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A New Ecosystem of
Early Music Studies



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MAPPING MUSICOLOGY IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This report examines the position of musicology within European higher education and research, treating the field as an economic and professional sector that spans universities, research institutes, and Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs). It first highlights the lack of granular, discipline-specific data in major international statistics and national databases, which complicates any systematic assessment of musicology's workforce, degree production, and funding. Drawing on questionnaires, desk-based research, and collaborative data collection across COST countries, the study maps institutional structures, staff profiles, and doctoral activity in historical musicology since 2015. It shows that musicology occupies a structurally heterogeneous but widely recognised place across Europe, with great disparities in permanent posts, career pathways, and access to research funding. A substantial section analyses historical musicology within HMEIs, detailing diverse institutional models, curriculum designs, and research configurations, and clarifying how performance-focused environments integrate scholarly work. The report also investigates evolving relationships between universities and HMEIs, especially through artistic or practice-based research and new third-cycle programmes. Case studies from several national contexts illustrate the impact of governance, qualification requirements, and policy frameworks on musicological careers and teaching. Overall, the findings underscore both the vitality and vulnerability of musicology in Europe and argue for better data, stronger coordination, and targeted advocacy to secure the field's long-term sustainability.

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Introduction

This report aims to highlight particularly pressing issues in the field of humanities—where direct economic metrics are less clear-cut—, and more specifically in musicology: Can musicology be considered an economic sector characterised by employability and a clearly defined professional path, as well as a presence in higher education and research institutions? We hold that musicology makes an exceptional case in point, as an academic field that exists across all types of higher education and research institutions due to its foundational ties with the art of music.¹ Owing to its nature and history, musicology occupies a space between the arts and the humanities, between scholarship and practice. Thus, it has been fundamentally affected by recent changes in institutional structures across Europe, including the conversion of higher music education institutions (HMEIs) into universities of the arts beginning in the 2000s.

Surprisingly, no survey mapping musicology in higher education and research institutions has been carried out in the last twenty-five years. In the past, the journal *Acta Musicologica* regularly published articles on the state of musicology in various countries.² Scattered here and there, various publications delivered the results of investigations into one corner of the field or another, often appearing more as a forum for epistemological reflection than as the assembly and analysis of raw data on the musicological profession, associated career pathways, and working conditions.³

Some data are still missing to complete the broader picture we intend to present to the reader. We invite you to provide any corrections, clarifications, or quantitative details. Please send your comments and updates to vendrix@univ-tours.fr.

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- 1 For practical purposes and with the aim of adopting an inclusive approach, musicology is understood here as any activity involving high-level intellectual engagement with music history.
 - 2 The last publication of this kind in *Acta Musicologica* (on the state of musicology in France, both institutionally and in terms of publications) dates from 1991. See Jean Gribenski and François Lesure (1991), '[La recherche musicologique en France depuis 1958.](#)'
 - 3 Here too *Acta Musicologica* was an active forum. A different form of presentation of the debates was adopted in several issues of *Il Saggiatore Musicale*. Book-length attempts to come to conceptual terms with the question include Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, eds. (1999), *Rethinking Music*; more recently, Michele Calella and Nikolaus Urbanek, eds. (2013), *Historische Musikwissenschaft. Grundlagen und Perspektiven*; Jelka Vukobratović and Dalibor Davidović, eds. (2023), *Musicology and Its Future in Times of Crises*; Joseph Williams, 'Interdisciplinarity and Musicology in Higher Degree Research' in Sally Macarthur, Julja Szuster, and Paul Watt, eds. (2024), *Cultures of Work, the Neoliberal Environment and Music in Higher Education*; Rainer Prokop and Rosa Reitsamer, eds. (2024), [Higher Music Education and Employability in a Neoliberal World](#).

The present report is an initial response to this gap. It presents the principal findings of collaborative work under the aegis of COST Action 21161, *EarlyMuse*.⁴ Over more than two years, and in locations from Athens to Lisbon, from Birmingham to Ljubljana, from Naples to Brussels, we designed and distributed surveys, collected and analysed data, and collectively wrote, edited, rewrote, and reedited.

From the beginning our approach has been an institutional one, focusing on academic and research institutions that educate and/or employ musicologists, including universities and research institutes (section 1) and institutions of higher music education like conservatoires, universities of the arts, and arts academies (section 2). As this work progressed, it became clear that recent developments in the arena of artistic or practice-based research are already transforming musicology's role in these institutions. We therefore include a section on the development of artistic research third-cycle (doctoral) programmes (section 3), in order to illustrate the opportunities and challenges that this new modality will pose to the field of musicology.

We have asked questions including the following: How many institutions offer degree courses in musicology? How many doctorates are defended each year? How much European funding is devoted to musicological research? What academic qualifications are necessary for musicologists? As these questions have to do with the material conditions of the field, much of our work has consisted of identifying sources of information, collating data, and then counting. Given the scale of the task and the multitude of sources, we have restricted ourselves to European countries, noting that the Europe of research as understood by COST counts forty-one countries from the United Kingdom to Georgia and

4 <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21161/>; <https://earlymuse.eu/>. The present report draws on the following: Christophe Levaux, Philippe Vendrix, Adam Whittaker, eds. (2025), '[Historical musicology in European universities, research organisations and scientific academies: a preliminary survey](#)'. The themes discussed in this document were addressed during meetings and a collective Short Term Scientific Mission in 2023, 2024, and 2025. In Padova during a management meeting hosted by Paola Dessi; Aleksandra Pister and David Burn, [Historical Musicology in European HMEIs: Institutional Frameworks, Curricula, Research, and Future Perspectives](#) (*EarlyMuse* meeting in Zagreb, February 2024 hosted by Ivan Curkovic, in Athens, May 2025 hosted by Stella Kourmpapa and Petros Stergiopoulos); Kalina Tomova & Pedro Sousa Silva, *Artistic Research in European HMEIs: Doctoral Programs, Publishing Practices, Disciplinary Tensions, and the Role of Historical Musicology* (*EarlyMuse* meetings hosted by Metoda Kokole in Ljubljana and by Eva Veselovska in Bratislava, March 2025). During collective Short-Term Scientific Mission certain aspects of these reports were explored in depth: in Tours hosted by Philippe Vendrix (August 2023), in Birmingham, hosted by Adam Whittaker (July 2024 and June 2025), in Valencia, hosted by Ferran Escrivà Llorca (May 2025), in Naples, hosted by Federica Castaldo (June 2025).

from Norway to Malta.⁵ We have therefore striven to be as inclusive as possible, but we acknowledge from the outset that it has not always been possible to obtain the types of data necessary for such an endeavour—a refrain that will resound throughout this report.

The lack of aggregate data granularised to the level of musicology as a discipline pushed us to use various sources of data and methods of analysis. To illustrate: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), EUROSTAT as well as UNESCO publish aggregate data on tertiary education. All use the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), where Arts and Humanities represents one of eight fields. Social Science constitutes a field of its own, but this may include the sociology of music. Table 1 below shows the distribution of different subfields within Arts and Humanities where ‘Music and Performing Arts’ (0215) is a subfield of Arts (021); and History and archaeology (0222) is a subfield of Humanities (022). In other words, no specific subfield is dedicated to musicology in the ISCED.

02 Arts and humanities	021 Arts	0211 Audio-visual techniques and media production 0212 Fashion, interior and industrial design 0213 Fine arts 0214 Handicrafts 0215 Music and performing arts
	022 Humanities (except languages)	0221 Religion and theology 0222 History and archaeology 0223 Philosophy and ethics
	023 Languages	0231 Language acquisition 0232 Literature and linguistics

Table 1: OECD distribution of different subfields within Arts and Humanities⁶

5 Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

6 International Standard Classification of Education: [Fields of Education and Training](#) (2013).

The [OECD](#) presents statistical information for tertiary graduates by field for a series of countries from 2005 to 2020. While the data demonstrates that Arts and Humanities has experienced an average decrease in graduates since 2005, there is no granular data concerning subfields.⁷ Comparative data is also provided by the OECD. For instance, between 2018 and 2020, Arts, Humanities and Languages represented 9.1% of graduates in OECD countries. [EUROSTAT](#) data tells a similar tale: the number of Arts and Humanities graduates hovers at around 10% of all graduates but there are no distinctions between subfields.

The same lack of disciplinary specificity also exists in data on research funding. A search in individual project databases like those maintained by national research organisations or CORDIS, the database for information on research projects funded by the European Commission, gives great insight into the variety of musicological research. However, there is no aggregate data on funded musicological research across Europe, nor is there any way to determine exactly how much funding musicology has obtained. As a result, we have had to adopt alternative methods, which will be described in subsequent sections of this report.

We acknowledge, too, that our response is limited by the existential gaps between research and education institutions and the shifting terrain of national and European organisational and governance structures. To be sure, there is a certain homogeneity of context for higher education across Europe: accessible after a secondary school qualification, sanctioned by diplomas that in most cases benefit from national or European recognition, based on a system of equivalence that enables a form of mobility, backed by a research dynamic that results in the awarding of doctorates, the publication of research work and the eligibility to apply for European funding.

A critical mass of the COST countries' higher education systems was involved in the Bologna Process, which aimed to create a common European Higher Education Area ([EHEA](#)), including a common degree system among the participating countries.

7 See the methodology here: [Education at a Glance: OECD INDICATORS](#) (2022).

Nonetheless, such apparent homogeneity is superficial. There are huge disparities between institutional constitutions, organisation, and frameworks in the countries of the European Research Area, and even within a single country or region.

In Austria, for example, universities are multidisciplinary public institutions which provide teaching, undertake research and award degrees. Universities of the Arts are monodisciplinary institutions which provide teaching, undertake research and award degrees. The Austrian Academy of Sciences is a multidisciplinary institution which undertakes research. There is not necessarily any difference in the type of musicological research which these three types of institutions can carry out, although in general universities tend towards philological work, Universities of the Arts towards artistic research and the Academy of Sciences towards Digital Humanities.⁸

Such institutional and structural complexity is found everywhere across Europe, making direct comparisons and the tracking of common metrics challenging. But it is imperative that we formulate at least an initial answer to the question of the economic role of the musicology sector. All the more so as international and European indicators do not give musicology a singular place.

The conclusions presented in this report should therefore not be considered as definitive. Rather, they intend to define the terrain of future investigation, action, and advocacy—not just for musicology, but for other disciplines as well. By giving insight into the changing landscape of higher education and research and the possible impacts of structural changes on the profession of musicology, we hope to inspire further research and coordination efforts that will ensure the long-term sustainability of our field.

We encourage our readers, whether musicologists or others, to read this work both critically and generously. Critically, for we ask you to please correct us if our data or analyses are incorrect. Generously, for continuing to engage with the challenges and opportunities discussed in hoping our field(s) will continue moving forward. If this report in some way motivates other research projects or helps to shape policies in some way, or otherwise results in a widening of the space of musicology, we will have accomplished our task.

⁸ Musicology is also taught in Austria at several private institutions: the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna, the Anton Bruckner Private University of Linz, the Gustav Mahler Private University for Music in Klagenfurt, the Joseph Haydn Private University of Burgenland and the Stella Vorarlberg Private University College for Music in Feldkirch.

1. Musicology in Universities and Research Institutes⁹

1.1. Introduction

This section examines how historical musicology is structured and institutionalised in universities and research institutes across Europe. Musicology is widely recognised as an academic discipline with institutional status, distinct from performance-based artistic practice. This distinction has direct implications for career pathways and shapes the kinds of institutions where musicologists may work. In some countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom (UK), conservatoires and universities are classed at the same level of higher education, so musicologists can move between these institutions with ease. Elsewhere, however, the situation is different: in Italy, for instance, universities and conservatoires are categorised separately, a distinction that shapes career prospects. In Greece, musicology is taught within universities, but conservatoires fall outside the higher education system due to constitutional restrictions. Moreover, musicologists are sometimes employed outside musicology departments of universities and research institutes, for example in history or art history. Such cases are excluded from the present survey, as these scholars cannot be counted as part of the professional sector of ‘musicology’ in a strict sense. Our survey also did not cover systematic musicology, notably fields such as music psychology or cognitive studies of music, or cultural or ethnomusicology, as it focused specifically on historical musicology.

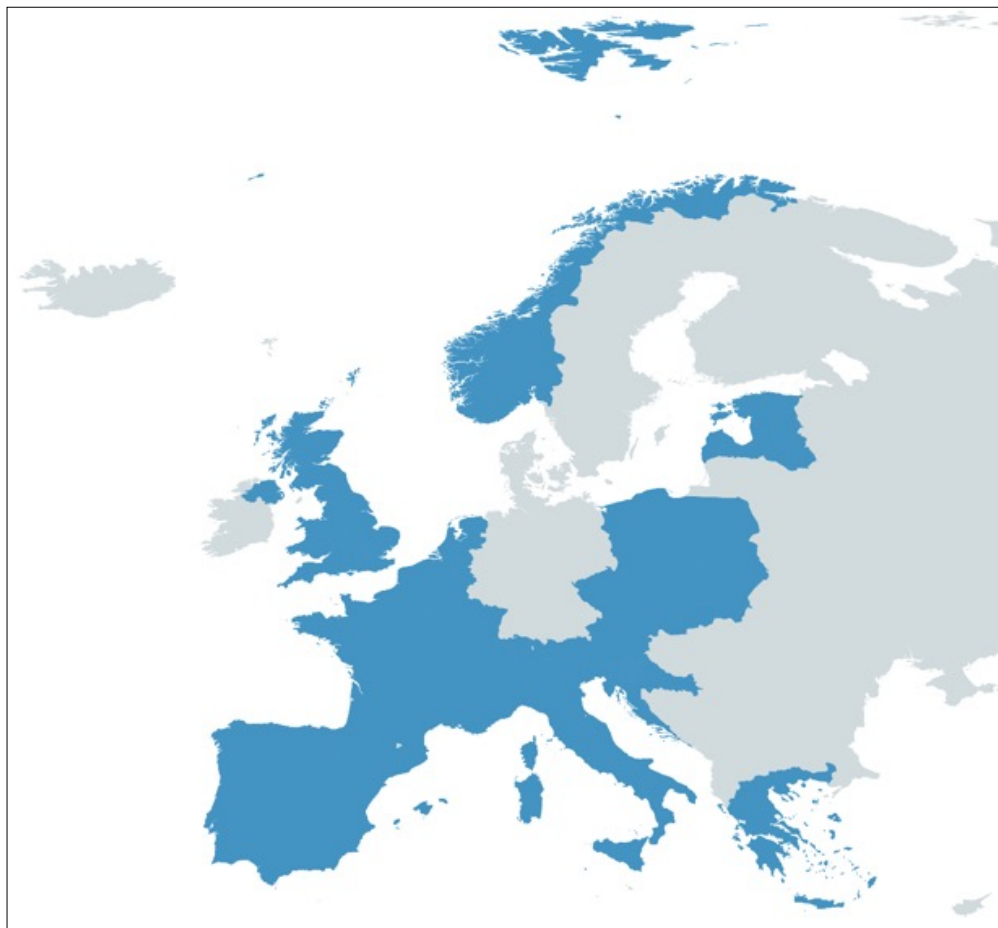
1.2. Methods and sources

1.2.1. Questionnaire

The primary basis for this report is an in-depth questionnaire distributed to colleagues in historical musicology across Europe between April and July 2023.¹⁰ The purpose of the questionnaire was to assess the status of historical musicology in their institutions. It asked about the number of students,

⁹ This section builds on a preliminary version published in 2025; see Christophe Levaux, Philippe Vendrix, Adam Whitaker, eds. (2025), ‘[Historical Musicology in European Universities, Research Organisations and Scientific Academies: A Preliminary Survey](#)’.

¹⁰ The questionnaire was prepared by Aleksandra Pister (Lithuania) and David Burn (Belgium), and discussed during a [meeting of the EarlyMuse WG Education in Lisbon](#) (2023). See also Aleksandra Pister, ed. (2025), ‘[Musicology and Early Music in European University Education—Report of Working Group 1 Education](#)’.



Countries represented through survey responses

doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, curricula and topics covered by current modules, and institutions involved in historical musicology. Moreover, questions about sources of funding and the general state of the discipline were included. The forty-three total responses came from seventeen countries across Europe.

The questionnaire included closed questions (in which respondents chose from a set number of choices), as well as open questions inviting free-text responses. Respondents were not required to complete every question, and a few questions did not receive sufficient responses to draw conclusions. Responses occasionally did not provide contextual information, reflecting the complexity of the discipline within Europe. In some instances, the state of the field described for a particular country did not match the data cross-checked by the research team. There are various reasons for this, including (but not limited to) the following issues:

- A diversity of ways of naming positions or titles: country-specific academic cultures remain, and influence the way that historical musicologists' positions are named (i.e. assistant professor vs. lecturer). This is reflected upon more substantially in Section 2.5.1 below. Given that in some cases, what may seem (based on title) to be permanent positions are actually fixed-term, it is often impossible to determine the nature of an individual's professional contract.

- While some countries make information about PhDs that have been awarded publicly available, many do not; even in cases where this information is compiled, it is often unclear whether it is up to date, and inconsistent metadata across entries limits analysis.
- The same can be said for postdoctoral researchers, especially those that receive national (rather than European) funding; determining who is employed on what basis is challenging.
- Each of the above cases is linked to the fact that institutional websites are often irregularly updated, difficult to navigate, and/or lack crucial information about individual musicologists entirely.

