Name of Provider: The Academy of Contemporary Music
UKPRN: 10013357

TEF Year Three Provider Submission

1. Provider Context

1.1. We are an independent higher education provider that specialise in the delivery of programmes preparing students for careers in music, the music business, and the wider creative industries, while providing a solid academic degree qualification. Alongside full-time HE provision we also deliver full-time FE programmes at Level 2 and Level 3 for 16-18 year olds, as well as a range of part-time short courses and a summer school.

1.2. Our vision is to incubate potential and

1.3. Our mission is to provide an immersive student experience, with a curriculum which is connected to the industry in real-time, based on a 'learning by doing' ethos. Our core aim is for our students to enjoy lifelong sustainable careers underpinned by applied learning and a specialist, cutting edge curriculum.

1.4. We deliver practical hands-on programmes that prepare students for their careers by exposing them to current and emerging industry technologies and practices. Students also engage with a core body of academic knowledge that extends their critical, reflective and analytical skills and abilities.

1.5. We offer the following programmes of study validated by Middlesex University:

- BA(Hons) Music Industry Practice
- BA(Hons) Music Industry Practice including foundation year.

1.6. To support the delivery of programmes and our core aims we have made substantial investment over the last three years in various resources including staffing, physical spaces, systems infrastructure, registry services, student support services, and industry engagement services.

2. Commentary On Core And Split Metrics

2.1. As an independent provider we are relatively new to the various data reporting now required of alternative providers accessing student loan support. Our current metrics are therefore based on a single year of data, and in the case of NSS and DLHE only one year of experience in running these processes under the new regulatory framework. Additionally, as a specialist provider, with a small number of programmes in a single subject area, the impact of each course is potentially disproportionate when compared with an HEI with a wide range of programmes. Further to this the metrics do not necessarily reflect recent investment in resources and services, and the provision of a newly designed curriculum introduced in September 2016. There is value therefore in providing some contextual commentary on the core and split metrics, as well as identifying various initiatives, both implemented and planned, to address any short-comings identified within the metrics.

2.2. Our metrics indicate that the majority of our students (70%) enter with low/medium entry tariffs, with 58% in the low/non tariff category. 12% of students indicated a disability, and 18% are from low participation postcodes. (POLAR Q1 and Q2).

2.3. Our metrics indicate very good continuation rates 2.1% above benchmark, reflecting a positive student experience. It should also be taken into account that these metrics relate to accelerated 2-year degree programmes and students are further through their programme at the point of census compared to those on traditional three-year degrees reflecting in real terms a more notable continuation rate. Rates for low-participation postcodes (Q1 and Q2) are substantially higher (98.2%), as are rates for disabled students (95.8%), reflecting the effectiveness of the support in place for disadvantaged students.

2.4. *Employment or further study* metrics (93.4%) are just above benchmark (92.7%) and *Sustained employment or further study* is 3.6 % above benchmark with a positive flag for mature students. This reflects positively the substantial work done to support students in preparation for professional life.

2.5. We recognise performance below benchmark in the *Highly skilled employment or further study* metric. We are aware that this is a particular issue for graduates in the creative arts who typically enter into development of portfolio careers rather than a single employment easily categorised as 'highly skilled'. This is supported by the Supplementary LEO metrics that

indicate *Above median earning threshold or further study* is only 0.6% below benchmark reflecting positive outcomes that come through a longer term career strategy.

2.6. Internal surveys based on NSS question categories conducted with students on the new programme portfolio during 2016/17 have shown improvements in the areas of teaching, assessment and feedback compared to the NSS TEF metrics. For example, Programme Evaluation Questionnaires undertaken by 2016/17 cohort Year 1 students 92% agreed that '*staff are good at explaining things.'* (3% above NSS sector benchmark), and '*The criteria used in marking has been clear in advance.'* (at NSS sector benchmark).

2.7. Engagement with the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) has highlighted a need for greater focus on specific aspects of the provision and student expectations in these areas. Whilst implementation of a new curriculum and the enhancement of various services and resources might not yet be reflected within the published metrics we recognise need for improvement in key areas that effect the student experience as relate to teaching on the course, assessment and feedback, and academic support. In light of this various initiatives have been put in place, including:

- Greater student involvement within the NSS
- Incorporating NSS questions within the module and programme evaluation surveys to greater inform enhancement strategy.
- Introduction of Canvas VLE across all programmes to facilitate submission and timely assessment of coursework, and standardised access to course content.
- Greater focus on CPD for teaching staff, and review of teaching staff contracts.

<u>Teaching Quality</u>

3. Student Engagement (TQ1)

ACM understands how the creative industry works and has created an immersive and comprehensive learning environment, which connects directly with industry. Our 'learning by doing' ethos helps simplify how the industry works and produces a clear view of career paths and options for our students. This is facilitated through provision of industry standard resources, staffing with extensive professional experience, and a programme portfolio that reflects the changing demands of the creative industries. Teaching practice therefore encourages active student engagement within the learning environment whether through practical skill development or through interactive discussion of emerging practices as opposed to exposure to purely academic or theoretical concepts. The following are indicators of how we encourage and enhance student engagement:

3.1.1. We recognise the value of students as partners in learning and this is evidenced through the programme design enabling students to define their emerging career path through the availability of electives and bespoke project based modules. This helps define their final year study, particularly their research focus and exit specialism. Engagement is further enhanced through student involvement in working groups, and forums alongside more formal methods of student feedback, to inform programme design.

3.1.2. Students have access to a range of mechanisms to help shape their experience including student forums for each pathway, module and programme evaluation surveys, post-induction surveys, as well as involvement with the NSS. We use termly Board of Studies to review survey activity and facilitate monitoring and review of learning and teaching and provide opportunity for students and staff to discuss matters openly and agree on actions and matters to be referred for consideration and approval.

3.1.3. In 2016/17 we implemented an enhanced Student Representation system that sought to strengthen: the election process, the induction/training for representatives, ongoing support for student representatives, recognition for students that serve as a representative, engagement with the new board and committee structures. During 2016/17 we have seen very positive and active participation from students within the new and enhanced committee structure. There is evidence that the student voice has been strengthened, with students making constructive and meaningful contributions to the Board of Studies meetings, with 16 student representatives in place across our two degree programmes.

