



BIMM Ltd Brighton, Bristol and Manchester

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

June 2014

Key findings about BIMM Ltd Brighton, Bristol and Manchester

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 2014, 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 programmes it offers on behalf of Bath Spa University, Middlesex University, University of Sussex and Pearson.

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 and organisation.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

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

- the continual building on and embedding of external academic and professional reference points in the full range of College activities (paragraph 1.6)
- the productive engagement with academic and professional practice in the music industry (paragraph 1.7)
- the extensive and highly effective student support provided by tutors, and the Quality and Student Support team (paragraph 2.8)
- the College's proactive approach to curriculum development by listening and responding to the needs of the music industry (paragraph 2.9)
- the consistency of the highly effective staff development policy operating across the three College centres (paragraph 2.13)
- the highly effective engagement with alumni to disseminate contemporary music best practice (paragraph 3.1)
- the consistent and effective management of social media (paragraph 3.4).

Recommendations

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

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

- publish a concise and clearly understood annual quality cycle (paragraph 1.4)
- facilitate collaboration between college centres to support the work of their external examiners (paragraph 1.5)
- consider the introduction of discipline-specific annual reporting (paragraph 1.5)
- facilitate communication between student representatives across College centres (paragraph 2.6)
- provide clear information about how numerical grades are derived (paragraph 2.11)
- adjust document management policies to enable the College to check that all information is current and reflects the full range of College provision (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at BIMM Ltd Brighton, Bristol and Manchester (the College) which is a privately funded provider of higher education. 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 Pearson. The review was carried out by Mr Harry Davison, Mr Colin Smith, Ms Deborah Trayhurn (reviewers) and Professor Nicholas Goddard (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included the College's self-evaluation and other documentation; documentation supplied by the awarding bodies; and meetings with staff and students from the three College centres within the scope of this review. The review team also consulted the report of the College's April 2012 REO, the subsequent April 2013 monitoring visit report, and a Pearson Quality Review and Development Review report (December 2013).

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- the requirements and regulations of the awarding bodies and organisation.

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

The College was founded in 2001 as the Brighton Institute of Modern Music. The College's mission is to be a leading provider of vocational further and higher education in modern music. It specialises in drums, bass, guitar, song writing, live sound, tour and events management and music business. The College aims to offer its students the opportunity to gain a higher education award in their chosen core subject and to connect with the UK music industry. Its motto is 'Music, Education, Excellence'.

Since its foundation the College has established a number of regional centres including BIMM Bristol (established in 2008), BIMM Dublin (2011, but outside the scope of this review) and BIMM Manchester (2013). In 2011 the founding directors left the organisation and the company was then taken over by Sovereign Capital; this development signalled a significant expansion of the College's provision. A sister college, Tech Music School London, was acquired in 2010 and has been subject to a separate QAA review (2012). It is due to be fully integrated into the College in September 2014. Current full-time student enrolments on higher education programmes are 973 students in Brighton, 478 in Bristol and 161 in Manchester; a total of 1612 students. At the time of the review there were eight full-time academic staff and 81.36 part-time FTE staff. There were 33.25 non-teaching FTE staff in central services for the BIMM UK colleges.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies and organisation with student numbers in brackets:

Bath Spa University

- Fd (Music) - Professional Musicianship (34)
- BA Professional Musicianship - Performance (265)
- BA Professional Musicianship - Songwriting (68)
- BA Music Industry Management (56)
- BA Event Management (11)
- BA Music Production (44)

Middlesex University

- Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education (14)

Pearson

- Professional Diploma in Live Sound and Tour Production (10)

University of Sussex

- Fd (Arts) - Professional Musicianship (56)
- BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship - Performance (689)
- BA (Hons) Professional Musicianship - Songwriting (240)
- BA (Hons) Music Business (57)
- BA (Hons) Event Management (26)
- BA (Hons) Music Production (42).

