

Conservatorium van Amsterdam

Associate Degree

Amsterdam Electronic Music Academy -
AEMA

Study Guide 2020-2021

Part 1: Programme description

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Studying Dance and Electronic Music at the CvA

The Amsterdam Electronic Music Academy (AEMA) of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (CvA) is open to talented musicians with a passion for creating dance and electronic music. Geared towards offering young students higher professional training, the course is embedded in the CvA Pop Music Department and focuses on the DJ/producer professional profile. Launched in 2018 and accredited in 2019, the course can accommodate ten to twenty motivated students. Currently, most students are from the Netherlands, but the course is fully prepared to receive foreign students in the future.

Future AEMA alumni can look forward to a broad and varied professional experience. There is a real need for trained producers and DJs equipped with the knowledge and skills for creating music for dance events, producing as an artist or for other artists and for games, advertising, film, television, fashion and art. Professionals active in the dance and electronic music world create, perform, produce and effectively present their work. Thanks to the CvA network, The School of House and numerous leading partners based in Amsterdam, the course boasts teachers and instructors known for quality, state-of-the art knowledge and good connections with the professional world.

Students from diverse backgrounds bring different experiences to the programme. One student may have already established his or her own artistic identity and is looking to turn it into a professional product. Another may have acquired various basic skills and is looking for ways to establish his or her own identity. The programme provides scope for further development from different starting levels.

The CvA's AEMA is part of the Pop Music Department, which offers a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in Pop Music, in addition to the AEMA Associate Degree. AEMA would appear to offer added value both for the students and teachers of these courses. There are opportunities for exchange between those enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in Pop Music and the AEMA. Pop music students supplement their knowledge with electronic production skills and the dynamism (e.g. online marketing and strategy) of the dance scene. AEMA students can capitalize on the expertise of the Pop music programme by working on collaborative projects or taking electives. The interaction between the two is a source of inspiration, resulting in new musical interconnections and making both the AEMA and the Pop Music Department cutting-edge programmes and stronger in the future.

Course details

Study load: 120 ECTS

Length of study: 2 years (full-time)

Languages of instruction: Dutch and English

CROHO code: 80160

Degree: Associate Degree in Music

Curriculum

The AEMA programme consists of two years of study. The first year is divided into *trimesters*, the second into *semesters*. The first year offers plenty of scope for students to broaden their horizons by discovering a variety of aspects among the core elements of the course. Students gain as much knowledge as possible and discover what is right for them. In the second year, students shift their focus to preparing the final project and moving into the professional world as independent players in the arts sector. It is during the final examination that students present their skills and artistic ideas to the outside world.

Each term ends with an assessment: three in the first year, two in the second. At the three points at which assessment takes place, students will present the results of their composition projects. The teachers assess these results in accordance with the A-MACK system (see explanatory notes below). The last week of each term is the evaluation week. The examinations and presentations of each student are discussed during the teacher meetings. Teachers give feedback to students on their development based on their performance in all subjects, so that the students can adapt and coordinate their personal academic process.

Educational concept

The AEMA programme has been shaped in accordance with a number of guiding principles reflecting the starting level and different profiles of the students enrolled on the course.

- These are individual and focused on each student's maximum learning output. The profiles and development issues of enrolling students are different, but the basic curriculum offers sufficient scope for a tailored approach.
- Students learn to reflect on their performance and development, in relation to which they are increasingly able to set realistic, independent goals in line with their personal ambitions and potential. This prepares them for lifelong learning in an ever-changing line of work.
- Classes are small – no more than twenty students are accepted each academic year. There is sufficient scope for private instruction and guidance in artistic, business and technical areas.
- The final assignment is a professional product consisting of a project plan and the student's own work. It can also be used by students as an aid to positioning themselves in the professional field.

Structure of the curriculum: the four pillars

The individual subjects are grouped into four pillars on which the programme is built. Core subjects recur across and throughout these elements. The curriculum overview below shows a graphical representation of the programme. The separate course descriptions can be found in the second part of the prospectus (on the intranet).

AEMA - jaar 1	Trimester 1		Trimester 2		Trimester 3
Producties en projecten					
Kennisvakken					
Business, Industry and organisation					
Persoonlijke ontwikkeling, keuzevakken en Vrije Ruimte					
AEMA - jaar 2					
	Semester 1		Semester II		
Producties en projecten					
Kennisvakken					
Business, Industry and organisation					
Persoonlijke ontwikkeling, keuzevakken en Vrije Ruimte					

Translation of the terminologu used in the above table:

AEMA year 1 / year 2:

“Producties en projecten” => Productions and Projects

“Kennisvakken” => Knowledge courses

“Business, Industry and Organization” => idem

“Persoonlijke ontwikkeling, keuzevakken en Vrije ruimte” = > Personal development, electives and ‘free space’

In each block making up the two academic years, students cultivate their knowledge and develop their artistic and business profile. Learning is built around four fundamental pillars offered throughout the course:

Productions and Projects

During the Productions and Projects module, students experiment with making their own tracks and develop concepts independently. Students develop their technical skills and apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired.

