

caring for quality

Quality Framework Art Education and Amateur Art



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Introduction

The sector of art education and amateur art consists of organisations that permanently and professionally provide art education and/or amateur art production, and/or offer support in these fields. These efforts are based on the view that art and culture surround us always and everywhere. Art and culture enhance the quality of and cohesion in society, and hence improve the quality of life. They offer new means of communication and contribute to people's development opportunities. For this reason, every person should have the opportunity to become acquainted with art and culture. Institutions for art education and art participation offer active and passive access to art and culture, enabling people to develop and grow in these areas. In a way that suits them, and in a way that's sure to stick. Increasingly, institutions and companies in this sector are starting to realise that caring for a high quality of services and products is requisite to assuring the future. Competition is growing, and customers are becoming more critical. Subsidised institutions are transforming into socio-cultural entrepreneurs and are noticing that it is essential to systematically ensure high quality services and products, and to realise improvements wherever necessary. Subsidy providers, too, are requesting more transparency in terms of the quality provided by the institutions they support.

This framework sets out quality criteria for institutions that engage in art education and amateur art. These can be both subsidised and non-subsidised institutions. This quality framework was developed by Kunstconnectie in consultation with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (*Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten*, VNG) and the Interprovincial Consultations (*Inter Provinciaal Overleg*, IPO). The framework offers institutions of art education and participation a tool to concretely work on quality assurance and to improve their organisation. If an institution satisfies all the criteria, it can request certification. The quality framework provides an

answer to the question what an institution needs to accomplish to obtain certification. Since this framework was developed in close cooperation with the organisation for Amateur Arts (*Kunstfactor*), it connects seamlessly with the certification of training programmes in amateur art (sector trainings, e.g. Hafabra: Harmony, Fanfare, Brass music sector).

What is quality?

The quality delivered is based on the norms and values shared by the organisation and the staff members involved, and depends on the agreements and arrangements made with the subsidising client as well as with the paying customers. The quality question can then be answered by reference to the agreements made and whether these are being fulfilled. This trajectory can vary per institution; what matters is the consistency.

An organisation that delivers quality must be able to:

- Demonstrate how it challenges and inspires the social environment and its customers;
- Translate customers' demands into adequate products and services;
- Maintain a healthy relationship with the social environment, taking account of the perspectives held by the various parties;
- Provide transparency. This means, being able to offer (financial) accountability to the environment.

This quality framework offers a tool to accomplish these goals. It identifies the issues that are important with respect to:

- Exploring the social need in relation to the institution's own values and expertise (Chapter 1: Vision and policy);
- Defining and realising the services and products that the institution delivers in relation to the market (Chapter 2: Primary process, products, services and innovation);
- Providing the preconditions and supportive activities important to realising the services and products (Chapter 3: Processes and organisation)
- Identifying the results of policy (Chapter 4: Results).

The quality framework outlines all aspects that institutions should ideally satisfy. For many organisations, this may be asking too much. When assessing an institution's quality, the (im)possibilities of the local situation play a significant role. It is much more important that an institution can demonstrate how it is working to improve or how the local restrictions are being dealt with. If an institution can show that it is structurally working on improvements, it need not have everything in (tip-top) order to nevertheless be eligible for certification.

To complement this quality framework, a Hallmark Art Education and Amateur Art has been developed. This hallmark can serve as means of communication to the outside world. It can also play a role in applying for subsidies.

The Hallmark Art Education and Amateur Art indicates that the institution:

- Has a vision and a policy that takes account of the social need as well as of professional standards;
- Realises products and services in accordance with the policy plan and

the expectations of customers and subsidy-providers;

- Has set up the organisation and processes in such a way that it can adequately manage the realisation of products and services;
- Has a clear view of the results of policy;
- Continually engages in improving itself and its internal processes, the services and products.

To obtain this Hallmark Art Education and Amateur Art, an independent, objective and knowledgeable audit team assesses the extent to which the institution satisfies the aspects listed in the Quality Framework Art Education and Amateur Art.

