

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals in a University

**A case-study of evaluation and foresight applied in a
strategic context**

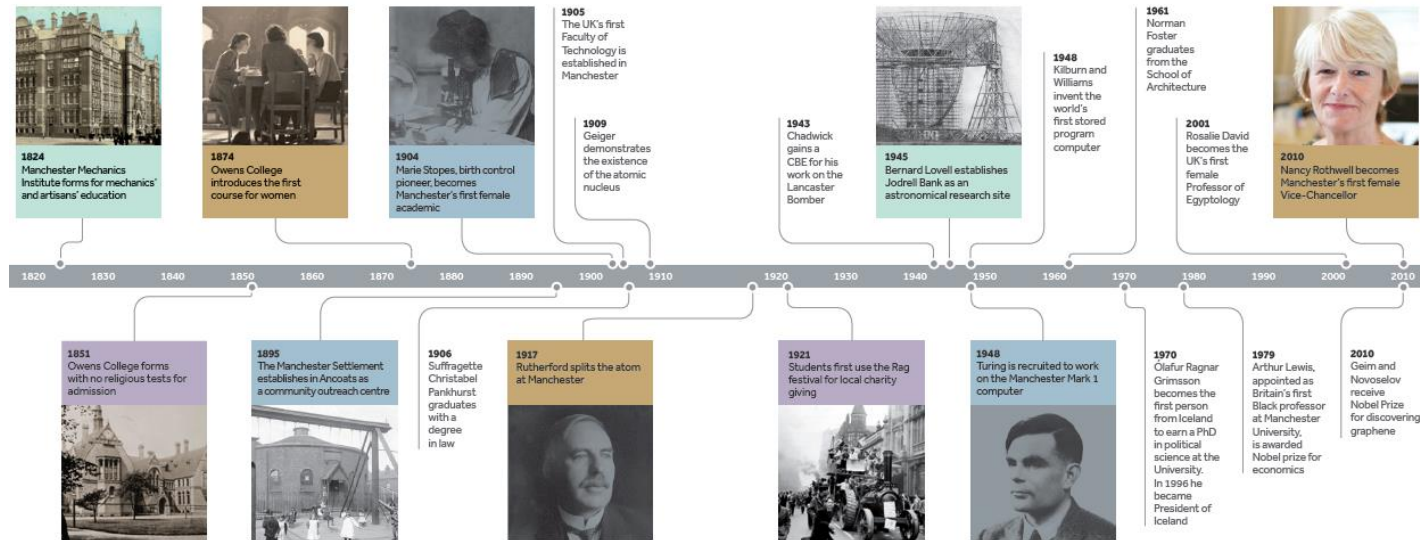
**Revaluation 22 European R&I Policy Evaluation
Conference**

May 5th-6th 2022 | Vienna, Austria

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University of Manchester

* With important acknowledgements to Julian Skyrme and Matt Atkin

A few points from our history



1

Goal one

*World-class
research*

2

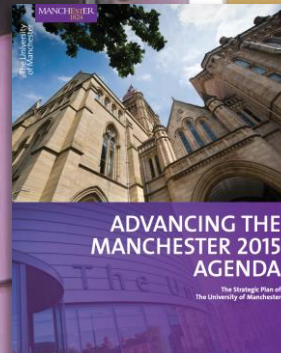
Goal two

*Outstanding learning
and student experience*

3

Goal three

*Social
responsibility*



Social responsibility is *both*

- a distinct orientation of activities in our university (public and civic engagement, equality and diversity, environmental sustainability, cultural engagement, staff/student/alumni volunteering, university HR and procurement processes, widening participation etc)
- a unifying theme that runs through our core research and teaching goals, helping to give purpose and meaning to activities that generate societal impact

We are committed to becoming a zero carbon university by 2038

We are divesting from fossil fuel and other carbon-intensive investments

We are an accredited Living Wage Employer

SOCIAL INCLUSION

As a global centre of research and teaching, and one of our city-region's largest employers, we're challenging the inequalities and prejudices that affect people's lives locally, nationally and globally.



