



## **BIMM Brighton and Bristol**

Review for Educational Oversight  
by the Quality Assurance Agency  
for Higher Education

April 2012

## Key findings about BIMM Brighton and Bristol

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Bath Spa University, Middlesex University, the University of Sussex and Edexcel.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of these awarding bodies.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with its awarding bodies (paragraph 1.4)
- the development of audio feedback on assessment (paragraph 1.11)
- the industry focus in programme design and assessment practice reflects career opportunities in the music industry (paragraph 2.9)
- the College's support for staff to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education has encouraged the development of action-based research (paragraph 2.12).

## Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- ensure that the Higher Education Forum maintains effective oversight of all higher education provision (paragraph 1.3)
- develop an overarching annual monitoring process and a report and action plan (paragraph 1.5)
- develop a formalised strategy to ensure consistency of approach to teaching and learning in higher education across both centres (paragraph 2.4).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- provide more developmental feedback on students' assessed work (paragraph 1.11)
- improve the quality of developmental feedback in teaching observation reports (paragraph 2.5)
- further develop formal processes for the monitoring and evaluation of staff development and scholarly activity (paragraph 2.14)
- review and, where appropriate, amend all existing College policies to provide clear and accurate information and guidance for managing higher education provision (paragraph 3.4)

- introduce a clear policy and procedures for the development and monitoring of the use of social media by students and staff (paragraph 3.5).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at BIMM Brighton and Bristol (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Bath Spa University, Middlesex University, the University of Sussex and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms Deborah Trayhurn, Mr Colin Smith, Ms Frances Wiles (reviewers) and Mr Simon Ives (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included the College's self-evaluation and other documentation, documentation supplied by the awarding bodies, meetings with staff and students at the Brighton and Bristol campuses and a meeting with employers.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- Academic Infrastructure
- the requirements of the awarding bodies.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

BIMM (the College) was established in Brighton in 2002 as the Brighton Institute of Modern Music. The College is a leading provider of vocational further and higher education in modern music, specialising in drums, bass, guitar, song writing, live sound and tour management and music business. The College's mission is to produce musicians and music industry professionals, who graduate from BIMM with specialist skills and who will gain employment in the music industry.

Since its establishment, BIMM has increasingly focused on higher education provision and has expanded significantly. The company now comprises four centres: BIMM Brighton, BIMM Bristol, BIMM Dublin and TMS Tech Music Schools. BIMM Brighton and Bristol works with four awarding bodies and delivers higher education programmes at levels 4-7. Current full-time student enrolments on higher education programmes are 804 students in Brighton and 323 in Bristol, a total of 1,127 students.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies:

### **Bath Spa University**

- Certificate of Higher Education in Professional Musicianship (107)
- Fd Mus Professional Musicianship (78)
- BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship (75)

### **Edexcel**

- Professional Diploma in Music (Live Sound) (17)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4).

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

### **Middlesex University**

- Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education (12)

### **University of Sussex**

- Certificate of Higher Education in Professional Musicianship (132)
- FdA Professional Musicianship (132)
- BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship (426)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students, programme delivery, assessment and internal moderation, the quality of teaching and learning, the provision of appropriate staffing and physical resources, application of the awarding bodies' standards, regular internal monitoring of quality, and compliance with the awarding bodies' requirements for annual evaluation and review.

## **Recent developments**

In 2011, the founding directors left the organisation and the company was taken over by Sovereign Capital. This resulted in recent significant organisational and management changes. Following the changes in management, the provider has proposed an expansion of provision to additional delivery centres within the UK and Ireland.

In 2012-13 academic year the College is moving from a mix of validated and franchised students to wholly validated provision with Bath Spa University and the University of Sussex, taking increased responsibility for resources and student support. Recent curriculum changes include the validation in 2011 of the Certificate of Higher Education in Professional Musicianship, as both a stand-alone award, and as the first year of the BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. The College briefed student representatives on the review process at the Higher Education Forum. In line with the creative ethos of the College students considered that a video presentation would be appropriate. Students from both centres in Brighton and Bristol contributed to the process. The production of the subsequent video in January 2012 was funded and facilitated by the College, and focused around the three core themes of the review. Students were offered support and guidance throughout the process, but were given complete editorial control over the final submission. Students confirmed, at a meeting with the team, that they had contributed to the student submission and concurred with the comments it expressed. Students met reviewers during the review visits to the Brighton and Bristol centres, and at the preparatory meeting, and the team found their views helpful in informing their discussions.

