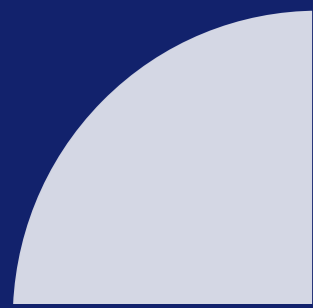


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# Benchmarking and Ranking: useful tools to improve quality in Higher Music Education?

*Stefan Gies, Hochschule für Musik Dresden / AEC*



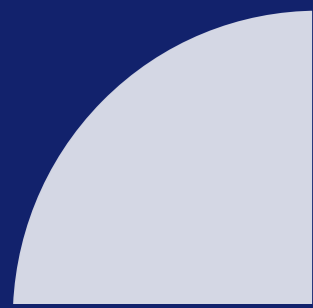
I Some definitions

II What are significant indicators?

III What's special about Music HEIs?

IV Benchmarking and Ranking - useful tools?

V Conclusion



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Quality Assurance

*Quality Enhancement*

*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

*Benchmarking*

*Ranking*

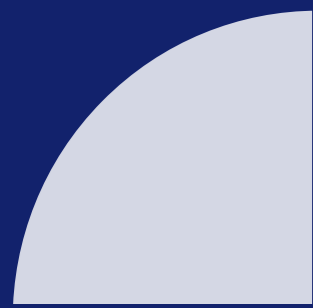
## I Some definitions

### *Quality Enhancement*

- ▶ QE needs protected space
- ▶ QE is a voluntary offer
- ▶ QE is about offering support
- ▶ QE should be based on a QE policy

### *Evaluation*

- ▶ Evaluation is an improvement orientated approach, it is not meant to assess



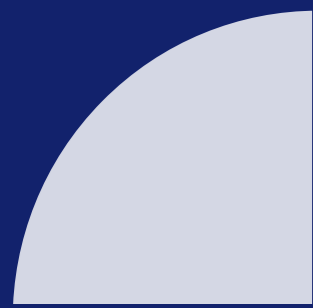
# I Some definitions

## *Quality Enhancement*

### *Evaluation*

### *Accreditation*

- ▶ Accreditation leads to an assessment and has legal consequences
- ▶ The objective of accreditation is a yes or no judgment



# I Some definitions

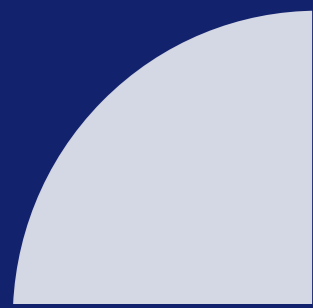
*Quality Enhancement*

*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

*Benchmarking*

- ▶ Benchmarking means: Looking at what competitors are doing (in order to improve processes)
- ▶ The decision to do a benchmarking should be a voluntary decision



# I Some definitions

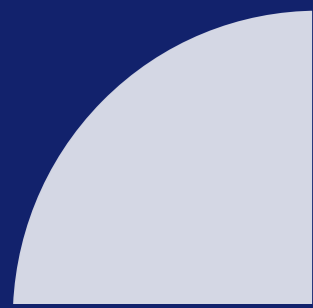
## *Quality Enhancement*

### *Evaluation*

### *Accreditation*

### *Benchmarking*

- ▶ if you use benchmarking with a view towards quality enhancement, you should always combine quantitative indicators with qualitative indicators
- ▶ The outcome of an improvement orientated benchmarking should be an action plan



# I Some definitions

*Quality Enhancement*

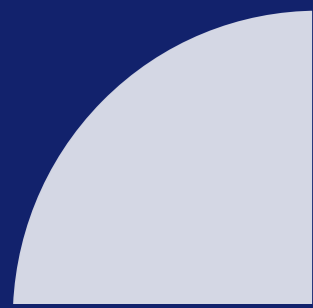
*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

*Benchmarking*

- ▶ It is not worth to carry out a benchmarking exercise if the institution's leaders are not actively supporting the process





# I Some definitions

*Quality Enhancement*

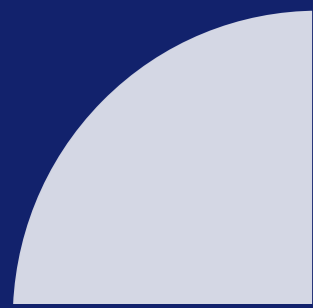
*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

*Benchmarking*

*Ranking*

- ▶ If we want or not: Ranking takes place anyway
- ▶ Ranking is not done by the HEIs themselves
- ▶ for non-public funded institutions, ranking can be an important marketing tool



## I Some definitions

*Quality Enhancement*

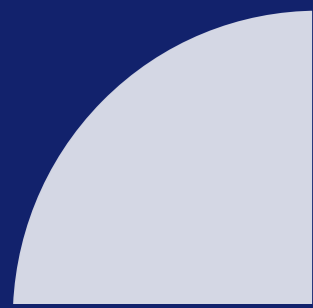
*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

