

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Candidate Brief

Director of Business Engagement and
Knowledge Exchange

August 2025





The University of Manchester is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of sex, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or transgender status, age, or nationality.



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this role at The University of Manchester. The University has a rich heritage of discovery, social change and a pioneering spirit, which has been at the heart of what we do since 1824. We were founded to make a positive impact on the community we serve, and over the past 200 years, we have consistently delivered on the vision of our founders.

Today we are one of the UK's largest single-site higher education institutions, with more than 13,000 members of staff and 46,000 students. This is a truly diverse global community collectively recognised across the world for excellence in teaching, research and impact. This scale brings with it enormous potential, and a responsibility to act to address some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. This responsibility is what motivates us to continue pushing boundaries across our mission.

This is a tremendously exciting time to join The University of Manchester. We are looking to the future with optimism, reflecting on our proud history but also looking ahead with ambition – thinking about how we can enhance our impact and reach in a rapidly changing world and commencing the process of reviewing our strategic plan.

We look forward to meeting you.

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About the University

The University of Manchester is recognised globally for its 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.

In 2024, we celebrated our bicentenary: 200 years of education and innovation. This milestone event was an exciting time to reflect on the past, recognising our key discoveries, pioneering ideas and world firsts while looking forward to what our third century could bring.

Our history

The University of Manchester was the first and most eminent of England's civic universities. Our earliest roots can be traced back to 1824 with the formation of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, founded as part of a national movement for the education of working men, and with the creation of the Manchester Royal School of Medicine.

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).

We have a rich history of attracting brilliant minds to the University, with 25 Nobel laureates among our current and former staff and students, including Ernest Rutherford, Arthur Lewis, and most recently, Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov.

The present

Part of the prestigious Russell Group of UK universities, The University of Manchester is one of the UK's largest single-site higher education institutions with a broad disciplinary base across STEM and the arts and social sciences. We operate at scale with an annual turnover of £1.35 billion, a significant ongoing capital investment programme and more than 500,000 alumni.

The University is a truly global institution, with a reputation for education and innovation that resonates across the world. We are consistently ranked among the top universities in the world across all significant international rankings.

We are the most popular university in the UK for UCAS applications and have around 17,000 international students in our total student community. Our students come to live and study in Manchester and learn to be global citizens. They are attracted by our powerful sense of place, our academic ranking, the diversity of our courses, the impact of our social responsibility and by the city's rich cultural and sporting heritage.



The city of Manchester and the region

Manchester is the original modern city, responsible for pioneering events and movements that shaped the past and continue to influence the world as we know it today. The Industrial Revolution powered by canals and steam had its origins here – alongside it came fundamental societal developments such as trade unionism, the cooperative movement and the suffragettes.

The University is a proud Manchester institution – inspired by its revolutionary history, we act courageously and challenge assumptions to create the exceptional.

We are an anchor institution: critical to the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of the city and our region. The University is committed to its local community, and we recognise the importance of our civic role. In collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, Royal Northern College of Music, University of Bolton and the University of Salford, we have developed a joint Civic University Agreement with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and its ten local authorities to drive social and economic change in the city-region.

We make a significant contribution to the city and region's cultural credentials, with our own Manchester Museum, John Rylands Research Institute and 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.

Manchester has been ranked as the top UK city to live in (*The Economist's* Global Liveability Index 2022) and in 2021, the city was ranked in the top three of *Time Out's* World's Best Cities.

It's a cosmopolitan city, and its cultural life is internationally renowned. There are three outstanding professional theatre companies, the concert halls of the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic orchestras, HOME, and Europe's fastest-growing Chinatown.

Among developments enriching the area's cultural life are the Lowry Centre and MediaCityUK at Salford Quays, the Bridgewater Concert Hall, the refurbished City Art Gallery, and the Imperial War Museum North, designed by Daniel Libeskind, in Trafford.

