Leeds College of Music
UKPRN 10034449

TEF Year Four Provider Submission

Provider Context

Leeds College of Music (LCoM) is a conservatoire, located in the cultural quarter of Leeds and designated as a Higher Education Institution in 2018. Our mission is to be artistically ambitious, quality driven and industry focused, actively engaged in the future of music making in an environment that nurtures independence and creative risk.

We treat our students as professionals from day one, and our close-knit community of inspirational musicians prepares and supports them to succeed in the creative industries. Our students are taught by industry professionals in exceptional facilities and have access to a wide range of professional partners and a wealth of expert knowledge both within and outside our curriculum. We encourage students to be inquisitive, to expand their creative vision, and to use our environment and resources to experiment and to create new ideas.

With pathways in Classical, Jazz, Folk, Popular, Songwriting, Production, Electronic Music Production, Film Music and Music Business, we offer the broadest range of genres of any conservatoire in Europe, giving students unrivalled opportunities for collaboration. We are the only conservatoire to offer degrees combing two disciplines from Classical, Jazz, Popular, Folk and Production, reflecting the increasing focus on multidisciplinary practice in the music industry and offering even greater opportunities for personalised learning.

We are the largest UK conservatoire in terms of student numbers, with 1200 undergraduates, which we anticipate will rise to 1400 by 2020 with the introduction of new performing arts provision. 25% of our students have disabilities, and we support them to achieve excellent outcomes. Over 90% of our students come to LCoM from outside the local area, but a high proportion stay in Leeds after graduation, and contribute significantly to the cultural life of the region.

Teaching Quality

Student Engagement (TQ1)

Quality of teaching

Our primary strategic aim is *to offer our students an exceptional learning experience*, characterised by a rigorous and challenging curriculum, inspirational teaching and exceptional opportunities and support.

Undergraduates are recruited by audition and interview to a range of programmes validated by the University of Hull: two Foundation Degrees and one BA (Hons) Music degree with eight main pathways, fifteen combined pathways and five pathways with Foundation Year.

Student satisfaction with the quality of teaching improved substantially between 2017 and 2018, from 75% to 83%, with significant rises in perception of intellectual stimulation, including leaps of 35 percentage points in the Classical pathway and 20 percentage points in Production.

A drop in satisfaction in the 2017 NSS has led to a negative flag in the TEF teaching quality metric. Overall agreement had improved consistently in the previous three years (from 80% to 84%), but fell significantly (to 75%) when the questions in this section changed. The question on staff enthusiasm, historically the highest in the group (90%, ±1%) was replaced with a question on challenge, which scored the lowest in the group (68%). The question on intellectual stimulation also fell, to 69%.

Talking to our students in classes and Pathway Councils and seeking further insight through our internal student survey, we found that our students understand 'intellectual stimulation' to mean being creative and innovative, deeply understanding their specialism and using specialist skills. Much of the curriculum is practice-based and centres around students' creative specialisms, but a theoretical foundation, development of professional skills and learning through repetition are also important elements of musical training. Our challenge was to better contextualise these elements for students and to integrate them into practice-based learning and teaching.

Tutors sought additional feedback from students on whether they felt challenged, and undertook continual review of delivery to provide a tailored level of stretch. Additional formative feedback and peer feedback opportunities were embedded in delivery to provide challenge, and lecture/demos and concert talks were added to masterclass and concert schedules to emphasise a scholarly, contextual approach to practical study.

Perceptions of challenge and intellectual stimulation differ between programmes that have a primary focus on live performance and those that have a primary focus on performance and composition for fixed media. For 2018/19 we have split our undergraduate provision into two Schools along this boundary, and each has an action plan to continue to address their specific issues in terms of stimulation and challenge.

Partnerships with students

There are many examples of quality improvement and enhancement initiatives that have developed from student feedback, and a number are described in more detail in this submission, including changes to the module prerequisite structure, changes to group work requirements, redevelopment of teaching and learning spaces, development of the VLE and extension of our opening hours.

Students are embedded in discussion and decision-making at all levels of institutional and programme governance, and in planning and evaluating our support provision. Programme-year representatives are recruited by the Students' Union in partnership with Programme Leaders, and they are well-trained, vocal and constructive participants in Pathway Councils (for pathway-level academic issues) and Student Staff Forums (for institution-wide issues). The Student Staff Forum is a student-led initiative, co-chaired by the Students' Union President and the Vice Principal.

