Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of London College of Creative Media Ltd, trading as LCCM

November 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at London College of Creative Media Ltd, trading as LCCM (LCCM). The review took place from 15 to 17 November 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Fahmida Khan Rushdy
- Mr Robert Pulley
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by LCCM and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[2] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).[3] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about LCCM

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at LCCM.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of the awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the provider's information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at LCCM:

- the comprehensive and developmental induction arrangements, including the use of integrated workshop activity and student interviews with academic and support staff (Expectations B4 and B2)
- the strategic and extensive development of student-centred learning through peer support, group work and skill sharing initiatives (Expectations B3 and Enhancement)
- the considered, sustained and close engagement with music industry practitioners to ensure the effective and coherent transition of students through and beyond higher education (Expectations B4 and B10).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to LCCM.

By April 2017:

- strengthen the involvement of students in programme design and pre-validation processes (Expectations B1 and B5)
- ensure that the Complaints Policy is clear, consistent and comprehensive (Expectation B9)
- strengthen the risk analysis procedure for performance venues external to LCCM (Expectations B10 and B4).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that LCCM is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the work underway to increase the range and effectiveness of student engagement opportunities (Expectation B5)
- the actions underway to effectively implement the monitoring process for information provided to students (Expectation C).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

London College of Creative Media satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).

About LCCM

London College of Creative Media Ltd, trading as LCCM was created in August 2016, before which it was the London Centre of Contemporary Music Ltd. This corporate restructuring was developed in consultation with BIS to enable new financial investment in the institution. The branding and marketing continues to be LCCM, as this is how the institution has been most widely recognisable since its creation in 2003. All students and staff have now transferred to the new legal entity.

LCCM offers higher education awards validated by the Open University. This is a new partnership that replaces both Middlesex University as the former awarding body and Pearson as the former awarding organisation. LCCM now offers the BMus (Hons) in Music Performance and Production, incorporating the Higher Education Certificate for Music Performance and Creative Media Practice, in addition to the recently validated MA in Creative Entrepreneurship. A wide range of non-higher education evening, weekend, summer and access courses are also provided. New awards are planned for the 2017-18 academic session, including the BA (Hons Creative and Professional Writing and BSc (Hons) Digital Product Development - both subject to validation by the awarding body.

LCCM is in the centre of London, with advanced plans to relocate in September 2017 to a new adjacent campus called The Music Box. LCCM states that its rationale is to develop literate popular music through exploring the diverse practices and skills of professional musicians and artists, who are increasingly expected to be arrangers, composers, producers and leaders of micro-businesses. The institution's academic strategy focuses on the preparation of students for an unorthodox, competitive industry that relies on specialist knowledge and skills, intellectual property, networks and entrepreneurship.

There are 241 current full-time student enrolments, with 19 part-time students. LCCM employs permanent and part-time tutors who are also professional practitioners within the music industry. Strategic academic oversight of the partnership between LCCM and the awarding body is the responsibility of LCCM's Academic Board and Board of Governors. The management structure includes a Senior Management Team involving the Principal, and the Heads of Academic Quality, Student Services, Marketing and Communication, Resources, and Information Technology. The BMus and MA in Creative Entrepreneurship have Programme Leaders, with oversight and coordination of all higher education delivery and support being managed through Academic Board. Student Services is responsible for the development of learning support.

The Review for Educational Oversight in 2012 generated a series of recommendations, all of which have been addressed successfully. They include revised methods for recording the business of committees and the collection and analysis of student data, improved systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and making programme specifications more easily accessible to current and potential students. LCCM has continued to develop the good practice highlighted in the last review, including the embedding of professional standards, the use of the summer review action planning process, and the consistent provision of full and detailed feedback for supporting students' creative development.

Explanation of the findings about LCCM

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1 In 2016, the Open University (the OU), as the new awarding body, validated a portfolio of programmes in collaboration with LCCM, leading to the awards of MA Creative Entrepreneurship, BMus (Hons) Performance and Production, Cert HE Music Performance, and Cert HE Creative Music Practice.

1.2 The OU reserves the right to undertake such activities that it deems appropriate to reassure itself of the quality assurance and academic standards for its awards. Robust policies are supported by effective programme documentation systematically generated by LCCM to ensure that the requirements of the FHEQ in England are met. LCCM has responsibility for writing the programme specifications using templates produced by The Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP).

1.3 The awarding body and LCCM policies and procedures would allow Expectation A1 for threshold academic standards to be met.

1.4 The review team considered a range of documentation associated with approval and validation events coordinated by the awarding body in 2015 and 2016. Details were discussed with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and a representative from the awarding body.

1.5   The team noted that policies and procedures for positioning qualifications at the appropriate level of the framework for higher education are being adhered to, with recommendations arising from validation addressed at an early stage. The self-evaluation document outlines the processes related to the setting and maintenance of academic standards in detail. This is effectively supplemented and supported by the White Book and the OU CICP Handbook.

1.6   Programme specifications refer explicitly to the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements and level descriptors. The rigour of this process is supported by the application of the awarding body's templates. The credit point structure, programme outcomes and learning outcomes are effectively aligned because of LCCM's rigorous attention to detail.

1.7   In addition to establishing the conditions for institutional and programme approval, the awarding body supported the validation process and is providing a forum for debate on matters of academic and institutional development. The OU was impressed by LCCM's immediate responses to recommendations emerging from recent validation events, something it was not obliged to complete until after the first annual monitoring report scheduled for summer 2017.

1.8   The team concluded that LCCM's policies and procedures are consistent with the guidance in the Quality Code. They are embedded, properly moderated and effectively supported by the internal management structure and quality assurance system. The Expectation for FHEQ requirements in meeting threshold academic standards is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.9   The Curriculum and Validation Committee of the OU agreed that LCCM should be approved as a partner institution for an initial period of five years from 1 September 2015, following the outcomes of the Institutional Approval visit. The OU determines the management framework for academic standards and the regulations governing how academic credit and qualifications are awarded. The ultimate arbiter of academic governance is the awarding body, supported by QAA, as stated in LCCM's White Book.

