

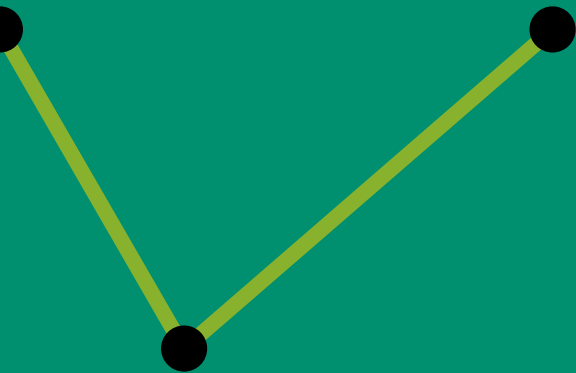
**Royal  
Conservatoire  
The Hague**



# **Master Project Plan Guidelines**

**Master of Music**





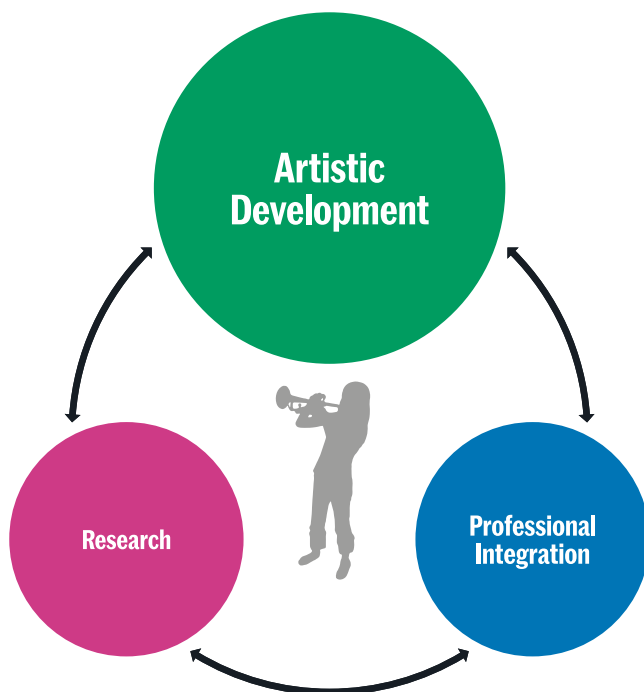
# **Master Project Plan guidelines**

## **Applying to the Master of Music programme**

When you apply to the Master of Music programme, you need to submit a Master Project Plan<sup>1</sup>. This is a study plan in which you express your personal plans for your master studies at the Royal Conservatoire. This document includes information on the Master of Music programme and offers guidelines on writing your Master Project Plan.

## 1. Master of Music Programme

A master's programme at the Royal Conservatoire is a full-time two-year programme. The total annual course load is 60 ECTS, but can be higher depending on the courses you choose to follow and your participation in projects or your own productions. Further information can be found on the individual master programme pages and in the curriculum handbooks on the website of the Royal Conservatoire ([koncon.nl/en/programmes](https://koncon.nl/en/programmes)).



<sup>1</sup> These Master Project Plan guidelines are applicable to all Master of Music disciplines except NMO and Master of Sonology.



## Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy of the Master of Music programme at the Royal Conservatoire is dedicated to developing your individual artistic vision, personal growth, inquisitive and entrepreneurial attitude and independence, and your instrumental and technical skills to a high qualitative level. We strive for our alumni to become excellent performers, composers, producers and/or educators and also professionals who can reflect on their role in society and navigate the complex realities of today's music profession.

To guide your development, the curriculum is designed in three domains: artistic development – research – professional integration. The programme is aimed at helping you find your place in the professional practice. Therefore, you are constantly encouraged to make your own choices and develop and carry out your own ideas and plans. We challenge you to connect all three domains in a way that is meaningful and relevant to you, so that you can find your 'niche' and prepare yourself for the professional practice after you have finished your studies.

The main goal of the Master of Music programme is for students to develop and complete their own Master Project that will help them realise the professional practice they aspire by integrating the following three domains:

**Artistic Development:** You develop a vision for your artistic development: What characterises you as an artist in terms of skills, motivations and/or interests? What kind of artist would you like to become? What are your career aspirations? What do you need to work on in order to become this artist? How can your Master Project help you achieve your goals?

You will receive individual tuition by the teacher(s) of your main subject. Furthermore, you will participate in for example: group lessons, combo lessons, chamber music activities, ensemble classes, orchestral projects, Big Band projects, producing, recording, sound reinforcement or composition projects, and in some departments you will work with a coach pianist.

