



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Innovation Fest

Celebrating creativity and innovation

Event programme

18 – 22 May 2026

[#innovationfest](#) [#BCUIF26](#)

Innovation Fest

2026

From Monday 18 May to Friday 22 May, the 13th annual Innovation Fest will take place at STEAMhouse, celebrating the convergence of science, technology, engineering, arts, humanities and mathematics (STEAM). STEAM is our unique differentiator, an interdisciplinary culture and mindset through which we prepare students, academics, partners and industry for the complexity, challenges and opportunities of the future. It emphasises collaboration, industry partnerships and interdisciplinary project-based learning embedded into the curriculum, resulting in highly employable graduates.

This much-anticipated event marks the end of the academic year and aligns with BCU's Strategy 2030 objectives: Develop the Talent for Tomorrow | Power Prosperity | Create Knowledge for Good

The week-long event highlights the creativity and innovative concepts of students including Architecture and Built Environment; Computer Science; Engineering; Health and Social Care; and more! They offer a vibrant showcase of exhibitions, competitions, and the STEAM Playoffs. It provides an invaluable opportunity for businesses to connect with BCU's talent and explore cutting-edge research and innovation capabilities.

Featuring a dynamic program, Innovation Fest brings together industry leaders, guest speakers, judges, and partners to inspire collaboration and the exchange of ideas. During the week, we will also host partner schools and colleges to explore Innovation Fest and engage in hands on STEAM activities.

Throughout the week, regional employers will have the chance to connect with graduates and support their career journeys. The event is not just a celebration - it's a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and fostering transformative opportunities. Everyone is invited to engage with potential employers, exchange ideas, and immerse themselves in the lineup of exciting activities. A heartfelt thank you to everyone joining us - here's to making Innovation Fest 2026 an unforgettable experience!

All events take place in STEAMhouse, unless otherwise stated.





Monday

18 May 2026

Main stage

Keynote speakers

Monday 18 May

Event	Time
Opening and welcome of Innovation Fest	10am
Join us for an inspiring opening where our Executive Team will unveil the exciting highlights of the week and share how you can dive into the action. Let the innovation begin!	
The Isaac National Computer Science Competition finals	11am
The National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) presents the Internet of Everything Challenge, where finalist teams from Years 9 to 11 pitch their ideas, designs, and innovative products to a panel of industry judges.	
The Isaac National Computer Science Competition results	1.40pm
The National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE), alongside industry judges, presents the results and winners of the Internet of Everything Challenge.	
The Isaac National Computer Science Competition close	2pm
Key messages and evaluations	
From prototype to partnership: Powering CreaTech innovation through collaboration	3 - 5pm
This panel brings together partners, stakeholders and businesses from the CreaTech Frontiers programme to explore how collaboration transforms ideas into impact. Drawing on live examples from the CreaTech Frontiers Programme, this session will examine:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How universities and businesses co-create innovation• What industry looks for in emerging talent and early-stage ideas• How collaboration strengthens the knowledge economy• The real-world impact of student-industry engagement	
This discussion will provide insight for students, academics, and industry alike, highlighting how cross-sector partnerships fuel innovation, enhance employability, and support entrepreneurial ambition.	

Student showcases and activities

Monday 18 May

Event	Time	Location
Unihack Hackathon	9am - 5pm	C455/7, Curzon Building
<p>A fast-paced, high-energy hackathon at Innovation Fest, bringing together students to design, build, and pitch real solutions in a limited timeframe. Hosted by Unihack and supported by the Department of Computer Science, the event is designed to push creativity, technical ability, and collaboration. Participants will work in teams to tackle real-world challenges across development tracks, with support from mentors, access to tools, and the opportunity to showcase their work to industry and academic judges.</p>		
XR coursework exhibition	10am - 4pm	CST106/7
<p>This is a poster competition in which Master's students (Sep 2025 and Jan 2026 cohorts) in User Experience Design will participate and showcase their final group projects.</p> <p>CMP7215 Human-Centred Design (Jan 2026 cohort): all student groups will showcase a mobile application focused on health.</p> <p>CMP7220 Advanced and Immersive Technology (Sep 2025 cohort): all student groups will showcase an augmented or virtual reality application.</p>		
Music Information Retrieval poster session	10am - 4pm	CST302
<p>Students will showcase their work through posters, detailing their project methodologies and results. Attendees can expect to explore two project options: instrument classification or player or speaker identification.</p>		
Wind Turbine showcase	11am - 4pm	CST303/4
<p>Foundation students build a desk top wind turbine to lift a mass and then compare this with the incident wind power and calculating the overall efficiency of their design. By invitation only - this activity requires a safe space environment.</p>		
The role of leadership and commercial management in innovation and sustainability	3 - 5pm	CST314
<p>Join us as we explore the challenge of insolvency which poses a challenge to firms as they endeavour to innovate. As new ideas and innovation are being introduced in the construction industry, the unfortunate reality is that several businesses file for insolvency. According to the BCIS (November 2025) report, construction firms accounted for 15.2% of all insolvencies (for the period August to October 2025) in England and Wales in September 2025 (circa 291). Hence, Quantity Surveying students, and the construction industry at large, constantly explore the challenge of insolvency in the sector and possible mitigation measures. Posters and recorded presentations produced by BSc Quantity Surveying Level 5 students will be displayed as way of sustaining innovation via commercial management and leadership. Our invited guest speaker Laurence Vickers Regional Director/Birmingham Project Management Lead from Atkins Birmingham Office will also share insights and practical examples on the importance of leadership and commercial management in fostering innovation and sustainability.</p>		

