

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester

Teaching and learning

Our future

Knowledge | Wisdom | Humanity

2021-25 plan

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Foreword

At The University of Manchester, we aim to strengthen our community of academics, professionals and students, working in partnership to develop the best educational experiences.

We have high expectations of ourselves and recognise the need for accessible, inclusive and international support structures for all – from students engaged in peer support, to senior academics. We will develop a culture where our people are valued and rewarded for teaching and learning engagement and excellence.

We enable students to study options that enhance employability, interdisciplinary outlook and global understanding. As the world of work changes, graduates will need to embrace periods of

re-skilling, updating and discipline flexibility. Manchester graduates will be bold, entrepreneurial and resourceful. Students will prepare for their future as global citizens and leaders through employment opportunities, our outstanding Stellify programme, and an emphasis on social responsibility, digital approaches and interdisciplinarity learning.

By positioning Manchester at the forefront of flexible and lifelong learning, we can instil this as a natural way of working for our staff, students and alumni. Just as our students are enabled to master their disciplines, work together across boundaries, and inhabit an increasingly digital world, so our colleagues will become confident in designing and delivering excellent teaching and assessment in a blended learning environment. Together we will teach and learn in a supportive context that encourages us to aim high, take intellectual risks and benefit from our research-intensive environment.

Our aspirations to diversify Manchester's staff and student communities will make our curricula and teaching environments more inclusive, ensuring content and environment speak directly to our students. With our students, we will determine how partnership and engagement work best and how we can foster both.

In the Manchester student journey equality of access is the vital first step, but every other step must also be supported, so all of our students can reach their potential. This will enable our future graduates to work with complexity, create prosperity, tackle social and environmental problems and enhance their own wellbeing through confidence and happiness in who they are.



April McMahon

Vice-President for Teaching,
Learning and Students

Purpose, vision and strategic plan

Our purpose

To advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society.

Our vision

We will be recognised globally for the excellence of our people, research, learning and innovation, and for the benefits we bring to society and the environment.

Our strategic plan



Read our vision and strategic plan at www.manchester.ac.uk/strategic-plan



Ambition one

Enhancing the quality of our teaching

We share a vision and ambition to create a strong community of professionals, academics and students. Our Institute of Teaching and Learning will support a step change in teaching quality, implement effective and innovative teaching methods, lead on strategic projects, and work with colleagues across the University to develop teaching leadership and excellence at all levels.





Through the Institute of Teaching and Learning, in partnership with Faculty Teaching Academies, we are making a significant investment in strategic infrastructure, enhancing our capacity to develop, share and lead exceptional, cross-University teaching and learning initiatives, while maintaining the strong discipline links that are so important for our staff and students.

A culture of teaching excellence

We have high expectations of ourselves and our colleagues. Through effective and collegial partnership, the Institute of Teaching and Learning will offer sector-leading, tailored professional development for teaching, from students engaged in peer support to senior academics. Through AdvanceHE accredited provision such as the

New Academics Programme and the Leadership in Education Awards Programme – along with wider informal and formal development provision at School, Faculty and cross-University levels – colleagues can develop skills throughout their careers and influence teaching and learning practices locally and globally.

An inclusive learning environment

By attracting the most promising candidates, regardless of background, we will recruit excellent, ambitious and motivated students who are engaged with their own learning and who challenge us, pushing us to be the best we can be. We are committed to addressing awarding gaps. Through improving curricula and assessment, increasing opportunities to engage with employers, developing

an enhanced transition experience and in partnership with the University's Students' Union, we will provide holistic and effective learning support structures for all students.

We will work in partnership with staff and students to ensure that student voices are fully represented and that our programmes effectively equip them with the skills, experiences and attitudes for future success. We will co-create an environment and culture in which students feel empowered to advocate for themselves and others, where the University's values are lived by our community, and where personal integrity and individual paths are respected and valued.