WIDENING PARTICIPATION

We invest more than £15 million annually in financial support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.



SCHOOL GOVERNOR INITIATIVE

We've helped more than 1,000 staff and alumni to contribute to education leadership.



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

We've supported more than 4,000 local people into work using The Works, our unique employment partnership.



EQUITY AND MERIT PROGRAMME

With support from our donors, we've helped more than 300 postgraduate students to lead on sustainable development in their own countries.

BETTER HEALTH

We're collaborating with the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS trusts and Health Innovation Manchester to tackle local and global health challenges through research, teaching and social responsibility initiatives.



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

We're part of more than 50 healthcare partnerships in the Global South in support of UN SDGs.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE REGISTER

We created the UK International Emergency Trauma Register and deploy medical experts during overseas disasters.



HEALTH INNOVATION MANCHESTER

Our unique civic and academic collaboration to transform the health and wellbeing of Greater Manchester's 2.8 million citizens.



HUMANITARIAN AND CONFLICT RESPONSE

We partner with the WHO, Médecins Sans Frontières and the British Red Cross in our humanitarian and conflict response work.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We're leading the way to a more sustainable world through research, teaching, operations and engagement activities in areas such as climate change, population growth, rapid urbanisation, overconsumption, food and water security, loss of biodiversity and pollution.



DECARBONISATION

Our science has helped to create a pathway for Greater Manchester to reach zero carbon status by 2038.



RENEWABLE ENERGY

We lead the biggest research project into sustainable development of the world's dams.



PLASTIC POLLUTION

We've eliminated more than 250,000 pieces of avoidable single-use plastic, with more to come.



GREEN CAMPUS

We've planted more than 300 trees on campus and launched an interactive tree trail.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Our unique cultural institutions – the Whitworth, the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Manchester Museum and Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre – are engaging audiences through their diverse collections, events, exhibitions, partnerships and inspirational spaces.



ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

Our bluedot festival brings together music, science and culture at Jodrell Bank Observatory, a UNESCO world heritage site.



GREATER INCLUSIVITY

We're investing in our Manchester Museum to create a more inclusive, caring and imaginative destination for all our visitors.



CARBON LITERATE MUSEUM

Ours was the world's first museum to receive a Carbon Literate Organisation Award for cultivating a low carbon culture.



CULTURAL PARK KEEPER

Our Whitworth gallery employs the UK's first Cultural Park Keeper, responsible for outdoor activities focused on wellbeing.

Sustainable Development Goals

- Universities challenged to demonstrate their purpose and public benefit.
- UN SDGs offered opportunity to communicate and align impact work against world's democratically-agreed priorities in internationally consistent language
- 17 SDGs apply to global North and South, to local and to global action
- Cover *sustainable development* – not just environmental sustainability
- UoM's strategy, called *Our Future*, committed to addressing the UN SDGs in four ways: research; teaching/learning; public engagement; operations



