



INSTITUTE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
THEATRE

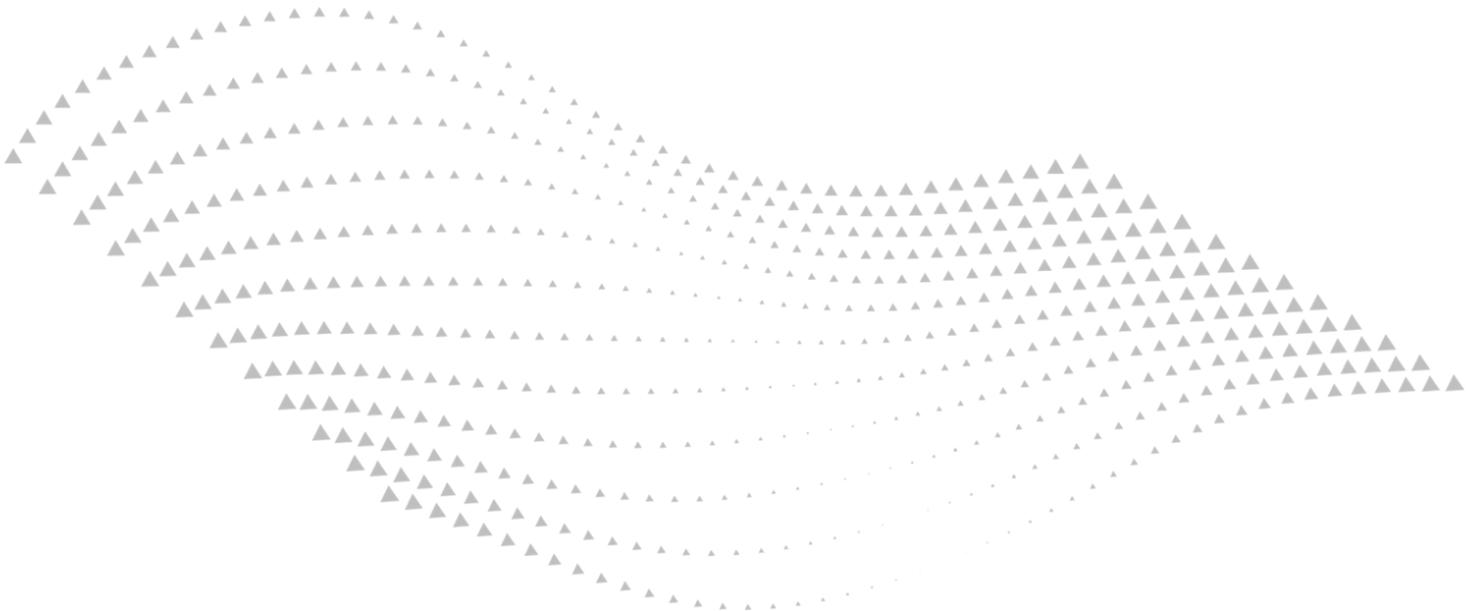


BIMM  
INSTITUTE



PERFORMERS  
COLLEGE

# Higher Education Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy



Last approved: June 2020

Approved by: Academic Board

Next review due: June 2024



## **1 Purpose & Scope**

- 1.1 This HE Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy applies to all HE provision delivered at BIMM Institute, the Institute of Contemporary Theatre or Performers' College (collectively referred to as "the Institute").
- 1.2 The Institute, as a degree awarding body, is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name and for ensuring that the quality of learning experiences is appropriate to enable students to achieve those standards. In order to execute those responsibilities, the Institute has a range of policies and procedures for assuring the academic standards of awards and enhancing the quality of its educational provision.
- 1.3 This policy statement summarises the Institute's approach to the maintenance of academic standards and to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities offered to HE students. It provides an overview and direction to the policies and procedures that provide the framework within which the Institute operates.
- 1.4 This policy statement supplements and supports the Institute's Quality Handbook, which sets out the Institute's expectations and requirements for practice by its staff and students particularly in relation to quality assurance and enhancement.

## **2 Policy Objectives**

- The Institute aims to provide its students with a high quality academic and vocational experience, underpinned by rigorous academic standards.
- The Institute's policies for maintaining academic standards are in line with the [Office for Students \(OfS\) Regulatory Framework](#), the expectations of the [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\) UK Quality Code \(UKQC\)](#), subject benchmarks and the requirements of its awarding institutions (where appropriate), as well as the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#), [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\)](#) and the [National Framework for Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#).
- Each College is responsible for the implementation of policy under the leadership of the College Principals, with the assistance of the Academic Development & Quality Assurance Team (ADQA).
- In line with awarding institution requirements and the UKQC/NFQ, key quality assurance and enhancement procedures benefit from the participation of external peer reviewers – this includes external representation on validation and review panels. External academic advisors may also be invited to join Academic Board and its subcommittees.

