

The Future-Ready University: New Markets, New Models, New Mindsets

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Flexible
Learning



Why Lifelong Learning: Policy Landscape

The evolving role of higher education

The higher education landscape has changed - we as a university are responding to both educational and workplace shifts.

75%

of learners prefer flexible learning, with a preference for short courses and certificates*



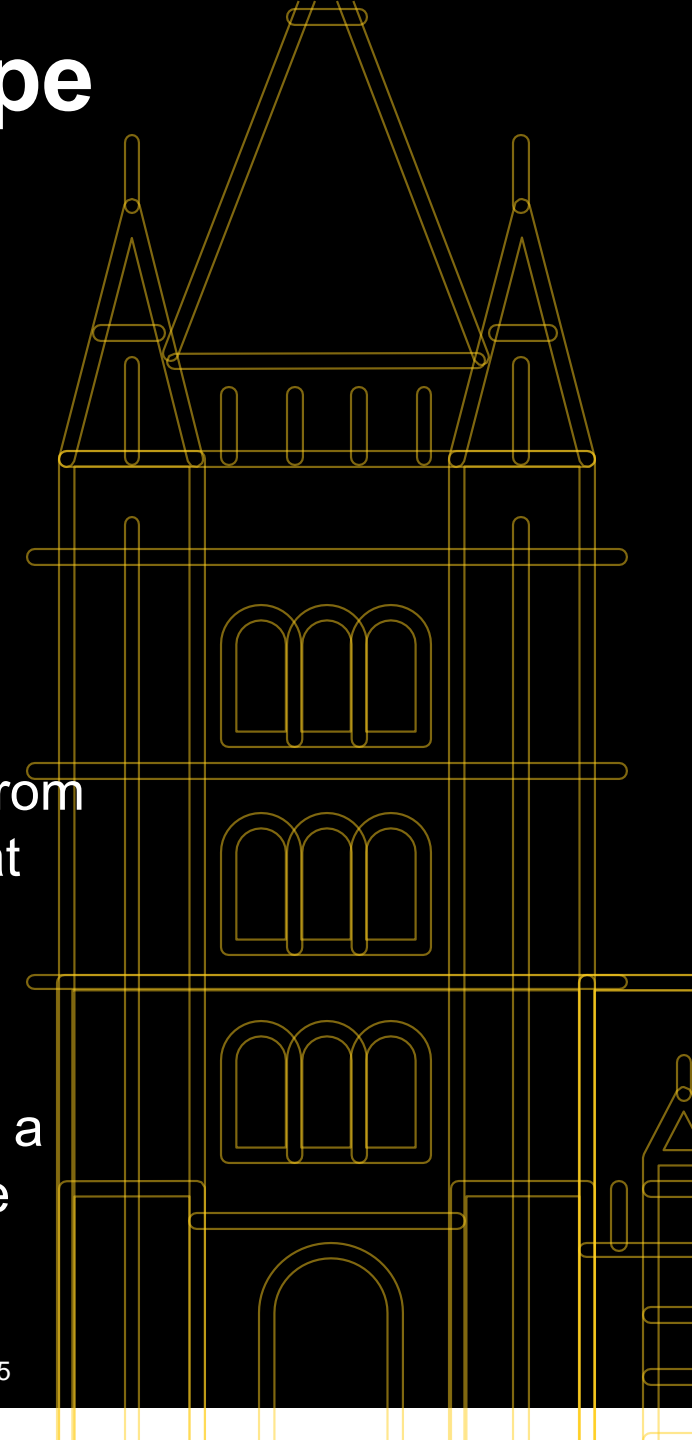
Department
for Education

Lifelong Learning Entitlement (from 2026/27) funds modular study at Levels 4–6



Apprenticeship Levy reform into a “Growth & Skills Levy” to enable more flexible training

* UALL REPORT ‘MAKING LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRAL TO UNIVERSITY STRATEGY’, 2025



Strategy 2035

Flexible, Personalised and Digitally-Enabled Learning

Creating a new kind of learner experience – flexible, connected and personalised – blending digital innovation with in-person support and combining hands-on, partner-enabled learning with our local and global connections

PACE, PLACE, PATHWAY: VISION TO BE A LEARNING PARTNER FOR LIFE

The University to Partner With: supporting Innovation

By 2035, we will be the partner of choice for those who share our commitment – to excellence and to turning knowledge into impact – for the public good.