Knowledge courses

Knowledge courses provide students with a music theory framework allowing them to develop skills which support the analysis and composition of music. They also develop their understanding of the terminology and technology used in the profession.

Business, Industry and Organization

The pillar of Business, Industry and Organization allows students to explore market opportunities and to gain insight into the music industry as a whole.

Personal development, electives and ‘free space’

Elective courses and ‘free space’ offer students the opportunity to explore, cultivate and further develop their own profile and artistic identity.

Level indicator

Our level indicator is broken down into three variables:

1. Environment: focus inside (level 1) and outside (level 2)
2. Collaboration/communication: focus alone (level 1) and together (level 2)
3. Output creation: unconscious competence/conscious incompetence (level 1) and conscious competence (level 2)

Level 2 represents the final level of the programme for all variables. In the course descriptions (see intranet), these levels are indicated for each course and for each block.

	1. Environment	2. Collaboration/communication	3. Output creation
Level 1	<p>1 = Inside</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: You create your own work, but there is no, or only a limited, correlation between it and your environment.</p>	<p>1 = Alone</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: You work alone and thus not with your peers or with other disciplines.</p>	<p>1 = 1A: unconscious competence 1B: conscious incompetence</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: 1A: You create compositions/your own tracks which are good but which came about mainly through intuitive means. 1B: You are not yet able to produce compositions as fully fledged outputs or songs, but you are motivated to learn how to do so.</p>
Level 2/Final level	<p>2 = Outside</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: Commissioned by others, you produce compositions, remixes or music to be used to accompany visual material. There is a direct correlation between your work and your professional environment.</p>	<p>2 = Together</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: You work as part of a team (multidisciplinary or otherwise). You can adapt and get your point across to the others. You adapt and empathize with the others and their points of view.</p>	<p>2 = conscious competence</p> <p>Explanatory remarks: You are aware of how you structure your compositions, work or remixes, and can carry out and manage this process consciously and competently.</p>

Structure of the two-year AEMA curriculum

The two-year AEMA curriculum is structured in accordance with the level indicator described in the previous section. The structure is shown schematically in the diagram below.

Year 1	Year 2
<p><i>Students arrive with different knowledge and skills. We make a distinction here between two guiding principles:</i></p> <p><i>(1) Students start out with unconscious competence – in other words, they just happen to create good music serendipitously. In taking part in the learning process, they follow the path towards conscious competence.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Another option is that students start out with conscious incompetence, and follow the learning process to conscious competence.</i></p> <p><i>At this stage, consciousness is the main aim in both cases.</i></p>	<p><i>The students' consciousness is developed (further) by focusing on personal and fundamental reflective skills. This phase of the course focuses on output – there is no longer any place here for serendipity. The result is the emergence of conscious competence.</i></p>
Diverging	Converging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students lay a foundation of knowledge and skills aimed at producing and composing electronic music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are primarily engaged in applying and deepening their knowledge and skills, and creating music for a personal release.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They learn to use tools and apply them in their own work. These tools include the most important software programs, an initial integration with hardware, historical context and the development of the ear and analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students use the tools they have acquired to deepen the process of making their own music.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They work together with their peers on pieces of music, learn to work together and come into contact with styles outside their own world of experience and taste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students learn to arrive independently at an artistic statement in their music.
Discovering and exploring	Selection and continued development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will explore the questions of What am I good at? What else do I want to learn? - Students develop a musical frame of reference. They will be doing research and broadening their framework. The exploration of a range of styles is key. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will stand up for who they are. What is their style? They will be identifying tendencies here and developing their own style. - Students work towards their own release, in both musical and business terms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They work to develop their aural skills. - Students learn to control the instrument (laptop) and to express in words the path they wish to take: producing sound in a digital environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students have developed their aural skills in such a way that they can recognize and reconstruct music (or elements thereof), but also invent and develop it themselves.

Curriculum overview

The AEMA curriculum is a mix of creative and theory subjects. Each year represents a study load of 60 credits, the total programme consisting of a study load of 120 credits.