Research-enhanced and pedagogically based teaching and learning

We will provide opportunities for colleagues to engage in the latest pedagogical advances through Institute Fellowships, co-creation, teaching development partnerships and experimental teaching opportunities with real-time feedback from student partners.

We will help colleagues think creatively about curricula and assessment and make the most of our physical and digital learning spaces. We will bring the latest disciplinary and interdisciplinary research into our programmes to ensure that students can explore the foundations and push the boundaries of our understanding.

Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching

We will develop a culture where staff and students are valued, recognised and rewarded for teaching and learning excellence. Through internal and external award programmes, we will ensure that our current and future teaching leaders are able to develop their profiles and evaluate and evidence their impact. We will be proactive in shaping and influencing the direction of higher education teaching through the effective dissemination of the work of our staff and students. Improving teaching practice will be a core aspect of line management – with support to improve and opportunities to excel clearly signposted at all levels.



Ambition two

Transformative student experiences

Our teaching will be research-driven and personalised, so each student is challenged to achieve their best, and feels a strong sense of community and belonging. Learning and assessment will be inclusive of all students, and fully supported through digital platforms and services.

Students will be engaged in their learning and work in partnership with staff to co-create life-changing educational experiences. We will develop independent learners who are equipped for lifelong learning. Our world-class physical and virtual teaching and learning spaces will ensure that our students are prepared for a more hybrid working future.





We will build a positive future with teaching and research working together, excellent student experiences a priority for all, and everyone's contribution being recognised. We will also empower individuals and groups to challenge existing practices and to innovate in teaching and learning through sharing effective practice and pedagogy.

Learning through research and critical review

Our students and staff benefit from the interaction between teaching and research; teaching-led research is as important as research-led teaching. We will go beyond students engaging with current research in the advanced stages of a degree, to integrate teaching and research at all levels.

Students will encounter research leaders and be encouraged to develop and use research skills from the start. They will also discover how these skills are applicable beyond the curriculum. We will connect across years of study, between staff, students and disciplines, embedding the philosophy of the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning (UCIL). Our teaching methods and assessments will allow students to engage actively in research and critical enquiry.

Personalised learning with an inclusive curriculum

Together we will develop outcomes-based curricula, informed by business, industry and research and reflecting the student voice. Students will have programme choices that enhance their employability, interdisciplinary outlook and global understanding. Embracing digital and blended experiences will transcend timetabling restrictions and allow flexible learning on and off campus. We will proactively make our curricula and teaching environments more inclusive, ensuring that content and context speak directly to our students – wherever they are and wherever they come from.

Students as partners

We will work side-by-side to co-create a culture and environment that facilitates students to take responsibility for the learning process at all levels. We will make co-creation and partnership the norm, working with student communities to determine what student partnership should be, and how engagement works best.

Building on the success of My Learning Essentials in the Library, and the valuable work of the Institute of Teaching and Learning and the Student Experience Programme, every University project and initiative that impacts students will involve students. Our student partners will support transparent, student-facing communications.



Supporting access, success and learning

Our Access and Participation Plan targets are rightly challenging and driven by our socially responsible commitment to reduce barriers to learning. However, a more diverse community of students needs more tailored support. We have made tremendous steps forward in improving access to the University, and now aim to consolidate this work by tackling awarding gaps and encouraging progression to fulfilling employment and further study.

In the Manchester student journey, equality of access is the vital first step, but every other step must also be supported. We will ensure that, using learning analytics, each student can visualise and track their journey, set goals, evaluate their academic development and manage their own motivation for learning.

Ambition three

Realising students' potential

Manchester students will become distinctive graduates through innovative teaching and learning, in a vibrant city that is both northern and global. We will challenge students to reach their full potential through interdisciplinary learning in a research-intensive environment, including developing personal capabilities in creativity, digital literacy, social responsibility and entrepreneurship.





