



Highest-rising university in the Guardian League Table 2026

The Sunday Times University of the Year for Social Inclusion 2024

 Adobe Creative Campus



BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

Strategy 2035
The Professionally Creative University for the future

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Our purpose

Bath Spa University is the Professionally Creative University for the future. Creativity is our human superpower. It's at the heart of our purpose and our planning. Professional creativity transcends subject disciplines, and BSU connects learners, staff and external partners with applied research and innovation. We power inclusive growth through creative education and skills development, and we shape futures using practice based, innovation-intensive learning for all.



Our challenge

Bath Spa University was founded on the belief that creativity and education drive human progress. As we step into a decade defined by technological, social and environmental disruption, we reaffirm this as our guiding purpose.

We harness **professional creativity** to unlock human potential, strengthen communities and drive inclusive, sustainable growth across the West of England, in London, nationally and globally.

Our diverse learners, colleagues and partners bring lived experience, ambition and imagination to fuel new ideas and practical solutions. We define creativity broadly, and harness creative thinking and human talent to generate meaningful outcomes.

We ask a simple but profound question:

▶ How can creativity and education shape a better future?

Our answer is to be the **Professionally Creative University for the future** — a community where inclusive interdisciplinary teaching, research, enterprise and partnership fuse to create social, cultural and economic value.



Our ambition

By 2035, Bath Spa University will be recognised as a distinctive, sustainable, national university proudly rooted in the South West. We will be celebrated for leading:

- Inclusive growth, removing barriers to opportunity and enabling our diverse community of learners to develop career enhancing skills, and to flourish.
- Professionally Creative education, pioneering flexible, personalised, practice-driven, research-informed lifelong learning opportunities.
- Creative and civic innovation, working with small and medium sized enterprises, public bodies, cultural institutions and social enterprises within the core economy to deliver social and cultural value as well as economic impact.
- Professional practice, combining academic rigour with application, exploration, experiential learning and discovery.



Shaping the future

We live in times of profound change. Technological acceleration—including the rapid rise of AI—is reshaping how we learn, work and communicate. Economic uncertainty, skills shortages and demographic shifts are transforming expectations of higher education, while sustainability imperatives and geopolitical volatility require new forms of collaboration, resilience and civic purpose.

These forces are not abstract. They shape the daily realities of our learners, colleagues, partners and communities nationally and globally. Demand for lifelong learning and skills is increasing, new industries and creative technologies are emerging, patterns of study, work and living are evolving. Learners are balancing more responsibilities, seeking new forms of flexibility, and requiring stronger support to thrive.

Bath Spa University is uniquely positioned to thrive in this context. Professional creativity—our defining strength—provides the mindset, skills and behaviours needed to navigate uncertainty, imagine new possibilities and design practical solutions. Our diverse student communities and locations, our longstanding commitment to inclusion, and our network of educational, civic and industry partners place us at the heart of the social, cultural and economic systems undergoing the fastest transformation.

We will move into the next decade as the **Professionally Creative University for the future**: shaping industries, empowering communities, expanding opportunity and inspiring learners at every stage of life.



Our foundations

1 Outstanding, innovation-intensive teaching, research and knowledge exchange

The interconnection of our innovation-intensive teaching, interdisciplinary research and impactful knowledge exchange will be the engine of **professional creativity**. We will:

- **Partner** with schools, colleges, professional bodies, industry, employers, and other universities to deliver innovative, career enhancing, lifelong learning pathways.
- Respond to new learning needs proactively through **flexible, personalised, practice-driven** delivery methods that develop skills and unlock talent.
- Harness **digital fluency and creative technologies** to enhance teaching, research and innovation, using AI responsibly and ethically.
- Offer outstanding student experiences, enriched by **world class research, enterprise and knowledge exchange**.