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College has responsibility for the identification of curriculum needs and development; programme specifications; setting, marking and moderation of assignments; and the provision of feedback to students for awards validated by Bath Spa University. It also has responsibility for staff development; the recruitment and admission of students; the provision of academic advice; student support and the appeals system; and programme and public information. It shares with the University responsibility for the quality review of its higher education; the moderation of marking; the monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching; and procedures for ensuring the accuracy of public information. Each of the three awarding bodies and Pearson appoint the external examiners.

For Middlesex University the awarding body takes responsibility for the quality review of the provision and the student appeal system. It shares with the College responsibility for programme specifications and learning outcomes; monitoring student retention and completion; and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.

In the case of University of Sussex the College shares with this awarding body responsibility for the strategic responsibility of higher education; student recruitment and selection; monitoring student retention and completion; reviewing and responding to annual monitoring reviews and reports; the quality review of higher education; student admission; guidance and induction; library and learning resources; programme and module information; the student appeal system; procedures for monitoring the accuracy of public information; collecting and acting upon student feedback; and the management complaints and appeals.

For the Pearson award the awarding organisation provides guidelines and regulations for the delivery of the provision and is responsible for the external verification of assessed work. It appoints an external examiner who produces a report upon which the College is required to act. The College is responsible for the setting and marking of assignments; the internal

moderation of assessed work; collecting and acting upon student feedback; and the management of complaints and appeals. The information provided for students is a joint responsibility with Pearson but the College is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of information it makes available. As is the case with the university-validated awards, the College provides staff, teaching accommodation and practice space; learning resources and technical support; and student pastoral advice and guidance.

Recent developments

The opening of BIMM Manchester in September 2013 as an additional regional centre with higher education provision validated by the University of Sussex was an important development. During the 2012-13 academic year the Senior Management Team was restructured and the institution's portfolio of programmes was extended to include music production, event management and music business studies, which were approved in January 2013. College programmes validated by the University of Sussex were successfully revalidated and the Brighton Centre was re-accredited in January 2014. A new Marketing Director and team have been appointed and, following a review, the BIMM brand has been clearly defined; a modified name and logo is due to be launched in September 2014 when Tech Music School London will be fully integrated into the College.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. This was compiled by three elected students, one from each College centre within the scope of this report and took the form of a critical appraisal of the progress that has been made in addressing points in the College action plan. The review coordinator met a representative group of students at the preparatory meeting, as did the review team during the course of the review visit. The team found the records of these meetings most useful and they inform the findings of this report.

Detailed findings about BIMM Ltd Brighton, Bristol and Manchester

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has clear mechanisms and structures for the management of its responsibilities for academic standards as delegated by its awarding bodies and organisation. These have been adopted by the newest centre in the College, located in Manchester. Responsibilities are clearly defined in partnership agreements and the ways that the College works strategically and proactively with its partners ensures these are robustly and consistently managed across the College centres. Final responsibility for the academic standards of the provision lies with the partner universities and the awarding organisation. Responsibility for academic standards is delegated by the Principal to the Deputy Principal, reporting to the Senior Management Team. The Deputy Principal signs off all policies and procedures and the Principal reports monthly to a Board of Directors who undertake oversight of College activities. Recent re-recognition and revalidation reports by the University of the Sussex confirm the College continues to be effective in securing standards.

1.2 The College has developed systematic and effective governance and committee structures, successfully negotiating changes of ownership and developing new centres, incorporating these into existing reporting lines and procedures. The College maintains and develops work with partners both at a strategic level and operationally through link tutors. Any differences in the approaches adopted by its awarding bodies, in reporting and data gathering requirements, are addressed successfully and responsibilities met. The institution has developed academic regulations with its university partners, importing and revising procedures to ensure a cohesive and coherent approach across the College centres.

