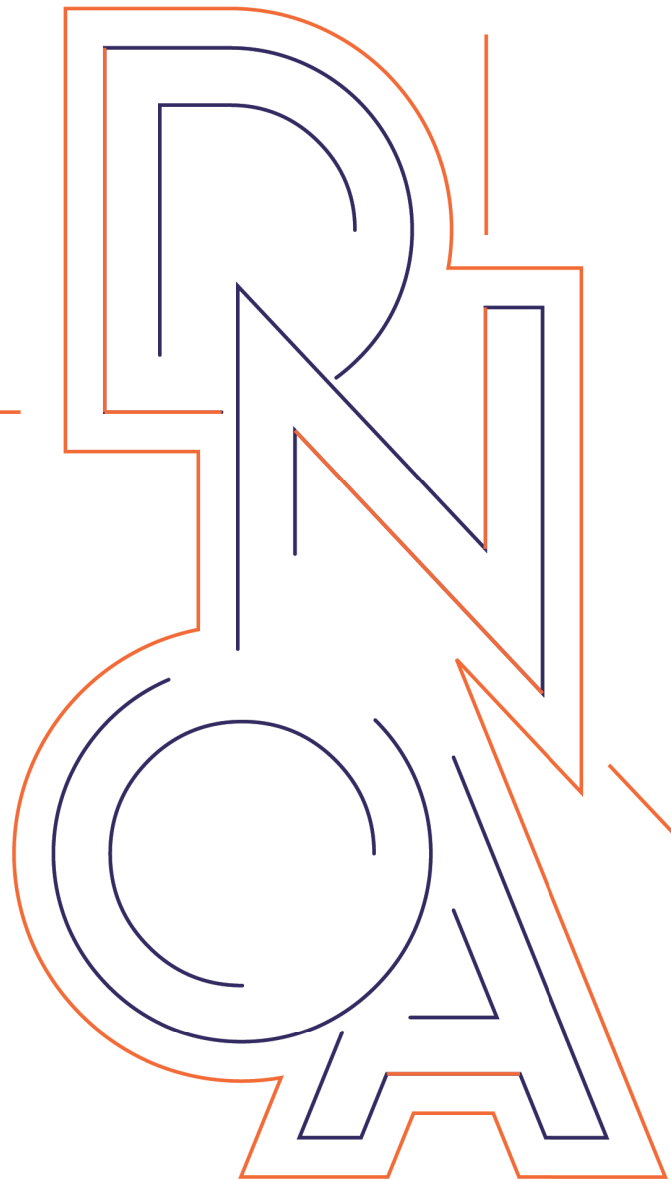


# Curriculum Handbook

Master of Music

Dutch National Opera Academy

2025 - 2026



Dutch National  
Opera Academy

A PARTNERSHIP OF



Conservatorium van Amsterdam  
Amsterdam University of the Arts



Royal Conservatoire  
The Hague

The information contained in this Curriculum Handbook is, beyond errors and omissions, correct at the time of publication, but may be subject to change during the academic year. Therefore, always make sure you are referring to the latest version of this document which can be found at our website. For questions about courses, you can get in touch with the contact person mentioned in the course description.

*September 2025*

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# INTRODUCTION

This Curriculum Handbook is designed to give you an overview of important information about your studies at the Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA). In addition to the curriculum overview and programme objectives, you can read about the learning goals (objectives) of each of the courses and the criteria by which each of them will be assessed. This handbook also incorporates information about the grading scales and the DNOA-addendum to the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) of both institutes.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DNOA

A partnership of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, the Dutch National Opera Academy is a two-year's master's programme offering a wide-ranging curriculum encompassing all aspects in the training of an aspiring opera artist. In addition to a focus on refining technical skills, students are supported in developing a very clear sense of vocal and artistic identity, and how these attributes can best be united to meet market demands and expectations. The programme is tailored to enable young artists to enhance chances of success in a competitive field as they transition from full-time education to the workplace. DNOA graduates can be found in many of the world's leading opera houses. The programme mounts several full-scale productions each season and enjoys close ties with the wider world of opera. The programme issues a Master of Music degree.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

In addition to several fully staged productions each year, the DNOA programme maintains a careful balance between individual lessons and group classes that take place over two semesters (September – December and January – August). While the DNOA schedule varies from week to week (occasionally including activities at weekends), education generally takes place Monday – Friday with a focus on one-to-one lessons in the mornings and group classes/ rehearsals in the afternoon/ early evening.

Voice lessons and individual coaching sessions are offered during 32 weeks of the academic year. In addition to working with the DNOA faculty, students engage with a wide range of well-established and respected specialists from the international opera scene, including conductors, directors, vocal coaches, and agents as well as people from the field of cultural management and performance psychology. DNOA productions, workshops and seminars provide practical and beneficial ways to establish and build professional networks within the world of opera and beyond.

The programme issues a Master of Music degree, with the main subject being the integrated domain Performing Opera.

