Name of Provider: BIMM Limited
UKPRN: 10037544

# TEF Year Three (TEF3) provider submission

## Provider Context

BIMM Limited is the wholly-owned subsidiary of BIMM TopCo Limited designated for student finance by the Department for Education and operates as a single institution, the British and Irish Modern Music (BIMM) Institute, with five colleges in England: BIMM Institute Brighton, BIMM Institute Bristol, BIMM Institute London, BIMM Institute Manchester and BIMM Institute Birmingham, which opened in October 2017. For the 2017-18 academic year BIMM Institute's UK colleges enrolled 5,192 full-time Higher Education (HE) students. BIMM Limited's distinctive offer to students is that of a vocationally relevant learning environment that immerses students in the regional and national creative industries through contact with staff who are deeply connected to those industries, and who are also qualified as practitioners, academics and educators. BIMM Limited offers undergraduate courses in: music performance; songwriting, music business, event management, music journalism, music production, performing arts and a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

BIMM Institute can trace its origins to 1983 when BIMM Institute London was founded as a specialist drum school in Acton, West London. The school evolved into Tech Music School expanding its curriculum to include vocals, guitar and bass guitar, and offering its first HE courses in popular music performance in 1995 in partnership with Thames Valley University (now the University of West London), thereby making it the first and longest established Alternative Provider of HE popular music courses in the UK. BIMM was established in 2001 as the Brighton Institute of Modern Music and offered its first HE courses in popular music performance in 2002 in partnership with the University of Sussex. A second college, now BIMM Institute Bristol, opened in 2007. In 2010, BIMM acquired Tech Music School to create the British and Irish Modern Music (BIMM) Institute and subsequently opened colleges in Dublin (2011), Manchester (2013), Berlin (2015) and Birmingham (2017). The wider BIMM Institute also includes BIMM Institute Dublin, BIMM Institute Berlin and from 2018-19 BIMM Institute Hamburg.

BIMM Institute colleges are located in cities where there is a strong musical heritage and a vibrant and diverse musical scene that can provide opportunities for students to engage with the music and wider creative industries. Our colleges are developed to high specifications and provide first-class music and creative arts learning and teaching facilities furnished with industry-standard equipment. Our alumni work across all fields of the creative industries in promotion, publishing, live sound and tour production, events management, and most notably the creative arena of songwriting and performance. Recent artist alumni who have enjoyed critical acclaim and significant success in the music industry include Izzy Bizu (winner of the 2016 BBC Introducing Award), Leddra Chapman, George Ezra (winner of the 2015 YouTube Music Awards), James Bay (winner of the 2015 Critics' Choice BRIT Award) and Tom Odell (winner of the 2013 Critics' Choice BRIT Award). Our alumni have also secured highly skilled employment in a number of other fields including: Jules Gulon (Assistant Sound Engineer Pierce Entertainment); Jamie Skinner (Music PR Executive at LD Communications); Natasha Bent (Booking Agent at the Coda Music Agency); Jade Foster (PR Executive at Dawbell); Sara Meneghini (Music Publisher at BMG Publishing); Coco Leaman (A&R Executive at Kerry Gordy Enterprises); Josh Ledger (Booking Agent at United Talent Agency); Loki Lillistone (Promoter and co-founder at Fear of Fiction); Ellie Sorensen (Publicist at Badge of Friendship); James Meadows (Marketing Manager at Warner Music Group); Ed Cox (Label Manager at Mike Stock Music and S4K Records); Chris Dean (Press Agent at Duff Press); Jordan Whitmore (A&R Executive at Atlantic Records).

The aims of the BIMM Institute Strategic Plan 2016-17 – 2020/21 are to:

- Enhance our position as the UK and Europe's market leader for popular music education and provide high-quality accessible specialist education for students whose primary goal is to have a sustainable career in the music and wider creative industries.
- Gain Taught Degree Awarding Powers and University Title.
- Place students at the centre of everything we do and engage the student voice at all levels of decision making to enhance the quality of the student experience.
- Be innovative in our approach to excellence in learning and teaching.
- Improve student progression and achievement rates.
- Expand our connectivity with the music and wider creative arts industries to enhance the student experience.

Strategic and operational management is dealt with respectively by the BIMM TopCo Limited Board/ and the Executive Management Group (EMG) and its main sub-committee the Senior Management Group (SMG).

Responsibility for academic strategy and management is delegated by the BIMM TopCo Limited Board to its sub-committee the BIMM Institute Academic Board, which meets at least three times a year and reports to the BIMM TopCo Limited Board through its minutes. The Academic Board has three principal subcommittees:

- Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC).
- Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).
- Research and Enterprise Committee (REC).

## Metrics and mitigating factors

After careful examination of the TEF metrics we believe that we have good grounds to argue that there are a range of mitigating factors that explain the seeming contradiction between student satisfaction and continuation (which both score below benchmark, and in terms of student satisfaction are in the bottom ten percent of all institutions eligible for TEF3), and the metrics for employment/further study and highly skilled employment or further study which are at, or significantly above, benchmark. At our last Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review (HER) in January 2016 we were commended for the quality of learning opportunities we provide and our approach to employability was singled out as good practice and this also leads us to the conclusion that there are other factors at play here. Firstly, as an Alternative Provider BIMM Limited has only been included in the National Student Survey (NSS) for the last two years (in 2015-16 we entered voluntarily) and therefore we have only had a single year to respond to student satisfaction issues arising from the survey. Many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been working with the NSS since 2005 and experience from the sector, and in particular our own university partners, shows that improvements in NSS scores are achieved through rigorous triangulated evaluation of data alongside work with staff and students in the institution to evaluate the impact of interventions over a prolonged period. Furthermore, it has been clear from the work that we have done to understand students' responses in the NSS that our students have been less aware of its purpose, the meaning of the questions asked, and the way the scoring system works than students in other HEIs.

We are disadvantaged in terms of being a single subject institution specialising in creative and performing arts as research into the NSS has demonstrated that these subject areas score significantly and consistently lower than other subjects in the NSS (Surridge, 2010; Yorke and Blair, 2015). In addition, we would argue that satisfaction with assessment is generally not a reliable measure of good teaching but of satisfaction with the final result achieved (Lenton, 2015). Finally, there is also evidence to show that disabled students are generally less satisfied, and we have a higher than average proportion of students declaring a disability (15%) and that international students are generally more satisfied with assessment than home or EU students and we have a low proportion of international students (3%) compared to the university sector as a whole.

In terms of continuation, there are also mitigating factors at play and our work to improve continuation, retention and achievement is detailed below in the section on positive outcomes. We do attract a significant number of students from disadvantaged and low participation areas, and face a challenge in retaining these students, something we are working very hard to address with early indications of some success. Secondly, some of our most successful students in terms of career destinations do not complete their studies with us and opt to leave at the end of the first year, often because they have secured opportunities in the profession through the employability enhancement work that we do.

