

# ICMP Provider Submission TEF 2023

## 1.0 Provider Context

### 1.1 Introduction to ICMP

The Institute of Contemporary Music (ICMP) is located at the heart of the global commercial music industry with a mission to shape the future of music. We pride ourselves on distinctive features that set us apart from other HE providers and ensure an excellent student experience. These are:

- The comprehensive embeddedness of industry and employability in every aspect of our provision;
- Our excellent industry standard facilities and equipment, and their availability to students to hone their skills and perfect their craft;
- The development of a dual-practitioner teaching staff that brings our students directly into contact with industry experts on a daily basis;
- Our small teaching group sizes that allow our tutors to know our students and personalise learning in accordance with their individual aspirations;
- Our approach to designing an holistic student experience that fuses academic study with a wide range of extra-curricula and industry-focussed opportunities;
- Our commitment to equality of experience, opportunity, and outcome for every member of our diverse student population.

As a result, many of our graduates go onto successful life-long careers in the creative or aligned industries, as demonstrated by our outstanding Graduate Outcome and TEF progression metrics (8.2 ahead of benchmark). Our graduates' works – whether as musicians, producers or in other parts of the music industry – are recognised through the winning of internationally recognised, highly sought-after awards

or have gone on to work in production, songwriting, or as session/touring musicians for artists that are household names (eg, Adele, James Taylor Quartet, Stormzy, Dave). Other graduates work for record labels, large and small, or within the music, film, television, and games industry, designing and supplying high-tech equipment and services to well-known artists (eg, The Rolling Stones, Sting, Miles Davis, John Mayer, Pharrell Williams, Megadeth, Pink Floyd)

This points not just to the successful progression of our students but also to the music industry connectivity and lifelong networks that are hallmarks of the ICMP experience, and which will be explained within this submission.

The quality and capability of ICMP graduates is well recognised in our associated industry and ICMP has an enviable reputation across the sector:

ICMP has consistently pursued a rigorous approach, pioneering one of the first pop music degrees in the UK. This has led the field in popular music performance education for decades and has since blossomed into the related areas of production, songwriting and music business studies. As a result, ICMP staff have become respected pioneers and authorities in popular music performance teaching, ICMP students have produced and performed on innumerable hit records, and other public and private institutes in the UK and globally have looked to the ICMP model of education for their inspiration.

## **1.2 Our Student Community**

ICMP is currently home to a total student population of approximately 1200<sup>2</sup>, enrolled on a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that represent the full eco-system of the contemporary music world: music performance, music production, songwriting and music business. From academic year 2022-23 we have expanded our portfolio to include live event management, music management, and digital marketing.

A feature of ICMP is our diverse student community. 74% of the current student community are UK domiciled, 20% are from the EU, 6% of students are non-EU international. Of our 2021-22 cohort, 44% of UK domiciled students were from the global majority, compared to 26% average nationally.<sup>3</sup> Around 25% of ICMP students declared a disability compared with 15% for UK undergraduate programmes in the UK. The average age of our undergraduate students is slightly older than average at 24 years, with 66% of our total student population over 21.

## **1.3 Degree Awarding Powers and ICMP's Strategic Plan**

In 2021, ICMP achieved Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs). From academic year 2022-23 all incoming, and most continuing, students are studying on ICMP validated programmes, and we look forward to our first formal ICMP Graduation Ceremony in Autumn 2023. Achieving DAPs was a long-term aspiration and a central pillar to our previous Strategic Plan. The award of DAPs coincides with ICMP receiving our best ever set of NSS results for 2021-22, with overall satisfaction increasing by 22 points to 74%. We have recently received notification of the successful outcome of the second of two successive OfS Capital Bids, worth a total of £7.8m for investment in our estate and digital infrastructure, the maximum amount of funding that the OfS awarded to any HE provider.

ICMP is therefore building on a very strong foundation as we launch our Strategic Plan 2022-26. Framed by our ambition of 'Creating a University for the Future,' this plan will lead us to achieving indefinite DAPs and University Title, alongside the further expansion of our portfolio into new creative disciplines, even greater flexibility for students, and a continued focus on excellent student experience and graduate outcomes.

## **1.4 The impact of COVID-19**

As a provider of predominantly practical programmes, including live performance and technical training dependent on access to specialist facilities, ICMP was hit particularly hard by the COVID-

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<sup>2</sup> The combined TEF population is 1610.

<sup>3</sup> National average is from HESA data; combined Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnicity categories.

19 pandemic. ICMP's TEF data extracted from the NSS shows dips across all the student experience indicators in 2020-21 and our overall NSS performance based on a 4-year average, in common with the sector, is brought down by this 'COVID dip'. ICMP's score for overall satisfaction for 2021 was 52%, down 15% from 2020, against a sector average NSS dip of 7%. However, we note that our competitors in predominantly performance and production provision were, like ourselves, impacted by a higher margin than other subject areas.

Despite these challenges, ICMP was highly successful in navigating the pandemic, crucially through maintaining ongoing and meaningful dialogue with the Student Presidents, Officers, and the broader student community. We took student wellbeing, continued academic development, and student experience very seriously, with significantly increased investment in our Additional Financial Support Fund, heavy investment in our digital capability to allow all timetabled activity to continue, and the delivery of critical equipment to students' homes as required.

A key feature of our pandemic management strategy was the implementation of a MacBook Loan Scheme, allowing us to seamlessly move provision online without disadvantaging any student in their ability to record and produce work.

Our response to the pandemic was considered during our DAPs scrutiny: "External examiner reports for 2020 confirm that student support, welfare and inclusion were at the heart of ICMP's response to COVID and that inclusive adjustments are encouraged."<sup>5</sup> The ICMP Student Vice-President at the time reflects: "The year when students had to go back home because of COVID we looked after them; provided care packages, had people watching over them."<sup>6</sup>

ICMP prioritized a return to in-person use of facilities and performance opportunities as soon as it was safe to do so, reopening studios and facilities for students to book from 8 Mar 2021, the first day allowable under Government regulations, with full access to the building and extended opening hours right through to Aug 2021.

In 2021-22, with a resumption of on-campus learning and performance, and continuation of our programme of continuous improvement of student experience, we are especially pleased to see that our NSS data 2022 bounced back to a position over and above our pre-pandemic results across all academic programmes, our strongest institutional NSS performance to date.

### **1.5 Governance and Management**

We aim to be an exemplar of good governance in the higher education (HE) sector. Our established set of governance principles, enshrined in ICMP's Code of Governance,<sup>7</sup> are subject to periodic review, and bring together the legal obligations of a private company and the statutory and regulatory requirements established by the Office for Students (OfS). An external Governance Effectiveness Review in 2022<sup>8</sup> found the arrangements at ICMP to be "highly effective."

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<sup>5</sup> QAA Degree Awarding Powers Assessment: ICMP, 2021

<sup>6</sup> ICMP Vice President 2020-21, quote from TEF Focus Groups, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> ICMP Code of Governance.

<sup>8</sup> ICMP Governance Effectiveness Review, 2022.

