

Application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers: British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM) Limited

Scrutiny team report

September 2018

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About this report

This report reflects the findings of a team appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to conduct a detailed scrutiny of an application from the British and Irish Modern Music Institute Limited for the power to award taught degrees.

The application was considered under criteria approved by Government in 2015. In advising on applications, QAA is guided by the relevant criteria and the associated evidence requirements. QAA's work in this area is overseen by its Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP), a subcommittee of the QAA Board.

ACDAP's initial consideration of applications establishes whether an applicant has made a case to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the application and the evidence on which it is based. If satisfied on this matter, ACDAP agrees that a team may be appointed to conduct the scrutiny and prepare a report, enabling ACDAP to determine the nature of the recommendation it will make to the QAA Board.

Scrutiny teams produce reports following each of the engagements undertaken. The final report reflects the team's findings and is structured around the four main criteria contained in the 2015 TDAP criteria,¹ namely:

- governance and academic management
- academic standards and quality assurance
- scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff
- the environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes.

Subject to the approval of the Board, QAA's advice is communicated to the appropriate minister. This advice is provided in confidence. The minister determines whether it should be disclosed to the applicant. A final decision on an application, and the notification of that decision, is a matter for the Privy Council.

¹ The TDAP criteria are available in Annex A of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' *Taught Degree Awarding Powers and Research Degree Awarding Powers: Guidance for Higher Education Providers: Criteria and Process for applying for Taught Degree Awarding Powers and Research Degree Awarding Powers* (September 2015) at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526813/BIS-15-525-degree-awarding-powers.pdf (PDF, 535KB)

Executive summary

Governance and academic management

BIMM Institute Limited (BIMM) has expended considerable effort in establishing its governance arrangements, reviewing them regularly, and operating them effectively. The TopCo Board, Academic Board and the management structure, including the Executive Management Group, Senior Management Group and College Management Teams, operate with clear terms of reference, composition and delegated powers, which are understood by those directly involved and by staff and student representatives as a whole.

Particularly noteworthy is the high quality of the presentation of agendas, papers, minutes and comprehensive action lists, which characterises the operation of the various committees. Committees are well chaired, inclusive and transparent in their deliberations, and offer BIMM clear academic, business and financial strategic and operational leadership.

Strategic and operational planning for taught degree awarding powers has been comprehensive, detailed and effective, with BIMM in a position to implement these arrangements satisfactorily. In addition to establishing a deliberative structure suitable for a degree-awarding body, and in preparing an appropriate regulatory and academic framework, BIMM's decision to consolidate the awards of all its current programmes onto a single degree-awarding body demonstrates its willingness to engage in additional activities involving the review with the University Sussex of those programmes previously validated by Bath Spa University and the University of West London.

There are detailed and regular quantitative updates and analyses provided to the Academic Board and TopCo Board concerning BIMM's applications, recruitment, progress and achievements of students, at both course and BIMM College levels. Similarly, there are equally detailed financial and risk analyses presented to and considered by the TopCo Board.

BIMM's post-TDAP quality assurance arrangements appear robust, having been developed from those it has operated very effectively on behalf of its awarding bodies. BIMM's longer term aim is to develop subject-based programmes at level 7, though no earlier than 2022-23. BIMM's cautious approach in this regard acknowledges the requirement for a comprehensive action plan to ensure such proposals are able to meet satisfactorily, in every respect, the rigorous threshold requirements of BIMM's own quality assurance regulations.

The small size of the TopCo Board, which is currently working well, could raise questions of its capacity, particularly of its external members (it meets usually monthly), and possible conflicts of interest. Although BIMM has a variety of ways to receive and act upon student and staff feedback, the absence of student and staff membership of the Board, though currently not distracting from the Board's business, could limit the Board's collective experience and perspectives.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that BIMM meets Criterion A.

Academic standards and quality assurance

BIMM operates consistently within the regulatory frameworks of its three awarding bodies. All its awarding bodies have confirmed that BIMM is in a position of readiness to award its own degrees. An appropriate regulatory framework has been developed by BIMM in preparation for granting its own degrees and is an indicator of the institute's readiness for degree awarding powers.

Widespread and effective use is made of external advice and guidance in the management of academic standards and quality. External advisers are involved in the internal programme development process and industry advisory panels help to ensure programmes reflect current knowledge and practice. The advice and input from external examiners is considered at all levels of the academic governance structure and is responded to appropriately as part of annual monitoring processes and formal academic governance. The existing effective use made of external advice is accounted for in BIMM's proposed regulatory framework for post-TDAP providing a level of assurance that current practice will continue.

BIMM has developed its own programme approval, monitoring and review processes, while currently operating those of its awarding institutions. These internal processes are clearly set out and are widely understood by staff involved in curriculum development and programme management. There is widespread adherence to operating BIMM's procedures across colleges, supported by the departmental and leadership structures, which facilitate a sound level of consistency across the institute. Academic Board maintains effective oversight of approval, monitoring and review. The proposed post-TDAP regulatory framework incorporates these procedures.

BIMM is effective at keeping its students and staff informed about policies and procedures, including those for programme design, monitoring and review. The electronically published Academic Development and Quality Assurance (ADQA) Manual is comprehensive and detailed in its coverage of quality assurance processes and is easily accessible. The ADQA staff team are effective in the support that they provide for those involved in programme design, monitoring and review activity. Regarding assessment criteria and practices, both staff and students are well informed. For staff the ADQA Manual is a key reference, and programme specifications and handbooks, in addition to clear assessment briefs, are the main sources of information for students.

Two approval events that occurred during the duration of the scrutiny provided an indication that planning for resourcing of new programmes and/or new centres could be more strategic and proactive. Although the circumstances were different and not of equal severity, in both cases initial validation events led to conditions relating to matters such as accommodation and teaching resources. BIMM responded to the conditions set in a positive, swift and rigorous manner and the conditions were met before delivery commenced. Students subsequently recruited to the new programmes/centre were not disadvantaged and reported a positive experience.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that BIMM meets Criterion B.

Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff

There is strength in core BIMM staff who show a good understanding of, and commitment to, quality and standards, and student experience. Academic staff have practical knowledge and experience of the music industry that is valued by students, and BIMM has put effort into designing and delivering a Postgraduate Certificate to meet the needs of industry professionals moving into higher education teaching, which is valued by staff. Teaching observation and student feedback is used effectively to ensure teaching is fit for purpose. A range of staff development opportunities is available, and some opportunities for research are provided and supported.

The proportion of staff with higher degrees, and the proportion of staff who are active researchers, are relatively low. There are opportunities for research, but examples relate primarily to pedagogical research, with currently limited discipline-focused research. BIMM is taking steps to address the position, but change will take time, and this has implications for the ability of BIMM to offer wider provision at master's level. Quite a high proportion of academic staff are fractional or hourly paid, and while the staff body is relatively stable, this

has some implications for the coherence of the academic community. In general terms, BIMM has taken some steps to encourage staff to engage in research and undertake relevant external engagements, but it is in the early stages of collecting and reviewing data in these areas and setting goals to increase participation.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that BIMM meets Criterion C.

The environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes

Academic and professional staff work in an integrated and coordinated manner to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the learning and teaching infrastructure. Enhancements to learning and teaching are promoted through: clearly articulated institutional goals supported by college-specific action plans; a well-received developmental teaching observation scheme; and opportunities to share good and innovative practice through tutor development days; support for teaching and learning projects; and an annual institute-wide learning and teaching conference.

BIMM makes good use of student-related data to identify enhancements to provision, support decision-making and to make interventions to address concerns. However, it accepts that it has found it a challenge to meet the demands on alternative providers to report to an increasing number of external agencies. It has taken prompt action to identify the weaknesses and to strengthen its data analysis and reporting capacity.

BIMM has well organised and effective arrangements for obtaining feedback from students, staff, employers and other stakeholders. Students are actively engaged in quality assurance and enhancement, although there is scope to extend student membership to some committees. There is an unremitting focus on the quality of the student experience from first contact, application, enrolment and induction, through the range of career-related activities available within and outside the curriculum, and after graduation through its alumni network. BIMM's knowledge of and connections to the music industry are extensive and are put to good use for the benefit of students. Student support arrangements are highly attuned to the needs of the students. The development of a periodic review process, planned for implementation in 2018-19, incorporates a review of support services and will provide a formal and systematic way of assessing the effectiveness of these services.

BIMM is aware of the need to address the concerns of students in relation to feedback on assessment and the timely provision of adequate learning resources. Actions include helping students to understand what constitutes feedback, providing a stock of core texts and investing in its electronic library. The team identified some weaknesses in BIMM's capacity to identify and plan the provision of physical resources required for new academic developments prior to approval but were nonetheless given assurance by BIMM of the need to strengthen resource planning. BIMM has a commitment to equality of opportunity but it has only just recognised the need to monitor formally the impact of its policies.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that BIMM meets Criterion D.

Privy Council's decision

The Privy Council's decision is to grant BIMM Limited renewable taught degree awarding powers for a six-year term beginning on 14 March 2019 and expiring on 13 March 2025.

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the work and findings of the scrutiny team (the team appointed by QAA to review in detail the evidence submitted in support of an application for taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) by the British and Irish Modern Music Institute Limited).

The application was considered by QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) in February 2017, when the Committee agreed to proceed to the detailed scrutiny of the application. The team appointed to conduct the detailed scrutiny comprised Professor Peter Bush, Professor Susan Blake, Mr James Perkins, Ms Sarah Riches (scrutiny team members) and Ms Helen Uglow (secretary). The detailed scrutiny was managed on behalf of QAA by Mr Alan Weale, Quality Manager.

The detailed scrutiny began in May 2017, culminating in a report to ACDAP in September 2018. In the course of the scrutiny, the team read a wide range of documents presented in support of the application. The team also spoke to a range of stakeholders and observed meetings and events pertinent to the application.

Key information about the British and Irish Modern Music Institute Limited

The British and Irish Modern Music Institute Limited (BIMM) is an independent provider of popular music and performing arts education ultimately owned by Sovereign Capital Partners (SCP), the non-executive Chairman, a non-executive director and the Executive Management Team and is governed by the BIMM TopCo Limited Board which has specific responsibility for the determination of the educational character and mission of the institution.

BIMM is part of the wider British and Irish Modern Music Institute, which includes BIMM Institute Dublin, BIMM Institute Berlin and BIMM Institute Hamburg. On gaining TDAP the intention is for BIMM to validate the courses offered by BIMM Institute Berlin and BIMM Institute Hamburg; however, BIMM Institute Dublin will continue its existing franchise partnership with Dublin Institute of Technology. Throughout the body of this report, where reference to 'BIMM' is made, this refers to The British and Irish Modern Music Institute Limited. Individual component sites or institutes are referred to as colleges.

BIMM is the wholly-owned subsidiary that is designated for student finance by the Department for Education and operates as a single institution with five colleges in England: BIMM Institute Brighton, BIMM Institute Bristol, BIMM Institute London, BIMM Institute Manchester, and BIMM Institute Birmingham which opened in October 2017. During the period of the scrutiny BIMM has expanded its curricula into the wider performing arts sector through the acquisition of Bird Studios to create the Brighton Institute for Contemporary Theatre Training (BRICCTT) and which is wholly incorporated into BIMM Institute Brighton.

BIMM's mission is to 'to provide students with the best opportunity to achieve a sustainable career in the music and broader creative arts industries'.

BIMM presents its distinctive offer to students as that of a vocational and relevant learning environment that immerses students in the regional and national creative industries through contact with staff who are deeply connected to those industries, and who are also qualified as academics and educators. The BIMM curriculum is focused on a vocational ethos, which aims to provide disciplinary knowledge and skills, while also developing each student's

academic abilities. BIMM's awarding body partnerships have been in place with the University of West London since 1995, the University of Sussex since 2003 and with Bath Spa University since 2008. BIMM has completed the move to a single awarding body, the University of Sussex and is in a transition period that should be completed by the Summer of 2019.