In summary, we are convinced that the current metrics provide only a partial picture of our institution. Furthermore, we feel that our distinct ethos: the emphasis we have on a vocational education grounded in the industries we serve, our mission to recognise potential at the point of admission rather than prior attainment and thus, remove unnecessary barriers to access, are all mitigating factors that lead us to conclude that the metrics alone do not reflect the true picture of excellence in learning, teaching and student outcomes that BIMM Institute provides. Indeed, our external examiners endorse this view, for example:

> *It has been my absolute pleasure and privilege to watch BIMM rise to the challenges set in that first year. The journey they have undertaken has been breath-taking with best practice now being shown across the entire provision. I have been thrilled by the positive responses of both tutors and managers to my comments. The team have worked with dedication and high levels of creativity to turn these courses into sites of excellence in teaching and learning, employability and research… In all honesty, I would say that BIMM is now a beacon of excellence in the sector…*
> (Professor Martin James: final report of tenure, 2017)

**NSS**

In this section, we will seek to explain further some of the factors underlying our performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) over the last two years and what we are already doing to address the issues raised by our students over preceding years. In 2016 all BIMM Institute final year students took part in the NSS, for the first time. The results from the survey were disappointing (in some areas), while close to our HEFCE institutional benchmark, but not surprising as they mirrored feedback which we were already addressing from our students through internal student satisfaction surveys, college-based Boards of Studies (BoS) and course level Student Representation Forum (SRF) meetings. We scored reasonably well in the NSS on learning and teaching, but less well in terms of: resources; library provision (although this may be partly because the bulk of library provision is electronic); course organisation and communication (where there were particular issues with enrolment for 2015/16 with timetables and other key information being provided later than we would have liked due to technical issues); and timeliness of assessment feedback. Our NSS results led to the creation of an enhancement plan to address the issues raised by students. It is worth noting here that several actions were already in train and had been addressed in Annual Monitoring Report action plans over a number of years including; expanding the Electronic Library; expanding access to internal and external rehearsal spaces; improving access to social/common room spaces; ensuring handbooks, guides, schemes of work are available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in a timely manner; and implementing an effective communication to students. Furthermore, we had been aware of the increased need to create dedicated quiet study spaces from student feedback at BoS and the NSS results enabled us to make this an overarching priority taking an institution-wide approach to ensure that provision is increased consistently and coherently across all colleges.

In 2017 we took part in our second engagement with the NSS and overall satisfaction at institutional level increased from 60% to 63%; an improvement, albeit against an increased institutional benchmark of 70% (62% in 2016). As with 2015-16, we scored highest on Academic Support (up from 70% to 73.5%) and the Teaching on my Course (72%), as well as on the new Learning Opportunities section (72.2%), and lowest on Organisation & Management (up from 55% to 55.7%) and Learning Resources (up from 38% to 52.3% following significant additional investment across all colleges during the 2016-17 academic year). There were also some excellent results for satisfaction with individual courses, such as Music Industry Management (91.7%), Event Management (81.8%) and Professional Musicianship (77.9%), all at BIMM Institute Bristol, and Popular Music Performance (82%) at BIMM Institute London. The two lowest-scoring courses in 2016 achieved significantly improved results in 2017 with Music Production at BIMM Institute Bristol up from 50% to 61.9% and Songwriting at BIMM Institute London up from 36% to 53.6%. At a college level, we saw improved scores across the board, with BIMM Institute Bristol up from 65% to 76.8%, BIMM Institute London from 61% to 64.8%, BIMM Institute Manchester from 50% to 52.9% and BIMM Institute Brighton from 60% to 60.5%. While all but one course (Creative Musicianship at BIMM Institute London) improved on the previous year's scores, it is clear that we need to continue the work we started in 2016 and to this end we convened our second NSS review in October 2017 with the College Principals and members of the EMG to plan responses to address this year's NSS outcomes and update the enhancement plan for approval by Academic Board.

To further explore the variation in NSS scores between colleges and courses, the Academic Board convened a panel to undertake a Student Experience Review (SER) at BIMM Institute Manchester. The SER, formally reporting to QAC took place in the first week of November 2017 and was conducted by a panel nominated by the Academic Director & Provost including senior academic staff (the Dean of Higher Education and the Head of Education from BIMM Institute Bristol) and a student panel member from another college. The SER was led by the external chair of our Academic Board Professor Mark Hunt. The SER was based on a self-evaluation document and evidence provided by the college with meetings taking place with managers, staff and students. The outcomes from the review included identification of good practice along with recommendations and affirmations at college level and some recommendations for BIMM Institute as a whole and this process provides a template for further enhancement work at college and group level. Through this activity and the work of Academic Board and its sub-committees alongside our continuing work on careers and employability, we aim to enhance student learning opportunities and further improve student satisfaction at course and institutional level, thereby improving retention: working closely with our students as partners and agents for change, in the further enrichment of their learning experience.

We have also undertaken a significant amount of work on the engagement of students with internal surveys as affirmed by the QAA in their 2016 HER report. Students have taken a key role in assisting us in revising our approach through their membership of QAC, LTEC and Academic Board. Our student representatives advised us that students would prefer surveys to run in Term Two rather than Term Three, and in class where practical. We trialled this approach in 2015-16 academic year with some positive results and, with varying levels of engagement across courses and colleges. In 2016-17, QAC approved a pilot scheme for University of Sussex

provision on the EvaSys platform, which utilises both electronic and paper-based methods of surveying. The two colleges involved, BIMM Institute Brighton and BIMM Institute Manchester, saw their response rates increase from single figures in 2015-16 to 25.5% and 26.6% respectively in 2016-17. The modules for which we trialled in-class surveys achieved the highest response rates, with many exceeding 50% and some as high as 68%. These positive results have convinced us to roll-out the use of EvaSys across all colleges during 2017-18, with a focus on in-class survey completion using smartphones/tablets/laptops, as this will both facilitate direct engagement between tutors and students on the surveys and enable absent students to participate in their own time. Furthermore, for the current academic year QAC has approved the revision of Module Evaluation Questionnaires and the introduction of year-end evaluations that will more closely mirror the questions used in the NSS.

### Continuation

Our non-continuation rate for 2014/15 improved from 21% (compared to an institutional benchmark of 15%) in 2013/14 to 16.9% (against an institutional benchmark of 10.8%) in 2014/15 and in the TEF3 metrics for the 2016/17 academic year the non-continuation rate is 16.1% against a benchmark of 10.1% showing a continued incremental improvement. Improving retention and progression (continuation) has been a priority objective over the past three years and it appears that as we move closer to the benchmark that the effort required to improve this key metric is exponentially greater. It is notable that continuation rates for BME students at BIMM Institute is 10.6 percentage points above benchmark, although the sample size is small the z-score of 2.7 is nevertheless significant.

