

Approval of proposed new name for Newman University (10007832)

The Office for Students (OfS) has approved the use of the word 'university' in the provider's change of name from 'Newman University' to 'Birmingham Newman University'.

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 amended relevant legislation to give the OfS the power to approve the use of the word university in a registered higher education provider's name. In approving the inclusion of the word 'university' in any name the OfS has regard to the need to avoid names which are, or may be, confusing.¹

The OfS has published guidance for registered higher education providers that wish to use either university or university college as part of their name ('university title' or 'university college title'). It states that we will consult on a provider's proposed new name and assess the extent to which the proposed name is, or may be, confusing or misleading.²

Newman University applied to the OfS for approval to use the word university in its proposed new name, 'Birmingham Newman University', in May 2022. We consulted on the provider's proposed new name and received 42 responses.³ Considering the responses:

- We took the view that the provider's proposed new name did not appear to be like any other registered English higher education provider's name because of similarity that could cause potential confusion or be misleading.
- We agreed with some consultation responses that an abbreviation of the provider's proposed new name using initials only could potentially create confusion, particularly for prospective students and stakeholders, with other English higher education providers that use abbreviations using initials only of their names.
- However, we concluded that the issues raised by respondents to the consultation were unlikely to occur because the provider had stated it did not intend to use an acronym of its proposed new name; it intended to use the words in its proposed new name. We considered that the intention to retain the word 'Newman' in its name, including if abbreviated to 'Newman', sufficiently distinguishes it from the names of other higher education providers. Should the provider make any changes to its website or address, it will consider using its proposed new name in full words.

¹ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/part/1/crossheading/powers-in-relation-to-university-title/enacted>.

² See 'Regulatory advice 13: How to apply for university college and university title' (OfS 2019.08), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-13-how-to-apply-for-university-college-and-university-title/.

³ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/proposed-new-name-for-newman-university/.

- Therefore, we decided to approve the use of the word 'university' in the provider's new name 'Birmingham Newman University'.