MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

From Manchester
for the world



Candidate brief

Two Schools, Two Leadership Opportunities:
Vice Dean & Head of School of Medical Sciences
Vice Dean & Head of School of Health Sciences

October 2026

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Faculty	Biology, Medicine and Health
School	Medical Science & Health Science
Reports to	Professor Ashley Blom
Duration	Initial five year term, with the possibility of extension
Location	Manchester

Enquiries about vacancy shortlisting and interviews
Email: talent.attraction@manchester.ac.uk

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in joining the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health at The University of Manchester.

Seldom do opportunities arise to be part of a defining moment in an organisation's history, and it is truly an extraordinary time to be joining the University. With the launch of our new strategy to 2035, we are redefining what a 21st century higher education experience looks and feels like.

The traditional educational paradigm is being challenged like never before and we firmly believe our role is to provide students with the agility and, above all, curiosity to go into a world transforming at an unimaginable pace. This presents opportunities to rethink not only how we deliver our programmes, including through online provision and new technologies, but smashing disciplinary boundaries to unleash the power of learning without borders.

Increasingly our research is transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries and we believe that to solve the next generation of health challenges facing local and global communities, we need to leverage the full breadth of expertise, knowledge and methodologies the University has to offer. This involves drawing on the wealth of intellect from academics, technicians and Professional Services colleagues across the organisation as we unite to build healthier futures for everyone, from Manchester for the world.

We hope you'll consider joining us on the journey ahead.

Ashley Blom
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty

and

Beth Micakovic
Executive Director of Faculty Operations



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About the University

The University of Manchester is recognised globally for our pioneering research, breadth of teaching and learning and for our commitment to social responsibility.

The world's big challenges demand urgent action – we're working across boundaries and disciplines to create healthier, more equal futures; helping to eradicate poverty; ensuring energy supply for future generations; and protecting our planet for the years to come.





Our history

The University of Manchester was England's first civic university, built for an industrial age. We trace our roots to 1824 with the Manchester Mechanics' Institution and the Manchester Royal School of Medicine. The modern university was formed in 2004 through the merger of the Victoria University of Manchester and UMIST.

We have a rich history of attracting brilliant minds, with 26 Nobel laureates among our current and former staff and students, including Ernest Rutherford, Arthur Lewis, and most recently, Andre Geim, Kostya Novoselov and Simon Johnson.



The present

Part of the Russell Group, The University of Manchester is one of the UK's largest single site universities, spanning STEM, the arts and social sciences. With a £1.35bn turnover, major capital investment and more than 500,000 alumni, we are a global institution recognised for excellence in education and innovation.

Our strategy to 2035, launched in 2025, focuses on five areas to go further and faster, driving innovation, skills and good jobs in the region and country, while addressing global challenges. These priorities build on our firm foundations of teaching and research excellence, values-led social responsibility, deep civic roots with global reach, and a culture with equity, diversity and inclusion at its heart.

Manchester and the region

Manchester is the original modern city, birthplace of industrial and social movements that shaped the world. The University is a proud civic institution, central to the region's economic, social and cultural life, and a partner in Greater Manchester's Civic University Agreement.

We contribute to the city's rich cultural landscape through institutions such as Manchester Museum, the Whitworth and Jodrell Bank.

Manchester, ranked in the top three of *Time Out*'s World's Best Cities, is a cosmopolitan, globally recognised cultural centre, home to leading theatres, orchestras and major developments like MediaCityUK, Aviva Studios and HOME.