1.10   The awarding body's policies and procedures, as adopted by LCCM, would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met.

1.11   The review team scrutinised LCCM's policies and procedures in order to establish that the defining requirements of the FHEQ are assured through the programme specification documents provided by the awarding body. In a meeting with senior managers and the representative from the awarding body, the team received further evidence of the productive relationship with the awarding body based upon mutual respect and effective feedback systems.

1.12   The team noted that the awarding body and LCCM ensure the internal consistency in the governance of academic standards through robust assessment regulations put in place during recent validation events. LCCM's assessment regulations outline in an effective manner the basis upon which degree classifications are decided.

1.13   The overall academic framework reflects the OU Handbook for Validated Awards, with the White Book detailing all aspects of academic governance and management for promoting quality assurance systems.

1.14   The Tutor Handbook sets out the purpose and approach to assessment and the principles of good feedback. Staff development strengthens the understanding and application of regulation frameworks in a systematic way.

1.15   The team concludes that there is a coherent body of information that describes practice aimed at securing academic standards, alongside a transparent and comprehensive academic framework for regulations governing how academic credit and qualifications are awarded.

1.16   Expectation A2.1 is met, with low risk, based on LCCM's strict adherence to a rigorous and comprehensive academic framework governing how they award academic credit.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.17   LCCM produces programme specifications containing definitive information about courses, using templates provided by the awarding body. Programme specifications are approved by the awarding body and made available on the LCCM website.

1.18   The consistent approach to producing programme specifications, using awarding body materials and procedures, and arrangements for publication, would allow Expectation A2.2 to be met.

1.19   The review team considered this Expectation through discussions with students and staff, including a representative from the awarding body. They team also scrutinised programme specifications and templates.

1.20   The team found that programme specifications are clear, detailed and easily accessible online. Students confirmed that they find them helpful and that they know where to locate the specifications. Staff were clear about the process of making and monitoring modifications to definitive information. Changes can be made to module specifications but these must be approved by LCCM's Academic Board and then by the OU. The team found evidence that Academic Board conducts detailed discussion about potential module amendments.

1.21   The team concludes that programme specifications were approved by the awarding body and are valued by students. They are comprehensive and easily accessible, leading to Expectation A2.2 being met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.22   LCCM has been involved in partnerships with different awarding bodies and organisations, including Pearson and Middlesex University. In line with the mission of LCCM and its strategic plan to diversify into new segments of the creative industries, a strategic decision has been made to offer only courses validated by the OU, effective from September 2016. As noted in Expectations A1, A2.1 and A2.2, the OU has responsibility for ensuring that programmes meet academic threshold standards set out in academic frameworks. The partnerships with Pearson and Middlesex University have been phased out with clear transition arrangements.

1.23   The effective and consistent implementation of the existing policies and procedures for the approval of taught programmes would allow Expectation A3.1 to be met.

1.24   The review team considered the effectiveness of design and approval of programmes and modules through the scrutiny of relevant specifications, validation documents, and awarding body guidelines, policies, and procedures. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the representative from the awarding body, and students.

1.25   Programme specifications and module learning outcomes are written by LCCM with reference to the FHEQ using templates provided by the OU, as noted in Expectation A2.2. LCCM ensures that all of its programmes reflect current industry practice, and therefore use experts in the relevant industry field to ensure currency.

1.26   There are clear policies for the validation of programmes. Planning meetings are held with the awarding body to agree a provisional title, programme content, subject benchmarks and any other relevant aspects of QAA guidelines. External representatives are invited to the preliminary validation meeting to ensure that the qualification is fit for purpose and maintains the academic standards expected. The finalised programme structure is presented to a final validation panel organised by the awarding body in order to gain approval.

1.27   LCCM currently delivers the Cert HE in Music Performance, Cert HE Creative Music Practice, and BMus Music Performance and Production programmes, approved by the awarding body. The MA in Creative Entrepreneurship has also been validated, with plans to run the programme from September 2017. As noted in Expectation A1, LCCM has addressed all recommendations emerging from recent validation events and these have been received positively by the awarding body. All courses have been approved for a period of five years and will be revalidated in summer 2021, subject to satisfactory annual monitoring.

1.28   The team concludes that LCCM works closely with the awarding body to ensure that academic standards meet the UK threshold standards, enabling the programme design and approval process to be in accordance with appropriate academic frameworks and

regulations. The Expectation for establishing and consistently implementing processes for
the approval of taught programmes is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.29   Assessment is conducted in accordance with the Assessment Policy and published guidelines set out by the awarding body. External examiner reports, and in previous years Pearson Academic Management Reviews, assure that internal assessments meet the expected standards. The effective and consistent implementation of the existing policies and procedures would allow Expectation A3.2 to be met.

1.30   The review team scrutinised programme and module specifications, external examiner reports, assignment briefs, and awarding body guidelines, policies, and procedures. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the representative from the awarding body, and students.

1.31   LCCM's Assessment Policy outlines rules and regulations related to all assessment. Assignment briefs clearly show where learning outcomes are being assessed. The programme specifications map the module learning outcomes to the programme learning outcomes. Assessments are designed to include a diverse range of activities that are relevant to module and programme outcomes. LCCM provides continuous assessment opportunities throughout the year, which ensure that students understand their individual achievement objectives.

1.32   Assessment boards are organised by LCCM, with the awarding body approving terms of reference, membership, external examiner appointments, and the conferment of validated awards. The board determines progression with final results ratified and signed off by the Chair once external assessments have been completed. Positive external examiner reports confirm that credit and qualifications awarded are based on the achievement of relevant learning outcomes according to the guidelines of the awarding body.

