

# Self-Evaluation Report 2025 Template

## Template Guidance Note

- All sections of this template should be completed in full.
- The format of the template should not be altered.
- The template has been pre-populated with the agreed Performance Objectives, indicators, and targets. Pre-populated elements of the template reflect the Performance Agreement, and these entries should not be amended. Queries relating to pre-populated information should be submitted to [systemperformance@hea.ie](mailto:systemperformance@hea.ie).
- Where word count limits apply, these limits should not be exceeded.
- Appendices are not permitted.
- Reporting should be clear, concise, and evidence based.
- Narrative or bullet point formats may be used, and the use of plain English is encouraged.
- Reporting should be cognisant of the information provided in the [System Performance Framework 2023–2028](#) and [System Performance Framework Glossary](#).
- Where institutional strategies, policies, or other institutional documents are referenced, these should be hyperlinked where possible.
- Data presented in the report should be the most recent data available to the institution (timeframe should be specified).
- It is the responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure that the information provided in the report is accurate.
- Redaction may be agreed with the HEA prior to publication, as appropriate.
- The report must be signed by the head of the institution prior to submission.
- The report should be submitted to [systemperformance@hea.ie](mailto:systemperformance@hea.ie) by the stated deadline.

## Data Protection

The HEA as data controller will process personal data received via this form in compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only process the data received via this form for the purposes of reviewing, evaluating, and reporting on the System Performance Framework 2023–2028 and data will be retained in line with our Records Management Policy only as long as is necessary to meet this purpose. For more information, please see the HEA's [Data Privacy Notice](#).

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# University of Limerick Self-Evaluation Report 2025

## Introduction

This Self-Evaluation Report will form the basis of the HEA’s assessment of the strategic performance of the institution with respect to the objectives and targets set in the Performance Agreement established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and University of Limerick (UL) in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023–2028.

In line with the HEA’s mandate to measure and assess institutions’ strategic performance with a view to strengthening the performance of the higher education system and of designated institutions, and to ensure institutions’ accountability, this Self-Evaluation Report will be published on the HEA website. The HEA will engage with institutions regarding any required redactions prior to publication.

It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the submitted report (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate.

## Part A: Performance Indicators

Text should be added to the white boxes in each of the tables below. Text in the shaded boxes reflects entries in the Performance Agreement and should not be amended. The most up-to-date data available should be reported in the ‘**Benchmark data**’ and ‘**2024/25 result**’ columns. The year or range of years to which the reported data relates should be added after the data source in the ‘**Data source and timeframe**’ column.

### Pillar: Teaching & Learning

#### Performance Objective 1

**To deliver an excellent student experience through the provision of flexible programmes that enhance students’ employability.**

**Transversal areas of impact:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Climate & Sustainable Development.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
1.1	<b>Effective Teaching Practices Score</b>	Student Survey.ie	2022: 32.5	Match or exceed university sector average (32.7 in 2023), and work towards achieving UL’s previous highest score (37.5, achieved in 2016) by 2028	<b>Not available</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	35.5	36.5	37.5	<b>37.5</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
1.1 (a)	Effective Teaching Practices Score	UL internal Student Satisfaction Survey, April 2025	64% (April 2024)	Not available	N/A		67%* April 2025				
1.2	Quality of Interactions Score	Student Survey.ie	2022: 36.3	Work towards exceeding 2022/23 university sector average score (40.3) by 2028	Not available	38	N/A	39.5	40	40.5	40.5
1.2 (a)	Quality of Interactions Score	UL internal Student Satisfaction Survey, April 2025	63% (April 2024) UL internal Student Satisfaction Survey	Not available	N/A		70%* April 2025				
1.3	Progression rate (%) new entrants	HEA SRS, 2022/23	2022/23: 88.6%	Work towards restoring pre-pandemic rate (92% in 2019/20) and achieve university sector average by 2028 (90% in 2021/22)	University sector average: 91%	90%	92%	91%	92%	92%	92% 3.4 p.p. increase on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
1.4	<b>Proportion (%) of undergraduates who undertook internship or work placement</b>	HEA Class of 2023 Graduate Outcomes survey and UL data on School Placement (SP) and Cooperative Education (CE)	2023: SP: 100% CE 95%	Maintain current rates; exceed university average (54% HEA Class of 2022 survey)	<b>58.4%</b>	<b>SP: 100%</b> <b>CE: 95%</b>	<b>SP: 100%</b> <b>CE: 96%</b>	SP: 100% CE: 95%	SP: 100% CE: 95%	SP: 100% CE: 95%	<b>Maintain baseline</b>
1.5	<b>Proportion (%) of students registered on PGT programmes with work-integrated learning in curriculum</b>	HEA Class of 2023 Graduate Outcomes survey and UL Student Records	2022/23: 55%	Continue to exceed the average rate across seven traditional universities (36% HEA Class of 2022 survey) and increase further	<b>Awaiting HEA data from Class of 2023 survey.</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>70%</b>	75%	85%	95%	<b>40 p.p. increase in students registered on PGT programmes with work-integrated learning in curriculum</b>
1.6	<b>Proportion (%) and number of flexible, part time, blended,</b>	UL Student Records and HEA SRS, 2023/24	2022/23: 15% 2,676 (headcount)	Average rate for traditional universities (16% in 2022/23)	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b> <b>3,000</b>	<b>16%</b> <b>3,032</b>	17% 3,300	17% 3,450	18% 3,800	<b>3 p.p. increase on baseline</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	<b>distance learners</b>										
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Proportion (%) and number of students enrolled at Level 9/10</b>	UL Student Records and HEA SRS, 2023/24	2022/23: 25.5% 4,483 (headcount)	Average rate for traditional universities (28.6% in 2022/23)	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>27%</b> <b>5,050</b>	<b>25.9%</b> <b>4,931</b>	28% 5,450	29% 5,900	30% 6,300	<b>4.5 p.p. increase on baseline</b>
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Proportion (%) of programmes which embed the revised Graduate Attributes</b>	Academic Programme Review Committee	2022/23: 6.5% (19 programmes)	Not available	<b>N/A</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>52%</b>	34%	51%	68%	<b>68% of all programmes revised in line with the ICDF (100% by 2030)</b>

#### Technical note on indicator data for PO 1:

1.1 & 1.2 StudentSurvey.ie paused its taught student survey in 2024 and 2025 to undertake a Strategic Review. Reporting on indicators that draw on StudentSurvey.ie results will recommence in 2026. Where the relevant survey questions have changed, indicators will be updated accordingly. A proxy for the indicators 'Effective Teaching' and Quality of Interactions' value has been chosen using UL's internal Student Satisfaction Survey and the results are presented in 1.1 (a) and 1.2 (a) above (April 2025 results).

1.3 The baseline for Indicator 1.3, Progression rate (%) new entrants, reports the % of the 2021/22 new entrants that were retained in 2022/23. The baseline and targets set by UL for this Indicator do not include transfers to other institutions as these figures were not part of HEA reporting prior to the [HEA Progression and Completion Report 2025](#). All reported figures exclude transfers per HEA dashboard methodology.

1.6 The UL Performance Agreement 2024-2028 noted that the number of students will be updated once the new strategic plan is in place.

## Pillar: Research & Innovation

### Performance Objective 2

To enhance research performance, support our research community, and translate our research into societal impact through excellent fundamental, translational, and multidisciplinary research that pushes boundaries and addresses global challenges.

