



The Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance
Network
Annual Report 2010-11
Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1 – page ii List of BMAF events 2010-11

Appendix 2 – page v Evaluation Report

Appendix 1 – List of BMAF events 2010-11

- 1) Changing Universities through Internationalisation: From Strategy to Pedagogy
16th September 2010
University of East Anglia
- 2) Developing an Employer Responsive Learning Provision
27th October 2010
University of Wales, Newport
- 3) Internationalisation SIG workshop – Internationalisation: Same or Different?
5th November 2010
Manchester Metropolitan University
- 4) BMAF e-Learning Workshop – Embedding technology into students' learning experience
11th November 2010
Westminster Business School
- 5) AM/BMAF Marketing Education SIG Workshop
12th November 2010
University of Central Lancashire
- 6) BMAF/ABS Workshop: Different Models, Different Perspectives
3rd December 2010
ABS Offices, London
- 7) The cultivated community approach taken to develop academic standards for business disciplines – a response to Australia's higher education changes and the new regulator and quality agency
14th December 2010
Oxford Brookes University
- 8) Games and Simulations Workshop
18th February 2011
Oxford Brookes University
- 9) Islamic Studies: BMAF Think Tank
2nd and 3rd March 2011
University of Northampton
- 10) Entrepreneurial Learning SIG Workshop: Best Practice – Entrepreneurship Teaching and Learning – the Student Experience
11th March 2011
Northumbria University
- 11) Human Resource Development SIG Workshop: Reflective Learning
8th April 2011
Leeds Metropolitan University

- 12) Internationalisation SIG Workshop
8th April 2011
University of Glamorgan
- 13) Supply Chain and Operational Management SIG (inaugural meeting)
13th April 2011
Oxford Brookes University
- 14) Workshop for New and Aspiring Business Academics
19th April 2011
Aston University
- 15) BMAF Annual Conference – Graduates with Impact through excellence
in business education
10th and 11th May 2011
Menzies Carlton and Eastcliff Hotels, Bournemouth
- 16) Project Management SIG Workshop: The Future of Project
Management Education?
18th May 2011
University of Lancaster
- 17) BAA Accounting Education SIG Conference
24th to 26th May 2011
University of Winchester
- 18) Maximising your In-sessional Academics Skills Support for International
Students
10th June 2011
Northumbria University
- 19) Workshop on Technology for Employability and Work-Related Learning
(Employability SIG)
10th June 2011
University of Central Lancashire
- 20) Sharing and Building Bibliographic Capacity in Islamic Studies: Law
and Finance
15th June 2011
University of Warwick
- 21) National Student Survey Workshop
16th June 2011
Leeds Metropolitan University
- 22) Teaching Agile in Business Schools
23rd June 2011
University of Hertfordshire

- 23) Internationalisation SIG Conference – Internationalisation: A Strategy for the Future
23rd and 24th June 2011
Nottingham Trent University
- 24) National Student Survey Workshop
29th June 2011
Oxford Brookes University
- 25) BMAF Fellows Forum
8th July 2011
Oxford Brookes University
- 26) 'They Just Don't Get It': How do we support students understanding within and across the disciplines
20th July 2011
University of the West of England

Appendix 2 – Evaluation Report



Evaluation Report

BMAF Impacts and Engagement with Business Schools

Academic Year 2010/2011

**Brenda Eade
Associate Director
BMAF**

June 2011

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Methodology	2
3. Evaluation of BMAF's Activities	3
3.1 Key Contacts	3
3.2 The Student Voice	4
3.3 The Annual Conference	4
3.4 Special Interest Groups (SIGs)	4
3.5 Teaching Research and Development Grants (TRDG)	5
3.6 Resources and Publications	6
3.7 BMAF Projects	6
3.8 BMAF Events/Workshops	7
4. Key Issues for Business Education	7
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	8
Appendix A Visits to University Business Schools and Departments of Management	11
Appendix B Focus Groups	12

1. Introduction

This is the third evaluation report for the Business Management, Accounting and Finance Network (BMAF). It follows a similar format to those for the two previous academic years. However, the objective of the evaluation exercise this year has had a slightly different emphasis, in that this is the final year of BMAF in its current form. Consequently, as well as evaluating the impact BMAF may have had on informing practice and contributing to enhancing the student experience, the report provides an overview of what those who have participated in the evaluation would like to see continuing, in terms of support for Business Education, under the new Higher Education Academy (HEA) structure.