1.33   The team concludes that the Expectation for the achievement of relevant learning outcomes that has been demonstrated through assessment has been met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.34　　LCCM undertakes monitoring and review through the use of annual reports prepared by the Principal, with summer review action plans prepared by the SMT. Annual monitoring reports for Middlesex University - as the previous awarding body - were prepared by the Institutional Link Tutors. In previous years, Pearson (the awarding organisation) undertook annual monitoring through its academic management review process and external examiner reporting system. The first annual review cycle for the new awarding body programmes is due at the end of the current academic year, with systems and procedures being clearly defined. The effective and consistent implementation of the existing policies and procedures for monitoring and review would allow Expectation A3.3 to be met.

1.35　　The review team considered a range of annual monitoring documentation, summer review plans, external examiner reports and quality assurance policies. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the representative from the awarding body, and students.

1.36　　The policy for Annual Institutional Review (AIR) highlights achievements and targets to improve the learning opportunities for students as well as the wider student experience. The AIR ensures that academic standards are being maintained, with external experts informing internal improvement and student achievement of learning outcomes at appropriate levels.

1.37　　LCCM has received positive commentary from annual management reviews and external examiners associated with the previous awarding body and organisation. All actions and recommendations have been appropriately addressed and effectively implemented.

1.38　　The annual monitoring system incorporates information from Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) and Annual Organisation Monitoring (AOM) processes. Outcomes are collated into the over-arching annual summer review plan, with Academic Board having overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the annual monitoring process.

1.39　　LCCM has effectively managed its responsibilities for monitoring and review procedures, as well as those of its previous awarding body and organisation, with appropriate scrutiny of the maintenance of academic standards. The review team is confident that these robust procedures and systems will continue to be applied for annual monitoring that involves partnership arrangements with the new awarding body. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation:　　Met
Level of risk:　　Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.40   LCCM collaborates with educational and professional experts to design programme specifications that reflect core values and strategic aims, including pre-professional education to enable students to succeed in a competitive market.

1.41   LCCM states that expertise from the awarding body, as well as other independent expertise, is obtained at key stages of the processes for setting and maintaining academic standards. External expertise is sought to verify that threshold academic standards are set by rigorous adherence to the national reference points and to the OU's policies and procedures. These arrangements for the use of external and independent expertise would enable Expectation A3.4 to be met. The review team considered a range of documentation, including pre-validation information and external examiners' reports. The understanding of the role of externality in programme design and review were discussed in meetings with senior and teaching staff and the representative from the awarding body.

1.42   The relationship between LCCM and the awarding body has been forged through an intensive period of validation in 2016. Desk research provided extensive evidence demonstrating that, during programme validation and monitoring, recommendations were received from numerous external sources. These included the awarding body subject expert, a quality link representative, an external expert, and an external examiner. The team noted that the awarding body has praised LCCM's connection with industry at validation.

1.43   The SMT emphasised the importance of calling upon industry contacts as a matter of course during the process of new programme development and programme revision. They referred to the value of collecting feedback from external partners to inform learning and teaching practices. The professional relevance of programme content and teaching methods was also endorsed comprehensively during meetings with teaching staff and students. The review team recognised that sessional staff are professional musicians and that communication between senior management, the Programme Leader, and teaching staff in LCCM's small and specialist context is effective and productive.

1.44   Throughout its recent period of academic development, LCCM has embraced feedback from an extensive network of external stakeholders. The process has been managed effectively by an expanded management team at LCCM. LCCM continues to call upon an impressive range of external perspectives to set and maintain academic standards. The team concludes that the Expectation for using external and independent expertise for setting and maintaining standards has been met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.45   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by LCCM, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.46   All of the Expectations in this area have been met, with a low level of associated risk in each case. There were no recommendations or affirmations.

1.47   LCCM, in partnership with its awarding body, uses appropriate reference points for academic frameworks and regulations associated with the approval and award of academic credit and qualifications. Definitive records are maintained for programmes, and the achievement of learning outcomes is demonstrated through assessment based on the satisfaction of academic standards. Monitoring and review procedures are implemented successfully, including the appropriate use of independent and external expertise in order to assure the integrity of higher education provision.

1.48   The review team concludes that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards at LCCM **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1   LCCM undertakes the design and development of programme specifications and module learning outcomes with reference to the FHEQ, and adhering to guidelines and templates provided by the awarding body. There is a validation policy that outlines the process and approval structure. The Board of Governors, with advice from the Principal, have the final authority to sanction the development of all new programmes, following the presentation of a business case. The Academic Board will approve all programme design prior to the pre-validation panel. The pre-validation panel is also responsible for internal scrutiny, with external input to ensure that the academic standards are maintained.

2.2   The final approval for programme delivery is confirmed by the validation panel, hosted by the awarding organisation. The effective and consistent implementation of the existing guidelines, policies and procedures would allow Expectation B1 to be met.

2.3   The review team considered a range of documentation for the design and approval of modules and programmes including specifications, validation documents, awarding body policies, and minutes of meetings. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, the representative from the OU, and students.

2.4   The team confirmed that the internal validation process is reviewed annually by the Academic Quality Department. The Academic Board will approve any changes or modifications to programme design, as part of the annual review process.

2.5   The Academic Quality Department, together with the Programme Leader, ensure that the steps for programme design are consistently taken with appropriate and clear external reference points. The programme content is based on current professional practice, and learning outcomes are underpinned with strong theoretical understanding. The design also ensures that innovative links are established between programmes to provide industry-relevant opportunities for collaboration. As noted in Expectation A3.4, LCCM ensures that all of its programmes reflect current industry practice, and therefore uses experts in the relevant industry field to ensure currency.

2.6   Staff involved in developing new programmes have significant higher education experience as well as contemporary music performance. Internal staff training and the sharing of good practice take place at appropriate levels to assure consistency.

2.7   LCCM has taken steps to incorporate student views into programme design and development through discussion in some Board of Study meetings. However, the team noted that student input into new programme design is captured predominantly through informal discussion and feedback. As noted in Expectation B5, students have not been part of any formal pre-validation panel or planning process. The team therefore **recommends** that LCCM strengthens the involvement of students in programme design and prevalidation processes.

