

# W100 Distinctionary: Play your cards right in our W100 brand ID game.

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# TODAY

- Introductions
- The need for brand distinction
- Distinctionary game - guess the university from the brand!
- Ways of assessing and building distinctiveness
- The Manchester beacon experience
- Final thoughts



Alan Ferns



- Associate Vice-President for External Relations and Reputation, the University of Manchester
- Led the Manchester Beacons project to establish distinctiveness through research

Louise Simpson



- Expert in reputation management and reputational auditing
- Director, higher education consultancy, The Knowledge Partnership.
- Director, World 100 Reputation Network



*It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.*

**Charles Darwin**

The need for  
difference



Word clouds generated from the “About us” pages of nine top universities



# Distinct

*Distinct: recognizably different in nature from something else of a similar type.*

*clear, clear-cut, definite, well defined, sharp, marked, decided, unmistakable, easily distinguishable*



**Reputation** - what people think of an organisation

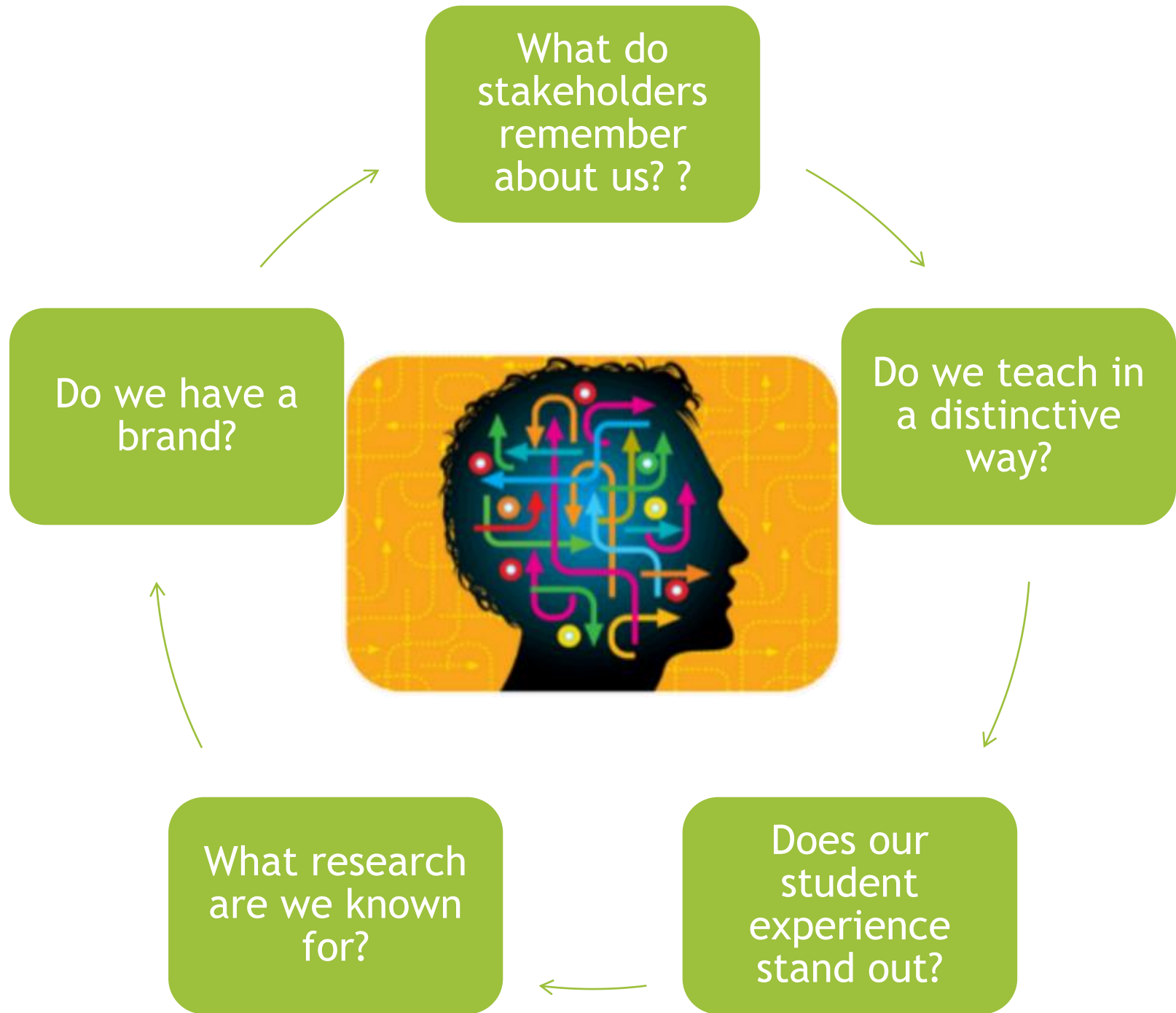


**Brand** - what the organisation says about itself



**Distinctiveness** - what sets the organisation apart compared to peers

Being different is critical in today's HE environment



# Distinctionary - a game to identify universities by four brand areas



## W100 DISTINCTIONARY

A game of distinction

1



### VISION

Our vision is of the university as a civic university with a global reputation for academic excellence.



### RESEARCH STRENGTHS

Water; Food Systems; Global Ageing; Cities; Social Renewal; Sustainability



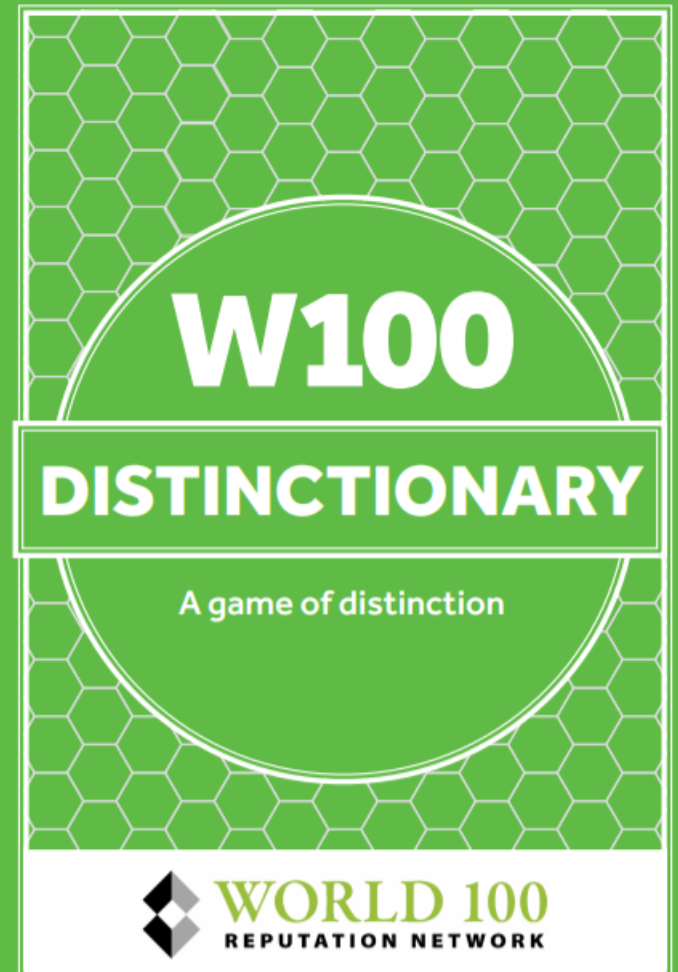
### LOCATION MARKETING

One of the country's favourite student cities. One in six people are a student, helping create the city's vibrant social scene and renowned nightlife.



### STUDENT OFFER

World-class education at a city-centre campus in one of the country's favourite cities. Long tradition of excellence in teaching, endorsed by top teaching award.





What did you  
learn? Who  
stood out?  
What are the  
problems?



