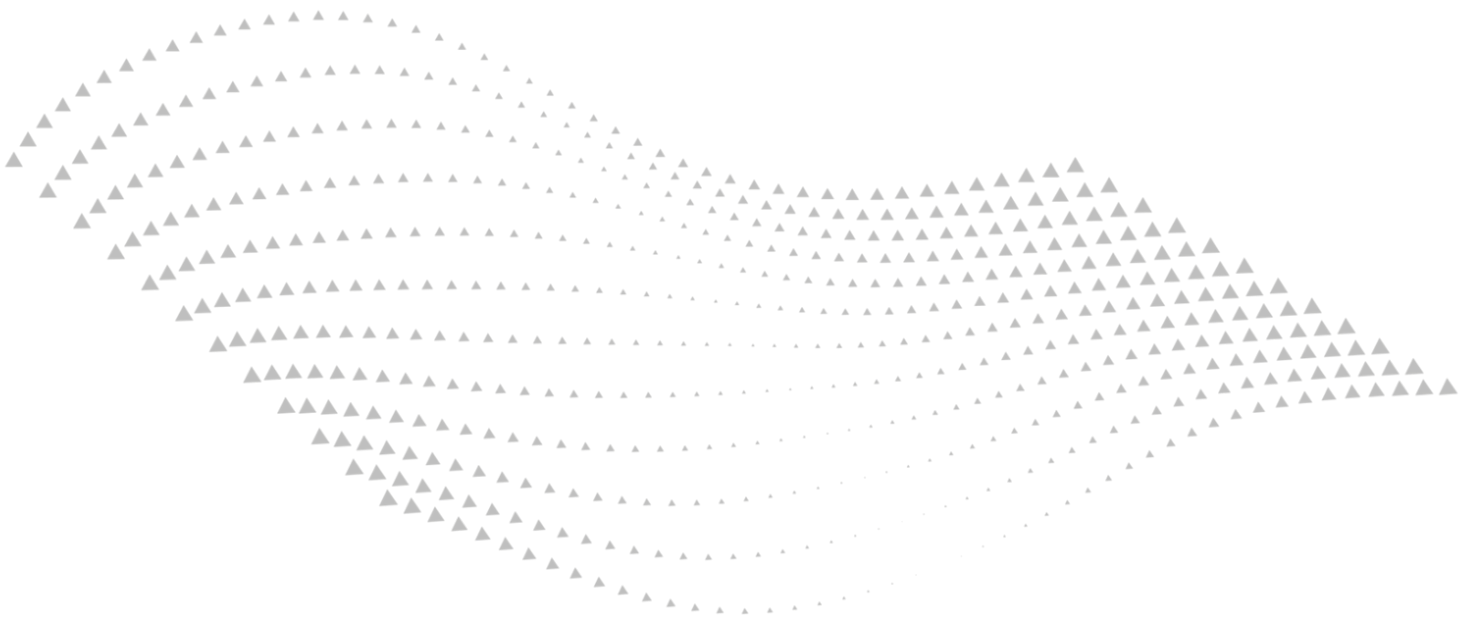


BIMM
UNIVERSITY

A university
for the creative
industries

Higher Education Strategy



Last approved: May 2022

Approved by: Academic Board

Next review due: May 2026

Introduction

This Strategy applies to all Higher Education provision delivered at BIMM University and is owned and implemented by the Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (HELTEC), a subcommittee of Academic Board.

Who We Are

The University is an established, dynamic and specialist higher education provider, delivering education for creative arts practitioners. At our core is a solid commitment to providing excellence in teaching and learning and further developing our capacity in terms of research and enterprise. The University is a multidisciplinary community of staff and students. It is characterised by a culture of creativity, innovation and collegiality.

Our Educational Values

The following statements describe the University's educational values and define excellence; they are aligned with our core institutional values.

Students are supported and enabled to succeed: We will welcome learners of every background and ensure that all our students are supported to achieve their potential. We will address any barriers to success and achievement. Our learning communities will be diverse and culturally rich, and we will promote inclusivity, wellbeing and accessibility. We will support our students in fulfilling their potential and positively contributing to the world. We will strive to eliminate gaps in access, attainment and progression to employment or further study.

