



Dear Colleague,

## BU2025

In my last update, I announced that we were starting to develop the [BU2025 vision and strategy](#), and since then, along with UET colleagues, I have been visiting Faculties and Professional Services to discuss our approach and to start gathering your feedback on our ideas for the direction and priorities for BU after [2018](#). As I write this, I am looking forward to more of these meetings which have been engaging and stimulating. I have really enjoyed hearing from members of staff across BU.

We have summarised your feedback so far on the [intranet](#), where you can also see some of the outputs from the workshops we have held. Over the coming months, we will continue to identify key themes and respond directly to questions that you have asked – the first answers are on the intranet now:

- *How will the Fusion themes be used in practice?*
- *Is BU2025 going to be the same as BU2018?*
- *Does consistency imply a limitation on innovation – should there be more standardisation and centralisation?*
- *The focus on personalised support for students creates a tension with requirements for efficiency and value for money – how will we reconcile that?*

There will be more opportunities to engage through a range of methods over the next few months. In the meantime, please get involved:

- E-mail [BU2025 Vision and Strategy](#)
- Send us an SMS text message – text your message to 07507 319512 starting with BU2025
- Contribute to our [online PADLET](#)
- Please check [the diary](#) for our themed workshops and other activities.

## BU update

As we shape our vision for 2025, it is important that we also reflect on our achievements over the current plan period. This year we are delighted that we have retained our place as one of the best new universities in the world. BU was included in the THE Young University Rankings, an annual league table compiled by the Times Higher Education (THE) magazine that identifies the best new universities across the world. The rankings consider universities which are under 50 years old and given that we are about to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a university this is an excellent achievement. My thanks go to all the staff and students at BU who have made this possible.

Although league tables are only one way of looking at what we do, and have many limitations, they do help to position BU relative to our competitors and when taken together, they can provide a rounded view of how we are doing. Recent rises in the national league tables take our aggregate position in all three major rankings (one of our Key Performance Indicators) to 60. These achievements underline the journey we have been on as a high quality university having an important impact on our community and increasingly becoming an influence nationally and internationally.

We are also expecting the results of the Teaching Excellence Framework in June. Despite some challenges in the metrics, arising from our historic performance in the National Student Survey (NSS), we told a confident and positive picture about teaching quality and learning opportunities at BU and the positive outcomes for our students – thanks to the efforts of all staff across BU.

To recognise the outstanding achievements of colleagues from across BU, you can now nominate individual colleagues and collaborative teams for the Vice-Chancellor's Staff Awards 2017. Nominations can be made until 14 July - all the information about categories and eligibility, and the documentation you need to make a nomination (or two!) are on the [Staff Intranet](#). There are five categories of award as well as the Recognition Awards. Last year's ceremony, the first held in the Fusion Building, was particularly memorable, and I know you will help make 2017 even more exciting - I am looking forward to reading the nominations!

We will be launching our 2017 staff survey very soon - we want staff to play an active role in the on-going development of BU and that is why we are asking you to complete a staff survey. Previous staff surveys have highlighted important aspects including wellbeing, change management, and staff engagement, and we have used this to make changes and develop better ways of working. Your responses will help us find out what is working well and what could be improved, and will inform our strategy development. Please look out for the promotional material and the e-mails about the survey and take time to complete it – it doesn't take long.

## **Sector update**

As we wait for the election, politicians are focused on their manifesto commitments and campaigning, and most government bodies have suspended the publication of policy or other documents for the time being. Just before Parliament was suspended for the election, the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 was passed, with a number of important government concessions, including relating to a review of the Teaching Excellence Framework, and clarifications about autonomy and quality.

The government also announced that EU students joining UK universities in the 2018/19 academic year will be eligible for fee levels and loans that apply now, right through their study – which is great news. This confirmation is something we have been asking for, along with the rest of the sector. However, uncertainty remains about the position of EU staff and students after the UK leaves the EU, and the expected consultation on wider issues relating to immigration will now probably take place after the election, assuming that the government is re-elected.

There is one very important step that you can take in the next few days: make sure that you are [registered to vote and that you have registered for a postal vote](#) if you need one. The deadline is 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

## **Festivals**

The Festival of Learning has gone global again this year with events in Indonesia, Malaysia, India and China. You can read more about it [here](#) and follow [this week's events in China](#).

Celebrating its fifth year, [BU's annual Festival of Learning](#) will take place this year from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> July, with over 140 events running across the five day period. A core theme of this year's festival is *Understanding the world around us*. The festival will open on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July with our popular *Festival for the Family* and will conclude with a day-long showcase of BU's global footprint and closing evening reception on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July. Please do save these dates in your diaries, the festival brochure will be available soon.

Best wishes,

John Vinney  
**Vice-Chancellor**

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