Addressing the Paradox

Universities are built
on robust governance and quality assurance

Our regions and employers require “just-in-time skills”

Rapid job change, employer skills shortages, and funding reform make lifelong learning economically essential.

Topics such as cloud computing, cyber security and sustainability are moving too quickly for traditional degrees and approval cycles

We need faster, more agile
options

The Industrial Strategy's Growth Driving Sectors and the Frontier Industries within them



Advanced Manufacturing

- Aerospace
- Advanced Materials
- Agri-tech
- Automotive
- Batteries
- Space



Creative Industries

- Advertising and Marketing
- Film and TV
- Video Games
- Music, Performing and Visual Arts



Clean Energy Industries

- Wind (Onshore, Offshore and Floating Offshore)
- Fusion Energy
- Nuclear Fission
- Hydrogen
- Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS), including Greenhouse Gas removals
- Heat Pumps



Digital and Technologies

- Artificial Intelligence
- Engineering Biology
- Advanced Connectivity Technologies
- Quantum Technologies
- Semiconductors
- Cyber Security



Financial Services

- FinTech
- Insurance and Reinsurance Markets
- Sustainable Finance
- Capital Markets
- Asset Management and Wholesale Service

Defence

- Drones and Autonomous Systems
- Combat Air
- Directed energy weapons
- Complex weapons
- Maritime capabilities



Life Sciences

- Pharmaceuticals
- Medical Technologies (MedTech)

Professional and Business Services

- Accountancy, Audit, and Tax
- Management Consultancy
- Legal Services



Understanding our Drivers



Embrace cultural shifts

- Changing career patterns
- Work-life balance
- Study alongside other commitments
- Continued service to our alumni



Engage with social/economic drivers

- Social purpose and our mandate as a Civic University
- Support policy changes, such as Growth & Skills Levy
- Address needs of local and strategic industry partners – industrial strategy



Improve learner experience

- Contribute to high quality T&L innovating new delivery models.
- Take advantage of the capabilities delivered by Flexible Learning Programme – eg move to a new Virtual Learning Environment



Mitigate against external risks

- De-risk our portfolio & attract a diverse learner cohort
- Financial sustainability by diversifying income sources

New Mindsets

Flexible pathways



- Meeting a growing need for new educational pathways
- Responding to government policy, eg Skills & Growth Levy
- Embracing and embedding breadth of educational pathways that give access to a Manchester education throughout a learner's lifetime

Flexible first



- Supporting students and staff to develop their digital skills
- Interactive learning resources on-campus and online
- A seamless and accessible digital infrastructure
- Giving students access to the software and hardware that supports their learning.

