



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

March 2025



# WELCOME

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for expressing your interest in joining Birmingham City University's Board of Governors at this exciting point in our development.

The University has many great strengths. It is based in the heart of one of the UK's youngest and most diverse cities, within a region that is increasingly recognised for its ambition and hunger for success. Our growth over the last decade reflects that of our city, and the ambitions of our communities and partners.

Our students are at the centre of everything we do, and through our education, research, partnerships and the roles our graduates go on to play in the world, we support individuals to transform their lives and play their part in transforming society. We focus on providing a transformative, practice-based education, ensuring professional relevance. Staff and students share a sense of common purpose and commitment to the nature of the higher education we offer, and our core values shape the way we work with each other and our partners. Of course, there are challenges that we and our sector face, which we intend to meet with determination.

We are looking for exciting additions to our Board, people from a diverse range of backgrounds, with experiences to offer that will help to enable the University to achieve its strategic objectives in the years ahead. You will join a Board that is working to inform and support the work of our recently appointed Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Mba, who is already well underway in overseeing a step change in the University's ambitions, including the development of a new institutional strategy to take us to 2030 and beyond.

We are seeking team players who can bring expertise from other fields to the work of the University, people who are collegiate but challenging, as well as individuals who are able to draw on their connections beyond BCU for the betterment of the institution and its students.

BCU is a vibrant and progressive university, and if you are someone who wants join us on our most exciting journey yet, then we certainly want to hear from you.

**Anita Bhalla OBE**  
Chair of the Board of Governors





# BCU CHANCELLOR, ADE ADEPITAN MBE

Television presenter, journalist, disability campaigner and Paralympic medallist Ade Adepitan MBE was installed as Chancellor of the University in October 2024 and formally succeeded Sir Lenny Henry on 1 January 2025. As Chancellor, he is the ceremonial figurehead of the University and a symbol of our values and aspirations.

Ade was born in Lagos, Nigeria where he contracted polio and lost the use of his left leg. He moved to London at the age of three and rose to acclaim for his sporting success, playing wheelchair basketball for Milton Keynes Aces and competing for the Great Britain wheelchair basketball team that won bronze at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Following his sporting achievements, he became a sports commentator during the London 2012 Paralympic Games and is a passionate advocate for disability sports.

Ade was one of the first physically disabled television presenters in the UK and he consistently uses his platform to campaign against racism and disability discrimination. He has an enormous passion for sport and inclusion and the power of education to transform lives and uplift people from working-class backgrounds and minority groups. As with all new Chancellors, Ade brings a new perspective to his role and we believe that he will become a powerful asset to the University, to Birmingham and to the wider West Midlands region in his role as a key ambassador promoting the University's vision and mission. He also undertakes the traditional ceremonial responsibilities of Chancellor at the University's twice-yearly graduation ceremonies in Symphony Hall and other key institutional events.







# OUR UNIVERSITY

Birmingham City University is an institution with a proud heritage and a hugely ambitious future. It's also a University like no other.

Just as we were founded to shape the needs of the industry around us in 1843, so today we are shaping the society and economy of the future.

Our new STEAMhouse underpins our distinctiveness, driving an ambitious STEAM agenda by bringing together entrepreneurs, creatives and academics to generate new solutions to tomorrow's problems, from a once derelict former Victorian factory.

Our Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is stunning in all respects, whether the talent of its performers or the remarkable £57 million building in which they thrive. Alongside our School of Jewellery, right at the heart of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, or our School of Art in its historic home in the centre of the city, our contribution to the creative arts is globally renowned, and readily enables us to put the A into STEAM.

Our move into the Alexander Stadium, home for the hugely successful Birmingham Commonwealth Games, gives our sports students the

very best facilities, and again demonstrate BCU's deep connection with our city. What comes next will build on our first 180 years, investment of more than £400 million in our estate, the seven years of Sir Lenny Henry as our inspirational Chancellor, the role of our graduates in powering public services, and our phenomenal work in promoting higher education access to disadvantaged communities.

Perhaps above all, however, it will build on the very significant ambitions of our new Vice-Chancellor Professor David Mba, and the development of our next strategy, taking us to 2030 and beyond.

The BCU 2030 Strategy will be shaped by the wealth of opportunities in front of us, including our fast-developing connections with the world, from HS2's impressive Birmingham station - rapidly emerging next to our City Centre Campus - to our exciting new home in India, where our STEAM agenda is set to go global.

We are on the threshold of a new era, the next and most exciting yet.