2.8   The review team concludes that the Expectation for the design, development and approval of programmes is met, with low risk. The procedures used conform to the expectations set by the awarding body, with robust and transparent processes being used consistently throughout an intensive recent period of programme review and development.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.9   LCCM Student Services Department is the single point of contact for admissions. The Department is responsible for overseeing the Student Admissions Policy, which governs this area of LCCM's work. It also provides support to applicants through the interview process, produces formal offer letters and compiles admissions data for senior managers.

2.10   LCCM completes interviews with all applicants who are offered a place. This is done face to face and also via electronic platforms when students cannot attend in person. Academic staff are responsible for conducting interviews and a detailed Interview Form is in place to record key information and observations throughout the process. An Admissions Appeal Procedure is in place and recruitment and admissions are reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process.

2.11   LCCM's detailed Admissions Policy, robust recording system for interviews, and clear information for applicants and students would be sufficient to enable Expectation B2 to be met.

2.12   The review team scrutinised the Student Admissions Policy, Interview Form and Admissions Appeal Procedure. Details were discussed with students as well as teaching and professional support staff and the representative from the awarding body.

2.13   Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the admissions process, stating that pre-arrival information was comprehensive, accessible and, based on their experience, accurate. In particular, students cited the fact that staff respond to admissions queries in a timely fashion, something international students especially praised.

2.14   Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to admissions, where a highly centralised process, run by the Student Services Department, is in operation. The team was informed that LCCM has very recently become a member of UCAS and staff with responsibility for admissions are considering membership of key network and professional bodies to support their work. As discussed in Expectation B6, mapping processes are in place for admitting students with prior learning. No students have appealed admissions decisions.

2.15   LCCM uses a clear policy framework that includes an appeals process for applicants, with detailed information available through the website and other formats. A high level of student satisfaction was evident, with organisational structures and processes supporting the selection of students who are able to complete their programmes of study. The team concludes that the Expectation for the principles of fair admission is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16   LCCM focuses on a strategic approach to learning and teaching for promoting the effective engagement of students. The developmental approach to supporting staff who are engaged in facilitating learning is described in the Staffing Policy. LCCM's Academic Governance structure enables ideas for the continuous development of learning opportunities to flow upwards and downwards through LCCM. This process is supported by the summer review action plan.

2.17   LCCM articulates and systematically reviews the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices to enable every student to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subjects in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. In addition to the operational procedures detailed in the Student Services Handbook, all staff members are also responsible for adhering to the institutional policies and procedures detailed in the White Book, the Tutor Handbook and the CICP Handbook.

2.18   These arrangements would enable Expectation B3 to be met. The review team scrutinised the extensive library of evidence made available by LCCM and triangulated information through discussion in meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, professional support staff and students. A demonstration of the LCCM virtual learning environment (VLE) platform illustrated further details for the use of technology for learning and teaching.

2.19   The comprehensive range of reports and documents made available by LCCM provided extensive evidence of a rigorous and systematic approach to the review and enhancement of learning opportunities. The effective management of the process is demonstrated throughout the management structure and begins with the Strategic Plan.

2.20   LCCM's commitment to the continuing development of learning and teaching is made clear in reflective accounts, including the self-evaluation document and student submission, and is triangulated at the operational level as indicated in Programme Committee minutes and the Academic Quality Summary Report of student evaluations. The self-critical way in which findings are considered by the Academic Quality, Student Services and Programme teams provides further evidence that LCCM's approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities is effectively managed.

2.21   The review team was presented with numerous and appropriate examples of strategies for independent learning and methods aimed at developing analytical, critical and creative thinking in meetings with staff and students. Aspects of effective learning and teaching, which positively exploit the context of a small provider, are evident in the Skills Share Scheme, a new careers module, extracurricular rehearsals, including a Latin-based ensemble, live performances, peer assessment, and a new Open Class initiative which provides a student forum for feedback on a weekly basis. The strategic and extensive development of student-centred learning through peer support, group work and skill-sharing initiatives constitutes **good practice**.

2.22   Policies and processes map across to effective learning and teaching practices at strategic and operational levels. There is evidence of steady improvement through the incremental development of LCCM's management, teaching, and professional support teams. The team concludes that the Expectation placed upon LCCM to systematically review and enhance learning opportunities for students is met and that the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.23   LCCM's mission and success is built on a culture of aspiration, aiming to provide learning opportunities that are unsurpassed by any comparable institution. Within this context, the purpose of the Student Services Department is to provide continuous, personal support to individual students.

2.24   The Academic Board has an explicit requirement to recommend new resources for programme enhancement. The Student Committee is the established platform for conversations between staff and students about support systems and processes. Policies for assisting students include the Hardship and Bursary Fund, Extenuating Circumstances, and Interruption of Studies. These systems and processes would allow Expectation B4 to be met.

2.25   The review team considered an extensive range of documentation relevant to the provision of student support, including the White Book, the Student Services Handbook, minutes of Student Services meetings, extracurricular activity, and the student support policies. Details were discussed with students and teaching and professional support staff, and a representative from the awarding body.

2.26   The team recognised that LCCM provides appropriate resources for supporting student learning, with evidence from annual monitoring reports demonstrating support and responsiveness to students' needs for practice facilities, investment in up-to-date technical equipment and access to musical instruments. Resource provision and monitoring is reinforced by policies for IT and Physical Resources. High levels of satisfaction with available resources are noted in student survey data. Resource planning is effectively demonstrated by summer review documentation, including the detailed design of new facilities, learning resources and equipment within the proposed relocation of LCCM to the Music Box campus in 2017.

2.27   The formation of the Student Services Department has formalised student contact points, with one point of reference from application to graduation. The Student Services Department works with the Head of Academic Quality and the Programme Leader to deliver the BMus degree and provides pastoral support to students. Student Services is also the team that looks after all aspects of the student experience through the management of communication with incoming, current and outgoing students and by supporting them in their studies.