Global rankings and reputation

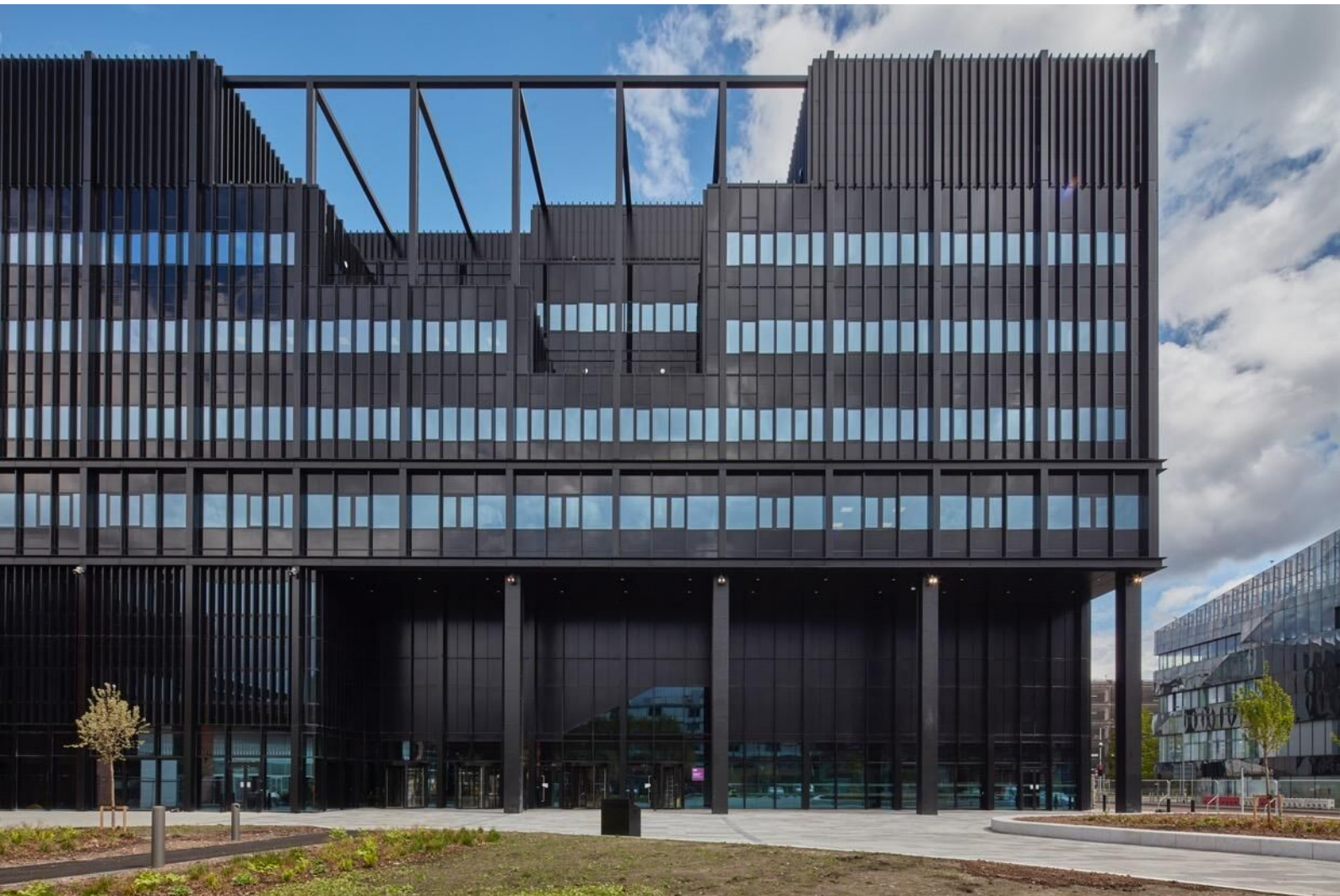
The University enjoys a global reputation for excellence in research, teaching and civic engagement:

- 35th in the world (QS World University Rankings 2026).
- 93% of our research is rated 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*) (Research Excellence Framework 2021).
- 1st in the UK and Europe and 2nd in the world for social and environmental impact (Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2025). The only university to rank consistently in the global top 10 since the rankings began.