BIMM has a total of 5,129 students across all five colleges and employs 448 staff of whom 194 occupy permanent full-time leadership, management, support or administrative posts at college or Group level supported by 86 part-time staff (FTE 50). There are 158 staff employed in fractional course-level management posts (course leaders, module leaders and heads of curriculum departments). In total, 315 staff are engaged in academic leadership, management or teaching roles on either an employment contract or in the case of teaching-only staff, on a freelance basis.

Detailed scrutiny against taught degree awarding powers criteria

A Governance and academic management

Criterion A1

An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers is governed, managed and administered effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities. Its financial management is sound, and a clear relationship exists between its financial policy and the safeguarding of the quality and standards of its higher education provision. In the case of an organisation that is not primarily a higher education institution, its principal activities are compatible with the provision of higher education programmes and awards.

Financial planning, quality assurance, and resource allocation policies are coherent and relate to the organisation's higher education mission, aims and objectives

1 BIMM's mission is to provide students with the best opportunities to achieve a sustainable career in the music and broader creative arts industries. Securing taught degree awarding powers (TDAP), enhancing BIMM's position as a market leader for popular music education, particularly for students seeking a career in music and the wider creative industries, and improving student progression and achievement rates are among the six aims of the 2016-17 Strategic Plan. This plan develops the earlier focus on increasing BIMM's market share at its then core locations (Brighton, Bristol and London), extending its curriculum range within the performing arts sector, and expanding its operations into Dublin, Manchester and Berlin. BIMM has subsequently opened BIMM Institute Birmingham; expanded its curricula into the wider performing arts sector by acquiring Bird Studios and creating the Brighton Institute for Contemporary Theatre Training (BRICTT); secured validation and site approval for the related development of a BA (Hons) Performing Arts by the University of Sussex; and extended its work in Germany. The overall Strategic Plan and agreed annual priorities are discussed by the BIMM TopCo Board, with delivery delegated to the Executive Management Group (EMG).

2 The Director of Finance, working closely with the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Institution (CEO), has oversight of financial planning and monitoring in implementing the financial priorities of the Board including the detailed annual budget-setting. In late 2016 Sovereign Capital Partners (SCP) confirmed investment in BIMM Limited for a further extended period and the ownership structure was changed from SCP Fund II to SCP Partners Fund IV. In overseeing BIMM's strategy, the Board plans capital expenditure for the estate and responds to additional capital requirements as they emerge, although action relating to the configuration and increase of space associated with the acquisition of other organisations has been more reactive than strategic.

3 Financial considerations play a key role in EMG and TopCo Board considerations of a range of capital and investment projects. The annual budget-setting process is lengthy and is based largely on current and anticipated student numbers and their staffing implications, involving discussions by College Management Teams (CMTs), the Senior Management Group (SMG) comprising the two Executive Principals (who each have executive oversight for a number of BIMM colleges), College Principals and Heads of BIMM Group central services. EMG considers a draft budget prior to approval at the TopCo Board in August, amended subsequently on the finalisation of actual student numbers. TopCo Board receives detailed financial statements at each meeting together with each college's profit and loss positions, overheads, balance sheet and cash-flow data as well as the financial

implications of new developments. At local levels, CMTs regularly monitor college use of resources while the Academic Resource Group (ARG) advises the Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) of the Academic Board on enhancing physical learning resources, the virtual learning environment (VLE) and special projects.

4 BIMM's quality assurance arrangements are discussed under the section of this report covering Criterion B. The Board considers comprehensive reports on academic matters from the Provost, including detailed minutes of the most recent Academic Board. It reviews the contractual arrangements with awarding bodies, the outcomes of validation events, including financial consequences of panel outcomes, and the budgetary implications of student progression and retention.

Higher education mission and associated policies and systems are understood and applied consistently both by those connected with the delivery of the organisation's higher education programmes and, where appropriate, by students

5 The Strategic Plan is available to all staff and students through the VLE linked to the BIMM website. The delivery and monitoring of the strategic plan is the prime responsibility of the EMG overseen by TopCo Board. The Academic Board and its subcommittees, Boards of Studies and local CMTs (see paragraph 8) develop and implement policies and strategies designed to provide appropriate learning and career opportunities for students that match BIMM's educational objectives.

6 BIMM's reporting lines and the delineation of executive and academic responsibilities have reinforced the commonality of institution-wide arrangements. The establishment in 2017 of the SMG reporting directly to EMG (see paragraph 11) has facilitated a more direct channel of communication between College Principals, central services staff and EMG. The scrutiny team noted opportunities for considering information from senior managers and academic committees in various college forums such as CMTs, Boards of Studies and Higher Education Group meetings. Students are represented on College Student Representative Forums (SRFs), Boards of Studies, the LTEC, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and the Academic Board.

7 Staff were generally aware of BIMM strategic priorities, particularly regarding TDAP, the opening of new centres and the expansion into other areas of the performing arts. Part-time and associate staff were less aware but acknowledged that local academic leaders supported and advised them on key academic policies and operational matters. While students were not as familiar with TDAP or the processes involved with it, they spoke positively of their support for BIMM as a degree-awarding body.

There is a clarity of function and responsibility at all levels in the organisation in relation to its governance structures and systems for managing its higher education provision

8 In preparing for its TDAP application, during 2016 BIMM's then governing body undertook a review of governance noting relevant sector-led guidance and the advice of external consultants. New governance arrangements were formally adopted by the TopCo Board in January 2017. These reconstituted the Board, revised the membership of the Audit, Nomination and Remuneration subcommittees, established the already existing Academic Board formally as a subcommittee of the Board and introduced an internal audit function. There are four inter-linked organisational systems within BIMM: TopCo Board and its subcommittees, including the Academic Board; the EMG, led by the CEO; the Academic Board with its subcommittees including college Boards of Studies; and the CMTs at each of BIMM's colleges, which report directly to the SMG.

9 TopCo Board has overall responsibility for strategic, commercial and financial governance including the educational character and mission of BIMM. It comprises a non-executive chair, an investment Director representing SCP, three senior non-executive Directors, one from the music industry, one with global commercial branding experience, and one with a senior academic leadership background, and two executive Directors, (the CEO and Director of Finance). Agendas include detailed reports from the CEO, the Director of Finance, the Provost, and the Marketing and Admissions Director; other EMG members attend as appropriate to lead pre-scheduled discussions on strategic topics. Discussions are well informed, and reports and proposals from the CEO and Director of Finance are rigorously challenged by non-executive Board members. TopCo Board maintains oversight of academic affairs through receipt of minutes of the Academic Board and reports on academic matters from the Chair of Academic Board (who is also a non-executive member of TopCo Board) and the Provost, including updates on the progress of the TDAP scrutiny and proposals for post-TDAP operating arrangements.

10 The Audit Committee is responsible for establishing a framework of accountability, reviewing all control methods, including the risk register (see paragraphs 25 and 26) and recommending the appointment of internal and external auditors. Meeting twice a year, Audit Committee is conducted professionally and effectively with advice from the CEO, Director of Finance, the Provost and the external audit firms. Remuneration Committee's prime role, meeting annually, is to determine the remuneration of the Chair (in the Chair's absence) and of EMG members. Remuneration Committee minutes for November 2017 accurately reflected the Committee's role although the TopCo Board minutes do not record that Remuneration Committee met nor that its minutes are circulated in confidence to non-executive Board members. The Nominations Committee, chaired by the Chair of the Board, appears effectively to meet its key roles of recommending to the TopCo Board the appointment or re-appointment of Board and subcommittee members and managing the membership process.

11 The EMG comprises the CEO, Director of Finance (who has assumed the role of Executive Principal for Brighton and London), the Business Development and Creative Careers Director, the Provost, the Marketing and Admissions Director, and the Executive Principal for Birmingham, Bristol, Dublin and Manchester. Meeting monthly, it reports to the Board mainly on strategic, financial, business development and student recruitment and marketing activities. Formally designated a TopCo Board subcommittee in 2018, EMG is action orientated, although its papers and notes are detailed and comprehensive. It receives reports from the Executive Principals who alternately chair the SMG. In receiving reports from the fortnightly CMTs, chaired by College Principals and including heads of academic, administrative and support departments, SMG is well informed, able to share best practice, advise EMG of issues within colleges, and to update on progress implementing BIMM policies and decisions.

12 Academic Board's main duties are to have strategic oversight of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for all BIMM Institute colleges, to recommend to EMG and TopCo Board proposals for new course developments, and to oversee BIMM's academic preparations for TDAP. It has wide powers of delegation and is responsible for establishing and receiving minutes and reports from subcommittees, namely LTEC, QAC, the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC), and the Module and Programme Assessment Boards (MABs, PABs). This structure provides institute-wide arrangements to oversee academic quality and standards on a consistently applied and understood BIMM-wide basis. The composition and terms of reference of Academic Board and its subcommittees were reviewed in summer 2018 with College Principals joining the Board and the College Heads of Education joining the LTEC and QAC. The TopCo Board non-executive Director with senior academic leadership experience was appointed as Academic Board Chair in January 2017, bringing experienced external expertise to

Academic Board and because the most appropriate internal member had a possible conflict of interest as a holder of equity in the company. College Higher Education Boards of Studies, chaired by the College Head of Education, with student and staff representation, report directly to LTEC.

13 BIMM's overall governance arrangements are clear and well understood. The scrutiny team notes the very detailed papers, usually including executive summaries, prepared in advance of all the meetings in the four systems referred to above, and the meticulous recording of minutes and detailed action reports. TopCo Board is effective, is well supported by the diligent CEO and Director of Finance in advising on risk and control issues and is appropriately informed on academic matters through receipt of equally detailed Academic Board minutes and comprehensive written and oral reports from the Provost. Though TopCo Board membership is highly relevant to the mission of BIMM, its small size notwithstanding the recent appointment of an additional non-executive member might in the future challenge the capacity of the Board, given its detailed monthly meetings. It will wish to assure itself of the continued robustness of the independence of the advice it receives from its subcommittees, given the inevitable overlap of the external membership among these. The inclusion within its membership of a staff member involved with the running of programmes and a student representative would bring to the Board wider experience of the teaching and learning environment at BIMM.

There is depth and strength of academic leadership across the whole of the organisation's higher education provision

14 Senior academic leadership is delivered through the EMG, primarily through the Provost, who leads the Academic Development and Quality Assurance team (ADQA), the Dean of Higher Education, College Principals and Heads of Education at the BIMM Institute colleges, and the Academic Board and its subcommittees (see paragraphs 11 and 12).

15 The six EMG members offer complementary experience. The CEO, Director of Finance/Executive Principal and the Marketing and Admissions Director have senior high profile commercial and financial backgrounds. The Provost (the Deputy Chair of the Academic Board, who chairs the TDAP Implementation Group), and the Business Development and Careers Director are qualified at level 7 or above and have experienced senior academic leadership roles in BIMM with senior level experience in other cognate higher education institutions. The Executive Principal has considerable experience of senior academic and management leadership within BIMM. The Board receives well-informed inputs from its non-executive experienced external academic who chairs the Academic Board. BIMM's awarding bodies are reassured by the recruitment of appropriate staff to senior positions, their relevant qualifications and the experience of ADQA staff who have significant institutional liaison roles and have contributed to the awarding bodies' own quality assurance work.

16 Oversight of each of the BIMM colleges is provided by the CMTs, chaired by the College Principal and including the Head of Education and heads of academic, administrative and support departments. CMTs report to SMG, chaired alternately by the Executive Principals who are responsible for the development of the College Principals. The scrutiny team recognises the College Principals as an increasingly able, well-respected and effective layer in the management structure, developing academic leadership authority as well as managing their particular college. College Principals attend Academic Board and College Boards of Studies, working closely with the Heads of Education, who normally chair the latter, and operate to a cross BIMM Group agenda.