The Students' Union President is a member of the Board of Directors, as well as our highest level governing committees: Academic Council and Executive Leadership Committee. Members of the Students' Union Executive represent students on all other deliberative committees and are thus embedded in all TEF-related discussion. Students are also represented at the Joint Board of Studies with our validating body, the University of Hull.

The wider student body also engages with survey-based feedback, and our internal commissioning process for surveys ensures that feedback is meaningful, comparable and useful, and that a robust student feedback loop is in place. We have used our internal student surveys to provide insight into the Library, the VLE, students' reasons for transferring courses, student support services, online enrolment and communication with students, and have used the results to plan, implement and evaluate improvements. We have also undertaken detailed student journey mapping of VLE usage, and improved the user experience in terms of layout, clarity and accessibility of both learning and teaching and support resources.

Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out the graduate attributes that will make our students distinctive. The first is that graduates *will have learned and developed in partnership with academic staff: musicians and producers with qualifications and active professional profiles appropriate to the level of the exit award.*

Students are taught by music industry professionals, giving them a direct link to current professional practice. Part-time staff who are active professionals carry out 90% of undergraduate teaching, and more than half of these have a contract of less than 0.2FTE. A small number of full-time staff undertake curriculum management, and are also active practitioners in their fields. The assessors from JAMES (Joint Audio Media Education Support) who accredited our Production provision in 2018 "*applaud[ed] that this course reflects the professional world in the learning environment, and that students are taught by practising professionals"*.

Students also benefit from a wide range of visiting staff who are high-profile industry practitioners. Recent examples include jazz performers Tim Garland and Jason Rebello, film composer Harry Escott, Grammy Award-winning mix engineer Andrew Scheps (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Adele), BRIT Award-winning and Grammy-nominated songwriter John Beck, BBC Radio 2 Folk Musician of the Year Sam Sweeney, composer Gavin Bryars, clarinettist Janet Hilton, Grammy Award-winning mastering engineer Mandy Parnell (Björk, Brian Eno, The XX) and keyboardist Hannah Vassanth (Rihanna, Jessie J).

We recognise and reward excellent teaching through academic promotion, which is embedded in our annual appraisal process, enabling staff to move from Lecturer to Senior and Principal Lecturer grades. During the appraisal, teaching staff undertake guided reflection on their teaching, professional profile, research profile, qualifications and contribution to strategic activities. These are mapped to the academic promotion criteria, which are linked to the UK Professional Standards Framework, and the outcomes inform future professional development and/or a recommendation for promotion.

There is no prescribed balance between the criteria. Staff can gain promotion through formal routes like gaining higher qualifications and/or Fellowship of the HEA, as well as a wide range of other criteria, reflecting the diversity of professional practice among our staff. Evidence of professional profile might include regular tours and public performances, media reviews, commissions, publishing contracts, theatre performances, record releases and festival appearances. Contribution to strategic activities might include demonstrable enhancement of the student experience, development of student employability, promotion of diversity and/or access and participation, internal/external collaboration, or other activities

consistent with our mission. Where staff are recommended for academic promotion on the basis of teaching excellence, they are required to evidence positive feedback from students and peer observation, evidence of teaching development linked to research and professional practice, and evidence of effective assessment and feedback.

Staff who have shown particularly high levels of distinction in teaching and/or professional practice can apply for a professorial title, either full or associate. Associate Professorships are year-long developmental roles aimed at early career staff, in which the conservatoire supports them to develop the profile of their area of specialism. Recent areas of specialism for Associate Professorships have included European collaboration, vocal health and rehabilitation, and contemporary music.

83% of staff say they are proud to work at LCoM, well above the university benchmark of 68% in the Quality of Working Life survey. Staff recognise others' contribution to the conservatoire through our annual staff awards, which include awards for Teaching Excellence and Enhancement of the Student Experience. Students recognise teaching excellence through annual student-led teaching awards, awarded at Graduation. Awards include Most Innovative and Most Inspiring, where teaching has had a transformative effect on the student experience, as well as Best Feedback and Best Support Staff.