# Manchester's Research Beacons



## What was the problem?

- A global audience
- Sounded like every other university
- Several distinct stakeholder groups
- Lots of channels
- Multiple channel owners
- 12,000 staff and a few dozen marcomms professionals giving different examples of our world-class research

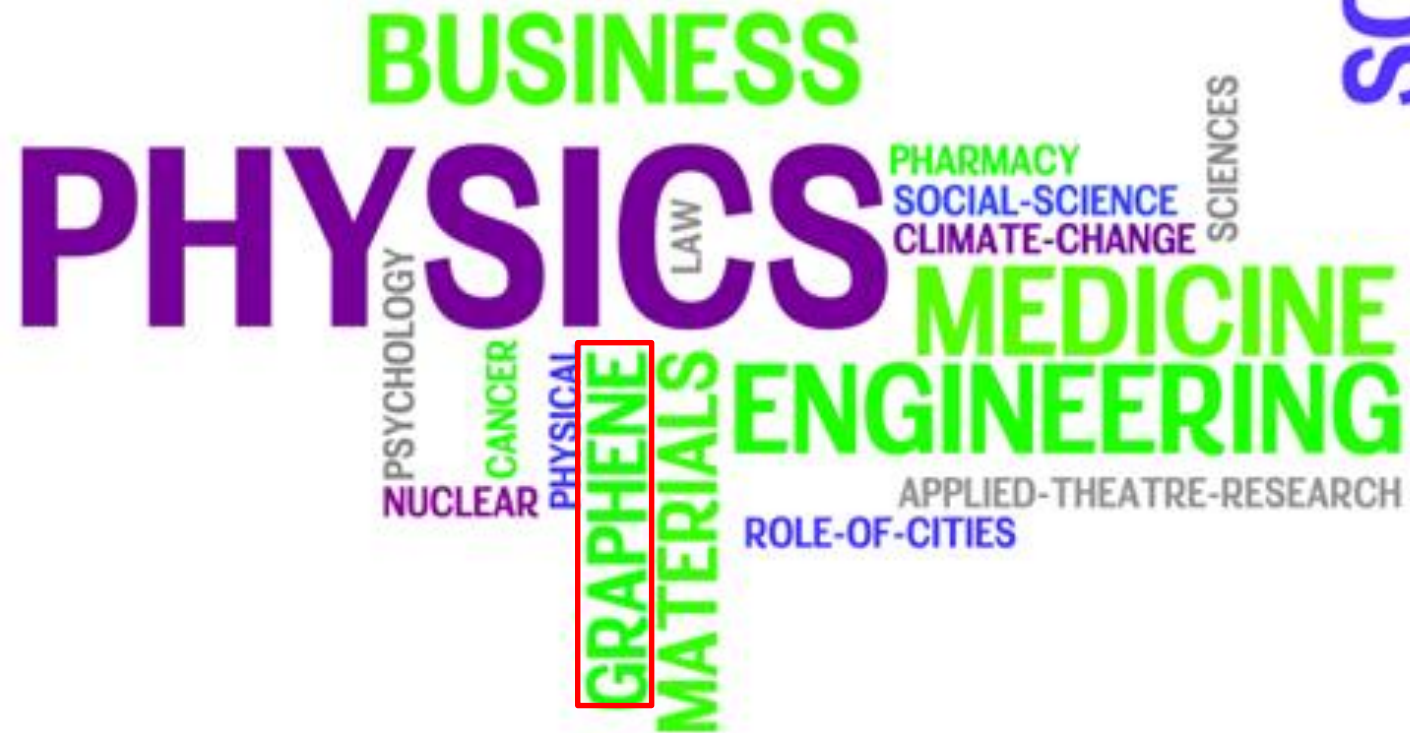


## **2013 External Stakeholders' Survey**

“Leaders know that Manchester wants to be a top 25 university, and that’s great, but every university says that these days. They say, we are busy, and bombarded with news every second of our day. We are probably talking to 100 universities in the UK, and maybe the same number across the world. And we don’t know what Manchester stands for, or why it’s different. Please tell us!”

