Performance, voice student	305
10:00-10:15	<p><b>Review Team meeting</b></p> <p><i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i></p>		305

10:15-10:30	Break		
11:30-11:30	<b>Meeting 7</b> <i>Meeting with representatives from the profession</i>	LAC Artistic Director for Music Secretary General Department of Culture and Society, RSI Director of the Culture Division, City of Lugano SMUS Director OSI Artistic Director	305
11:30-11:45	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		305
11:45-12:45	<b>Meeting 8</b> <i>Meeting with alumni</i>		305
12:45-13:00	<b>Review Team meeting:</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		
13:00-14:00	Lunch	Review Team alone	Osteria Penel
14:00-15:15	<b>Observation of student performances during class</b>		Various rooms
15:15-15:30	<b>Review Team meeting:</b> <i>Review Team members share conclusions with Secretary (debriefing)</i>		305
15:30-15:45	Break		
15:45-17:00	<b>Meeting 9</b> <i>Meeting with Members of Advisory Board</i>	SUM Advisory Board Member SUM Advisory Board President SUM Advisory Board Member and SUPSI Director of undergraduate and graduate studies	305
17:00-19:00	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Reflection on the first day and preparations for day 3</i>		305
19:00-	Dinner	Review Team alone	

Day 3 – (21/11/2025)			
Time	Meeting (working session)	Participants of the meeting (names and positions of the participants from the visited institution)	Location

9:00–10:00	<b>Meeting 10</b> Extra session if required by the Review Team	As notified by the Review Team	305
10:00-12:00	<b>Review Team meeting</b> <i>Preparation for the feedback meeting</i>		305
12:00-13:00	<b>Meeting 11</b> Feedback to the institution	Leadership of the institution	305
13:00-14:00			
END OF THE SITE-VISIT			
14:00-	Departure of the Review Team members / Free time		

## Annex 2. List of documents provided to the review team

1. 900presente 1 2025, production agenda
2. Active collaboration agreements within the SEMP programme
3. Admission requirements, Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement
4. Admission requirements, Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in Composition
5. Admission requirements, Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in Performance
6. Admission requirements, Master of Arts in Music Composition and Theory
7. Admission requirements, Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, major in Instrumental/vocal music pedagogy
8. Admission requirements, Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in Ensemble Conducting (contemporary repertoire)
9. Admission requirements, Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in Instrumental/vocal music performance
10. Admission requirements, Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance
11. Admitted students who previously studied at CSI
12. Art for ages project
13. Arts Philanthropy Booklet 2022
14. Arts Philanthropy Booklet 2024
15. Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in composition, anonymised example of Diploma supplement
16. Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in composition, anonymised example of Diploma, Diploma supplement, Transcript of records, and Certification of marks
17. Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in performance, anonymised example of Diploma supplement
18. Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in performance, anonymised example of Diploma, Diploma supplement, Transcript of records, and Certification of marks
19. Blueprint CSI Breganzona building
20. Blueprint CSI main building
21. Blueprint CSI Radio building
22. Cantonal Law on Higher Education Institutions (LHEdI)
23. Città della Musica, new campus to be completed in 2028.
24. Concept for the continuing education of SUM teaching personnel
25. Comparative Analysis 2018 Review – 2025 SER
26. Counselling and accompaniment services on the SUPSI website
27. CSI annual report 2024-2025
28. CSI code of conduct
29. CSI Directive on photocopying musical scores
30. CSI Gender and diversity service brochure
31. CSI instrument inventory
32. CSI library local catalogue
33. CSI Locker regulations
34. CSI Mission statement
35. CSI Orchestra regulations
36. CSI Organisation regulations
37. CSI organisational chart
38. CSI Regulations on instrument loans
39. CSI Regulations on the loan of support material
40. CSI Room booking regulations
41. CSI solidarity fund
42. CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028
43. CSI strategy and action plan 2025-2028 (unofficial English translation)