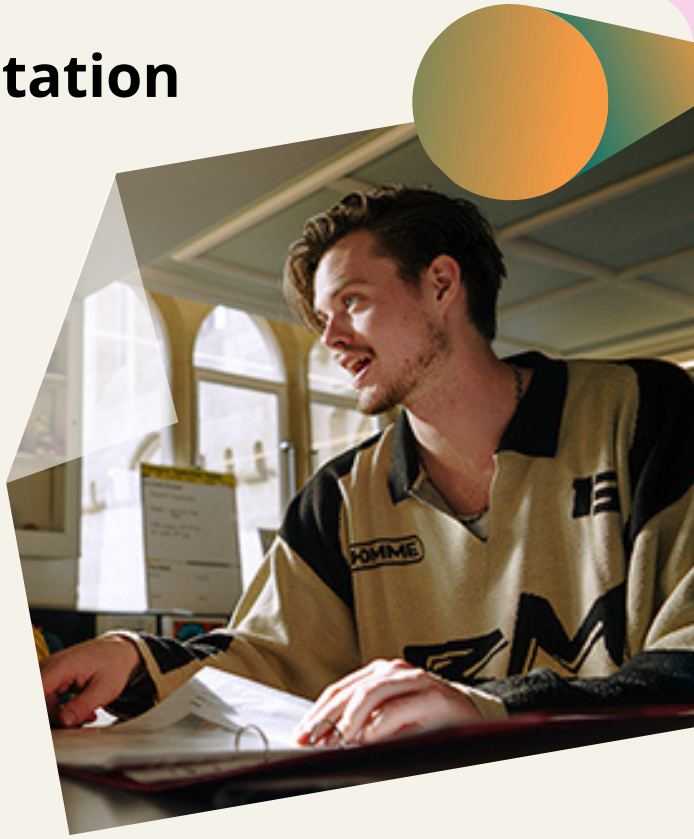
Global rankings and reputation

The University has a global reputation for excellence in research, teaching and civic engagement. We rank 35th in the world (QS 2026), with 93% of our research rated world leading or internationally excellent (REF 2021).

We are first in the UK and Europe, and second globally, for social and environmental impact (*Times Higer Education* Impact Rankings 2025) – the only university to place consistently in the global top ten since the rankings began.

Manchester's expertise supports partners worldwide and our campus brings together students from more than 170 nationalities, making us one of the world's most international universities.

Learn more about our rankings and reputation: manchester.ac.uk/about/rankings



From Manchester for the world

***From Manchester for the world* is our strategy to 2035, defining our ambition to be a great civic university for the 21st century.**

Our strategy focuses on five priorities: flexible, digitally enabled learning; accelerating research impact; driving innovation; strengthening partnerships; and modern, data driven services.

Realising the ambitions of our strategy will define our next decade and beyond, and work to achieve this is already underway. In 2026, we partnered with Microsoft, becoming the first university in the world to provide Microsoft 365 Copilot access and training to all students and staff.

Read our full strategy – *From Manchester for the world:* manchester.ac.uk/about/manchester-2035/full-strategy

"As we enter our third century, we stand at a pivotal moment. *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."

Professor Duncan Ivison
Manchester's President and Vice-Chancellor.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

From our earliest days, we've worked to break down barriers and improve lives. Today we are committed to building a truly inclusive university where equity, access and belonging shape our work. We invest in leadership, programmes and data to support this ambition and report our progress annually.

We are committed to meeting and exceeding our obligations under current legislation and by doing more, we build on Manchester's existing reputation for rich diversity. Recognising, embracing and valuing difference leads to improvements for all.

University leadership



Professor Duncan Ivison
President and Vice-Chancellor

Professor Ashley Blom
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

Professor Fiona Devine
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

Professor Colette Fagan
Vice-President for Research

Patrick Hackett
Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

Professor Jenn Hallam
Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students

Professor John Holden
Vice-President for Civic Engagement and Innovation

Ele Morrissey
Director of People

Professor Sarah Sharples
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering

Professor Nalin Thakkar
Vice-President for Social Responsibility

George Whalley
Interim Chief Financial Officer

Read detailed biographies of the University's senior officers:
www.manchester.ac.uk/about/people/university-executive-team/

Governance

The University of Manchester's governance structure reflects the principles of good governance in higher education. Responsibility is held by the following bodies:

Board of Governors

The University's governing body, chaired by Philippa Hird. Its 23 mostly lay members hold ultimate responsibility for strategic direction and financial oversight.

General Assembly

A two-way forum through which the University shares achievements and receives feedback from its wider constituencies. It has around 100 members.

Senate

The University's principal academic authority, responsible to the Board of Governors for promoting research and maintaining academic standards in teaching.

About the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health



The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health brings together an integrated and world-leading community of researchers, educators and clinicians focused on understanding life, improving health and transforming healthcare delivery. The Faculty combines basic discovery science with clinical application and patient care – delivering transformative learning, research and societal impact.

The Faculty comprises three Schools, each with specialist divisions that reflect both academic depth and interdisciplinary strength:

- School of Biological Sciences – advancing fundamental and applied bioscience research
- School of Medical Sciences – delivering outstanding medical education and biomedical research
- School of Health Sciences – training healthcare professionals and driving innovation in health practice, policy and professional development

Together, these Schools cover key areas such as biomedical sciences, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, psychology, optometry and population health.

