BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

Transforming Students
Transforming Practice
Transforming the University
Transforming Birmingham and the Region
INTRODUCTION FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Welcome to this plan for the development of our University over the coming years. It builds upon our previous 2011-16 Corporate Plan, embraces our academic heritage and achievements, establishes new ambitious priorities for academic excellence and with confidence defines our future vision for 2020.

Higher education is, by its nature, transformative and aspirational. We want our students to have life-changing experiences and our academic staff, researchers and Professional Service staff to be part of this process of transformation. As we all know higher education is in a state of flux, there have been and are yet to be new challenges and many new opportunities. In order to face these challenges and realise opportunities the University, as a whole organisation, will be as open to transformation and as aspirational as we expect our students to be.

It is our responsibility to prepare our students for successful professional lives in a demanding and dynamic job market. We need to be leading the way on creative, professional, practice-based education and be a key source of inspiration, guidance, and influence, engaging our students throughout their educational experience, from applying to a course through to entering into successful careers.

We are an important part of the economic, cultural and social life of the city and the region and will play our part in their transformation and future development, forging productive collaborations and engendering innovation. Birmingham is an international city enriched by the diversity and aspirations of its people and its engagement with global markets. The University plays a key part in this and in becoming an international university we will be closely aligned to the global aspirations of the city and region.

We are building on strong foundations and we are positioned well to move forward with confidence. The indicators we have set ourselves are challenging but achievable. Our strategy strikes the right balance between ambition and pragmatism. Transformation needs to be carefully managed and we will be reviewing the indicators annually to ensure that they remain appropriate to the circumstances and our aims.

It is in this spirit of transformation, aspiration and confidence that the following strategy has been developed. I am confident that with the talents and commitment of staff and students, working together over the coming years we will be able to realise the exciting vision that we have articulated here in this new Strategic Plan.

Professor Cliff Allan
Vice-Chancellor
Birmingham City University
**Mission**
To transform the prospects of individuals, organisations and society through excellence in practice-based education, research and knowledge exchange.

**Distinctive Features**
**Practice**
- All students have practice intelligence
- All courses include practical experience / learning
- Research and knowledge development applied to practice

**Creativity and Enterprise**
- Value and application promoted in all areas of study and activity
- Distinguishing features of all graduates

**Student Engagement**
- Students have a sense of ownership in their University
- Focus is student success; they have a major role to play to ensure this

**The University FOR Birmingham**
- Main provider of relevant education for the people from greater Birmingham region
- Significantly contribute to economic, social, cultural prosperity and well-being

**Summary**
**Aims**

**Transforming Students**
We will:
- provide a comprehensive portfolio of creative, professional and practice-based education
- ensure that student learning and support enables our students progress to successful achievement
- help our graduates to secure employment, further study and career enhancement
- maximise student satisfaction and the learning experience
- become recognised as the sector leader for student engagement

**Transforming Birmingham and the Region**
We will:
- forge strong partnerships with education providers in the city and region
- be recognised throughout the region as a collaborator supporting economic, social and cultural improvement in the city region

**Transforming Practice**
We will:
- deliver clearly differentiated research focused on proven strengths and areas of demonstrable demand which will contribute to informing and transforming practice
- become a leading business-engaged University in the region

**Transforming the University**
We will:
- become an internationalised University
- be financially sustainable
- have a community of outstanding and effective University staff working together to deliver this strategy
- provide an outstanding education and learning environment
- continuously improve University organizational structure, operational systems and processes
- ensure effective external engagement which delivers strong relationships and support for the University and its activities

**Key Indicators**
- Overall student satisfaction
- Non-continuation rate of FT first year entrants
- Percentage of FT degree entrants projected for degree completion
- Percentage of FT degree leavers in employment or study six months after graduation
- Application rates
- Income generated from business to business services
- Research quality
- Research grant and contract income increase
- Enterprise income
- Income from employer/ business contracts

**Vision**
- To be recognised as the leading University for creative and professional practice-based education in UK
- To have highly employable graduates with knowledge, attributes and practice skills to successfully progress in their lives and careers
- Through applied research and knowledge exchange create advantage for students, organisations, our city and region, and for wider society
- To be recognised as the sector leader in student engagement
- To be the University FOR Birmingham and with a global reach
- To continue to be an employer of choice and attract innovative and enterprising staff

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BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 VISION

Mission

To transform the prospects of individuals, organisations and society through excellence in practice-based education, research and knowledge exchange.