The DNOA board consists of Lies Colman (Royal Conservatoire ,The Hague); and Okke Westdorp (Conservatorium van Amsterdam).

## THE CURRICULUM

The DNOA curriculum focuses on four specific areas of development:

- vocal/musical skills
- performance skills
- performing opera (main subject)
- reflective and career skills

The total study load of the programme is 120 ECTS.

## MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Constructive dialogue between the respective teachers and students plays an important place in the monitoring and assessment of your development during your time at the DNOA.

Along with regular informal evaluation by the artistic leader and other teachers, formal assessment at the DNOA takes place in two ways:

- the assessment of your performance during the opera production by a commission of examiners, including DNOA faculty and external experts. This assessment will lead to a mark, 1–10 (including 0.5).
- the evaluation of your progression during the semester regarding the individual courses by the respective teachers. This takes place during the semester evaluation.

Feedback is subsequently given in individual sessions led by the Artistic Leader and one or more members of the faculty. Students may also access written reports in their respective dossiers which are administered by the student administration in each conservatoire. Regular consultation of the dossiers is highly recommended.

## ATTENDANCE

An attendance level of at least 80% is a prerequisite for assessment, extenuating circumstances aside.

## STUDENT PANELS & MEETINGS

Dialogue is central to the DNOA programme and students are encouraged to participate in informal monthly meetings as well as more formal "Student Panels" with the aim of discussing issues encountered that are relevant for the entire group.

The Student Panels are overseen by the Quality Culture departments and chaired by the Artistic Leader. Students are invited to suggest topics for the agenda which is set in advance. Some agenda points are fixed. For example, social safety is currently on the agenda of every meeting. Minutes taken are anonymised and are shared with the students who were present during the panel before they are distributed to the board and faculty.

Furthermore, "Debriefing" sessions with the core faculty are scheduled after the main productions.

Students can give feedback on their study programme in other ways, for example by participating in the National Student Survey (NSE).

All the above are effective and constructive ways to facilitate and contribute to the continuous development of the DNOA programme.

## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The intended learning outcomes describe the minimum requirements that you need to meet in order to obtain a Master of Music degree with specialisation Opera. The intended learning outcomes are based on the *National Framework Music* (2017) of the *Netwerk Muziek* and are divided in six areas of competencies:

- technical skills
- creative skills
- contextual skills
- research and development skills
- communication skills
- organisational skills

Where necessary the programme objectives of the *National Framework Music* have been adapted to match the DNOA programme. The following table indicates what courses in the DNOA programme contribute to the six areas of competencies.

## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES DNOA

### 1. TECHNICAL SKILLS

The student has a wide range of professional knowledge and skills, and applies them in different musical contexts.

	COURSES
1.1 The student actively contributes to and realises artistic concepts at a high professional level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual singing lesson</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Acting Skills</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>
1.2 The student commands a representative, varied repertoire within their field, has enhanced or broadened their knowledge and knows how to set themselves apart as a professional artist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Individual singing lesson</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language coaching/Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> </ul>
1.3 The student works in ensembles or in creative collectives varying in composition, size and style and context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> </ul>
1.4 The student has enhanced and/or broadened their practical knowledge of repertoire, music history, musical styles and performance practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> </ul>
1.5 The student demonstrates that they are capable of analysing music they hear, or notated music with which they are presented, based on their understanding of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic structures and forms, and on that basis, can interpret and perform it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual singing lesson</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>
1.6 The student demonstrates the ability to be creative and adaptable and apply individual advanced-level strategies to function consistently in a rehearsal and performance context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development</li> </ul>

<p>1.7 The student has mastered effective study, practice and rehearsal skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>
<p>1.8 The student is aware of their physicality. They demonstrate awareness of health risks and takes preventative measures to ensure vocal and physical well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>

## 2. CREATIVE SKILLS

The student can realise the concept and vision of the conductor/ director in various productions.

	COURSES
2.1 The student shows artistic initiative at a high professional level based on their own artistic concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Individual singing lesson</li> <li>• Correpetition/ Language Coaching/ Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Acting Skills</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> </ul>
2.2 The student shows extensive creativity in their chosen repertoire and in realising the concept and vision of a creative team (conductor, director etc) both in a rehearsal and performance context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Acting Skills</li> </ul>
2.3 The student uses research methods to develop and enrich their work in an artistic sense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Repertoire development</li> </ul>
2.4 The student expresses a musically artistic personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> </ul>
2.5 The student puts their musically artistic personality and skills at the service, and in the context of, a larger whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>
2.6 The student can also function as an initiator, of projects of musical, dramatic and/or social value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>



### 3. CONTEXTUAL FOCUS

The student identifies developments in the national and international professional world and in society at large, positioning themselves and their work in relation to these.