Event	Time	Location
MA Landscape Architecture	10am - 4pm	Level 1 atrium
<p>The Landscape Institute–accredited MA/MLA in Landscape Architecture provides a platform for the in-depth exploration of pressing global challenges as they manifest in our cities and landscapes. This exhibition presents a diverse body of student work demonstrating innovative thinking and evidence-based design responses to key contemporary concerns in landscape architecture and urban design, including climate change, biodiversity loss, health and wellbeing, active landscapes, food production, and green infrastructure. The projects engage critically with the concept of sustainability, examining the dynamic relationships between natural and cultural processes.</p>		

Open staff events

Monday 18 May

Event	Time	Location
Virtual reality in higher education: Experience an immersive simulation of social work, nursing and ODP	11am - 4pm	Digital Labs, Level 1
<p>Social Work, ODP and Nursing departments have developed innovative teaching using 360 virtual reality. Come and experience what it's like to be one of these professions using Quest headsets and our realistic 360 virtual reality simulations.</p>		
STEAM skills exhibition	12 - 2pm	Atrium
<p>An exhibition highlighting the breadth of STEAM skills and educational innovation delivered by STEAMhouse, developed in partnership with academics, businesses, schools, and key collaborators.</p>		
Public Humanities launch	3 - 6pm	Belmont Suite, Level 2
<p>A special red-carpet launch event celebrating the appointment of Islam Issa as BCU's Professor of Public Humanities. Join a panel of media and cultural industry experts discussing the question 'What good are the humanities?', followed by a short keynote from Islam Issa on why we need the arts today. Watch exclusive clips from Channel 4's Race for Ancient Egypt, with a live behind-the-scenes Q&A featuring presenter Islam Issa and director Andre Holzinger. Also includes red carpet photography, refreshments and opportunities for networking.</p>		



Tuesday

19 May 2026

Main stage

Keynote speakers

Tuesday 19 May

Event	Time
Breakfast briefing on the development of Birmingham Knowledge Quarter	8 - 9.30am

Birmingham Knowledge Quarter (B-KQ) is a transformational, government-backed innovation district, located at the heart of central Birmingham. Spanning approximately 210 hectares, B-KQ is designed to serve as a catalyst for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and urban regeneration, supporting the city's transition towards a knowledge and innovation-led economy.

B-KQ is a research and development cluster for cutting-edge companies specialising in advanced digital technologies, engineering, and HealthTech research. B-KQ is strategically positioned at the core of the city, forming a vital link between the Birmingham HS2 station, Birmingham's Central Business District, the Digbeth Creative Quarter, Smithfield, and the Knighthead's Sports Quarter. BCU has formally signed up to a close collaboration with WMCA, and Birmingham City Council to help deliver an inclusive STEAM-led and systems approach to developing the BKQ Birmingham Knowledge Quarter, and is actively working with students, staff, and partners to help to develop a world class asset for research, teaching, and student learning.

The event is being led by the Birmingham City University Smart Sustainable Green (SSG) research group and delegates will learn more about the next steps and the role of the soon to be formed East Birmingham Mayoral Development Corporation.

BCU KTP Associate showcase	10am – 12pm
-----------------------------------	--------------------

Hear from our associates on their career journey from recent graduate to skilled professionals with industry partners. The KTP programme develops recent graduates to deliver their expertise and skills into a business. Birmingham City University is proud that many of our associates go on to secure permanent positions following the successful completion of their KTP project. Their employment within partner organisations highlights the long-term benefit and career progression reflecting the strength of the KTP programme for recent graduates wanting to springboard their career.

Industry mentorship - Bridging academia and practice with Dilakshana Mayadunne	12 - 12.30pm
---	---------------------

We invite industry professionals to mentor final-year students through their dissertations, offering a light-touch commitment grounded in real industry expertise. This session explores how that partnership works in practice, connecting students' academic research with live industry realities across quantity surveying, infrastructure, urban planning, and construction management. Mentors are not expected to supervise academic work, but to share professional insight, contextualise research topics, and where possible open doors to their networks. Built on a proven model of industry-academia collaboration, the programme offers businesses a meaningful opportunity to engage with soon-to-graduate talent over an extended period.