Vision

To be recognised as the leading University for creative and professional practice-based education in the UK

- To have highly employable graduates with knowledge, attributes and practice skills to successfully progress in their lives and careers
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University Values and Commitments

In seeking to deliver this vision, the University is committed to:

- **Inclusive education**, providing opportunity for those with the abilities and motivations to benefit and to transform their lives, particularly taking a pro-active approach to raising aspirations among socially and economically deprived communities, and ensuring a diverse university community of students and staff
- A strong focus on **successful graduate outcomes** and future success
- Contributing significantly to the **economic prosperity**, social and health well-being of our city and region
- Internationalising the University in terms of its student body, overseas partnerships and promoting global perspectives in our curricula and research
- Innovation in how we improve and enhance all aspects of our offer and activity
- Valuing our staff and supporting their development of knowledge, skills and capabilities to benefit both their professional development and the University
- Being **client centred**, focussing on and responding to the needs of our students and other clients in a friendly, supportive and effective way
- Maintaining strong and enduring relationships with our alumni and friends of the University to create a large and active wider University community.

We value:

- **Excellence**, by ensuring the highest quality standards in learning and teaching, and professional service
- **Being people focused**, valuing everyone’s contribution, recognizing that what we do is for the benefit of all those connected with the University
- **Partnership working**, with our students, wider University community, and external stakeholders to create strong and successful working relationships and deliver high quality customer service
- **Fairness and integrity**, by taking a fair and balanced approach to our activities and being mindful of the impact on others
Defining characteristics

We define our role and place in higher education through four core characteristics which underpin what we do and how we do it:

- **Practice**
  We focus on practice so all students have Practice Intelligence (the capability to learn from experience and apply it to future practice).

  All courses include practice, practical experience and learning through practice; we command credibility and respect from the professions and our curriculum anticipates their changing needs.

  Our research and knowledge development are applied to practice.

- **Creativity and Enterprise**
  We promote the value and application of creativity and enterprise skills in all areas of study and activity of our staff and students.

  Creativity and enterprise skills and capabilities will be distinguishing features of all Birmingham City University graduates.

- **Student Engagement**
  We seek high levels of student engagement so our students have a sense of ‘ownership’ in their University.

  Our focus is student success and we believe they have a major role to play in shaping what the University does to ensure this.

- **The University FOR Birmingham**
  We are the main provider of higher education for the people from the Birmingham region, we are culturally inclusive and we significantly contribute to the economic, social, cultural prosperity and well-being of the city and region.
1. TRANSFORMING STUDENTS

We have five core aims to transform the student experience at Birmingham City University leading to successful graduate outcomes.

1. We will provide a comprehensive portfolio of creative, professional and practice-based education.

   a. All courses have strong links to professions and practice and courses co-designed with employers
   b. All courses demonstrate evidence of practice experience for students
   c. Our educational environment fosters creativity and enterprise skills and attributes
   d. Regular reviews take place of the size, form and nature of the academic portfolio to ensure its relevance to professional practice, employer needs and expectations, and student demand
   e. We define the ‘Birmingham City University Graduate’ with distinctive and valued attributes
   f. We maintain strong and appropriate levels of student support for a diverse student population which is representative of the changing demographics of the region
   g. Strong partnerships with industry, professions and employers are forged
   h. A wide range of enrichment and added value activities are offered to students throughout each year
   i. New product offers will include in-company awards, work and study opportunities, and on-line and flexible learning

2. We will ensure that student learning and support enables our students progress to successful achievement.

   a. A strong focus on student transition, retention, progression and achievement as set out through ‘Partners for Success’, and with appropriate learning and assessment design, with effective academic and pastoral support to students
   b. All programmes to have Personal Tutors for all students
   c. Use of best practice from within the University and beyond to support retention and progression activity
   d. Use of technology to deliver innovative and effective approaches to learning and teaching that motivate and inspire students to succeed

3. We will help our graduates to secure employment, further study and career enhancement.

   To do so, we will ensure that:
   a. Clear graduate attributes are embedded in all programmes which reflect employer and professional needs
   b. Work experience or placement opportunities are embedded in all courses
   c. Employability enhancement activities are embedded in curricula, and related added value activities beyond the curricula with appropriate certification of experience
   d. We develop strong enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and experience amongst all students
   e. Employers are partners co-designing our courses
   f. We actively place Birmingham City University graduates in employment through appropriate schemes
   g. We develop our alumni as employers of our graduates
   h. Development of our Personal Tutors and career support enables more active engagement in shaping the future destinations of our students
   i. Clear paths and progression routes are offered for our UG students to progress to Postgraduate study, with a stronger PGT offer
   j. Students are employed by the University during their studies

4. We will maximise student satisfaction and the learning experience.

   To do so we will require:
   a. Inspirational teaching and learning through a variety of approaches which challenge, stimulate and encourage our students
   b. All our academic staff to be appropriately informed, qualified and constantly developing their academic practice through fellowship of the Higher Education Academy
   c. Effective and appropriate forms of assessment with regular feedback to students within agreed timescales
   d. Effective course organisation and management, with clear course information, timetables and expectations clearly communicated to students
   e. A high quality learning environment in terms of physical space, learning resources supported by appropriate technology and state of the art equipment.