	COURSES
3.1 The student is aware of developments in their specialist field, the wider professional music world and society at large. The student demonstrates how they integrate that awareness into their professional abilities and use it to enhance their own career and to serve the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li><li>• Master Research</li><li>• Opera productions</li></ul>
3.2 The student identifies opportunities, turning these into concrete actions. They are not afraid to take risks and positions themselves with their products or activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li><li>• Opera productions</li></ul>
3.3 The student demonstrates an understanding of how the national and international music markets function and are organised. To that end, they have knowledge of music marketing and production, money flows and revenue models, and apply that knowledge to position themselves in the professional music world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li><li>• Opera productions</li></ul>
3.4 The student participates in professional/cultural life, and networks with peers, other musicians, members of the public and press, and potential and current clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li></ul>
3.5 The student demonstrates resourcefulness and is capable of securing engagements, jobs and/or work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li><li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li></ul>

#### 4. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

The student constantly evaluates their own artistic performance through self-initiated research and reflection on their own identity, actions and work with the aim of improving that performance and simultaneously contributing to innovation in their field where relevant.

	COURSES
4.1 The student asks critical questions and is open to the questions of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> </ul>
4.2 The student reflects on their own assumptions, preferences, strengths and weaknesses, and understands their implications for their development and career opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> </ul>
4.3 The student reflects on their own working methods, and thus understands the implications of choices and decisions, which they can defend retrospectively both to colleagues and to individuals working outside the field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>
4.4 The student gives a justified assessment of the artistic merit of their own work and that of others, as well as an assessment as to how effectively it meets their intentions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>
4.5 The student independently collects, analyses and interprets knowledge and information relevant to their field and contributes through their own research to the development of new source material, where relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Repertoire development</li> </ul>
4.6 The student conducts structured research on issues directly or indirectly related to their own field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>
4.7 The student proactively organises their own input in the form of reflection, feedback and research, using knowledge, insight and skills to help further develop their work, professional status and field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>
4.8 The student explores, identifies and experiments with innovations in their field, in addition to fostering innovation themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The student interacts effectively in various professional contexts, using appropriate forms and means of communication.

	COURSES
5.1 The student presents themselves and their work, individually and/or collectively, in a way that is suited to the work presented and the intended audience. The student actively and demonstrably contributes to multi- and/or interdisciplinary collaborations in their own discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Master Research</li></ul>
5.2 The student participates in creative processes, projects and/or collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Master Research</li><li>• Acting skills</li></ul>
5.4 The student uses their oral, written and IT skills to convincingly and effectively convey their competencies, working method, vision and research results to professionals and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li><li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li><li>• Master Research</li></ul>
5.5 The student deals strategically and respectfully with the various roles, responsibilities, interests and qualities inherent in a collaborative undertaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Master Research</li></ul>
5.6 The student demonstrates effective intercultural communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opera productions</li><li>• Master Research</li></ul>

## 6. ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

The student creates sustainable work situations and networks, enabling themselves to achieve their goals.

	COURSES
6.1 The student sets realistic goals and makes and works according to a plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>
6.2 The student has sufficient business, organisational and administrative knowledge and skills, operating as a professional to ensure the success and sustainability of their career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> </ul>
6.3 The student organises workflows mutually with others, seeking an appropriate balance between artistic, business and facilitating activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Research</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> </ul>
6.4 The student maintains sustainable professional networks and contacts, thereby strengthening their own activities and those of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Planning and Reflective Portfolio</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> </ul>
6.5 The student responds to changing situations and circumstances and contributes to solving complex context-specific problems and issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> </ul>
6.6 The student is aware of relevant parameters and deals with them appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual singing lesson</li> <li>• Correpetition/ Language Coaching/ Repertoire Development</li> <li>• Acting skills</li> <li>• Embodiment &amp; Performative Body</li> <li>• Opera productions</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Audition Training</li> <li>• Master Research</li> </ul>

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA)	Year 1	Year 2
Master of Opera 2025-2026		
<b>Vocal and Musical Skills</b>		
Individual Singing Lesson	5	5
Correpetition/Language Coaching/Repertoire Development	6	6
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Performance Skills</b>		
Acting Skills	4	4
Embodiment and the Performative Body	4	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Performing Opera</b>		
Opera Production 1	15	
Opera Production 2	15	
Opera Production 3		15
Opera Production 4		15
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Reflective and Career Skills</b>		
Professional Development and Audition Training	5	5
Master Research	5	5
Planning and Reflective Portfolio	1	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total per year</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### INDIVIDUAL SINGING LESSON

