

Corporate Plan

2011 - 2016



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University



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INTRODUCTION



Professor David Tidmarsh
Vice-Chancellor

We are delighted to introduce the University's new Corporate Plan, covering the years 2011-2016. In so doing, it is appropriate to look back briefly at what we set out to do when we launched the previous plan in 2007 and to comment on what has been achieved.

Much of our previous plan focused on the need to raise the profile of Birmingham City University and to achieve recognition for our distinctive strengths in creative and professional education and research: the application of knowledge to the development of professional expertise and to the solution of real-world problems. We were delighted when, in 2010, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education commended the work being undertaken by the University to involve students in the development of their own learning and the curriculum. This commitment to partnership with our students and the Students' Union in the field of academic development was further recognised when it received the 2010 award for outstanding student support from the Times Higher Education publication. This new Corporate Plan deepens our commitment to practice-based education and to the engagement of students as active partners in the development of their learning experience. It places student satisfaction and graduate prospects at the heart of our strategic priorities.

In the fields of research and business engagement much has been achieved. The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise demonstrated the international and world-leading excellence of research in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Our financial investment in research has continued; further research centres have been recognised; and the number of postgraduate students has increased. Engagement with business and employers of all sizes and types has also continued to develop. We have instigated our first professorships of practice, developed and run management development programmes for a range of new employer partners, and continued to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises with business interventions and knowledge transfer programmes. Our goal remains to be a major contributor to the region's development as a leading knowledge-based economy and to create advantage for employers and other key partners through the application of the knowledge that we generate.

Our international reach has grown in the four years since the 2007 plan was published, both in terms of the number of

international students we attract to the UK and in the number of partnerships we have launched overseas. Our forward ambitions include the further expansion of our global reach through increased focus on strategic partnerships, both in the UK and internationally.

None of our strategic goals can be achieved without the commitment, motivation and passion of our staff. We have committed heavily to the introduction of the Investors in People (IiP) standard over the last four years, with many departments having achieved at least the standard and, often, the more advanced stages of IiP recognition. We continue to commit to nurturing the talents and expertise of our staff as academics and professionals and to the highest standards of professional service delivery and academic achievement.

Throughout the last four years we have demonstrated strong and stable financial performance, while continuing to invest in the University's facilities. At our City North Campus we have invested in facilities for indoor sport and exercise, and refurbished both teaching facilities and student social spaces. Our City South Campus, home to the Faculty of Health, has witnessed major investment in the refurbishment and re-opening of the West Wing of the Seacole Building, thereby enabling all of the Faculty's Schools to be located on the same campus for the first time since the Faculty was created in its present form. Finally, we have devoted considerable attention to establishing a sizeable land base for future development in Birmingham's city centre and commenced the first phase of construction to create a new home for the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design from 2013.

We recognise that the environment in which the University now operates brings new challenges and new competitive pressures. The University's Board of Governors has taken the opportunity of this Corporate Plan to re-state our commit to continuing academic innovation, to robust financial management and the generation of surpluses for investment, to reducing our carbon footprint and to increasing our efficiency in the use of resources. We have also taken the opportunity to review our mission and to articulate our vision of becoming the leading university for creative and professional practice, inspired by innovation and enquiry. Pursuit of the strategic objectives set out in this Corporate Plan will define our future and enable us to thrive in the difficult times ahead.



03 / OUR MISSION AND VISION

MISSION:

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

VISION:

“To be the leading university for creative and professional practice inspired by innovation and enquiry.”

1.

“ To provide transformational learning experiences, informed by our engagement with employers, which extend educational opportunity and prepare our students for successful and rewarding lives.”

The University believes in the transformative power of education and the potentially life-changing opportunities that higher education can bring. We are committed to our role in raising aspirations and encouraging progression to higher education for able and committed individuals from communities without the tradition or experience of going to university.