3.1.4. We believe that prospective students should have real opportunities to immerse themselves in the ACM environment before making a final decision about their studies. In addition to ACM open days our 'Access All Areas' initiative provides all applicants with access: to ACM facilities, targeted learning resources, live streamed classes with Q&A, and experience events at ACM. During 2017 this included three events held at Metropolis Studios in London enabling prospective students the opportunity to experience real-world professional environments.

3.1.5. Our Student Ambassador scheme provides prospective applicants with the opportunity to meet current students and gain a peer perspective about studying at ACM. We currently have 22 Student Ambassadors supporting events, outreach and recruitment activities.

3.1.6. Students feature prominently on our website in a specific Student News page highlighting student activity and successes. A small selection of 2017 news items include:
Hannah Harper releases new single 'Appetite'; Daisy Brunskill – Open Mic finalist, Introducing…Mountfield, Scholarship award winners; The Soulful style of The Harry Miler Band; ACM showcase at The Great Escape Festival 2017; Ray Wills' captivating set for BBC Introducing at Purple Turtle; Lineup announced for student showcase at The Alternative Escape Festival; ACM student Zurra releases new single on Get Twisted Records.

3.1.7. ACM Website Alumni News section also includes high profile alumni who return to do masterclasses and guest lectures for our students.
'ACM's Industry Link isn't just a clever name, they really are the link to the students' future in the music industry. When I was a student, they worked tirelessly to ensure that all students had constant audition opportunities and amazing guest speakers to pass on their knowledge. Which is why it is such an honour to now be one of those guest speakers. Richard Shaw Guitarist - *Cradle of Filth* and ACM Alumnus.

3.1.8. To help entry into higher education new students attend induction sessions and are provided with a comprehensive induction pack. Returning students attend re-induction 'Academic Transition Events'. Our QAA review reports in 2014 and 2016 identified '*the highly informative Induction Booklet, and the comprehensive range of online resources available as good practice.'* Students have responded positively about their Induction experience with 90% of students '*clear about where they needed to be on the day'* and 91% indicating that '*staff were helpful'* 2016/17 cohort Induction survey.

3.1.9. During Freshers' week students have access to a wide range of activities to help integrate them into life at ACM including number of masterclasses, gigs, and networking events. 88% of students responded positively about the masterclasses provided during induction week. (2016/17 cohort Induction survey).

3.1.10. In 2016/17 we introduced an enhanced governance structure that included engagement of students across the committee framework. The framework included provision of a Student Engagement and Experience Committee. All students have access to external examiner reports, committee meeting minutes and other relevant documents through the VLE. Students played a key part in our recent QAA HER Review and were fully involved in both the submission preparation and review visit. In October 2017 we appointed a Head of Quality and Student Experience to further support commitment to enhancing student engagement.

3.1.11. We use a range of technology to support student engagement. Following a pilot in 2016/17 the use of Canvas VLE was implemented across all new intakes in 2017 allowing students access to course support material, assessment submission and feedback. The MyACM app launched in 2014 enables access to a variety of resources and services via smart phones and other devices including practice room/studio and tutorial booking, and access to timetables. Over the last few years the app has been further enhanced to enable students to review their own attendance and progression data as well as access Student Services through a 'Help' button. QAA Review reports in 2014/2016 identified the *'rigorous systems for monitoring student progress through the in-house designed software, especially for students at risk, as good practice.'*

3.1.12. We provide a significant range of general and specialist support services for students including general learning and study skills support, wellbeing and mindfulness, access to counselling and wellbeing advisors, specialist learning support, and accommodation support. During 2016/17 the Student Services team received around 1000 referrals through a variety of mechanisms including referral by staff, self-referral, unscheduled drop-ins, and the MyACM

'Help' button. Students are also able to access a range of support resources via a Canvas VLE module. Following its introduction in late 2017 it has proved very popular averaging around 50 hits per day. Our Student Services team now has 20 staff including 6 full-time reflecting our core mission and aims as well as recognising creative arts tendency to attract those who work visually, aurally and kinesthetically, and may have specific learning support needs. Our learning, teaching and assessment strategy accounts for this through increased use of practical instruction methods and project based assessments. Retention and award outcomes are high for these learners with the number of DSA students achieving high grade classifications as well and in some cases better than learners without disability. In 2017 we received the AMOSSHE sponsored award for 'Outstanding Support for Student Learning' at the Independent Higher Education (IHE) awards in recognition of our provision. Our QAA review reports in 2014 and 2016 identified *'the specialist student support and guidance in place at ACM as good practice.'*

3.1.13. External Examiner reports evidence the vocational strengths of the programmes including industry relevance.
'These programmes have been carefully developed with practical hands-on learning in mind, with some excellent critical, self-reflective and analytical engagement built around strong creative practice.'
'All the courses assessed provide strong links between creative output, critical thinking and employability. The experience and links formed through industrial example and workflow are excellent.'
'Outstanding and well-conceived vocational element throughout the assessment design. The programme has been thoughtfully designed and is delivered by music professionals who understand well the demands of the profession.'
'The course curriculum encourages students to sculpt interesting and creative outputs, but also prepares individuals well for a variety of careers.'
External Examiner Reports 2015-17

3.1.14. We recognise that improvements could be made to the way students are kept informed of developments that effect their journey. Following a pilot in 2017, we have now introduced a student weekly newsletter highlighting student news, important dates, and programme, resources and assessment information. We will continue to explore ways in which we can provide effective student communication.

3.2. Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

We engage a diverse range of staff to support teaching and learning activities and place great importance on high standards and relevant industry experience. Key to this is our staff recruitment strategy and the training provided to support staff development. Our staff demonstrate high profile industry experience at national and international levels across every subject area. To support staff, many of which have developed their experience outside of traditional academic environments, we provide access to professional teaching qualifications alongside our own professional development training schedule. The following are indicators of the ways in which we value teaching:

3.2.1. A key strategy undertaken during 2017 has been to move towards employing more contracted teaching staff, whilst continuing to recognise industry profiles alongside academic profiles. This has been done to provide greater security for our current sessional staff as well as to enhance engagement of teaching staff in the teaching and learning strategy, and to build a stronger academic community to support professional development and the student learning experience. We now employ c.30 contracted staff covering 70% of our teaching needs and supporting a range of developmental activities beyond teaching and assessment with c.80 members of staff employed on a sessional basis.