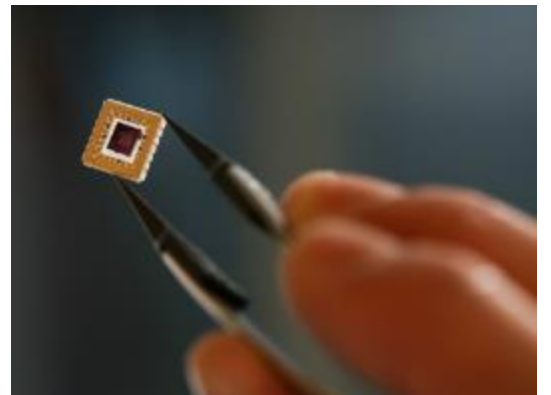
- Collective feedback from the External Stakeholders' Survey 2013

# External Stakeholders' Survey



# The Graphene Story

- Wonder material Graphene was isolated by two Physics Professors here on our campus
- Awarded Nobel Prize in 2010
- Appointed dedicated communications professional to work just on Graphene
- Manchester became know as “Home of Graphene”
- “Best thing to happen for Drama at Manchester in the past decade was the invention of Graphene”



## MEDIA COVERAGE: PRINT



**18,000**

media articles about graphene at the University, of which 8,000 were in 2015/6

**200+** More than 200 UK broadsheet articles and more than 100 articles in international newspapers, including in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *Time*, *Le Monde*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Times of India*

## DIGITAL CONTENT



### MICROSITE

New [graphene microsite](#) launched in 2014 – visitors increased by 44% from 125,000 to 180,000 between 2014 and 2015

### f FACEBOOK

94% increase in Facebook comments and 111% increase in Facebook likes of graphene-related content between 2015 and 2016

### 🐦 TWITTER

182% increase in Twitter engagement and 267% increase in Twitter users who have seen an update relating to graphene between 2015 and 2016

## MEDIA COVERAGE: BROADCAST

**200+** **BBC**

More than 200 BBC interviews across all platforms, including more than 25 on Radio 4

Notable appearances from Nobel laureate Andre Geim on *Profile* and *Desert Island Discs*, graphene features on *Horizon* and *The One Show*, and a special edition of *PM* broadcast live from the National Graphene Institute



More than 80 other broadcast interviews, including on *Channel 4 News*, *BBC World News*, *CNBC* and *The Gadget Show*



## ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCE

**20**

More than 20 visits to the NGI by UK politicians, including former Chancellor of the Exchequer, **George Osborne**.

State visit to the newly opened National Graphene Institute by **Chinese President Xi Jinping** in 2015

Royal visit to NGI by **Duke and Duchess of Cambridge** in 2016



**650**

leading researchers attended Graphene Week in June 2015

Internal lectures for staff and students by the Nobel laureates, plus an information day chaired by President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell

# Defining our distinctiveness

## Finding another four “Graphenes”

- Discoveries
- Breakthroughs
- World-changing
- Strong academic leaders
- Senior Leadership Team to pick
- 78 ...45..... 19 ... **5 areas**







