BIMM UNIVERSITY | A university for the creative industries

Commercial and Academic Planning Committee (CAPC) Minutes

12th March 2024, 9.30-11.30

via Videoconference

1   Welcome

1.1   Confirmation of Attendees and Apologies for Absence

1.1.1   Attendees:

- Professor Louise Jackson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost (Co-Chair – LJ)
- Fiona Tyler, Chief Finance Officer (Co-Chair – FT)
- Professor Mark Irwin, Deputy Provost & Director of Postgraduate Studies (MI)
- David O'Connor, Chief Strategy & International Development Officer (DO'C)
- Emma Charles, Director of Strategy and Projects (EC)
- Jason Knight, Associate Director Product Development (JK)
- Adam Stratford, Associate Director Commercial Planning (ASt)
- Milly McLeod, Regulatory Returns Manager (MM)
- Sam Hope, Dean of Screen and Film (SH)
- Alex Searle, Dean of Music (ASe)
- Richard Smith, Director of Academic Services and University Clerk (RS)
- Karyn Woolcock, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (KW) (Servicing Officer – SO)

1.1.2   Apologies for absence were received from Carol Harvey-Barnes, Dara Kilkenny and Juilia Ruzicka.

1.1.3   The Co-Chair (LJ) welcomed committee members to the inaugural meeting of the Commercial and Academic Planning Committee (CAPC), a new committee which would be the main communication forum for commercial and academic planning. The main aim of the committee would be to ensure that decision-making processes were transparent and streamlined.

2   Terms of Reference and Composition

2.1   Received for information Terms of Reference and Composition.

2.1.1   The terms of reference and composition were received for information, noting their approval by Academic Board. The Provost and Chief Finance Officer would be Co-Chairs of this meeting, to ensure financial oversight of new courses and course rollouts.

2.1.1   It was noted that the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement was in attendance because of their role, and was also acting as Servicing Officer for this meeting of CAPC.

2.2   Received for approval draft Schedule of Business.

2.2.1   Members approved the schedule of business, noting that this was based on the remainder of the academic year; it would be revisited in advance of the 2024/25 academic year to ensure that CAPC could action relevant activity at the appropriate point within the academic cycle.

3   Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

3.1   Received for information a summary of decisions made on Chair's Action since the last meeting.

3.1.1   Members noted the following Chair's Action approvals prior to this meeting of CAPC.

3.1.2   To rollout to Berlin from 2024/25:

1) BA (Hons) Filmmaking (Top-Up).
2) BA (Hons) Popular Music Performance and Songwriting to Berlin.
3) BA (Hons) Songwriting and Music Business.

3.1.3   To rollout to Berlin, Manchester and Birmingham from 2024/25: MA Screen and Film Production. This item was also discussed further in item 6.

4   Portfolio

4.1   Received for consideration an update on the Academic Portfolio.

4.1.1   Members received the new Academic Portfolio, which had been developed from the former "Product Roadmap". While the Product Roadmap had listed all courses, new and proposed, and course ideations, the new Academic Portfolio listed only current courses and those approved to be delivered. Moving forward items would be added to the Academic Portfolio using the following process:

Type of approval	Added to Academic Portfolio - Status	Can be advertised on website / prospectus
Course rollouts approved by CAPC	Approved	Yes
New courses – **Stage 0** approved by CAPC	Proposed	No
New Courses – **Stage 1** (via the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC)).	Subject to Course Approval	Yes
New Courses – **Stage 2** (via Course Approval event)	Approved.	Yes

4.1.2   All statuses would change to "current" as soon as they were being actively delivered (e.g. at the start of the academic year of approved delivery).

4.1.3   The Chair emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with partners. A key observation was that the Trinity Diploma, a significant component of BIMM University's academic offerings, was currently not included in our portfolio. This omission was highlighted in feedback from recent Ofsted reviews, indicating a need for improvement in our approach to these courses within the broader framework of university governance. It was crucial to recognise that our portfolio played a vital role not only in our strategic planning but also in ensuring that courses like the Trinity diploma were given due consideration in our governance and planning processes.