Event	Time
<p>Lessons from managing construction on HS2 with Osama Taleb</p> <p>This talk will share practical lessons from working on the HS2 project, focusing on coordination between different disciplines, managing real site constraints, and translating design intent into construction. The session will highlight how communication, planning, and engineering judgement play a key role in successfully delivering complex infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>12.30 - 1pm</p>
<p>Digital tech boardroom pitches</p> <p>Computing students specialising in software design and enterprise practice will compete for project funding by pitching their ideas to an expert panel of industry judges. This contest will select the top three second-year projects in computing.</p>	<p>1 – 5pm</p>
<p>STEAM Strategy Showcase</p> <p>Join Professor Hanifa Shah OBE as we proudly introduce Birmingham City University's STEAM Strategy - a transformative approach embedding interdisciplinary, employer-engaged learning to place employability at the heart of our education model.</p> <p>Moving beyond traditional subject boundaries, STEAM at BCU purposefully develops creativity, critical thinking and career-ready skills for our students, supports their entrepreneurial ambitions through the Future Founders Fund, and underpins our institutional approach to research, enterprise, and innovation. Be part of shaping a distinctive, inclusive and future-focused learning experience, and explore opportunities to help connect our students to businesses and community projects!</p>	<p>5 - 6pm</p>

Student showcases

and activities

Tuesday 19 May

Event	Time	Location
Emerging Digital Technology	9am – 2pm	CST213
<p>Students will deliver dynamic presentations that showcase their innovative design solutions, utilising emerging technologies such as AI, VR/AR, and IoT. They will have the freedom to select their presentation format, with an emphasis on incorporating visual aids, physical models, and digital tools to engage the audience/industry guests. This may include elements like physical or digital models, short videos, and interactive walk-throughs.</p>		
Computing final year poster presentation	9am – 5pm	CST106/7 and CST302/3/4
<p>Final year undergraduate students will showcase their final year projects through posters and artefact demonstrations. This also includes an industry IHP competition where representatives from industry judge selected projects.</p>		
Line follower robots demonstration	10am – 1pm	Challenge Lab, ground floor
<p>Students will showcase their wheeled robot designed to follow a line autonomously through an exciting competition where the fastest one wins!</p>		
Site Management and Logistics	10am – 4pm	CST308
<p>The BNV4128 Construction Site Management Practice coursework presentations offer an opportunity for students to showcase developed connections between their understanding of taught theories and principles and its practical application to field cases. The presentations will highlight construction site planning interventions for a school development project with real site, logistical and other constraints produced by Level 4 Construction Management students. The endeavour provides a platform for students to develop hard and soft skills such as report writing, presentation design, public oral presentation, and critical knowledge synthesis while receiving feedback from industry and academic experts.</p>		
Leading Engineering Endeavours	10am – 5pm	CST006/7
<p>Level 5 engineering students, across automotive, mechanical, electronic, and manufacturing courses, working closely with water welfare charity The Rivers Trust on a green engineering project. Working in teams, students are given a challenge of educating schoolchildren, undergraduates and teachers about the challenges of water welfare. Creating a video about their project, they will present this in a trade fair environment.</p>		

Event	Time	Location
BNV5120 Information-Driven Construction day	9am - 5pm	CST202/3/4

During this session, student groups will present their project work developed for the module scenario. The presentations will demonstrate how digital information and building information modelling (BIM) can support project planning, coordination, and decision-making in construction. Each group will explain their proposed approach, how information is managed and shared across the project team, and how digital workflows can improve collaboration and project delivery in the built environment.

MA Landscape Architecture	10am – 4pm	Level 1 atrium
----------------------------------	-------------------	-----------------------

The Landscape Institute–accredited MA/MLA in Landscape Architecture provides a platform for the in-depth exploration of pressing global challenges as they manifest in our cities and landscapes. This exhibition presents a diverse body of student work demonstrating innovative thinking and evidence-based design responses to key contemporary concerns in landscape architecture and urban design, including climate change, biodiversity loss, health and wellbeing, active landscapes, food production, and green infrastructure. The projects engage critically with the concept of sustainability, examining the dynamic relationships between natural and cultural processes.

Property Marketing	10am – 5pm	CST311
---------------------------	-------------------	---------------

Final year real estate and planning students will be presenting marketing strategies for selling a development site. By invitation only.

Department of Psychology and Counselling showcase	12 - 2pm	Ground floor atrium
--	-----------------	----------------------------

Infancy module showcase

Level 5 Psychology students present original toys and apps designed to support early development. Each product is grounded in developmental theory and current research, demonstrating how psychological science can inform practical, evidence-based tools for infants and caregivers.

Undergraduate dissertation showcase

Final-year students display independent research projects in which they developed a literature-based research question, secured ethical approval, collected and analysed primary data, and produced a 5-8,000-word dissertation. Their posters highlight real-world implications for policy and practice across psychological fields.

Forensic psychology showcase

Second-year students share victim-focused leaflets created for a forensic assessment. Tasked with producing an 800-word resource for victim-survivors of crime, they balance clarity, sensitivity, and creativity while developing practical communication skills relevant to third-sector roles such as domestic abuse support services.

