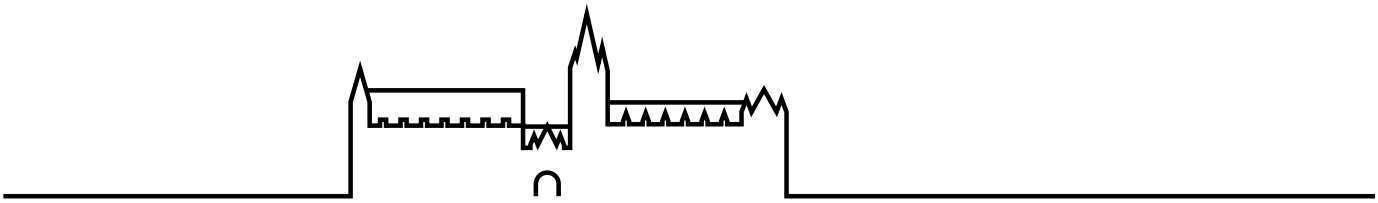
MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester



University facts and script

How to use this document

This document is split into two sections;

1 Facts and statistics (pages 1 to 9)
2 Script (pages 10 to 13)

The facts and statistics is your one-stop shop for the University's key messages to include as supportive material when dealing with external audiences. Use the information to help tell our story.
The script is your go-to if you're pushed for time and need some quick points about the University. It's been designed and written so you can print and read for a presentation.

From the Directorate of Communications, Marketing and Engagement
November 2026

www.manchester.ac.uk/brand

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The University at a glance

- We are the first and most eminent of England's civic universities.
- We are the UK's most popular university in terms of undergraduate applications (UCAS 2026 cycle).
- We are the 5th best university in the UK for employability (*Times Higher Education*, 2027)
- In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (2026), the University is placed:
  - 51st in the world;
  - 13th in Europe;
  - 6th in the UK.
- Other international rankings:
  - QS World University Rankings (2027): 40
  - QS World University Sustainability Rankings: 12
  - *Times Higher Education* World University rankings (2027): 60
- National rankings:
  - Guardian (2024): 24
  - Complete University Guide (2027): 24
  - We're now the 22nd most international university in the world, according to the *Times Higher Education* rankings (2026).
  - Platinum Engage Watermark from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement.
- Social and environmental impact rankings:
  - Number one in the world for social and environmental impact (*Times Higher Education* Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026). We're the only university in the world to rank in the top ten in all eight years since the rankings launched.
  - 12th in the 2027 QS World University Sustainability Rankings.
- Academic activity is structured around three Faculties:
  - Humanities;
  - Biology, Medicine and Health;
  - Science and Engineering.
- The University plays a key role in the cultural life of the region, through:
  - Manchester Museum;
  - John Rylands Research Institute and Library;
  - Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre (a UNESCO World Heritage Site);
  - The award-winning Whitworth art gallery.

**The table is compiled using the international student score, international staff score, international co-authorship score and international reputation metrics.*

Becoming a great 21st century university

The world is changing, fast. Climate, tech, geopolitics – everything is shifting.

But this isn't the first time Manchester has risen to the moment. We were born as an answer. The first modern civic university, built for an industrial age. Now, it's our turn to define what a great university looks like for the 21st century, creating knowledge for the public good, locally and globally.

From Manchester for the world, our strategy to 2035, published October 2025.

Goal 1: **World-class research**

We're driving discovery, creating social impact and tackling global challenges across the key areas of advanced materials, biotechnology, cancer, energy and global inequalities.

Our research highlights are exemplars of interdisciplinary research collaboration and cross-sector partnerships.

We bring together brilliant minds, foster collaboration, push the boundaries, empower positive change and lead the way towards a healthier, sustainable and equitable future for all.

Our five research highlights include:

- Global inequalities
- Advanced materials
- Biotechnology
- Cancer
- Energy

Global inequalities

Across the world, and in our own city of Manchester, inequalities exist across food, healthcare, infrastructure and resources. Our researchers are dedicated to exploring the roots of inequality and co-creating sustainable solutions across its many aspects, from poverty to social justice, living conditions and equality in the workplace.

We bring together the best minds in medicine, business, law, social sciences and the arts to listen, collaborate and help to change the lives of communities at home and worldwide. Our approach involves actively engaging with and listening to communities, working together to instigate positive transformations in the lives of people both locally and globally.