Discipline mastery is expected from a Manchester graduate – but our breadth of opportunities also enables students to develop their own unique experiences. These initiatives will help students to benefit fully from our offering and prepare for their futures. They will be encouraged to develop as excellent, distinctive employees or entrepreneurs and to contribute as capable, confident citizens. Wherever our students go, and at whatever level they have studied, they will carry their own understanding of the impact Manchester has had on their journey.

Interdisciplinary learning

Traditional discipline boundaries have been eroded as a result of modern ways of research and work, and most graduates will be employed in roles that go beyond their university subject. Students need the skills and ability to interact and work with others from a wide variety of backgrounds, and to develop creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship through time spent in interdisciplinary teams. Students will be enabled to undertake interdisciplinary learning in Schools, Faculties and through the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning (UCIL), including online and blended units.

Diversifying Stellify

At Manchester, our commitment to social responsibility is at the heart of all we do and our sector-leading Stellify award embeds ethical grand challenges, volunteering and leadership into undergraduate study.

In the next phase of Stellify, all of our students will have the opportunity to make a difference to the world, but with more freedom to choose how to do so. We will diversify the Stellify programme to include accessible awards that involve integrating and reflecting on employability skills and recognising international experience. We will also explore extending the programme to our postgraduate taught students.



Work experience, internships and placements

Short periods of professional experience are invaluable for preparing students to move beyond their academic studies. When employment opportunities are inside the University, they also bring the student voice and dynamic new ways of thinking into our established ways of working. Working with the Careers Service and employers we will ensure that all students are able to engage with impactful and accessible work experience and/or internships, lasting from two weeks to two years, during their time at Manchester.

Graduate attributes

We are working with students, alumni and employers to revisit our graduate attributes – demonstrating how Manchester graduates use the interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial approaches they have learned to combine their thinking, knowledge, capabilities and values in imaginative and experimental ways.

Through a community project of students, staff, alumni and employers, and building on our 'belonging' theme for Welcome and Induction, we will spell out the ingredients of the essential 'Manchesterness' of all our graduates. This will communicate how they work with complexity, create prosperity, tackle social and environmental problems, build positive examples of radical thinking and pioneering spirit, and enhance their wellbeing through confidence and happiness in who they are.

Ambition four

An education for global leadership

Our graduates will have a distinctive education that will prepare them for futures as leaders and global citizens. They will learn in a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages them to aim high and take intellectual risks, building their confidence to step outside of their programmes to learn new languages, new subjects, to study abroad, experience the world of work and take advantage of the opportunities at our University.

They will develop the skills needed to lead people from a diverse range of backgrounds, using appropriate technologies to communicate across distances. They will also understand the challenges facing our world and will be prepared to take a lead on developing solutions locally and globally.





All of our students will have opportunities to engage in the biggest social, economic and environmental questions facing the world through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities linked to ethical grand challenges and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within and outside of their programmes, they will have a range of opportunities to acquire the skills to support their transition into global leaders, equipped for the 21st century and for making a difference in their chosen field.

Global citizenship

Our students are members of Manchester's global community. Studying in Manchester, at our international centres, at our partner institutions, or online, they can study, debate and work with international staff, alumni and student communities. Through the global reach of our curriculum, students will be challenged to develop knowledge, understanding and skills for a world that is rapidly and constantly changing.

Making a difference through the Ethical Grand Challenges

Our Ethical Grand Challenges programme supports undergraduate students in learning about three of the biggest challenges facing the world in the 21st century: sustainability, social justice and workplace ethics.

In future, students will be encouraged to reflect on these challenges within the contexts of their programmes. We will inspire our students to think for themselves, to rise to the challenge and to make a positive difference in the world. They will be supported and given the opportunities to build and demonstrate their skills, along with the courage to put these into practice. We will recognise the importance of making a difference in the city and local region we call home, as well as internationally, through programmes of study, work placements and student volunteering opportunities.

Learning about sustainable development

Using interdisciplinary approaches to learning, students will be invited to learn about the SDGs through the kite-marking of modules within their programmes and the opportunities presented by the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning (UCIL).