4.1.3 Courses which were due to be validated by BIMM University for delivery by academic Partner MetFilm for 2025/26 were not yet on the Academic Portfolio. As these courses would be validated "as is" they did not need to be processed via Stage 1 or Stage 2 and could be added to the University portfolio as "subject to course approval". The same would apply for the franchise course, BA (Hons) Digital Film Practice, which would be approved in April 2024 to be delivered from 2024/25.

> **ACTION**
>
> Add Trinity Diploma provision to the Academic Portfolio as "current".
>
> Add MetFilm Partner provision to the Academic Portfolio as "subject to course approval".

4.1.4 Discussion took place regarding two items on the Product Roadmap (which had not been submitted to CAPC) – BA (Hons) Animation and BA (Hons) VFX, which were proposed for sale from September 2024 to commence in September 2025. JK confirmed that the intention would be to present this for Stage 0 approval at the April 16th meeting of CAPC.

4.1.5 There were concerns about the workload that two course approval events would entail on staff involved, from both a resourcing and a financial perspective. The timing of the proposals would also likely mean a summer approval event which would be challenging with respect to availability of staffing and external expertise. It was agreed that the Stage 0 proposals would still be submitted to the next meeting of CAPC and that any resource implications would be addressed at that point.

4.1.6 The importance of forward planning was discussed, and while the Academic Portfolio listed current and approved / proposed courses, there was still a role for the "Product Roadmap" to play in CAPC to ensure that members had oversight of potential additions to the Academic Portfolio. This would also help to ensure that 18-month course approval deadline was adhered to. KW and JK would work together to develop a clear process for moving items from the roadmap to the Academic Portfolio, and ensure no overlap.

> **ACTION**
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> SO to add Product Roadmap as a standing item on CAPC Schedule of Business.
>
> KW and JK to develop a clear process for ensuring clarity between the Product Roadmap and the Academic Portfolio.

4.1.7 Further discussion took place about costings, and in adding new course ideas to the Product Roadmap, in addition to costs of course development and approval, teams must also take into account "hidden costs" related to approval events, such as staff time (especially when senior members of staff Chaired an approval event).

4.1.8 In balance, there may also be a need to recognise the cost of not undertaking a new course (such as rationale and business case); other considerations such as wider strategy and building planning was linked onto course planning, which meant it was

important to plan ahead and get these right and proposed at the right time.

4.1.9 Following this discussion, it was clear there was a need for a revision of course costing at the Stage 0 (proposal) stage, for example, a full Economic costing of staff time, potential resources required to run the event etc.

ACTION

Review of costings at Stage 0 to be undertaken - to include a set list of criteria to understand potential impact on resources should the course proceed to full approval.

4.2 Register of building locations.

4.2.1 The Co-Chair (FT) presented the schedule of building locations. This listed all buildings BIMM University owned or leased, with important property information. This would help track costs and plan future campus changes. Renewal dates are highlighted for planning purposes. This would be crucial in ensuring that the University was maximising its property usage. The University would continue to update and improve this schedule with more detailed information.

ACTIONS

Review Schedule of Buildings spreadsheet. To include:
- UKVI status
- Consideration of External Hires (for teaching or other purposes)

4.2.2 Buildings were presented on the spreadsheet by "Brand" e.g. Screen and Film School Brighton, and a discussion took place regarding whether these be presented by "campus", with a view to providing clarity regarding UKVI approval of a certain campus building for students of all Faculties. This matter would be raised with the Head of International Student Compliance (HoISC) to ensure that UKVI campus rules were being complied with. The Chairs agreed that this member of staff should be a key member of CAPC and as such should be added to the terms of reference.

ACTIONS

Add HoISC to CAPC Terms of Reference.

