



The Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance
Network
Annual Report 2009-10

The Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance Network is one of the 24 subject centres that form the subject network of the Higher Education Academy. It provides subject based learning and teaching support for all working with students of these areas in Higher Education in the United Kingdom.

Our mission is to support the provision of the best possible learning experiences and opportunities for all students in our subject areas in Higher Education.

This mission is achieved through our strategic aims:

- To celebrate and raise the status of teaching
- To broker and facilitate the sharing of effective practice
- To identify, develop and disseminate evidence-informed and effective approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- To inform, influence and interpret policy
- To support colleagues in responding to strategic change at institutional level and government policy directives
- To operate a professional and sustainable working environment that can be responsive to changing priorities and needs

Director's comment on year

As this report clearly demonstrates, in 2009-10 the BMAF Network continued to provide a range of services and products designed to support better teaching in our subjects, and through that enhancement of the learning opportunities and experiences of students. In times of financial constraint, it is even more essential that attention centres on teaching standards of the highest order in HE, and that continuing professional development of teachers is promoted, supported and valued.

The year saw the Subject Centres of the Higher Education reach their tenth anniversary, but any celebratory inclination was somewhat dampened by uncertainties about the future structure of the Academy in the face of government cuts, and thus of the nature of support for subject communities in the future and of the future of Subject Centres themselves. Immediate funding reductions have required changes to our staffing, with the intention of ensuring that we can maintain, as far as possible, the range of activities which we know are valued by the communities we serve. Our commitment to working effectively with subject communities, institutions and individuals – the key agents for change in HE - to make a difference for students remains undiminished.

It is clear that 2010/11 and a climate of financial constraint will bring challenges for all in HE, but with them should come opportunities to explore new ideas and to find new ways to enhance the learning opportunities and experiences of our students. We look forward to promoting and supporting innovation, enterprise and creativity in this new era.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the staff of the BMAF Network who, despite the highly unsettling nature of current events which are beyond our control, have maintained their commitment to the work of the HE Academy and of our Subject Centre – and their continuing enthusiasm for working with and for our colleagues in the subject areas and communities we endeavour to support. It is my privilege to work with them.

Clive Robertson

Overview

2009/10 was the year in which the BMAF Network and the wider network of Subject Centres celebrated ten years of supporting developments in learning teaching and assessment, and through them the enhancement of students' learning experiences and opportunities. Much has been achieved in the years since the inception of a subject centre to support developments in business education, in its first incarnation as BEST within the Learning Teaching Support Network (LTSN) and since 2006 as BMAF, now part of the Higher Education Academy. Highlights and testimonials can be found on a special page of our website - <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/aboutus/10years>.

Our celebrations have, however, been tinged with uncertainty about the future structure and operation of the Academy and its Subject Centres. Confirmed cuts to funding of at least 30% by 2012 leave the Academy facing difficult challenges and decisions anticipated to have significant impact on the Subject Centres as they are currently constituted and operate.

The changing political landscape and long term repercussions of the global recession further add to uncertainty, but also provide many opportunities for BMAF to support our communities in showing the contribution that subjects in the business education spectrum can make, and the value added to the economy by our highly skilled graduates. Furthermore, the financial pressures now facing higher education require renewed investment in learning, teaching and assessment practice that engages students and enhances their learning experiences and opportunities, ensuring cost effectiveness and value for money.

In 2009-10 the BMAF Network maintained a position of relative operational stability, thanks to continuing prudent financial management. A funding cut of 15% for 2010-11 has meant, however, planning to reduce costs and inevitably reduction in the staffing budget. Through continued efforts to ensure our events, publications, resources and other activities are relevant and of high quality and of the best value, BMAF is well placed to cope with a change in financial circumstances. Our services and products have also maintained their reputations and places in our subject communities.

In short, the BMAF Network, the wider Subject Centres Network, and the Higher Education Academy have continued in 2009-10 to provide much needed support for institutions, subject communities and individuals. Financial imperatives now necessitate changes in priority, focus and structure for the Academy that will be agreed in 2010-11 and implemented in 2011. We are grateful for and value the support shown to the BMAF Network by the subject communities with whom we work; you are the Network and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

In this new format for our Annual Report, the following sections will highlight how we have met our strategic aims and operational objectives over the past year.