**Transversal areas of impact:** Society; Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; International.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.1	<b>Number of PGR new entrant enrolments</b>	UL student records and HEA SRS 2024	2023/24: 200 including professional doctorates	Maintain current share of PGR enrolment amongst IUA members (11% in 2023/24)	<b>11% in 2023/24</b>	<b>210 in 2024/25</b>	<b>202 in 2024/25</b>	225 in 2025/26	240 in 2026/27	250 in 2027/28	<b>250</b>
2.2	<b>Number of PGR graduations</b>	UL Student Records 2024	2023: 161 graduates	Not available	<b>N/A</b>	<b>170 (2024)</b>	<b>158 (2024)</b>	180 (2025)	190 (2026)	195 (2027)	<b>195</b>
2.3	<b>PhD Completion rate (%)</b>	UL Student Records, 2024	TBDC	Not available	<b>N/A</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>N/A</b>	TBC	TBC	TBC	<b>TBC</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.4	<b>Students' rating of their opportunities to engage with other research students</b>	Research culture in PGR Student survey 2025	2023: 62.4% agree <i>'Opportunity to discuss my research with other research students'</i>	Exceed national average	<b>62.4% in 2023</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>61.1% in 2025</b>	65% in 2025	N/A	70% in 2027	<b>70% agree</b> <b>7.6 p.p. increase in 2027 compared to 2023 baseline</b>
2.5	<b>Research income</b>	UL audited accounts, 2023/24	€38.1M (2022/23)	Average for Irish HEIs of similar size	<b>€39.6M in 2021/22</b>	<b>€40.5M in 2023/24</b>	<b>€37.6M in 2023/24</b>	€43.2M in 2024/25	€45.6M in 2025/26	€48M in 2026/27	<b>Increase in annual income to €50.4M by 2027/28</b>
2.6	<b>Value (€M) of Horizon Europe research funding awards</b>	UL Annual Research Performance Report 2024	Total awards from Horizon 2020: €34.7M Horizon Europe Awards in 2022/23: €7.1M	Average total awards from Horizon 2020 for Irish HEIs of similar size: €30.6	<b>€30.6M Average total awards from Horizon 2020</b>	<b>€9.8M in 2023/24</b>	<b>€10.2M in 2023-24</b>	€10M in 2024/25	€6M in 2025/26	€10M in 2026/27	<b>€42.9 total from Horizon Europe to date by 26/27</b> <b>Overall target for Horizon Europe is €52M (50% increase from Horizon 2020)</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.7	<b>Number of Research impact case studies</b>	UL case study archive	2023/24: 24	Not available	<b>N/A</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	4	4	4	<b>16 new case studies over 4 years, leading to a total of 40 case studies</b> <b>67% increase on baseline</b>
2.8	<b>Citation Impact score (Citations per paper over 5-year publication window)</b>	Scopus/ SciVal 2020-2024	Jan 2023: 10.0 averaged over 5 years (2019–2023)	National average citation impact for 7 Irish universities over 5 years (11.11 for 2018–2022)	<b>13.7 (2020-2024)</b>	<b>10.3 (2020-2024)</b>	<b>10.7 (2020-2024)</b>	10.7 (2021–2025)	11.1 (2022–2026)	11.5 (2023–2027)	<b>15% increase by 2023–2027 window, measured at Jan 2028</b>
2.9	<b>Number of Licenses, Options &amp; Assignments</b>	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2024	2023: 45 LOAs over 4 years (2020–2023)	National average for no. of LOAs per €10M research spend (3.0 in 2023)	<b>3.3 (2024)</b>	<b>13 (2024)</b>	<b>15</b>	14 (2025)	15 (2026)	16 (2027)	<b>58 LOAs over 4 years</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
2.10	Percentage of publications that are Open Access Publications	UL 2024	2023: 72%	National average	<b>72% (2024)</b>	<b>75% (2024)</b>	<b>76% (2024)</b>	75% (2025)	75% (2026)	75% (2027)	<b>Above national average 75% 3 p.p. increase</b>
2.11	Percentage of papers co-authored with international researchers	UL 2024	2023: 61.2%	National average for the 7 universities	<b>63% (2023)</b>	<b>61.5% (2024)</b>	<b>63% (2024)</b>	62% (2025)	62.5% (2026)	63% (2027)	<b>63% 1.7 p.p. increase</b>

#### Technical note on indicator data for PO 2:

2.1 Number of PGR new entrant enrolments are based on the average of the intake over the last three years. Data for 2024/25 is anticipated at end of October 2025.

2.3: A national agreement on a definition regarding PhD completion rate % is outstanding. UL's Doctoral College is part of national conversations on this topic.

2.5 Research income reported is GAAP adjusted research income from audited accounts reported in academic year. The target to 2028 assumes national funding for research centres to continue at 2022/23 levels.

2.6 The reduction in the 2025/26 funding is due to a projected gap in the adoption and launch of the Horizon Europe Pillar 2 2025 work programmes.

2.10 Journal articles and reviews in green/gold only. Benchmark national average is an analysis via Scopus of national average of journal articles and review articles only. Our target to place above national average is limited by institutional funding and staffing to supplement national open access publishing deals. Ireland is currently 6th in the world for open access, see <https://esac-initiative.org/market-watch/> UL is placed number 3 nationally, therefore increases in this area are limited based on resourcing available (institutionally and nationally).

## Pillar: Access & Participation

### Performance Objective 3

To increase enrolment, progression and completion rates for students from under-represented communities and priority target groups identified in the National Access Plan and to create a more inclusive and accessible learning and university experience for all students.

**Transversal areas of impact:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Society; Region; Digital Transformation; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
3.1	<b>Proportion (%) of students registered with the disability service (across all programmes)</b>	UL SRS and <a href="#">AHEAD</a> reports, 2023/24	2022/23: 5.5%	Work towards exceeding 2021/22 university sector average (2021/22: 6.9%; source: AHEAD) by 2028	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	6.5%	7%	7.5%	<b>2 p.p. increase on baseline</b>
3.2	<b>Number of students with a disability who are supported by FSD (Fund for Student with Disabilities)</b>	HEA FSD Returns <a href="#">AHEAD</a> reports, 2023/24	2022/23: 972	No HEI comparator available (Total of 14,145 students supported nationally by FSD in 2020/2021)	<b>20,002 students supported nationally by FSD</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,039</b>	1,050	1,100	1,150	<b>1,150</b>  <b>18% increase on baseline</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
3.3	<b>Proportion (%) of new entrant enrolments of students via access pathways (HEAR, DARE, QQI, MS, Tertiary)</b>	HEA SRS, 2023/24	2022/23: 17%	Bring UL in line with national average (2022/23 rate for all HEA institutions is 19.5%)	19.2%	17.5%	19.8%	18%	19%	20%	3 p.p. increase on baseline
3.4	<b>Proportion (%) of new entrants from DEIS schools</b>	HEA SRS, 2023/24 and UL SRS, 2024/25	2023/24: 9.0%	Bring UL in line with national average (12% in 2020/21)	10%	9.5%	10%	10.0%	10.5%	11.5%	2.5 p.p. increase
3.5	<b>Non-progression rate (%) for new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas</b>	HEA SRS and <a href="#">Non-Progression and Completion Dashboard</a> , 2022/23 new entrants	2020/21: 11%	Achieve a rate below the average across all HEIs (11% in 2020/21)	16%	10.5%	14%	10%	9.5%	9%	2 p.p. decrease on baseline
3.6	<b>Non-progression rate (%) for new entrants with disabilities</b>	Equal Access Survey, 2022/23 new entrants	2021/22: 11%	Achieve a rate below the average, all HEIs, by 2028 (13.5% in 2021/22)	12%	10.5%	11%	10%	9.5%	9%	2 p.p. decrease on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
3.7	<b>Completion rate (%) students from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas</b>	HEA SRS and <a href="#">Non-Progression and Completion Dashboard</a> , 2019/20 new entrants.	2018/19: 73%	Exceed the average rate across all HEIs by 2028 (70% in 2018/19)	<b>63%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>	75%	76%	77%	<b>4 p.p. increase on baseline</b>
3.8	<b>Completion rate (%) for students with disabilities</b>	Equal Access Survey, 2019/20 new entrants	2018/19: 73%	Align UL with the average rate across all HEIs by 2028 (76% in 2018/19)	<b>65%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>80%</b>	75%	76%	77%	<b>4 p.p. increase on baseline</b>
3.9	<b>Number of students enrolled who are Irish Traveller and Roma across all programmes</b>	AWP Student records and UL PATH 5 Report, 2024/25	2022/23: ■	Not available (■ Traveller students in HE in Ireland 2020/2021)	<b>2023/24: ■</b>	<b>+2</b>	■	+2	+2	+2	<b>+8 on baseline 133% increase on baseline</b>

**Technical note on indicator data for PO 3:**

3.5-3.8 The UL base line figures for Indicators 3.5 to 3.8 were provided to UL directly by the HEA in 2024. These figures cannot be verified through publicly available data.

3.5 & 3.6 The baseline, benchmarks and targets set for Indicators 3.5 and 3.6, non-progression rates (%) for new entrants from socio-economically disadvantaged areas and students with disability, do not include transfers to other institutions as these figures were not part of HEA reporting prior to the [HEA Progression and Completion Report 2025](#). Therefore, the performance figures reported above for 2024/25 *exclude* transfers.