The Corporate Board ('the Board') is the governing body of ICMP. The Executive Committee is ICMP's senior management committee. Together these bodies oversee the corporate governance of ICMP. Academic governance responsibilities rest with the Academic Board, ICMP's senior academic authority, supported by a suite of academic sub-committees with clearly defined remits and terms of reference.

The Chief Executive, responsible to the Board, leads the organisation, supported by the Senior Management Team (SMT). Each member of SMT is responsible for a portfolio of activities. The Dean works with a Deputy Dean and other senior academics to discharge responsibility for the overall management, strategic development, and continual improvement of ICMP's academic function. The Dean is also an Executive Director of ICMP ensuring that academic activity is appropriately represented at the Board.

Students have representation on Programme Committees, Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board. Each quarterly meeting of ICMP Board commences with a meeting between Directors and the Student Presidents.

### **1.6 Methodology**

The creation of this submission has been a collaborative and collegiate endeavour coordinated by a TEF Working Group. An important part of the process was interviews and focus groups with students and graduates. We held five sessions

Respondents represented the full range of ICMP programmes and years of study. Participants being able to represent the viewpoints of wider cohorts from the most recent years in scope. Comments and feedback from these TEF focus groups are referenced throughout this submission.

## **2.0 Student Experience**

### **2.1 Learning Experience and ‘teaching on my course’**

ICMP’s mission is to “inspire, encourage and equip our students to succeed by delivering a relevant and innovative educational experience of the highest quality.” The continuous improvement of our students’ learning experiences is therefore integral to our institutional development.

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy<sup>9</sup> defines our approach to the design and delivery of our education offer. The strategy is developed in consultation with academic staff, students and external music industry specialists. It is organised around four key themes: student engagement; learning culture and community; industry-readiness and employability; and staff development. These themes inform the design, content, and delivery of our programmes, with a range of specific activities ensuring that each theme is brought to life through daily classroom practice. The strategy is aligned with OfS’ Quality & Standards Conditions and AdvanceHE’s Professional Standards Framework.

We are committed to bespoke, personalised learning and encourage our students to recognise their autonomy as learners. The underpinning principle is that, to successfully facilitate the creative and technical development of our students, tutors must be experienced dual professionals, who can model critical self-reflection and creative and academic enquiry. At the same time, working with the next generation of musicians and thinkers provides our tutors with new insights for their own evolving practice, which they can in turn reflect to their students. This distinctive approach to a “Partnership Learning Culture” has been presented to several UK sector conferences<sup>10</sup> and was raised by the student participants in our TEF focus groups as a valued aspect of their education.<sup>11</sup> Our collaborative delivery is an example of the distinctive way in which we encourage students to stretch their knowledge and skills and how we use innovative scholarship and professional practice to contribute to a very high quality academic experience.

During the TEF period, we have achieved steady improvement in the student experience indicators for the ‘teaching on my course’ questions. We scored 70% in 2019, 75% in 2020, and our highest-ever score of 79% in 2022. We recovered strongly from our ‘COVID-dip’ score of 68% in 2021. Our current score indicates a very high quality provision in line with benchmark and we are confident that we will further build on our steady upward trend.

### **2.2 Assessment & Feedback**

Assessment and feedback is another area where we demonstrate strong improvement in the student experience indicators. Our latest NSS score is outstanding at 83%, 13 points above TEF

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<sup>9</sup> ICMP LTA Strategy 2022-26

<sup>10</sup> ICMP Partnership Learning Culture was presented to the UK Council for Graduate Education conference on 30 June 2022 and to the ‘Personalised Pedagogies: inclusive, empowering and progressive Higher Education for all’ conference at Hull University on 12 July 2022.

<sup>11</sup> TEF Focus Groups, 2022. Eg, an undergraduate student participant noted: “it was amazing that we had an impact on a career of a tutor and performer that was actually happening now.”

benchmark and 15 points above sector average. The split indicators also demonstrate a positive trend in satisfaction for black students up 8 points to 76%, and mature students up 6 points to 75%.

We are proud of this progress and the impact it is having on our students. The strategic improvements that have led to this gain include: a review of different assessment types being offered across each programme to ensure that there is a varied diet of assessment opportunities being given to students; smarter assessment design from the point of programme validation that is inclusive from the point of conception; continuing to improve guidance to students at the point of assignment briefing; module team training in the implementation of assessment and providing high quality feedback; implementation of multimodal feedback, which gives students audio, video or written feedback depending on the type of assessment.

Assessing creative work is complex and we are committed to ensuring that all assessments are rigorous, industry-facing and engaging. We ensure that assessment is used beyond summative measures of attainment and as ongoing formative dialogue, built into the core delivery of programmes. For example, weekly workshops comprise group feedback and discussion of compositional, recording and performance work. Feedback is thus embedded within our curriculum leading to continuous development for our students. A recurring theme in TEF focus groups was how receiving and giving feedback continuously within class develops students' confidence, ability and ultimately industry-readiness,

Every week at ICMP you're writing songs and getting critique [...] And because [of what] I'd done week in, week out, at ICMP, the real-world element came naturally to me."

We provide a highly supportive learning environment, with feedback opportunities embedded across the institution. Across the TEF student focus groups, students commented on how feedback at ICMP is iterative: received through formative and summative assessment, and group working, but also continuously as students network, play, and perform in, and around, campus. Students commented on how willing staff are to engage outside of class: "If you were to send your song to a lecturer you didn't even work with, you would get feedback. Technically if you want you could get feedback 24-7."<sup>14</sup> The students recognise that this is a unique strength of ICMP and one that is strongly linked to the industry connectedness of their experience, as further discussed in *2.6 Student Engagement (p.11)*, *3.3 Progression (p.18)* and *3.4 Educational Gain (p.20)*.

Alongside the positive student feedback, the quality and rigour of our assessment processes is a regular theme in external examiner reports and other external scrutiny, eg: "The range of assessments and module content supports key areas in the development of students entering into industry. Students are provided with excellent feedback;"<sup>15</sup> and: "Feedback and identification of areas for improvement is detailed and really signposts students to how they can develop their skills. The standard of work, particularly in performance and production modules is high and assessments allow students to demonstrate innovation, creativity, and potential. The course team is to be commended, once again, on the design of rigorous assessments which cater for such a wide range of creative styles."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> TEF Interview, 2022

<sup>15</sup> Craig Burgess, UEL External Examiner report, BA Creative Music Production, October 2022

<sup>16</sup> UEL External Examiner report, BA Creative Musicianship, October 2022

### 2.3 Academic staff development

Our learning, teaching and assessment practices are underpinned by a culture in which staff are closely supported in their continuing professional development. A defining characteristic of ICMP's academic excellence is the 'dual professional' status of most of our academic staff; we know students value the experience of professional practitioners in the classroom: "It's so important our lecturers are actually in the music industry, because it evolves and changes so quickly;" and: "Our teachers are actually doing what they're teaching us and doing it very successfully."<sup>17</sup> The blending of up-to-date professional expertise and practice with pedagogical understanding and skilled teaching is therefore critical to the ICMP student experience, and our credibility with students and across the sector.

