



Ulster University Business School Strategic Plan

ulster.ac.uk/uubs



**PEOPLE,
PLACE AND
PARTNERSHIP**

**DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES FOR ALL**

Ulster University Business School stakeholders and partners



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Welcome from the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean

It is my pleasure to introduce the Ulster University Business School (UUBS) Strategic Plan, a roadmap that sets out our ambition for the future, aligned strongly with Ulster University's overarching strategy, 'People, Place, and Partnership: Sustainable Futures for All'. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary year in 2025, the planning process has presented an opportunity to reflect on our past achievements and ensure we continue to remain a relevant, agile, and impactful business school at the heart of economic and societal transformation.

Founded in 1975, UUBS emerged during a pivotal period for Northern Ireland, providing the talent and expertise necessary to support economic development in the region. As a post-conflict society, Northern Ireland has undergone significant transformation, with businesses and entrepreneurs driving economic recovery, resilience, and renewal. Over the past five decades, our School has been a key catalyst for growth, producing graduates and thought leaders who have shaped industries, driven innovation, and strengthened our economy. Today 75-84% of all private sector enterprise in Northern Ireland is classed as family owned or managed (IFB, 2021), and the majority, 89% are considered micro-businesses (NISRA, 2024). At the same time, the region has an impressive record in foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly within the Services sectors (Technology; Financial; Professional), and UUBS has played an active role in supporting workforce development models and future of work skills to encourage a supportive inward investment eco-system. Supporting a range of diverse enterprises and a variety of corporate global organisations remains a key priority for UUBS as we equip the next generation of business leaders with the skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial mindset to sustain and grow our economy.

Whilst the landscape and our approach to business education has evolved significantly, our mission remains clear: To empower students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, driving opportunity and growing a talented, skilled pipeline. Through this mission we are committed to preparing students to become engaged, collaborative, and future ready leaders enabled by people-centric partnering.

At the heart of this ambition are our people. Our staff across all our locations, are our greatest resource. Their expertise, professionalism and commitment to excellence are central to strengthening our partnerships. Through meaningful engagement with the business community (and including a group of Visiting Professors), policymakers, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and students, we are co-creating the future of business education. Our engagement activities ensure that our strategy is informed by the voices of those we serve. Through People-Centric Partnering, we are committed to co-creating knowledge, engaging meaningfully with industry, and embedding responsible business practices that contribute to a sustainable future.

This strategic plan builds on our achievements and outlines our ambition to be a leading, engaged and entrepreneurial business school, one that delivers transformational outcomes for our students, staff, and the business community. By leveraging our strong foundations, our partnerships, and commitment to innovation, we are confident that UUBS will continue to play a vital role in shaping the future of business and society in Northern Ireland and beyond.

I look forward to working together to achieve our vision.



Professor Gillian Armstrong MBE

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean

Ulster University Business School



**ULSTER
UNIVERSITY**

Introduction and Context

Ulster University Business School is a leading provider of business education, focused on creating and transforming opportunity into new and sustainable value at the level of the individual, industry, economy and wider society. We offer learning solutions that positively impact how learners think and act around new opportunities, especially those emerging in times of volatility.

As the premier strategic learning partner to industry in Northern Ireland, we are focused on co-creating contemporary, inclusive and sustainable learning solutions both with individuals and organisations of all sizes and sectors, to help them future proof their businesses for the 4th industrial revolution. We have a particular and deliberate alignment with the dominant Northern Irish SME economy and are accredited by the UK Small Business Charter (SBC) in recognition of that support through learning and teaching, student entrepreneurship and enterprise and research and external partnering.

With over 10,000 students and 200 staff, we are one of the largest business schools in the UK and Ireland, working across Ulster's three locations in Northern Ireland and with partner programme delivery in Birmingham, London and Manchester as well as international presences overseas in China and Qatar.

People are at the heart of our approach and commitment to enhancing potential. At UUBS, we work in close collaboration with our key partners to create opportunities across all our campuses.

