



2022/23

Annual Sustainability Report



Introduction

During 2022/23 we continued to see huge changes in our University, most notably with the opening of the new enhanced Belfast campus in September 2022.

Its city centre location has provided the ideal location and opportunity to promote active and sustainable travel to the over 15,000 staff and students working and studying on the campus.

We also celebrated success in the prestigious Times Higher Education Impact Ranking and were delighted to be placed in the Top 15% of participating institutions globally. Our work does not stop with a ranking however, and we continued our efforts with the support of the Sustainability Steering Group by implementing a new environmental sustainability action plan, further delivery of carbon literacy training for



Professor Ian Montgomery
Dean of Sustainability &
Corporate Social Responsibility

staff and students, and a commitment to embedding sustainability within our nascent research strategy. Within the curriculum module handbooks were updated to include our new graduate attributes and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we were recognised in the SDG Teach-In as the third highest university in the UK for the number of educators taking part in the Teach-In to embed the SDGs into teaching and learning. More widely, we secured recognition for our ground-breaking work in equality, diversity, and inclusion.

In recognising that the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked we have responded to these challenges on campus




Marie-Louise Gaile
Sustainability Manager

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As we look forward the University continues to strengthen and deepen its commitment to the sustainability agenda and climate action.

We expect to introduce new initiatives in our corporate social responsibility work, focus on reducing impacts from business travel, strengthen sustainability networks in faculties and departments, produce a sustainability operational plan, expand our green skills agenda, and increase our sustainability and climate-action influence. Looking ahead with our Sustainable Futures for All Strategy in place, our determination to create positive impact is stronger than ever.

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through our climate and nature positive actions, engagement, and accreditations. We have developed a preferred decarbonisation scenario into a detailed Net Zero Carbon Roadmap outlining the major actions required to achieve emissions reductions and we officially pledged to the Nature Positive Universities Alliance committing to assessing the impacts of our natural capital. During the year we conducted the first of four nature positive pledge requirements by conducting a baseline assessment and ecological survey of the Coleraine campus.

We live in an era of ever-increasing complexity. Climate change is intensifying social and ecological crises across the world, making urgent action to address a range of sustainability issues more critical than ever. If we are to successfully limit climate change and build a more sustainable world, it is essential to effectively mobilise our Ulster community and resources to accelerate this process. At the University, this means integrating our sustainability efforts across campus operations, research, teaching and learning, and engagement with partners to prioritise and accelerate progress.



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PEOPLE

AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY: EVERYONE MATTERS



'Team of the Year' award for UU Student Money Team at NASMA



'Best Student Community' award for UU Residential Life Team



World leading Mental Health and Wellbeing conference held at Ulster



Ulster University gained White Ribbon and Diversity Mark Accreditation

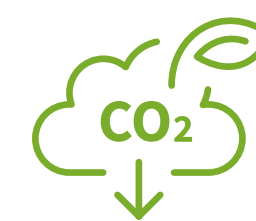


Conference showcased LGBTQ+ Research at Ulster



PLANET

A CLIMATE POSITIVE UNIVERSITY: PROTECTING NATURE



Completion of Net Zero Carbon Roadmap



15.6% of electricity demand provided by on-campus renewables



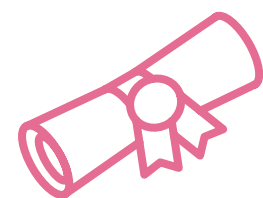
Modern construction of new and enhanced Belfast campus



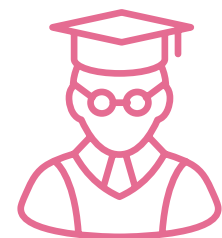
New campus Wellbeing Garden



Pledge to Nature Positive Universities Alliance



Three new National Teaching Fellowships and a CATE Award for Ulster lecturers



Ulster welcomes second cohort of medical education scholarships



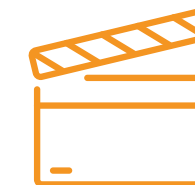
2022 UK 3MT® People's Choice Award won by Ulster researcher



Partnership with Action Mental Health delivers 24/7 service to those in need



Atlantic Futures: Major Cross-Border Research Partnership Launches



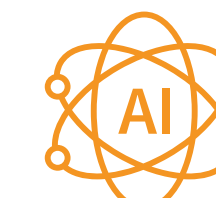
Work began on the new Studio Ulster virtual production complex



Applications opened for 25@25, a fully funded programme to support and develop leaders of tomorrow



Ulster partner in UK National Clean Maritime Research Hub



Ulster and Kainos partner to launch new Artificial Intelligence Research Centre



Ulster leading partner in Peace Summit



PLACE

AN INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



PARTNERSHIPS

A CONNECTED UNIVERSITY: CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY

Contents

People _____ 1

Health and Wellbeing 2-3

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion 4-5

Planet _____ 6

Carbon - Our Pathway to Net Zero 7-8

Energy - An Energy Efficient Estate 9-10

Water - Reduce Water Consumption 11

Resource use - Increase in Resource Efficiency 12

Travel - Reduce Emissions 13-15

Biodiversity - Enhance Biodiversity 16-17

Engagement and Accreditation 18

Place _____ 19

Teaching and Learning 20-21

Research 22-23

Partnership _____ 24

Industry and Government 25-26

Community 27-28

How to get involved _____ 29

PEOPLE

People are at the heart of this university, together we continue to build a culture in which we can all flourish and where brave thinking and values-led behaviour is encouraged; a university in which we are all proud to work and study.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We support students and staff with their health and wellbeing.



Launch of Ulster University's Employee Wellbeing Strategy.

Ulster University is committed to creating a culture that 'ensures and promotes the health, safety and the physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing of all staff, students and partners, and as part of this vision, the People and Culture Strategy recognises the priority to 'promote wellbeing'.

To support this vision, we have seen the creation of the Wellbeing Team and the development of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy, which is a vital component of the University's revised and revitalised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

In developing the Wellbeing Strategy, staff campus conversation events and consultations were held and responses sought from staff, along with members of the Senior Leadership Team and Council. Following this engagement, the University's first 'Employee Wellbeing Strategy'



was launched at a series of Wellbeing Breakfast events which kickstarted the University's Wellbeing Week during September 2022.

The University's Student Money Team won 'Team of the Year' at the annual National Association of Student Money Advisers (NAMSA) conference.

The award recognised the positive impact the team had on students at Ulster and their excellence in working to support and advise students managing their finances.

Ulster University's Residential Life team won the prestigious Best Student Community (UK and Ireland) award at the 2022 Global Student Living Awards.

This recognition was particularly significant for the Residential Life Team, who provide student accommodation and living support on the University's campuses because the award is based directly on extensive feedback collected from students, and so is a valued reflection of student experiences of the service.