We interpret our findings in light of these constraints, and return to their implications when discussing the results.

1.2.2. Additional data collection

Upon receiving responses to the questionnaire, the research team undertook desk-based searches of national and institutional databases¹¹ in an attempt to gather information about:

- The number of musicology departments and other research organisations outside of university structures.
- The number of permanent faculty members working in the field.
- The number of fixed-term, paid PhD positions and postdoctoral fellowships.
- The number of unfunded PhD students working in the field.
- The number of PhDs in historical musicology completed between 2015 and 2023.
- The number of current research projects in historical musicology.

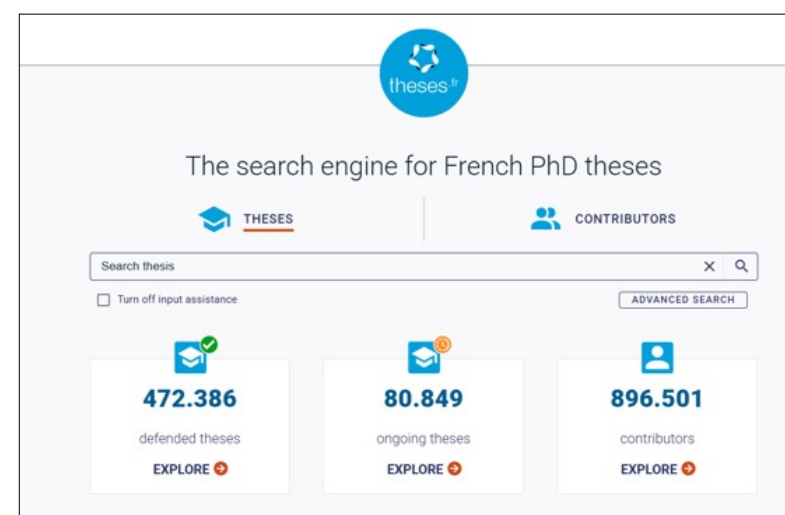
Working with multiple databases, repositories, and institutional websites required a flexible approach for collecting data. As a result, the research team decided to consider historical musicology as anything that treated topics pre-WW1 (the final date given in the questionnaire). Without a concrete list of European universities which engage in ‘historical musicology’ (whether in teaching or research), examples of universities where historical musicology is represented could only be achieved through web searching and, when available, national listings of musicology degrees. The complexity of modern

¹¹ See [Levaux et al. \(2025\)](#) for a more detailed discussion of these data collection approaches and referenced documentary resources.

university structures, and the various disciplines in which historical musicology may fall, made this task challenging.

For non-university organisations, the research team used similar approaches as there is no formal list of those who engage with historical musicology. The first step was to identify departments and organisations, and then to explore directories of staff. Often, these listings were not up to date, they did not give enough information about research activities (including publications and grants), or they failed to indicate the nature of the position (i.e. whether it is paid, permanent or fixed-term, etc.).

The research team also looked at PhDs awarded between 2015 and 2023. Information was available across various databases, but the nature of the data available varied from country to country, and the data was not easily extracted.¹² Certain countries maintain national databases that automatically report theses, making such information public and easy to access; examples include the [British Library EThOS repository](#) and the [French PhD titles repository](#). Germany has a national online database ([Dissertationsmeldestelle der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung](#)) which, while searchable, does not consistently present the metadata for completed PhDs; the consequence is therefore that one cannot filter data according to subject groupings or dates of completion. Other countries maintain databases, but these are not public or online, as they exist in internal consultation systems or on paper (such as the *Tesi di Dottorato* collection in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma). Institutional repositories were also used, and these systems used varied cataloguing systems or terminology (meaning that direct comparisons were difficult). Whether these institutional repositories are mandatory or even fully represent the theses completed in musicology remains unclear.



12 The research time focused on European databases. The United States' database 'Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology', hosted by the American Musicological Society until 2025, gathered data on 13,481 theses since 1871. For the years 2015-2018, they registered 100 dissertations (36, 26, 22, 16, respectively) that deal with topics related to Antiquity through to the 19th century.

The research team thus was required to analyse these databases to draw out key points, and also to communicate them in a common format. Particularly for datasets with thousands of entries, the project team used keyword searches, filtered contents through recognised subject fields, or used designations given by topic or the institution. On occasion, manual filtering was required through the reading of abstracts or titles. For research projects funded either nationally or on a European level, the team consulted publicly available data.

A few months after the completion of the questionnaire, COST members met in Padua, Italy (September 11 and 12, 2023) to undertake a more strictly quantitative study. Over these two days and the exchanges that followed, the team collected additional data for twenty countries, such as the number of institutions that award degrees in musicology and the number of PhDs awarded per country since 2015. Participants were asked to research the information and complete a comparative table. For large countries (such as the UK, Germany, and France), collecting such data was difficult, if not impossible. Given that there is no centralised data collection institution or shared standards, the present data must be considered with caution. What these reflections do indicate, however, is that producing a systematic overview of historical musicology remains complicated, and that the field is not represented coherently in available data sources.

1.3. Quantitative data: a heterogeneous field

The main finding of this data collection work is the absence of any internationally standardised information-gathering institutions or processes for musicology. As Section 1.2 makes clear, it is a uniquely challenging endeavour to assess the discipline in any systematic or quantitative way. This is especially true when considering postdoctoral or fixed-term appointments, whose status and tasks widely vary across countries, and for which little concrete data are available. While this information would no doubt be invaluable for any survey of the discipline as a whole (particularly as a way of comparing the number of available permanent positions and the size of the field), it is currently impossible to draw conclusions from reliable data.

Despite the attempt to collect this data, in virtually all countries it was impossible to quantify exactly:

- the number of permanent members of staff,
- the nature of their contracts and professional status,

- the number of postdoctoral researchers active in the past decade,
- the number of PhDs awarded.

As such, at this stage it is not possible to communicate quantitative data for the entirety of Europe in a way that would make European-wide comparison possible. Given these issues, any comprehensive collection of data would require extensive cross-checking that is not currently feasible.

Nevertheless, some general observations can be made about the state of permanent positions for historical musicologists in European academic institutions. Although the information remains partial, we were able to gather a set of quantitative data through research and exchanges, which are presented here in the form of country-based examples.

Austria: Sixteen permanent professors have been identified in the universities; other staff members are employed on renewable fixed-term contracts.



Exhibition '[A musical journey](#)' at the KBR museum, Brussels

Belgium: Musicology is taught at the universities of [Leuven](#), [Louvain-la-Neuve](#), [Brussels](#), [Liège](#), and [Ghent](#). The number of full-time permanent staff remains modest (e.g., four at KU Leuven). Temporary or permanent researchers funded by the [FWO](#) (Flemish Community) or the [FNRS](#) (French Community) are also affiliated with these universities. Only the FNRS recruits staff on a permanent basis (currently three in musicology). There are collaborations between universities and other institutions, such as the [Royal Library of Belgium \(KBR\)](#) and the [Musical Instrument Museum](#).

Bulgaria: Musicology is taught at several institutions. The [New Bulgarian University](#) employs one professor (PhD), the [Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences](#) employs one

associate professor, and [Shumen University](#) employs one professor (PhD). The [National Academy of Music 'Prof. Pancho Vladigerov'](#) (Национална музикална академия 'Проф. Панчо Владигеров') offers undergraduate and graduate programmes in musicology within its Faculty of Musicology. The New Bulgarian University (Нов български университет), a private institution in Sofia, offers programmes in musicology as part of its Faculty of Arts. [Sofia University 'St. Kliment'](#) (Софийски университет 'Св. Климент Охридски') offers modules in musicology within its Faculty of Arts. The [Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts](#) in Plovdiv (Академия за музикално, танцово и изобразително изкуство – Пловдив) also includes musicology in its programmes.

Croatia: Musicology can be studied only at the [University of Zagreb, Academy of Music](#). The Department of Musicology, established in 1970, has six full-time staff members: one research assistant, three assistant professors, one associate professor, and one full professor. In addition, four musicologists, who also serve as librarians, work in the Library of the Academy of Music. At the [University of Split, Arts Academy](#), Music Department, there are three musicologists: one research assistant, one assistant professor, and one full professor.

France: Thirty-seven universities offer musicology modules, of which thirty-one include historical musicology.

Italy: 114 positions are currently occupied across forty-six universities. These include thirty-three *ordinario* professors, fifty-four *associato* professors, and twenty-seven *ricercatore* professors of various statuses.

Netherlands: Posts are concentrated in two universities, both of which offer BA courses in Musicology. As of 2025, the [University of](#)

BULGARIAN MUSICOLOGY 2/2025

**Българско
музикознание**
2/2025

Музикологическа теория
Музикална история
Музикална история
100 години от рождението
на Андре Букочурчлиев
Андре Букочурчлиев
100-годишнина
Дебюти
Прегледи
Рецензии

Bulgarian Musicology

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[Bulgarian Musicology](#), vol. 2/2025. The leading Bulgarian journal in the field, published by the Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



Muzička akademija Zagreb
Source: [Interkonzalting](#) (2025)

[Amsterdam](#) employs one full professor and one assistant professor of historical musicology, as well as various teaching and research positions in cultural musicology, jazz and improvised music, music cognition, and computational musicology. At [Utrecht University](#), the team in the Faculty of Humanities includes one associate professor and four assistant professors specialised in music before WWI; a full professor and four assistant professors specialise in music and media. Further, the Music Information Computing group in the Faculty of Sciences consists of one full professor, one associate professor, and one assistant professor.

Poland: Musicology is taught at the [University of Warsaw](#), [Jagiellonian University](#) (Kraków), [Adam Mickiewicz University](#) (Poznań), [University of Wrocław](#), [Catholic University of Lublin](#), and [University of Opole](#). Polish universities, together with the [Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences](#), currently employ thirteen professors (including eight specializing in music before WWI), thirty-five habilitated doctors in various positions (including nineteen focusing on music before 1900), and fifty-four doctors (PhD) in various positions (including twenty-six specializing in music before 1900).

Romania: Musicology is taught mainly in arts universities rather than in classic multidisciplinary universities. The [National University of Music Bucharest](#) (Universitatea Națională de Muzică București) offers undergraduate and graduate programmes in musicology within its Faculty of Musicology and Music Education. The [University of Arts in Târgu Mureș](#) (Universitatea de Arte din Târgu Mureș) offers programmes in musicology and ethnomusicology. The [Gheorghe Dima Music Academy in Cluj-Napoca](#) (Academia de Muzică Gheorghe Dima) provides education in various fields of music, including musicology. The [George Enescu National University of Arts in Iași](#) (Universitatea Națională de Arte 'George Enescu' din Iași) offers programmes in musicology, composition, and music education.

Serbia: The [Department of Musicology](#) at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, employs thirteen professors.

Slovakia: Five universities employ fourteen permanent professors, ten of whom are in historical musicology.

Slovenia: Four universities employ thirteen permanent professors, eight of whom are in historical musicology.

Spain: Permanent positions exist in the eleven universities offering musicology.

Switzerland: Musicology is taught at the universities of [Zurich](#), [Basel](#), [Bern](#), [Fribourg](#), [Lausanne](#), and [Geneva](#). In Lausanne, it is offered only as a minor subject. Historical musicology is part of the curriculum at all universities, although the emphasis placed on it varies considerably.

Ukraine: Reforms in the 1990s and 2000s transformed conservatoires into music academies with full university status. These institutions, such as those in [Kyiv](#), [Lviv](#), [Odessa](#), and [Kharkiv](#), now operate under a distinctive dual subordination system: administratively overseen by the [Ministry of Culture](#) while educational standards and degree requirements are defined by the [Ministry of Education and Science](#). This dual framework ensures that music academies balance artistic excellence with academic rigor, consolidating historical musicology as a core part of their profile.

These country impressions demonstrate that the situation of historical musicology in European universities is difficult to access based on the remarkably heterogeneous data collected by our research teams. In some cases, it is possible to determine where historical musicology sits within the curriculum of a particular university (for example in Switzerland, where we know that ‘early music’ as a subfield is a part of the curriculum at all universities), while in others we can determine only that there are a certain number of permanent posts in the discipline. Only sparse information is available about the nature of fixed-term contracts and the particular tasks of historical musicologists employed. It is also worth drawing attention to gender disparity in the discipline. It was obvious from both responses to the questionnaire and subsequent cross-checking that there is a greater representation of men than women in permanent positions in historical musicology across Europe. Interestingly, this imbalance seemed to be in contrast to data that we collected about postdoctoral and doctoral researchers, where women seemed to be better represented than men. While more research would be necessary to determine reasons for these outcomes, it would be worth studying whether the current group of female postdoctoral and doctoral researchers obtain permanent positions, thus leading to greater gender balance in the field.

1.4. Qualitative data: perceptions and challenges

In articulating their perceived positions and issues associated with historical musicology, survey respondents themselves frequently pointed to perceived deficits. Three recurrent themes emerged:

- Lack of funding
- Lack of staff
- Lack of student interest

It is significant that respondents reported these deficits, as staff, students, and research funding are essential parts of any academic discipline. In terms of funding, there have been notable success stories of large-scale grants at national and European levels for historical musicological research (see section 1.6).¹³ Similarly, many universities have at least one permanent member of staff who has some degree of responsibility for musicology associated with earlier historical periods, though this is not always the case. However, there is a perception among respondents that the field is in a weaker position than it was in the past and that there are threats to the long-term sustainability of musicological investigations from a historical perspective.

To help illuminate the likely pipeline of researchers in our field, the research team collected data on the completion of PhDs in historical musicology. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the changing proportion of musicology theses addressing topics in historical musicology in France and the UK respectively. Information gathered on certain national situations for the period 2015–2023 does not show any notable difference from the findings for France and the UK, although the data are not consolidated.

Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Total number of music PhDs	56	71	80	78	50	43	66	65	509
Number of historical musicology PhDs	29	29	23	9	7	10	10	10	127
% of historical musicology PhDs	51,8%	40,8%	28,8%	11,5%	14%	23,3%	15%	15,4%	25%

Table 2: Historical musicology PhDs as a proportion of all PhDs in musicology completed in France (2015–2022)¹⁴

¹³ A forthcoming report from the EarlyMuse STSM held in Malta and hosted by Jeremy Coleman ('The Role of Scientific and Cultural Policy in Shaping Musicology and the Early Music Field') will discuss funding on the EU-level in more detail.

¹⁴ This calculation is based on data from [Theses.fr](https://theses.fr) and includes all the PhDs that study music (i.e. not only those registered in a Music and/or Musicology department, but also theses from Sociology, History or Letter and Arts depart-

Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022*	Total
Total number of musicology PhDs	193	221	217	204	212	144	16	3	1210
Number of historical musicology PhDs	28	30	24	31	19	11	2	1	146
% of historical musicology PhDs	15%	14%	11%	15%	9%	8%	13%	33%	12%

Table 3: Historical musicology PhDs as a proportion of all PhDs in musicology completed in the UK (2015-2022).¹⁵

It is notable that in several countries, doctoral activity in historical musicology remains relatively modest. In Slovenia, for example, in this period only sixteen doctorates were defended at the [University of Ljubljana](#), six of them in historical musicology. In 2023, eight theses were still in progress, of which just two focused on music before 1900. In Bulgaria, activity is similarly concentrated in only a few institutions, with very small numbers of completed or ongoing theses in historical musicology. By contrast, Spain stands out with 135 doctoral theses in musicology, though the data do not make it possible to distinguish the proportion dedicated to historical musicology. Poland also presents a stronger base, with forty-three theses defended, including twenty in historical musicology (up to WWI). Comparable though less detailed data were also collected for Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, and other countries. These figures indicate that, while activity is higher than in smaller countries, it remains unevenly distributed across institutions.

Taken together, these figures give empirical weight to the perception of fragility expressed in the questionnaires, while also revealing considerable disparities: in some national contexts doctoral activity in historical musicology is very limited, while in others it is more substantial but often unevenly structured across institutions. Deficit perceptions do have some basis in reality, and they are not

ments). Eleven PhDs are at the limit of the chosen chronological boundary (WWI): four PhDs which cross the WWI boundary until the 1930s; four until the 1940s; two PhDs about Debussy; and one PhD about Ravel.

15 The [British Library EThOS](#)-system is the most comprehensive, though not completely exhaustive, record of PhD dissertations in the UK. However, the system has still not been restored since the 2023 cyberattack on the library. A [dataset](#) published in 2023 provided metadata for this calculation, which was based on the subject code 'Music' being applied, followed by manual filtering of topics based on abstract and thesis title. It is important to note that data for 2021 and 2022 (marked in grey above) appears to be incomplete and should not be taken as indicative of a collapse in the number of music PhD students in the UK. In instances where topics included a chronological focus spanning the period before/after WWI, these entries were included in calculations.

unique to musicology. Rather, these sentiments echo broader concerns across the humanities about the erosion of humanistic education and research within the university system.

1.5. Career pathways

The career trajectories of historical musicologists in academic or scientific positions across Europe are highly diverse and shaped by national structures. In some countries, advancement follows formalised pathways with additional postdoctoral qualifications, while elsewhere career hierarchies exist without a clear progression between levels. Employment conditions also vary widely, ranging from permanent professorships to fixed-term and project-based contracts. Beyond universities, historical musicologists are employed in a variety of research-driven institutions, including national laboratories, academies of science, and heritage organisations. These bodies differ in size, funding models, and their degree of integration with universities, but all play an important role in sustaining research activity in the field.

