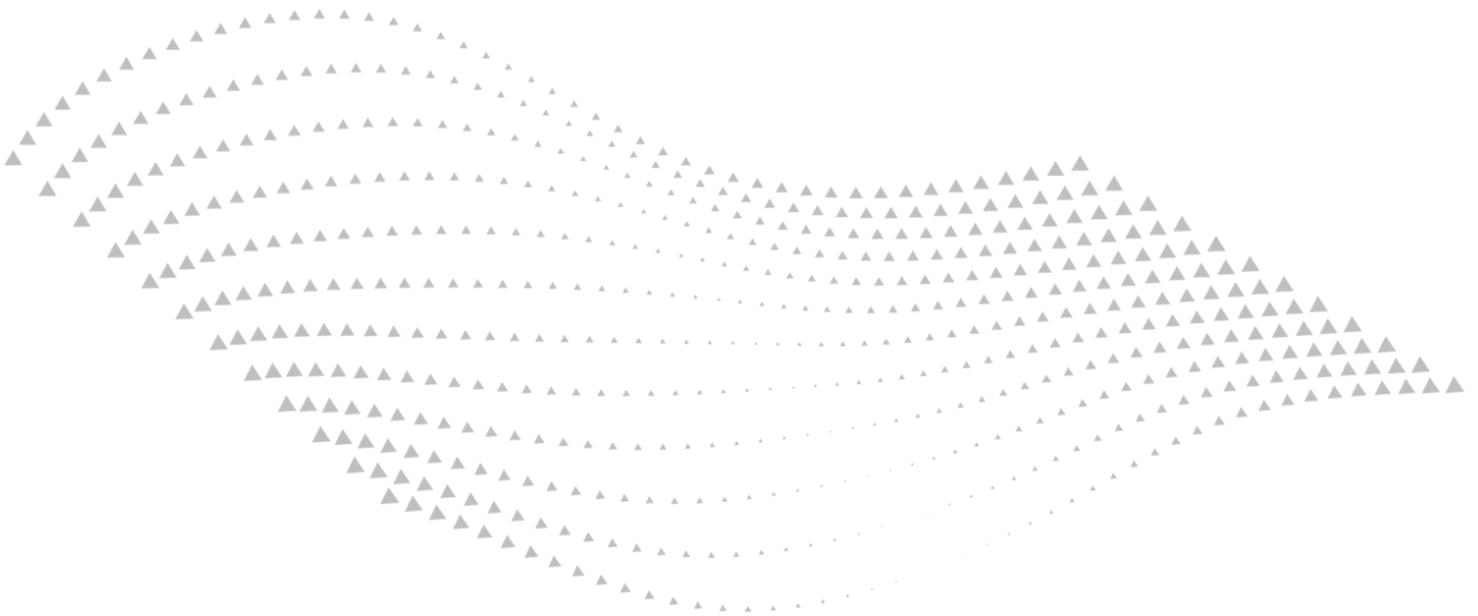


BIMM
UNIVERSITY

A university
for the creative
industries

Research & Enterprise Strategy 2022-27



Last approved: May 2022

Approved by: Academic Board

Next review due: May 2027

Introduction

The Strategy applies to all Higher Education provision delivered at BIMM University and covers a five-year period from 2022-27.

Defining Research

We believe that it is essential to define research in the creative and performing arts. Research in this context includes various approaches and strategies that lead to cognitive and embodied ways of understanding and experiencing the world involving our senses, emotions, imagination, language(s), and intellect. These ways of knowing the world can generate fresh insights and new perspectives relevant to understanding our creative practice and the exploration of a diverse range of social and cultural phenomena. The field of creative and performing arts research is constantly developing, and likewise, the definition of research in the creative and performing arts is continuously evolving.

Defining Enterprise

Enterprise is defined here as the generation and application of ideas, which are set within practical situations during a project or undertaking. This is a generic concept that can be applied across all areas of education and professional life. It combines creativity, originality, initiative, idea generation, design thinking, adaptability and reflexivity with problem identification, problem solving, innovation, expression, communication and practical action.¹

Practice Research

Research at the University primarily focuses on creative arts and industries practices. Research in this instance can be described as ‘practice research’ (Bully and Sahin 2021).² *Practice research* is a type of research where practice is the primary methodological approach conveyed in a research output, and a research narrative articulates the research inquiry that has emerged in practice. *Practice research* exists across and beyond the traditional boundaries of subject disciplines.

However, this definition can also be refined to include ‘practice-based’ research, where a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge and ‘practice-led’ research, where investigation primarily leads to new understandings about practice (Candy, L & Edmonds, E, 2018).³ Using the above approaches, the research practices established at the University will seek to foster a culture that interrogates and challenges established research methodologies to place creativity at the heart of excellence in exploration and enquiry.

Leadership in Research & Enterprise

In September 2015, a Research & Enterprise Committee was established as a subcommittee of the Academic Board to oversee the development and implementation of a Research & Enterprise Strategy and to monitor the effectiveness of the research activities undertaken across all colleges. For this iteration of the strategy (2022-27), membership of the Research & Enterprise Committee will include members of academic management and teaching staff with an interest in and experience in research, plus external advisors with research and enterprise expertise.

¹ QAA, 2018: [Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education. Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers](#)

² Bulley, J. and Sahin, S. (2021). [Practice Research—Report 1: What is practice research? and Report 2: How can Practice Research be Shared?](#) London: PRAG-UK, 2021.

³ Candy, Linda & Edmonds, Ernest. (2018). Practice-Based Research in the Creative Arts: Foundations and Futures from the Front Line. Leonardo. 51. 63-69. 10.1162/LEON_a_01471.

Strategic Objectives

The aims of the Research & Enterprise Strategy are to:

- Establish the University as a centre of excellence in utilising professional practice as a foundation for research.
- Ensure that teaching and learning across the curriculum is informed, enhanced and enriched by practice-based and practice-led research.
- Support staff to produce and disseminate nationally and internationally recognised research outputs, including text, practice, and artistic artefacts.
- Build research capacity through the development of postgraduate programmes and development opportunities.
- Foster a diverse community of enquiry that is accessible, supportive and enabling.
- Work collaboratively with partners in the Higher Education sector of national and international standing.
- Engage collaboratively with the creative industries to undertake research that benefits those industries and society more widely at the national and international levels.
- Build the capacity to source and secure external or matching funding, and devise plans for generating earned income.

Delivery & Evaluation

The Research & Enterprise Committee will monitor progress in implementing the Research & Enterprise Strategy through its oversight of the Research Action Plan (RAP). The RAP will define actions, set targets for meeting our strategic objectives and be reviewed annually. In addition, REC will report on the strategy to Academic Board through its minutes.

Theory of Change (ToC) is a methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation to promote social change. A Theory of Change describes the underlying assumptions about how planned activities will lead to intended outcomes. By developing a model setting out our Theory of Change, we can understand how different aspects of the interventions we are planning fit together to achieve our final goal(s). This is best done collectively, drawing on the experience of those who will work on implementation.

A Theory of Change model allows us to:

- Describe the need we are trying to address.
- Describe the changes we want to make (our outcomes).
- Describe our plan to achieve these changes (our activities).

Establishing Theory of Change before we start to deliver an intervention allows us to set out the aims, context and resources required, processes and intended impact.

Evaluating the Impact of our Work

Theories of Change also serve to integrate process and impact evaluation into the same process whilst clearly distinguishing evaluative activities relating to process and those focusing on measures relating to impact(s). The evaluation of an intervention's inputs, activities, and outputs forms the process and implementation evaluation, which then logically feeds into the outcomes and impacts of an intervention – the impact evaluation.