## Detailed findings about BIMM Brighton and Bristol

### 1 Academic standards

#### How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The College effectively fulfils its responsibilities for managing academic standards, although there are areas for developing further oversight of provision. There is a clear management structure with a Senior Management Team taking decisions on strategic management and policy matters. Responsibilities are clearly defined in the partnership agreements, and the College works proactively with its awarding bodies to ensure these are robustly managed at programme level. Responsibility for academic standards at both Brighton and Bristol is delegated to the Head of Higher Education, reporting to the Senior Management Team. The Head of Higher Education, working with course teams, oversees all four awarding body partnerships, ensuring that the College works consistently within the universities' policies and procedures. The awarding bodies' validation reports, and minutes of partnership meetings, demonstrate that this arrangement is effective in securing standards.

1.2 The College responsibilities include: organising examination boards, proposing curriculum changes, submitting documents for validation and revalidation, and liaison with link tutors. The College's responsibilities, clearly documented in institutional documents, are broadly similar for each awarding body, with some variations in timescales and reporting arrangements. For the Edexcel programme the College follows the requirements of the Edexcel Information Manual.

1.3 A number of committees oversee the management of standards. However, their roles need to be further developed and clarified to provide effective strategic oversight of all provision. The Curriculum Steering Group oversees the development of new programmes and changes to the curriculum and allows for strategic planning of provision across all the centres. The Higher Education Forum, whose membership includes staff and students, meets termly at both Brighton and Bristol. It is the senior committee with responsibility for annual monitoring, programme review and proposals for curriculum changes. The current terms of reference do not provide oversight of the partnerships with the College's four awarding bodies. Work with Middlesex University is currently overseen by the course leader and Principal, and the Edexcel provision has no formal committee representation. While the Higher Education Forum has extensive discussions about operational matters, there is little evidence of it working consistently to address strategic matters and having oversight of academic standards across all provision and all awarding bodies. The team considers that it is advisable for the College to amend the terms of reference of the Higher Education Forum to ensure oversight of all higher education provision, provide clear strategic direction for addressing cross-college issues, identify good practice, and set clear targeted actions.

1.4 The College has a coherent management structure which facilitates an effective exchange of information between programme teams and senior managers. This ensures that all staff are engaged in monitoring and enhancing academic standards. College staff have effective formal and informal collaborative relationships with link tutors, who are appointed by each university to achieve strategic and developmental objectives. Link tutors are responsible for chairing examination boards and attendance at other meetings, including the Higher Education Forum. This constructive and ongoing dialogue with link tutors has enabled the College to develop the curriculum and have oversight of partnership responsibilities, and assure academic standards. The team has identified good practice in the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with its awarding bodies,

and consequent engagement with the wider academic community, which enhances academic standards and students' learning opportunities.

1.5 Fortnightly programme team meetings and termly Board of Studies meetings ensure that student retention and progression are regularly reviewed. Student representatives attend Boards of Studies, and these provide an effective oversight of academic standards at programme level. Annual review is undertaken thoroughly and effectively at programme level with clear action planning. Programme reports are individually reviewed at the Higher Education Forum. However, the College does not have a process where outcomes from programme annual monitoring reports are collated and developed into a college-wide action plan. In its self-evaluation, the College acknowledges that the Edexcel Professional Diploma in Music (Live Sound) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education lie outside the normal quality process. The team considers it would be advisable for the College to develop an overarching annual monitoring process with a report and action plan, which would provide oversight of provision delivered at both centres and across all awarding bodies.

1.6 Recent validations and periodic reviews of programmes indicate that the College continues to provide high-quality provision. The latest University of Sussex institutional due diligence process confirms that the recent change of ownership of the College, while causing significant institutional turbulence, has been professionally managed, and that the new management are committed to high-quality provision.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?**

1.7 The College engages with all elements of the Academic Infrastructure, including the use of subject benchmark statements and *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). College staff spoke confidently of their understanding of the various elements of the Academic Infrastructure, which has been supported by staff development. Learning outcomes, level expectations and assessment practice are set in line with the requirements of the FHEQ. Detailed programme specifications are provided for all programmes, and are approved at validation. The expectations of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* are understood by staff and embedded in programme design.

