



Chris Skidmore MP  
Minister of State for Universities,  
Science, Research and Innovation  
Department for Education  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019

Dear Chris,

As the umbrella body for the commercial music industry, UK Music has established a Music Academic Partnership (MAP) scheme, dedicated to nurturing talent and ensuring a skilled workforce for our sector in order to maintain its strength in the decades ahead. Our network includes 18 members including a number of universities, music colleges and institutions such as the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA).

I am writing to express our concerns at what we regard as the damaging impact of the current funding regime on small higher education institutions, particularly those dedicated to offering highly specialised disciplines like music.

Specialist music institutions often have a focus on performance and industry skills, operating degree programmes with a practical element as opposed to being research based. This is due to the industry requirements for the workforce. With a shift in university grant funding towards innovation, there has been a lack of recognition of innovation methodologies beyond traditional research, and of the industry connections institutions like LIPA have forged.

The British music industry relies greatly on institutions such as LIPA to deliver a talented workforce to help grow an industry which contributes £4.5 billion a year to the UK economy. Our music industry generates exports of £2.6 billion annually and employs 145,815 people. Ed Sheeran had the best-selling tour in the world in 2018 and for three of the last six years an act from the UK has been the biggest-selling recording artist in the world. However, the current

UK Music  
Savoy Hill House  
7-10 Savoy Hill  
London, WC2R 0BU

T. 020 3713 8444  
info@ukmusic.org  
www.ukmusic.org

funding regime unfairly discriminates against world-leading institutions like LIPA that make an important contribution to our and talent pipeline.

I am writing now following the referral by Dame Louise Ellman MP to the Parliamentary Ombudsman of a complaint regarding the Office for Students that the funding decisions that have had a serious negative impact on LIPA and other similar institutions. It is vital we ensure LIPA and other smaller institutions, which carry higher staff and other costs because of their specialist nature, do not continue to suffer.

Founded by Sir Paul McCartney, LIPA is an institution with formidable global reputation. But as Sir Paul McCartney commented this week in the Liverpool Echo:

“I helped to bring LIPA into life during very difficult times for Liverpool. It is now a highly respected institution all over the world. Our funding was recently affected by what to me, and the heads of every university in Liverpool, was a flawed process. LIPA is my passion and part of my legacy. It would not be fair to allow injustice to affect its future”.

Taking the LIPA case as an example, we believe that there is an urgent case to review support for highly specialised education institutions. This should cover:

1. Timescales for appeals: the process for LIPA’s appeal as part of the decision-making process took three months, which meant that by the time it had been upheld the money was already allocated elsewhere.
2. Inaccurate feedback: LIPA were both advised that they could not appeal about the third stage and that their application for the third stage had not been seen by the final review panel – neither of which were true.
3. Process: There is evidence of a lack of proper process being followed by the International Review Panel and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) at many stages when considering the application. For example, no records were kept of certain key decisions and insufficient resource was put into assessing the LIPA bid.

The three Liverpool university vice-chancellors asked their quality teams to review all available documents and found that it was a flawed process. The Guild HE also reached the same conclusion.

UK Music’s concern is that the LIPA case is indicative of a wider problem for assessing applications from similar institutions. We should be incentivising more institutions like LIPA, rather than leaving them dangerously exposed to funding shortfalls.

UK Music would be happy to work with you to identify further areas that a review could cover and ensure that the failures in the LIPA case can be resolved.

I am grateful for your attention regarding this matter and I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Michael Dugher  
UK Music CEO