3.7 & 3.8 The calculation of data for Indicators 3.7 and 3.8, completion rates (%) for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities, is subject to continuous update as completion is calculated on a rolling basis i.e. the figures reported for completion of new entrants in 2018/19 may increase as this cohort completes their studies over time. However, the submitted baseline and benchmark data can be deemed a more relevant indicator of completion within an expected timeframe without repeats or students taking breaks in their studies, as the average number of years to completion for a Level 8 degree is 3.9 ([HEA Completion Report](#)).

3.9 The level of disaggregation of data disseminated publicly is subject to data protection considerations. Data disaggregated to a level which may allow individuals to be identified (even indirectly) is not disseminated publicly. See the HEA Statistics: [Privacy, Data Protection and Disclosure Control](#).

## Pillar: Engagement

### Performance Objective 4

To catalyse regional regeneration by engaging with industry, community groups, and other academic institutions and providers, to create a diverse and resilient talent pipeline and continue to develop innovative learning partnerships.

**Transversal areas of impact:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Enterprise; Region; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
4.1	Number of Springboard enrolments	UL Student Records HEA System Performance Dashboard, 2023/24	2022/23: 298	Maintain current share of SB enrolments in IUA institutions (13% of 2,124 in 2022/23)	15.4% of 1,980 nationally	300	250	360	360	360	Increase of 62 121% increase on baseline
4.2	Number of Micro credential enrolments	UL Student Records and micro-creds.ie MicroCred portal 2024/25	2022/23: 768 2023/24: 779	Continue to provide largest number of micro-credential places nationally	Not available	1,000	1,009	1,200	1,400	1,400	Increase of 632 enrolments on baseline
4.3	Number of Apprenticeship	UL Student Records	2022/23: 199 2023/24: 235	Not available	Not Available	220	318	240	260	280	Increase of c.80 enrolments

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	<b>enrolments</b>	2024/25									<b>p.a. 40% increase on baseline</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Proportion (%) of L8 graduates in employment or further study nine months after completion</b>	HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey, Class of 2023	Class of 2022: 96% including postgraduate studies (81% pure employment)	Remain slightly above IUA institutional average (95%, Class of 2022)	<b>93%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>97%</b>	96%	96%	96%	<b>Maintain baseline graduate employment rate of 96%</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Number of President's Volunteer Awards (PVAs)</b>	UL 2024/2025	2022/23: 530	Match or exceed University of Galway (600 ALIVE Awards, in 2022/23)	<b>492 ALIVE Awards in 2024/25</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>797</b>	610	640	680	<b>Increase of 150 on 2023 baseline</b>

#### Technical note on indicator data for PO 4:

4.1 The 2025/26 target set in Performance Agreement assumed National Springboard funding to continue at 2022/23 levels. The cumulative target notes that student capacity is limited by Springboard criteria on maximum number of programmes per HEI (max. 30 programmes).

4.5 UL Student Affairs data.

## Performance Objective 5

To foster staff engagement through a culture of openness, transparency, personal responsibility, respect, trust, collegiality, and ambition.

**Transversal areas of impact:** Institutional Leadership & Culture; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging.

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
5.1	Percentage of staff that have received Dignity and Respect training	UL 2025	Mandatory D&R training not currently in place.	Not available	N/A	70%	59.5%	75%	80%	85%	90%
5.2	Percentage of staff who indicate they know how to report on bullying/harassment	Staff Survey	2022: 75%	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	N/A	90%	15 p.p. increase on baseline
5.3	Percentage of respondents who agreed that “My department or unit promotes clear values and expectations	AS/EDI Survey	2022: 76.1%	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	81%	N/A	86%	c. 10 p.p. increase on baseline

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
	<b>about how people should behave towards each other.”</b>										
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Number of Academic Units with Athena Swan Ireland awards</b>	Athena Swan published awards	2023/24: 1 Institution Silver (IS) 0 Gold school/faculty (GSF) 2 Department Silver (DS) 1 Faculty Silver (FS) KBS 12 Department Bronze (DB) 1 Faculty Bronze (FB) AHSS 0 Professional Directorate Bronze (PDB)	Advance, HE published list of awards	<b>Advance, HE published list of awards</b>	<b>1 IS 3 DS 2 FS 11 DB 1 FB</b>	<b>1 IS 4DS 2FS 10DB 0FB</b>	1 IS 4 DS 2 FS 10 DB 1 FB	1 IS renewal 5 DS 3 FS 10 DB 2 PDB	1 IS renewal 1 GSF 6 DS 3 FS 10 DB 4 PDB	<b>1 Silver renewal institution Award by 2027 1 Gold school/faculty Award by 2027/28 6 Silver Department Awards 3 Faculty Silver Awards 10 Department Bronze Awards 4 Professional Directorate Bronze Awards</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source & timeframe	Baseline	Benchmark	Benchmark data	2024/25 target	2024/25 result	2025/26 target	2026/27 target	2027/28 target	Cumulative target
5.5	<b>Percentage of Full Professorships held by women</b>	HEA Higher Education Institutional Staff Profiles by Sex and Gender 2024	2023: 32% of Full Professorships held by women	30.8% across university sector 2022 ( <a href="#">HEA Statistics</a> )	<b>34.7%</b> across university sector <b>2024</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>33%</b>	38%	40%	40%	<b>8 p.p. increase on baseline</b>

**Technical note on indicator data for PO 5:**

5.1 Data Source: UL Core HR System.

5.4 2024/25 result – note that the Faculty of AHSS had previously held a bronze award (1FB in the 2022 baseline). It was notified of its silver award in June 2025. This is reflected in the 2 Faculty Silver result above. All academic units at UL now hold either bronze or silver awards.

5.5 33% represents 25 Female Professors, core funded whole time equivalents (WTE). Male Professor WTE is 50.7, i.e., 67%.

## Part B: Performance Evaluation and Strategic Reflection

Text should be added to the white boxes in each of the tables below. Word count should be recorded as indicated. Guidance on the information required in each table is provided in the shaded boxes. Pre-populated elements of Part B reflect the Performance Agreement, and these entries should not be amended.

### Section 1: Context

Provide an update on the context for the implementation of the institution’s Performance Agreement in academic year 2024/25. This should include information on the following, as relevant:

- Institutional strategy, including stage of development and/or implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Changes to the organisation’s structure and/or senior leadership.
- Changes to the profile of the institution, i.e. significant changes to the number of staff and/or students or to programme delivery.
- Improvement or development of data collection and evaluation systems and processes, e.g. action taken to address data challenges or gaps, or any new challenges or data gaps that have been identified since the development of the Performance Agreement or submission of the previous SER.
- Any modifications (requested or approved) to the Performance Agreement.

Word limit: 500

**Institutional Strategy Development** – UL has initiated its new strategy development process with a view to having a new Strategic Plan published in Q4 2026. A high-level key business process for the development of the new Strategy has been agreed by Executive Committee (EC) as follows:

## Strategic Planning – Key Business Processes

Green = Complete  
Yellow = Initiated/In progress



The overarching priorities for the new strategic plan are broadly agreed at EC and aligned to the traditional missions in higher education (HE) — 1. Research Intensity, 2. Academic Transformation, 3. Engagement + Impact. Key considerations emerging for the new planning round include:

- Financial Sustainability – state, demographics.
- Student Mix.
- Research Growth/Intensification.
- Efficiency – non-academic staffing, digitisation.
- Renewal Programme — nurture and improve governance, operating model, and institutional culture.

### Changes to Structure and Leadership

The composition and terms of reference of the UL Executive Committee (EC) have been revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Deloitte Section 64 Report.

The terms of reference now state that the EC operates as collective decision-making body, rather than an advisory board, as had previously been the practice. The President maintains statutory accountability as the chief officer, as per the Universities Act, 1997.

Significant changes to Institutional culture, governance and operating model are now also embedded in the Section 64 renewal programme and are being reported regularly to HEA.

### Changes to the profile of the institution

There have been no significant changes to the number of staff and/or students or to programme delivery in the reporting period.

In January 2025, the Academic Council approved the establishment of a project to scope, plan and execute a transformation of UL's Academic Operating Model (ATOM Project). This follows a decision by Executive Committee in November 2024 that a fundamental review and simplification of the UL Academic Operating Model was required.

The ATOM Full Project Scoping Document will be submitted to Academic Council in December 2025. Regular updates on this project are provided to the Executive Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and the Governing Authority.