Our degree programmes are shaped by our cutting-edge research. 100% of our Business and Management research has outstanding or considerable impact, with 87% of our research overall being internationally excellent or world-leading, placing us in the top 20 of over 100 business schools in the UK (REF 2021).



**BUSINESS AND
MANAGEMENT**
(REF 2021)



ULSTER UNIVERSITY
(REF 2021)

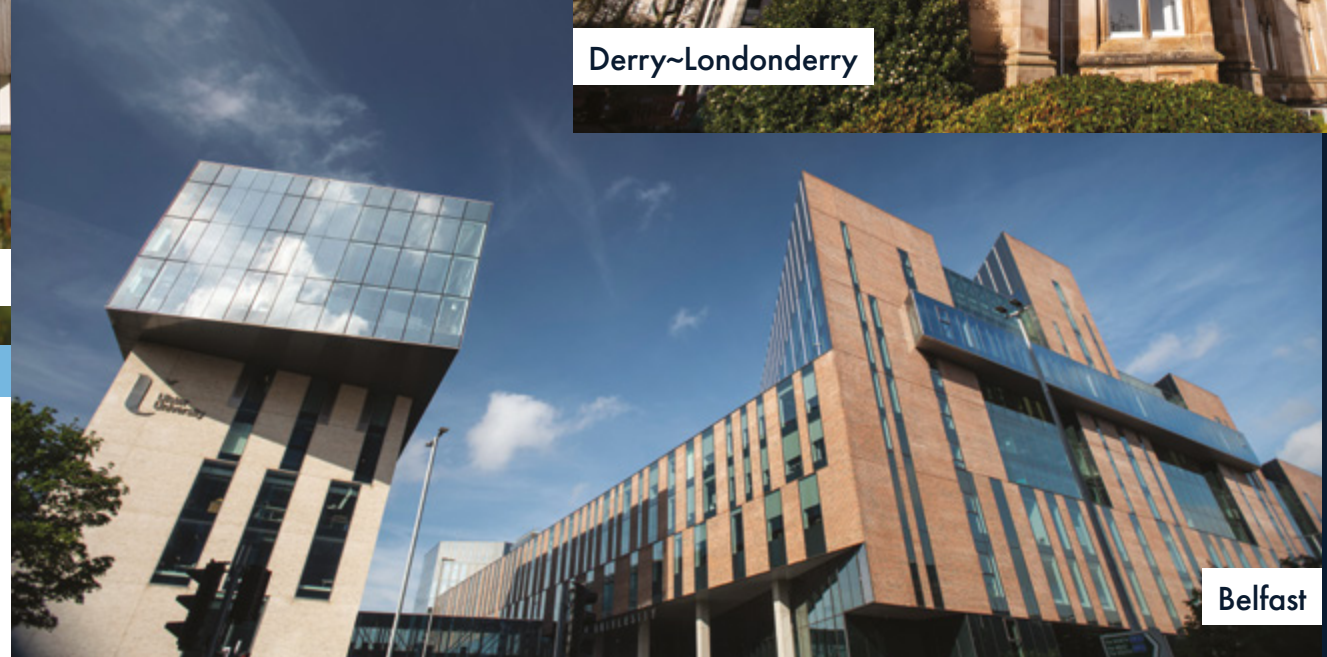




Coleraine



Derry~Londonderry



Belfast



GUARDIAN UNIVERSITY GUIDE
(2025)



DAILY MAIL UNIVERSITY GUIDE
(2025)



DAILY MAIL UNIVERSITY GUIDE
(2025)



ACCOUNTING
AND FINANCE



HOSPITALITY, LEISURE,
RECREATION AND TOURISM



ECONOMICS



MARKETING AND
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ulster University (UU) stands as the leading institution in Northern Ireland when it comes to overall student satisfaction, surpassing the UK average. Specifically, our Business School boasts an impressive 100% student satisfaction rate for our Accounting and Finance programmes, along with exceeding a 90% satisfaction rate in four other key business disciplines. These exceptional outcomes serve as a clear testament to the outstanding quality of education offered within our Business School.

