



CORPORATE **Responsibility**

Welcome

Birmingham City University is a vibrant, popular institution, which employs nearly 2,000 staff, educates some 23,500 students and generates more than £270 million a year for the regional economy.

The University's vision is to transform the prospects of individuals, employers and society through excellence in practical, relevant and work-based education, research and knowledge exchange.

As an exempt charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 1993, the University's commitment to Corporate Responsibility underpins and finds expression in our charitable purposes. Our primary purpose is the advancement of education; however, there is also a strong commitment to the promotion of health and the saving of lives; citizenship and community development; equality and inclusion; the development of the arts, culture, heritage and science; and the protection and improvement of our environment. Our approach and the priorities we set for ourselves reflect the four core values of the University, which are: excellence, people focused, partnership working, and fairness and integrity.

Our commitment to Corporate Responsibility is implicit in our Corporate Goals and in our Mission and Vision as set out in the Corporate Plan 2011-16. We are committed to embedding the highest standards of Corporate Responsibility across the University, to working to the highest ethical standards, and to educating our students to be socially, economically and environmentally responsible citizens.

Professor Cliff Allan

Vice-Chancellor
(March 2013)



Teaching and learning

Corporate Goal one

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 received national acclaim when it won a prestigious Times Higher Education Award in the 'Outstanding Support for Students' category in 2010. The award was shared with our Students' Union, and was given in recognition of our joint Student Academic Partners (SAP) scheme, which sees students work in partnership with the University to find ways to further improve our learning and teaching. We are gaining a strong reputation for our innovation in this field, which is underpinned by genuine partnership between staff and students which has enabled teaching and learning activities in the community.

A student taking part in a Jewellery Design Masterclass



Helping youngsters to 'Aimhigher'

As part of our outreach activity, students from Birmingham City University regularly mentor children in local schools. They encourage the pupils to consider the benefits of higher education, providing both face-to-face and online support and encouragement to learners as they encounter various milestones between years 9 and 13. These initiatives are part of the Birmingham-wide 'Aimhigher' partnership between the city's universities to raise student aspirations and to encourage students, particularly those with no family background of higher education, to consider university.

Seminars to promote Corporate Responsibility

The Centre for Business Innovation and Enterprise (CBIE) has a strong research interest in Corporate Responsibility and, for the second year running, has organised a seminar for local businesses on Corporate Responsibility (CR). The seminar aimed to encourage the sharing of experiences in ethical business practice and to help businesses to find ways to embed CR values within an organisation without harming business objectives or shareholders' interests. The theme for the 2012 seminar was sustainable product design, development and life-cycle use.



Students share legal expertise

Students on the LLB (Hons) programme at our School of Law work with the Citizens' Advice Bureau and other not-for-profit advice centres to provide free legal advice. In this way these students use their professional knowledge to help those with real-world problems, and put something back into the local community while they study.

Community

Corporate Goal two

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.

Our commitment to CR is evidenced through our collaborative partnerships with industry, which are designed to ensure that we develop graduates with the skills employers need and to provide practical solutions to commercial problems. The University also makes a major contribution to the cultural life of the city through the extensive arts and music programmes we offer to the general public, in particular through Birmingham School of Acting and Birmingham Conservatoire. Our outreach programmes see us work within the local community and beyond to widen participation in higher education, helping individuals to achieve their full potential.



Students helping to clean up the canal.

Students give something back

In partnership with our Students' Union, we promote the benefits of volunteering to students, helping to improve their skills and experience while contributing to deserving causes. Projects supported include ArtCart, which provides art and craft-based activities for patients at Birmingham Children's Hospital, the Planetarium at Millennium Point and the British Red Cross. Students have also been involved in one-off activities such as clearing and re-planting the area around the canal near our City Centre Campus, in partnership with the British Waterways Trust and Community Service Volunteers.

Efforts to promote games rewarded

As part of its work to encourage citizenship, the Students' Union was an active supporter of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Events at Birmingham City University included an Olympics Week and promotion of the visit of the official Olympic Torch to Millennium Point, which attracted over 1,000 people. For its work in supporting the Games, the Students' Union was awarded silver accreditation by the National Union of Students. The 'Be a Champion' programme rewards and recognises the commitment and effort shown by students' unions across the country in creating an environment in which Games-inspired activities can flourish.