# Implementation – Getting the creative right

Global challenges, Manchester solutions



## Phase 1- Awareness raising

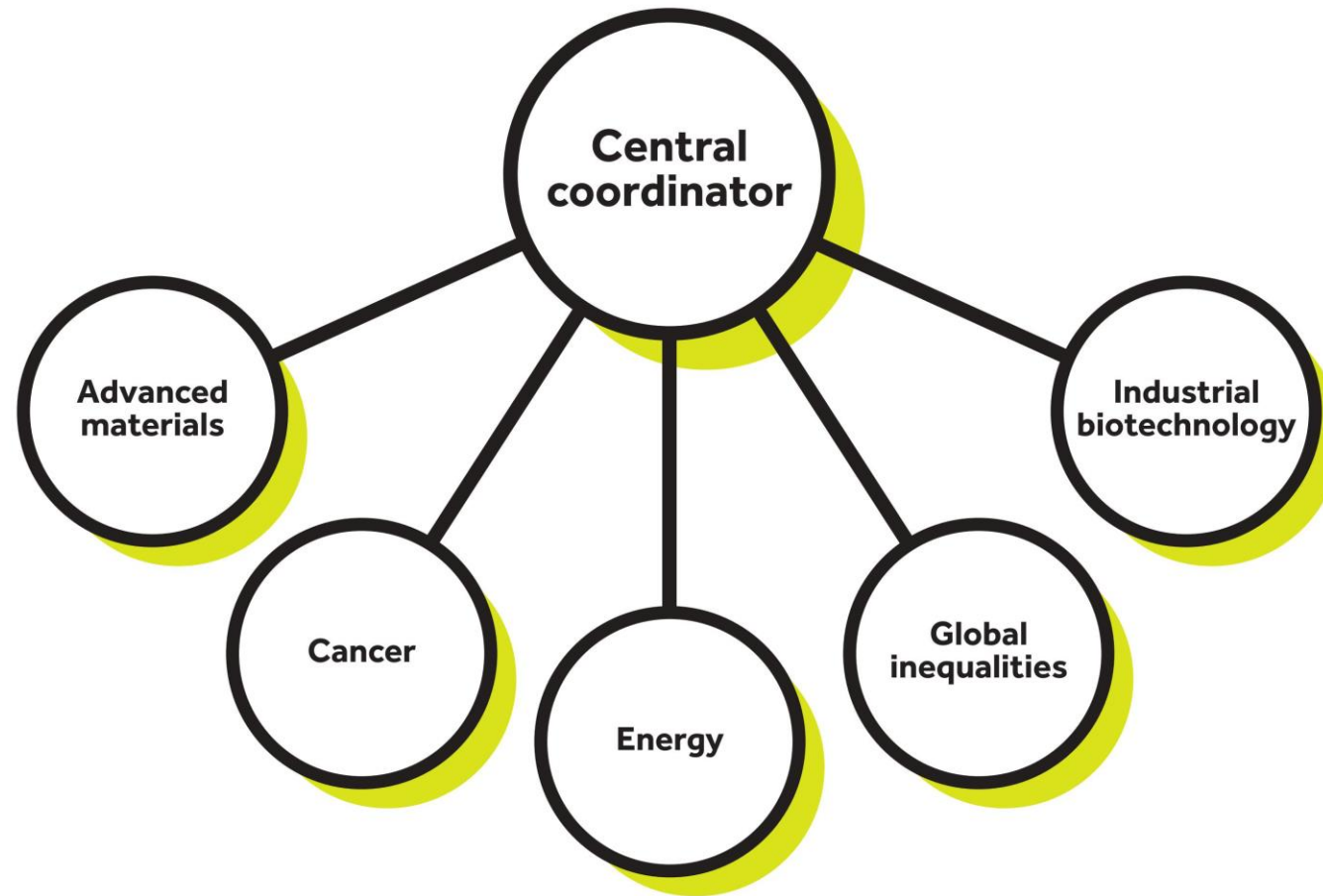
- Internal: engaged, but problems of silos and size
- External: need to provide information and target audiences
- Build awareness

## Phase 2 - Implementation

- Established a dedicated team
- Working in partnership with academics
- Greater research communications capacity



