

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

Freedom of Information Request Relating to the Change of Name

Information has been sought on the total cost, including a breakdown of spending on the switchover from the UCE logo and name to the Birmingham City University logo and name, together with the reason for the name change and information about prior consultation with students and staff. The information which follows draws largely on existing documentation.

Detailed rationale for changing the name

The University's present name is too long and unwieldy, making it difficult to convey the title in a way which conveys the status and location of the institution. The University also has a desire to associate itself much more strongly with the city in which it is located in keeping both with Birmingham's desire to develop a knowledge-based economy and with the University's own mission to serve the economy and society.

The increasing degree of competition between UK universities for students, both home/EU and international, and by the advent of higher tuition fees, making for an even more demanding market makes this application of significant importance to the University.

The University has experienced a clear difficulty in marketing the current long title, whether to potential business partners or to possible applicants. In itself the title is too long and all attempts to shorten the title lose a key ingredient, either the location of the University, or the fact of University status. Notwithstanding the views of many current students who have a strong emotional attachment to the current name for perfectly understandable reasons, the University believes that a shorter name in which the name of the city features more prominently will be a significant advantage in marketing the University and in raising brand awareness and profile over time.

The rationale for putting Birmingham at the forefront of the title is strong. The University has historical associations with the Birmingham name, it having been formally part of the polytechnic title from 1971 to 1989, and featured in the titles of the 5 constituent institutions prior to polytechnic status and 4 of the 6 institutions that subsequently merged with the Polytechnic/University. Even today several of the University's sub-brands contain Birmingham in their titles; Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Birmingham School of Acting, Birmingham School of Architecture and Birmingham School of Jewellery.

Market research undertaken for the higher education sector on name recognition indicates that those institutions that are most easily recognised and remembered are those that have adopted the name of a major city. Name recognition is important in terms of the University's ability to recruit able and committed students and it is equally important to the University's graduates when they are seeking employment or promotion. High recognition enhances the value of the University's students' awards.

It is therefore a key priority for the University that the name of the city of Birmingham should feature much more prominently in the University's title. Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK and has enjoyed a huge renaissance since the early 1990's. It has transformed itself successfully from a traditional manufacturing centre to a thriving cosmopolitan hub at the heart of a city-region. It has become a centre for retail, food and leisure and for the professional and financial services. As Birmingham seeks to celebrate its status as a university city, this University wishes to proclaim its location proudly. If Birmingham is to compete as a learning city it needs to be promoting its three universities more prominently than at present and in turn Birmingham's three universities need to be promoting the city of Birmingham. The University is fully supportive of Birmingham's intention to promote itself as a city of learning and this is why having "Birmingham" at the forefront of its name is of primary importance.

The University is committed to working with the city of Birmingham and in pursuance of the Government's agenda to widen participation in higher education and encourage greater collaboration with business and industry. The current name is inhibiting the University in helping to achieve the desired outcomes of that agenda.

A name which puts Birmingham at the forefront is also in harmony with the University's new mission to be a centre of excellence in learning creativity and enterprise promoting economic social and cultural wellbeing. It will assist in finding new business partners to work with, helping them with solutions to their business problems and at the same time, triggering fresh, real-world material to enliven teaching, providing new opportunities for student work placements and assisting students to be more employable on graduation.

On 29th March 2007, the Board of Governors of the University resolved that a formal change of University title be considered and authorised the Vice-Chancellor to commence a process of consultation on the future name. Key interested parties were informed of the University's intention and suggestions were sought from staff and students as to the future title

Consultation Process

After consideration of over 90 possible names put forward, in July 2007, the Vice-Chancellor launched a formal and extensive consultation exercise on three possible names:

Birmingham Chamberlain University;
Birmingham City University; and
Birmingham Metropolitan University.

The Vice-Chancellor wrote directly to individuals and organisations whom the University regarded as key stakeholders in the consultation exercise, in addition to soliciting the views of staff, students and alumni of and applicants to the University, through an internet based survey.

Letters to Stakeholders were posted on 27 & 28 June 2007 and a deadline of 19th July 2007 was given for the submission of responses.

Members of staff were emailed on 27 June 2007 and a deadline of 19th July 2007 was given for the submission of responses.

Students were emailed on 27 June 2007 and a deadline of 19th July 2007 was given for the submission of responses.

Applicants were emailed on 27 June 2007 and letters to them posted on 28 June 2007 (if the University did not have an email address) and a deadline of 19th July 2007 was given for the submission of responses.

Letters to Alumni were posted on 14 July 2007 and a deadline of 24th July 2007 was given for the submission of responses.

STAFF (via email)

Dear

I am writing to consult you on the University's proposal to change our name later this year.

Our experience of operating under our formal title of University of Central England in Birmingham indicates that it is too long and unwieldy to enable us to easily present both the University and its location in Birmingham to the outside world. We believe that this disadvantages us when engaging with prospective students (particularly in the national and international markets) and with business partners and similarly disadvantages graduates upon completion of their studies. Our core partners in the region have already indicated that they would welcome the change.

Our preference, therefore, is to adopt a new title which is shorter and puts our location in Birmingham at the forefront, representing the social and economic dimensions of the University's mission and supporting the City of Birmingham's own profile as a science city and university city within a knowledge-based economy.

