

From: [John Vinney](#)
To: [All Staff](#)
Subject: Update from the Vice-Chancellor
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Dear colleague

As we prepare to welcome our new and returning students, this is a good time to think about doing things differently this academic year, bringing our BU values of creativity, excellence, inclusivity and responsibility to life. I know that we all want to continue to take positive steps to make sure that all our students and staff across BU have a consistently excellent and personalised experience and that we enable everyone in our BU communities to thrive and achieve.

Student and staff experience

This summer, we were given [access to our NSS results](#) earlier than ever before. As a result we have been able to use the summer period to take action to ensure that the student experience is better, across all areas of BU, from this month, including learning from the excellent practice in many areas. I am pleased that staff have embraced this challenge positively and collaboratively.

I am delighted that we have engaged our professional services in this process in a different way this year. Our professional services are implementing their own plans and all our professional services, including those who are not directly student facing, are taking steps to ensure that they support their colleagues across BU and facilitate the work that we are undertaking.

It is vital that, at this very busy time for everyone, we do not lose momentum. We must each make sure we deliver the plans made so far. If things are not working we cannot wait until the next survey or review cycle to think about changing it. If something is working well, share it with colleagues. Our [Centre for Fusion Learning, Innovation and Excellence](#) (FLIE) and Service Excellence team will support you to share best practice across BU.

Our objective is to achieve 90% plus in the NSS for every undergraduate programme, and similar levels of satisfaction for all our post-graduate students. We will only achieve this level of excellence if every member of staff, in every part of BU, commits, with energy and positivity, to a creative and inclusive approach to sustainable improvements in our student experience.

We continue to deliver our BU2025 plans linked to staff experience and staff development, including the Digital Enablers programme. One of our BU2025 implementation plans is that all staff, across BU, in academic departments and professional services, ensure excellent service to students and staff and I encourage you to look at the Service Excellence [pages on the intranet](#) and consider how you can incorporate these ideas into your day to day work.

Our clear sense of purpose and direction, as set out our [BU2025 strategic plan](#), supports us as we take these steps. My colleagues and I are continuing to engage with staff from across BU to discuss how we are doing and hear your feedback - you can sign up to our open meetings [here](#) or provide feedback or suggestions by e-mailing [BU2025VisionandStrategy](#). We also want to hear your stories about how you are implementing BU2025 in your areas and the difference it is making.

External perspective

Chris Skidmore MP has been re-appointed as Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation following Jo Johnson's resignation. There is a great deal of uncertainty about whether the UK will leave the EU in October, whether or when there will be a general election and what the outcome will be. Assuming the current government stays in power, we do not know what their approach will be to implementing the Review of Post-18 Education and the Augar Review. If there is a change of government, we know that Labour plan to change the funding structure for HE, but it is unlikely that they would be able to do so quickly.

Again, the clear direction set by BU2025 is helpful. We expect that we will meet our budget targets for student recruitment this year. We will continue to develop innovative new programmes. We will continue to support increased collaboration on research bidding and to take a long term view of investing in areas that are aligned to national and regional priorities. We will continue to implement our plans for external engagement, making sure that we are working effectively with stakeholders locally, regionally, nationally and around the world, and to engage with practice and industry to make sure that our work is relevant and engaging.

We will continue to welcome EU and international students and staff to BU. I am pleased that the government have announced the reintroduction of post-study work visas for students starting courses in 2020/21 and we hope that this is only the start of other positive steps to encourage and support EU and international staff and students. Whatever else happens politically, at BU we recognise the positive contribution that EU and international students and staff make to our community at BU and locally, and to reassure you that we will continue to be a vibrant, diverse and inclusive community. There is more information for EU staff [on the intranet](#).

And while the external context may be uncertain, having set ourselves stretching objectives, it is important that we remember to look externally for ideas, inspiration and for evidence in support of our plans.

Celebrating success

The Autumn always brings some fantastic opportunities to celebrate success across BU, making this my favourite time of year.

We are also preparing for [graduation](#) on 4th-8th November. These ceremonies are a wonderful mix of the formal and the informal, and provide an opportunity to celebrate with our graduates and their families and friends, and to reflect on our achievements as a community at BU. I encourage all staff to attend a ceremony, either as a member of the platform party to support your students when they cross the stage, or as a member of the audience. Information about how to book a staff seat will be available nearer the time, but you can plan your time now to make sure you will be able to attend.

I was delighted to agree the shortlist for the VC Staff Awards recently and look forward to the announcements, which are coming soon. It is always inspirational and uplifting to read the nominations for staff from across BU and I want to thank everyone who made time to nominate and congratulate everyone who was nominated.

Thank you all for your efforts so far in preparing for the new academic year, and I look forward to working with you all in an innovative, creative and collaborative year for BU.

Best wishes,

John Vinney
Vice-Chancellor

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