Strategic Aim 1

To celebrate and raise the status of teaching

Performance indicators:

- Increased recognition of Teaching Fellows in subject communities.
- Improved access to and awareness of expertise within subject communities.

Operational objective: Celebrate good teaching and promote professional standards.

Operational objective: Encourage the recognition & reward of teaching at institutional level.

Through our partnership with the Association of Business School (ABS), BMAF made contributions to their conference that related to the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (PSF) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This work resulted in discussions with five business schools, formalising our first connections in our aim to establish channels for communication with newly recognised Fellows of the Academy in our subject areas, with Senior Fellows of the Academy and with those recognised by their own HEIs and schools as leaders in teaching, learning and assessment. Further development in this field will be an area of work for Richard Atfield, Assistant Director – Networks, during 2010-11.

Furthermore, BMAF funding for Teaching, Research and Development projects, papers published in the International Journal of Management Education (IJME), and contributions to our workshops and annual conference all encourage the recognition and reward of teaching.

Strategic Aim 2

To broker and facilitate the sharing of effective practice

Performance indicators:

- A year-on-year increase in the number of staff who engage with the BMAF Network.
- A year-on-year increase in the number of staff contributing to the BMAF Network's activities.

Operational objective: Establish, build on and promote networks and communities of practice.

Strategic Partnership with the Association of Business Schools

Our strong strategic partnership with the Association of Business Schools (ABS) continues to be extremely beneficial for us, and the service level agreement has been successfully reviewed this year. The Chief Executive, Jonathan Slack, is a member of the BMAF Advisory Board and ABS makes its offices in London available for various BMAF meetings. Regular meetings between the ABS and BMAF teams have been held this year, and it is intended to continue with at least three meetings per year. The meeting venue alternates between the BMAF Oxford and London ABS offices.

Presentations were made by Clive Robertson and Richard Atfield within the ABS Conference programme and Clive has also contributed to the ABS development programmes. These presentations have led to discussions with a number of business schools and academic development units about linking the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) to initial and continuing professional development support for staff.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Our biggest challenge continues to be meeting the needs of our community and the priorities of the Academy within the constraints of the resources available to us. As awareness of our work grows amongst our subject community, so does demand for our services. It is not possible for us to run events in all HEIs and significant effort has been put in to establishing a number of SIGs which act as focal points of expertise and interest, to develop our capacity and reach.

The eight SIGs we have regularly supported in 2009-10 are:

Accounting Education – joint with the British Accounting Association, together with the Committee for Heads of Accounting;

Main Objectives – conference sponsorship; support for new conference attendees; bursaries for new researchers.

eLearning Experts Group/Technology Enhanced Learning SIG – hosted by Bournemouth University;

Main Objectives – to respond to an increasing adoption of technology to facilitate Business and Management education

Employability – hosted by the University of Central Lancashire;
Main Objectives – Identify/develop and share resources; engagement with employers, recruiters and careers service; on-line discussions about key issues; delivery of workshops, contribute to relevant Academy developments.

Entrepreneurial Learning – hosted by Swansea Metropolitan University;
Main Objectives – focus on and enhance the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment relating to entrepreneurship, intreprenurship and enterprise related pedagogies.

Human Resource Development – joint with the University Forum for HRD;
Main Objectives – award of pedagogical grants, resource development for academics, delivery of workshops.

Internationalisation – hosted by De Montfort University;
Main Objectives – maintain and expand the network of interested individuals; engagement with stakeholders (employers, business schools, lecturers, students); delivery of workshops and a conference; on-line discussions and resources, publications (the next BMAF Magazine will be an Internationalisation ‘special’ prepared and edited by the SIG Team)

Marketing Education – joint with the Academy of Marketing;
Main Objectives – grants to staff involved in the teaching, learning and assessment of marketing; exchange of ideas; responding to issues faced by marketing educators.

Project Management – hosted by Bournemouth University
Main Objectives – identify good practice; identify network individuals and community; identify/develop and share resources; delivery of workshops.

All of the SIGs have also contributed to the wider work of the Network, including IJME, BMAF Magazine, e-News, reviewing grant applications and supporting the annual conference.

In addition, some BMAF academics have discussed developing their own informal groups, e.g. Operations and Supply Chain, Research Active Curriculum, Research Methods, and these have been offered use of the website and funds for workshop activities. There is also a SIG related to the Islamic Studies project.