Interactive open events

Tuesday 19 May

Event	Time	Location
RIBA West Midlands Housing Exhibition 2026	10am – 4pm	Belmont Suite, Level 2
<p>The exhibition will showcase shortlisted and winning student and professional proposals for a live housing site in Saltley (Birmingham), demonstrating how innovative, design-led approaches can deliver high-quality, sustainable, and affordable housing in complex urban contexts. The event will feature keynote from RIBA, short presentations from CDA (about 'Coming Home' report) and the winning projects, followed by a networking session bringing together professionals from practice, academia, and public sectors in the midlands.</p>		
Navigating challenges in conducting research with disabled communities workshop	10am – 4pm	CST314
<p>PhDs and researchers working with disabled communities in their research practice will come together to discuss challenges and good practices to involve disabled people in research, explore interdisciplinary perspectives, and learn from other fields (e.g., human-computer interaction, design, arts, psychology, education, health, and social science) to conduct more ethical and inclusive research. We will have short individual introductions, brainstorming activities, and general discussion.</p>		
Human factors: emerging research highlights workshop	1 – 5pm	C281, Curzon Building
<p>The event will offer a set of brief research talks highlighting current work in human factors, with a particular emphasis on transportation and user interaction topics. The event will consist of short presentations from academic staff, PhD researchers, and external speakers, followed by a short panel discussion. The session aims to provide a snapshot of emerging work across human factors and related areas, and to encourage cross-disciplinary engagement.</p>		
Build. Balance. Learn. A fun, hands-on way to explore design and teamwork!	1 – 4pm	Challenge Lab, ground floor
<p>This activity introduces key concepts of structural engineering and spatial design through hands-on learning with the Mola Kit. Participants build and test structures using a levelling camera, promoting creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork.</p>		
SAP hack workshop	2 – 5pm	CST208
<p>The SAP hack combines technology, business thinking, and collaborative problem-solving to demonstrate how enterprise systems support modern organisations. Through guided challenges and industry engagement, participants experience how digital platforms such as SAP enable innovation, integration, and sustainable decision-making.</p>		

Event	Time	Location
The Happy Human Project - Designing empowering communication	2 – 5pm	CST213

You are invited to join this experiential journey of self-discovery, exploring positive psychology and life-centeredness, to identify personal fears, while working collaboratively in a series of collaborative group design challenges, ensuring there are clear and inclusive strategies to address poor communication across local and global cultures, borders and environments. The event aims to empower confidence, celebrate diverse perspectives, and encourage active listening and creative problem solving.

Wednesday

20 May 2026

Main stage

Keynote speakers

Wednesday 20 May

Event	Time
Getting into Cyber	10 - 11am
Join BCU alumni Cavan Arrowsmith, Director at Turnkey Consulting, Rob Black, Head of Pre-Sales and Matt Smith, CISO at SJP to share and discuss their journey into cyber security.	
AI-enabled digital twins for the inspection of critical infrastructure using UAVs	11am – 12noon
This session explores the future of drone operations for critical infrastructure inspection, bringing together industry innovators at the forefront of autonomous aerial systems. Attendees will gain insight into how UAV technology, cloud-based ground control, and AI-enabled connectivity are transforming the way we monitor and maintain large-scale infrastructure assets - moving beyond traditional limitations to enable scalable, remotely managed drone operations. The session bridges cutting-edge research and real-world industry application, offering students a unique view into the emerging ecosystem of intelligent aerial services.	
Evolving recruitment practices in a changing workplace	12 - 1pm
Our panel of industry experts will be sharing their experience of recruiting graduates and offering insight into the skills and attributes that they are looking for when assessing candidates.	
Rollercoaster showcase awards	1 - 2pm
Presentation and evaluation of shortlisted projects from Engineering's Minivation Fest in collaboration with our industrial partner.	
Female business leaders and founders: challenges and opportunities for growth	2 – 3pm
This panel brings together female business leaders and founders to explore the challenges and opportunities shaping the growth of women-led businesses while addressing the shortfall in female representation in leadership and entrepreneurship.	
Through shared experiences and practical insights, the discussion will examine barriers to leadership and entrepreneurship while highlighting pathways for innovation, scaling ventures, and supporting women at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey.	
Innovation Labs at BCU	3 – 5pm
Innovation Labs demo day is the culminating showcase where student founders present the ideas they have developed through the programme, demonstrating their progress, vision, and potential to an audience of peers, mentors, and industry guests.	

Student showcases

and activities

Wednesday 20 May

Event	Time	Location
Civil Engineering design project and Innovation in Civil Engineering posters	9am – 1pm	CST106/7
This is the sponsored poster competition event for Level 4 and Level 6 Civil Engineering students stemmed from their Civil Engineering design project work.		
Reverse Engineering	9am – 5pm	CST006/7
An innovative, practical project where students explore how everyday products can be improved to optimise performance, last longer, be repaired more easily and be produced in a more sustainable manner.		
Building Acoustics competition	10am – 12pm	Digital Lab, Level 1
An opportunity for second-year audio students to showcase their building project designs to industry guest judges.		
Biomedical Engineering student showcase	10am – 2pm	Ground floor atrium
Students demonstrate how electromyography (EMG) signals can be used to control an autonomous vehicle, showcasing a Muscle-Computer-Interface that translates human muscle activity into real-time machine commands. Learn more about a patient fall-detection and alert system which is a smart monitoring system designed to detect patient falls, automatically record the event, and send instant alerts — supporting safer, more responsive healthcare environments.		
Cyber and Forensics day	10am – 4pm	CST203
Students across L3 and L7 of the BSc Digital Forensics, BSc Cyber Security and MSc Cyber Security courses will gain an insight into current developments in industry area of expertise and present the challenges currently faced through a Q&A and panel discussion.		
Games showcase	10am – 4pm	CST302/3/4
An exposition of the best work, models, animations and games that have been produced this year. 3DGP + GAP. Featuring innovative work from our Games Academy.		
MA Landscape Architecture	10am – 4pm	Level 1 atrium
The Landscape Institute-accredited MA/MLA in Landscape Architecture provides a platform for the in-depth exploration of pressing global challenges as they manifest in our cities and landscapes. This exhibition presents a diverse body of student work demonstrating innovative thinking and evidence-based design responses to key contemporary concerns in landscape architecture and urban design, including climate change, biodiversity loss, health and wellbeing, active landscapes, food production, and green infrastructure. The projects engage critically with the concept of sustainability, examining the dynamic relationships between natural and cultural processes.		