17 Receiving reports from its three subcommittees (see paragraph 12) which include senior college academic staff and student representatives, Academic Board is well-informed

on the broader higher education environment through the Chair, a highly experienced external senior academic, the Provost and the Dean of Higher Education. The scrutiny team observed well-informed discussion and debate at Academic Board, noting valuable contributions from non-executive staff and students' representatives.

The organisation develops, implements and communicates its academic policies and systems in collaboration with those responsible for the delivery of its higher education programmes, and with relevant stakeholders

18 BIMM operates effective measures which ensures that its mission, policies and systems are developed and widely understood by its key stakeholders. These include greater alignment of college and departmental structures into consistent BIMM group-wide arrangements, the availability on the website of all BIMM's policies and procedures through the ADQA Manual, BIMM's engagement with students, and the organisation's close links with the popular music industry and its key professionals.

19 The report of the 2016 QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) commended BIMM on the 'extensive use of the music industry practitioners in course design and development'. Industry Advisory Panels play significant roles in programme development and on internal validation panels, a feature commended by one of its awarding institutions. Additionally, BIMM's part-time tutors are mainly experienced music industry practitioners, which further facilitates collaboration with stakeholders in the design and development of courses.

Academic policies, systems and activities are monitored and reviewed, and appropriate and timely action is taken when deficiencies are identified

20 BIMM's academic policies are monitored and reviewed by Academic Board on a four-yearly cycle, with an initial review at the end of the first year of operation; policies are date-stamped at approval, a process overseen by the Academic Registrar. All policies are published in the ADQA Manual, which is publicly available. The last full review of all academic policies was undertaken in mid-2016 and approved by Academic Board in December 2016 partly to ensure that all BIMM's academic policies and procedures were aligned with the current legal and regulatory higher education landscape.

21 Academic Board approved revisions to the current University of Sussex regulations in September 2017 following agreement to transfer all programmes to that degree-awarding body. In June 2017, Academic Board approved changes to the moderation and sampling policies for external examiners to coincide with this transfer. The scrutiny team regarded as significant the June 2017 Academic Board's discussion and approval of the comprehensive, and professionally developed and presented, post-TDAP course approval and periodic review handbooks and in March 2018, the post-TDAP BIMM Calendar, Regulatory Framework and Academic Regulations, and the policy for the recognition of prior learning.

Higher education activities take full account of relevant legislation, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and associated guidance

22 BIMM ensures its activities take account of the current higher education environment through the clear briefings of the TopCo Board, Academic Board and their subcommittees, EMG and SMG primarily from the CEO, Director of Finance, the Provost and its external professional consultancy firms. BIMM Limited subscribes to the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA), the Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and is an active member of GuildHE and Advance HE (HEA). More recently the EMG submitted BIMM's Gender Pay Gap to government.

23 The 2016 report of the QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) confirmed that BIMM met the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), commending it on the quality of student learning opportunities. Programme approval and review documentation, and programme approval events, demonstrate the Institution's awareness and application of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), relevant Qualification and Subject Benchmark Statements, and, more generally, a comprehensive understanding of the issues relating to course approval and review. BIMM comprehensively mapped its quality assurance arrangements against the Quality Code in 2016 and disseminated the Code to staff.

24 Staff are well informed on legislative and higher education policies generally through a combination of Higher Education and CMT meetings at local levels, regular reports from Heads of Education, by the complementary staff representation on Academic Board and its three subcommittees and the easily accessible ADQA Manual. Academic Board members, who disseminate information to colleagues, welcomed the series of presentations, usually led by ADQA colleagues, on sector-wide matters.

Academic risk and change management strategies are effective

25 In January 2017 the TopCo Board implemented the recommendation of the internal corporate review (see paragraph 10) to record and review risk more formally through the establishment of a risk register. This replaced the previous practice whereby the former BIMM Board (now TopCo Board) was alerted to a variety of risks through the monthly reports and mitigation proposals from the CEO and Director of Finance. TopCo Board delegated to the Audit Committee powers to approve and regularly consider a risk register, (prepared by the Director of Finance), advising the Board of its deliberations as part of its normal business cycle.

26 Audit Committee and then TopCo Board initially considered and categorised 10 BIMM Group risks and Audit Committee added two additional risks: the quality of data returns to statutory bodies and the failure to comply with UKVI regulations. The team noted the care taken by both Audit Committee and TopCo Board in considering all elements of the risk register and in questioning the Director of Finance and the Chair of Audit Committee on the analysis of the likelihood and impact of the risks.

27 EMG and TopCo Board regularly analyse the risk elements of the business propositions, monitoring the academic and marketing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including student progression and graduation data presented at individual course, college and institution levels. These analyses led to agreed percentage targets for the BIMM Group for each measure and actions from colleges to deliver specific targets. EMG and TopCo Board additionally receive detailed analyses of application and enrolment data informing discussions on the effectiveness of admissions and marketing strategies. EMG prepares updates on the progress of BIMM's current projects, including reports to TopCo Board on the BRICTT and Birmingham initiatives, and the levels of financial, reputational and resource risks associated with a range of other projects ahead of strategic discussions with the TopCo Board.

Robust mechanisms are in place to ensure that the academic standards of the organisation's higher education awards are not put at risk

28 The awarding bodies have regularly commended BIMM on its internal quality assurance commitment and activities. BIMM's adherence to these agreements have ensured that its programmes operate within the overall academic and regulatory frameworks of the awarding institutions. These include robust and externally monitored assessment processes and outcomes to secure the standards of the universities' awards. The scrutiny team noted

the careful consideration of the accurate and timely information prepared by BIMM's support systems for MABs and the key role of the external examiners, nominated by BIMM and appointed by the University, in assisting the Boards as the guardian of academic standards. In anticipation of its receipt of TDAP, BIMM has developed a comprehensive regulatory framework based on that operating with the University of Sussex.

29 BIMM's internal quality assurance arrangements are examined in detail under the sections covering Criterion B. The events observed by the team included a review of a programme at level 7, the validation of a programme in the performing arts, and reviews of new teaching centres. The awarding body approved each of these programmes, though for the performing arts programme for a smaller cohort and for a shorter timescale than proposed to allow BIMM time to implement the space requirements of the approval panel. Given BIMM's intention to expand further in the creative industries and the awarding body's initial concerns with the proposal, the scrutiny team was reassured that the institution had learned much from the validation of the BRICCT programme, including a review of the external composition of its internal validation panels.

The organisation has the capability of managing successfully the additional responsibilities vested in it were taught degree awarding powers granted

30 The Provost, the Dean of Higher Education and the Academic Registrar have led the oversight of the TDAP process on behalf of EMG and steered through Academic Board the development of BIMM's post-TDAP academic arrangements, updating EMG and TopCo Board. TopCo Board endorsed the strategic view of Academic Board to consolidate, with effect from session 2017-18, its validated provision under a single degree-awarding institution to support BIMM's development of its own post-TDAP regulatory framework. Academic Board approved in March 2018 a comprehensive Academic Framework for adoption on the implementation of TDAP. This incorporates the principles governing all awards within the framework, detailed academic regulations, the policy and procedures for recognition of prior learning and a broad institutional calendar. Academic Board also approved a BIMM programme validation events calendar from 2018, to enable BIMM to offer its own taught awards from 2020-21. The scrutiny team believes that these comprehensive arrangements BIMM has put in place are effective for a degree-awarding body.

31 The significant levels of delegated authority BIMM receives from its degree-awarding bodies and the experience of BIMM's staff in implementing these have ensured that there are sufficient staffing resources, in terms of experience, expertise and numbers, to assume the additional post-TDAP responsibilities. The support has been strengthened by the appointment of an Academic Registrar in January 2018.

32 The scrutiny team noted positive letters of support from BIMM's awarding bodies at the beginning of the scrutiny, all of which reported their successful long-standing arrangements with BIMM and expressed their confidence in its ability to carry out effectively the responsibilities of awarding its own degrees. More recently, representatives of the degree-awarding bodies strongly endorsed these views, commenting positively on the quality and depth of BIMM staff, BIMM's commitment to its students and the care with which it undertakes all its quality assurance responsibilities. While noting the successful validation of BIMM's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education by the University of Sussex in 2018, awarding bodies doubted whether BIMM is currently adequately equipped to deliver specialist music and related programmes at level 7. BIMM has recognised this in confirming that it does not expect to teach subject-based level 7 programmes until 2022-23 at the earliest, and although work has commenced on the preparation of staff to teach at this level, there is currently no formal detailed action plan setting out a preparation strategy and stages (see also paragraphs 87 and 100).

33 On the basis of the evidence discussed above, the scrutiny team concludes that BIMM Institute has the capability of managing successfully the additional responsibilities vested in it were taught degree awarding powers granted.

B Academic standards and quality assurance

Criterion B1

An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers has in place an appropriate regulatory framework to govern the award of its higher education qualifications.

The regulatory framework governing the organisation's higher education provision (covering, for example, student admissions, progress, assessment, appeals and complaints) is appropriate to its current status and is implemented fully and consistently

34 BIMM operates within the regulatory frameworks of its three awarding bodies. The institution has developed and approved regulations designed to accommodate undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, covering admissions, credit accumulation and progression, assessment, appeals, complaints, exceptional or mitigating circumstances and academic misconduct. Decisions and changes to academic regulations, policies and procedures are shared by email, with staff reporting that they are suitably informed to implement the regulations. These frameworks are implemented fully and consistently, in partnership with key contacts from the awarding bodies.

The organisation has created in readiness a regulatory framework which will be appropriate for the granting of its own higher education awards

35 At the commencement of the scrutiny, BIMM had initiated a process to consolidate provision to one awarding body to facilitate an easier transition should they be able to award their own degrees. BIMM's awarding institutions have all confirmed that the institution is ready to grant its own awards. BIMM has developed a regulatory framework in readiness for the granting of its own higher education awards through a process of consultation and iteration, which is appropriate and demonstrates preparedness for granting its own higher education awards. In the event of degree awarding powers being conferred, BIMM intends to review this framework to ensure it remains appropriate and robust ahead of delivering its own degrees.

Criterion B2

An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for defining and securing the academic standards of its higher education provision.

Higher education awards are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the Qualification Frameworks

36 BIMM's programmes are mapped against the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, which is confirmed during approval and validation processes. Staff are made aware of the descriptors expressed within the FHEQ during induction and through online resources. BIMM is diligent in its use of, and reference to, the FHEQ during the development and review of curricula, regulations and marking criteria, and also in confirming student performance in relation to the corresponding levels.

Management of its higher education provision takes appropriate account of the Quality Code, characteristics statements; credit frameworks; relevant Subject Benchmark Statements; and the requirements of any relevant professional and statutory bodies

37 BIMM is self-critical in its approach to the Quality Code. The role of the ADQA team across BIMM is focused on ensuring that quality assurance and enhancement processes adhere to the expectations of the Quality Code. The development of its own periodic review process makes explicit reference to the Quality Code and gives assurance that the Institute's recently developed regulatory framework aligns to the expectations of the Code. The regulatory framework proposed for BIMM's own awards is designed in accordance with, and makes explicit reference to, the higher education credit framework for England, including a 1:10 ratio of credits to notional learning hours, and European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS) equivalence.

38 Programme documentation demonstrates how modules and intended student outcomes are designed in alignment with Subject Benchmark Statements. While one awarding body expressed concern about the preparedness of BIMM to develop and deliver curriculum outside of its existing areas of expertise, BIMM demonstrates careful consideration of mapping outside of its 'core' subject of music, as well as using related benchmarks where none exist.