Winners of staff and student awards are invited to share their practice at staff development events. We hold two-day Staff Conference events in September (for teaching staff) and January (for all staff), which also offer a range of other opportunities for training, development, practice sharing and wellbeing activities. Our annual staff development fund supports higher level qualifications, teaching qualifications, HEA accreditation, and attendance and presentation at national and international conferences, in line with our strategic objective to invest in our staff.

Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

The second attribute of our graduates is that they will have *acquired expert knowledge and skills as performers, composers, producers or entrepreneurs, complemented by an array of employability skills including critical thinking, listening, communication and presentation skills, and the ability to work independently and collaboratively with others.*

Students enjoy a very high level of flexibility and can create their own bespoke programme while developing high-level core skills specific to their pathway. Following student feedback, we removed all but one prerequisite module between Levels 5 and 6, further increasing the flexibility of the design.

The focus of the student experience is Specialist Study, whether instrumental/vocal performance, composition, production or music business. Specialist Study is taught one-to-one and in small groups, creating a supportive but intensive environment that provides exceptional individual challenge and stretch. There is no set repertoire, enabling students to devise their learning and assessment programmes in partnership with tutors. Specialist Study makes up a substantial proportion of the programme: 60-80 credits per year, and culminates in two major final projects including public performances, recordings and live events.

The rigour of Specialist Study requires students to demonstrate high levels of professionalism and discipline, particularly in contributing to group activities. Following student feedback about variable levels of engagement with ensemble and group project work, contribution targets were added to group assessments, to ensure that all students had equal involvement in the outcomes. These reflect the commitment expected in professional ensembles and are commended by external examiners.

Students contextualise their Specialist Study through Contextual Studies modules, engaging in repertoire analysis, examination of the sociocultural influences on music and choosing from a wide range of optional modules in which they work cross-pathway, including Collaborative Composition, Intercultural Music, Entrepreneurship and Musical Direction.

Students are immersed in the mechanisms of the creative industries through Professional Studies modules, which focus on legal, commercial, project management and digital literacy skills before broadening out into practical optional modules where they work on live, industry-relevant projects including Business Start-up, Artistic Management, Live Music Management and Community Music.

Creative Project gives all students the opportunity to work collaboratively with students and tutors from other pathways on two week-long, intensive projects, chosen from an extensive list of options. Recent projects have included Crash Course in Big Band Arranging, Practical Crowdfunding, Baroque Song, Perceptions of Race in Music Performance, Debating Music and the History of Horror Film Music.

Teaching and learning is responsive, current and relevant to the music industry, leading to comments from our external examiners on the clear sense that all aspects of the curriculum are under continual review and reflection. Student feedback shows that students connect these broadening skills with increasing employability, and enjoy the opportunity to work on a Creative Projects at Level 4, creating cross-pathway relationships that endure and develop throughout the programme.

The third graduate attribute is that graduates will *have been given the opportunity to perform at a high level, for example through large ensembles.*

Students can access a huge range of extracurricular workshops, masterclasses, ensembles, projects and performance opportunities, and say that these play a major part in *"enhancing their professional confidence"* (QAA student submission, 2016). In 2017/18 we staged 170 concerts, gigs and other performances, and 58 workshops and masterclasses, where students practice, extend and showcase their skills in environments that mirror professional settings, and get feedback from leading industry practitioners.

Our flagship ensembles are open to students from all pathways, by audition. Members of our Contemporary Pop Choir were the inaugural winners of BBC1's *Pitch Battle*, and the full Choir, along with the New Music Collective, have appeared alongside celebrated singer-songwriter Marc Almond. Our Big Band, Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Contemporary Jazz Orchestra and Wind Ensemble regularly take to the stage with high-profile conductors and musical directors. Our annual Gala Concert and End of Year Show showcase the breadth and quality of our offer, with a wide range of performances from Junior LCoM (for 9-18 year olds) to our postgraduate provision.

Ongoing relationships with Liverpool Sound City, the Manchester Jazz Festival, BBC Music Day and Festival Republic provide performance and events management opportunities for students, and our students regularly perform at major festivals including Live at Leeds, Leeds Festival, Tramlines, Eurosonic and SXSW.