International businesses, charities, governments, and universities turn to Manchester for its expertise – from leading the European renaissance in industrial biotechnology to broadening access to cancer services in India, helping more than 5,000 children with leukaemia receive treatment.

More than 170 student nationalities come together on campus, making Manchester one of the world's most international universities.

Learn more about our [rankings and reputation](#).



Vision and strategic plan

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

In 2019 we launched *Our future* which affirmed our core purpose to advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society and set out ambitious targets for the next five years. As set out when we launched our strategic plan, as we enter our third century we will review and update the strategy which has guided us over the past five years.

Our future established three core goals which are encapsulated in our motto: knowledge, wisdom, and humanity:

- Research and discovery
- Teaching and learning
- Social responsibility

and four themes:

- Our people, our values
- Innovation
- Civic engagement
- Global influence

Our future set an ambitious agenda to build on the University's distinctive strengths, with a commitment to make a difference to society and the environment and protect our unique status as an open place of enquiry and challenge.

It looked to a future where we expand our world-leading research to address the most challenging global questions and exploit our capability for interdisciplinary research; transform the way our students learn to make them the most employable graduates and truly global citizens; and ensure that all our activities make a positive difference to society.

The strategic plan reinforces what already makes The University of Manchester distinctive: our excellence, openness and inclusivity, our longstanding commitment to social responsibility, our scale and breadth, our tradition of innovation, and our very close bonds with, and location at the heart of, Manchester.

Universities such as ours are ideally positioned to help address many of the world's major challenges, finding new means to deliver environmental sustainability, close the gap of societal inequalities, improve health, inform and empower citizens, and create the leaders of the future.

Find more about [Our future](#)

Manchester 2035

Our institutional strategy, Manchester 2035, will define the University's direction for the next decade. Co-created with students, staff, alumni and community partners, it builds on our legacy while embracing future challenges and opportunities.

- Phase 1 (Oct 2024 -Jan 2025): More than 5,500 participants attended staff, student, alumni and community workshops, with nearly 2,900 online contributions.
- Phase 2 (Feb -May 2025): We received more than 1,400 contributions. We are now moving into the final phase which will launch in October 2025, following a preview at our September staff forum.

Manchester 2035 will set bold missions across equity, innovation, sustainability, research impact and civic partnership.

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 how we work and what we achieve. We continue to invest in leadership, programmes and data that reflect this ambition and share progress updates through our annual Equality Information Report.

We are committed to meeting and exceeding our obligations under current legislation and by doing more, we build on Manchester's existing reputation for its rich diversity and ensure we equip all our staff and students with the knowledge to sustain and enjoy a fully inclusive study and work environment. Recognising, embracing and valuing difference leads to improvements for all.



University Leadership

Leadership

- President and Vice-Chancellor – Professor Duncan Ivison
- Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer – Patrick Hackett
- Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health Professor – Ashley Blom
- Chief Financial Officer – Carol Prokopyszyn
- Executive Director of People – Eleanor Morrissey
- Director of IT Services – Patrick Hemmaway
- Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities – Professor Fiona Devine
- Vice-President for Research – Professor Colette Fagan, FAcSS
- Interim Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering – Professor Peter Green
- Vice-President, Regional Innovation and Civic Engagement – Professor Richard Jones
- Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students – Professor April McMahon
- Vice-President for Social Responsibility – Professor Nalin Thakkar

Detailed biographies of the [University's senior officers](#).

Governance

The University of Manchester's governance structure and constitution have been developed so that they hold true to the ethos, principles and requirements of good governance in higher education.