# BCU AT A GLANCE



**67%** of UK-domiciled students from West Midlands

**61%** of UK-domiciled students from minority ethnic backgrounds

Overall  
**SIZE** **31,571**  
**STUDENTS**

**4,256 STAFF**

**50%**

of England-domiciled full-time UG students from IMD quartile 1

**EMPLOYABILITY**

**92%**

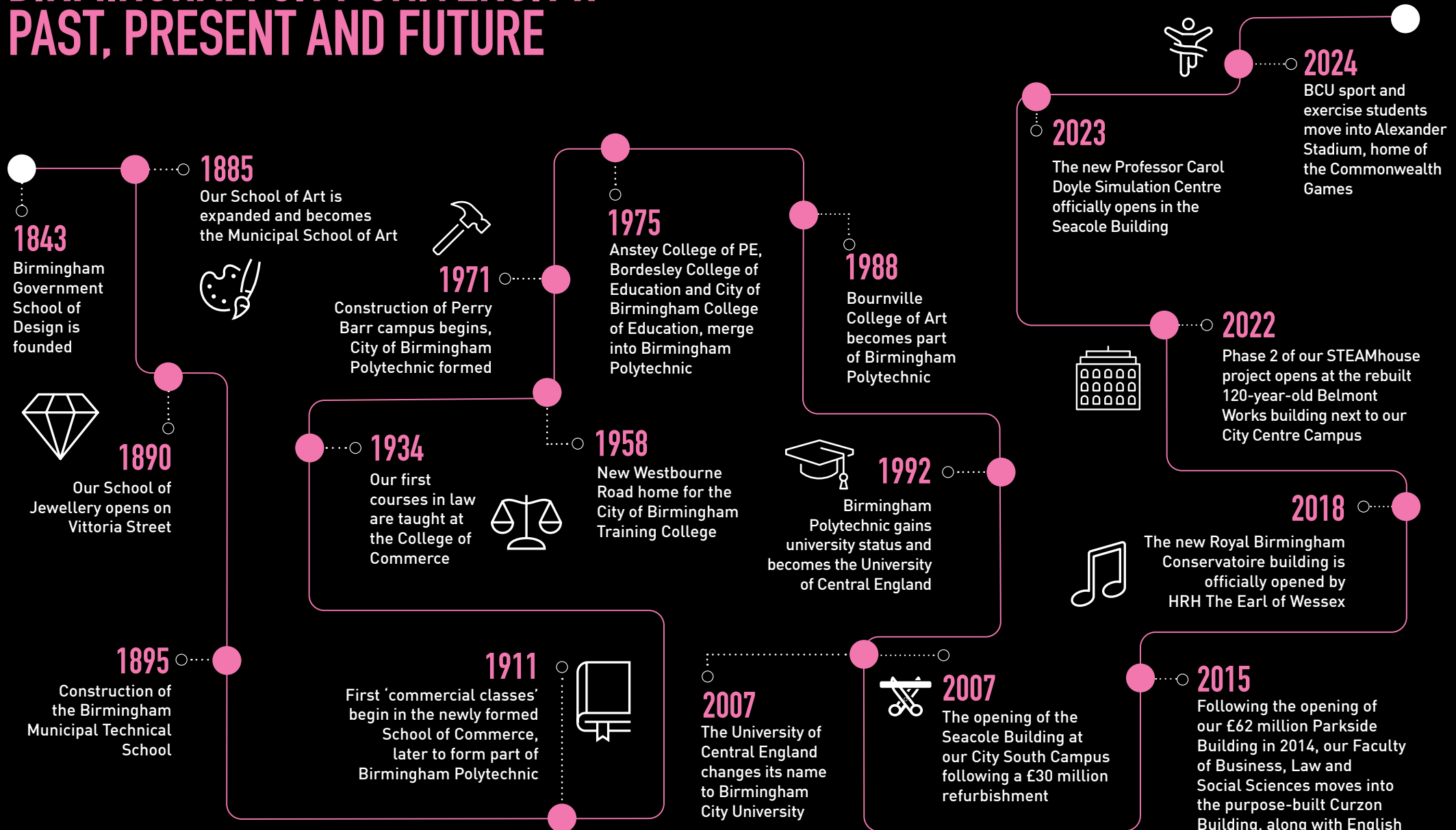
in work or study after 15 months (or not seeking work)

**TURNOVER**  
**c.£337m**

**5,186**

full-time international students on campus

# BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE





# TRANSFORMING OUR ESTATE

BCU has invested over £400 million in estates and facilities in the past decade, including our City Centre Campus – just minutes from the city's Bullring and major transport links – and our City South Campus, in leafy Edgbaston, also walkable from the centre of Birmingham.