5. We will become recognised as the sector leader for student engagement.

   Therefore:
   a. Students will have a real and experienced sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘ownership’ in their University community
   b. Students will be partners in our academic community
   c. Increased opportunities for student input will be provided
   d. We will develop a ‘dividend’ scheme linked to student achievement
   e. We will increase student representation across all areas of University management and structures

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<td>1. All courses have work, practice and creativity experience incorporated into their design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non-continuation rate of FT first year entrants</td>
<td>2. Graduate level employment or further study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Percentage of FT degree entrants projected for degree completion</td>
<td>3. HEA accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Percentage of FT degree leavers in employment or study six months after graduation</td>
<td>4. Students placed into paid work on campus</td>
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<td>5. University wide employability enrichment programme</td>
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2. TRANSFORMING BIRMINGHAM AND THE REGION

The University has two key aims to expand our contribution to our city and region.

1. We will forge strong partnerships with education providers in the city and region.

To do so, we will:

a. Establish new ‘supply chain’ relationships with Sixth Form and BTEC providers to provide defined and clear progression routes to Birmingham City University so more Birmingham and the region students progress into the University.

b. Forge strong strategic relationships with local FE Colleges delivering ‘joined-up’ provision, services and models of education, business support and employer engagement for the region.

c. Become pro-active in developing relationships with schools and colleges in the city region to maximise achievement and raising of aspirations.

2. We will be recognised throughout the region as a collaborator supporting economic, social and cultural improvement in the city region.

We will:

a. Deliver research and knowledge exchange priorities which relate to regional economic, social and cultural needs.

b. Increase our engagement with city and region businesses, organisations, public and private bodies and sectors by developing and delivering a clear Birmingham City University offer of support and services and supplying graduates to the region who contribute towards its economic growth.

c. Increase student and staff engagement in the wider community through volunteering, active participation and sharing knowledge.

d. Actively participate in the cultural and creative sectors of the city and region.

INDICATORS FOR TRANSFORMING THE CITY AND REGION

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<td>1. Application rates</td>
<td>1. Schools and college partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Income generated from business to business services</td>
<td>2. Involvement in community engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Regional representation</td>
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</table>
3. TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

There are two key aims to transform our practice to deliver a research focus and knowledge based services.

1. We will deliver clearly differentiated research focused on proven strengths and areas of demonstrable demand which will contribute to informing and transforming practice

This requires:

a. Building on existing strengths and the development of new areas to respond to proven demand
b. Becoming a regional exemplar for blending new knowledge generation with practice engagement
c. Ensuring that our research is demand-led, responding to commissioners, industry, business, public and third sectors for contract and collaborative research
d. Increasing the linkages between research, teaching and our practice focused curricula
e. Increasing the development of a research culture and capacity through support, staff development, recognition and appointments
f. Establishing opportunities and approaches to foster stronger inter-disciplinary research and development
g. Effectively disseminating the outputs and impact of Birmingham City University research
h. Increasing our high quality research as recognized through the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

2. We will become a leading business-engaged University in the region

This requires:

a. Demonstrable and deep linkages between our Schools and Departments and employers and business
b. Businesses seeking to work with Birmingham City University on problems issues and solutions
c. Clearly defined and valued services delivered to businesses in the city and region
d. Clear articulation of the enterprise offer from Birmingham City University – covering student skills, graduate attributes, academic staff expertise, and business to business services
e. Embedding a strong spirit of enterprise across all parts of the University which serves the city and regional economic, social and cultural needs
f. Actively supporting innovation and competitiveness in local and regional businesses
g. Establishing a University infrastructure and organisation to manage, co-ordinate and deliver our business services professionally and effectively
INDICATORS FOR TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

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<td>2. Research grant and contract income increase</td>
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<td>3. External funding for research studentships</td>
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<td>4. Income from employer/business contracts</td>
<td>4. Academic staff at doctoral level (and equivalent)</td>
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<td>5. CPD and consultancy income</td>
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4. TRANSFORMING THE UNIVERSITY

We have six aims to ensure we transform the University into a global, effective and sustainable organisation.

