

2026 BU Strategic Academic Plan

Introduction

Brandon University is committed to academic excellence. This 8-year Strategic Academic Plan, provides a clearly articulated vision of our university's context, identity, and priorities for the purpose of guiding academic decision making. This plan was informed by [*Looking Ahead*](#), the 2015-2020 Academic Plan, as well as BU's Strategic Plan, [*Mamaawii-atooshke aakihkiwiin*](#) (2022-2027), and BU's [*Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Action Plan*](#). This process involved several stages of consultation with our university community and external stakeholders.

As plans, both *Looking Ahead* and *Mamaawii-atooshke aakihkiwiin* speak to the importance of Brandon University's connections to its place and its commitment to the many people who contribute to its academic mission. In *Looking Ahead*, this is articulated in describing the many important societal contributions that Brandon University, through its myriad academic endeavours, makes to our city, our surrounding communities, and our province (*Looking Ahead: Academic Mission and Key Strategic Priorities*). In *Mamaawii-atooshke aakihkiwiin*, this is captured through its recognition of the critical role our university plays in our community and its commitment to positive and reciprocal relationships with the communities we serve. Brandon University's *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan and Action Plan* reinforces our commitment to having principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, indigenization, decolonization, reconciliation, and accessibility permeate and underscore the academic work of our institution.

Reflecting what was heard in our consultations, the language of this plan is written with the intention of being inclusive. For example, when our plan references programming, that reference is inclusive of all programming at our university, both graduate and undergraduate. References to students, unless otherwise stated, are intended to be inclusive of all students (graduate and undergraduate, domestic and international, etc.). Similarly, references to research and creation are intended to be inclusive of the wide range of scholarship and creative endeavors in which our faculty and students engage.

The consultation process for this academic plan demonstrated that our university, by virtue of both its size and place, must define itself and its goals so that its work builds upon core values and strengths while remaining a sustainable institution that continues to serve its community/region long into the future. In keeping with findings from other plans, our consultations confirmed the importance of meaningful, accurate, and accessible institutional data in making decisions that build upon our values, strengths, and goals. Our consultations also revealed a clear recognition that our university's future is reliant upon the complex and interwoven connections between individuals, Departments, Faculties/Schools, and communities. Resonating throughout this plan is the importance of relationality and the importance of respectful, collegial, and reciprocal engagement with one another, in ways that are mindful of our shared commitment to EDI, Indigenization, Reconciliation, Decolonization, and Accessibility, and our shared responsibilities to serve the best interest of our students and our academic disciplines.

In consideration of our university's past, our current context, the consultative process, and our place within Manitoba's post-secondary system, this plan recognizes three primary interwoven components that define who we are as a university and, therefore, form the basis of Brandon University's academic identity.



In addition to identifying these foundational components of our identity, this plan identifies six interwoven thematic areas that exist within each of the components. These thematic areas provide clearly articulated academic direction and priorities for the years ahead. It is important to note that one of our foundational components shares a name with a thematic area. This intentional duplication reiterates that Indigenization and Decolonization are central to our university's identity while also remaining a concrete academic priority in all aspects of our programming.

Transformative Post-Secondary Education

With its main campus located at the heart of Western Manitoba, Brandon University provides a transformative student experience, welcoming students with a variety of academic histories into its programs while seeking to make the process as seamless and transparent as possible for students at whichever point in their lives they are seeking admission. As an open-access university, Brandon University has long distinguished itself as a place that seeks to address and remove barriers for students.

With the exception of some academically specialized or heavily subscribed professional programs, our University is accessible to all students seeking admission to undergraduate studies who have completed a high school diploma in Manitoba and Canadian students over 21 who did not complete high school. Our university has the potential to reduce admission barriers for secondary school graduates applying after high school completion in other Canadian provinces and territories. While providing access and reducing admission barriers for international students is important, given their vital contributions to our campuses, we must continue to include responsible and meaningful entrance requirements that serve to best support those students and

those faculty and staff who serve them. As an open-access university, we acknowledge our shared responsibility to provide ongoing supports to all students throughout their chosen educational pathways.