Our work to improve student retention, identified as an affirmation in our January 2016 HER report is ongoing. After careful analysis of exam board data and discussions with External Examiners in 2014-15 academic year, BIMM Institute adopted a more rigorous approach to student engagement including the implementation of an institution-wide Student Engagement Policy (based on attendance and engagement metrics and implemented from the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year) to ensure all colleges address issues of non-engagement more consistently. After its first year of operation, a report was submitted to BIMM Institute Academic Board that showed that the interventions made by the college-based Student at Risk Committees (SARCs), a key element in the strategy's implementation, had been effective in retaining students and made recommendations for enhancements to the process. Our most recent data shows that Year One to Year Two progression has improved for our UK colleges, increasing from 73.6% in 2014-15 to 74.7% in 2016-17. Year Two to Year Three progression has also improved from 78.7% in 2014-15 to 80% in 2015-16 and 84.2% in 2016/-17, with BIMM Institute Manchester showing the most improvement over the three-year period from 80% in 2014-15 to 85% in 2016-17. BIMM Institute graduation rates (the percentage of final year students who successfully complete their degree) also improved for the 2016-17 academic year and there were significant improvements in BIMM Institute Brighton (+9.5%) and BIMM Institute Manchester (+15.2%). It is likely that interventions made over the medium term as part of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan (LTEP) and subsequent College Enhancement Action Plans (CEAPs) are beginning to have a positive effect. We have recently revised the LTEP with a continuing explicit focus on support for student progression and achievement approved by LTEC in November 2017, which will be responded to in the form of new CEAPs in term two of 2017-18 (see the section on enhancement below).

With only one year of TEF continuation metrics available we are unable to evaluate fully the impact our work is having on improving continuation, but as we are below benchmark by six percentage points it is clear that we need to continue our efforts in this area. In order to establish what additional interventions might be most effective we have signed up to the Higher Education Academy's Retention Collaborative Project, which aims to support institutions to: *develop a deeper understanding of student retention, and identify current strengths and needs for future development.* We also plan to conduct a fundamental curriculum review in 2018-19 to address a range of issues identified through our academic quality assurance processes including: the balance of academic and practical study; the structure of the academic year; greater optionality at levels five and six and a more consistent approach to the volume, timing and weighting of assessment.

## Teaching Quality

### Enhancement

BIMM Institute is committed to the continual enhancement of teaching and learning, for the benefit of both students and staff. We believe that as an educational institution we are best able to achieve this aim if we engage thoughtfully with on-going, iterative cycles of activity and reflection structured as follows: identifying a small number of key development areas, allowing for sustained attention and progress; generating and analysing data to understand fully the current state of play in the identified areas, and to gain a deep

understanding of the problems/challenges the institute is currently facing; setting clear, measurable goals for improvement in the identified areas, including both output ('what will we do?') and outcome ('what should this achieve?') goals; designing and carrying out activities to achieve those goals, with clear lines of responsibility and report; and at the same time, designing an evidence-based approach to monitoring and evaluating progress towards achieving the institutes goals, allowing us to adapt and revise actions as necessary. This approach is embodied in the BIMM Institute LTEP supported by individual College Enhancement Action Plans (CEAPs). The current aims for the LTEP are:

- To develop approaches to Assessment and Feedback (output) to improve student achievement and progression (outcome).
- To support students in taking effective and self-aware approaches to development of academic, practical, cognitive and personal skills throughout their studies (output) to improve student achievement and progression, and ensure that BIMM Institute students possess graduate attributes which higher education aims to provide (outcome).
- To make effective use of appropriate technology to enhance learning both inside and outside of the classroom (output) to ensure that student learning environments are appropriately flexible, and that learning opportunities support self-directed, formal and informal learning in an integrated manner (outcome).
- To establish and maintain active, student-centred learning environments which prioritise visible learning (output) to improve student achievement, attendance, retention and progression (outcome).

Our strategic approach to enhancement was singled out as good practice in the 2016 HER:

> *BIMM Limited has a five-year plan directed at enhancing students' learning opportunities. These include improving student satisfaction with their educational experience and improving student performance, progression and retention. The plan is strategic and initiatives are planned. BIMM Limited has a strong ethos which encourages enhancement, good practice is identified and the quality assurance procedures are used to identify opportunities for enhancement.*
> (BIMM Limited HER Report, April 2016)

BIMM Institute also monitors and enhances the quality of teaching directly through peer observation of teaching and all tutors are observed annually. Observations are undertaken by senior staff alongside peer observation and both types of observation are designed to be developmental, as well as identifying trends and themes that may feed into the LTEP and institutional academic staff development plan. New tutors receive additional support and are observed more regularly. Observation reports are produced by each college and submitted to LTEC for consideration and approval annually. The Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement worked collaboratively with the colleges to revise the teaching observation scheme for 2016-17. The revised scheme addressed, feedback from staff, tutors and the QAA in terms of taking a more developmental approach to supporting the professional development of our teaching staff. It is now a two-stage process, allowing the tutor being observed to receive and implement constructive developmental feedback. We have also removed the previous system of grading and replaced this with thematic reporting which is much more appropriate for an enhancement-led methodology.

In order to ensure we share good practice in Learning and Teaching, BIMM Institute has funded the establishment of an institute-wide annual Learning and Teaching Conference overseen by LTEC, the first of which took place at BIMM Institute Manchester on the 5th April 2017 and was attended by eighty staff from across the institute and provided an opportunity for staff to share good practice through formal academic papers, presentations and panels. This year's Learning and Teaching conference will take place on the 3rd and 4th April 2018 in Bristol. Moreover, Academic Board has also encouraged the sharing of good practice and innovation through the establishment of a presentation item on the agenda and examples of projects brought to Academic Board include BIMM Institute Bristol's approach to providing additional academic study skills support, which has subsequently been adopted by two other colleges for 2017-18 academic year, and BIMM Institute's Brighton and Manchester's proposal to introduce a categorical marking scheme which has now been formally implemented across all colleges. Work on both of these projects began with initial proposals brought forward through LTEC.

## Student Engagement

BIMM Institute is dedicated to improving engagement through providing personalised and vocationally focussed education. Our engagement with our students through representation and more widely was commented on in the HER report in 2016:

> *The team concludes that students understand how the representation system and other mechanisms operate and BIMM Limited monitors and responds effectively to the student voice. Student engagement is widespread and well supported.* (QAA HER Report, April 2016)

Furthermore, we actively engage our students as agents for change, ensuring that the student voice is heard and acted upon with students as active members of all academic committees and as members of our internal course approval panels. Our approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities is twofold: firstly, through the enhancement of learning and teaching as discussed above; and secondly through the enhancement and enrichment of the student experience outside of class through engagement with the creative industries and the provision of opportunities such as work placements, internships and Work Based Learning. Our approach to engaging our students is recognised by our university partners who have commend us for:

> *The course team's engagement with the music industry and alumni at the early stages of the curriculum development process.* (University of Sussex Validation Report, 2017)

> *The increased diversity and range of master classes and interdisciplinary collaborations with the local creative arts community and industry.* (University of West London Validation Report, May 2016)

BIMM Institute ensures that students are further engaged by direct contact with the creative industries through an annual programme of guest presentations and masterclasses from visiting industry professionals at each BIMM Institute college. The QAA HER 2016 review team commended us for 'the use of music industry professionals in providing masterclasses, guest lectures, mentoring and careers advice to support student learning.' In 2015-16 BIMM Institute provided 1,329 experiences of industry engagement including masterclasses and other activities such as: Careers Hub events, student promotional videos, attending industry conferences, auditions for external agencies, etc.

