

# The University of Manchester public benefit statement

## Impact in Teaching, Learning and Student Experience

Despite lots of positive student feedback, our National Student Survey (NSS) results have remained persistently low. The NSS, which is completed every spring by final year undergraduates, shows our position in the sector, but also includes individual free text comments which help local areas and programme teams to understand and address student concerns. The NSS is stubbornly hard to improve – students complete it in their final semester, but they look back to their initial experiences at Manchester, so even very tangible improvements take a while to filter through.

NSS 2025, however, gives very positive indications that we are on an upward trajectory. Manchester was the highest improver in the Russell Group, and one of the biggest climbers in the sector, moving up 28 places. We have seen particular improvements in our priority themes of Student Voice and Assessment and Feedback, as well as Organisation and Management – and in every question covered by our pioneering university-wide NSS Action Plan for 2024-25, we saw double digit uplifts. Our students respond well to a coordinated, one University approach. There is still a lot to do, as we remain in the lower quartile for the sector.

However good our teaching and learning offer might be, we know students still have issues and concerns in accessing and making the most of their university experience – and a lot of that comes down to money. Cost of living pressures have not gone away, and even when students take the maximum student loan, there is a considerable gap in meeting their living costs. We know families try to support where they can, but they may also be under pressure; and not all our students have families to help.

The University is working to support students in two main ways. First, donors and friends are contributing to our Manchester Access and Success Fund. This Fund aims to ensure that a diverse range of talented students **arrive** at Manchester, but also **thrive** here.

Secondly, we have increased the value of our own bursaries and scholarships; and also raised the household income threshold which determines which students qualify for these awards. That means **more than 1,000 additional students** have benefitted from scholarships and bursaries in 2024-25, and those awards are also bigger. Our efforts are being recognised nationally and we were delighted to win the Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Support for Students in November 2024 for the Cost of Living Support project, co-created by the Students' Union and the University. It was a particular bonus to see three generations of Students' Union Officers on stage to collect the award!

We are also enhancing the experiences of our colleagues and students through new and improved technology and systems. Through the initial workshops and discussions of our developing Manchester 2035 Strategy, many voices told us 'we just want things to work' – and we know they don't always now. We have two major projects in development at present which are already making a positive difference.

In September 2025, we moved from Blackboard to Canvas by Instructure as our Campus Learning Environment. Canvas promises to be easier to navigate, more accessible, intuitive and flexible, encouraging colleagues to improve their teaching resources (and to declutter those resources as they move to Canvas – the equivalent of clearing out the garage **before** you move house). SEAtS, our Student Engagement and Attendance System, has also been a feat of organisation to launch and roll out, but thanks to huge collective efforts, we have seen 3.4 million student check-ins for classes this year alone. We want all our students to attend and benefit from their teaching sessions; but students have complex lives and can face challenges. Once a student begins to disengage from their studies, early intervention is essential to support them back on track; hence the importance of knowing about attendance and engagement and acting on that information quickly. Again, we are seeing external

recognition of these projects, with the SEAtS Engagement Analytics project shortlisted for the best change/transformation campaign at the Institute of Internal Communications awards.

The University has continued its active participation in the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Programme (UMHC), underscoring our ongoing commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. As members of the programme since it first launched in 2021, we continue to engage in UMHC practice sharing events, insight sharing sessions and communities of practice, and use the UMHC framework to help guide our work. In October 2025, we concluded the peer assessment and independent evaluation stages of the programme and were awarded a **UMHC Award accreditation**. The assessment process supported us to better understand our areas of strength and development to inform ongoing improvements, whilst recognising good practice along the way. Through our UMHC action plan, we will continue to partner with our students and colleagues to embed further enhancements.

Meanwhile, the University's planned redevelopment of its Fallowfield Campus is expected to mark a transformative chapter in reimagining student accommodation, increasing the average quality and value for money of its portfolio as it does so. The scheme is intended to not only meet growing demand for student housing but also to redefine the living experience for our student residents, blending modernity with environmental responsibility and community heritage.

With a **£500 million** investment, the project is planned to deliver 3,300 modern, high-quality bedspaces across five distinct neighbourhoods, each celebrating local history and character. A central hub will serve as the heart of the campus, complemented by dedicated amenity spaces, ancillary dwellings, and enhanced green areas. The demolition of Owens Park Tower—an iconic 1960s structure—was completed in spring 2025, paving the way for construction to begin in 2026. The phased handover of new buildings

will allow students to move in from 2028 through to 2031. Sustainability is central to the design, with the development aiming to be one of the largest Passivhaus-certified projects globally, alongside targeting BREEAM Excellent standards.