3.2.2. We are committed to providing continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities for all our teaching staff to ensure access to academic and scholarly activity, professional practice, maintain current industry and sector knowledge, undertake formal qualifications, and training. Over the last few years we have provided formal access to teaching qualifications including PGCE programmes through a formal arrangement with the Institute of Education,

and PTLLS/CTLLS for a substantial number of our sessional staff. In 2018 we will be providing staff with access to a formal post-graduate teaching qualification through Falmouth University. We provide all new teaching staff with an induction and ongoing mentoring and support from senior staff. Training is supplemented with EduCare online training modules.

3.2.3. We run regular staff training activities (INSET) embedded into the annual calendar to inform staff about key operational and regulatory matters and share best practice in learning and teaching. Recent training activity has included enhanced use of technology in teaching, learning and assessment. External Examiner reports highlight staff professionalism. See 3.4.3

3.2.4. In 2016/17 we commenced implementation of a new Employee Development and Review (EDR) procedure that will ensure all staff are subject to annual performance monitoring and review. This will further consolidate staff CPD, ensuring staff are well supported to develop their operational and academic skills and abilities. The process began with senior staff, who themselves will be undertaking EDR of the staff that they line manage through 2017/18.

3.2.5. To further promote sector best practice and support staff development we joined the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2017. We are currently supporting 35 education staff to develop their applications for HEA Fellowship/Senior Fellowship. In addition to running in-house HEA sessions we hosted two HEA training events for our staff and for other alternative providers in December 2017.

3.2.6. We highlight teaching staff profiles on the ACM website and on a featured wall within the campus providing information about the vocational and academic backgrounds of every member of teaching staff. This is of particular value for students as they can book one-to-one tutorials with lecturers other than those they are taught by. The ACM website also features a number of individual video interviews highlighting specific staff and their professional and academic interests. The website news section regularly includes notable accolades and activities of current teaching staff, and to introduce new staff. News items in Nov/Dec 2017 included: ACM Tutor Chris Carney wins big at UK Event Awards 2017, Guitar tutor Scott McGill's recent work with legendary bassist Percy Jones, ACM tutor Sandy Beales touring Europe with JP Cooper, New Senior Lecturer at ACM-Introducing Dr Jerry Thackray, and Soundtrack for award-wining movie Raw mixed by Production tutor John Gallen.

3.2.7. Through the enhanced governance framework, and with the increase in the number of contracted lecturers, staff are now better able to contribute to decision making bodies including: Academic Board, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, Curriculum Review Committee, Student Engagement and Experience Committee, and Research and Ethics Committee, all of which have staff representation. Teaching staff are also engaged in various workshops and forums to support development of programmes and pedagogy. A key area of development currently is exploring ways in which staff can contribute to the development of a research culture based on both professional experience and academic research.

3.2.8. We provide students with the opportunity to comment on tutors that have had a positive impact on their time at ACM. This is collated into an online video blog 'Who is your favourite tutor at ACM?'

3.2.9. To further recognise the contribution made by teaching staff we are launching a series of annual awards in 2018 for learning and teaching excellence. Awards will be made for: outstanding or innovative teaching, outstanding or innovative assessment and feedback, outstanding support for the learning experience of students, and outstanding industry connections in the learning experience of students. An award will be given for each of these categories from both students and peers.

3.2.10. QAA Review reports and External Examiner reports recognises the professional expertise of teaching staff.

'The Academy makes effective use of external links with the music industry in enhancing learning opportunities. In particular the partnership with Metropolis Studios enables both staff and students to have access to expertise.' QAA Review Report 2014.

'The programme has been thoughtfully designed and is delivered by music professionals who understand well the demands of the profession.'

'Overall the students believe that the staff are excellent in their fields, having worked as professionals in the industry.' QAA HER Student Submission 2017

External Examiner Reports: See 3.1.13

3.3. Rigour and stretch (TQ3)

The course design, learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and real-world opportunities provided to our students ensure they are encouraged to achieve the highest possible standards expected within the creative industries. We believe that our 'learning by doing' ethos that brings up-to-date real-world experiences into the curriculum maximizes their potential in achieving sustainable careers. The following are indicators of how we challenge and motivate students to achieve their potential and meet professional standards.

3.3.1. We carefully monitor the industry relevance and professional standards through the enhanced governance framework implemented in 2016/17 to ensure learning, teaching and assessment is appropriate. This includes a Curriculum Review Committee to consider current offering as informed by Board of Studies and other feedback mechanisms, and a Programme Development and Innovation Committee to consider the development of new programmes. Both committees are informed by an Industry Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG, which is comprised of independent professionals from across the creative industries, meet on a regular basis to ensure our programmes continue to meet the needs of a dynamic industry that is driven by entrepreneurship, innovation and technological change.

3.3.2. We place great importance on engagement with opportunities to maximize a student's potential. In addition to directed learning through timetabled lectures, workshops and seminars, we also provide access to one-to-one tutorials, practice and studio facilities and learning resources. Participation and engagement in activities is tracked and reports are provided both to individual students and to support teams to help with re-engagement.

3.3.3. External Examiners reports across all subjects regularly highlight the academic rigour and industry relevance of the programmes and the high standards being achieved by our students.

'The cohort displays an excellent array of creative and academic skills.'

There was a good blend between students developing strong academic skills and imaginative and creative practical work.'

'Assessments are creatively designed to test students on relevant skills in line with music industry expectations.'

'Evidence of some excellent, industry standard practical work often with a very strong emphasis on originality that should be highly commended.'

'The cohort displays an excellent array of creative and academic skills, which provide a great focus on personal development, interaction with professional entities, and providing evidential documentation of all the activities.'

'The breadth and detail contained within the business modules and the students' representation of the acquired knowledge within the assessments, is on the whole, extremely impressive.'