A summary of discussions with representatives from twenty different University Business Schools, and Departments of Management, forms the basis of this report. Current issues facing Business Education have been identified, and an evaluation has been made of BMAF's current role. The final part of the report provides some recommendations for the future.

2. Methodology

Eleven Business Schools/University Departments have been visited, and meetings have been held with Key Contacts, those responsible for managing Learning and Teaching, and other interested academic colleagues.

The Key Contacts Meeting, in October, provided a forum for presenting the previous year's evaluation of BMAF (with a focus on Teaching, Research and Development Grants), and an opportunity for those attending the meeting to give feedback on BMAF activities and to express their views on how the work of the Network should continue.

Delegates at the BMAF Annual Conference (in May) were invited to two focus groups to contribute to the evaluation.

Further commentary has been gathered through the "Events Evaluation Project", for which contact has been made with frequent attendees of BMAF events. The Academy Scotland Forum meetings have also provided an opportunity to collect feedback from other discipline networks.

Appendix A lists the Schools and Departments visited, and Appendix B the members of the two focus groups.

Those who have contributed to the evaluation were asked to comment on:

- how they and their institution had interacted with BMAF during the academic year,
- outcomes from BMAF projects they had undertaken,
- grants and Funding,

- BMAF events,
- BMAF publications – eg the International Journal of Management Education (IJME), BMAG, Ezine and the “Enhancing Series”.

They were also asked to indicate the type of support they would like from the HEA in the future.

The meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss projects currently being undertaken by BMAF such as ESCAPE: Effecting Sustainable Change in Assessment Practice and Experience, ELSIE: Understanding and Developing Higher Education E-Learning Strategies in International Environments (*JISC DEL2 funded*), Islamic Studies, Supporting the Development of New Academic Staff in Business Disciplines

Reports, with action points, were written following each university visit, and a summary of the issues discussed during the focus group meetings was circulated to participants. Copies of these reports are available from the BMAF Administration team.

As, in previous years, the author’s external examining duties for two University Business Schools, one of which covers a College in China (Chengdu College of Technology [CDUT], provided an opportunity to further discuss the role of BMAF. Two validation events (Bedfordshire University and Northumbria University) helped to identify some of the issues Business Education is facing in terms of developing the curriculum and managing international partnerships.

3. Evaluation of BMAF’s Activities

Despite the uncertainty over its future, and the concerns regarding continuity expressed by those who participated in the previous evaluation exercise (see Evaluation report for 2009/2010), the BMAF Network has celebrated another very successful year. The following highlights some of its achievements during 2010/2011:

- the publication of further two further volumes of the IJME (October 2010 and March 2011) and the “Enhancing” series in conjunction with the Hospitality, Leisure Sport and Tourism (HLST) Network (*Enhancing Graduate Impact, July 2011 and Enhancing Learning through Assessment in Business and Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism, August 2010*)
- an evaluation of the Teaching, Research and Development Grants,
- an evaluation of BMAF Workshop and Events,
- the provision of funding for research projects,
- a full programme of well attended workshops,
- development of the “student voice”
- a well attended and highly regarded Annual Conference.

3.1 Key Contacts

The Key Contacts Symposium on the 27th October, at the London School of Fashion, was well attended and provided a forum to discuss the impending changes to how higher education is funded and the effect this may have on business education in particular.

The focus groups identified the key contacts as a critical part of the BMAF Network, enabling direct communication and interaction between different universities. In particular, it was felt that, “The key contacts list is essential and should be managed and preserved.” This is available on the BMAF website and provides a direct link between representatives from University Business Schools.

3.2 The Student Voice

Student participation in BMAF activities has continued to be developed by the Network during the 2010/2011 academic year.