A report on SIG activities in 2009-10 can be found in *Appendix 2*.

Key Contacts

Each business school has a designated key contact whose identity is confirmed to BMAF by their Dean or Head of Department annually, and who carries out a specific role of communication between their school/department and BMAF. In 2009/10 the approach established in 2008/09 of holding one Key Contact meeting was continued, with a meeting hosted by Manchester Business School at Manchester Metropolitan University on 16th February 2010.

19 universities were represented at the meeting, an important outcome of which was the establishment of a JISCMail list for Key Contacts to aid discussion and consultation.

External Examiner Database

The External Examiner database for BMAF subjects has continued to grow in terms of both registrations and users over the last year. A proposed new system

led by Academy York has not progressed as yet. We intend to continue support for our current system while also pressuring for development of the new Academy-wide system.

Operational objective: Promote Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPPD).

National Workshop Programme

Fifteen workshops were held this year, with two further summer events postponed at this time. The events included BMAF support for workshops and conferences delivered through the SIGs. A list of all BMAF events held in 2009/10 appears in *Appendix 1*. There are already seven workshops ready to take place in 2010/11.

BMAF Annual Conference 2010

The Fifth Annual Conference of the Business Management Accountancy and Finance (BMAF) Network was held in Newcastle at the Newcastle Marriott Gosforth Park on 20th and 21st April 2010. The conference was run in conjunction with the Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University.

The theme was "Assessment and Assessment Standards" and comprised six streams: Authentic Assessment, Academic Integrity, Assessment of Large Cohorts, Accessibility and Inclusivity, Innovation and Creativity, and Technological Approaches. The conference report can be found in Appendix 3. We are grateful for the significant support for the event given by our colleagues from the Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University.

Even though some delegates and one keynote speaker were unable to attend, grounded due to the volcanic ash flight ban, around 140 colleagues enjoyed the conference. 40 papers and 10 workshops were offered across the two days. Key Note speeches were given by Professor Mark Freeman of the University of Sydney and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) (via telephone and Wimba classroom software), and Aaron Porter of the National Union of Students (NUS). We would like to extend our thanks to all those who contributed to a highly successful event.

Feedback on the event has been extremely positive, with the professional organisation of the event again being particularly appreciated, and the conference dinner complete with a magician a popular highlight. A report on the conference can be found at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/BMAFconference/>.

We are near to confirming a venue for the 2011 Conference, which is currently planned to be held in May 2011 in Bournemouth, with key support from Bournemouth University. The theme for the conference will be Graduates with Impact, which links directly to a key priority of the Higher Education Academy.

Strategic Aim 3

To identify, develop and disseminate evidence-informed and effective approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Performance indicators:

- Year on year increase in resources available to support enhancement of the student learning experience.
- Growth in the level of engagement with practitioners, subject associations, working groups and institutions, reflected in numbers of contacts, event attendees, applications for grants, case studies, publications distributed and/or viewed.

Operational objective: Gather, synthesise and make available relevant evidence.

BMAF Teaching Research and Development Grants for 2009-10

Eight projects were awarded grants from the 2009-10 fund, in six different themed areas:

- Assessment
- Education for sustainable development (*an Academy priority area*)
- Employability (work based learning and employer engagement)
- First year, recruitment and retention (including HE in FE) (*student engagement is an Academy priority area*)
- Teaching international students
- Teaching large groups (*student engagement is an Academy priority area*)

Details of the individual projects, including reports, are available from the BMAF web site.

This year we have also commissioned our Associate Director, Brenda Eade, to provide a critical review of our grants over recent years. The review of the TRDG Reports and responses from grant holders demonstrates that this is a highly successful part of BMAF's activities, with clear evidence that the projects have made a significant contribution to improving the student experience and that they are directly linked to current themes and trends in higher education.

Support for the Development of New Academic Staff in Business Disciplines

The six universities in the main project were paired as similar institutions and each team facilitated access for the other to information and to appropriate facilities and staff for interview. Having completed their on-site work, initial reports were produced, checked with their 'pair' for accuracy, shared with the other sites and the pilots and initial themes identified. From this work an interim report was produced and is available on the BMAF website (Atfield and Curran 2009). A final output is under development, more as a resource than a report, to bring together learning from these sites, and we are also grateful for contributions from the international Reference Group.