- 2024 – Our sports provision moved into dedicated facilities within Alexander Stadium.
- 2023 – Our City South Campus receives a £5 million addition to its Health, Education and Life Sciences facilities, with the opening of The Professor Carol Doyle Simulation Centre.
- 2022 – We officially open STEAMhouse, a £72 million transformation of the 121-year-old Belmont Works, a derelict Grade-A one-time Victorian bicycle factory.
- 2018 – A major expansion of our City South Campus adds extensive facilities for teaching new Sports and Life Sciences provision.
- 2017 – Teaching starts in a new £57 million home for the University's Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.
- 2016 – The Joseph Priestley Building becomes a purpose built centre for our professional services staff.
- 2015 – The Curzon Building opens, housing Business, Law and Social Sciences, as well a new library, IT and student support facilities.
- 2013 – The Parkside Building paves the way for the expansion of our new City Centre Campus, adding superb new facilities for our Arts Design and Media students.

These investments consolidated our estate around two major campuses, in addition to our existing historic sites, the Victorian School of Art in the city centre and the School of Jewellery in the renowned Jewellery Quarter.





# STEAMHOUSE — ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF OUR EMERGING ECONOMY

The £72 million restoration of the 120-year-old derelict Belmont Works has given our University a stunning addition to our campus and breathed new life into a prominent Birmingham landmark – a Grade A-listed building, which stood derelict since being gutted by a fire in 2007.

More than bricks and mortar and its state-of-the-art equipment, however, STEAMhouse is about rethinking so much of what we do. It means aligning academic expertise with the needs of the world

around us, applying our research to the ambitions of entrepreneurs, and driving collaboration across business, academia, creative and digital communities. It is driving our pedagogy too. As well as being home to our School of Computing and Digital, BCU's STEAM agenda will increasingly underpin our teaching and learning. STEAMhouse is the physical embodiment of our recognition that genuine and sustained knowledge exchange is everything if we are to meet the needs of our future graduates, our economy, and our diverse communities.





# OUR DISTINCTIVE RESEARCH

Our research is underpinned by a commitment to foster economic growth, social innovation and cultural vibrancy. Alongside discovering new knowledge, our work aims to create new processes and innovative products, as well as, crucially, applying them with purpose in the real world, ultimately to impact on people's lives.

- Take, for example, our work in breaking the taboos surrounding menstrual health. Our researchers uncovered flaws in training given to healthcare professionals around serious conditions such as endometriosis which led to delays in diagnosis. This work is shaping clinical guidance and training to improve outcomes for the 1.5 million women in the UK with the condition.
- Or our research into anti-Muslim abuse – which gave rise to the term Islamophobia. Our researcher's work, which has been cited in Parliament, has even influenced social media giant Twitter to change its policies around anti-Muslim speech, and has helped to establish guidance around hate speech for the Crown Prosecution Service.
- And our research has even sought to redefine what it means to live in an urban environment, with the development of plans for the West Midlands National Park. This work demonstrates how social, economic and environmental change can be catalysed through the celebration of a landscape.

The University's STEAM agenda is increasingly driving our research ambitions, as we invest in harnessing our creative arts expertise and heritage, and fusing it with our strengths in science and technology to enable meaningful collaboration across disciplines.

Carrying out research and discovering new knowledge makes us a university. But using our results to deliver real-world impact makes us a transformative institution, impacting lives beyond our campuses.



# JUST A FEW OF THE THOUSANDS OF BCU GRADUATES MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS...



**CAL HENDERSON**  
BEng (Hons) Software Engineering graduate

CO-FOUNDER OF SLACK



**SHAMSIYA IBAKU MOHAMMED**  
LLB (Hons) Law graduate

BARRISTER AND SOLICITOR FOR NIGERIA SUPREME COURT

**MARK RADFORD**  
BSc (Hons) Nursing

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF INTENSIVE SUPPORT AND DEPUTY CHIEF NURSING OFFICER FOR ENGLAND



**PAM SHEEMAR**  
BA (Hons) Government and Law graduate

DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL BANKING AT NATWEST



**NICOLA COUGHLAN**  
MA Acting graduate

STAR OF DERRY GIRLS AND BRIDGERTON

**TAYYIB MAHMOOD**  
BSc (Hons) Film Production Technology graduate

WORKED ON FILMS ON TIME TO DIE AND THE BATMAN





# OUR STAFF

*"I always tell my students to be themselves. The best seminars tend to be the ones that end up in unexpected places."*