1.3 The College has effective governance processes to oversee academic standards. These focus on the Higher Education Forum (HEF) which meets each term and acts as an Academic Board providing oversight across the College. This is led by the Deputy Principal and has clear terms of reference. The HEF membership is drawn from all College centres and includes student representatives. Extensive reporting is undertaken and action plans are created. Short-life working groups are formed to develop key initiatives and establish developments which are then rolled out across the College, such as the student charter. These demonstrate activities being more clearly defined, a maturing of cross-College processes, and engagement with the Senior Management Team to support its role in exercising prime responsibility for delivering academic strategy. More focused reporting enables the College to direct attention to the formulation of strategy. New course approval mechanisms have been introduced which draw upon specialist industry and sector advice, and enable staff and student feedback to inform proposals. These processes enhance strategic planning of College practice and provide underpinning for the expansion of programmes across areas allied to the music industry.

1.4 Academic standards are managed effectively at programme level. The management structure has recently been strengthened and supports the development of local and College practice. The comprehensive Higher Education Quality Manual is designed for all staff and is accompanied by a Higher Education Student and Quality Manual, written in a more student-oriented manner. A separate Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy is in use. College managers manage the provision at each location, supported by education managers and with the Deputy Principal taking effective oversight.

Fortnightly College management meetings take place and provide a forum for discussion of the day-to-day operations. These have terms of reference which include responsibility for academic standards. While documents refer to a quality cycle, and practices represent feedback and review of processes, the quality cycle approach linking strategic decision making to operations is not yet provided in a clearly accessible format. It would be **desirable** for the College to publish a concise and clearly understood annual quality cycle.

1.5 Course leaders maintain effective, open and regular dialogue with link tutors and relevant practitioner groups. They prepare an annual report, work with module leaders and tutors, discuss modes of assessment with external examiners, and prepare the course action plan. Board of Studies operate at each centre and are student orientated. They focus on the operational management of academic standards including assessment, module review and the student experience. Module leaders at each centre lead teams and are responsible for their practices and maintenance of academic standards. Thorough and critical module internal and external review process provides the basis for the quality assurance processes. Modules at the Manchester and Brighton centres have separate external examiners but the same awarding body. As the College expands, it would be **desirable** for the College to facilitate collaboration between College centres to support the work of their external examiners. Module reports are summarised in comprehensive annual monitoring reviews which currently group all courses together. With the proposed expansion of disciplines it would also be **desirable** for the College to consider the introduction of discipline specific annual reporting.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.6 The College makes full and constructive use of the Quality Code. It has developed the mapping of College activity reported in previous QAA reviews and this has been used to prepare for the validation of new provision and information to staff commencing employment. Course specifications are checked by the Deputy Principal to ensure they clearly reference subject benchmark statements and reflect the expectations of *Chapter B1: Programme design and approval* of the Quality Code. The continual building on and embedding of external academic and professional reference points in the full range of College activities is **good practice**.

1.7 Industry and sector standards are used as reference points in all development of provision and activity. Industry Advisory Panels operate at each centre, chaired by the local College manager at least biannually. These ensure that all courses, creative activities and teaching and learning strategies are aligned to the needs of the wider music industry. Terms of reference for these groups include research topics of particular relevance and current and future operational strategy. New provision is tested with benchmarking processes, engaging with academics, external examiners, sector and music industry representatives, including UK sector skill Academy for Cultural and Creative industries. This process has given rise to new areas of student development, such as digital proficiency. Interest and engagement with the professionals working in the music industry continues to be thoroughly embedded in the College ethos. This is available at each centre, such that all students have opportunities to thoroughly engage in extensive sector activity as a routine part of their study. The productive engagement with academic and professional practice in the music industry is **good practice** and ensures that the College remains at the forefront of providers in this sector.

How does the College use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.8 The College engages effectively with the external examiners, extending invitations to work closely with the College from the outset of their appointment. It conducts an induction programme with new external examiners, which includes meetings with students. Annual monitoring reports demonstrate continuous improvement and confirm, with recent validation activity, that the College meets the requirements of its awarding body partners. Assessments are marked and internally moderated by the teaching staff, and externally moderated by the external examiners. The HEF monitors student assessment and the outcomes of moderation and any issues arising, which in turn inform staff development priorities. For example, sessions have been run on marking practices and providing feedback using a standard feedback form.