AEMA credits									
Year	Outputs and Projects	EC	Knowledge courses	EC	Business and Industry	EC	Personal development	EC	up to
I	Style Labs I DJ & Repertoire I Mix & Production I Music & Media I	6 4 6 4	Music Technology Sound Synthesis & Set-up General Music Theory Composition & Analysis Building Tracks Percussion Lab	6 4 3 3 4 2	Industry & Entrepreneurship	10	Artist & Culture Electronic Music History	4 4	
Subtotal		20		22		10		8	60
II	Style Labs II Mix Lab & Production II Artist Release & Performance	6 4 6	Music Technology II General Music Theory II Creativity and Identity Building Tracks	6 3 5 4	Industry and Entrepreneurship	10	Elective 1 * Elective 2 Elective 3 Free space	4 4 4 4	
Subtotal		16		18		10	(4 choices)	16	60
Total		38		36		20		30	120

Overview of electives:

Course name	EC
Advanced DJ & Repertoire II	4
The Web, Social Media & Distribution	4
The Art of Remixing I (teacher A)	2
The Art of Remixing II (teacher B)	2
Music & Media II	4
Production II	4
Ableton Advanced Course	4
Apple Logic Certified Pro	4
Electronic Music History II	4
Art Theory: Pop & Electronic Music	4
Coaching & Course Development	4
Instrumental lesson (subsidiary subject)	4
Internship	4

Methods of instruction

The lessons consist of a mix of lectures, practical seminars, creative projects, studio sessions and independent outputs. Through feedback, reflection and guidance, students are encouraged to take their own work to the next level. Knowledge acquired can be applied directly to the outputs students are working on. The lessons will be adapted as necessary to students' individual learning needs. The course contents do not change, but one student can focus more on a competency he or she needs to develop, while another can focus on another competency. Standard 3 examines in greater detail how teachers can facilitate such a tailored approach.

The lesson material consists of software, a well-equipped studio environment and various books and articles from periodicals. The teaching is truly tailored to the students' needs. Various themes are revisited in a number of the lessons.

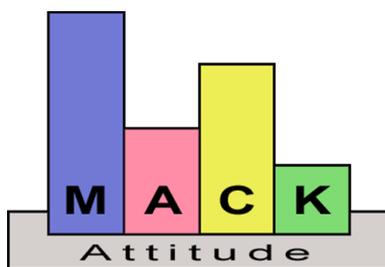
Classes are given in a lecture hall, a computer lab and three electronic music studios. These are furnished with computers with professional software, hardware synthesizers and additional studio equipment. Students can also avail themselves of drop-in classes in the studio of the main building and use the recording facilities there.

Assessment and testing

A-MACK assessment

All terms and courses are concluded with an assessment in the form of a presentation, examination, paper, etc. The description of each course describes how assessment is carried out. The A-MACK student monitoring system is used throughout the degree programme as a reflective assessment system and communication model. The A-MACK system is a transparent, valid and reliable monitoring system and serves as the guiding principle underlying personal development.

In a nutshell, A-MACK stands for Attitude and Motoric, Auditory, Creative and Knowledge skills.



- A - Attitude
- M - Motorische vaardigheden
- A - Auditieve vaardigheden
- C - Creatieve vaardigheden
- K - Kennis vaardigheden

The A-MACK monitoring system is applied starting from admission up to and including the final examination and in respect of all interim assessments and assignments. Students learn to deal with feedback by means of the A-MACK system from the beginning of the course, thus enabling them to gather information much more consciously, continue to ask questions when things are unclear and refine their communication and strategies.

The table below shows how the basic skills are broken down for each part of the system. It also makes clear on which criteria students are assessed.

A	M	A	C	K
Independence	Attitude	Listening skills	Composition and remix	Insight
Motivation	Movement	Sound	Arrangement	Knowledge of the material
Concentration Energy	Mastery of the material	Aural skills	Production	Analytical ability
Boldness Individuality	Sound association	Musical imagination	Self-sufficient Authentic	Knowledge of the music industry
Discipline	Coordination	Sound production	Concept development	Music theory

Using this system, the team of teachers discusses the entire student population once every trimester (in the first year) or semester (second year). The resulting insights are then discussed with the students via the mentors and lead to new study goals and strategies. The level indicator and structure of the two-year curriculum discussed in the previous sections have also been adapted to the A-MACK monitoring system. The qualitative level expected of students at the end of year 1 and year 2 has been formulated for each component, thereby creating a holistic rubric for the programme based on the A-MACK monitoring system. As a result, expectations for the student are made transparent, and the intersubjective reliability of the inter-assessors, too, increases. The result is presented in the table found in annex 1.

