



# CIVIC UNIVERSITY AGREEMENT

[greatermanchesteruniversities.org](http://greatermanchesteruniversities.org)

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# PRIMARY SIGNATORIES

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**Rt Hon Mayor Andy Burnham**  
Mayor of Greater Manchester



**Professor Linda Merrick**  
Principal,  
Royal Northern College of Music



**Professor George Holmes**  
President and Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Bolton



**Professor Malcolm Press**  
Vice-Chancellor,  
Manchester Metropolitan University



**Professor Helen Marshall**  
Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Salford



**Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell**  
President and Vice-Chancellor,  
The University of Manchester

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# INTRODUCTION

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This Civic University Agreement is the first time that all of the five universities in our city region have come together to collectively make commitments on this scale<sup>1</sup>.

It builds on the existing work we have been doing together, as the five universities in Greater Manchester, along with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), both before but increasingly during the Covid crisis – recognising that there is more power in the collective than acting individually, and our role and responsibility as major contributors and anchor institutions within our city region.

It sets out our shared priorities as institutions, in partnership with the GMCA and the elected Mayor of Greater Manchester. It builds on the existing Greater Manchester strategy, which all of our institutions continue to be involved in and contribute to, as well as a wide range of other activities which all of us are undertaking as civic institutions. It sits alongside a shared ambition to make Greater Manchester the best place to grow up, get on and grow old in the UK.

It is based on concrete actions which we will take – as universities and alongside democratically elected local leaders. We want to focus on where we can make substantial changes to really improve the city region in the medium term.

It is collective. We are more than the sum of our parts, and as we work together – and indeed with other bodies, from our Further Education colleges to NHS Trusts to businesses to the creative and cultural sector – we can do so much more. We want to deepen this collaboration over time and broaden it to include more organisations.

Most importantly, this agreement is drawn from our own population's priorities. The polling we commissioned<sup>2</sup> in advance of this agreement shows clearly that as universities and as a combined authority, we have many strengths in making our region a good place to live, and an economic powerhouse. But we also know we have more to do to become a tangible force for change in all ten boroughs, and a place where our residents can engage with their universities.

This agreement will follow the Mayoral cycle and be for an initial three year period. During this period we want to play our part, alongside our core mission of teaching and research, in contributing to economic recovery, addressing inequalities, sharing our creative and cultural facilities and increasing the number of Greater Manchester residents who visit and engage with us.

We will produce and publish an annual update against this agreement and will establish new partnership arrangements so that we can work together collectively to oversee and manage progress against it.

We believe deeply in our civic responsibilities as anchor institutions for our region. We believe it is a region where people can and will thrive. Our priorities as signatories are to work together to build upon our foundations of collective work and address the areas where we can make a concrete difference to people's lives, and truly deliver a Greater Manchester.

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<sup>1</sup> See [greatermanchesteruniversities.org](http://greatermanchesteruniversities.org) for more information

<sup>2</sup> [civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/greater-manchester](http://civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/greater-manchester)

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## IN THIS CIVIC UNIVERSITY AGREEMENT, WE JOINTLY AGREE TO WORK WITH OTHERS ON ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING:

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We commit to playing our part in making our region the best area in the country for young people to grow up, and for children and adults at all ages and all levels of qualification to be supported to learn throughout their lifetimes. Through our research programmes and training functions, and our work on widening participation, we will contribute to addressing the education and skills gaps between Greater Manchester and the rest of the UK and between the most and least advantaged parts of Greater Manchester. We will engage with learners from underrepresented backgrounds through individual and shared access and outreach initiatives. We will build on collaboration with Further Education Colleges and businesses, including through a new Local Skills Improvement Plan, to identify labour market shortages and collectively plan how we will address them. We commit to work with local employers, large and small, to grow the number of Apprentices being trained in Greater Manchester.

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We will support the levelling up of opportunities and life-chances between Greater Manchester and the rest of the UK – and between the most and least advantaged towns and districts of Greater Manchester – through our role as key employers and anchor institutions. Working together, we will play our part in reducing inequalities by taking forward relevant elements of the refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy, building on the conclusions of the Independent Inequalities Commission.

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We will work with leading innovators from business, science, our own universities and FE colleges and local government to help drive growth and create jobs across Greater Manchester. This will include focusing on growth in digital technology and cyber security. We will further develop the UK's first city-region wide innovation agency, Innovation GM – a £7bn blueprint focusing on innovation across the region and inclusive economic growth which could create 100,000 jobs, boost R&D investment and 'level up' the North, building on our R&D strengths in areas including advanced materials and manufacturing, health innovation, digital and creative, and net zero.

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We will work together to support research and new businesses to drive growth in areas such as e-commerce, cyber security, data analytics, creative digital, smart cities and health tech, making Greater Manchester a top-5 European digital city-region. We will provide support for work in cyber security and AI through the Greater Manchester Cyber Foundry and the Greater Manchester AI Foundry. And through Health Innovation Manchester and other institutional initiatives we will improve local people's health and wellbeing through new technology and devices, digital products and tools, improving prevention, and early detection and treatment of disease.



We will direct our research, innovation, courses and the management of our own estates to support our city region's ambitious 2038 zero-carbon target. We make a collective commitment to be signatories to Greater Manchester's 2038 zero carbon plan. We will harness our science and innovation base, study programmes and policy expertise to address the ambition. We will collaborate to ensure that our institutions fully embed

the low carbon knowledge and training required for students to be work-ready for their future careers. We commit to working together to set baselines of current emissions and sharing individual formal reduction targets for our institutions in line with our target for zero carbon by 2038.



Greater Manchester is the UK's most visited city-region outside of London in part because of the strength of our cultural facilities. Our universities contribute to this through our research, study programmes and our stewardship of important cultural institutions and partnerships, as well as our support for creative and cultural education. We will work to make our involvement in the city's cultural institutions better known and used by a wider population, and grow the opportunities we have for people across the city region to visit us. We will continue to support programmes which use our creative and cultural power to drive economic growth – including through supporting students and graduates into start up enterprises, increasing knowledge exchange around our universities' output in creative subjects, and supporting students across our city region at all ages to understand the benefits to their future careers from studying creative and cultural subjects.

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# THE FUTURE

This high-level Civic University Agreement is our starting point. A new Civic University Board will be established to oversee the development of specific targets, deliverables and reporting of progress.

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# FULL LIST OF SIGNATORIES

In addition to the Mayor and leaders of Greater Manchester’s five universities, this Civic University Agreement has been endorsed by the elected leaders of each of Greater Manchester’s ten authorities and the Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

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**Eamonn Boylan**

Chief Executive,  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority

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**Rt Hon Mayor Andy Burnham**

Mayor of Greater Manchester

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**Cllr Martyn Cox**

Leader, Bolton Council

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**Mayor Paul Dennett**

Salford City Mayor

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**Cllr Neil Emmott**

Leader, Rochdale Council

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**Professor George Holmes**

President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Bolton

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**Cllr Sir Richard Leese**

Leader, Manchester City Council

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**Professor Helen Marshall**

Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford

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**Professor Linda Merrick**

Principal, Royal Northern College of Music

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**Cllr David Molyneux**

Leader, Wigan Council

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**Cllr Eamonn O’Brien**

Leader, Bury Council

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**Professor Malcolm Press**

Vice-Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University

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**Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell**

President and Vice-Chancellor,  
The University of Manchester

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**Cllr Arooj Shah**

Leader, Oldham Council

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**Cllr Brenda Warrington**

Leader, Tameside Council

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**Cllr Andrew Western**

Leader, Trafford Council

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**Cllr Elise Wilson**

Leader, Stockport Council

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