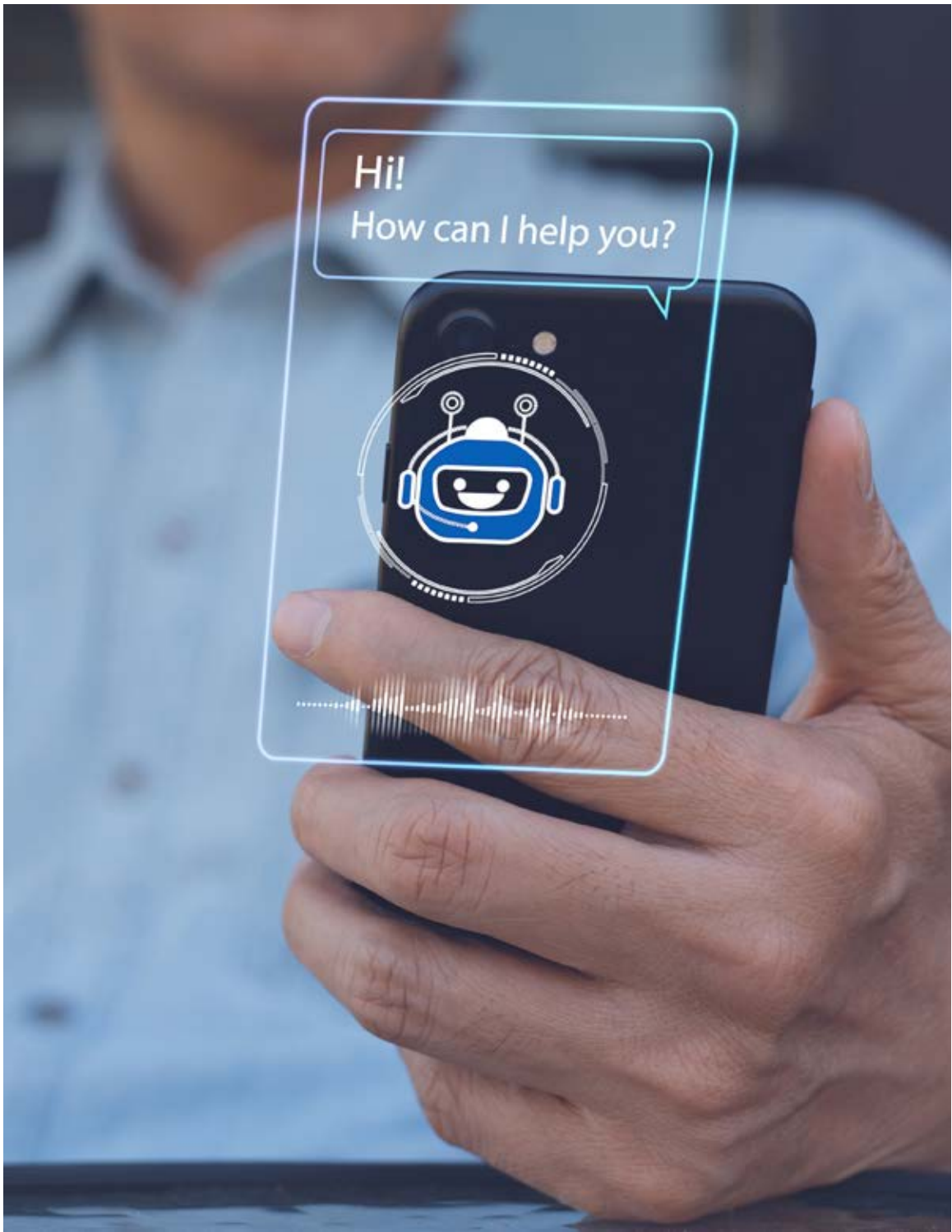


Ulster University teamed up with the Consumer Council and Danske Bank to launch a new digital animation. The animation aims to help students to understand the dangers of online gaming and gambling.



The Virtual Campus Project was winner of the Excellence in Workplace Health and Wellbeing award at the Digital Construction Live Awards. The Project allows applicants, students, staff, and visitors to explore Ulster University through Virtual Reality as a way to help reduce feelings of anxiety before visiting new spaces on campus.

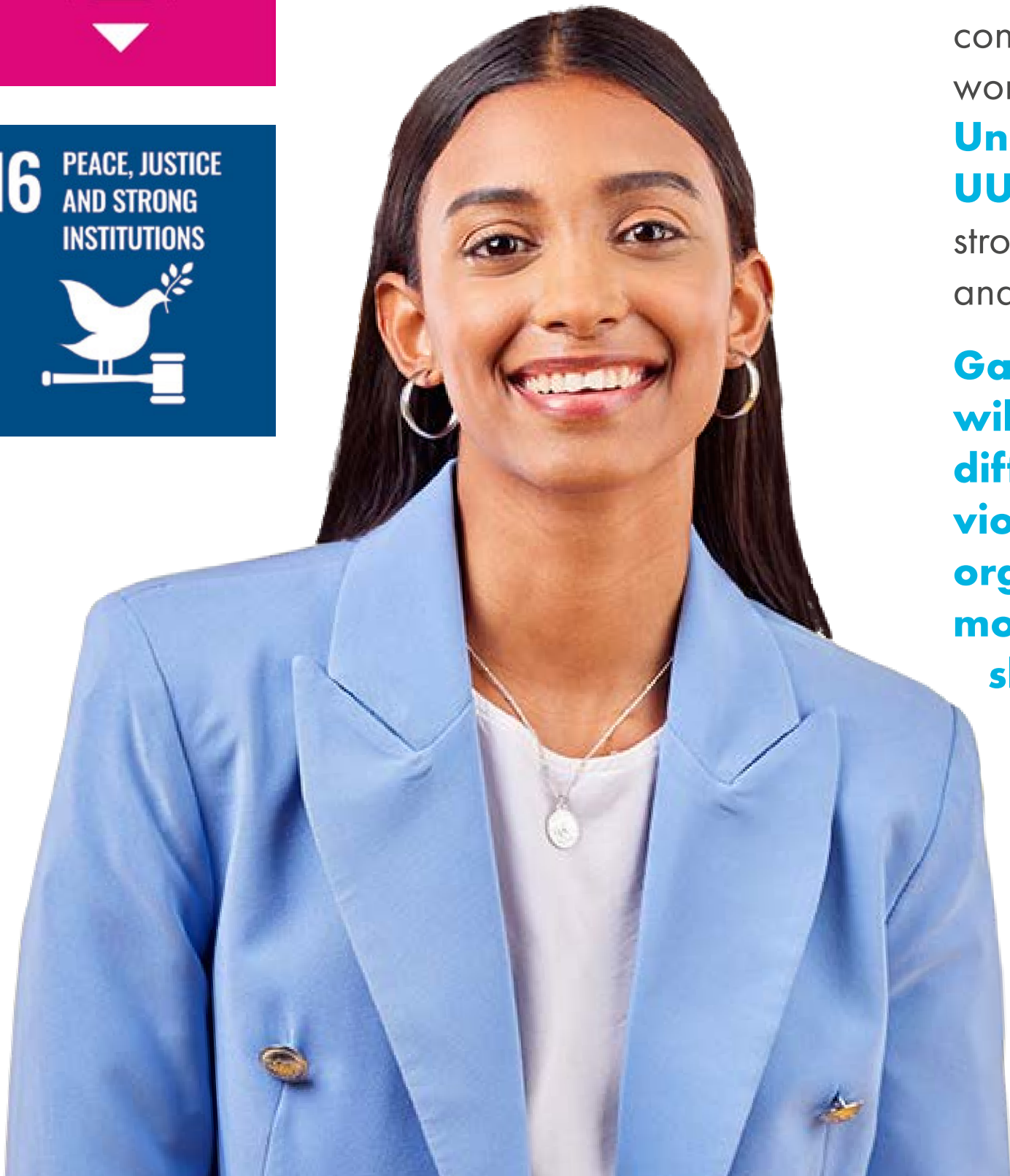
Ulster University hosted the inaugural International Digital Mental Health and Wellbeing conference at the Belfast campus. The conference, supported by the MENHIR research project and the HSC Public Health Agency's R&D Division explored the use of digital technologies to support wellbeing, discussing emerging digital mental health inventions such as chatbots and virtual reality or augmented reality tools, and how these can support those requiring treatment and help to reduce waiting times.



The University marked the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. A year long programme of artistic events was unveiled taking inspiration from Northern Irish citizens' resilience in sustaining peace for 25 years since the Agreement. The programme opened with AGREEMENT, featuring fourteen large-scale video portraits of leaders behind the Agreement, and continued with a varied programme of events and exhibitions.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

We believe in equality; we celebrate diversity, and we foster inclusion.



The University gained White Ribbon Accreditation. Being White Ribbon accredited affirms the University’s promise to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls. This, along with **Ulster University’s Strategy to end violence** and **UUSU’s Active Consent campaign**, gives a strong message that violence in any form is wrong and sets out how we can all tackle it together.

Gaining White Ribbon Accreditation will help Ulster University to make a difference in our communities to end violence against women; improve our organisational culture, safety and morale; increase the knowledge and skills of our staff to address violence against women; improve our reputation; improve the experience of our customers and stakeholders and become an employer of choice.

NI Diversity Mark Accreditation was awarded, marking the University’s progress and commitment to the creation of an inclusive and diverse workplace where individuals feel valued, are treated fairly and have equal opportunities.

The University was delighted to achieve an Athena Swan UK Silver Award for Gender Equality, recognising its commitment to the principles that underpin the Athena Swan Charter and its aim to transform gender equality within Higher Education.

The Belfast Feminist Film School was held for a second year, supporting women to write and make films about subjects reflecting a female frame of reference.

The film school engaged with community organisations interested in feminist film making approaches, extending the University’s training and resources to women who would otherwise be unable to attend conventional training courses.