1.5.1. University career structures

The career trajectories of historical musicologists across Europe in university positions is varied, and largely dependent on a country's particular academic career structure. Germany, an extreme example, retains the *Habilitation*, which is required for W2 and W3 professorships (the senior ranks of permanent university professors). In order to obtain a professorship, various post-doctoral career pathways are available during which the musicologist works on the *Habilitation*. Musicologists may work during this time as *Privatdozenten*, or *wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* (where they work with a chair of musicology), on a [DFG](#) project (*eigene Stelle*, meaning that the researcher has received public funding for a fixed-term project), or in short-term teaching contracts across different institutions.

Many countries employ musicologists in various hierarchies of professorships. For example, in Italy, historical musicologists are employed as *ordinario*, *associato*, or *ricercatore*, with the highest density in the category of *associato*. A similar hierarchy exists in the Netherlands: positions clearly distinguish between Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor (or *universitair docent*, *universitair hoofddocent*, and *hoogleraar* in Dutch). The lack of a progressive promotion system in the Dutch context means that most academic staff remain at the Assistant Professor level, while Associate Professors tend to be outnumbered by Full Professors. Thus, hierarchies play out in different ways in practice, meaning that

similar terms are not equivalent, even if they may seem so. Differing academic career structures thus shape diverse trajectories for historical musicologists, both within individual European countries and across them.

What is an Assistant Professor?

The term Assistant Professor is applied inconsistently across Europe. The term derives from the American tenure-track model, in which an Assistant Professor is on a fixed-term contract until passing tenure review and receiving a promotion to Associate Professor. On the surface, using a single term in a single language (English) might signal international consistency regarding an individual's career stage. A brief reflection on this title in distinct European contexts is offered below, to demonstrate the heterogeneity of its use in practice. The information is valid as of 2025.

Belgium (Flanders) In recent years, Flemish universities have begun appointing individuals to the post of Assistant Professor (*docent* in Dutch). The initial contract is for a period of 5 years, at which point an evaluation is performed to determine if the individual will be made permanent; if so, they are raised to the post of Associate Professor (*hoofddocent*).

The Netherlands The Dutch system has also recently changed, and also appoints Assistant Professors (or *universitair docenten* in Dutch). Individuals appointed at this level receive a permanent post after only one year, following changes to the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch universities in 2023. However, there is no institutional obligation to promote staff along the professorial ranks, meaning that it is possible to remain at the level of Assistant Professor for one's entire career.

The UK and Ireland The term Assistant Professor is generally used in the UK and Ireland as an equivalence to Lecturer which, in principle, is a permanent position (with eventual possibility of promotion). Nevertheless, in recent years advertisements for Assistant Professorships in the UK often indicate that these positions are fixed-term with no possibility of being made permanent.

1.5.2. Research organisations

Historical musicologists are also employed in research institutions, whose operations and objectives vary from country to country. Some countries have national research organisations, whose work might be closely linked to the country's universities. Some of these bodies are organised around laboratories ([Max-Planck](#) in Germany, [CNRS](#) in France, [CSISC](#) in Spain), while others concentrate their support on permanent or temporary researchers or on research programmes led by musicologists belonging to university institutions. In a number of countries, Academies of Science host researchers and/or research projects. This dynamic process in Germany and Austria also exists in Hungary and Croatia and some other countries.

Entities (laboratories) devoted in one way or another to historical musicology are few and far between. In France, CNRS researchers in historical musicology are mainly located in two laboratories, [IREMUS](#) and [CESR](#); in Spain, the [Institución Milá y Fontanals de Investigación en Humanidades](#) in Barcelona of the [Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas \(CSIC\)](#); in Germany, the [Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics](#) is home to music historians. The number of researchers working on a permanent basis in these few national laboratories is modest compared with the number of archaeologists, historians and even philosophers.

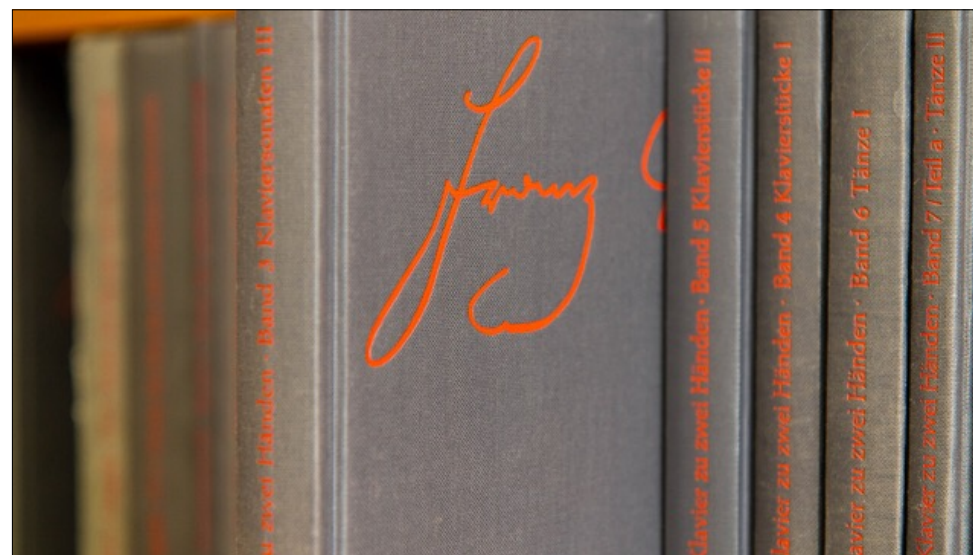
- As of September 2025, there are seven musicologists working at the [CSIC](#), Institución Milá y Fontanals de Investigación en Humanidades ([IMF-CSIC](#)) in Barcelona. Among the CSIC institutes in Spain, the IMF is the only one that has a musicology research area, stemming from the former Instituto Español de Musicología, founded by Higinio Anglés in 1943.
- The [Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics](#) employs one musicologist as a full professor (as of September 2025), along with 10 postdoctoral researchers and 8 doctoral researchers.
- Musicology is represented in several [Centre national de la recherche scientifique](#) laboratories ([IREMUS-Paris](#), [CESR-Tours](#), [CESCM-Poitiers](#), [IRHT-Paris](#), [CRAL-Paris](#), [IRCAM-Paris](#)). The staff have various statuses, ranging from research or study engineers to researchers. Altogether, this involves approximately thirty people.



Project website for [Virtual Music Heritage](#)

Elsewhere in Europe (particularly in Germany and Austria), academies of science host researchers or projects. In some instances, these researchers are permanent fixtures, while in others, highly-specialised researchers are recruited for concrete projects that span multiple years.

- The [Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz](#), for example, co-ordinates a programme of long-term projects funded by the federal and state governments through the regional Academies of Arts and Sciences brought together in the [Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften](#), principally for the production of large scale complete editions of music, but also for example including RISM. As of 2024 the academies fund seventeen long-term musicological research teams (*Forschungsstellen*), often in collaboration with German universities and sometimes external institutions, employing permanent researchers (the majority with a doctorate in musicology), researchers on temporary contracts (often doctoral fellows), and qualified technical personnel. Collectively, the musicological projects of the *Akademienunion* constitute one of the largest employers of musicologists in Germany, with forty researchers on permanent contracts and sixty on part-time, open-ended contracts (total of c. 75 FTE, not counting the senior, salaried university professors who direct the projects). Additionally, there are eleven funded PhD fellows (*Qualifikationsstellen*) on temporary contracts. The Akademienunion in 2022 published a comprehensive overview of music-historical research projects, demonstrating the interest in and vitality of musicological research.¹⁶
- The situation is similar at the [Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften](#), where permanent researchers from Akademie and from other institutions, as well as contract researchers, work together on ambitious multi-year projects, including the recently-completed collected edition of the works of Franz Schubert.¹⁷



Neue Schubert-Ausgabe, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna

16 Union der Deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften (2022), '[Forschung fürs Notenpult: Musikwissenschaftliche Editionen im Akademienprogramm](#)'.

17 *EarlyMuse* WG 3 Publications has undertaken a study of the state of monumental editions in Europe under the direction of Dr. Andrea Puentes-Blanco; see Andrea Puentes-Blanco, Metoda Kokole, Philippe Vendrix, María Gembero-Ustároz, Rebecca Herissone, Christian Troelsgård, Klemen Grabnar, Birgit Lodes, Kateryna Schöning, and Vilena Vrbanić (2024), '[The monumental edition in the digital age: creating a sustainable future](#)'.

- The [Institute for Musicology of Hungary \(Zenetudományi Intézet\)](#) has existed for more than forty years. Formerly part of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in 2019 it joined the [ELTE Research Centre for the Humanities](#) (HUN-REN-RCH). There are departments of folk music research and early music history, as well as the [Bartók Archives](#). The Institute employs some nineteen researchers (as of 2025) across the various departments. Links exist with the [Liszt Ferenc Academy](#).
- The [Department for the History of Croatian Music at the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#) was founded in 1980 and currently employs four staff members. Their salaries are funded by public funds, and they also manage nationally funded projects supported by the Croatian Science Foundation.
- The [Institute of Musicology \(IM\)](#) is one of the smallest of the eighteen institutes of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and is an independent, non-university organisation. As of October 2025, the IM employs five researchers and one PhD student/junior researcher. The IM, like other institutes of the Research Centre, is financed solely through its own efforts—which means successful application for research programmes and projects on a national level with the National Research and Innovation Agency ([ARIS](#)), or internationally. Each programme is essentially a 6-year research project, which is intended to enable more stable financing.
- The [Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences \(IM SAS\)](#) is one of the forty-five institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and is not connected to the university. As of December 2024, the IM SAS employs thirteen senior and junior researchers and four PhD students. It is thereby one of the smallest institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The institute is financed partially through the state budget, and partially through their own efforts. IM SAS researchers apply for research programmes and projects on a national level with the Slovak National Research Agencies VEGA (Scientific grant agency of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences) and APVV (the Slovak Research and Development Agency), and internationally for international research projects. Each programme is essentially a 4-year research project, designed to provide more stable financing.
- The [Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#) is one of the eight institutes of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. It is the first and only institute of musicology in the Republic of Serbia and the oldest in the former Yugoslavia. The Institute has three departments: Archival-Historical Department (history of Serbian artistic and church music and contemporary Serbian music), Ethnomusicological Department, and Theoretical Department (general musicological issues). Currently, the Institute employs twenty-three musicologists and ethnomusicologists. It is financed with public funds.
- The [Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences](#) employs fifteen musicologists in its Department of Music, including one full professor, five habilitated doctors, six doctors, and three PhD students. The [Fryderyk Chopin Institute](#) employs six people in the library, which also carries out research projects in the field of digital musicology.

The varied nature of this structure is also reflected in research funding. As the examples above demonstrate, musicology departments regularly have to apply for funding to guarantee their survival beyond four, five or six-year periods, presenting challenges to career progression and long-term planning for complex research programmes.

Outside of, but often connected to, universities, are publicly-supported institutions (such as the [Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles](#), [Alamire Foundation](#), [Beethoven-Haus Bonn](#), Berlin Kultur), and in rare cases, completely autonomous ones ([Fondazione Cini](#), [Fondazione Bru Zane](#)). These institutions have a primarily cultural vocation, based on the recognition and enhancement of musical heritages (French Romantic music, French Baroque music, Flemish polyphony, Beethoven), often those connected to a particular country. The [Alamire Foundation](#) in Leuven (Belgium), for example, is a joint venture between the University of Leuven and [Musica Impulscentrum](#). Focussing on music in or connected to the Low Countries before the end of the 18th century, the Foundation aims to bridge the worlds of scholarship and performance. Alongside providing an outreach platform for historical musicologists connected to Leuven University, the Foundation has funding streams in its own right that allow it to employ musicologists on fixed-term and permanent contracts. Historical musicologists can also be found working in libraries such as the [British Library](#), [the Royal Library of Belgium](#), the [Bibliothèque Nationale de France](#), and the [Bayerische Staatsbibliothek](#), and museums such as the [Victoria & Albert Museum](#) (London), [Musée des Instruments de Musique](#) (Brussels), and [Musée de la Musique](#) (Paris).



[Event](#) organised by the KBR and Alamire Foundation

1.6. Funded projects

Since 2015, the EU has funded several types of projects involving musicologists: individual projects ([ERC](#), [Marie Skłodowska-Curie](#)), collective projects of varying scope (H2020, Horizon Europe) and sometimes projects under the [Creative Europe](#) programme. The thirty-three musicological ERCs (Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced) awarded since 2015 highlight the state of work in the field: work in historical musicology, research on recent or contemporary situations, explorations of technologies (digital, audio), or cognitive science issues involving music. The presence of historical musicology is clearly displayed in twelve of these thirty-three projects, and a majority of these projects concern music pre-1600 (eight out of twelve) (see Table 4). An identical observation can be made for Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSC) grants, which enable the initiation of research projects that could take on even greater scope at the end of the two years of funding. 108 grants have been awarded to projects related to music, of which sixty-six are in the field of historical musicology.



Horizon Europe project *Polifonia*

EU project	ERC		MSC		H2020/HorizonEU	
	Early music	Others	Early music	Others	Early music	Others
2015	DTHPS ; ARTECHNE		Transnational Localism			
2016	PERFORMART	Con Espressione				
2017		IRiMaS ; SloMo ; TECSOME				
2018	AMBH ; MiMus ; ARTSOUNDSCAPES ; NEEM	PMSB ; NEUME ; SONORA ; BioMusic				TROMPA
2019	MUSICOL ; DIDONE ; ArsNova	Rhythm and Brains ; PREMUS ; CIPHER ; CREATIVE IPR	DiCrEd	CEJaMS		BEATIK
2020	BENEDICAMUS	MUSAiC ; SoundKnowledge	MigrEnAb	MORPH ; NONORMOPERA ; DJMI Zouj		
2021	NEMUS ; Transopera	MUSICSTREAM ; PREMUS ; MUSICOM ; MusAI ; MUTE ; DigiScore ; PoetryDA	REWID ; SPECTACLECONOMICS ; CaPer	TECKNO ; ONTOMUSIC ; WABP ; CONGOTOPIA ; ARPOEXMUS ; LI-RAP		Polifonia
2022	LAUDARE	MUSICCONNECT ; Whither Music ; ECura ; TAPTAPP	AVIGNONMUSIC ; MIKE-AGM ; Harmony on the Edge ; MARTINET ; LA Music ; Invention ; ReSound ; MUSRES	MEFCPFS ; PoPoliBB ; ROMAVANTGARDE ; Lullabyte ; SensBrain ; IEJCGRMJ ; MuSAiC ; OPANDA ; POYESIS		ReSilence
2023	SCRIBEMUS ; BROKENSONG ; RESOUND ; TOHR	IMPRODECO	MIME ; MusiConduits	EA-DIGIFOLK ; RACISMUS ; KDR-UiB ; PPA ; SynchInConcert ; RomChords ; LOMUS ; PHYLOMUSIC ; IIMPAQCT	REPERTORIUM	OpenMusE ; Music360 ; Fair MusE
2024			TureckBachXXI			
2025		REM@KE ; DIACHRONY	MARGICANTUS ; MUSICVIM ; MUSICVIMI ; RomChords ; SOUNDSHIP	STEP ; PlaceMUS ; NEUROWORD ; FUNCTUMUS ; ANIMA	PlaceMUS-XR ; MusicSphere	

Table 4: Selected EU funded-projects¹⁸

18 The two keywords were used for the [CORDIS search](#): ‘music’ and ‘musicology’. Projects in the fields of informatics, acoustics, and psychology are thus included.

Beyond EU-wide funded projects, national calls for research projects also receive submissions concerning music, although it is not possible to carry out such surveys for all of the countries concerned. Sources of funding sometimes circulate internally, as is the case for the academies of science in some countries. In any case, the visibility of historical musicology is assured in Germany and the UK (as is detailed below). In other countries, only a relatively small number of national or sometimes multilateral funding sources concern musicology, even though it is present in many universities and research laboratories.

In the UK, the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) (a government funding body) has funded seventy-eight music-related projects and fellowships since 2015¹⁹, twelve of which can be considered related to historical musicology. These projects attracted around 21% of the funding awarded to music projects, totalling £3.3 million.

In Germany, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft funds projects in the fields of historical musicology, systematic musicology, and ethnomusicology, as well as in the sciences and psychology. The database accessible from the [Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft](#) website provides information under the field 'Kunst-, Musik-, Theater- und Medienwissenschaften' or by using the keywords 'Musikwissenschaft' or, more fruitfully, 'Musik' to enable the browsing of results. Based on an initial survey of data from 2015 onwards, approximately twenty projects have been funded each year that relate in one way or another to the history of music or the processing of sources useful to the history of music. The amount of funding awarded and duration of each grant vary.

In France, the [Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique](#) (French National Agency for Scientific Research) funds scientific, technological, social and historical projects concerning music. However, a search of the database does not reveal a significant number of projects related to historical musicology (no more than five between 2015 and 2022). Sociology, technology, and the psychology of music are more widely represented, numbering more than half of the funded projects. It is also of note that those projects which do focus on historical musicology often feature a digital dimension. Historical

19 Project summaries were not always publicly available and awards were not delineated by subject specialisation. There may be further funded projects and fellowships which included historical musicology that are not reflected here. Music technology and sociology of music elements might be similarly omitted.

musicology has benefited from the support of the Secrétariat général à l'investissement in various forms, as its own initiative (for example, the [LABEX Groupe de Recherches Expérimentales sur l'Acte Musical](#) at the University of Strasbourg) or as part of a wider institutional dynamic (for example, the [Collegium Musicae](#) at Sorbonne University).