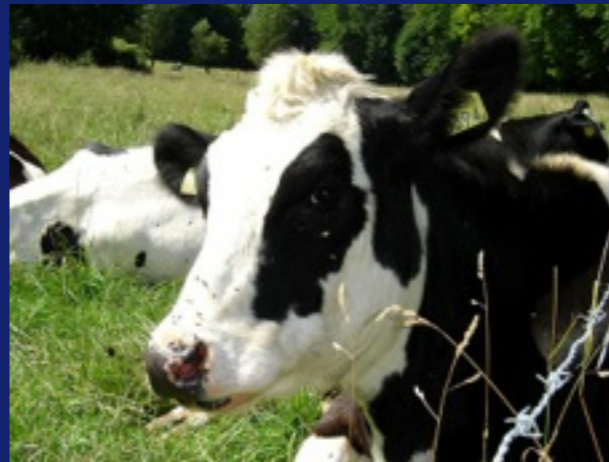
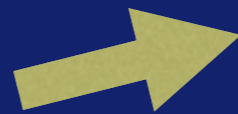
*Benchmarking*

*Ranking*

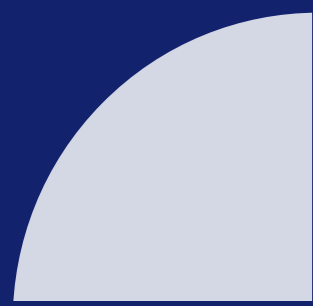
- ▶ As long as private sponsors rely on rankings, this can help the HEIs. If politicians rely on rankings, this might easily turn out badly for the HEIs



- ▶ In many cases, methods and tools are used, which are here and there (evaluation, accreditation, benchmarking, ranking, ...) the same ones, but can - depending on its objective - have very different functions.



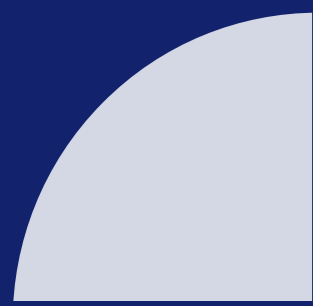
- ▶ **Quality assurance** can be seen as some kind of umbrella notion
- ▶ **Quality enhancement** is a set of measures and tools implemented in order to support people to do a good job.
- ▶ **Evaluation** is an improvement orientated approach that is not meant to assess. If it is about assessment, it is not evaluation.
- ▶ **Accreditation** is a formal process of examination, in which the actual state is measured against pre-determined standards. An accreditation judges and leads to legally relevant decisions.
- ▶ **Benchmarking** means to look at what competitors are doing in order to improve processes.



## THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF UNIVERSITY BENCHMARKING

### Benchmarking

- ▶ relies on having peers with a shared strategic interest and is based on mutual respect
- ▶ helps you to become more aware about what your institution is doing and wants to do
- ▶ is about getting the best out of all club members



## THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF UNIVERSITY BENCHMARKING

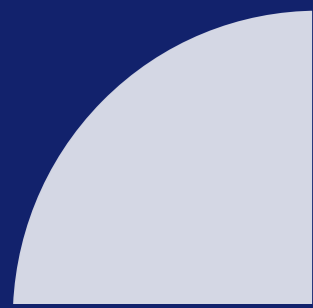
### **Benchmarking means**

- ▶ understanding the process: data gathering is secondary
- ▶ thinking about what kind of institution you want to be
- ▶ not to focus on quantitative data, as this risks losing the bigger picture

## THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF UNIVERSITY BENCHMARKING

### **Benchmarking**

- ▶ does not replace rational thinking
- ▶ is not an end in itself
- ▶ does not provide league tables



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Ranking is something different!



## II What are significant indicators?

### **a) Facilities:**

Benchmarking can provide important information about where you are standing compared to other players - as long as the final decision on where to set priorities remains at your institution.

It doesn't make sense to use "Facilities" as a ranking indicator.

## II What are significant indicators?

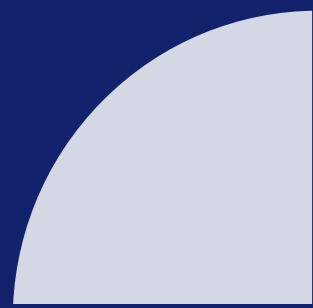
**b ) The number of students graduating within a given norm-time.**

The relevant findings are neither significant nor suitable as a benchmarking or ranking indicator. However, it might make sense to define an accreditation standard based on the fact that there are students who graduate within the given norm time.

## II What are significant indicators?

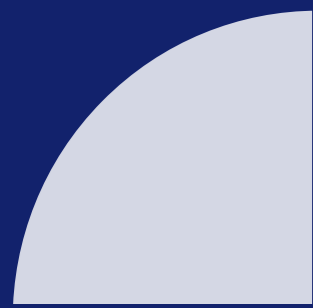
**c ) Quality of teaching - e.g. the diversity and adaptability of study programs *(based on data gathered by student 's and graduate 's survey)***

Graduate's surveys can provide clues to pinpoint specific areas, that are worth to be looked at closer. But these findings do not provide comparable figures and do not provide solutions.