Several papers have been presented at HEA, Enhancement Themes and CETL conferences drawing on this work (Hunter-Jones et al 2009, Adcroft and Taylor 2009, Anderson and Atfield 2010) and these are now being considered for publication. For reasons of space and sustainability these have not been attached to this report but can be accessed at

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/projects/detail/new_academic_staff

The initial site reports have been used in a number of ways in addition to developing themes. First, each was re-reviewed to ensure anonymity of those who contributed (at this stage complementary reports were prepared by the pilot sites too); second they were (or are currently being) presented to the relevant Learning and Teaching Committee; third, many have been presented to colleagues during internal conferences; fourth, with the agreement of each institution these are being made available for open access via the BMAF website. The themes also underpinned BMAF contributions to university events and a BMAF workshop for new academic staff. More recently this work was valued by Academy Scotland and BMAF are leading an Enhancement Themes project with three Scottish HEIs and the Engineering Subject Centre.

To maintain the momentum and progress this further, we are delighted that BMAF have very recently been awarded Open Educational Resource (OER) funding to further develop resources to support new academic staff in business education. This will again draw on a number of those HEIs involved in the BMAF and Academy Scotland projects and aims to deliver by July 2011.

JISC Funded Projects

While projects started in previous years have now completed, BMAF continues to work with JISC whenever possible. We intend to continue our working links with JISC into 2010-11 and beyond, now including two projects on discipline-based enhancement. The Assistant Director (Knowledge Exchange) has responsibility for co-ordinating our working links with JISC and identifying funding opportunities.

Open Educational Resources

As mentioned above, BMAF has submitted a successful proposal for the OER OMAC projects and has been awarded £20,000 to develop open materials to support accredited staff development learning. In addition to the HEIs from England, Scotland and Wales who were involved in previous projects, this will also be supported by UKCLE, an OER1 project holder, and by Oxford Brookes University.

BMAF will also be supporting the HLST Subject Centre in an OER phase two project related to the 2012 Olympics. The proposal of the project is to identify resources which derive from all phases of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games from planning to post-Games evaluation of impact which can enhance curricula and student engagement with learning.

Islamic Studies

Building on recommendations from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Academy is working to build a national Islamic Studies Network. BMAF is contributing to this development.

Events Programme

Our Annual Conference, workshops and other events (as reported under *Strategic Aim 2*) also contribute to this operational objective.

International Journal of Management Education

Issues 8:1, 8:2 and 8:3 of the International Journal of Management Education were published in the 2009-10 academic year, both online and in hard copy. The journal continues to receive around fifty papers for consideration per annum and has a healthy acceptance rate of approximately 50%, with submissions received from authors from fourteen different countries in 2009-10. This was also the first year in which prizes were awarded for the best papers. The journal is also listed in the ABS Journal Quality Guide.

We continually review our distribution arrangements to ensure that appropriate numbers of hard copies reach business schools and departments. The journal is also published electronically, via a mini-website designed specifically for the journal which is discreet from yet linked to the main BMAF site.

Case Study Book Series

A further volume in the popular “Enhancing...” series of case study books was published in conjunction with HLST in 2009-10. With an introduction written by Professor Mantz Yorke, the fourth book in the series, “Enhancing Learning Through Assessment in Business and Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism”, was published in July 2010. Limited numbers of individual complimentary copies are available from BMAF and HLST, with further copies available for purchase direct from the publisher.

It is intended to continue the series into 2010-11, with a collection of case studies on “Enhancing Graduate Impact”.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The SIGs we support (as listed under *Strategic Aim 2*) also contribute to this operational objective.

[Operational objective: Promote the use of evidence-informed approaches to enhance the student learning experience.](#)

BMAF Magazine

The eighth issue of BMAF Magazine was produced in conjunction with the BMAF Internationalisation Special Interest Group (SIG), with the ninth issue published in spring 2010 before the BMAF Annual Conference. Responsibility for the magazine has changed hands from Richard Atfield to Steve Probert, whose first issue will be the tenth which will be published early in the 2010/11 academic year.