BIMM Institute's enhancement planning aims to further enrich provision with the aim of increasing the support to students for academic skills development, particularly at key transition points for progression, these aims are put into operation through the LTEP and the CEAPs. Moreover, our PGCert in Learning and Teaching, which we support teaching staff to take if they do not already have an HE teaching qualification, includes an action research module designed to support participants in researching teaching and learning practice. The results of these projects feed directly into the enhancement of classroom pedagogy; for example, we are currently producing a series of short videos to share good practice in this regard. In addition, we have funded LTEC to provide a mechanism through which staff can bid for funds to participate in additional small-scale teaching development action research projects with our first successful bids leading to two projects in 2016-17: one examines the way that research methods are taught across the Institute, with the aim of identifying best practice and producing a shared toolkit for tutors available on the VLE; and the second provides a shared social media space for songwriting students to work collaboratively with their tutors. We have invested significantly in a range of institute-wide value-added activities including the provision of college online newsletters, Industry Showcases, and additional student performance opportunities on BIMM Institute sponsored stages at music festivals and conferences/events nationwide. In 2015-16, 436 festival performances were given by students from UK BIMM Institute colleges and our students consistently cite this aspect of our provision as being a hugely valuable and beneficial part of their experience.

## Valuing Teaching

The majority of teaching staff at BIMM Institute are professional creative industries practitioners who manage successful portfolio careers combining teaching with an active professional profile in the industry. We ensure that teaching staff are appropriately trained by offering them the opportunity to enrol on our in-house PGCert in Learning and Teaching validated by the University of Sussex and accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Although a number of our staff already hold academic and/or teaching qualifications, we do recruit tutors with significant industry experience but who do not hold (HE) teaching qualifications; this is normal practice in the conservatoire sector. The percentage of teaching staff qualified to teach at HE level or currently enrolled on our PGCert in Learning and Teaching for the current academic year 2017-18 is as follows: BIMM Institute Bristol 81%, BIMM Institute Brighton 80%, BIMM Institute Birmingham 70%, BIMM Institute Manchester 65%, and BIMM Institute London 45%; the differences here are explained by the fact that college

in London is one of our largest and only began to register staff on our PGCert in 2015-16 and BIMM Institute Manchester is one of a newer colleges and has grown quickly. A significant number of our teaching staff hold additional academic qualifications at undergraduate level (61%) and at postgraduate and doctoral level (23%) – data from the 2015-16 HER data return to QAA.

Through a combination of pre-term tutor training, in-year staff development, mentoring and enrolment on the PGCert we ensure that all tutors are provided with the training and support required to teach at HE level. LTEC maintains an institute-wide Staff Development Plan (Academic) which is updated annually and includes strategic activities such as: introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (three days training for all staff in their first year of teaching); HEA fellowship support; postgraduate study bursaries for staff; and more specific annual themes for training which in the current year include: training for staff in using the generic marking scheme and helping students to utilise feedback on assessment more effectively, promoting assessment literacy; training for staff handling complaints and appeals; training for student members of course approval panels; and training for staff on academic report writing. A range of other staff development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops are offered by each college in line with their CEAP in response to BIMM Institute's LTEP. Staff development spend has increased significantly in the UK colleges to an annual spend of £183,000 in 2016-17 as part of the EMG's strategy to ensure that there are sufficient resources and skilled staff in place to support growth and maintain/enhance teaching quality. Our ethos and commitment to staff and their development has been recognised by our University partners consistently over the past five years with the following commendations:

> *The professional currency of staff and their links to the music industry, which is highly valued by the students.* (Bath Spa University Validation Report, February 2013)
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> *The commitment [of BIMM Institute] to staff development.* (Bath Spa University Validation Report, February 2013)
>
> *The clear engagement with teaching staff; taking industry specialists and transforming them into HE practitioners.* (University of Sussex Re-recognition Report, January 2014)
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> *The institution's commitment to training teaching staff, reflected in the high quality of teaching reported in the panel's discussion with students.* (University of Sussex Validation Report, January 2015)
>
> *BIMM Institute's strong links with industry, drawing practising professionals into its teaching staff and providing valuable learning opportunities for students.* (University of Sussex Validation Report, January 2015)
>
> *The course team's engagement in pedagogy and scholarship.* (University of Sussex Validation Report, 2017)

We also subscribe to the HEA and as stated above, achieved accreditation for our PGCert at fellowship level in September 2017. In addition, we have developed a scheme (in conjunction with the HEA) to support experienced staff to gain HEA fellowship and enrolled our first cohort in 2017 and will enrol a second cohort in 2018.

The BIMM Institute staff appraisal system makes direct links to staff development and teaching observation, ensuring that developmental needs of staff are captured and acted upon. The appraisal system is owned, monitored and operated by BIMM Institute Human Resources Department and uses an externally-provided online system. It is also worth noting here that we take a pro-active approach to the career progression and development of our staff with many senior roles now filled by staff who began their career at BIMM Institute as sessional tutors and in some notable cases as students.

## Rigour and Stretch

BIMM Institute works closely with its Awarding Institutions to ensure that courses are properly designed and rigorously tested through peer review (including external academic, industry and student input at all stages from design to approval) before they are delivered. We ensure that courses are closely aligned to the FHEQ and that assessment is also specifically aligned to sector benchmarks and industry practice at each level. Differentiation and scaffolding are key considerations in the way we design and deliver the curriculum and we seek to both support student weaknesses whilst also stretching them intellectually. This is confirmed by our external examiners:

> *The standards set are consistent with the national subject benchmark for Music and appropriate for this qualification as set out in the course handbook and module specifications. The expectations for*

> *Levels 4, 5 and 6 are consistent with FHEQ guidelines.* (Dr Tom Sykes, BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship, 2016)
>
> *Overall student performance is comparable to courses elsewhere. At top end students displayed a high level of skill and where appropriate a good understanding of reflection with improved level of critical insight.* (Professor Martin James, BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship and BA (Hons) Music Industry Management, 2016)

We have also enhanced our internal curriculum approval processes to ensure that courses are ready for Awarding Institution approval through the design of a rigorous internal approval process that includes students on approval panels and industry input at an early stage through Industry Advisory Panels (IAPs). This has proved to be a beneficial process for all stakeholders ensuring a meticulous examination of course proposals prior to university validation. The University of Sussex commended us in 2016 for our approach in terms of the 'rigorous internal validation process and the quality of the course documentation.'

