

Conservatorium van Amsterdam

Study Guide 2023-2024

Master of Music

Pop Department

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 Pop master 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 master 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.

1. Studying Pop at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam

The Pop department of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam offers a two-year master's programme focused on individual authenticity and development of the student. The aim being to train and produce versatile musicians of the highest level, whether they be performers, composers or entrepreneurs in the contemporary music industry.

This the master's programme focuses on deepening and broadening of the principal subject; the student's artistic project is the basis. The programme is designed in such a way that the student must set out an essential part of his study process. This study path is outlined in the form of a study-plan which is drawn up prior to the entrance exam and which forms a part of the selection procedure. In the course of the study the student works on perfecting his concepts and vision and is guided in creating a team around his artistic and business plan.

The student is given opportunity to combine broadening and flexibility with craftsmanship and is guided in such a way that individual qualities and talents can be optimally developed. The master's programme maintains a careful balance between knowing and being able, and between thinking and doing. The student who completes this course pairs and excellent mastery of the profession with the capacity for critical reflection and artistic innovation.

The CvA works closely with other high-quality academic programmes. It cooperates with renowned institutions abroad, including Thornton School of Music, Popakademie Baden-Wurtemberg, Royal Northern College of Music, and Berklee College of Music. Students of the master's programme in music can also attend lectures and tutorials at the University of Amsterdam for a number of specific subjects.

1.1 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

1.2 Course details

Study Load:	120 credits
Length of study:	2 year full-time
Languages of instruction:	Dutch and English
CROHO-code:	44739 (M Muziek)
Degree:	Master of Music

1.3. Academic guidance

Students are guided in their academic process by several teachers, staff members and external actors.

In more serious or dire situations, the student can be referred 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, master students can take part in a study exchange programme in their second year. 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. Admission and Registration

Candidates must hold a Bachelor's degree in music (BMus) to be eligible for admission to the Master's course and must already have produced music that has been published professionally. Students must have outstanding basic knowledge of the playing field and their music must have featured in activities and organizations in the arts, with regular performances and a response from the industry. Students will have a clear artistic vision and outstanding compositional, production-related and conceptual skills. They possess organisational, communication and social skills for carrying through their projects and marketing them at the highest possible standard in the pop and musical world, making all the right connections.

Composers and performers who use laptops can also take part in the selection procedure if they have adequate theoretical and practical musical skills and knowledge. Virtuosity of composition and recording are the key points in the principal study. The recording studio or digital environment and performance practice as the playing field. This also opens wide the world of soundtracks, electronic music, the dance scene and producers of new content in the creative industry.

2.1 Intake

For intake, candidates are required to set out their individual study goals and compile a study plan incorporating the four goal elements outlined above.

The formulation of the Master's programme takes these principles to a new level, with a structure that encourages dialogue between the student, the course and the industry so as to get the very most out of every aspect of the artistic concept that has been submitted. Master students will move towards managing and being part of a creative and commercial team. The focus here is on development of a personal vision ending up with a musical product being brought to the market via personal entrepreneurialism.

The student must submit a personal Master's project. A carefully selected think-tank is set up for each Master's project that is submitted, with at least 2 people acting as mentors for each element. They will be a sounding-board for the various areas that will have to be considered. Selection, direction and challenges as to content originate from a working group at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, in consultation with the student, the key partners and the head of department.

3. Programme Overview

3.1 Student, course, industry

The Master's programme is a collaboration among three parties: the student, the course and the music industry. During the course, the student must bridge the gaps between these three elements in order to support his or her projects, both as regards substance and from a business perspective. For this, students are offered a tailor-made package of lessons, lectures, workshops, discussions and a range of other activities. The contents of this custom package have to relate to all three elements. The coaching and reflection from each element will add a number of stimuli. A Master's student will therefore have to be able to weigh up and incorporate a variety of opinions and instructions. This provides an opportunity for a strong development of the student's artistic and organisational compass.

The ever-changing nature of the music industry clearly demands collaboration between the course and the industry when developing talent. One strength of the Master's programme is the support provided at the very highest level by the institutions involved. Top teachers, mentors and coaches are recruited to support Master students in following significant new pathways. We actively forge links with important people in the music industry so that students are given feedback and have the chance to think about development opportunities.

