

INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY OF THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATRE 2021–2025

This document is based on the Development Plan of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereinafter EAMT) for 2021–2025, the Communication Strategy of the EAMT, the Estonian Education Development Plan 2021–2035 and the national strategy “Culture 2030”.

Higher education in a globalising world from the perspective of the EAMT

Modern global society places high academic and professional demands on university graduates, for which university education should provide the appropriate preparation and support. The internationalisation of higher education is also generally considered to be to the advantage of various stakeholders. On the level of the individual, international education can broaden a person’s career opportunities by raising the necessary competencies. Institutionally, internationalisation helps shape the image of the educational institution, broaden the professional and cultural knowledge of students, academic and non-academic staff, develop cooperation projects with foreign universities and improve the content of curricula. At the national level, the values inherent in international education help improve the country’s position in the global political and economic arena.

An important realisation for EAMT is that internationalisation does not only work narrowly in the field of education, but also provides an opportunity to better promote Estonian music and theatre culture in the world in terms of both cultural diplomacy and cultural exports. We support the basic principles, directions and vision of the Estonian cultural policy and the idea presented in the preparatory materials for “Culture 2030”¹ that culture is always present in the public space and that the environments and common spaces that facilitate creativity bring together people with different socio-economic backgrounds and cultural experience.

Our openness and our experience in and readiness for international cooperation are eloquently proved by our membership in domestic and foreign professional organisations and networks:

- Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Academies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
- Association of Nordic Music Academies (ANMA)
- European League of the Institutes of Arts (ELIA)

¹ https://www.kul.ee/sites/kulminn/files/kultuur_2030_tallinn_kokkuvote.pdf

- Global Network for Higher Music, Dance and Performing Arts Education (GLOMUS)
- Modernizing European Higher Music Education through Improvisation (METRIC)
- Southeast Asian Directors of Music (SEADOM)
- European Association for Music in Schools (EAS)
- European Chamber Music Teachers' Association (ECMTA)
- European Arts Management Education Network (ENCATC)
- International Association of Schools of Jazz (IASJ)

EAMT actively participates in the Nordic exchange programme Nordplus. The EAMT is the secretariat for NordClassic, the largest network of the Nordplus higher education programme, and for the creative entrepreneurial network ActinArt. The EAMT is also a member of the NordPuls, NordOpera, NordTrad and NNME music networks and the Nortecas theatre network.

As the Estonian Education Development Plan envisages internationalisation and international learning mobility as promoters of the diversification of study opportunities, raising the quality of education and wider recognition of the Estonian language and culture², the EAMT is also active in all these areas. Under the Erasmus+ programme, the EAMT had partnership agreements in 2020 with 166 institutions of higher education in the field of music and theatre across Europe, plus 11 higher education institutions outside the European Union within the framework of the global mobility programme.

Although the EAMT's mobility indicators are quite good, participation in exchange programmes has not yet become a generally accepted norm. Nevertheless, the number of students and academy staff who have been on academic mobility has increased year by year, and in the academic year 2019–2020, the EAMT taught 65 students from partner schools (52 of them within the Erasmus+ programme). In the same academic year, 61 EAMT students participated in learning mobility. In addition, the Nordplus programme enables short-term express mobility, under which nearly 30 EAMT students participated in masterclasses and projects in Nordic and Baltic partner institutions in the 2019–2020 academic year, which significantly increases the number of students participating in international activities and offers international experience for those who cannot participate in long-term mobility. The EAMT's international mobility target is a 10% share of international exchange students every year. The international mobility of EAMT students should also reach 10% of the total number of students.

The aforementioned mobility programmes also enable the exchange of academic staff, and within the framework of both these and the EMTASTRA programme, more than a hundred masterclasses are held at the EAMT every year by teaching staff from partner institutions and internationally recognised specialists, which have become a natural and important part of teaching. Mobility

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programmes also enable those EAMT students who, for various reasons, are unable to attend partner schools, to participate in master classes delivered by external teachers.

In addition, the EAMT participates in various international cooperation projects as the chief organiser or partner, including:

Erasmus+ strategic cooperation projects

- European Landscape of Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovation in HMEI's – Music theory fields (Harma+)
- Reinventing Mentoring in Arts Management (REMAM)
- RAPP Lab – Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice
- Digital Orchestra

Creative Europe projects

- Strengthening Music in Society (SMS)
- The Self-curating Musician by Design Thinking (SeCum)

Within the framework of the Nordplus programme, the EAMT has implemented several intensive courses as a leading partner.

In spring 2020, the international master's level joint curriculum Contemporary Performance and Composition (CoPeCo) hosted its fourth international admission. CoPeCo includes four institutions of higher education in music: The EAMT, the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (Sweden), Lyon Conservatoire National Supérieur Musique et Danse (France) and the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre (Germany). As of 2020, 23 students have received their master's degrees.

Internationalisation at home and abroad

Considering the demographic situation in Estonia and the fact that the number of students has been on a downward trend in recent years, it continues to be vital for us that EAMT education is accessible to both Estonian and talented international students. As the opportunities for acquiring primary and secondary musical education vary greatly from country to country, we focus on the countries where the acquisition of basic education in music is systematic and at a professionally high level. In 2020, international students accounted for 27.7% of the total number of students at the EAMT (155 students from 26 countries). We hope that when they return to their homeland after graduation, most of them will become ambassadors of the EAMT and Estonian culture in broader terms.