- 200+ dedicated researchers working across our three Faculties.
- 20+ interdisciplinary research institutes.
- 650+ academics researching in areas relating to Sustainable Development Goal 10, reducing inequalities.

Advanced materials

Our researchers partner with industry to unlock potential. Whether this is discovering game-changing materials like graphene, real-world applications with commercial impact, accelerating technology readiness, or boosting productivity and reducing carbon footprint in the foundation industries, we're embracing opportunities, mitigating challenges and ensuring the UK's reputation as a technology superpower.

We're creating transformative interdisciplinary solutions to tackle some of the biggest global challenges. These include clean energy and net zero; climate action and clean water; good health and wellbeing; industry; innovation and infrastructure; and sustainable materials and responsible production.

With our partners we're developing new materials, while making existing ones lighter, stronger, more sustainable and cheaper to produce, all to underpin sustainable and circular solutions to global challenges.

- 700 – the highest concentration of materials experts at any UK university.
- £885m invested in state-of-the-art facilities in the last ten years.
- Lab-to-market – providing partners with a path to scale up.
- Ecosystem model – supporting progress and prosperity through relationships with local, national and global partners.

Biotechnology

As we look for ways to protect our environment and support the health of billions across the globe, we turn to nature's own processes to provide the answers.

Biotechnology is enabling us to find new and more sustainable ways to produce chemicals, materials, and everyday products, by understanding and harnessing biological processes and applying them at industrial scales.

By engineering biology, we can create more environmentally friendly agricultural products, produce human therapeutics quickly and at a lower cost, and reduce carbon emissions from key industries while also divesting those industries from petrochemical feedstocks.

Supported by the internationally recognised Manchester Institute of Biotechnology, our 400+ experts are innovating solutions to key challenges in environmental sustainability, clean energy, health, and sustainable manufacturing.

- 400+ dedicated researchers across three Faculties.
- 12 major spin-out companies from our research.
- 2019 Queen's Anniversary Prize for supporting strategic development of biotechnology in the UK.

Cancer

We're delivering impact across the whole cancer pathway. From genomic discovery to world leading treatments, our expertise and facilities span the entire bench to bedside journey.

We're world leaders in cancer prevention and earlier detection. Supported by one of two high-energy proton beam centres in the UK, we're aiding the radiotherapy treatment of tens of thousands of patients each year. Our experts are also working across cancer genomics, biomarkers, and experimental and precision medicine. Working with our partners across the world, we're also helping to reduce inequalities across the entire cancer pathway and develop solutions to ensure more people can access precision medicine regardless of where they live.

We're making an impact at home with innovative pilots like the mobile lung health check, giving the local, and now national population increased access to diagnostic tools designed to detect cancer when it's at its most treatable. Across the UK our experts work closely with policymakers to implement crucial policy changes in cancer screening and treatment standards. Further afield, we're increasing our knowledge through global partnerships. Together we're improving access to prevention, detection and treatment strategies in low- and middle-income countries, along with for cancers of non-European descent.

This is supported by our unique Manchester Cancer Research Centre partnership, joining forces with Cancer Research UK and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust to deliver real change for people affected by the disease. Together, we aim to create a future free from the burden of cancer.

- £150m cancer campus home to a state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer research centre.
- 700+ experts addressing the full cancer detection and treatment pathway.
- £150m in active research grants.
- 950 clinical studies active at NHS sites across Manchester, including the Christie Hospital.

Energy

Our research is at the forefront of the energy transition. Guided by our innovative spirit and interdisciplinary outlook, we work to mitigate climate change while transforming our energy system, to enable a just and prosperous future for all.

Across every aspect of energy, from how we best harness it, to how we can transform and use it, our passionate community of researchers are committed to making a positive difference now and for generations to come. Our legacy gives us the drive to both resolve current challenges and pave the way to a clean and just energy future.

Embracing the urgency and scale of the challenge, we're developing solutions ready for immediate deployment, that can deliver rapid reductions in carbon emissions. Our experts across engineering, science, social science, health sciences and policy, are transcending disciplinary silos and partnering with governments, industries and communities to create interventions that deliver impactful and immediate change for people both locally and globally.