Our students and academic colleagues were always impressed by the amazing staff and lecturers, their professionalism and passion for music education.[...] Their hand-picked lecturers are world-class musicians as well as dedicated educators who share their real-life experiences with their students. *Drumtrainer Berlin and lecturer*

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I always been impressed by the quality of their staff, students and facilities. I have contact with many music departments and universities across the UK but ICMP is one whom I have seen grow most in reputation, connections and relevance for those wishing to enter or develop their careers in the music industry. The industry can appear complicated and developing networks is key so having established people who are working in the industry right now is essential. *The F-List and the Ivors Academy*<sup>19</sup>

Our 'dual professional' expectation is predominantly governed by our institutionally agreed Attributes of an ICMP Educator, which ensures that professional experience is sufficiently balanced with pedagogy, teaching capability, and the broader skillset required of a teacher. The Attributes are used as the key mechanism for the recruitment and induction of academic staff, staff training and development and monitoring of teaching standards through our peer review process. ICMP's positive culture of open and constructive classroom observation is longstanding. Our peer review programme, introduced in 2016, is broadly based on research-informed practice found in initial and continuing teacher education. It is the central mechanism through which we monitor the quality of teaching and learning, support colleagues in their continuing professional development and assess the strengths and areas of development for our staff. We have recently enhanced the peer review programme to place greater emphasis on critical self-reflection and ipsative assessment; and our hourly-paid lecturers are now paid for engaging in the process.

An annual peer review report, received by the LTA Committee and Academic Board, analyses themes and trends emerging from the process that can feed directly into the planning of our CPD offer. In 2020-21, data from peer reviews identified our areas for development as: assessment for learning; peer-to-peer learning; questioning and checking learning; setting learning objectives; student engagement; and student-led activity.

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<sup>17</sup> Comments from TEF focus groups, 2022

<sup>18</sup> World-Leading Specialist Provider funding bid, ), 2022

<sup>19</sup> World-Leading Specialist Provider funding bid, ), 2022

We also ran an LTA conference themed around these key areas of teaching practice. These activities have now been added to our annual delivery cycle.

Approximately 42% of the academic staff have a teaching qualification; approximately 51% also hold a post-graduate qualification and a small number (6%) hold a doctorate.<sup>21</sup>

Our strategy of focusing on the professional development of our teaching staff has contributed to an 11-point uplift in our average score for the ‘teaching on my course’ question set, which has risen from 68% in 2021 to broadly in line with benchmark in 2022 at 79%. In addition, the split indicators for mature and mixed ethnic students show positive trends: up 7% and 15%, to 78% and 80% respectively.

Our distinctive and effective approach to learning and teaching is frequently commended by our External Examiners, eg: “Seeing first-hand how they [the teaching team] support and encourage their students while striving to develop more efficient processes has been incredibly impressive;”<sup>22</sup> and: “The course provides students with a structured and relevant learning experience that is in line with current industry and professional trends, [...] with an effective blend of modules that cover professional practice considerations across a range of approaches.”<sup>23</sup>

## **2.4 Learning Resources**

### *Facilities*

As a specialist educator in contemporary music, we have a high quality base of physical and general resources, and state-of-the-art studios, specifically to allow our students to develop the technical, academic, and musical skills needed to succeed in their chosen roles within their programme of study.

Over the last four years, we have invested heavily in the development of our estates and facilities, in accordance with our strategic aims and objectives, to provide outstanding physical and virtual learning resources to support the specialised ICMP learning experience. In response, our NSS score average for the ‘Learning Resources’ questions has risen from 64.5% in 2019, which was 14 points below our benchmark, to 80.6% in 2022, materially (5 points) above benchmark. The split indicators also demonstrate positive trends – students score has increased 36% to 87%, the score for disabled students has increased by 13% to 79%, for black students by 7% to 85%, and mature students by 20% to 80%. Encouragingly, our ‘mock-NSS’ survey,<sup>24</sup> which collates the views of all our students at levels 4 & 5, also shows an improvement in satisfaction levels, from 62% in 2021 to 79% in 2022.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ICMP staff development records, 2022

<sup>22</sup> UEL External Examiner report, BA/MA Songwriting, October 2022

<sup>23</sup> UEL External Examiner report, BA Creative Music Production, October 2022

<sup>24</sup> Student Satisfaction Survey (Mock NSS), 2022

<sup>25</sup> This reflects the very high level of investment we have made in our learning resources, environment, and facilities in recent years. There was a dip in the upward trajectory in 2021, which is directly attributable to the national lockdowns, when students had no access to studio or performance spaces. Detail on how we managed COVID restrictions is included in the *Provider Context* section, see p.2.



Our success here has been achieved through a robust Estates strategy, closely aligned with our corporate, portfolio development and LTA strategies. This Estates strategy provided the framework for two successful OfS capital bids. In 2021, we received £2m, which funded phase 1 and the start of phase 2 of our Queens Park refurbishment; the next phases of this project follow further OfS funding awarded in 2022 totalling £5.8m over the following 3 years. These successful bids endorse the significant added value that these facilities represent. We have planned for an ongoing programme of investment beyond this funding to ensure that we can maintain and further develop our world-class specialist estate and facilities. For context, in 2019-20, our investment in learning environment and resources was approximately 3% of revenue; in 2022-23, this has risen to 22% of revenue. Future investment plans are shown below:

Source	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	TOTALS
OfS	£2,000,000	£2,000,000	£1,800,000	£5,800,000
ICMP	£300,000	£613,000	£700,000	£1,613,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,300,000</b>	<b>£2,613,000</b>	<b>£2,500,000</b>	<b>£7,413,000</b>

In the last four years, we have made significant developments to our learning environment. Firstly, in 2018, we extended and completely refurbished our Dyne Road site with new state-of-the-art facilities, offering a range of specialist, industry-standard creative spaces, study spaces and social spaces. In 2020, we acquired a new site in Queens Park and began a phased refurbishment and fit-out project. In Sept 2021, we developed three industry-standard studio spaces. In Sept 2022, we completed phase two of the project, which included a 110-capacity live venue, new technology labs and classroom spaces, as well as a 50-seat student café.

Students have access to our specialist facilities during scheduled timetabled teaching and for independent use during evenings and weekends. This extensive access is a key enhancement to the student experience at ICMP: any student from any programme can book rehearsal rooms, recording studios, production suites and have access to our tech suites whenever they are not in use for timetabled activity. We also offer an extensive library service, appropriate to the specialist nature of our programmes.

“At ICMP as a student you might take these things for granted. The access to facilities is very valuable [...]

ICMP’s Facilities team ensure that all our spaces and resources remain up to date, safe and fit for purpose, as well as maintaining a huge stock of free-to-hire equipment. As an indication of student use, in one month alone we loaned approximately 6,000 items.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the above, our Head of Industry Partnerships (utilising strong industry connections as a member of acclaimed British rock band, Skunk Anansie) secures ongoing sponsorship deals and discount offers for our students. This includes software and equipment from leading industry suppliers, as well as a range of sponsored scholarships and endorsements.