The courses offered at BIMM Institute are specialist in nature, and take account of the career aspirations of our students, providing cognate optional modules that allow them to specialise further in terms of discrete career pathways within their chosen discipline. The approval/validation process ensures that optional modules are properly aligned with the aims and objectives of the course and are therefore academically coherent. Each BIMM Institute college aims to provide students with a microcosm of the creative industries and attracts students who have chosen to be part of a thriving and highly specialist community of practice and this ethos is strongly embedded in our institutional culture. Moreover, each college brings together students and specialist tutors from the principal creative industry disciplines, enabling them to work together collaboratively. Thus, courses are grounded in, and aligned to, the range of competencies required by the relevant profession or discipline in the creative industries and aim to produce graduates who are already practitioners with real world experience rooted in, and connected to the creative cultural field.

Each college also provides numerous opportunities for students to take part in events and performances which are held in established venues in each city and are open to the public and regularly attended by creative industry talent scouts. We have recently enhanced our work in this area with the appointment of an Institute Head of Artist Development, whose role is to work with our specialist music industry non-executive director to support students to take the first steps into the industry. Furthermore, we have taken on board feedback from students on non-performance based courses regarding their desire to have more career development opportunities and this has led to the establishment of the post of Business Development and Creative Careers Director and the establishment of the institute-wide Careers and Employability Steering Group, which is discussed in detail in the Employability and Transferable Skills section below.

BIMM Institute aims to assess students fairly and in authentic ways, placing considerable emphasis on formative assessment and providing constructive feedback (including peer-group assessment and feedback). We are also careful to ensure that assessment tools are relevant and appropriate and help to promote learning. BIMM Institute's Assessment Policy was commended in the QAA HER 2016 report and the rigour of our marking and moderation process is also celebrated by our external examiners:

> *I confirm that the existing assessment processes enable students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In addition to general/overall feedback, it is excellent to see that the written feedback for the students responds to the individual learning outcomes separately, resulting in good academic practice. This also allows for the development of the student learning process and provides details on how they can move forward.* (Jacqui Norton, BA (Hons) Music Business and BA (Hons) Event Management, 2016)
>
> *Wholly appropriate and robust double marking and moderation process in place. The module moderation documents are really-well thought through and offer a clear and useful 'snapshot' of each module and range of marks. We do something similar however not as clear and concise as this. This will be something that I will suggest to my own institution in the way of good practice. Good to see that the moderator has picked up on many of the inconsistencies in the process and offered suggestions to the marker to rectify these issues, which have then been acted upon.* (Matthew Grimes, BA (Hons) Music Business, 2016)

### Feedback

BIMM Limited has a policy of returning feedback on all assessed work within fifteen working days of the submission deadline or examination during term time. Coursework is submitted electronically using the BIMM Institute VLE and feedback is also returned to students by email or marked online using Feedback Suite. Despite working to deliver feedback in a timely and effective manner, this is still an area where student module and course feedback and NSS results indicate there is more work to do, in particular in ensuring that students both understand how and when feedback is delivered and are equipped to make the most effective use of the feedback they receive. Compliance with our policy on the return of feedback on assessment is monitored by the Quality Assurance Officer in ADQA and reported to QAC. However, despite the fact that we consistently hit target for assessment feedback across the majority of modules, our NSS score in this area remains low overall. Our analysis of feedback from the NSS shows that there are several factors at play here for students: firstly, although students receive continuous and often verbal formative feedback in class, they do not consider it to be feedback; students are also not aware of the time it takes to process assessments and we need to be clearer in communicating this to them and managing their expectations; finally, there is still some small pockets of variability in the quality of feedback, and the clarity of the link between feedback, grades and criteria and this is continuing to be addressed via academic staff development as discussed above and is being monitored by LTEC, and by College Management Teams locally through teaching observations and student feedback in BoS and SRF and responded to through the LTEP and CEAPs.

Tutors across a number of colleges are increasingly using audio feedback (for example, on the BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship at BIMM Institute Bristol and BIMM Institute Brighton, the BA (Hons) Music Business and BA (Hons) Event Management at BIMM Institute Brighton and the PG Cert Learning and Teaching) to enrich this aspect of the student experience. Feedback on assessment is referenced to learning outcomes and is developmental in nature using a *medal and mission* approach, and we continue to work with tutors in staff development sessions to improve this aspect of learning and teaching. Moreover, we are aware that a crucial issue here is not just the quality and timing of feedback, but also how students are then able to use the feedback they receive to improve their work. We are tackling this issue in two ways: firstly, by ensuring that the curriculum allows further opportunity to practice the skills being assessed and secondly by working with staff to support students in developing skills of reflective practice so that they may use the feedback they receive in a more effective manner. Assessment submissions are now time-stamped so that students know exactly when they will receive their feedback and if there is a delay this is communicated directly to the students affected with a revised feedback deadline and an explanation of why the delay has occurred.

## Learning Environment

### Resources

BIMM Institute provides a wide range of specialist learning and teaching resources including, but not limited to, large and small group teaching spaces, performance and rehearsal spaces, music production studios, tutorial spaces, and computer labs and all spaces are equipped to industry standards. We also use several professional venues and studios to enhance the in-house resources and provide students with real-world creative industry experience. Our spending on enhancing physical spaces and hardware/software resources for learning and teaching at existing BIMM Institute colleges in the UK has been significant with annual spending of: £1.4m in 2014-15; £7.2m in 2015-16 and £1.8m in 2016-17. The EMG oversees the strategic approach to resource provision while also constituting working groups for particular projects and areas of resource whilst the oversight of ongoing, academic resource development is overseen by the Academic Resource Group (ARG) a sub-committee of LTEC chaired by the Associate Dean: Academic Development.

As discussed above, we have identified from student feedback that library and study space provision is a key area for further enhancement over the short and medium term. We continue to look at how we can improve library and study space through ongoing investment in texts, both electronic and physical. Our annual spend on books and journals for our UK colleges increased from £177,000 in 2014-15 to £231,000 in 2016-17. Over the last five years we have expanded our EBSCO-hosted electronic library significantly to the stage where it now augments effectively the college-based hard-copy libraries/study spaces and our collaborative provision of library facilities with local city libraries. The BIMM Institute Electronic Library, which includes core and supplementary texts and relevant academic/industry journals and archives is maintained by ADQA and this has ensured a consistent approach across the institute.

BIMM Institute has policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff and students use electronic and social media resources properly, ensuring dignity, courtesy and respect (recently updated to include our duties under PREVENT). Social and electronic media policies are developed by the marketing team and considered by QAC

before approval at Academic Board. Academic staff are provided with a BIMM Institute VLE specification guide, developed and reviewed by ARG and approved by LTEC. Academic staff are supported in their use of the VLE through a series of VLE training videos.

BIMM Institute has taken a strategic approach to the adoption and implementation of systems and specialist software on a 'best of breed' basis that ensures that we adopt the system that is most suited to the specific task and the requirements of our colleges and students which affords us a high level of flexibility.

BIMM Institute has invested in a new VLE (a bespoke Moodle based system hosted by ULCC), that was rolled out for the 2015-16 academic year to all colleges, with major updates to functionality introduced in 2016-17 and 2017-18. Investment in the VLE has almost doubled from £47,000 per year in 2014-15 to £84,000 per year in 2016-17. The VLE is managed by our Management Information Services (MIS) team and its development is overseen by ARG. The new VLE has significant enhancements including shared pages for student representatives to communicate with each other across all colleges, staff and Student Services pages, and full integration of the BIMM Institute/EBSCO Electronic Library, Turnitin originality checking service, and Feedback Studio Turnitin's electronic marking and feedback system for staff and students.

