

# PEOPLE, PLACE AND PARTNERSHIP

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DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURES FOR ALL





Students at Ulster University's Derry-Londonderry campus



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School pupils and Ulster University work in partnership to catalogue the diversity of marine plants and animals that are present in our coastal waters, Coleraine



## Foreword



Jenny Pyper, Chair of the Council

*I'm pleased to introduce Ulster University's strategic plan - People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All.*

The University is immensely proud of both its historic roots in, and commitment to, Derry~Londonderry, Coleraine and Belfast and also its identity as a university that balances research and teaching excellence with this strong presence across Northern Ireland. People and relationships are central to our plan and we recognise that the dedication of our staff, the ambition of our students and the quality of our collaborations are key to our ongoing success and will provide the energy and innovation to catalyse this strategy.

Ulster University is recognised internationally for academic quality and student experience as well as for its socio-economic contribution and is Northern Ireland's largest university with over 27,000 students and 2,700 staff across all our campuses. While our primary purpose is to educate and inspire learning, it is notable that the economic impact associated with our activities is estimated to be £1.3 billion annually – this corresponds to a sector-leading cost-benefit ratio of 1:7. As a multi-campus University, this impact is well distributed across the region and so continued investment in all three campuses is a priority in this plan.

Our previous five-year strategy significantly improved our research capacity and quality, enhanced our teaching and graduate performance, expanded our global partnerships, and saw our student body become increasingly diverse and internationally mobile. It sought to maximise the civic contribution of our teaching and research and this new strategic plan outlines our absolute commitment to people, our students, staff, the quality of our teaching, research and campuses, recognising that investment in people, partnerships and infrastructure will be transformative across our wide sphere of activity and influence.

The delivery of our aims will enable us to increase our impact on society and to play our part as a university which addresses both regional and global challenges. This plan builds on our commitment to create a university that is sustainable and innovative, with a strong reputation internationally. Our focus on academic excellence in teaching and research remains undiminished and our historic high point in the University league tables is a consequence of our ongoing commitment to quality enhancement in all aspects of our work.

We recognise both the enormous value of our regional footprint and the need for us to work as a balanced, unified organisation with an ongoing focus on equality, diversity and inclusion in order to achieve our goals. Sustainability is a central feature of this new strategy and encompasses everything from addressing the funding challenges facing the higher education sector to our role in addressing climate change and providing leadership in achieving sustainability goals.

On behalf of Council, our governing body I'm proud to endorse this strategy. It charts a pathway that will significantly improve outcomes for our students, society and the economy by focusing investment on the learning and social experiences of our students and enhancing the working lives of our staff, right across Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Pyper'.

**Jenny Pyper**  
Chair of the Council



Students studying at the recently redesigned library at Ulster University's Derry-Londonderry campus

## Introduction



Professor Paul Bartholomew

*I am delighted to be introducing our new University strategy: People, Place and Partnership which seeks to unlock our collective potential to deliver Sustainable Futures for All.*

Ulster University is extraordinary. We are one of the most complex large institutions within the UK, successfully maintaining a dual focus on research and teaching while actively driving exemplary social mobility and civic engagement. We are a university that spans a region of great potential and great passion. Our focus on People, Place and Partnership tasks that passion with a purpose: to deliver Sustainable Futures for All.

Our organisational values define who we are - they shape our organisational culture, influence our behaviour, and underpin our achievements, that's why we have placed them at the heart of this strategy. We act with integrity in our dealings with each other, we actively seek opportunities for collaboration, the enhancement of potential is central to everything we do, and we are inclusive as a place to study and as a place to work.

This strategy is brought forward at an unprecedented time for higher education as we face the challenge of emerging from the global pandemic and adapting to a changed learning landscape. The pandemic has challenged how people experience the world and although we are embracing new opportunities for how, when and where we work together to progress all facets of our sustainability agenda, we are deliberately renewing our commitment to the notion of the campus-based university for all who wish it, with a significant expansion of fully online provision for those wishing to study at a distance. For us, the commitment to campus-based education has an additional dimension as we are a multi-campus university and with this strategy we are re-committing to our pan-regional presence and all the opportunities this delivers for those who study with us, work with us, and partner with us.