2.28   The Student Services team supports special educational needs (SEN), with students that register as SEN learners representing approximately 18 per cent of the student body. Discussions with students and staff confirmed close working relationships for providing support and guidance throughout a range of undergraduate journeys, reinforced by evidence drawn from Student Services and Student Committee minutes, the Student Services Department Handbook, and the LCCM VLE.

2.29   Evidence confirmed that the induction programme for new and continuing students provides timely information, including a student induction pack and tutor-led sessions on the study expectations for new recruits. To ensure that students have the best opportunity to succeed, initial assessments of skill and capability occur during the induction period. This is a priority of LCCM given the relatively high levels of attrition, particularly during the first year of study on the BMus programme. LCCM has developed strategic support sessions giving

clear guidance on independent learning, the student week, the effective use of information technology, and the purpose of assessment and feedback. Additional initiatives include the Prevent Programme and the Culture Shock workshops. Survey data demonstrates that 94 per cent of students agree that induction is effective, with additional supportive comments being noted during discussions with students and through the student submission. The comprehensive and developmental induction arrangements, including the use of integrated workshop activity and student interviews with academic and support staff, is an instance of **good practice**.

2.30   Induction is further supported through LCCM's endeavours for enhancing external access to the work of students, including the use of SoundCloud and YouTube. Students have access to extracurricular activity related to professional practice and networking on the new Student Portal. This resource provides 24-hour access to timetable information and allows students to book rehearsal facilities, such as studios, online.

2.31   Students confirmed that they are encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of College life, despite the absence of a formal student engagement policy - a point that is discussed in more detail under Expectation B5. Learners noted many opportunities to develop personal skills pertinent to improving study experience and developing professional portfolios. Staff and students confirmed that the academic and professional potential of students is nurtured by one-to-one exchange with tutors in the context of a small specialist provider, reinforced by a clear pastoral support policy.

2.32   The team recognised, in particular, LCCM's clear, comprehensive and strategic approach to enhancing students' employability. Students are encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of College life, with many opportunities to develop personal skills pertinent to improving study experience and developing professional portfolios. Embedded curriculum activity is supplemented by extra-curricular opportunities, which LCCM helps to incubate. The range of these classes covers many areas of musical interest, providing career development potential. The team was informed that non-assessed learning opportunities represent an additional 25 per cent contact time in the current student timetable, with staff and students confirming the extensive amount of musical rehearsal and practice.

2.33   Members of the SMT emphasised that a conscious approach had been taken to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum that reflects requirements in the workplace, therefore placing LCCM's graduates at an advantage. The Career Education Information Advice and Guidance Policy provides evidence of LCCM's commitment to enabling student access to professional networks in preparation for life post-study. Examples of this approach include a focus on production in the song-writing strand of the BMus and mandatory piano at Level 4 for all students. Students noted that these kinds of initiatives have enhanced their learning experiences. LCCM has also developed a targeted careers module for delivery at Level 5 that will enable students to concentrate on developing further career management skills. On the basis of this wide-ranging evidence, the team concludes that LCCM's considered, sustained and close engagement with music industry practitioners to ensure the effective and coherent transition of students through and beyond higher education is **good practice**.

2.34   From induction to graduation, LCCM, through its teaching staff and Student Services Department, offers a secure source of support for a wide range of individual learners, with access to extracurricular events giving students enhanced opportunities for progression into their chosen career. The team concludes that the Expectation for enabling students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.35   A limited range of student engagement processes are in place, which include elected student representatives and feedback questionnaires. LCCM does not currently have a specific documented strategy for student engagement and recognises that more progress can be made in this area. Mechanisms for student feedback are, however, documented in the LCCM White Book.

2.36   Students are represented on a wide range of committees including the Board of Governors, Academic Board, Programme Committees and the Staff-Student Forum. Students are not currently involved in LCCM's pre-validation process and are also not represented at central service departmental meetings. A Student Committee is in place and is chaired by an elected student, with Programme Leaders and Student Services staff in attendance. A Student Committee Training Handbook has been constructed to guide elected representatives in relation to their responsibilities and the Student Services Department is responsible for delivering training to elected representatives.

2.37   The team found that despite the absence of a documented strategy for student engagement, the mechanisms in place for students to provide feedback, including the use of surveys and commitment to involving students in College committees, together with the support arrangements for elected representatives, are sufficient to enable Expectation B5 to be met.

2.38   The review team tested this Expectation through meetings with staff and students, including student representatives. College questionnaires, reports and terms of reference for College committees were considered in addition to the minutes of College committees.

2.39   The team noted the small nature of LCCM's provision, with regular interaction between staff and students helping to facilitate a dialogue about the quality of student learning opportunities, which students themselves really value. The team found that the opportunity for all students to attend Staff-Student Forums enables any student to discuss matters of concern directly with teaching staff. Students also informed the team that they had been consulted on the change of awarding body and had been able to vote on the matter.

2.40   Response rates to student surveys are low and significant emphasis is placed on informal dialogue between staff and students. Students reported to the team that this approach carries with it an immediacy that students value highly; they reinforced the fact that a culture exists that embraces student feedback and the desire to improve their learning experience. The team also noted evidence for the channelling of this informal feedback into more formal processes such as annual programme monitoring, including a recent issue on the guitar strand of the BMus programme.

2.41   The team recognised that LCCM acknowledges the need to develop more effective arrangements for student engagement. Work has begun to achieve this, with extended student participation and voting rights at committees, and enhanced training for representatives. LCCM will take part in the National Student Survey for the first time in 2017. The team was also informed that LCCM was in discussion with external training providers to enhance support for student representatives, and that this would also focus on career management skills that will benefit students beyond their representative role. The team

therefore **affirms** the work underway to increase the range and effectiveness of student engagement opportunities.