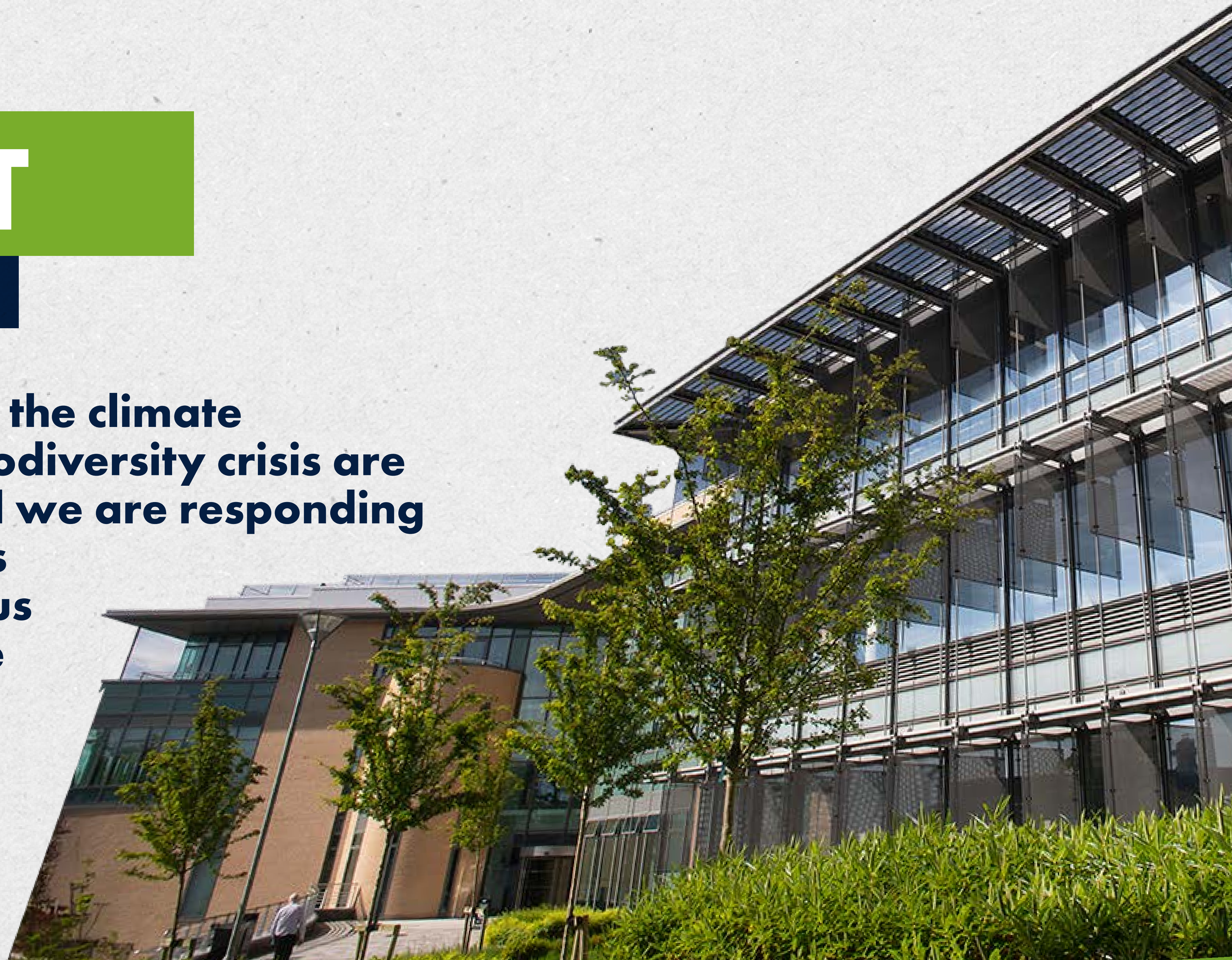
Events were held in association with International Women’s Day, to #EmbraceEquity. Ulster’s Women’s Network colleagues hosted an event to celebrate women’s achievements and reinforce a commitment to women’s equality. Whilst colleagues from the Business School Nancy Brown and Jo Watson hosted a panel discussion with over fifty people from business, academia, third sector and public sector organisations. The panel discussed how individuals can better understand the true meaning of equity versus equality, how individuals’ actions can lead to collective change in support of gender parity, and what organisations can do to embrace equity.

Ulster University’s LGBTQ+ Staff Network partnered with the Doctoral College and the Centre for Youth Research and Dialogue to host the first ‘LGBTQ+ Research at Ulster’ one-day conference. The Network is a vehicle to promote and enhance equality and inclusion across all genders and sexualities at the University. The conference provided a platform for the diverse work of researchers examining LGBTQ+ issues, bringing together researchers with non-governmental organisations and activists from the local LGBTQ+ sector.



PLANET

In recognising that the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked we are responding to these challenges through our campus climate and nature positive actions, engagement, and accreditations.



CARBON – OUR PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

Utilising carbon emissions baseline assessment to model pathways to net zero.



Measure, reduce and mitigate our carbon emissions.

Ulster University have completed a net zero carbon modelling project as part of a foundation phase of developing a climate and sustainability strategy.

The modelling project presented a series of decarbonisation pathways to reach net zero with different target dates utilising a mix of varying

investment and project interventions across the University's entire value chain emissions.

In 2022/23 a preferred decarbonisation scenario was developed into a more detailed Net Zero Carbon Roadmap










outlining the major actions required to achieve emission reductions. The Net Zero Roadmap provides a high-level guide to next actions required, including but not limited to:

- Campus and building portfolio assessments and detailed strategies for reducing electrical and heat demand, phasing out gas usage and assessing embodied carbon on future new build and retrofit construction.
- The creation, adoption, and implementation of relevant policies i.e., introduction of innovative business travel policies.
- Focused engagement with key stakeholders, such as suppliers, local government authorities and the student body, to achieve the emissions reduction targets.

- Target-setting for supply chain decarbonisation to reduce upstream Scope 3 emissions.
- Regular annual assessments of carbon emissions to ensure decarbonisation is proceeding at an optimal rate consistent with the net zero carbon roadmap.
- Improvement of data quality and collection processes.



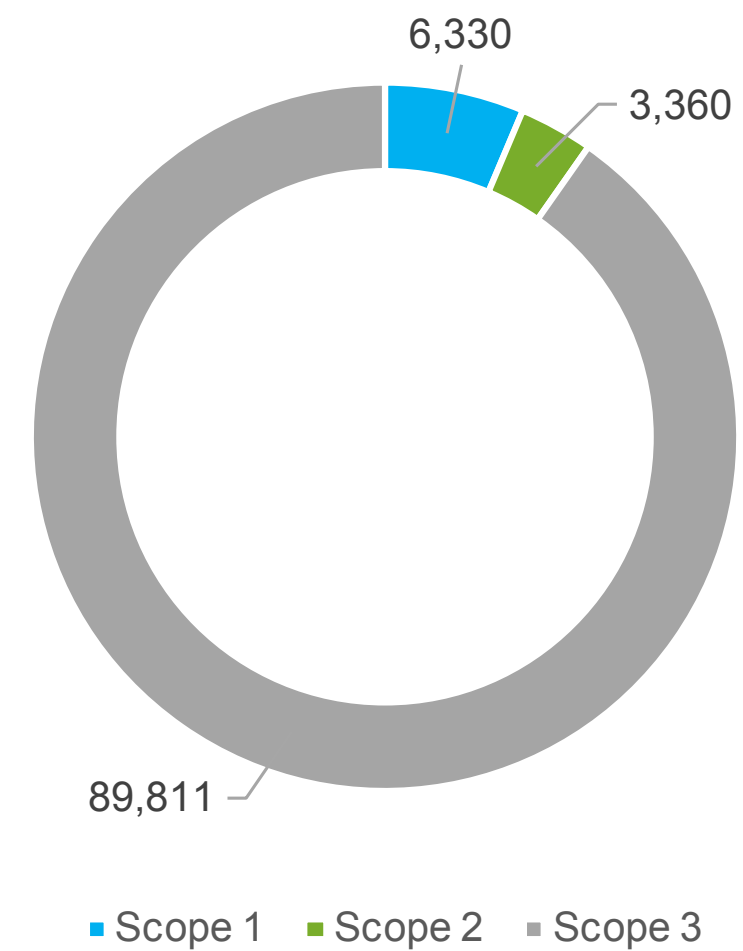
Carbon Footprint Baseline 2018/19 compared to Academic Year 2022/23

Type of Emissions	Emission Sources		2018/19	2022/23
			Carbon emissions Tonnes of Carbon equivalent (tCO2e)	Carbon emissions Tonnes of Carbon equivalent (tCO2e)
SCOPE 1 Direct Emissions from our activities.	 GAS AND FUELS Use to heat and operate our buildings.		6,330	4,843
SCOPE 2 Indirect emissions from our electricity use.	 ELECTRICITY Use for lighting, IT, ventilation.		3,360	3,390
SCOPE 3 Indirect emissions associated with our activities and supply chain.	 GOODS AND SERVICES All things we purchase including for construction.		54,024	42,127
	 STAFF/STUDENT TRAVEL Commuting to campus.		28,319	20,418
	 BUSINESS TRAVEL Air, car, and hotels.		5,237	2,266
	 FUEL AND ENERGY RELATED ACTIVITIES (FERA) Extraction, processing and transport of fuels and electricity to campus.		1,728	1,930
	 TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTION Transport, storage and mail services.		378	124
	 WASTE generated on campus.		97	42
	 WATER consumed.		28	12