We're looking to accelerate this transformation within the next two decades. Pushing boundaries, we're part of a movement which will transform the energy system, and support local, regional and national leaders in meeting pressing zero carbon targets across systems and scales. We're challenging how things are done now, exploring ways to integrate technical and social innovations into existing infrastructure, and making room for new energy capabilities that can improve people's lives.

For future generations, we're harnessing our curiosity to advance the fundamental science. We're building our capability to anticipate new energy and materials challenges as AI and digitisation reshape our world, and exploring how new technologies from nuclear fusion to biologically produced hydrogen, could change the way we produce and use energy forever.

At Manchester, we do more than just research.

We innovate to create impact that lasts.

- 600+ researchers working across the entire energy system.
- 19 interdisciplinary centres and institutes.
- 500+ strong support team of technical staff to IP advisors.

Our research and innovation performance

- In the results of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), 93% of our research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*). We retained fifth place in the UK for research power overall (calculated by grade point average, multiplied by the number of FTE staff submitted (FTE – full-time equivalent head count) and gives a measure of scale and quality). We are also in the top three nationally for nine subjects.
- In 2024/25, our research income was £286 million.
- Our commitment to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) is unmatched. We're first in the world in the 2026 *Times Higher Education* Sustainability Impact Ratings and the only university to feature in the top ten every year since they began in 2019. We rank first out of 1,603 universities across 114 countries.
- Our history of intellectual property commercialisation spans more than 30 years, during which time we've generated more than 100 spin-out companies.
- Our research commercialisation made a significant economic impact in the UK between 2004 and 2023:

  • Licensing, £129 million*

  • Spinouts, £468 million*

  • Total, £597 million*

  *Cumulative GVA impact
- The University of Manchester has achieved the highest possible score in 2024 for its work with intellectual property and commercialisation, research partnerships and public and community engagement in the latest Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) rating by Research England.
- We are placed 22nd in the 2026 *Times Higher Education* global rankings for the most international universities.
- Established in 2024, Unit M is maximising the impact of the University's world-class research and innovation at speed, across disciplines and through partnerships, to change people's lives for the better. Unit M exists to answer a simple question: if the University is the region's biggest innovation asset, what should it do to drive innovation-led growth? Our answer is a disruption unit that experiments, makes mistakes and involves more people than every before in the process and benefits of innovation.

Goal 2: **Outstanding learning and student experience**

- 14,475 of our 46,000+ students come from outside the EU – one of the largest international intakes of any UK university.
- We are the most targeted university by the UK's leading graduate employers (The Graduate Market, High Fliers Research, 2026).
- Internationally, we're ranked 60th in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2027.
- More than 1,000 degree programmes offered.
- Our Stellify initiative encourages all students to participate in an exciting range of transformative and socially responsible experiences within and outside of their studies. These help them to broaden their horizons, understand key global issues, step up to fresh challenges and boost their career prospects, while becoming valuable contributors to society. They can even work towards the Stellify Award.
- Innovative teaching and learning facilities include the Alan Gilbert Learning Commons – a 24/7 space designed with our students, for our students.
- The Students' Union is one of the largest in the UK, featuring more than 400 clubs and societies catering for a diverse range of interests.
- To continue our commitment to outstanding student wellbeing, we've partnered with the city to be the first place in the country to establish a dedicated centre to help support higher education students with mental health needs. The service offers innovative and accessible treatment, looking at digital technology such as virtual clinics, to university students experiencing mental illness.

Goal 3: **Social responsibility**

- We were the first university in the UK to set social responsibility as a core goal.
- Our social responsibility activities mirror our unique Manchester spirit, motivating communities to research, teach and share their ideas, and students to study with us. The power of our social and environmental impact has been recognised on a global scale:
  - We're first in the world in the *Times Higher Education* Sustainability Impact Ratings and the only university in the top ten every year since the rankings began.
- In 2023, Manchester became only the second university to be awarded a Platinum Engage Watermark from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement.
- The Stellify Award provides every Manchester undergraduate with the opportunity to gain experience outside of academic studies; to shape both their future and the world around them. The University's most prestigious personal development award, it's designed to further personal development, enrich student life and broaden horizons.
- Through our School Governors Initiative 1,000 staff and alumni supported more than 400,000 learners, creating more than £1.52 million of economic value.This programme won a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2016 and has twice won a *Times Higher Education* Award.
- Our Manchester Access Programme has supported more than 2,800 local students from families with no experience of higher education join the University.
- We're committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly. Recognition includes:
  - Athena SWAN (Silver);
  - Race Equality Charter (Silver);
  - Stonewall LGBTQ+ inclusive employer Gold Award 2024;
  - Disability Confident Leader.
  - Platinum Engage Watermark (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement)