Effective and transformational curriculum design: Our curriculum will encourage students to ask deep questions, explore uncertainty and challenge conventional thinking. We will develop our courses in a holistic and considered way to meet the needs and expectations of students, employers and the higher education sector. Aims, methods, content and outcomes will be aligned and carefully evaluated by teachers, learners and external experts. We will strive to be innovative in learning design through continual evidence-based experimentation, evaluation and enhancement.

Outstanding learning & teaching: We will ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are enhanced through reflection and draw on best practices and current research. We will engage students as active participants in their education and creative practice. Assessment will be fair, relevant, authentic, collaborative, diverse, inclusive and accessible. We recognise that knowledge, understanding and learning are socially constructed in learning communities where staff and students become co-creators of understanding and co-producers of learning.

Valuing our educators: We will recognise, develop and reward excellent educators across the University, at all career stages, through shaping our structures, policies and resources to achieve this. In addition, we will create an environment that fosters evidence-based innovation in educational practice, thus building both individuals and the University's reputation for educational leadership.

Exceptional graduates: Employers, alumni and other stakeholders will inform the design and delivery of our curriculum by sharing their diverse external perspectives with us and supporting students to become agents of change. Furthermore, we believe that identity, creativity and imagination are fundamental to success in the creative arts industries. Being creative requires risk-taking, collaboration, determination, and resilience through the experience of both success and failure. Moreover, we will provide our students with opportunities to develop the communication, emotional intelligence, and teamwork skills that underpin the continuous development of their creative practice. Our approach to higher education will produce graduates who are:

- Employable and entrepreneurial
- Resilient and adaptable
- Creative, collaborative and connected
- Globally aware
- Socially responsible
- Intellectually curious
- Self-aware

Our Priorities

For the five years covered by this Strategy, which follows a consultation period with staff and students, we have agreed on the following priorities to enhance the higher education student experience we provide.

1. **Access and participation:** We will seek to improve access, retention, and achievement levels for underrepresented groups.
2. **Progression and retention:** We will engage staff at all levels of the University in taking responsibility for ensuring that our students are ready to benefit from the education we offer and fully supported to progress successfully to the achievement of their educational goals.
3. **Equity, diversity and inclusion:** We will work with students and staff to promote the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.
4. **Enhancing learning, teaching and assessment:** We will work with students, staff and external subject experts, drawing on best practices and current educational theory to reflect on and enhance our educational practice.
5. **Educator development and progression:** We will work with our educators to support their continuing professional development and reward excellence in learning and teaching.
6. **Student support:** We will look to enhance levels of support and guidance to students and use real-time data to identify and intervene when students are at risk.
7. **Working in partnership:** We will look for new opportunities to strengthen our collaborations with industry and the university sector to ensure we are leaders in shaping the future of the creative and performing arts.

How we Enhance the Quality of Higher Education

Theory of Change¹

Theory of Change (ToC) is a methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation to promote social change. A Theory of Change describes the underlying assumptions about how planned activities will lead to intended outcomes. By developing a model setting out our Theory of Change, we can understand how different aspects of the interventions we are planning fit together to achieve our final goal(s). This is best done collectively, drawing on the experience of those who will work on implementation.

A Theory of Change model allows us to:

- Describe the need we are trying to address.
- Describe the changes we want to make (our outcomes).
- Describe our plan to achieve these changes (our activities).

Establishing Theory of Change before we start to deliver an intervention allows us to set out the aims, context and resources required, processes and intended impact.

¹ Adapted from TOC briefing notes by TASO: <https://taso.org.uk/evidence/evaluation/step-1-diagnose/#theory-change>

Evaluating the Impact of our Work

Theories of Change also serve to integrate process and impact evaluation into the same process whilst clearly distinguishing evaluative activities relating to process and those focusing on measures relating to impact(s). The evaluation of an intervention's inputs, activities, and outputs forms the process and implementation evaluation, which then logically feeds into the outcomes and impacts of an intervention – the impact evaluation.