1.8 The College is developing a comprehensive set of mapping documents to show how it is aligning its policies with the precepts set out in the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). The College's self-evaluation identifies careers education, information, and advice and guidance policies as areas for further development. Industry standards are used as reference points where relevant. Ongoing formal and informal engagement with music industry employers also informs curriculum design.

### **How does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?**

1.9 The College engages well with its external examiners, and annual monitoring reports confirm that the College meets the requirements of its awarding bodies. External examiners' reports confirm that academic standards, and student achievement, are comparable to those at other institutions. The arising issues, and areas of good practice identified in external examiners' reports, are considered by course teams, responded to in a programme action plans, and are reviewed at the relevant Board of Studies and Higher Education Forum. Annual monitoring reports are shared with staff and students, and submitted to the awarding university. Progress on actions is developed in ongoing

dialogue with external examiners throughout the year. Evidence shows that recommendations are appropriately addressed.

1.10 Assessment strategies are well planned and appropriate to the level of study, and reviewed through annual monitoring. Students are provided with full assessment schedules at the start of the academic year. Assessment briefs identify learning outcomes to be addressed, and demonstrate an appropriate and wide range of assessment methods. Students are provided with marking criteria, and external examiners confirm that moderation and second-marking of assessed work is generally consistent and fair.

1.11 Students stated that they are able to get formative feedback on coursework and draft essays. On summative assessments feedback is generally prompt. However, some students consider that this should be more developmental, and should identify clearly how they can improve. External examiners' comments, and student work samples seen by the team, confirm this as an area for improvement. The College's self-evaluation identifies the need for further training to improve the quality of marking and moderation, and staff development is being provided. The team considers it would be desirable for the College to provide more developmental feedback on students' assessed work. The review team saw innovative examples of the use of audio feedback on students work, which related clearly to the learning outcomes being assessed, and provided extensive developmental commentaries. The team considers the development of audio feedback on assessment to be good practice, providing a detailed and personalised approach which is readily accessible to students.

1.12 The College evaluates and develops its processes for managing academic standards in relation to moderation and examining. This is achieved through ongoing collaboration with link tutors and external examiners, and through feedback from student representation at Boards of Studies and the Higher Education Forum.

1.13 There is evidence of good practice being shared, for example through mentoring arrangements of staff at different centres. At present, much good practice is disseminated on an informal basis, although the newly formed Teaching and Learning Group is intended to provide a more strategic approach to identification and dissemination. Proactive and collaborative engagement with the awarding bodies has led to opportunities for staff to engage with the wider academic community and share good practice relating, for example, to its teaching and research activities.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

### How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 The College processes for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6. The Head of Higher Education oversees and monitors programme delivery at both centres. This role is supported by a College Manager at Bristol, and a Tutor Leader at Brighton. The Senior Management Team proactively manages the varying requirements of the different awarding bodies.



## **How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?**

2.2 The Academic Infrastructure is used and applied in the processes for managing and enhancing learning opportunities. Engagement with various elements of the Academic Infrastructure, including key sections of the *Code of practice*, is outlined in paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8.

## **How does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

2.3 The College has no overarching teaching and learning policy or strategy. Students are provided with information on the wide range of teaching and learning methods used through course handbooks and module guides. The Head of Teaching and Learning provides support and training for staff, and the recent introduction of a Teaching and Learning Development Group is intended as a vehicle for future enhancement. Many of the existing policies are focused on procedures, often for further education, and need to be clearly aligned with the needs of higher education.

2.4 A tutor guide is provided for staff to support their teaching practice, but this provides little guidance on teaching and learning approaches. Staff use a wide range of delivery methods and peer learning activities to provide a balance between creative practice and development of academic skills. There is limited opportunity for students to develop academic skills through group discussions, although staff indicated that they undertook small group work and hold group tutorials wherever possible. The team considers that it is desirable for the College to review existing policies and procedures, and informal approaches to teaching and learning, and develop a formalised teaching and learning strategy for higher education to ensure consistency of approach across delivery sites.