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<sup>27</sup> Facilities data for April 2022

Our virtual learning environment (VLE) acts as a central resource for students and tutors on all modules and on all programmes. With a prescribed protocol for design and architecture, and a dedicated Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team, the platform is designed so that students have a consistent experience across all areas of their learning. This robust architecture allowed us to pivot smoothly to online delivery during the pandemic. TEL is a key element of our LTA strategy and effectively supports our high quality teaching and learning. Our approach has been endorsed by the QAA: “The team found that programme documentation is carefully maintained and accurate. Students whom the team met during the visits confirmed that clear and detailed information on their programme, modules and assessment is easily accessible on the VLE and enables them to understand their programme and the assessment requirements.”<sup>28</sup>

## **2.5 Academic Support**

Our supportive learning environment is currently rated by ICMP students as an outstanding feature. Our overall score in the NSS 2022 for ‘Academic Support’ is materially above benchmark at 85%: the sector average is 73.88 % and the benchmark is 76.5%. Furthermore, we are materially above benchmark on all three of the questions that comprise the overall score, ie, relating to contacting staff, receiving advice and guidance on the course, and making study choices. The split indicators show positive trends – mature student satisfaction has increased by 19% to 89%, black students by 16% to 89%, mixed ethnicity students by 10% to 85% and IMD 2 students by 7% to 84%.

These positive scores for academic support are endorsement of our LTA strategy detailed above and are supported by external verifiers. In 2021, our validating partner, University of East London, commended ICMP for: “the passion for the subject that is evidenced in the student-centred approach to teaching; the peer-to-peer learning that is well supported by the institution; tutors, who are highly responsive to students’ requests and requirements; and the institution’s responsiveness to student feedback in improving the programmes.”<sup>29</sup> In evaluation of our DAPs application, the QAA team: “concluded that all students are well supported to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression.”<sup>30</sup> The QAA acknowledged our commitment to inclusivity by stating: ‘ICMP’s approach to enabling student development and achievement is guided by a commitment to equity which is clearly built into its policies and procedures and is implemented in practice.’<sup>31</sup>

The rise in Academic Support ratings also validates recent improvement initiatives. In 2019, pre-pandemic, our NSS academic support satisfaction score was close to the benchmark.<sup>32</sup> The substantial climb in 2022 coincides with a strategic restructure targeted at improving learning support. In 2021, we created a responsive and accessible student-facing and student-centred service. Student Advisors are now prominently based on ICMP front reception desks and provide a student helpdesk function of accessible, joined-up assistance. Programme leaders working in liaison with programme administrators provides expert support to small portfolios of programmes and modules. A new engagement and attendance dashboard has improved the way we identify and offer early interventions and academic support for students at risk of non-engagement. (Our

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<sup>28</sup> QAA Degree Awarding Powers Assessment: ICMP, April 2021, [55].

<sup>29</sup> UEL Education & Experience Committee, confirmed Validation report, July 2021

<sup>30</sup> QAA, 2021 [166]

<sup>31</sup> QAA, 2021 [175]

<sup>32</sup> As previously mentioned, our results during the pandemic were suppressed. See ‘the impact of COVID-19’ in the *Provider Context* section p.2.

structured system of supportive student engagement interventions is described in the 3.1 *Continuation (p.13) and 3.2 Completion (p.18)* sections below.) As part of the positive one-year review of the new structure,<sup>33</sup> the ICMP evaluation team met with Student Officers, who confirmed that feedback from Student Reps on behalf of their cohorts across all years and programmes, rated the new service as ‘excellent’ and commended the tailored provision.

### *Student Support Services*

The student wellbeing team is a crucial part of the support offered to students at ICMP and provides another example of how ICMP offers very high quality learning support. We recognise that many of our students require specialist support in addition to the academic and tutorial offer,

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Students referred for counselling	55	70	53	77

ICMP is dedicated to supporting disabled students across the lifecycle through the interventions and support we can give through our student wellbeing team. They provide support for disability, mental health and wellbeing, counselling, accommodation, and financial support. All advisers offer both face to face and online meetings, which allows us to adapt to the needs of all our students and have a flexible approach to service access. Students can also receive support from two external counselling providers, an Alexander Technique teacher, an NLP Practitioner and Life Coach, and have free access to Togetherall. We recognise that mental health is a significant area of importance, and we have staff trained as mental health first aiders. Disability awareness is part of the mandatory EDI training for all ICMP staff, with more advanced disability training for those in key student-facing roles.

## **2.6 Student Engagement**

Our excellent music-student focused environment is fostered through a wide range of ICMP-organised extra-curricular student events. These are strategically designed to complement taught programme experience with broader technical-skills, music industry learning, and cross-disciplinary networking opportunities. A recurring theme that emerged from our TEF focus groups was how: “ICMP have put me in touch with so many people that think about music the way I do, that it’s impossible not to find people I can play and perform with.”<sup>34</sup> “A lot of what I hear from students is how they have grown. You are never the songwriter or performer you started as.”<sup>35</sup> The events that help with networking and creative growth, and thus our broader learning support, include, but are not limited to: instrument/discipline-specific evening group learning; Nashville-style songwriters’ circles; networking events; panel discussions; and specialist Masterclasses with high-level industry practitioners across a range of creative disciplines

<sup>33</sup> Registry Restructure Review, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> TEF Focus Group, 2022

<sup>35</sup> TEF Focus Group, 2022

his exposure to, and opportunities to network with, successful industry practitioners enhances student experience, feeds into educational gain and catapults careers (see more about this in *3.3 Progression (p.18)*).

In parallel with ICMP-run events, students are supported to organise and manage student-led activities that further extend professional learning and networking. Our 'Belong' initiative encourages students to pitch ideas that celebrate the diversity of our student body to receive mentoring to professionally organise, promote and stage their event.

Over the last two years, ICMP have responded decisively to feedback from our internal NSS focus group ('Learning Community')<sup>36</sup> that advocated for the development of student societies. We ring-fenced staff and financial resource to support students in these, and, from an inaugural society in 2021, current student societies include: Film; Radio/Podcast; Cultural; Female and Non-Binary Producers; LGBTQIA+; Obscure Music; Afro-Caribbean; and Student Communications.

## **2.7 Student Voice**

Engagement with students is thoroughly embedded in ICMP provision. The TEF NSS indicators show that Student Voice at ICMP is very high quality. The latest NSS 2022 score for Student Voice at ICMP was an outstanding 74.91%, materially above the sector benchmark of 66.54%. The split indicators also demonstrate positive trends in satisfaction with Student Voice for mature students up 7% to 75%, and black students up 8% to 76%. From our internal data, we know we are among the top-scoring on the Student Voice NSS question in our group of direct competitors.<sup>38</sup>

At TEF student focus groups, one of the key themes that emerged was how students find ICMP highly responsive to issues they raise: "Any time I've reported an issue its either been explained to me why it can't be resolved, or it's been resolved immediately."<sup>39</sup> At ICMP, there is an ethos of responsiveness that enhances student experience and learning support. This is included as an ICMP value in the induction that all new employees receive and regularly highlighted during our all-staff meetings.<sup>40</sup> Students tell us that most minor issues are resolved rapidly and locally at the point where they raise them.