We are equally proud of our role in preparing students, whatever their background, for entry to the professions through practice-based education and we have established an enviable reputation for the excellence of our teaching, particularly in areas of creative and professional practice. We aim to provide a learning experience which is intellectually rigorous and

stimulating, which involves students in the design of their own learning and which prepares them for careers as innovative professionals: capable of shaping their subject and their profession throughout their working lives.

The students we recruit will have demonstrable potential to succeed and will recognise the parallel intellectual investment they will need to make in their own learning and development. We will set a pervasive ethos of high expectation and high performance and will actively champion student participation in the design and delivery of the curriculum. Building upon nationally-recognised student engagement activities, we will seek to involve our students fully in all our academic

processes as co-creators of curriculum and as full partners in a growing learning community.

We recognise the impact of globalisation, supported by modern communications technologies, upon the economy and upon social and cultural interchange and we will prepare our students for lives in a global society. Finally, we will ensure that our curriculum incorporates guidance on professional and ethical standards relevant to the discipline concerned, including environmental awareness and the promotion of sustainability.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1** Provide a practice-based education of the highest quality which is exciting, intellectually rewarding and informed by our research and engagement with employers.
- 1.2** Be an exemplar for the engagement of students as active partners in the development of their own learning experience.
- 1.3** Set challenging expectations of student performance and exceed national benchmarks for student retention, progression and completion.
- 1.4** Raise educational aspiration among socially and economically deprived communities in the city and the region and ensure that fair access to a university education is available to those with the aptitude and the motivation to succeed.
- 1.5** Forge strong multi-faceted strategic partnerships with other educational providers and employers to provide a variety of routes to and modes of accessing higher education in response to student and employer demand.
- 1.6** Exploit technology to develop innovative and effective approaches to learning and teaching that motivate and inspire students to succeed.
- 1.7** Ensure that all our students have the opportunity to develop up-to-date, relevant professional, technical and subject-based knowledge that will equip them for employment, including self-employment, and the skills and attitudes that will enable them to continue to develop as creative and innovative practitioners throughout their lives.
- 1.8** Capitalising on Birmingham's rich cultural mix and international relationships prepare our students for lives as global citizens and expose them where relevant to international dimensions of their subjects of study.

2.

“To be an exemplar for student engagement, working in partnership with students to create and deliver an excellent university experience and achieve high levels of student satisfaction and graduate employment.”

We recognise that the changing context of higher education funding places increased emphasis on the personal financial investment that students are making in their own education and that their expectations will rise accordingly. They will expect the highest professional standards of education and service in every aspect of their university experience and we will meet that expectation with a high level of responsiveness.

Because we recognise how much students can contribute to the full range of our activities we will actively seek their views in the development of policies and practices that influence their experience.

We welcome the Students' Union as a critical friend and partner of the University and we will particularly welcome the contribution it can make in encouraging

student representation and feedback. Together we will ensure that we can meet students' wider social, cultural, sporting, wellbeing and personal development needs.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Build a strong University community which actively involves current and former students in shaping the University's future and the services it provides.
- 2.2 Ensure that students are central to everything we do and that their expectations are recognised, appropriately shaped and addressed.
- 2.3 Provide high-quality, well-integrated services and facilities to prospective, current and former students and endeavour to achieve equity of access to them.
- 2.4 Through a rejuvenated approach to student representation and feedback, build effective and responsive dialogue with our students, producing outcomes that exceed national benchmarks for student satisfaction.
- 2.5 Work with the Students' Union to maximise the range of support, leisure and personal development opportunities available to our students.
- 2.6 In partnership with the Students' Union, our alumni and employers, increase the opportunities available to our students to obtain experience of work during their time at university.
- 2.7 Incorporate effective preparation for work into the learning experience and ensure that our graduates achieve high rates of progression to employment, self-employment or further study.

3.

“To extend our research base and, through the application of the knowledge we generate, create advantage for students, employers and other key partners.”