A successful student focus group meeting in October, at Oxford Brookes, has helped BMAF to identify not only what academics regard as key issues in business education, but also to hear directly from students what they see as critical to their future employment. This student group has set up its own Facebook page and blog.

Student engagement with the BMAF Network was further endorsed by the increased number of entrants (from 12 in 2010 to 41 in 2011) for the “Student Voice Competition” in April 2011, when students were required to demonstrate how they would be “Graduates with Impact”. Once again BMAF provided prizes not only for the winners of the competition, but also for their Schools and Departments. The entries provide a reference point for ensuring that the work of the Network is directly relevant to students following business education programmes.

3.3 The Annual Conference

In May, BMAF held its final Annual Conference in Bournemouth, in conjunction with Bournemouth University Business School. Over 80 delegates attended the Conference, which had a full programme of papers, workshops and poster sessions. Attendance was slightly lower than in previous years, which may reflect a reduction in funding for staff development activities such as this, as well as uncertainty over the future of the Network.

Feedback from conference delegates was extremely positive. There was unanimous agreement that the conference should continue in some form, as illustrated by the following comments from the focus groups:

“The Conference is ‘the only one of its kind’ and should continue as it:

- provides an excellent source of ideas to disseminate to colleagues,
- legitimises new ideas and innovation,
- encourages cross fertilization of ideas,
- helps the business education community to ‘make connections’ in respect of ideas/issues/changes,
- provides an opportunity to “hear it live from someone who has done it”,
- presents a showcase of what is “good” and innovative in business education.

The focus groups suggested that future conferences might be enhanced by: “more interactive sessions” and that BMAF might want to consider opportunities to include “agony aunt”-type sessions.

3.4 Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have continued to support subject specialisations and respond to current issues impacting on business education. In particular, the International SIG was identified as having “provided a wealth of support for teaching international

students". In particular, "the workshop at Northumbria identified the need to assess these students early in their programme, so that they are aware of how they are performing academically" (*Focus Groups, Annual Conference, May 2011*).

It was strongly believed that the SIGS should continue, in some form, under the new structure. It was suggested that one way forward may be for the subject based SIGs to link with their relevant professional bodies. The Marketing Education, Human Resource Development and Accounting SIGS already have such a link, while the Entrepreneurship SIG has as its leader the Chair of Enterprise UK. The Project Management SIG has been approached by The Association for Project Management to join with them but hopes to continue as an autonomous group.

Those SIGS which support generic issues in business education, such as employability and teaching international students may look to join other funded organisations/projects to continue their work, for example the Improving Teaching and Learning for International Students (ITALIS) project.

3.5 Teaching Research and Development Grants (TRDG)

Over seventy-five applications were received for the grants which provide funding of up to £3,500 for research relating to current issues in Business Education. Eleven grants were awarded in September 2010, the majority of which are still in progress. The initial findings from many of these research projects were presented as papers to the Annual Conference.

Applicants were invited to bid for grants reflecting the main priorities and enhancement themes for the UK:

- assessment, feedback and academic integrity
- graduates for the 21st Century
- internationalisation and teaching international students
- education for sustainable development
- the first year experience and student recruitment and retention
- HE in FE
- inclusive curriculum
- professional development of staff
- research-teaching linkages
- teaching large groups

The grants continue to be highly regarded by the business education academic community, and their specific value was identified as:

"Offering seed-corn funding for bigger projects; giving external legitimacy to research projects within an institution; providing an opportunity to work with

colleagues in other institutions and to network through dissemination of project outcomes; offering a stepping stone for “getting published – eg a grant for teaching accounting in relation to future careers obtained in 2008, led to a published article in 2009” (*Focus Group, Annual Conference, May 2011*)

This year, grants up to £5,000 were offered directly by the HEA. However, it was felt that these may not encourage bids for projects with the same focus on business education as those offered by BMAF, and that there might not be the same level of support for grant holders

3.6 Resources and Publications

The **International Journal of Management Education** (IJME) remains a useful first publication point for many researchers. However, as in previous years, it was suggested that, “it could have greater impact if the profile was raised, to give it a higher REF rating” (*Focus Groups, Annual Conference, May 2011*). Furthermore, if the IJME did attain a higher rating, consideration could be given to publishing a series of “working papers” which would provide a platform for disseminating the initial findings from grants and other research projects. These would, in turn, be a source of fully publishable articles (for the IJME) once the research had been completed.