**Research:** You conduct research that is driven by your artistic vision and that will help you to reach your goals for your artistic practice. You can use your research to inform and support your professional integration activity (PIA), or you can use your PIA as a case study in your research.

You will attend an introductory course on research in the arts and you will receive individual research supervision.



**Professional Integration:** You design, develop and realise an activity that connects you with the professional practice you want to be active in and therefore brings you outside the walls of the conservatoire. This professional integration activity (PIA) is driven by your artistic development goals. It can be informed and supported by your research, or it can function as a case study for your research. It is the starting point for a professional practice that stretches beyond the duration of your master's programme. You will attend an introductory course on project management during which you will design a plan for your PIA, and you will receive individual coaching by a professional integration coach.

## Master Circle

The monthly master circle is a peer learning group where the three domains of the Master Project come together and where you discuss the Master Project as a whole with your fellow students. The circles are organised by focus area. Every circle includes first- and second-year master students and is facilitated by a master circle leader who is knowledgeable in the focus area. For more information on the focus areas [click here](#).

## Master Project Network

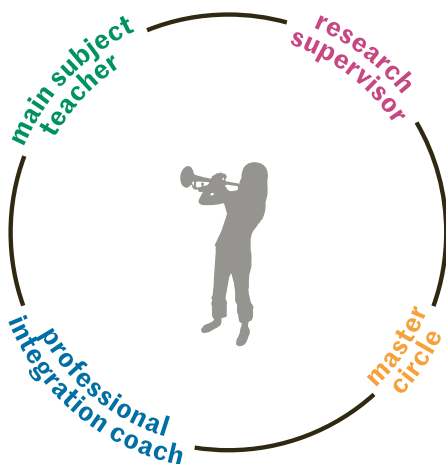
You are in control and at the centre of your Master Project – it's all about what you want to do and what is meaningful to you! However, you are not alone: you are surrounded by a network of people who can guide you while developing and realising your Master Project. Each person in the network will provide guidance from their specific angles/perspectives, but it is important and your own responsibility to keep them informed of all elements of your Master Project.

Your **main subject teacher**, who can help you define your artistic vision and artistic goals, and connect your Master Project to these.

Your **research supervisor**, who can help you with your Master Project from a research perspective.

Your **professional integration coach**, who can help you with your Master Project from a professional integration perspective.

Your **master circle**, consisting of your peers and master circle leader, with whom you can discuss the connection and coherence of artistic development, research and professional integration within your Master Project.



## 2. Master Project Plan guidelines

The Master Project Plan is a realistic study plan in which you describe your idea for your Master Project, explaining how

your artistic development goals, your chosen research topic and ideas for your professional integration activities will come together. The Master Project Plan should be between 500-750 words and written in English.

**Your Master Project Plan should include the following information:**

- Why would you like to continue your studies after your bachelor's?  
*You can include your artistic goals, the teacher(s) you wish to study with and why; a proposal with regards to repertoire and collaborations (for example cross-departmental and interdisciplinary initiatives); your thoughts on performance, improvisation, composition, and/or arranging. You can also include if you are interested in a period of study abroad through exchange programmes such as ERASMUS<sup>2</sup>.*
- What is the theme and/or working title of your Master Project?
- What is your motivation and inspiration for your Master Project?
- What are your goals for the Master Project in each of the three domains (Artistic Development, Research, Professional Integration)? How are these connected?
- How do you envision your artistic development: What characterises you as an artist in terms of skills, motivations and/or interests and what kind of artist would you like to become?
- What is your intended research topic and working title of your research?  
*You are advised to choose research topics that are closely related to your own artistic practice and development.*
- What is your intended Professional Integration Activity?  
*Think about your future: How do you see your future as a professional? What kind of activities do you want your professional practice to include? What steps can you take*

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2 **Art of Sound applicants** can include a proposal with regards to applying technology in relation to specific musical repertoire; characteristic repertoire of certain musical styles and the historical influence of technology on those musical styles; cross-departmental and interdisciplinary initiatives are encouraged (e.g. collaborations with the classical, early music, jazz, composition or sonology departments); your thoughts on improvisation, composition, and/or arranging in relation to studio production, recording or concert sound reinforcement practice.