We have strong international partnerships; LCoM is a member of the Berklee International Network and the Association of European Conservatoires, we have external examiners from the Netherlands and Denmark who provide a European perspective on our curriculum, and we gained the Erasmus+ HE Charter in 2017 which has enabled staff exchanges, and from 2018/19, both incoming and outgoing student credit transfer. Since 2016 we have worked with Popakademie Mannheim, Codarts in Rotterdam and the Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen on a European Songwriting project, in which students and staff from each institution have collaborated on the development of a series of original songs.

Assessment and Feedback (TQ4)

We have made very significant improvements in assessment and feedback over a number of years, and we are pleased to see this borne out in the TEF metrics: student satisfaction has risen year on year, leading to a negative flag in year 1, no flag in year 2, and a positive flag in year 3. This is the result of a strategic approach to improvement.

Improvements in resourcing and management of assessment, as well as improvements in tracking, have meant that over 99% of marks and feedback are now returned within the 20 working day window, compared with approximately 80% in 2014.

The perception of fairness in assessment and feedback is a challenge for the performing arts sector due to the inherent subjectivity of judgements, and the key to addressing this for LCoM has been developing a shared understanding of grading criteria. Initiatives have included staff development sessions that use live ensemble performances for marking and feedback training, mock performance assessments that enable students to receive immediate formative feedback and discuss this with the assessment panel, and a new extended feedback template that links feedback comments more explicitly to each grading criterion.

Communication with students about assessment and feedback has also been an important part of our strategy. One-to-one and small group tuition mean that students receive continual formative feedback, stretch and challenge, and mixed-year small groups provide opportunities for peer feedback, but often we have found that students do not identify these as ‘feedback’ or recognise that they are a key part of the conservatoire’s approach to enabling their artistic and academic development. We have also improved the communication of our assessment procedures: better awareness of second marking and moderation, the inclusion of expert external assessors on all final year recital panels, external examining and audio/video recording of assessment all contribute to students’ confidence in the robustness and fairness of assessment and feedback.

We have a strategic approach to development of our VLE to support assessment and feedback. Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) staff are embedded in academic departments, to advise on the appropriacy of technology for teaching and learning and enable continual improvement.

LCoM was shortlisted for the THELMA award for Outstanding Digital Innovation in Management and Administration for our bespoke, in-house VLE development to support our flexible curriculum. The VLE supports online assignment submission (for over 95% of assessments), online marking and feedback for all assessments, auto release of marks and feedback to agreed schedules to manage and meet student expectations, and an assignment dashboard that shows students upcoming deadlines and assignment statuses.

The VLE supports innovative teaching and learning methods including quizzes and vlogs, and assessment methods including ePortfolios, which have been commended by external examiners for their relevance to the industry. Through portfolio assessments, students can generate a multimedia portfolio to contextualise and record their experiences, enabling richer description and reflection and creating an online resource that can form the basis of a professional portfolio.

Innovative feedback methods include audio feedback for the communication of tone, inflection, emphasis and musical examples, video feedback and screencasts. These are popular with students and often cited in nominations for student-led teaching awards. PollEverywhere, live polling software, is used in performance and composition to generate peer feedback: students are guided by the tutor to give free-text feedback during in-class performances, which is discussed at the end of the performance. Each innovation has been piloted by teaching staff in partnership with TEL staff and expanded to other programmes and pathways through staff development events.

Learning Environment

Resources (LE1)

Physical resources

Providing first class facilities is key to attracting and retaining the most talented students and staff; our students tell us consistently that our facilities had the highest influence over their choice of institution compared with any other factor. Our Strategic Plan sets out our ambition to provide exceptional teaching and working environments that are among the best in the sector, and we are well on our way to achieving this.

Our facilities reflect the best of the music industry. We were the first English conservatoire to be designated an All Steinway School: 90% of our pianos come from the Steinway family and as well as being used for daily practice and masterclasses they provide rehearsal facilities for competitors in the Leeds International Piano Competition. We are an Apple Authorised Training Centre for Education, and have six Apple Mac Labs equipped with over 100 high-specification iMacs, MIDI keyboards and audio interfaces. As one of only three Roland AIRA Academies in Europe, our students have exclusive access to cutting-edge production and performance technologies.

We extended our opening hours in response to student feedback; our facilities are open until 3am during term time, including over 75 bookable rooms and studios for practice, rehearsal, recording, production, writing and performance. We maintain an extensive stock of musical instruments and technical equipment that students can borrow, and teams of equipment, AV and studio technicians provide support for study and independent practice.