“**The Enhancing**” series, published in conjunction with HLST, has been well received, but several of those who contributed to the evaluation were not fully aware of its role and potential in terms of supporting their practice.

Two editions of **The BMAF Magazine** have been published during 2010/2011, a further edition will be published later this month, and a special edition relating to workshops and events will be published in the Autumn. Feedback regarding The BMAF Magazine was mainly positive, and the special edition relating to Teaching Research and Development Grants was welcomed as a useful reference point for case studies, and project reports.

The **BMAF Website** was identified as having “a pool of excellent resources, which contributed to the sustainable education agenda” (*Focus Groups, Annual Conference, May 2011*). Many of these are particularly useful for academics in the early stages of their career. However, it was suggested that these resources could be better organised to make them more easily accessible. Concerns were expressed that if these resources were subsumed into the HEA website, their relevance to business education may be lost.

It was suggested that, “Consideration should be given to having an interactive part of the website where people can post ideas and discuss issues/problems” (relating to the delivery of business education).

3.7 Projects

This year BMAF has been involved in several projects during the Academic year 2010-2011, including:

- ESCAPE: Effecting Sustainable Change in Assessment Practice and Experience
- ELSIE: Understanding and Developing Higher Education E-Learning Strategies in International Environments (*JISC DEL2 funded*)
- Islamic Studies
- Supporting the Development of New Academic Staff in Business Disciplines
- Developing a Technology-Enhanced Learning Strategy for the Plymouth Business School (*Discipline-focused Learning Technology Enhancement*)
- Working with E-Champions to Enhance Flexible Learning (*Discipline-focused Learning Technology Enhancement*)

These have been undertaken in conjunction with representatives from Higher Education Institutions and with other organisations supporting business education, such as the Association of Business Schools (ABS). The outcomes of the projects have been presented at workshops and have provided resources which can be accessed through the BMAF website. However, not all those participating in the evaluation were aware of the focus or outcomes of the projects. Consideration should, therefore, be given to disseminating the project outcomes more widely and raising their visibility and profile within the business education academic community.

3.8 Events and Workshops

BMAF has run a full programme of events and workshops during the current academic year. These are seen as a valuable contribution to business education, as demonstrated by the following comments:

“The BMAF workshops are very useful and often provide immediately useable ideas which can have ‘high impact’ in terms of improving the student experience. They also provide a useful set of resources, for example, how to use turn-it-in as a formative assessment tool.” (*Focus Groups, Annual Conference, May 2011*).

An evaluation of BMAF events and workshops, held over the past five years, has been completed and will be presented as a separate report to the Advisory Board. The outcomes from this evaluation project will form a special edition of BMAG in the Autumn.

4. Key Issues for Business Education

The overwhelming concern for Business Schools and Departments, at the present time, is the effect of the impending changes in funding on business education. In particular, there is uncertainty about how to manage the increased expectations of students who may see themselves as “customers” or “consumers”. In response to these concerns, BMAF and ABS offered a joint forum, entitled, “Business Schools: 2012 and Beyond” and invited HEIs to

discuss how they envisaged the changes in funding would impact on the provision of business education. This was well attended and, although not offering any immediate solutions, enabled delegates to gain an insight into how other institutions are preparing to manage rising student expectations.

A further issue relating to the introduction of full fees for UK students is the prospect of increased competition from the private sector, particularly as degree-awarding powers have been given to two private institutions and further applications are pending.

Supporting International students continues to be a high priority for many Business Schools, particularly as numbers have increased. However, there are also concerns about the effects of the new UKBA legislation relating to visas and post-study work permits. Many Business Schools are heavily reliant on the additional income they receive from their international student community.