In Italy, between 2017 and 2020, only five projects in the field of historical musicology emerged from consulting the national database, [PRIN](#). The recovery plans put in place since then have significantly increased the number of music history projects (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza). However, it is not yet possible to identify them on the dedicated website. A recent call, for example, mobilised the consultancies in conjunction with the universities to initiate new models of collaboration.

The identification of funded research projects certainly serves to measure the relative weight of musicology in the funding of science at a national level. If carried out systematically, this identification could also lead to an evaluation of post-doctoral research opportunities for the many musicology PhDs in European universities.

1.7. Preliminary conclusions

Taken together, the evidence presented in this section underscores the fragmented and uneven landscape of (data on) historical musicology across Europe. The field is institutionally recognised in most countries, but the degree of stability, visibility, and integration into broader academic structures varies considerably. Attempts to establish a comparative overview reveal the vitality of research activity and the persistent obstacles of, among other things, limited data and varying academic hierarchies. At the same time, historical musicology continues to have an important (if vulnerable) place in Europe's research and higher education systems. The findings presented here thus serve as a foundation for more detailed analysis of career pathways, institutional support and long-term prospects for the discipline.

2. Musicology in Higher Education Music Institutions (HMEIs)

2.1. Introduction

This section examines the role, evolution, and current status of historical musicology within European Higher Music Education Institutions, henceforth referred to as HMEIs, in line with the terminology used by the [Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen \(AEC\)](#).²⁰ HMEIs include institutions commonly referred to as conservatoires, music academies, or colleges of music. Drawing on extensive research from across Europe, the present study explores the complex institutional settings, pedagogical models, and research capabilities that characterise historical musicology in these specialised educational environments. The findings reveal considerable diversity in how historical musicology has been integrated into HMEI programmes over time, with significant variations in curriculum design, research support, and faculty qualifications across different national contexts. While HMEIs have generally emphasised musical performance training alongside, for instance, composition or conducting, historical musicology has increasingly been recognised as an essential component of a comprehensive musical education, albeit with implementation approaches that often differ markedly from university models.

Historical musicology is represented in virtually all HMEIs across Europe but with considerable variation in coverage, conceptualisation, and delivery. In order to summarise and articulate the different ways in which this happens, and to understand how this informs the status of the discipline in practical terms, we need to keep in mind that the notion of HMEIs encompasses a variety of institutional models, shaped by historical and national factors.

As a consequence, the embedding of historical musicology in curricula, as well as the content and structure of these curricula, is just as varied.

20 The [Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen](#) (AEC) is the European association representing higher music education institutions, promoting quality, diversity, and international cooperation in artistic training.

2.2. Historical musicology in HMEIs

Across Europe, there is substantial variation in how historical musicology is defined, implemented, and valued within HMEIs. A fundamental question concerns how narrowly ‘historical musicology’ should be defined, and in particular whether it should be distinguished from ‘music history’ and ‘music theory’ within the taught curriculum. For practical purposes, the present study adopts the inclusive definition of ‘musicology’ given at the beginning of this report, namely, that it is understood as any activity involving high-level intellectual engagement with music history. This definition allows for the integration of historical inquiry with performance practice, a hallmark of education in HMEIs across the continent.²¹

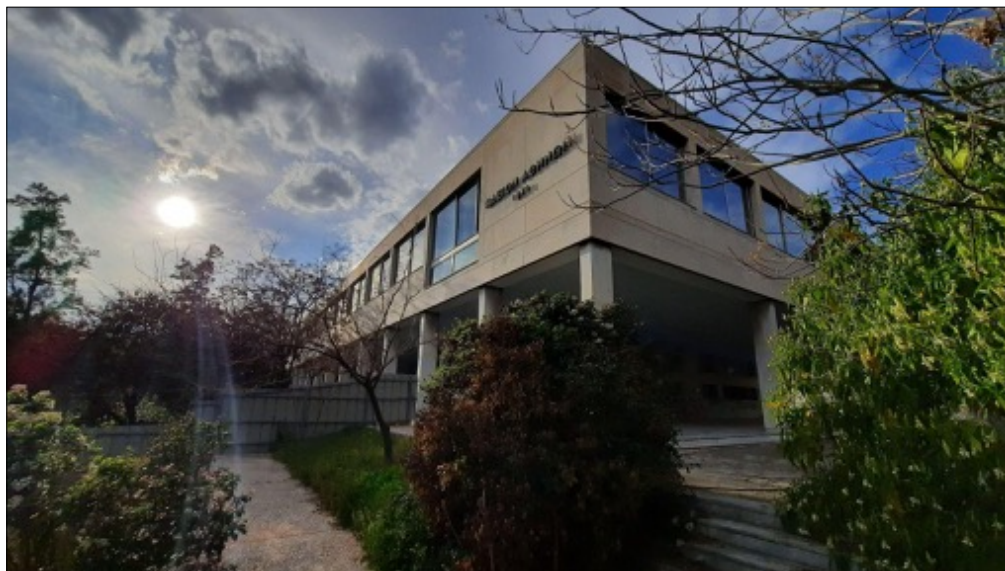
The presence of a dedicated musicology department within HMEIs often serves as an indicator of the institutional value placed on historical musicology. This structural approach varies significantly across Europe: in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Ukraine, and some other countries, some HMEIs maintain distinct musicology departments. In the United Kingdom, such content is usually integrated within broader ‘academic studies’ departments. In Germany, the organisational structures vary considerably between institutions. Musicology at German HMEIs (*Hochschule für Musik*) is a cross-sectional subject: students of all music-related subjects (BA, MA, teacher training) must take modules in music history. Nevertheless, there is also a considerable number of HMEIs that have their own musicology department. The diversity of structures reflects different national traditions, institutional histories, and educational philosophies. In some cases, the domain of historical musicology in HMEIs has been gradually subsumed under a general music theory area, encompassing subjects such as ear training, analysis, and acoustics, and repositioned primarily as curricular support for practice-based programmes.

²¹ See section 2.3. “Defining HMEIs in higher musical education”.

Case Study: Historical Musicology Teaching in Greece

Reaching a deeper understanding of the current landscape through the lens of Historical Musicology education in Greece requires an analysis of the broader corpus of studies defining the performing arts. This is because the teaching of music history is an integral part of those studies. The evolution of so-called 'Conservatoire studies' in Greece necessitates a qualitative distinction between institutions that have historically covered and continue to comprehensively cover the entire spectrum of educational domains governing higher-level education in music performance (Performing Arts practice), and those that, for reasons outside the scope of this study, do not. The foundational concept of the term *Odeion* (Conservatoire), as stated in the founding declaration of the Athens Conservatoire and especially in the curriculum implemented therein, highlights the need for comprehensive coverage of all academic domains that define music as a performing art. This was addressed by establishing specialised schools within the Conservatoire's structure, each supervised by an administrative board (*Euphor*) for the Schools of Percussion, Wind Instruments, and Strings. After the foundation of Music Studies departments in Universities, graduates of Musicology, including those specialised in Historical Musicology, may be appointed to teach theoretical subjects at a Conservatoire without holding a Conservatoire degree as a strict prerequisite.

In this framework, the School of Theoretical Studies within a Conservatoire includes the study of Music History in addition to modules in Music Theory and Advanced Music Theory subjects. This theoretical education directly relates to the discipline of Historical Musicology and includes modules in Music History, Musical Morphology, and Organology. These subjects are taught in Greece as part of the curriculum initially designed and implemented at the Athens Conservatoire, and subsequently incorporated into the series of state laws governing the instruction of these subjects since that time.



Athens Conservatoire.
Photo by StrangeTraveler,
29 May 2020. Licensed
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2.3. Defining HMEIs in higher musical education

A defining characteristic of HMEIs is their focus on practical musical training, which can be informed by historical musicological research. These specialist institutions typically do not house the full range of faculties found in universities. They generally comprise one or a small number of departments focused on practice-related activities, music, or performing arts. In many countries, HMEIs operate as institutions independent from universities, while in others, they function as components of universities or (for example in some cases in the United Kingdom) as semi-independent faculties of broad-based universities.

It is important to mention that not all institutions labelled ‘conservatoires’ are fully integrated into higher education systems, defined as institutions of tertiary-level specialist learning and research. This ambiguous status has created challenges in several countries, particularly regarding the recognition of conservatoire qualifications within broader higher education frameworks. For instance, in Greece, a legal distinction between public and private conservatoires has significantly impacted their recognition status in higher education. In some countries, like France and Spain, a clear distinction is made between pre-college conservatoires and higher-level institutions. By contrast, in Portugal and Hungary, the term conservatoire refers exclusively to pre-college music education. Elsewhere, including Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Serbia, and Romania, ‘academies/faculties of music’ are considered to be equivalent to ‘conservatoires’ in higher education. Nevertheless, they can be associated with a university. While these institutions include a core emphasis on performance training, they maintain a broader profile. Musicological research, which often includes ethnomusicology, music theory, and music education, is an equally important area of academic activity. These faculties are sometimes affiliated with universities, which can help them to develop comprehensive academic programmes and research agendas that extend beyond the performance-focused conservatoire model.

Case Study: Music Academies in Ukraine

Following the educational reforms of the 1990s and early 2000s, conservatoires in Ukraine were transformed into music academies and granted university-level status, starting with the establishment by Presidential decree of the [Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music](#) in 1995. This transformation elevated seven major music institutions, including those in Kyiv, Lviv, Odessa, and Kharkiv, and provided a university-like framework of faculties and specialised departments that allowed them to offer comprehensive academic programmes at bachelor, masters, and doctoral levels. Unlike standard higher education institutions, Ukrainian music academies operate under a distinctive dual subordination structure. The Ministry of Culture provides primary administrative oversight, while the Ministry of Education and Science establishes educational standards and degree requirements. This dual governance system creates a balance where music academies maintain both artistic excellence and academic rigour, positioning them as key cultural and educational institutions that combine specialised artistic focus with rigorous academic standards.

2.4. Diverse institutional models

European HMEIs demonstrate remarkable diversity in their institutional models, reflecting different national traditions and historical developments. The relationship between historical musicology and HMEI education has also evolved differently in different European contexts. In some European countries—such as Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and the United Kingdom—HMEIs mirror university structures or are integrated into universities, often with dedicated departments for historical musicology.

In Western Europe, a wide range of institutional models can be observed. On the one hand, in the United Kingdom, HMEIs generally do not have separate musicology departments but instead incorporate historical studies within broader ‘academic studies’ curricula. In contrast, in countries such as Germany, France, Lithuania and Italy, as further examples, some institutions maintain distinct musicology departments while others follow more integrated approaches.

Case Study: Institutional Models and Recognition Frameworks in some European HMEIs

In **France**, the [École Normale Cortot](#) faces challenges due to its ambiguous position as a private institution modelled on a public conservatoire. It was founded in 1919 to welcome foreign students who would not be admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris. It is therefore no surprise that it is based on a very similar model to the [CNSMDP](#) (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris), sometimes even sharing professors. While a private music academy, it draws on a public model and offers musicology modules taught by fully-fledged professors holding CNSM prizes and PhDs.

In **Portugal**, a reform in the 1980s restructured music education by creating polytechnic schools such as [ESML](#) and [ESMAE](#), which inherited the HMEI's role in professional music training and began awarding recognised degrees in performance, composition, and related fields. At the same time, musicology was assigned to the university sector, with [NOVA University Lisbon](#) establishing the first dedicated programme. This created a functional distinction: polytechnics focused on artistic practice, while universities specialised in research-based musicology. From the 1990s onward, this divide began to blur as higher education institutions like Aveiro, Évora, and Minho launched programmes that included performance and composition. While musicology has remained within the university system, the boundaries between academic and artistic training have become increasingly porous.

2.5. Academic staff and qualifications

In terms of staffing, virtually all HMEIs employ academics whose role is exclusively or primarily that of a musicologist. However, their status varies greatly. Many institutions—typically those that place greater emphasis on musicological research and include musicology prominently in their curriculum—employ a number of musicologists on full-time permanent contracts, often as professors, as well as on temporary contracts. Staff members are expected to carry out research, and their teaching load reflects the expectation that they will be active researchers. Such researchers are typically required or expected to hold doctorates (PhDs), and in some countries, also the *Habilitation* (a post-doctoral qualification).

A second group of academic and artistic staff at HMEIs comprises the representatives of the academic mid-level faculty (e.g. *Akademischer Mittelbau*). This group includes examined or graduate academic personnel who do not hold a professorship. It also encompasses so-called 'mid-level professorships' (e.g. *Assistenzprofessuren*), namely associate professors, as well as staff from third-party-funded research projects who can be recruited for teaching. These researchers may hold temporary, fixed-

term contracts or permanent positions. Historical musicologists may also be employed in other parts of HMEIs (such as in libraries or archives), contributing to the institution’s research culture, and sometimes to teaching, even where this is not their primary role.

There are national differences in career development and mobility, in particular concerning the possibility of moving between HMEIs and universities as part of standard career progression. Such differences can have far-reaching consequences on salaries, as well as the stability or fragility of the positions involved.

Case Study: Institutional Mobility between HMEIs and Universities

In **Lithuania**, according to the Lithuanian Law on Science and Education, the academic title of professor holds equal formal status across higher education institutions, including both universities and academies. However, in practice, direct transfer of this status between institutions can be challenging due to differing institutional requirements and expectations. While general national guidelines for academic ranks exist, each higher education institution sets its own specific criteria, which can result in limited mobility between universities and HMEIs where there are differences in expectation. At the [Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre](#), professors undergo a certification process every five years, during which they must demonstrate continued professional and academic activity in line with the institution’s expectations. Should these criteria not be fully met, the title may be revised, for example, by transitioning to the rank of associate professor. Additionally, remuneration for professorial positions may vary between universities and academies, reflecting institutional policies and funding structures.

In **Spain**, HMEI professors are generally not allowed to hold additional jobs, due to incompatibility laws. However, there are certain exceptions. Professors may be permitted to teach part time at a university as an Associate Lecturer (*Profesor Asociado*), or to work in the public cultural sector. That said, approval for such secondary employment is not automatic. Teaching schedules must not overlap and regional governments can still deny the request if other legal conditions are not met. In any case, being a professor in an HMEI does not automatically grant access to university teaching. Universities have their own independent selection processes, and any professor in an HMEI who wishes to teach at a university must start from scratch and meet all the specific requirements set by the university system.

2.6. Required qualifications across Europe

The qualifications required for gaining a permanent position teaching historical musicology in European HMEIs vary considerably across national contexts, reflecting different traditions and institutional arrangements. While a master’s degree in musicology or a related field is typically the minimum requirement, many institutions favour candidates with doctoral qualifications, or indeed require that qualification outright. Although a significant number of higher education systems from

COST countries joined the [Bologna Process](#) to establish the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with a unified degree framework, the Bologna Process did not standardise requirements for teaching posts. The requirements can therefore differ drastically across the European higher-education landscape, both in the statutory frameworks and sector practices.

The following information on specific national contexts is based on contributions provided by COST Action CA21161 members and representatives of the following countries who were present at the COST meeting on 5–7 May 2025 at the Athens Conservatoire and at the Short-Term Scientific Mission on 26–30 May 2025 at the University of València. The methodological approach for the collection of the data presented below combines open-access legislative sources and expert input from members of the [COST Action EarlyMuse](#). The countries represented correspond to those for which verified data was available, or where data and information was contributed by national experts involved in the Action. The more significant presence of certain countries within the network has facilitated more comprehensive data collection for those national contexts.

2.6.1. Albania

In Albania, becoming a professional musicologist generally requires a strong background in performance, typically advanced studies in an instrument such as piano or violin, as well as a bachelor's degree in musicology or a related field from a recognised university, with master's and doctoral degrees necessary for higher-level academic or research careers. The [Faculty of Music at the University of Arts in Tirana](#) is the primary institution, initially modelled on the Soviet system, combining theory and practical training with ideological content. A five-year BA-MA programme is standard, with theses supervised by staff members holding PhDs. The faculty established postgraduate programmes in 2005, including Master's and doctoral cycles. The curriculum emphasises music history, harmony, ethnomusicology, and research skills to prepare specialists for academia, cultural preservation, and artistic development. Master's theses and PhD cycles can only be supervised by teaching staff with PhDs in Musicology.

2.6.2. Croatia

In Croatia, apart from the [University of Zagreb Academy of Music](#), musicologists also teach at academies of music similarly housed within universities (Split, Osijek and Pula), but their teaching

is generally confined to music history overview modules. The careers of all these individuals, like those of every member of the academic community in Croatia, is regulated in a specific professional field. For musicians this field is music, for musicologists it is the humanities. The employees of these four institutions must therefore develop their careers according to the standards of the field in question. As a result, individuals can begin teaching musicological modules (including history of music overview modules) without a PhD, typically as assistant or lecturer under the supervision of a professor. However, to become fully independent, they need to acquire a PhD in musicology or on a musicological topic.

2.6.3. France

In France, while a master's degree is mandatory for teaching historical musicology in HMEIs, candidates with PhDs enjoy an advantage when applying for positions in larger institutions such as the national [conservatoires of Paris](#) and [Lyon](#) (CNSMD) or other regional HMEIs. Interestingly, the preferred degree for most positions in HMEIs appears to be the state diploma in music teaching awarded by HMEIs, rather than university degrees, highlighting a structural issue in the professional pathways available to young musicologists.