2.42   The team concludes that LCCM codifies arrangements for student engagement effectively in the White Book and, as students testify, strikes an appropriate balance between formal and informal feedback mechanisms. LCCM also recognises the need to strengthen student engagement which, as the team notes under Expectation B1, is needed in certain areas. Consequently the team found that the Expectation for engaging all students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.43   The Assessment Policy and Teaching and Learning Strategy outline rules and regulations related to all assessment. LCCM has developed its own Academic Misconduct Process Policy according to the requirements of the awarding body. The effective and consistent implementation of the existing policies and procedures would allow Expectation B6 to be met.

2.44   The review team scrutinised programme and module specifications, external examiner reports, and a range of assessment information. Documentation about LCCM's use of awarding body guidelines, policies, and procedures was considered. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the representative from the awarding body, and students.

2.45   All policies are published on the website and there is further reference to the nature and use of assessment in the Tutor Handbook and Golden Rules for Tutors. Procedures for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) are outlined in the Admissions Policy. RPL may be awarded through academic credit transferred from other higher education institutions. Alternatively, mature students who may not have conventional qualifications but who can demonstrate their academic capability through professional or work experience can gain recognition at admissions or advance standing stages. There is a clearly defined mapping process that ensures appropriate transfer of credits for defined level descriptors, and procedures were articulated clearly by teaching and professional support staff.

2.46   Assessment schedules outline the assessment process and skills to be improved in order to demonstrate good academic practice. Assessments have been designed to reflect current professional practice and include a range of activities, including composition and arrangement performed by professional musicians, live performance in external venues, group projects, performances and technical ability examinations. All live performances are double-marked using defined and transparent assessment criteria. The team noted the effective use of a pre-defined sample of assignments agreed with the external examiners, which is double-marked in order to ensure consistency and comparability.

2.47   Formative and summative feedback is provided to students on all assessment tasks. Feedback is a combination of both written and verbal commentary with the team recognising the use of a variety of methods including one-to-one tutorials, peer feedback, reflective journals, and live recordings. Students and teaching staff expressed positive views on these continual feedback opportunities leading up to summative assessments, which encourage further learning improvement.

2.48   Assessment boards are chaired by either the Principal or a Senior Academic not associated with individual programmes. The membership of the Assessment Board is reviewed annually and formally ratified by the Academic Board. All marks are analysed by the Programme Leader prior to formal submission to the Assessment Board, as detailed in the Assessment Policy. Academic misconduct is investigated in line with College policy and a summary of closed cases is shared with the Assessment Board. All moderated grades are

agreed with external examiners prior to final ratification at the Assessment Board. The agreed grades are entered into the LCCM system by Student Services. All assessment scripts are retained for one year after conferring.

2.49   LCCM operates valid and reliable assessment processes to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award of credit or qualification. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.50   LCCM is responsible for nominating suitable candidates as external examiners for all programmes of study and they are appointed by the awarding body, in order to provide assurance of academic standards and enhancement of quality. External examiners complete induction, arranged by the awarding body and LCCM, prior to commencing their duties. External examiners are informed, at the beginning of their appointment, of their right to raise matters of serious concern with the awarding body's Vice Chancellor.

2.51   The names of external examiners are shared with students through programme handbooks and the White Book. Conversations at the Assessment Board and external examiners' reports are designed to provide feedback, promote enhancement and to ensure standards at LCCM. LCCM's approach to the integration of external examiners within quality assurance processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.52   The review team considered a range of documentation associated with assessment policy and examination procedures, in addition to minutes of Programme Committee and Assessment Board meetings and external examiner reports. Details were discussed in meetings with teaching and professional support staff, the representative from the awarding body, and students.

2.53   The team noted the recognition by LCCM of the critical role of the external examiner in providing confidence to the awarding body about the quality and standards of its validated provision. Staff emphasised that the awarding body places great value on the external examiner system and requires its partner institutions to give a high priority to responding to their advice and feedback. The team confirmed that the awarding body's external examining policies and procedures are clearly explained and rigorously monitored. As noted in Expectation B6, a sample of assessments is reviewed prior to Assessment Board meetings and external examiner comments are addressed consistently and thoroughly.

2.54   LCCM ensures that external examiner reports are formally considered through boards and committees and that recommendations are included within action plans that are followed through. Reports from the external examiner for BMus confirmed that the process of external feedback, action planning for continuous improvement and implementing change is being managed effectively by LCCM.

2.55   LCCM sends external examiners a response setting out the actions taken following receipt of reports, and provide the awarding body with confirmation of their responses to issues raised in their summer review action plan. External examiner reports are also made available to students, except for confidential reports made directly to the Principal.
The review team was reassured to receive confirmation from the SMT and support staff that external examiner reports are available on Google Cloud through the LCCM website.
The policies and procedures of the LCCM external examining system are rigorously applied, and external examiners' reports are given close attention at every level of the institution.
The team concludes that the Expectation for making scrupulous use of external examiners is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.56   The Academic Board has overall responsibility for securing and maintaining academic quality and standards, and to review annual programme monitoring. The AIR process aligns with the requirements of annual monitoring and reporting of the awarding organisation. As noted in Expectation A3.3, the AIR has two streams of input from Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) and Annual Organisation Monitoring (AOM).

2.57   In previous years LCCM has completed annual monitoring reviews using the procedures of the former awarding body and organisation. The first annual review cycle for the new awarding body is due at the end of the current academic year. The effective and consistent implementation of the existing and previous policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.58   The review team scrutinised a range of documentation including annual reports, summer review plans, external examiner reports, and quality assurance policies. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the representative from the OU, and students.

2.59   APM and AOM processes collect data and review information throughout the academic year. The APM procedure enables reflection and action plans based on issues arising from programme reports, evaluating current quality assurance and planning future enhancement. The AOM procedure measures the effectiveness of operational elements and longer term strategic enhancements identified in LCCM's Strategic Plan. The outcomes of AIR are documented in the summer review plan prepared by the SMT.