ICMP students enjoy a structure that effectively and inclusively represents our diverse student body at all levels of the institution, and across all areas of activity. Student representation is steered by an elected Student President and Vice-President who chair Student Senate, comprising Student Officers<sup>41</sup> and Student Representatives from every strand of every programme. ICMP

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<sup>38</sup> Internal data analysis, available through ICMP Business Intelligence Analyst.

<sup>39</sup> Quote from TEF Focus Groups 2022.

<sup>40</sup> Responsivity to student feedback was most recently mentioned in the all-staff meeting on 1 Nov 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Student Officer roles have remits: eg, Societies, Sustainability, EDI.

scores above sector average for the NSS question 'The students' union ([...] effectively represents students' academic interests.'<sup>42</sup>

Crucially, responsiveness is structurally embedded in the relationship between student representatives and ICMP staff. Members of Student Senate receive a comprehensive induction at the start of the academic year, and continuous operational support and communication from staff.

Through these close working relationships, issues can be quickly identified, communicated, and acted upon. Enhancements that have been initiated over the past two years as a direct result of these meetings include: improvement to our room booking system using social media; and the co-development (Student President and Registrar) of the ICMP zero tolerance campaign and policy. The positive ongoing dialogue between staff and students was especially commended by the outgoing 2020-21 and 2021-22 Student Presidents in their exit meeting with the Board in July 2022.<sup>43</sup>

Students are at the core of discussion and decisions at ICMP, with student opinion incorporated into ICMP strategy and process through student committee membership (see *1.5 Governance and Management* (p.3)) quality assurance feedback mechanisms, and student focus groups. We run internal NSS focus groups that reflect on key aspects of the prior year's NSS; in 2021-22 this resulted in improving noise pollution across studio spaces and hosting new cross-programme networking events.<sup>44</sup> We consult students on our broadest institutional strategy, eg, we incorporated student feedback into our 2022-26 ICMP Strategy and drew on student evaluation of the recent campus upgrades to inform the next phase of our Estates Strategy. Our 'Closing the Feedback Loop' communications make sure students are informed about how the institution acts on their feedback. We are particularly proud of our success in understanding and including the perspectives of groups of students from under-represented backgrounds; we achieve this through bespoke advisory and focus groups. For example, the Access and Participation Advisory Group (APAG) empowers students from under-represented groups to give feedback and suggestions around their lived experiences of access, success, and progression that informs APP strategy. Listening to the views of this group has recently resulted in a bursary scheme targeted at students from lower income backgrounds.

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<sup>42</sup> Eg. NSS 2021, ICMP Score of 58.92 is materially above sector average of 52.55

<sup>43</sup> Corporate Board Minutes, July 2022, published on the ICMP website.

<sup>44</sup> A cross-programme networking event in December 2022 that was set up as a direct result of student feedback

### 3.0 Student Outcomes

#### 3.1 Continuation

Improving rates of continuation is currently ICMP's highest priority. At ICMP, we accept students who demonstrate high levels of commitment and development potential, rather than privileging entry-tariff. We encourage applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds and sectors of the community associated with low participation rates. We welcome many students who have not previously flourished in education. We are extremely proud of the transformative experience we offer and very successful outcomes for our graduates across all backgrounds and starting points. We are fully committed to inclusivity, but this kind of admissions policy is inevitably challenging. Our most recent B3 metric for continuation on 3-year degrees places ICMP 5.5 points ahead of the OfS baseline. Current continuation on 'other UG' programmes is marginally behind baseline at 72.9% (see the explanation at *Continuation on 'other UG' programmes (p.14)* below). We are working hard to significantly reduce early drop-outs. We have analysed and strategized to resolve this situation and in 2022-23 are currently in the first year of our new Continuation and Completion Action Plan (CCAP).

The development of our CCAP entailed careful analysis and strategic planning. In 2021, ICMP commissioned a Student Engagement Working Group to investigate the challenge of retention and the recommendations of this group led to the establishment of a Student Engagement Strategy and the CCAP to affect change. In recognition of the importance of this plan, ICMP undertook an external review and evaluation of the CCAP in Nov 2021.<sup>45</sup> The external review endorsed the approach, with some minor enhancements which have been incorporated. Our revised LTA Strategy 2022-26 includes a student engagement theme and has assumed responsibility for oversight of this work. The QAA note that ICMP recognize attendance and non-continuation rates as an area of risk and have a comprehensive action plan for non-continuation which details intervention strategies. They say: "There is clear evidence that attendance and non-continuation data are routinely monitored, and action is in hand [...] and this has resulted in increases in staffing and improvements to provision. Students met by the team confirmed they are well supported."<sup>46</sup>

The CCAP draws on analysis of our internal intelligence about the reasons students leave, and recommendations for specific forms of advice and support. We have therefore put significant financial resource from 2021-22 into Finance and Accommodation advice, and Mental Health and Disability Support. We have also invested from the start of 2023 in a bespoke post that will coordinate the delivery of CCAP and lead on evaluation of the projects of the plan, working with our external advisor, SEER.<sup>47</sup>

The key initiatives we have implemented as part of CCAP relate to increasing a sense of belonging and better supporting those students with lower levels of previous educational attainment. The projects addressing the former include our 'Belong' scheme and the growth of student societies (see also *2.6 Student Engagement (p.11)*) and a best-practice personal tutoring system, designed in collaboration with SEER. This is used in conjunction with intelligence from our new student engagement dashboard and the Programme Administrators and Programme Leaders' close relationships with individual programmes and students (see *2.5 Academic Support (p.10)*), and an enhanced attendance monitoring system with early intervention for non-attenders. Another key

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<sup>45</sup> *Review of ICMP's approach to non-continuation, 2021.*

<sup>46</sup> QAA Degree Awarding Powers Assessment, 2021, para 179

<sup>47</sup> SEER (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research), see <https://collaborativehe.com>

initiative in this area is our peer-to-peer academic student mentoring scheme. We are continuously evolving our support for those students who come from a non-traditional educational background. Our Pre-Amp pre-sessional programme<sup>48</sup> is providing tailored support to help applicants from a non-traditional route to entry to develop their academic skills. In the current year, we are seeing improved engagement resulting from this initiative, with 85% of 'Pre-Amp' students still on course at the end of the first semester.<sup>49</sup>

*Continuation on 'other UG' programmes*

Within the TEF data, our continuation metric is 5 points below benchmark. This requires some explanation as our overall institutional continuation metrics are disproportionately affected by a single programme, our now discontinued HNC ('other UG'), which represents a very small part of ICMP's overall provision. The continuation for our 3-year UG degrees is in line with benchmark and is representative of our high quality performance:

TEF Continuation (inclusive of 'other UG')	TEF Continuation (excluding 'other UG')
81.8%	85.5%
5 points below benchmark	Materially in line with benchmark (0.8 below)

ICMP became an Edexcel/Pearson Centre in 2011, and Pearson qualifications have underpinned our 'Higher Diploma' brand of intensive one-year music performance programmes. This has been an important and attractive part of our portfolio, providing practical programmes for students looking for a shorter period of study, a programme of upskilling, career change, or preparation for higher level study. ICMP has been a highly competent and effective Pearson Centre, with successive successful Pearson annual management reviews (AMR) and external examiner scrutiny. Comments from the most recent Pearson AMR include that ICMP: "provides students with an enviable experience in both music production and performance; has exceptional facilities; takes much pride in what they deliver; is diligent in ensuring that it meets all statutory requirements; and all students were positive about the amount of time and access they had to their tutors."