The assessment is performed on the basis on the following questions:

- Is policy based on responsible considerations and analyses, and is this based on valid and testable data? In other words: does the institution have plausible arguments for the choices it makes?
- Is the performance of the processes and of the topics listed in this framework consistent with the choices made?
- Does all of this minimally satisfy the professional standards that may be expected of the institution?
- Can the institution demonstrate that shop-floor practice corresponds to formulated policy; in other words, does the institution actually do what it says?

Assessments based on this quality framework are conducted by a selected certifying institution that is familiar with the sector. The manner in which the assessment is conducted and the associated procedures are described in a separate assessment procedure.

1 Vision and policy

The central quality question of this chapter is: *Does the institution pursue a consistent policy that is based on professional norms and responsive to wishes from the environment, and does this achieve the desired results.*

Vision and policy are essential to steering and directing an institution. The policy principles, generally set out in a policy plan or business plan, define the factors that are important to justifying the institution's existence. If these principles are not translated into concrete (annual) objectives, it is unlikely that the intended policy will be actualised.

The policy principles should provide clarity regarding the following aspects (if applicable):

- Social objectives, relevance, value and involvement;
- The market and (potential) customers;
- The professional principles of the organisation;
- Collaboration with amateur art associations and its social embedding;
- Other collaborative partners and the goal of this collaboration;
- Development(s)/growth of the institution;
- Organisation and operational management;
- The content and embedding of the primary process;
- Personnel policy;
- Management of resources;
- Financial policy.

The policy principles should be supported by the personnel that it concerns, and demonstrably so. The policy principles describe the organisation's position regarding the aspects listed above, as well as the position that it aspires to. Maintaining the position held and achieving the position aspired to requires well-defined objectives. These objectives and the planned action scheme constitute the policy. To realise the objectives and to safeguard the action scheme, and to enable the measurement of success in achieving the desired goal, these need to be described in SMART¹ terms.

Policy will need to be adjusted periodically. Adjustment requires (management) information. The institution must demonstrate that it knows what information it needs for this, how it acquires this, and how it interprets this information. The Benchmark provided by De Kunstconnectie/VKV offers an effective tool for this. For further information on this Benchmark, see www.kunstconnectie.nl.

¹ **S**pecific
Measurable
Aceptable
Result-focused
Timebound

2 Primary process, products and services and innovation

The central quality question of this chapter is: *Are the products and services offered by the institution in accordance with the policy as set out in the policy vision, and do they achieve the results defined therein.*

The primary process, products and services are defined differently by the institutions for amateur art (AA) and for art education (AE), depending on the local situation. It is important that the choices made by the institution regarding its offered products and services are consistent and in line with its vision and policy. It is also important that there is a clear perception, within the organisation, of the quality of its services and products, and that there is an ongoing discussion about possible improvements and the manner in which this should be pursued. The primary process within institutions for art education and amateur art can be described as 'organising services and products that bring the public into contact with and offer guidance in the various forms of art and culture'. The products and services are distinguished as follows:

1. Out-of-school programmes and courses.
2. Activities for schools and institutions.
3. Project-based activities.

No distinction is made in terms of first-line and second-line institutions, particularly because many institutions combine both components and usually work for both the general public and for schools.

Innovation is an essential part of art education and, in many institutions, a permanent element of their policy. The social position and intrinsic assignment of art education demands continuous renewal. To emphasise this aspect, it is important to chart (the measure of) innovation separately.

To monitor the operation of primary processes and to secure the end results, the institution will need to have a clear picture of the policy's achievements. The processes that this involves are discussed in Chapter 4: Results.

2.1 Out-of-school programmes and courses

This can broadly be described as recruiting pupils, determining their starting level, teaching, guiding and training pupils, and completing and evaluating the learning process.

To offer insight into this primary process, the institution should demonstrate that it pursues the following aspects in a responsible manner:

- The way in which the institution's offer sets it apart from other offering parties;
- Its approach to various target groups;
- The degree of orientation on and progressive elaboration of its offer;
- The choices made with regard to continuing learning trajectories and opportunities for ensemble and/or exchange;
- The collaboration between the various disciplines (internally) and with other institutions (externally);
- The results achieved by the programmes (diplomas, in- and outflow, evaluations, etc.);
- The communication with (potential) pupils and/or their parents;
- The setup of the learning process:
 - Determining the initial and final level
 - Defining the learning trajectory
 - Safeguarding the learning trajectory and the final level to be achieved
 - Offering support and guidance with regard to choices in the course of the learning trajectory
 - The manner, shape and measure of assessment or presentation.