Finally, enhancing our teaching and learning, and the broader experiences of our learners, depends on supporting our excellent teachers and teaching leaders. We are currently celebrating the announcement of two new National Teaching Fellowships for Jenni Rose of the Alliance Manchester Business School, and Professor Ang Davies of the School of Health Sciences. For an unprecedented third year in a row, we have also won a CATE (Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence), this time for the PGCert Medical and Health Education Programme Team, led by Dianne Burns and Bip Choudhury. Well done to all the winners and the teams who have supported them!

## Research impact

The University is committed to using our research expertise and pioneering spirit to deliver solutions to the world's biggest problems and transform lives. Our researchers work collaboratively to push boundaries, redefine knowledge and accelerate the journey from discovery to real world impact. Our Talk 200 lecture and podcast series discusses how to address the biggest topics of the day including, health, digital and AI, climate change and energy, equality and justice.

We are leading cancer detection and prevention strategies, making biomedical and health science discoveries, and translating research into practice, allowing for earlier intervention and improved outcomes. This includes developing a new blood test that can tell doctors precisely how active a patient's cancer is, progressing a new method to detect early signs of Parkinson's disease, informing new UK-wide clinical guidelines for asthma diagnosis, and identifying genetic causes of hearing loss.

Our experts are exploring how to transform our energy systems. Breakthroughs include developing a hydrogen sensor that could pave the way for safer and cleaner energy and establishing a new way to improve the lifespan of zinc-ion batteries offering a more sustainable option for energy storage.

Addressing immediate challenges to the environment, our researchers have contributed to a river rescue kit supporting the collection of water quality data to inform policy, and have shaped guidance on decarbonising the music industry.

Contributing to a prosperous and inclusive world is central to our interdisciplinary research efforts. Our researchers collaborate globally and locally and informed a WHO report on the global loneliness crisis, developed frameworks on sustainable reforestation, and initiated discussions on equitable tourism development.

Our research institutes have continued to deliver national leadership with international impact, supporting the UK Government's Industrial Strategy Frontier Industries of Advanced Materials, AI, Engineering Biology, Quantum and Semiconductors.

Our research platforms have connected and amplified collaborations across the University contributing to research, impact and engagement locally and beyond.

Creative Manchester brought together leading voices from the arts and academia to discuss Manchester and Britain's untold musical heritage, Why Museums Matter and Miscarriages of justice. Our partnership with English National Opera explores how to engage with new communities and what it means to have an opera company based in the city-region.

Digital Futures hosted the annual Advances in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Conference and explored the collaborative and responsible use of AI and data science. The Civil Service Climate and Environment Conference brought our researchers and policymakers together to discuss how AI can support the government's housing ambitions.

The Healthier Futures platform hosted the Delivering Maternity Equity Summit and worked with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on an initiative to understand the links between health and housing.

Our Sustainable Futures platform is leading a partnership with the health industry to address the challenge of plastic waste in healthcare settings and via the Joined-Up Sustainability Transformations Centre will collaborate with communities, governments and

businesses to develop low-carbon living initiatives.

Extensive engagement with policymakers locally and nationally takes place through Policy@Manchester and the Greater Manchester Policy Hub. In the last year our researchers have contributed to policy discussions on a wide range of issues including local climate change, equitable social prescribing and young people's well-being.

## Research exploitation

Signalling a renewed and expanded focus on innovation, Unit M was launched with a mandate to drive regional innovation as an immediate step to solve the UK's growth and productivity challenge. Our £1.7bn innovation district, a joint venture with Bruntwood SciTech, opened its doors to hosting businesses in the Renold Innovation Hub, and revealed its new name, Sister.

Our Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (BEKE) team supported 335 awards with industry across research collaborations, consultancy and knowledge exchange partnerships. Income from industry research was £30.1m (23% on the four-year average). The most up to date sector results from HESA show a 47% growth in industry research income over the last four years and ranks us nationally at 5th, up from 6th in the previous year and 9th two years prior.

BEKE have supported 89 projects totalling £4.8m with SMEs, and the most recent data shows that we continue to be ranked 2nd for contract research income with SMEs. We remain a sector leader in Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, with a total portfolio of 16 active projects (£4.9m), with 75% of collaborating partners based in the North West. Our combined UKRI Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) portfolio (>£15m) is the largest nationally and in the last 12 months 59% of partner organisation applicants were based in the North West.