Despite this assurance of quality, we identified in 2019 that our Pearson HNC Music Performance programme was underperforming in relation to continuation in comparison to our 3-year UG programmes. Our view is that Pearson HNC programmes have become increasingly poorly constructed and unnecessarily complex in relation to the quantity and granularity of assessment tasks. This presents students with a burdensome number of hurdles, and the risk of demotivation through failure of very small units of assessment. A number of actions were taken to remedy this, but simply served to reinforce our hypothesis that the real issue is the design and assessment protocol of the Pearson programme.

The decision was therefore taken that, following a successful DAPs outcome, we would exploit the greater autonomy that affords ICMP and transition from the Pearson HNC to a proprietary CertHE

<sup>48</sup> 'Pre-Amp' is a widely used technical term for boosting an audio signal.

<sup>49</sup> Internal data, available from student records team.

qualification, allowing us to streamline assessment protocols and better match curriculum content to our excellent institutional knowledge of what this particular cohort of students is seeking. That transition is now complete. We have closed our partnership with Pearson, and a new suite of instrument-specific CertHEs in Popular Music Performance have been approved under our own Awarding Powers and are now in their first year of delivery.

We are delighted to report that our internal data is already showing dramatically improved rates of retention and improved pass-first-time rates,

#### Pass-First-Time rates

2021-22 HNC Pass-First-Time Rate	54%
2022-23 Semester A CertHE Pass-First-Time Rate	85%

#### *Continuation for different groups of students*

##### *Mature Learners*

In 2022, our annual mature student welcome event

addressed topics such as fitting in, developing academic study skills, and managing the pressures of study alongside life commitments. This event helps create a mature student community and we have been able to stay in contact and highlight other opportunities of support. Many of our mature students are financially independent and on low household income, and in 2022, we altered our financial support to provide students on a household income of <£25,000 an £800 bursary for every continuous year of study to support engagement, continuation and reduce the need for mature students to take paid employment outside of their academic studies. With many of our mature students coming from non-traditional routes, we offer Pre-Amp (see also 3.1 *Continuation (p.14)*) and are seeing improved retention in 2022 for those engaging with this programme. We also note that this group's satisfaction in assessment and academic support is higher than the benchmarks and of their peers.



## *Disabled Students*

Since 2020, we have engaged Equality Focus<sup>51</sup> to provide one-to-one specialist study skills support for students identified as needing further support but not eligible for DSA.

Our Study Support Assistants provide additional support for disabled students within the classroom.

Supporting students is another priority and led by our Specialist Adviser. We have established a dedicated transition day for students to foster an early sense of belonging and preparedness as well as developing a dedicated peer mentor scheme, where former students can offer advice and support to those currently studying.

## *Ethnicity*

We continue to have targets within our APP to reduce the continuation gap and are paying particular attention to the intersectionality of students and taking measures to reduce the continuation gap of Black students.

Work has been done to ensure the institution is learning and understanding the systemic issues facing these students and putting measures in place to ensure inclusivity. We recognise the importance that having a diverse staff plays in delivering a diverse, inclusive and relevant curriculum; in short, ensuring that all of our students feel seen and heard in the classroom.

We have engaged with Sound Connections,<sup>52</sup> who have consulted with us on diversification and run staff workshops on microaggressions and race in the classroom, including conversations specific to the music industry and environment. ICMP's EDI Committee has an objective within its operational plan to further diversify the curriculum to ensure our student body is fully represented. Recent initiatives include forming a collection of popular musicology texts by global majority academics and authors and decolonising reading lists and library stock; student EDI and microaggression training; and engaging with a diverse roster of industry guests for masterclasses and conferences. Our events include: Awareness in Music panel discussions addressing racial inclusion within the music industry; our Belong Scheme (see also 2.6 *Student Engagement (p.11)*); and events celebrating Black History Month and Caribbean Culture, 100% of students organising these events said they felt the scheme helped make them feel a part of the ICMP community.<sup>53</sup> In addition, a student-led Afro-Caribbean society has recently been established.

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<sup>51</sup> Equality Focus offer specialist non-medical help support staff (mentors, study skills tutors and support workers) service to HEIs. They enable students with diverse range of needs to fulfil their academic potential.

<sup>52</sup> Sound Connections have a mission to ensure that all young people can experience music and creative opportunities, see <https://www.sound-connections.org.uk>

<sup>53</sup> Impact Data, Belong Scheme

NSS trend data shows that for 2022, satisfaction of Black students in academic support, assessment and feedback and learning resources continues to increase. These moves to ensure improvements in satisfaction are hoped to contribute to better continuation.

### **3.2 Completion**

Our overall TEF completion rate of 85.5% is broadly in line with the benchmark of 86.4% and is therefore of very high quality. We believe this is a direct result of our commitment to small teaching groups, personalized approach and our holistic student experience that ensures students succeed in their studies.

Nonetheless, completion rates remain an area of intense focus at ICMP, and we strive for even greater success in this area through the work of the CCAP described above. For example, the action plan includes the introduction of a specialized personal tutor scheme for second- and third-year students

### **3.3 Progression**

The TEF student outcome indicators show that progression (graduate outcome) at ICMP is outstanding. We are consistently materially above benchmark with the most recent progression data at 75.2%, 8.5 points above benchmark. We are 9.1 points above benchmark for the progression of disabled students, 11 points above for IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, 4.5 points for mature students and materially above for ABCS quintile 1 and 2 and ethnically diverse students. ICMP is also above benchmark for all geography of employment quintiles.

Incoming students tell us that they come to ICMP to develop creatively as performers and practitioners and to forge careers within the music and creative industries.<sup>54</sup> We are highly effective in implementing and personalising approaches that ensure our students achieve these ambitions. The majority of ICMP's graduates are working within the broad music/creative industry sector. Internal graduate outcomes data from 2019<sup>55</sup> show that >75% of those in highly skilled employment were working as musicians, teachers or as professionals within the creative industries.

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<sup>54</sup> Analysis of a 'sticky wall' survey of 2022 freshers reveals that the top four hopes of our incoming cohort relate to: i) gaining music-industry and/or career opportunities; ii) networking; iii) learning and developing skills; iv) producing, releasing, and/or performing new creative material.

<sup>55</sup> ICMP GO, 2019. 42.8% response rate of 325 surveyed students.