BIMM Institute has also invested in the innovative Band Player Software (branded as *BIMM Player* to students). This system allows students to play along with expert performers in a virtual band and has proved very popular with music performance students and staff. *BIMM Player* is an innovative teaching and learning software application that enables students to playback and isolate discipline specific instrument and vocal performances on current and classic songs. It is utilised as an in-class teaching device enabling the tutor and students to interact with the songs to reinforce part learning and technique and gives the opportunity for students to use it in their practice regimes and preparation for performance classes. *BIMM Player* is added to the welcome pack provided to each performance student giving them access to a large catalogue of contemporary songs to use along with tailored play lists to match their course performance schemes.

Additionally, we have also introduced CELCAT software to centrally manage timetables and registers. This software has enabled colleges to better utilise available space, and accommodate growth in student numbers without compromising student timetables. It has also allowed colleges to deliver the curriculum model across multiple courses broken down into three teaching modes; large mixed groups, small discipline specific classes/seminars and one to one tutorials, all of which are managed through CELCAT. For the 2016/17 academic year, the VLE, Electronic Library, timetabling software CELCAT, and *SiSo* room booking software have all been integrated so that students can use the same username and password to check their class times, assessment schedules, industry guest appearances, and book rehearsal space in college and at external venues. Student user guides for each of these software tools have been created and are available on the VLE.

BIMM Institute does not have any courses that are delivered wholly through distance learning. We have carefully considered whether a distance learning approach is suited to popular music education and concluded that as a lone method for learning and teaching it is not. However, we do utilise a wide range of technology to support blended learning and teaching on our HE courses including our VLE, Electronic Library, and the *BIMM Player* application. We are committed to exploring technology enhanced approaches to learning, seeking to discover and implement approaches which make effective use of both established, and emergent technologies to support students and staff. Therefore, enhancing use of our VLE, and promoting the use of blended learning has been a consistent element of our learning and teaching strategy since its inception. In addition, our PGCert is built on a blended learning model, seeking to demonstrate good practice and promote use of technology. Our LTEP, which was revised at the beginning of the 2017-18 academic year, continues to place technology enhanced learning as a priority and a key aim of this plan is to make effective use of appropriate technology to enhance learning both inside and outside of the classroom; to ensure that learning environments are appropriately flexible, and that learning opportunities embrace and support self-directed, formal and informal learning in an integrated manner.

To achieve the aims of our LTEP in the area of technology enhanced learning, our Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement is working collaboratively with college teams to encourage further use of existing resources and new ones including the ePortfolio assessment tool Mahara, which was introduced as an integral part of the development of our new course in performing arts during 2017. During 2017-18 several modules on other courses have also started to utilise the Mahara platform, for both formative and summative assessment purposes. We are also making use of the video capture/casting system Panopto, which we have trialled in 2016-17 at our college in Berlin. In addition, we have established a strong collegial relationship with key staff engaged in technology-enhanced learning at Leeds College of Music, where our Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement recently took part in a sector-wide symposium on sharing good practice in technology enhanced learning.

## Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice

BIMM Institute is a teaching-led institution with an established culture of practice-based research focussed on a key area of our professional practice: learning and teaching. In addition, a growing number of staff are involved in postgraduate research, either as part of their studies for our PGCert in Learning and Teaching or their own independent research for Masters or Doctoral qualifications (supported through our Postgraduate Study Bursary Scheme) and this is helping to re-enforce our approach to research-informed teaching across the curriculum. All of our undergraduate courses include a final year double-weighted project module which has a strong research element and allows students to engage with a range of research methodologies. Students are also introduced to the ethical aspects of research through a standardised ethical review process, established and overseen by REC.

BIMM Institute has a Research and Enterprise Strategy produced by REC and approved by Academic Board and we currently have two external members sitting on REC with specific experience in popular music research (one from the University of Sussex and the other from University College Dublin), whose remit is to advise the committee on research strategy. As a result of our strategic approach to research we are beginning to make valuable connections within the fields of pedagogical and popular music research. The successful collaborative bid to host the 2016 International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) UK and Ireland conference with the University of Sussex is a good example of our engagement and has led to our profile being raised within the wider popular music research community. We have also lent our support to collaborative research funding bids by the universities of Sussex and Brighton to the AHRC. From 2017-18 we are extending the research bursaries scheme to include part-time staff to support them in their own research projects relating to their teaching.

BIMM Institute is a member of the 21st Century Music Practices Research Network in the southeast of England, comprising 16 HEIs. Through the conversations that have underpinned the formation of this network, we have had significant input in ensuring the inclusion of practice-based research into musical learning and pedagogy in the terms of reference for the network. We are also a member of UK Music's Music Academic Partnership (MAP), working nationally to bring the music industry and music education together to work collaboratively in terms of mutually beneficial research projects. This work has resulted in the Music Cities Project, with BIMM Institute students working on a pilot research project to Map Brighton as a Music City. Two BIMM Institute Music Business graduates have now opened the Brighton Music Office as a pilot for the rest of the country based at the digital-media hub and think-tank Wired Sussex. Other BIMM Institute students are working on projects on behalf of Believe Digital, Universal Publishing, and record label BMG. The MAP network decided in 2016 that the Music Cities and Regions Project managed by BIMM Institute would be one of two key priorities for UK Music in its plans to make applications for collaborative research funding to the AHRC and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). In addition, work in this area has led to the setting up of a student led industry focussed conference called *Appetite for Disruption: Building a New Music Industry* taking place on the 26th January 2018 in Brighton, where all the presentations and workshops will be led by students and alumni aged between 17 and 21. The attendees will be drawn from institutions across the South-East including Bexhill College, BIMM Institute, University of Brighton, Canterbury Christchurch University, Chichester College, Chichester University, DV8 College, East Kent College, East Surrey College, Kent University, Hastings College, Mid Kent College, Northbrook College, Portsmouth Guildhall, Southampton Solent University, Surrey University, Sussex Coast College, Sussex Downs College, University of Sussex and West Kent College.

## Personalised Learning

BIMM Institute encourages teaching staff to adopt innovative and inclusive approaches to academic and vocational pedagogy through a strongly embedded ethos that promotes active learning within a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Where students and professionals (their tutors or *Old Timers*) from the contemporary creative industries interact, and learn from each other and through practice and participation. This approach fosters reflection on action in action (Schon, 1981) or metacognition (the ability of students to reflect on their own learning and understand their own strengths and weaknesses). Furthermore, our teaching aims to make learning visible to both teacher and student, and creates an environment where there are opportunities to practice the skills being taught (Hattie, 2009). Teachers are encouraged to be flexible and open in their approaches, acting as experts in their subject, but also as guides or facilitators and sometimes as co-creators (McWilliam, 2008). We recognise that learning in the creative industries is both formal and informal (Green, 2002) and we seek to draw on what our students learn in class and outside in making the opportunities for learning we provide more effective. BIMM Institute's ethos also recognises that learning in the creative industries is an iterative and aesthetic process (Finney, 2002) and above all a process of identity formation (Frith, 2004), and finally, that the education should be an experience that is authentic to our students, whilst encouraging and supporting them to become creative, reflective and innovative practitioners.