Programmes or courses that have been assessed and judged positively according to the amateur arts regulation are exempted from assessment pursuant to this quality framework. A special commission reports and certificates are presented to the certifying institute.

2.2 Activities for schools and institutions

Many art education institutions direct their activities at primary and secondary schools. Also, activities are increasingly organised for or in collaboration with other institutions. These include ROCs (Regional training centres), welfare institutes, child day-care centres, etc. This involves practically supporting and enhancing the professionalism of teachers on the one hand, and activities for and with children and youth on the other. A third aspect concerns contributing to the interaction of educational institutions with the cultural environment, for instance through network building. Finally, it concerns developing new educational projects with professional artists and art instructors.

The institution should demonstrate that it pursues the following aspects in a responsible manner:

- Consistency with the institution's vision;
- The relationship with various partners in the field;
- Knowledge of contemporary educational developments, the ensuing customer demand and the willingness to assimilate these developments;
- Knowledge of the field of art education and its translation into products and services;
- The degree to which the institution encourages cultural participation among the pupils of primary and secondary schools (or the participants of another institution);
- The information offered about cultural education policy and the relevant cultural opportunities in the work domain;
- Its contribution to the cultural infrastructure of the work domain;
- The degree to which the institution distinguishes itself from other offering parties;
- The offer, i.e. the diversity, range of choice and alignment with the needs of the different target groups in education (or the institution) and the communication with (potential) target groups;
- The manner in which the institution guarantees an independent position with respect to other offering parties (when it performs an intermediary role).

2.3 Project-based activities

With project-based activities, we mean every activity that does not fall under "programme" or "course". This includes support for amateur art, consultancy work, deployment of facilities, open days, festivals and events, recitals, performances and presentations, expositions and exhibitions.

Projects that exceed a certain size are structured, in terms of man-hours, budget or complexity, by devising and cyclically executing a project plan. The quality of projects of a lesser size or complexity will also be safeguarded in a certain manner.

The following aspects will be embedded in the project plan:

- Aligning the project (goal) with the institution's policy (market, positioning, social relevance and involvement);
- The results;
- A coordinated implementation of the process phases, in which the following process phases can be distinguished:
 - project initiation;
 - plan formation;
 - elaboration/actualisation of the plan;
 - execution of the plan, with the realisation of the project as concluding moment;
 - the evaluation (and the processing thereof to benefit subsequent projects);

- Information and communication and the organisation thereof, both internally and externally. The external information and communication includes such aspects as subsidy applications, sponsoring, marketing, advertisements and public information;
- Requirements. These can be distinguished as follows:
 - financial (e.g. subsidies);
 - staffing; deployment of personnel and volunteers and their recruitment and selection;
 - required materials;
 - required equipment.
- Project coordination or project leadership. Who takes on these tasks and responsibilities; who steers, who organises?

2.4 Innovation of products and services

- Which (policy) spearheads are selected?
 - What is the social relevance?
 - What relationship is there to the institution's market positioning?
 - Is there a cycle of evaluation and improvement/renewal?
- How is innovation encouraged and elaborated?
- How much budget or manpower is devoted to innovative activities?
- What are the results of the innovation; how does this affect the customer?

3 Processes and organisation

The central quality question of this chapter is: *Is the organisation sufficiently organised to adequately pursue the objectives set out in the policy vision.*

The guiding principle here is that the degree of organisation of the secondary process accords with the institution's situation. The secondary processes support the primary process. The institution should give content to the following aspects.

3.1 Organisation

This paragraph lists the most important aspects, in answer to the question: What must an institution organise to implement its policy?

Organogram

The institution has a clear picture of its organisation. This organisation is represented in an organogram.