39 While BIMM does not offer any provision accredited by a professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) currently, advisory panels comprised of members of industry are engaged within colleges to reflect critically on the currency and relevance of programmes to industry and during the early stages of curriculum design.

In establishing, and then maintaining, comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level programmes, the organisation explicitly seeks advice from external peers and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies

40 All programmes delivered by BIMM have external examiners. Programme approval events also include external subject experts. External examiners attend progress and award boards and reflect on student performance with respect to comparability of standards with UK higher education providers. The advice and input from external examiners are widely considered, and appropriately responded to, as part of annual monitoring processes and formal academic governance, with external examiner reports made available online.

41 Detailed summaries of external examiner reports for provision at all colleges are provided annually to Academic Board. As part of the move towards a single awarding body, BIMM developed its approach to external examination through identifying lead examiners for programmes to ensure comparability of standards across colleges. Further external advice is sought across different levels of the institution. The Academic Board is chaired by an external to provide external expertise and criticality (see paragraph 15), while industry advisory panels provide advice on the relative professional standards developed through the Institute's provision. The arrangements within BIMM currently do, and are likely to continue to, provide appropriate levels of academic and professional externality, and external examiner reports are likely to continue to be used rigorously, as detailed within the proposed regulations.

Programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements are robust, applied consistently, have at all levels a broadly based external dimension and take appropriate account of the specific requirements of different levels of award and different modes of delivery

42 BIMM has developed its own programme approval, monitoring and review processes, while currently operating those of its awarding institutions. Programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements are detailed within the ADQA Manual. A four-stage process involves outline approval by LTEC, approval by the awarding body, an internal approval event and an external approval/validation event. External assessors are involved in stages two and four, and internal panel members are given a particular focus on the proposed curriculum in relation to BIMM's curriculum framework(s) and, through their design, national frameworks and standards. LTEC has been supported by the Curriculum Steering Group in the 'task and finish' aspects of moving towards a single awarding body. LTEC is effective in overseeing programme approval during the pre-TDAP validation schedule, with a particular focus on monitoring validation outcomes. Programme approval of the BA (Hons) Performing Arts programme included appropriate consideration of the robustness of the programme's academic offer, the relative standards and resource provision. Internal approval for the Postgraduate Certificate followed a similarly robust process, with the outcome reports highlighting all the areas expected under the Quality Code. Centre-level approval, like that of BRICCTT, is considered also by EMG. The ADQA team is currently in a process of developing support and training for staff less experienced in programme design.

43 Programmes are monitored annually through annual monitoring reports (AMRs). Course and college reports include consideration of external examiner comments, numbers and/or outcomes of appeals and complaints, with Student Services contributing to their development. Reports are considered at QAC, which plays an important role in the AMR process, notably through its active and detailed monitoring of progress against actions throughout the year, on which it reports regularly to Academic Board. While LTEC 'owns' the course/centre approvals processes, QAC keeps an overview of the quality assurance aspects of these activities, as well as receiving updates on AMR action plans at each meeting.

44 BIMM programmes are currently subject to periodic review from its awarding bodies, the outcomes of which are received by QAC. BIMM demonstrates confidence in engaging with periodic review processes. In readiness for TDAP, an institutional periodic review process and handbook has been approved, designed with reference to the Quality Code, with outcomes considered by committees within the academic governance structure.

45 Programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements allow for appropriate levels of scrutiny to be provided at all stages, with reference to the specific requirements of different levels of award. At present, only one programme is not delivered full-time to undergraduate students, with differentiation of experience facilitated through multi-site delivery.

There is an explicit and close relationship between academic planning and decisions on resource allocation

46 Responsibility for academic planning and decisions on resource allocation lies ultimately with the EMG, who set academic priorities in relation to the funding allocated by TopCo Board. BIMM's growth is managed at the executive level, and estates provision within BIMM (and by extension each college within) is monitored in relation to capacity. This process is transparent for both staff and students.

47 During the scrutiny period, reorganisation of the leadership structure has resulted in some minimal change to the way in which academic planning and resource allocation

decisions are made; however, the fundamental principles have been retained. These changes included the creation of a single SMG, which the team recognised as improving cross-organisational oversight. Physical resource needs are planned on an annual and periodic basis. Annual budgeting is informed by expected progression in relation to UCAS data, with specific needs from services or academic departments fed through college-level financial planning. Annual review of programmes encourages reflection on learning resources.

48 BIMM uses student feedback to identify academic and support resource needs. Feedback is collected through annual student surveys, informal direct student feedback and through student representation on committees such as Boards of Studies. Specific actions are identified and incorporated into college-level action plans in response to the National Student Survey (NSS) to address physical and electronic resource issues, with specific contingencies built into budgets to respond to specific in-year demand.

49 The cross-institute ARG is responsible for making recommendations concerning the VLE, monitoring agreed actions in relation to improving academic learning resources, and for sharing good practice between colleges. BIMM is considering the need to differentiate learning resources such as core texts and online journals in order to adequately deliver postgraduate taught provision. While ARG is not explicitly related to academic planning, its working and oversight across BIMM indicates capacity for identification, development and implementation of the resources required for successful curriculum delivery.

50 Following the identification of some concerns about the student experience at BIMM Institute Manchester, an internal review was conducted of the existing College site. Alongside other areas addressed within the review, there was a holistic assessment of the College that identified the existing resource limitations and resulted in recommendations to address estate and resource issues.

51 BIMM experienced more challenges in relation to its BRICTT developments. Following acquisition of Bird Studios to establish BRICTT, a protracted approval process was undertaken as a result of the awarding body being concerned about the suitability of the premises and expertise within the staff resource to deliver the curriculum with sufficient quality.

52 Conditions were set in respect of the delivery at the BRICTT site that included the need to provide suitable large teaching spaces and establishing a resource centre for student computer access. Recommendations included planning for the eventuality of full cohort intakes. BIMM had met all the recommendations and requirements of its internal processes and engaged in rigorous and detailed discussions with the Sussex panel. Following ongoing engagement with the awarding body, BIMM was approved for delivery of the Performing Arts programmes (see also paragraph 92).

53 Similarly, the scrutiny team observed a centre approval from the University of Sussex for the operation of an already validated suite of music programmes at its new Birmingham Centre; this was approved, with one of the approved programmes having a limited cohort intake to allow BIMM to complete its programme of specialist physical expansion. BIMM was careful in its attention to detail, its preparation of high quality paperwork and its swift and positive responses to the recommendations and conditions of both internal and external validation panels.

54 Students on the new programme were broadly positive about their experience and recognised the benefits (such as the high levels of individualised support and access to resources) and challenges, which had been experienced in the first year of a new programme. For example, in Birmingham one-off expenditure was required to provide off-site

facilities due to anticipated shortages, though a regional partnership with the established BIMM Institute Manchester provided support and guidance in getting the Birmingham operation established.

Criterion B3

The education provision of an organisation granted taught degree awarding powers consistently meets its stated learning objectives and achieves its intended outcomes.

Strategies for learning and assessment are consistent with stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes

55 BIMM's Learning and Teaching Strategy, overseen by LTEC, relates to both learning and assessment. The strategy's aims are to provide high quality teaching and support for students, addressing differentiated needs for all learners; assessment is intended to inform day-to-day learning and teaching. Academic Board (through and with LTEC) drives enhancements to learning and assessment opportunities in support of this strategy. Students reflected positively on the relationship between programme objectives, learning and assessment.

Relevant staff are informed of, and provided with guidance on, its policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review

56 BIMM's policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review are contained within an electronically published manual (the ADQA Manual), available to all staff. Changes to policies and procedures are cascaded through academic governance and team meetings, and staff can also access these online through central committee minutes. External examiners are provided with bespoke guidance on these procedures. The ADQA team provides effective direct support to relevant staff in executing its responsibilities for programme design, monitoring and review through a central, coordinated tutor development plan. The Curriculum Steering Group facilitated identification of additional training needs to support less experienced staff through their engagement with these processes. The team was assured that staff are informed of (and are aware of how to) find guidance and policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review.

Responsibility for amending or improving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action is carefully monitored

57 New programme proposals are submitted by course development teams who are responsible for responding to conditions and recommendations arising from internal and external approval events. Outcomes of these events are documented and reported through LTEC to Academic Board and the Curriculum Steering Group. LTEC oversees and monitors progress on addressing recommendations effectively, while individual Boards of Studies are active in ensuring responses are made to new programme proposals. Responsibility is clearly assigned, with related policies in this area reviewed to ensure they remain valid.

Coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways is secured and maintained

58 Conceptually, the move to a single awarding body has created alternative pathways through the approach taken to localise single programmes at each individual college. The salience of this is further emphasised through plans to enable easier movement of students between different sites of delivery. Developing the external examination processes to ensure parity between institutions provides a robust means of maintaining coherence.

Further, the Curriculum Steering Group is effective in commanding consistency in approaches between different colleges (see paragraph 86).

Close links are maintained between learning support services and the organisation's programme planning, approval, monitoring and review arrangements

59 The ARG membership includes academic and support staff from across BIMM, providing an effective forum to share practice and identify enhancements as part of the academic review of programmes. The Heads of Student Services manage learning support services, report to CMTs and contribute to discussions concerning programme planning, approval, monitoring and review within site-specific meetings (such as Boards of Studies). The move to a constituency-based model of representation on cross-institute committees has retained membership of a representative Head of Student Services. As a result, student support has been identified as a strength both within and external to the organisation. Staff from learning support services engage proactively and reactively to programme development and review.

Robust arrangements exist for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those students that may be studying at a distance from the organisation are adequate

60 BIMM does not deliver programmes by distance learning. The ARG is responsible for collating feedback and practice with regard to the VLE to support student access to resources off-site. The group maintains effective oversight across BIMM to ensure that resources provided through the VLE are appropriate and support curriculum delivery.

61 Students benefit from work placements available to second and third year undergraduates and these were identified as good practice during the 2016 QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers). Work-based learning is supported through Careers and Industry teams within colleges. Students reflected positively on the strong support structures in place to facilitate work experience within and outside the curriculum. All work-based learning is governed by policies and procedures, developed by the Careers and Industry team and approved by Academic Board. These policies are included in the ADQA manual. All placements are supported by a learning agreement that has to be signed off by the relevant module leader and all students are covered by employers' and public liability insurances.

62 BIMM reflected that providing enough placements to students is a challenge; however, placement provision is identified by students as a strength across all colleges. Some placements are offered to other colleges where this is geographically more suitable for students. A central log of all careers and industry-related projects is maintained, and placements are discussed as part of industry forums, and within the SMG. The team was satisfied that there is parity of opportunity for placement across all colleges.

Through its planning, approval, review and assessment practices, the organisation defines, monitors, reviews and maintains its academic standards

63 BIMM's programme approval procedures require the definition of academic standards with reference to appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ. At present, internal approval procedures confirm a proposal's readiness for submission to the awarding body while identifying any recommendations to enhance the proposal. BIMM programmes have undergone external approval and this process has confirmed that programme proposals meet threshold academic standards, which was soundly evidenced during the scrutiny.

64 Annual programme monitoring incorporates reflection on student performance and on external examiner reports in relation to academic standards. Actions were found to be

appropriately framed and are reported and monitored at college and group level in relation to matters of academic standards. Periodic review and revalidation processes, presently owned and operated by the awarding bodies, further ensure that academic standards are maintained. Consideration of programme development by Curriculum Steering Group demonstrates robust internal scrutiny of standards.

65 BIMM currently monitors, reviews and maintains the academic standards of its programmes. The academic framework proposed for post-TDAP is designed to appropriately assure standards through programme approval and review.