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

This live document sets the roadmap for the Business School for the next 5 years, underpinned by Ulster University's Sustainable Futures commitments. It outlines the Business School goals and our key objectives.





Consultation and strategy development process

UUBS's strategic plan development process has been consultative and has provided for multistakeholder engagement and input.

This includes the UUBS community of staff, students, alumni and partners from industry. Through UUBS governance structures, we have facilitated review and feedback of the plan.

As a live document, we look forward to continuing to employ a consultative engagement approach across all internal and external stakeholders as we monitor and review specific goals and key initiatives in our annual operational planning process to achieve our strategic priorities.





Mission

Empowering students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, driving opportunity and growing a talented, skilled pipeline.

Through our mission we are committed to preparing students to become engaged, collaborative, and future ready leaders enabled by people-centric partnering.

Vision

Through people-centric partnering, we will be a leading engaged and entrepreneurial business school, achieving transformational outcomes for our students, staff, and the business community.

Our new vision underscores our commitment to meaningful connections and impactful change. This vision embodies the strength of partnerships and the ambition to create an engaged, entrepreneurial space.

Our research and teaching address the following UN SDGs:

- Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)
- Good health and well-being (SDG 3)

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



Our core purpose

Our mission helps us to focus our thinking on the strategic direction aligned with the University's strategy, 'People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All', and its commitments.



We empower students to have an entrepreneurial mindset. This refers to a particular way of thinking and approaching opportunities, challenges, and decision-making. We encourage this by recognising that applied, research-informed and work-based learning represents opportunities for all. Our strength is underpinned by people-centric partnering inclusive of students, staff and industry. We make people the priority, supporting them to achieve their full potential, enabling current and future leaders as they develop more sustainable organisations.

UUBS is positioned at the centre of Northern Ireland's knowledge and skills strategy, as a key player in economic growth. Our regional model is as unique as Northern Ireland itself; transformative for local communities, whilst making an impact on the global stage.

Supported by the BRAVE Leadership Framework, people are at the heart of our approach and our commitment to enhancing potential. UUBS creates development opportunities across the campuses in collaboration with key partners. UUBS is making a difference every day, ensuring a transformative impact for individuals, communities and business.

Moving forward, we are committed to actively collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to drive our mission forward. This approach will support UUBS's role as a leading business school.

Values

Ulster University Business School achieves transformational outcomes for students through what we teach, how we teach and how we behave. Underpinning our behaviours is a pervasive sense of possibility and recognising the important role of the individual in making a positive difference in the lives of others. Our institutional core values underpin those behaviours and our bias to positive action.

In our behaviours, Ulster University Business School staff demonstrate the University's values of integrity, collaboration, enhancing potential and inclusion.

Integrity

We are open, honest and transparent with each other.

Collaboration

People and relationships are central to everything we do.

Enhancing potential

We strive to be the best that we can be.

Inclusion

We promote a place to work and study where everyone is accepted.