By fostering faculty research and creation, pedagogical excellence, and its commitment to academic freedom, Brandon University focuses on undergraduate education. This emphasis on undergraduate studies sits alongside our commitments to graduate programming, both future and ongoing, where opportunities for excellence align with the best interest of our students, faculty, and community. In a supportive, inclusive, and accessible atmosphere, students experience meaningful connections and mentorship with world-class pedagogues and researchers. This learning environment facilitates immersive research, creative exploration, professional preparation, and community engagement. Through these activities, students develop their abilities to think critically, creatively, ethically, and independently for engaged citizenship in our local and global community.

Indigenization and Decolonization

Our university has campuses located on both Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territories and has long-standing and well-established connections to and relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. Our university remains firmly committed to Truth and Reconciliation, the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint, and, recognizing Indigenous ways of knowing, as well as other non-Western knowledge systems, as essential to our academic context.

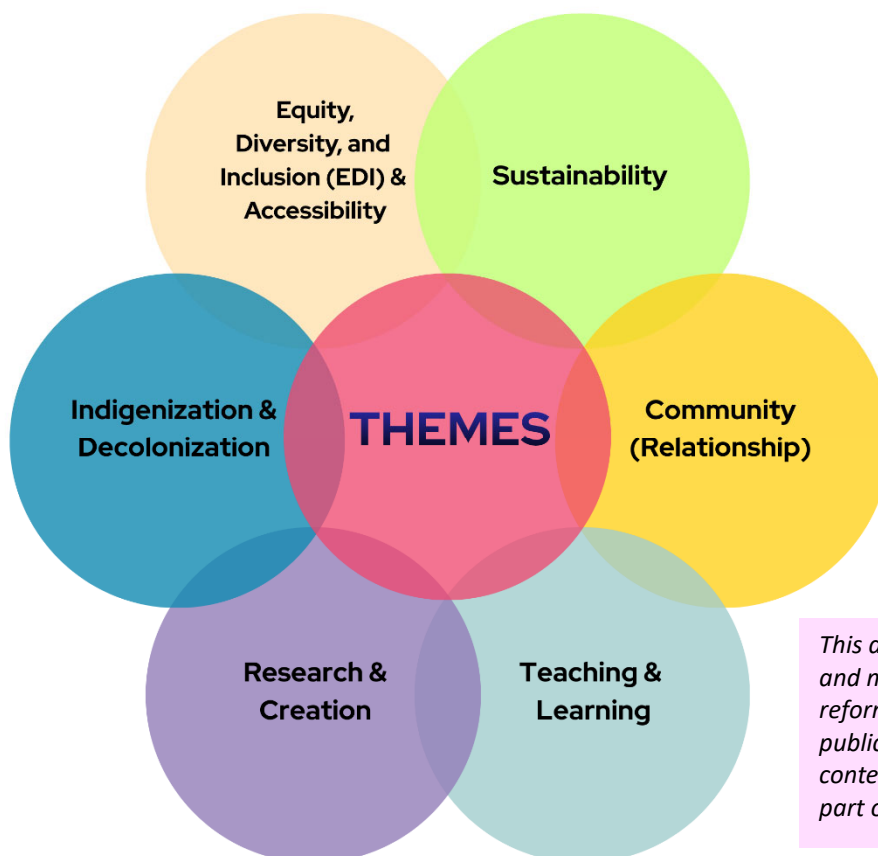
For reasons related to its history, its size, and its location, Brandon University has a unique opportunity to serve First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in the rural and northern parts of Manitoba and to become the university of choice for members of those communities.

Professional Programming

Our university plays a vital role in preparing public professionals to meet the needs of Manitobans primarily in the fields of education and health care but also through our commitment to scientific and business professions. In addition to meeting the certification standards of those professions and helping Manitoba meet critical needs in the education and health care sectors generally, Brandon University is unique in preparing its students for the distinct experiences of serving in rural and northern communities.

