

Approval of proposed new name for Bishop Grosseteste University

UKPRN 10007811

The Office for Students (OfS) has consented to the use of the word 'university' in the provider's change of name from 'Bishop Grosseteste University' to 'Lincoln Bishop University'.

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) amended relevant legislation to give the OfS the power to consent to the use of the word university in a registered higher education provider's name. In consenting to 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

Bishop Grosseteste University applied to the OfS for consent to the use of the word university in its proposed new name 'Lincoln Bishop University' in April 2024. Having considered the OfS's general duty, under section 2 of HERA, to use the OfS resources in an efficient and effective way, we ran a targeted consultation that focused on interested parties that we considered to have a particular interest in the provider's proposed name.

The targeted consultation was to determine whether the new name could be confusing or misleading, and we received 170 responses, with the majority of responses from current students.

Considering the responses

We agreed with some consultation responses that the proposed name could potentially create confusion in some limited circumstances:

- a. The proposed name may be particularly confusing for incoming students. Some respondents suggested that there was the potential for incoming students to be confused or misled by the new name. The primary reason behind this concern was the potential for confusion with the University of Lincoln. We concluded, however, that the provider had already considered this concern and had specifically put 'Lincoln' at the start of its new name to ensure that it was sufficiently different from the 'University of Lincoln'. We also reflected on the wider sector precedent for multiple providers to share city names within their titles, and considered that this issue in its own right should not prevent the provider changing its name. It is also important to recognise that the provider previously had the

¹ See [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#).

² See [Regulatory advice 13: How to apply for university college and university title](#).

word 'Lincoln' in its name for the first 100 years of its existence, before changing its name in 1962, which removed the location.

- b. The proposed name could be confusing for current and graduating students if it happens mid-year.
- c. There is a risk that employers in the teacher training field could find the proposed name confusing and not recognise the university for the quality of its teacher training.
- d. The proposed name may create a level of confusion for current and prospective students going into the field of teaching.
- e. Confusion with the use of the acronym 'LBU' as this is already used by Leeds Beckett University.

However, we concluded that the confusion raised by respondents to the targeted consultation were unlikely to occur. This was because we considered the following mitigations would lower any risk of confusion or harm:

- a. Awareness of the name change through the provider's insight gathering consultation surveys with key stakeholders, which included current and prospective students and alumni.
- b. Appropriate marketing and communications strategies to raise awareness of the name change and the reasons for it, including clearly explaining this information on the provider's website, with links to relevant articles, posts and communications during the transition period.
- c. The provider's strong communication channels with hundreds of schools and colleges in the local area, which will allow it to continue to emphasise and promote the quality of its teacher training provision.
- d. Emphasising that the university is to be known as 'Lincoln Bishop' rather than 'LBU', with plans in place against the use of the acronym should it occur.

The consultation responses also highlighted that the provider's new name clearly articulates the provider's geographical location, which we considered would allow more students to more effectively consider the provider and the local area's offerings.

Therefore, we decided to consent to the proposed new name of 'Lincoln Bishop University'.