The organogram displays the different organisation parts and how they relate to one another. The organisation parts include (where applicable) educational programmes and projects, management, personnel affairs, quality assurance, financial affairs, marketing and communication, facilities department, administration (of participants) and operational management.

Organisation culture

The institution has deliberated on the desired organisation culture. Norms and values are clear to everyone, and they determine how personnel members interact with each other and with customers.

Consultation structure

There is an established consultation structure. This serves to structure and control information transfer and important decision-making moments. The institution is well aware of these moments. As far as required, reasons and goal of the consultation have been recorded.

Steering

The steering of the organisation should be adequate to achieving the goals set (cultural government). Here, a distinction should be made between the administrative board and management. The following issues are important:

- The administrative model (supervisory board, board of trustees) accords with the structure of the organisation.
- There is a profile for the appointment of board members.
- The (division of) responsibilities between board and management is defined, for instance in a management charter.
- The degree and manner of supervision exercised by the board over the management is clear.

3.2 Personnel

Qualified personnel form the basis of every institution for art education and amateur art. Intrinsically, art professionals need to permanently engage in their personal development. Since the artists and instructors in institutions retain a large measure of autonomy and personal responsibility, it is important to monitor the staff members' professional attitude and development.

Personnel policy

The following matters need to be established:

- Current staffing (in terms of quality and quantity);
- The expected future staffing needs;
- The required competencies;
- Recruitment and selection of new personnel
 - Which methods of recruitment are applied?
 - Which selection criteria are applied?
 - Who is authorised to hire new personnel members?
- Performance and assessment interviews to safeguard and develop staff competencies and expertise, agreements concerning the expected effort, performance or results; reviewing previously agreed performance or results;
- Trainings to be followed by staff members in the coming year (trainings plan);
- The manner in which the institution pursues discussions about the relation between professional ideal, professional performance and institution policy, and innovations and developments.

Job descriptions

An awareness of the quantitative and qualitative staffing requirements guides a considered pursuit of an adequate workforce. Job descriptions help an organisation to clearly describe the division of duties, responsibilities and authority.

To exercise these duties, responsibilities and authority, the staff members must possess different competencies. These required competencies should be included in the job descriptions. The job descriptions (which should be updated regularly) can be used to define vacancies, in discussions about performance and in performance assessment interviews.

Employee participation and the Works Council

- Is the institution a business, according to the Works Council Act (*Wet op de ondernemingsraden*)? Should the institution therefore comply with the regulations contained in this Act? If so, do the institution and works council comply with the stipulated regulations?
- Are the employees adequately informed about and involved in determining and implementing policy?

3.3 Finances and resources

Financial administration should be conducted properly. Important aspects are:

- Providing proper annual reports: budget and multiple-year documents and annual accounts (audited by an accountant);
- The responsibilities and authorities within the organisation (including the authority of signature);
- The policy regarding the proportion between income received through subsidies and generated income;
- The budgeting system. How are budgets allocated across the various departments and activities within the institution?

There should be a clear fee policy. This policy is communicated consistently to participants and external parties.

If institutions are to some degree dependent on subsidies, they must make sure to remain informed of the subsidy regulations and conditions applied at various levels and departments (municipal, provincial and national).

Purchasing materials has a direct impact on the financial budget, and this process needs to be conducted in a controlled manner (investment policy). The institution has at its disposal an analysis or a programme of demands that indicates, on the one hand, which materials and resources are required, and on the other, which materials and resources are already at the institution's disposal. This enables a careful consideration of expenditure in the coming year.

3.4 Facilities

The facilities provided by the institution should stand in relation to the ambitions of the organisation. If a music school aims to expand the number of pop bands, it will need to have the space and equipment. If the social interaction among personnel is high on the agenda, it will need to have an adequate staff room. Here, again, consistency counts. A failure to satisfy the requirements does not necessarily imply rejection, as long as there is a proper explanation. Aspects to consider include:

- A low threshold (literally, too!)
- Workplaces
- Socialising areas
- Climate control
- Noisiness
- Acoustics
- General ambiance and appeal

3.5 Marketing and relation management

Marketing should reflect the vision and policy of the institution.