The Venue, our 350-seat auditorium, hosts masterclasses, concerts and assessed performances as well as being used regularly by external promoters for conferencing, filming, recordings and concerts. Our 120-seat Recital Room hosts gigs, recitals, workshops, talks, lunchtime concerts and film showcases, as well as regular Live Lounge events, where live sessions are streamed from our studios. External examiners and assessors comment that our students benefit from assessment facilities that reflect professional standards.

In 2016/17 we invested £3.2m in three transformational estates projects that were shortlisted for the THELMA award for Outstanding Estates Strategy. We created a new Music Library, a major rooftop extension to The Venue and converted the former library space into new teaching and learning facilities, in response to our planned growth in student numbers. Seeking to create an inspiring campus to support our creative community, the designs for the Library and the former library space were co-created with student focus groups. We also developed a sophisticated space model to reflect the consistently high levels of space utilisation, and plotted this against student number projections to determine our future specialist resource needs.

The new Music Library is purpose-designed to provide an exceptional learning environment for the conservatoire and for the city and to address key issues identified by students, including insufficient private and group study space, lack of computer facilities and noise. Study spaces have increased by 68% and provide a variety of open-plan and enclosed spaces to support an increased focus on collaborative work within the curriculum. The number of Library PCs has increased by 54% and spaces are adaptable for a range of study styles, in particular for the increasing number of students wishing to use multiple devices. The Library collection includes a significant jazz archive and more than 10,000 CDs, 8,000 LPs and 18,000 items of printed music, and more of the Library stock is now open access than ever before. As well as study, the Library hosts VLE drop-in help sessions, a book club for supporting international students' language skills and a variety of Students' Union society meetings. Student satisfaction with the Library in the NSS rose more than 10 percentage points in 2018, to 91%, and the design won the Yorkshire Property Industry Design Excellence Award.

The redesign of the former Library space enabled the creation of additional teaching space, practice areas, specialist drum rooms, a classical rehearsal room, Music Business and Postgraduate hubs and informal break-out areas for students to gather. The land between our main building and the Library was also developed to create a grassed square with new seating, lighting, planting and a broadcast point for our neighbours BBC Yorkshire. The development has been recognised as a major improvement to the public realm in the cultural quarter.

Our Estates Strategy continues to 2021 and will see us occupy the top floor of a major £60m creative arts facility that is currently under construction by the Leeds City College Group. This will accommodate further student growth in our new performing arts provision and present a state of the art campus designed to meet the demands of a changing and growing curriculum.

<u>Digital Resources</u>

The fourth graduate attribute is that graduates will *display confidence and independence, and be an inquisitive learner who will have used the LCoM environment to experiment with*

new ideas and practices and will be digitally literate in academic, social and professional contexts.

Our TEL Strategy supports students' independent study skills and digital literacy through evidence-based developments, student partnerships and staff development. VLE development is driven by student and staff feedback, through the internal student survey, detailed student journeys, and staff development sessions. This will be further expanded upon in 2018 through adoption of the Jisc digital literacy research methodology.

Students have 24/7 access to learning resources via the VLE. Lecture notes are provided in advance of teaching sessions, and lecture capture recordings are provided after each session for students to re-watch at their own pace. Students can also access a wide range of audio and video tutorials, audio-visual libraries, e-books, e-journals and music streaming services. Our pioneering Augmented Reality app, created in collaboration with Jisc and student focus groups, creates an interactive, immersive experience for teaching complex technical concepts. The app enables students to use a smartphone or tablet to access interactive tutorials for independent learning outside of scheduled teaching sessions.

Digital support for students is provided through our student Digimentor scheme, an innovative peer support mechanism that also provides paid work experience for students. Digimentors host pop-up support events, provide social media support signposting students to help and resources, work on student-led social media initiatives (for example Instagram takeovers) and produce short video guides to engage students with dry but important topics like assignment hand-in guidelines. The Digimentor project has been hugely successful in improving support for students and awareness of digital literacy, and was disseminated at the Jisc Change Agent Network Conference in 2018.

The TEL team also provides bespoke staff development, identifying needs through student and staff feedback, regular reviews of learning resources and innovation in the sector. Regular drop-in support sessions, Lunchtime Bytes, enable staff to ask questions and share practice.

