BIRMINGHAM CITY University

BCU PSF Application form – Senior Fellow (D3)

Submit this application as one file (including referee statements and any other evidence relevant to your application), by email to psf@bcu.ac.uk

Name	Luan Shaw	**Date**	January 2019
Role/job title	Director of Postgraduate Studies and Head of Pedagogy		
Faculty/School	ADM/Royal Birmingham Conservatoire		

Case study 2

This should provide a specific example of successful co-ordination, support, supervision or mentoring of others in relation to learning and teaching and/or supporting learners

Professional Placements

In my role as Head of Pedagogy and Community Engagement, I lead a team of five core academic staff and devolve responsibility to nine Heads of Departments in the delivery of instrumental teacher education and workshop facilitation techniques at RBC. I have initiated and established numerous collaborative partnerships which enable students to undertake credit-bearing placements and require them to reflect on their experiences and feedback to inform their subsequent development at various stages of their course [A3, K2]. These partnerships reinforce the Conservatoire's connections within the local community whilst raising awareness of BCU and RBC on a national level. Since 2011, the number of external mentored placements within the Pedagogy Department has grown under my leadership from 0 to over 100 per year, significantly impacting on the student learning experience and subsequent employability [V4].

A crucial aspect of these partnerships is my introduction of professional mentorships which benefit both RBC students and the employees of the external organisations involved. I supervise a large team of mentors who undertake assessment of our students' work. I deliver training to ensure that mentors understand the aims and assessment criteria of each course/module, and that their mentoring and feedback is of the highest quality, informing students' progress. I also encourage mentors to evaluate RBC's provision from their perspective. Seeking feedback from mentors in this way is an important part of my leadership role because sharing knowledge and

solving problems together helps 'build supplier relationships', trust and mutual respect (Gittell, 2003) [V4] whilst also ensuring quality [K6].

In order to evaluate the impact of the mentor's role both on their own practice and on students' learning [A5, K5] I recently invited them to complete a questionnaire. The findings were wholly positive, revealing that mentors find the training I provide enjoyable and fulfilling, and that the process of interacting with RBC students in the professional context is directly beneficial in requiring them to analyse and question their own work:

'… an excellent way to think closely about my own practice, and to be able to clearly articulate the key aspects of it to others. Having an observer is like having your own fresh eyes each time'.

The majority of the placements I have set up have utilised my own professional knowledge and industry links to encourage organisations to come on board to enhance RBC's curriculum [A1, K1]. One such example is a collaboration with the national organisation, Music in Hospitals and Care. As I have worked for this organisation for over 20 years, I know their work 'from the inside' and it provides ideal scenarios for students to be mentored on their interactive performance work in care homes for residents with dementia. Further examples include the CBSO, where knowing the players personally, through performing with them since the early 1990s, has reaped huge benefits for students, and Orchestra of the Swan, where my membership has facilitated useful links for community-based work placements. I have also forged a similar partnership with Calthorpe Academy, the second largest special school in Europe.

Elsewhere I have used my negotiation skills to build partnerships without any former connections. For example, in 2017 I initiated a pilot project in collaboration with Elmhurst Ballet School to enable student pianists to receive elementary training from professional ballet pianists. I mentored a fellow member of staff from RBC's Piano Department throughout the planning process, accompanying her to strategy meetings at the school, supporting her with email correspondence, guiding her through the

design of an audition/recruitment process and generally building her confidence as a leader. The placements, which ran last year for the first time, were a huge success and received national press coverage. One of the students selected for the pilot project has subsequently been employed by Elmhurst and the project is now running for a second year with a strand involving Birmingham Royal Ballet. I continue to support my colleague, though she has now developed the necessary skills to work on the project independently. Furthermore, she was recently promoted from a Visiting lecturer position to Senior Lecturer and claims that this was largely a result of the confidence I instilled in her.

'I have really appreciated working with Luan on the Conservatoire/Elmhurst Ballet Piano Collaboration. Luan's advice and support to me personally, has helped me gain more confidence in my skills and develop further in areas such as negotiation and leadership.'

The very first (and most significant) professional placement training programme I initiated during my academic career at RBC was in conjunction with Services for Education (SFE) in 2011. Prior to this development, in 2010, SFE informed RBC that job applicants tended to

'fall down on the parts of the interview on pedagogy and on strategies for turning around difficult teaching scenarios: lateness, mixed ability groups, poor attendance, creative repertoire, inventing warms ups, linking activities, behaviour management ...'

My impact is demonstrated in that after five years of my leadership of a placement programme with SFE, the Deputy Head of Service (Teaching and Learning) reported that

'This active engagement has had a very positive impact on the quality of students' job applications and interviews, and on their understanding of how to deliver effective teaching.'

In 2018, during my studies on the MEd Academic Practice [A5], I carried out some research to further evaluate these developing placement programmes, looking at four cohorts (2012-16) to assess the quality of RBC's instrumental teacher education and the extent to which graduates found my BMus year 4 'Further Pedagogy' module relevant in their early careers [K6, DV/VI]. It was gratifying to learn that students had gained employment as instrumental teachers in the UK and overseas as a result of my teaching and course developments, with 24 out of 25 instrumental teachers (96%) attributing this to the module itself:

'[Further Pedagogy] helps as an extra credential when applying for jobs. [It] *displayed my true interest in teaching to my employers.'*

It has become clear that I have achieved my aim of 'raising the profile' of instrumental teaching as a career. I feel that the success of the professional placements I have introduced has been largely due to my being an effective role model within and outside the conservatoire context. I am respected by colleagues in the external professional contexts in which I operate; hence their willingness to collaborate with RBC students; and through the continuing receipt of positive student feedback and high levels of employability, I have convinced RBC staff that my initiatives are worthwhile and effective, as noted by the former RBC Vice-Principal in 2017:

'[Luan's] relentless attention to detail, superb communication, professional standing and managerial expertise ensure that the courses for which she has responsibility are held in high esteem by students and colleagues alike.'

This view is reinforced by a Head of Department:

'Since Luan joined us at RBC, the 'Art of Teaching' provision has improved in immeasurable proportions. It is staggering what she has achieved and the students have every opportunity to develop their skills to a professional level. Teaching is now viewed by students and their own teachers as an excellent career choice and I regularly hear the opinion from external sources that our students are very well prepared for the profession.'

Furthermore, since I set up these placement schemes with SFE and elsewhere, colleagues in the Conservatoire have implemented similar training opportunities, for example, ‘In Harmony’ Telford and Stoke (a project based on the Venzuelan ‘El Sistema’ model), the Young Composers Project and ‘ARCO’, a scheme whereby students teach children in Soweto via video-conferencing). The Conservatoire now has its own Learning and Participation (outreach) department, and Heads of Departments include more pedagogical training within their weekly departmental workshop classes, thus spreading the benefits of this kind of provision to students more widely. *External* impact is evidenced in the Music Education Council’s recognition of Services for Education’s ‘association with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire’ via the Music Education Award in 2017, and institutions such as the Universities of Birmingham and Sheffield are now following suit by setting up similar schemes to those I have initiated at RBC, albeit on a smaller scale.

In summary, this case study relates to Kurt Lewin’s three stage change model (Bassot (2016) as I had to 'unfreeze' colleagues’ long standing attitudes and perceptions about what a conservatoire education should include and allow my planned interventions to unfold over a number of years, during which time, I witnessed a definite culture change: staff are now much more open to preparing students for teaching careers than they were in 2011. Therefore, in the third 're-freezing' stage, instrumental teacher education and workshop facilitation training has become an accepted part of life at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.