The university's commitment to and role in the education of these vital professionals extends to providing access to important, targeted graduate programming that prepares individuals to advance into critical professional roles, such as educational and health care leadership without needing to leave our region.

Themes and Priorities



Emerging from consultations with faculty councils, the Indigenous Peoples' Centre, Library Council, Student Services/Registrar's Office/Senate Office, Deans' Council, the Faculty Association (through a BUFA group's submitted feedback), and others (Director of CTLT, Director of Co-Op), the Strategic Academic Planning Committee identified six themes that speak to our university's academic priorities in our current context and extending into the future: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) & Accessibility; Sustainability; Community (Relationship); Teaching and Learning; Research and Creation; Indigenization and Decolonization.

Themes

The following themes have significant areas of overlap. This overlap is understood to significantly reinforce the strength and importance of each theme.

Teaching & Learning

The reciprocal sharing of knowledge, ideas, and information that occurs amongst faculty and students is fundamental to the mission and purpose of a university. This requires that our

professoriate is supported and engaged in their research and creation as this work underpins and informs our university's curricula, pedagogy, and assessment practices. In the context of Brandon University, we prioritize the education of undergraduate students while also acknowledging our opportunities and obligations to offer excellent and transformative graduate education in specific disciplines and areas.

We prioritize supporting faculty in their efforts to master and adapt their pedagogies and academic programming to respond to ever-changing contexts and meet the best interests of our students. The Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology (CTLT), through the dedication of its faculty and steering committee, provides support for faculty in their pursuit of teaching excellence. While currently small, the CTLT provides a foundation for our university to further develop clear, transparent, and sustainable ways to better support teaching and learning on our campuses. In addition, the rich resources provided by the John E. Robbins Library form a strong base for teaching and learning at Brandon University.

With equal commitment, we prioritize supporting students in their efforts to access transformative learning experiences on our campuses. Stemming from its rich traditions, location, and size, our university is uniquely well-positioned to provide students opportunities to study with faculty members in settings that offer higher degrees of interaction, often resulting in profoundly rich relationships that positively change students' lives. Through the Indigenous Peoples' Centre and Student Services, our university has existing frameworks to provide students with supports for learning, for accessibility, and for managing their well-being throughout their educations and as life-long learners. Our thriving program in cooperative education engages students by connecting classroom learning with community and societal needs.

Through the life of this plan, we will build on our existing strengths and aim to fulfill our potential as a centre of teaching excellence.

<i>Priorities:</i>	<i>Cross-sectioned with:</i>
a) Establish clear, transparent mechanisms to enhance support for innovation and initiatives in teaching and learning excellence.	• <i>Research & Creation</i>
b) Establish clear, transparent mechanisms to support academic program development and renewal, and interdisciplinary academic program collaboration and coordination that contribute to the complete student lifestyle.	

c) Support excellence in student experience and academic success through enhancement of student supports (e.g., Student Services, Indigenous Peoples' Centre, John E. Robbins Library and McKee Archives, Information Technology, Office of International Activities, Residence Services).	• <i>Research & Creation</i> • <i>EDI & Accessibility</i>
d) Strengthen the attractiveness and quality of our programs, aligning programs with student and societal needs.	• <i>Sustainability</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i>
e) Support current experiential learning opportunities designed to enhance student learning and experience, and support departments in exploring and developing work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities.	• <i>Community</i> • <i>Sustainability</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i>

Research & Creation

Excellence in research and creation is directly linked to excellence in teaching and learning. Continued ongoing supports for research and creation, for faculty and students alike, are crucial to Brandon University's future and the ways in which it will meaningfully contribute to society. One of our greatest strengths and opportunities is our university's unique capacity to link faculty research excellence to student learning and research engagement. Our undergraduate students directly experience and engage with research-active faculty, affirming research and creation as being at the heart of what is being taught and providing undergraduate students with experience and skills normally reserved for graduate students at larger universities. Similarly, graduate students are presented with research, creation, and leadership opportunities that prepare them for success whether in career or further advanced studies.