Professional Practice (LE2)

Our location in Leeds's Cultural Quarter puts us *"in the centre of a creative hub, surrounded by not only the BBC with whom there are creative links but also theatres, ballet, music venues"* (JAMES accreditation report, 2018). This immerses our students in a creative environment and gives them access to professional practice at the forefront of each discipline.

The QAA also noted LCoM's good practice, "*in particular its use of connections with the music industry and expert professional practice to enhance the student learning experience*" (QAA HER report, 2016).

Sounds Like THIS is LCoM's annual festival, an eclectic, diverse and boundary-pushing festival that reflects music across the industry. Taking place in six different venues across Leeds, the most recent festival included two commissions, three world premieres, eight UK premieres and a programme of work which had not been experienced in Leeds before.

LCoM students and alumni were an intrinsic part of the programme. Alumni band Northern Contemporary Collective performed at Nonclassical Club Night at Belgrave Music Hall, whilst current students performed in The Paradise Club opera, as well as at Songs Like THESE at Studio 24. A partnership with creative music charity Brighter Sound also saw the festival host the first ever Leeds-leg of the Both Sides Now initiative. An artist residency was led by Shiva Feshareki, who collaborated with 15 female artists from across the region (including LCoM students and alumni) over the course of five days, and culminated in a unique performance on the opening night of Sounds Like THIS in The Venue. Sounds Like THIS is fast becoming an important part of the Leeds music scene and was named 'Best Small Festival' in the national Drum Experience Awards 2018.

The Venue has a live link to our neighbours at the BBC, and has hosted numerous productions for BBC Yorkshire and BBC Radio 3. Our relationship with the BBC provides regular opportunities for students and alumni, from house band gigs and radio features to work placements and community music initiatives such as BBC Ten Pieces. A recent collaboration with Leeds Playhouse and BBC Radio Leeds provided four LCoM alumni with the opportunity to score four new radio plays commemorating the Empire Windrush, which were presented live in The Venue and recorded for broadcast.

We host the Leeds Lieder Festival each April, which has grown significantly in recent years and attracts some of the greatest art song performers of our time, including Roderick Williams, Dame Felicity Lott, Thomas Allen and Benjamin Allen. Leeds International Concert Season presents two seasons each year of evening concerts by leading classical musicians and has included seasons curated by Tina Thing Helseth, Paul Lewis and Tamsin Little.

Leeds International Piano Competition rehearsals take place across the conservatoire, attracting some of the finest emerging pianists from across the world, and professional artists from the judging panel rehearse in The Venue during the competition period. We will be the main venue for Leeds International Piano Festival concerts in 2019.

We are a key host venue and partner in Leeds Jazz Festival, which is becoming a centrepiece of the thriving jazz scene in the city, and as a venue for the Live at Leeds festival we have hosted George Ezra and Frank Turner and now host the wristband exchange for the whole festival which brings thousands of music enthusiasts into the conservatoire.

Personalised Learning (LE3)

Embedding collaboration within our culture is a core strategic aim, recognising that our students have a great deal to learn from one another. The unique breadth of our offer enables collaboration across pathways and levels, building professional group working skills that are particularly relevant to the music industry. This links to our fifth graduate attribute, that graduates will have *valued collaboration with other professional musicians and individuals from the creative industries as a method to enhance creativity, originality and employability.*

Students value our *"friendly, relaxed atmosphere"* and say that the environment for collaboration is *"not intimidating",* which can be an issue where the standard of music making is very high (QAA student submission, 2016). Regular Friday night showcases bring together student and alumni bands, staff performers, DJs and special guests. *Crosswire*

presents some of our best pop and production artists and jazz night *The B-Side* features vinyl from our extensive jazz archive alongside open mic slots and performances.

Student feedback demonstrates consistently that integration with students who are training in a wide range of disciplines is a unique opportunity that mirrors, or even exceeds, the 'real world' in terms of access to networking and collaboration. Many students, staff and alumni establish their own bands, projects and ensembles through LCoM and we provide opportunities to do this through networking events and our online social space LCoM Life.