## **3 Academic Framework**

- 3.1 All courses which lead to BIMM awards are subject to the Institute's Academic Regulations, which set out the directives for all taught Higher Education courses. Those courses which lead to a University of Sussex (UoS) award are subject to the BIMM Institute/ICTheatre/UoS Academic Regulations.
- 3.2 The Institute has formally approved policies and procedures to ensure fair, valid, authentic and robust assessment of its students. Where appropriate, our awarding institutions also test our assessment regime and course design through the approval/validation and periodic review/re-validation process. Generic and course-based assessment criteria is published to students by



Colleges in Course Handbooks, and Module Guides/Assessment Briefs, which are made available via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

- 3.3 All student-facing procedures which relate to its assessment regulations are published online, in addition to the Student Support Policy which outlines the Institute's strategic approach to supporting students.

#### **4 Governance Infrastructure**

4.1 Governance of the overall quality and standards of the Institute resides with Academic Board (AcBd). AcBd has delegated authority from the BIMM Limited Board to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and to advise the Chief Executive Officer & Head of Institution and the BIMM Limited Board on all academic matters. AcBd is also responsible for promoting the academic and professional work of the Institute and maintaining oversight of the quality of its provision.

4.2 AcBd has various standing subcommittees, including:

- Access & Participation Committee (APC)
- Further Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (FELTEC)
- Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (HELTEC)
- Quality Assurance & Compliance Committee (QACC)
- Research & Enterprise Committee (REC)

4.3 QACC is responsible for developing and enhancing policies and procedures in the areas of academic quality and enhancement and for advising AcBd on all aspects of such policies and procedures both within the Institute and with its awarding bodies (where appropriate).

4.4 Full details of the Institute's Governance Infrastructure are published online.

#### **5 Student Engagement with Quality Processes**

5.1 Student involvement is wide-ranging, and the Institute provides a wide variety of activities to engage its students. In relation to quality assurance processes, the Institute seeks to involve students:

- Pro-actively in the development of its courses, policies and procedures through consultation.
- Concurrently through participation and representation on key decision-making bodies, including:
  - Via a formal course committee through the Student Representation Scheme – Student Reps are members of Academic Board, APC, FELTEC, HELTEC and QACC.
  - Non-standing committees, such as approval and review panels and Student Experience Reviews (see also section 7.4).

5.2 Students are also engaged through a variety of survey and feedback mechanisms where their opinions are recorded and used to contribute to a cycle of continuous improvement. These include the National Student Survey (NSS), Graduate Outcomes Survey and, for postgraduate students, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). Students in Ireland participate in the [Studentsurvey.ie](https://www.studentsurvey.ie) in their first and final years. Students are also invited to engage with a variety of internal evaluative processes, such as Module Evaluation Surveys (MES).

5.3 Further information on Student Surveys can be found in the Institute's Quality Handbook.



## **6 Approvals**

### **6.1 Course Approval & Modification**

- 6.1.1 The institute has its own formal mechanisms for the approval of new academic courses and changes to the existing curriculum, which are set out in the Higher Education Course Approval & Modification Procedures. The Institute also complies with awarding partner procedures for approval of new courses and periodic review of existing provision ([University of Sussex Partner Handbook](#)).
- 6.1.2 Each new course must go through a robust approval procedure; this is designed to assure the Institute that courses are of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to their award being approved.
- 6.1.3 LTEC has responsibility (on behalf of Academic Board) for the approval of all courses leading to a BIMM award and their titles, with delegated authority given to the validation panel to approve courses.

### **6.2 Approval of Learning Resources & New Delivery Locations**

- 6.2.1 The adequacy of learning resources to support new courses is considered through the course approval process - the Institute has in place a Delivery Centre Approval Procedure, which demonstrates the viability of a proposed new course (or existing course) at a different College, and aims to ensure that appropriate staffing and learning resources are in place for the effective delivery of the course. The procedure for approval of new delivery centres can be accessed online.