The Faculty's research is internationally recognised, consistently ranking highly in national assessments and contributing to breakthroughs in areas such as infection and immunity, cardiovascular and cancer sciences, neuroscience, public health and clinical innovation. In the 2026 QS World University Rankings by Subject, we ranked 10th in the world for Nursing, 27th for Life Sciences and Medicine, and top 20 for various other subjects.

Our 13,000-plus students benefit from high-quality teaching and an education shaped by the latest research and clinical practice. Programmes range from undergraduate, master's and postgraduate research courses to continuing professional development (CPD) courses that support lifelong learning and professional excellence.

The Faculty's work extends beyond Manchester, with international partnerships and global health initiatives that improve wellbeing around the world – such as cancer partnerships in Kenya and the SMARThealth programme in Indonesia. It also embeds social responsibility into its mission, contributing to community health, widening participation in education and public engagement.

Faculty leadership team



Ashley Bloom
Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty

Allan Pacey
Deputy Dean of the Faculty

Elizabeth Micakovic
Executive Director of Faculty Operations

Andy Trafford
Vice-Dean for Research and Innovation

Keith Brennan
Vice-Dean for Internationalisation

Paul Dark
Vice-Dean for Health and Care Partnerships

Natalie Gardiner
Vice-Dean for Social Responsibility

Georgina Moulton
Vice-Dean for Teaching, Learning and Students

Rachel Simpson
Interim Director of Faculty Finance

Stephen Johnston
Lead People Partner

Heads of School

Simon Hubbard
Vice-Dean and Head of the School of Biological Sciences

Hilary Mairs
Vice-Dean and Interim Head of the School of Health Sciences

Andy Brass
Vice-Dean and Interim Head of the School of Medical Sciences

The role

The University of Manchester is seeking two outstanding academic leaders to join the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (FBMH) as Vice-Dean and Head of School, leading either the School of Medical Sciences or the School of Health Sciences. These are significant leadership opportunities at a pivotal moment for our university, our faculty and the wider health and higher education sectors.

As Vice-Dean and Head of School, you will set a clear academic direction, bring people together around shared ambitions and create an inclusive environment where colleagues and students can thrive. Your leadership will advance excellence in teaching, research and innovation, strengthen the student experience and extend the School's contribution to social responsibility and civic life.

As a member of the Faculty Executive and the University's extended leadership team, you will help shape decisions at School, Faculty and institutional level. Working closely with the Dean, Faculty colleagues and the Director of School Operations, you will unite academic and Professional Services expertise to turn strategy into action, supporting a joined-up, One University approach.

This is a broad and influential leadership role. You will oversee School performance, resources, partnerships and governance, while promoting excellence in teaching, research, innovation, student experience, social responsibility and civic engagement. You will also play a key role in strengthening the School's culture, external profile and long-term sustainability.

Beyond the University, you will strengthen partnerships across the NHS, Greater Manchester's health and care system, industry, government, civic organisations and academic partners, opening new opportunities for collaboration, innovation and impact to translate education and discovery into better health and wider public benefit.

Read more about our Faculty and Schools:
https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/about/structure/

Key accountabilities

As Vice-Dean and Head of School, you will shape the academic direction, culture and future success of your School. Bringing together talented colleagues, students and partners, you will turn ambition into meaningful outcomes across education, research and innovation. As a member of the Faculty Leadership Team, you will also influence decisions and priorities beyond the School, contributing to the wider success of The University of Manchester.

Shape the School's future
Develop and deliver a compelling strategy that builds on the School's strengths and opens up new opportunities. Set clear priorities, champion interdisciplinary collaboration and lead change with colleagues and students, aligning the School's ambitions with Faculty and University goals.

Advance academic excellence and impact
Create the conditions for outstanding teaching, research, innovation and knowledge exchange. Develop a distinctive, relevant and sustainable academic portfolio, strengthen research funding and support collaborations that translate expertise into wider benefit.

Inspire and develop your people
Build a shared sense of purpose and an inclusive, empowering culture where colleagues can thrive. Attract and develop talent, strengthen academic and Professional Services leadership, and champion fair approaches to performance, progression and recognition.

Put students at the heart of the School
Lead an excellent and inclusive student experience, from recruitment and transition through to progression and outcomes. Uphold academic standards, strengthen teaching and support, and ensure students have a meaningful voice in shaping their education.

Build partnerships and strengthen reputation
Act as an ambassador for the School, extending its national and international reach. Deepen relationships with NHS organisations, Health Innovation Manchester, industry, civic and community partners to create opportunities for education, research, innovation and social responsibility.