2.60   In 2013, LCCM had undertaken a self-critical review in line with the regulations of its former awarding body, resulting in modifications to undergraduate programmes. In order to become an approved institution of the new awarding body, LCCM completed a rigorous self-assessment to ensure academic standards and good governance, which has subsequently resulted in a collaborative partnership agreement spanning the next five years.

2.61   Staff-Student Forums meet twice a year, providing an opportunity for staff and students to consider enhancements, modifications or recommendations, which are cascaded through to Programme Committees. These meetings are also scheduled twice a year and are attended by student representatives. The Committee is responsible for maintaining academic quality and standards, recommending changes to enhance programme delivery, and reviewing all feedback relating to the programme. Annual management reviews and external examiner reports are discussed. Any actions and recommendations have been appropriately addressed and effectively implemented.

2.62   The Annual Report is incorporated into the AIR, and provides a strategic overview of LCCM. These reports are presented to the Academic Board, which monitors and reviews all actions arising from AIR and summer review plans.

2.63   LCCM operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and review of programmes through its AIR process. LCCM manages its responsibilities for its own monitoring and review procedures as well as those of its previous and current awarding

bodies and organisation effectively, with appropriate scrutiny of the maintenance of academic standards. The team concludes that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.64   LCCM has policies in place to process student complaints, academic appeals and appeals relating to admissions decisions. The policies expressly reference timeframes for handling complaints and appeals within LCCM, and are made available on the College website as well as being the subject of information provided during induction. The Tutor Handbook also provides guidance for staff on how these policies should be operationalised. Forms are available online for students to submit a complaint or appeal. The outcomes from complaints and appeals are monitored by the Academic Board. These documents and accessible policies and monitoring arrangements are sufficient to enable Expectation B9 to be met.

2.65   The review team discussed details in meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, a representative from the awarding body, and students. Policies relating to student complaints, academic appeals and admissions appeals, as well as student handbooks, were scrutinised.

2.66   LCCM informed the team that when a student has exhausted the internal complaints policy they have two further options available to them. Students can either refer their complaint to the OU or directly to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The awarding body will be issuing further guidance to partner colleges and confirmed that these were the two options available at present for students who remain dissatisfied following LCCM's response to their complaint. The team found that LCCM's Complaints Policy does not clearly articulate this process. Inconsistent reference is made to the role of the OIA and the awarding body, and timescales associated with referrals are also not mentioned. The team therefore **recommends** that LCCM ensures that the Complaints Policy is clear, consistent and comprehensive.

2.67   The team found that despite a lack of clarity in formal paperwork for complaints procedures, LCCM understands the extent of its responsibilities as assigned by the awarding body. Furthermore, students were confident that they would be able to access the necessary support and guidance to submit a complaint and appeal. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.68   While LCCM does not provide formal placement activity for students, a range of employer networks and contacts are used in order to involve other organisations with the facilitation of rehearsal and live performance by students in external venues. Procedures are used for agreeing and monitoring the use of venues, including the use of risk and safeguarding registers. These arrangements would allow Expectation B10 to be met.

2.69   The review team explored a range of documentation including programme specifications, validation documents, handbooks, registers and minutes of meetings. Details were discussed in meetings with students as well as senior, teaching and professional support staff.

2.70   The team recognised that LCCM's strategic commitment to employability has resulted in extensive involvement of students and tutors within a wide range of contemporary music industries, as discussed in more detail in Expectation B4. This strategy is underlined by the LCCM mission for transforming higher education in music, writing, and digital product development by connecting students with industry and capital. The team noted that the embedding of industry links is reflected effectively in extracurricular activity, module and programme specifications, and student handbooks, as well as validation documentation for the BMus and the MA in Entrepreneurship.

2.71   Two members of teaching staff attend all live performances in external venues whenever a performance is part of the curriculum, and are responsible solely for assessment linked to the award of credit. Members of the Resources Department are responsible for the safe set-up of equipment, testing the power supply, and checking performance space. Details of venues are discussed within the Resources Committee, although there does not appear to be a consistent process for reporting systematically on all venue safety or suitability issues. Risk analysis documentation and venue registers do not appear to include consideration of all venues and organisations associated with public performances by students in public venues. The review team therefore **recommends** that LCCM strengthens the risk analysis procedure for performance venues external to LCCM.

2.72   Despite this observation, the team was reassured that students and staff understand the need to adopt a safe and ethical approach to working with others in external venues. The review team concludes that LCCM succeeds in making extensive and wide-ranging links with music professionals and industries outside LCCM, and that this is a significant feature of student support as discussed in Expectation B4. There are procedures for managing arrangements that help students to perform securely and effectively in public venues, and in so doing the team concludes that the Expectation is met. The Expectation is associated with medium risk because of the need for a more formal analysis of health and safety in order to ensure the regular and systematic monitoring of links with all other organisations who provide venue and industry opportunities for students.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.73   LCCM does not deliver research degrees; therefore, this Expectation does not apply.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.74   In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.75   All relevant Expectations in this area have been met, with a judgement of low risk being reached in nine cases and a moderate risk for Expectation B10.

2.76   There were three instances of good practice. The first involves Expectation B3, with student-centred learning in a wide range of modules and programmes, and with skill-sharing and peer support as prominent and sustained activity. The second involves Expectation B4, where LCCM has developed extensive induction procedures and activities, including the use of interviewing and workshops by a wide range of staff. The third is also for Expectation B4, based on the advanced and close engagement of students with practitioners in the music industry.

2.77   There were three recommendations. With Expectation B1 there is a need for more student involvement in programme design and pre-validation. In Expectation B9 LCCM is asked to clarify the Complaints Policy. In Expectation B10 there is a need for strengthening the procedure used for risk analysis when students perform in public venues outside LCCM.

2.78   One affirmation emerged for Expectation B5, recognising the steps being taken by LCCM to increase student engagement.