Generous staff boost Oxfam collections

When Oxfam's national clothing repository burned down in 2011, staff helped to replenish its stores by donating over 200 bags of clothing. This initiative, organised by Professor Fiona Church, Executive Dean for the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences, was part of the 'Oxfam Collects' scheme. This scheme enables the charity to gather items of clothing, books and music directly from workplaces, increasing the amount of goods it has to sell in its charity shops, to fund its lifesaving work around the world.

University highlights opportunities

Birmingham City University is helping to raise the aspirations of young people from less well-off parts of the region, as part of the nationwide 'Mosaic' initiative. This mentoring programme was set up to increase opportunities for young people growing up in some of the most deprived parts of the UK, by providing information about the options open to them in the fields of work and education. By sponsoring four local schools to visit the University, we helped give these youngsters an insight into higher education, and hosted a 'graduation' ceremony to celebrate their success.

University achieves Fairtrade status

The University and the Students' Union are both committed to the use of ethically-sourced products wherever possible. We were awarded 'Fairtrade University' status after demonstrating our commitment to supporting and promoting products which are grown and traded in an ethical manner. The Fairtrade Foundation commended the University and Students' Union on initiatives such as the provision of Fairtrade tea and coffee at all meetings and events, the inclusion of Fairtrade elements in student projects, and work with other local universities and the Fairtrade Association in Birmingham to develop good practice.

Awareness talks target local schools and colleges

University staff also use their academic expertise to help improve the lives of those in the community. For example, experts from the Faculty of Health run a series of talks at local schools and colleges to raise awareness of cancer, its symptoms and treatments. These talks focus on taking the message to a younger audience, with information about the symptoms to look out for, as well as advice for those who may have friends or family members with the disease. The sessions are led by Alison Simons, senior lecturer in chemotherapy and Julie Hall, senior lecturer in radiography.

Local schoolchildren visit the University as part of the Mosaic initiative.





University's Easter eggstravaganza

During Easter 2012 there was an appeal to University staff to donate Easter eggs for children in care homes across Birmingham. The response to the appeal was fantastic, with over 250 eggs being donated in the run-up to the holiday. Katie Rice, marketing assistant for the Faculty of Health, who organised the collection said: "We were aiming to have one egg for each child, but we received so many that we ended up being able to give each child two instead!"

Battle of the brains aids charities

Our popular 'Brains of BCU' quiz – where staff, students and alumni pit their wits against each other for charity – has become firmly established as part of the University's social calendar. The first one took place in 2011, to raise money for seven-year-old Jay Brewer, of Northamptonshire, who needed to travel to the USA for lifesaving cancer treatment. Such was the success of the event, raising £725, that it took place again in 2012, with proceeds going to the Alzheimer's Society, and 2013 in aid of the NSPCC.

Corporate Goal three

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

Birmingham City University is home to world-class and in some cases world-leading research and we use this expertise to make a difference to society in areas like mental health policy, criminal justice and planning. We also aspire to lead the way on engagement with employers in all sectors through our programmes of applied research, innovation, knowledge transfer and workforce development and work with organisations as diverse as the BBC, Cisco, Microsoft, Arts Council England, Jewson, the Law Society and the NHS.



Experts analyse training results

The University is working with the Birmingham-based National Institute for Conductive Education (CE) to analyse the effects of CE on patient rehabilitation. CE is a rehabilitation programme specifically designed for chronic stroke patients, providing the maximum opportunity for recovery. The project compares patients' performance before and after CE intervention, in relation to a waiting list control group on a range of cognitive, motor and psychological tests and schedules.

Safeguarding our volunteers

Ethical practice is at the heart of our approach to all academic activity and all teaching and research projects are subject to ethical review. This includes ensuring that those who are involved in projects as subjects are safeguarded, and that all those who carry out projects do so to the highest ethical standards.

