

5 January 2016

Dear colleagues

On behalf of the NAMHE Committee, may I take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year and all the very best for 2016?

I am writing to update you on what has been a particularly active year for the Association, and to highlight key issues that have been identified by the Committee as priorities for NAMHE over the next six months. Feedback from member departments and institutions is always welcome, of course, and we hope colleagues will continue to advise us on emerging areas of concern relevant to NAMHE's remit.

In 2015:

1. We actively supported sixth-former Jessy McCabe's petition for the inclusion of music by women on the A-level Music syllabus (see '[Latest News](#)' section of the NAMHE website). We were subsequently involved in Edexcel's stakeholder consultation on revisions to their AS- and A-level Music specifications, and these syllabuses now include music by women.
2. We contributed to DfE and Ofqual consultations on the proposed new A and AS-Levels in Music Technology, and were subsequently invited to make a detailed submission (see the '[Latest News](#)' section of the NAMHE website). We are advocating a more creative syllabus for this qualification to ensure its relevance as preparation for HE and professions in music technology. We are also arguing for a higher component of non-exam assessment.
3. We are also in the process of feeding into the QAA's current Subject Benchmarking review for Music.
4. At the AGM in May we launched our report on *Gender Equality and Music in Higher Education*, funded by NAMHE and researched and authored by Danijela Bogdanovic. The report can be downloaded from the '[Latest News](#)' section of the NAMHE website, where you can also view Danijela's introductory video. Any department or institution seeking to address this and related issues, particularly as part of the Athena Swan programme, is encouraged to contact NAMHE – Danijela is happy to discuss this initiative and how the report's recommendations might be implemented by colleagues.
5. We have convened a panel at the 2016 BFE/RMA Research Students' Conference, to be held at Bangor University on 6–8 January 2016. The panel, chaired by NAMHE's Student Representative Zaina Shihabi, will discuss a range of current issues in HE Music relating to teaching, research, and recruitment and admissions.
6. Along with other subject associations and learned societies, we fed into discussion of the AHRC's new programme of PGR training

7. We have contributed to ongoing discussions about the future of the Institute of Musical Research. NAMHE has a representative on the Advisory Panel, and will be continuing to offer travel grants to postgraduate students to enable them to attend sessions.

8. We convened a very successful 2015 Annual Conference *Music – Learning – Technology* at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on 5 May 2015, and also a very successful joint conference with SCUDD and DanceHE at Senate House on 28 February 2015, which included a panel on the REF2014 including the Chair of Sub-panel 35, Maria Delgado, and Deputy Chair, Simon McVeigh.

9. We completed our *MA/MMus Numbers* report, which is available to any department experiencing pressure due ‘low’ numbers on PGT music programmes.

CURRENT PROJECTS AND FUTURE PLANS FOR 2016:

1. On our own behalf and as part of the Arts & Humanities Alliance, we are contributing to the current consultation process on the BIS Green Paper, *Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*. This will have a massive effect on the organisation of higher education across the UK, including plans for the TEF. The consultation closes on **15 January 2016** and responses and comments from NAMHE members to inform the Association’s response are welcome by 10 January.

2. Along with the Music Education Council, Musicians’ Union and ISM, we are participating in the current consultation on the future of the BTEC Music and Music Technology qualifications, which involves NAMHE in discussion with Pearson as well as Ofqual and the DfE.

3. Planning for our 2016 Annual Conference is in its advanced stages. The conference will be held at the RNCM on 3 May 2016. The theme will be practice as research, and the title *Practice ⇔ Research ⇔ Policy*. Our keynote speaker will be Mark Llewellyn, Director of Research at the AHRC. The programme will include the AGM, as always, and a panel on ‘Gender and Beyond’, which will consider what NAMHE and related organisations might do to address a wider range of equality and diversity issues in HE Music.

4. We are completing the fourth of our advocacy videos in the series *The Value of a Music Degree*, and if funding levels permit we are planning to produce two more over the next two years. Composer Adrian Sutton, whose work includes the scores for *Warhorse* and *Coram Boy*, has agreed to work with us on the next in the series. The most popular of our current three videos has been viewed over 6,000 times in less than a year, and all three are featuring in school careers and university/conservatoire open-day presentations (see <https://vimeo.com/namhe/videos>).

5. We are developing a working group on good practice in the safeguarding of students and staff in HE Music.

6. A number of departments have gone through difficult restructuring processes over the last year – one such crisis surfaced without warning in the final week of term before Christmas. In each case NAMHE has supported colleagues and been

involved in discussions with staff, students and management as appropriate to the particular circumstances. This work is ongoing and the Committee encourages any department experiencing such difficulties to contact the Association for assistance: as a national body of peers and specialists in HE music education, we are well placed to fulfill an advisory and advocacy role wherever this would be helpful.

As always NAMHE can only continue its activities and develop new initiatives with the support of member departments. Your subscription payments are vital to the continuation of this work, so please ensure we receive payments as soon as possible in the new year.

With many thanks and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Cowgill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rachel Cowgill

NAMHE Committee:

Martin Blain(Treasurer)
Pam Burnard
Chris Collins (Vice-chair; Wales Representative)
Rachel Cowgill (Chair)
Liz Dobson
Laura Hamer
Freya Jarman
Simon Mawhinney(Northern Ireland Representative)
Miguel Mera
Helen Julia Minors (Vice-chair)
Michelle Phillips
Paul Rodmell
Diana Salazar (Scotland Representative)
Zaina Shihabi (Student Representative)
Alison Marlow (Administrator)
Keith Marlow (Webmaster)