Governance is the responsibility of the following authoritative bodies:

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is the University's governing body. Chaired by Philippa Hird, and with 23 (mostly Lay) members, it has ultimate responsibility for the University's overall strategic direction and for the management of its finances.

General Assembly

A two-way channel of communication through which the University presents its achievements to its broader constituencies and receives feedback and advice on matters relating to University business. It has around 100 members.

Senate

The University's principal academic authority. The Senate is responsible to the Board of Governors for the promotion of research and for monitoring standards in teaching.

University of Manchester Values

Knowledge

We are ambitious in our pursuit of new ideas, greater understanding and discovery.

Wisdom

We share and apply our knowledge and experience to guide balanced and evidenced decisions for ourselves and for society.

Humanity

We embrace and celebrate difference, respect and support each other, and act with integrity to benefit society and the environment by transforming and enriching lives.

Academic freedom

We support with enthusiasm and vigour the principles of freedom of thought and speech.

Courage

We think and speak freely and act boldly to challenge assumptions and shape our future for the greater good.

Pioneering spirit

In the radical Manchester spirit, and inspired by our people, history and scale, we create the exceptional.

The role

Overall purpose of the role

- To lead an integrated pan-University team providing operational and strategic support for the achievement of the University's objectives for its engagement with business.
- To lead the University's integrated Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange Team (BEKE) within the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement. This will involve:
 - Directing the activities of BEKE members co-located with, and line-managed directly by, the Director of BEKE
 - Ensuring, in consultation with the relevant academic and PS stakeholders, that the activities of BEKE members with dual reporting arrangements, located in and line-managed by specific faculties, are coordinated effectively and support the strategic priorities of the University
- Working closely with the Vice-President for Regional Innovation & Civic Engagement, other members of the University Executive, Associate Vice-Presidents and Faculty Vice and Associate Deans, to provide overall leadership for business facing activity across the University, leading the establishment and development of strategic relationships with major business organisations, both in the UK and overseas, to deliver increased sponsorship to the University resulting in the achievement of ambitious targets for growth of income from business sources
- To provide senior representation for the University in discussions with business, promoting the University to external funders and stakeholders (including individuals at Board and other senior levels) and acting as the key contact for business stakeholders in their engagement with the University
- To provide expert guidance and analytics which support the generation of new opportunities for engagement with business and the effective allocation of resources for prioritised targeting of these opportunities
- To work with key individuals and organisations across the Greater Manchester city region, and the broader locality, to collectively exploit mutually attractive opportunities for business engagement
- Establishing and leading networks between HEIs, business and other organisations to provide effective positioning for the University to optimise its opportunities for funding and strategic partnerships
- To provide a major contribution to the work of, and organise administrative support for, the University's Innovation and Business Engagement Strategy Group (IBESG), working with the members to develop and implement strategies for engagement with business
- To provide professional leadership for the University's PS community of business engagement practitioners beyond the core BEKE team to share best practice, coordinate activity and enable training and support
- To encourage and promote external income generation, including the provision of research, CPD, KE and consultancy services by members of the University staff