Key accountabilities

Secure sustainable success
Take accountability for the School's academic, financial and operational performance. Working with the Director of School Operations, align budgets, people, estate and facilities with strategic priorities, grow income opportunities and embed environmental sustainability in decision-making.

Champion a supportive and accountable culture
Promote equality, wellbeing, accessibility, academic freedom and respectful debate. Ensure sound governance, effective risk management and a safe environment, combining transparent decision-making with collective responsibility for the School's success.

Person specification

Academic Standing & Knowledge

You will bring academic credibility and a strong understanding of the higher education environment, including:

- Academic standing and a record of achievement that establishes credibility with colleagues and external partners.
- A commitment to excellence in teaching, research and innovation.
- Knowledge of higher education policy, governance, quality assurance and relevant external frameworks.

Skills

You will be able to operate confidently across organisational, academic and professional boundaries, bringing:

- Ability to provide strategic direction, create shared purpose and translate priorities into effective delivery.
- Sound judgement and the ability to make evidence-informed decisions while balancing competing priorities.
- The ability to build relationships and work collaboratively across organisational, professional and disciplinary boundaries.
- An influential and inclusive communication style, with the ability to listen, consult and build consensus.
- The ability to manage people, resources, risk and organisational performance.

Leadership & Experience

You will have experience of leading in a complex academic or research-intensive environment, including:

- Experience of leading at a senior level within a university or another complex research- or education-focused environment.
- A record of developing and delivering strategic and academic plans.
- Experience of leading change, improving performance and developing inclusive and effective teams.
- Financial and operational management experience, including responsibility for budgets and organisational resources.
- Experience of developing productive relationships and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.

Key behaviours

One University

A 'One University' approach, whereby we break down silos and work collaboratively towards furthering the University's strategic goals, vision and values.

People-Centered

Committed to prioritising high performance to deliver great people- centred experiences.

Agility

Demonstrate a commitment to agility and continuous improvement by embracing change, championing innovation, and being flexible and forward thinking to adapt.

Sustainability

A sustainable approach that safeguards our future university by championing environmental practices, advancing digital capability, and supporting financial stability and philanthropic initiatives.

Inclusion

A commitment to furthering equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing to create a positive work environment and culture.

Social responsibility

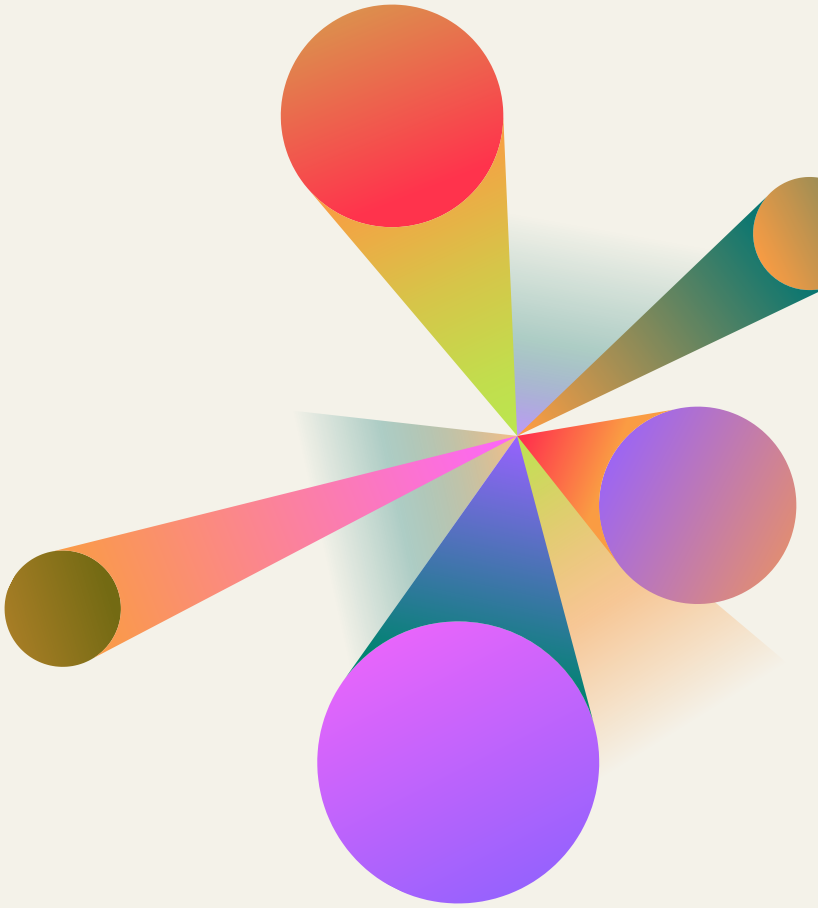
Promote and champion the University's social responsibility ambitions to advance social inclusion, prosperous communities, better health and cultural engagement.