2.5 Much team teaching and informal peer observation takes place, within an open-access teaching culture. The College operates a graded management observation process for teaching and learning, as part of staff appraisal. All members of staff are formally observed, at least annually, and new staff are observed as part of their induction. Staff observers are trained by the Head of Teaching and Learning. Observation records are monitored directly by senior managers, and any emerging themes form part of the annual staff training day. Observation records show feedback reports are not consistently used and are of variable quality, and observed staff often do not complete their own evaluation. The team considers that it is desirable for the College to improve the quality of teaching observation reports to ensure that they provide developmental feedback to staff, and ensure that staff reflect on the outcomes.

2.6 There is an effective range of mechanisms for students to provide feedback, including Boards of Studies and the Higher Education Forum. These are well attended by elected student representatives, and module questionnaires feed into annual review processes. Annual focus groups are organised by the Quality Support Team to ensure a wide range of student engagement. Students regard teaching and support staff to be highly accessible and responsive to questions or concerns they raise. Students testify to the responsiveness of the College to issues raised and provided examples where their comments had improved their learning experience.

2.7 The College has recruited experienced music practitioners and academics. Staff are well qualified and many maintain active networks in the music industry. This provides students with a contemporary understanding of the diverse music business. All staff without a formal teaching qualification who are teaching more than six hours weekly are required to

undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education. New staff undertake a probationary period, and are extensively mentored and supported.

### **How does the provider assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.8 The College provides a highly supportive environment for students. All students receive a practical audition or interview prior to enrolment. Students commented that the application process was supportive and effective. Students are supported through a tutorial system managed and monitored through the Quality and Student Support section. Academic tutorials are available from a wide range of specialist tutors and are bookable weekly. Students found the system fair, and the availability of tutorials with appropriate staff generally sufficient. Tutorial entitlement is indicated in the module specifications and communicated to students in course handbooks. Unlimited access to personal advice and guidance on a range of matters is provided. Additional learning support is provided, including support for dyslexia, and students are supported in their applications for the Disabled Student Allowance. Additional drop-in sessions are provided for academic study skills.

2.9 The College's aim is to provide a learning environment that replicates a professional music environment. Students commented that support for career planning started at induction. Students on Foundation Degree programmes have a work-based module, which includes work experience. Honours students are provided with professional practice studies and career planning. Students valued the support provided by the Head of Work Based Learning and the support they received in planning placements, and the seminars on developing their curriculum vitae. Students can apply for authorised absence so that they can undertake external engagements in the music industry. The team met with a group of employers. They spoke highly of the discipline-specific skills the students had developed, along with much valued transferable skills. Students spoke highly of the guest lectures and master classes provided by a range of well known music professionals. The team identified as good practice the industry-focused ethos of the College, including programme design and assessment, as it provides students with a clear and realistic understanding of career opportunities in the music industry.

2.10 Support mechanisms are regularly evaluated by student support staff, through the Quality Forum. Data on uptake of tutorials and student attendance is gathered through the Quality and Student Support office, and statistics are reviewed weekly with the Heads of Department and tutors. The Quality Forum also regularly reviews student attendance, retention and achievement, and provides data for use by course teams in annual monitoring and for discussion by the Senior Management Team.

### **What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.11 There is a strongly embedded approach to staff development and a wide range of opportunities exist for teaching and support staff. All staff are encouraged to engage in continuing professional development, and this is planned at appraisal and subject to a half yearly review. The majority of staff are employed part-time, and the College recognises that engaging them in staff development is a challenge. The staff intranet is used as a repository for key information and as an important communication tool. The College arranges termly meetings for all staff, annual themed away-days, and training days, which part-time staff are paid to attend. Sessional staff have no formal review process but are required to attend training. Staff are exposed to new teaching and learning methods through the peer review process and through engagement with the awarding bodies.