**The Musician Educator** applicants can include their educational/teaching goals.

*to help you shape your desired future career? How can this professional integration activity help you to develop, realise and maintain relationships with the professional music practice? Do you prefer to explore this by yourself or in collaboration with others?*

- Which of the focus areas of the Royal Conservatoire fits your Master Project most? You will be enrolled in a master circle based on the focus area.
- What steps do you plan to take and how will you use developing an artistic vision, doing research and creating a professional integration activity in order to execute your Master Project and meet your goals?
- How do you think others in the artistic field could learn and/or benefit from your Master Project?

**Need inspiration?** For Master Project examples, [click here](#).



Have you looked at our [instruction video](#) yet?

### Criteria & Checklist

Your Master Project Plan will be assessed using the following criteria: integration, autonomy, understanding, and realism & viability. When preparing your Master Project Plan, it can be helpful to use this checklist:

- Integration: Does your Master Project Plan show that you have understood the connection between the three domains and have integrated and synthesised these in a creative and promising matter?
- Autonomy: Does your Master Project Plan show an autonomous approach to your studies? Think about taking initiative, dedication, independent and pro-active thinking.
- Understanding: Does your Master Project Plan show that you understand the wider cultural and professional context of a musician?
- Realism & viability: Is your Master Project Plan realistic? Are your proposed artistic goals, research topic, and professional integration activity viable? Can your proposed activities be supported by two years of study?

It should be clear from your Master Project Plan that you have understood the purpose of the Master of Music programme, i.e. that the programme is not simply a continuation of two more years of individual lessons, but a programme based on a holistic educational philosophy that will help you to experiment with and develop your own identity as a reflective and entrepreneurial practitioner at a high artistic level in preparation of working in the music profession.

### **Entry requirements & application procedure**

The general application rules are explained on [www.koncon.nl/en/application-process](http://www.koncon.nl/en/application-process). For the exact entry requirements for your main subject, please check the individual master programme pages on [koncon.nl/en/programmes](http://koncon.nl/en/programmes).

During your entry examination you not only need to give a high level performance but also convincingly demonstrate your understanding of and motivation for your Master Project based on your submitted Master Project Plan. You should also show that you are aware of the course load during the coming two years and are willing to devote sufficient time to your studies.

The Master Project Plan (as well as other documentation) has to be uploaded in 'Osiris Aanmeld', the online application tool of the Royal Conservatoire. You are required to follow the procedure as explained on [koncon.nl/en/application-process/entrance-exams](http://koncon.nl/en/application-process/entrance-exams).

Please make sure you upload your final version only, as your uploaded Master Project Plan will be distributed to the admissions committee. If your Master Project Plan is incomplete, you may be asked via email to make changes before your Master Project Plan is forwarded to the admissions committee. It is important to underline that you cannot be admitted to the Master of Music without having submitted a Master Project Plan that is approved in the admission process.

And finally, please note that the Master Project Plan is primarily meant as an assessment tool during the entrance examination. During your studies, you are of course allowed to make changes to your original plans, or collaborate with fellow students in joint Master Projects. Good luck - we look forward to reading your Master Project Plan!

## Focus Areas

Students will be introduced to ten focus areas during the course 'Introduction to Research in the Arts', and will be placed in a master circle which centres on one of these focus areas. The distribution of students over the various master circles is based on the Master Project Plans sent in as part of the application process. The ten focus areas are:

1. Art of Interpretation
2. Instruments, Techniques & Technologies
3. Music in Public Space
4. Creative Processes
5. Beyond Discipline
6. Musical Training, Performance & Cognition
7. Aesthetics & Cultural Discourse
8. Co-creative and educational settings
9. Music Theory & Aural Skills
10. Artistic Knowledge & Scientific Inquiry

On the next pages you will find each focus area explained.

# 1

## Art of Interpretation

Projects focused on the musical interpretation, contextualisation and performance of musical repertoire, both historical and contemporary. Besides artistic experimentation, research in this area presumes the critical study of various sources (scores, texts, recordings), which may inform and inspire the musical interpretation and eventually lead to altered approaches of performance practice. Professional integration activities may involve the curation and performance of concert programmes, the recording of an album or the creation of a thematic website, podcast or documentary.

# 2

## **Instruments, Techniques & Technologies**

Projects focused on the design, use, role and function of instruments and their playing techniques in musical practice. Research in this area typically requires the application of knowledge about instrument making, acoustics or electronics, or the movement possibilities of the human body. Students in this area show a technically oriented interest, sensibility for sound and eagerness to experiment and develop. Examples are the exploration of historical, alternative or extended playing techniques, the use of microphones and amplification, the relation between instrumental set-ups and acoustics, and live electronics. Professional integration activities may include the development of new musical tools or instrumental prototypes, or instructive methods on playing techniques.