2.6.4. Germany and Austria

In German-speaking countries, the path to a professorship in musicology at an HMEI usually parallels that of a university professorship. It requires the *Habilitation* (or equivalent) following a doctorate (Dr. phil.). Therefore, it is possible to switch from an HMEI to a university and vice versa, allowing for a flexible career development. Academics usually start teaching on semester-based teaching contracts (i.e. *Lehrauftrag*) after completing their PhD, and increasingly also while still doctoral students. Federal states run both the HMEIs and the universities. A similar model is followed in Poland, Serbia, and Croatia where switching between HMEIs and universities is possible, but the principle difference is that an *Habilitation* is not required in these countries.

2.6.5. Greece

In Greece, two qualifications are required to teach Historical Musicology in HMEIs. The *Ptychion* is an HMEI qualification, representing a junior academic qualification. The second is the *Diploma*, which includes both performance and teaching components and is considered equivalent to a university

bachelor's degree. A Master's or PhD is appreciated as an additional qualification, but it is not mandatory. HMEIs confer the *Ptychion* and *Diploma* degrees, which are recognised by the Ministry of Culture; however, these degrees have not yet been formally aligned with the European Qualification Framework. Positions within HMEIs are not permanent. In practice, salaries are calculated on the basis of hours completed and remain stable even though contracts are not open-ended.

2.6.6. Italy

In Italy, the minimum qualification required to teach historical musicology at HMEIs is a Master's degree in musicology. Although a PhD is not formally required, it is increasingly common among successful candidates, reflecting a gradual shift towards higher academic standards more closely aligned with those of universities.

This trend coincides with significant institutional developments. During the 2023–2024 academic year, approximately fifty professors of music history were appointed in Italian conservatoires. That same year, these institutions, formally recognised as higher education institutions under the Higher Education Institutions for Artistic, Musical, and Choreographic Training (AFAM) system, were, for the first time, authorised to offer accredited doctoral programmes. While most of these programmes focus on artistic research, several leading conservatoires (e.g., [Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi' in Milan](#), [Conservatorio 'Santa Cecilia' in Rome](#)) have introduced doctoral curricula that include historical musicology and music theory as core academic components.

These developments reflect a progressive alignment with the Bologna Process, fully integrating HMEI degrees into the three-cycle structure (Bachelor–Master–Doctorate) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The increasing presence of PhD-qualified staff, along with the growing involvement of Italian HMEIs in Erasmus+ programmes and EU-funded research projects indicate the consolidation of HMEIs as academic institutions with research capacity and enhanced international collaboration.

2.6.7. Poland

In Poland, the situation is complex due to the existence of two parallel educational paths: university musicology departments and music theory departments within music academies (HMEIs). Historically, academic staff responsible for teaching music history in Polish music academies often had some

musicological background, typically at the doctoral level. However, this pattern has shifted in recent years, as Polish music academies have gained the authority to award doctoral degrees (equivalent to the Doctor of Musical Arts). Consequently, music history in these institutions is increasingly taught by music theorists rather than specialised musicologists. However, music theorists (holding a DMA degree equivalent) typically are not hired by universities; the exceptions are short-term contracts for lectures on contemporary music, music acoustics, jazz music, etc. This apparent separation between these two types of institution is justified by the specific nature of the curricula.

2.6.8. Portugal

Portugal's public music schools, such as [ESML in Lisbon](#) and [ESMAE in Porto](#), are required to comply with national regulations concerning faculty qualifications, which have become increasingly stringent since the Bologna reform. Over the past fifteen years, this has led to a significant rise in the number of faculty members holding doctoral degrees. At ESMAE, for example, approximately half of the full-time academic staff now hold the PhD. However, not all of these doctorates are in musicology, and only a subset of PhD holders actively engage in formalised research, in part because it is not a contractual requirement. Importantly, higher education institutions in Portugal enjoy autonomy in defining the academic and professional profiles of the staff they wish to recruit, including the type of third-cycle training they consider appropriate. When hiring in theoretical areas, music schools often favour candidates capable of covering a broad range of subjects such as music theory and analysis, music history, and music pedagogy. As a result, while the advanced academic qualifications of HMEI staff have increased, research in historical musicology within these institutions remains uneven and often dependent on individual initiative rather than institutional research agendas.

2.6.9. Spain

Spain's regulatory framework for accessing teaching positions in HMEIs has progressively aligned with European standards, particularly those of Italy. Since 2019, candidates must hold a research-oriented Master's degree to be eligible for public competitive examinations (*oposiciones*). However, between the late 1980s and this reform, no nationwide examinations were held. Recruitment was delegated to regional governments, which applied disparate criteria, resulting in a highly heterogeneous system

among HMEIs. As a result, many interim professors remained in post for fifteen to twenty years, while tenured faculty retired without systematic replacement.

This prolonged reliance on interim staff raised concerns on the European level regarding employment stability and compliance with Directive 1999/70/EC on fixed-term work. In response, Spanish authorities launched an extraordinary regularisation process in 2023, granting permanent positions to most interim professors without requiring them to pass competitive exams. Because many of these appointments predated the 2019 reform, a significant portion of the regularised faculty do not meet current academic qualification standards, particularly the requirement of holding a Master's degree.

The recently enacted Law 1/2024 introduces a new academic career structure for higher artistic education. It stipulates that access to permanent full professorships now requires a doctoral degree, replacing the former category of *Catedrático de Música y Artes Escénicas*, which did not mandate a PhD. A transitional provision allows current holders to retain their status and salary or apply for reclassification under the new title (*Catedrático de Enseñanzas Artísticas Superiores*) upon obtaining a doctorate within ten years. However, as the law permits incumbents to remain in post without meeting this requirement, the incentive to pursue doctoral studies remains limited. Moreover, since competencies in education are devolved, the effective implementation of the law will depend on each regional government's regulatory development.

2.6.10. Türkiye

In Türkiye, because all HMEIs were connected to universities with a decree-law in 1982, artist-instructor positions gradually disappeared and the minimum requirement for undergraduate-level teaching has since been an MA degree. Although musicology has been part of the academic agenda since the late nineteenth century, the academic organisation of historical musicology has yet to be clearly defined as a distinct field. The only historical musicology MA programme in Türkiye requires a PhD (or DMA equivalent) degree for teaching positions, but the discipline itself is not specified. Current faculty hold degrees ranging from a DMA in piano to a PhD in theology. In addition to the twenty undergraduate programmes in musicology throughout the country, there are graduate programmes in various disciplines (music theory, history, art history, Islamic art, Turkish literature, etc.), where a focus on historical musicology is possible, building interdisciplinarity into the very structure of the field.

2.6.11. Ukraine

In Ukraine, musicologists teaching at HMEIs must meet qualification requirements that are uniformly applied across all higher education institutions, as regulated by identical legislative acts from Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science. The academic career ladder consists of three main levels: Assistant (an entry-level position requiring at least a Master's degree and demonstrated scholarly potential), Associate Professor (Docent, requiring a PhD/Candidate of Sciences degree and published research), and Full Professor (requiring a Doctor of Sciences degree, significant research contributions, and extensive teaching experience). For the music field specifically, the conferment of Associate Professor or Professor titles also requires extensive concert activity, archived audio and video recordings, and recognition as a laureate of international competitions and festivals. Each position demands progressively higher qualifications in both academic achievement and pedagogical experience, with promotions based on a combination of research output, artistic achievements, and peer recognition. These qualifications are governed by standardized national frameworks that ensure consistency across all disciplines in higher education institutions.

2.6.12. United Kingdom

In the UK, there is more of an established practice than a formal legal framework for career progression and appointments to posts that involve teaching historical musicology. While a PhD is not required by law, the professionalization of the discipline and sector, along with the desire of conservatoires to raise their status and credibility as research institutions, has resulted in a de facto requirement of a doctorate for permanent academic positions. HMEIs are in this respect no different from universities; a candidate would be expected to hold a PhD and have established research and publication in



[Roshen Concert Hall](#) in Kiev, Ukraine

aspects of historical musicology, demonstrating leadership within their field. Each institution (whether university or conservatoire) can define its own requirements within the very broad subject benchmark statements set by the UK Qualifications Authority (Ofqual). Career progression typically follows the sequence of Lectureship, Senior Lectureship, Readership, and Professorship. Movement of historical musicologists between universities and HMEIs is not proscribed by law as it is in Italy; it will depend much more on the specialist interests of the institution concerned and on how an individual musicologist may be able to contribute to teaching and research.

Table 5 provides a comparative overview of the minimum academic qualifications required for teaching in HMEIs across the countries represented. It outlines the qualifications established by national legislation for teaching at BA and MA levels, doctoral supervision, the requirement of a PhD or habilitation, and the recognition of artistic output. The information reflects current legal and regulatory frameworks, with some exceptions addressed in the following lines.

Country	Minimum Qualification for BA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for MA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for PhD Supervision	Doctorate Required for permanent position?	Habilitation Required?	Artistic Output Recognised?	Notes
Albania	PhD	PhD	PhD*	Yes	No*	Yes	The qualification system is standardised across all higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education and Sports regulations. The professors for the academic positions of teaching require academic qualifications and artistic achievements. * Doctor of Sciences degree serves similar function for full professor positions
Austria	PhD	PhD	Professorship (with/without Habilitation)	Yes	No	No	Formal academic track
Belgium	MA	MA	PhD	No	No	Yes	

Country	Minimum Qualification for BA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for MA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for PhD Supervision	Doctorate Required for permanent position?	Habilitation Required?	Artistic Output Recognised?	Notes
Croatia	MA	MA	PhD	Yes	No	No	When choosing a career path, one is either in the field of humanities (musicology) or performing arts (music), it is not possible to switch or to have the output from the other field recognised for either employment or professional advancement.
France	MA	MA	Not applicable	No	No	No*	* not formally but background in artistic practice is desirable Only conservatoires in Paris and Lyon offer doctorates in collaboration with universities, which provide the scientific support.
Germany	MA	MA	PhD + Habilitation	Yes	Yes*	No	* Habilitation required for full professorship and to supervise PhD projects.
Greece	Conservatoire Degree (Bachelor or Diploma) or BA in Musicology						Conservatoires and universities have no official institutional relationship
Italy	MA	MA	No*	No	Yes	Yes	*PhD is preferred but not mandatory, but the supervisor must hold a tenured position. All the professors recently recruited have a PhD in Musicology or related disciplines
Lithuania	MA	MA	PhD	No	No	Yes	
Netherlands	BA*	BA*	BA*	No	No	Yes	*The minimum qualification for any position is the BA or similar. No further specifications have been adopted in policy or law, to our knowledge.
Poland	MA	MA	PhD/DMA + Habilitation*	Yes	Yes	No	*It is possible to be an assistant supervisor having only a doctorate without a habilitation

Country	Minimum Qualification for BA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for MA Teaching	Minimum Qualification for PhD Supervision	Doctorate Required for permanent position?	Habilitation Required?	Artistic Output Recognised?	Notes
Portugal	PhD or Specialist Title	PhD or Specialist Title	PhD	Yes	No	Yes	
Serbia	MA (for PhD students who assist with teaching), PhD for all other teaching staff	PhD	PhD + official requirements for supervision as defined by law (number of articles, monographs, qualitative work)	Yes	No	No	50% research, 50% teaching in workload
Spain	MA	MA	Not applicable	Yes*	No	Yes	* PhD will be required once the Law 1/2024 is fully implemented for both BA and MA teaching
Türkiye	MA	PhD (or DMA equivalent)	PhD (or DMA equivalent) + completed supervision of MA	Yes	Depending on the academic track*	Yes	* Assistant professors are expected to be habilitated or their position is converted to instructor At conservatoires under universities, university regulations apply; universities without conservatoires have faculties of fine arts and design with a similar status to conservatoires.
United Kingdom	MA	Doctorate	Doctorate	Yes	No	No*	*not formally but background in artistic practice is often considered desirable
Ukraine	MA	PhD	PhD	Yes, for senior positions (Associate Professor and Professor); not mandatory for Assistant positions	No	Yes	Teaching positions combine requirements for both academic qualifications and artistic achievements, with the latter being particularly important in conservatoires and music academies.

Table 5: Comparative overview of the minimum academic qualifications required for teaching in HMEIs

2.7. Academic career paths and research expectations

Academic career paths and research expectations for historical musicologists working in HMEIs vary across European countries. In many cases, these expectations differ from those placed on performance faculty within the same institutions, and also differ from those placed on historical musicologists working in university contexts. These differences concern not only the expectations themselves, but may also be reflected in disparities of salary. There may also be variations in how staff are assessed, and the impacts these have on career progression opportunities. This subsection provides examples of the different academic pathways in different European countries. The methodological approach is similar to that used above concerning qualifications. The information gathered is summarised in Table 6.

Country	Career Path Structure	Research Expectations	Teaching/Re-search Balance	Special Notes
Albania	Assistant → Associate → Professor	Promotion requires publications, Scopus/WoS outputs, supervision, and conferences	Teaching + research, Bologna-style ranks	Musicology embedded in composition/ conducting/pedagogy departments
Austria	Professorships vs. a large number of freelance/non-staff lecturers	Professors: research expected; lecturers: usually teaching-only	High reliance on freelancers (up to 70% in conservatoires)	New time limits on externally-funded staff in Austria are reducing teaching supply
Belgium	Professors and diverse roles (library/archive/research staff); mix of permanent & teaching-only roles	Varies widely; research expectations for some, none for others	Flexible: some staff are research-active, others only teach	Many HMEIs now offer PhDs/artistic doctorates
Croatia	Assistant → Associate → Full Professor	Publications, research projects needed for advancement	Nominally 40% teaching, 40% research, 10% admin, but often teaching-heavy	HMEI staff are evaluated like university staff
Germany	Professorships vs. a large number of freelance/non-staff lecturers	Professors: research expected; lecturers: usually teaching-only	High reliance on freelancers (up to 70% in conservatoires)	
Italy	HMEIs and universities are separate; no cross-mobility	Limited research support; no personal research funds for staff	Teaching workload is high; research is minimal	Professors are disadvantaged compared to their university peers
Lithuania	Assistant → Lecturer → Associate Professor → Professor	Promotion requires publications, Scopus/WoS outputs, monographs, thesis supervision, and conference activity	Teaching + research + MA and PhD/DMA supervision	

Country	Career Path Structure	Research Expectations	Teaching/Re-search Balance	Special Notes
Netherlands	Musicologists are permanent in HMEIs, though often not full time; many temporary contracts; contracts are insecure	Increasingly expected	-	Growing need for musicological staff due to formalisation of academic requirements in BA and MA courses
Poland	Assistant → Associate (PhD with Habilitation) /University Professor → Full Professor	Research/artistic output required (often artistic activity substitutes for publications); teaching required; external grants less common	Primarily teaching-oriented unless combined with artistic research; in practice teaching often exceeds 50% of workload	A university professorship =Associate Professor) is not obligatory in order to obtain the title of Full Professor (titular professor, awarded by the President of Poland).
Portugal	Adjunct → Coordinating → Principal Coordinating Professor	Increasingly valued, affiliation with research centres is key	Teaching 300–360h/yr, research expectations vary	HMEIs now gaining doctoral rights; convergence with universities Initial HMEI salary levels tend to be lower than those of universities; fully aligned with universities at the senior level
Serbia	Assistant (doctoral students, 3+3 yrs) → Assistant Prof. (5 yrs with possible reappointment) → Assoc. Prof. (5 yrs with possible reappointment) → Full Prof. (tenured)	Required for promotion: publications, projects, supervision	Since 2025: teaching 87,5%, research 12,5%	Permanent contracts only at Full Prof. level; external employment allowed up to 0.3 FTE
Spain	No structured progression beyond professorship	Research is officially encouraged and rewarded.	Teaching only; no time allocated for research	Salaries rise automatically every three years; reforms are ongoing for the 2023–2024 period.
Türkiye	Professors on permanent contract (post-habilitation in public HMEIs); private HMEIs vary	Research encouraged, but recognition rank-dependent	Standard teaching: up to 30h/wk	Private institutions are more diverse in appointment
UK	Lecturer → Senior Lecturer → Reader → Professor	Research & publication requirements vary by institution	Variable expectations	Conservatoires join university frameworks; salaries tend to be lower than university equivalents
Ukraine	Assistant/Lecturer (MA) → Assoc. Prof. (PhD/Candidate of Sciences) → Full Prof. (Doctor of Sciences)	Publications, monographs, conference activity, and artistic achievements (performances, recordings) are also required	Increasingly international research outputs are valued (Scopus/WoS)	Unique dual emphasis on scholarship + performance achievements

Table 6: Comparative overview of the academic pathway models in HMEIs

2.8. Research models and funding sources

A comprehensive summary of all of the ways in which research and the practices of HMEIs can be integrated—including both those that are abstractly conceivable as well as those currently or previously implemented in specific HMEIs—would exceed the space available here. However, we have identified several distinctive models, which often coexist within national systems. These models are in many ways the result of increased demand for HMEIs to have a research function, in line with developments in (inter-) national policy and law establishing HMEIs on a similar footing to ‘traditional’ universities. It should be noted that the products and activities of musicologists attached to HMEIs are not substantially different from those of musicologists affiliated with universities or research centres.