External Examiner Reports 2015-17. See also 3.1.13

3.3.4. To further stretch and challenge students ACM offers a number of scholarships to reward excellence and increase accessibility. For 2018 these total more than £130,000 and include: The Music Gateway Production Scholarship, The Skunk Anansie Scholarship, The Freddie Mercury Scholarship, BASCA Scholarship, and The Keith Lowde Scholarship. Since 2016, ACM graduates have been able to compete for an annual £2500 scholarship award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians to support their career in music.

3.3.5. Through Industry Link we provide access to various competitions and peer assessed opportunities to highlight and promote excellence in our students and to motivate, inspire and reward passion and commitment. These include high profile showcase and performance events including festivals, end-of-year showcases, and graduation ceremonies, as well as access to professional studio recording opportunities and commercial radio playlists. Gigs and live music events organised by Industry Link are profiled on the ACM Website. Recent examples include: *Winter Festival 30th October to 30th November 2017 – a month long festival in venues in Guildford and London; Noise Theory gigs, regular events showcasing ACM student artists and bands; Discovery and Development Showcase; Network Monthly@Tileyard; 440 Sessions; and lunchtime sessions at Riverside Café.*

3.4. Feedback (TQ4)

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy, published in July 2017, sets out our approaches to, and the use of, feedback. We aim to ensure that assessment and feedback to students on their work promotes effective and independent student learning and contributes to their academic, professional and technical development. ACM ensures the implementation of a robust framework of marking and feedback mechanisms including double marking, second marking, analysis of grade distributions, and monitoring through external examiners. The following are indicators of the priority we place on assessment and feedback.

3.4.1. Following a phased introduction in 2016/17 Canvas VLE is now used for all assessment submissions across all intakes with over 3000 submissions (formative and summative) received via the VLE in the first Trimester of 2017/18. Feedback for all assessments is contained within the VLE allowing for provisional grades to be released more quickly. The use of the VLE also enables more enriched feedback through such facilities as video/audio commentary, and annotation of written work, as well as originality checking through the Turnitin service. We have enhanced assessment practices with the use of grading rubrics to promote a standardised approach for assessments and provide more detailed feedback to students.

3.4.2. To ensure consistency of approach for marking, training and guidance is provided to tutors through Canvas VLE training modules and at INSET training sessions.

3.4.3. External Examiner comments have highlighted the quality of feedback provided to students.
'In general there is a high level of consistency to the feedback provided. The feedback examined is of a competent standard and offers plenty of advice for improvement regarding all areas of assessment.'
'Feedback is again detailed with clear indication of how students can improve.'
'The level of detail on the feedback forms is excellent, with clear guidelines and support to students with regards further development.'
'The programme leaders and module leaders must be commended for their diligence in maintaining standards across the cohorts.'
External Examiner reports 2015-17

3.4.4. We recognise the importance that students place on the form and timeliness of assessment feedback and this has been raised through Board of Studies, programme evaluation surveys and the NSS survey. Various strategic activity, including the recent implementation of Canvas VLE for all submissions, is being used as a driver to help meet student expectations.
'The Academy has taken action to improve the form and timeliness of assessment feedback by implementing online submission, marking and feedback. The academy policy is for marked work to be returned within three weeks. The feedback provided to students is monitored by heads of schools and recent external examiner's report praised the quality of feedback. Students indicate that assessment feedback is useful and timely.' QAA Review reports 2014 and 2016.

4. Learning Environment

4.1. Resources (LE1)

We aim to ensure that all our learning resources, physical and service based, are accessible to all. This includes provision for those with physical difficulties and those with learning support needs. Building access is considered and our Education Guidance team provides a friendly and accessible service to assist students with dyslexia and other specific learning differences to achieve their potential. The following are indicators of the priority placed on resources:

4.1.1. Details regarding access to facilities is provided within a 'Building Access Guide' available on our public access website and this identifies provision for wheel chair users including ramps, lifts and disabled toilets, and guidance for those with visual impairments. At application stage our Education Guidance team undertake assessment of any specific learning needs including provision for students with visual and hearing impairments, and physical disability. The team also consider needs for students with specific learning difficulties and mental health issues to ensure the appropriate support is in place. Outcomes for these learners indicate that they are not disadvantaged in terms of their ability to engage and achieve. See 2.3, 3.1.1
Our QAA review reports in 2014/2016 identified *'the specialist student support and guidance in place at ACM as good practice.'*

4.1.2. We believe are facilities represent some of the best available at any creative arts educational institution in Europe. We have invested substantially in the last few years to

enhance the learning resources at ACM. The Guildford campus now contains seven buildings totaling 65,000 sq ft, providing c.1500 students with a range of resources including suitably equipped teaching and performing spaces, state of the art recording studios, rehearsal and tutorial rooms, a professional theatre venue, library, student café and social space. All spaces are linked by an integrated wireless internet coverage. With the exception of the theatre venue, which is also used for community activity outside of class and term time, all the facilities are reserved for the exclusive use of students and for class room delivery. We currently operate with extended opening hours allowing access to rehearsal and studio facilities in the evenings and at weekends.

4.1.3. We provide access to a range of online resources for students and teaching staff via the Canvas VLE and the MyACM app, in addition to the learning resources available in our specialist creative arts library. Staffing has been expanded to support learning resources including full-time appointments in 2017 of a Curriculum Content Manager and Learning Resource Manager.

4.1.4. We also use a number of external spaces to enable students to gain experience of professional environments including arrangements with a number of venues in and around Guildford and London. ACM students also benefit from exclusive access to facilities at Metropolis Studios in London.

4.1.5. The VLE provides access to a range of useful resources for students making it easier to access learning materials, assessment information and engage with staff and students in module delivery. This is particularly helpful to students who need time to absorb lecture content outside of timetabled classes and to access additional content to support further study. The VLE provides access to: student induction materials, programme and module learning resources, assignment briefs, messages and updates from lecturers, assignment submission (with Turnitin integration), assessment feedback and provisional grades, knowledge base (policies, External Examiner and Committee reports), and student services information.
In the first trimester of its integration across all programmes the VLE has been actively used by staff and students with c.1.4 million page views and c.18 thousand actions taken recorded[1].
The QAA identified the '*comprehensive range of resources on the student portal that are highly appropriate for contemporary music'* as good practice. QAA Review reports 2014/2016 *'Students find the resources such as technical equipment, and access to the recording studio very beneficial to their learning'.* QAA HER Student Submission 2017.
Each term we prepare a range of professional published learning support materials for each course providing students and staff with details on content for each lecture as well as guidance on further study. The QAA identified these *'course notes for supporting teaching staff'* as good practice. QAA Review reports 2014/2016.

