

Conservatorium van Amsterdam

Study Guide 2023-2024

Bachelor of Music

Department of Pop Music

Part 1: Programme Description



Conservatorium van Amsterdam
Amsterdam University of the Arts

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Reading guide for this study guide.

In this part of the study guide, you can find all the relevant information regarding the Jazz bachelor programme at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (CvA). Combined with the study guide 'general part', this guide offers you all the required information to successfully complete a bachelor programme at the CvA. In the 'general part', information can be found regarding the organization of the CvA, internationalization and admission. Further (practical) information regarding studying at the CvA, can be found in the booklet 'This-is-how-it-works', that students receive at the start of their study.

Admission regulations (per principal study) and a list of the teachers can be found on the CvA website. Further information on education and examination can be found in the Teaching and Examination Regulations and the Additional Regulations with Respect to Reviews and Examinations.

Courses in the Jazz bachelor programme are divided in 5 categories:

Principal study

Ensemble and projects

Music Theory subjects and Musical and Cultural History

Education and Entrepreneurship

Individual credits

This study guide also contains course descriptions regarding the principal study (category 1). In part 2 of the Jazz study guide, course descriptions are adopted regarding categories 2-5.

1. Studying pop music at the CvA

The pop music programme at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam is open to talented, young musicians with a passion for creating pop music. It is a relatively new course, and over ninety per cent of its student body has so far consisted of Dutch students, ensuring deep roots in the musical life of the Netherlands.

The pop music degree programme provides a learning environment in which students are challenged to develop into young professionals who can participate in the professional world of pop music as enterprising artists as soon as they graduate. To that end, they learn to create, perform, produce, and effectively present their work. We feel students should be introduced to all these facets so that they get a clear idea of the entire process, in addition to their specialist area. After graduating, lifelong learning in their field is a natural process.

Besides presenting to them all the ins and outs of the world of pop music, the pop music degree programme also represents a four-year-long haven in which students can work on autonomous concepts and acquire solid knowledge and skills. The market mechanisms of a small country like the Netherlands can often interfere with the urge to experiment which can lead to new developments. Finding one's own identity and expressivity takes time.

In addition to disseminating knowledge, issues like making conscious choices and developing taste in order to arrive at a powerful, exciting statement are addressed in the classes. Industry-related concessions can always be made outside the course or after graduation.

1.1 Course details

Study load:	240 ECTs
Length of study:	4 years (full-time)
Languages of instruction:	Dutch and English
CROHO code:	34739 (B Muziek)
Degree:	Bachelor of Music

1.2 Pop Department Staff

Joachim Junghanss	Associate director head Jazz, Pop, AEMA	joachim.junghanss@ahk.nl
Jack Pisters	Head of study Pop & AEMA	jack.pisters@ahk.nl
Elske van der Linden	Producer Pop & AEMA	elske.vanderlinden@ahk.nl

1.3. Academic guidance

Starting at the CvA, each student is assigned a mentor. During the first two study years, this mentor is predominantly involved with the study success of the student. The mentor is the first person to go to for information and advice on course contents, the course of study and academic progress; exemptions; additional subsidiary subjects; 'individual credits'; or a modified study plan. During the third and fourth year, the mentor also takes on the role of sparring partner for the student's artistic development and study results. More on the mentoring is discussed in part 2.3 of this guide.

For questions regarding the mentors, students can contact Elske van der Linden (elske.vanderlinden@ahk.nl). In more serious or dire situations she can refer the student through to the study advisor, Jack Pisters (jack.pisters@ahk.nl).

Further information regarding academic guidance can be found in the general part of the study guides.

1.4 Project Office Pop

The CvA has collaborations with several music venues that are keen to offer students a place to gain experience in performing. Students of the Pop department can partake in Career Clinics, in which a guest from the field offers insight into the daily practices of a musician. Students are also expected to perform at least three times a year, on a venue in Amsterdam such as Melkweg, Café Pakhuis Wilhelmina and Paradiso. This offers pop students an opportunity to present their work to a new and wider audience.