<b>Course content:</b>	Individual voice lessons are an integral part of the DNOA programme, as a sustainable opera career requires a high level of vocal proficiency. The singing lessons focus on the further development of your vocal technique, as well as the exploration and detailed preparation of the repertoire for both the performance and auditioning modules.
<b>Objectives:</b>	At the end of this course, you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• display a high level of technical and vocal competency and assurance that is considered as excellent at an international level and that should facilitate your entry into the opera profession;</li> <li>• use your vocal technique to realise your artistic vision and enjoy a sense of freedom as an interpreter;</li> <li>• implement the wishes and instructions of a conductor or director in a way that is vocally consistent, healthy and resilient;</li> <li>• show a good understanding of your vocal identity regarding voice type and repertoire.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	60 min per week, 32 weeks per academic year
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	You will study with a voice teacher at one of the conservatoires or with an approved external teacher
<b>Credits:</b>	5 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	A combination of personal choice and repertoire allocated in consultation with your singing teacher and the artistic leader
<b>Work form:</b>	Individual practical lessons
<b>Assessment:</b>	The assessment is based on your achievements and progression during the semester. These will be evaluated during the semester evaluation, based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical proficiency and assurance</li> <li>• vocal and artistic initiative</li> <li>• development</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>Language:</b>	English or Dutch
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	By individual appointment with your voice teacher, at CvA, KC or a private studio in consultation with the Artistic Leader.
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## CORREPETITION/LANGUAGE COACHING/REPertoire DEVELOPMENT

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>During this course you will work on an individual basis with a range of experienced and accomplished coaches/pianists on your musical, interpretive and performance skills. You will receive feedback on topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocal/musical technique (tone quality, rhythm, phrasing, intonation and pronunciation)</li> <li>• interpretation (making informed stylistic choices, character identification and communication)</li> <li>• Language and articulation</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have mastered a broad and appropriate repertoire – including the core repertoire role that you have memorised – that can be used in performances, auditions and competitions;</li> <li>• are able to receive and integrate feedback from a wide range of coaches from the international world of opera each of whom brings their own perspective to both the literature and the business;</li> <li>• have developed learning strategies and practical skills to choose and prepare new repertoire in a way that is keeping with industry expectations;</li> <li>• are able to make informed and appropriate stylistic and interpretative choices;</li> <li>• have improved your competency in various languages.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	A minimum of 51 hours over 32 weeks during the academic year, ie the equivalent of two forty-five minute sessions per week
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	DNOA faculty and a wide range of guest coaches
<b>Credits:</b>	6 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	A combination of your chosen repertoire and repertoire that has been allocated in consultation with your singing teacher and the Artistic Leader which may include a "Core Repertoire Role" relevant to your current Fach.
<b>Work form:</b>	Individual practical lessons
<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>The assessment of the module is based on your achievements and progression during the semester. These will be evaluated during the semester evaluation, based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocal/musical technique</li> <li>• responsiveness</li> <li>• initiative and command of your chosen repertoire</li> <li>• language skills</li> <li>• development</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>Language:</b>	English or Dutch
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	At CvA or KC
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## ACTING SKILLS

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>The theatrical training of an opera singer is a combination of various acting techniques derived from the methods employed in today's theatrical practice. Utilising those techniques, you will learn to combine your own stage personality with the psychology of the character, to work in direct relation to the audience and to use the actual situation during the performance, manipulating it in the here and now.</p> <p>The primary elements in the course focus on basic acting skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text scenes without singing; both monologue and dialogue: going step by step from analysis to mise-en-scène on stage</li> <li>• elementary acting scenes using music but without text: without words but set on music you will physically act out a directed parcours as if inventing it on the spot</li> <li>• physical improvisation: partly based on the method of Lecoq, you will work with several improvisation formats wherein body language and sensitivity to space are crucial</li> <li>• sung scenes: combining singing in a fixed musical timing with being and reacting in the here and now as a character.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have developed your acting skills through techniques such as improvisation, use of speed and dynamics, concentration of attention, body language and control, change of emotions and atmosphere and manipulation of here and now;</li> <li>• have inhabited various characters from the operatic and theatrical literature in a meaningful way;</li> <li>• are able to communicate truthfully with your audience and your colleagues on stage;</li> <li>• are able to create the unique moment anew and bring something uniquely personal into every performance;</li> <li>• are able to process requirements of musical and stage directors into a personal blend.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Four semesters
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	Daniel van Klaveren; Anja Kühnhold
<b>Credits:</b>	4 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	A selection of spoken texts and repertoire of choice
<b>Work form:</b>	Group lessons and individual sessions
<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>The assessment is based on your attendance, engagement and progress during the semester. These will be evaluated during the semester evaluation, based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• craftsmanship</li> <li>• technical assurance and artistic credibility</li> <li>• communication</li> <li>• physicality</li> <li>• responsiveness</li> <li>• development</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	Regular classes during non-production periods at CvA &/ or KC
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)