An example of how we have responded to student feedback in terms of tailoring provision to student needs is *BIMM Extra*. This consists of regular additional non-credit bearing classes (such as: Dealing with Performance Anxiety, Video Editing, Live Performance Technology, Drumming for Non-Drummers, Musical Theatre Skills, Mindfulness, Yoga, Dance, Creative Writing, Mental Health and Resilience, Vocal Health and Film Music) offered to students in addition to the core curriculum, covering areas which are relevant to students and particular to the context of each college. The *BIMM Extra* offer is overseen by LTEC and student feedback is utilised to ensure that it continues to be relevant and in line with student needs.

Another aspect of our provision that ensures students receive support and guidance is the individualised tutorial system. Students can book tutorials with a wide range of staff including tutors, module and course leaders, heads of department (who also act as personal tutors), careers staff and student support officers. We do not limit the availability of tutorials or limit them to staff that teach the particular student, and this allows students to draw on a huge body of knowledge and expertise across each college. All tutorials are recorded in the form of defined action planning and made available to the student via the VLE allowing students to track their own progress in addressing action points.

Moreover, as part of the work we are undertaking to fundamentally review our curriculum, we have already decided to introduce more optionality across all courses. This approach will enable us to provide clear career pathways within all courses that allow students to specialise in particular areas of their chosen profession while also maintaining a core of academic and subject specific modules. Increased optionality is something that students have asked for. We will also enable each college to develop its own range of options that are specific to the creative culture and heritage of the city thereby ensuring a unique and personalised learning journey that is in line with students' individual ambitions. In addition, we recognise that a modular system may also lead to over-assessment and we have begun to revise our approaches to assessment of achievement in particular through the use of Mahara ePortfolios and live assessment briefs which will allow us to provide synoptic and authentic assessment opportunities that produce assessment for learning without over-burdening students with numerous assessment tasks.

## Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

### Employment and Further Study

Our achievement data shows a good proportion of 'good honours' degrees (1st or 2:1) awarded to BIMM Institute students with: 61.6% achieving a 1st or 2:1 in 2013-14; 57.7% of students achieving a 1st or 2:1 in 2014-15 and 60.2% of students achieving a 1st or 2:1 in 2015-16. We are confident that this is an accurate reflection of the achievement of our students and does not indicate any systemic underlying issues with grade inflation. The Destination of Leavers in HE (DLHE) survey shows that 11% of graduates went on to further study in 2015 and that for 2016 this figure dropped to 6%, however until we have more longitudinal data we will not know if this indicates a trend that we should be particularly concerned about.

BIMM Institute also offers a small amount of accredited Further Education provision (FE) at BIMM Institute Brighton, BIMM Institute London and BIMM Institute Manchester and has partnerships with the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BIMM Institute Brighton), and The Skills Company (BIMM Institute Manchester). BIMM Institute London also offers privately funded FE courses. BIMM Limited FE courses are accredited by Pearson and RSL Awards (formerly Rock School). Our FE courses provide progression routes to BIMM Limited's HE provision and support our approach to widening access and participation by engaging with students who might not normally apply for a university place. For 2016-17 academic year, FE provision accounts for around 6% of BIMM Limited's students.

Our students typically embark on portfolio careers and a significant part of our provision aims to prepare them for such a career through engagement with business-related and entrepreneurial development activities as the curriculum both broadens and deepens. An example of this is that c20% of our performance students develop music teaching practices having studied the optional Music Teaching Practice module at Level Six. The results of the 2015/16 DLHE Survey showed that 82% of BIMM Institute graduates are in work six months after completing their studies, with 70% involved in work in the creative industries. Our graduates also reported that 63% of them had found work through a network established while studying with us, 83% of them working in the industry during their studies. This data is also reflected in our core TEF3 metrics with employment or further study above benchmark and highly skilled employment or further study 4.6 percentage points above

benchmark. It is also notable that although the split metrics flag below benchmark performance for median earnings, it is likely that the fact that many of our alumni are self-employed and/or pursuing entrepreneurial/portfolio careers is a significant contributing factor to this particular statistic.

BIMM Institute promotes over 400 jobs a year to its Alumni Network. Alumni are currently working across a diverse range of roles including: major record labels, independent labels, promotion companies, music-pluggers, agents, promoters, venues, studios, song writing companies, music management, music journalism, TV and radio broadcasting, tour management, musical theatre, and of course as successful recording artists and performers. Our embedded relationship with the creative industries is recognised and commended by our partner institutions as follows:

> *Extensive connections and commitment to the pop music industry, locally and internationally.* (University of West London Approval Report, May 2015)
>
> *The relationship with the wider creative sector in all aspects of BIMM provision* (University of Sussex Re-recognition Report, January 2014)

As previously stated, we are a vocationally focussed institution and our curriculum is constantly evolving to reflect employer and industry needs. Through the input of industry experts and IAPs convened prior to developing or re-approving all courses, our curriculum is actively informed by our connections to the industry it serves. Our non-executive director Tony Wadsworth (formerly CEO of EMI Records UK and Ireland and Chair of music trade body the BPI) sits on the BIMM TopCo Limited Board and has extensive music industry experience at the highest level. This approach has also supported the expansion of our curriculum more widely into the creative and performing arts; for example, the recent development of the BA (Hons) in Performing Arts was supported by a specialist IAP which brought together established actors, musical theatre performers, producers, casting directors and agents to advise the course team on the requirements of the industry and the relevance of the proposed curriculum.

## Employability and Transferable Skills

The transferable nature of the skills developed during a course in the creative arts means that our alumni enter a wide cross-section of roles across the creative industries. BIMM Institute was commended for its careers support during the 2016 QAA HER and this has also been commended by our Awarding Institutions. Careers education, information and guidance is available to all students, starting with Open Days and the BIMM Institute website and prospectus, and continuing through career-planning tutorials, masterclasses, in-class guests and Work-Based Learning/placements/internships. This support also continues after graduation with the provision of the BIMM Institute Alumni Network and the development of the *BIMM Connect* application. *BIMM Connect* is an interactive digital platform specifically designed to promote career development and connectivity between students and alumni. Our MIS team is developing this software application so students and alumni can access careers resources and support via their smart phones, an example of how we seek to stay aligned with the digital lifestyle of our students and alumni.