**DR ISLAM ISSA**  
Reader in Literature  
and History



*"My favourite thing about teaching at BCU is our enthusiasm to collaborate across different disciplines and departments. I aim to inspire students to collaborate, explore different creative platforms and experiment with digital and physical processes."*

**LEE LAPTHORNE**  
Head of the Birmingham Institute  
of Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles

*"The staff-student community is second to none. At our weekly Game Night on Wednesday evenings we all take time to celebrate what we love – developing and playing games."*

**DR CARLO HARVEY**  
Associate Professor, Director  
of Future Games and Graphics



*"I am a passionate advocate of engineering – the world needs creative problem solvers to find sustainable solutions to global challenges. I teach my students to develop products and services that are not only fit for purpose today but also have the least negative impact on the world."*

**LAURA LEYLAND**  
Deputy Head of the College  
of Engineering



*"I believe that improving access to education as well as creating innovative and inclusive educational experiences is key to achieving our shared goal, developing the current and future healthcare workforce."*

**DEZITA TAYLOR-ROBINSON**  
Associate Professor,  
Head of Department for  
Pre-Qualifying Healthcare Practice



# GOVERNORS VACANCIES

Birmingham City University is currently seeking to appoint four new members to its Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors meets five times a year. Papers are circulated at least a week in advance. There is a full board meeting in November, May and July, an additional brief meeting in October, and an annual away day in February. Board meetings typically begin with an evening meal and a presentation from one of the University's Senior Officers. The following day the Board meeting starts at 9am and typically finishes at midday. Lunch is then provided alongside a training session on a relevant topic. Overnight accommodation is provided at the Clayton Hotel and car parking is available on campus.





# ROLE DESCRIPTION

## 1. APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF OFFICE

Lay Members of the Board of Governors are appointed for a term of four years (normally renewable for one further term of four years). Appointment for more than two terms of office can only take place in exceptional circumstances.

## 2. MAIN DUTIES

- Each member of the Board is expected to play an active role in ensuring that the necessary business of the Board is carried out efficiently, effectively and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to the Board and the University as opportunity arises.
- In addition to membership of the Board, lay governors are expected to sit on at least one of the Board's main committees or subsidiary companies. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, members are expected to attend all meetings of the Board and the committees/ subsidiary companies of which they are a member.
- Members have a responsibility for ensuring that the Board acts in accordance with the University's Instrument and Articles of Government and with the University's internal rules and regulations and should seek advice from the University Secretary/Clerk to the Board in case of any uncertainty.
- Members will be expected to attend at least two of the University's graduation ceremonies each year.
- Members may also be invited to support the University at other events.



### 3. STANDARDS

- The expectations of a University Board are codified in the HE Code of Governance produced by the Committee of University Chairs, the requirements of the Office for Students, and the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The specific requirements relating to the operation of the University's Board of Governors are set out in our Articles of Government and in the Standing Orders of the Board
- Within the collective responsibility of the Board, the Chair has overall responsibility for holding the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive to account. The Chair also has specific responsibility for setting objectives and reviewing the performance of the Vice-Chancellor with input from the full Board.
- Each member of the Board will be responsible for making full and timely personal disclosures for recording in the Register of Interests maintained by the University Secretary. Members are also required to declare any interests in respect of the business to be covered at each Board and committee meeting. The Chair of the Board shall ensure that any conflict of interest is identified, recorded and managed appropriately in order that the integrity of Board business shall be (and shall be seen to be) maintained.
- Members recognise that the Board acts as a corporate body and are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by the Board.
- Members are appointed to the Board in an independent capacity, do not represent any constituency and may not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others. Members will abide by decisions properly made and will not lobby for individual gain or advancement or for the benefit of an organisation or constituent Faculty or College of the University, or other group whether internal or external to the University.
- Members will exercise their responsibilities with independence and discretion. They must recognise that they will have access to information which must not be shared outside the Board. Members will respect confidentiality, personal data and commercially sensitive information and, if in any doubt as to the status of information, should check with the University Secretary/Clerk before disclosing.

- Members are required to participate in appropriate training events organised by the University or by relevant leadership organisations.
- Members are required to participate in a formal annual performance review process undertaken by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board.

### 4. THE BUSINESS OF THE UNIVERSITY

- The Board, collectively and under the leadership of the Chair, sets the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and ensures the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the strategic objectives, risks and Key Performance Indicators which the Board has approved.
- The Board, collectively and under the leadership of the Chair, reviews and holds the Executive to account for delivery of the University Strategy including any revisions or extensions in response to internal and external developments.
- The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that the Board exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University for the furtherance of its charitable purposes, maintains its long-term financial viability, and safeguards its assets, and that proper mechanisms exist to ensure financial control and the prevention of fraud.