# Our approach



MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

GLOBAL  
CHALLENGES,  
MANCHESTER  
SOLUTIONS



MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

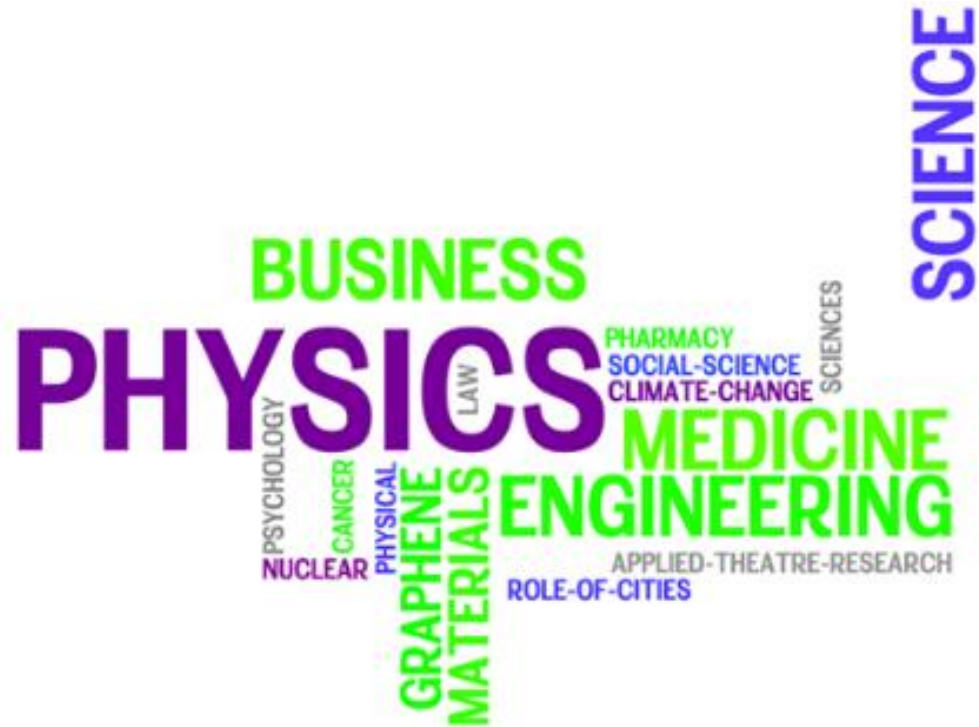
# Measuring our success

- Website metrics
- Social media engagement
- Media coverage
- Rankings
- Audience specific metrics
- External Stakeholders' Survey