North-west based Saraco Industries engaged with the University through a UKRI IAA and KTP project, collaborating with an interdisciplinary team of materials science, biological physics and microbiology experts, to develop a world-first plastic free, biodegradable clinical disinfection wipe. Saraco estimated that this first-to-market product innovation has opened a £140m market opportunity and won the 2025 Bionow 'Project of the Year' award.





Jan Smith, DyNAMIC clinical trial patient



Team developing swab test for Parkinson's disease



Director of the Tyndall Centre, Professor Carly McLachlan, meeting King Charles III



Organic semiconductor hydrogen sensor



Three people putting River Rescue Kit into action



Professor April McMahon speaking at the Talk 200 lecture series

We have continued to grow and strengthen our institutional strategic business partnerships and now hold one of the largest and diverse portfolios in our peer group, with 24 strategic partners. This year, we formalised a strategic partnership with Amentum, a global leader in advanced engineering and innovative technology solutions, to drive advances in materials science, robotics, digitalisation, energy and social impact.

University of Manchester Innovation Factory Ltd. (UoMIF), a wholly owned subsidiary responsible for the commercialisation of IP, launched new deep-tech and life science spinout companies in 2024/25 and were ranked 4th in the Russell Group for spinout company creation in the newly published Spinout Register. UoMIF also maintained our sector leading position for IP and Commercialisation in the KEF. To further strengthen innovation and drive economic growth across the region, UoMIF collaborated closely with the four Technology Transfer Offices in Greater Manchester, and hosted an Investor Conference showcasing innovation from the Northern Triangle. Finally, our groundbreaking partnership with The University of Cambridge, the UK's first cross-UK innovation partnership, will drive economic growth for the UK and set an example for other cities to follow.

## Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement

The University of Manchester is unique in UK higher education in having social responsibility as a core goal. Significant progress has been made in all five areas of our Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement Plan: Social inclusion, Prosperous communities, Better health, Environmental sustainability and Cultural engagement. This plan is underpinned by a focus on People, Partnerships, Processes and Performance. The highlights below illustrate breadth, depth and impact across our campus, city-region and global partnerships.

### Social inclusion

We strengthened social mobility and inclusion through flagship programmes and new partnerships. Our Pathways to Law cohort graduated in partnership with the Sutton Trust, while Humanities partnered with The Access Project to support learners from under-resourced backgrounds into top universities. We also convened the Arthur Lewis Lecture with a focus on citizen empowerment

and inclusive participation.

To promote digital and financial inclusion, we introduced a joint Digital Equity Charter with the Students' Union and enhanced our student support package. Practical equality-of-opportunity initiatives ranged from IT-enabled laptop donations to local youth groups to a Faculty of Science & Engineering cooking-skills pilot supporting wellbeing and cost-of-living resilience.

Great Science Share for Schools (GSSfS) marked its 10th year with record engagement: 845,105 pupils took part in 2025 (up 26% year-on-year) across more than 40 countries, under the continued patronage of the UK National Commission for UNESCO. The campaign fosters scientific curiosity and pupil voice through ask-investigate-share activities in classrooms and communities.

### Prosperous communities

We continued to catalyse inclusive economic growth across Greater Manchester. The University launched Unit M – our new innovation capability – appointing its first CEO to connect assets, talent and innovation adoption across the region. Our £1.7bn innovation district opened under the new name Sister, welcoming its first tenants and unlocking the GM Investment Zone's potential for good jobs and productivity.

A new economic impact report underlined scale and reach: for every £1 invested in research, the University generates £5.95 in UK productivity benefits, with a total UK impact of £7.3bn in 2022–23. Entrepreneurship flourished, with alumni-founded ventures moving into the district and continued collaboration through the GM Innovation Accelerator.

### Better health

Our research, education and partnerships delivered tangible health benefits locally and globally. We launched the British Heart Foundation Manchester Centre of Research Excellence with £4m to accelerate world-class cardiovascular discoveries and translation. We also marked the launch of our Africa Strategy with partner visits in Kenya focused on shared SDG challenges.

Health equity and public engagement featured strongly: our Age-Friendly Futures Summit convened global partners to co-design age-friendly

environments, while alumni communities raised funds for early-career cancer researchers. Student-led and international outreach – from Roots to Dental and the DiPS programme in Kenya to antibiotic-awareness campaigns – demonstrated how service learning enhances population health. Our long-standing Mansoura Manchester Medical Program in Egypt nears its 20th anniversary, now training nearly 400 students annually and expanding access for scholars from crisis-affected regions.