Information Listings

We provide two information listings that are continuously updated, and an e-news bulletin published eight or nine times per academic year. The two information listings are:

- Events Listing – a list of events on our web site which are relevant to the BMAF subject communities

- News Listing (e-News) – a list of news items (including funding opportunities), relevant consultations, policy statements and reports, and subject related information

Our e-news bulletin is a regularly emailed to all of our contacts and contains information about the latest BMAF activities and other news, events and resources relevant to our community.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The SIGs we support (as listed under *Strategic Aim 2*) also contribute to this operational objective.

Events Programme

Our Annual Conference, workshops and other events (as reported under *Strategic Aim 2*) also contribute to this operational objective.

Resources

BMAF signposts resources, both those generated by our own projects and those available through external databases. We also provide useful links categorised as either discipline-specific or themed teaching and learning topics. An A-to-Z list of resources, sorted by topic, is available on the BMAF website which capitalises on the wealth of resources available from the wider BMAF Network, and its further development is a key objective of the Assistant Director (Knowledge Exchange).

New Teaching Staff

In addition to the project on Support for the Development of New Academic Staff in Business Disciplines, BMAF has a web page dedicated to resources relevant and useful to new teaching staff and to HEI academic developers who organise institutional PGCert programmes. BMAF is involved with the Academy's 'Supporting Academic Staff' Facilitation Group and the Academy/SEDA Reference Group and regularly attend and contribute to the SEDA conferences to ensure that both business educators and staff developers are widely aware of the resources available.

Strategic Aim 4

To inform, influence and interpret policy

Performance indicators:

- Increasing availability to subject communities of resources and events to help them to interpret policy and choose appropriate action.
- An increasing number of requests for BMAF contributions to policy formulation and implementation.

Operational objective: Develop and use our knowledge base and networks to influence national policy.

Engagement with Sector Skills Councils and Professional Bodies

Routine engagement with the Sector Skills Councils is primarily through contributions made to consultations on the development of the 14-19 diplomas in BMAF related subjects. We enjoy good working relations with a number of professional and industry bodies, including through their representation on our Advisory Board.

Work with Subject Associations

Our Assistant Director (Networks), Richard Atfield, has continued to devote considerable effort to working with subject associations, and has attended meetings and made presentations about BMAF at subject association conferences and workshops. BMAF has again provided support for existing subject association SIGs on learning and teaching and to encourage the development of new ones, mainly through small amounts of financial support for research grants and conference bursaries.

Operational objective: Work at multiple levels to inform, influence and interpret policies relevant to the student learning experience in the BMAF subject grouping.

Engagement with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

BMAF continues to benefit from the high level of commitment of an Advisory Board member from a Northern Irish HEI. BMAF workshops have been hosted by Welsh and Northern Irish HEIs and there were delegates from all countries at the BMAF Annual Conference held in Newcastle in April 2010.

The BMAF Network continues to encourage and receive contributions to our publications from colleagues in all parts of the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Involvement with current development projects and the award of small grants also reflects the range of HEIs across the four countries of the UK.

International Links

BMAF continues to develop its working links with representatives of business education in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere.

Strategic Partnership with ABS

Our partnership with ABS (as reported under *Strategic Aim 2*) also supports activity in this area.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Andy Penaluna, in part in his role as lead on the Entrepreneurial Learning SIG, has participated in governmental policy discussions

Strategic Aim 5

To support colleagues in responding to strategic change at institutional level and government policy directives

Performance indicators:

- Increased awareness of institutional and governmental priorities amongst subject communities.
- Increased awareness of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment which can contribute to institutional and government priorities.

Operational objective: Ensuring familiarity and maintaining awareness of current priorities relevant to learning and teaching at subject level.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The SIGs we support (as listed under *Strategic Aim 2*) also contribute to this operational objective.

Work with Subject Associations, Sector Skills Councils and Professional Bodies

Our work in this area is also supported by our links with other organisations (as detailed under *Strategic Aim 4*).

Engagement with FDTL Projects

A one-day workshop on the 16th June at Oxford Brookes University was presented by the FDTL5 Enhancing Graduate Employability project and hosted by BMAF and HLST. The E-Evolve FDTL5 project at the University of Central Lancashire is the basis for the BMAF Employability SIG.

Engagement with CETLs

BMAF has been represented as a member of the Steering Groups of the following CETLs:

- ASKe (Oxford Brookes University)
- Re-invention centre (Oxford Brookes and Warwick Universities)
- The Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning (Liverpool John Moores University)
- HELP (University of Plymouth)

One of the 'new lecturers project' papers was delivered at the Preparing for Academic Practice CETL conference last December (Adcroft and Taylor 2009).