**Improvements in Data collection** – The UL IT Strategy, [UL Enable](#) (2022-2027) aimed to facilitate a data-driven environment and in the reporting period, a central Directorate for Strategic Planning, reporting to the Office of the President has been established. This office has developed an institution-wide key performance indicators (KPI) dashboard with capabilities for institution-wide performance management, reporting, and business intelligence, enabling devolved performance management and reporting at more localised faculty and academic department levels. This will enable more targeted planning and performance management across the organisation under the new strategic planning round.

**Any modifications (requested or approved) to the Performance Agreement** – The current cessation and redesign of the national student survey will require either a removal or recalibration of indicators 1.1. and 1.2 as they will be no longer available in future reporting years. For this year we have provided two internal proxy indicator scores from UL's own survey that align with our original proposed measures. Reporting on indicators that draw on StudentSurvey.ie results will recommence in 2026. Where the relevant survey questions have changed, indicators will be updated accordingly.

[Word count: 498]

## Section 2: Evaluation of Performance

Provide an evaluation of the institution's performance in relation to this Performance Objective, with reference to the indicator data provided in Part A. This should include:

- Analysis of the indicator data for this Performance Objective, e.g.:
  - Trend analysis and benchmarking of performance with reference to baselines, benchmarks, and targets. Graphs or charts to illustrate the analysis provided should be labelled and cross-referenced in the commentary.
- Assessment of implementation, e.g.:
  - Effectiveness of the specific actions related to the Performance Objective as demonstrated by the analysis of the indicator data.
  - Internal or external factors that have supported or impeded the achievement of targets.
  - Any additional evidence of performance, e.g. qualitative evidence of outcomes.
- Strategic reflection, e.g.:
  - Any learning from the analysis of the institution's performance.
  - How learning is being applied to maintain and/or enhance implementation and outcomes in future.
  - How learning is being used to inform decision making, strategy development, policy, and/or strategic planning.
  - New or emerging opportunities, challenges, and risks related to the Performance Objective.
  - Priority(s) in relation to this Performance Objective for the year ahead, with reference to any new actions or initiatives to support implementation.

Word limit: 1,000

## Pillar: Teaching & Learning

### Performance Objective 1

To deliver an excellent student experience through the provision of flexible programmes that enhance students’ employability.

#### Transversal areas of impact:

Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Climate & Sustainable Development.

### Analysis of indicator data

1.1 & 1.2 UL has demonstrated strong performance across all indicators under this pillar. Internal survey data shows a 3% increase in the Effective Teaching score (from 64% to 67%) and a 7% increase in Quality of Interactions (from 63% to 70%), reflecting improved student satisfaction.

		2023/24 (April 2024)	2024/25(April 2025)
<b>Indicator 1.1</b>	Effective Teaching	64%	67%
<b>Indicator 1.2</b>	Quality of Interactions	63%	70%

Table 1: Effective Teaching and Quality of Interaction values 2023/24 & 2024/25 (UL Internal Student Satisfaction Survey).

1.3 Progression rate for new entrants has exceeded the 2024–25 target of 90%, reaching 92%. This early achievement suggests effective retention strategies, although UL remains 6th among the seven universities for the third consecutive year<sup>1</sup>.

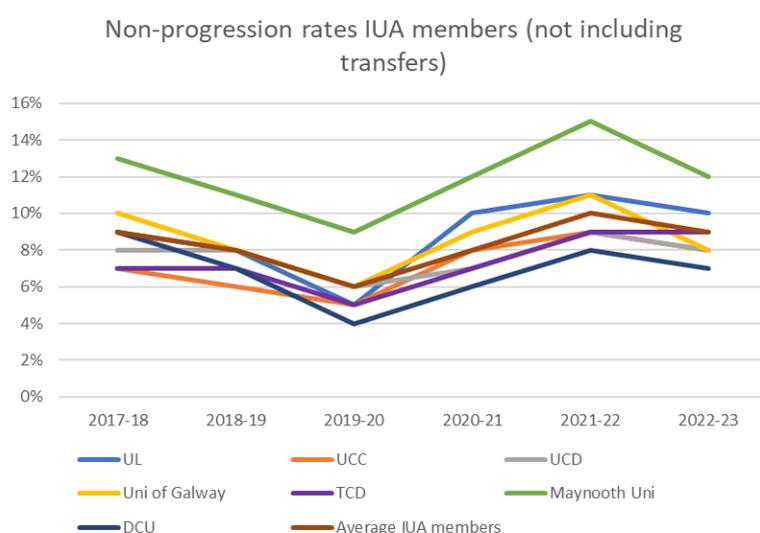


Figure 1: Non-progression rates IUA members (not including transfers) 2017-2023.

<sup>1</sup> Non-progression rates 2022/23 DCU 5%, UCD 5%, TCD 6%, UCC 6%, UoG 6%, UL 8%, MU 9% (HEA.ie)

1.4 The principle of employability is a cornerstone of UL’s educational philosophy and a defining feature of the UL student experience. Indicator data confirms UL is maintaining its rates of undergraduates who undertook internship or work placement at 100% for school placement and 95% for Cooperative Education.

1.5 Postgraduate programmes with embedded work-integrated learning rose to 70%, surpassing the 65% target and well above the sector average of 36%.

% PG Taught Students with Work Integrated Learning	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	55%	53%	57%	68%	70%

Table 2: Proportion (%) of students registered on postgraduate programmes with work-integrated learning embedded in the curriculum 2020-2025.

1.6 Flexible learning enrolments increased to 3,032 learners (16%), matching the sector average.

1.7 Level 9/10 enrolments reached 4,931 (25.9%), slightly below the 27% target but showing strong growth, particularly among international and part-time learners.

1.8 The [UL Graduate Attributes](#) are now embedded in 52% of programmes, up from 6.5% in 2022–23. This progress is tracked through programme approval, annual reviews, and periodic quality reviews.

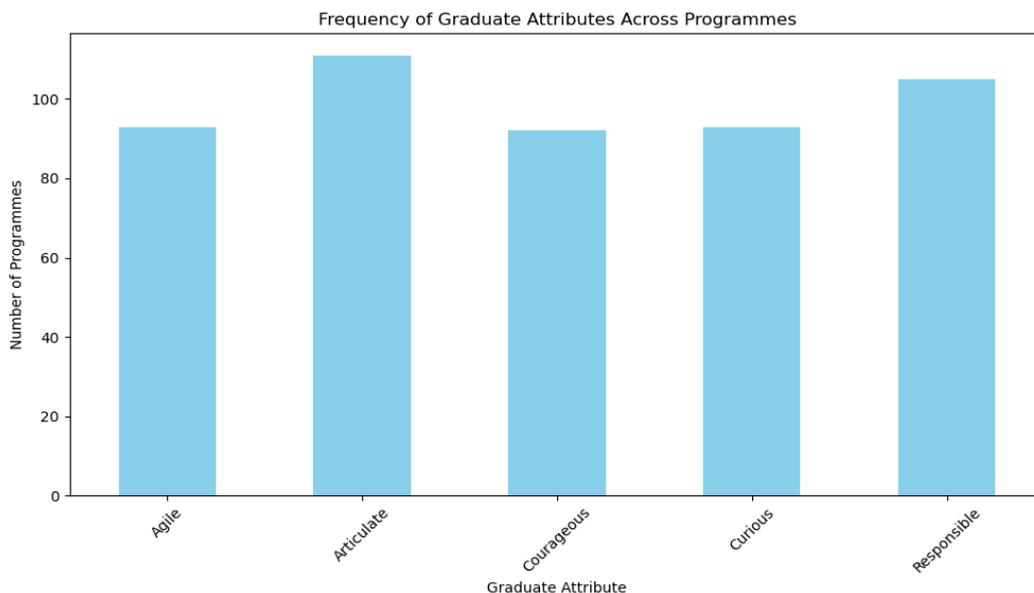


Figure 2: Frequency of Graduate Attributes Reported Across Programmes in Annual Programme Review Reports.

### Assessment of implementation

1.1 & 1.2 UL has reviewed and revised its suite of feedback mechanisms at programme and module level. The TRUST-EM feedback mechanism at module level has achieved a 28% response rate and 83% positivity indicator. Evaluation of teaching using TRUST-SET commences in 2025–26. These tools enable real-time feedback and support academic staff in responding to student concerns.

1.3 Improvements in student retention and progression can be attributed to several factors and initiatives such as the Student Engagement and Support Officers (SESOs), the Student Support Hub, and the Committee on Access and Retention (CARE) in AHSS. The UL Student Retention Working Group aligns with national HEA forums, enhancing institutional strategy in this area.