Event	Time	Location
Data and Decision Making	10am – 5pm	CST314
Students deliver a 15-minute presentation to a panel of guests from industry which includes a summary of the research structure, characteristics of the area of analysis, concept development, a summary of the findings, and recommendations.		
Digital Animation showcase	10am – 5pm	Challenge Lab, ground floor
Digital Animation students will showcase their final major projects, with screenings of short films, performance animation showreels, story reels and concept and visual development portfolios.		
Playing music with vibrations workshop and NIME coursework exhibition	10am – 5pm	CST202
Students will present and demonstrate original interactive systems for musical expression, a showcase of innovative approaches to sound-human-computer interaction and performance. The exhibition is open to all visitors and offers a curated experience in digital sonic art, including experimental interfaces and creative coding projects. The day will also include a hands-on workshop for registered attendees titled 'playing music with vibrations', exploring how haptic feedback can be used as a medium for musical interaction.		
Property Marketing	10am – 5pm	CST311
Final year real estate and planning students will be presenting marketing strategies for selling a development site. By invitation only.		
Industry listening session: showcasing student innovation	11am – 1pm	Workshop 7, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Join four industry experts including a Grammy award winning producer (Mike Exeter), Bass player in Bentley Rhythm Ace & Pop Will Eat Itself (Richard Marsh) and two Universal signed songwriters (Tara Chinn and Peter Brown) to share and seek feedback on your productions, mixes and recordings.		
Microphone design competition	12 – 2pm	Digital Lab, Level 1
Casing for microphones is in general, just functional and hence boring. Sound Engineering and Production and Music Technology students have decorated their microphone casings to add to the artistry of aesthetic interpretation of music and hence 'lift' the musicality of artists using their mics.		
Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, and Life and Health Sciences Showcase	10am - 12.30pm	City South Campus, Seacole
This event will be showcasing the teaching, research and project innovations developed to best prepare students for their future careers in healthcare and science. A curated selection of workshops and activities will give industry guests opportunities to meet students and academics to see innovative teaching and learning in action.		

Industry and collaboration events

Wednesday 20 May

Event	Time	Location
Apprenticeships partners event	9 – 11am	Belmont Suite, Level 2

Our apprenticeship employer partners will get the opportunity to meet the academics delivering our apprenticeship programmes, our Apprenticeship Support Team, Skills Coaches and each other during this inaugural apprenticeship employer partner meet-up.

The session will review the recent changes at BCU that have been implemented to improve the apprenticeship provision further, recent developments in the apprenticeship landscape, the current EPA process and what the future holds for apprenticeships at BCU. Current apprenticeship employer partners will also have the opportunity to hear directly from RICS and CIOB on recent developments in the industry, as well as answering key questions about the EPA process.

Making cities healthier and smarter with AI workshop	10am – 4pm	CST204
---	-------------------	---------------

This event is designed to spark collaboration between leading organisations in the UK and South Korea, bringing together voices from industry, Birmingham City Council (BCC), academia, and innovation-focused stakeholders. During the workshop, three talented early-career researchers will showcase their cutting-edge work on smart city technologies, while invited experts from South Korea will share insights into successful digital transformation initiatives and urban innovation happening across their cities.

Architecture and Built Environment industry networking event	1 – 5pm	Belmont Suite, Level 2
---	----------------	-------------------------------

Discussion of the future of architecture and the built environment job market with round table networking, a collaboration between academia and industry. Please note this event is by invitation only.