Our history: a spirit of innovation

- The University's earliest roots can be traced back to 1824 with the formation of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, which was founded as part of a national movement for the education of working men.
- At one of the University's predecessor institutions, Owens College, leading professors looked to German universities that stressed the creation of knowledge, not simply its transmission. Research came to be viewed as the key ingredient of a university; it advanced knowledge and was a potential source of material benefits.
- The University of Manchester, in its present form, was created in 2004 by the amalgamation of the Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST).
- There are 26 Nobel laureates affiliated to the University, the first of whom was J J Thompson (1906) in physics for conduction of electricity through gases, and the most recent, Simon Johnson (2024) in economics, for his studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity.
- The University's motto, 'Cognitio, Sapientia, Humanitas', translates as 'Knowledge, Wisdom, Humanity'.

Innovation Festival

A week-long celebration of innovation took place from Monday, 5 to Friday, 9 October 2026.

Through hands-on workshops, live demonstrations, awards, talks and networking events, the Festival showcased Manchester's vibrant, globally connected innovation ecosystem and brought together researchers, students, entrepreneurs, partners, investors and civic leaders to explore how ideas become impact.

Aligned with our strategy to 2035 – From Manchester for the world – and our ambition to deliver transformative innovation, the Festival showcased how our people, partnerships and ideas change lives locally and globally.

Celebrating our bicentenary

In 2024, we celebrated our bicentenary: 200 years of education and innovation. During this milestone year we reflected on and celebrated our rich heritage of discovery, social change and pioneering spirit, which remains at the heart of all we do.

Our flagship bicentenary celebrations included a four-day festival, Universally Manchester, and hosting the prestigious THE World Academic Summit, welcoming more than 500 delegates from across the globe to explore our theme: 'Making a difference: The purpose of universities in a rapidly changing world'.

World-changing achievements

- Manchester was the birthplace of the nuclear age, when Ernest Rutherford's pioneering research led to the splitting of the atom.
- The computer revolution started here in June 1948 when a machine built by Tom Kilburn and Sir Freddie Williams, known affectionately as 'the Baby', ran its first stored program. The celebrated wartime codebreaker Alan Turing worked on this computer during his timeat Manchester.
- The economist and logician William Stanley Jevons formulated the principles of modern economics. Later, landmark economic works were published by Manchester professors John Richard Hicks and Sir William Arthur Lewis – the latter of whom was Britain's first Black professor on his appointment at Manchester.
- At our Jodrell Bank UNESCO World Heritage Site in Cheshire, a young Bernard Lovell built the world's largest steerable radio telescope just after World War II.
- We were the first university in the UK to offer a nursing degree (1969) and first to appoint a Professor of Nursing (Baroness Jean McFarlane of Llandaff, 1973).
- The properties of the 2D material graphene were isolated at Manchester by Sirs Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov. Thinner than a human hair yet 200 times stronger than steel, graphene is set to revolutionise the world in areas including energy, membranes, composites and coatings, biomedicine, sensors and electronics.

Challenge Accepted

The world is facing urgent challenges, from inequality and climate change to geopolitical instability and global health crises, putting at risk the future opportunities available to the next generation.

Challenge Accepted is The University of Manchester's ambitious fundraising and volunteering campaign. We're uniting alumni, donors, staff, students and civic, industry and community partners to tackle the world's toughest challenges and transform lives locally and globally.

Our ambition is to raise £400 million while also highlighting ways our community can make a difference through volunteering. This dual commitment strengthens our ability to fund our leading research, widen access to education and strengthen our response to global challenges.

Challenge Accepted is integral to Manchester 2035, providing the focus and momentum to realise our ambition to become a great philanthropic university. It will embed philanthropy more deeply across Manchester, strengthening the role it plays in enabling the University's long-term ambitions and connect people to the causes they care about.