Tailored opportunities for postgraduate taught students

While our Ethical Grand Challenges and Stellify programmes are important and successful, they are currently only offered to our undergraduate students. Recognising that our postgraduate taught students also deserve an education for global leadership, we will work with them to develop and launch tailored options to recognise their co-curricular achievements, offer interdisciplinary and blended learning opportunities, and embed their awareness of the SDGs.



Ambition five

Lifelong and flexible learning

Our expectation is that work will continue to evolve, and graduates will need to change occupations, requiring periods of re-skilling, updating and discipline flexibility. Graduates will need to be bold, entrepreneurial and resourceful. In positioning Manchester at the forefront of flexible and lifelong learning, we will instil it as a natural way of working for our staff, students and graduates. We will ensure teaching across the University is accessible, inclusive and international by adopting a strategic approach for the future of learning, created with staff and students.

Full and part-time learning will be delivered through combinations of face-to-face, interactive online and blended learning. Our graduates will be in exceptionally high demand because they are ready for an increasingly digital world that requires agility, creativity and digital skills.





Open, online and blended learning

We will showcase the values and strengths of our teaching and research using high-quality, open learning courses. These will be available for credit and for interest, making education at The University of Manchester open to all, including our alumni.

Students will experience a range of educational delivery modes including blended, online and augmented/virtual reality, and will also be able to study in small face-to-face groups in Manchester or at our global centres. They will have the opportunity to attend, either in person or online, keynote lectures with the University's world-leading researchers.

Flexible and lifelong learning

The University will be a leader in flexible and lifelong learning. A range of higher education awards will be available through credit accumulation and transfer ('stackable' awards). Students can transfer continuing professional development (CPD) awards to credit-bearing degrees, transfer credits gained from partner institutions and accredited organisations and, where appropriate, complete degrees over an extended time period.

Through the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning (UCIL), we will offer interdisciplinary awards, including degrees, both as full-time and part-time/lifelong learning options. A common and consistent learning design framework will facilitate these ambitions.

Global education

Aligned with ambition four, our students will be prepared for leadership on a global scale. In an increasingly globalised world, Manchester students will be given the opportunity for an international experience. Student mobility in an age of increasing climate awareness will be reconceptualised to include virtual as well as physical international experience.

We will develop joint and dual degree awards with comparable educational and commercial institutions across the globe. These will be offered in online and blended learning modes, both on and off campus. Such awards will benefit the University in terms of global profile and benefit students through enhanced employability and global and cultural awareness.

Infrastructure, support and inclusion

We will reshape our understanding of effective teaching and learning; improve the digital capacity of our teaching spaces and virtual learning environment; and support and enable academic colleagues to inhabit those spaces with ease. All students, including those studying online or at a distance through our global centres, will have effective representation and be included in meaningful academic communities.

Students will be able to use a wide range of digital applications appropriate to their discipline, and will understand the principles of data governance, data management and security, data ethics and integrity, and data analysis and interpretation. They will be evaluated through a diverse range of relevant assessment types, with prompt, personalised and timely feedback.



Key measures of success

Board scorecard metrics

We will:

Achieve a top quartile sector position for undergraduate student satisfaction and a satisfaction rate of 90% for postgraduate taught students.

Improve the satisfaction of our students with our approach to assessment and feedback.

Achieve our planned intake each year for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Achieve our Access and Participation Plan Targets for access and outcomes (removing the unexplained awarding gaps between student groups).

Increase the continuation rate of our students beyond their first year of study.

Help our graduates progress to highly-skilled employment or further study.

Increase the diversity and flexibility of our delivery beyond standard on-campus programmes.

Ensure we support and monitor student wellbeing.

Additional teaching and learning theme metrics

At least 60% of teaching staff will have a teaching qualification or recognition of reflective practice (such as an Advance HE Fellowship at some level) by 2025.

Every University project that impacts students will include students as partners.

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