Thursday

21 May 2026

Main stage

Keynote speakers

Thursday 21 May

Event	Time
The founder's roadmap: Scaling innovation and personalisation in the AI era	10 – 11am
<p>Every startup founder faces the ultimate challenge: turning a bold vision into a scalable reality. In this session, we go behind the scenes of MeTime Stories to explore how one startup navigated the pivot-heavy landscape of creative tech. By leveraging AI to reshape publishing - transforming static photos into personalised, illustrated narratives - the team had to overcome complex technical, ethical, and market hurdles. Join us for a candid discussion on the practical realities of building in the creator economy, the lessons learned from rapid iteration, and how a founder's roadmap must constantly evolve to drive meaningful growth.</p>	
Women's Wellbeing presentation	11am - 12noon
<p>A presentation of a community-led employment programme created by Women's Wellbeing in collaboration with Birmingham City University is helping women in east Birmingham build the digital confidence and employability skills they need to access work. Funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), the Digital Gateway into Employment (DGIE).</p> <p>Designed for those who often feel digitally excluded or disengaged from traditional employment support, the six-week programme has supported around 60 women to grow in confidence using email, completing online forms and navigating job platforms. Participants also developed practical skills in job searching, AI tools, CV writing, cover letters, LinkedIn profiles and interview preparation.</p>	
Placements fair, panel discussion	12 - 1pm
<p>Find out more about the benefits of undertaking a Professional Placement Year from placement students and employers at the Placements Fair Panel. This interactive discussion will allow you to explore potential opportunities to enhance your technical/transferrable skills and graduate employability via a year in industry.</p>	
CIB Student Chapter launch	1 - 2pm
<p>This session marks the official launch of the CIB Student Chapter at Birmingham City University. The event will introduce the Chapter's vision, objectives, and opportunities to students, followed by the formal appointment of the inaugural Student Council members. It aims to foster research culture, professional engagement, and global connectivity among postgraduate and doctoral students.</p>	

Event**Time****Postgraduate study at BCU****2 - 3pm**

Join our postgraduate student panel to hear directly from current Master's students about what postgraduate study is really like. From managing the step up in academic expectations to balancing study, social life, and future career plans, our panel will share their honest experiences and insights. We will be joined by Master's students from a range of courses such as Project Management, Big Data Analytics, Social Work, Psychology and Sport and Exercise Nutrition.

This is a great opportunity to ask your questions, get practical advice, and find out whether a Master's degree could be the right next move for you!

Innovation driving inclusion: Shaping the authentic digital student**4 - 5pm**

As part of the BCU Professorial Inaugural Lecture Series, Professor Rehan Bhana shares his journey. Rehan is Professor of Digital Transformation and Academic Innovation at Birmingham City University and Academic Lead for Enterprise, Engagement, Innovation and STEAM in Computer Science. He specialises in developing education and enterprise models that connect universities, SMEs, and regional innovation ecosystems. He is the founder of Innovation Fest, a flagship model embedding innovation and enterprise into education, impacting over 50,000 learners globally and shaping inclusive, industry-integrated learning.

Student showcases

and activities

Thursday 21 May

Event	Time	Location
Engineering Level 7 poster presentation	10am – 4pm	CST306/307
<p>Witness Level 7 Project Management and Logistics and Supply Chain Management students showcase their expertise through dynamic poster presentations, alongside the thrilling Text2Image (T2I) competition, where creativity and technology collide to bring ideas to life!</p>		
Design Resolution 3	10am – 4pm	Parkside Building, P433-435
<p>Students will be presenting their final major projects in a classic juried review. Students will either pin up physical work or present digitally via screens. There will be a panel of external guest critics, internal critics, and the module teaching staff. Students will have approx. 15-20 minutes to present, with 25-20 minutes for comments and feedback.</p>		
Individual Master's project (MSc BIM, DC, CPM and QS)	10am – 4pm	Level 1 atrium
<p>Our students present their dissertation research findings on practical challenges in construction practice in the UK and the globe in the format of poster. This poster exhibition showcases our students' research achievements under the supervision and support of our academic staff.</p>		
Individual Project HNC	10am – 4pm	CST310
<p>An end-of-module poster presentation where students present the outcomes of their individual projects in a poster format, covering a range of construction-related topics and summarising their aims, methodology, key findings, and conclusions.</p>		
BNV4135, BNV5151/5150 and BNV6200 - Architectural Technology degree show (Day 1)	10am – 5pm	CST006/7
<p>A showcase of innovative designs, interactive displays and poster presentations, challenges and competition and inspiring conversations with future architectural technologists. Held in collaboration with industry partners and professional bodies.</p>		

Event	Time	Location
Construct, demonstrate and exhibit MVP: Innovation Project	10am – 5pm	CST106/7, CST202/3/4 and CST302/3/4
<p>Our first-year computing students are seamlessly blending academic theory with creative, hands-on solutions to real-life issues. Their innovative, STEAM-enabled learning undergoes industry assessment as they critically align projects with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Discover exceptional teams of problem-solvers and communicators working with purpose, whose ability to navigate and transform a fast-paced technological world sets the stage for tomorrow's leaders. Explore and celebrate the remarkable achievements of these emerging tech talents, poised to spark transformative change.</p>		
Engineering final year presentation	10am – 5pm	Belmont Suite, Level 2
<p>Students will present posters for their final year projects.</p>		
Advanced Design and Surveying Skills	10am – 5pm	CST208
<p>Students outline proposals to integrate passive and active strategies for a net-zero-carbon redesign of a Grade II-listed building. This includes evaluating its current condition and developing a low-carbon refurbishment strategy that addresses heritage constraints while enhancing sustainability and energy efficiency.</p>		
Environmental and Materials Science	10am – 5pm	CST213
<p>Students work on objectives together with rationale and justifications for choosing the topic area and how to implement the innovative technology/application/tool/material.</p>		
Reimagining Birmingham	10am – 5pm	CST314
<p>Postgraduate students from MA Planning Built Environments and MSc Real Estate Management showcase collaborative and innovative projects for sustainable mixed-use development in Digbeth. Developed in partnership with local organisations, these projects address critical challenges in affordable cultural infrastructure, housing, design excellence, community engagement, and environmental resilience.</p>		
Property Marketing	10am – 5pm	CST311
<p>Final year real estate and planning students will be presenting marketing strategies for selling a development site. By invitation only.</p>		