Assessment criteria and practices are communicated clearly to students and staff

66 Assessment criteria and marking schemes are made available to staff through the ADQA Manual and staff are trained and supported in assessment. Programme specifications and student handbooks provide a definitive point of reference for staff and students, communicating assessment criteria and practices. Students are confident that BIMM makes every effort to ensure assessment criteria and practices are understood. Clear assessment briefs are provided, and BIMM demonstrates appropriate efforts to ensure that these are consistent and adhere strictly to the definitive programme specifications. Staff and students have been consulted, within colleges and through group-wide academic committees, on proposals to transfer to a categorical marking scheme (implemented from the 2017-18 academic year), as well as in discussions concerning generic marking criteria, resulting in approval and subsequent incorporation into the post-TDAP regulatory framework.

Assessment practices fully cover all declared learning objectives, learning outcomes and modes of delivery

67 The proposed academic regulations assign responsibility for designing and setting assessment to relevant Heads of Education, course and module leaders, and in accordance with course specifications and internal quality assurance guidelines. Within the ADQA Manual, assessment is identified as being integral to course design, and requiring direct relation to course aims and learning outcomes. External examiner reports seek confirmation of the alignment of learning outcomes, with respect to both the full-time undergraduate and part-time postgraduate taught provision. Annual monitoring, through reflection on external examiner reports, student outcomes and, as well as critical self-reflection as part of ongoing enhancement of provision, provides a holistic opportunity for BIMM to confirm the validity of assessment practices. BIMM staff demonstrated critical review and evaluation of the efficacy of assessment practices during periodic review, which took full account of external examiner reports and evaluations by students. Summaries of external examiner reports are also considered in detail by Academic Board; for instance, in 2016-17, all external examiners confirmed 'Assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended course and module learning outcomes'.

Appropriately qualified external peers are engaged in the organisation's assessment processes and consistency is maintained between internal and external examiners' marking

68 External examiners are engaged to assure academic standards are maintained and that assessment processes are rigorous and fair, as well as acting as critical friends. A log of external examiners is maintained, which details the higher education institutions from which they are appointed. BIMM values the expertise and qualifications of their external examiners, which form part of the criteria for nominations. They also highlighted the importance of engaging appropriately qualified and experienced examiner appointments when entering new disciplinary areas. QAC is responsible for confirming examiner recommendations/nominations to awarding institutions.

69 Appropriately qualified or experienced external peers also form the membership of industry advisory panels, as well as programme validation and periodic review panels. There is widespread use of external peers to ensure assessment processes are consistent.

The reliability and validity of the organisation's assessment procedures are monitored, and its assessment outcomes inform future programme and student planning

70 Assessment procedures are approved and overseen by Academic Board. External examiners are asked to confirm the validity of assessment procedures in their reports and through active participation during assessment board and progress meetings. Academic Board is supported by other committees (QAC and LTEC) in ensuring procedures are reliable and valid through receiving external examiner reports and responses (QAC) and through creating actions to address concerns as part of annual monitoring processes (LTEC). New staff are trained to engage in assessment (see paragraph 91).

71 Assessment outcomes are considered within colleges at Boards of Studies, with overall consideration of progression and outcomes also provided at senior management levels. Boards of Studies ensure assessments are conducted in accordance with agreed course requirements. MABs and PABs operate in accordance with described procedures, and with sufficient focus on the reliability and validity of assessment processes and outcomes. BIMM is well aware of the need to maintain parity of assessments and assessment practice across the colleges and in order to enhance this are proposing to appoint examiners to courses delivered across BIMM rather than to courses at individual colleges.

Clear mechanisms are in place for use when a decision is taken to close a programme or programme element, and in doing so, students' interests are safeguarded

72 Decisions to close programmes or elements are made in consultation with BIMM's awarding bodies, and in such an event, BIMM is committed to ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in any way. Consideration is given to the management of resources and the impact on other provision, as well as following statutory and sector guidance. BIMM proposes that Academic Board be responsible for making such decisions in the event of TDAP being awarded, though this is not explicitly detailed in the approved regulatory and policy frameworks.

73 During the scrutiny period, no programmes were closed although provision was consolidated to a single awarding body and therefore there was teaching out of provision. BIMM demonstrated a robust approach to safeguarding student interests through its engagements with the awarding bodies and were proactive in the planning and preparation of these transitional arrangements in college-based and institute-wide committees. This included the development of detailed exit strategies and teach-out arrangements, as well as tracking the impact on student satisfaction through surveys.

Criterion B4

An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers takes effective action to promote strengths and respond to identified limitations.

Critical self-assessment is integral to the operation of the organisation's higher education provision and action is taken in response to matters raised through internal or external monitoring and review

74 BIMM sees itself as a self-critical institution at all levels, with senior staff expressing the view that criticality is integral to how it operates. Strategic direction and KPIs are set by the TopCo Board, with quarterly reports on progress, and targets fed down through the committee structure. Alignment between committees has been improved, for example to make clear the role of Boards of Studies in colleges and to clarify responsibilities for action. Some KPIs are now set at course level, for example in relation to progression and NSS satisfaction scores. The academic and quality committee structure provides for centralised oversight of all internal and external monitoring and review processes, with information fed up from separate colleges, and fed back as appropriate through reports and minutes. There are also lines for personal responsibility.

75 To provide a sound basis for critical self-assessment, AMRs comment on points raised in programme and student committee minutes, feedback forms, NSS data and external examiner reports, and draw on centrally provided data on student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement. AMR outcomes are collated into an overall institutional AMR Action Plan by the ADQA team, which is considered by QAC and then approved by Academic Board. An overall BIMM AMR Action Plan is maintained by the Academic Registrar and monitored by QAC. AMR Action Plans are discussed in a range of meetings, including at Higher Education Management Group and Board of Studies. AMR Action Plans are used by colleges to prioritise academic and learning resource development and enhancement, alongside the College Enhancement Action Plans. The team saw a wide range of AMR Action Plans and College Action Plans, with effective monitoring, and many examples of actions being taken effectively, for example in relation to external examiner comments and student requests.

76 Systematic periodic review and reapproval processes include critical self-assessment and lead to the identification of actions. For example, the reapproval process for the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching involved a thorough review of the programme, considering a range of data and views, and leading to a significant redesign of programme structure, delivery and assessment. At reapproval events there was active discussion about further development of the programme. BIMM considers enhancement to be part of periodic review and is beginning to develop periodic review processes to assist in sharing good practice across colleges, using best practice from its current validators.

77 Examples of self-critical action being taken in response to other external and internal stimuli include the Manchester Student Experience Review, which was carried out following rapid growth at BIMM Institute Manchester. Challenges to resourcing and staffing and declines in student satisfaction scores were reviewed robustly leading to a specification plan, and the potential for appropriate actions to be rolled out to other BIMM colleges. A constructive approach was also taken in relation to the approval of new sites and new types of provision, although the team noted some concern about the scale of actions identified at a relatively late stage. In general terms the University of Sussex expressed the view that BIMM responds to conditions in a timely and conscientious way. However, in the formal approval of the new provision with BRICCTT, the University of Sussex imposed significant conditions in relation to matters such as premises, resources and staffing. In the initial validation event for the new BIMM Institute Birmingham there were also conditions and recommendations as regards space and resourcing. In each case BIMM responded constructively and met the conditions before delivery commenced, but were TDAP to be granted, it would be important that planning for new provision was more detailed and timely (see also paragraphs 52-53 and 92).

Clear mechanisms exist for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny, monitoring and review of agreed learning objectives and intended outcomes

78 Once set through programme and course approval, oversight and review of learning objectives and intended outcomes lies with the external examining, annual monitoring and periodic review processes. Any actions relating to learning objectives and outcomes are likely to become part of the institutional action plan, overseen by LTEC, and within each college monitoring is carried out through the Board of Studies. The single academic regulatory framework established across all colleges from 2014-15 provides the framework for review and monitoring, followed by consolidation to a single awarding body. Learning objectives and outcomes were understood by staff and students met by the team with few issues arising. Specific steps have been taken to enhance the assessment process with the introduction of a single set of level-based grading criteria across all BIMM sites, the use of audio feedback, and peer assessment. There are some issues around standardising practice in relation to assessment brief guidance and how far localisation is permitted now all colleges offer University of Sussex qualifications, but BIMM is addressing such matters.

Ideas and expertise from within and outside the organisation (for example on programme design and development, on teaching and on student learning and assessment) are drawn into its arrangements for programme design, approval and review

79 BIMM values relevant expertise and builds it into institutional structures. There are significant current links with the music industry at TopCo Board and Executive Principal level, significant external academic expertise at Board level, and external research representation on REC. Should TDAP be granted, it is planned to extend externality, with appropriate external members on LTEC and QAC. Relevant industry expertise is an important criterion for the appointment of staff, and BIMM regards the community of practice of industry professionals, staff and students as a unique selling point. Staff consider currency with practice as an important part of course design and development, and their awareness of practice helps ensure students get access to industry-level facilities. Students value staff knowledge and experience of industry as enhancing both module content and student experience.

80 As regards to external expertise, BIMM sees proactive engagement with creative industries and alumni as a defining aspect of its operation. Extensive use is made of creative industry reference points at a range of levels. For new course developments and revisions, an Industry Advisory Panel (IAP) is convened to offer advice and ensure curriculum development meets industry expectations, for example in relation to the BA (Hons) Music Journalism at BIMM Institute Brighton. An external subject expert may be appointed on a consultancy basis to assist with programme development, and every course approval/reapproval or centre approval includes an academic external subject specialist. A Performing Arts IAP informs the learning, teaching and student experience more generally, and this informs course design, for example as regards the use of technology in performance. There may be consultation with the local music industry before the reapproval of a programme. There is a very active alumni community with representation on IAPs. Alumni talk to current students about their projects and there are strong connections with alumni working in the industry, which all helps to inform student experience and expectations. The BIMM Institute Creative Collaboration and Industry Links Forum (CCILF) has been established to share industry connections across the institute, and to promote opportunities for creative collaborations between the colleges, ensuring a strategic and deliberative approach on a national and regional basis.

81 There is currently no provision with PSRB accreditation, but BIMM is proud of its range of industry partnerships, including bodies such as The Performing Rights Society for

Music. BIMM also has a formal partnership with Sony Music on both its A&R Academy and its Digital Partner Development Project, and there are significant links with the Association of Independent Festivals Congress, and projects such as the Great Escape Festival in Brighton. BIMM is closely linked with a wide range of other industry bodies.

82 BIMM makes use of external academic reference points. In meeting the requirements of its three awarding bodies, BIMM has built on the best models offered by each in developing its own academic policies and procedures. BIMM has sought external expert advice in developing its own academic credit framework. BIMM is a subscriber to the Higher Education Academy (HEA), Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), GuildHE, OIA and the National Association for Music in Higher Education (NAMHE).

Effective means exist for encouraging the continuous improvement of quality of provision and student achievement

83 BIMM has an ethos of encouraging enhancement, which is built into strategic planning and quality assurance processes. A five-year strategic plan incorporates feedback from College Principals and is reviewed quarterly by the TopCo Board. Under the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, enhancement is considered alongside quality and standards, with overall Academic Board oversight. The primary vehicle is annual monitoring, alongside the AMR Action Plan, with enhancement actions gathered into a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan (LTEP), linked to the Teaching and Learning Strategy and owned by LTEC. Colleges produce separate College Enhancement Action Plans (CEAPs) in response to the LTEP. Heads of Education are primarily responsible for actioning these plans and sharing of good practice, though some further work needs to be done on measuring progress and actions. Progress on implementing the LTEP is overseen by LTEC and reported to Academic Board.

84 Since December 2016, Academic Board has asked for additional thematically based reports from College Principals on key academic matters linked to strategic objectives. Enhancement themes and actions may come from sources such as student surveys, focus groups and NSS results. Student feedback has led to the improvement of room booking facilities, availability of rehearsal space, communication channels, and increased core academic texts. External examiner forms have a specific section for comments on good practice and opportunities for enhancement. The NSS action plan also includes a commitment to improving communication between staff and tutors. Nevertheless, NSS results demonstrate the need for a high-level strategic approach to enhancing resources related to existing programmes.