Once assessment of the individual subjects has taken place and the teachers have drawn up their A-MACK reports, they jointly spend one week for each unit assessing the students, focusing on what the students still need to acquire during the next unit. In some cases, if students already far exceed the final level, a tailored curriculum will be created. After the teacher meeting, the A-MACK reports are collected, and an overarching report produced. Mentors give students feedback on this information, providing them with the most important focus points, learning goals and artistic challenges for the coming term. For example, if a student is technically very far advanced, but still has a way to go to develop their collaborative skills, he or she can draw up a plan together with the mentor and/or other teachers to focus more on this area. Feedback for students ensures that they have a clear picture of where room for development still exists and where things are actually going very well.

Final assignment

The final assignment will depend on how individual students conceive of, and intend to pursue, their career. It consists of two parts: a project plan and a graduation assignment. The final project consists of a recording featuring four or five of the student's own works.

The project plan lays the foundation for the final project. It must be written out in full and submitted electronically, and present an artistic and business plan, as well as a media strategy.

The final project itself consists of an EP featuring four or five works which are the student's own compositions. The mentor and teachers help students shape their identity as artists. The business coordinator has office hours to help all students shape their work plan. Mentoring and consultations during office hours will intensify in the final term as students prepare for the final project.

Teachers

Classes at the Amsterdam Electronic Music Academy are taught by musicians of the highest calibre active in the Dutch dance and pop industry. The core team of teachers are big names and key figures in their field and are actively involved in creating music productions and performances of the highest professional calibre. Their expertise covers a range of genres and facets in terms of performance and production, guaranteeing that the course can function in a genre-free context, promote new developments and impart expertise. Among them, the teachers have a network which encompasses the entire dance and pop industry both in and outside the Netherlands. An overview of the teachers can be found below.

Permanent teachers

Dennis Waakop-Reijers
Ferry Ridderhof
Hans Weekhout
Jack Pisters
Sebastiaan Dutilh
Victor Coral

Remi Lauw
Sarah Stam
Attie Bauw
Martin van den Oetelaar
Vince Watson
William Penn

Guest teachers

In addition to the permanent team of specialists, guest lecturers from the Dutch and international dance and pop industry are invited to share experiences from their own lives as artists and to answer questions. This can inspire students to create their own outputs and hone their professional skills.

Mentoring

Students are assigned a mentor for the duration of the course. The mentor coaches the student, monitors the process and refers the student to information relevant to his or her development. It is also important that the mentor should be well versed in the student's style area. The mentor communicates with the department head and the teachers using the A-MACK system (see standard 3 for an explanation) regarding the student's progress, and alerting the relevant teachers to any deficiencies in a particular area. These are discussed in detail in respect of each student during the teacher meetings.

Annex

A closer look at the A-MACK assessment system focusing on levels and final competences of the two-year curriculum. The qualitative level we expect of students at the end of year 1 and year 2 has been formulated for each component.

A – ATTITUDE		
Learning outcomes	Level as at the end of year 1	Level as at the end of year 2
General	Diverging/Discovering and exploring	Converging/Selection and continued development
Technical skills	Students develop the drive, attitude and artistic curiosity to become professionals with the desire and the ability to independently develop professional output.	Students have the drive, attitude and artistic curiosity which a professional needs to independently develop professional output.
Creative skills	Students develop the personality and boldness to develop and disseminate an artistic concept or project. Students have the self-confidence to handle criticism and feedback.	Students have the personality and boldness to develop and disseminate an artistic concept or project from their vision. Students have the self-confidence to handle criticism and feedback. In addition, students put themselves at the service of the artistic product.
Contextual focus	Students are curious, open and enterprising when it comes to their surroundings.	Students are curious, open and enterprising, and have the self-confidence to take risks when presenting themselves.
Research and development skills	Students are curious and inquisitive, can ask critical questions and learn to deal with criticism.	Students are curious and inquisitive, can ask critical questions and can deal with criticism.
Communication skills	Students present themselves in an individual way.	Students present themselves in an individual way, can work with others and communicate constructively.
Organizational skills	Students work in an organized way and are attentive to, and actively seek to strike, a balance between artistic and business interests.	Students work in an organized way and strike a healthy balance between artistic and business interests.