Open interactive events

Thursday 21 May

Event	Time	Location
TechHack4Dementia: Innovating with empathy	10am – 4pm	Curzon Building, C281

This event will harness the power of computing to create meaningful digital tools, applications, and experiences that support people living with dementia and those who care for them. Students from different courses will be invited to take part in a series of activities. This hackathon invites students from different backgrounds to work together in teams to address real-world challenges with members of the dementia community to collaborate (co-organised with Birmingham City Council and the Alzheimer's Society). By co-creating solutions with the dementia community, participants aim to generate meaningful impact for the region and for society.

Placements fair	10am – 4pm	Challenge Lab, ground floor atrium
------------------------	-------------------	---

Employers will be onsite to discuss placement opportunities. The Careers team will be available to offer advice. Students that are currently on placement will be sharing their experiences. L3, L4, L5 and L7 students are encouraged to attend. An opportunity for industry guests to explore the potential of employing placement students.

Industry events

Thursday 21 May

Event	Time	Location
Engineering Industry Advisory Board	9am – 1pm	CST206/207

The Industrial Advisory Board plays a vital role in supporting the Department's aspiration to become an internationally leading centre in engineering education, research, and knowledge transfer. By invitation only.

Friday

22 May 2026

Main stage

Keynote speakers

Friday 22 May

Event

Time

The Big Idea pitching competition

10am – 2pm

An exciting pitching competition designed to showcase bold, innovative ideas with real-world impact. Participants across multiple subject areas across BCU will have the chance to pitch their creative solutions to a panel of industry experts, competing for prizes. Open for all to come along and support!

Awards and celebrations

4 – 6pm

Join us for the final event of the week: Innovation Fest Awards and Celebration Evening. This is a chance to recognise exceptional accomplishments and shine a spotlight on students who have excelled this week. As we gather to celebrate, we acknowledge not only the winners but the collective effort that has shaped this memorable week.

Student showcases

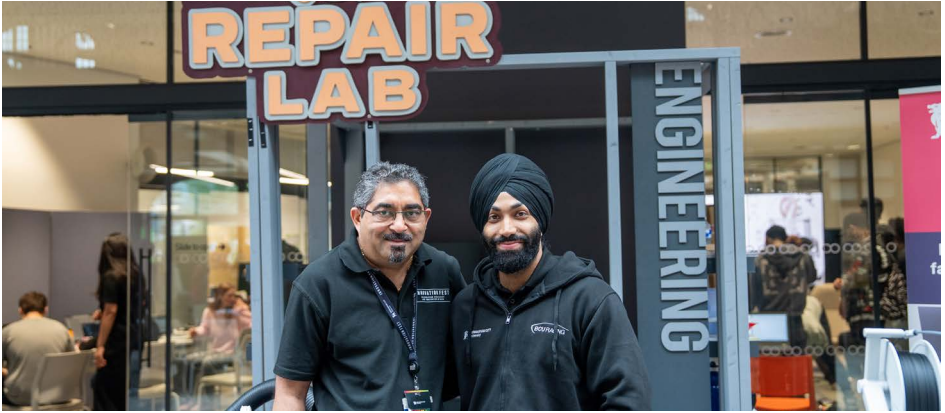
and activities

Friday 22 May

Event	Time	Location
Capture the flag	10am – 1pm	CST202
<p>A capture-the-flag style ethical hacking activity, test your hacking skills in a fun, competitive environment! No prior experience needed.</p>		
BNV4135, BNV5151/5150 and BNV6200 - Architectural Technology degree show (Day 2)	10am – 3pm	CST006/7
<p>A showcase of innovative designs, interactive displays and poster presentations, challenges and competition and inspiring conversations with future architectural technologists. Held in collaboration with industry partners and professional bodies</p>		
Oracle APEX hackathon – low-code innovation with AI	10am – 3pm	CST203
<p>Oracle APEX hackathon focused on building powerful, data-driven applications using low-code development. This hands-on event will explore the latest Oracle APEX features, practical implementation strategies, and real-world use cases - while showcasing how AI capabilities can be seamlessly integrated into modern enterprise solutions.</p>		
Oracle and AI Odyssey: Careers, code and connections	10am – 3pm	CST314
<p>This full-day Oracle Academy event will immerse students in the latest advancements in autonomous AI database technology through a dynamic keynote on diverse industry career pathways, a hands-on workshop exploring cutting-edge Oracle AI tools and features, and an interactive fireside panel with Oracle professionals, interns, and early-career talent. Participants will gain practical insights, real-world mentorship opportunities, and a free Oracle Academy account, empowering them to innovate, build entrepreneurial solutions and forge direct pathways into the tech sector. Coordinated in partnership with Oracle Academy, the day is designed to inspire creativity, embed enterprise thinking and equip the next generation of computing graduates for tomorrow's digital economy.</p>		
BCU x CalPoly STEAM challenge	1 – 3pm	CST213
<p>Following a recent STEAM challenge between California Polytechnic University (Cal Poly) and BCU students, the groups will present the outcome of their STEAM challenge.</p>		
Three-minute thesis competition	11am – 1pm	Challenge Lab
<p>This showcase and competition offers PhD candidates across BCU the opportunity to present significance of their research and its potential application or impact into three minutes.</p>		