Enter the rankers

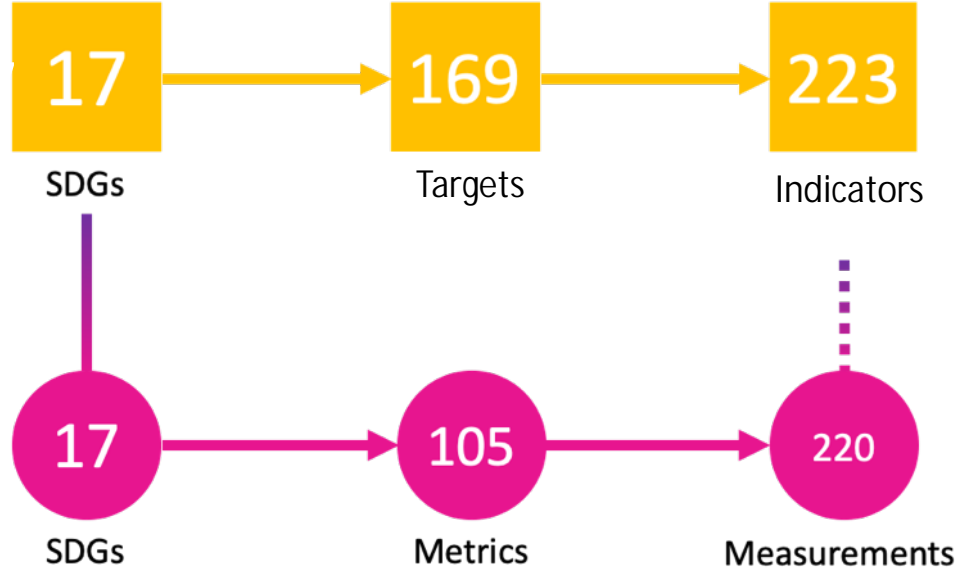


KEY FACTS

- Launched in 2019 *THE Impact Ranking* is the only ranking in the world measuring HE action towards the 17 UN SDGs
- It covers social, economic and environmental impact, not a narrow definition of environmental sustainability.
- With 1,240 entrants in 2021 it's predicted to overtake the traditional THE World University Ranking (1,527 entrants) very soon
- The ranking is based on performance across all key functions of a University using 105 metrics and 220 measurements across:
 - Research impact
 - Teaching, learning and student impact
 - Public engagement and other knowledge exchange activities, including the work of university-owned cultural institutions
 - Operations activities e.g. finance, HR, estates, campus operations



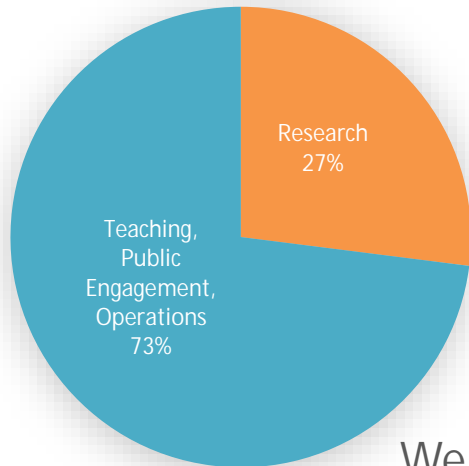
Alignment with the UN SDGs



INDIVIDUAL SDG RANKINGS

17 individual SDG rankings based on

- Research (27%) Scopus-generated publication data mined for impact using Elsevier keywords, sitescore, FWPI etc
- Teaching, Public engagement, Operations/PS (73%) Submission of 220 pieces of evidence and 105 metrics (policies, commitments, partnerships, student data, expenditure) compiled by Office for Social Responsibility



Weightings

OVERALL GLOBAL RANKING

- THE produces an overall ranking
- Ranking calculated from
 - SDG 17 = Partnerships for the goals (22%)
 - Top 3 other SDGs (26% + 26% + 26%)



$$22\% + 26\% + 26\% + 26\% = 100\%$$



[Methodology defined in 190 page document](#)

Rank	2019	2020	2021	2022 scores / 100
1	Uni of Auckland, NZ	Uni of Auckland, NZ	UNI OF MCR, UK	Western Sydney Uni, Australia 99.1
2	McMaster Uni, Canada	Uni of Sydney, Australia	Uni of Sydney, Australia	Arizona State Tempe, US 98.5
3	UNI OF MCR, UK	Western Sydney Uni, Australia	RMIT, Australia	Western Uni, Canada 97.8
4	UBC, Canada	La Trobe Uni, Australia	La Trobe Uni, Australia	King Abdulaziz Uni, Saudi 97.5
5	King's College, UK	Arizona State Uni, US	Queen's Uni, Canada	Universitit Sains Malaysia 97.5
6	Uni Gothenburg, Sweden	Uni of Bologna, Italy	Uni Wollongong, Australia	Uni of Auckland, NZ 96.7
7	KTH Royal Inst Tech, Sweden	UBC, Canada	Aalborg, Denmark	Queens Uni, Canada 96.6
8	Uni of Montreal, Canada	UNI OF MCR, UK	Uni College Cork, Ireland	Newcastle Uni, UK 96.5
9	Uni of Bologna, Italy	King's College, UK	Arizona State Uni, US	UNI OF MCR, UK 96.4
10	Uni of Hong Kong	RMIT, Australia	Uni of Auckland, NZ	Hokkaido Uni, Japan 96.2
Total Ranked	450	768	1,117	1,406
Countries	76	85	98	106