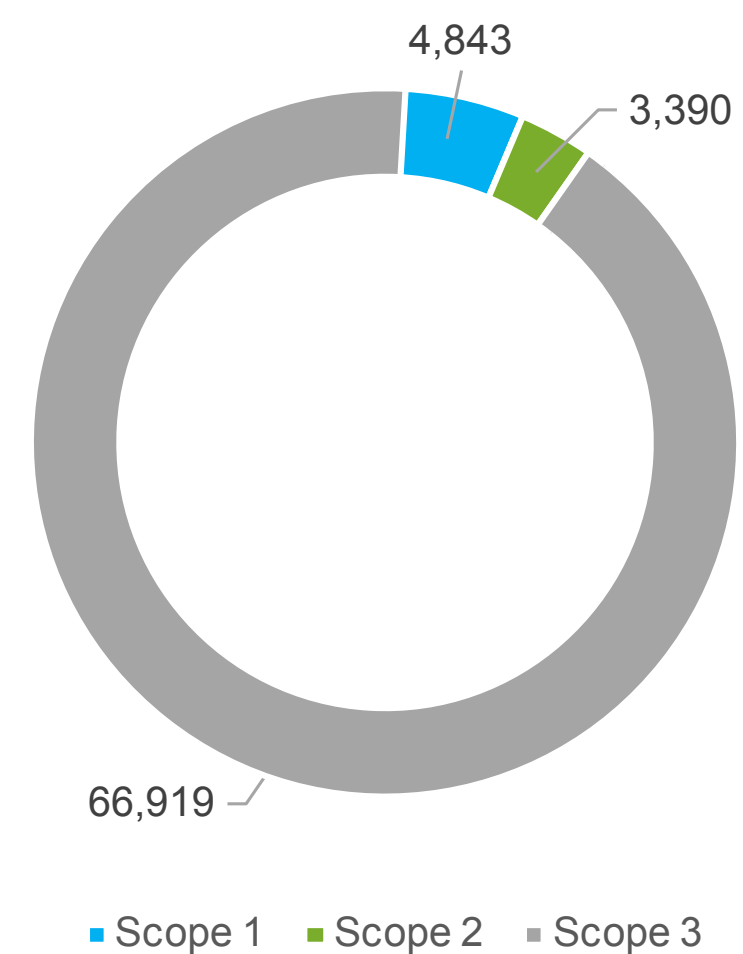
The most notable reductions in emission sources are within scope 3 Goods and Services linked to capital goods, construction activity. The 2018/19 baseline year saw high levels of construction due to the development

of the Belfast campus at this time. Construction activities have not occurred on the same scale within 2022/23. This relative reduction in construction activity has been the principal factor in emissions reductions in the short term.

2018/19 Baseline Carbon Emissions



2022/23 Carbon Emissions by Scope



ENERGY – AN ENERGY EFFICIENT ESTATE

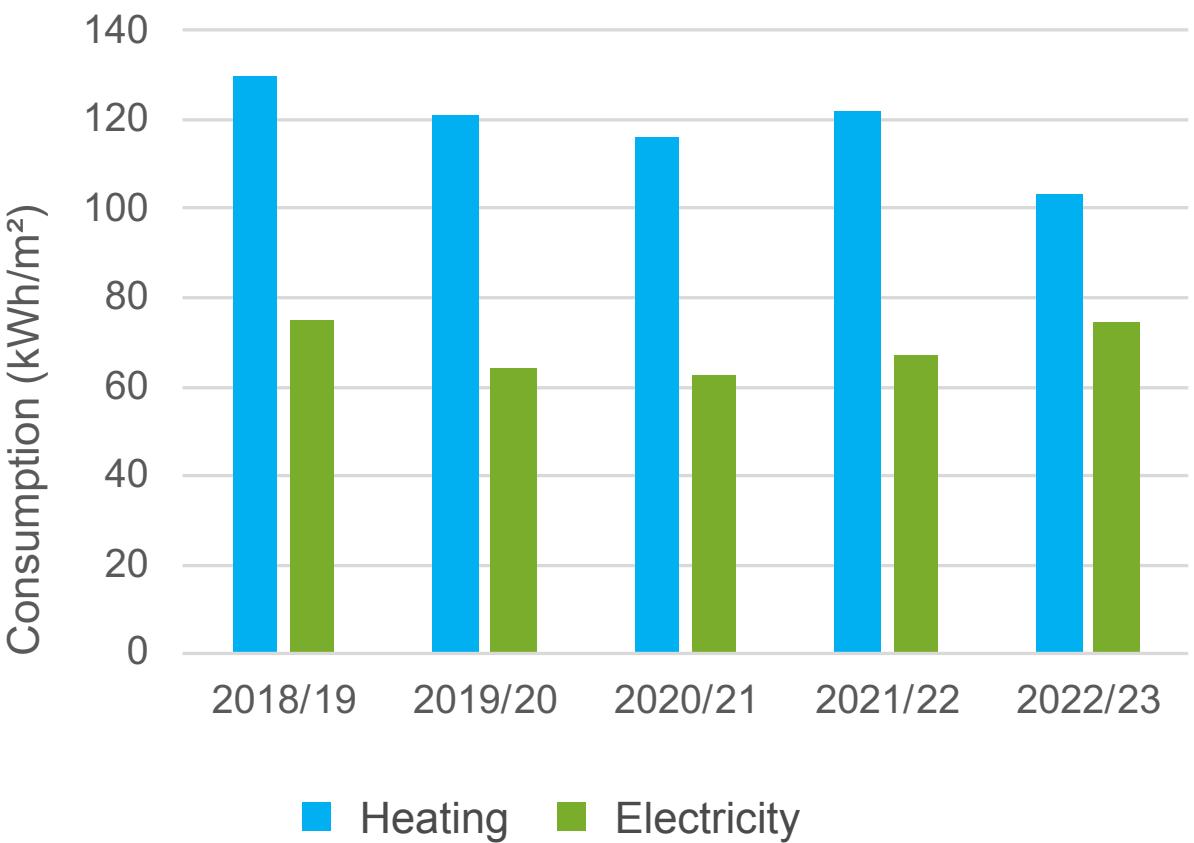


The effective management of energy has been a key strategic objective within the University for many years, having been at the heart of its Estate Strategy for the past two decades.

The University’s energy usage (electricity and heating) per m² for 2022/23 was 178 kWh/m² which represents a 6.0% decrease from 2021/22 and 13.0% reduction over the last 5-year period. This positions Scope 1 and 2 emissions at 8,233 tonnes CO₂e, a year-on-year decrease of 7.5% or 670 tonnes CO₂e.

The increase in electricity was due to the opening of a new block at the Belfast campus and the decrease in gas follows reduced activity at Jordanstown campus.

For 2022/23, on-campus renewables generated over 2,917 MWh (15.6%) of campus electricity demand. The University has two 800 kW wind turbine generators at Coleraine campus, as well as a number of solar power arrays installed across the estate.



Driving high energy efficiency standards continues to be a key aspect of how we design new buildings and building retrofits:

- The University completed and opened the enhanced Belfast campus in September 2022. The new campus buildings are of **modern construction, with efficient plant and solar power installations which all contribute to the ongoing energy efficiency and carbon reduction progress across the estate.**



- **The Belfast campus was the best performing campus with annual energy use per square foot of 121 kWh/m².** This represents an energy intensity of 30% less than the next best performing campus, Derry~Londonderry.
- **At Derry~Londonderry campus as part of a rolling programme of works we continued to replace lighting with energy efficient, cost effective and low-maintenance LED lights.**

- Derry~Londonderry **student accommodation heating system was also upgraded to improve energy efficiency** and reduce energy consumption. A central boiler house was replaced with individual boiler houses at each accommodation block along with new heating controls.
- **At Coleraine Campus the heating controls were partially replaced to provide better control and visibility of the heating system across the campus.** This delivered an enhanced heating control system which also provided better reporting capability, thus improving the energy efficiency of our heating plant. The hot water infrastructure was also upgraded.



WATER - REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION

Proactive programme in place to minimise water consumption.