At the same time, there are encouragingly many examples of international students who have stayed in Estonia after graduation and started working in professional groups in Tallinn (the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Estonian National Opera) as well as in regionally important cultural (Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu) and educational institutions (children's music schools in southern Estonia). This shows that international EAMT graduates are in demand in the Estonian labour market and contribute to the development of the Estonian economy and society for a longer period of time and more than just by making our higher education landscape more international. This is also supported by a study conducted by Statistics Estonia in 2019 on the participation of international students in the Estonian labour market and its impact on the economy³. Therefore, it continues to be important that international students have positive learning and internship experiences during their studies and can easily find information on job and career opportunities after graduation.

The presence of international students is also important from the point of view of local students, as it improves the quality and competence of learning by enabling them to adapt more easily to an increasingly international work and living environment.

One of the main tools for finding good student candidates is the personal contacts of lecturers. EAMT faculty members deliver numerous masterclasses abroad within the framework of all the above-mentioned mobility programmes. In 2019, EAMT faculty members and staff were seconded for 73 masterclasses and training missions in partner schools (48 under Erasmus+, 17 under Nordplus and 8 under EMTASTRA). Therefore, it is essential that every faculty member understands their activities not only as a deliverer of professional knowledge, which is of course primary, but also as an ambassador of the EAMT as an institution of higher education in music and theatre.

Although the mission of a modern university is not only to teach but also to serve research and the public, one of the main goals of the EAMT as an educational institution for music and theatre is to maintain and ensure the high quality of teaching. As a result of good work so far, we have reached the top 51–100 in the world in our field in the QS World University Rankings. Our ambitious goal for the coming years is to reach the top 50 in the field through the continuous development of teaching.

Main directions of internationalisation

1. Improving the quality of teaching and research

³ <https://www.stat.ee/pressiteade-2019-15>

- Being aware of the curricula and best practices of music and theatre universities around the world, especially in Europe, in order to learn from international experience.
- Involving leading musicians, actors, stage directors and prominent scholars, teachers, cultural managers and cultural policy makers from around the world in our educational efforts.
- Promoting the international mobility of students and teaching staff.
- Increasing the number of international lecturers having regular relations with the Academy.
- Strengthening the international dimension of teaching and research activities and all curricula.
- Further developing English-language curricula, but also offering international students opportunities to study in Estonian-language curricula.
- Providing Estonian language and culture studies for all international students.
- Involving foreign experts in the development of doctoral curricula and expanding international cooperation in the supervision of doctoral theses.
- Encouraging doctoral students to study abroad for at least three months during their doctoral studies.
- Supporting student participation in international competitions, research conferences and international cooperation projects.
- Increasing the international visibility of the EAMT through the effectiveness of research and the organisation of research events.
- Developing digital solutions for distance learning, including digital mobility, which would be convenient to use in both normal and crisis situations, considering the specifics of music and theatre education.

2. Creating an environment conducive to internationalisation

- Developing a tolerant learning environment where tolerance and empathy for cultural differences are highly valued and where everyone feels good regardless of origin.
- Encouraging communication between domestic and international students both professionally and in extracurricular activities; encouraging international students to participate in the EAMT student council.

- Ensuring that important information on international cooperation and funding opportunities reaches the target groups.
- Developing the administrative capacity needed for international research and development.
- Offering continuous professional development opportunities abroad for both academic and non-academic staff.
- Supporting international students and teachers in settling in and managing daily affairs, enhancing their opportunities for learning Estonian to facilitate their overall involvement in Estonian society.
- Providing in-depth study of the state language for students whose mother tongue is not Estonian and who study in an Estonian-language curriculum for a maximum of one year in cooperation with Tallinn University, taking into account the admission criteria for the curriculum.
- Continuing to pay scholarships to reduce the tuition fees for the best international students on the basis of a competition.
- Supporting the best international students in master's and doctoral studies with a monthly scholarship, subject to the availability of public funds.
- Organising an annual student satisfaction survey within EAMT, conducted by the International and Public Relations Department.

3. Developing international cooperation

- Developing cooperation with other universities, professional networks and other foreign organisations.
- Prioritising established partnerships with immediate neighbours, the Eastern Partnership countries and other European music academies, while also expanding cooperation with the US and Asian countries.
- Participating actively in EU and Nordic education programmes.
- Participating actively in international doctoral networks of institutions of higher education in music and theatre.

- Supporting the participation of both academic and non-academic staff and students in international cooperation and research projects.
- Increasing the international visibility of EAMT through the organisation of international projects and network conferences.
- Supporting the participation of EAMT students in high-level international ensembles such as the European Union Youth Orchestra and the World Youth Choir, which give students excellent professional preparation and experience of international cooperation for their future careers.

4. International marketing

- Continuing to cooperate with Study in Estonia, a platform that centrally markets Estonian higher education, to participate in various marketing activities (including information exchange between Estonian universities, publications, bios and success stories about students and alumni in social media, etc.) and surveys (including the International Student Barometer).
- Implementing active marketing measures with the help of modern media systems to introduce the EAMT and its study opportunities to student candidates and project partners.