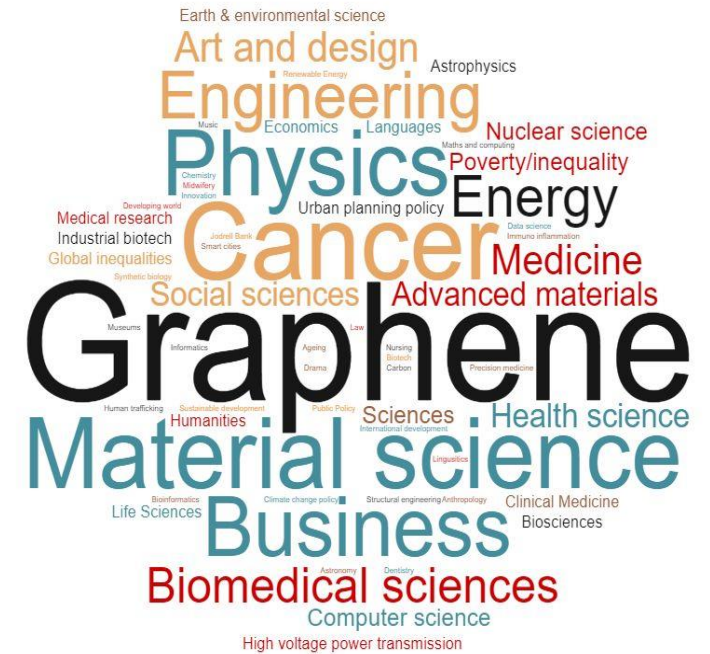


# External Stakeholders' Survey

2013



2017





# What's your distinctiveness challenge?





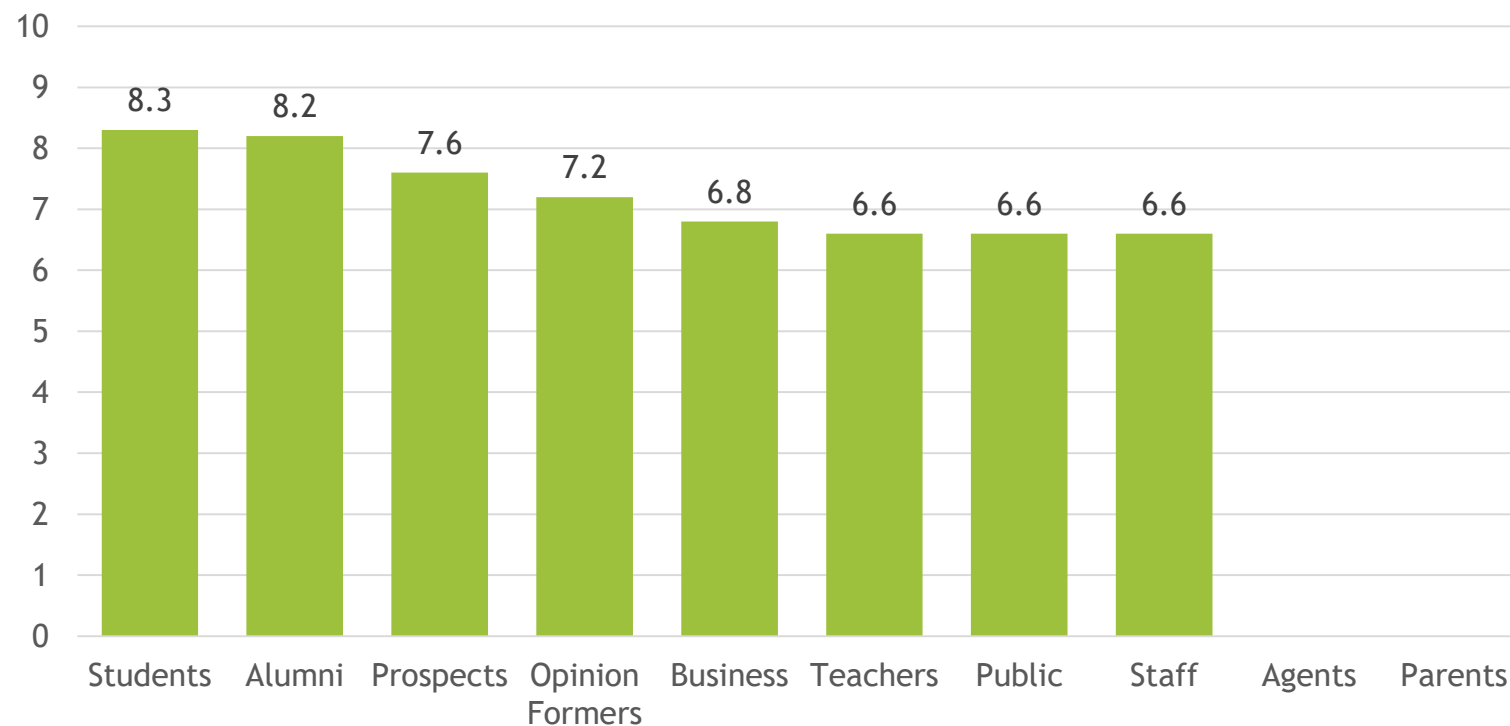
### THE WORLD 100 TRACKER

REPUTATION BENCHMARKING FOR WORLD 100 UNIVERSITIES



## If the university with the best reputation in the UK scored 10/10, how would you rate the reputation of University of Manchester?

537	4,243	239	60	510	187	1,086	382		
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Rank	3/9	2	2	2	3	2	3	6/9		
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# Final thoughts

- Audit reputation before and after
- Need for leadership and strategy
- Less is more
- Specialist press officers
- Co-ordinated communications rather than fragmented/devolved
- Academic personalities critical
- Conferences and events
- Perseverance!



# Thank you!

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