

Section 24: BIMM Institute Academic Staff Appointment & Continuing Professional Development Policy

Policy overview

BIMM Institute is a learning-focussed institution, placing strategic importance on learning and teaching and its constant enhancement at the centre of its mission. BIMM Institute has pioneered an innovative teaching model where tutors are recruited as industry professionals and then inducted into a bespoke community of practice as teachers and scholars through BIMM Institute's own PG Cert in Learning and Teaching, alongside an annual programme of staff training and development activities in each college. The BIMM Institute staff appraisal system makes direct links to staff development and teaching observation, ensuring that developmental needs are captured and acted upon. The appraisal system is owned, monitored and operated by BIMM Institute HR department under the oversight of the Managing Director and uses an externally-provided online system *People HR*.

BIMM Institute's Learning and Teaching Strategy states that BIMM Institute will ensure that everyone involved in learning and teaching or supporting student learning is appropriately qualified, supported and developed: [Learning & Teaching Strategy - Section 13 ADQA Handbook](#). The purpose of this policy, and the staff development programme at BIMM Institute is to ensure that that all members of the academic faculty are able to deliver the curriculum at the highest level and to support BIMM Institute's mission and strategic aims: [Strategic Plan - Section 4 ADQA Handbook](#). BIMM Institute is committed to supporting all staff in their continued personal and professional development and to promoting the sharing of good practice through the promotion of support networks within the colleges in line with the standards established by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) UK Professional Standards Framework: [HEA UKPSE](#).

The policy

Academic staff appointment and development at BIMM Institute is based on the following principles:

- equality in the treatment of all staff, regardless of job function, age, gender, ethnicity or disability;
- effective selection and development of academic staff that leads to the enhancement of the student experience;
- transparency in procedures relating to appointment and development opportunities;
- flexibility to allow staff to maintain and develop their industry profile and to engage in scholarly activity and research.

Staff development

The primary objectives of staff development are as follows:

- reflect the priorities identified in the BIMM Institute Strategic Plan;
- enable staff to perform their current roles with greater levels of effectiveness and efficiency;
- equip staff for new and changing roles and enable career progression;

- promote reflective practice, team building and successful sharing of best practice;
- foster a positive culture of professional self-development allowing staff to achieve their full potential;
- assure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching for our students.

Implementation

Responsibility for implementing staff development objectives is held by the Executive Principals, supported by the College Principals and by individual line managers throughout BIMM Institute. Senior Managers may also draw on the expertise of the Academic Development and Quality Assurance team and BIMM Institute's Human Resource (HR) Administrators and/or professional HR consultants where required. Records are maintained using BIMM Institute's online HR system *People HR*.

BIMM Institute's annual staff development cycle leads to interventions based on the priorities and goals identified in the BIMM Institute Staff Development Plan, drawn from staff development needs identified through annual reporting: including data from the previous cycle of appraisal.

Recruitment and selection of academic/teaching staff

BIMM Institute takes the process of recruiting new staff very seriously and this process starts with drawing up a job description (describing the main purpose, tasks and scope of the job) and a person specification (describing the person best suited to the role). The BIMM Institute college team will then advertise in one or more of the following ways to attract potential candidates:

- post the vacancy internally;
- advertise via the internet including the BIMM Institute website;
- advertise through local/national newspapers/ specialist or professional journals/specialist recruitment agencies;
- by introduction through existing members of staff.

The format for applications for all posts is online via *People HR* and candidates will be shortlisted by the relevant senior managers or their nominee. Successful candidates will be invited for an interview with the relevant college management team. Any offer made to a candidate will normally be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and proof of qualifications. Interviews may include, a pre-prepared presentation, or teaching session observed by members of the interview panel.

Induction

Once recruited, all new members of academic/teaching staff will be given details of their induction and if required their initial training programme. As part of this induction new teaching staff will also spend time with their line manager and the relevant Course Leader/ Head of Department who will cover key information including health and safety with them, as well as detailed discussion of their role and responsibilities. In addition to college based compulsory tutor-training sessions new tutors will also be observed teaching, early in their first year and provided with additional support and training as required (see Teaching Observation Policy section of the Learning and Teaching Strategy: [Learning and Teaching Strategy - Section 13 ADQA Handbook](#)).