1. We will become an internationalised University

This requires:

a. A significant increase in overseas students supported on campus
b. The development of strategic partnerships overseas in key regions of student growth where Birmingham City University awards can be delivered and research collaboration encouraged
c. The development of specific and targeted activity in key countries
d. An increase in overseas study and work placement opportunities and take-up for UK students at Birmingham City University

e. Greater input to the curricula of global perspectives
f. Common understanding across the University of internationalisation and the expectations of its increased development
g. The integration of overseas students within Birmingham City University enabling an immersed and high quality experience of UK higher education to the benefit of both local and overseas students
h. Staff to have global awareness and act as global citizens

2. We will be financially sustainable

This requires:

a. Achieving income growth while managing costs to generate surpluses for investment in our academic activities, people, facilities and services
b. Increasing our financial resilience by diversifying income sources across teaching, research and services to business and the community
c. Anticipating and robustly managing future strategic and operational risks
d. Ensuring good return on investment on special projects and new developments
e. Continually reviewing our systems, process and structures to maximise value, reduce unnecessary costs and incentivise behaviour

3. We will have a community of outstanding and effective University staff working together to deliver this strategy

This requires:

a. Appropriate levels of investment in and support for our staff to achieve excellence in all aspects of University activity
b. To develop both a culture of continuous improvement and our enterprising and commercial capabilities, to enhance performance and service delivery and ensure we provide good value for money
c. To offer appropriate development and support for staff so they can understand, respond to and deliver the challenging vision and aims to 2020
d. Ensure a staff mix and career routes aligned to the University vision and mission
e. Supporting staff to work across traditional boundaries of discipline, profession and occupation to maximise multi-professional working partnerships
f. The development of leadership capacity and capability at all levels to manage the changes and challenges required through this plan
g. The development of appropriate reward and recognition to support excellent practice and performance, and being clear about expectations of role, responsibilities and performance standards
h. Ensuring a working environment which is supportive, fosters our values, a strong sense of community, and which releases the talent and potential of individuals and groups

4. We will provide an outstanding education and learning environment

This requires:

a. The implementation of our estates strategy which consolidates our activities on two campus locations
b. Greater efficiency in the use of space without compromising the quality of the student and staff experience
c. Managing space utilization and effective timetabling of rooms and resources for the benefit of students and efficiency

d. Promoting and securing environmental sustainability in our policies, operations and actions to reduce our carbon footprint
e. Investing in learning resources, equipment and IT infrastructure with clear replacement cycles

5. We will continuously improve the University’s organisational structure, operational systems and processes

This requires:

a. Organisational structures and form which are fit for purpose and aligned to best deliver this plan
b. The delivery of services which are efficient and effective through appropriate combinations of standardisation and local variation
c. Services and operations designed to provide maximum support and utility to users, students, staff and other parties
d. Ensuring that both academic and non-academic processes and services are fit for purpose, optimise effectiveness, efficiency and add value

e. Regular periodic reviews of services, systems and processes to maximise performance and purpose, and ensure that appropriate benefit is obtained from technology change and other innovations
f. Agreed service standards established for all services across the University based on clear accountabilities
6. We will ensure effective external engagement which delivers strong relationships and support for the University and its activities

This requires:

a. A pro-active and co-ordinated corporate relations strategy to maximise positive profile of University activities
b. Active engagement with city, regional, national and sectoral leaders and influencers
c. Active engagement in economic, social and cultural organisations
d. Clear and strong communications which promote University strengths, successes and activities
e. Increased public engagement to demonstrate the University’s role, assets and potential
f. Greater development of our alumni, Honorary Doctors, advisory group members, friends and supporters to increase their relationships with the University on all levels
g. The development of a fund-raising strategy to maximise philanthropic giving to support defined University activity and projects

ININDICATORS FOR TRANSFORMING THE UNIVERSITY

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<th>Key Indicators</th>
<th>Secondary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Full-time on-campus international students (non-EU)</td>
<td>1. Staff engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students studying Birmingham City University awards overseas</td>
<td>2. Space utilisation</td>
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<td>4. Cash reserves</td>
<td>4. Completion of the new estates strategy</td>
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<td>5. Staff costs to turnover</td>
<td>5. Clear and comprehensive service standards</td>
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<td>6. Level of borrowing</td>
<td>6. Reduction of student complaints and academic appeals</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Net operating cash flow</td>
<td>7. Contacts on alumni database</td>
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<td>8. Annual IPR and achievement of Investors in People accreditation at Gold standard</td>
<td>8. Active engagement of alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Extent of fundraising activity</td>
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</tbody>
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