Contactperson for these productions and other projects is producer Elske van der Linden (elske.vanderlinden@ahk.nl).

1.5. Going abroad

In general, bachelor students can take part in a study exchange programme from their third year on.

Information regarding the application procedure and deadlines can be found on the Intranet site MyAHK (under "Studying Abroad") or by contacting CvA's international relations officer and Erasmus+ Coordinator Ruth Graf-Fleet: ruth.graf-fleet@ahk.nl.

Further information regarding exchange can be found in the general part of the study guides.

2. Curriculum

2.1 Description of the Programme

The Bachelor's Degree in Music consists of one propaedeutic year (the first academic year) and a main phase (comprising the second, third and fourth years). The propaedeutic year is introductory and selective in nature and concludes with a propaedeutic examination. During the main phase (from the second to the fourth year), examinations for all required subjects are given once a year. The entire programme concludes with a final examination.

The pop music curriculum is broken down into two parts: the lower level (years 1 and 2) and the upper level (years 3 and 4). In the lower level a student receives the skills and knowledge that are necessary as a base. In the upper level a student is expected to use this base, develop their own interpretation on the acquired skills and knowledge, and to get acquainted with musical entrepreneurship. This prospectus will elaborate on that structure in greater detail.

Upon graduation from the course, a student will be able to play, write and produce music. The student will have acquired conceptual and creative skills and a great deal of self-awareness and self-knowledge. Furthermore he/she will have acquired good organizational skills and to articulate content effectively in order to share the gained knowledge. Thanks to our contacts in the world of broadcasting, at the studios, in the music industry and with new media, the pop department can help students establish the contacts they need. Additionally, a special set of courses prepares students for the business aspects of the music industry.

2.2 Coordination of the curriculum: ICEO

To provide broad preparation for the professional world, the curriculum is organized in accordance with four pillars: ICEO. Abbreviated this stands for:

- instrument
- creativity
- education
- organization

The four pillars support each talent and focal point, yet also offer scope for specialization. However, the professional world of pop music is such that all four should be developed to a certain extent to ensure that the graduate can stand on solid ground.

Instrument: Learning to master one's instrument so that students can effectively implement their ideas and those of others, ensuring they have the proper tone and emotional expressivity while maintaining an overview of the arrangement.

Creativity: Being able to use one's creativity in a practical setting: writing songs, producing, arranging, improvising, and developing one's own musical material. This ensures that a broad interest in experimentation and in finding one's own core are developed.

Education: Students must be able to express their own musical ideas methodically, since by doing so, they will learn to communicate and convey their own knowledge. A key concept is dissemination, in the broadest sense of the word, from one-to-one lessons to band coaching and from production to leading your band with skill. In short, it is about the development of an effective narrative for all dissemination of knowledge transfer in the professional world.

Organization: Organizational and business skills: by learning to plan and organize effectively, students ensure that artistic ideas have a real chance of success; they also manage their available time and capacities in the best possible way.

All the pillars are closely interconnected and support one another. Mastering the instrument increases creativity, and vice versa: creative ideas influence how the player approaches the instrument. Further, creativity is important when it comes to deepening one's insight into methodology and working method, in addition to staying fresh. Teaching also deepens one's approach to the instrument. Organizing one's career effectively has a decisive influence on all the other pillars.

2.3 Programme structure

Starting level

In the first 2 years, students follow a rigorous curriculum involving many hours of instruction (for the hours of instruction per course, see the course descriptions in part two of the study guide). In addition to the principal subject, there are classes in many different groups and configurations, and the students work on outputs. In this phase, the principal subject teacher is the first point of contact for any questions and issues influencing the study. The principal study teacher also monitors how students are functioning in class and how the material is applied in practical terms.

