



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Culture Forward

Bringing the University, Birmingham,
and the West Midlands' cultural and
community organisations into closer and
more creative collaborations.

We collaborate
We activate

birmingham.ac.uk



What is Culture Forward?

Culture Forward is an initiative that draws together the University's communities (academic, research, student and professional) with organisations across the arts, cultural, creative and community sectors that are based - or working - in Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Led by the College of Arts and Law (CAL) at the University of Birmingham, this network comprises University researchers and professionals from across the breadth of academic disciplines – including health sciences, business studies, physical sciences, engineering and law, as well as the arts and humanities – and over 100 organisations of different sizes and forms, including from the commercial, education, public, charity and social enterprise sectors.

Culture Forward exists to:

- Share best practice, nurture ideas and develop fruitful collaboration between the University and our members;
- Encourage joint research activities between external members and the University's dynamic research community;
- Enhance and expand work experience and educational opportunities across the cultural, creative and community sectors for our student community;
- Devise and deliver collaborative programmes and events that celebrate, commemorate and champion the artistic and cultural heritage of Birmingham and the region's diverse communities.

What does Culture Forward membership offer?

- ❖ A **free annual events programme** of sandpits, workshops and other events where you can network with our academics, students and professional experts as well as with organisations and individuals from across Birmingham's cultural, creative and community sectors.
- ❖ **Facilitated access to our researchers and academics**, representing extensive and globally renowned expertise across almost all fields of enquiry, including health and life sciences, engineering, earth and environmental sciences, business and management, education, public policy, law, arts, humanities and social sciences.
- ❖ Opportunities to work with our academics and researchers on **co-developing and co-delivering research projects**, proposals, reviews, policies, bids, evaluations, data collection, analyses, impact work, interventions or other activities.
- ❖ The chance to enhance your operations, expand your delivery, and at the same time support our 40,000+ global student community, through **hosting a diverse portfolio of work experience opportunities** including internships, placements and mentorships.
- ❖ Opportunities to work with our degree module convenors through developing your business operations and real-life projects into **case studies and live briefs** that our students can work on, gain a practical understanding of the cultural and creative industries, and effectively deliver outcomes for you.
- ❖ Collaboration with the University on the **co-delivery of events and activities that engage civic, local and regional communities** in the representation of their cultural, creative and artistic heritage.

The Culture Forward Ethos

Our working ethos is organised around the following values:

Flexibility

We appreciate that network members will have different objectives, ways of working, approaches, and delivery types. As far as possible, we will work with members as a collective of individuals and individual organisations rather than apply a 'one size fits all' methodology.

Collaboration

We encourage our members to be dynamic participants who actively seek out opportunities to work with us and each other. We will foster both bi- and multilateral partnership arrangements across the network and across sectors.

Inclusion

Birmingham and the West Midlands region is one of the most superdiverse parts of the UK, representing a kaleidoscope of communities and forms of culture and expression. Through its membership, engagement and activity, Culture Forward will represent and serve our many communities.

Contribution

Through the outcomes of its activities and facilitated partnerships, Culture Forward will enable the University and network members to make a meaningful, tangible and positive difference for the communities of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Culture Forward supports the aspirations of CAL's 2030 Strategy and the [University's 2030 Strategic Framework](#), both of which respond to major global challenges as identified in the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#). Culture Forward particularly seeks to work with communities and industry exploring the following areas drawn from the [College's 2030 Strategy](#):

1. Relationships between [digital media and cultures](#), AI technology, information and modes of communication;
2. Fostering a more equitable world and [responding to the challenges posed by social injustices](#), including lack of access to education and healthcare, gender and race-based inequalities, poverty and political conflict;
3. Celebrating and representing the city and region's [superdiverse communities and their heritage](#) to advance cross-cultural understanding, empathy and appreciation;
4. Exploring the [intrinsic connection between the arts/humanities and the sciences](#), especially in the realms of public health, mental and emotional wellbeing, and sustainability and the climate crisis.

Find Out More

To join Culture Forward or find out more, either contact the Team at cultureforward@contacts.bham.ac.uk or complete our [online enquiry form](#).