We are conscious that some people have expressed concerns about the possible costs associated with changing our name. Let me assure you that we are already planning ahead in order to keep expenditure to the minimum and that the cost will be a fraction of one per cent of the University's total budget for 2007/08 and considerably less than the new Olympic logo!

The titles for which we would welcome your support and on which your comments would be most welcome are:

Birmingham City University
Birmingham Chamberlain University
Birmingham Metropolitan University

We are consulting widely on this matter and your views will be invaluable in enabling us to reach a decision on the recommendation to be put to the Privy Council later this year.

I should be grateful to know whether you have any preferences among the above names and if you have any objections.

We have created a special web-based survey to enable you to notify us of your preferences, which can be accessed at <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/uce/staff> The site will be available until 19 July.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Professor David Tidmarsh
Vice-Chancellor

STUDENT (via email or letter)

Dear

I am writing to consult you on the University's proposal to change our name later this year.

Our experience of operating under our formal title of University of Central England in Birmingham indicates that it is too long and unwieldy to enable us to easily present both the University and its location in Birmingham to the outside world. We believe that this disadvantages us when engaging with prospective students (particularly in the national and international markets) and with business partners and similarly disadvantages our graduates upon completion of their studies. Our core partners in the region have already indicated that they would welcome the change.

Our preference, therefore, is to adopt a new title which is shorter and puts our location in Birmingham at the forefront, representing the social and economic dimensions of the University's mission and supporting the City of Birmingham's own profile as a science city and university city within a knowledge-based economy. We believe that this will strengthen the value of our students' degrees and diplomas after they graduate.

We are conscious that some students have expressed concerns about the possible costs associated with changing our name. Let me assure you that we are already planning ahead in order to keep expenditure to the minimum and that the cost will be a fraction of one per cent of the University's total budget for 2007/08 and considerably less than the new Olympic logo!

The titles for which we would welcome your support and on which your comments would be most welcome are:

Birmingham City University
Birmingham Chamberlain University
Birmingham Metropolitan University

We are consulting widely on this matter and your views will be invaluable in enabling us to reach a decision and then apply to the Privy Council for a change in the University name later this year.

I should be grateful to know whether you have any preferences among the above names and if you have any objections.

We have created a special web-based survey to enable you to notify us of your preferences, which can be accessed at www.survey.bris.ac.uk/uce/studenthome The site will be available until 19 July.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Professor David Tidmarsh
Vice-Chancellor

Web-based Survey

Online Surveys - Admin - Microsoft Internet Explorer


File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Search Favorites

Address: https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/manifestId=101856op=preview

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University of Central England in Birmingham (1)



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University New Name Survey Page

Your views are important in helping us to decide the name by which the university will be known in the future. Three possible new names have been selected from the suggestions received.

University of Central England in Birmingham

1. Please consider these new names carefully and rank them in order of preference. (Only one option should be selected in each row or column)

	1st	2nd	3rd
a. Birmingham City University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Birmingham Chamberlain University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Birmingham Metropolitan University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Please give a reason why you prefer your first choice. (Optional)

3. Some people may have particular objections to one or more of the proposed names. Please indicate whether or not this applies to you.

I have no objections I have objections

a. Please indicate which name(s) you object to (select all that apply)

Birmingham City University - I have an objection

Birmingham Chamberlain University - I have an objection

Birmingham Metropolitan University - I have an objection

b. Please give the reasons for your objections.

Start

UCE - Research Online

21/05/2007 10:41

Online Surveys - Admin

Internet

My Documents

Bluetooth

1151

Thursday

16/07/2007

Results of Consultation

A breakdown of responses from the different groups consulted is set out below. The percentages shown are of the proportion of the group in question who have identified the name as their first choice.

	Number of Responses	Birmingham City University	Birmingham Metropolitan University	Birmingham Chamberlain University
Stakeholders	229	53.3%	31.0%	12.7%
Staff	1004	20.8%	62.1%	15.9%
Home Alumni	859	43.5%	35.9%	18.7%
International Alumni	95	52.6%	30.5%	16.8%
Home Applicants	1143	52.4%	31.8%	15.3%
International Applicants	325	52.9%	36.9%	10.5%
Home Students	1361	47.1%	31.3%	13.7%
International Students	103	50.5%	36.9%	9.7%
Total	5119	46.6%	37%	14.2%

7 (3.1%) of Stakeholders and 143 (2.9%) of other consultees expressed no clear preference, only commented to raise objections, or suggested alternative names.

The favourite name across the consultees is Birmingham City University, with the exception of the members of staff who favour Birmingham Metropolitan University. The effect of the Staff vote has therefore reduced the overall percentage in favour of Birmingham City University.

Reasons for the choice of Birmingham City University

The University's principal reasons for supporting the Birmingham City University title are as follows:-

- It is clear, succinct, easy to say, and easy to remember;
- It places the University in its geographical setting and associates it with the second city;
- It is simple and unpretentious but sounds businesslike and professional;
- It is neutral; it doesn't identify the University with a particular point in history nor with any other group of institutions, leaving the University the freedom and opportunity to create its own market position;
- There are historical claims to the name from the University's days as the City of Birmingham Polytechnic and the title of one of the precursor teaching training institutions (1971 to 1989); and
- It is the name favoured by the majority of the consultees.