Our people

- We're led by Professor Duncan Ivison, President and Vice-Chancellor.
- We have two Nobel laureates on our current staff: Professors Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov.
- We have 46,000+ students, one of the largest student communities in the UK.
- 14,475 of our students are international (non-EU) – one of the highest international intakes of any UK university.
- We have almost 12,800 staff – of whom a quarter are from overseas.
- We have the largest alumni community of any campus based university in the UK, with more than 585,000 former students in more than 190 countries.

Notable alumni

- **Jesse Armstrong and Sam Bain** – writers of television comedies *Peep Show* and *Fresh Meat*
- **Tom Bloxham MBE** – founder of Urban Splash and former Chancellor of The University of Manchester
- **Lord Terence Burns** – Chairman, Channel 4 Television Corporation
- **Parineeti Chopra** – actor
- **Winnie Byanyima** – Executive Director, UNAIDS
- **Benedict Cumberbatch CBE** – actor
- **Sir Peter Maxwell Davies** – composer and conductor
- **Professor Dame Sally Davies** – Former Chief Medical Officer for England
- **Ben Elton** – screenwriter, author and playwright
- **Lord Norman Foster** – architect and designer
- **Teo Chee Hean** – Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore
- **Toby Jones** – actor
- **Frances O'Grady** – first female General Secretary of the TUC
- **Christabel Pankhurst** – law graduate and suffragette
- **Sophie Raworth** – presenter, BBC News
- **Chuka Umunna MP** – MP and Former Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
- **Ellen Wilkinson** – Labour politician and the first female minister of education

Notable current staff

- **Sir Andre Geim** – Professor of Condensed Matter Physics, Regius Professor and Royal Society Research Professor, and joint Nobel Prize winner in Physics (2010) for the isolation of the properties of graphene
- **Sir Kostya Novoselov** – Professor of Condensed Matter Physics and joint Nobel Prize winner in Physics (2010) for the isolation of the properties of graphene
- **Jeanette Winterson OBE** – Professor of Creative Writing and author of novels including *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*
- **Jim O'Neill, Baron O'Neill of Gatley** – Honorary Professor of Economics, chairman of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership Advisory Board and Commercial Secretary to the Treasury (or 'City Minister')
- **Michael Wood** – Professor of Public History, author and broadcaster
- **Danielle George** – Professor of Radio Frequency Engineering and presenter of the 2014 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures
- **Brian Cox OBE** – Professor of Particle Physics, Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council Advanced Fellow, and broadcaster
- **Sir Salvador Moncada** – Professor of Translational Medicine and Director of the Institute of Cancer Sciences
- **Steve Furber** – ICL Professor of Computer Engineering, one of the designers of the BBC Micro and the ARM 32-bit RISC microprocessor at Acorn
- **Alistair Burns** – Professor of Old Age Psychiatry, Vice Dean (Clinical Affairs) and National Clinical Director for Dementia, NHS England
- **Maxine Peake** – Honorary Professor of Literature and Performance RADA-trained actress, appearing in theatre, television, radio and film, including *The Theory of Everything*, *Shameless*, *Dinnerladies*, and *Peterloo*
- **David Olusoga OBE** – Professor of Public History, broadcaster, film-maker, and presenter of the BBC's landmark series *Civilisations* (2018)
- **Rob Bristow** – Professor of Cancer Studies, Director of the Manchester Cancer Research Centre, Chief Academic Officer of The Christie NHS Foundation Trust and Senior Group Leader for the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute

Globally influential

- There are more than 170 nationalities among our student population.
- Much of our research has a global impact, in areas including health and wellbeing, climate change, international trade and cohesive communities.
- We have agreements with a host of international institutions and organisations. For example:
  - The University of Melbourne on a funded mobility scheme to facilitate collaboration across research, teaching and professional support;
  - A three-way alliance between Manchester, Melbourne and Toronto creates opportunities across research, teaching and career prospects;
  - Research partnerships with Peking University Health Science Centre in China and also with Tsinghua University;
  - Dual award PhD programme with Universidad de Chile;
  - UK-Med on medical responses to international emergencies.
- We have exchange agreements in place with many institutions, allowing students from around the world to experience life and learning at Manchester.
- Our Jodrell Bank Observatory is the international headquarters for the Square Kilometre Array, the world's largest radio telescope. The telescope will help us to answer some of the biggest questions about the universe.
- Our range of online and blended learning courses and MOOCs enable a global audience

Size and scale

- We are one of the most popular universities in terms of undergraduate applications and have one of the largest student communities in the UK.
- We offer more than 1,000 degree programmes and had one of the broadest submissions of any university in the UK to the Research Excellence Framework in 2021, with research evaluated in 31 subject areas.
- Our scale allows our researchers to work across disciplines to find innovative solutions. For example, our work in biotechnology is centred at the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology, a hub of research that draws on the medical, physical, engineering, life and social sciences.