4.1.6. The MyACM app, available to all students, provides a range of services via mobile devices and via workstations located around the campus. The app provides support for learning including access to: class timetables, tutor bookings, room bookings and rehearsal space bookings, the 'Help' button, Student Services information, programme handbooks, policies and procedures, reports and meeting minutes, information about Industry Link, personal information, and provisional assessment grades. Students have been actively involved in the development of the app and many enhancements have come through student ideas and suggestions.

4.1.7. To help facilitate effective learning, teaching and assessment all classrooms are equipped with teaching tools including white boards, projectors, PC with internet access, and audio playback equipment. A number of rooms are setup for specific delivery needs including two rooms setup for drum instruction, a keyboard instruction room, two performance spaces with stage and lighting, and four rooms with music production workstations (with 133 workstations in total). In additional to ensuring rooms are suitably equipped we also consider the lighting and décor to provide students with inspiring, creative and engaging professional environments. Our goal is for students to feel they are immersed in the creative industries from day one.

4.1.8. We currently have 5 recording studios equipped to a high standard for teaching and student use. In line with our 'learning by doing' ethos three of the studios also function as teaching

[1] CANVAS VLE user analytics recorded September to December 2017.

spaces to enable instruction in a practical environment. Work on a professional standard recording studio space is currently being completed ready for January 2018. Featuring an industry standard SLL desk and a large 680 sq ft live room the facility will provide students with one of the best recording facilities available at any educational establishment.

4.1.9. To support individual and ensemble performance rehearsal, and music pre-production activity we provide access to around 30 separate spaces including a number of rehearsal 'pods'. All these spaces are fitted with the necessary sound equipment and majority have acoustic drums kits. Each student is allocated a booking provision to ensure fair usage with unused provision made freely available on the day.

4.1.10. In June 2017 we secured a 20-year lease for the Electric Theatre in Guildford. The theatre will see at least 50% of its use dedicated to learning and teaching activities. The venue, located opposite our main building, features a 200-seat auditorium equipped with sound system, lighting rig, backstage area, and tiered seating. There is also a café area, office spaces, green room and meeting room facilities. The theatre will be used to support a range of learning opportunities, and will host events, showcases, masterclasses available to students throughout the year.

4.1.11. ACM's library provides access to a range of learning resources and reference material that support students through all stages of their studies at ACM. The library has subscriptions to various digital databases that allow access to materials to support research activities. Students can use printing and binding services and have access to computers with word processing and various music production software installed. The library provides a study space for students where they can undertake independent and group research and self-directed study activities. We also provide a range of study support seminars on various topics including information/digital literacy, referencing and critical writing and conceptual analysis. External Examiner reports have commented positively on the research and academic skills evident in student work. See 3.3.3

4.1.12. During induction week we provide all students with guidance on the learning resources available to them. This includes talks from relevant staff, and instruction videos on use of the VLE and MyACM. QAA Review reports commented positively on Induction Booklet provided to students. See 3.1.8

4.1.13. Our facilities are managed by a full-time team of technicians to oversee physical spaces and learning environments, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, kept safe and accessible, maintained and equipment kept up to date. They also provide advice and guidance to students outside of class time and access to additional equipment including percussion, microphones and mobile recording equipment. Each year the facilities team carry out an annual maintenance work schedule to renew equipment and refurbish or re-purpose spaces.

4.1.14. Learning skills support is provided to students through a variety of ways. Various instructional modules are available via the VLE including referencing and writing skills and all final year students are required to complete an online project planning module to support Level 6 work. The library team run a number of academic skills workshops and one-to-one study skills support and mentoring is available through the Student Services team. External Examiner reports have commented positively on the research and academic skills evident in student work. See 3.3.3

4.2. Scholarship, research and professional practice (LE2)

Our staff recruitment strategy, placing importance on active industry experience, ensures that the student learning environment is enriched with scholarship, research and professional practice. The following are indicators of how we encourage and enhance scholarship, research and professional practice:

4.2.1. We expect staff to remain actively involved in their areas of professional and academic practice and provide support to encourage this through: the type and nature of employment contracts now available to them; CPD activity including sharing of good practice; HEA membership; and through encouraging a collegiate community of practicing professionals and active researchers. We recognise that professional practice can often place staff in new

situations and work environments including use of new technology requiring them to develop new strategies and practices which in turn inform teaching, learning and assessment. This is particularly evident in the creative industries that are continually evolving and being redefined. We view this as valuable examples of scholarship and research, and essential to student learning. This experience is fed into the curriculum through classroom teaching, contribution to learning materials and programme design, and shared through INSET training and CPD activity, and by highlighting tutor activity through news updates and other forms of communication.

4.2.2. We are currently exploring ways in which academic research can further support teaching, learning and assessment. A number of our teaching staff already hold post-graduate qualifications at Masters level. However, recent appointments of PhD level staff will help further development of ideas and strategy in this area. We are keen to find ways in which research within an educational establishment might be redefined to best support the endeavours of staff and to support the student journey. This activity is being led by a working group of the Research and Ethics Committee involving a number of teaching staff.

4.2.3. Our staff demonstrates a breadth and depth of professional and academic expertise to support industry relevant teaching, learning and assessment. A small sample of our current teaching staff reflecting diversity includes:

Tim Hawes, songwriter and record producer and recipient of a prestigious Ivor Novello award, who achieved over ten million record sales including five No.1 singles.

Charlie Morland, guitarist who has performed with many of the industry's biggest names, including Sir Tom Jones, Candi Stanton and Mavis Staples.

Joe Yoshida, drummer who has worked with Jessie J, Robin Thicke, and Mike Batt, amongst other big names. He has a wealth of experience on TV and radio, including sessions for BBC and ITV, and TV commercials for Lexus and Heineken.