ICMP's outstanding rates of graduate progression, and the high-level music industry success of many alumni, are attributable to the embeddedness of industry and employability in every aspect of ICMP provision. We understand that careers are not an add-on of a university education but need to be threaded throughout the whole student experience. In a TEF focus group discussion one graduate summarized: "The opportunities that we're all afforded by coming to ICMP gives us years' worth of head-start trying to get into this industry [...] it's invaluable."<sup>56</sup> ICMP achieve this 'head start' through a web of industry connectivity stretching throughout classroom teaching, broader student experience, and our careers hub.

In terms of teaching, industry-readiness and employability has always been a core theme of our LTA Strategy.<sup>57</sup> (See also *2.1 Learning Experience (p.5)*.) We expect all students to be equipped with transferable skills, knowledge, and attributes to ensure their ongoing professional development beyond graduation. Our students progress through their programme increasingly engaging in activities that help their transition into the working environment. Specific examples of the embeddedness of industry in our teaching are given in *3.4 Educational Gain (p.20)*.

Our strategic approach to employability recognises the importance of extra- and cross-curricular activity. Our rich tapestry of creative, skills-based and industry-connected student events is discussed above, under *2.6 Student Engagement (p.11)*. As evidenced in that section, student life at ICMP routinely provides networking opportunities with some of the biggest players in the music industry. Additionally, from our base in an area of London historically known as the 'Music Mile', we support our students to hone and develop their skills in the safe and supportive environment of our local community. On any night of the week, ICMP students can be encountered performing in local venues around Kilburn; local performance opportunities have been enhanced from 2022 with the opening of our new campus venue at Queen's Park. Our community liaison team further ensure that our students gain experience through paid community engagement opportunities, open to students across all programmes and years of study, eg, in 2021-22, ICMP students worked as event, floor and backstage runners and videographers at the Brent Makes Music event at Wembley arena and presented and performed at the Global Youth Awards at the Camden Club.

Our ICMP Careers and Industry Hub ("the Hub") tailors approaches to support our students in their educational gain and progression. As well as facilitating and co-delivering much of our within-programme and extra-curricular industry experience mentioned above, the Hub offers individual, tailored careers support to students throughout all levels of study. Our Music Industry Advisory Panel (MIAP), that comprises music industry representatives and other creative employers, guides and advises our programme development and the activities of the Hub. Highlights of the Hub's provision include expert advice on portfolio career development<sup>58</sup> including access to the ICMP Accelerator fund providing students and graduates with business project funding,<sup>59</sup> bookings with renowned Industry Coaches;<sup>60</sup> and professional advice from the Hub staff team who include well

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<sup>56</sup> Graduate

quote from TEF Focus Group, 2022

<sup>57</sup> Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-26

<sup>58</sup> A portfolio career is made up of multiple revenue streams from different projects, roles or jobs undertaken at different times and often simultaneously. In music and the creative industries more broadly, employment can be project-based, seasonal or contracted, so professionals will work across a portfolio career to sustain themselves successful.

<sup>59</sup> Eg, the ICMP Accelerator Fund.

<sup>60</sup> 258 bookings since 2020-21. Our industry coaches currently include: directors of management companies and music PR agencies; practitioners such as a regular drummer for Emelie Sande; a backing singer for Dua Lipa, and the creative lead at a leading sync agency;

connected dual-professionals. The Hub offer many initiatives to ensure equality of opportunity, eg a partnership with EmployAbility provides specialist advice for students with disabilities; Career Changers host a series of workshops to support mature learners ahead of graduating; the Creative Grants Scheme funds students from under-represented backgrounds to complete an original creative project; AIM<sup>61</sup> facilitates internships at leading music industry companies specifically for students from under-represented backgrounds; and the Ace Accelerator Award gives a business graduate access to an inclusive office space and facilities at the Design District in Greenwich for a year. And the Hub provides ongoing graduate support. Our TEF alumni focus groups endorsed this: “The aftercare is incredible, and I'm still really connected with everyone at ICMP that I've worked with.”<sup>62</sup>

### **3.4 Educational Gain**

An ICMP graduate approached ICMP's Dean following our recent 2022 annual Awards Ceremony and thanked him for the role ICMP had played in setting their career in motion. The precise words were: “I've had a brilliant three years at ICMP, I'm ready for the next stages of my artist career, and I managed to get a degree along the way!”

This comment is a good representation of ICMP's attitude to its mission and values. The reality of the creative industries is that being a graduate in and of itself is not enough to guarantee successful career outcomes. The academic award is therefore the vehicle through which we support our students in meeting their aspirations and prepare them for the future. The added value we build around the academic programme is what makes ICMP unique and an attractive proposition for those serious about a career in their chosen discipline.

ICMP, therefore, defines Educational Gain as this added value from which its students benefit, with a focus on the achievement of our students that goes above and beyond their academic attainment and prepares them for life beyond graduation. Our success in achieving this has been reported back to us through student and graduate focus groups, with numerous statements confirming the importance of ICMP's holistic offer. This resulting supernumerary skillset is wide and varied, but is best articulated through our formally stated ICMP Graduate Attributes<sup>63</sup> that ICMP graduates are: industry ready & employable; imaginative & enterprising; adaptable; global citizens.

Our starting point in achieving this added value is to do all within our powers to ensure, in the first instance, that all students who complete their programme of study achieve successful academic outcomes, regardless of their prior experience at the point of entry. At the most fundamental level this can be demonstrated by our consistently good degree classification outcomes (First and upper second class honours), with approx 80% of completing graduates achieving this.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore our ‘tariff on entry’ data shows there is no discernible difference in academic attainment between those with the lowest tariff on entry, and those with the highest. For instance,

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<sup>61</sup> AIM is the Association of Independent Music.

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TEF alumni focus group, 2022.

<sup>63</sup> LTA Strategy 2022-26. Following the award of DAPs and the transition from our legacy UEL programmes to our proprietary programmes, all ICMP programmes are carefully mapped against the ICMP Graduate Attributes to ensure that sufficient opportunities are embedded at the module level to allow students to meet these outcomes.

<sup>64</sup> ICMP Degree Classifications 5-year average shows that 41% receive 1<sup>st</sup> class degree; 42% receive an upper 2<sup>nd</sup>; and 15% receive a 3<sup>rd</sup> class degrees.

in the academic year 2021-22 the proportion of students with the lowest tariff on entry (48-63 points) gaining a good degree was identical to the proportion of students with the highest tariff (208-223 points). The proportion of those students enrolling at ICMP with zero or an unknown tariff on entry (a result of mature students with non-traditional routes into HE) gaining a good degree is typically slightly higher than all other tariff categories. This demonstrates that ICMP does an exceptionally good job at ensuring our students achieve good degree outcomes regardless of their prior experience and attainment.