Brandon University continues to value its role as a centre for research and creation excellence. This includes providing ways to connect Brandon University researchers and creators with the world, enhancing collaboration and also enhancing society's understanding of the importance of research and creation. It also includes bringing research and creation leaders onto our campuses (visiting scholars, for example), providing venues to share and debate ideas, advancing understandings, and building research/creation relationships and partnerships. This academic plan is intended to work in concert with Brandon University's [*Strategic Research Plan*](#).

Priorities:	Cross-sectioned with:
a) Enhance Brandon University's growing reputation as an institution engaged in innovative research, scholarly, and creative activity.	• <i>Community</i>

b) Continue to support and enhance faculty members' scholarly activity, research, and creation.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>EDI & Accessibility</i> • <i>Community</i>
c) Continue to support and enhance excellence in undergraduate research and creation.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i>
d) Continue to develop and support strategic graduate research and creation opportunities.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i>

Community (Relationship)

Our university is committed to those communities it serves, noting our shared aspiration to prioritize ways of better and more respectfully serving those communities. Recognizing that our concept of community can be expansive, making decisions about when, how, and to what extent we engage in reciprocal, respectful, and sustainable relationships will be important. These decisions will be informed by commitments to Truth and Reconciliation; Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; Indigenization and Decolonization; evolving student needs; evolving societal needs; and the priorities of our province.

<i>Priorities:</i>	<i>Cross-sectioned with:</i>
a) Seek and respond to opportunities to engage in respectful relationships with diverse communities (local, national, and international) to support reciprocal relationships in teaching, research, and service.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i>
b) Identify and respond to community learning needs (such as bridging/transition education, continuing education, professional development).	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i>
c) Engage with communities and prospective students to value and recognize non-traditional pathways to education and to improve student outcomes, with an emphasis on under-represented communities.	• <i>Indigenization & Decolonization</i> • <i>EDI & Accessibility</i>
d) Increase alumni engagement with current students and faculty so that BU is a community of lifelong learners.	

Sustainability

This academic plan offers a framework through which Brandon University can make informed, strategic and transparent decisions to build a sustainable academic life in full consideration of the human energies through which all universities strive to create success. This includes caring for the well-being of our environment, caring for the well-being of our people, and contributing to education of future generations.

Our university must carefully select where it invests its financial resources so that our overall operation remains viable and capable of focusing on its core mission. Sustainability goes hand-in-hand with improving data collection and reporting and necessitates transparency.

Priorities:	Cross-sectioned with:
a) Establish a clear, transparent, multi-year academic budget model and institutional information framework to facilitate integrated and effective multi-year planning.	• Teaching & Learning • Research & Creation • EDI & Accessibility
b) Establish clear, transparent mechanisms to review and adjust resource allocations in support of institutional academic priorities.	• Teaching & Learning • Research & Creation • EDI & Accessibility
c) Support and promote well-being of students, faculty, and staff.	• Teaching & Learning • Research & Creation • Community • Indigenization and Decolonization • EDI & Accessibility
d) Create and implement a Strategic Enrolment Management Plan which properly takes account of the diversity of students who call BU home and the supports they require to be successful at BU.	• Teaching & Learning • Indigenization & Decolonization • EDI & Accessibility
e) Create an academic infrastructure plan, which ensures that our academic spaces and technology properly support the institution's academic and student support work.	• Teaching & Learning • Research & Creation • EDI & Accessibility
f) Respect and give consideration to the deep influence of the plants and animals who share their history and traditions on the land and water of this area in academic decision making.	• Indigenization & Decolonization

Indigenization and Decolonization

Acknowledging the clear need for our university to do better, Brandon University has been a leader in its commitment to recognizing Indigenous ways of knowing and being and providing post-secondary pathways for Indigenous students and communities. The Department of Native Studies *[Department renaming process is underway and the Plan will be updated to reflect this upon approval]*, the first of its kind in Western Canada, is in its sixth decade of academic programming. The IshKaabatens Waasa Gaa Inaabateg Department of Visual Art is an increasingly renowned leader in Indigenous art. The PENT Indigenous Teacher Education Program has long provided community-based opportunities for aspiring educators in remote and northern Manitoban communities.

