
Final Assessment Report- Executive Summary

Music

2018-2025

To: Algoma University Senate

From: Dr. Brett Goodwin, Vice President Academic and Research

Date: November 2025

In accordance with the Algoma University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan provide a synthesis of the cyclical program review process (and related outcomes) of Algoma University Music programming, including: Bachelor of Arts (General) Music, single major (BA3.MUSC); and Bachelor of Arts (General) Music- Combined Major (BA3.MUSC.xxxx). This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement. The report sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies (a) what bodies are responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report, (b) what bodies are responsible for providing any resources made necessary by the recommendations, (c) any changes in the organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, (d) what bodies are responsible for acting on those recommendations, and (e) the timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Cyclical Program Review Summary for the Music Program

The Music Self Study Committee submitted the completed self-study to the CAO Office on December 12, 2024. The Quality Assurance Committee approved the Self-Study and recommended it for external review at its next meeting on January 13, 2025. The self-study included an analysis of program strengths and areas for improvement informed by quantitative data analysis, feedback from students, and an analysis of the program curriculum. Included were the CVs for full-time faculty, course outlines, and student survey results.

Two arm's length reviewers were selected by the Quality Assurance Committee of the Senate to conduct the external review. The reviewers, Dr. Stephen Runge, Dean, Faculty of Music at University of Manitoba and Dr. Brent Jarvis, Victoria Island University, were provided with a briefing package and conducted a virtual site visit on March 19, 2025. The external reviewers met with faculty in the program, the members of the Self-Study Committee, the departmental and Faculty chairs, academic and administrative unit heads, including the Vice President, Academic and Research, the Acting Associate Vice President Student Affairs, the Chief Information Officer, the Manager of National Recruitment, the Educational Developer, the University Librarian and current students and alumni of the program.

The reviewers submitted the Reviewers' Report on the Music program on April 1, 2025. In their report, the external reviewers provided feedback on each of the evaluative criteria in the IQAP. The objectives, admission standards, curriculum, teaching and assessment, and quality indicators were assessed for the programs under review.

The reviewers provided 15 recommendations for improvement of the Music program.

Below you will find a summary of the findings and recommendations.

Summary of Significant Program Strengths

- Faculty members express an exceptional dedication to providing a vibrant and exciting experience for students through their commitment to a student-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Small class sizes and favourable faculty-to-student ratios allow for an individualized approach to instruction, which is particularly valuable in a performance based program. Students have a notable amount of hands-on instruction and significant performing opportunities.
- The program occupies a unique and well-positioned space in Northern Ontario by focusing on popular music and the contemporary music industry. This contrasts sharply with other regional programs, which primarily focus on classical traditions.
- Despite limited on-campus space, the program maintains an ongoing leasing relationship with the Algoma Conservatory of Music, which provides students with access to very fine facilities for teaching, rehearsal, and performance. The Music program is closely integrated with the larger Sault Ste. Marie musical community where they have cultivated strong and mutually beneficial relationships with external partners.

Summary of Reviewer Recommendations

- Course offerings should be tightened up to focus on areas that reflect faculty expertise and strong student interest, rather than attempting to cover all genres comprehensively.
- The reviewers recommend that the department explore the proposal process for a 4-year Bachelor of Music in Performance, Industry and Creativity and concurrently explore expanding the current BA3 program to include a 4-year Honours option to better prepare students for graduate studies.
- Review and update the posted audition requirements for the BA degree to accurately reflect current flexible practice (where Level 8 RCM is no longer required), ensuring they are appropriate for the required skills.
- The Department and administration should work together to determine a mutual path to financial sustainability, whether through cutting costs or increasing revenues, to inform future curriculum and marketing decisions.

Program Quality Outcome

The Quality Assurance Committee of the Senate discussed the distinguishing features of the Music programming described by both the Self-Study Committee and the Reviewers. The Committee determined that the Music program is of **“Good Quality- QualCom has no serious concerns about program quality, as it is apparent that students are receiving a sound educational experience. The number and nature of the recommendations for quality enhancement, while they may be significant, do not impact the overall quality or viability of the program** on August 25, 2025.