To ensure our students achieve our stated graduate attributes we have constructed a student offer that helps students extend their achievements above and beyond the academic attainment demonstrated above, preparing them fully for a successful next chapter following graduation. This is a co-ordinated synthesis of the academic programme with pre-programme support and guidance, the co-curricula of industry and careers engagement, our student events and masterclasses, the additional academic support, and a focus on fostering the kind of community that feeds networking and helps students quickly and easily develop professional working relationships with their peers. These professional relationships extend far beyond graduation, with many students forging lifelong connections and networks with their peers and ICMP staff. Indeed, it is this offer that attracts students to ICMP over and above other providers, and this has been reported directly back to us through student and alumni focus groups in preparation for our TEF submission. Our NSS data consistently demonstrates the importance of community to our students and our success in maintaining this, with responses to Q21 of the NSS (I feel part of a community of staff and students) consistently above sector average, and an impressive 20 points ahead of sector average immediately prior to the pandemic.

Engagement with our wide-ranging programme of events and extra-curricula activities is clearly key to this co-curricular offer, and our data demonstrates the extent to which this forms an integral part of the ICMP student experience. In the academic year 2021-22 there were a total of 1031 in-person attendee at ICMP events, and a further 1315 online attendees. The range of events and opportunities are outlined in the *2.6 Student Engagement (p.11)* and *3.3 Progression (p.18)* sections.

An important part of the Educational Gain we facilitate for students is what might be described as the demystification of the creative industries. Students typically arrive at ICMP with limited experience and awareness of the cultures and structures of the creative industries, and not in a position to successfully navigate a career path, even following successful graduation with a good degree. ICMP has therefore embedded contextualised business and entrepreneurship modules across every programme allowing students to explore the relevant parts of the industry structures, develop the entrepreneurial skills required to forge their career path, and to apply their particular skills within the business and/or industry environment.

Examples of how industry and employability initiatives are directly embedded into programme design and content includes: 'Professional branding' workshops for students of performance, creative, production and business programmes; 'Meet the education employer' workshop on music pedagogy and music in education modules; The design of a new 'Songwriting and Community' module with community based experiential learning opportunities for students; A 'studio internship programme' for students on production degrees; Music Business students are able to work in industry organisations throughout their final semester, earn academic credits and at the end may secure permanent employment; As part of our Business Enterprise module students pitch their business initiatives to a panel of founders and established entrepreneurs and pitch to NatWest

bank's Entrepreneur Accelerator programme; A level 4 music business module is sponsored by BMG through their BLM initiative and charity Tomorrow's Warriors to promote employment opportunities in the industry for disadvantaged young people; Impulse Decisions Ltd provide paid opportunities for students to work at their events, with a career development path for students to progress to become professional event managers at the organisation; MVT Music Venue Trust is the Official Course Partner of BA(Hons) Live Event Management.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of systematically measuring 'learning gain',<sup>65</sup> ICMP remains confident that the value it adds to student outcomes goes above and beyond minimum expectations, and we continue to explore ways of measuring and demonstrating this, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Our strong graduate outcomes clearly supports our case that our students are well equipped for employment, but the specific Educational Gains they achieve are best evidenced through the qualitative examples and stories we collate in the form of case studies.

These show how the professional achievements of ICMP graduates extend far beyond their good degree outcomes:

*Case study: BA(Hons) Songwriting, 2022*

regularly met with the Hub to discuss their development as a professional and a creative. They successfully obtained funding through the Accelerator Fund and Creative Grants. At the end of their second year, they undertook a placement with Headline Records and were mentored by LAB Records as part of the Industry Mentoring Scheme.

*Case study: BA(Hons) Music Business, 2022*

Within a year of graduating landed a coveted job at leading label Mute Records came onto the programme showing an abundance of creative talent but needing greater confidence and self-belief. They worked extensively with the Hub alongside their programme of study. states that this was 'instrumental in providing me with the knowledge and confidence I need going into this job'.

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<sup>65</sup> "Measuring learning gain is complex and contested. Overall, what has emerged from the pilot projects and related international initiatives is that there is no simple 'silver bullet' metric that accurately and effectively measures student learning comparatively across subjects of study and institutional types, despite appetite from government ministries and the media." In: 'Final Evaluation of the OfS Learning Gain Pilot Projects', available online at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/20ffe802-9482-4f55-b5a0-6c18ee4e01b1/learning-gain-project-final-evaluation.pdf>

*Case study: BA(Hons) Creative Music Production, 2020*

recently released a debut EP,  
with tracks clocking up thousands of Spotify streams.

graduated with a first  
class honours degree.

ICMP remains committed to the ongoing collation and analysis of such case studies, to better our understanding of which curricula and extra-curricula activities have the greatest impact, and how we can increasingly target our resources and energies on those aspects that contribute most to the Educational Gains of our students.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The TEF 2023 evaluation arrives at a particularly positive moment in ICMP history, in the context of our receiving endorsement of the quality of our provision through achieving Degree Awarding Powers in 2021, our achieving our best-ever NSS results in 2022, and gaining two successful OfS capital bids (2021-22 and 2022-25) for investment in our infrastructure. ICMP is an ambitious institution with a strong track record of recognising areas for improvement and acting to constantly elevate student experience and achieve even stronger graduate outcomes. This submission provides evidence to show that ICMP is undoubtedly an excellent provider, delivering consistently high quality programmes and student outcomes, and with a number of outstanding features.

The ICMP student experience is characterised by very high quality teaching, based on personalised, industry-relevant learning, achieved across all programmes through small group sizes and dual practitioner teaching. We have outstanding assessment practices as consistently demonstrated in our NSS results. We have embedded industry and employability in all our teaching, resulting in our students' experience of professional practice and employer engagement being outstanding. Recent significant investment in our physical and virtual learning resources has been recognised by a corresponding rise in our score in the TEF indicators and, in the most recent year, our learning resources are categorised as very high quality. As further endorsement of our continued improvement, our work to create a supportive learning environment has seen the TEF metrics for academic support move from very high quality overall to an outstanding position. Similarly, student engagement initiatives have seen the TEF metrics for student voice, which are very high quality and in line with benchmarks overall, achieve an outstanding outcome in the most recent year.

ICMP is extremely proud of our student outcomes. The TEF indicators show that, with the exception of the now discontinued HNC ('other UG') programme, we are broadly in line with the high quality benchmark for continuation. We have high quality completion results. We tailor our provision to give excellent student experience for our particular specialism and for the individual needs of our students, with strong learning support and a commitment to EDI that is embedded throughout our provision.

We celebrate outstanding rates of successful progression for all our students, across all courses, as a result of the deployment of industry and employability opportunities and initiatives in every aspect of our provision. We define Educational Gain in terms of both academic attainment and preparedness for life beyond graduation. Our students succeed in achieving these gains: students who come to us from non-traditional backgrounds do at least as well in terms of degree results as those with the highest tariff on entry; our progression performance is outstanding overall, and for all split indicators. We achieve our mission of shaping the future of music, with graduates enjoying prominent roles throughout the creative and music industries.

From our roots as a pioneer of popular music education, ICMP continues to enjoy an exceptional reputation within the specialist music-industry and creative sectors. We centre student experience, teaching excellence, and graduate outcomes in all our work. We trust that our TEF 2023 award will further affirm our status as a very high quality provider of higher education.



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