Brandon University has made specific commitments under Truth and Reconciliation and is a signatory to the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint. Understanding the richness of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being, and in recognition of historical and ongoing injustices and inequities, we prioritize the importance of Indigenous education. We will work respectfully and reciprocally with Indigenous communities to better serve the needs of those communities and their students. Our university, through a sincere commitment to decolonization, must be a place where Indigenous knowledge is fully and equally valued, supported, and reflected in all programming.

Priorities:	Cross-sectioned with:
a) Work closely with institutional and provincial Indigenous leaders to strengthen our position as a top choice university for Indigenous students in Manitoba and its surrounding areas.	• Community • Sustainability
b) Collaborate with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge-Keepers, and community partners to continually recognize, value, and integrate Indigenous knowledge, language, culture, and worldviews into all aspects of our academic work through education, research, and skill development.	• Community • Teaching & Learning • EDI & Accessibility
c) Partner with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and organizations to create reciprocal learning relations aimed at: enhancing the accessibility of post-secondary educational opportunities; improving student experience and academic success; and engagement in research, scholarly, and creative activities with potential benefits to Indigenous communities.	• Community • Teaching & Learning • Research & Creation • EDI & Accessibility

d) Support Indigenous language reclamation and revitalization in course offerings, research and scholarship, and community engagement initiatives.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i> • <i>Community</i>
e) Create space and opportunity to celebrate, support, and promote the contributions of Indigenous students and faculty.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and Accessibility

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and Accessibility are core to the academic priorities of Brandon University and are fundamental to the ways in which we interact as faculty, staff, and students. As an open-access institution, we seek to provide safe and supported spaces for all students who pursue their education on our campuses. As a university that is committed to the communities we serve, we recognize that the inclusion of multiple and diverse conceptions, experiences, and perspectives leads to richer, deeper understandings and forges more meaningful and inclusive relationships to disciplines, to our place, and to one another. This commitment, which includes the university's EDI plan, is imagined to include the invitation of visiting scholars and experts to inform our ongoing work in these important areas, supports for units in reviewing their academic programming through EDI and Accessibility lenses, and work on developing meaningful data sets to inform transparency in how EDI and Accessibility infuses and informs our decision-making.

<i>Priorities:</i>	<i>Cross-sectioned with:</i>
a) Create a culture in which EDI and accessibility permeate all of our academic work and processes.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i> • <i>Community</i>
b) Diversify our institution at all levels by advancing meaningful representation and belonging of equity-deserving groups, and by understanding EDI and accessibility as broad intersectional concepts that include visible and invisible dimensions of identity.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i> • <i>Community</i>
c) Identify, examine, and address potential and existing systemic barriers and embedded inequities to accessibility, equity, and diversity within institutional processes, academic spaces, teaching, and research to proactively mitigate injustices.	• <i>Teaching & Learning</i> • <i>Research & Creation</i>

- d) Expand sustained opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in experiences and initiatives on and off campus that are grounded in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Teaching & Learning
- Research & Creation
- Community
- Sustainability

Implementation

In addition to affirming our shared commitment to academic excellence, articulating our priorities with the specific context of Brandon University, and guiding our university's academic decision making, this plan is also intended to guide priorities, actions, and decisions at the institutional, faculty, school, and unit levels.

At the institutional level, strategic planning will require consultation, collaboration, and coordination with an expectation that all parts of our university's academic vision and mission are given full consideration. The Provost's Office will lead institutional-level academic planning efforts related to priorities under the Teaching & Learning, Sustainability, Community, and EDI & Accessibility themes. The Provost's Office will support the Office of the VP Research and Graduate Studies in its development of institution-wide planning associated with the Research and Creation theme and its priorities. Likewise, the Provost's Office will support the Office of the AVP Indigenous Initiatives in institution-wide planning associated with the Indigenization and Decolonization theme and priorities. Consultative and transparent institutional-level planning will begin within 3 months of this plan's approval.