3.2 Programme Outline

Het masterprogramma bevat de volgende verplichte onderdelen:

Element	Credits (EC):
Principal study	44
Popcontact	16
Managing Your Talents	15
Research	15
Electives, projects and 'free space'	30

Students must attain all 120 credits inside two years in order to graduate.

3.3 Study programme structure

As well as the flexible format appropriate to certain lessons, we also offer a more rigid structure. This consists of the following monthly elements:

- a commercial seminar;
- a think-tank session about the industry for Master students;
- editorial work for producing Popcontact streaming;
- interactive Artist & Repertoire session;
- individual or group sessions with artistic mentors;
- individual or group sessions with business and legal mentors;
- recording days and production workshops.

Individual principal study instrumental lessons for each student are scheduled on the basis of an annual rota, which involves opting for the most effective format. Students themselves must arrange a weekly tutorial for their principal study.

Master studies are offered, within a customised programme, in areas such as production, arrangement, composition, orchestration, modern media, sound synthesis and cultural research. The aim of the personal programme is to expand the student's knowledge and experience to the levels required for a Master.

The Master student can choose from a team of top coaches for his or her main project. They will then work on perfecting their own artistic projects in three-hour blocks, ten times during the year. They can also choose coaches to help develop sound, playing, production, interaction, image, performance and so on.

In addition to this intensive support, the students will also form their own think-tanks to provide them with constructive feedback, share their experiences and ideas with each other and 'pitch' to each other.

Three times during the year, students organize and host the Popkontakt evening, joined by a panel of industry guest speakers, interspersed by short acts of the student'. Eight sessions beforehand help the students to prepare for the evening. The popkontakt evening provides them with keen and relevant feedback on their own work. The students also develop a greater insight into the modern media landscape and will be able to extend their own networks. Students are given the maximum responsibility during the evening. Popkontakt is the place where innovation, the industry and education meet up directly.

3.4 Final project

Every graduation project must in any event cover the following areas, and development will largely be simultaneous:

- vision and concept;
- the writing process;
- research and reporting;
- artistic growth (via A-MACK 2-year plan);
- business format with business plan;
- the recording process (from pre-production through to mastering);
- presentation, design;
- PR and communication.

The artist will, in a sense, have to learn to juggle priorities within the same areas of priority. This is a specific Master competency, aimed at getting students to occupy their own spot in the international music market, like spiders sitting at the centre of their webs.

4. Assessment and conclusion

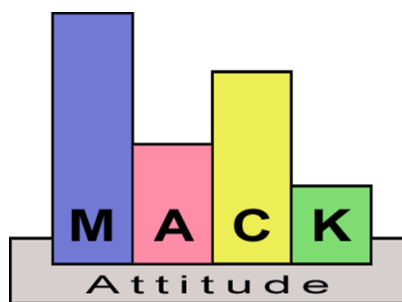
Assessment of the principal study is charted using the A-MACK system, developed by the Pop department. The assessment of the different elements in the personally customized programme is recorded in the form of written reports (the 'reviews').

4.1 A-MACK assessment system

Specific for the Pop-programmes is the use of the A-MACK monitoring system. Each course is finalized with a presentation, exam, paper or similar and the course descriptions below offer details on how each subject is assessed. For assessment the Pop-department uses the A-MACK scheme, which is a transparent, valid and reliable system of student assessment and makes a common thread 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 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 table below explains how each category of the system is elaborated and explained what categories each element consists of. This way it becomes clear which assessment criteria are used. For each specific course, the teachers and coordinators formulate the skills which need to be acquired. 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

4.2 Document folder

Each student has a folder containing the collection of A-MACK reports and reviews. The student is responsible for the contents of the folder. It may include the following documents, depending on the student's personal study programme:

- the business format;
- copyright, publishing and associated aspects;
- Artist & Repertoire development;
- record company (from DIY to Major);
- timeline of releases and deadlines;
- financial plan (actively seeking out external funding sources);
- management;
- bookings;
- promotional plan.

4.3 Completion

Master students give a public presentation at the end of their two years of study. This includes an explanation of the research results and associated thesis, as well as a presentation of the personal Master's project including the student's own new music.