Transforming our campus

- Plans to transform the University's former North Campus into the world's next great innovation district are underway. Sister (formerly ID Manchester) is a £1.5 billion project that has the potential to create more than 10,000 new jobs in the next 15 years and play a vital role in the future of the UK science and technology sector.

From Manchester for the world

In October 2025, the University launched its new strategy to 2035, *From Manchester for the world*.

It sets our course to be a great civic university for the 21st century – creating knowledge for the public good, locally and globally, so we can do more of what matters for our students, our staff, our city and our partners around the world.

This is a framework for the future, not a fixed route. We will focus on where we can make the biggest difference, connect our strengths across teaching, research, innovation and partnerships, and work more deeply with our city, so ideas developed here deliver impact here and across the world.

The city of Manchester: industrious, inventive, international

- Often referred to as the 'original modern' city.
- The city of Manchester was at the heart of the Industrial Revolution in England, with an economy built on the cotton trade.
- A revolutionary and progressive spirit infuses Manchester's history. Many political movements have roots here – the Chartists, trade unionism and the suffragettes.
- The UK government is working to balance the UK economy through the Northern Powerhouse initiative. The University is playing a key role with the Henry Royce Institute becoming a central hub for advanced materials research.
- The government has devolved powers to Greater Manchester, including a healthcare budget. Through Health Innovation Manchester, the University, in partnership with leaders across health care research, academia and industry, is working to bring the most innovative health care solutions to the local population more quickly.
- The county of Greater Manchester has a population of more than 2.8 million and includes the UK's second most populous urban area.
- Manchester is reachable from London by rail in two hours, while Manchester Airport serves more than 190 direct destinations.
- Manchester is a multicultural city, with more than 200 languages spoken among long-term residents. It has the second largest Chinatown in the UK (the third largest in Europe).
- The city is famous for its sporting culture, particularly for its two football clubs, Manchester United and Manchester City. It is also home to Lancashire County Cricket Club, where international matches are often played, and the National Cycling Centre.
- Manchester boasts an enviable arts scene. It's home to the Hallé Orchestra, bands such as Oasis and The Smiths, writers such as Anthony Burgess and the University's own Jeanette Winterson, and the biennial Manchester International Festival, which brings world premieres to the city.
- The University's own Manchester Museum, John Rylands Library and the Whitworth are among the city's cultural landmarks, with the iconic Lovell Telescope just a short drive away at our Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) in Cheshire.
- In May 2018 Manchester Museum received a confirmed grant of £4,215,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop and transform the museum by providing new exhibition space, an improved programme of outreach and the north's first South Asian gallery. The finished building reopened in February 2023 and saw tens of thousands of visitors in its first week.
- In 2025, it was also the first university museum to be awarded European Museum of the Year, praised for how it has 'reimagined its mission, acknowledging and addressing its complex history by redefining the role of its collections and public programmes'.
- 2026 marked the first time the BRIT Awards were hosted outside of London. Jack Whitehall hosted the ceremony at Manchester's Co-op Live Arena and other fringe events including art trails and design exhibitions were hosted across the city. The Awards will return to the city in 2027.

University script

The University of Manchester is a place where research has a global impact, where students experience outstanding teaching and learning, helping them to develop into tomorrow's leaders, and where all activity is enriched by a commitment to social responsibility.

Manchester was the first and most eminent of England's civic universities. Today, we're part of the prestigious Russell Group of UK universities, with an international reputation for the highest level of research and teaching, as demonstrated by our position in the Academic Ranking of World Universities. In 2026 we were placed 51st in the world and sixth in the UK.

Looking ahead, we will define what it means to be a great civic university – this time, for the 21st century. *From Manchester for the world* means working with our city and region deeply to develop the ideas and solutions our communities and the world urgently need. From splitting the atom, isolating graphene, challenging social norms, and building the first programmable computer, Manchester has always sought to lead.