## EMBODIMENT & THE PERFORMATIVE BODY

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>In this course the body is regarded as "the instrument" in the context of singing. It is addressed as an organic self-regulated system; physicality and movement are explored and practiced, to experience and open up new pathways. The course is based on the somatic practice of BMC (Body-Mind-Centering) integrated with principles from new dance, Alexander technique, yoga improvisation and physical theatre. The course is given in two classes:</p> <p><i>Embodiment encompasses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus and Presence: practice in placing attention in the body</li> <li>• Kinesthetic awareness, availability and alertness</li> <li>• Experiential anatomy: hands-on and study of different body systems: skeleton, facia-muscular, organs</li> <li>• Space awareness</li> <li>• Musicality and physical timing</li> </ul> <p><i>Performative Body Coaching:</i></p> <p>This class consists of the integration of physicality into the singing practice. It provides you a context of exploration, by approaching and understanding your voice from the body and its physicality, taking risks and exploring new connections. The lesson can take place either in a group or in one-to-one setting and is regularly in collaboration with a pianist.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have foundation and trust in your performative singing;</li> <li>• are able to recognize and release physical patterns;</li> <li>• are able to embody physical alignment;</li> <li>• have spatial awareness and are able to assess its implication in performance;</li> <li>• have reading skills of physicality and its relation to the voice;</li> <li>• are able to name your process and reflect on it.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Four semesters
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	Marisa Grande
<b>Credits:</b>	4 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	<p>Self-made study material sourced from:</p> <p>'Anatomy of Movement', 'Anatomy and Voice', 'Anatomy of Breathing' by Blandine Calais-Germain</p> <p>'Body Space Image' by Miranda Tufnell &amp; Chris Crickmay</p> <p>BMC study material by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen</p>
<b>Work form:</b>	Group lessons
<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>The assessment is based on your attendance, engagement and progress during the semester. These will be evaluated during the semester evaluation, based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responsiveness</li> <li>• reflection</li> <li>• alignment</li> <li>• physical and spatial awareness</li> <li>• development</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	Regular classes during non-production periods at CvA &/ or KC
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## PERFORMING OPERA – OPERA PRODUCTIONS

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>The domain Performing Opera which incorporates multiple opera productions is the main subject of your studies. The primary focus of the course is the integration of singing, acting &amp; physicality in the context of rehearsals and performances of fully staged operatic productions and other related projects.</p> <p>Working with creative teams including experienced guest conductors and directors from the international world of opera, you will develop a keen sense and understanding of the process of preparing and rehearsing a wide range of roles and gain the experience of performing regularly before the public in diverse circumstances.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have acquired, rehearsed and performed a range of appropriate roles in their entirety in a working environment that mirrors that of a professional opera company;</li> <li>• be able to give performances which demonstrate the integration of vocal, dramatic and physical skills at a high level and to a standard that is in keeping with the expectations of the operatic profession;</li> <li>• be able to realise the concept and vision of a conductor and director in various production contexts;</li> <li>• be able to receive and integrate feedback from a wide range of practitioners from the international world of opera each of whom brings their own perspective to both the literature and the business.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory. Singers are required to perform in all productions as cast.
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Two or more productions and projects per academic year of which two will be credit-bearing.
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	Experienced creative teams working in conjunction with the DNOA faculty and other production personnel.
<b>Credits:</b>	15 ECTS per credit-bearing production (Total 30 ECTS per academic year).
<b>Literature:</b>	A broad and varied repertoire chosen by the DNOA Artistic Leader encompassing a range of époques and styles.
<b>Work form:</b>	Practicum and public presentation
<b>Assessment:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocal technique</li> <li>• musicality/ stylistic awareness</li> <li>• diction</li> <li>• role interpretation/ acting skills</li> <li>• physicality</li> <li>• artistic initiative</li> <li>• ensemble spirit</li> </ul> <p>The assessment criteria above will lead to a general mark for technical assurance and artistic credibility</p>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Numeric (1-10 scale including 0.5)
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	<p>At CvA, KC and/or an external location.</p> <p><i>Please note productions may also take place during the vacation periods.</i></p>
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & AUDITION TRAINING

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>This core module is designed to prepare students for a competitive and evolving professional landscape by combining artistic training with targeted career development. Through a comprehensive series of classes, workshops, and simulated auditions, students build a structured and tactical approach to auditioning for opera houses, young artist programmes, agents, and competitions.</p> <p>A distinctive feature of the DNOA programme is its integration of holistic professional development: students receive bespoke mentoring, work with renowned industry experts, and engage with emerging practices such as intimacy coordination and emotion-focused therapy (EFT). A new collaboration with a neuropsychologist offers insight into the mental and physical frameworks that underpin sustainable artistic careers—from stress regulation and concentration to decision-making and mental practice, bridging the worlds of elite art and elite sport.</p> <p>Additional focus areas include performance biography writing, self-presentation, networking, negotiation, and working with the media. The goal is not only to refine the student's audition skills, but to strengthen their professional identity and strategic self-management.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master a wide and serviceable range of appropriate operatic repertoire that can be used in any audition or competitive context</li> <li>• Have acquired a better understanding of your own Fach from a historical perspective as well as current industry norms</li> <li>• Have developed a tactical approach to choosing audition repertoire both in terms of personal strengths and market expectations</li> <li>• Understand from first-hand experience how to prepare for and present yourself in the context of a working session with a conductor and/or director in an audition context</li> <li>• Be able to receive and integrate feedback from a wide range of practitioners from the international world of opera, each of whom brings their own perspective to both the literature and the business</li> <li>• Be equipped with a range of holistic, managerial and entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Be resourced in every respect to deal with competitive and challenging circumstances</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Two years
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	Paul McNamara and various industry experts including conductors, agents, journalists and casting directors.
<b>Credits:</b>	5 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	<p>Appropriate operatic repertoire chosen &amp; agreed in consultation with the DNOA Artistic Leader &amp; your voice teacher.</p> <p>Kloiber Konold Maschka: <i>"Handbuch der Oper"</i> (Bärenreiter Verlag, 2024)</p> <p>Pearl Yeadon McGinnis: <i>"The Opera Singer's Career Guide"</i> (The Scarecrow Press, 2010)</p> <p>Peter F. Drucker: <i>"Managing Oneself"</i> (Harvard Business School Press, 2008)</p>
<b>Work form:</b>	Practicum, individual lessons and group lessons