We have identified three broad models through which research is undertaken within HMEIs: first, through autonomous research departments within the institutions themselves; second, through Historically Informed Performance (HIP) projects; and third, through formal collaboration with external institutions, namely those described in Section 2 (i.e. universities and research centres).

1) Some HMEIs maintain autonomous research departments dedicated to historical musicology. These institutions integrate research into their educational frameworks, maintain dedicated research staff, pursue independent research agendas, and often publish their own series. The [Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland](#) exemplifies this approach, housing a dedicated research department specializing in historical music practice from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Similarly, the Mozarteum University Salzburg in Austria has established the research-oriented [Institute for the History of Musical Reception and Interpretation](#). Another example is the [Science Centre of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre \(LMTA\)](#) and the [Scientific Research Centre of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music in Latvia \(JVLMA\)](#), which coordinate and develop research activities funded both by the institutions themselves and by national funding bodies.



Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Vilnius (Lithuania). Photo by Augustas Didžgalvis, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) license.

2) In other contexts, research in historical musicology takes place primarily within the framework of Historically Informed Performance (HIP) projects. Rather than existing as an autonomous academic discipline, historical inquiry is integrated into artistic practice, especially within departments or programmes dedicated to early music. This approach is particularly prevalent in HMEIs with strong early music traditions, such as the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon, and the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya.

3) A third model involves HMEIs engaging in musicological research through collaboration with external academic institutions. This cooperation occurs both at the individual level, through teachers who are affiliated with university research centres, and at the institutional level, through formal partnerships with universities or research bodies.

Spotlight: Research Projects at HMEIs

[Conservatorio Statale di Musica Cesare Pollini](#) in Padua, [Italy](#), is directing the project [ROLE](#), within the framework of ‘[MUSIC THEATRE AND NEW TECHNOLOGY](#)’, CUP B26E24000320006, funded by the PNRR ITALIA and the European Union through the NextGenerationEU programme, under the call ‘Directorial Decree no. 124 of 19-07-2023’ (M4C1 – Investimento 3.4 ‘Didattica e competenze universitarie avanzate’, sub-investimento ‘Partenariati strategici/iniziative per innovare la dimensione internazionale del sistema AFAM). The project is structured around the following two main actions: 1. The digitisation of a collection of eighteenth-century opera manuscripts; 2. The production of an opera film based on Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. The shared aim of the project is to preserve and revitalise musical heritage. On the one hand, the digitisation of historic manuscripts enhances access to and usability of invaluable materials that document the history of opera and musical production between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, the film offers an innovative means of reinterpreting the operatic repertoire, exploring new artistic languages and methods of dissemination.

The [Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles](#), [Belgium](#), is carrying out the [project HarMA HUB: second edition](#), funded through the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. Targeting teachers, students and researchers in music theory, the project builds on the outcomes developed during the first edition ([HarMA+, 2020-2023](#)) by gathering music theory resources in an online open platform, fostering research and pedagogical innovation, and striving for a certain level of harmonisation of the academic offerings at the European level. The main objective of HarMA HUB is to bring together the community of music theory within HMEIs, with the purpose of modernising practices and giving access to the latest knowledge and innovations in this specific field. In the long term, the project will allow a common reflection on the place of music theory as part of the training of future musicians.

The [Royal Birmingham Conservatoire](#) (RBC), [United Kingdom](#), conducted the project ‘[Aural Histories: Coventry, c. 1451–1642](#)’, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The project explored the changing experience of music in late-medieval and early-modern Coventry through performances and recordings within VR reconstructions of its lost performing spaces—most notably St Michael’s Cathedral, destroyed during the Blitz of 1940. This example is particularly interesting as it represents all three broad models through which research is undertaken within HMEIs: the RBC has an autonomous research department dedicated to Historically Informed Performance (HIP). As part of Birmingham City University, it also operates within a university framework.

With regard to research funding, it should be noted that some of the funded research projects referred to in Section 2.6 above are in fact implemented at certain well-established HMEIs. Yet access to research funding for historical musicology staff in most HMEIs reveals significant structural inequalities when compared to university-based researchers or staff at research centres. This disparity stems mainly from the historical positioning of HMEIs as institutions focused on artistic and professional training rather than on the systematic production of academic knowledge. In many national systems, HMEIs lack established institutional frameworks to support research activities, including dedicated research offices, internal funding schemes, or structured mechanisms for allocating protected research time. Furthermore, the employment categories and qualifications of HMEI staff—frequently designated as ‘artistic staff’ or ‘teaching-artistic personnel’ and perhaps with professional rather than academic degrees—can restrict their eligibility for competitive research applications and invitations. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that, in several European countries, HMEIs are not fully recognised as higher education institutions on equal terms with universities in matters of research. As a result, HMEI faculty members are often excluded from direct participation in publicly-funded national and European research programmes.

Inequalities and exclusions like these represent structural barriers that impact the scholarly potential of many highly qualified musicologists working in HMEIs and create asymmetries within the European Higher Education and Research Areas, depriving the broader field of musicology of valuable contributions grounded in artistic practice, local heritage, and diverse institutional settings.

To address the structural inequalities currently affecting HMEIs, several strategic measures should be considered to enhance access to research funding for academic staff in musicology. These include the formal recognition of HMEIs as research-performing institutions within national frameworks, their integration into existing research support systems, increased participation in European funding programmes, and stronger cooperation with universities and research centres. Institutions and national authorities must enhance the communication of funding opportunities, making eligibility criteria clear to enable HMEI staff to advocate for participation. Institutions and national authorities should also strengthen research services and offer technical guidance.

2.9. Curriculum design and pedagogical approaches

Given the primary role of HMEIs as institutions for the training of practical musicians, the question may reasonably be asked as to how essential historical musicology (in teaching or research) is to their primary mission. There is a broad consensus, whether for pragmatic or ideological reasons, that it is fundamental. It is not possible to imagine a performer with absolutely no need for music-historical knowledge or awareness. But in practical terms, the level of engagement with historical musicology differs greatly. Almost universally, the teaching of music history is a required part of HMEI curricula, and is often (but not necessarily) taught by staff employed as musicologists. But much of this teaching can be in the nature of survey modules which are not research-led, even if often taught by trained musicologists with PhDs.

There are different models for how music history is included in curricula. It can be taught as a separate module; here the standard model is the historical survey style, from early historical periods through to the current developments in which students get broad knowledge about the context and factual knowledge, sometimes known as ‘Introduction to the history of music’. Music history is also delivered in combination with other topics, such as music theory, historical performance, research-led projects, or research methodology modules.

There are HMEIs with established (historical) musicology study programmes, with national music history as an important part of the curriculum. Such curricula include theoretical and practical disciplines, alongside music history/musicology, harmony, form, counterpoint, orchestration, ear training, instrumental ensembles, choir, and other subjects such as aesthetics, art history, sociology, research methodology, world music, and music in media. There is also usually a strong emphasis on individual research projects. The pedagogical approach often combines lectures and seminars, group discussions, and analysis of musical pieces in the historical context. Upon completing BA studies, students may pursue the MA and work on a scholarly-oriented dissertation.

The curriculum for historical musicology often differs significantly between HMEIs and universities across Europe, although there are important areas of overlap. The key differences lie in focus, depth, and purpose of training. HMEIs generally prioritise performance and applied music skills, with musicology serving as an integrated subject that provides performers with context for the repertoire they play. This performance-oriented approach stands in contrast to universities, which typically treat

musicology as a distinct academic discipline with emphasis on critical theory, historiography, research methods, and scholarly writing. These differences are evident in assessment methods as well. HMEIs tend to evaluate students through written exams, oral presentations, and performance-linked essays that connect historical knowledge to interpretative decisions. Universities more commonly assess students through research papers, theoretical analysis, and theses often featuring original research.

Spotlight: Musicological training in Belgrade

The Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, offers students a comprehensive music education with wide possibilities for professional choices. [Musicology degree programmes](#) exist at the BA (four years, 240 ECTS), MA (60 ECTS), and PhD (180 ECTS) levels. Students develop professional competencies in various scientific fields. Through an interdisciplinary approach characteristic of musicology, students are empowered for creative, individual research work or participation in research projects. By applying and integrating acquired contemporary knowledge of scientific research and theory, students develop skills for answering complex contextual musicological issues through scientific methods.

2.10. Degree programmes across Europe

The implementation of the Bologna Process has had a transformative effect on the organisation of musicological studies in HMEIs, introducing modular curricula and three-cycle degree structures. While this has facilitated international comparability, national variations remain considerable. In Germany, for instance, musicology modules are deliberately broad in name—‘Music History I and II’—allowing seminar content to shift each semester. Elsewhere, the scope diverges more sharply: in Poland, conservatoires prioritise music theory programmes rather than musicology; in the UK, only a single HMEI offers a dedicated MA in musicology, while Croatia and Serbia retain integrated BA/MA structures. In France, only the two national conservatoires (CNSMD Paris and Lyon) offer full musicology degrees, whereas in Albania, the Faculty of Music has developed progressively, launching postgraduate and doctoral studies in recent years.

The availability of doctoral studies represents another axis of divergence. Austria offers doctorates through both universities and HMEIs, while in the UK seven conservatoires now supervise PhDs in music, often blending artistic practice with research. In contrast, the Netherlands and Switzerland restrict

doctoral provision to universities, leaving conservatoires dependent on institutional collaborations. Italy's conservatoires were only recently authorised to award doctoral degrees, marking a significant step towards integration with the broader higher education landscape. These asymmetries illustrate the uneven pace at which Bologna-inspired reforms have been absorbed into national frameworks and institutional traditions.

2.11. Preliminary conclusions and summary

This section highlights the complex and uneven landscape of historical musicology within European Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs). Whilst nearly all HMEIs across Europe include historical musicology in some form, its status, curricular integration, and research orientation vary significantly depending on national frameworks, institutional histories, and pedagogical models. The discipline's presence ranges from departments with dedicated staff and research agendas to marginal inclusion within broader theory or performance-based curricula. One of the key findings of our study is the pronounced disparity in academic qualifications and professional recognition for historical musicologists within HMEIs. Requirements for teaching positions differ widely—from master's degrees to PhDs with *Habilitation*—reflecting national traditions rather than a unified European standard. Likewise, the capacity for career mobility between HMEIs and universities remains highly constrained in many contexts, limiting the development of hybrid academic-artistic profiles and hindering the circulation of knowledge across institutional boundaries.

In order to improve and enhance the work and professional development of musicologists in both types of institutions, academic requirements should be unified. Scholars who hold a degree in musicology—regardless of whether it was obtained from an HMEI or a university—should be able to move freely between HMEIs and universities as places of employment. Such institutional flexibility will help in a better flow of musicological research, helping both institutions and academics access all the benefits of the Bologna Process.

Overall, there is a need for greater structural coherence, enhanced recognition of research within HMEIs, and sustained efforts to foster dialogue between performance and musicological scholarship. A lasting European mapping of historical musicology within institutions would provide a crucial foundation for this work and help articulate clearer institutional missions, career paths, and research strategies across the continent.

Despite these challenges, opportunities are emerging. In several countries, reforms have begun to bridge the gap between HMEIs and universities, particularly through the creation of doctoral programmes, joint degrees, and increased access to research funding. Moreover, the growing recognition of artistic research opens new avenues for integrating scholarly and creative practices, as will be discussed in detail in the next section.

3. Evolving Relationships between Universities and HMEIs: Musicology and Artistic Research

In recent years, fruitful points of collaboration between HMEIs and universities have begun to emerge around shared research infrastructure and joint doctoral programmes. University research centres are showing growing interest in partnering with HMEIs to diversify their outputs, demonstrate the applicability and impact of their research, and improve their overall evaluation ratings. International cooperation is increasing as HMEIs become more active in European research networks and exchange programmes.

Particularly significant are the developments around artistic (or practice-led) research.²² Artistic research in music occupies a hybrid space between performance, composition, pedagogy, musicology, and reflection led by practitioner-researchers within diverse and shifting institutional contexts. This modality has received increasing attention across Europe, with new third cycle (doctoral) programmes emerging rapidly. Despite growing legitimacy and institutionalisation, the field remains heterogeneous and underdefined. Such openness supports innovation but also creates tension: what counts as research? How are outcomes evaluated? Which academic norms should apply? And what potential does artistic research have for professional careers, also in relation to musicology? For, as we note, the potential of artistic research programmes in music to mutually influence and cross-pollinate with musicology, with which they share much of their subject matter, is currently not being fully realised.²³

22 'Artistic' research is a term commonly used in Continental Europe; in other contexts, 'practice-led' or 'practice-based' research is preferred. For a brief overview of the various terms, see Simon Zagorski-Thomas, Anthony Kwame Harrison, and Laura Jordán González (2023), '[Practice Research Special Issue Editorial](#)'.

23 See for instance the activities of the [Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musik-hochschulen \(AEC\)](#), which has organised workshops, discussions, and other contributions on the embedding of artistic

In what follows, we consider the current state of artistic research within music in institutions of higher education and research (universities, HMEIs, and research centres), identifying key concepts and institutional developments that affect the training, research, and professional opportunities of musicologists. Of particular concern to our group, due to the focus of the COST Action *EarlyMuse*, is the question of to what extent the profession and science of musicology are involved in the construction, execution, supervision, and evaluation of artistic research projects and programmes. However, we acknowledge from the outset that this is precisely the type of information that is most difficult to determine, as the information available on institutional websites generally does not detail research methods, sources, specific requirements for the thesis or capstone project, or the type of supervision desired or required. Most of the perspectives that we have been able to gain derive primarily from personal or professional experience or from our knowledge of individual doctoral projects developed through these programmes.

Much of this section draws on reports prepared by members of the COST Action CA 21161 (EarlyMuse) Working Group 4 during a meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 3 to 5 March 2025, and during a Short-Term Scientific Mission in Naples, Italy, from 16 to 22 June 2025. The contributors represented twelve different European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland), who pooled their linguistic and professional expertise to collectively assemble information from around one hundred institutions in thirty-three countries that offer third-cycle degree programmes in music.

3.1. The place of artistic research

Artistic research (AR) has emerged in recent decades in Europe as a domain separate from the traditional humanities disciplines dealing with artistic practices and objects (art history, musicology, the history of theatre etc.). Commonly defined as ‘research in and through practice,’ artistic research takes the artistic process as the starting point, often with the artist-researcher examining their own practice, frequently using methods akin to auto-ethnography. In music, such research often deals

research in conservatoire curricula (see, for example, [the Artistic Research webinar and follow-up at EPARM](#) and the [Subtopics and Outputs document](#)).

with the relationship between the musician and their instrument or musical texts, as well as practices of improvisational or compositional creation. As Paulo de Assis and Lucia D’Errico highlight:

One fundamental trait [of artistic research] is its positioning at the crossroads of art and academia, in between thought and sensible apprehension, articulating different artistic practices and disciplines, and giving processes and materiality a central role. Thus, artistic research describes a particular mode of artistic practice and of knowledge production, in which scholarly research and artistic activity become inextricably intertwined.²⁴

Various organisations and stakeholders in the field (including the European Association of Conservatoires and the Society for Artistic Research) produced a policy document in 2020 titled *The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research*. Intended to address decision makers as well as educational and research institutions, the Declaration aimed in particular to present a clearer vision of what artistic research is and does within the Frascati Manual (the OECD classification manual for collecting statistical research data). A second aim was to restructure funding policies and programmes in order to bring support of AR into line with the support received by the sciences and humanities. Finally, the declaration intended to secure a place for ‘practice-based third cycle studies’ within higher arts education across Europe, which would further develop the field. The basic definition provided by the Vienna Declaration is as follows: ‘Artistic Research (AR) is practice-based, practice-led research in the arts.’ A section of the document provides a list of ‘key features’ of AR: ‘research through means of high-level artistic practice and reflection’; an ‘epistemic inquiry, directed towards increasing knowledge, insight, understanding and skills,’ and thus in line with research and development (R&D) in the Frascati Manual 2015.²⁵ Topics and problems addressed through AR originate in and are relevant to artistic practice, and additionally take on issues of broader significance.

The Vienna Declaration does not limit itself to music; instead, it encompasses ‘all art practice disciplines,’ such as design, film, photography, fine art, architecture, media and digital arts, and

24 Paulo De Assis, and Lucia D’Errico (eds.) (2019), *Artistic Research: Charting a Field in Expansion*: 3. See also Paulo de Assis (2023), ‘[Rethinking Artistic Research: A Review of Michael Schwab’s ‘Contemporary Research’](#)’.

25 [AEC, The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research](#), June 2020 (policy document supported by the European Association of Conservatoires and the Society for Artistic Research, published via Culture Action Europe). See also: [OECD, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities: Frascati Manual 2015](#).

performing arts other than music. Perhaps because of its broad remit to address all different kinds of stakeholders in all different kinds of fields, the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research avoids specifying learning goals, curriculum components, modes of examination, or capstone requirements.

Notably, however, the declaration connects to the wider European economic and intellectual property (IP) concerns by stating that AR within higher education research institutions commonly interacts with enterprise R&D, thereby generating new IP through research practice. Thus, the Vienna Declaration is in line with Europe-wide developments that aim to bring higher education closer to practice (and hence, IP creation) and to societal concerns (mostly, to prove that research directly benefits society and ‘pays for itself’)—moves that have begun to fundamentally change the research environment, funding opportunities, and social status and position of both ‘old’ and ‘new’ universities.

