

TEF STUDENT SUBMISSION: 19/01/22

BIMM University Introduction

BIMM University Ltd (BIMM University) is a leading specialist vocational higher education institution. It prepares students for a sustainable career in the creative industries, with students studying popular music alongside performing arts training and filmmaking courses.

The University is a highly distributed institution with fifteen constituent colleges in 'creative capitals' across England, Ireland, and Germany: cities with a rich cultural heritage and a thriving currency in popular music, performing arts, and/or film.

Who worked on the submission?

Our TEF student submission has been created using data from a survey that was collated by

This Student Submission has been collated by _____, the student Rep for Electronic Music Production at BIMM Birmingham. As a student rep _____ is the representative for their course; they attend meetings with student reps from other courses and act as an independent voice that students can contact to raise any issues, concerns or ideas they may have. BIMM University doesn't currently have a Student Union so student representatives are the way that student voice is being fed back into the curriculum and the general student experience. This submission has not been unduly influenced by the university.

Approach to evidence Gathering

BIMM University's Group Head of Access and Participation; _____, sent a student-wide call out for people to support with the submission and a group of students met for some meetings via Teams. The TEF student submission team created a collaborative document to pull together the questions for a survey for the student submission with each student creating questions for different sections of the submission.

One of the key aims of the survey was to make it accessible to as many students as possible by using language that made things clear and concise so we could capture the most precise data with a tight turnaround. We also ran a competition that would see 2 students win £100 each from a random prize draw to support them with the cost of living. We also chose to do a survey rather than hosting focus groups because the December-January period is some of the busiest times in Semester 1 as students are completing assessments during this time. We decided that a remote way to feed into the report was the fairest way to gather data that was considering the needs and focus of students right now.

After the survey was created _____ sent it out to all Higher Education and post grad students studying at BIMM University colleges in the UK, with a further reminder for them to complete it two days before the survey closed. The survey went out via email on the 16th of December and closed on the 23rd of December 2022.

Due to capacity and availability, it was decided that [redacted] would be the lead student for the rest of the submission and would interpret the data and create the final submission. [redacted] met via Teams weekly to discuss the progress, approach to evidence gathering and to ensure that the submission was in line with the data that TEF wanted us to gather.

Overview of responses

The curriculum at BIMM University prepares students for a range of different career paths in different sectors of the music and entertainment industry. We received a total of 809 responses, with 35 different courses and learning pathways being represented from all colleges and courses. We gathered information from full time Higher Education and Masters courses only.

- 469 responses from BIMM Music colleges
- 163 responses from Performers College
- 100 responses from Screen and Film School
- 77 responses from IC Theatre

Our survey also had a range of responses from students in different years of study from BAY1, BAY2, BAY3 and Master students.

Support with the best approaches to interpreting data has been provided by [redacted] ; Group Head of Access and Participation, and [redacted] ; AP Data Analyst also supported with interpreting some of the long form responses.

Student Experience

Student experience is something that is prioritised at BIMM University; one of BIMM's purposes and visions is to *"Inspire the next generation of industry professionals through the creation of inclusive and creative learning environments that remove barriers and create opportunities for equal participation in the creative industries"*.

The biggest uptake of responses was from 2nd year students who made up 37% of our responses followed by 35% of 1st year students and then 25% of 3rd year students and 3% of Masters students. This data shows that across the students studying a BA there is a relatively equal level of engagement when it comes to using your individual student voice to give feedback.

Learning Environment

When we asked students if they felt supported in the learning environment at BIMM 70% of students answered yes with 28% responding that they do sometimes. The year group that had the highest response for answering yes to this question was BAY1 and the numbers begin to decrease as we move further through years of study. This could be due to how work becomes more independent throughout your degree. Only 12 students across the whole survey responded no to this question.

In order to engage in a creative learning environment, students need to feel comfortable asking questions in their lectures to help them process the information they are learning and give tutors an opportunity to respond to individual needs. 79% of students felt comfortable asking questions in their lectures and 88% of this number also had received constructive feedback when they had asked for additional support. This shows that for students that can get past the barrier of speaking in a group they are able to participate in equal ways.