1.9 External examiner reports are fully considered and are used effectively to inform the management of academic standards. Assessment briefs are reviewed and are appropriate to the level of study. These demonstrate an appropriate and wide range of assessment methods to prepare students for their roles in the music industry. Responses to external examiner reports and action plans are monitored by the Boards of Studies and ultimately the Senior Management Team, via the HEF. An overview and analysis report is presented to the latter. The College evaluates and develops its activities for managing standards, reviewing modules, marks and processes used, on at least an annual basis.

1.10 The College has clear and effective mechanisms for the management of its responsibilities for academic standards. The collaborative approaches undertaken ensure that external examiner reports are scrutinised and that appropriate actions are taken. The College demonstrates highly effective engagement with external academic and professional reference points and embeds these in all activities it undertakes.

The review team has **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies and organisation.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 There is a clear management structure that defines the responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities. Overall responsibility lies with the Principal and the Senior Management Team (see paragraphs 1.1-1.2). On a day-to-day basis responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Principal, supported by the individual centre College and education managers. The College has a Head of Student Support and a Senior Office Manager who reports to the College Manager and Deputy Principal in respect of key performance indicators to support student learning and enhancement.

2.2 The College has clearly identified mechanisms to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. It has defined responsibilities for course delivery, documented through the partnership agreements. The HEF (see paragraph 1.3) monitors the quality of learning opportunities through the examination of awarding body annual monitoring reports, College annual monitoring reviews, Board of Studies, and Progress and Examination Boards. There are regular curriculum and team meetings to discuss issues that arise, which feed into the process of annual monitoring review. External examiners confirm that the College provides appropriate learning opportunities for students.

2.3 The College has produced staff and student quality manuals that outline the roles of committees, policy and regulation within the College. This is a useful document that could be developed by the College to reflect the annual cycle of course delivery (see paragraph 1.4).

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

2.4 External reference points are integrated into the current management and quality assurance policies and procedures. The appropriate sections of the Quality Code and the use of subject benchmark statements inform the delivery of the higher education courses. College staff are supported by the awarding bodies, active membership of national music industry organisations, and the input of the recently remodelled Industry Advisory Panel (IAP) informs development of the curriculum.

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

2.5 Staff are clearly aware of College expectations governing the delivery of teaching and the use of learning opportunities. The College has a teaching and learning policy and strategy that, along with the quality manual and awarding body guidance, provide valuable reference sources in the design, delivery and assessment of courses. The Teaching, Learning and Development Group, chaired by the Deputy Principal, has responsibility for the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment, and directs enhancement through the teaching and learning strategy. Students are satisfied with the quality of teaching provided and value the variety of teaching methods employed.

2.6 The College responds promptly and effectively to issues of concern raised by students. Both in their submission and at their meeting with the team, students cited many examples of such action that they greatly appreciated and which had enhanced the learning experience. Students have the opportunity to comment on teaching and learning opportunities through module evaluation, student course representation at the Board of Studies, the HEF and focus groups facilitated by the Quality and Student Support team (QSS). The College supports student representation through election and training of representatives for each course at each centre. The student representatives expressed the view that they would like to have more contact with representatives from other College centres. It would be **desirable** for the College to facilitate communication between student representatives across College centres.

How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?

2.7 The College has a comprehensive policy to ensure the continuous support of students from pre-entry, through and beyond their course. Teaching staff cooperate effectively with support staff to achieve this. The College provides open days where potential students can access academic and support staff and experience the College ethos through presentations and meeting with alumni and music industry guests. The admission process requires all students to undertake a practical assessment or interview prior to acceptance. There is also opportunity for Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning within this process and students reported that this was supportive, particularly for those applying for non-traditional entry. There is an informative and effective induction process that introduces the student to the College, the awarding body and the specific course of students.