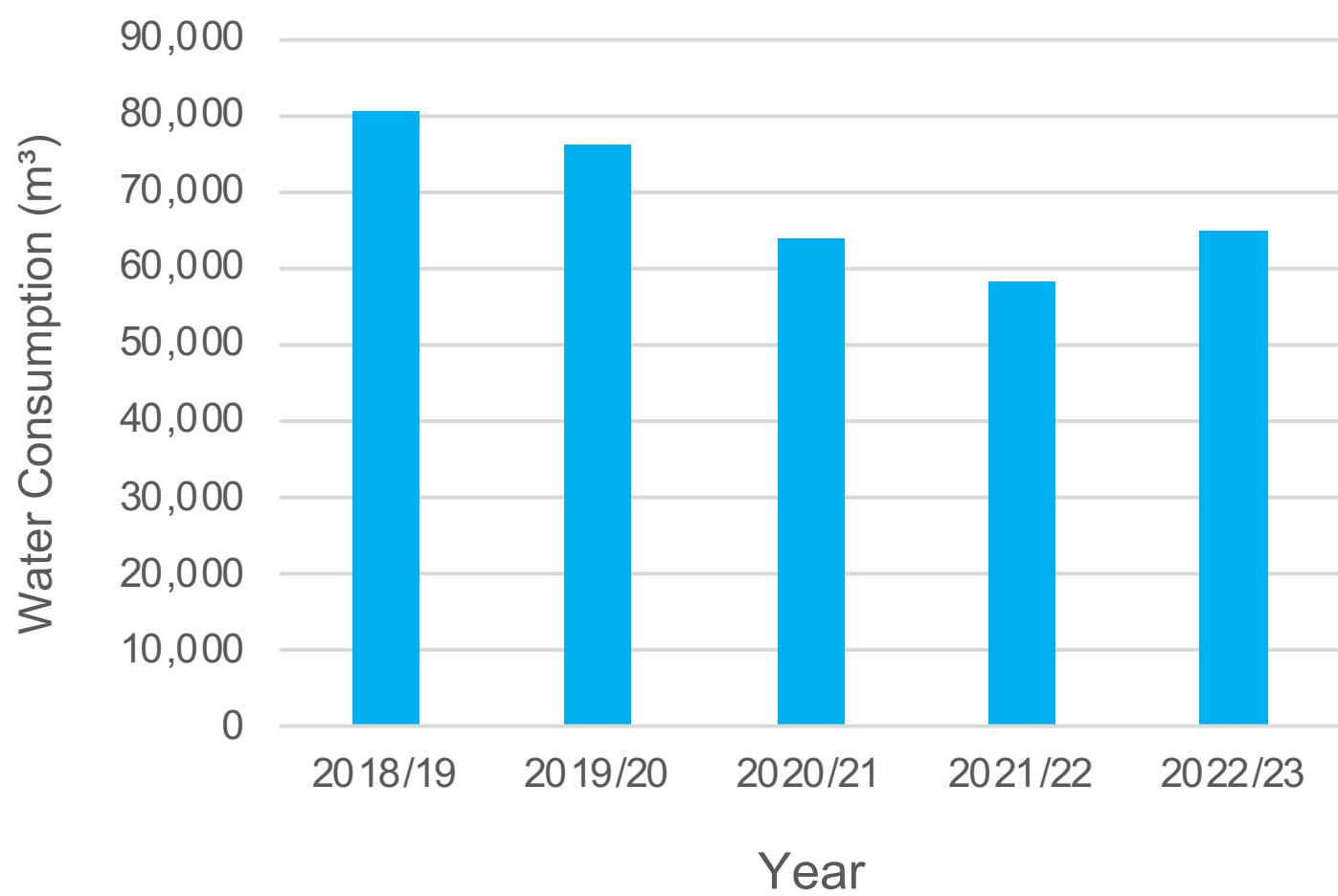


Water consumption increased by 11% in 2022/23. This was due to increased numbers of staff and students on-campus and activities returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The University continues to assess where and how water is being used across the estate and identify opportunities during new build and refurbishment projects for reducing water consumption.

Improved metering, monitoring, and targeting tools used by the University’s Estates Services department enable staff to effectively identify and remedy any leaks in an efficient manner.

Water Consumption 5 Year Trend



RESOURCE USE - INCREASE IN RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

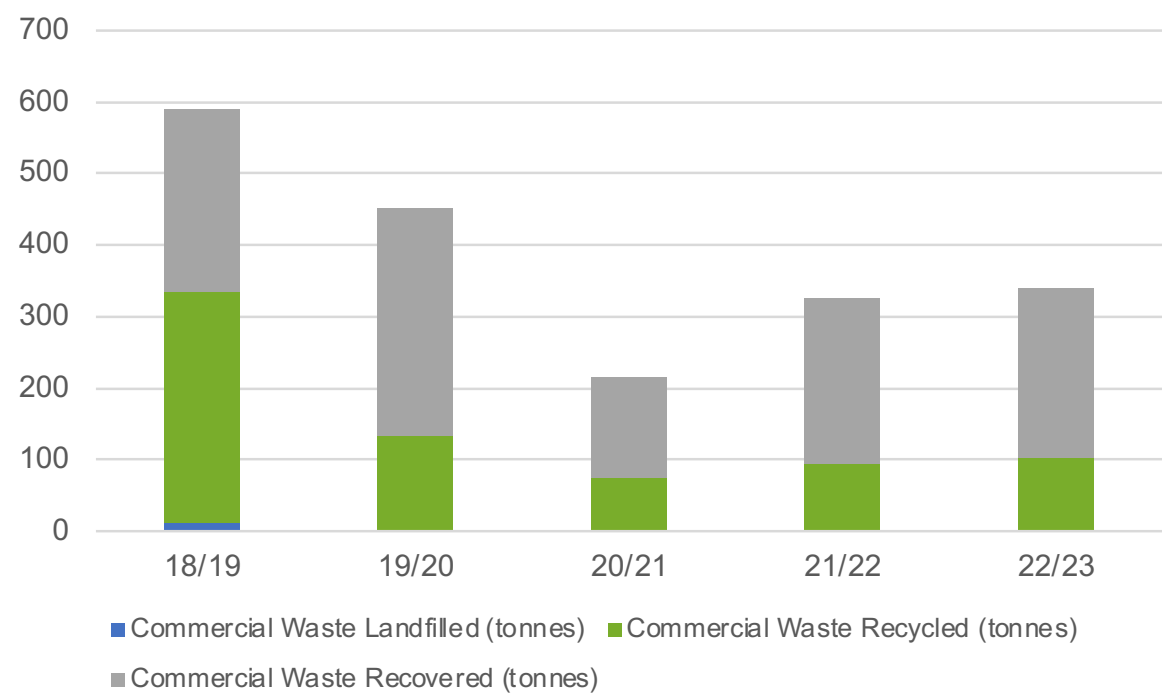
We apply the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover' waste hierarchy in our waste and resource management.



Ulster's total routine office and commercial waste volume in 2022/23 was 338 tonnes. This represents an increase of 14 tonnes from the previous year. **100% of routine office and commercial waste was recycled and recovered with zero waste to landfill.**

2.8 tonnes of unwanted items were donated to the British Heart Foundation 'Pack for Good' campaign delivered by Residential Services, with a value to the charity of £4,914. Residential Services also hosted a clothes swap encouraging students to reuse/recycle clothing and continued to run the Hungry in Halls initiative teaching students how to cook nutritious and tasty meals including vegetarian and vegan meals that have a lower environmental impact.

Commercial Waste 5 Year Trend



Derry~Londonderry campus installed six new water hydration stations across the campus aimed at reducing the use of single-use plastic bottles.

Warp-it (Waste Action Reuse Portal), a furniture and equipment redistribution and reuse marketplace was well used by staff across all campuses.

During 2022/23 Warp-it saved 13 tonnes of carbon emissions and £30,000 through surplus items being donated and claimed:

- 287 items reused on campus via claim of surplus and unwanted items.
- 30 items reused for personal use from unclaimed and unwanted items raising £155 donations for student hardship fund
- 5 tonnes of waste diverted from disposal and waste management stream.

We continued our collaboration with the Invest Northern Ireland Industrial Symbiosis matching service which connects organisations and charities by matching wasted resources from one organisation as a new material for another organisation thus diverting items from waste streams. The University donates obsolete furniture and equipment to charities with business organisations providing a donation to the University Student Hardship Fund for matches. Examples of successful matches in 2022/23 include provision of:

- Study carrels, desks, chairs and filing cabinets from Derry~Londonderry campus to a deaf community charity and a training and employment agency.
- Seminar chairs and catering crockery and tablecloths from Coleraine campus to a counselling charity and church.
- Chairs from Jordanstown campus to a hospice.

TRAVEL - REDUCE EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUTING AND BUSINESS TRAVEL



Sustainable and Active Travel to campus

The University have developed and implemented campus travel plans which aim to reduce the environmental and neighbourhood impacts of staff and students commuting to campus.

Delivery of the travel plans includes stakeholder engagement through regular communications and a two-yearly staff and student travel survey.

The survey provides insights into the commuting preferences of staff and students to campus and helps to inform travel initiatives such as provision of personal journey plans and location of campus electric vehicle charging, cycle hubs, lockers, and showers.

There is regular on-going collaboration with external agencies on public transport and walking and cycling connectivity to campus.

The new enhanced Belfast campus opened in September 2022, its city centre location providing the ideal location and opportunity to promote active and sustainable travel to the over 15,000 staff and students working and studying on the campus.

The travel survey conducted in March 2023 found **public transport as the preferred mode of commuting to Belfast campus with 50% of staff and students using public transport and 18% choosing active travel to the campus.**

Belfast campus now has a low single occupancy **car mode of travel with only 18% of students and 31% of staff commuting by car.**

A range of Sustainable travel improvements were introduced as part of opening the new campus including:

- New Translink shuttle bus service connecting the campus to the nearest train stations and popular student residential areas.
- Free Metro bus transfer from Yorkgate Train Station to campus.
- Enhanced bus service from and to Jordanstown Sports Village (JSV) as well as a park and ride facility at JSV.
- Sustainable Travel Map.
- Opening of Active Travel Hub operated by social enterprise Big Loop Bikes and Sustrans offering cost effective repairs, bike purchase and leasing and a programme of activities, training and events delivered by Sustrans.