3.2. The institutionalisation of artistic research degree programmes

In recent years, third-cycle (doctoral) programmes in AR in music have proliferated. The United Kingdom played a pioneering role in the second half of the twentieth century, developing practice-based doctoral models that combined artistic output with critical commentary—structures that continue to influence programmes across Europe, even as terminology and expectations diverge. In what follows, we introduce the institutional contexts, degree types, research models, and supervision models associated with third-cycle programmes in music. Our survey is by no means comprehensive; however, this first-ever attempt at presenting a state of the art aims to identify the most important points of future consideration and investigation, particularly in relation to the profession and science of musicology.

Degree programmes in AR in music have developed in a wide range of institutional contexts across Europe, including universities, conservatoires, joint doctoral schools, and international consortia. The institutionalisation of AR accelerated in the early 2000s, driven by the Bologna Process and the formation of the European Higher Education Area.²⁶ As conservatoires and art academies aligned with university systems, doctoral programmes multiplied.

26 See [European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#).

It should be kept in mind that in most countries, the legal authority to confer doctoral degrees (*jus doctorandi*) remains with traditional universities. As a result, many AR programmes based in conservatoires operate through formal partnerships with universities. These collaborations ensure compliance with national quality assurance systems and enable degrees to be formally recognised within the European Higher Education Area. Typically, such programmes adopt academic procedures including written research proposals, structured supervision, extended written components, and formal evaluation processes.

However, not all AR programmes follow conventional university models. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, and Norway, conservatoires and higher arts institutions have acquired independent doctoral degree-awarding powers, whether in the form of a PhD or a specifically AR-focused award (Doctor of Musical Arts, Doctor of Music).²⁷ This autonomy allows them to design doctoral programmes more closely aligned with artistic epistemologies, often placing greater emphasis on performative, multimodal, or practice-based forms of knowledge production. Recent significant changes in national legislation have granted similar powers to HMEIs in Portugal and Italy, as will be discussed below.

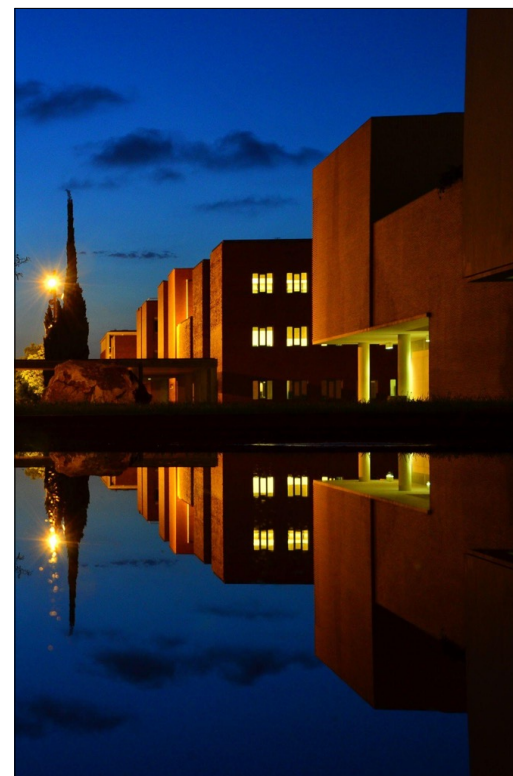
27 For example, [Royal Conservatoire of Scotland](#), [University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna \(mdw\)](#), and [Norwegian Academy of Music](#).

Spotlight: Portugal

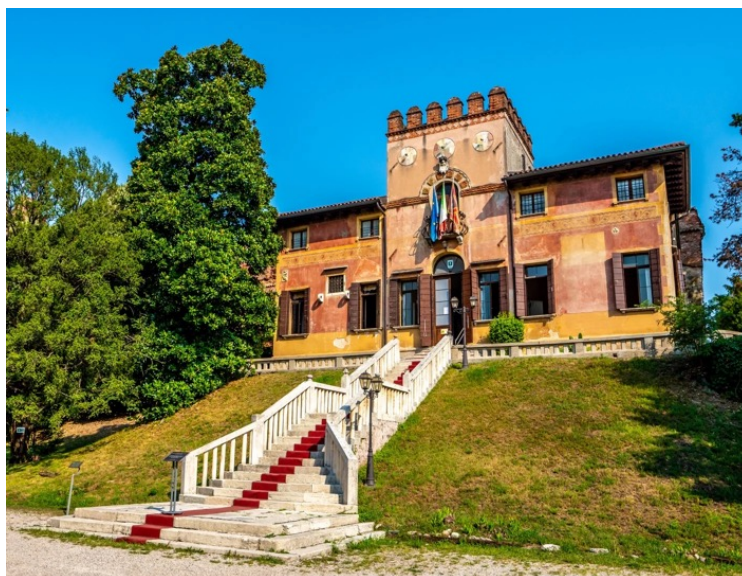
Portuguese legislation ([2017](#)) allowed for doctoral programmes in which artistic works or performances constitute the core of the doctorate, provided that they are supported by a written **document** explaining the process of conception and development, as well as the theoretical context. However, as only universities had the authority to award doctoral degrees, these programmes had to be closely linked to research units affiliated with the degree-awarding institution.

More recently, [Law No. 16/2023](#) marks a significant shift in the Portuguese higher education system, as it enabled polytechnics, including HMEIs, to independently develop doctoral programmes and award doctoral degrees. The new law also permits polytechnics to use the designation 'Polytechnic University' in English as part of their internationalisation strategy.

These developments have begun to reshape the landscape of artistic research doctoral programmes in Portugal. For example, the University of Aveiro, the Polytechnic University of Porto, and the Polytechnic University of Leiria had already developed a three-year, 180 ECTS PhD programme in Artistic Creation, where candidates research through artistic practice in areas such as visual arts, sound arts, theatre, dance, and music. The final outcome is an artistic project accompanied by a theoretical-critical justification, supervised by staff members including artists, performers, and scholars in artistic creation. The diploma is currently issued by the University of Aveiro, but thanks to the new law, it will soon be jointly awarded by the three institutions.



University of Aveiro. Photo by André Prata, 20 April 2011. Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.



Conservatorio di musica 'Agostino Steffani'.
See [website of the city of Castelfranco Veneto](https://www.castelfranco-veneto.it/) for credit.

Spotlight: Italy

Recent developments in Italy demonstrate the growing integration between HMEIs and the broader European academic landscape. As of 2024/25, institutions within the Italian system of Higher Education in Art, Music, and Dance (AFAM) have begun offering PhD programmes. These offerings became legally possible following the implementation of Ministerial Decree No. 470 of February 21, 2024. Sixty-two new PhD courses were accredited, including ten Industrial PhD programs and two National PhD programs.

Unlike in Portugal, where PhD candidates in artistic research generally pay tuition fees, the Italian government has directed significant funding to the new PhD courses. A total of 266 PhD positions were funded for the cycle beginning in 2024/25, with further positions awarded in 2025/26; however, the future remains unclear, since the funds derived from the NextGenerationEU pandemic recovery plans. These positions have a duration of three years, with possibilities for extension, and involve one main supervisor and co-supervisors. Teaching activities and international internships are planned, and the final thesis must be evaluated by external experts before public discussion.

The new AFAM doctoral programmes integrate artistic research and creative practice, experimental projects, and emphasise applied research and innovation. Particularly significant for the present report is the National PhD programme in '[Artistic Research on Musical Heritage](#)', led by the Conservatorio 'A. Steffani' of Castelfranco Veneto in cooperation with sixteen other conservatoires. A total of forty-four funded PhD candidates and fourteen unfunded PhD candidates started in 2024/25, with a further thirty-four funded candidates joining in 2025/26, to undertake research in advanced artistic and musical education with multidisciplinary approaches. The programme is divided into ten interconnected training courses, including Musical Heritage Conservation and Valorisation, Immersive Technologies Applied to Music, Musical Historiography and Philology, and Musical Interpretation and Performing Arts.

This process has not been completed in all countries. In Greece, for example, the HMEI degrees have not yet been aligned with the European-equivalent levels of the National Qualifications Framework. And, despite the implementation of the Bologna process, the difficulty in establishing equivalences between HMEI and university qualifications continues. In some countries, such as France, there is a structural division between music academy and university diplomas, creating difficulties for the professional development of young researchers.

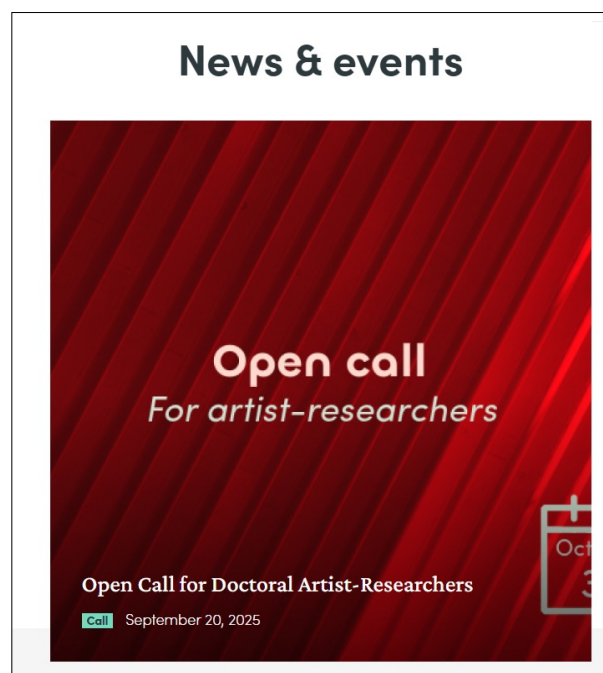
International consortia and joint doctoral schools offer further alternatives. Programmes such as [docARTES](#) (Netherlands–Belgium; discussed in more detail below) and the [Collège Glarean](#) (France–Germany) represent cross-border collaborations that enable institutions without the *jus doctorandi* to contribute meaningfully to doctoral education. Co-tutelle agreements, in which candidates enrol in two institutions (often in different countries) and earn a joint or double degree, provide additional flexibility. These arrangements foster interdisciplinary research and international mobility, but require significant administrative coordination and alignment between differing institutional cultures.

Spotlight: *docARTES*

Launched in 2004, the docARTES programme has emerged as an important model in artistic research that influences newly created programmes around Europe. Structured as an international, inter-university doctoral programme, docARTES offers a framework combining support for original artistic research with research-training events, including taught modules, seminars, study days, conferences, performances, and guest-lectures. The programme leads to the degree of PhD (in principle after a minimum of four years full-time), and is co-ordinated by the [Orpheus Institute](#) in Ghent, in cooperation with conservatoires and universities in Belgium and the Netherlands. The Orpheus Institute hosts all docARTES-related events, offering an intensive research environment for artistic researchers at all levels to come together. However, as the Orpheus Institute itself has no degree-awarding powers, it depends on its partnerships with Leiden University (Netherlands), KU Leuven (Belgium), and the University of Antwerp (Belgium) for the conferral of degrees. In addition to supporting the docARTES programme, the Orpheus Institute hosts post-doctoral researchers funded through national and European programmes and employs permanent, advanced research staff.

One clear feature of the field of the artistic research programmes in music at doctoral level in Europe is that they have adapted to suit the niches in which they are locally situated. While this rich diversity of approaches is a potential source of strength, there is a sense among some that this has resulted

in a cacophony in which ‘anything goes’,²⁸ and that the field both struggles to connect to itself and to adjacent fields. Accordingly, the potential of artistic research programmes in music to mutually influence and cross-pollinate with musicology, with which it shares much of its subject matter, is currently not being fully realised.²⁹



Example of a [call](#) for artist-researchers from the Orpheus Institute



Orpheus [Fellowship](#) 'Futures in Artistic Research'

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- 28 See for instance Paulo de Assis (2023), '[Rethinking Artistic Research: A Review of Michael Schwab's 'Contemporary Research](#)'.
- 29 See for instance the activities of the *Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musik-hochschulen* (AEC), which has organised workshops, discussions, and made other contributions on the embedding of artistic research in conservatoire curricula; <https://aec-music.eu/news-article/artistic-research-webinar-and-follow-up-at-eparm/> and https://aec-music.eu/userfiles/File/customfiles/subtopics-d-outputs_20160125125009.pdf.

3.2.1. Degree types, requirements, and recognition

The landscape of doctoral degrees in the arts across Europe includes a range of titles that reflect different emphases on academic research, artistic practice, and professional development. Table 7 presents a comparison of the most common degree titles in AR-centred programmes and their implications.

Degree Title	Emphasis	Requirements	Institutional Context	Recognition & Status
<i>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD, DPhil)</i>	Academic research	Extensive written thesis with original research	Universities and research institutions	Widely recognised across Europe and internationally
<i>Doctor Artium (DA)</i>	Artistic research (hybrid)	Artistic portfolio + reflective or theoretical component	Institutions like Kunstuniversität Graz or mdw (Austria)	Varies by country; less standardised than PhD
<i>Doctor of Liberal Arts (DLA)</i>	Artistic practice + reflection	Artistic output with accompanying documentation	Used in Hungary (e.g., Liszt Academy)	Nationally recognised; equivalence outside varies
<i>Doctor of Music (DM, DMus, MusD, DMA)</i>	Artistic practice (music)	Composition/ performance portfolio + written reflection or thesis	UK and Commonwealth music institutions	Recognised in music fields; variable outside them
<i>Professional Doctorate (PD)</i>	Professional practice	Applied project work + reflective documentation	Conservatoires and professional academies	Emerging degree; inconsistent recognition

Table 7: Comparative profiles of doctoral degrees in the arts

These degrees differ significantly in their academic and artistic weight. While PhDs prioritise scholarly research, degrees like the DMus and PD focus on artistic or professional outcomes, with varying levels of theoretical engagement. Doctor Artium and DLA occupy a middle ground, integrating practice and reflection. Some titles, like the PD, are of very recent invention.

Spotlight: The Professional Doctorate in the Netherlands

In 2023, the Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science launched a six-year pilot to establish a [professional doctorate](#) in seven different domains. Music-related projects appear in the domain of Arts & Creative. Within the pilot, the Ministry agreed to cover 50% of the salary costs of candidates (who are treated as employees) plus reimbursement of travel and tuition fees.

The pilot aims to explore the need for a practice-based doctorate separate from the PhD and to create a research-intensive learning trajectory at the level of European Quality Framework 8, and thus equivalent to a PhD. However, the PD is not yet established within the Dutch Law on Higher Education and Scientific Research, meaning that candidates cannot receive a diploma or a title; instead, they receive a certificate of participation. Depending on the outcome of the pilot, the participating organizations hope for a change in the law that will officially recognise the PD.

Note that this quite a different approach to other countries, which have given the right to grant PhDs to their practice-oriented institutions of higher education. It also exists in simultaneity with existing university-university of applied sciences cooperations in PhD programmes based on artistic research like the [Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music](#).



The *Hoftoren* of the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Education, and Science (OCW)

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

The proliferation of degree titles might seem to undermine the European project of integration and impact the mutual intelligibility of degrees and qualifications, especially since it seems that the titles have different weights and interpretations in different European contexts. This is largely due to the fact that the rights, privileges, and obligations of third-cycle degrees are established within national education law. In principle, EU states should harmonise legally-established educational programs within the EQF in order to facilitate mobility, but the situation on the ground indicates this process has not been fully executed. For example, we note that graduates of the artistic research programs in Italian conservatories have the same status, title, and rights as graduates of a traditional PhD program in a research university. On the other hand, the status or value of the Doctor Artis degree (as offered by programs in Norway or the German-speaking research area) is unclear. More recent developments like ‘professional doctorates’ in places like the Netherlands and Romania further muddy the waters. The proliferation of third-cycle degrees that *sound* like doctorates should perhaps give us pause, for it might indicate a further devaluation of academic programs within the Bologna system.

Too, while many programmes claim a professional orientation,³⁰ they often do not clearly define what the ‘professional sector’ entails. As a result, while these degrees may enhance employability in broad terms, their connection to clearly defined job qualifications or regulated professional pathways remains vague and often unarticulated.

3.2.2. Curricula and content

Our investigations and published observations from within the field have shown that there is no common curriculum or set of standards for artistic research in third-cycle music education.³¹ Programmes are developed on a local or national level, in line with the prevailing standards of national education policy and the regulations of the national or regional accreditation organizations. The programmes are therefore expected to respond to the [European Qualifications Framework](#) (EQF, set up in 2008 and revised in 2017) and implemented within the [National Qualifications Frameworks](#) (NQF). In practice, though, standards, formats, and content of the degree programmes varies widely from

30 See: [Royal Irish Academy of Music – DMusPerf \(Doctor in Music Performance\), NFQ Level 10](#); [Universitatea Transilvania in Braşov – Doctoral Domains and Topics](#).

31 Paulo de Assis (2023), [‘Rethinking Artistic Research: A Review of Michael Schwab’s ‘Contemporary Research’](#)’.

place to place. While there has been some reflection from stakeholders that such variety makes it very difficult to judge the value of a degree or the level of a degree candidate, there is also resistance to over-regulation for fear that it would quash creative projects that might have great added value, but might not easily conform to too-restrictive standards. Discussions within the field have centred on the possibilities of defining research curricula and outputs that enable a certain level of quality control within degree programmes, rather than restrictive guidelines for evaluation.

Curricula vary significantly, typically combining artistic projects, research training, written work (to quite variable degrees), and public presentations. For example, there are programmes with lengthy written theses complemented by artistic components, and programmes with shorter theses where artistic performance takes precedence. Within these broad categories, three more specific typological models emerge, which offer insight into how artistic practice and scholarly inquiry are balanced.