It is a fundamental part of the University's mission and values to advance knowledge through intellectual enquiry and creative discovery. Knowledge discovery and its dissemination through teaching, personal practice and engagement with business and employers are core activities.

As a research-engaged university we have aspirations to grow our research base. Achieving our aspirations requires investment and consequently we will expect there to be manifest benefits for our other activities. Research will underpin our knowledge exchange and enterprise activities and inform our taught programmes, as well as contributing to academic vitality and staff and student motivation.

Research at the University is concentrated in centres of excellence, each faculty playing a leading role in at least one of the centres. In addition to carrying out world-leading research, each of our centres of

excellence will also undertake innovation in process and practice and enterprise work of the highest significance and impact. The performance of the centres will be reviewed regularly with a view to ensuring that their objectives remain aligned with the aspirations of the University and international research priorities. We will continue to focus on applied research with international significance, originality and rigour, and on areas with high impact and relevance.

It has long been understood that universities are major contributors to economic development. We contribute, directly and indirectly, through our education research and enterprise work to the region's gross domestic product and to job creation. We seek to act as a catalyst and agent for change and to promote and nurture entrepreneurship and innovation.

Alongside our engagement with business and enterprise, we work with other key partners: organisations in the

public and not-for-profit sectors and with professional institutes in the UK and overseas. We aim to exploit our intellectual capital and real-world focus to create lasting advantage for business, employers and other key partners that have chosen to work with us.

We will continue to refine our policies, processes and good practice with a view to extending and deepening these partnerships to provide mutual, sustainable competitive advantage.

Our strong focus on employability seeks to engage staff and students with private and public sector employers. We seek to foster knowledge exchange, enhancing creativity and innovation, and ensure that graduates have the necessary skills and qualifications to be professionally successful – whether as entrepreneurs, self-employed or working in a large global company.

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1** Building on the good progress achieved in the last five years continue to contribute to the international knowledge base by focusing research activity and internal investment on key areas of excellence where our research is comparable with the best in the world.
- 3.2** Following success in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise secure continued improvement in outcomes in the follow-on Research Excellence Framework in 2014.
- 3.3** Expand research capacity and capability, securing year-on-year increases in external research income and increasing the proportion of research-active staff and postgraduate students.
- 3.4** Be a major contributor to the region's ambitions to be a leading knowledge-based economy.
- 3.5** Act as an agent for economic development, assisting employers to embrace creativity, to absorb innovation in process, practice and technology, and to remain globally competitive.
- 3.6** Exploit our knowledge and expertise to inform the development of public services and policy to promote economic, social and cultural wellbeing and to use the talents of our staff and students in initiatives to support our local communities.
- 3.7** Ensure our engagement in research, scholarship and knowledge exchange informs and enriches the curriculum and the educational experience of our students.
- 3.8** Develop the University's employer engagement programme as a national exemplar of best practice.

4.

“To extend our influence by building meaningful international partnerships which enrich the lives of our students and enhance the intellectual endeavours of our staff.”

The University embraces extensive international engagement. Over 2,000 of our students are recruited from outside the UK, from over 80 different countries. A further significant number of students or prospective students are studying at partner institutions in the UK or overseas. We have established liaison offices in India, China, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and Nigeria and have developed a wide network of strategic relationships and international agents. We have formed educational communities of practice with prestigious institutions in Europe and the USA with which we exchange ideas about innovation in learning and teaching. A significant proportion of research submitted to the 2008 Research

Assessment Exercise was internationally excellent or world-leading and we recognise the benefits that international collaboration in research have brought.

Globalisation is affecting all parts of the world economy. As a professionally-orientated university we cannot afford to ignore the impact of globalisation on the industry sectors that we serve and on professional practice in those sectors. At the same time, our strengths in creative and professional formation mean that we have a distinctive contribution to make to shaping the emergence of professional and creative practice in developing economies.