2.8 The College supports students through an academic and pastoral support system which is highly effective. Each College centre has a Head of Quality and Student Support. Following induction students obtain support through the tutorial system that is managed by

the QSS team. The Teaching and Learning Policy identifies entitlement to one-to-one tutorial time allocated per term, and academic support is clearly identified in module guides. Access is bookable on a weekly basis for both academic tutor support and the more general support and guidance available from the QSS team. They have a clearly defined role to evaluate the use of tutorial time and student attendance and this is regularly reviewed by the heads of department and course tutors. Students repeatedly emphasise the extensive and highly effective student support provided by tutors and the QSS team and this is **good practice**.

2.9 The College provides a dynamic learning environment that gives the student an authentic experience of the contemporary professional music industry. The work-based learning module in the foundation degree course is highly regarded, and the honours degree has a similar option. The work-based learning team supports students in obtaining placement or internships, and students value the opportunity to have this experience within the music industry. Students also appreciate the use of guest speakers, master classes and distinguished alumni, many of whom are established music professionals within the industry. The College actively engages with innovative developments in the industry. A prime example of this is the College's response to changing technology. The area of digital proficiency was identified through the IAP, incorporated in the Teaching and Learning Strategy and subsequently included in the Professional Musicianship programme. The College has recently appointed an Artist Promotion and Digital Development Manager to support students in developing a digital presence. The College's proactive approach to curriculum development by listening and responding to the needs of the music industry is **good practice**.

2.10 The Quality Manual requires that feedback on marked work be returned within 15 days and students confirm that feedback is easily accessible online, is developmental and gives useful guidance on how the work may be improved. This is supported by external examiner comments. The College recognises the value of formative assessment feedback, and staff clearly described this is used to support student learning. Module delivery is extended over the entire academic year and module assessment is staged to allow for work to be marked and returned within the period of module delivery. This timing of assessment helps students to monitor progress for further creative and written assessment undertaken at the end of the module.

2.11 The course handbooks do not clearly specify how a final module mark is calculated. The handbooks do provide students with marking schemes within the module outlines with a grading system of very high, higher, lower and fail. Although the Quality Manual provides a generic marking scheme for degree and foundation degree awards based upon a percentile grade scheme with six bands, this does not clearly convey to students how percentile marks are determined. It would be **desirable** for the College to provide clear information about how numerical grades are derived

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

2.12 The College effectively uses staff development policies and processes to maintain high standards and support the College mission and strategic aims. All staff are appropriately qualified and offered a range of staff professional and vocational development opportunities. Before appointments are approved, the College involves its awarding bodies in scrutiny of full and part-time staff CVs for approval.

2.13 The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Strategy includes staff development as a key aim. A staff survey on continuing professional development (CPD) needs is used to inform the staff development strategy through continuous monitoring and reflection which

consequently links to individual staff appraisal and training-needs analysis, and considers the extent of support for CPD. The consistency of the highly effective staff development policy operating across the three College centres is **good practice**.

2.14 Staff are continually exposed to new teaching and learning methods and work closely with the awarding bodies. All teaching staff are observed on an annual basis and new staff observed a minimum of three times. Developmental feedback effectively provides clear guidance on improving teaching practice and informs teaching within the College. Induction is clearly defined and staff at the Manchester centre commented that this process is effective and have clearly benefitted from additional training and support. Records of teaching observations are completed and circulated to the Teaching and Learning Development Group, which effectively monitors staff training needs and consolidates the themes for staff development across the College. This process is also overseen by the Senior Management Team which makes the final decisions based on recommendations made by the Teaching and Learning Development Group.

2.15 Formal mentoring and informal shadowing is part of the College's culture and is effective. Teaching staff are appropriately trained in the delivery of teaching and learning and 94 per cent of staff delivering more than six hours have attended or are completing a postgraduate certificate in teacher training programme. Additional staff development and CPD is supplemented by training offered by the awarding bodies. The College encourages staff to pursue research and scholarly activity with several staff currently registered on master's or PhD programmes. Good practice is consistently identified and disseminated. Research and development practice is of good quality enabling the provision of research informed teaching to enhance lectures throughout the year. The majority of staff are contemporary practitioners enabling them to share excellent relevant practice delivering a dynamic educational experience.