1.4 UL continues to maintain its rates of % of undergraduates who undertook internship or work placement at 100% for school placement and 95% for Cooperative Education.

1.5 Work-integrated learning (WIL) is embedded in postgraduate programmes in collaboration with our industry, community, and government partners. This is operationalised through our Integrated Curriculum Development Framework, annual programme reviews, and updated workflows.

1.6 UL's commitment to lifelong learning extends to building curriculum and enrolments in partnership with EU consortia in the service of small-medium-enterprises, professional and disadvantaged learners via Digital Europe projects. UL will build on its portfolio of 'skills for workforce competitiveness' funding through continued EU Horizon scanning.

Dual education models continue to grow momentum with apprenticeship offerings expanding in the period. UL has stepped up its 'Micro-credential to Masters' learning pathways strategy popular with 'career-conscious' professionals. Learnings from extensive 2024 market research suggested the function, content and readability of UL web programme pages required updating, the significant roll-out of improvements is underway and due to conclude in 2025.

New flexible offerings in data analytics, energy economics, environmental impact assessment, and process safety have been launched in partnership with enterprise offering high economic benefit and industry impact.

Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 programmes have been established in the region and continue to attract work-based learners to higher education.

1.7 As a research-intensive university, UL is committed to strong growth in our postgraduate student population, driven by increased international enrolments and targeted domestic programmes. UL aims for steady increase in postgraduate student registrations to bring the number of Level 9/10 enrolments to 30% of all registrations by 2028.

1.8 The Graduate Attributes have now been integrated into 52% of current programmes. The

impact of the introduction of these attributes will not be measurable until 2027–28 as students graduate from the revised programmes.

### **Strategic Reflection**

UL has made meaningful progress across this Performance Objective with several indicators showing strong performance and areas of innovation.

UL's enhanced feedback systems are fostering a culture of responsiveness and continuous improvement. The high positivity indicator signals that effective teaching and quality of interactions are a strength of the University, and early feedback from Heads of School suggests that data is being effectively used for professional development and workload planning. As implementation expands in 2025–26, increasing response rates will be a priority to further strengthen the validity of insights and support evidence-based decision-making.

The revised [First Seven Weeks programme](#) and the launch of the new Student Engagement Forum represent targeted interventions to improve student experience and retention. These initiatives are expected to yield measurable improvements in student satisfaction and progression and will be closely monitored in the coming academic cycle.

Employability-focused learning remains central to UL's strategy. While external labour market conditions may affect placement availability, UL is proactively diversifying experiential learning opportunities to mitigate these risks. Continued innovation in this space is essential to maintain alignment with graduate outcomes and employer expectations.

Flexible learning continues to thrive, reflecting UL's commitment to accessibility and lifelong learning. However, the discontinuation of Springboard funding for spring starts poses a challenge. In response, UL will optimise autumn offerings and seek surplus HEA funding to sustain momentum and ensure continuity for learners.

The target projected increase in the proportion (%) and number of students enrolled at Level 9/10 is supported by three strategic pillars:

- **Traditional Masters Programmes:** Registrations have increased by >8.8%, with strong performance in programmes such as MSc Energy Science and Engineering, MSc Business Analytics, and MSc Psychological Science.
- **Work-Based/Flexible Learning:** Professional Diplomas in areas like School Leadership, Climate Adaptation & Sustainability, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Computer Vision have seen a >21.4% increase, reflecting demand for upskilling and career development.
- **Research/PhD Students:** A >3.4% growth in research/PhD enrolments, driven by increased funding, aligns with UL's research-intensive profile and strategic goals.

These trends underscore UL's responsiveness to market needs and its capacity to deliver high-impact postgraduate education.

The Academic Transformation Operating Model (ATOM) project full scoping phase is due for completion in December 2025. This initiative aims to streamline academic processes across curriculum development, registration, grading, governance, and reporting. ATOM has the potential to reshape future KPIs and will be a key enabler of institutional agility and efficiency.

[Word count: 1,115]

## Pillar: Research & Innovation

### Performance Objective 2

To enhance research performance, support our research community, and translate our research into societal impact through excellent fundamental, translational, and multidisciplinary research that pushes boundaries and addresses global challenges.

#### Transversal areas of impact:

Society; Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; International.

### Analysis of Indicator Data

2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 The results for indicators relating to Postgraduate Researchers (2.1, 2.2) are marginally behind the targets set at 202 new enrolments and 158 graduates, respectively. While a national agreement on a definition regarding PhD completion rate % (2.3) is outstanding, the HEA has suggested that the result be recorded as N/A for this year, and that a baseline and targets be established in a revised PA, with changes taking effect from 2025–26. UL's completion time for full-time PhD students (excluding Professional Doctorates) was 4.9 years in 2024. Informal discussions with other HEIs suggest this figure is in line with our peers. The aim will be to maintain a completion time of within 5 years. The national postgraduate student survey (2.4) data have been released (March 2025) and UL students' rating of their opportunities to engage with other research students is now at 61.1%, slightly behind the national average of 62.7%.

2.5, 2.6 UL has exceeded its target for EU research funding in 2023–24 in reaching €10.2 million. This total is comprised of 18 awards, 11 in Horizon Pillar I (Excellence) and 7 in Pillar II (Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness). The Pillar I awards include one European Research Council Consolidator award, three Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Networks, five MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships together with one MSCA COFUND and one award in the Research Infrastructure programme. The seven awards in Pillar II are across four clusters CL1 Health (1), CL4 Digital, Industry and Space (3), CL5 Climate Energy and Mobility (1), CL6 Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment (1) and Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (1). Of these seven awards, UL are coordinating two of these proposals. We have not achieved our research income target (2.5) as planned growth is impacted by the changing landscape for Irish national funding. This issue is flagged on our risk register and continues to be monitored closely.

2.7 Four research impact case studies have been completed in the reporting period and published on our research impact archive. They cover the areas of music therapy, ageing research, physical activity, and law. Our Research Impact programme now celebrates 10 years and was the subject of a conference presentation at the International Network of Research Managers (INORMS) in May

2025. Supporting the Research Impact agenda, UL's Research Week provides an important platform to showcase the impact of UL's research. In 2024, Research Week programme involved 29 events across all disciplines with over 1,200 registrations with attendees from other Irish HEIs and international visitors.

In the period, UL published its [action plan](#) as part of its commitments to advancing research assessment. UL has made many strides in the advancement of research assessment, including incorporating Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) principles into its President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards and our Research Impact Programmes; delivery of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Disciplinary Norms Guidance; the delivery of the Workload Allocation Model; and further expanding the opportunities for visibility of our research community and their research output via UL's [Pure Research Information System portal](#).

2.9 The licenses and agreements (LOA) metric measures levels of interest from companies in new innovations arising from UL research activities. The number of LOA agreements signed in the reported year exceeded target, demonstrating strong interest for innovations arising from UL research. The innovations range across software quality, carbon capture technologies, novel materials, therapeutics, and medical devices. The data is sourced from reports submitted to and validated by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

Research output performance (citation impact 2.8, open access 2.10, international co-authorship 2.11): Across our research output related indicators we have seen increases which can be attributed to UL academics ongoing work to build international collaborations. In addition, authors are establishing strong publication strategies with open access at the forefront of their decision-making. UL Library Research Services support the community in several ways, one example is a popular session during Research Week focused on Academic publishing, open access and the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to new IReL open access agreements and ongoing communications to increase awareness of open access.

#### Assessment of implementation

#### **Priorities for the Year Ahead**

- Continued implementation of our research strategy Wisdom for Action 2022-2027. Under our research strategy [Wisdom for Action](#) 2022-2027, UL has supported key areas of emerging strength through an internal call for new internal research centres in cutting-edge areas of research, such as energy, implementation science, ageing, artificial intelligence, and risk, to position groups to bid for larger awards. A call was initiated to support the establishment of (or consolidation of existing internal research centres into) new internal research centres. Six new internal research centres were announced: [Ageing Research Centre](#), [Centre for Emerging Risk Studies](#), [AMPEire Centre for Battery and Energy Materials Research](#), [Centre for Implementation Research at UL CircUL](#), [Data Driven Computer Engineering D<sup>2</sup>ICE](#), Centre for Sustainable Digital (Re)Manufacturing.
- Support our Postgraduate Research Community: UL aims to sustain PGR enrolments despite

national challenges. This includes bringing internally funded stipends in line with government recommendations. Where this is not feasible, alternative bursaries are offered. In 2025, UL launched the PhD Supervision Lifecycle Programme, with over 140 staff expressing interest. Two cohorts (80 staff total) completed workshops in January, April, and June, earning digital badges. This initiative enhances supervisory capacity and doctoral outcomes. Additionally, UL is collaborating with Indonesia's Ministry of Education to enrol PhD candidates funded through national scholarships covering tuition and living costs.