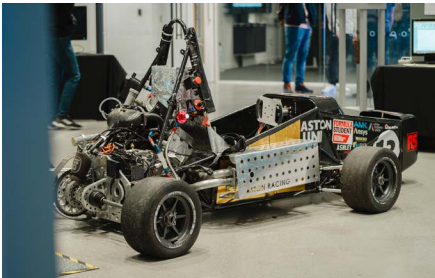
Exhibitions,

showcases and stands



Repair Lab

Bring along any broken appliances and gadgets to see if they can be fixed at the BCU Repair Lab – find us in the Production Space all week.

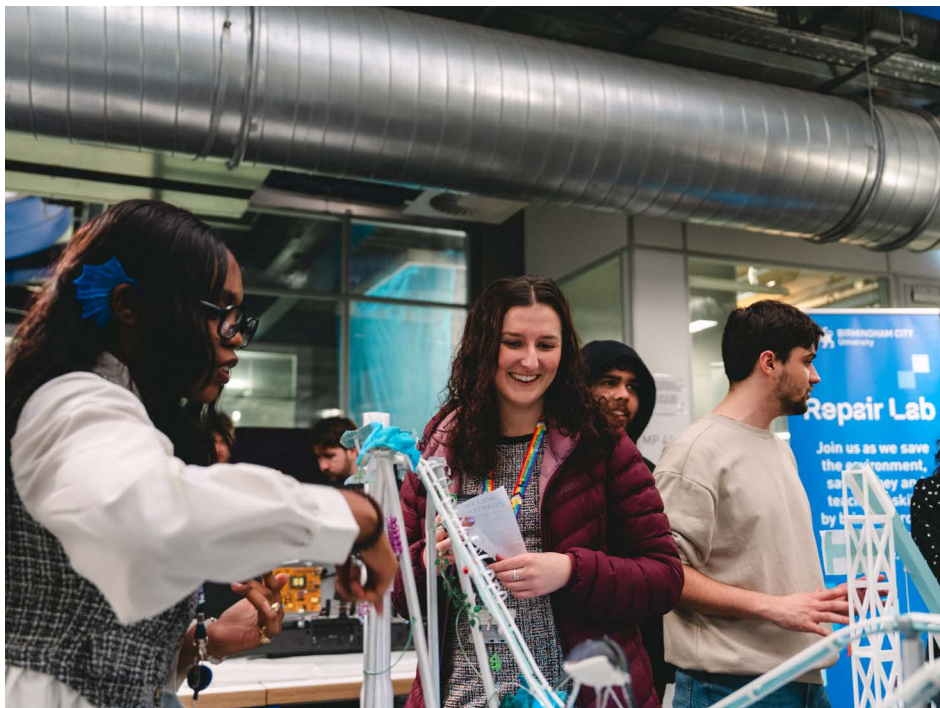


Formula Student

BCU Racing presents the Formula Student 2025 car launch, unveiling the vehicle set to compete at Silverstone in July. This event highlights the engineering, design, and teamwork driving the project forward.

STEAM Podcasts - Teaching and Learning

Visit the STEAMhouse Digital Labs on Level 1 on Tuesday and Thursday to experience a series of podcasts with colleagues who are already doing great work in STEAM-inspired curriculum design and delivery. The idea is to share experiences, spark ideas, and build the guidance package around real examples of what's working, supported by pedagogy and strategy.



Careers and postgraduate study

Come and talk to us about your next steps. You can explore live placements and graduate roles, as well as finding out more about the Graduate Scholarship- where BCU students are offered 20% off postgraduate fees!

Rock Up Ready! Skills Accelerator

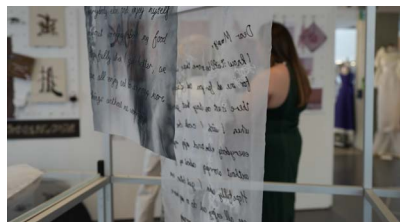
Rock Up Ready successfully delivered training to over 100 graduates looking to enter the film and television industry. Receiving bespoke CV development and career support, industry-recognised qualifications (BAFTA Albert and Mark Milsom Health and Safety Passport), and a two-day immersive experience at the University of Wolverhampton's Screen School studio. Covering essential production knowledge across scripted and unscripted formats, in-depth coverage of production roles, freelancing in the industry, and insights from guest industry speakers - giving participants the knowledge and experience needed to step into entry-level roles.

Participants went on to gain employment on Great British Menu, Masterchef, Silent Witness, and Father Brown, to name a few. This intensive short-term course provided invaluable opportunities to gain sought-after, sector-specific production skills. Come along to find out more on Wednesday 20 May.

Save the date

Inspired Festival

8 - 12 June 2026



Notes

Thank you
see you next year

www.bcu.ac.uk/innovation-fest

#innovationfest #BCUIF26