HoISC to advise on UKVI approval of campus locations.

4.3 There would be a wider piece of work to ensure that there was a clear process for adding sites to the formal schedule of building locations, including consideration of external venues hired by the University for teaching or other purposes. This would be reviewed by KW as the process currently sat within the Quality Handbook.

ACTION

Review of centre / building approval process in line with new CAPC terms of reference.

4.3   Capex Panel Summary Report.

4.3.1   The Co-Chair (FT) presented a report from the Capital Expenditure (CapEx) Panel which included a provisional budget approved by Board.

4.3.2   FT reported that A new CapEx committee – CapEx Steerco - had been established which would be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, with FT as Deputy Chair. Inclusion of CapEx updates at CAPC would be crucial to ensure that the University could forward-plan for the necessary resources to deliver courses successfully.

4.3.3   The University was currently considering CapEx related to digital learning tools and educational products for our students. Any asset with an economic value lasting longer than 12 months would go through our capital planning cycle, and this process would be initiated alongside our revenue budgeting cycle starting in April 2024. Input from all CAPC members would be welcomed during this planning phase.

5   Current Provision

5.1   Received for consideration a report on BIMM University withdrawal rates.

5.1.1   The Chair (LJ) presented a report relating to withdrawal rates and confirmed that the focus would be on planning deep dives into potential issues related to student withdrawals. The focus was on addressing in-year withdrawals, which were separate from students unable to progress to the next year. The Head of Student Data and Academic Administration (HoSDAA) developed a tracker which allowed for adjustments in budgets and forecasting based on student data. This tracking was helping us to identify trends, and plan for future cycles. The HoSDAA was thanked for their work in developing this tracker and the withdrawal report.

5.1.2   This was one of two initiatives aimed at improving student retention which were:

1) Students who withdraw in-year (as discussed above)
2) Students who are unable to progress to their next level of study (due to not gaining enough credits).

5.1.3   Members were advised that in-year comparisons of the data would be available, at present these were year-on-year but from 2024/25 would be able to show three-year trends. Withdrawal data would play a role in CAPC as it developed as it was essential to have a clear understanding of withdrawal reasons to be able to deal with the issues leading to withdrawal and understand the impact on our provision.

5.2   A report on the performance of music courses.

5.2.1   The Co-Chair (LJ), on behalf of ASe, provided an overview of the recent periodic review which encompassed music undergraduate provision awarded by BIMM University. Thanks were expressed to all members of staff who contributed to this extensive event, noting the quality of data and the associated reflections undertaken by the team.

5.2.2   Members were advised that while most subjects had performed well, some other courses – for example within the business and entrepreneurship subject area - had not, and as such some additional measures had been put in place for this provision.

5.2.3   LJ was pleased to report that the Faculty had received a range of commendations, and advised that the report would be shared with the committee once finalised.

ACTION
SO to circulate Music Periodic Review report with CAPC members once finalised.

5.2.4   LJ confirmed that, moving forward, this CAPC would see evaluative data on poor performing courses to ensure the ongoing health of our academic portfolio.

6   2024/25 Academic Year

6.1   Receive for consideration an update on the rollout of MA Screen and Film Production.

6.1.1   The MA Screen and Film Production course had been approved via Chair's Action in October 2023, with an update to costings in December 2023 (see Chair's Action item 3.1). As such, the courses were currently advertised to run from September 2024, subject to numbers.

6.1.2   As the courses had been approved via Chair's Action subject to the addition of the Chief Finance Officer as Co-Chair, FT requested that an update to the original business case be presented to CAPC, including updated costings and status of applications, as there would be an opportunity in July to determine whether the courses would still run in September 2024.

6.1.3   In order to ensure that course rollouts had the right people involved at the right stages, there was an action identified for the rollout process – including business case – to be reviewed. KW and JK would review this outside of the meeting of CAPC and include consultation with key stakeholders, including Finance.