- Devolved KPI planning: Through the leadership of UL's Director of Strategic Planning, the Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation are supporting the institution-wide initiative to devolve key performance indicators and targets across the organisation. This complements our priority to continue to implement our research strategy with a particular focus on research talent initiatives.

### **Strategic Reflection**

UL continues to deliver on its research strategy Wisdom for Action 2022-2027 which is aligned to our HEA Performance Agreement and drives our ambitions as a research-intensive institution. December 2024 marked the mid-way point of our strategy and a significant number of actions have progressed to support UL's research ecosystem; supporting early career researchers with the Doctoral College, enhancing supports in pre and post award, digital transformation in research systems, to recognition and reward of researchers through expansion of President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards and investment in our internal centres ecosystem. This will support the achievements of the targets as set out in the Performance Agreement. Building research intensity will be a key priority of the new Strategic Plan currently under development.

[Word count: 1,087]

## Pillar: Access & Participation

### Performance Objective 3

To increase enrolment, progression and completion rates for students from under-represented communities and priority target groups identified in the National Access Plan and to create a more inclusive and accessible learning and university experience for all students.

#### Transversal areas of impact:

Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Society; Region; Digital Transformation; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

### Analysis of Indicator Data

3.1–3.4 Enrolments of students with disabilities (SWD) at UL have risen steadily, particularly through the DARE route, and have exceeded earlier projections. This mirrors national enrolment trends (Indicators 3.1 and 3.2) and has directly boosted UL’s overall access figures (Indicator 3.3). The proportion of new entrants from DEIS schools is 10% for 2024/25 (Indicator 3.4), which is on target.

3.5 & 3.6 non-progression rates remain a challenge. For new entrants from socio-economically disadvantaged areas in 2022–23, UL recorded a 14% non-progression rate. While this is better than the sector average (16%), it lags the Irish University Alliance (IUA) average. Performance variations across IUA members partly reflect different socio-economic profiles of student populations<sup>2</sup>. Persistent factors such as the cost-of-living crisis, accommodation shortages, and the need for long daily commutes are disproportionately affecting disadvantaged students. These issues, which have intensified post-COVID, contribute to lower retention and present systemic barriers for higher education institutions nationwide<sup>3</sup>.

Non-progression for SWD is slightly behind target but still better than sector averages. SWD often have a higher socio-economic profile compared to other under-represented groups, which may explain their relatively lower non-progression rates. However, the figures are based on Equal

<sup>2</sup> Amongst the IUA members, data from DIS groups by Institute, average 2021/22 to 2023/24, all students, all courses show UL with the joint second (with DCU) highest proportion (8%) of students with DIS Disadvantaged profile, and with the second highest proportion (37%, after MU at 39%) of students with a combined DIS Disadvantaged and Marginally Below Average profile. Amongst the IUA members, data from DIS groups by Institute for 2023/24 new entrants show UL as having the second highest proportion (8%) of students with DIS Disadvantaged profile, and with the second highest proportion (38%, after MU is at 39%) of students with a combined DIS Disadvantaged and Marginally Below Average profile.

<sup>3</sup> [The impact of COVID-19 on higher education: a review of emerging evidence, European Commission, 2021](#). [Education Yearbook Ireland. \(2023\). Who commutes to college, and why it matters: Socioeconomic disparities in student travel and engagement. The State we are in inequality in Ireland 2024. Generation Emigration: A call for our government to end the National Accommodation Crisis \(2025\)](#)

Access Survey responses, not the full population of students registered with Disability Services. As a result, they represent a sample rather than the complete picture.

3.7 & 3.8 Completion rates for SWD exceeded expectations. The completion rate for 2019–20 SWD entrants stands at 80%, compared with 76% for the 2018–19 cohort. For disadvantaged students, completion rates for the same period are slightly behind target but still above the sector average. These students often take longer to finish their studies, likely due to the same socio-economic pressures influencing non-progression rates.

3.9 <sup>4</sup>Traveller and Roma student participation has increased substantially in 2024, supported by the appointment of a Mincéir/Traveller Programme Coordinator under PATH 3 and the active application of UL's *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) policy. This year, UL identified ■ Traveller and Roma students, up significantly from previous years. ■ current students were identified, and ■ new entrants (■ students entered UL using RPL as an entry route, ■ students through the Higher Education Access Route, ■ students on a part-time basis and ■ student secured a place on UL's pre-entry Access to University Course 2025).

### Assessment of Implementation

3.1–3.4 UL continues to invest in widening participation through targeted pathways, school, and community outreach, and expanded QQI progression routes — from 14 in 2019 to 49 for 2025 entry. These initiatives have been strongly supported by PATH programmes. Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) transfer rates have improved, at 10% new entrants, which is 2% ahead of the IUA average and 1% behind the sectoral average, which remains our target.

Nationally, SWD registrations have risen 364% in the last 15 years (AHEAD, 2025). Many students, however, do not disclose their disability or delay registration for support. While DARE and FSD funding have significantly improved undergraduate access, postgraduate participation among SWD remains an area for growth.

UL has enhanced Disability Support Services by adding staff, introducing embedded Occupational Therapy support, and mainstreaming assistive technology costs. Sustained resourcing, alongside embedding universal design in teaching, learning, and assessment, is essential to meeting institutional and legislative commitments.

3.5–3.8 Equitable post-entry support — academic, social, and financial — is crucial for improving retention and completion rates among underrepresented groups. Demand for financial support is growing. Student Assistance Fund awards have increased by 12% and Financial Aid Fund awards by 45% in the past two years. These trends underline the continuing financial pressures faced by students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

<sup>4</sup> 3.9 The level of disaggregation of data disseminated publicly is subject to data protection considerations. Data disaggregated to a level which may allow individuals to be identified (even indirectly) is not disseminated publicly. See the HEA Statistics: [Privacy, Data Protection and Disclosure Control](#).

3.9 The RPL policy has proven transformative for historically marginalized communities. The Traveller Coordinator's proactive, trust-based approach has helped increase participation and retention, fostering awareness and enabling smoother entry into higher education. This combination of consistent academic support and tailored pathways has significantly contributed to the rise in Traveller enrolments in 2024–25.

### **Strategic Reflection**

In the short term, UL plans to enhance supports for students entering through QQI pathways, aiming to improve retention for those facing multiple barriers. Outreach will be strengthened to promote these routes and ensure that both disadvantaged and non-traditional entrants receive adequate post-entry support.

Long-term strategies include embedding universal design principles in teaching and learning, establishing a Universal Design and Inclusive Practice (UDIP) committee aligned with the ALTITUDE Charter, and mainstreaming PATH 1 and PATH 3 funding into the university's core resources.

Risks to progress include continued economic pressures and the cost-of-living crisis, which may hinder disadvantaged students' ability to enter or remain in higher education. The positive outcomes from the Traveller Coordinator role demonstrate the importance of direct community engagement and sustained support structures.

Aligning resources with access targets will be critical, as will embedding access considerations in all levels of decision-making. The forthcoming national Access Data Plan will provide stronger evidence for targeted interventions, ensuring UL can design services that address local needs.

While the Traveller and Roma numbers seen in 2024–25 are encouraging, they may not be sustained year-on-year. Nonetheless, increased participation of adult learners from Traveller communities is expected to create a role-modelling effect, encouraging future generations to pursue higher education.

### **Priorities for the Year Ahead**

1. Deepen engagement with Traveller and Roma communities, building on momentum from recent outreach and policy changes.
2. Fully embed PATH 1 and PATH 3 funding into UL's resource base to ensure sustainability and growth of initiatives.
3. Implement structural reforms within the Access and Widening Participation (AWP) framework to improve support for QQI entrants.
4. Advocate for equitable, transparent funding to AWP services so they can meet both institutional and national access goals.
5. Embed Universal Design Inclusive Practice initiatives across the university to deliver inclusive teaching, learning, and service provision.