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

2.16 The College provides appropriate resources to meet student needs. Specialist resources for teaching and performance are available and the College monitors use through a booking system. The College is responsive to student evaluation of resources; for example, students identified the need for rehearsal space through the Board of Studies, and this request was recorded in the annual monitoring report. As a result the College provided off-site space and developed links within the local communities to provide external performance and recording venues.

2.17 The College uses the annual monitoring reports to monitor equipment requirements and individual tutors have responsibility for the monitoring of these module resources. The College has increased its e-book and online journals available. There are varying levels of access to libraries with the validating partners and the College is currently renegotiating access with one awarding body. Digital software resources are available to students and, at Manchester, this availability has been enhanced by the relationship with the local public library. The College virtual learning environment (VLE) is at present a repository for learning materials. The College has a Unit e-User group that has a remit for supporting the use of electronic resources to support staff and students.

2.18 The College effectively manages the quality of learning opportunities through clearly identified strategies and policy that takes into account relevant external reference points. There is extensive and highly effective student support and this is enhanced through staff development. The College has a proactive approach to curriculum development that is informed by its strong relationship with sector bodies and the music industry.

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 Information about learning opportunities

How effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The College uses a range of media, in particular its robust website, which is designed in consultation with staff and students. The website is the main channel for publishing information for applicants and is a successful bespoke information communication service. The detailed information currently provides sections on courses, admission procedures and the College's core offering, including student life in Brighton, Bristol and Manchester, fees and financial advice, and appropriate links to key partners. Additional information about the BIMM experience, includes musical and video content, and navigates to media network links to the centres' social networking sites. The use of alumni information about the achievements of former students is exemplary. This is embedded throughout the College on information screens and publicly online, and this highly effective engagement with alumni to disseminate contemporary music best practice is **good practice**. Public information is shared effectively, including master classes to communicate good practice from previous students currently working in the music industry. A specialist Digital Development Manager supports press writing and is in place for new and forthcoming events. Students confirm they receive information appropriately at each stage of their learning journey.

3.2 Effective ways to access information includes performance events, hardcopy in the form of handbooks, prospectus and bespoke information leaflets. Open days and planned school and careers tours effectively disseminate public information. A College newsletter is available in different media. The VLE includes an efficient emailing system and resource booking arrangements. Students find the email communication systems effective and the VLE a valuable learning resource.

How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.3 The College has effective procedures in place to assure the quality of the information it publishes. All published information undergoes proofreading for inaccuracies of content, English and grammar. The team saw examples that demonstrate the need to ensure documents contain up-to-date and accurate information. For example, the Teaching and Learning Policy states that one of its key features is 'helping the tutors maintain a professional, disciplined and relaxed environment conducive to musicians reaching their full learning potential', but this statement does not reflect the addition of more broadly based music industry courses to the College provision. It would be **desirable** for the College to adjust document management policies to enable the College to check that all information is current and that it reflects the full range of College provision. The College prospectus is signed off by the Senior Management Team. Course level information, for example, handbooks and the VLE are checked by the appropriate course team and then signed off by the College managers and the Deputy Principal. Copies of these documents are sent to the awarding bodies for proofreading. The marketing team refer all text used in advertising for approval of the Principal or their designate.

3.4 The College fully appreciates the usefulness of social media to enable best practice in learning. The College maintains a small presence on social media sites, as well as an internet-based music sharing platform which are effectively managed, monitored and moderated by the Social Media Manager. The College's Social Media Policy and guidelines for staff and students successfully provides guidance on usage to encourage effective and beneficial practice, while protecting the College and community. The consistent and effective management of social media is **good practice**.

3.5 Student feedback has been instrumental in informing the scope of the information published in the student handbook, and their comments and needs are considered in the content of the website and other information. Students are regularly involved in marketing, including making school visits, careers tours and open days or evenings. There is an effective pre-course student mentoring programme which was initially piloted at Bristol and is currently being rolled out across the College. Student mentors commence late August and are matched with new intakes to reinforce information as new students start their studies. The student mentoring supports an introduction to the college and appropriate comprehensive networking within the music industry.