Performances

Each unit is concluded with two examination weeks for all subjects. The results of the style and freestyle bands in units 1 and 2 and the free periods in unit 3 are presented at various pop venues in the city. All performances are assessed by the teachers in accordance with the A-MACK system (see A-MACK system elsewhere in this study guide).

Assessments

The last week of each unit is the evaluation week. Examinations and performances are discussed for each student in the teacher meetings. Based on their performance in the instrumental principal subject, on examinations and in band presentations, students receive feedback from their teachers and band coaches on their development in order to make course corrections to their personal process.

Upper level

In the last two years, students are given more individual guidance in their autonomous motivation and development and lay the foundations for setting up a healthy one-person business in the music industry reflecting their talents and strengths, supporting the principle of the four pillars (ICEO).

Guest lectures, career clinics and projectweek

Various guests from the professional world are regularly invited to give workshops. During the project weeks, (inter)national guests come together to work on new material and share knowledge. The Career Clinics, workshops and masterclasses give students a glimpse into the day-to-day activities and career choices of these professionals. Guests have backgrounds as well-known musicians, producers, and songwriters, while others have an organizational or business profile.

Performances

Each unit is concluded with two examination weeks for all subjects. The results of the style and freestyle bands (in units 1 and 2 and the free periods in unit 3) are presented at various pop venues in the city. All performances are assessed by the teachers in accordance with the A-MACK system (see A-MACK system elsewhere in this prospectus) and feedback.

Assessment

The last week of each unit is the evaluation week. The teachers discuss examinations and performances with the students. Based on their performance in the instrumental principal subject, on examinations and in band presentations, students receive feedback on their development in order to make course corrections to their personal process.

Final presentation

Students prepare individually for the final presentation, developing a clear profile which strikes a balance between the four ICEO pillars and working, as it were, towards their career.

During the final presentation, students are assessed on
the musical performance (Instruments)
the creative concept (Creativity)
their ability to communicate methodological ideas clearly (Education)
organizational/business planning (Organization)

Mentoring

In the last two years, the student shifts his or her focus to preparing for the final presentation and moving into the professional world as a one-person business in the arts sector. The DOK subjects (De Ondernemende Kunstenaar) support this process. It is during the final presentation that students present their skills and artistic ideas to the outside world. This process is supported by a mentor who is assigned to the student by agreement in years 3 and 4. The mentor should be able to ask the right questions, monitor the process and refer the student to information relevant to his or her development. It is also important that the mentor should be well versed in the student's style area. The mentor communicates using the A-MACK monitoring system with the department head, organization and principal study teacher regarding the student's progress and notifies the relevant teachers of any deficiencies in a particular area. These are discussed in detail during the teacher meetings in respect of each student.

Electives and 'free space'

Students complement their regular program in the 'free space' with electives in line with the direction they wish to pursue. The choice in elective course options is composed in cooperation of the study management, the mentor and the principal subject teacher. This guarantees compatibility with the student's artistic direction.

In the last two years, students choose at least three theory electives in addition to the ASL bands to support them as they advance towards the final presentation.

The pop music upper-level electives programme focuses on
theory training and concept development
contemporary arts education
developing a reflective, inquisitive and professional attitude
breaking new ground, topicality, interdisciplinarity and topicality as regards the arts

In the last two years, students choose part of their curriculum from the following:

at least three Advanced Style Labs for 6 credits
at least three theory electives for 4 credits
'free space' electives for 10 credits.

This means that 40 of the 120 credits are reserved for electives, bands and 'free space'. These electives help students to shape their own personal development.

Semesters

In contrast to the trimester structure of the first and second years, the third and fourth years are divided into semesters. There are two performances each year and students are assessed twice a year using the A-MACK system.

Final presentation

Prior to graduation, students perform with three graduation candidates an evening-long programme at a venue in the city of Amsterdam or at the CvA. Each candidate is expected to perform for approximately one hour of the programme. Students use this concert to show the projects and artistic ideas they intend to focus on in their careers. Many candidates will have already made great strides in this direction in the final year of their study. The three candidates are expected to prepare thoroughly for the evening, developing an overall concept. They are responsible for quality programming, the overall organization and promotion. This evening, each candidate will also present a professional level recording with artwork from their most important artistic project.