Paul Geary, a bassist who has worked with number of bands and artists including Nik Kershaw, George Michael, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Simply Red, and Mary J Blige

John Gallen, a producer and studio engineer who has spent over 35 years in the music industry working with major recording artists in leading studios around the world including, Queen, Motorhead, Simply Red, Boy George and Billy Ocean.

Dave Cronen, has worked across all areas of the music industry since 1984, first for Virgin Records and Rough Trade, before setting up his own company Trust Management where he now manages a whole roster of award winning artists.

Dr Jerry Thackray is an internationally-renowned music critic who has edited and written for countless magazines and websites. Author of several books on rock music including biographies of Nirvana, The Ramones and The White Stripes.

Patrick Rackow, a qualified barrister he started in the music industry as an in-house lawyer for a record label. He was CEO of BASCA for 4 years and now runs his own legal and business affairs consultancy.

Rasha Shaheen, is an integrated performance scientist, songwriter, producer, educator and events curator. She is currently studying for a Masters in Performance Science at the RCM.

4.2.4. We provide a substantial range of services to students through our Industry Link team to develop professional practice. Run by staff with extensive industry experience and connections the team is dedicated to supporting the professional development of students, helping them take their first steps into the creative industries. Through regular networking events, work placements, professional showcases and audition opportunities, students are able to showcase their knowledge and talent. Industry Link offers every student, past and present, free guidance and support through creating bespoke programmes of work. These are tailored to an individual's needs, enhancing personal and professional development. In the last year the team has been expanded to further enhance the service it can provide with additional support to help students take full advantage of the opportunities on offer through the ADCO (Artist Development and Creative Output) team.

4.2.5. Industry Link activity this year has included: Freshers week and enhancement weeks gigs; masterclass and networking events; The 'Electric Theatre sessions', a set of regular events hosted in the style of a chat show which follows a different theme each show, such as crowd funding, and includes information about provision, staff and guest interviews, networking

opportunities and performances by solo artists, student bands and an ACM 'house band'; access to Music Gateway global site and private network, a service that matches creative with music professionals and professional development opportunities as well as student collaboration and opportunities; a Music Industry Blog, a blog providing exclusive insights and the very latest commentary on the issues central to the future of the global music and creative industries; ACM graduate network, open to all alumni, enabling them to network, attend industry and alumni seminars/events and benefit from all Industry Link has to offer in terms of opportunities and tutorials; and many shows and gigs nationally. Industry Link typically run at least five events every week at professional venues around Guildford and on campus providing opportunities for our students including gigs, workshops totaling around 170 events each year including 14 festivals. Music Gateway (see above) currently has around 2300 active ACM users with students and alumni engaged in around 1000 projects to date.

4.2.6. To broaden their experience and understanding students have access to a range of masterclasses and extra-curricular activity including weekly 'Pro-Workshops'. Most terms we run around eight 'Pro Workshops' every week covering such areas as 'Soul Workshop', 'DJ Workshop', 'Mix Doctor', 'The Electron Choir', 'The Healthy Singer', 'Music Theory Godmother', Music Industry Bootcamp' and 'Synth Jam Workshop'. We run a large number of masterclasses during term time providing access to a wide variety of musicians, music professionals and artists. Masterclasses during 2017 winter term included Jason Cooper (The Cure drummer), Young and Behind the Music tour (Grime managers and PR), Rhianna Kenny (Robbie Williams vocalist), Music Manager's Forum, Paul Sayer (The Temperence Movement guitarist), Shez Raja (virtuouso bass player), Rob Harris (Jamiroquai guitarist), Mikey Demus (Skindred guitarist), Mark Richardson (Skunk Anansie drummer), Bob Earland (Roots Manuva engineer), Ben Scott (Ed Sheeran drummer), Ralph Rolle (Lady Gaga, Chic Drummer), Eddy Thrower (Lower than Atlantis), Ben Hillier (Producer Depeche Mode), Lucy Spraggan (X Factor) amongst many others. Over the last few years ACM has been fortunate to welcome Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers), Roger Taylor (Queen), Newton Falkner, Guthrie Govan (Asia, Hans Zimmer), Phil Campbell (Motorhead), Mo Pleasure (Michael Jackson, Earth, Wind and Fire), Paloma Faith, Gary Langham, Phil Brown (Led Zeppelin producer) and Trevor Horn amongst many other high-profile industry professionals.

4.2.7. Each year we arrange to take between 20 and 30 business students to the international music industry conference 'MIDEM' in Cannes, France. There they get to network with the thousands of music and creative industry professionals as well as debate the latest industry happenings at the various 'conf-labs' and attend presentations compered by some of the biggest names in the business. Students highly value the experience and bring back wider benefits for the student body through the increased understanding about management and promotion of ACM artists and bands in the real world.
'Going to MIDEM was a memorable experience! It coupled ACM's educational and social values perfectly. I also got some great information from the talks.' ACM Music Business student.

4.2.8. The Industry Link team maintain an 'Artist Roster' to showcase musical talent at ACM. The roster features a directory of current students and alumni and can be used by industry to locate: artists and original bands for events, gigs, festivals, tours or to manage/sign, producers to record, mix or master music, to design soundtracks and special effects, for original composition work, DJs for all events, freelance musicians for session work, compositions and scores, and function bands for weddings and corporate events.

4.2.9. In 2015 ACM's Discovery and Development (D&D) initiative was setup to bring together new talent and student management teams. A key element of this is the D&D Days held at Metropolis Studios, in London in which business students work with an ACM band or artist and help them prepare a press pack, develop new product, formulate marketing and manage them in the real world. The day includes presenting the packs to an industry panel and showcasing performances, with valuable feedback provided by the panel. *'D&D was a really great opportunity to experience the modern world of music management.'* ACM Music Business Student.

4.2.10. The Industry Link Team compiles regular playlists of ACM artists under their 'Noise Theory' banner. Noise Theory events held throughout the year provide opportunity to hear the various acts featured in the playlists live.

4.2.11. In November 2017 we received the Shakespeare Martineau sponsored award for 'Industry Partnership of the Year' at the Independent Higher Education (IHE) awards in recognition of the provision.