Students take a break in the teaching block within Ulster University's Derry-Londonderry campus

Our strategic commitment to our multi-campus university model is not rhetorical, it is tangible. In accordance with our institutional value of integrity, this commitment will be matched by the patterns of our investment and enacted through our behaviours.

A commitment to campus-based higher education is, at its heart, a commitment to people. Learning, teaching, and research are social activities where people come together to create and disseminate knowledge through collaboration and partnership. Accordingly, we are committed to the creation and nurturing of shared spaces where people can co-locate and build communities of research-led learning across each of our campuses.

Through academic and operational excellence we are committed to the enhancement of the learning and social experiences of our students, to the widening access and participation of all in our communities, and to maximise their opportunities and success through the curation of an outstanding university experience. As a multi-campus university, we are acknowledged for our key role in creating exceptionally capable graduates and postgraduates for a wide spectrum of professions, workplaces and entrepreneurial endeavours.

Our investments and behaviours are also critical when we consider how we will deliver against our sustainability agenda. To contribute meaningfully towards a sustainable planet, sustainable local regions, sustainable academic disciplines and indeed our collective

custodianship for a sustainable broad-based multi-campus university we must commit to change and have the confidence to invest accordingly.

Our place at the heart of Northern Ireland's knowledge and skills ecosystem is highly developed, as is the part we play in economic growth and regional enhancement of cultural life. With over 27,000 students and 2,700 staff distributed across our campuses, our regional model is as unique as Northern Ireland itself; transformative for local communities, whilst making a sustained impact on the global stage. Building on our campuses as centres of excellence, our collaborative partnerships, and our sectoral leadership, Ulster University is making a difference every day, ensuring a lasting impact for individuals and communities alike.

We enjoy a national and international reputation for excellence in research and teaching while simultaneously playing a leading role in the enrichment of the social, economic, and cultural life of Northern Ireland. We are a university of, and for, the world. We believe in equality, we celebrate diversity and we foster inclusion. Through our critical role in fulfilling our global civic commitment and transforming lives we are delivering Sustainable Futures for All.

*P. Bartholomew*

**Professor Paul Bartholomew**

Context



Engineering student Zara Chambers at Ulster University's Derry~Londonderry campus

*With over 27,000 students and 2,700 staff dispersed across our campuses, Ulster University plays a special role in the cultural, societal and economic advancement of Northern Ireland.*

Our regional model is as unique as Northern Ireland itself; deeply rooted in local communities, whilst making a sustained impact on the global stage. Reaching out from our centres of excellence in Derry~Londonderry, Coleraine, Belfast and Jordanstown Sports Village, through our many collaborative partnerships, Ulster University is making a difference every day and is having a lasting impact for individuals and communities alike.

- **27,000 Students**
- **2,700 Staff**
- **3 Campuses and the Jordanstown Sports Village**

Ulster University enjoys a national and international reputation for excellence in research and teaching, reflected in our Research Excellence Framework and in our National Student Survey results.

The aspirations of our vibrant student community are met across our four sites, each offering a student experience unique to its location and subject areas. We are recognised for our outstanding impact on student outcomes due to the excellence of our committed teaching community; delivering a learning experience that develops skills, raises ambitions and prepares future leaders.

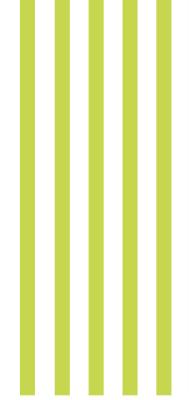
This strategy sets out the trajectory of how we will evolve and respond to global challenges whilst continuing to deliver impact at local and regional level.

We are uniquely positioned to stimulate and drive forward balanced regional development. Through pioneering research and innovation,

we have contributed to advances that are helping to build sustainable futures and improve the quality of life for us all. With a renewed focus on people, place and partnerships, we are committed to building the capacity and capability needed to secure economic growth and other societal benefits.

By investment in world class infrastructure and in our people, we will continue to nurture talent and ambition built on research, innovation, and academic excellence that is 'best in class'. We will equip our students with the skills to tackle challenges responsibly and confidently in resourceful and inclusive ways.