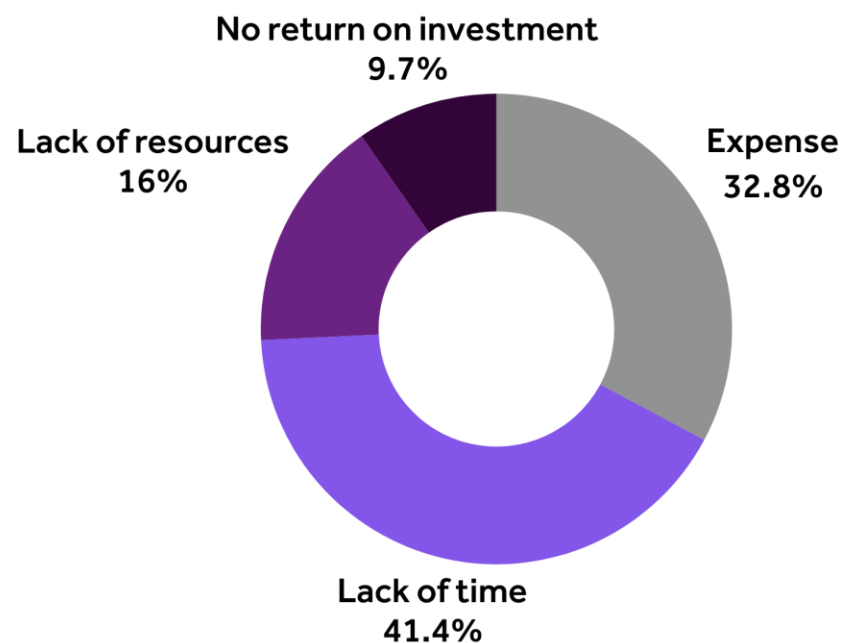
Design and delivery by team



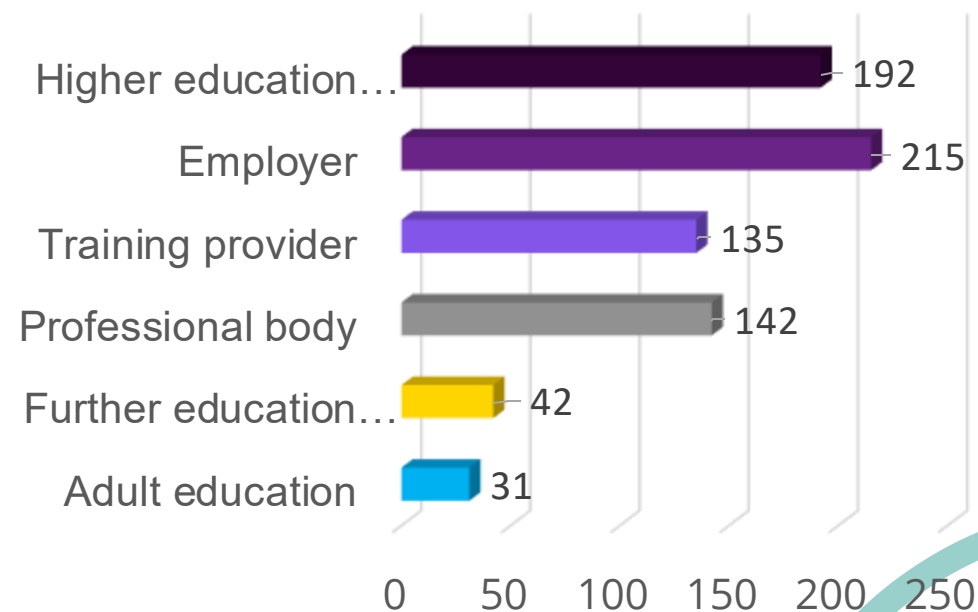
- Shifting ownership of course creation towards design and delivery of teaching and assessment by a specialist team.
- More support for colleagues in designing a learning offering that works for diverse audiences and can be delivered through various modes.

New Markets: Our Alumni perspective

Barriers:

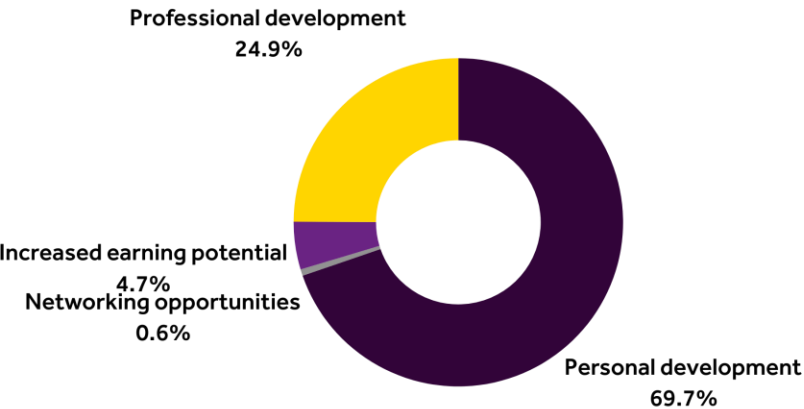


Where have Manchester alumni engaged with Lifelong Learning?