### Environmental sustainability

We advanced decarbonisation and nature recovery at pace. Construction of the Medebridge solar farm – over 103,000 panels across 175 acres – progressed to energisation, and will be providing up to 60% of our electricity needs and cutting emissions by 12,000 tCO<sub>2</sub> per year. The project won AUDE Gold for Sustainability Impact and will enhance biodiversity while supporting research and teaching.

Campus-wide initiatives included a free bus trial to cut congestion and emissions, the Trash Talks campaign to clarify recycling, a Sustainability Careers Fair, and the launch of the reusable Bee Cup scheme with Manchester City Council and InOurNature. Research and civic action advanced through the JUST Centre on equitable sustainability transitions, an atmospheric monitoring station at Jodrell Bank, the River Rescue Kit, and our first zero-emissions non-residential building at Booth Street East. Partnerships with City of Trees and Friends of Medlock Valley supported local biodiversity.

### Cultural engagement

Our cultural institutions deepened public connection through collections, performance and co-creation. John Rylands Library marked its 125th anniversary with a year-long programme and The Secret Public: LGBTQ Pop 1955–1985; Manchester Museum hosted community-powered programming including for Diwali, Ramadan and Vaisakhi celebrations and helped bring the Silent Skies exhibition on air quality to new audiences. The Whitworth presented high-profile exhibitions and socially engaged practice; Jodrell Bank offered lectures, immersive shows and community projects. Creative Manchester curated city-wide literary and arts collaborations from the Festival of Libraries to new work on Arts-Based



Participatory Research, while the Humanities-funded Manchester Medieval Festival returned to celebrate the city's heritage.

## People, Partnerships and Processes

We strengthened the enabling environment for social responsibility. The Engaged Research Hub launched a suite of resources to grow capacity for participatory and co-produced research; we reviewed training for public engagement and advanced Faculty-level PPIE quality frameworks. Our new employee volunteering policy provides up to three days' paid leave, supporting staff to contribute skills to civic priorities.

### Partnerships across Greater Manchester intensified:

Manchester 2035 development involved extensive civic engagement; the GM Civic University Board set refreshed priorities and advanced green-skills work with FE colleges; and we deepened work with Citizens UK Greater Manchester on the Real Living Wage and youth mental health. Community engagement, celebration and recognition remained central through the Making a Difference Awards 2025, Volunteer of the Year Awards, Peer Support Awards and the Universally Manchester community festival.

## Performance

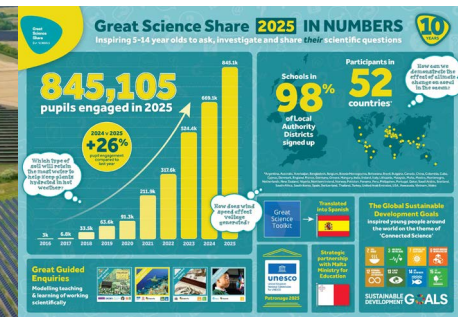
We have two key measures of success for social responsibility and civic engagement.

The first measure is the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings, based on performance towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2025 the University of Manchester was ranked first in the UK and Europe and second in the world for the third consecutive year. We are the only university globally to have ranked in the top ten in all seven years of the rankings and were placed first in the world for SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The 2025 exercise assessed 2,318 institutions across 130 countries.

The second measure is the UK Knowledge Exchange Framework section on Public and Community Engagement. In KEF4 there was no new requirement for updated information on public and community engagement and we therefore retained the highest top-quintile position.



Solar farm in Ockendon, Essex



Great Science Share for Schools 2025 infographic



Summer solstice event at Jodrell Bank, including Jazzie B of Soul II Soul



Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2025 results



University of Manchester and Bupa collaboration

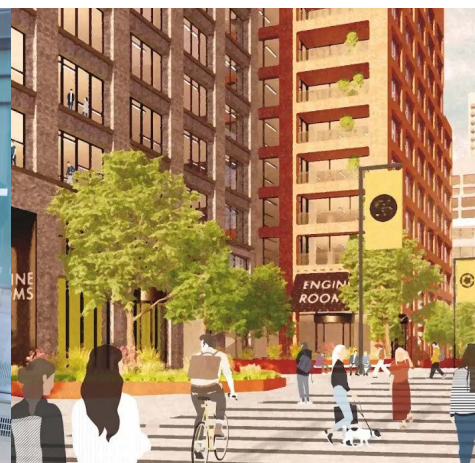


The Maternity Equity Summit, 2025





Unit M team at The University of Manchester



Artist's impression of Sister development



Diwali celebrations at Manchester Museum



Bill Newman, Professor of Translational Genomic Medicine



Saraco team winning 2024 Bionow 'Project of the Year' award