The pace of change, technological advances and disruption are creating new opportunities that we are determined to embrace. In doing so, we are genuinely optimistic that as an increasingly diverse university community, our contribution will deliver a safer and sustainable future for us all.



**Ulster University is already outstanding**

**TOP 20** Ulster University for student experience  
*Times Good University Guide (2022)*

**#1** Northern Ireland Large University for Student satisfaction  
*National Student Survey (2022)*

**92%** Of all leavers in work or further study  
*Graduate Outcomes (2018/19)*

**Shortlisted University of the Year**  
*Times Good University Guide (2022)*

**2,500** Student work placements every year

**#1** Most popular Northern Ireland University for PG study  
*HESA (2020)*

**215,000** Alumni

**2ND** in UK for PRES  
*Postgraduation Research Experience Survey (2021)*

**97%** Environment for world-leading or internationally excellent research  
*REF (2021)*

## OUR PURPOSE

*As a multi-campus university, we are transformative, unlocking the potential of people, place and partnership to build sustainable futures for all.*



Students sharing ideas

## Our values

*Our Values set the tone for our University, who we are, where we are and where we want to go.*

The Values statements were co-created with around 600 (over 20%) colleagues throughout 2019.

The co-created nature of our Values provides an indication of the culture within our University. They are our touchstone, guiding us to achieve excellence together enhancing our employee and student experience, now and in the future.

Work is continuing to help facilitate and embed Values-driven activities and further colleague engagement at Ulster University.





Poulette Oduor, PhD researcher within the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Coleraine campus

## Our aims

**Enhance the learning and social experiences of students**

**Through the creation and dissemination of knowledge, enhance outcomes for students, society & cultural life, and the economy**

**Enhance the working lives and development opportunities of our staff**



Students collaborating in the multiple use spaces, Belfast campus

# Our commitments

Placing sustainability at the centre of what we do:  
*because we are custodians of the future.*

- ▶ Investing with the long term in mind
- ▶ Proactively managing our impact with reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Providing vibrant campus-based higher education:  
*because learning is fundamentally a social activity.*

- ▶ Investing in spaces for people
- ▶ Investing in places for communities

Enhancing the social life of our campuses:  
*because social interaction at university enriches learning and wellbeing.*

- ▶ Investing in sport, leisure and culture
- ▶ Building connections between people

Maintaining a multi-campus model for our region-wide delivery:  
*because wider geographical presence drives wider opportunities for participation in higher education.*

- ▶ Driving the regional economy
- ▶ Creating opportunities for all

Investing in a broad-based research-led higher education offering:  
*because knowledge creation should not be constrained.*

- ▶ Offering a diverse portfolio of courses
- ▶ Fusing research and teaching to address the challenges of our time

Being a key partner for industry:  
*because our research, skills, and talent development give us and employers a competitive edge.*

- ▶ Driving innovation
- ▶ Building a skills pipeline for the economy and wider society

Being a key partner for the cultural and social life of our communities:  
*because shared life experiences define our society.*

- ▶ Enacting outreach, transforming lives
- ▶ Partnering with the community

Taking proactive stances on equality, diversity, and inclusion:  
*because togetherness and partnership enrich us and our work.*

- ▶ Celebrating all people
- ▶ Providing opportunities for all communities

Helping our staff achieve a work-life balance that allows them to flourish in both:  
*because people come first.*

- ▶ Promoting better health
- ▶ Enabling fair career progression



*We will deliver on our commitments through a focus on people, place and partnership.*

Student Reuben Brown, Belfast School of Art, End of Year Show installation



# Our strategy



**PEOPLE**  
Students  
Staff  
Society



**PLACE**  
Regional Commitment  
Space  
Community



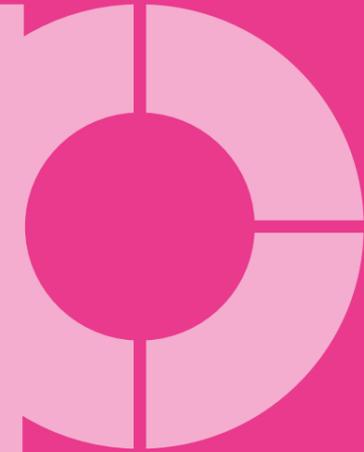
PhD Researcher engaging in the PhD Festival of Research