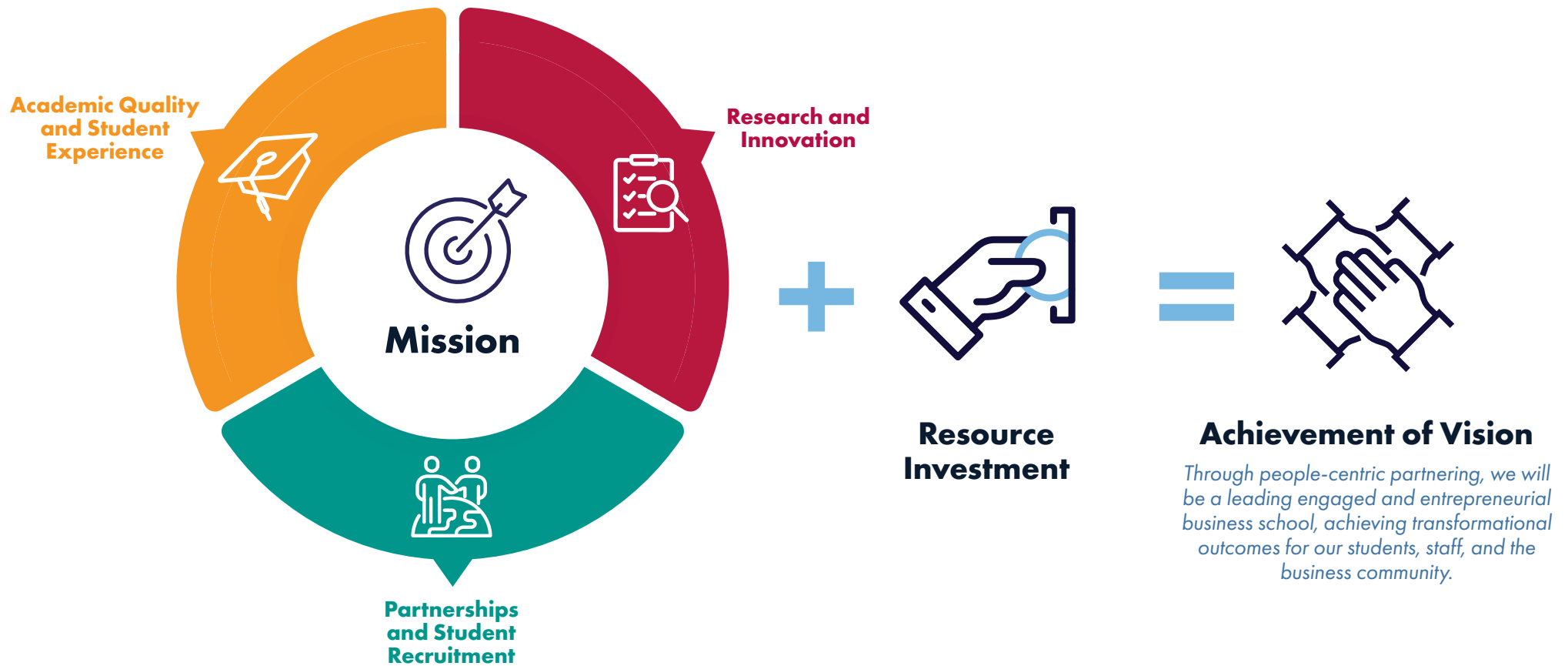


www.ulster.ac.uk/peopleandculture/values





Aligning Vision, Mission, Strategic Portfolios, and Resource Investment



University Commitments and UUBS Strategic Goals

People, Place and Partnership: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All (PPP), articulates a clear strategic intent for the continual enhancement of core activities at Ulster University against which UUBS sets its strategic goals. Ulster University is making a difference every day and is having a lasting impact for individuals and communities alike. It is self-evident that there is close connectivity, overlap and interdependencies between the UUBS Strategy and PPP.