2.12 Many staff have been supported in studying for the Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education, and research projects undertaken on through this have

impacted on learning and teaching practice. Scholarly activity is encouraged and staff have been supported in delivering at national conferences, and at their awarding bodies' learning and teaching conferences. Research projects and scholarly activity have directly impacted on teaching practice. The BIMM Academic Research Network has recently been established to formalise research activity and to look specifically at developing links between theory and practice. Staff have also been supported in applications for Higher Education Academy Fellowships. Staff are also supported in undertaking master's and doctoral programmes. The team considers as good practice the College's support for staff to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Education in Professional Musicianship, which has directly enhanced the development of a dynamic learning environment.

2.13 New staff receive a thorough induction. This is individually planned and effective monitoring, including teaching observation, takes place during the probationary period. New staff are often recruited for their industry expertise and are developed as higher education teachers through a mentoring programme.

2.14 An informal set of processes for staff development monitoring and evaluation are evident. The newly formed Teaching and Learning Development Group and the BIMM Academic Research Network are attempting to draw together staff development activity, evaluate the impact of scholarly activity and share good practice. The team considers that it is desirable for the College to further develop formal processes for the monitoring and evaluation of staff development and scholarly activity.

### **How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?**

2.15 The College has a robust business planning process to ensure that resources are suitable for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The College is centrally located in Brighton and Bristol, and is well resourced at both centres. Specialist music resources include teaching and performance rooms with current technology and equipment appropriate to the professional focus of the programmes offered. Resources are ratified at programme validation and periodic review, and at institutional accreditation, by the three partner universities. The annual monitoring process identifies ongoing resource needs and module leaders keep resources under close review, and report specifically on gaps in requirements.

2.16 Considerable effort is made to develop and maximise links to appropriate local and community facilities for student use. Access to professional venues for performance, rehearsal space and studio facilities are regularly negotiated by the College, as a response to student requirements. Students have varying access to the libraries of the validating universities dependent on the validation agreement, and geographical proximity. Both centres have small learning resource rooms with computer and internet access, as well as specialist software, and include all core and recommended texts. There is increasing provision of e-books and electronic resources. Students generally state that they are happy with the resources available, and feel that the College are responsive where possible to requests for additional resources.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

### 3 Public information

#### **How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?**

3.1 The College produces an appropriate and comprehensive range of public information for potential and current students, staff, employers and other stakeholders. This includes a mission statement, programme specifications, information on student support, tutor profiles, work-based learning, general College information and events, and virtual campus tours. The review team found that pre-course materials given to students are informative and accurate.

3.2 The College website provides useful public information on all courses and is the main channel for publishing information for applicants. The website has accessible active links to the awarding bodies' websites, where much additional information is accessible. This provides an effective information communication service for students. The website has recently been redesigned, following consultation with staff and students, and provides prospective and current students full information in a highly accessible format. There is also helpful guidance on matters such as finance and study support, and scholarships supported by the College. There is specific guidance for disabled applicants.

3.3 The course specifications have appropriate information and provide students with full details about intended learning outcomes and assessment. There are extensive and high-quality course handbooks provided for students, which are also available electronically. Students commented that these had improved significantly for the current year and now provide full information, including module guides, assessment information and schedules, schemes of work, academic regulations, and information on support. The College identified in its self-evaluation that the course handbook for the Edexcel Professional Diploma in Music (Live Sound) does not provide comprehensive information on complaints or appeals as required by the *Code of practice*, and action is currently in place to address this omission.

3.4 The College publishes a wide range of policies for students and staff on aspects of teaching and learning, assessment and support. The team found many of these procedures, rather than policies, focused on the needs and requirements of further education. The team considers it desirable for the College to review and, where appropriate, amend all existing College policies to provide clear and accurate information and guidance for managing higher education provision.

3.5 The College is also responsible for publishing information on the virtual learning environment, developed and managed by the Head of Higher Education. This contains comprehensive course material, including lecture notes, schemes of work, assessment briefs and links to further reading and other sources of relevant information. Students reported that they found this material generally accessible. The College is increasingly using social networking websites as a communication tool, as these are considered to be widely accessible to students. Some of these social media are used to provide discussion boards and interactive dialogue. At present, there is no policy for the management of these activities. The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to take action to introduce a clear policy and procedures for the development and monitoring of the use of social media by students and staff.