College-based Careers and Industry Hubs host events and activities with the emphasis on work-based learning and career development and provide a wide range of employability events to students including: CV reviews, mock interviews with industry professionals, small group seminars with creative arts companies; House Band auditions, A&R demo drops, student label meetings, 'Meet the Experts' panels, Digital Futures sessions, Careers Fairs, journalism workshops and intern networking events. We have also continued to add to the work placement opportunities available to students and the number of student work placements across BIMM Institute has increased by 215% from 229 in 2015/16, to 722 in 2016-17. Institutional support for Work Based Learning has also developed significantly over 2016-17 with the introduction of: a student-led record label at BIMM Institute Brighton run by Music Business students; a student led agency for Event Management students at BIMM Institute Manchester and a student run magazine 'BIMM Life' for Music Journalism students at BIMM Institute Brighton and BIMM Institute London. The work we have done to provide and support student placements was also commended by the QAA in 2016:

> *The diversity of work placement opportunities, supported by highly informative guidance in handbooks for staff, students and employers.* (QAA HER Report, April 2016)

Furthermore, as part of a recent review of our strategic priorities and the governance and management structures required to deliver them, a new executive-level post of Business Development and Creative Careers Director has been created to provide an enhanced level of strategic leadership to student employability. The previous Creative Careers and Industry Links Forum (CCILF) has been replaced by the Careers and

Employability Steering Group (CESG) which is chaired by the Business Development and Creative Careers Director and reports to the Senior Management Group. In addition, another new institution-wide role of Head of Careers and Employability has been created and this person will act as deputy chair to the newly-formed CESG. This steering group has begun its work with aims to research and enhance support for careers and employability, with particular focus on student comments from the 2016-17 NSS concerning the different levels of employability and careers support available across subjects and colleges. Examples of projects that this group is currently overseeing include: developing *BIMM Connect*, expanding membership of the BIMM Institute alumni association (currently 1,628 members); further developing the BIMM Institute annual student *Business Award*; continuing to develop the work of the college Careers and Industry Hubs to meet the needs of students; continuing to engage with music festivals and events nationwide; and facilitating the production of BIMM Institute albums and the BIMM Life Magazine.

## Positive Outcomes

BIMM Institute is committed to providing equality of opportunity for students and staff and this is built into our policies, procedures and institutional culture. Policies on equality of opportunity exist for students and staff and cover a range of areas including admissions and assessment. Equal Opportunity policy is developed by ADQA in consultation with Student Services and reporting to QAC and Academic Board. Support for disabled students is provided across the Colleges by Student Services departments. BIMM Institute ensures, as far as it is reasonable to do so, accessibility to learning and associated resources for its students by promoting an inclusive approach in all areas. Support is available for students who declare a disability and there are policies in place for reasonable adjustment to assessment. Our TEF3 metrics show positive flags for a range of groups of students in terms of highly skilled employment or further study on graduation with an overall score of 65.9%.

BIMM Institute is a widening access and participation provider and we recruit a significant number of students holding non-traditional qualifications and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). This means that we must provide flexible routes into its courses and the requisite support for students as they enter and progress through Higher Education. BIMM Limited has in place a Widening Access Statement, which is available on our website.

The TEF3 metrics further confirm that we are a specialist provider with the majority of our students studying for a first degree and under 21 at entry and the majority of our students being male (71%). Although we have made some incremental improvement in the gender balance amongst its student population it is likely that this is because we have widened our portfolio into non-performance areas as in music performance and production there continues to be a sector wide issue with very few young women choosing to play instruments such as guitar, bass and drums or to take on technical roles as engineers and producers. However, we do make every effort to provide positive role models in our marketing and promotion and through the guests we invite to speak to students. In addition, we have been able to promote several female members of staff from instrumental performance and production backgrounds to senior academic roles in our colleges who serve as role models in terms of both their academic and industry practice. It is worth noting that for the female students we do recruit, continuation rates (82.5%) are only 2.1% below their male peers and employment and further study sits above that of their male peers by 3.4% (94.3% against 91.1%), although in terms of highly skilled employment or further study, female students score 1.8% lower than their male counterparts (64.5% against 66.3%). The core issue for all music performance courses is that young people need to take up instruments at an early stage in their school education in order to have the technical ability to study at HE level. We do encourage participation through our school tours, but it will take a change in priorities at primary and secondary school level to make a marked difference and although good work that has been done through initiatives such as *Musical Futures:* the current focus on STEM subjects mean that this situation is unlikely to change in the near-future.

We do not attract an ethnically diverse student population and popular music is a field within the creative industries where both women and ethnic minorities are historically poorly represented, particularly at senior levels. Although this is a cultural issue that will need to be addressed across society for change to be successful we have made efforts to address this challenge through ensuring that our promotional materials present positive role models to prospective students and other stakeholders. We do attract a number of young people from areas of low participation (29% from POLAR 1 and 2) and we are very successful in helping these students to achieve their potential with 83.7% of Q1 or Q2 students continuing, 94.5% entering employment or further study and 68% highly skilled employment or further study. Our inner-city locations also contribute to us attracting students from areas of multiple deprivation (33% from IMD 1 and 2) and 79.7% of these students from Q1 or Q2 continue, with 92.9% entering employment or further study and 63% highly skilled employment or further study. Furthermore, we attract a relatively high number of students declaring a disability (15%). Nearly half our entrants are admitted on a low tariff (43%) and our willingness to recruit students from low

participation and deprived backgrounds with relatively poor prior attainment on the basis of their passion and potential demonstrated at audition/interview is a defining feature of our approach to widening access and participation.

## Conclusion

We are confident that despite being below benchmark/absolute performance in some metrics, principally in terms of student satisfaction and to a less significant extent continuation, we have shown incontrovertibly that we excel in attracting a high-proportion of students from both disadvantaged backgrounds and those young people who might not normally enter Higher Education. Moreover, we believe that we support our students to fulfil their potential to achieve their goals both in terms of obtaining an HE qualification and in enabling them to progress to employment (in particular progression to highly skilled employment) or further study.

We recognise that while the data shows that we are making improvements in the key areas of student satisfaction (an increase of 2.8% in NSS overall satisfaction from 2016 to 2017) and continuation (an increase of 4.9% from 2014/15 to 2016/17), we have more work to bring our performance in line with the sector. Our submission aims to demonstrate that we are addressing these issues through a strategic commitment to improvement and enhancement, including engagement with sector good practice, that is embedded in our ethos across the whole institution, and we are confident that the initiatives we have put in place will be successful.

We leave the final words of the submission to our alumni:

> *Songwriting for other artists isn't just about the music, it's also about relationships, consistency and resilience. BIMM helped me to develop these qualities and provided me with the tools I needed for my future.*
> Lei Jennings (Songwriter)
>
> *Life at BIMM was fundamental in supporting my growth and initial network in the music industry. My degree taught me patience, the importance of networking and key business knowledge that has helped me get to where I am today.*
> Emmanuel Mathews (A&R Executive, Universal Music)
>
> *I can honestly say that I probably wouldn't be CEO of an investor-funded games studio if I hadn't gone to BIMM... Learning from them changed my life by affecting the way I approached work in terms of focus, attention to detail and generally getting things done with no excuses.*
> Simon Davis (Founder and CEO of Mighty Bear Games)