2 Values-led and socially responsible

Social value and inclusion will remain an essential part of our DNA as we break down barriers to opportunity, fuelling social mobility and inclusive growth. We will:

- Ensure that **lifelong learning opportunities** reach those historically underserved by higher education.
- Enact our core values of **respect, inclusion, collaboration and sustainability**.
- Be recognised for our leadership and research in **sustainable, responsible and ethical practices**, including the ethical use of AI.

3 Regionally essential, nationally leading, internationally connected

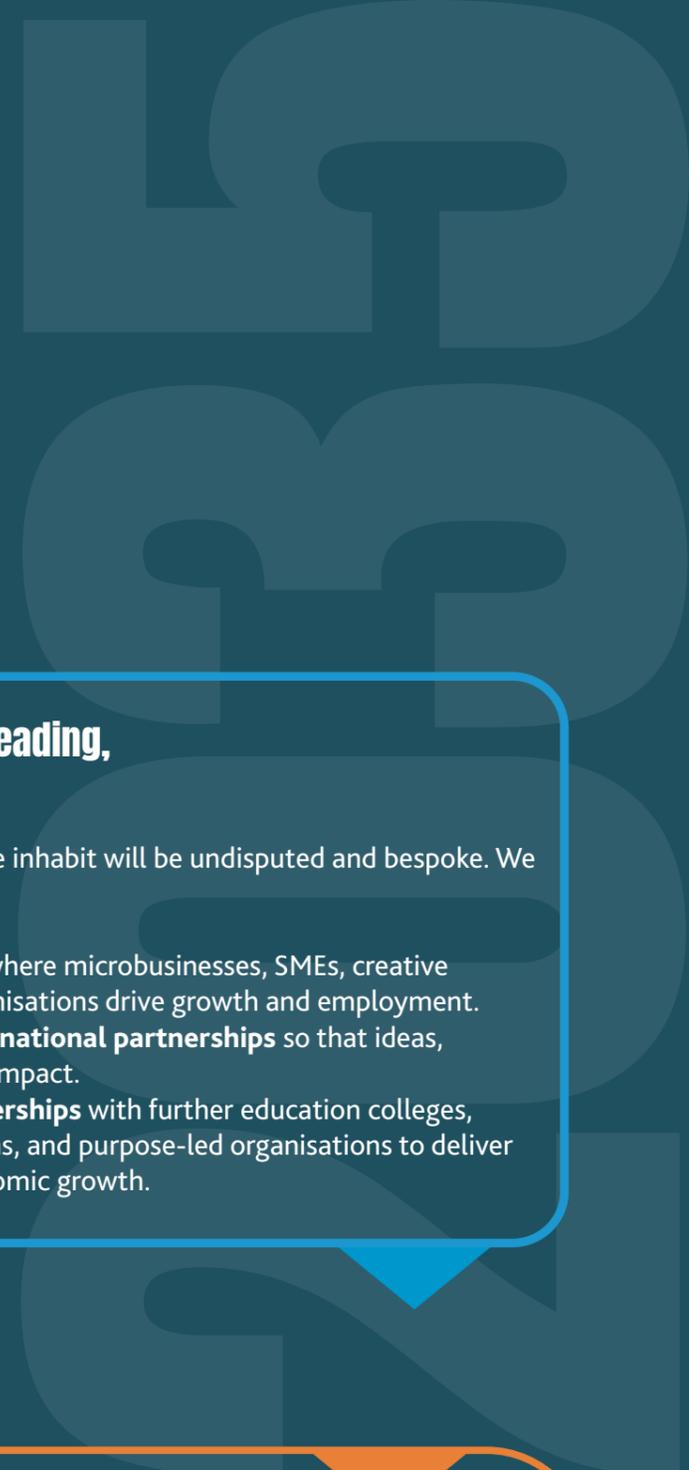
Our value and contribution to the places we inhabit will be undisputed and bespoke. We will:

- Support the **everyday core economy**, where microbusinesses, SMEs, creative enterprises, public and third sector organisations drive growth and employment.
- Strengthen our **civic, regional and international partnerships** so that ideas, research and creativity have real-world impact.
- Expand our **deep and innovative partnerships** with further education colleges, cultural institutions, industry, professions, and purpose-led organisations to deliver social and cultural value as well as economic growth.