[Word count: 1057]

## Pillar: Engagement

### Performance Objective 4

To catalyse regional regeneration by engaging with industry, community groups, and other academic institutions and providers, to create a diverse and resilient talent pipeline and continue to develop innovative learning partnerships.

#### Transversal areas of impact:

Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Enterprise; Region; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

### Analysis of indicator data

4.1 UL was contracted to provide 220 Springboard places annually (total 660) from 2022–2025. Due to high demand and HEA surplus, an additional 199 places were awarded. In 2024–25, UL offered 10 programmes across autumn and spring, exceeding contracted places by 110%. However, due to the discontinuation of spring funding, UL did not meet the 2024–25 target of 250 registrations.

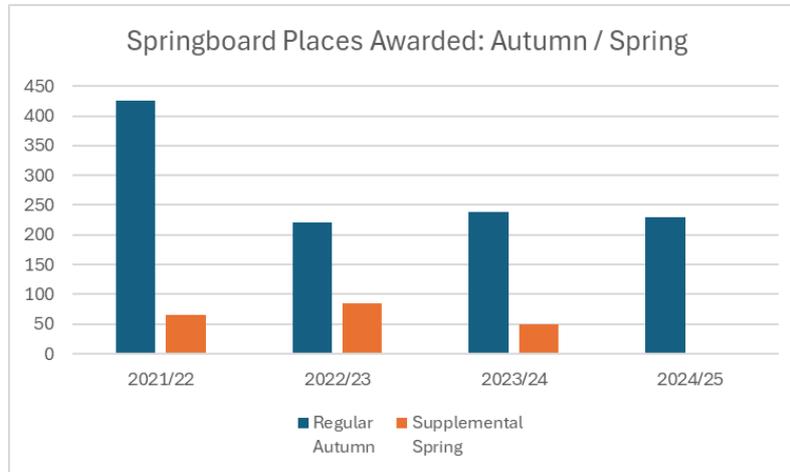


Figure 3 Springboard places awarded autumn/spring 2022-2025.

Programme Code – Programme	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
CTMASBUPA - Certificate in Management for Service Businesses	23	20	22
CTSCMPUPA/B - Certificate in Supply Chain Management (Production and Inventory Management)	67	80	45
GCACPRTPA/B - Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice	22	27	21

GCPSWMTPA - Postgraduate Certificate in Posture, Seating and Wheelchair Mobility across the Life Course	14	14	14
HCHRDWUPA - Higher Certificate in Human Resource Management and the Digital Workplace	21	24	21
PD AIRWTPB - Professional Diploma in Airworthiness	24	21	17
PDHESATPB - Professional Diploma in Health and Safety	35	30	26
PDQMLSTPA/B - Professional Diploma in Quality Management - Lean Systems	32	37	36
PDRABTPB - Professional Diploma in Regulatory Affairs in (Bio)Pharmaceuticals	33	33	28
PDSCMATPB - Professional Diploma in Supply Chain Management	20	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>250</b>

Table 3 Springboard enrolments per programme 2022-2025.

4.2 Micro-credential enrolments rose to 1,009 in 2024–25, up from 779. These include individual learners (B2C), enterprise groups (B2B), and tendered contracts. Public sector cohorts were excluded due to variability.

4.3 Apprenticeship enrolments increased from 235 to 318 across seven executive programmes, surpassing targets.

COURSECD	PROGNM	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
⊖ BSCYSEUPA	Bachelor of Science in Cyber Security	1	2	
⊖ BSSCMGUPA	Bachelor of Science in Supply Chain Management	28	30	50
⊖ DPSCMOUPA	Diploma in Supply Chain Management Operations	21	33	52
⊖ MEEQSETPA	MASTER OF ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT SYSTEMS ENGINEERING		3	
	MASTER OF ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT SYSTEMS ENGINEERING (APPRENTICESHIP)			8
	Masters of Engineering Equipment Systems Engineering	5	1	
⊖ MSSTQMTPA	Master of Science in Strategic Quality Management - Lean Sigma Systems	35	39	56
⊖ MSSTQMTPB	Master of Science in Strategic Quality Management - Lean Sigma Systems	48	55	66
⊖ MSSUCOTPA	Master of Science in Supply Chain Operations	10		
⊖ MSSUCOTPB	Master of Science in Supply Chain Operations	37	46	56
⊖ PHENGGTPC	Professional Doctorate in Engineering	13	26	30
⊖ PHENGITPC	Doctorate in Engineering	1		
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>199</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>318</b>

Table 4 – Apprenticeship Enrolments per programme 2022-2025.

4.4 UL’s graduate employment/further study rate remains above the national average.

4.5 A more proactive and personalised approach to student volunteering led to a higher-than-expected increase in President’s Volunteer Awards (PVAs) in 2024-25.

### Assessment of implementation

4.1 The discontinuation of HEA Springboard funding for spring starts will negatively impact on future part-time, flexible enrolments, given the growing industry preference for January

commencement. In 2025, UL secured funding for 218 places annually for the next cycle, but course caps and funding constraints limit growth. A marketing campaign is underway to shift spring enrolments to autumn.

4.2 Growth in micro-credentials is driven by demand and funding (Skillnet, MicroCreds Learner Fee Subsidy, Springboard). UL leads nationally in course volume and learner choice. While targets were met, some disciplines rely heavily on business customers.

4.3 Apprenticeship development is active. A NFQ 9 apprenticeship of Sustainability Manager was approved in April, led by 20Fifty Partners, recognised for climate readiness initiatives.

4.4 UL has a particular strength in employability. To support students in the development of their future graduate capital, it deploys one of the largest undergraduate placement programmes in Europe, including the largest global placement programme nationally. An award-winning portal was piloted this year to support students' employability development before, during and post-placement. A comprehensive suite of careers fairs attracted 400+ graduate employers and 3000+ final year students across all faculties. Additional supports include career management strategies, career planning advice, and sector-specific events co-delivered with graduate employer partners.

4.5 Engagement was enhanced by the creation in 2023 of a national HE Student Volunteer Coordinator position, currently hosted by UL, to support national and international visibility of the value of student volunteering, as a civic engagement and an experiential learning activity. A collaborative and robust national infrastructure now exists (digital system, multi-stakeholder governance, student partnership, and civic society organisation / external funder partnerships) to sustain and develop this work.

### **Strategic Reflection**

University of Limerick (UL) finds itself at a pivotal juncture, navigating a landscape shaped by evolving funding mechanisms, shifting learner needs, and a dynamic labour market. As UL awaits guidance from the HEA on potential alternatives to reduced Springboard and non-continuation of HCI funding, we face a broader challenge: the need to remain agile in the face of structural constraints, with the possibility of revisiting performance indicators to ensure they remain realistic and aligned with external realities.

Amidst this uncertainty, UL demonstrates a proactive stance by leveraging enterprise partnerships and national initiatives such as the MicroCreds Learner Fee Subsidy. The narrative highlights the success of engaging professional bodies to fill courses — a strategy that has proven effective and is recommended for replication, given their role as catalysts for lifelong learning and learner progression onto our premium offerings. This aligns not only with UL's own strategic vision throughout our performance agreement, but also with broader European Union goals around continuous education and upskilling. A key strategic priority in the next planning round will be to continue to grow our traditional high-value chain postgraduate research and full-time

postgraduate intake figures in the coming years, in line with our IUA peers, whilst continuing to develop our flexible offerings in targeted areas.

The University’s efforts to broaden the appeal of apprenticeships beyond traditional school leavers reflect a commitment to inclusivity and workforce development. Enhanced marketing activities have yielded tangible results, as seen in increased registrations for 2024–25. The University is fully engaged with the Irish Universities Association in its representative role within the National Apprenticeship Alliance to ensure an attractive and sustained Apprenticeship programme pipeline. Of particular significance is the ‘Generation Apprenticeship’ audit currently underway. We recommend full implementation and resourcing of the Single Integrated Apprenticeship System and specifically highlight that consortia-led apprenticeships do not receive the same level of funding as traditional craft apprenticeships, limiting their ability to scale, innovate, and deliver high-quality programmes.

Against the backdrop of a tightening labour market in key sectors, UL’s co-operative education strategy is to deepen engagement with a diverse array of employer partners – from startups to global multinationals – across multiple sectors to maintain our leading national position in work-integrated learning across our undergraduate programmes. This approach is both ambitious and necessary, recognising that graduate employability depends on strong, multifaceted industry connections. The breadth of sectors mentioned (from Med-Tech to law, ICT to food) underscores UL’s commitment to serving the needs of a complex and rapidly changing economy as our Co-operative Education programme enters its sixth decade.