The diversity of opportunities and the the flexibility of the curriculum mean that students can create a truly individualised experience that supports and stretches their own artistic, academic and personal development goals. Student comments in the NSS demonstrate that they value the attention paid to them as individuals by teaching and support staff, and our JAMES accreditation panel noted *"the very apparent student focus on the courses and that lecturers are accessible, supportive and socially involved with the student body"*. This is demonstrated in the continuation metric, which is positively flagged.

Our approach to academic support is evidence-driven, and programme-level support is tailored to student needs; in particular our Foundation Degree provision attracts students who are more likely to be male, to be local to Leeds, to be from a low-participation area, to enter with a lower tariff and to leave during their first year. Enhanced academic support has been developed by the programme team to support engagement and continuation; as a result, continuation for Other Undergraduate provision has increased from 77% in year 1 to 84% in year 3. Individualised support and intervention is described in more detail in the Positive Outcomes for All section.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

Employment and Further Study (SO1)

Students benefit from a number of employment opportunities at the conservatoire while they are studying: in roles such as Digimentors, Student Ambassadors, who engage with prospective students alongside our student recruitment and outreach teams, venue technicians, alongside our professional events and technical teams, and paid internships in our Short Courses, Junior LCoM and Events and Enterprise departments.

The TEF metrics show that our students are highly successful in progressing to employment and further study, particularly from our Foundation Degree provision (where the majority progress to Level 6 study at LCoM).

Our Alumni Association provides continued support for our alumni, and we know that 78% are working in the creative industries, 68% are combining two or more occupations in a portfolio career and 88% agree that they are using the skills that they gained at LCoM in their career. Recent alumni successes include award winners at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, the Music Producers Guild Awards, the Unsigned Music Awards and British Country Music Awards. Our alumni regularly tour with high-profile artists such as Sam Smith and Kylie Minogue, and have appeared on BBC Later… with Jools Holland and at major festivals including Glastonbury, Leeds Festival, The Great Escape and Radio 1's Biggest Weekend.

A limitation of the LEO data, which shows a negative flag for graduates earning above the median salary, is that it cannot fully contextualise the career trajectory of a graduate in a creative portfolio career. Though many of our graduates (and students) are actively recording, touring and publishing, and attracting high hourly pay rates, the number of hours that they work is likely to build slowly, particularly in their early career.

Our JAMES accreditation further highlighted our "*excellent links with local industry"* and *"the impression that many ex-students stay in the locale rather than automatically moving to London"*. The retention of LCoM graduates within the region is shown very clearly in the TEF contextual maps, demonstrating that our graduates are making a significant contribution to the local creative economy.

Employability and Transferable Skills (S02)

The final graduate attribute is that graduates will *be prepared for the international music industry and have an appreciation and understanding of wider cultures and communities. Have demonstrated the knowledge and skills to progress to further study, and/or to become professional composers, musicians, performers, producers or entrepreneurs who could contribute to the global marketplace.*

Employability is a key feature of our curriculum design: the Professional Studies strand is part of all programmes, and all assessments, particularly public performance, live project and portfolio work, are based on industry-style briefs that are commended by external examiners for their real-world relevance. Student feedback shows that students recognise that the combination of performance, composition or production and Professional Studies makes them a well-rounded and employable musician. Foundation Degree students undertake a work placement, and employers comment positively on the appropriateness and legitimacy of our training.

Our students work closely with students from other art forms. Music Production students have teamed up to work with students from the Northern Film School, performance students regularly collaborate with dancers from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and our songwriters and composers work with students from Leeds College of Art.

Outside the curriculum, students can access a huge range of Enterprise activities, experiences and funding. The Experience Fund has enabled students to take part in international instrument camps, festivals, masterclasses and conferences and a linked Match Funding Scheme has provided a cash boost to students who have demonstrated an entrepreneurial approach to projects, raising funding themselves towards events, recordings and record releases. In 2017/18 the Artist Development Scheme provided 31 students with year-long support for their artistic/business development and a further 30 students with subsidised photos and videos across 10 different projects, kickstarting their creative careers.

Our Musicians' Booking Agency matches students and alumni with professional performance bookings, and has expanded from corporate events, private parties and weddings to include regular provision of support acts for Leeds venues. Since September 2015 the Musicians' Booking Agency has raised more than £80k in direct earnings for LCoM students and alumni.