We will seek, therefore, to extend our global reach through an increasing variety of mechanisms alongside traditional forms of international student recruitment. Acting independently or in partnership with organisations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, we will seek to extend the benefits of the University's expertise to new and emerging professional communities across the world and will work with international partners to advance the boundaries of knowledge and practice in our areas of expertise.



Chartered Institute of
Management Accountants



Birmingham City University Business School
and CIMA launch MSc Accountancy
and Finance top-up degree

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Extend our global reach, raising the profile of the University and the recognition it receives for its distinctive, practice-based disciplinary strengths.
- 4.2 Continue to identify and develop collaborative partnerships with high-quality institutions and organisations to extend the benefits of practice-based education in emerging and developing economies.
- 4.3 Work with industry partners and professional institutions with international reach to support their strategic objectives.
- 4.4 Ensure that international engagement adds value to the experience of our students and staff, prepares our students for a global world of work, and creates an international and cosmopolitan community of learning and ideas.
- 4.5 Review and enhance the distinctive, targeted support provided to our international students studying in the UK to ensure that they receive maximum benefit from their study with us.
- 4.6 Continue to identify and develop international research partnerships which enhance the University's research effort and standing.

5. **“To invest in and support our staff to achieve excellence in all aspects of teaching, research, knowledge exchange, student support and service delivery.”**

We recognise that the University is a community of individuals who, working together united by common ambition and common goals, have the power to create a truly inspirational place of learning and research and an exemplar for student and employer engagement. We recognise that the University's distinctive focus on professional and creative practice means that our

academic staff have a greater diversity of backgrounds than is often the case in higher education and we welcome and value the distinctive contribution that all members of staff can make to enhancing our offer. We expect all of our academic staff to be active as teachers and involved additionally in research, knowledge transfer, professional practice or employer engagement.

We value and support all staff equally regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family circumstances, citizenship, social and economic status, or any other irrelevant individual differences.



OBJECTIVES

- 5.1** Develop an explicit statement of shared values which places the interests of students and clients at the forefront of our ethos, planning and actions.
- 5.2** Foster a culture of enquiry, innovation, enterprise, professionalism and pride in all that we do.
- 5.3** Ensure that the skills and knowledge of all of our academic staff as teachers and researchers are continuously nurtured, refreshed, developed and are utilised fully in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge to the benefit of students, our local communities and society at large.
- 5.4** Ensure that all staff aspire to and are supported to achieve the highest standards of professional practice and service delivery.
- 5.5** Recognise and celebrate excellence and the achievements of our staff and incentivise them to contribute to the continuing success of the University and our students.

6. **“To ensure academic and financial sustainability, while providing maximum value to students and stakeholders and behaving responsibly towards the environment.”**

The University recognises and appreciates the significant public investment in higher education and the personal financial investment that individual students of the future will be required to make in their educational experience. We will aim to operate as cost-effectively as possible, while ensuring that our students and stakeholders receive the services and facilities they

require. In the more volatile funding environment we face we will continue to place a high priority on the financial sustainability of the University, ensuring that we can continue to renew and update our buildings, resources and facilities to provide an outstanding learning environment. It will be more important than ever that our programmes of teaching and research

reflect the most up-to-date thinking and practice and are responsive to employer and industry demand where appropriate.



OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Encourage innovation in and regularly review our programmes of teaching and research to maintain academic vitality and responsiveness to student and client needs and ensure the optimum use of costly resources.
- 6.2 Maintain a robust approach to financial management which prioritises the allocation of resource to core activities and frontline services while ensuring that the University remains financially sustainable.
- 6.3 Continue to generate sufficient surpluses to enable the University to invest in the renewal of the resource base, facilities and infrastructure to provide a first-class educational and learning environment.
- 6.4 Reduce the size of the estate and the number of freestanding sites, with a view to minimising academic and social isolation and increasing efficiency in resource utilisation.
- 6.5 Promote environmental sustainability in our policies, operations and actions and reduce the University's carbon footprint.



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City North Campus, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU
T: 0121 331 5000 W: www.bcu.ac.uk