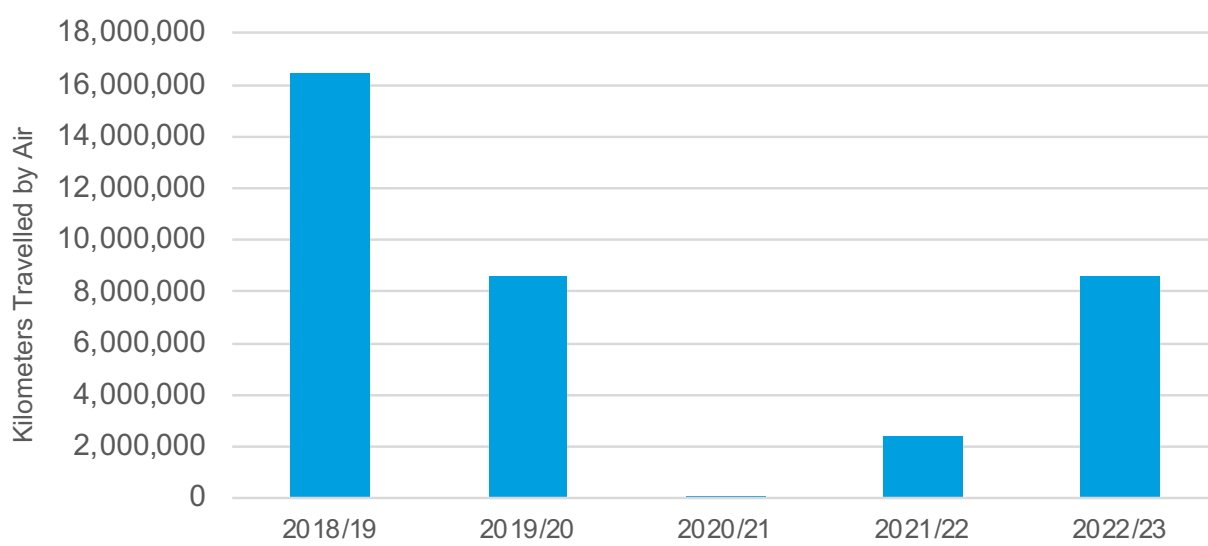


Business Air Travel

During 2022/23, there were 3,548 return flights by University representatives for business activities accounting for 8,582,615 Kilometres with associated carbon emissions of 1,317 tonnes, a significant increase on the previous year which saw 1,346 return flights, 2,406,030 Kilometres travelled and 265 tonnes of carbon emissions.

58% of total business travel emissions arose from air travel with 89% of air travel emissions from long haul flights.

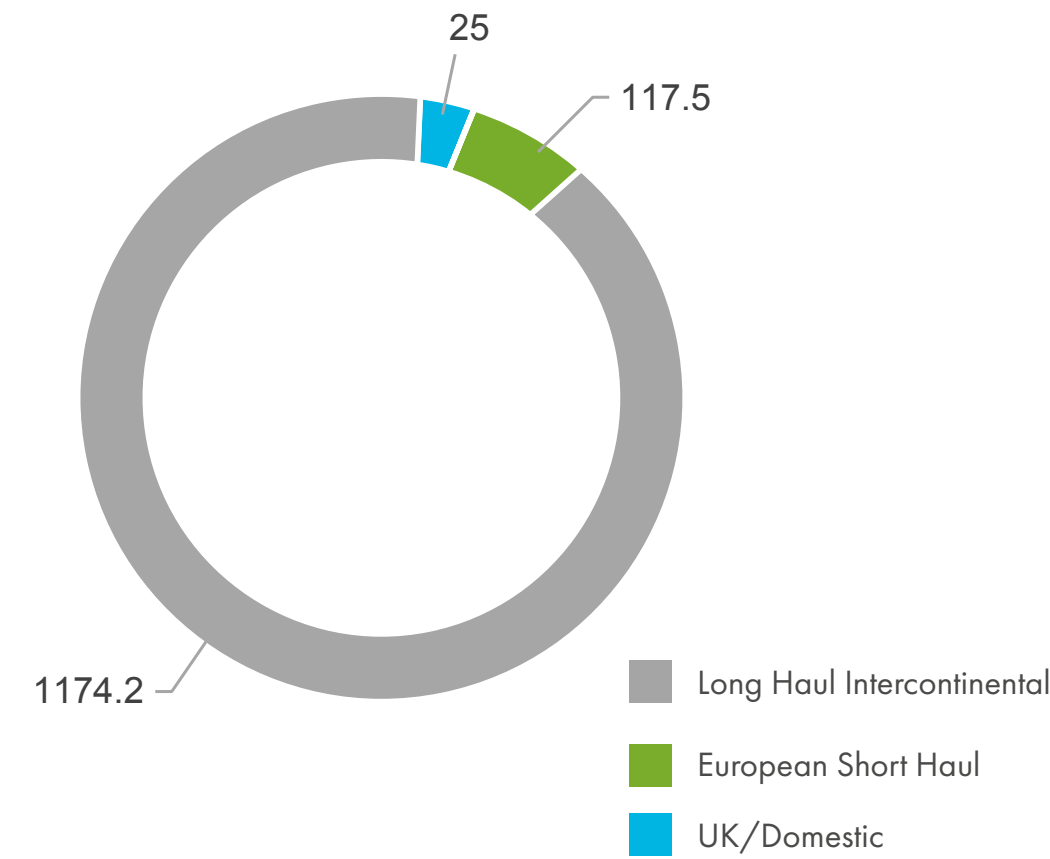
Business Air Travel 5 Year Trend



Business Car Travel

During the reporting year, staff travelled a total of 973,989 miles by car on university business, which resulted in approximately 261 tonnes of carbon emissions. This is an additional 358,361 business car miles travelled compared to the previous year and the second consecutive annual increase since 2020/21, the period during the COVID-19 pandemic.

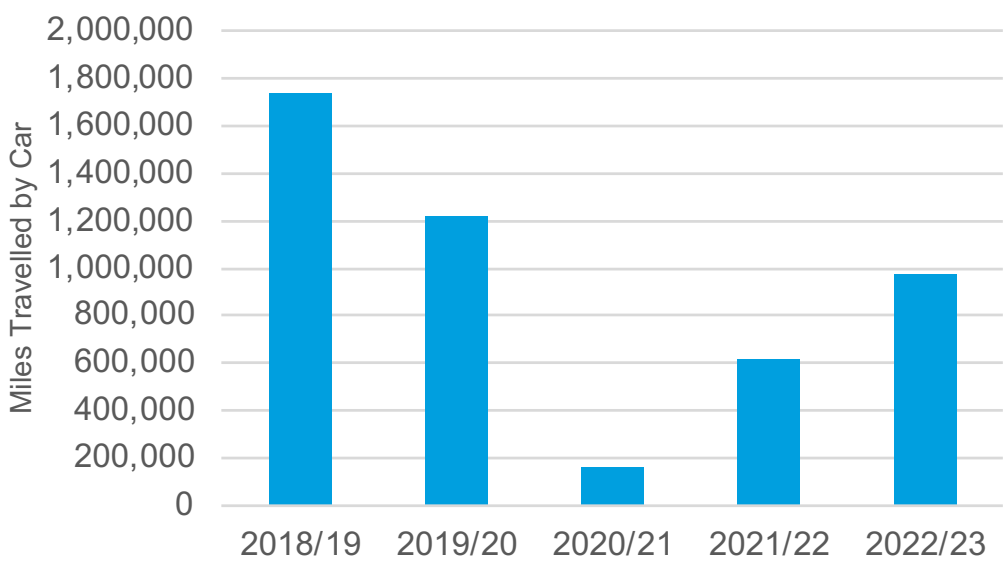
Carbon Emissions per Flight Type



Conducting a comprehensive assessment of business travel would provide an institutional approach to balancing the need to travel for business purposes with the imperative to reduce carbon emissions.

An assessment would be cognisant of the geographical challenges associated with travelling to and from Northern Ireland and take into consideration equality and diversity matters and individual staff circumstances associated with a new approach to business travel.

Business Car Travel 5 Year Trend



NATURE POSITIVE - ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Pride in the natural capital of our estate.



In 2022/23 Ulster University officially pledged to the Nature Positive Universities Alliance, committing to assessing the impacts of our natural capital and to determine the most impactful initiatives to introduce and to report progress on.

During the year we conducted the first of four pledge requirements by conducting a **baseline assessment and ecological survey of the Coleraine campus.**

Setting nature targets, taking action to protect and restore species and ecosystems and nature reporting will form the next elements of our nature positive pledge and commitments.



Coleraine campus

Transformation from 'blanket' mown amenity areas to species rich grassland has continued. Areas have extended into the arboretum at the southern end of the campus. Close mown paths aid accessibility.

Native **wildflower plug plants have been planted** to aid establishment of wildflower meadows.

The common spotted orchid has been seen along grassed woodland edges from the June to early August period.

Sowing locally sourced yellow rattle (*Rhianthus minor*), commonly known as nature's meadow maker plant has been aimed at the degradation of the existing vigorous grass plants.



Yellow rattle is classified as a semi parasitic plant, extracting nutrients from vigorous grass plants. The weakened grass then allows for the establishment of less vigorous wildflowers, so creating a more diverse sward.

Derry~Londonderry campus

Professional tree surveys have been undertaken to **assess tree safety and tree health in general with all trees named and numbered.**

The tree disease, Ash Dieback continues to be controlled on campus.