#### **How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?**

3.6 There are effective arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing. Collaborative provision agreements

are up to date and indicate responsibilities and controls for all published material. Public information responsibilities are assigned, delegated and reviewed through the Senior Management Team by means of the policy review procedure. Day-to-day management responsibility rests with the Head of Creative and Music Industries, who oversees the accuracy and completeness of the website and social media sites, and updating of public information.

3.7 Public information is made accessible to all relevant audiences. There is explicit guidance to applicants on College resources and information about the validating partners, and the support available. New content on the website includes more extensive information on work-based learning and employability, and a section about alumni. The staff intranet is available to all full-time staff and sessional tutors, who are encouraged to use this as a key source of information. The site is updated annually over the summer, with additional documents being added as required.

3.8 Students are proactively involved in ensuring accuracy and completeness of public information and have been instrumental in the redesign of the new website. The College holds a series of focus groups to gather students' views on support mechanisms, and these also provide feedback on published information. Students are regularly involved as ambassadors for the College as part of recruitment activities, including school and careers tours, and open days.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

BIMM Brighton and Bristol action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight April 2012.						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with its awarding bodies (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	Head of Higher Education to continue to develop partner relationships with higher education awarding bodies	September 2012	Head of Higher Education	<p>College contribution to University of Sussex Partner Network Day 21 June 2012</p> <p>Re-recognition of the College by Middlesex University (summer 2012)</p> <p>Head of Higher Education to meet with awarding body representative to confirm quality assurance arrangements for</p>	Awarding bodies, Higher Education Forum and Senior Management Team	<p>Successful Sussex Partner Network Day</p> <p>Re-recognition report from Middlesex</p> <p>Confirmation of new agreement and quality assurance arrangements with Bath Spa University</p>

<sup>3</sup> The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding bodies.

				<p>Bath Spa going forward with validated provision (19 June 2012)</p> <p>The College to confirm new senior management responsibilities with all awarding bodies – Head of Higher Education to take lead quality assurance role as Head of Higher Education and Quality for all higher education provision (July 2012)</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development of audio feedback on assessment (paragraph 1.11)</li> </ul>	Brighton Higher Education Team to disseminate good practice developed at Brighton to Bristol more widely among staff at Brighton, through training sessions and materials	December 2012	<p>Head of teaching and learning assisted by Higher Education Team (including senior academic lecturer and Head of Higher Education)</p> <p>The use of</p>	Student feedback (module questionnaires and focus groups) and staff feedback from training	<p>Higher Education Forum</p> <p>Teaching Learning and Development Group</p>	Student feedback through the annual monitoring process and evaluated by the Head of Higher Education

			electronic feedback will also feature in presentation at University of Sussex Partner Network Day on the College's use of their virtual learning environment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the industry focus in programme design and assessment practice reflects career opportunities in the music industry (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>	<p>Extend the role of the Industry Advisory Panel in advising on programme development and assessment practice</p> <p>We intend to involve the Industry Advisory Panel in consulting on the development of a new BA for Brighton called Commercial Music Management (next Industry Advisory Panel meeting – June/July 2012)</p>	September 2013	Commercial Music Management Course Leader assisted by the Head of Higher Education	Successful involvement in course development resulting in approval and validation by the University of Sussex	Higher Education Forum Senior Management Team Collaborative Provision Committee - Sussex	<p>Industry Advisory Panel minutes</p> <p>University of Sussex validation report Commercial Music Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's support for staff to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education has encouraged the</li> </ul>	Continue to offer Postgraduate Certificate to staff at both sites and continue to support and encourage a research culture (including development of an ethical approval process	September 2013	Head of Teaching and Learning and Head of Higher Education	Postgraduate Certificate enrolments research activity	Teaching, Learning and Development Group, Higher Education Forum and Senior Management	Postgraduate certificate enrolment statistics, research activity, ethical approval form and monitoring