44. csimagazine.ch
45. Cultura e salute project
46. Description of the seminar: "Musica per gli altri" in the 2025-26 booklet
47. Diagram of the Swiss education system provided by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK)
48. Draft proposal: Description of the Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance
49. Draft proposal: Regulations of the Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance, Major in Instrumental/vocal performance
50. Draft proposal: Regulations of the Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance, Major in Solo performance
51. Exam regulations, Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement
52. Exam regulations, Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in composition
53. Exam regulations, Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in performance
54. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Composition and Theory
55. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, major in Elementary music education
56. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, major in Instrumental pedagogy
57. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in Ensemble conducting (contemporary repertoire)
58. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in Instrumental performance
59. Exam regulations, Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance
60. Example call for a new bassoon teacher
61. Example end of course survey, Bachelor of Arts in Music and in Music and Movement
62. Example Report on the hiring of the new bassoon teacher Andrea Cellacchi (confidential)
63. Example Report on the hiring of the new teachers
64. Example student feedback: Career development for musicians (2024-2025)
65. Example student feedback: Come realizzare un demo audio-video
66. Example student feedback: Introduzione alla direzione
67. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Aventures
68. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente brochure 2021-2022
69. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente brochure 2022-2023
70. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente brochure 2023-2024
71. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente brochure 2024-2025
72. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Heure Espagnole
73. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Kammermusik
74. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Mavra
75. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Una retrospettiva futura (DE)
76. Examples of 900presente seasonal programmes: 900presente Una retrospettiva futura (IT)
77. Examples of concert calendars: CSI agenda Feb-Aug 2023
78. Examples of concert calendars: CSI agenda Sep 2023-Feb 2024
79. Examples of concert calendars: CSI agenda Sep 2024-Feb 2025
80. Examples of concert calendars: CSI agenda Sep 2025-Feb 2026
81. Examples of concert Posters: Choir production with Mark Kölliker

82. Examples of concert Posters: Concert of MA Specialized students with the OSI
83. Examples of concert Posters: Orchestral production: Kamil Janas (clarinet, MA Specialized student) with the SUM orchestra
84. Examples of concert Posters: Orchestral production: SUM orchestra with Christoph König (conductor) and Kokoro Imagawa (violin, MA Specialized student)
85. Examples of concert Posters: Orchestral production: SUM orchestra with Diego Fasolis and the RSI choir, Beethoven's 9th symphony
86. Examples of concert Posters: Orchestral production: SUM orchestra with George Pehlivanian (conductor) and Federico Colli (piano)
87. Examples of concert Posters: Orchestral production: SUM orchestra with John Neschling (conductor)
88. Examples of final recitals and chamber music recitals
89. Examples of newsletters: newsletter September 2025, newsletter June 2025, newsletter May 2025
90. Examples of student's final projects (Bachelor project): Beatrice Pellegrino: I Madrigali di Luzzaschi per il Concerto delle Dame Approccio all'esecuzione
91. Examples of student's final projects (Bachelor project): Diego Jiménez Alonso: Gaspar Cassadó's Suite for cello solo: an analysis of its characteristics and the influence of the Spanish folklore
92. Examples of student's final projects (Bachelor project): Ines Cristina Catarino Pereira: The clarinet in Klezmer music: a study case on Paul Schoenfeld's Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano
93. Examples of student's final projects (Bachelor project): Julia Devi Salvaggio: An Exploration of the Musical and Extra-Musical Components Required to Interpret Szymanowski's Mythes Op. 30
94. Examples of student's final projects (Bachelor project): Sergio Notarangelo: Il corno nel tardo-barocco
95. Examples of student's research: Research Module example paper: Giulia Panchieri
96. Examples of student's research: Research Module example paper: Norma Zanetti
97. Excerpts from minutes of the Conference of field representatives
98. Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector
99. Financial reporting to the SERI, 2024
100. Gender and diversity service brochure
101. Guidelines for the completion of Bachelor Final Project (unofficial English translation)
102. Guidelines for the completion of Master Final Project (unofficial English translation)
103. How to apply for the Bachelor and Master's programmes
104. iCommit survey on personnel satisfaction 2022, summary
105. "Il super potere della musica" (The super power of music) invitation letter
106. Information available for foreign students: Accommodation
107. Information available for foreign students: Health insurance
108. Information available for foreign students: Living in Lugano
109. Information available for foreign students: Visas and permits
110. IT resources available to students
111. Library statistics
112. List of SUM teachers and their respective biographies
113. Media presence, 900presente review
114. Media presence, Città della Musica project
115. Media presence, Media presence, 900presente XXVI season
116. Media presence, Orchestral production with Bruckner's 8th symphony
117. Media presence, Orchestral production with Luca Pianca