Implementation Plan

The Academic Dean was asked to review the Report on Program Quality and rank the recommendations. The Dean completed the prioritization practice and informed the Department on September 12, 2025. The Department Chair submitted the draft Implementation Plan to the Designate of CAO on October 17, 2025. The Quality Assurance Committee (QualCom) approved the draft Final Assessment Report and the Implementation Plan on December 8, 2025. Items in the chart below are ordered according to the ranking and priority level provided by the Academic Dean.

The Music program shall prepare a report of the status of the agreed-upon Implementation Plan 18 months following Senate approval of the Final Assessment Report. This report shall be submitted via the Office of the CAO to the Quality Assurance Committee for review. The date of the next Music program review is 2030/31.

The Bachelor of Arts in Music Draft Implementation Plan

| Priority # | Recommendations | Who is Responsible for Leading /Following-Up? | What Resources are Required? | Timeline for Addressing Recommendation (and explanatory comments) |
|------------|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <p>RECOMMENDATION 2: The Music Program should continue with the next steps in the proposal process for the 4-year Bachelor of Music in Performance, Industry and Creativity, while recognizing that without strong evidence of student interest and potential for enrolment growth, the current financial situation facing Ontario universities will make any expansion difficult. NB: It should be noted that despite requests, the reviewers did not receive a copy of the BMus proposal. This recommendation should not then be understood as an endorsement of its program curriculum or structure, but rather as support for Algoma's internal review process which should ensure the appropriateness of the program for the Program and broader university offerings</p> | <p>Chair: Dept. of Music</p> <p>Office of Quality Assurance</p> | None | <p>Action may be completed by May, 2026</p> <p>The Music Department, in collaboration with the Office of Quality Assurance, may develop a program proposal with the goal of completion and forwarding to the Senate by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.</p> |
| 2. | <p>RECOMMENDATION 3: ...The Music Program should also consider whether its current BA in Music could be expanded to include a fourth year Honours option. This</p> | <p>Chair: Dept. of Music</p> <p>Office of Quality Assurance</p> | May require FT resourcing beyond | <p>Action to be completed by September, 2027: Bachelor of Music Degree program launch</p> |

| | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | would provide more depth of training for students, hopefully leading to greater success in accessing Master's programs following graduation. | | the current one FT position. | A four-year Bachelor of Music (BMus) degree could be developed if conditions remain favourable for program development. The necessary advance steps may be completed through 2025 - 2026 in preparation for a September 2027 program launch |
| 3. | RECOMMENDATION 5: The Music Program should consider whether it can realistically continue to offer course offerings in all areas of music study, including Performance, Music Research, Music Education, and Popular Musics, and in such a comprehensive range of genres (European Western Art classical music, jazz, popular music, world music, etc). Given that there are already several courses that have not been offered for many years, the Program may be able to tighten its offerings to more closely reflect faculty expertise and the interest of students in the region, ideally positioning itself uniquely among other larger post-secondary Music programs. | Chair: Dept. of Music | None | Action completed |
| 4. | RECOMMENDATION 6: Given their proposed BMus focusing on popular music and the music industry, the small numbers of incoming students with a high level of Classical music training, and the proven interest in courses exploring topics such as rock music and video game or film music, the Program should consider a streamlining of the program to concentrate on | Chair: Dept. of Music | None | Action completed Explanation: the BMus concept proposal is not music genre-specific. Musicians from all genres have always been, and will continue to be welcomed into the Algoma U Music Program. The current curriculum aligns with standards expected of a comprehensive, robust three-year BA. The same will hold true for a developed BMus. |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|-------------------------|
| | these areas. This would enable the Program to provide sufficient electives for a greater depth of experience and subject knowledge in a more focused area of musical study. | | | |
| 5 | RECOMMENDATION 7: If the Program is set on maintaining auditions for the BA degree, they should review the posted requirements to more accurately reflect actual practice (where Level 8 RCM is no longer required) and should not require a higher skill level than students would realistically need to successfully meet curricular aims. | Chair: Dept. of Music | None | Action completed |
| 6 | RECOMMENDATION 9: The Administration must ensure that the Music Program has relevant data and a clear understanding of the current budgetary situation. The Program must understand how increased enrolment (either increased numbers of Majors or increased numbers of non-Majors enrolled in Music courses) impact their budget. | Chair: Dept. of Music VPAR Registrar CFO | Needed resources: Accurate enrollment and financial data communicated to the Music Department in a timely manner. | Spring 2026 |
| 7 | RECOMMENDATION 10: The Administration and Music Program must immediately undertake talks to determine how the Program can attain financial sustainability, either through cutting program costs or increasing program revenues. The Program can | Chair: Dept. of Music Interim President VPAR CFO | No resources needed beyond Music's ability to meet with the Leadership Team to bring cost savings ideas forward for | Action completed |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
| | then undertake curriculum, program, and marketing/outreach decisions with clearer goals in mind. | | consideration and possible operationalization as a means to ensure Music Program long-term viability. | |
| 8 | RECOMMENDATION 11: The role and responsibilities of Dr. Michael DiSanto in regard to the Music Program should be clarified and made official. It is unclear whether his valuable assistance and obvious care for the Program should be seen as part of an informal advisory role, or whether (particularly given the title “Co-Director”) his duties are instead part of his official job responsibilities. | Chair: Dept. of Music | None | completed Action |
| 9 | RECOMMENDATION 12: Given the loss of Shingwauk Auditorium as a performance venue, the Administration should work with the Music Program to identify another possible performance venue – either on- or off-campus – for any Music Program events that cannot take place in the Loft performance space at Algoma Conservatory (for example, any student ensemble concerts which would be too large to be comfortably accommodated in the Loft) | <p>Led by the Interim President, a meeting to include:</p> <p>VPAR</p> <p>Members: Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association</p> <p>Krista McCracken</p> <p>Joel Syrette</p> <p>Chair: Music Dept.</p> | <p>Resource: Meeting(s) to discuss restored access</p> <p>Shingwauk was purpose-built for arts presentations. Before August 2023, Shingwauk had long been a hub for Music and multiple other programs. Continued access is viewed as essential, as a means to:</p> <p>(i) honour Music’s legacy in the space,</p> <p>(ii) acknowledge Chief Shingwauk’s vision of <i>“a teaching Wigwam where Anishinaabe and settler children learn from each other’s cultures,”</i></p> <p>(iii) support Music’s growth by ensuring continued access to a cost-free, on-campus performance venue that fosters student experiential learning and engagement</p> | May, 2026: |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | | across the university in perpetuity. | |
| 10. | RECOMMENDATION 1: The Music Program should familiarize itself with the Canadian University Music Society's (MusCan) guidelines for the Bachelor of Arts (Major in Music) and Bachelor of Music degrees. The Program should join MusCan's Standing Committee of Institutional Members (SCIM) and participate in the ongoing discussions around Music degree requirements. | Chair: Dept. of Music MusCan | To be determined | Action will be completed before the end of the 2025 - 2026 academic year |
| 11. | RECOMMENDATION 4: The Music should work with Admissions to determine the reasons behind students' applications to Music, and ultimately their decisions whether to register at Algoma or not. This would be useful in determining future program and curriculum direction as the Program aims for increased numbers of applications, converting acceptances into larger numbers of registrations. | Chair: Dept of Music | None | Action completed |
| 12 | RECOMMENDATION 8: At the next updating of the lease for facilities at Algoma Conservatory, an attempt should be made to include a set number of annual performances in the Loft in the lease price, rather than the current pay-per-use model. A case should also be made for reduced (or free) tickets to Loft concerts for Algoma Music majors, as student report ticket prices are prohibitive. | Chair: Dept. of Music VPAR CFO Algoma Conservatory Administration | None | Date: January 2026 |