development of action-based research (paragraph 2.12).	by Senior Management Team) Head of Teaching and Learning (also Postgraduate Certificate Course Leader) to become a member of Higher Education Forum				Team	continuing professional development return from staff (see next advisable recommendation)
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the Higher Education Forum maintains effective oversight of all higher education provision (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	<p>Re-visit terms of reference to include: all higher education provision from level 4-7 at the College</p> <p>Strategic oversight of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities</p> <p>Oversight of creative developments at the College</p> <p>Dissemination of good practice</p> <p>Add Head of Teaching and Learning to membership</p>	October 2012	Head of Higher Education	Sign off by Senior Management Team and awarding bodies	Senior Management Team	<p>New terms of reference approved by Senior Management Team and awarding bodies</p> <p>Minutes of Higher Education Forum</p> <p>Analysis of new remit as part of new Higher Education annual management report</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop an overarching annual monitoring process and a report and action plan (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	Discuss and agree the template for an overarching annual management report with our awarding bodies and staff teams	February 2013	Head of Higher Education	Sign off by Higher Education Forum, Senior Management Team and awarding bodies	Senior Management Team and Higher Education Forum	Approval by Awarding bodies, Higher Education Forum and Senior Management Team  Feedback from awarding bodies on new reports
develop a formalised strategy to ensure consistency of approach to teaching and learning in higher education across both centres (paragraph 2.4).	Teaching, Learning and Development Group to develop a teaching and learning strategy	March 2013	Teaching, Learning and Development Group	Approval by Higher Education Forum	Higher Education Forum and Senior Management Team	Approval by Higher Education Forum  Feedback from stakeholders (staff, students and awarding bodies)
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide more developmental feedback on students' assessed work (paragraph 1.11)</li> </ul>	Staff training on this aspect of feedback including the use of audio feedback (also as part of the teaching and learning strategy)	December 2012	Head of teaching and learning assisted by Higher Education Team (senior academic lecturer and Head of Higher	Student feedback (module questionnaires and focus groups) and staff feedback from training	Higher Education Forum and Teaching, Learning and Development Group	Student feedback through the annual monitoring process and evaluated by the Head of Higher Education in the new annual management

			Education)  The Use of electronic feedback will also feature in presentation at University of Sussex Partner Network Day on College's use of their virtual learning environment			report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the quality of developmental feedback in teaching observation reports (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	Teaching, Learning and Development Group to evaluate current form and training for observations	September 2013	Head of Teaching and Learning	Review of observations	Higher Education Forum and Teaching, Learning and Development Group	<p>Observation paperwork</p> <p>Feedback from users</p> <p>Teaching, Learning and Development Group minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop formal processes for the monitoring and evaluation of staff development and scholarly activity (paragraph 2.14)</li> </ul>	BIMM to compile a continuing professional development register for all staff alongside staff development plan and budget – staff to be asked to update 'College CV' including continuing professional development annually	September 2013	Principal assisted by her Personal Assistant	<p>New continuing professional development register</p> <p>Increased continuing professional development in line with plan and indicators</p>	Senior Management Team and Teaching, Learning and Development Group	<p>New continuing professional development record and register</p> <p>Minutes of Teaching, Learning and Development Group and Senior</p>

						Management Team  New staff development plan with targets and success indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review and, where appropriate, amend all existing College policies to provide clear and accurate information and guidance for managing higher education provision (paragraph 3.4).</li> </ul>	Policy review already underway – aim to review all ‘old’ policies by May 2013 and have all policies checked and updated by 2014	February 2014	Heads of Departments (as appropriate) supported by Head of Higher Education and Quality and Management Information Systems Manager (who will track all policies and maintain an electronic database on the College server)	Completed policy register and mapping against relevant codes and legal requirements	Head of Higher Education and Senior Management Team	Policy register and minutes of Senior Management Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce a clear policy and procedures for the development and monitoring of the use of social media by students and staff (paragraph 3.5)</li> </ul>	New policy to be written	July 2012	Marketing Manager	Successful implementation of policy	Senior Management Team	Completed signed off policy

## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook<sup>4</sup>](#)

**Academic Infrastructure** Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

**academic quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

**academic standards** The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

**awarding body** A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

**awarding organisation** An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

**Code of practice** *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**enhancement** Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

**feature of good practice** A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

**framework** A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

**framework for higher education qualifications** A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks:

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.*

**highly trusted sponsor** An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

**learning opportunities** The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

**learning outcome** What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

**programme specifications** Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes of study**, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

**provider** An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

**public information** Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

**reference points** Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**subject benchmark statement** A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

**threshold academic standard** The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

**widening participation** Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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