As well as the issues associated with fees, it was felt that, in respect of the business curriculum, “the notion of what a degree should be is being challenged”, that “skills appear to be more important than content”, and that “students need to be ‘agile thinkers’ to have successful careers”. In this respect, the BMAF Network is seen to offer “a forum for discussion, comparison, confirmation of ideas and a means of challenging traditional business education methods of delivery”. Furthermore, it is considered to be a “safe environment in which common issues can be discussed”. (*Focus Groups, Annual Conference, May 2011*).

The previous BMAF conference theme of “Assessment and Assessment Standards: Challenges for business education”, reflected areas of staff development and curriculum review being undertaken by University Business Schools. Several were reviewing their assessment methods to ensure they effectively tested the learning outcomes for their programmes. The material made available through the conference was used as a resource for staff development. In particular, Staffordshire Business School ran a “colloquium” for all its business school staff, entitled “What have we learnt today? Assessing learning in the 21st Century University”. The Associate Director was invited to give the keynote speech on behalf of the BMAF Network.

A further development in several University Business Schools has been the establishment of Pedagogic Research Units. This recognises research relating to pedagogy as being of equal importance to that focussing on specific subject areas. In response to a request from the University of Hertfordshire, a list of Business Schools with research units relating to pedagogy was compiled and circulated to Key Contacts.

There continues to be a need to provide support for new academics, particularly those who are moving into education from industry, or taking on a teaching role whilst completing their PhDs. The material generated through the BMAF project “Lecturers for the 21st Century” has provided an easily accessible set of resources for this purpose and was commended by several Business Schools.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In view of the changes to the Higher Education Academy Subject Networks, which will take effect from September 2011 onwards, it is difficult to make recommendations in this report which relate directly to the BMAF Network. However, the following comments, which are taken from the focus group discussions, can be used to inform future policy on how those delivering business education should be supported by the Academy.

- BMAF is essential for those involved in pedagogic research and should continue to showcase good practice in business education. We should preserve a network which has already proved its value to the business education community and works well!!
- BMAF is a live community which must be kept alive. One of its key assets is that it is a Network which supports rather than “challenges” its community.
- BMAF raises the profile of teaching/pedagogy in Business Education and helps to keep pedagogy at the forefront of curriculum development. It is a vehicle for “informing academics” of best practice, new ideas, policy etc. The proposed changes should not allow the Network to become a means of “telling tales” to the HEA.
- The Network operates at the ground level and has a pragmatic approach to learning and teaching which wholly supports the academic at the forefront of delivering the curriculum. This ground-level approach should be maintained. The HEA currently seems too remote.
- Those who are new to business education, particularly those who have come from industry, find BMAF an invaluable resource for developing their competence in teaching and assessment.
- There is a need for integration across the various business education subject areas such as marketing, human resource management, accounting. Students will be assessed in their competencies across these subject areas, consequently innovation should be shared, and there should be consistency in approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. BMAF helps to bring all these subject areas together, particularly at the conference.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that we do not lose what is a proven source of innovation in business education. Perhaps the Association of Business Schools could take a more proactive role in helping to maintain and build on the work of BMAF, as this could enable the Association to work with academics on the front line whilst continuing to support those at management level, thus making a further contribution to enhancing the student experience.

- The Network is invaluable and is part of a sustainability agenda for education. Linked-in could be a possibility for providing a discussion platform and a means of reflection for business education academics who currently rely on BMAF.

The evaluation exercise this year has received a wealth of positive comments, with many offers to help BMAF to maintain its autonomy and continue its work. However, the restructuring of the Discipline Networks is now complete, and the Higher Education Academy has set out its proposals for the next academic year. It is hoped that the contents of this report, which reflects the views of the business education academic community, will help to inform future policy and go some way towards maintaining the kind of support which has been offered through BMAF.

The Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance Network
Oxford Brookes University
Wheatley Campus
Oxford
OX33 1HX

Tel: +44 (0)1865 485670
Fax: +44 (0)1865 485829

bmaf@brookes.ac.uk

www.heacademy.ac.uk/business