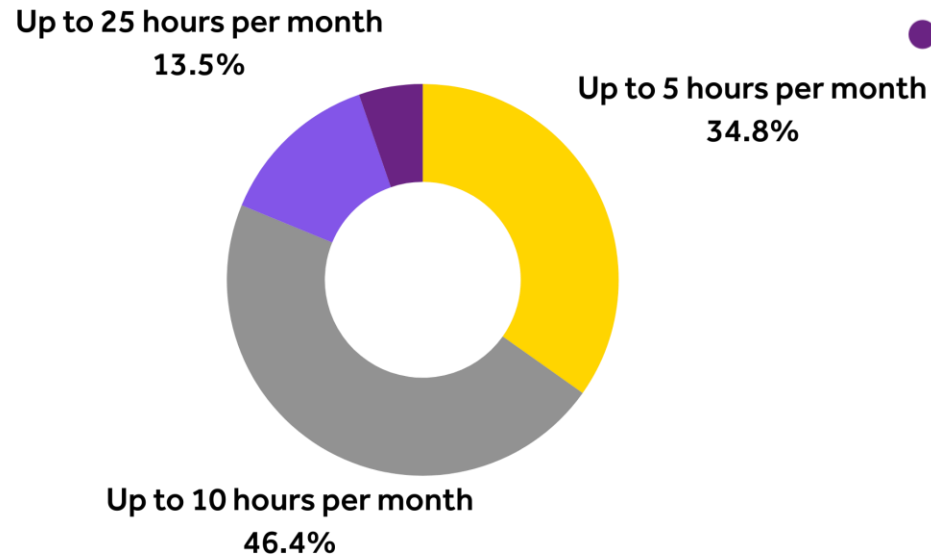


New markets: Our Alumni perspective

What is the greatest benefit of lifelong learning?

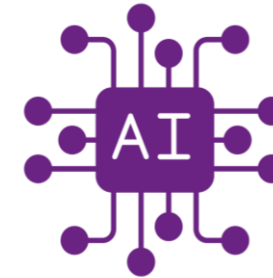


How much time for lifelong learning?



Areas of Interest:

- AI, digital skills and programming
- Leadership and development skills
- Data science & finance



New Models



Business –
to-
Business

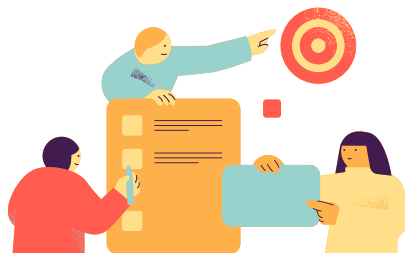
CPD/Short
Courses

Micro-
credentials

Early 2023 - A Problem Analysis – what were the barriers?



No effective **reward** and **recognition** of non-standard pathways



Local processes, policy and digital systems, are **absent/not scalable**



Finance and recognition **does not have parity** with other teaching/research



Market insight and business engagement **not embedded within business as usual**

Strategic Outcomes

Overall Outcome: We Can Respond More Effectively to Lifelong Learning Opportunities through a coordinated & supported approach

Improved Knowledge & Understanding of Current Lifelong Learning Provision

UoM has the capabilities to respond to LLL opportunities

FLP (LLL) has developed Civic, Industrial and Internal partnerships that enable LLL

Engagement with Faculties

T&F Group on Professional Learning

Consultancy & Promotion Policy

Costing

Appraisal and Approval

Insight

Civic Partners

Industrial Partners

Internal Partners

Delivery Engine: Pilots and Pathfinders

Building our Capabilities: Three Enablers

Enabler 1: Protected time – no longer a “fringe” activity

- **Seed funding** to buy out time for pilots: co-design, build, pilot, evaluation
- **Collaborative model:** calls for projects to Faculties + selection criteria + support offer
- **Outcome:** Design + Development by team, (academic + learning designer + operational support – **Education Development Team**)



Enabler 2: Space to Fail – in a supported way

- **Pilots and pathfinders** gave space and time to determine what works and what doesn't
- **No commercial pressure** and we have learnt valuable lessons regarding working with industry
- **Outcome:** Strong industry collaborations built on trust & co-design ethos



Enabler 3: Building Capability – minimising time to launch

- **Costing models:** worked together with finance teams and now have templates for different products
- **Approvals – raising visibility and solidifying industry partnerships:** worked with stakeholders (Heads of Schools/Faculties) to define a process
- **Outcome:** Viable programmes, properly resourced, addressing real industry needs

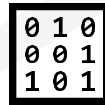


New Models: Short Course Co-Design

INDUSTRY PARTNER

SHORT COURSE

AstraZeneca 



Viable AI for
Organisational Impact

FUJITSU



Digital Sustainability

TESCO



Making Net Zero
Happen: Fashion and
Home Textiles

Practical Takeaways

1. **Understand** your market – your alumni and partners are your greatest asset
2. **Analyse** your operational capabilities & infrastructure
3. **Appreciate** your institutional culture and be prepared to challenge it!

Thank You

Questions/Feedback?

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