3.6 The College has effective arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing. Its use of alumni to support and inform student success is exemplary. Public information is shared effectively. Social media policy and provision of guidelines for staff and students protects the College and community, while providing an excellent learning environment.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan³

BIMM Brighton, Bristol and Manchester action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of June 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the continual building on, and embedding of, external academic and professional reference points in the full range of College activities (paragraph 1.6) 	To continue to benchmark our work to external academic and professional reference points across the range of College activities, including mapping against the revised Part A of the Quality Code and new subject benchmarks	<p>Review revised Part A of the Quality Code and map against it</p> <p>Ensure that new subject benchmark statements are used by College teams in course design as they become available</p>	<p>December 2015</p> <p>As benchmark statements become available</p>	<p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance</p> <p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Higher Education Forum</p> <p>Higher Education Forum</p>	<p>QAA monitoring will assess our mapping against the Quality Code</p> <p>Internal and external course approval process with awarding institutions - feedback from validation panels on the</p>

³ The College 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 College's awarding bodies and organisation.

						use of benchmarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the productive engagement with academic and professional practice in the music industry (paragraph 1.7) 	To continue to use Industry Advisory Panels to inform curriculum development, enhancement and enrichment	Ensure that Industry Advisory Panels regularly meet across the group and raise areas for enhancement and enrichment	From July 2014	College managers	Senior Management Team	Industry Advisory Panels minutes Academic Development and Quality Assurance to monitor and report on the activity of the panels as part of group-wide annual monitoring
	To continue to engage in research and scholarly activity and to make links in these areas with the broader academic community	Continue to support staff in this regard	Ongoing	Principals	Senior Management Team	College Senior Management Team to evaluate staff development annually
		Develop a research and scholarly activity policy Proposal to host the British and Irish International Association for the Study of Popular Music conference in 2016 with the University of	Draft policy for spring 2015 Submitted		Academic Development and Quality Assurance	Higher Education Forum

		Sussex				<p>Association for the Study of Popular Music bid with Sussex</p> <p>Policy and promotion of BIMM research in the wider academy to be evaluated by Academic Development and Quality Assurance periodically to measure impact</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extensive and highly effective student support provided by tutors, and the Quality and Student Support team (paragraph 2.8) 	To continue to develop and train tutors and student support staff to ensure that the quality of provision is maintained	Include support staff development in the strategic planning of staff development for the three centres	October 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	<p>Annual staff development planning meetings at each group of centres' Senior Management Team</p> <p>Staff development activities to be evaluated in annual monitoring and included in</p>

						reporting (including feedback from staff attending events) to QAA and awarding institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's proactive approach to curriculum development by listening and responding to needs of the music industry (paragraph 2.9) 	To continue to use Industry Advisory Panels to inform curriculum development, enhancement and enrichment	Ensure that Industry Advisory Panels regularly meet across the group and raise areas for curriculum development	From July 2014	College managers	Senior Management Team and Academic Development and Quality Assurance	<p>Industry Advisory Panels minutes</p> <p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance to monitor and report on the activity of the panels as part of group-wide annual monitoring</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the consistency of the highly effective staff development policy operating across the three College centres (paragraph 2.13) 	To continue to monitor and plan staff development at Senior Management Team level	All training needs in staff appraisal reports to feed into Senior Management Team annual staff development planning meeting	October 2014	Principals	Senior Management Team and Academic Development and Quality Assurance	<p>Annual staff development planning meetings at each group of colleges Senior Management Team</p> <p>Staff development</p>

						activities to be evaluated in annual monitoring and included in reporting to QAA and awarding institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highly effective engagement with alumni to disseminate contemporary music best practice (paragraph 3.1) 	To continue to develop and support the BIMM Alumni Association	Redesign of website to improve BIMM alumni pages	September 2014	Head of Marketing	BIMM Board	<p>College Principals to continue to report into the BIMM Board on the success and development of the BIMM Alumni Association, including feedback from alumni on the scheme</p> <p>BIMM Board to evaluate and decide on future priorities in this area</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the consistent and effective management of 	To continue to support and develop our effective systems for the	BIMM Marketing to continue to provide support in this area and develop	September 2014	Head of Marketing	BIMM Board	Marketing Director to report into