To be effective, therefore, this plan requires academic planning exercises in each academic unit (Faculty/School/unit), organized and led by the leaders of those units, and informed by strategic institutional data. This includes the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Health Studies, Faculty of Science, School of Music, Library and Archives, Student Services, the Indigenous Peoples' Centre, the Registrar's Office, the Office of the Vice-President (Research & Graduate Studies), and the Provost's Office. These unit-specific strategic academic plans will:

- Reference, respond to, and interact with this plan (addressing the priorities listed in each thematic area) with an aim to improve student outcomes, articulate academic program review and renewal, inform student recruitment and retention strategies, guide academic staffing priorities, and shape facility planning (inclusive of technology, equipment, and physical spaces);
- Identify clear goals and priorities to inform and guide unit level recommendations and decisions that are made within and by those faculties/schools/units as well as recommendations that are made by those faculties/schools/units for university-wide deliberations and decisions;
- Where unit-specific strategic plans impact the operations of units across the university (for example, the Provost's Office in developing a unit-level plan for the Centre for

Teaching, Learning, and Technology), consultation and collaboration with impacted units is expected;

- Articulate unit-specific implementation plans, including regular reporting requirements that identify measures of how plans are being implemented and how goals are being met, and built-in opportunities for review.

Unit specific plans, in keeping with Section VI (11(c)) of Brandon University Senate By-Laws, are expected to be approved by Faculty Councils (or their equivalents) within 12 months of this plan's approval and sent to Senate for final approval.

Non-Academic Unit Consideration

Effective implementation of this plan requires meaningful, consistent, and collaborative engagement with units that, while not reporting through Senate, are fundamental to the success of our students, faculty, staff, and academic programming.

It is recommended that the Provost, working with the University's senior leadership, develop a report that speaks to ways in which the themes and priorities articulated in this plan can be used to inform the work of other units and offices, as well as the ways in which ongoing reporting on the Academic Plan can and should reflect, or otherwise incorporate, the work being done in those units/offices. These units/offices include but are not limited to (in no particular order of priority) Marketing and Communications, Information Technology Services, Ancillary Services, Financial and Registration Services, Alumni Relations and Advancement, Physical Plant, and Finance and Administration.

Accountability

The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the academic plan and supporting Deans and their equivalents in the development of their faculty/school/unit specific academic plans. As Research and Graduate Studies factor prominently into the academic work of our university, it is understood that the Provost will, wherever appropriate, include the Vice-President (Research & Graduate Studies) in the implementation of this plan. Similarly, as Indigenization and Decolonization factor prominently in our university's priorities and identity, the Provost will consult and include the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives) in this plan's implementation. In overseeing this work, the Provost will be expected to provide bi-annual updates to Brandon University's Senate. The first report will be received in September and will focus on the planned work for the upcoming academic year. The second report will be received in May and will describe the progress that was made during the academic year. These reports, upon Senate's approval, will be electronically distributed to faculty and made available to students, and uploaded to the [Provost's website].

Deans/Directors will provide annual progress reports to their respective faculty councils (or equivalents) and the Provost's Office. These reports will be delivered in April. By August,

Deans/Directors will provide planning briefs to the Provost's Office, reflective of consultation with their units and outlining their unit's goals and priorities, that will inform the Provost's September report to Senate.

During the fourth year of the plan, the Provost will Chair a committee that will review the academic plan and its efficacy. This committee will consult with the campus communities and make a report to Senate. This report, to be delivered in May, may include recommendations to Senate of changes to the approved plan.

During the fifth year of the plan, Deans/Directors will lead reviews of their unit-specific plans. Should these reviews result in recommended changes, those changes would be presented to the appropriate Faculty Councils for deliberation and any recommendations forwarded to Senate for final approval.

During the seventh year of the plan, Senate will form a Strategic Academic Planning committee to review this plan and its impacts and to embark upon the work of renewing or replacing this plan.