85 While the BIMM ethos is strong, the colleges have their own identities, influenced by the flavour of the local music scene. While programmes have the same core across all colleges, local options are provided. While not wanting to make the sites identical, BIMM recognises the challenges presented in achieving sufficient standardisation across a range of sites. The move to common validation by Sussex has had significant implications in moving towards shared practice. This has facilitated cross-college collaboration and the sharing of good practice, such as sharing academic study skill support developed at BIMM Institute Bristol. Since 2017 the Curriculum Steering Group has helped to identify and spread best practice across colleges, having been set up to support the consolidation of quality and standards for all programmes under University of Sussex validation, for example looking at cross-college moderation. The team saw various examples of enhancement activities, such as the expansion of the alumni network, the establishment of college-based Careers and Industry Hubs, and the development of a Student Creative Career Development Strategy, which has resulted for example in the Music Cities Project.

86 There are still areas for development. Support services have not been monitored outside the processes for academic monitoring, though student services report into committee structures, and monitoring these will be introduced as part of developing periodic review processes. There is no single estates strategy, and while there is a basic template for college resources, needs are identified locally with budgets based on student numbers. The team saw many examples of improvements in facilities, but these were in reaction to student requests rather than necessarily being pre-planned. Two recent validations attracted conditions regarding facilities, though these conditions were promptly and effectively met. In enhancing student achievement and progression, BIMM has focused on how to better understand the obstacles facing students. Steps have been put in place to address progression issues, including a Student Engagement Policy and a Student at Risk Committee. There have been significant improvements but, as acknowledged by BIMM, further work remains.

C Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff

Criterion C1

The staff of an organisation granted powers to award taught degrees will be competent to teach, facilitate learning and undertake assessment to the level of the qualifications being awarded.

All higher education teaching staff have relevant academic and/or professional expertise

87 BIMM has a distinctive body of staff in that teaching staff are professional creative industries practitioners, many of whom combine teaching with an active profile in the industry. Of the 315 academic management and teaching staff, a core body of 33 staff are employed on a full-time basis in senior academic roles, with a substantial proportion of the remaining staff having fractional appointments or being hourly paid as sessional tutors. Part-time staff tend to be drawn from an existing network of contacts with limited turnover year on year, and some staff teaching at more than one college. The tension between using current practitioners to teach and encouraging staff to engage academically in their subject area is acknowledged by BIMM, but it seeks to achieve an effective balance. For middle and senior management roles BIMM seeks to recruit staff with postgraduate qualifications and experience of working in higher education, and it is now the norm for appointed academic staff to have a degree. From the total of 315 academic management and teaching staff, 220 hold a minimum of an undergraduate degree, 70 a postgraduate degree, and 10 a doctorate. While these levels of qualification have been sufficient for programme development and delivery to date, BIMM is aware of the need for higher levels of staff qualifications to meet plans for future developments. Core competency as regards quality and standards in teaching is maintained by having staff with good knowledge and experience of these areas in key quality roles, and through the Postgraduate Certificate training for other academic staff outlined below.

88 College Principals act as academic leaders and managers, with support from central staff. College Heads of Education line-manage the course leaders and Heads of Department. Course leaders are responsible for the day-to-day running of each course, with Heads of Department responsible for each area of practice. The Heads of Education are all full time. Course leaders are engaged on permanent contracts between 0.4 full-time equivalent and full-time depending on student numbers, but the majority are at least 0.5. Heads of Department are all 0.2 and module leaders are on very small fractions. Other teaching staff are sessional, teaching on set days per week. Staff numbers are agreed

annually as part of budget setting, in the light of student numbers and approved strategic projects. Teaching budgets are held by College Principals, who make appointments with some central involvement. There is a formal process for requesting additional staff. Job descriptions are standardised across colleges, with some slight variations.

89 A micro-teaching session is part of the appointment process, and there is college-based induction for new staff at the start of the year. Staff are then mentored, and their teaching is observed. BIMM seeks to ensure that all teaching staff are appropriately trained to teach at higher education level through pre-term tutor training, in-year staff development, mentoring, and enrolment on the in-house HEA-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching. All staff teaching more than five hours a week who do not already hold an appropriate higher education teaching qualification are required to enrol on the Postgraduate Certificate course, which is provided at no charge to staff. This approach is sufficient, when linked to teaching observations and willingness to address any student concerns about teaching. This programme is taught and overseen centrally but delivered in each BIMM college in groups of up to 15 with some local tutors. Staff with lower teaching hours can take the course voluntarily. The Postgraduate Certificate has resulted in 68 staff across the colleges being qualified to teach at postgraduate level (with 29 further staff having a general teaching qualification), and staff reviews of the benefits are very positive. The programme has recently been fully reviewed and revalidated as Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching (Professional Practice) to be taken part-time over two years by staff, with a separate one-year version delivered in Brighton for other students seeking a higher education qualification in teaching creative arts. BIMM gained HEA accreditation for its Postgraduate Certificate for Fellow status in 2017 and plans to support about 20 staff in gaining fellowship each year. Currently 10 members of staff hold HEA Fellowship, including a Principal Fellow.

90 Training days are provided during the year in relation to teaching and assessment with input from the ADQA team and monitoring by LTEC. All staff engaged in assessment are trained prior to assessing by college teams, with mentoring to ensure appropriate standards are reached. Further training may be provided if a particular need is identified. Learning and teaching is monitored through the BIMM Teaching Observation Scheme which is overseen by LTEC and the ADQA team. Both the process and its oversight are effectively managed. The process is collaborative but is mandatory and may lead to actions. Observations are carried out by senior staff, and oversight reports are discussed by Boards of Studies, and submitted to LTEC, with outcomes feeding into staff development planning. Students are generally very positive about teaching staff and their range of industry experience, though there are some issues about staff availability for individual discussions.

91 Staffing in relation to setting up new centres and extending into new areas of professional practice requires vigilance. The University of Sussex, as the awarding body, imposed conditions in relation to staffing for such provision. At the initial approval of BRICTT and the validation of the BA (Hons) Performing Arts the low level of higher education experience of the proposed course team led to a condition that a full-time, performing arts specialist higher education practitioner with experience and expertise in pedagogy and scholarship be appointed to act as Course Convenor and Head of Higher Education, with a second condition that the person filling the role of College Principal have appropriate qualifications and experience. The conditions were addressed to the satisfaction of the validator, but this indicates that BIMM was slow in appreciating what was needed. In setting up the new centre at Birmingham, support was provided by appointing experienced module leaders from the Manchester centre as part of the team for the first year, and induction and training was available for new tutors. BIMM has indicated it will take lessons learned into account in future developments.

92 Overall, the University of Sussex has expressed satisfaction with the strength and depth of staffing for the current validated awards, and the scrutiny team takes a similar view, albeit noting that actions were needed to address issues raised about a small number of staff through the Student Experience Review at BIMM Institute Manchester (see paragraph 77). However, the University has expressed reservations about BIMM's current ability to deliver master's courses beyond the Postgraduate Certificate, a point considered more fully in paragraph 96 below.

All higher education teaching staff have relevant engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline (through, for example, membership of subject associations, learned societies and professional bodies)

93 BIMM supports staff in undertaking pedagogical research related to teaching in creative arts. The Postgraduate Certificate includes an action research element designed to support research into teaching and learning practice, which feeds directly into enhancing classroom experience. Reports on these projects go to LTEC. In addition, LTEC provides a mechanism through which staff can bid for funds for small-scale teaching development research projects. In discussion, senior staff show a good grasp of relevant pedagogical concepts. A member of staff has recently achieved a Doctorate in pedagogical research.

94 As staff are active in the creative arts industry, many are members of a range of subject societies, learned societies and professional bodies, bringing the benefits in wider links to the sector. Over 20 relevant professional bodies are listed in BIMM's Critical Self Analysis, submitted as part of its TDAP application. Some 26 are members of the Institute for Learning, 42 are members of a professional body, and 33 are members of other relevant bodies. Staff were not aware of support provided by BIMM for membership of professional bodies, but this was not a matter of concern for them.

All higher education teaching staff have relevant knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching

95 As BIMM matures as an organisation it is starting to encourage staff to engage more widely in research and scholarly activity through funding and practical support. However, it is aware that current engagement in postgraduate research (save for pedagogical research) is low and it relies on a small number of staff who can make time for these activities. There is a base for building research as BIMM is a leader in the area of modern music industry practice, but development work is in its early stages. A REC, reporting to LTEC, has two external members with specific experience in popular music research. An Ethical Review subcommittee, and a Research Funding subcommittee have been set up. Senior research staff from awarding bodies provide advice on developing strategy, and there are possibilities for joint research initiatives with other universities. A Research and Enterprise Strategy has been developed by the REC and approved by Academic Board, and there is a draft action plan to implement it, though the actions proposed are relatively modest, noting the need to increase collaborative research, papers written, conference attendance and presentations, and levels of postgraduate qualifications among staff. Research Excellence Framework requirements are being tracked with the ambition of entering at some point, and there is a proposal that BIMM set up a peer-reviewed Music Business Journal.

96 BIMM is making relevant connections, for example hosting the 2016 International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) UK and Ireland conference with the University of Sussex. It is a member of relevant bodies such as the 21st Century Music Practices Research Network and BIMM's Music Industry Ambassador has played a part in several commercial research projects by students, including working with UKMusic.

Projects include the involvement of undergraduates in industry-focused research, overseen by the BIMM Research and Enterprise Centre (BREC), which sends an Annual Research and Enterprise Report to Academic Board. A conference on 'Appetite for Disruption - building a new music industry' was arranged by BIMM Institute Brighton in early 2018. This was aimed at students but involved keynote speakers and industry panel members. It is hoped to develop more such events.

97 A very small number of staff are involved in postgraduate research in their discipline area, with some carrying out independent research for master's or doctoral qualifications. Currently only 10 staff hold doctorates, but BIMM supports staff financially in gaining higher degrees. A Research Projects Scheme provides funding for staff projects but overall the budget to support research is still very modest. Some individuals have gained private industry funding for data gathering and research. Staff note that they are being encouraged to undertake research, but still tend to see keeping industry knowledge up to date as more important. There are 235 staff active in practice and consultancy with 15 per cent (36) having given conference presentations, 10 per cent (23) having written an article and 9 per cent (12) a book. BIMM senior staff accept research is at an early stage. A database of staff research has been established over the last 18 months, overseen by REC, and an online survey has been carried out. It is accepted that raising the number and profile of staff engaged in research will be a major challenge, and targets will be added to future annual reports.

98 Research may be relevant to teaching but does not yet inform teaching on a wide scale, although there is an understanding of the need to develop research skills in students. Currently the Postgraduate Certificate is the only provision BIMM delivers at level 7. It is proposed this be extended to become a full MA, followed by the development of wider master's level provision for 2022-23 at the earliest. This is seen as a natural progression, but BIMM appreciates there would need to be a detailed plan to implement such a move. This would need to include significant support for the development of staff through master's level and PhD completion. There would also need to be substantial investment in library resources, which are currently relatively limited for research purposes.

99 Overall, a structure for the academic management of research is in place, and this appears to be working adequately at a central level. There is clear scope for the development of research activity related to the courses BIMM offers and some steps have been taken to develop relevant links. However, while there is support for research and scholarly activity, the number of staff currently actively involved is small. Development is at an early stage and there is not yet a general research environment. In principle, BIMM understands the need for significant development in this area before it will be properly positioned to offer master's degrees, but there is not yet detailed planning for the level of investment that would be needed to create a sufficiently wide and active research environment, with sufficient research resources.