4.2.12. Our QAA review reports recognise our successful engagement with industry as good practice.
'The Academy provides students with direct links to music industry support for professional development. There are extensive opportunities for extracurricular activity through professional workshops and master classes, which enable skill development. The Industry Link team supports students through facilitating internships and work opportunities. Students said they greatly valued these opportunities. The extensive links to the music industry to support learning is good practice.' QAA Review reports for 2014/2016

4.2.13. We have received many endorsements from industry professionals highlighting key aspects of our provision and its positive impact on students and staff.
'I am delighted and honoured to be a patron of the Academy of Contemporary Music. Amazing places like this didn't exist when we were learning to be a group.' Roger Taylor.
'ACM continues to grow and encourage new talent in the area of music. Artist Development is sorely lacking now in the UK, and the more organisations and people that encourage this, the better.' Tony Moss (BMG Music Rights).
'*ACM is the most sincere and industry relevant music school and I am proud to be part of the strategic team building post-graduate and incubation programmes by creating Twin Music Inc.'* Nick Gatfield (Former Head of Sony and founder of Twin Music Inc.).
'I saw a vision for the future of musical education today. ACM lives in the real world too. The talent of the student body reflects the open minded, forward thinking brains behind the whole machine.' Dorian Holley (Musical Director, American Idol).
'From the moment you cross the threshold you can feel the creativity throughout the building. It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm exuding from both the staff and the students.' Nigel Elderton (ACM patron, President and Managing Director, Peermusic UK).
'Having been involved with the ACM showcases for a number of years now I can honestly say that the standard and level of professionalism on display was simply outstanding.' Gary Caldwell (SXSW/LoveBox/The Great Escape).
'Progressive, holistic, conscientious. Quite honestly a truly magical place to learn. A wealth of highly skilled professionals ready to impart their knowledge on to future generations.' Gary Langan (Queen, Yes, ABC, Spandau Ballet, Co-founder of ZTT Records).
'ACM is an amazing place…After 20 years in the music industry, to find a fertile ground of training, ideas and talent is amazing. ACM can't be matched for their commitment and attention to detail.' David Rowell (Autonomy/Communion, Mumford & Sons, Ben Howard, Laura Marling).

4.3. Personalised learning (LE3)

Personalised learning is present throughout the student journey from initial application, within the programme design, and the resources and support provided whilst on programme, and accessible following graduation. We seek to create a culture and environment that reflects the collaborative nature of the creative industries, and that recognises the individual needs and expectations of each and every student. The following are indicators of how we encourage and enhance personalised learning:

4.3.1. Our degrees provide opportunity for students to design a bespoke pathway from over 100 modules to meet both general and specific career aspirations. This includes 5 main pathways: Musician, Music Production, Creative Artist, Technical Services, and Music Business and Innovation. Further specialisation is possible through selection of elective modules and project based modules. The availability of a foundation year provides opportunity to learn more about their own individual preferences before joining the 2-year accelerated degree programme. Within the musician route, discipline areas (guitar, vocals, bass, keyboards and drums) are recognised separately through specific module delivery.

4.3.2. At the recruitment stage we provide guidance on the various pathways and electives. The auditions process recognises the separate pathways and discipline routes and applicants are assessed as applicable to their instrument (musician pathway) or other pathway as relevant.

4.3.3. Within the culture and environment of the campus each pathway and disciplines have their own distinctive character. Students identify themselves in a positive way as a bassist, drummer, music producer etc. and specifically equipped rooms and specialist tutors help foster this. One-to-one tutorial support, both academic, and professional through Industry Link, is provided by specialists to support the individual needs of students. Learning resources, whether through the VLE or library, provide specific discipline related material. For example, specially commissioned course notes for vocalists. Pro-Workshops, themed masterclasses and other extra-curricular further support recognition of personalised learning.

4.3.4. Our Student Support Services team, through the provision of wellbeing, counselling, and Education Guidance activity, ensure that the personalised needs of each student is carefully considered and supported as appropriate. We recognise that our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds and have a varied range of needs that require individual attention. Our use of technology to support the monitoring of attendance and progression enable us to respond quickly to individual issues. Student outcomes for learners with specific disabilities, our QAA reports, and recognition of an IHE award are evidence of positive outcomes in this field. See 3.1.11, 3.1.12

5. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

5.1. Employability and further study (SO1)

Our metrics show that we exceed the benchmark for *Employment or further study* (93.4%). The absence of negative flags within the core metrics and splits across all categories including age, disability and gender are evidence of consistent good outcomes for all students. The supplementary metrics indicate 3.6% above benchmark for *Sustained employment or further study* and a positive flag for mature students. *Above median earnings threshold or further study* is almost at benchmark. Sustainable careers and support for disadvantage students is a core aim and the metrics overall indicate good student outcomes in these areas. The following are indicators of how we encourage and enhance employability and further study:

5.1.1. Personal and professional development is embedded across all our programmes. All students study a shared module at Level 4 that aims to help unlock their potential through developing the necessary skills and tools to achieve career goals including time management, confidence building, interview techniques, development of practice routines, networking, skills development, wellbeing and work life balance etc. A Level 6 exit specialism module helps prepare students for their next steps, both further study and career wise. Personal and professional development is further supported by services provided by Industry Link, Pro-Workshops, and masterclasses.

5.1.2. We provide various services to alumni to access opportunities and further develop their skills and understanding. This includes continued free access to Industry Link services including Music Gateway and Artist Roster, as well as specific access to networking events. Alumni are also featured and promoted within our website news items. See 3.1.6

5.2. Employability and transferable skills (SO2)

The following are indicators of how we encourage and enhance the development of transferable skills:

5.2.1. Programme design incorporates development of employability and transferable skills. All modules consider professional practice within the learning outcomes and are evidenced through the nature of assessments typically based on measuring performance against professional standards. Within the programme students are initially provided with a broad curriculum enabling them to experience different aspects of the industry including technical skills, contextual understanding, and business understanding. As they progress through the programme there is opportunity to select electives that further define their career aspirations, and final year modules that allow for development of professional standard portfolio and specialist areas of study. Research and dissertation activity provides pathways to further study at post-graduate level as well as the development of business ideas.