Where next on SDGs?

University operations

- Creation of SDG directory microsite
- [New 2021/22 SDG report](#)

Research

- Enhancing awareness of SDG bibliometrics
- Automated profiles for staff in updated PURE system
- Developing key research platforms related to SDGs, particularly Sustainable Futures

Students

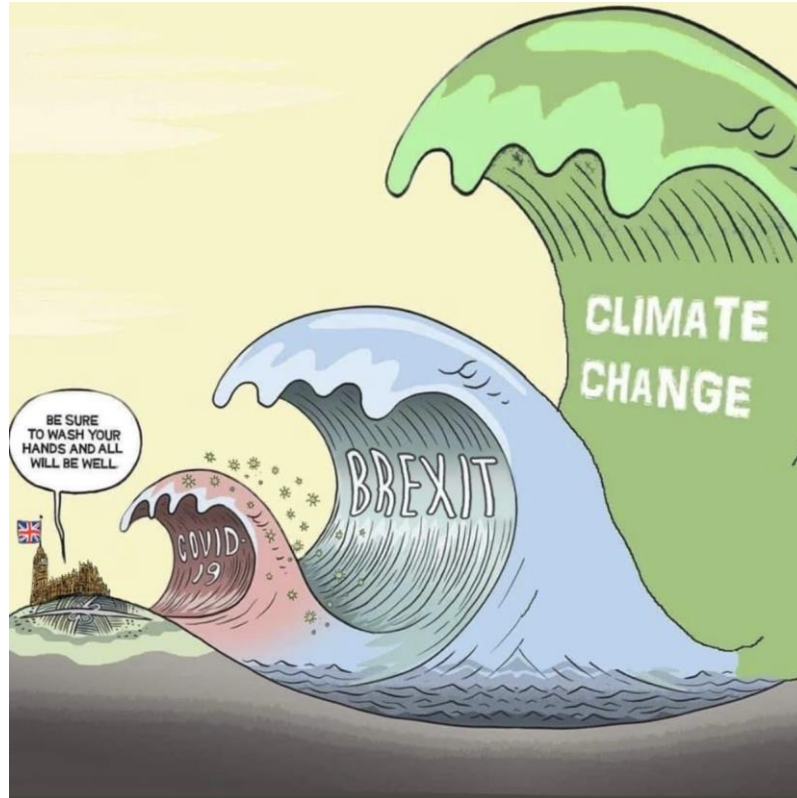
- Taster module on SDGs for prospective students
- Use SDGs in course recruitment information
- SDG-focused projects for students
- Expand UCIL modules on SDGs and [selectively available to developing country scholars](#)

Public, civic and global engagement

- Link SDGs to civic work
- Partnerships with networks USR, Talloires, ACU, SDSN
- SDG MOOC for HE professionals



A few challenges to face...



Cartoon by G.MacKay adapted
by G.Hughes

Context for University in 2020

Covid 19

- Pandemic saw universities worldwide pivot rapidly to online teaching and restricted research activities when in lockdown
- UK universities work in market model in which majority of government funding of research is at a maximum of 80% of full economic cost and domestic undergraduate students also capped and funded at break-even or less
- In consequence, international student fees, which are not regulated, effectively subsidise research
- Restrictions on international travel of incoming students, with potential loss of revenues, posed an existential threat which was partly mitigated by government loan facilities

Sustainability

- City of Manchester has science-based carbon budget and associated zero carbon date of 2038
- University as signatory to Race to Zero

Brexit

- Culture wars, Levelling-up of left behind regions,...