- To lead the University's support for knowledge exchange activities, ensuring that these are managed appropriately and that their development is in line with the University's overall strategies for research and business engagement
- To contribute to the setting of University, Faculty, School and Centre/Institute plans relating to business engagement and work with the Innovation and Business Engagement Strategy Group to ensure that these plans are translated into appropriate, ambitious and realistic goals and objectives that are delivered successfully through collaborative working at all levels in the University
- To coordinate the University's negotiation approach for major contracts with business and play a key role in ensuring appropriate cost recovery in all such contracts in accordance with University policy
- To work in effective partnership with the leadership of other parts of the University which support delivery of the Innovation Strategy, including (but not limited to), Unit M, the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre, the Masood Enterprise Centre and Executive Education
- To work in partnership with the University of Manchester Innovation Factory to develop and exploit opportunities for commercial activities, e.g. licence agreements, spin-out company activities, incubators
- To work with IT Services in identifying the requirements for information systems to support the coordination of University engagements with business, and work with 'owners' of corporate information systems to plan, implement, and sustain effective IT Support
- To develop close working relationships with Research Services and the RBE Contracts Team to ensure optimal efficiency and transparency of process for research projects involving (or developing from) relationships with business
- To ensure that the BEKE team provides effective coordination for the development of the University's submission to the Knowledge Exchange Framework and the accountable use of resources allocated from the Higher Education Innovation Fund
- To support and develop seamless support services for business engagement through effective coordination and optimised business processes across the University's Professional Services
- To work with the Directorate of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment to ensure that the presentation and marketing of opportunities for business to engage productively with the University are highly effective
- To foster pan-University co-operation in the furtherance of the University's approved strategies and in the effective utilisation of resources
- To represent the University as appropriate by chairing or serving on internal and external committees, working and advisory groups as required
- To provide executive leadership of externally funded programmes or projects as Appropriate
- To manage the budget allocated for the activities of BEKE

- To contribute to the delivery of the PS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives
- To undertake other duties as determined from time to time by the Executive Director of Research and Business Engagement

Internal and External Relationships

Key interactions (internal):

- Vice-President for Civic Engagement and Innovation
- Vice President and Associate Vice-Presidents for Research, Innovation, Business Engagement and International
- Other Members of University Executive
- Faculty Leadership Teams
- Associate Deans for Business Engagement
- Heads of School and Research Institutes
- CEO of UMIF
- Leadership of PS Directorates and Faculty Operations

Key interactions (external):

- Senior representatives of business (including industry, public organisations and Government)
- Senior individuals at city and region organisations (inc. Sister, MSP, MIDAS, Growth Company, HIM)

Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed

Essential Knowledge and Experience

- Proven ability to lead and manage a successful team
- A track-record of successfully leading and managing change, including experience of setting up new structures and processes and optimising those already in place
- A good understanding of the working of higher education institutions (across School, Faculty and Institutional levels where appropriate), the opportunities for business engagement across all aspects of the University's mission, and the nature of academic drivers/priorities and their variance between disciplinary contexts
- Experience of conducting, proposing or commissioning research or working with research outputs

- Substantial experience of working with business and excellent understanding of how business works, recognising the diversity of styles and practices between different sectors and different scales of firm
- An understanding of the contribution of intermediary and governmental bodies to the university-business interface and of how relationships with these bodies can be optimised
- An understanding of intellectual property issues, company formation, funding, start-up and exit
- Excellent negotiation skills and proven ability to influence colleagues throughout the organisation
- Proven ability to build effective relationships with staff at all levels, including establishing and maintaining the confidence of senior academic colleagues and external stakeholders
- A track-record of using information systems effectively to manage information, support distributed activity and communicate both externally and internally
- Educational achievement to degree level or equivalent
- Shares the University's values

Desirable Knowledge and Experience

- Experience at a senior level of co-ordination of activities at the interface of business and higher education, and demonstrated ability to communicate the opportunities for engagement effectively to external organisations
- A track-record in taking the initiative in identifying and developing new opportunities for external engagement

Personal Qualities and Skills

- A strategic thinker and planner
- A commitment to the strategic direction of the University
- An enthusiasm for the University's mission and the impact it makes to wider society and economy
- A team player
- Sound budgeting skills

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Committed to continuous service improvement
- Pragmatic problem solver and effective decision maker

Other Contextual Information / Special Features

The role also requires a range of ongoing engagements with significant external bodies where a

common agenda beyond the University is being pursued (in the University's strategic interest).

Examples include:

- Government organizations including DSIT and DIT
- UKRI, particularly Research England and Innovate UK
- Russell Group
- Health Innovation Manchester
- SISTER joint venture
- Manchester Growth Company, including MIDAS and Growth Hub
- N8
- BioNow
- Bruntwood SciTech, including Manchester Science Partnerships and Alderley Park



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