All higher education teaching staff have relevant staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their professional competence and scholarship

100 BIMM appreciates the need to develop people and invest in them, and this has led to significantly increased expenditure on development activities. The development of academic staff centres on the ADQA team and the Postgraduate Certificate provision as outlined above. A wider range of staff development and continuing professional development workshops are offered across all colleges and BIMM's LTEP includes staff development as a key area of enhancement. There is a Staff Recruitment and Development Policy, which meets current needs appropriately but will need to be further developed to meet any future plans to deliver postgraduate provision. The LTEP is accompanied by a staff development

plan and has been approved by Academic Board, and there are college-level plans. A Group Staff Development Plan has also been approved.

101 For academic staff, sessional staff who do not join the Postgraduate Certificate have a two-day course with the Head of Education. For all teaching staff there is a further day at the start of every year, and mandatory training on assessment. All colleges hold tutor development days to address any issues and spread good practice. Higher Education Team meetings at colleges, chaired by the relevant Head of Higher Education and attended by relevant course leaders and administrative staff may identify needs. Tutors are expected to attend development events and are paid to do so. Support staff are invited to relevant sessions. There are also more general events, such as Learning and Teaching Conferences, held at different centres. General training needs may be identified centrally by the ADQA team. Individual development needs for salaried staff are identified through annual staff appraisals and may also be noted through teaching observations. There is training for specific functions, such as for Admissions Tutors. All staff are informed about training opportunities by email and are kept updated through regular higher education team meetings. In addition to internal development, BIMM staff may also attend external staff development events offered by the awarding bodies. Overall, staff development provision is appropriate and sufficient.

102 BIMM operates an appraisal system under which all employed staff are appraised each year. The appraisal system is owned, monitored and operated by BIMM Human Resources department under the oversight of the CEO. The form includes questions about staff development and research support and there are direct links to staff development and teaching observation, ensuring that developmental needs can be captured. Staff met by the team reported that appraisal helped staff to progress and was a two-way process. Course leaders are appraised and have regular meetings with their Head of Education. Sessional tutors are not appraised but are mentored and have two discussions a year with their managers. There is oversight of training and development by line managers and by College Principals. The training of staff is discussed at Higher Education Team meetings. While training is available, and needs are identified, staff may not always go to all training that might be of benefit to them. Senior managers consider there is some further work to be done, for example as regards some challenges in dealing with a small number of sessional tutors.

Staff with key programme management responsibilities have experience of curriculum development and assessment design

103 Over some years BIMM staff have worked closely with their awarding bodies in developing an extensive curriculum offer in the field of popular music studies. This approach has allowed the senior staff teams at each college to develop significant expertise in course and assessment design that is now shared with less experienced colleagues. The ADQA team delivers staff development sessions dealing with course and assessment design, and for staff designing new programmes there is training on writing learning outcomes, and on effective assessment design. Staff involved in course development will also normally have completed BIMM's Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, which includes training on curriculum and assessment design or be supported by staff who have done so. Senior ADQA staff are assigned as critical friends to college teams developing significant new course proposals or redeveloping existing courses, including individual mentoring for teams preparing for validation/revalidation. Overall, the arrangements work effectively. Over 100 staff have relevant experience, and staff the team met showed a good understanding of course design, standards and assessment processes in higher education.

Staff with key programme management responsibilities have engagement with the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations (through, for example, involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, or external reviewers)

104 In general terms, BIMM encourages and supports staff in becoming involved with other higher education organisations, understanding the value of such activities, and this is formalised in the academic staff development policy. In practice many staff do not have much time to engage in such activity. Some 11 members of academic staff currently act as external examiners, six have acted on course validations, and 13 in other capacities. The colleges allow time for staff to engage in such activities, but individuals may not find it fits easily with their commitments.

105 Two staff members are trained as QAA reviewers, and two are trained as TEF assessors, and one also having been awarded Principal Fellowship by the HEA. Academic Board has a watching brief in relation to higher education sector developments, and there are regular reports from the Provost and the Dean of Higher Education. Staff see keeping up with current practice as an important part of course design and development and get information about current higher education practice in other organisations.

106 As an institution BIMM has engaged with the wider higher education community, becoming a member of GuildHE, the Higher Education Academy, and the Higher Education Policy Institute. In 2015-16 it voluntarily engaged with the NSS and the Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education survey for the first time. The Provost was a member of the team that revised the Music Subject Benchmark Statement in 2016.

D The environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes

Criterion D1

The teaching and learning infrastructure of an organisation granted taught degree awarding powers, including its student support and administrative support arrangements, is effective and monitored.

The effectiveness of learning and teaching activities is monitored in relation to stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes

107 Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of learning and teaching is vested in LTEC at institutional level and Boards of Study at college level. Enhancements to teaching and learning are articulated in LTEP and the associated staff development plan which forms part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS), both of which are kept under review by LTEC. At the most recent review, LTEC approved changes designed to make the plan more strategically focused, with a reduction in the number of goals to ensure that intended actions are achievable. Institutional themes are followed through by each college in College Enhancement Action Plans (CEAPs) which are monitored and reviewed regularly by LTEC. Each college has identified a manager with responsibility for Learning and Teaching; at Group level the key manager is the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement.

108 The effectiveness of learning and teaching activities is monitored and assessed through a range of internal and external monitoring and review processes including robust arrangements for annual monitoring and periodic review of programmes, incorporating thorough consideration of feedback from external examiners and students and key performance data; and a developmental teaching observation scheme. The appointment process for sessional tutors includes delivering a teaching session. Once employed, new

staff have their first teaching observation within 10 weeks which is used to identify development needs. Thereafter, tutors engage in a two-stage observation process designed to support developmental practice. The outcomes of teaching observation may include individual staff development activities, sessions at College Development Days and Group-wide activities. The revised peer observation scheme has been well received by tutors and steps are being taken to widen the pool of observers to address variability in completion of the expected two observations a year for each tutor. Innovation in teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice is fostered by the availability of small grants for teaching development projects and the annual Learning and Teaching Conference.

Students are informed of the outcomes of assessments in a timely manner

109 Appropriate arrangements are in place to provide students with timely feedback on their assessments. Most assessments are submitted electronically through the VLE, marked online and feedback provided online or by email. BIMM's policy is that feedback on assessed work, including examinations, should be provided within 15 working days. Students confirm that this target is normally met or, where this is not possible, explanations are provided. Individual tutorials can be booked if more detailed feedback is required. Despite these positive reports, BIMM's NSS satisfaction rates for 'Assessment and Feedback' are significantly lower than the sector average. Actions to address the issues identified are contained in College and institutional NSS Action Plans. The effectiveness of these plans is being monitored by LTEC and CMTs through teaching observations and feedback from students in Boards of Study and student representative forums.

110 Students are informed of the outcomes of Assessment Boards by email within one week. BIMM provides transcripts to students after each Board and provides a Diploma Supplement for those receiving an award. Degree certificates are prepared by the awarding bodies and distributed either by the University or BIMM. These arrangements function well.

Constructive and developmental feedback is given to students on their performance

111 The development of approaches to assessment and feedback to improve student achievement and progression is one of four primary goals of the recently revised LTEP. Students receive continuous developmental feedback from tutors, peers and audiences but they do not always recognise this as feedback. BIMM recognises that it has more work to do to address students' concerns as expressed in the NSS about the quantity and quality of feedback. Ongoing tutor development is focused on ensuring that feedback is clear, timely and developmental, using a medal and mission approach. Initiatives to improve feedback include the use of audio feedback, interpretation sessions within sessions to help students look at and use feedback and the introduction of feedback tutorials. Students receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback from students, staff (and where relevant) employers and other institutional stakeholders is obtained and evaluated, and clear mechanisms exist to provide feedback to all such constituencies

112 BIMM obtains extensive feedback from students through the student representation system, questionnaires and surveys and student engagement with validation and review panels. Elected student representatives attend College-based SRFs and Boards of Study. Students are also represented at senior central deliberative committees including Academic Board, LTEC and QAC. While there is generous provision for student representation at these key committees and good take-up in attendance, there is no student presence at TopCo Board, or at ARG. TopCo Board receives the student voice through the minutes of Academic Board and reports from senior managers. Student representatives are supported in their role by training events, a handbook and dedicated pages set up on the VLE; however, effective peer-to-peer communication has yet to be developed. BIMM does not have a collective

representative body for students; however, Academic Board has recently approved the development of a BIMM Student Association with a focus on the development of non-curricular and social activities. Academic Board, assisted by QAC, has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the student representative system.

113 BIMM obtains feedback from individual students through a range of mechanisms including internal and external surveys, for example, module evaluations, course questionnaires and an annual enrolment survey; focus groups on specific issues; student representation at formal committees; and course leader sessions. BIMM has participated in the NSS since 2016 and consequently has two years of data. Analyses of these feedback sources are used to identify areas for enhancement. These are recorded in annual monitoring reports and resulting action points monitored through the committee structure. NSS outcomes are analysed meticulously at programme, college and institutional level; detailed action plans at College and Group level prepared in response are monitored regularly by senior management and deliberative committees. Students' views are also sought by internal and external validation and review panels and the internal course approval process includes a student member of the panel where possible. Training has been delivered to interested undergraduate student representatives to widen the pool of potential panel members.

114 Feedback from employers and alumni is gathered through formal and informal means. The non-executive members of TopCo Board have senior level experience of the music industry and arts education. Industry advisory panels are convened to provide advice on new course developments. Feedback from work experience providers is also used to inform enhancements to provision. BIMM has an extensive network for alumni whose continuing contact with BIMM is facilitated through BIMM Connect, an interactive digital platform.

115 Academic and professional support staff provide formal feedback through their membership of deliberative committees and management. Less formal feedback is obtained through staff conferences and college-based tutor development days. The TopCo Board, EMG and SMG hold meetings at different BIMM locations and senior staff visit colleges on a regular basis.

Students are advised about, and inducted into, their study programmes in an effective way, and account is taken of different students' needs

116 Information, advice and guidance about study courses are provided through BIMM's website, College prospectuses and Open Days and by recruitment and admissions staff. BIMM holds a UK Visas and Immigration Tier 4 licence enabling the recruitment of non-EU overseas students; advice and guidance is provided by a dedicated International team. Information about the support and facilities available to disabled students is provided in college-specific Disability Guides; support for applicants is provided by College Student Support teams. As part of its plans to improve retention, BIMM is exploring the correlation between entry qualifications and continuation and achievement rates. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of 2018 to inform the review and development of the course portfolio.

117 Students apply to UK BIMM colleges through UCAS. All students are interviewed or in the case of performance students undergo an audition. Unsuccessful students receive feedback with advice on areas for improvement, alternative options including pre-degree courses available at BIMM, or offered the opportunity to be re-auditioned. If applicants are made an offer they receive an Applicant Offer Pack that includes links to the terms and conditions of their contract. Prior to enrolment, students receive joining instructions that include induction arrangements. Students met by the team confirm that they had received

a useful induction which typically includes an introduction to student handbooks, timetables, key staff and their roles, college facilities, IT facilities, the VLE and electronic library, and access to local libraries. One of the colleges has trialled a longer induction period that incorporates timetabled study skills sessions related to the context of modules. Students have been helped to understand what is meant by independent learning and pass rates have improved.

118 BIMM's Admissions Policies comply with the requirements of partner awarding bodies and align with the Quality Code. They have been checked to ensure compliance with the consumer legislation and alignment with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance. They include details of pre-application information, interview and audition requirements, English language requirement for overseas students, opportunities for recognition of prior learning, arrangements for disabled students, and complaints and appeals about admission decisions. Students who met the team confirmed that they had been kept informed of any changes to their intended programmes or the progress of validation of new courses.