Our concern now is to ensure that the achievements, products and, where appropriate, continuing activities of CETLs are promoted by the Business Education community.

Engagement with the Higher Education Academy

We are keen to contribute strongly and continue the Academy's broad developmental agenda, and believe that a subject context is essential in its work. However, availability to contribute is constrained by funding considerations.

Operational objective: Support strategic change affecting the student learning experience by working with individuals and subject communities.

Collaboration with other Subject Centres

BMAF has continued to benefit from collaboration with the HLST Subject Centre. The joint BMAF/HLST management group has continued to meet on a regular basis. In addition, BMAF and HLST have continued the practice established during 2005-6 of meeting with the Economics, UKCLE, ESCalate and C-SAP Subject Centres. This has led to further sharing of insights, effective practice and collaborative working. BMAF team members have also worked closely with other Subject Centre colleagues regarding consultations on the future of the Higher Education Academy.

Collaboration with Academy York

BMAF staff are involved in a variety of groups and projects at Academy York that support this objective. These include the Supporting Academic Staff facilitation group, the Academy/SEDA Reference Group, and the PMI2 funded TIS project (Teaching for International Students).

Student Engagement

BMAF organised a successful 'Student Voice' essay competition as part of the Academy awards and recently presentations were made to the two joint winners at Strathclyde and Manchester. We look to the Academy to support our interest in work which the Academy is pursuing with the NUS to establish links with students within subject communities, and Richard Atfield will be attending a meeting at NUS in London this September.

Subject Centres are now carrying out the bulk of work on detailed analysis of the National Student Survey (NSS) on their own, with basic level information supplied by Academy York.

Strategic Aim 6

To operate a professional and sustainable working environment that can be responsive to changing priorities and needs

Performance indicator:

- A sustained reputation for the high quality, relevance and usefulness of products and services provided by the BMAF Network.

Operational objective: Manage the people and resources of the organisation effectively.

Resources and Staffing

The BMAF offices are co-located with those of the HLST Network in the Oxford Brookes University Business School, College Close premises. The core BMAF team has remained relatively stable in 2009-10 but the need to meet a 15% reduction in funding in 2010-11 has necessitated a reduction in our staffing budget and, inevitably, staff redundancies.

We have used the opportunity to review staff roles and responsibilities and to ensure we obtain the maximum efficiency from our co-location with HLST and our shared 'back office' support. All support staff roles will now include contribution to the operations of both Subject Centres.

Unfortunately this means that in the summer of 2010 we will be saying goodbye to an integral member of the BMAF support team, Anne Harrap. We would like to formally thank Anne for her dedication, hard work and commitment to BMAF and wish her well for the future.

Losing team members is never a pleasant experience, but we are confident that we are putting in place a staffing structure that can take us into future years and maintain our service to the BMAF community.

The Joint Academy JISC Academic Integrity Service (JAJAIS) Senior Adviser, Erica Morris, has an office with us in College Close, and we have benefitted from being able to work closely with her during 2009/10. We hope to continue this working relationship in the future.

Evaluation

We continue to adopt a process of ongoing reflexive evaluation of our activities throughout the year, through formal feedback and consultation as well as through less formal communications. In addition, our Associate Director, Brenda Eade, has provided an evaluative report on our products and services based on visits to institutions (report available in *Appendix 3*).

This year we have also commissioned Brenda to provide a critical review of our Teaching, Research and Development grants over recent years. The review of the

TRDG Reports and responses from grant holders demonstrates that this is a highly successful part of BMAF's activities. There is clear evidence that the projects have made a significant contribution to improving the student experience and that they are directly linked to current themes and trends in higher education.

Engagement with Academy York

BMAF has continued to make an active contribution to the work of the Academy as a whole.

We remain concerned about the variable level of response by Academy York to our communications and requests for support, but appreciate that we represent one of a range of competing demands. Issues remain regarding future funding, co-ordination of Academy-wide initiatives, the maintenance and development of the web site and the INTEGRA CRM.

