

# Boundaryless Learning

**The University of Manchester is building upon its solid reputation and expanding its Hong Kong Centre with new postgraduate programmes.**



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**Richard Cotton**

**Director, International Development  
The University of Manchester**

Education paves the path to success. The University of Manchester (UoM) set up its Hong Kong Centre nearly three decades ago and today, despite the pandemic, the centre will expand with additional postgraduate courses to launch in the second half of 2021 to cater to a rising demand.

Richard Cotton, UoM's Director of International Development, found that Hong Kong is a key strategic location for multinational corporations. As the region's educational hub, the city is home to 22 degree-awarding higher education institutions. Currently three Hong Kong universities are featured in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2022 top 50 list, demonstrating the high quality of the education system. "Our Hong Kong Centre offers services to students and alumni from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Macau – the one-hour time zone difference and short travel time are advantages that provide a better learning experience to our overseas students," he said. "All this means that we will be able to increase the breadth of programmes we can offer to students based in the territory and East Asia region, delivering on our ethos of no barriers, no boundaries to learning."

Cotton admits that initially there were concerns about how universities would cope with disruption to teaching and learning. "As with other parts of society, necessity has been the mother of invention, and the academic community has rapidly adapted," Cotton said. "Whilst the pace of developing new ways of learning in response to COVID-19 has been achieved

at breakneck speed, the idea of flexible learning across borders was not a new one for us. Our Hong Kong Centre has long played a key role in delivering programmes that fit around the lives of working professionals who form a pool of competitive talent for the labour market."

## Academic excellence on and offline

The Hong Kong Centre offers Masters level courses that allow students to study as they work fulltime. Indeed, the synergy they derive from real life experience is shared in classrooms through a mixture of live and virtual engagement. "The courses delivered by the Hong Kong Centre take a blended approach to learning," explained Cotton. "It allows students to practically apply the theoretical approaches they are taught in the real world and in real time. For example, both the Master of Science Financial Management and the Global Master of Business Administration (GMBA) allow students to bring a project they are working on into the virtual classroom. They get feedback from a world-renowned expert in the field and their peers who bring different perspectives from the different industries they work in. This collaborative approach means students not only propel their learning collectively, they also increase their professional network."

Although the pandemic accelerated the move towards online learning, virtual classrooms were always part of UoM's mandate. "It creates a real opportunity for the university to build on in the future,"

Cotton revealed. "We are embracing teaching, learning and assessment online both at pace and at the same world-class standard of our traditional face-to-face approach. More than 5,000 East Asian professionals have graduated from our Hong Kong Centre's GMBA programme."

## The University of Manchester

- With origins dating to 1824 as Manchester Mechanics' Institute, The University of Manchester is ranked as the 27th top university in the world and sixth in the United Kingdom
- The UK's only university to have social responsibility as a core goal, and has been ranked 1st in the world in the *Times Higher Education* University Impact Rankings in 2021 based on the contributions towards UN's 17 SDGs
- It established the Hong Kong Centre as its first overseas hub in 1992, offering its Manchester Global MBA programme to executives in the East Asia region

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