Available learning support materials are adequate to support students in the achievement of the stated purposes of their study programmes

119 EMG has the overall responsibility for the procurement and development of adequate resources to support student learning. Its role includes: recommending for the approval of the TopCo Board proposals for capital expenditure and annual budgets; approving and monitoring staffing complements at Group and College levels; and ensuring that appropriate learning resources are in place to deliver the approved programmes.

120 The key deliberative committees are LTEC and ARG, at Group level, and Boards of Study locally. ARG can make recommendations to LTEC concerning any academic resource matter with a particular focus on the development of the VLE, the provision of printed course notes, core texts and other student learning resources. ARG plays a key role in ensuring that software required for successful delivery of the curriculum is obtained and staff developed in its use. College academic managers are well represented on ARG, but its potential is reduced by the absence of student representatives and professional support staff.

121 Learning resources attracts the lowest satisfaction rate for all question areas in BIMM's most recent NSS. Resources are planned on an annual and periodic basis. Application and progression data is used to identify the required physical resources and staffing levels for each college. Resource needs are also identified by support services and academic departments, drawing on student feedback and tutor knowledge of industry standards. BIMM does not have an estates strategy; the accommodation required for delivery of the curriculum, including specialist spaces such as rehearsal and performance rooms, is considered at each stage in the development of a new college or discipline and on an ongoing basis. Observation of two major developments identified weaknesses in BIMM's capacity to plan the physical resource required for new developments (see also paragraphs 52-53). While BIMM acted quickly to address the conditions set by the awarding body, it remains a concern that internal processes work to some extent on a 'just in time' basis.

122 BIMM acknowledges that student access to rehearsal and performance spaces and the adequacy of library, study and social spaces are ongoing challenges that require flexible, local solutions. These include extended opening hours, room booking software, acquiring external rehearsal space, working with local libraries and investing in electronic library resources. Students at all colleges have access to the same VLE interface and home page. Staff are supported in their use of the VLE through a specification guide and training videos. Minimum standards for module materials on the VLE are set with some flexibility for tutors. BIMM has established a minimum provision of five hard copy texts for each module at

each college and has invested in enhancing the provision of electronic texts. These improvements have been well received by students and BIMM is acting to address the licensing problems that limit concurrent access to e-resources.

The effectiveness of any student and staff advisory and counselling services is monitored, and any resource needs arising are considered

123 BIMM's Student Support Policy encompasses academic support and tutorials, careers advice, pastoral and welfare arrangements, monitoring of student progress, support for students with additional learning needs, and provision for career development in the music industry. All colleges offer tutorials, which give students access to tutors, module leaders, heads of department, course leaders, student services, careers and Industry liaison staff. Students are very positive about their access to tutorials, but the system is largely reactive to student requests although weaker students are encouraged to attend. Support for students with additional learning needs is provided by college Student Services departments. Details of the services provided are set out in college-specific Disability Guides. There is also a Reasonable Adjustment Policy covering assessment. Opportunities to improve accessibility are actively sought; for example, during the scrutiny period LTEC considered a policy on the recording of lectures by students with additional needs drawing on sector good practice.

124 Counselling services are provided by a mixture of in-house provision and the use of external agencies. BIMM recognises the growing demand for and importance of accessible counselling services. There is evidence of sharing of ideas and good practice across colleges to make counselling more readily available and effective. Each college operates a Students at Risk Committee (SARC) which regularly monitors attendance and other risk indicators with the aim of making interventions to provide targeted support. Staff also have access to the counselling service.

125 Careers information, advice and guidance is provided at all stages of students' engagement with BIMM. Information about the range of career paths within the music industry are provided through the website, prospectuses and at open days. Enrolled students can access career-planning tutorials, masterclasses, guest events, internships and work experience, and extracurricular courses, known as BIMM Extra. Graduates keep in touch through the BIMM alumni network and BIMM Connect. Employability is promoted through exposure to tutors who are music industry practitioners, and real-life experiences such as managing and performing gigs, working on festivals and industry events, contributing to an in-house music label and publishing company. Connections to the music industry are also advanced through BIMM's associate membership of an extensive number of trade and professional associations. The Careers and Industry Liaison team operating through college-based Careers and Industry Hubs are involved in sourcing placements, arranging masterclasses, hosting employability activities such as CV reviews, mock interviews with industry professionals, House Band auditions, careers fairs, and small group seminars with creative arts companies. The approach to employability and career preparation is thorough, proactive and well resourced, providing exceptional opportunities for students to achieve a sustainable career in the music and broader creative arts industries. Students are appreciative of the range of opportunities available to them and the support provided to help them prepare for a career in the industry.

126 Support services are monitored as part of BIMM's processes for the approval, monitoring and review of its provision. Student feedback on support services is gathered through surveys, SRFs and Boards of Study. Support services staff are represented on and contribute to college and central committees and management groups. The Internal Student Experience Review which was carried out at one college in November 2017 considered the effectiveness of student support services as part of its remit: this approach will be

standardised in future with visits to a different college each year. In addition, the college intends to undertake a review different support functions each year, starting with Estates and Facilities in 2018-19.

127 The provision of student support, including counselling, disability support and career preparation, is good. The service is well resourced, opportunities to enhance provision are actively pursued and staff have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities. The development of a periodic review process which incorporates a review of support services will provide a formal and systematic way of assessing the effectiveness of these services.

Administrative support systems are able to monitor student progression and performance accurately, and provide timely and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic management information needs

128 BIMM uses a commercially available student record system for internal and external reporting of student data. Academic and support staff have access to the system, with some restrictions in respect of sensitive information.

129 BIMM's committees and management groups make effective use of student-related data to identify areas for improvement and to aid decision-making. Student attendance is recorded and analysed leading to interventions, such as support for individual students, changes in timetabling or assessment methods. KPIs in respect of student progression, completion, achievement and satisfaction are set for all courses. The leaders of courses acquiring two or more red flags are required to prepare an enhancement plan, which is monitored by QAC. Analysis of differences in NSS outcomes, attendance, progression and achievement between colleges led the Executive Principal and Academic Director and Provost to commission a formal review of the student experience at one of its colleges. The self-evaluation document prepared by the CMT for the review made good use of detailed trend data to analyse the issues requiring attention. Now that BIMM has access to comparative data for alternative providers, it is able to benchmark its performance against competitor specialist providers and more generally against private providers.

130 BIMM is currently subject to a Department for Education (DfE) notice to improve its non-continuation rates of students from level 4 to level 5. While continuation rates have improved, they have yet to meet the increasingly challenging benchmarks set by the DfE. Retention and continuation strategies are developed at college level to address local issues and are approved centrally. Projects are underway to map the link between attendance and student achievement in modules and to analyse the relationship between entry qualifications, progression and achievement. The College participated in the HEA Retention Project during 2017-18 to gain a better understanding of its data and good practice across the sector.

131 BIMM accepts that it has found the increasing demands of reporting to a range of external agencies a significant challenge. An internal audit report on BIMM's processes for data collection, data quality checks and data reporting for the 2016-17 HESA return identified a number of weaknesses in its arrangements. A credible management action plan to address the auditors' recommendations is in place; the plans include a restructure of the MIS and IT teams and the recruitment of a Head of MIS and IT.

132 BIMM is responsible for preparing data for examination boards. Administrative support for boards is good with considerable effort invested in ensuring that Board members have full information about students including any extenuating circumstances to ensure consistent decision-making in accordance with the applicable regulations. Analyses of student performance at module level are included in module leaders' reports, which feed into

course reports scrutinised by QAC. The percentage of first time pass rates is one of the course-related KPIs.

Effective and confidential mechanisms are in place to deal with all complaints regarding academic and non-academic matters

133 Students can raise concerns collectively through their student representatives at the college level at SRFs and Boards of Studies and centrally at Academic Board, LTEC and QAC. The complaints and academic appeals policies set out the formal procedures for individual students to make a complaint or an academic appeal. These are contained in the ADQA Manual available to students on the BIMM website and are explained at induction. The procedures set out the stages of the internal process and opportunities for reviews by the awarding institutions and the OIA. The procedures were revised in 2015-16 to ensure alignment with the OIA's Good Practice Framework. Students can lodge a complaint or appeal using an online system; support is available from tutors, course leaders, student support staff and student union officers from the awarding body. Relevant BIMM staff and student representatives have received training in the revised procedures.

134 Complaints and appeals are monitored by the central ADQA team, Academic Board receives an annual report on complaints and appeals, which contains a comprehensive analysis of data and consideration of how institutional processes could be improved. Annual reports to partner universities also include details of complaints and appeals. The number of appeals and formal complaints is relatively small and to date the OIA has not received any requests for reviews from BIMM students.

Staff involved with supporting the delivery of the organisation's higher education provision are given adequate opportunities for professional development

135 Staff development needs of those supporting the delivery of BIMM's higher education provision are identified through the appraisal process and by managers. All staff undergo an annual appraisal with a mid-year follow up. Overall staff development priorities are determined by the SMG and logged by each college on a Staff Development and Training Planner. The LTEP is accompanied by a Staff Development Plan, which sets out supporting development activities for academic staff, professional services, managers and student representatives ensuring an integrated and focused approach.

136 Professional support staff have access to the same professional development opportunities as academic staff, including the Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching and the Graduate Bursary Scheme, if appropriate. Professional development and training sessions are delivered at both group and college level. Staff are encouraged to engage with relevant sector associations including attendance at conferences. Staff confirm that they have good access to a wide range of opportunities to support their professional development.

Information that the organisation produces concerning its higher education provision is accurate and complete

137 BIMM has a Public Information Policy designed with reference to Part C of the Quality Code and to ensure compliance with consumer protection legislation. The Policy provides an indicative list of the types of information covered and where executive-level responsibility for the management and approval of information lies. Overall responsibility for ensuring public information is accessible, accurate and trustworthy rests with the EMG, reporting to the TopCo Board. The Public Information Policy provides a sound framework aligned to national expectations for the oversight of public information. Policies, procedures and practices have been audited to ensure compliance with legal requirements and

arrangements for ongoing monitoring are in place. The team endorses the students' views that information is accessible, complete and accurate.

138 BIMM has developed a Student Charter which is published in the ADQA Manual and introduced at induction.

Equal opportunities policies are in place and implemented effectively

139 BIMM is committed to equality of opportunity for staff and students and ensuring that this principle is embedded in its policies, procedures and culture. The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy sets out the general principles underpinning the policy, identifies the responsibilities of directors, managers, staff and students and routes for students to obtain redress through the complaints procedure.

140 Responsibility for developing equality and diversity policies rests with the Human Resources department for staff and the ADQA team in respect of students. Senior staff accept that monitoring of its equal opportunities and diversity policy has not been effective; steps are being taken to ensure that the responsibilities of EMG (for staff) and Academic Board (for students) for monitoring the equal opportunities policy and its impact is made explicit in the terms of reference.

141 BIMM is committed to widening access to and participation in higher education courses related to the music industry and creative arts. BIMM seeks to encourage applications from underrepresented groups through the selection of role models in promotional material, outreach activities with local schools and colleges, open days, and the availability of bursaries and scholarships. Applicants are selected on the basis of their potential assessed through achievement of a level 3 qualification and performance at an audition or interview. Each college has developed study skills support to help students make a successful transition to higher education, although this is not specifically targeted at entrants with non-traditional qualifications. BIMM publishes a Guide for Disabled Students and there is a Reasonable Adjustment Policy. Support needs are identified either at the application stage or in-year and any adjustments facilitated by close working between the college heads of student support and academic staff.

142 Annual course monitoring reports for the University of Sussex provision contain detailed demographic data for admissions, progression and achievement but the prescribed requirements of annual monitoring templates mean this is less evident in reports for other awarding bodies. BIMM accepts that it is at the early stages of analysing how students with specific characteristics are represented in student retention, achievement and success measures.

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