The final examination committee consists of at least five teachers from the Pop music Department with different instrumental backgrounds. A well balanced composition of members in the examination committee is crucial, consisting of the mentor, the principal subject teacher and an external member.

The result is expressed in two marks: one assessing his or her competence in the instrumental component, the second relating to the creative component in which the musical concepts presented are assessed in the broadest sense of the word. These two marks represent a final assessment in respect of two of the four ICEO pillars. The other two pillars are assessed at a different moment than the final examination and must be satisfactory in order for the student to graduate. The education pillar is assessed on the basis of internships and projects. The organization of the presentation is closely interconnected with the student's preparation leading up to the final presentation which begins in the third year as part of the DOK programme when students start drafting their project plan. The further development of both the content and organizational components of the examination is closely monitored throughout the course. Finally, students receive a final assessment with their A-MACK report outlining recommendations for the future and the start of their career.

So far, final examinations have been held in the smaller halls at Paradiso and De Melkweg, Pakhuis Wilhelmina, Pakhuis Willem de Zwijger, Cinetol, OT301, OCCII, PLLEK, Tolhuistuin, Bitterzoet and various theatres. The evenings are often well catered, professionally organised and attract many audience members, including guests from the professional circuit.

2.4 Bachelor programme structure and credits

Year	Principal subject	EC	Bands and Projects	EC	Theory subjects	EC	DOK	EC	'Free space'	EC
I	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 4 4 1	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège I HAP I GTS I AML Comp. Lab I MT I Pop history I	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	DOK I Career Clinic	3 1		
60		17		12		27		4		x
II	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 3 3 2	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège II HAP II GTS II KTB I Comp. Lab II MT III Pop history II	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	Educational studies Methodology internship	2 2 1		
60		16		12		27		5		x
III	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Studio Lab ICO	15 3 3 3	Advanced Style Lab I Advanced Style Lab II	6 6	KTB II Elective I	4 4	Methodology Internship DOK III	3 1 8	Student's choice	4
60		24		12	Electives	8		12		4
IV	Principal subject individ. Studio Lab ICO	20 12	Advanced Style Lab	6	Elective II Elective III	4 4	DOK IV	8	Student's choice	6
60		32		6		8		8		6

2.5 Description of the curriculum

Within the structure of the curriculum being divided into two parts: the starting level (years 1 and 2) and the upper level (years 3 and 4), the subjects can be divided into five types: principal subject; bands and projects; theory subjects; pedagogical subjects and entrepreneurial subjects (DOK); and 'free space'.

Principal subject, bands and projects

Five principal subjects are offered as part of the pop music course: voice, guitar, bass guitar, drums and keyboards. A principal subject consists of both one-to-one and group lessons. In addition, students are given ample opportunity to gain experience in a number of bands and projects.

Theory subjects

The selection of theory courses consists of General Theory Training, Solfège, Harmony at the Piano (HAP), Keys I and Keys II, History of Pop music, Art: Language and Image, General Music Theory, Composition Lab and Music Technology.

The aim of these auxiliary subjects is to develop students' inner ear and musical perception jointly, and to shed light on the professional music world from different perspectives.

DOK programme: pedagogical and entrepreneurial subjects

Holders of a Bachelor's Degree in Music from the CvA have earned the qualification to teach at a music school or arts centre. The pedagogical subjects on offer involve the methodology of the student's own instrument, education and an internship. Foundations are built which will allow students to set up their own private teaching studios and to work in music education in the broadest sense. They are also taught how to prepare themselves for organizational and business aspects of the professional world. To that end, a special curriculum called the Enterprising Artist (known in Dutch as De Ondernemende Kunstenaar, or DOK). Specialist guest teachers are enlisted to teach some of the classes. The programme is supported by the www.beroepkunstenaar.nl website, developed in collaboration with the various departments of AHK. By developing their profile and final project, students largely decide for themselves how they shape the DOK programme. Key points include developing a project plan, setting up a one-person business in the arts and organizing and shaping the final examination festivals.