Our strategy is a framework for the future, not a fixed route. It focuses on the areas where we can make the biggest difference, while opening up future possibilities.

Our roots

The University was formed in 2004 by the merger of the Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology – institutions which both had their origins in the mid-19th century.

During our history there have been 26 Nobel laureates who have studied or worked with us. In fact, there are two on our current staff: Professors Sir Andre Geim and Sir Kostya Novoselov (both Physics).

In 2024, we celebrated our bicentenary: 200 years of education and innovation. During this milestone year we reflected on and celebrated our rich heritage of discovery, social change and pioneering spirit, which remains at the heart of all we do.

Our flagship bicentenary celebrations included a four-day festival, Universally Manchester, and hosting the prestigious THE World Academic Summit, welcoming more than 500 delegates from across the globe to explore our theme: 'Making a difference:

Research and innovation

Manchester has a rich history of ground-breaking research, from the splitting of the atom by Ernest Rutherford in 1917 to the isolation of graphene's properties by Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov in 2004.

Other pioneering discoveries include the work of Tom Kilburn, Freddie Williams and Alan Turing on the modern computer – the first stored program was run at Manchester – and the development of modern economics by trailblazers such as John Richard Hicks and William Arthur Lewis. The latter, on his appointment at Manchester, was Britain's first Black professor.

Today, some of the most exciting work at the University is in advanced materials, biotechnology, cancer, energy, and global inequalities – five areas that we describe as our research highlights. These highlights are examples of how our interdisciplinary research is helping to find unique solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges, from eradicating poverty to ensuring energy supply for future generations.

Our place as one of the UK's top research universities was confirmed in the results of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. 93% of our research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*), and we retained fifth place in the UK for research power overall.

Established in 2024, Unit M is maximising the impact of the University's world-class research and innovation at speed, across disciplines and through partnerships, to change people's lives for the better.

Unit M exists to answer a simple question: if the University is the region's biggest innovation asset, what should it do to drive innovation-led growth? Our answer is a disruption unit that experiments, makes mistakes and involves more people than every before in the process and benefits of innovation.

We believe the great universities of the 21st century will be those who go from discovery to impact in the quickest possible time.

A week-long celebration of innovation took place from Monday, 5 to Friday, 9 October 2026.

Through hands-on workshops, live demonstrations, awards, talks and networking events, the Festival showcased Manchester's vibrant, globally connected innovation ecosystem and brought together researchers, students, entrepreneurs, partners, investors and civic leaders to explore how ideas become impact.

Aligned with our strategy to 2035 – From Manchester for the world – and our ambition to deliver transformative innovation, the Festival showcased how our people, partnerships and ideas change lives locally and globally.

Teaching, learning and the student experience

Our student community is one of the largest in the UK. At present we have more than 46,000 students studying at the University.

This quality of research feeds into our taught courses, many of which are also designed to meet the needs of industry. We offer more than 1,000 degree programmes and receive more undergraduate applications than any other UK university.

We encourage all our undergraduate students to participate in Stellify, a select package of activities containing some of Manchester's most exciting and transformative student experiences.

Activities include: tackling ethical grand challenges relating to equality, sustainability and social justice in the modern world; studying optional interdisciplinary and international course units incorporating world-leading research; making a difference via community volunteering and developing key skills through leadership roles and work experience.

Students can even choose to work towards gaining a prestigious University award.

Social responsibility

Manchester is unique among UK universities in that social responsibility is one of our core goals, sitting equally alongside our commitments to world-class research and an outstanding learning and student experience.

We're first in the world in the 2026 Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings and the only university to feature in the top ten every year since they began in 2019. We rank first out of 1,603 universities across 114 countries.

Social responsibility informs everything we do. To encourage our students to become socially responsible citizens, we offer every Manchester undergraduate the opportunity to work together across disciplines to confront a new ethical grand challenge in each year of their study.

In 2023, Manchester became only the second university to be awarded a Platinum Engage Watermark from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement.

Our Manchester Bursary and Undergraduate Access Bursary are currently distributed to over 6,000 students (26% of our home undergraduate student body), representing an investment of over £11 million annually. More than 900 of our staff and alumni make a difference at state schools by volunteering as school governors – that's more than any other university.

