

Case Study

Bournemouth International Centre



Bournemouth University recognises its world-class, award-winning talent with a big and very public send off

Client:

Bournemouth University

Website:

bournemouth.ac.uk

Base:

Poole, Dorset

Industry:

Higher Education

Event:

Graduation Ceremonies



Results:

Enjoyable, stress-free experience for everyone

Smooth, safe people management for up to 3,000 people a day

Clear signposting to show everyone where to go and what to do

Precise timetable and running order maintained throughout

Venue spaces fully optimised to suit the BU event format

Client brief fully met in terms of:

- Logistics
- Security
- Hospitality
- Customer experience

Graduation is a major life event for some 300,000 university students every year in the UK. It's the highlight of the academic calendar.

Thousands of students, friends and family come to celebrate at the graduation ceremonies, introducing thousands of pounds into the local economy — and a complex logistical challenge for the venues that host them.

The brief

During graduation week, around 12,000 people gather at Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) to attend the graduation ceremonies.

Keeping them all safe, sound and moving in the right direction is a huge responsibility for the BIC's operations team.

“Research shows that the Bournemouth University (BU) graduation ceremonies inject an extra £4 million into Bournemouth's local economy in just four days. It's a hugely prestigious and popular event –

and one of the more operationally challenging in terms of people management,” says Pat Coyne, BH Live Director of Venues.

BH Live runs its BIC and Bournemouth Pavilion events with an expert team of on-site operations managers, assistants, cleaners, security specialists, switchboard operators and front of house customer assistants. Together, they plan, manage, build, attend and secure no fewer than 500 events across both venues every year.

The team often turns events around overnight. “We operate to extremely tight programming schedules for a wide variety of events, often in rapid succession,” says Pete Woods, Operations Manager.

“We can go from a wedding show, to a high octane gig with 6,500 fans, to an international darts competition in under 36 hours. Security is paramount. We enforce the highest security standards to ensure the safety of customers, but discreetly so that they feel welcome and relaxed.”



For BU students and their families, graduation is a public acknowledgement of a personal achievement and a very proud moment. Like any once-in-a-lifetime experience, it has to be perfect.

The service

“Success is all in the preparation and planning,” says Pete Woods. “Our project teams get together several months ahead of the event to analyse feedback and plan how we can use this to make the event even better.”

The schedule for the *Bournemouth University Graduation Ceremonies* is designed to create a special and memorable experience for everyone – students, families, friends, staff and VIPs. With up to 3,000 people moving about the venue at any one time, crowd flow is a critical success factor.

“We establish a clearly signposted, logical flow of people that starts from the time they arrive at the main entrance, to the registration, gowning and photo booths in the Solent Hall, to the ceremony in the Windsor Hall and then on to a champagne drinks reception in the Purbeck Hall.” says Pete Woods.

“The BIC is the largest venue in Bournemouth and the perfect

size for us,” says Isobel Langrish, Event and Conference Manager at Bournemouth University.

“We’ve the flexibility to separate people and activities where we need to – for registration, gowning, photographs, VIP reception, and so on, and bring them all together in one place to enjoy the ceremony and drinks reception.

“For the lighting, public address and multimedia services we use BIC’s recommended suppliers. They know their way around and how to make the most of the venue – and work directly with our photographers, gown hire and other suppliers, so we don’t have to worry about the detail of getting their services up and running on site.

“We like to keep the ceremonies themselves formal and traditional, so they don’t change much, but we always try and bring something new each time to make the event run even more smoothly or add a touch of magic to the day.

“The photo booths were new for 2014. When you’re taking hundreds of shots a day, it’s important to get a process set up that makes sure every shot is worthy of a frame, without taking too long about it. We put 20 booths in the Solent Hall to photograph 20 students at a time, speeding up the process without impacting quality or the time needed to line up good shots.”

The result

BU wants every graduation day to be an enjoyable, stress-free experience for everyone.

“The BIC team makes that happen by matching the venue spaces to our timetable and running order, with clear and simple signposting to point people to the right places, at the right time, without feeling rushed.” says Isobel Langrish. “And there’s always an expert, go-to person on site to sort out any last minute requests.

“To top it all, the venue gives us a great location for students to bring their families – close to town with nice bars, the promenade and sea, and gorgeous coastal views.”

BU Graduation Ceremonies will be back at *Bournemouth International Centre* in November 2015.

About Bournemouth University

Bournemouth University (BU) has a global reputation for incubating a huge pool of talent, especially in the field of media and communication. It is the only Centre for Excellence in Media Practice in the UK and BU alumni are frequently making news for their stellar FX work on blockbuster movies.

About Bournemouth International Centre

Bournemouth International Centre is the South Coast’s premier conference, exhibition, entertainment, and hospitality venue, with versatile arena, meeting and hospitality zones for conferences, exhibitions, meetings, major music concerts, dance and comedy performances. www.bic.co.uk

About BH Live

BH Live is the South Coast’s leading operator of leisure and event venues - a social enterprise that designs and builds engaging experiences to inspire people and enrich lives. With over 2.5 million visits a year and over £31 million turnover, the organisation is changing lives – placing it at the heart of the UK’s growing social economy.

www.bhlive.org.uk