5.2.2. We use a variety of mechanisms to ensure that our programmes and services are fit for purpose and relevant to students in terms of employability and transferable skills. This includes use of external industry professionals during the university validation process, and the External Examiner process to ensure consistency of standards within the sector. The Industry Advisory Group (IAG) further ensure independent assessment of our programmes, and to inform development of new programmes aligned with sector needs. Our use of industry professionals within the teaching team provides sustained input of sector expectations into the classroom delivery on a day-to-day basis.

5.2.3. Industry Link services, and in particular the work of the Artist Development and Creative Output (ADCO) team, serve to provide students with guidance on skills development and approaches needed to take advantage of various opportunities available through Industry Link. For example, the ADCO team will work with a band or artist to prepare material, tracks or performances, or business plans to the required professional standards before embarking on tour, festivals, showcases and auditions, recording sessions or business opportunities.

5.2.4. We provide further opportunity for students to develop various transferable skills through their involvement as Student Representatives or Student Ambassadors. Through training sessions and engagement with their roles and responsibilities they develop a range of skills including networking, communicating, decision making, report preparation and project activity.

5.3. Positive outcomes for all (SO3)

The following are indicators of how we demonstrate positive outcomes for all our students:

5.3.1. Typical degree outcomes for our students indicate that over 60% of our graduates achieve Upper Second or First classification with around 26% achieving a First classification[2]. At the most recent exam board[3] 68% of DSA students achieved Upper Second classification or above. This rises to 83% when considering DSA students who engaged with Education Guidance Support. Our recruitment strategy, which is based on identifying talent and commitment through audition and interview, has a relatively low tariff entry requirement. Our TEF contextual data for entry qualifications indicates that 70% of entrants are in the middle or low tariff category with 53% in the low category. This suggests that students are achieving positive outcomes from the programme, especially for those that enter with low level previous academic achievement.

5.3.2. Our TEF metrics indicate *Employment and further study* is above benchmark for all learners, and with no negative flags for disadvantaged groups. We are extremely proud of our students past and present, who can be found working in all kinds of roles as musicians, artists, songwriters, producers, DJs, engineers and sound designers, industry executives, innovators and entrepreneurs. We track and highlight various graduate destinations and successes via our website through news items and alumni features. A small sample include:

Tim Steadman, a Music Business graduate performing in an acoustic duo, working in design for IMG Artists, and setting up his own company.

Yvonne Park, a Vocals graduate has shared the stage with many artists including Belinda Carlisle and Sonia, and sung for Candi Stanton, Pixie Lott, Omar, and many others.

Lawrie Pattison, a Guitar graduate has been touring with the punk rock band Miss Vincent.

Rianne Lewis, a Music Production graduate who has setup Cold Frame Productions, a multi-faceted company with a specialist focus on artist development and production.

Ellie Fletcher, a Music Production graduate has been touring the world with Crystal Fighters, playing with Jools Holland, Glastonbury Festival and headlined Secret Garden Party in 2017.

Junior Kusi, a Keyboard graduate has worked with artists like Hollie Carmen, Naughty Boy, KYLA and RAYBLK, with whom he is currently preparing for a US tour.

Matt Aston, a Bass graduate has toured the UK and Ireland with many artists, performing headline shows at venues such as Shepherds Bush, and the O2 academies.

Ryan Ottley-Booth. Music Business graduate is working at Carlin Music Corporation, an independent publisher with offices in US and France.

[2] Unistats website data January 2018

[3] Finalist Exam board October 2017

Other graduates include: Newton Faulkner, Afrika Green (Pet Shop Boys), Zomboy, Katy Hurt, Rachel Coomber (BBC Introducing), Ben Kennedy (Foxes, Girls Aloud), Ed Sheeran, Molly Smitten-Downes, Members of band Lawson, and You and Me at Six, Mat Burr (Bastille), Crissie Rhodes (The Shires), Nick Tsang, Amelle Berrabah (Sugababes), Ted Dwayne (Mumford and Sons).

5.3.3. Current student activity and success stories are included on the student news section of the ACM Website. For examples see 3.1.6

5.3.4. We are committed to providing the highest standards of teaching and learning and an unparalleled student experience to those with a talent and enthusiasm for the music and wider creative industries, regardless of their economic or social background. To achieve these we provide a range of activities and initiatives to support and guide students at all stages of the student lifecycle from application to post graduation. This is important not just to uncover talent in unexpected places, but also to ensure that students are retained and graduate, before ultimately succeeding in their career aspirations. We believe that these activities and initiatives should be available to all ACM students and we are therefore committed to providing an inclusive widening participation provision, founded on a culture that recognises mutual respect and individuality. We achieve this through activity as outlined in our Access and Participation statement including: extensive outreach activity, a flexible programme portfolio, financial support through accelerated provision and bursaries, and resources available at no extra costs, support provided through induction, learning resources and Student Services, industry link opportunities and a creative inspiring environment. Student outcomes in terms of continuation for all learners, progression into employment and further study for all learners, and LEO data demonstrate the positive impact our approach is having on our students.

6. Final Note: Student Support For Statement

We consulted with Student Representatives in the preparation of the TEF submission and they were provided with opportunity to comment on drafts. As part of the process they provided the following in support of the submission:

As current student representatives from across different disciplines we wanted to highlight specific areas that we feel have had a positive impact on our student experience.

We appreciate the ways in which we are engaged, how staff listen to us and respond to issues raised. We value the opportunities to customise our learning experience through the availability of electives and the individual support and diverse range of facilities provided for different subject areas. The accelerated nature of the programmes is seen as advantageous with well-proportioned content across the two years beneficial to the development of relevant professional skills. Access to world class teaching staff at the 'top of their game' is a particular strength and staff are seen as mentors and approachable and we welcome an environment in which we are treated as colleagues and peers rather than students. Opportunity for industry engagement is extensive and the masterclasses in particular are highly inspirational. Finally, the support network extended to us whether from the academic staff, specific assistance from the Student Services Team or support in general helps us to achieve our personal aims.

ACM Student Representatives January 2018