Appraisal of academic/teaching staff

Full time, part-time and fractional academic/teaching staff are appraised annually by their line managers, in addition to being observed in their teaching practice. Appraisal forms also include reference to teaching observations for each member of teaching staff.

BIMM Institute Teaching Observation Scheme

BIMM Institute monitors the quality of teaching directly through peer observation of teaching and all tutors are observed twice a year. Observations are undertaken by senior staff alongside peer observation and both types of observation are designed to be developmental, as well as providing themes that may feed into the BIMM Institute Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan or LTEP, (see: [Learning and Teaching Strategy - Section 13 ADQA Handbook](#)) and staff development planning. New tutors receive additional support and are observed more regularly. College teaching observation reports are produced by each college and submitted to Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) termly for consideration.

Established staff appraisals (full and part time staff)

The purpose of the appraisal programme is to:

- ensure that individual staff are able to fully understand their roles and to reflect on and seek to improve their performance;
- to enable line managers to develop the skills and knowledge of their staff as effectively and efficiently as possible;
- to enable staff to contribute to BIMM Institute's strategic aims;
- to identify what the staff development needs are within a team and feed these into the BIMM Institute Staff Development Plan.

Objectives of the BIMM Institute Appraisal Programme

The appraisal process is designed to give the individual staff member and their line manager the opportunity to reflect jointly on his/her performance in their current post over the past year. In this way any staff development needs, which would enhance performance and/or job satisfaction, are identified, as are any organisational features, which adversely affect that performance. Any incremental pay increases may also be awarded in respect of the achievement of appraisal outcomes.

Timing of appraisal

Appraisal takes place once a year towards the end of the academic year, with the opportunity for interim appraisals on a 3-month or 6-month basis if the nature of the work to be undertaken and/or the wishes of the appraiser/appraisee require it. The primary outcome from appraisal should be a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the appraisee's performance in relation to current and expected needs of BIMM Institute. The appraisal will result in a clear action plan, which sets out the specific objectives and training and development opportunities, which are to be pursued. The action plan will set out the role of the appraiser in supporting and monitoring that the action plan is being acted upon.

Appraisal training

Each member of staff will be given guidance as to how the appraisal system works. The different aspects of the appraisal system will be explored including target setting, review and action plans, and any support BIMM Institute can give will be outlined. This will include discussion of staff development needs. Appraisers will be trained how to assess staff development and to set meaningful targets in line with BIMM Institute's strategic aims. There will be an emphasis on areas of achievement and how to develop these strengths further. Areas of improvement will be identified and explored in the action plan. The appraisers will be trained how to write an action plan that has achievable, measurable and realistic targets.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It is normal in the fields of the creative arts and education that practitioners continue to develop their skills and knowledge throughout their professional careers. To meet our commitment to develop our staff we provide a range of staff development activities and programmes across BIMM Institute as detailed below.

Annual college tutor training days

The purpose of training days is to facilitate team building, and to address particular themes for training that have emerged from the Staff Development Plan and through annual monitoring. Training days will be scheduled at the beginning and middle of each academic year and it is expected that where possible, all tutors and established staff will make themselves available to attend training. These training days will also focus on specific areas raised through appraisal, teaching observations, student feedback and annual quality monitoring.

BIMM Institute's Staff Development Plan (Academic)

BIMM Institute's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) formulates and oversees a group-wide staff development plan for academic staff and staff who interact with students as part of a central service. This plan is updated annually and delivered by the Academic Development and Quality Assurance team (ADQA) in collaboration with college teams. The plan sets out goals, activities designed to achieve those goals and anticipated outputs. Our stated policy is to take a flexible and holistic approach to staff development to achieve an appropriate mix of staff on each course team in each college that have between them a range of academic and professional qualifications and experience allowing each team to provide the best possible student experience. To enable this aim we ask colleges to aim to work towards and then maintain an overall average of 70% or above of staff holding a post-graduate teaching qualification with the remainder of staff in each college holding other appropriate academic or professional qualifications/and or demonstrating significant industry/teaching experience. BIMM Institutes Learning, Teaching and Enhancement (LTEC) Committee will oversee a strategic approach to planning staff development both at college level through CPD and at group level through the provision of centralized training and the PG Cert. In addition, the Research and Enterprise Committee oversees the award of post-graduate study bursaries to eligible staff.

Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE)

To ensure that new staff are properly supported in their first year of teaching and therefore competent to teach at Higher Education level, and fully aware of BIMM Institute approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, all sessional tutors are required to attend three initial teacher training sessions at their home college over their first academic year. This training ensures that all staff have the key information

and skills to deliver in the classroom effectively. The training is designed by staff in ADQA and the PG Cert and delivered locally by college teams.

BIMM Institute's teacher training programme: PG Cert Learning & Teaching

BIMM Institute expects that teaching staff with a significant amount of teaching hours (five or more hours per week averaged over their first year) will normally enroll on our in-house PG Cert in Learning at the beginning of their second year of employment with us. This expectation will be overseen by line managers and a conversation regarding this commitment will be conducted in advance of their second year working at BIMM Institute. Allocations of places on the PG Cert will be negotiated between college Principals and the Dean of Higher Education to ensure that strategic and localized priorities are met. Furthermore, the PG Cert is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to provide a route to Fellow status for BIMM Institute staff.

Staff on full time, part time or fractional contracts are expected as part of the requirements of their role to either have a post-graduate teaching qualification or be willing to study for one and will normally enroll on the PG Cert in their first year of employment at BIMM Institute. Staff in this category would include: Heads of Education and Heads of Higher Education, Course Leaders, Heads of Department and Module Leaders.

BIMM Institute Professional Accreditation Scheme

BIMM Institute provides support for staff with significant teaching experience to apply for fellowship with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) through the experiential route. This recognition scheme is run in conjunction with the HEA, with the HEA providing onsite training followed by individual mentoring from existing fellows at BIMM Institute. The HEA offers four levels of fellowship: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow, each appropriate for particular academic career stages. Nomination for inclusion in the scheme is through the College Principal.

Established staff postgraduate study scheme

BIMM Institute also operates a post-graduate study bursary scheme, that tutors and established staff can apply to study for a level seven qualification relevant to their own career ambitions and their role at BIMM Institute. Staff should note that support will normally be given on a reciprocal basis; in other words, although BIMM Institute may benefit from staff undergoing further study, the individual staff member will also benefit and, therefore, both parties should contribute. Decisions to support postgraduate study will be made by a working group comprised of senior managers and a member from the Research Enterprise Committee. Conditions may also be attached to any offer of support. Applications should be submitted to your College Principal by the published deadline using the BIMM Institute Staff Application Form for Postgraduate Study Support (available from ADQA: pgstudysupport@bimm.co.uk).

Self-managed opportunities for professional development, research and consultancy

BIMM Institute is committed to supporting all staff in their continued personal and professional development and often this development is self-managed with the support of line management. In line with BIMM Institute's strategic aim 4: *to be innovative in our approach to excellence in Learning and Teaching* - staff are encouraged through self-managed professional development to gain academic qualifications at post-graduate level and thus engage with research and scholarly enquiry. Further development of staff to gain Master's and Doctoral qualifications is also valued and actively supported.

Staff are also encouraged to take on roles such as being external examiners, members of validation and

approval panels, and educational consultancy. Likewise, academic staff may also engage in research, either as part of the PG Cert, or outside of that programme as long as appropriate ethical and professional standards are met.

Any research projects involving BIMM Institute students and/or staff should be put forward for ethical approval through the Ethical Review Process managed by the BIMM Institute Research and Enterprise Committee (REC). For the relevant form please contact ADQA. As an alternative provider of higher and further education, BIMM Institute is not research funded but we do offer support for research through a small budget to buy staff time for approved research projects. Such projects should also be submitted for approval to the REC using the appropriate form. LTEC also funds classroom-based action research projects conducted by academic/teaching staff. Forms to apply for funding for research projects from REC and LTEC are available from ADQA.

Arrangements for professional development/consultancy/research/postgraduate study are negotiated initially on an individual basis between staff and their line managers. Once staff have discussed their proposal with their line manager and received formal confirmation of support the proposal is then reviewed by the appropriate committee or panel as laid out below:

- Research project funding – REC.
- Classroom-based action research projects – LTEC.
- Postgraduate study funding applications – REC-PGF Panel.
- Other: PG Cert Learning & Teaching, professional development (including HEA Fellowship), external examining or consultancy - line manager.