**PARTNERSHIP**  
Institutional  
Regional  
Global



Personalised Medicine student at Ulster University's Derry-Londonderry campus



# PEOPLE



A student enjoys the coffee bar in the recently opened Block BD, Belfast campus

*People are the heart of this university. Our students, graduates and staff affect all of our impact, both in this place and around the world, expanding minds through teaching, pushing the boundaries of knowledge through research and working in partnership to enhance the potential of everyone through education.*

## Students

We maximise the life chances of people from all backgrounds, enabling access to transformative university experiences, to catalyse their potential and equip them to make their personal impact on the world.

We will further build on our leading delivery in areas of widening access, employability and wellbeing, investing to deliver holistic student experiences in preparation for work, entrepreneurship and life more widely.

- **Students' learning and social experiences**
- **Wellbeing**
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- **Widening participation**
- **Transformative experience**

**Aodhán Roberts, award winning Cinematic Arts student:**

“From a ‘troublemaker’ in secondary school expected to get no GCSEs, to a young man that graduated college with leading top grades to now a university scholar. To be a recipient along with 38 other people who have also received a Royal Television Society bursary scholar is astonishing to me.

The Cinematic Arts course is one of the top rated film courses in the United Kingdom and has everything I need to help me succeed in my chosen career path. To be studying and collaborating in this hub of creative people from so many diverse backgrounds is a dream come true.”

## Staff

Together we are Ulster University. We create the conditions, frameworks and approaches to enable people to achieve and exceed both their own career aspirations and the University's ambitions.

We will continue to build a culture in which we can all flourish and where brave thinking and values-led behaviour is encouraged across the institution; a university optimised for the future and in which we are all proud to work and study.

- **Work life balance**
- **Wellbeing**
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- **Living our values – and modelling them**
- **Investing in our people**
- **Environment to support academic and operational excellence**



Campus life

**Christine Wightman, Wellbeing Champion & Associate Head of Department of Accounting, Finance & Economics, Ulster University Business School:**

“I am a wellbeing champion because I have a real interest in wellbeing and mental health as I have been involved in a major University Employability & Careers intervention designed to enhance the resilience and wellbeing of students. I appreciate how wellbeing and mental health impacts on a person's work, performance levels and personal life in general. Looking after one's personal wellbeing can be the key to unlocking more positive experiences and enhancing one's personal resilience particularly in challenging times.