social media (paragraph 3.4).	management of social media	the effective monitoring of social media				BIMM Board and Director of Academic Development and Quality Assurance to evaluate and report on ongoing development
Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publish a concise and clearly understood annual quality cycle (paragraph 1.4) 	A graphic representation of the annual quality cycle to be produced and included in student and staff quality handbooks	Graphic to be designed and included in student and staff quality handbooks	September 2014	Academic Development and Quality Assurance	Higher Education Forum	<p>Student and staff quality handbooks</p> <p>Approach and impact to be evaluated by Academic Development and Quality Assurance through feedback from students and staff</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitate collaboration between College centres to support the work of their external examiners (paragraph 1.5) 	<p>As the Manchester provision is in its first year we will consult with our external examiners with a view to ensuring parity and consistency across the centres in regard of external moderation</p>	<p>Speak to externals and the University during the current round of exam boards and decide in consultation with our awarding institutions how best to ensure a consistent approach across the two centres</p>	<p>September 2014</p>	<p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Higher Education Forum and exam boards</p>	<p>Externals have agreed to share reports among the external examiner team and across centres; this approach will be monitored and evaluated as part of annual monitoring</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider the introduction of discipline-specific annual reporting (paragraph 1.5) 	<p>The production of discipline-specific annual reports, if appropriate and agreed with awarding institutions</p>	<p>Consult with College teams and awarding institutions on the best approach to annual review and develop a group-wide policy</p>	<p>December 2014</p>	<p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Higher Education Forum</p>	<p>Academic Development and Quality Assurance to review and report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitate communication between student representatives across College centres (paragraph 2.6) 	<p>We are currently looking at the possibility of forming a students' union for all BIMM students; in the short term we will set up a student page on the BIMM virtual learning environment that will facilitate student communication across the wider group of colleges</p>	<p>Set up shared virtual learning environment page and forum</p> <p>Plan/proposal for the formation of a group-wide students' union</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>December 2015</p>	<p>Management Information Systems Department and Academic Development and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Virtual learning environment group</p>	<p>Shared virtual learning environment page to be included in redesigned virtual learning environment for 2015-16</p> <p>Students to comment on this through Higher</p>

						Education Forum and evaluation to be included in annual monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide clear information about how numerical grades are derived (paragraph 2.11) 	We will look to redesign our current marking schemes to cover all levels and provide clearer information on how grades are derived	Look at practice in this regard across the sector and use these examples to formulate a level-based single set of marking schemes for all higher education provision to be approved by our awarding institutions and included in 2014-15 handbooks	October 2014	Academic Development and Quality Assurance	Higher Education Forum and Teaching, Learning and Development Group	<p>New marking scheme commented on by external examiners and sent to awarding institutions for comment prior to wider consultation</p> <p>External examiners will be asked to evaluate the use of the new scheme at the end of 2015-16 and we will also seek feedback from staff and students using the new scheme</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adjust document management policies to enable the College to check that all information is current and reflects the full range of College provision (paragraph 3.3). 	Revised policies as appropriate to reflect current College provision	Review data management	Company servers restructure August 2014	Management Information Systems Department	Group Board	Revised document management system to be reviewed by users over coming year
		Review of all policy, and other key documents with a view to harmonising practice and ensuring consistency across the group	August 2015	Academic Development and Quality Assurance	Group Board	Academic Development and Quality Assurance to review and report

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.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Glossary

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

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

academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also threshold academic standards.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA .

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation 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.

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

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

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

programme (of study) An approved course of study that 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 (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation 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').

quality See academic quality.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

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.

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 standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national frameworks for higher education qualifications and subject benchmark statements. See also academic standards.

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