118. Media presence, Orchestral production, celebration of CSIs 35th anniversary
119. Minutes, Academic council 2025-03-17
120. Minutes, Academic council 2025-06-23
121. Minutes, Conference of field representatives 2020 04 23
122. Minutes, Conference of field representatives 2021-12-13
123. Minutes, Conference of field representatives 2022-05-06
124. Minutes, Conference of field representatives 2023-10-03
125. Minutes, Conference of field representatives 2024-03-01
126. Mobility programmes
127. Music Park project
128. Number of concerts for the past 3 academic years
129. Offer of continuing education programmes
130. OggiMusica
131. Orchestra della Svizzera italiana
132. Orchestral session 1 2024, production agenda
133. Orchestral session 1 2025, production agenda
134. Orchestral session 3 2024, production agenda
135. Programme handbook Bachelor of Arts in Music and Movement
136. Programme handbook for the Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in Composition
137. Programme handbook for the Bachelor of Arts in Music, major in Performance
138. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Composition and Theory, major in Composition
139. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, major in elementary music education
140. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Music Pedagogy, major in instrumental/vocal pedagogy
141. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in ensemble conducting (contemporary repertoire)
142. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Music Performance, major in instrumental/vocal performance
143. Programme handbook for the Master of Arts in Specialized Music Performance
144. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: Con Carlo, 12 February 2023
145. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: Don Perlimplin, November April 2021
146. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: Galileo's Journey, 27 April 2025
147. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: I Cenci, 26 May 2019
148. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: Piccolo concerto, 14 March 2022
149. Recordings of 900presente, modern and contemporary music concert season: Sinfonia, 12 November 2019
150. Recordings of orchestral and other ensemble productions: SUM chamber orchestra, Alessandro Moccia (conductor): Mozart, Heydn, Cherubini, Beethoven, 8 March 2024
151. Recordings of orchestral and other ensemble productions: SUM orchestra, Christoph König (conductor): Strauss, 2 December 2021 (excerpt)
152. Recordings of orchestral and other ensemble productions: SUM orchestra, Francesco Angelico (conductor): Bruckner, 6 February 2023
153. Recordings of orchestral and other ensemble productions: SUM orchestra, Francesco Bossaglia (conductor): Beethoven, von Weber, Dvořák, 28 June 2024
154. Recordings of orchestral and other ensemble productions: SUM orchestra, John Neschling (conductor): Villa-Lobos, Rachmaninoff, 16 November 2022

155. Regulations regarding the hiring process of new teaching staff
156. Regulations regarding the title of "Professore SUM" (excerpt)
157. Seminars and activities booklet 2025-2026
158. Sport activities offer on the SUPSI website
159. Staff research, as available in our website: Cinzia Cruder
160. Staff research, as available in our website: Massimo Zicari
161. Staff research, as available in our website: Paolo Paolantonio
162. Staff research, as available in our website: Pierre Alexandre Tremblay
163. Staff research, as available in our website: Winnie Huang
164. Standards for institutional accreditation, published in the website of the Swiss national accreditation agency.
165. Statutes of the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana Foundation
166. Strategic plan Communications office 2025-2028
167. Student graduation and dropout data
168. Student survey after graduation 2024, BA Music and Music and Movement
169. Student survey after graduation 2024, MA Pedagogy
170. Student survey after graduation 2024, MA Performance
171. Students statistical data for all programmes
172. Study regulations
173. SUM administrative staff statistics
174. SUM Analysis of QA system with regards to accreditation standards
175. SUM evaluation of QA system 2022-2023, excerpt
176. SUM iCommit survey 2022 summary (unofficial English translation)
177. SUM Quality enhancement system, including the Quality Policy and Strategy, the Quality Assurance Framework, and the Quality Manual.
178. SUM Quality report 2020-2021
179. SUM Quality report 2022-2023
180. SUM teaching staff list
181. SUM teaching staff statistics
182. SUPSI annual report 2024 on student and staff mobilities
183. SUPSI contract with Ticino
184. SUPSI online resources
185. SUPSI Quality enhancement system, including the Quality Policy and Strategy, the Quality Assurance Framework, and the Quality Manual
186. SUPSI survey on employability after graduation, aggregated results from 2015 to .2023
187. Swisscovery catalogue
188. Symphony orchestra project/session information:
189. Teaching personnel regulations
190. Thank you message for donors
191. Usage of teaching/practice rooms
192. Website of the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana

## Annex 3. Definitions of compliance levels

- **Fully compliant.** *A standard is fully compliant when the approaches, structures or mechanisms relevant to that standard are fully implemented in a coherent and consistent way.*
- **Substantially compliant.** *A standard is substantially compliant when the standard is in place, while minor gaps have been observed but the manner of implementation is mostly effective. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a recommendation as to how full compliance can be achieved.*
- **Partially compliant.** *A standard is partially compliant when the standard is in place, while significant gaps have been observed or the manner of implementation is not sufficiently effective. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a recommendation as to how full compliance can be achieved or a condition\*.*
- **Not compliant.** *A standard is not compliant when the approaches, structures or mechanisms relevant to that standard are lacking or implemented inadequately. In such cases Review Teams are asked to include a strong recommendation or a condition\*.*

*(\*Please note that conditions can only be formulated in accreditation reports and not in quality enhancement review reports.)*