Freedom of speech and academic freedom

Support the University's commitment to securing and actively promoting the importance of free speech and academic freedom within our community.

People leadership

Demonstrate effective leadership by empowering, motivating and developing teams to achieve high performance. Build a collaborative and inclusive work environment and provide clear direction, support and feedback.



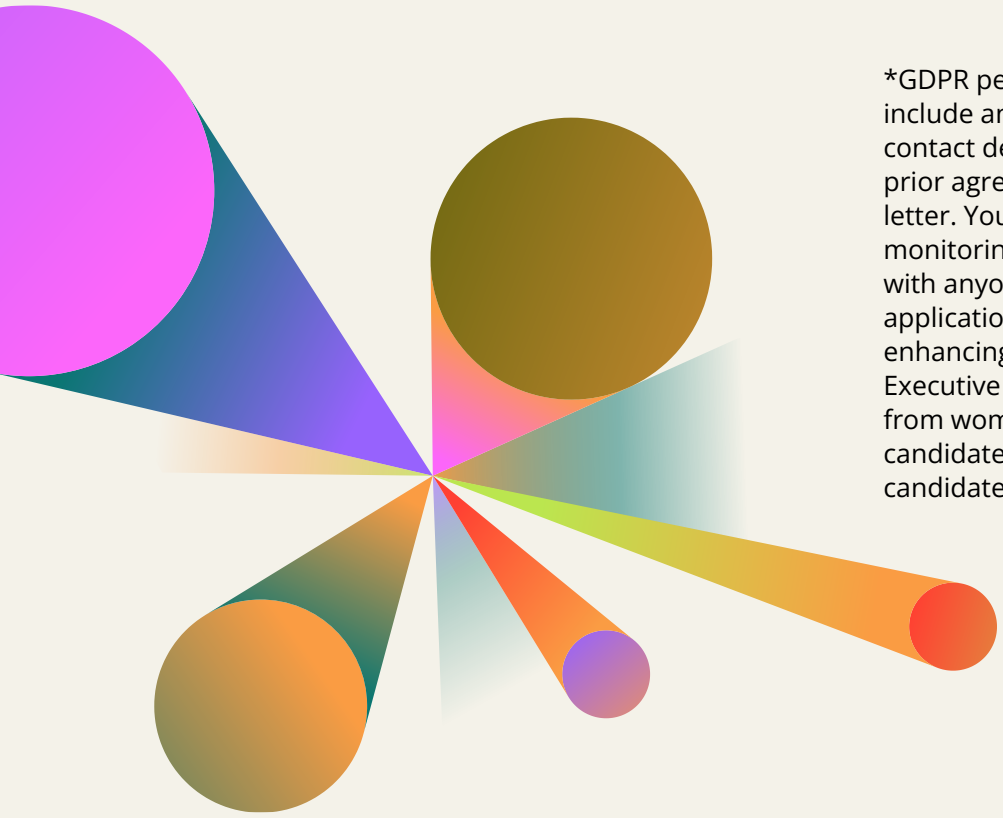
How to apply

To apply, please visit the job advert on the University of Manchester website and search for reference BMH-032454. Applications close at midnight on 15th November 2026.

Please note that panel interviews are due to take place on Monday 30th November 2026.

For informal enquiries about the role, please contact Rosie Harmshaw at talent.attraction@manchester.ac.uk.

In accordance with GDPR guidelines*, we are only able to process your sensitive personal data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life or sexual orientation) with your express consent.



*GDPR personal data notice – please do not include any sensitive personal data, including the contact details of your chosen referees (without prior agreement), within your CV and covering letter. Your completed 'equal opportunities monitoring and consent form' will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. We are committed to further enhancing the diversity of our University Executive and particularly welcome applications from women, Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority candidates, candidates with disabilities and candidates with other protected characteristics.



We are an open place of enquiry and challenge. We embrace and celebrate difference, diversity and debate, and we pride ourselves on being a place of education, learning and community where we are able, within the law, to question and test received wisdom, express new ideas and explore controversial or unpopular topics and opinions. Find out more from our Policy on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

The University of
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