<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Master I:</b></p> <p><b>Semester I:</b> A written submission in the form of an approach to an agent or Young Artist Programme including a letter of introduction, a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae and links to recordings.</p> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range and appropriateness of repertoire</li> <li>• technical &amp; musical proficiency</li> <li>• artistic, stylistic, and linguistic assurance</li> <li>• all aspects of presentation &amp; communication</li> </ul> <p><b>Semester II:</b> A simulated audition for a panel of industry experts where you are required to prepare five arias in contrasting styles and languages with the exclusion of the repertoire presented at your DNOA audition.</p> <p>The selection must include</p> <p>(i) an aria/scene from the baroque or classical period with a secco recitative.</p> <p>(ii) an aria in German.</p> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range and appropriateness of repertoire</li> <li>• technical &amp; musical proficiency</li> <li>• artistic, stylistic, and linguistic assurance</li> <li>• all aspects of presentation &amp; communication</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Master II:</b></p> <p><b>Semester I:</b> A written submission in the form of an approach to an agent or Young Artist Programme including a letter of introduction, a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae and links to recordings.</p> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range and appropriateness of repertoire</li> <li>• technical &amp; musical proficiency</li> <li>• artistic, stylistic and linguistic assurance</li> <li>• all aspects of presentation &amp; communication</li> </ul> <p><b>Semester II:</b></p> <p>( I ) A simulated working session (Arbeitsprobe) on selected repertoire to be prepared within a given period of time.</p> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the level of preparedness</li> <li>• technical &amp; musical proficiency</li> <li>• artistic, stylistic and linguistic assurance</li> <li>• all aspects of presentation &amp; communication</li> </ul> <p>( II ) A simulated audition for a panel of industry experts where you are required to prepare eight arias in contrasting styles and languages of which a maximum of three have already been presented during your first year on the programme.</p> <p>The selection must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) an aria/scene from the baroque or classical period with a secco recitative.</li> <li>(ii) an aria in German.</li> <li>(iii) a number from an operetta/musical where appropriate.</li> <li>(iii) an aria/scene from an opera by a composer born after 1949.</li> </ul> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range and appropriateness of repertoire</li> <li>• technical &amp; musical proficiency</li> <li>• artistic, stylistic, and linguistic assurance</li> <li>• all aspects of presentation &amp; communication</li> </ul> <p>A recording of the Audition Assessment will be provided to each student for personal use.</p>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	Regular group and individual classes throughout the year at CvA and/or KC
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## MASTER RESEARCH

<b>Course content:</b>	<p>Research in DNOA's programme centres on completing a research project within a chosen area that has relevance to your practice as an opera singer.</p> <p>In the first semester a range of different types of research will be discussed, offering you the opportunity to discover which form of research is most suitable for you.</p> <p>The DNOA offers two paths to conduct your Master research:</p> <p><b>1. Artistic research</b></p> <p>While the notion of artistic research is relatively new, it has become a common way to conduct research in the arts. What sets it apart from other types of research is that the creative process is integral to the research and the resulting artistic work forms the central part of the research output. At the DNOA, we encourage students to engage in artistic research. This research path allows you to explore a topic closely related to your musical practice, motivating you and enriching your studies.</p> <p>Although a creative activity is essential for artistic research, not every creative process counts as artistic research. The key difference is that while a creative process might be partly or mainly intuitive, artistic research requires critical awareness of the creative process. You should keep in mind the questions you wish to answer and use the creative process as a testing field. The research will thus lead to a meaningful discussion of the creative process, with findings and insights that go beyond the resulting artistic work.</p> <p><b>2. Thesis research</b></p> <p>This research path aligns with an academic approach to research. In a musical context, it can involve, for example, a thoughtful discourse around a music-related subject, an investigation of a particular compositional practice, an exploration of the performance practice of a particular piece, or a study of methods for a specific instrument. A thesis research gives you the opportunity to explore a topic of personal significance, enriching your studies and contributing to your academic and musical growth.</p> <p>For further information please refer to DNOA Master Research Guide 2025/26.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this course, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have acquired an understanding of the role research can play in a performance career;</li> <li>• be able to demonstrate skills of formulating a project proposal and abstract;</li> <li>• show an understanding of the use of source material and the skills required to document and present your research results;</li> <li>• have enhanced your artistic and professional understanding through the findings of your research;</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Four semesters
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	Klaus Bertisch
<b>Credits:</b>	5 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	Dependent on your research area and to be agreed in consultation with the course supervisor.