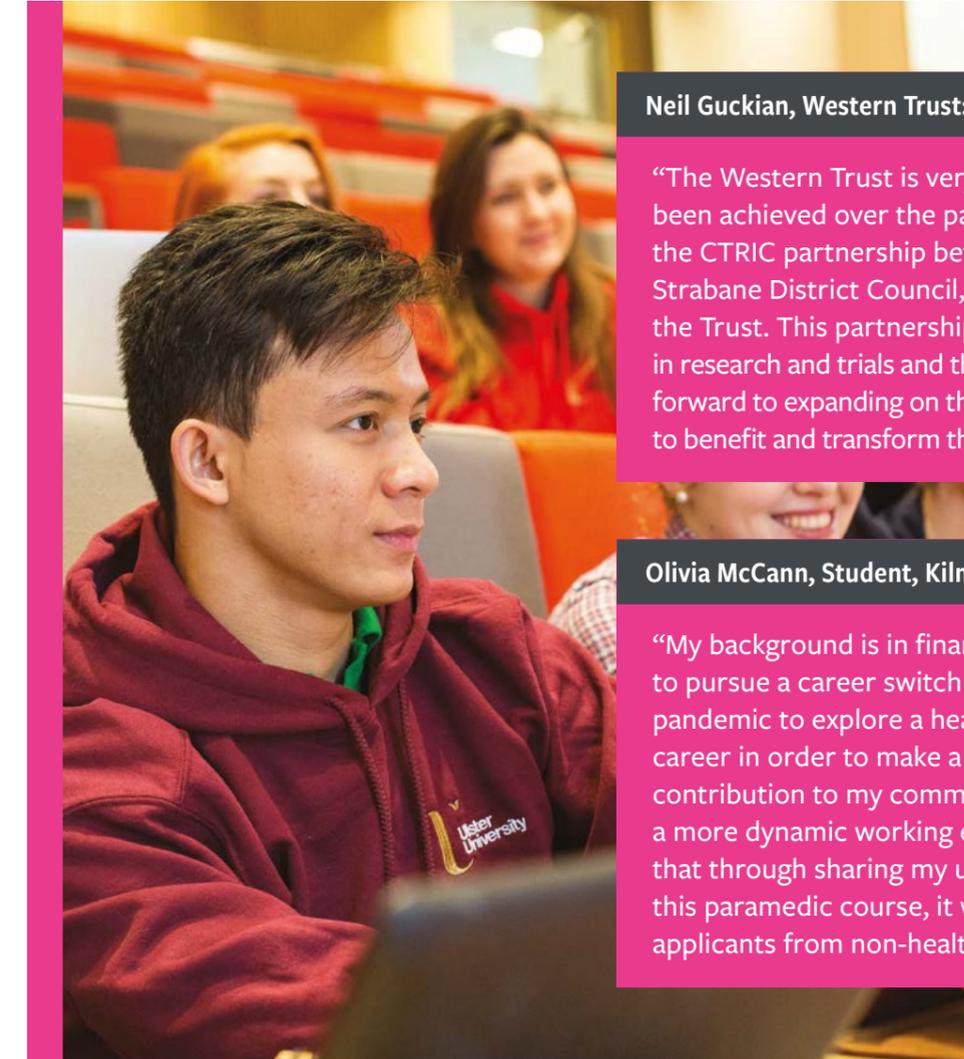
The wellbeing of my staff is important to me and providing them with opportunities to develop awareness and harness techniques or tools to support their wellbeing is a valuable role as an Associate Head.”

## Society

Our purpose is to build sustainable futures for all in society. From across Northern Ireland, our research is addressing the grand challenges of the world and our teaching is providing people with new skills so they can enhance their own life choices and outcomes for society.

We will support our people to continue making a profound and sustainable contribution to social, cultural, and economic development across the society we serve.

- **Sustainable futures for all**
- **Pan-regional commitment**
- **Social mobility**
- **People with skills and an applied/practical focus**
- **Bolstered individual capability leading to enhanced societal capacity**
- **Engaging with our Alumni**
- **Diversifying further, widening participation opportunities**
- **Addressing grand challenges**



Lecture in Ulster University's Coleraine campus

**Neil Guckian, Western Trust:**

“The Western Trust is very proud of all that has been achieved over the past decade through the CTRIC partnership between Derry City and Strabane District Council, Ulster University and the Trust. This partnership supports clinical staff in research and trials and the Western Trust looks forward to expanding on this work into the future to benefit and transform the lives of our patients.”

**Olivia McCann, Student, Kilmore, Co Armagh:**

“My background is in finance. I was inspired to pursue a career switch during the COVID pandemic to explore a healthcare-related career in order to make a more meaningful contribution to my community and have a more dynamic working environment. I hope that through sharing my unusual journey to this paramedic course, it will encourage future applicants from non-healthcare backgrounds.”



PLACE

*As a multi-campus university in Northern Ireland we are a physical and transformational presence across this place, deeply connected to these communities and intrinsic to all our futures.*



Ulster University Belfast campus

Regional Commitment

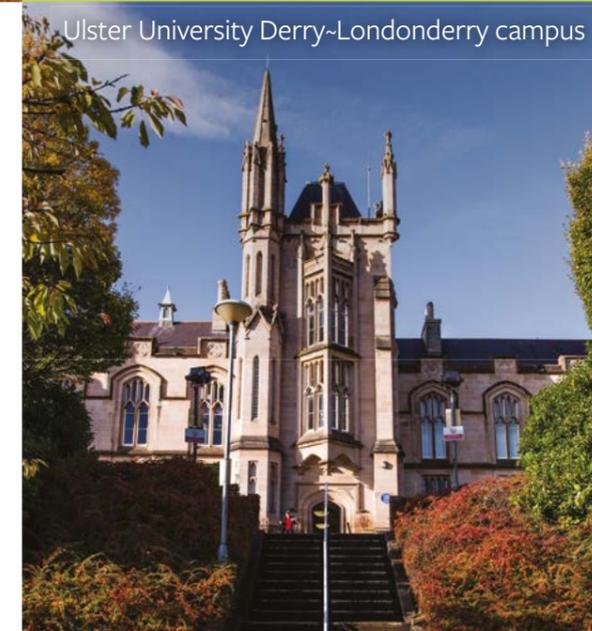
We bring the benefits of our research and teaching expertise to the wider region, driving innovation, investment and access to opportunity.

