# University of Greater Manchester suspends top officials amid multi-faceted misconduct probes



The recent suspension of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Greater Manchester, Professor George Holmes, alongside two other senior staff members, has drawn significant attention amid ongoing investigations into serious allegations of financial irregularities and misconduct. This development follows a period of mounting scrutiny, particularly relating to reports published by the independent news site The Mill and the findings of a PricewaterhouseCoopers report commissioned by the university's own fraud response panel.

In official statements, the university has characterised the suspensions as precautionary, emphasising that they do not imply guilt. The institution, notable for its student body of nearly 11,000, has appointed Dr Greg Walker, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), as the acting Vice-Chancellor during this tumultuous period. The chair of the university's board, Professor William Morris, assured staff in an email that the university's core functions and academic activities would proceed without disruption, while also acknowledging the uncertainty such allegations create within the community.

Beyond financial irregularities, the allegations encompass more severe claims of bullying and racism within the institution. Lucy Powell, the leader of the House of Commons, confirmed that both the Greater Manchester Police and the Office for Students—the regulatory body for higher education in England—are now involved in investigating these multifaceted allegations. The implications of such claims could be profound, not only for the university’s leadership but also for the institution's standing within the educational sector and the local community.

Phil Brickell, the Labour MP for Bolton West, has been vocal regarding the necessity for a thorough investigation, expressing concern over the reported conditions at the university, which have been described by whistleblowers. He highlighted the need for the investigation to unfurl fully to ensure accountability and that the university serves its stakeholders—students, staff, and the wider community—most effectively.

Further complicating matters, there have been specific allegations that senior university officials attempted to misappropriate taxpayer funds and engage in questionable financial practices involving external companies. Notably, reports have surfaced regarding an arrangement with a company based in Casablanca, Morocco, fostering suspicion around improper management of university resources. These disturbing revelations could signal deeper systemic issues requiring immediate rectification.

In addition, another senior figure at the university, Joseph Wheeler, was recently dismissed following findings related to both financial misconduct and instances of racist behaviour. His exit highlights the university's declared commitment to addressing such serious allegations, although the university has remained tight-lipped about specific details surrounding his dismissal, pointing to the sensitivity of ongoing investigations.

Overall, these unfolding events signal a critical moment for the University of Greater Manchester, previously known as the University of Bolton. As investigations progress and further reports surface, the future leadership and governance of the institution will likely be challenged as it seeks to regain trust and maintain its educational integrity against a backdrop of significant public scrutiny.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Sources [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation)
2. Paragraph 2: Sources [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation)
3. Paragraph 3: Sources [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/07/university-of-greater-manchester-allegations-racism-financial-misconduct), [[4]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bolton-mp-says-red-flags-university-should-be-investigated), [[5]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ofs-notified-greater-manchester-probes-concerning-claims)
4. Paragraph 4: Sources [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/07/university-of-greater-manchester-allegations-racism-financial-misconduct), [[4]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bolton-mp-says-red-flags-university-should-be-investigated)
5. Paragraph 5: Sources [[4]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bolton-mp-says-red-flags-university-should-be-investigated), [[5]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ofs-notified-greater-manchester-probes-concerning-claims), [[6]](https://manchestermill.co.uk/breaking-joseph-wheeler-sacked-by-the-university-of-greater-manchester/), [[7]](https://manchestermill.co.uk/the-university-of-greater-manchester-casablanca-deal/)
6. Paragraph 6: Sources [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/07/university-of-greater-manchester-allegations-racism-financial-misconduct), [[6]](https://manchestermill.co.uk/breaking-joseph-wheeler-sacked-by-the-university-of-greater-manchester/), [[7]](https://manchestermill.co.uk/the-university-of-greater-manchester-casablanca-deal/)
7. Paragraph 7: Sources [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation), [[6]](https://manchestermill.co.uk/breaking-joseph-wheeler-sacked-by-the-university-of-greater-manchester/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/13/university-of-greater-manchester-suspends-vice-chancellor-amid-investigation> - The University of Greater Manchester has suspended Vice-Chancellor Prof George Holmes, along with the provost and another senior academic staff member, amid an investigation into allegations of financial irregularities. The university, formerly known as the University of Bolton, stated that these suspensions are precautionary and do not imply any assumption of guilt. Greater Manchester Police have confirmed an investigation into these allegations, following reports by The Mill and a subsequent PricewaterhouseCoopers report commissioned by the university's fraud response panel. An interim leadership team has been established, led by Dr. Greg Walker, who assumes the role of acting vice-chancellor during the investigation.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/07/university-of-greater-manchester-allegations-racism-financial-misconduct> - Police are investigating serious allegations at the University of Greater Manchester, including financial misconduct, racism, and bullying. Lucy Powell, the leader of the House of Commons, confirmed that both the police and the Office for Students are looking into these allegations. The university, formerly known as the University of Bolton, has commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct an independent investigation into recent allegations reported in the press relating to the conduct and affairs of senior personnel working for or on behalf of the university. The investigation will be overseen by the university’s audit committee.
4. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bolton-mp-says-red-flags-university-should-be-investigated> - Phil Brickell, MP for Bolton West, has called for an independent investigation into the financial arrangements of the University of Greater Manchester after being inundated with allegations highlighting concerning practices within the institution. The university was the subject of an investigation by local news site, The Mill, which has been raised in the House of Commons by Conservative MP Neil O’Brien, who referred to attempts to pay large sums of taxpayers’ money to relatives of the university’s managers and the involvement of a company based in Casablanca, Morocco. Brickell has written to the Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, outlining his concerns and urging for an investigation.
5. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ofs-notified-greater-manchester-probes-concerning-claims> - Extremely concerning reports about alleged financial misconduct at the University of Greater Manchester have been passed to the sector regulator, according to an education minister. The institution, which recently rebranded from its former University of Bolton moniker, has been the subject of reporting surrounding its use of public funds and relationships with external businesses. Neil O’Brien, the Conservative shadow education minister, raised the case during a debate about the coming tuition fee rise in the House of Commons, referencing attempts to pay large sums of taxpayers’ money to relatives of the university’s managers and the involvement of a company based in Casablanca, Morocco.
6. <https://manchestermill.co.uk/breaking-joseph-wheeler-sacked-by-the-university-of-greater-manchester/> - Joseph Wheeler, a senior figure at the University of Greater Manchester, has been dismissed with immediate effect following an investigation into allegations of financial misconduct and racism. The university confirmed that Wheeler left after a review of an audio clip where he made racist remarks about international students. The university stated that it takes allegations of bullying and bigotry seriously and that Wheeler's departure was based on new information received following the reporting by The Mill. The university has not commented further on the matter.
7. <https://manchestermill.co.uk/the-university-of-greater-manchester-casablanca-deal/> - An investigation by The Mill has uncovered secret contracts and unexplained payments at the University of Greater Manchester, involving senior executives attempting to divert hundreds of thousands in tuition fees into a private company owned by one of them. The report details how Joseph Wheeler, a senior executive at the university, negotiated a side-deal with a leading university partner, raising concerns about financial misconduct and potential corruption within the institution. The university has been handed the details of the investigation by The Mill and has not commented further on the matter.