Student Services

BIMM has a brilliant and engaged support team within Student Services, who support students with any issues, questions or problems and provide them with a safe and confidential space to talk. They give students information about Student Finance, Disabled Students Allowance, budgeting, Counselling, Student events, therapy, mental health, sexual health, time management, exam preparation, healthy eating, drugs and alcohol, local services, study support, learning difficulties and medical services. They also support students who may have failed assignments and feel de-motivated, need to find accommodation in the local area or who may be struggling with attendance.

When we asked students if they knew the names of their student support team on campus 66% of students said yes and only 66% knew of additional funding that could be available to them. Despite this slightly lower number 88% said that they would feel comfortable speaking to student support if they were in an emotional or financial crisis.

One example of how BIMM University prioritises student well-being would be at BIMM Birmingham with their #EveryoneOK campaign. #EveryoneOK is their priority and commitment to inform students about safety and wellbeing and empower students to ask for and find the right support. This campaign is put as a reminder at the end of all staff members' email signatures.

Different colleges have different resources and depending on what course you are doing you also have varied access to them. One of the reasons that BIMM does this is to encourage collaboration with students across courses.

Resources

We asked the students if they felt like they had access to all the resources they needed in order to be able to do well on their course. 80% of students said yes. We also had a more open question so that we could get specific feedback from each student about what the gaps were and what other support they might need.

Some of the responses we had in relation to resources was for Studio Space, Academic Support, Digital Resources, Library, Personal Equipment/Resource, College Facilities, Learning Support, Study Space, Mental Health Support, Industry Opportunities/Information, Staff Communication, Events/Masterclasses and Communal Space.

The most common responses in this section (in order of frequency) were:

1. Studio space - students want additional spaces for practice, rehearsal and recording and improved systems for booking rooms.
2. Academic support - students wanting more contact time (timetabled hours) and more 1-1 tutorials with lecturers.
3. Digital resources - students want additional online resources that can support them with self-study and remote learning.
4. Library – students want improved online access to texts/books/journals and bigger physical libraries.
5. Personal Equipment/Resource – whilst there is great equipment available on campus students are not able to book equipment to take off campus and so students need more financial resources to be able to purchase equipment that is relevant to their course and can support them with learning at home.

Despite the differences in courses the data shows that there is a universal experience that students are having across all colleges and there were no major differences in how the student experience was rated.

“Studio time. From what I hear from my fellow students, studio time is exclusively reserved for production students. Having studio time would greatly benefit my Final Project as a third year student”

Quote from a student about the need for additional studio space.

Student Outcomes

In order to get the best outcomes, students need to have a clear pathway to progress on their course and knowledge on how to get support if they are experiencing difficulties around it.

Academic Experience

One of the ways that BIMM does this is by providing 1-1 tutorials with lecturers. We asked students if they had ever booked a tutorial with a lecturer and 70% of them said yes. 49% of students rated this process as either easy or somewhat easy with the remaining 51% saying that this process was somewhat not easy or extremely not easy.

87% of students said that they felt heard and listened to by staff on campus. Students generally feel comfortable using their voice and raise concerns 76% said they had given feedback about their experience before and 66% were happy with the outcome as a result of this.

The Academic Experience at BIMM based on teaching methods used in class was given an average rating of 3.85 stars (out of 5) with over 70% of students rating their experience as 4 stars or more. This could be due to the fact that students receive actionable and constructive feedback about their work (which 88% of students said yes, they do).

Students generally feel supported in their learning journey at BIMM either all the time (64%) or sometimes (35%) and 69% felt that staff were supporting them to progress on their course.

BIMM University provides courses that are intended to equip students to have creative careers by building learning modules that cover the fundamentals needed to thrive in their chosen field and a cross curriculum spine module 'Creative Industries' that provides general skills that are not pathway specific.

Students feel supported by staff at BIMM to progress on their course with 99% of students saying they felt this way all the time or sometimes. Despite this only 55% of students said that they always found course content engaging and 43% said they sometimes find it engaging. The students that answered yes to these questions also rated their academic experience highly. There is clear evidence that the staff at BIMM University are doing their best to provide students with the best learning experiences possible but the limitations of contact time on some courses and how subjects must be taught in a university setting could be why some students do not always feel engaged by the teaching approach.

Employment/Career Opportunities

We asked students if they felt ready for employment in their chosen field, we got different results based on what year of study the students were in. 35% of our respondents were in BAY1. Of the BAY1 respondents 25% said they felt ready for employment, 47% answered maybe and 28% said no. This shows that more first year students feel confident or somewhat confident that they are ready for employment.