## **7 Monitoring & Review**

### **7.1 External Examining**

- 7.1.1 The Institute is committed to ensuring that fairness is applied to each individual student and that the standard of awards and award elements are maintained in comparison with those elsewhere in the UK education system.
- 7.1.2 The Institute will enable External Examiners (EEs) to perform the function of independent reviewers of the assessment process for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to the accuracy, comparability of standards (internally and externally), compliance with regulations and the fairness of the output from that process.
- 7.1.3 At least one EE must be appointed to each course or subject area that leads to a BIMM award or one of an awarding partner, and appointments are normally made for a period of four years. AcBd retains ultimate responsibility for the appointment of all EEs across the Institute.
- 7.1.4 EEs are required to complete an annual report which provides an independent and objective appraisal of the standard and quality of the Institute's provision. Reports are reviewed and responded to by Course Leaders and the process is monitored by QACC. These reports are summarised for AcBd and rated under various categories depending on the nature of EE comments. This summary of reports is also shared with all EEs.
- 7.1.5 The processes for managing the Institute's EE processes, including appointment and details of institutional responsibilities, are fully outlined in the Institute's External



Examiner Handbook. Further information regarding the processes involved with nomination and appointment of EEs can be found in the Institute's Quality Handbook.

## **7.2 Periodic Review**

- 7.2.1 As a HE provider with Degree Awarding Powers, the Institute is required to undertake periodic review of its own provision. This is managed by subject area - the Institute's Periodic Review Policy outlines its strategic approach for undertaking the review of provision leading to a BIMM award.
- 7.2.2 For courses which lead to a University of Sussex (UoS) award, periodic review of provision is carried out collaboratively between UoS and BIMM, in line with university procedures.
- 7.2.3 The currency and future development of the curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure the continuing validity and relevance of the courses on offer. Furthermore, QACC and LTEC are empowered to instigate thematic reviews of areas and departments in order to assure and enhance quality across the Institute.

## **7.3 Annual Monitoring & Enhancement**

- 7.3.1 Annual Monitoring is a process designed to review performance and feedback on the Institute's provision. It enables the Institute to:
- Consider evidence to confirm the academic standards of its awards
  - Gather evidence to consider the quality of students' learning opportunities and experience
  - Evaluate its effectiveness
  - Identify good practice
  - Strengthen accountability
  - Take informed action to enhance its provision
- 7.3.2 Annual Monitoring is a continual cycle of review and enhancement, culminating in an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). It supports other review mechanisms operating across the Institute.
- 7.3.3 Annual Monitoring of BIMM Awards includes both module reporting, where review is according to set criteria, and course reporting, where teams will prepare an AMR and action plan. In the preparation of any AMR, teams are encouraged to review a variety of evidence, including External Examiner reports, student progression and award data, student feedback and survey outcomes (including the NSS) and BoS minutes, as well as any internal or external review reports.
- 7.3.4 For UoS provision, AMRs are completed in line with UoS Partner Annual Monitoring procedures. Reports are collated at Module Level by Course Leaders, and these are compiled to create a College-Level Report. An Institutional Summary is produced by ADQA to capture provision across the Colleges, as well as identify common themes and areas of consideration or good practice. The annual monitoring cycle culminates in a the UoS Partner Annual Monitoring Review Event (PAMRE), normally held in January, where the AMRs and the Institutional Summary are given an extra level of scrutiny via peer review from other partner institutions, and a resulting report provides recommendations for further enhancement of provision.
- 7.3.5 The processes relating to Annual Monitoring are outlined in further detail in the Institute's Quality Handbook.



## **7.4 Student Experience Reviews**

- 7.4.1 The Student Experience Review (SER) process provides a focus on enhancing the student experience at College level by analysing the outcome of student satisfaction surveys (e.g. MES, NSS), progression, retention and achievement rates, and how these have impacted upon student learning opportunities.
- 7.4.2 Specifically, the aims of an SER are to improve upon the overall quality of the student experience by:
- Considering how feedback from students, teaching staff and management contribute to the student experience.
  - Providing the College with a range of recommendations, with a view to enhancing the student experience.
  - Sharing good practice arising from the event to other Colleges.
- 7.4.3 The full SER process is detailed in the Institute's Quality Handbook.

## **8 Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff**

- 8.1 The Institute is committed to attracting and appointing practitioners from the music and creative industries who are capable of excellence in teaching and research and who support its core values of teaching and learning.
- 8.2 New members of teaching staff with significant regular teaching at the Institute (on full or fractional contracts) and without formal teaching qualifications are required to undertake and complete a part-time, Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) in Learning & Teaching.
- 8.3 All teaching staff at the Institute are formally observed annually, and the results from this observation scheme are fed into the quality assurance process through HELTEC and reported on in AMRs. There are also regular informal peer observations. Further details can be found in our Teaching & Observation Policy (Appendix 1 of the Learning & Teaching Strategy).