# 3

## **Music in Public Space**

Topics related to the possible role and presence of music and musicians in society and the public sphere. The research may focus on possibilities for enhancing the relevance of professional music practice in and outside the concert hall, the presence of musicians in (social) media, and the interaction with audiences. Professional integration activities may lead to innovative curatorial practices, music projects and artistic profiles in the public sphere. Social engagement, communicative interaction and entrepreneurial attitude are essential in this area. In comparison to focus areas 7 and 8, the visibility and public character of the project outcomes should be central.

# 4

## **Creative Processes**

Projects in this area zoom in on the making of music. Possible topics are the role of imagination, musical traditions, the interaction between composers and performers or the role of musical tools and notation techniques in creation processes. Artistic experimentation and documentation of the creative process are essential tools for researching in this area. Professional integration activities require an attitude of openness and curiosity towards all possible actors and elements that may contribute to the creation of music. The perspective of the creating artist is central, but also her ability to situate and contextualise project outcomes in a wider artistic and cultural context.



# 5

## **Beyond Discipline**

Projects that deal with the interaction between different disciplines and media. What can music's relation to literature, dance, film, visual arts, theatre, and installation art be? How can the interaction with non-artistic disciplines, new technologies and digital tools inspire musical creation? Research in this area investigates how different disciplines can influence and inform each other, and how the interaction between different media can create new forms of expression. Professional integration activities aim to realise innovative approaches to music experience through the use of multiple media and collaborations beyond disciplines. Curiosity, risk-taking and the willingness to temporarily put on hold the norms and values of common musical craftsmanship are characteristic values in this area.

# 6

## **Musical Training, Performance & Cognition**

Topics related to the process of musical learning and performance. The focus may be on musical preparation, avoidance of injuries, musical memory, mental and physical focus in performance, or the improvement of musical training and rehearsal methods. Research in this area is often informed by other fields of knowledge such as (music) psychology, biomedical sciences, physiotherapy, etc. Professional integration activities aim at sharing new knowledge and best practices, in a diversity of formats. Although there are possible overlaps with focus areas 8 and 9, the performer's perspective is central in this area.

# 7

## **Aesthetics & Cultural Discourse**

What are the origins of standards, beliefs and values that relate to musical practice? The student's musical practice and personal experience are starting points for a broader cultural and aesthetic inquiry. Examples of topics are the investigation and challenging of sound ideals and historical conceptions of 'the beautiful', 'musical taste' or 'musical quality'. Hot topics regarding cultural identity, environmentalism, decolonization or gender representation in music may also play a role. Students in this area have an affinity for reasoning, discussing and writing. The use of language may play an important role in professional integration activities, in combination with artistic practice.

# 8

## **Co-creative and educational settings**

Working with people is key in this focus area. Research projects investigate co-creative, participatory or educational processes. The professional integration activities aim at working with, in and through music with amateurs, children, elderly people or other participants. The role of the student in these projects is that of a coach, guide, teacher or cultural mediator. The context for research and professional integration activities can be classrooms, elderly homes, participatory art projects or other contexts for social-cultural work. Although the student's artistry remains crucial, projects in this area always consider the participant's experience as a guiding principle in musical activities.

# 9

## **Music Theory & Aural Skills**

Topics in this area focus on the combined theoretical and aural understanding of music as an acoustic and cultural phenomenon. Examples are the investigation of tuning systems, scales and modes and their application in music, or the relationship between rhetoric and musical form in baroque music. Projects in this area often aim at systemizing knowledge in order to apply it to music didactics. An analytical and clear methodical approach is characteristic for both research and professional integration activities in this area.

# 10

## **Artistic Knowledge & Scientific Inquiry**

This focus area investigates how artistic practice and scientific inquiry can mutually enrich one another. Students explore how scientific concepts, methods and data inspire musical and artistic creation, and how artistic processes can, in turn, generate new insights, forms of knowledge, or modes of scientific communication. Projects may involve working with scientific datasets to create sound-based interpretations or musical structures; translating scientific models into artistic formats; exploring bioacoustics, sonification, or sensory augmentation; or collaborating with scientists in laboratories, observatories, or field research contexts. Students in this area are curious about empirical inquiry and seek to translate complex scientific systems into meaningful artistic and musical experiences.

# Master Project Examples

Here are some examples of potential Master Projects. This is a non-exhaustive list, as there are many possibilities to be explored. For example, you could collaborate with other students on a joint Master Project.