'Free space'

A part of the curriculum, 10 points, can be used by the student for electives that enable him/her to broaden their artistic development. It also allows students to prepare for specific aspects of their future professional life and/or a (CvA) master programme.

A-MACK assessment

Students are also assessed in accordance with the four ICEO pillars in the last two years:

instrument

creativity

education

organization

Students hone their organizational skills by means of the DOK courses and real-world professional management skills. The students' artistic projects are assessed on a practical basis by a selection of guest teachers and a process involving six meetings with a coach active in the professional world. Topics addressed are concept, organization and publicity.

2.6 Binding study recommendation (BSA)

The first year of the programme is also intended for orientation and further selection. For students, the question is whether the programme meets their expectations and/or whether the professional perspective still appeals to them. For the programme this year is used to assess whether the students are living up to the potential they showed during selection. Should a student fail to meet these conditions and the result is unsatisfactory, a binding recommendation (NBSA) can be given. This student then must discontinue his/her studies, unless there are exceptional personal circumstances. For more information about such a binding recommendation, see article 15 of the Education and Examination Regulations (OER).

It will be determined at the end of the first year whether a student meets the conditions for a BSA. The conditions for the BSA are split into three categories. Core subjects, additional theoretical subjects and introductory or auxiliary subjects.

The following courses must be met by the student:

Core subjects:

- 100% of the study points:

Style Band

Freestyle Band

Additional subjects:

- at least 70% of the study points:

All other subjects and courses

Introductory or auxiliary subjects.

- at least 50% of the study points:

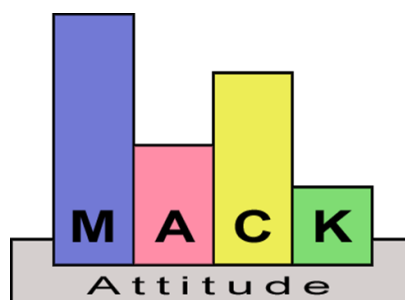
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3. Assessment: A-MACK system

Assessment of the principal study is charted using the A-MACK system, developed by the Pop department. The assessment of the different elements in the personally customized programme is recorded in the form of written reports (the 'reviews'). Each course is finalized with a presentation, exam, paper or similar and the course descriptions below offer details on how each subject is assessed. The Pop-department uses the A-MACK scheme for assessment, which is a transparent, valid and reliable system of student assessment, offering a student insight in their development throughout the student's studies.

During the course of the studies, a student's progress is systematically monitored with A-MACK in which assessment, reflection and development are entwined. The following diagram explains what A-MACK means:

A stands for "attitude",
M for "motoric skills" or craftsmanship,
A for "audio skills",
C for "creative skills"
K for "knowledge":



This monitoring system is applied from the moment of selection of students (audition) to the final exam and in all assessments during their studies. Students also learn to work with it and to use it to give shape to their studying and lessons. This way students can be more aware of the way they learn and collect information. They learn to ask questions and to fine tune their communication strategies.

The system is also used during teacher meetings to discuss students' progress. The insights are then shared with the students via the mentor and lead to new study goals and strategies. The feedback can thereby offer the student insight in their development and their strong points.

The table below explains how each category of the system is elaborated and explained which categories each element consists of. This way it becomes clear which assessment criteria are used.. This way the evaluations became ever more layered and thorough.

A	M	A	C	K
Independence	Attitude	Audio skills	Interpretation	Insight
Motivation	Movement	Sound	Improvisation	Knowledge of instrument
Concentration Energy	Instrument skills	Playing together	Arrangement Production	Analytic abilities
Daring	Sound bite	Sound	Autonomy	Knowledge of performance practices
Uniqueness	Association	Imagination	Authenticity	Music theory