



Lights, camera, *action!*



Your Alternative Graduation Ceremony

Thank you for your patience and understanding while you've been waiting for our announcement on this year's Graduation ceremonies.

We have been grappling with the complexities of an ever-changing situation in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and we now know (following the Government's latest announcement on 14 June 2021) that further restrictions are unlikely to be removed before 19 July 2021. We have been trying to plan for every eventuality, but the severity of the Delta variant in Bolton has added a new and serious dimension. As you know, Government restrictions also change at very short notice, making planning almost impossible.

However, we are now delighted to be able to announce our arrangements for your Alternative Graduation. It will clearly be impossible to have graduation ceremonies in the normal way, as this would involve several hundreds of people gathered together in one graduation hall. We have calculated that in order to observe social distancing requirements and to keep everyone safe, we would need to hold at least sixty graduation ceremonies. This would clearly be unviable.

And the emergence of the COVID-19 Delta variant would make it even more irresponsible for us to invite your parents and families to travel from throughout the UK and abroad, which would increase the risk of your graduation becoming a COVID-19 'super-spreader' event. And we know you value the safety and well-being of your families and friends back home too much to want to put them at any kind of risk.

However, we have created arrangements for your graduation that we believe are unique to the University of Bolton and are a more imaginative and creative response to this problem than is offered by any other university. We sincerely hope that you will agree.

In these unprecedented circumstances, your **Alternative Graduation** will be a streamlined, safe, and memorable occasion to honour and celebrate your achievements.

We will hold Alternative Graduations over the course of six days, very much following the usual pattern. But in contrast to previous years, each event will be a special ceremony for each individual School, with no guests invited and none of the large ceremonial processions that characterise typical graduations. Better yet, you won't have to listen to all the long speeches before you receive your award!

You will receive your award as usual, presented to you personally by your Head of School. Everyone will be wearing gowns and full academic dress as usual. You will have the opportunity to have your photograph taken by our official graduation photographer, and will have your picture taken again as your degree is presented to you. And if you want a few extra mementos, you will be able to request more photos from our University photographer, if you're not already sick of being snapped! So, while your parents and friends will not be able to share the occasion with you in person, they will have a variety of photographs, including that special moment when you are presented with your commemorative scroll to acknowledge your degree. Your degree certificate will be posted to your home, to keep it safe.



Use the links below to learn more:

The Graduation documentary film



But there is another exciting, unique, and completely unprecedented aspect of our plan. We will be making a **Graduation Documentary Film** in the run-up to graduation to give a snapshot of the brilliant ways in which students and staff have responded to the challenges of the last 15 months. We will also be filming throughout the entire six days of the small individual on-campus ceremonies. The film will be made by The Chase Films, a Manchester-based, Oscar-nominated film company and directed by our own Professor David Thacker who, as some of you may know, is an Olivier Award-winning theatre director and BAFTA-nominated film director.

The arrangements for your Alternative Graduation will be simple, straightforward, and entirely safe. Of course, some of you may not be able to travel to Bolton to graduate, and because the whole day will be filmed, a few of you may not wish to participate in your graduation ceremony. Professor Thacker assures us that you will hardly notice the filming going on and will be able to concentrate on the main purpose of the day, which is to celebrate your achievements and to give you something memorable to treasure for the rest of your lives. However, if you aren't able to come, or don't want to be filmed, David can insert a still shot of you in smart clothes when your name is announced in the film; you would just need to send it before the day of your Alternative Graduation ceremony.



Student Ambassadors and the Graduation Team will be on hand to guide you throughout the day. You will arrive at Senate House by appointment, exactly at the time specified by The Chase Films, to ensure that the ceremony and filming is efficient and professional. To guarantee that everybody is completely safe, you will be required to show your mobile phone on arrival with confirmation of a negative COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test taken by you within 48 hours prior to your arrival. These NHS tests are available, free of charge, from any reputable pharmacy and can be taken at home very easily. You will pass through the temperature scanner as usual. You will register in the Atrium in Senate House and be guided to the Graduands' Robing Room where you will be helped with your gown, and will have time to make sure that you look your very best!

Then you will be guided to the Photography Studio where you will have an official photo taken by the professional graduation photographer. Next you will cross to the Deane Lecture Theatre and will proceed, one at a time, down the steps of the Lecture Theatre, and across the 'stage' to receive your award from your Head of School. You will be photographed again at the very moment that your Head of School congratulates you. You will then exit the Lecture Theatre and be guided outside to the Pavilion Tent which will be immediately outside Senate House. Here you will be able to hand back your gowns and have more opportunities for additional photographs. There will be no charge for the gowns this year.

In August or September, the première of your School's Graduation Documentary Film will be shown online. You will be able to watch this in the comfort of your own home with all your friends and family gathered around you. If you wish, you will be able to have a copy of this unique film to keep as a memento. Perhaps one day you'll be able to show it to your loved ones, and we can all look back on the COVID-19 years with amazement.

Please note, if the alternative graduation ceremonies or official photography/filming cannot take place or are delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of the University, including (without limitation) fire, explosion, terrorist act (or threat of terrorist act), act of God, pandemic, or as a result of any industrial action or dispute involving the University, or at the venue where filming is due to be held, the University will not be liable for any losses direct, or otherwise, incurred by graduates. The University will, where at all possible, make alternative arrangements for any students affected.

Arrangements on the day



Strange as it may seem, you will have been part of history – a unique COVID-19-era graduation ceremony, and a world-first documentary from these unprecedented times.

We all look forward to a time where we can hug, high-five and celebrate in large gatherings, but in these challenging times, we hope you can see we are doing everything we can to give you the memorable graduation you deserve.

We look forward to seeing you on campus and on film!

The University Graduation Team



GREATER MANCHESTER

#UniAsItShouldBe