4 Organised for success: One BSU

Our staff and learners will be valued, challenged and supported to thrive. We will:

- Collaborate across departments and disciplines as **One University**, aligning priorities, sharing expertise, streamlining processes and working together to deliver our strategic goals.
- **Shape our portfolio** by developing innovative, career enhancing learning opportunities, and ensure our long-term financial sustainability by growing learner numbers at our teaching sites in London, Birmingham and overseas, maintaining learner numbers in Bath, and reducing the proportion of learners studying with educational partners.
- Our teaching sites will be differentiated to meet the needs of the learners and communities that they serve and **connected through our shared purpose and values**.



What will 2035 feel like?

A university alive with possibility, purpose and Professionally Creative energy.

By 2035, Bath Spa University will feel distinctive—more connected, more confident and more future-facing—while remaining unmistakably true to its creative, inclusive character. The experience of being a learner, colleague or partner will reflect a university that has continued to grow in ambition, clarity and impact.



Learning that adapts to life

Learners—whether 18 or 80—will experience flexible, personalised pathways that meet them where they are and take them where they want to go. Learners will move seamlessly across modular, hybrid, work-integrated and campus-based study, supported by academic communities who know them and a digital ecosystem that makes navigation easy.

Learning at BSU will feel Professionally Creative: alive with collaboration, experimentation and creativity. Classrooms, studios, labs and digital spaces will blend fluidly, supporting learning that is practical, immersive and industry connected.



Creative industries and civic life enriched by BSU

Across Bath, southwest Britain, Birmingham and London, the footprint of BSU will be unmistakable. Microbusinesses, freelance practitioners, cultural organisations and social enterprises will be flourishing through our support, spaces, research and talent pipelines. Our graduates will be shaping sectors—from creative technologies to sustainability, education, wellbeing, science, business and design.

Public services, schools, FE colleges, charities and businesses will trust us as a partner who listens, collaborates and delivers meaningful mutual value.



Digital that feels human

Our digital platforms will feel intuitive, supportive and connected. AI-enabled tools will enhance creativity, accessibility and collaboration, while never replacing the human relationships that define BSU.

Virtual and physical spaces will blend to create campus experiences that are seamless, sustainable and engaging—whether in person or online.

A community where you matter

Everyone—learners, colleagues and partners—will feel they belong. Inclusion will be visible not only in policy, but in daily interactions, outcomes and working cultures.

Support will be proactive, personalised and consistently excellent. BSU's culture will be characterised by collaboration, kindness, curiosity and high expectations. People will feel trusted, empowered and motivated to do their best work.



Research and innovation with visible impact

Transdisciplinary teams will be tackling complex challenges—from digital inclusion to climate resilience, cultural participation to mental health and creative technologies.

Research projects will be embedded in communities and industries, producing outcomes that matter.

Innovation will feel natural: part of how we teach, how we partner and how we contribute to the world.

A university that is aligned and agile

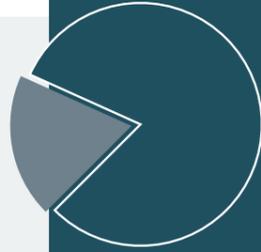
Colleagues will experience an institution that is organised for success: clear structures, simple processes, and a shared sense of purpose. Decision-making will be transparent, communication will be coherent, and collaboration will feel intuitive.

We will be financially sustainable, academically confident and strategically connected—able not only to adapt to change but to shape it.

BSU in 2035 will be a university that is **creative, inclusive, sustainable, and full of possibility**. A place where ideas grow, where people flourish and where creativity is a force for good in the world.

Delivery

Our core strategy will be delivered through our supporting strategies, implementation plans and delivery handbook.