<p><b>Work form:</b></p>	<p>In addition to three Master Research Circles (group context) per year, individual tutorials with your personal research supervisor will also take place throughout the module..</p> <p><b>Master I</b>  September-November – Group sessions with research supervisor towards creating research proposal</p> <p>November 2025 – Due date research proposal</p> <p>December – Formal start of the research</p> <p>May 2026 – Due date first year's submission: first research output and progress report</p> <p>May 2026 – End-of-the-year presentation to research supervisor, faculty and fellow students</p> <p><b>Master II</b>  November 2025 – Due date first submission: further research output and progress report, defining portfolio content and presentation format for the Research Symposium</p> <p>October-January – Working towards completion of research portfolio</p> <p>February 2026 – Due date final submission: handing in the research portfolio  March – Preparing for research presentation</p> <p>April 2026 – DNOA Research Symposium where you are required to give a 30-minute presentation of your research in English to the committee of examiners in front of an interested audience.</p> <p>The presentation during the Master Research Symposium is followed by questions from the committee of examiners and time permitting, members of the audience. You will be given the results of your research and presentation immediately following the deliberations of the committee.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b></p>	<p><i>Master I assessment criteria</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistency of the research process: setting goals, planning, realising</li> <li>- Quality and punctuality of the intermediate submissions</li> <li>- Communication with the research supervisor</li> </ul> <p>Based on these criteria, the progress you have made with your research in your first year will be graded with a 'pass' (if you are on the right track) or a 'fail' (if you are behind and not progressing).</p> <p>A 'fail' mainly functions as a warning and indicator; your progress can be re-assessed once you are back on track.</p>

<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>Master II assessment criteria</p> <p>Quality of the idea (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Originality</li> <li>• Contribution to the field</li> <li>• Contribution to the student's practice</li> </ul> <p>Quality of the research process (25%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency of the research process: setting goals, planning, realising</li> <li>• Quality and punctuality of the intermediate submissions</li> <li>• Communication with the coordinator &amp; advisor</li> </ul> <p>Quality of the portfolio (30%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the research outcomes, in light of the original research goals</li> <li>• Quality of the written work including references and formatting</li> </ul> <p>Quality of the presentation (30%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the preparation, time management and execution</li> <li>• Effective communication of research outcomes</li> <li>• Evidence of gained expertise as manifested in the presentation, including Question &amp; Answer</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	MI: pass/fail, MII: numeric (scale 1-10 including 0.5)
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	Master Circles & individual tutorials (MI four one hour sessions; MII five one hour sessions) will be scheduled during the year at CvA and/or KC or online.
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)



## PLANNING AND REFLECTIVE PORTFOLIO

<b>Course content:</b>	The Planning and Reflective Portfolio serves as a structured means to develop and hone critical and self-awareness attributes that are a vital tool in career development and sustaining a career. In addition, it aims to be an aid for planning and effective use of time, and for setting objectives for the respective modules and establishing strategies by which to achieve them. The Planning and Reflective portfolio to be submitted in the first semester serves as a frame of reference with which to reflect on your progress when it comes to the semester evaluations and getting the best out of your time at the DNOA.
<b>Objectives:</b>	At the end of this course you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have explored and developed both your self-reflective, critical and writing skills</li> <li>• have identified your strengths and weaknesses and learned ways to optimize the former while alleviate the latter</li> <li>• have clearly defined documents to use as a reference when it comes to monitoring all aspects of your development (artistic, managerial etc).</li> <li>• have learned to articulate your goals and set out ways to achieve them.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of course:</b>	Compulsory
<b>Level:</b>	Master I and II
<b>Duration:</b>	Two years
<b>Prior qualifications/ prerequisites:</b>	-
<b>Teachers:</b>	P. McNamara
<b>Credits:</b>	1 ECTS per academic year
<b>Literature:</b>	-
<b>Work form:</b>	Self-reflection, a written submission and individual discussions/consultations
<b>Assessment:</b>	Realisation of the goals established in the Planning Portfolio will be assessed in the context of the semester evaluations, similarly the Reflective Portfolio for the students at the start of the third semester at DNOA. Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• critical awareness</li> <li>• reflective skills</li> <li>• structure and articulation</li> <li>• attainability and realisation of goals</li> </ul>
<b>Grading system:</b>	Participation sufficient/insufficient
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Schedule, time, venue:</b>	An average of 20 hours of reflection and writing hours per year, in addition to one-to-one consultation sessions
<b>Information:</b>	Paul McNamara - DNOA Artistic Leader (paul.mcnamara@ahk.nl)

## GRADING SCALES

There are four grading scales: Numeric results - Participation results - Pass/Fail - Qualifying results.