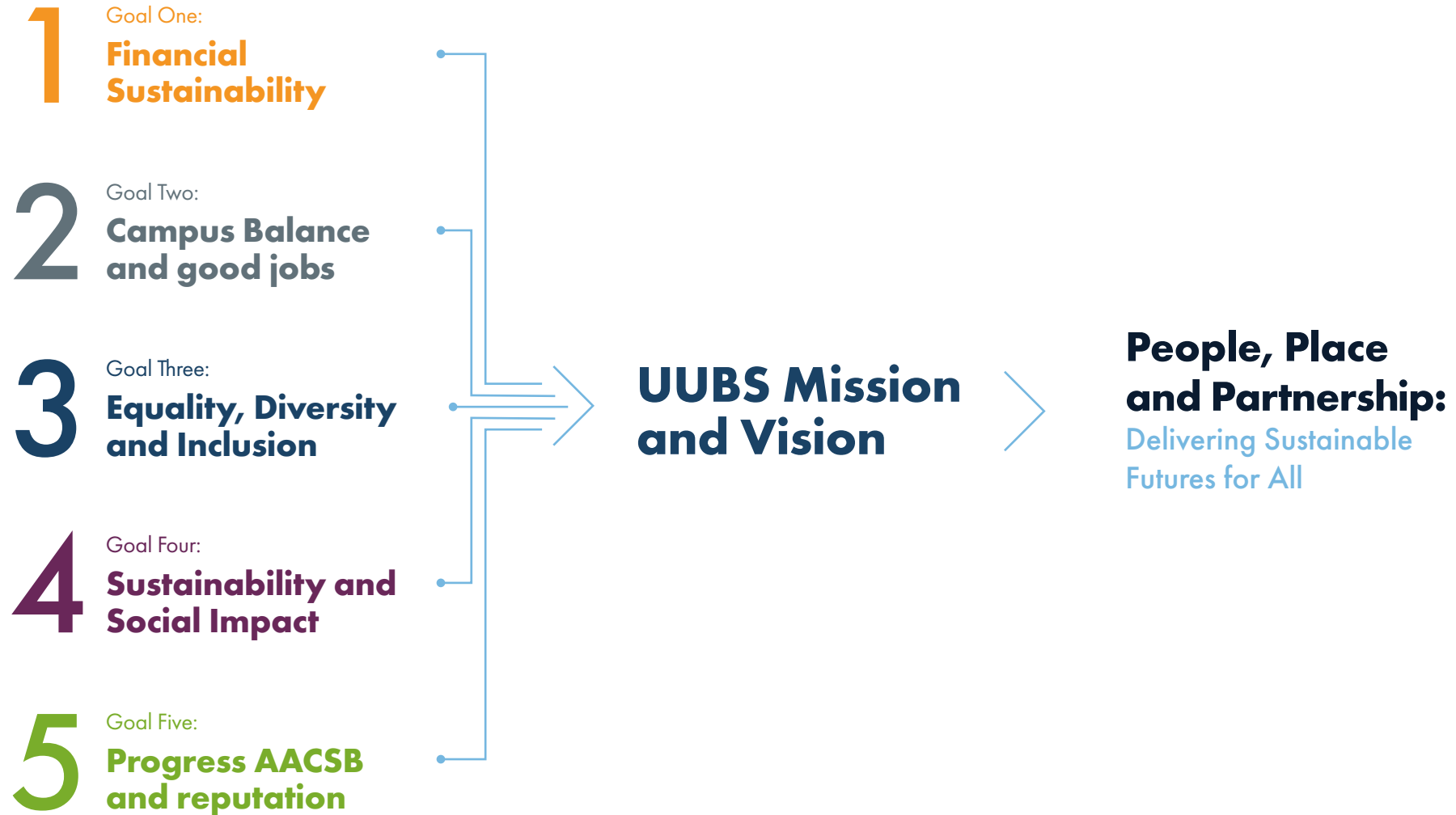
Ulster University Business School is committed to achieving its strategic goals through a series of key initiatives that focus on financial sustainability, campus balance, accreditation, societal impact, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

UUBS supports the achievement of PPP through the following strategic goals:

Priority	Strategic Goals	Strategic alignment with PPP
1	Financial Sustainability	1-9
2	Campus balance and good jobs	1,2,4,5,6
3	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Student and staff partnering for transformation	5,8,9
4	Sustainability and Societal Impact: Business School as a force for good	1,3,5,6,7,9
5	Progress AACSB Accreditation and Reputation	1-9

Full information on the nine UU PPP commitments can be found here: ulster.ac.uk/people-place-and-partnership/strategy/our-commitments

UUBS Strategic Goals





1 Goal One: **Financial Sustainability**

To ensure the long-term financial health and growth of UUBS, we are undertaking several initiatives aimed at expanding our portfolio and diversifying our revenue streams. We are partnering with QAHE to deliver new programmes and launch the new Manchester site, which will enhance our educational reach and presence in the UK. Additionally, we are supporting programme development at CUC Qatar, further enhancing our international footprint. A significant focus is also placed on non-regulated delivery options such as micro-credentials, executive education, and organisational development. By embracing an entrepreneurial approach to business development, we aim to meet our academic plan creatively in both domestic and international markets.