M – MOTORIC SKILLS		
Learning outcomes	Level as at the end of year 1	Level as at the end of year 2
General	Diverging Discovering and exploring	Converging Selection and continued development
Technical skills	Students can efficiently, technically and adequately deliver work (or elements thereof).	Students can efficiently, technically and adequately deliver work with a view to health, periods of stress and deadlines

		with respect to themselves and their teammates.
Creative skills	Students develop a sense of timing and a feel for how creative processes proceed.	Students have a sense of timing and a feel for how creative processes proceed, allowing them to consciously optimize the contributions they make at the right time and in the right way.
Contextual focus	Students identify opportunities in their environment and can change gear quickly when needed. Students are aware of new techniques and technology, as well as their application.	Students identify opportunities in their environment and can change gear quickly when needed. Students can quickly master new techniques and technology and apply them within their own field of activity.
Research and development skills	Students develop a feel for working methods and processes.	Students have a feel for working methods and processes and can make timely contributions in an appropriate manner.
Communication skills	Students make effective and timely use of their qualities and develop a feel for creative processes with deadlines to be met.	Students make effective and timely use of their qualities and have a feel for creative processes with deadlines to be met.
Organizational skills	Students develop skills in planning and organizing their own activities.	Students can plan and organize, and thus draw up realistic schedules so that deadlines are met. Also as part of a team.

A – AUDITORY SKILLS		
Learning outcomes	Level as at the end of year 1	Level as at the end of year 2
General	Diverging Discovering and exploring	Converging Selection and continued development
Technical skills	Students can analyse outputs and compositions. Students are also responsive to comments from their peers and can identify the key message when given feedback.	Students can analyse outputs and compositions, improve them and provide them with a mix or arrangement. Students are also responsive to comments from their peers and can identify and incorporate the key message when given feedback.
Creative skills	Students develop professional-level outputs and compositions in the genre with which they are familiar.	Students develop professional-level outputs and compositions in the genre with which they are familiar; they bear the hallmark of their identity and demonstrate attention to all details.
Contextual focus	Students analyse trends and their progression.	Students analyse trends and their progression, and develop a personal sound and approach.
Research and development skills	Students can listen to others and make an effort to collaborate where necessary or desired. They actively reflect on collaborative efforts and come up with alternative approaches.	Students can listen to others and can and want to collaborate effectively where necessary or desired.
Communication skills	Students are capable of explaining artistic choices and listening to others.	Students are capable of explaining artistic choices satisfactorily using logical arguments and listening to others, taking their feedback into consideration.

Organizational skills	Students can organize their own workflows.	Students can organize workflows taking into account signals from, and the interests of, all those involved.
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C – CREATIVE SKILLS		
Learning outcomes	Level as at the end of year 1	Level as at the end of year 2
General	Diverging Discovering and exploring	Converging Selection and continued development
Technical skills	Students can creatively study and work on parts of assignments – in the context of a performance or festival, for example.	Students can creatively study, work on and put together programmes for a performance or festival.
Creative skills	Students develop compositions, remixes, DJ sets or sound design work.	Either independently or as part of a team, students develop compositions, remixes, DJ sets or sound design work with vision, a sense of adventure or effectiveness.
Contextual focus	Students respond creatively to assignments or parts of assignments.	Students can respond creatively to assignments and make a creative contribution to a team.
Research and development skills	Students can make creative contributions and reflect on the contributions they make to a given process. Students express their intentions to improve.	Students can make creative contributions and reflect on the contributions they make to a given process. Students can use the skills mentioned here to improve their professional status.
Communication skills	Students can effectively give and receive feedback.	Students can functionally and effectively give and receive feedback, and incorporate it in the creative process.
Organizational skills	Students take a problem-solving approach in their work.	Students take a problem-solving approach in their work, even in a changing environment.

K – KNOWLEDGE SKILLS		
Learning outcomes	Level as at the end of year 1	Level as at the end of year 2
General	Diverging Discovering and exploring	Converging Selection and continued development
Technical skills	Students explore the repertoire of their specialist field and its historical context. Students have sufficient skills to work with commonly used software and hardware.	Students have a knowledge of the repertoire of their specialist field and can historically contextualize it. Students have professional-level skills to work with commonly used software and hardware and to use the corresponding procedures to produce the sound they want.
Creative skills	Students acquire professional knowledge to shape their outputs.	Students have professional knowledge to shape their outputs within their specialist field.
Contextual focus	Students have an idea of the international music market and their potential positioning in it.	Students have insight into the international music market and can position their outputs in this specialist field.
Research and development skills	Students have the knowledge relevant to their specialist field.	Students have the knowledge relevant to their specialist field and can apply it to assignments.

Communication skills	Students have an idea of existing performance practice, the music industry and the opportunities for positioning themselves in it.	Students have insight into existing performance practice, the music industry and their own qualities so that they can position themselves.
Organizational skills	Students have an idea of the parameters necessary for their activities as part of their future career.	Students have a realistic idea of the parameters necessary for their activities as part of their future career, as well as sufficient business and administrative knowledge and skills.