ACTIONS
• Head of QAE and JK to review rollout process (prior to CAPC Admission).
• SH to revise Business Case for MA SFP rollout, including rationale and costings.

6.1.4   Ultimately, in-person CAPC meetings would ensure that all members were aware of new course proposals and there were no surprises.

7   2025/26 Academic Year

7.1   Receive for approval a Stage 0 course approval – MA Business for the Creative Industries.

7.1.1.   A business case was presented for a new proposed course, MA Business for the Creative Industries (MABCI), which had an anticipated start date of September 2025 (on sale September 2024). The committee was asked to consider the appropriateness of this course to progress to the next stage of the approval process (Stage 1 – course outlined to be considered by LTEC).

7.1.2   A discussion took place regarding who would develop the course. It was noted that the Postgraduate school was inherently interdisciplinary, allowing the University to leverage expertise from all Faculties. External expertise may be sought where appropriate, however there was a wealth of knowledge within the University,

specifically within the Postgraduate school, and it would be important to utilise these resources. The course would require careful planning to ensure that each Faculty's input was proportional and aligned with the course's objectives.

7.1.3　It was highlighted that the course may incorporate a placement year - this would provide a high-quality experience, however posed significant challenges for international students so this would have to be worked out as part of the course development.

7.1.4　Additionally, the Postgraduate School was considering how pathways would be structured within the course. The first trimester would focus on foundational business skills, followed by specialisation in the second trimester. There would also be an option for students to pursue an interdisciplinary project in the second trimester, leading to a final industry project in the third trimester.

7.1.5　CAPC approved the Stage 0 course approval for MA Business in the Creative Industries. The course would be added to the Academic Portfolio as "proposed" and would proceed to Stage 1 approval via LTEC. At this point, the CFO would receive oversight of costings.

ACTIONS

SO to add MABCI to Academic Portfolio as "proposed".

7.2　Receive for consideration an update regarding rollover of courses on UCAS for 2025/26 delivery.

7.2.1　This item was deferred to the next meeting to allow an admissions representative to talk to the paper.

ACTION

SO to add "update regarding rollover of courses on UCAS for 2025/26 delivery" to April CAPC Agenda.

8　Date of Next Meeting

8.1　The next meeting of CAPC was scheduled for 16th April 2024.

9　Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
4.1.3a	Add Trinity Diploma provision to the Academic Portfolio as "current".	SO	ASAP
4.1.3b	Add MetFilm Partner provision to the Academic Portfolio as "subject to course approval".	SO	ASAP
4.1.6a	Add Product Roadmap as a standing item on CAPC Schedule of Business.	SO	ASAP
4.1.6b	KW and JK to develop a clear process for ensuring clarity between the Product Roadmap and the Academic Portfolio.	KW / JK	Update at April CAPC

Item	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
4.1.9	Review of costings at Stage 0 to be undertaken - to include a set list of criteria to understand potential impact on resources should the course proceed to full approval.	JK	Update at April CAPC
4.2.1	Review Schedule of Buildings spreadsheet. To include consideration of: • UKVI status • External Hires (for teaching or other purposes)		
4.2.2a	Add HoISC to CAPC Terms of Reference.	SO	ASAP
4.2.2b	HoISC to advise on UKVI approval of campus locations.	SO	Update at April CAPC
4.3	Review of centre / building approval process in line with new CAPC terms of reference.	KW	July CAPC
5.2.3	SO to circulate Music Periodic Review report with CAPC members once finalised.	SO	ASAP
6.1.4a	Head of QAE and JK to review rollout process (prior to CAPC Admission).	SO / JK	April CAPC
6.1.4b	SH to revise Business Case for MA SFP rollout, including rationale and costings.	SH	April CAPC
7.1.5a	SO to add MABCI to Academic Portfolio as "proposed".	SO	ASAP
7.2.1	So to add "update regarding rollover of courses on UCAS for 2025/26 delivery" to April CAPC Agenda.	SO	ASAP