The Musicians' Survival Guide, now in its third edition, has been distributed to 1,000 students and alumni each year since 2015. The Guide is a professionally designed and printed book full of advice and views from a wide range of professionals in subjects from finance, law, technical language and equipment, to etiquette and professional expectations. These have been very well received by students and alumni, particularly graduating students who are the first to receive a copy of the book as they arrive at their graduation ceremony.

Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)

Induction and transition

Recruiting our students through audition, interview and portfolio ensures that students can be selected on the basis of their potential, not just their prior attainment. We recently introduced a Foundation Year option to our Classical, Jazz, Popular, Songwriting and Film Music pathways, for students without the academic or musical entry requirements to build their confidence as a conservatoire musician, through specialist one-to-one tuition and skills in ensemble work, music theory and musicianship. Continuation rates from the Foundation Year to Level 4 are high. In addition, we have devolved authority from our validating body to admit students who do not meet our standard entry requirements but have been assessed as being able to succeed on the programme. This enables around 25 such students each year to access conservatoire study, who are as successful as students admitted via the standard route.

We work in partnership with the Students' Union to provide a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and social induction and transition activities, which are evaluated through an annual survey. Induction includes tailored activities for specific groups of students: international students are invited to bespoke welcome activities, and students declaring disabilities and support needs are offered a pre-induction visit at a quieter time so that they have an identified support network before they arrive at registration. Student Services staff are present during students' move in to student accommodation, and use this time to identify students who might not be settling in well and would benefit from access to additional support.

Support for students

Our student support services offer information, advice and support on fees and funding, accommodation, disabilities, health and wellbeing, including dedicated support for international students' wellbeing. Services are responsive to demand, for example we restructured counselling provision to focus on mental health and wellbeing support, in response to an increase in demand for these services, and services are tailored to the specific needs of musicians and performers. Students can access Alexander Technique classes as well as support and resources on vocal health, performance anxiety and mindfulness.

A high proportion of our students declare a disability, on average 25% over the last three years, ten percentage points above the HESA average for Music, and they are supported to achieve excellent outcomes. Significant and sustained investment in disabilities support closed a 12% achievement gap between 2014 and 2017.

We engage with students with disabilities from the point of application, to identify and meet their support needs. Mentors assigned to students who are supported by the Disabled Students' Allowance are drawn from current students and alumni wherever possible to ensure that the mentor understands the environment and study context or the student they support. The split metrics demonstrate that students with disabilities are particularly satisfied with academic support, and student feedback regularly praises our student support provision and its impact on students' ability to continue studying and to succeed.

Student progress monitoring takes place at an individual level, ensuring that all students are supported to achieve their potential. Online assessment and feedback enables students to track their grade profile and take ownership of their progress, and individual student attendance and support needs monitored by academic and support staff working in partnership to identify the most appropriate intervention for students who are not progressing as expected.

The Fitness to Study procedure provides personal support plans for students identified as being at risk of non-continuation or non-completion. As a minimum this is applied to students who have suspended and returned to study, but as the scheme has developed it has raised students' self-awareness of their own ability to stay on the course and they have begun to self-refer for Fitness to Study to access support.

The gender balance varies substantially by pathway, for example only 10% of Production students are female whereas 66% of Classical students are female. Songwriting, Folk, Popular and Music Business have a more even gender split. This is a historical and wider sector issue in relation to the gendering of instruments and musical genres; we are seeking to tackle this on a long-term basis through our Junior LCoM provision, Women in Music initiatives and the introduction of Musical Theatre to our portfolio. The proportion of our students who are female has increased from 23% to 29% over the last three years.

All new students are assigned a personal tutor, and in 2015 we introduced the female personal tutor scheme, where female students are allocated a female tutor in acknowledgement of the gender imbalance. The personal tutor for female Production students, who are in the smallest minority, created peer support and networking sessions for the students and won a staff award for this initiative in 2018. Student feedback on the scheme is very positive, and there are no significant gaps in retention, achievement or satisfaction between female and male students.

Student outcomes are monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which also maintains an overview of teaching and learning materials, identifies and disseminates good practice in embedding EDI in the curriculum, and contributes to staff development. The Students' Union has five representatives on the Committee: including the Equality and Diversity Officer and four Liberation Officers. From 2018, a wider EDI Network will involve more staff and students in promoting and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.