We will continue to invest in our distinctive campuses, enabling each location to be a catalyst for economic development and driver of social enrichment.

Deborah Stevenson,  
Operate Director, PwC:

“Social mobility has never been more important or more challenging but when businesses collaborate in their local markets, anything can be accomplished. The creation of this apprenticeship gives people from a broad range of backgrounds a different way to build a career in PwC, learning relevant market skills that will support future growth while helping us solve important problems and building trust in society. We all benefit by creating and being part of teams that provide diversity of thought and experience.”

Ulster University Derry-Londonderry campus



Ulster University Coleraine campus

- Single unitary institution
- Better campus 'balance'
- Pan-regional presence – we are here
- Our Cross Border context



Atrium in Belfast Campus

## Space

Our breath-taking and vibrant spaces are designed to inspire collaboration and deliver transformative experiences for all.

We will continue to ensure our state-of-the-art teaching and research spaces are equipped to foster innovation, creativity and economic development across the region.

- **Social space is important**
- **Space for peer-to-peer student collaboration**
- **Learning community**
- **Research community**
- **Spaces that are increasingly sustainable**
- **New investment across our estate to develop teaching and research, including the City Deals initiative**

**John Healy, Vice President & Managing Director, Allstate Northern Ireland:**

“We are very proud to have partnered with Ulster University in the opening of the new IT lab. The North West is an integral part of the Allstate NI organisation and this collaboration will help boost the local economy. We’re thrilled to be able to improve student experiences at Ulster University by providing them with top quality resources and look forward to seeing how the IT industry continues to grow in the North West.”

**Professor Victoria Simms, Research Director:**

“The developments in the school of psychology have been massively beneficial to our researchers. We now have world leading researchers working in an excellent research environment. Our PhD researchers have a great experience in excellent facilities. Just as importantly our students are just outside the door and seeing this research activity close up.”

## Community

There is an extensive civic benefit from our work and we have always worked to support the development of communities, rich in the cultural, health, wellbeing and wider resources that our University presence provides.

We will continue to build those connections, giving the passion and purpose of local leaders the means and support to make real and lasting change for stronger communities and the benefit of all.

- **University spaces, in these places**
- **Renewed commitment to schools outreach**
- **Widening participation**
- **Fundamentally civic**
- **Driver of innovation, investment and cultural enrichment**

Local community enjoying the woodland trail on the Coleraine campus



**Joanne Kinnear, CEO, Ashton Centre:**

“The North Belfast Community Benefit Framework provides an opportunity to develop a new level of partnership working between the North Belfast Community and the University to realise the potential social, educational, environmental and economic benefits that could arise from the relocation of Ulster University to North Belfast. This Benefit Framework is our joint commitment to work together to create real and tangible benefits for our community and to show how the rich fabric of our community can create real benefit for the University.”

**Geoff Dunn, Principal, Ballysally Primary School:**

“Key links between Ulster University and Ballysally Primary School have been forged in recent years with campus facilities being opened to pupils to enhance their academic, physical and well-being needs. University staff have been involved in creative, fun and challenging pupil and parent experiences within the school setting. Through making these vital connections, inspiration and aspiration are afforded the opportunity to replace often pre-conceived prejudices and barriers to learning. In a post covid-19 world, we would very much hope to take further strategic steps to promote the culture of holistic life-long learning which benefits society in a multiplicity of ways.”

**Dr Philip McDermott, awarded the North West Migrants Forum ‘Breaking Barriers’ Award for his work in promoting racial equality. The NW Migrants Forum:**

“The recipient of this award is extremely hard working and committed to using their position and knowledge to educate and empower others. He has gone over and beyond to support the work of North West Migrants Forum and its members. His devotion to promoting peace and reconciliation is commendable and we can’t thank him enough.”