2.79   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at LCCM **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 LCCM's management of information is governed by the Public Information Policy. The Principal holds ultimate responsibility for the approval of information, which they delegate to the Head of Marketing and Communications. Programme Leaders are responsible for generating course information although Heads of Department have delegated responsibility for ensuring its accuracy. The Public Information Policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the SMT, in line with the expectations of the awarding body.

3.2 Visitors to the website are able to browse content by instrument, discipline or academic level. LCCM considers the website to be the primary vehicle for programme information although the institution also uses a wide variety of social media platforms. Students and staff are provided with information through handbooks but also through the student portal, which contains information on learning aids, pastoral support and the curriculum. Programme specifications are available for students online and as part of student handbooks since September 2016.

3.3 The documented policy for the management of information, commitment to making key documentation accessible on the external section of the LCCM website, comprehensive range of information available to applicants and students, and consolidated policies and procedures available in the White Book, would enable Expectation C to be met.

3.4 The review team discussed the quality of information in meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, the awarding body representative, and students. A member of staff provided a demonstration of LCCM VLE and responded to questions from the team, who also viewed programme handbooks and College policies including Public Information. LCCM's website, student portal and other electronic platforms were scrutinised as well as the committee minutes, the White Book and documentation relating to the summer review process.

3.5 Common entry criteria are readily available on the LCCM website for undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The team was able to confirm that other key information, such as external examiner reports and programme specifications, are available on the external facing section of the website and that detailed module information is available on the VLE. The team found instances where information was either unclear, for instance surrounding complaints as discussed under Expectation B9, or inaccessible for students. During the preparation phase for the review visit, programme handbooks were not available online, although this oversight was addressed once it had been raised by the team.

3.6 The team found that, despite minor instances of information not being available for students, there was a monitoring system in place, as part of the summer review process, to ensure that information was accurate, accessible and up to date. While this had not been executed effectively in all cases, student satisfaction with the information received is nevertheless high. Where they did not have access to information, students knew who to contact and said that requests are dealt with expediently. LCCM informed the team that

revisions have been made to monitoring systems, including a change in staff responsibility for the management of information, but that these were not being consistently applied at present. The team therefore **affirms** the actions underway to effectively implement the monitoring process for information provided to students.

3.7   The team found that, notwithstanding the lack of availability of online handbooks at the time of the visit, staff are clear about responsibilities for producing and monitoring information and that LCCM has systems in place to enable monitoring to take place. As noted in the affirmation, LCCM is aware of the need for this to be applied more rigorously, with students remaining positive about the information that they receive. The Expectation is therefore met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.8   In reaching its judgement about the quality of the information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.9   The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There were no recommendations, with one affirmation for the work in progress to improve the monitoring of information provided to students.

3.10   LCCM provides information for the public about its higher education provision. Information is accessible, appropriate and accurate for prospective and current students, as well as those with responsibility for maintaining standards and assuring quality. The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at LCCM **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 LCCM's approach to enhancement is both strategic and long term, enabling incremental improvements. The enhancement strategy is embedded into the Strategic Plan 2016-20.

4.2 The Principal and the Board of Governors recognise their responsibility for the continual enhancement of learning opportunities for students. The design of College governance ensures that the Board of Governors has explicit responsibility for strategic enhancement of the learning opportunities for students.

4.3 The effective and consistent implementation of the existing policies and procedures would allow the Expectation for Enhancement to be met.

4.4 The review team considered a range of documentation including strategic plans, meeting minutes, summer review plans, annual monitoring and external examiner reports, policies, and procedures. Details were discussed in meetings with senior, academic and professional staff, the awarding body representative, and students.

4.5 LCCM does not articulate enhancement through a specific strategy or policy, although the team identified a series of sustained and strategic developments that are College-wide and aimed at enhancing learning opportunities and the student experience. Curriculum design and development offers a significant illustration. The Board of Governors made a decision in 2005 to develop a three-year BMus, which was validated in 2008. his innovative programme combined the teaching of the fundamental skills needed for aspiring professional musicians with the practical study of composition and arrangement, underpinned by an advanced study of harmony and theory.

4.6 The BMus programme has been subjected to modifications and new additions to improve curriculum delivery and clarify assessment criteria. In 2013, the programme underwent further structural changes at module levels for learning outcomes, assessment expectations and feedback requirements. These developments enabled students to understand the distinction between instrumental techniques and entertaining an audience through performance.

4.7 In 2015, LCCM engaged in a partnership with the new awarding body in order to design learning outcomes to further reflect the professional expectations within the industry. The focus of the validation for the new BMus has widened the options available for students during the first year of study, as reflected in positive student feedback.

4.8 LCCM has therefore developed an interdisciplinary curriculum that reflects requirements of the workplace and improves student employability, underpinned by an extensive extracurricular programme. As discussed in Expectations B3 and B4, students have expressed their appreciation for this approach and noted that this had improved their learning experience. The Specialist Careers module, Study Skills Scheme, and the Open Class sessions are further initiatives undertaken by LCCM for enhancing the overall learning experience.

4.9   A further implicit example of recent enhancement that has not yet been completed involves the strategic decision to invest in the new purpose-built Music Box campus in order to develop learning opportunities. The proposed facility, to be operational in 2017, includes the design of study space and teaching facilities required for the range of disciplines associated with creative media. The Music Box building is expected to facilitate the introduction of additional programmes in creative writing and digital product development, thereby complementing the existing music curriculum. During discussions, the team noted the enthusiasm for these developments among students and staff.

4.10   The review team concludes that LCCM has taken deliberate and effective steps to enhance the quality of student learning opportunities. The strategic approach to continuous quality improvement has created an ethos of enhancement across LCCM. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.11 In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.12 The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There were no recommendations or affirmations. The review team identified examples of strategic and deliberate curriculum and resourcing developments for improving learning opportunities, including plans for the relocation of LCCM to the new Music Box campus in 2017.

4.13 The review team concludes that the enhancement of learning opportunities at LCCM **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) handbook](#)

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

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

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

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

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

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

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

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

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

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

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

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

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)
An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

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

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

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document
A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

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