The veteran tree at Derry~Londonderry continues to survive, it has an aesthetic appeal and is biologically important providing a habitat for a wide range of other plants and animals such as mosses, lichens, and birds.



Staff and Student Gardens

Following the successful **establishment of a garden space on Derry~Londonderry campus, a similar garden space has been created at the Coleraine campus to enable staff and students to get involved in biodiversity and the art of growing.**

There are also plans to **enhance a roof terrace on the Belfast city centre campus, to include a communal growing area for staff and students and fresh herbs for the Academy Restaurant.**



ENGAGEMENT AND ACCREDITATION –

Promoting and adopting sustainable practices.



The University as part of its 'Sustainable futures for all' strategy aims to encourage active participation and involvement of staff and students in promoting and adopting sustainable practices. This approach seeks to raise awareness, encourage action, and motivate our university community to genuinely integrate sustainable behaviours into their daily lives.

The Net Zero Challenge, a digital engagement app was first launched at Ulster University in 2021. The interactive programme is available to all staff and students to engage with individual and university-wide sustainability and wellbeing actions. By completing positive actions staff and students earn points, a place on the leader board and prizes.

After two years the university community has completed almost 10,000 positive sustainability and wellbeing actions through the app! Actions have ranged from learning about carbon to travelling actively, and from eating less meat to litter picking.

Ulster University is recognised externally for leading in sustainability by achieving the 'Platinum' level award in the Business in the Community Environmental Benchmarking Survey and maintaining accreditation to ISO 14001, the International standard for Environmental Management Systems.

For academic year 2023/24 our climate and nature positive commitments will focus on agreeing a net zero pathway and completing our first natural capital assessment and account to facilitate an integrated approach to placing nature on our balance sheet.



NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey 2023
Platinum



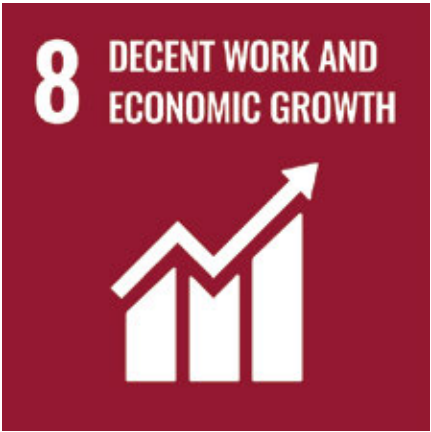
PLACE

Our students, graduates and staff all have an impact, both in this place and around the world. We widen minds through teaching, push the boundaries of knowledge through research, and work in partnership to enhance the potential of everyone through education.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

We create transformational learning and research opportunities that inspire, develop, and support our students and staff to reach new horizons.

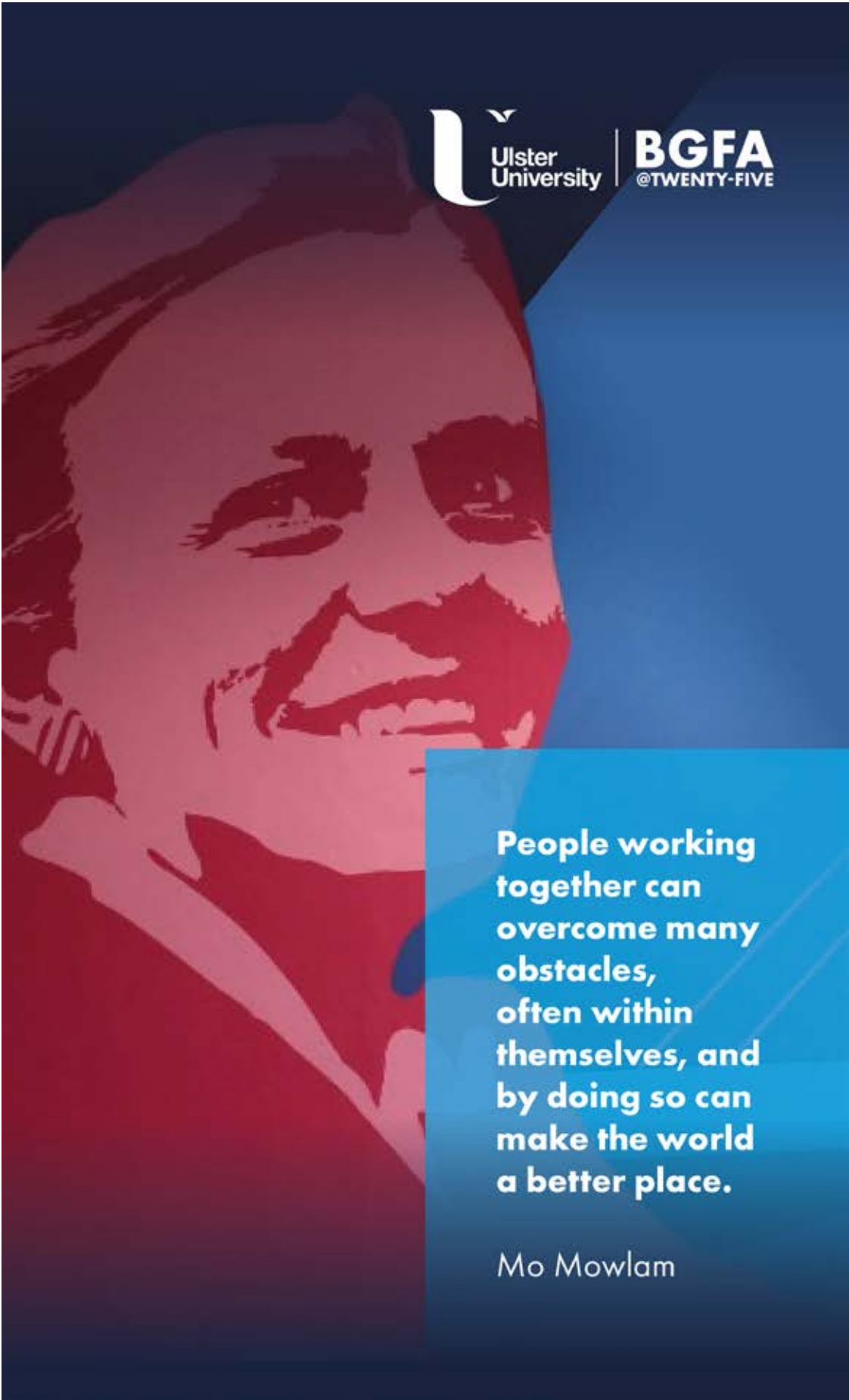


The University received the maximum number of national awards for teaching and learning excellence in 2022. Three National Teaching Fellowships were awarded to Richard Beggs, who works to enhance student experiences and outcomes through technology; Professor Ruth Fee, Professor of Public Services Education who has driven key educational partnerships within the criminal justice sector; and Dr Colm Murphy, who works to transform journalism education. The Office for Digital Learning secured a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence through Advance HE.

The University celebrated its inaugural Medical Education Scholars by thanking donors and partners with a celebratory event, before welcoming a second

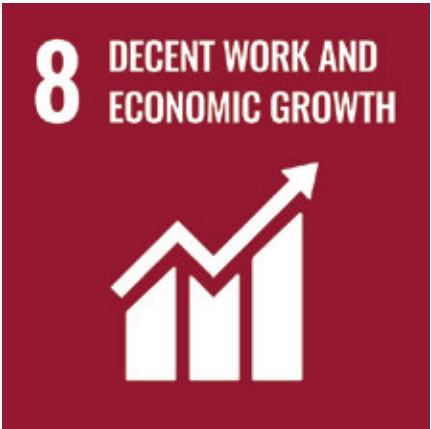
cohort of 10 medical student scholars. These scholarships are intended to help to remove financial barriers for those from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds and widen access to medical education. The University also provided 50 students with their first stethoscope through donations from private sector donors and partners.

The Mo Mowlam Studio was launched on the University's Derry~Londonderry campus. The newly refurbished cinematic arts studio celebrates the lasting impact and legacy of the former Secretary of State who oversaw the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The facility allows students to develop skills in the environment of a professional film studio.



People working together can overcome many obstacles, often within themselves, and by doing so can make the world a better place.

Mo Mowlam



The Future Schools Project was awarded the 2022 BERA Public Engagement and Impact Team Award. The Project supported parents and school communities to envision and articulate the kind of primary school provision in their area that would offer greatest viability, sustainability and quality of education. It was recognised for its success in boosting engagement and impact in education research.

Demonstrating the wealth of talent and dedication at Ulster, the University **swept the board at the Royal Television Society Northern Ireland (RTS NI) Student Television Awards in Belfast, Ulster students winning in Animation, Comedy and Entertainment, Drama, Factual, and Craft** – five categories entered!