## II What are significant indicators?

- a) Facilities
  - b) The number of students graduating within a given norm-time
  - c) Quality of teaching - e.g. the diversity and adaptability of study programs
- 
- ▶ None of the three examples provides findings that are suitable for a ranking.
  - ▶ As a benchmarking tool, the questions a and c might be useful, but only if they are not misused to derive compulsory standards from it.



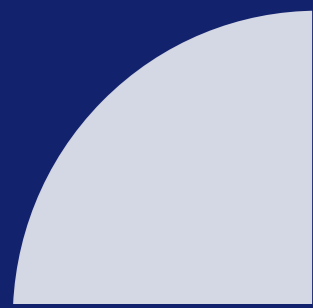
### III What's special about Music HEIs?

- ▶ Music academies and art schools do not exist, because they are supposed to produce an economic added value.
- ▶ Music academies and art schools exist because there is a social contract to run them.
- ▶ Art and Music are deeply rooted in the cultural life of a society.
- ▶ Professionalisation and academisation mean something different in the arts as in the sciences.
- ▶ It is still not clear whether the arts must or should be subject of academic training.

## III What's special about Music HEIs?

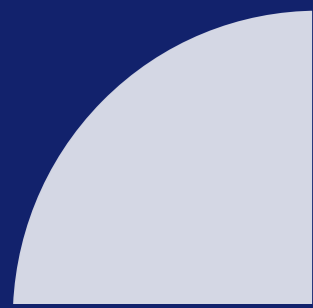
Referring on an understanding that is derived from a model that was developed in the 1960s, professionalism means:

- ▶ there is an extensive education leading to an officially approved degree or title
- ▶ there are clients who use the expertise of the professionals
- ▶ there is a system of control over the development of knowledge within the occupation
- ▶ there is control over who is accepted into or expelled from the profession.



## III What's special about Music HEIs?

- ▶ The criteria for what is good art and what not cannot be justified objectively.
- ▶ We are caught in a system in which people who are already in it, decide who is allowed to step in and who is not.
- ▶ To define and to decide what the *raison d'être* of the arts is, can - for good reasons - not be triggered by external factors.

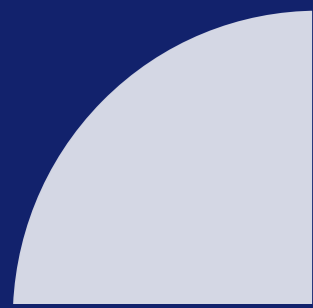


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## IV Benchmarking and Ranking - useful tools?

Is it worth it for music academies to get involved in benchmarking and ranking or should we keep distance from participating in working out ranking criteria?





## Are these suitable ranking criteria?

- ▶ Who is part of your Erasmus network?
- ▶ Where do applicants pass the entrance examinations and where not? And where do they decide to study, if they get the choice?
- ▶ Ask your graduates: If you were 18 again and you would have to decide again what to do, would you
  - 1) study music again?
  - 2) go for the same study program again?
  - 3) study at the same institution again or prefer to go elsewhere?

U-Multirank is a new multidimensional, user-driven approach to international ranking of higher education institutions. The dimensions it includes are teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement.

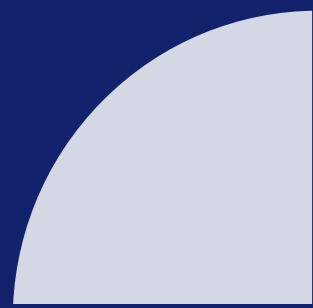
Based on empirical data U-Multirank will compare institutions with similar institutional profiles and allow users to develop personalised rankings by selecting indicators in terms of their own preferences.

<http://www.u-multirank.eu/>

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Quality Assurance

*Quality Enhancement*

*Evaluation*

*Accreditation*

*Benchmarking*

*Multirank*

*Ranking*

## V Conclusion

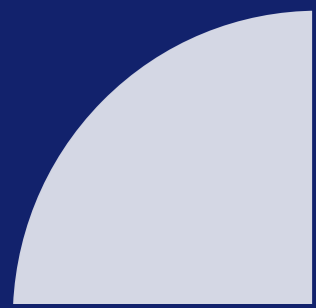
Benchmarking can be useful, if it stays strictly improvement orientated. And it can therefore be a good idea to work out a repertoire of indicators, criteria and questions, which fit to the needs and requirements of music academies.

AEC tries to do so.

But it must be clear that it is up to each institution and to each single member of a benchmarking club for what purpose they want to use these indicators and criteria.

## V Conclusion

Benchmarking can be a great support for the institutions - if the institution's management, the institution as a whole and as possible the stakeholders are willing to accept the benchmarking outcomes without any excuses or fake reasons.

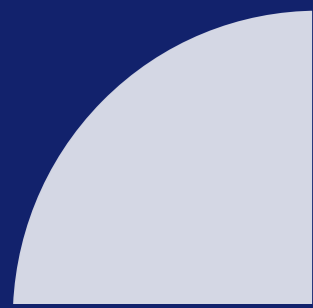


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## V Conclusion

Ranking judges from the outside.

Rankings are dependent on reliable data. But we should think over carefully who benefits from it and who it hurts if we make available the related data.



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