Part of a pioneering city

Our city region is a big part of our identity, and the University and the city have long worked together to ensure its success. The city of Manchester was at the heart of the Industrial Revolution, and our predecessor institutions were opening the doors of education to the working classes of Manchester.

The UK government is pushing forward with the Northern Powerhouse initiative to rebalance the country's economy. The University is a driving force in Manchester's contribution, not least through the £235 million Henry Royce Institute for advanced materials research, which has its centre on our campus.

The city has always had an independent spirit, with political movements such as Chartism, trade unionism and the suffragettes – who included Manchester graduate Christabel Pankhurst among their leaders – having Mancunian roots. Today's Manchester combines that pioneering drive with industrial and civic innovation.

Greater Manchester has devolved powers from the UK government. Among these are control of long-term health and social care spending. The University will be helping to bring the most innovative healthcare solutions – for example, personalised medicine – to the local population more quickly as part of the unique Health Innovation Manchester deal we've entered with leaders across healthcare research, academia and industry.

In the city region we have a greater economic impact than the city's airport and its two football clubs, Manchester United and Manchester City, combined. And with nearly 12,800 staff, we're one of the largest employers in Greater Manchester.

Culture

Manchester is one of the most celebrated of British cities. Alongside its sporting heritage, Manchester's culture is the envy of most world cities. It's home to the Hallé Orchestra, bands such as Oasis and The Smiths, writers such as Anthony Burgess and the University's own Jeanette Winterson, and the biennial Manchester International Festival, which brings world premieres to the city. 2026 even saw the BRIT Awards leave London for the first time to be hosted at the city's Co-op Live Arena.

The University plays a big part in this, with our own Manchester Museum, John Rylands Library and the Whitworth among the city's cultural landmarks, and the iconic Lovell Telescope just a short drive away at our Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre.

Added to all of this is the fact that Manchester is a more affordable place to live and work than London. It's also a diverse, welcoming place, with up to 200 languages spoken by long-term residents.

It's no surprise that many of our graduates find that they are able to achieve

An international institution

While we're proud of our place in – and relationship with – the city of Manchester, we have a global impact – and we place great value on what students and staff from around the world can bring to our University.

We have more international students than any other UK university, with 14,475 coming here from outside the EU – more than a quarter of the student body. Similarly, around a quarter of our staff come from outside the UK.

The University has four global centres. Each has an established international presence and strong links with the local business community. Our centres in Dubai, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore offer a growing range of online and blended learning programmes, supporting MBA students learning by combining face-to-face and digital activities.

Our reach doesn't end there. We have the largest alumni community of any campus-based university in the UK, with more than 585,000 former students in more than 190 countries.

Philanthropy

The world is facing urgent challenges, from inequality and climate change to geopolitical instability and global health crises, putting at risk the future opportunities available to the next generation.

Challenge Accepted is The University of Manchester's ambitious fundraising and volunteering campaign. We're uniting alumni, donors, staff, students and civic, industry and community partners to tackle the world's toughest challenges and transform lives locally and globally.

Our ambition is to raise £400 million while also highlighting ways our community can make a difference through volunteering. This dual commitment strengthens our ability to fund our leading research, widen access to education and strengthen our response to global challenges.

Challenge Accepted is integral to Manchester 2035, providing the focus and momentum to realise our ambition to become a great philanthropic university. It will embed philanthropy more deeply across Manchester, strengthening the role it plays in enabling the University's long-term ambitions and connect people to the causes they care about.

The future

The future is inherently uncertain and at The University of Manchester we want the ability to define our future, not merely react to it.

We are living through a time of transformation. AI is reshaping how we teach, learn and discover. Climate change will require us to rethink our operations and how we conduct our research. Geopolitical instability and technology are blurring boundaries between states, institutions and people, bringing new kinds of political, economic and cultural challenges to our campus.

In the UK, the future of higher education funding is uncertain. At the same time, expectations are rising – on value for money, social impact and how well students are prepared for life beyond university. Universities need to be engines driving innovation, good jobs and inclusive growth in our communities and beyond.

Manchester must lead – setting out a clear vision that strengthens our city and region and tackles global challenges. We need to face the future as a community.

This is our strategy to 2035 – a framework for the future, not a fixed route. We are focusing on areas where we can make the biggest difference, while opening up future possibilities.