We are ranked in the top 20% for student satisfaction with teaching and feedback on assessments

Guardian League Table 2026



BSU was the highest-rising university in The Guardian University Guide 2026, climbing 47 places now in **top 50% of UK**



BSU won **Best University Employability Strategy of the Year** in 2025

BSUL opened its first site in London in Hackney, in 2020 followed by BSUL (Canary Wharf) launched in September 2025 with now **more than 4,100 BSU students** studying in the capital



Bath Spa University secured **'Outstanding'** Ofsted ratings following inspection in July 2025



In the 2025 National Student Survey, BSU improved in all areas



Almost 30% of our students have a declared disability and 95% of Bath Spa University London are mature learners




BSU has been recognised as an Adobe Creative Campus since 2022

BSU is a certified member of Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) - the leading global authority and largest network of social enterprises in the UK.




Over 81% of our staff would recommend BSU to a friend as a place to work



14 graduate positions advertised in 2024, up from 5 in 2023; graduate roles starting salary £25,138

BSU is the **second most sustainable university** in the UK and has long ranked within the **top 20%** of universities for sustainability performance



People and Planet University League Table



BSU won **The Sunday Times University of the Year for Social Inclusion** 2024



BSU 'sets a benchmark for the sector' with 2025 Digital Transformation Award at the ALT awards

Between 2021 and 2025 the BSU Short Course Unit has:

- **Delivered 65 Skills Bootcamps** in response to government priorities
- **1,087** of Skills Bootcamps graduates have advanced their careers with us

Since 2023, BSU's Short Course Unit has helped **253 learners** pursue a creative passion or further their career with a series of self-funded courses in 27 subjects, collaborating with BSU staff and Cultural Organisations in BANES.





BSU is the Largest Initial Teacher Training provider in the South West, supporting **3,500** school-based teachers each year to enter this skills-shortage profession.

The Studio has 68 residents of SMEs and freelancers, **42%** grew their turnover in the past 12 months, **65%** earned their living from work based at The Studio.



During 2025 BSU's Inclusive Communities team has worked intensively with 176 people (working with them for more than 6 weeks), supporting 51 people into work, further or higher education. They have also supported a further 55 people to improve mental health, worked with 437 primary school children and 55 16 to 25-year-olds.



Emerge has 102 residents

with creative graduates moving into self-employment being typically highly skilled and EmERGE amplifies this: EmERGE achieves around 80% highly skilled employment, demonstrating a powerful longitudinal impact on graduates' career pathways within self-employment.



Work from over 100 students, staff and alumni across the University was celebrated across the five-week festival, Sparkfest. A vibrant showcase of dance, theatre, film and music.



Somer opened in June 2025, a retail hub supporting 100 sustainable fashion microbusinesses and BSU students.



Bath Spa University is home to students representing more than

40 different countries

Students studying overseas
UAE: 1,141



GALA was founded over a decade ago by BSU and is a dynamic, socially responsible, and ethical community of universities, drawn from across the world, that work together to make a transformative impact to people's lives through teaching, research, and collaborations with local communities and partner organisations. Now working with 18 partner universities in 15 countries and has made over 300 awards to BSU students and staff.

Total student numbers:
Approximately



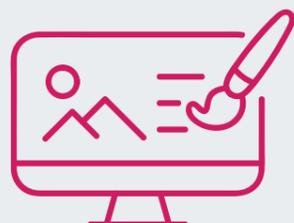
7,000 in Bath,
4,133 in London.

Significant number studying with our partners throughout the UK.



BSU's turnover as of year end 31 July 2025 is

£268.3m



BSU's freelance creative agency, Juno House, launched in 2025

41 students have been recruited into the freelancer pool, and the first 5 briefs have been secured from internal departments and external organisations.

THE PROFESSIONALLY CREATIVE UNIVERSITY FOR THE FUTURE



Our strategy: a snapshot

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- **Professional practice**, combining academic rigour with application, exploration, experiential learning and discovery.

Our foundations

1. **Outstanding, innovation-intensive teaching, research and knowledge exchange**
2. **Regionally essential, nationally leading, internationally connected**
3. **Values-led and socially responsible**
4. **Organised for success: One BSU**