


Proposal for the

# University of Greater Manchester



The Office for Students has launched a consultation on the University of Bolton's proposal to change its name. We hope this briefing will help stakeholders consider the issues at stake.



### What exactly has the University applied for from the Office for Students?

The University of Bolton has applied to become: University of Greater Manchester. The County of Greater Manchester has no university carrying this name currently. We would like that to change with the proposal we have made, which is being consulted on.

### Why is the University asking to make this change?

The University has expanded and changed beyond all recognition in the last 20 years, since its University title was granted, when it was much smaller and only had campuses in the town of Bolton. The proposed new name appropriately reflects an organisation which now has sites across Greater Manchester (in Trafford, Central Manchester, Wigan - through its Multi-Academy Trust - and in Bolton). The University is also currently looking to develop a significant presence in Bury.

Almost 70% of on-campus home students at the University are drawn from, and live permanently in, postcodes across the Greater Manchester (GM) Combined Authority, with less than 10% residing in the GM Borough of Bolton itself.



# Q

...where we  
educate our  
students.

## Why specifically has 'Greater Manchester' been chosen as the new title?

The reason is simple: Greater Manchester is where we educate our students and learners. We are the only university that operates across Greater Manchester: the other universities in the region operate predominantly in one constituent part of the County (in Manchester or Salford). The University receives just short of seven out of ten of its home students from the County of Greater Manchester, with only around one in five of its home students coming from the Borough of Bolton. We respect the fact that people in the County have their own understandings of their local identity, but the plain fact that our student body and area of operation is now more 'Greater Manchester' than 'Bolton' is important.

## Will there be confusion with the new name? Will this change mislead anyone?

No, this change will not create confusion, nor will it mislead people. As we have stated, the University is applying to be the only university named after the County of Greater Manchester. Other universities in the region with the word 'Manchester' in their title are named after the city in which they are based, not the wider county.





## Will there be a word in your title which will be shared with other universities?

Universities sharing a single geographic word in their title is very common in England. This practice does not generate any confusion where this frequently occurs. Only a few months ago, the Office for Students (OfS) approved a change in university title for 'Newman University' to become 'Birmingham Newman University' when two other universities in the City already already had 'Birmingham' in their long-established titles. This changed title was deemed officially by the OfS not to be confusing or misleading.

London has no fewer than 17 universities that officially have the word 'University' and 'London' in their titles. Leeds, Sheffield, Bournemouth, Nottingham, Plymouth and Oxford each have two or more universities sharing the name of the city with each other in their legally recognised titles. The City of Manchester already has two universities with the words 'Manchester' and 'University' in them. The University, in any case, is seeking the county name in which we operate, not a shared city name.

## Why should a stakeholder like us respond to the consultation on changing the name?

Because everyone in the region has an interest in the University continuing its path of success. A change in name is a critical factor in the future trajectory of the University. A positive response to the consultation would really help us reinforce the positivity behind this proposed change in name. Our thanks go to the many partners, students, alumni and staff members who have already indicated that they are strongly supportive of the change and who intend to respond affirmatively to the consultation. We would appreciate your time in making a positive response.

## How has the University fared in recent years?

The University has gone from strength to strength in recent times, thanks to the hard work and commitment of our students, staff and our partners. The University excels at teaching and student support and, as such, is the leading new university in the North West in this respect. The University has reached the Top 30 university in the UK in The Guardian's University Guide 2024. The University has risen to become the top university in the North West (and 8th in England) for Teaching Quality and 1st in the North West (12th in England) for Student Experience in The Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024. In 2023, the University was recognised by England's higher education regulator with a Gold grade for the student experience in its Teaching Excellence Framework.

## What are the University's plans for the future apart from this name change?

The University has many exciting plans for the whole region that a change in title will help generate. Foremost among these is the creation of the only Medical School in the north of Greater Manchester. This Medical School will deliver critical priorities for the NHS across the North West, producing hundreds of much needed Doctors and Physician Associates to help address the big shortfall of healthcare staff in these pivotal areas. The University has invested in a new Medical School building which is about to open in Farnworth to ensure these students have the best facilities.

We pride ourselves on our expanding work with local employers, large and small, to upskill the workforce regionally. Our new Centre for Advanced Manufacturing will be a key element of the nationally-funded Greater Manchester Investment Zone initiative, supplying local businesses with a thousand highly skilled engineering apprentices educated to Higher Education level.



## How would the change in title affect the University's civic mission?

The change in title would really help the University expand our already significant civic role. The University wishes to contribute to different areas of our region, including in areas of Greater Manchester that are adjacent to Bolton, and with whom there is so much positive interaction and a flow of students, business and economic activity. For example, the University wishes to develop opportunities for prospective students from Bury to study at the University, without those students having to move outside their own locality to study. Our work with employers and charities locally goes well beyond the boundaries of the town of Bolton.



Centre for Dental Sciences

National Centre for Motorsport Engineering



Bolton One

## Does this mean that the University is no longer committed fully to Bolton?

Far from it, the reverse is in fact true. The University remains rooted in, and resolutely committed to, Bolton. We are proud of our background and history and any change in name will not dilute the impact of our growing presence in the town. Bolton is a great borough with a bright future, a future that a renamed University of Greater Manchester will play a pivotal role in building. Our campus in Bolton will remain.



## Do students and the University's graduates (alumni) support the proposed change?

Our Students' Union leaders are strongly supportive of this change. Successive Students' Union Presidents have advocated for a change in name for some time. Alumni have also contacted the University to support our plans. Students and graduates say that they would appreciate the global recognition that reference to the county in which they are based would bring. The University is determined to give our graduates the strongest possible profile with employers, enabling them to get off to the best start in their working lives. We work extremely hard to give students the skills and aspiration to succeed in their careers. This alteration in title would contribute to that significantly, so we have agreed with our students that this is a change that is worth making on their behalf.

## Are there any downsides to the change in name?

We cannot see any downsides to the change: this should be a win-win for the people of the region. The change will enable the University to progress further and to improve what we do making an even greater impact in the communities we are dedicated to serve.



## What is the process from here on in?

The legal process is managed by the higher education regulator, the Office for Students, alongside the Department for Education, with the final sign-off coming from the Department for Education's Secretary of State. The University would be hopeful of an outcome in the summer of 2024. Please do help the process by responding positively to the consultation.

## How are other stakeholders likely to react to the change?

We expect most respondents will be positive, as many organisations and people wish the University to be able to make the best of its powerful civic mission within Greater Manchester, including Bolton. It is possible that one or two bodies may take a narrow or protectionist approach to the proposal. The University will focus on the overwhelmingly positive case for the change, which is for the benefit of students to give them an instantly recognisable global name on their well-earned degrees. Please do contact us if you would like more information on the proposed name change or have a query.



## How will this affect Bolton College?

Bolton College remains a key part of the University Group, which is a unique feature of the University. The name of the College is a decision for the College Board and there is no proposal to change its name now or in the future.



Proposal for the University  
of Greater Manchester

**Prepared:** 20 March 2024