2 Goal Two: **Campus Balance and good jobs**

Creating a balanced and supportive multi-campus model and learning environment that offers meaningful employment opportunities is vital. We are establishing the Centre for Finance and Regulatory Technology, incorporating the North-West AI and RegTech initiative, positioning us at the forefront of these priority sectors and subject areas. We are committed to increasing staff participation in academic progression and professional development, supported by AACSB standards and resources, ensuring our faculty are well-equipped and motivated. Our portfolio at Derry~Londonderry (DLD) and Coleraine, will continue to be reviewed and refreshed based on market research and stakeholder engagement, whilst also enhancing our research capacity. Additionally, we will enhance marketing and recruitment efforts for DLD and facilitate the potential relocation of UUBS on campus to improve visibility and presence of the business school in the Northwest area.

3 Goal Three: **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion is central to the work we do. We are monitoring compliance with the Athena Swan Bronze Award and will prepare for progress towards silver accreditation, reflecting our commitment to gender equality. A staff forum will continually gather feedback on policies, work-life balance and interventions required to ensure an inclusive culture and confidence within the faculty's operating model. A focus on engineering enhanced vertical and horizontal collaboration and communication, through social connections will be a priority within an overall people strategy. Furthermore, we are continuously reviewing the Workload Allocation Model (WAM) to ensure transparency and equity, enabling better management of work-life balance for our staff.

4 Goal Four: **Sustainability and Social Impact**

UUBS aims to be a force for good by promoting sustainability and societal impact. We have joined and launched the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative and are preparing our first Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report. Additionally, we are supporting family businesses and fostering transgenerational entrepreneurship through the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) Small Business Charter (SBC) and the Centre for Sustainable Family Enterprise (CSFE). We are providing enterprising families with the knowledge, tools and resources they need to build thriving, sustainable businesses that last for generations. It is estimated that 84% of all businesses in Northern Ireland are classed as family owned or managed (FBUK, 2025), employing around 318,000 people. Our aim is to be an important research and education centre for Family Firm and Transgenerational Entrepreneurship across Northern Ireland. With our partners, we aim to be the voice of Family Firms and to help drive the growth and long-term sustainability of Family Enterprises for the benefit of the NI economic and social landscape. These initiatives underscore our commitment to creating a positive societal impact and promoting sustainable business practices.

5 Goal Five: **Progress AACSB and reputation**

Achieving AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation is a critical goal for UUBS and the University, putting us in the top 6% of Business Schools in the world. To support this, an accreditation hub has been established along with a Faculty Accreditation Committee. We will conduct a comprehensive gap analysis and readiness assessment, including the preparation of the initial Self-Evaluation Report (iSER). Furthermore, we are designing and implementing an Assurance of Learning (AoL) process for all programmes within the AACSB scope, encompassing both home and partner institutions. Ongoing strategic planning and stakeholder engagement are integral to supporting our accreditation journey, ensuring we meet the standards set by AACSB and ensure continued growth of UUBS.



Strategy To Action

This strategic plan sets out our future direction and ambitions for UUBS at Ulster University. The strategic plan will be accompanied by annual departmental Operational Plans to ensure this plan is put into action. The Operational Plans will contain actions and objectives to achieve our strategic goals, including KPIs.

The plan will be reviewed and monitored by the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean for the UUBS and the Faculty Leadership Team (FLT). Updates on progress are reported to the University Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and to the UUBS Strategic Business Advisory Forum on an annual basis.







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