The institution maintains a database of relations containing all relevant relation details. It pursues an active policy with regard to maintaining and acquiring relations. This policy accords with the policy plan and the manner in which the institution wishes to profile itself on the market and to publicly demonstrate and express its social concern.

Important aspects in this regard include:

- How the institution responds to social needs and involvement;
- Which target group(s) or customers the institution aims to reach;
- How these parties are approached;
- Whether the institution is responsive to data concerning the inflow and outflow of participants;
- How it consequently adapts its PR;
- In what way it promotes and presents itself through advertisement;
- How this relates to the information materials.

3.6 Information management

It is important that essential information is received by the right persons at the right moment. An institution should visualise which information is circulating within the organisation and of the information streams that in any case need to be managed (archiving).

Essential information that needs to be managed certainly includes all contractual, formal, juridical and legal information.

The Quality Framework Art Education and Amateur Art distinguishes the following five groups of data/documents:

1. Financial documents and data.
2. Documents and data specific to education programmes (related to the primary process).
3. Personnel dossiers.
4. Quality documents, data and results.
5. Customer details, relation management.

In managing this information, it is important to take into account all applicable rules and legislation. This applies for instance to the archiving period of contractual documents and the privacy rules.

There need to be descriptions of what should be archived and how, and where documents can be found. The prescribed storage period of documents and data must be clear, just as how and when documents are to be modified or removed.

It should also be (made) clear what (management) information is recorded regularly and how this information is communicated (e.g. participant figures, inflow and outflow, quarterly reports, course details, schedules and plans).

3.7 External demands and rules and legislation

The institution is obliged to comply with national and, where applicable, international rules and legislation. Furthermore, if the institution wishes to be eligible for diverse subsidies, it must comply with additional demands imposed by the parties concerned.

It is important that the institution systematically remains informed of this information. The manner in which the institution arranges this, as well as the actual currency of available information, can be subject to assessment.

If it emerges that the institution is in breach of applicable rules and legislation and subsidy conditions, this will be considered in the assessment.

4 Results

This quality framework describes the most important aspects that have bearing on the quality of the institution and the services and products that it offers. However, quality assurance is a cyclical process. To ascertain whether the policy achieves the set objectives requires a periodic appraisal of where the institution now stands. Policy intentions need to be evaluated to see whether goals have been achieved. To safeguard or improve the quality, measurements need to be taken regularly in order to chart the results.

The institution must determine for itself what it wants to know and hence what it aims to measure. The results of these measurements provide an indication of whether the quality is realised on a number of points and thus can be embedded, or whether additional efforts are required in certain areas. To measure or monitor these indicators requires measuring instruments. The following instruments can be used:

- Internal assessment;
- Peer assessment;
- Complaints registration;
- Customer satisfaction surveys (participants);
- Customer satisfaction surveys of collaborative partners and schools;
- Personnel surveys;
- Inflow and outflow of personnel, numbers of visitors;
- Evaluations of the primary (or secondary) process(es);
- Measurements to safeguard the quality and the results of the primary processes;
- Measuring personnel satisfaction;
- Benchmarking;
- Risk inventorying and evaluation (RIE).

Registering the measurements is essential to a proper management of these details. Through this proper management, the right data can be used at the right moment to achieve an adjustment or improvement. The institution must be able to demonstrate that it applies the appropriate measuring methods for the policy it aims to pursue.

Measures taken can be subsumed under the term "improvements" or "embedding". Improvements apply to matters that are not entirely in order yet, while embedding applies to matters that are in order but that need to continue to be in order. When an institution is not (yet) able to satisfy the demands of this quality framework, it will need to show what action is being taken to realise improvements. These actions must be defined in an improvement plan with objectives formulated in SMART terms (see Chapter 1: Vision and policy). In this way, results can be safeguarded and plans or policies drafted to achieve the required improvements. In drafting the improvement plans, the wishes of the customer, the demands of the subsidising party and the norms and values of the art professionals within the institution will need to be weighed and considered. The institution needs to demonstrate that it is systematically working towards improvements and embedding. The institution must closely monitor the realisation of these improvements, or the status of the actions required in the process.

Colofon

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