### 5. TIME COMMITMENT

- As part of their core commitment, members need to be available to prepare for, and attend, meetings of Board and any relevant committees and subsidiary companies on which they sit. The approximate annual core time commitment required of members is 15 - 20 days which will include attendance at meetings, Board dinners, presentations and graduation ceremonies and preparation time to read meeting papers. Most of this activity will take place during term-time.
- At times, requests might also be made to members to be available for consultation or advice via email or telephone.

- Being present within the University and our wider community, engaging with the life of the University and contributing to our local profile. This is a more discretionary element depending, in part, on the individual member's interests and availability.

### 6. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

- Unless specified, Board members are not required to have extensive prior experience of higher education but must have some personal commitment towards the transformative power of a university in promoting the wellbeing of its students and its community.
- A commitment to engaging positively and openly with students, staff, the public and other stakeholders.

#### The ability to:

- act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- create a harmonious working environment, by developing and maintaining positive and effective relationships.
- work effectively in a team which has both executive and non-executive members
- analyse and review complex issues and weigh up conflicting opinions
- explain both orally and in writing reasons for arriving at decisions
- understand strategic planning and resource management
- motivate and enthuse others.

### 7. REMUNERATION

- Board members are not remunerated unless they are performing additional duties, in which case remuneration must be in accordance with the Charity Commissioners Guidance and approved by the Board of Governors.
- Members may claim travelling and similar expenses incurred while undertaking University business.



# COMMITTEE MEMBER VACANCIES

The University is also looking to appoint new co-opted Committee Members to the Audit Committee and Finance Committee.

The Audit Committee meets four times a year, and the Finance Committee three times a year, on a timescale that allows for regular reporting to the Board. Papers are circulated a week in advance of the meetings. Committee meetings are typically held in the afternoons and normally last up to two hours. The membership of both committees is comprised of serving Board members and up to three co-opted members from outside the University.



## THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee advises and assists the Board of Governors in respect of the entire assurance and control environment of the University. It regularly reviews the effectiveness of strategic risk management in relation to the University's activities and advises the Board on the audit aspects of the University's annual financial statements, including the external audit opinion and the statement of internal control. The Committee also advises the Board on the appointment of the internal and external auditors, approves internal and external audit strategies and work plans, and monitors the performance and effectiveness of the auditors. It seeks to assure the Board that the University has satisfactory arrangements in place to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness (value for money).

## THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee exercises oversight of the conduct of the financial affairs of the University and advises the Board of Governors on matters concerned with ensuring the solvency of the institution and its subsidiaries and the safeguarding of its assets. It reviews and advises the Board on the financial aspects of the draft annual financial statements, the approval of annual budgets of income and expenditure and the determination and implementation of the estates strategy and major projects, and monitors the consolidated financial performance of the University's operating subsidiary companies. The Committee has overall governance responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the University's fundraising strategy and any associated campaigns and oversees the gifts, benefactions, legacies, donations and trusts of which the University is a Trustee.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

The University is seeking individuals with the following attributes, capabilities and experience:

- a belief in, and passion for, BCU's mission and purpose
- a strong personal commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- an understanding of the range of stakeholder interests in, and of the challenges and changes facing, Higher Education
- a naturally collaborative style, with a willingness to ask probing questions
- an ability to commit the necessary time and focus to the role.

Prior experience in a non-executive role would be desirable but is not essential. The University is particularly keen to hear from candidates with experience and understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



## APPOINTMENT DETAILS AND HOW TO APPLY

Birmingham City University is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society.

Applications should consist of:

- a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification
- an up-to-date curriculum vitae
- names and contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

General advice on [how to write a strong CV](#) and [a strong covering letter](#) can be found on our website.

To upload your documents via Society's website, [click here](#).

The deadline for receipt of applications is **midday on 11 April**.

Birmingham City University is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and is continually seeking to diversify its workforce. This also applies to its governance structures. The University wishes to attract a diverse range of talented individuals who will be comfortable bringing their whole self to these vital roles and will enrich the University's decision making accordingly. We strongly encourage suitably qualified individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and lived experiences to apply.


The Nominations and Governance Committee will make recommendations to the July Board then an induction period will take place between July and September. It is envisaged that the new governors will attend their first full Board meeting on 8 October.

All the positions described in this document are voluntary and unremunerated.



# Society

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