### NUMERIC RESULTS

A numeric grade between 0 and 10, including a maximum of one digit after the decimal point.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Description</i>
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	More than sufficient
6	Sufficient
5	Insufficient
4	Very Insufficient
3	Poor
2	Very poor
1	Extremely Ppor

### PARTICIPATION RESULTS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Pass?</i>
Participation sufficient	PS	Yes
Participation insufficient	PI	No

### PASS/FAIL

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Pass?</i>
Pass	P	Yes
Fail	F	No

### QUALIFYING RESULTS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Pass</i>
Excellent	PS	Yes
Very good	PI	Yes
Good	G	Yes
More than sufficient	MTS	Yes
Sufficient	S	Yes
Insufficient	I	No
Very insufficient	VI	No
Poor	PR	No
Very poor	VP	No
Extremely poor	EP	No

# **ADDENDUM EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION REGULATIONS DNOA**

**To the Education and Examination Regulations (OER) 2025–2026 of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Education and Examination Regulations (OER) 2025–2026 of the Royal Conservatoire for the joint Master of Music degree programme in Opera.**

## **1. General**

The boards of the Amsterdam University of the Arts and the University of the Arts The Hague, herewith represented by the directorates of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire, attach this addendum to the Education and Examination Regulations (OER) of both conservatoires. The addendum is endorsed by the faculty counsels of both conservatories and concurs with article 7.13 of the Dutch law for higher education and scientific research. It concerns the content and form of the educational programme and tests for the Master of Music in Opera degree at Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA). This DNOA Master programme is jointly offered by the Music Faculty of the Amsterdam University of the Arts (hereinafter Conservatorium van Amsterdam) and the Royal Conservatoire of the University of the Arts The Hague.

The general provisions, including the enactment and the date of coming into operation of the Education and Examination Regulations of both conservatoires, apply fully to the DNOA. The purpose of this addendum is to synchronise the DNOA programme and its student assessments with the regulations of both conservatoires.

## **2. Programme**

The DNOA is a two-year programme delivered over four semesters. The academic year is divided in two semesters (September–January and February–August) during which periods of group lessons alternate with rehearsals and performances. Voice lessons and individual coaching sessions continue throughout thirty-four weeks of the academic year. The programme is presented each year in the curriculum handbook, including course descriptions, learning outcomes, assessment and criteria, and number of credits.

## **3. Auditions**

Audition requirements for enrolment at DNOA are specified on the DNOA website. A successful audition for DNOA means that a student has demonstrated sufficient qualities to be able to attain the final qualifications.

## **4. Sequence of Tests**

A prerequisite for admission to a test is that all previous tests in said subject or academic year have been successfully passed, unless the course specifically allows exception to this prerequisite.

## **5. Tests and Resits**

5.1 If a student fails the initial practical test, they will be offered the opportunity to take a reassessment in a similar or alternative form, as soon as viable, ideally within the same academic year. In the case of a failed or omitted opera production, the reassessment can be a staged recital (duration 35 – 40 minutes, repertoire and content to be decided in agreement with the Artistic Leader).

5.2 Students can enrol a maximum of two times for each course of the programme. If still not completed, the onus is with the student to ensure they prepare independently for a further assessment in the requisite course. The terms of this assessment are to be agreed in negotiation with the Artistic Leader and the DNOA board. successfully, students must consult DNOA's Artistic Leader on how to prepare for the exam on their own.

## **6. Types of Assessment**

6.1 The DNOA has various types of tests incorporating continuous assessment, written submissions and practical performances.

6.2 Practical tests are generally open to the general public, unless determined otherwise in special cases by the Artistic Leader in consultation with the Board.

## **7. Test Results**

7.1 At the end of each semester the integral development of a student is discussed at a plenary semester evaluation. During this meeting the student's overall development during the past semester is evaluated.

7.2 At the conclusion of the semester evaluation, DNOA's Artistic Leader meets with each student to relay the evaluation. This is followed by a written report concerning the student's study progress.

7.3 Twice a year DNOA's Artistic Leader is responsible for relaying student evaluations to the administration of the appropriate conservatoire.

## **8. Overview of roles**

Together with the diploma, the student receives a supplement stating the titles of the productions and names of roles that the student has participated in as part of the course, including the grade for the respective credit-bearing roles.

## **9. Cum laude**

DNOA students are eligible for the designation 'cum laude' if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. was awarded an average grade of at least 9.0 in the assessed Opera Productions;
2. was awarded a grade of at least 8.0 in the assessment of the final Master Research;
3. passed all components of the programme at the first attempt;
4. has been enrolled for the Master's programme for a maximum of two academic years;
5. the Exam Committee has never established fraud by the student. Whether the student has met all the requirements is determined retrospectively by the student administration office. The designation 'cum laude' is recorded in an attachment to the certificate.