Using Foresight to stress-test strategic plan

- In addition to immediate crisis management, the University of Manchester decided to undertake a foresight exercise to look beyond the pandemic at medium-term strategy and to consider the implications for its pre-pandemic strategic plan, '[Our Future](#)'
- What can this case-study foresight do to help consider more general implications for the role of universities after the pandemic?



Basic Parameters of the Foresight Exercise

Timeframe

- Options for medium-term horizon (5 to 10 years) post-Covid

Participation

- Group of 10 area leaders/experts with 132 other staff in workshops, 2,077 in What Works? Survey and 108 students in survey & workshop activities plus wider student survey
- Open to all for comment before presentation to Senate and Board

Scenarios

- 10-year reference assumptions underpinned central BAU scenario and groups asked also to formulate adverse and financially unconstrained alternatives

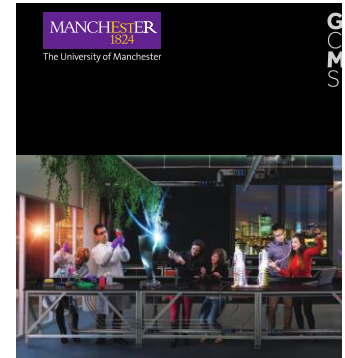


Seven themes:

1. The future of the research system
2. The future of teaching, learning & student experience
3. Redefining the international university
4. Regional innovation and levelling up
5. Reimagining the way we work
6. Future campus footprint/role
7. University size and shape/business model

Some key findings: Teaching and Research

- Flexibility at core for **teaching**, increasingly ‘blended’ combining best aspects of online & on-campus
- ‘Digital first’ to support
 - increased choice of pace, place, time and mode of study
 - kind of qualifications offered e.g. accommodating modular degrees or apprenticeships
- **Research** increasingly challenge-based demanding multidisciplinary cross-faculty approaches
- UK funding model for research not sustainable, meaning need to prioritise which areas for investment



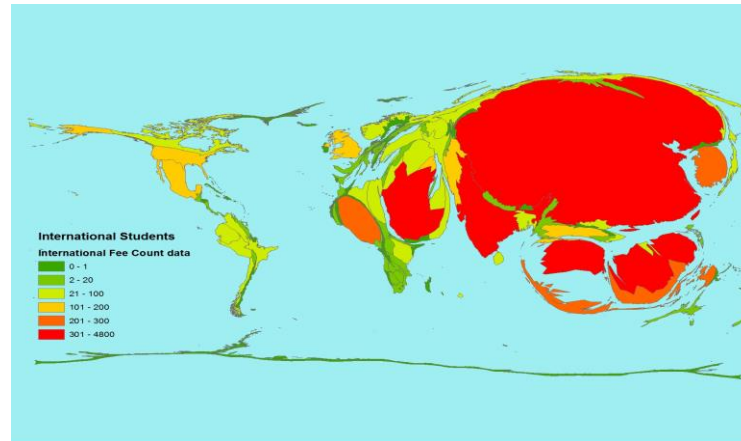
Some key findings: Work & Campus

- **Work** will be more blended and flexible than pre-pandemic but no one-size-fits-all solution
 - where roles and circumstances allow, mixture of on-campus work for interaction and access to facilities & home-working to reduce commuting & allow focus
- Imperative for **net zero carbon** by 2038 challenging for both investment and behaviour
- Changing patterns of teaching, research & work demanding **more agile and flexible spaces**. Cultural as well as technical change needed
 - premium on collaboration space & hot-desking replacing cellular offices
 - repurposing existing spaces or re-providing where affordable
 - flexibility in use of working week to ensure efficient occupancy.