37% of our respondents were in BAY2. Of the BAY2 students 25% said yes, they felt ready for employment 46% answered maybe and 29% said no.

25% of our respondents were in BAY3. Of the BAY3 students 29% of students said yes, they felt ready for employment and 29% said no they didn't. 42% of BAY3 students answered maybe for this question.

MA students was our lowest response to the survey overall, making up only 3% of all respondents. There are significantly less MA courses and so it isn't surprising that the response rate was low. Of the MA students that responded this is where we see the highest results. 42% of MA students said yes, they felt ready for employment and 42% answered maybe and only 16% said no. This shows that the more time that students spend studying at BIMM University, the more prepared they feel to enter employment.

30% of students said that their studies have led to career opportunities and 68% said that studying at BIMM University has made them feel more motivated in their career.

Extracurricular activities

89% of students said that they knew where to find information on extracurricular activities. BIMM University has 3 main ways that it communicates with students: mailing lists, the BIMM Connect platform and Student Support. Each college has slightly different resources and cultures so the way that information is shared may be different but there are clear methods of how students can get varied information.

BIMM Connect is an exclusive social networking platform and home to Europe's largest private community of music students and graduates. It also acts as a direct line of contact with students' local Careers & Industry and Student Support teams. BIMM Connect allows you to establish working and advisory relationships that can help you develop and progress in the career that you want.

83% of students said they felt confident about what the university would like them to achieve during their studies and 78% said there were enough activities to support them inside and outside of their lectures. With this question we also wanted to gather some more specific information, so we had an open text answer and asked students who answered no what they thought was missing.

Students wanted additional classes, practical experience, more masterclass/events and workshops, collaboration opportunities, Industry and career connectivity, course specific extracurricular activities, a student union, varied lesson structures, advanced classes, funding for support with neurodiversity i.e. tailored support and support to get a wider range of diagnoses – ADHD was mentioned more frequently here than any other neurodiversity - and also more promotion of extracurricular activities.

The most common responses in this section (in order of frequency) were:

1. Additional Classes – students want more contact time and/or additional classes that cover specific areas of their chosen course.
2. Practical experience – students want to have more practical in their classes and real-life work experience opportunities i.e. Gigs.
3. Masterclasses/events/workshops - students want more of these that take into consideration timetables because often there are clashes with masterclasses and lectures.
4. Collaboration opportunities with students and Industry professionals – students want more opportunities to do professional collaboration and networking.
5. Student Union – students want there to be a hub that supports more student clubs and societies in relation to sport.

“Would be nice if there was more after uni/school activities run by the lecturers, additionally there has been times when there has been a good activity that I wanted to attend but couldn't as it clashed with lesson times.”

“Additional opportunities to partake in more classes of different styles outside of normal timetable”

Quotes from students about additional classes.

“The student association is a great first step in connecting students with opportunities on their campuses. A “university wide Student Union would really help to bridge the gaps between students and staff and ensure that the student voice is heard all the time and not just when it comes to creating feedback for reports.”

Quote from student about the need for a student union.

Closing

Having gathered data across different colleges and curriculum areas there is some very positive feedback coming back from the student body. Whilst every college is different the blueprint seems to be working with 99% of students feeling supported by staff to progress on their course all the time or sometimes - this is a massive achievement for a university that has so many different colleges across the UK of different sizes and curriculum areas. The data also shows that the curriculum at BIMM does prepare students for employment the longer they study at the university.

The main things that could be improved based on what the students asked for is additional classes. Whilst some courses have 9-5 contact time that isn't the case across the board and so an expanded timetable would make things more equitable as all students pay the same course fees. Being such a niche university, it is understandable that the campuses are significantly smaller than other universities that have been running for a longer period but there is clear data to show that all students would benefit from more space on campus which would also help with hosting the additional classes and extracurricular activities that students have asked for.

Overall, students are having a positive experience at BIMM. The academic experience received a rating of 3.8 stars (out of 5) and 70% of students rated their experience 4 stars or more. This shows that BIMM is doing all it can to embody its mission and is inspiring the next generation of industry professionals with its inclusive and creative learning environments. The teaching and leadership prioritises the experience and outcomes of students which can be seen by some of the notable and successful alumni, which will hopefully just continue to expand over the years.