Finally, the narrative turns to student volunteering, identifying it as a priority area for growth and national collaboration. The planned rollout of a redeveloped digital system and efforts to expand membership in Student Volunteer Ireland reflect a dual focus on institutional capacity-building and sector-wide impact.

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**Performance Objective 5**

**To foster staff engagement through a culture of openness, transparency, personal responsibility, respect, trust, collegiality, and ambition.**

**Transversal areas of impact:**

**Institutional Leadership & Culture; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging.**

**Analysis of the indicator data**

5.1 A new Dignity and Respect eLearning module was launched on 9th June 2025. This will be further supplemented by in-person training for both managers and staff. These sessions

commenced at the end of June 2025. This training is mandatory for all staff. The target completion rate for this is 70% for 2024–25. We require all staff to have completed this training in full by end December 2025. As of 11 September 2025, the completion rate for the e-learning module was 59.5%.

5.2 Percentage of staff who indicate they know how to report on bullying/ harassment.

This metric draws on data from a 2022 staff survey. Future staff surveys will repeat this question. The expected timeline for rollout of a staff survey is end of 2026. Completion of the Dignity and Respect module also covers the procedures for reporting.

5.3 Percentage of respondents who agreed that “My department or unit promotes clear values and expectations about how people should behave towards each other.”

The following recommendation in the Renewal Plan relates this KPI: *Action 54. Roll out of behavioural and behavioural modelling programmes should be led from the top down across the University to ensure there is real change in behaviours addressing the areas of trust, communication, and leadership.*

Mazars are currently working with the University to identify the target culture, values, and behaviours. This work will include a roadmap of how values are embedded in the University, and this will form the basis of phase two of this project.

An update to Executive Committee was provided in June 2025 and the final report from Mazars is due in September.

The proposed staff survey for end of 2026 (as outlined in section 5.2 above) will provide updated data for this Indicator.

5.4 Number of Academic Units with Athena Swan Ireland awards.

UL continues to engage with the Athena Swan framework. We have exceeded the targets for 2024–25, and we are on track for 2025–26.

5.5 Percentage of Full Professorships held by women.

UL successfully recruited our third SALI Professor as part of cycle 2 of the HEA’s Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) in April 2025. Despite this, we have not met the target of 35% for 2024/25 for the reasons set out in the assessment of implementation below.

### **Assessment of implementation**

5.1 Following approval of the new *Dignity and Respect Policy* in January 2025, a “RespectFUL” campaign was launched across the University.: [RespectFUL Campus - Safe Spaces | Strong Voices | University of Limerick](#). This included communications, launch of the strategy, and a

comprehensive awareness campaign across campus.



A very successful one-day RespectfUL symposium was attended by over 150 people in spring 2025. Awareness of staff training was further highlighted through announcements at Faculty/Division meetings and Management Council.

As indicated above, the Dignity and Respect training is currently gaining traction, and it is expected that the target for completion will be met by the end of the year.

5.2 and 5.3. These Indicators will be measured later through the proposed 2026 staff survey. Work has been actively carried out to date as outlined above, through Dignity and Respect training and through phase one of the work relating to culture with Mazars. This will continue with an action plan emerging from the Mazars report.

5.4 UL is engaging fully with the Athena Swan framework and continuing to progress through the Athena Swan framework levels. The number of silver awards increasing year on year, demonstrates evidence of impact of the equality work taking place.

5.5 The target of 35% for 2024–25 and 40% by 2027–28 is challenging despite increases in female by Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) and Head Count (HC) since 2022. Female Professor headcount increased by 9% to 25 Full Professors in 2024, up from 23 in 2022. This is compared to a 6% increase in Male Professors headcount (n=52 to 55) over the same period. WTE increased 14% for female professors from 2022 to 2024 but by only 4% when comparing 2023 to 2024 indicating the growth rate in female professorship is inconsistent.

Recruitment competitions at (full) Professor level was also lower in 2024 (n=4) than 2023 (n=9).

### **Strategic Reflection**

University of Limerick (UL) is in the midst of a significant cultural and structural transformation, through its (Section 64) Renewal Programme. This detailed programme of work will continue to be reported separately to the HEA at regular intervals. This comprehensive programme was approved by HEA in Feb 2025.

The successful rollout of actions related to Dignity and Respect is portrayed as a collective responsibility, with managers at every level positioned as key agents of change. This is not just a top-down directive; rather, it is a coordinated effort, communicated through multiple leadership channels — Town Halls, Management Council, Executive Committee, and ongoing direct

engagement with managers and staff at all levels. The narrative here is one of shared ownership: managers are not only expected to ensure training completion but also to foster a culture of positive engagement and accountability.

Our staff are our greatest investment. We wish to optimise human talent, digitalisation, AI tools, and technological resources to enable service delivery, efficiency, and strengthen capacity across the University. The implementation of a Learning Management System (LMS) for staff training and development, scheduled to be operational in early 2026 represents a strategic investment in infrastructure, designed to make employee training more systematic and scalable. Currently, the resource-intensive nature of training is a bottleneck; the LMS promises to streamline this process, supporting the broader goals of cultural and governance development at UL. In particular, it will facilitate the efficient roll-out of large-scale, institution-wide, mandatory training and development as well as bespoke training for academic and professional services.

Parallel to these operational changes, the university's work on Values and Behaviours is reaching a critical phase. The current stage is nearing completion, and attention is shifting to the practical challenge of embedding these values into everyday practice. This signals a move from planning and consultation to action and lived experience—a crucial step in making institutional values tangible and enduring. Furthermore, this critical work will shape the articulation of a revised UL Mission, Vision and Values that will foreground the development of the new Strategic Plan.

The Athena Swan framework is highlighted as a cornerstone of UL's equality agenda. It provides a structured approach to assessing and addressing equality challenges, while also supporting the university's public sector duty. The narrative here is one of ongoing commitments: UL is not only responding to external frameworks but is actively working to create an inclusive environment and advance equality in higher education and research.

The recruitment of female Full Professors remains a persistent difficulty, with multiple open competitions and sustained effort required to make appointments. In response, UL is strengthening its career pipeline, leadership training, promoting internal advancement, and closely monitoring gender representation at senior levels. The Silver Athena Swan Action Plan is particularly noteworthy, aiming to establish a mentoring and support network for women at the highest academic ranks, encouraging applications for personal chairs and supporting career progression.

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## Section 3: System Learning and Policy Development

Comment on any learning or insights arising from the institution's self-evaluation of performance in relation to the Performance Agreement that may contribute to system learning and/or national policy development and implementation.

Word limit: 300

The University of Limerick's 2025 Self-Evaluation Report offers valuable insights with implications for both institutional strategy and national policy. A key learning that we have identified through our financial forecasting and modelling is the need to recalibrate sectoral priorities in response to projected demographic shifts. UL anticipates a tapering of undergraduate intake from 2030–2040, prompting the need for a strategic pivot toward postgraduate growth, intensified research activity, and internationalisation. This shift highlights the importance of a diversified student mix for institutional and sectoral sustainability.

UL's emphasis on research intensification aligns with broader national ambitions to position Ireland as a global knowledge economy. However, the report identifies a critical gap in ringfenced funding for research infrastructure and talent development, particularly within research-intensive universities. This calls for a coordinated national approach to sustaining research excellence, including enhanced investment through agencies such as Research Ireland and Horizon Europe. The re-introduction of a PRTL-type scheme to support research intensification would be very welcome.

The institution's experience also points to the need for a sustainable and transparent funding model for higher education. Financial pressures — exacerbated by inflation, cost-of-living challenges, and evolving student needs require a significant increase in current funding levels to ensure long-term viability.

Our reflections on international student recruitment suggest the value of a national strategy to target key markets in a balanced and coordinated manner. Such an approach would mitigate demographic decline and support Ireland's global competitiveness.

In sum, UL's self-evaluation contributes to system-level learning and offers evidence-based recommendations that will inform institutional strategic planning, support requests for funding reform, and will contribute to policy development across the higher education sector.

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## Section 4: Signature of the Head of the Institution

The SER should be signed by the Head of the Institution prior to submission.

On behalf of <b>University of Limerick</b> , I declare that the particulars supplied in this report are true and correct.	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Print Name:</b>	Professor Shane Kilcommins, Acting President
<b>Date:</b>	25 September 2025