Some key findings: At Home and Abroad

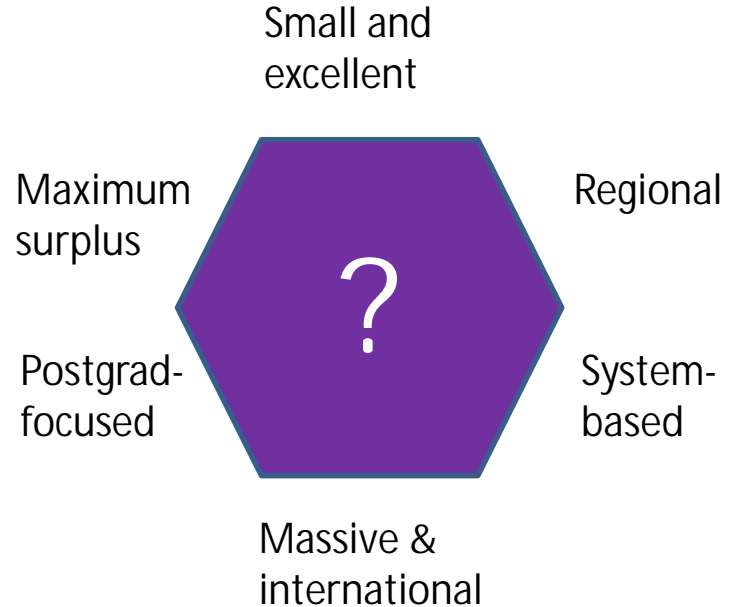
- International strategy stressing 'triple diversification' of student population & experience – by country, by course and by social origin
- Low-travel learning means need to create a global multicultural experience on campus & to deliver courses online and via international centres and partnerships
- National political drivers and our own SR commitments emphasising regional role in innovation, 'levelling-up' and raising the civic engagement agenda



Cartogram of UoM international students' country of origin

Alternative Models of Size & Shape of University

- Future size and shape of University defined by student numbers, financial turnover and mix of activities
- Of the World's top-25 ranked (ARWU 2019) universities, 15 receive more than 50% of their income from gifts, investments, or attached businesses e.g. healthcare, publishing (19>30%)
- Major challenge to finance a transition and reach a financially sustainable model



Some implications

- Most foreseen changes already exist at fringes of system but now becoming mainstream
- Blend of on and off campus experience is now a reality for both students and colleagues with almost all universities having this capability
 - Currently a reaction in progress as all enjoy the benefits of social and intellectual face-to face interaction on campus
 - Likely stabilization around a blended model with far higher digital content but clearly defined role for on-campus experience
- Substantial implications for campus estate strengthened by parallel pressure for de-carbonisation
 - More demand for interaction space and less for large lecture theatres
 - Limitations of retrofit for both carbon reduction and move to interactive space, especially in traditional/heritage buildings
 - Flexible working for staff likely to persist, again with implications for estate with more hot-desking etc
- Future of internationalisation will increasingly be challenged by carbon agenda as pandemic subsides, with lower travel alternatives
 - May drive increase of partnerships to allow partial study in home country or mix of online and shorter international stays
- It is very difficult for a university to shift its underlying business model as most are adapted to circumstances but most will change their operating models

Conclusions

- Key words across all functions of university are agility and flexibility in a sector not renowned for either
- Distinctiveness is important – no shortcuts in research or student experience but for us social responsibility and place are foundational
 - The SDGs are a useful framework for the medium-term
- High levels of uncertainty & risk in political & economic environment make it unwise to overcommit to a single solution
- Organisational foresight cannot reduce uncertainty but it can increase readiness for change
- Our aim is not to chase external metrics such as the Times Higher Impact Rankings but we will happily accept a positive result!
- An adaptive, evolutionary model that values resilience provides a stronger foundation for change to maintain and improve a university's position