Workplace

Corporate Goal five

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

The following examples are some highlights of what the University is doing to improve the workplace for both staff and students, and to comply with environmental standards:

Quality careers advice

In striving to embed excellence in the workplace, the University believes adopting and working to external benchmarks is an important element. The 'Matrix Standard', an unique quality mark for organisations to assess and measure their advice and support services to individuals, is a good example of how the CR management area of workplace can be evaluated; and in this case the University's students in their choice of career. The Standard, adopted by Student Services promotes the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance by ensuring the department regularly reviews, evaluate and develops its services.

University Commitment to Investors in People

Investors in People (IIP) is an example of a standard to help enhance management in the workplace, and is one of the most successful models for business improvement through people in the UK. At the heart of Investors in People is 'The Standard' which continues to deliver real business benefits based upon 39 outcome-based evidence requirements which make up the plan, do, and review cycle. This allows the University to build up a complete picture of how it manages its people, its capacity to engage in and deliver CR activities and where it can make improvements. Of the 18 departments or faculties that have undertaken the IIP diagnostic, 10 have achieved gold or silver IIP status.



An artists impression of the Phase 1 City Centre Campus building.

New buildings to set the standard

Birmingham City University is committed to achieving the highest possible environmental standards during the construction of two flagship new buildings at our City Centre Campus. This will be measured using the industry-standard Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). Phase 1 of the campus extension is on track to achieve a BREEAM 'excellent' rating, while Phase 2 is at an early design stage, but with the clear intention to also meet the 'excellent' standard, which will be continually reviewed at all stages.

Environment and sustainability

Corporate Goal six

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



A 'Platinum' EcoCampus University

Birmingham City University has received EcoCampus 'Platinum' status for its promotion of environment and sustainability issues, by implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS), enabling the institution to take a more structured approach to managing environmental impact. Rebecca Cottington, the University's Environmental Officer, said: "The University has been working hard over the last few years to improve its environmental performance and the platinum award is a fitting recognition of the great work that's been done by our staff and students."

In addition to the EcoCampus status, Birmingham City University is committed to conserving and promoting biodiversity, as well as creating a pleasant working environment for our staff and students in which to work and study. In 2010, we commissioned a survey of existing biodiversity across our campuses, which resulted in the production of a Biodiversity Plan. This has seen a number of projects carried out to conserve and promote biodiversity, including the creation of wild meadows at both our City South Campus and the Doug Ellis Sports Centre and the erection of bird boxes across our sites.



Top marks for energy efficiency

The University has set itself the challenging target of reducing its carbon emissions by 48 per cent by 2020 against a 2005 baseline. This is in line with HEFCE's assessment of the reduction that the whole HE sector must make if the UK is to meet its national carbon reduction targets. The University is currently on track to meet this target, having made reductions of 18 per cent to date, and further reductions are anticipated with the construction of the City Centre Campus.

Additionally, the University is fully committed to the aims of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme, a Government carbon reporting scheme. We performed very strongly in the first year, finishing eighth out of 128 universities – comfortably within the top 10 per cent of the HE sector and the overall list.

Birmingham City University's commitment to the environment was independently recognised in May 2012 when the institution was ranked 26th out of 145 universities in the University Green League table, published by The Guardian, marking a significant improvement on our previous ranking of 53rd.



The University's City South Campus

Sustainable procurement and water reduction

The Sustainable Procurement Group was set up in 2010 to oversee the University's work in implementing the Government's Flexible Framework for sustainable purchasing, collect data on carbon emissions associated with procurement, and bring about other general improvements in this area. The University has reduced its water use by 36 per cent since 2005/06, thanks to a sustained programme of improvements to conserve water through a variety of measures and controls. The University anticipates continuing this trend with the move to the new City Centre Campus.

The group has been instrumental in putting together our Sustainable Procurement and Fairtrade Policies (available on the University website) and in our achieving Fairtrade University Status (jointly with our Students' Union) which has seen, among other benefits, the introduction of Fairtrade products to our cafes.



The University's cafés now sell a range of Fairtrade products.



For further information on any of the highlighted items in this publication, or if you require it in an alternative format, please contact:

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