**PARTNERSHIP**

Ulster University's Centre for Food & Drug Discovery team conduct a sales meeting with industry stakeholders, Coleraine

*Connection and a spirit of partnership is the hallmark of Ulster University's past, present and future. Only together, do we deliver growth, innovation and progress.*

**Internal University community**

The collaboration already at play within the University results in some of our most innovative external impacts.

We will nurture this innate spirit and drive within Ulster, working together, consistently creating anew and delivering for our distinctive region.

- Single unitary institution
- Multi-disciplinary research
- Cross-faculty provision
- Academic and professional services working
- Staff/student partnerships
- Employee Relations

**Stephen Bartlett, EMEA Regional General Counsel & Global Co-Head, Markets and Securities Services Legal, Citi**

“The delivery of legal services is evolving quickly, and depends increasingly on the overlapping disciplines of data science. Ulster University’s new ‘Corporate Law, Computing and Innovation’ course is an exciting opportunity to acquire the practical knowledge and skills that are much in demand, as legal practices of all types equip themselves with the resources they need to support markets, commerce and society in the new data-centric era.”



Residential Assistants undergoing training at Ulster University's Derry~Londonderry campus

**Ashleigh Davis, Empowerment Officer, Dementia NI:**

“Dementia NI members are proud to have helped create an online resource that presents a personal connection to an individual’s past, we believe the inspireD app, developed by researchers from Ulster University’s Schools of Nursing, Computing and the Belfast School of Art in partnership with Dementia NI and local app developer Scaffold Digital, will deliver significant person-centred benefits when assisting those living with dementia to recall past life history and positively engage with their family and carers.”

## External and regional community

Through collaboration with industry, businesses, and the professions, we are highly attuned to the needs of our distinctive regional economy. We play a pivotal role in stimulating entrepreneurship and nurturing innovation.

We are working in partnership with policy makers and employers, we are creating a pipeline of highly skilled graduates fit to take their place and make an impact in our fast-changing world.

- Partner for/with business
- Knowledge transfer/exchange
- Working with government
- Embracing our communities
- Connected tertiary education
- Cross border collaboration and provision

Student experiencing VR technology



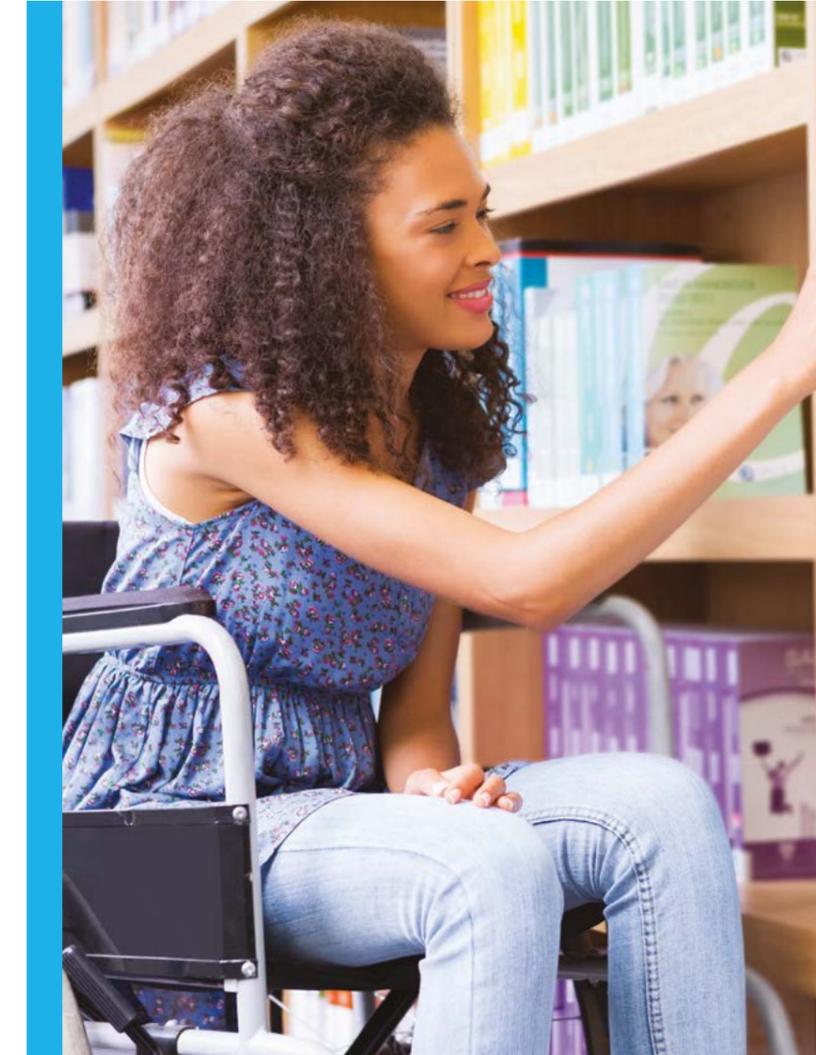
**Julie Lottering, Director of Unreal Engine Education, Epic Games:**