BMAF staff are involved in the Web Portal users group, the INTEGRA users group, the Gateway Project, the HE Academy Admin Network, the Supporting Academic Staff facilitation group, the Joint Systems Steering Group, the HE Academy Admin Network, and the Academy/SEDA Reference Group. Through their Internationalisation SIG, BMAF have hosted a workshop for the PMI2 funded TIS project (Teaching for International Students) which is led by Jude Carroll and Jeannette Ryan who are both from Oxford Brookes. Representation at groups and meetings of Directors, Managers, technical and other staff, and more has also been maintained.

Operational objective: Communications and reputation management.

Our approach to effective communication with our subject communities has been the subject of an internal review during 2009/10. At the moment our communication channels include our website and our publications, as well as brochures, a regular e-news bulletin and JISCMail. We also continue to use cost-free media such as Twitter and other similar communication tools. A key development has been the introduction of a JISCMail list for Key Contacts. Development of a communication strategy will be completed early in 2010-11.

The BMAF website, as part of the Academy web portal, continues to be one of our main tools for interaction with our subject communities. Support provided by the Academy York teams responsible for maintenance and development of the site has improved, but can on occasion be slow. Our concerns in this area are being addressed through various forums, including the web portal users group where BMAF is represented.

Our use of the INTEGRA CRM (Customer Relations Management) system, which is intended to enhance our capacity for managing events and network contacts as well as providing a tool for market research and annual reporting, has followed the same pattern as in 2008/09. Whenever possible, BMAF activity in 2009/10 has been logged on INTEGRA, with a view to producing end-of-year engagement data automatically as happened in 2008/09.

As reported last year, the INTEGRA system does remain rather unwieldy and difficult to use, especially for non-regular users. This has resulted in the initial aim of all BMAF staff using the system to log their activity not being pursued. Instead,

the Administration and Events Officer has requested data from colleagues and input it on their behalf in most cases. The upgrade to the system in autumn 2009 unfortunately didn't seem to solve usability problems as had been hoped. We would still wish to work towards all core BMAF staff using INTEGRA competently, thereby taking steps to capitalise on the potential offered by the system, but this relies largely on stronger support from Academy York and/or further development of the system

Financial information and accountability

BMAF is funded by the Higher Education Academy to which we submit annual reports, budgets and operational plans. Our core staff are employees of Oxford Brookes University, the host institution, and located within the Business School.

Income and expenditure for the year ended 31 st July 2010		
Income	Core grant (from HE Academy)	£621,998
	Other income (funds carried over from 07/08)	£68,525
	Total income	£690,523
Expenditure	Staff costs	£317,946
	Travel and subsistence	£16,158
	Communication and marketing	£62,705
	Commissioned work (including project grants)	£137,087
	Other (contingency)	£1,934
	Office running costs and overheads	£151,950
	Total expenditure	£687,780

Advisory Board

Our Advisory Board met twice this year.

Advisory Board members	
Richard Atfield	BMAF Network
Valerie Clifford	Oxford Centre for Staff Learning and Development
Joe Clark	The Association of Business Schools
Helen Connor	The Council for Industry and Higher Education
Brenda Eade	BMAF Network
Professor Kate Greenan	University of Ulster
Andrew Hughes	London College of Fashion
Professor Neil Marriott (Chair)	The University of Winchester
Berry O'Donovan	Oxford Brookes University Business School
Professor Huw Morris	University of Salford
Andy Penaluna	BMAF Special Interest Groups (SIGs) representative
Karen Pettit	Secretary to the Board
Professor Margaret Price	National Teaching Fellow/Director of ASKe
Steve Probert	BMAF Network
Paul Radford	BMAF Network
Clive Robertson	BMAF Network
David Sadler	The Higher Education Academy
Meera Shah	Business Student representative
Chris Shiel	Bournemouth University
Jonathan Slack	The Association of Business Schools
Professor John Sloman	Economics Network
Professor Jim Stewart	Leeds Metropolitan University

Centre Staff

Clive Robertson
Centre Director
Also Director for HLST Network

Steve Probert
Assistant Director – Knowledge Exchange

Richard Atfield
Assistant Director – Networks

Paul Radford
Centres Manager
Also Manager for HLST Network

Sam French
Publications Officer
Also for HLST Network

Karen Pettit
Events Officer
Also for HLST Network

Dorota Maton-Mosurska
Legal and Finance Co-ordinator
Also for HLST Network

Victoria Oliver
Administrative Assistant

William Ross
Web Development Assistant
Also for HLST Network

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