1. Integrated Artistic Analytical Model

This model, exemplified by the docARTES programme as well as institutions such as [Mozarteum University Salzburg](#) and the [mdw](#) – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, requires candidates to produce a substantial artistic project alongside a comprehensive written reflection. The artistic component is not supplementary but co-equal, serving as both the object and method of inquiry. The written thesis, meanwhile, is required to meet robust academic standards, including a clearly defined research question, theoretical and methodological grounding, and critical engagement with literature. At mdw, for example, reflective writing must follow scientific citation rules and ethical practices, situating the candidate's original ideas within broader scholarly discourse.



Mozarteum, Salzburg

2. Article/Monograph with Artistic Context Model

At the University of Copenhagen, candidates pursue either a monograph or an article-based thesis format. While artistic work may play a central empirical role, the final thesis must adhere to high academic standards, with detailed introduction, literature review, and clearly defined conceptual and methodological framework. In this model, artistic practice is not only documented but theorised and contextualised, ensuring that the thesis contributes to the advancement of knowledge in a format consistent with international academic norms.

3. Regulatory-Driven Academic Integrity Model

This model applies in contexts where national or institutional regulations strongly define the doctoral process. At the [Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre](#), for instance, artistic research doctorates require both a public artistic presentation and a thesis of 80,000–100,000 characters (~20,000 words), with strict requirements on methodology, citation, and structure. Similarly, JAMU in the Czech Republic and institutions in Bulgaria operate under codified academic standards that emphasise ethics, citation, and scientific rigor. While the artistic component is integral, the written component must meet formal academic criteria, often as defined by national law.

The plurality of methods and products has sparked debate. Some argue that AR should develop methods independent of traditional academic regimes, warning that the replication of university research models may undermine the originality of artistic knowledge production. Others stress that, within third-cycle academic programmes aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), it is essential that AR meet verifiable methodological standards—not to impose uniformity, but to ensure legibility, comparability, and rigour. And, despite their promise for innovative research, such models may encounter difficulties when interacting with national or transnational accreditation bodies, especially where doctoral supervision is legally bound to conventional academic credentials.

3.2.3. Supervision models, between theory and practice

Supervision in AR doctoral programmes varies widely across institutions and national contexts, reflecting differing legal frameworks, academic traditions, and disciplinary priorities. At the core of these variations lies the question of who is formally authorised—and epistemically equipped—to

supervise doctoral work grounded in artistic practice. A primary point of contact—though also a concern—for the involvement of musicologists in artistic research degree programmes has to do with these variations.

Our investigation has revealed that in some places, the involvement of musicologists continues to be a given, due to the requirement that supervisors themselves possess a PhD and artistic doctorates are relatively new. This situation is gradually changing as more artistic researchers complete doctoral programmes themselves and become eligible to supervise future PhD projects. In institutions where conservatoires have greater autonomy, or where doctoral programmes are structured explicitly around artistic practice, supervision by artist-researchers without doctorates is sometimes permitted, as is the case in Italy or the Netherlands. These environments tend to acknowledge professional experience and artistic maturity as legitimate forms of research expertise. At JAMU in the Czech Republic, for instance, doctoral candidates may be supervised by a *Dozent* (docent)—a senior academic rank—even if the person does not hold a PhD.³² It should be noted that the artistic research community itself, for example through the work of the [AEC European Platform for Artistic Research](#), has advocated for supervision for artistic researchers, by artistic researchers.

Due to institutional constraints and research orientations, many AR programmes adopt hybrid supervision models.³³ These combine the formal authority of academically credentialed supervisors, often musicologists, with the artistic insight of performers, composers, or other practitioner-researchers, some of whom may not hold a doctorate. The inclusion of musicologists as supervisors or co-supervisors is particularly common in programmes housed within universities or subject to structured doctoral school regulations. Co-supervision models can be highly beneficial, offering candidates broader perspectives and more tailored support. In the best scenarios, cooperative supervisory relationships foster interdisciplinary dialogue and enrich projects with historical and analytical depth. However, they also require careful coordination, especially when supervisors represent different institutional cultures or operate under differing conceptions of research and evaluation.

32 See: [Kritéria pro uchazeče habilitačního řízení o jmenování docentem na Hudební fakultě JAMU](#).

33 For example, the docARTES program and the Higher Education in Art, Music, and Dance Institutions in Italy.

The involvement of musicologists or the implementation of musicological research results, methods, or theories within artistic research degree programmes varies widely, and often depends on the local presence of musicologists as staff members. It also depends on the specific nature of each individual project, which may, due to the thematic focus, require either great input or little to no input from musicologists or musicological frameworks. This diversity often manifests along two main lines:

- On the one hand, historically- or musicologically-oriented projects focused on underrepresented composers, neglected repertoire, historical performance practices, or historical treatises;
- On the other, practice-centred projects, including comparative performance studies, experimental approaches, composition, or reflexive narratives of interpretive decision-making.

While the former tend to rely on well-established academic procedures, the latter might explore ways of generating knowledge through artistic creation itself. Both models are valid but require distinct methodological frameworks and supervisory support.

Historically-oriented projects are typically supported by tools from musicology and those who know how to wield them: critical textual analysis, source criticism, hypothesis testing, and integration into existing scholarly discourse. Indeed, some ‘practice-oriented’ research is conducted not as AR but as historical musicology (e.g. at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland); it should be remembered that musicology concerned with earlier repertoires initially developed as a result of practical experimentation with historical performance and compositional methods. Projects that centre the researcher’s own creative development, by contrast, may adopt methods from ethnomusicology, anthropology, education, or the social sciences, such as participant observation, practice-led inquiry, and autoethnographic reflection. Increasingly, digital tools are also being used to document and analyse artistic processes in real time.

More broadly, supervision in AR doctorates remains a dynamic and contested space, marked by the need to reconcile institutional requirements with the epistemic and methodological specificities of artistic practice. A central tension lies in the challenge of developing supervision models that are both inclusive of diverse research approaches—including non-verbal, process-based, and performance-led inquiries—and accountable to quality assurance frameworks that prioritise text-based, formally structured outputs. Addressing this tension requires not only flexibility in recognising different forms of supervisory expertise, but also the creation of transparent and credible mechanisms to ensure

research integrity, coherence, and evaluative fairness across models. Such considerations also impact the dissemination of the products of such projects, particularly through publication.

3.4. Publishing practices in artistic research

AR is a vast and diverse field that encompasses a wide range of practices and outcomes. This section focuses specifically on the types of output publications within AR as applied to music, excluding other performing arts and contemporary creation. While highly formalised academic outputs in traditional formats (e.g. peer-reviewed articles, books published by academic or specialised publishing houses, and institutional repositories for PhD theses) are still in use, other hybrid formats that are better suited to the nature of artistic research have emerged over the last few decades, such as books and articles which include recordings hosted on digital platforms, as well as supplementary events such as concerts and/or audiovisual presentations. Other outputs include video-essays and portfolios documenting the artistic production process.

There is no single platform that encompasses publications or unifies the search for results from various institutions. There are individual initiatives, such as [Artistic Doctorates in Europe](#), [Artistic Doctorates in Ireland](#), or the [Research Catalogue](#), but no unifying resource comparable to what RILM is for musicology. Technical improvements, such as enhancing the search options in these individual databases, are needed in order to facilitate artistic research in the future.³⁴ Furthermore, non-textual formats risk being lost since many repositories do not include alternative formats—often due either to lack of capacity or to the constraints of existing IP laws on audiovisual outputs.

Moreover, there is a significant difference between simply producing a recording, as part of a PhD for example, and creating a professionally produced,



Doctors in Performance at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

[Photo Marko Poolamets](#)

³⁴ For example, in the Research Catalogue, it is not required to indicate whether a thesis is a master's or PhD project, and there is no search filter to distinguish between educational levels. Searches for 'PhD' or 'PhD thesis', obtain results that include 'exhibitions', but it is unclear if they are a requirement of a PhD programme or merely a related event. In short, the metadata does not clearly contextualise the type of result. Additionally, the Research Catalogue is not consistently linked to major academic search tools like Google Scholar.

market-oriented audio or video product which is significantly more easily accessible to the public. The production of audiovisual materials and their recognition as research output is tightly connected to the lack of peer-review for these materials. This has been dealt with differently by different institutions. For example, in the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels, Belgium, having a professional career beforehand (including CDs, awards, concert career, etc.) is a requirement for admission in PhD programmes. This is an attempt to ensure the quality and musical excellence of the performance aspect. However, there are no common criteria regarding this within the Artistic Research community.

On the other hand, items included in the Research Catalogue, for example, are not peer-reviewed by an external panel, and for this reason, some of these non-textual outputs are questionably valid within the academic community. The issue of quantity, quality, type, and modes of artistic research output is a matter of concern within both the academic and artistic communities. Questions are beginning to be asked. For example, already in 2016 the AEC (a voluntary coalition representing Higher Music Education Institutions in Europe and beyond) developed a series of reflective questions on the topic of formulating, developing, and disseminating outputs of artistic research—many of which have yet to be answered in any comprehensive or consistent way.³⁵

These issues are particularly pressing in the area of peer review, where traditional models often fall short. Artistic outputs—especially non-verbal or performative works—cannot be revised after the fact, making post-hoc critique ineffective or irrelevant. What is needed is a process-oriented model of peer engagement, in which reviewers are involved at multiple stages of the project, offering feedback that shapes its development rather than merely judging its final form. In this model, peers act not only as gatekeepers, but as collaborative interlocutors, contributing to the researcher's clarity, depth, and methodological soundness.

In conclusion, one of the current challenges to the development of artistic research is the coexistence of two approaches: a more 'modern' or 'avant-garde' view that allows unrestricted creative freedom without the need for scientific grounding, and a scientifically informed artistic practice, to which Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP) belongs. While for some researchers or institutions this coexistence may not be seen as problematic, for those working within a scientifically grounded

35 See: [AEC – "What should be the goals and priorities for artistic research outputs?"](#).

HIPP framework, it may be perceived as a potential lowering of AR's academic standards. As a result, many continue to turn to the field of musicology for research and publication.

3.5. Musicology and artistic research, between the university and the HMEI

Across Europe, artistic research (AR) doctoral programmes display remarkable diversity in degree titles, submission formats, supervision models, and evaluation procedures. The developments that we have traced here demonstrate developing systems of confusion and inequality, as graduates of practice-based programmes may have full doctoral status in some countries but face uncertainty in others. The lack of clarity on the status of graduates may hinder international academic mobility and employment opportunities, and the proliferation of diverse titles and frameworks for non-PhD-titled AR doctorates raises questions about the consistency and perceived value of these doctorates within the European Higher Education Area.

Yet, the very fact that such programmes continue to multiply reflects the interest of Europe in developing connections between practice and research, as well as the vitality of this mode of inquiry and its adaptability to different cultural and institutional contexts. At the same time, the absence of shared reference points makes it difficult to compare programmes, ensure equitable assessment, or support the international mobility of candidates and supervisors. This tension leads to the questions: Should we have fewer models of AR programmes? And what role should musicology play?

Despite shared intentions, many AR programmes still maintain a division between artistic and theoretical components. This structural separation limits the potential for genuine interdisciplinarity. However, many institutions are already trying to break down these barriers. Musicological research—especially when embodied through performance—can act not only as an external commentator but as an integrated methodological partner. There is already a long-established relation between performance practice and musicology, even though the traditional publishing methods usually do not reflect it. Mutual exchange between performance and historical inquiry allows for projects where theory and practice are inseparable.

While existing tensions are clear, it should be noted that tension results from energy, and that the energy surrounding artistic research is currently high. We can see many points of convergence and

potential development to direct this energy toward productive fostering of career opportunities. Possibilities for fundamental collaboration between musicologists in these arenas should be fostered.

We propose that the challenges inherent to AR serve as catalysts for innovation. They offer a valuable opportunity to rethink how research is defined, validated, and shared. In this context, musicology can contribute useful tools: communication strategies that support interdisciplinary legibility, methodological articulation to ensure coherence, and critical engagement with sources to anchor research in broader epistemic contexts.

4. General Conclusions

This report sketched the current state of musicology in Europe within university structures and research institutes, higher music education institutions, and in the context of the expansion of artistic research. Broadly speaking, all of these figures should be considered ‘the academy’, with its overarching purpose being education and research; this area represents the traditional and obvious career route for musicologists. Nevertheless, the conclusions drawn from the collected data and case studies do not yet provide a complete picture—rather, they highlight the complexity and heterogeneity of the situation, which requires further research and systematic coordination.

What this report highlights is the fragmentation of information concerning where musicology lies within European higher education and research institutions. We emphasise that our undertaking in constructing this report is unprecedented, underscoring its originality and necessity. As we have described, there is no centralised or easily comparable information regarding training programmes, degrees and their equivalencies, career paths, course content, and more. Beyond this lack of centralisation, however, there is considerable variation—not only between countries, but often within them—where diverse types of institutions operate under widely differing practices, even where there are commonalities in statute. Too, the diversity of research funding opportunities at both national and European level, the various ways in which educational institutions and programmes are accredited, and the ability of individual countries or even regions or provinces to implement their own educational and research policies and priorities are constraints that impact the career paths of musicologists, whether for better or for worse.

Simply trying to find oneself as a musicologist within this diverse landscape can be bewildering. While the Bologna Process established a system intended to enable cross-border comparative frameworks for education and degree programmes that are expected to conform to the European Qualifications Framework, common curricula were never envisioned, nor were individual fields established as data points. To our knowledge, collaborative discussion of a shared skill set or training programme for all musicologists in Europe has never occurred. We might celebrate this as an example of academic freedom, but perhaps we should consider that the lack of dialogue also hampers the visibility and independence of our field.³⁶

As made clear in this report, the current landscape remains highly diverse in terms of institutional, pedagogical, and administrative practices. What is urgently needed is a sustained, long-term effort to map existing teaching practices, job roles, career pathways, curricula, and relationships with universities, among other dimensions. This effort must not be a one-time initiative but a durable and structured commitment. Musicology will thus be only able to acquire a concrete institutional presence through the consolidation of such data and the networking of its protagonists, may they be individuals or structural entities. In other words, this field must be given substance. The process towards this aim must begin with a long-term, cartographic undertaking.

A few conclusions can be offered which are intended to provide food for thought:

- ✿ At present, it is difficult to determine the institutional resources that currently exist to support research or teaching, whether these be administrative staff, digital tools, or specific budgets. We are aware of great differences. Some institutions do not have access to paid resources such as RILM, MGG Online, Grove Online or publishers' platforms, which have long been deemed essential to our field. The factors that impact access to these resources vary by institution or country, but can also be determined by individual choices within an institution. The rise of artificial intelligence may diminish such differences in the coming years; it will therefore be crucial to examine the methods used to produce the resources on which musicological work is based (identification of sources, retrieval of scientific literature, etc.).

36 Professional organisations around music (performance) education, most notably the European Association of Conservatoires, have made commendable efforts to establish guidelines intended to ensure quality and innovation in educational programmes. See, for example, the various [policy papers](#) published by the AEC.

- ✿ Inequalities exist on a variety of scales, including the level of career or access to resources to name only a few. These inequalities are also material: salaries vary considerably across Europe and even within countries, as well as institutional support for musicological research. Some musicologists have reserved research time within their contracts; others are full-time teachers. Some institutions offer elaborate support programmes for preparing third-party funding applications while others (particularly HMEIs) offer none at all. These inequalities hinder the possibility of a greater diversity of active researchers, thereby hampering the progress of our field.
- ✿ While artistic research and traditional academic research may at first seem at odds, they share something rather important: the outputs of their work both fall under questions of intellectual property, which in many cases ‘belongs’ to the institution employing the researcher.
- ✿ The eminently complex question of the relationship between musicology and musical practice lies beyond the completeness we seek to achieve through subsequent steps. We do not aim to discuss the nature of this relationship, the empiricism of the practice-based approach, or the experimental uses to which this joint approach gives rise. We nevertheless need to consider that certain questions will arise for us to gain a better understanding of career paths, to apprehend the range of skills required to achieve certain objectives and therefore to fuel the arguments in favour of the presence of a ‘musicological’ economic sector.
- ✿ Looking forward, one of the major challenges for musicology relates to the integration of emerging technologies and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) sector. Engaging with these developments not only opens up new funding opportunities but also redefines the role of musicology within society and within artistic higher education, aligning the discipline with broader innovation and impact agendas.

Above all, ensuring the future of our field necessitates the adoption of a different orientation: as institutions of tertiary and higher education face challenges worldwide, musicologists are forced to consider radically different career paths and outcomes. The loss of colleagues is already felt in the present report. Although concrete data is not always available, it is clear that the number of PhDs and postdoctoral researchers far outnumber those of individuals with permanent posts. This does not account for the cases in which a doctoral thesis is started but which, for a highly diverse set of reasons, does not lead to a defence and the awarding of the doctorate. Even in those cases when the doctorate is awarded, an increasing number of PhDs do not succeed in or do not wish to pursue the traditional professional career path, and instead follow entirely new ones. In both cases, we lose track of individuals who at one time shaped the landscape of our profession. Yet that should not mean that their achievements were for naught: To illustrate the richness of a professional sector, a diversity of outcomes needs to be recognised. Musicologists who pursue professions beyond the academy can offer new dimensions to our field and help to articulate the quality of their training, its viability and relevance in an ever-competitive world.