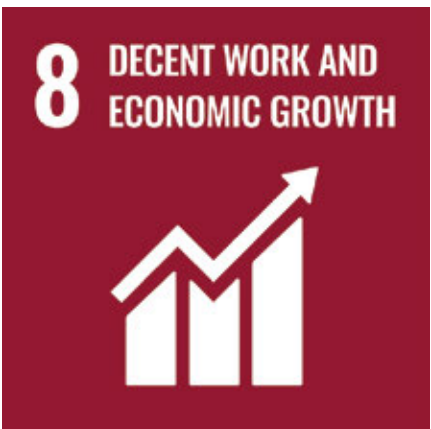
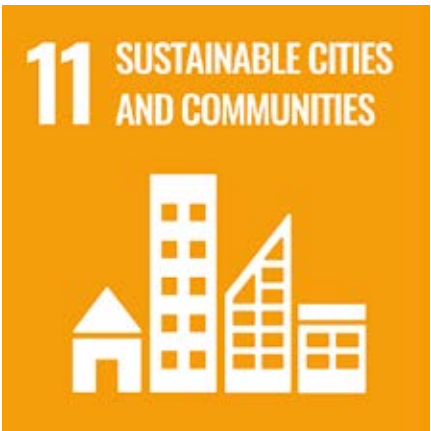


Having won the Ulster Judges’ Choice and People’s Choice Award, Ulster PhD Researcher **Yasna Najmi won the 2022 UK Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) People’s Choice Award.** Yasna, from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, presented her research on ‘A Herbal Alternative to Treating Dental Implant Disease’ condensing her thesis into just 3 minutes. The competition saw around 1,000 competitors from over 70 Universities taking part across the UK and Ireland.



RESEARCH

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.



A new means of delivering **24/7 mental health support, which was created through a three-year Ulster University research project was adopted by leading mental health charity Action Mental Health.** A multilingual mental wellbeing **chat bot, developed at the University, has enabled around-the-clock access to mental health and wellbeing support.** The ChatPal chat bot is available for use in four languages and is now freely available for organisations to integrate into their current service offering.



Atlantic Futures, a major €4million, four-year cross-border research partnership between the University, Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and the Universities of Galway and Limerick was launched in January 2023.

The project aims to address structural and societal imbalances across the North West Atlantic Innovation Corridor region. It will work to understand issues in the region including slow economic growth, low levels of female entrepreneurship and higher rates of mental health difficulties among young people.





The Student Psychological Intervention Trial (SPIT), held in collaboration with ATU Donegal was awarded Best Research Project at the Education Awards 2023.

Addressing the impact of poor mental health in young adults, the SPIT study helped identify the factors influencing mental health and wellbeing in students and trialled a web-based solution to provide support through online CBT-intervention.

Vital research at Ulster revealed the scale of violence against women and girls in Northern Ireland. **In partnership with IMPACT Research Centre, The 'Every Voice Matters! Violence Against Women in Northern Ireland' report was commissioned by the Executive Office and aimed to provide a voice**

to women, demonstrating the need to respond to the extensive nature of violence against women and girls living in Northern Ireland.

A cross-border conference was hosted in the Derry~Londonderry campus exploring physical activity in schools.

The event brought together academics, educators, physical activity practitioners and research commissioners. A variety of research was presented into interventions that can help to boost physical activity and promote active healthy lifestyles in young people.



PARTNERSHIPS

Connection and a spirit of partnership is the hallmark of Ulster University's past, present and future. Together we deliver innovation and progress.



INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

Through collaboration with industry, policy makers and employers we play a pivotal role in stimulating entrepreneurship and nurturing innovation. We provide a pipeline of highly skilled graduates fit to take their place and make an impact in our fast-changing world.



Work began on the new Studio Ulster virtual production studio. The studio is situated at Giant’s Park in Belfast and developed by the University in partnership with Belfast Harbour and with support from Northern Ireland Screen. It is a unique £72m, large-scale studio complex that integrates Virtual Production with traditional film, animation, games and broadcast industry alongside leading edge Research and Development, and Visual FX capability.

Building on established strengths in the region and working with globally important production companies and University research and development teams, the project aims to plug the skills gap in virtual production and develop highly skilled graduates. In addition, providing local creative companies access to hardware and software that will enhance their product and allow them to scale up and grow into global players in the industry.



Professor Paul McCarron was named Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. He received recognition for his outstanding contribution to pharmacy, at an award ceremony hosted by the leadership body, Pharmacy Forum NI.

Lauren Kelso, a final year Illustration student, won the Ulster Orchestra competition to design merchandise in partnership with Ulster University’s Belfast School of Art. Lauren’s winning design features on the new range of goods and gifts.





Applications opened for 25@25, a fully funded experiential learning and leadership programme to support and develop leaders of tomorrow from a host of different sectors. Part of Ulster’s programme to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, 25@25 is providing a unique opportunity for 25 future leaders in Northern Ireland to enhance their leadership skills and gain invaluable experience. The programme will help them build the necessary tools to continue to prioritise dialogue, compromise, and peacebuilding and become the changemakers of the future. Including leadership sessions with exceptional leaders; a week-long fully funded international residential at Babson College, Boston, USA; one-to-one coaching sessions; a mentoring programme with the Institute of Directors NI; and a community leaders network intended to endure beyond the programme.

Ulster researchers made significant contributions to new UN Guidance on Transitional Justice. Expert papers were commissioned from Prof. Brandon Hamber and Prof. Cath Collins from the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), which shaped the new

guidance note: ‘A Strategic Tool for People, Prevention and Peace’.

Five Ulster University students were awarded scholarships by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) Networks. Consisting of a £3,000 annual bursary, paid summer placements and one year paid industrial experience. The scholarships are worth over £40k throughout the duration of the students’ degree programmes. This brings the number of NIE Network scholarships to twelve.

Kainos supported the launch of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Centre at Ulster University’s new Belfast campus. Driven by the need to develop innovative, ethical and responsible AI services, the collaboration between industry and academic experts aims to inspire the next generation to harness the power of AI to improve society.

Ulster University worked with Donegal County Council on a project to use AI to predict visitor numbers on popular walking trails. Leveraging data collected by the Trail Gazers project which maps footfall on trails via a sensor network, the project used AI to provide the Council with valuable forecasts that can inform management and help to safeguard environmentally sensitive trails.

Ulster University worked to become part of a £21.3m national research partnership focused on decarbonising the UK maritime sector. The only partner based in Northern Ireland, Ulster University’s Hydrogen Safety Engineering and Research Centre (HySAFER) will be a major contributor to the hub’s activities and will receive around £630,000 of the funding.

COMMUNITY

We support the development of communities, 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.



Ulster University awarded a further 47 Community Scholarships (in addition to 39 in 2021) to students starting at the university. Removing the financial barriers that prevent many from accessing higher education. **These scholarships aim to address inequality by supporting those students who have faced challenges on their educational journey who may be discouraged from going to university due to financial barriers.**

Ulster was a leading partner in the Peace Summit Report. Produced through consultation with over 700 peace builders, local communities

and young people from across Northern Ireland and the border counties the report included an agenda for the future that speaks to issues from the past that require a renewed commitment to create sustainable peace and reconciliation.

The Schools Outreach team at Ulster University launched the Youth Business Hub in partnership with Ulster University Business School (UUBS). The hub is an online virtual learning environment, offering an extensive range of free, sustainable online business courses for school pupils and college students. The hub aims to provide opportunities for school and college students to explore diverse business content, and to gain an introduction to the breadth and diversity of business courses at Ulster.





A new Derry~Londonderry community research partnership was announced between Ulster University and community partners North West Community Network and Developing Healthy Communities. The partnership is to run a pilot project to address the systemic challenges community groups and researchers can face in working together, with the aim to create systems which support community partners and university-based researchers to collaborate more effectively and allow collaborations to have impact on local communities.

Ulster’s Cancer Care Research Group launched a range of resources for health and social care professionals working in the local community. Including an e-learning resource aimed at helping health and social care professionals to support parents having to communicate their cancer diagnosis and treatment to children.



Sessions were held with a group of women from St Peter’s Immaculata Youth Club exploring barriers and opportunities to accessing education as adults. Held by Dr. Denise MacDermott, Senior Social Work Lecturer and Subject Lead in Social Work, the sessions culminated in a campus tour at Belfast and discussion of pathways into higher education.

Participatory community mapping workshops were held on the Belfast campus in partnership with the Fostering Network providing the opportunity to give participants an insight into the discipline of Geography, aiming to open up educational possibilities and reduce barriers for care experienced young people.

The Belfast School of Architecture partnered with Grow NI, Anaka Women’s Collective and Women’s TEC to explore the needs of the members using the Waterworks Park. Through a series of workshops on and off campus, students were challenged to create a learning pavilion. Women’s TEC provided specialist joinery knowledge and skills which were invaluable in the construction of the pavilion.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED



We all have a role to play in managing our impact and creating a sustainable University.

Collectively all of our small steps add up to a significant group of actions.

During the 2023/24 academic year there will be more opportunities for all University staff, students, and stakeholders to get involved as we increase engagement activities and further progress actions towards delivering on sustainability.

Get involved and find out more:



ulster.ac.uk/sustainability



sustainability@ulster.ac.uk