“The Screen Academy at Ulster University understands the opportunities that real-time 3D skills unlock across digital media, film, animation, and games design. It’s wonderful to see how they are preparing students across so many disciplines for exciting careers with Unreal Engine-based offerings. We are proud to recognize them as Unreal Academic Partners, as well as being the first in Northern Ireland.”

**Award-winning BT Ireland Innovation Centre with Ulster University, Mark O’Flaherty, BT:**

“The Innovation Centre based in Belfast is a world-class centre of excellence, harnessing local innovation to make a global impact for BT and our customers. Belfast plays an integral role in our global research and development capabilities, and I am delighted that our partnership with Ulster University has been acknowledged by these leading local and UK industry awards.”

Library access



**Professor J.A. Scott Kelso, Florida Atlantic University:**

“The age-old fissure between brain-like intelligence and artificial intelligence is narrowing. The key to progress is that disciplines like mathematics, computer science, biology and psychology are teaching and learning from each other. Since its inception, the Intelligent Systems Research Centre in Derry is at the forefront of this research and pedagogical approach, not only in the UK and the island of Ireland, but world-wide.”

Intelligent Systems Research Centre (ISRC) at Ulster University’s Derry-Londonderry campus hosted the first ‘ISRC-CN3 Autumn School’ for academic and industry leaders from over 18 countries. “CN3” represents Computational Neuroscience, Neurotechnology and Neuro-inspired artificial intelligence (AI).

## Global community

We are in Northern Ireland and we are around the world. With our global partners we have branch campuses in London and Birmingham and transnational provision across the world. We will continue to create transformational learning and research opportunities that inspire, develop and support our students and staff to reach new horizons.

- International research collaborations
- Collaborative taught provision
- Student mobility – inward and outward
- International recruitment and diversity
- United Nations Sustainable development goals

## Endorsement from our Chancellor



*One of the things that attracted me to accept the invitation to be our Chancellor was the University's track record and commitment for being for, and of, people and their communities. This new strategy: People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All emphatically recommits to partnering with people and their places.*

I am particularly taken with the commitment in our strategy to our multiple campuses and to student life as part of our university offering. Of course, as a dual intensive institution with academic excellence in research and teaching, university life is immersed in scholarship but it is also important that we acknowledge, value, and support the full spectrum of opportunities that a university experience can bring.

The wellbeing benefits of a strong and engaging social life at university are well accepted as are the life-long benefits that accrue through the many opportunities to build friendships, networks, and interpersonal skills.

Important too is the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion because only through togetherness will we achieve our full potential of addressing the grand challenges of our society and indeed those in the wider world such as the climate emergency.

As a practising artist, I'm delighted that as well as reiterating the profound impact we have on the economic prosperity of our region, our strategy makes explicit our commitment to the cultural life of our communities too. It has always been a strength of Ulster University that we recognise enrichment of people, their places, and our partnerships have many facets both economic and cultural.

I commend this strategy to you and wholeheartedly support the directional steer it offers for our shared and sustainable futures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Davidson'.

**Dr Colin Davidson**  
Chancellor

