



## STRATEGIC PLAN BROADENING HORIZONS

building on our achievements  
accentuating our distinctiveness  
raising our international profile



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK  
OILLSCOIL LUIMNIGH



A photograph of two women in a bright, outdoor setting. The woman on the right is wearing a black graduation cap and gown with a red and yellow stole. She is smiling and adjusting the cap. The woman on the left is wearing a black dress with a large, colorful floral pattern in shades of pink, purple, and yellow. She is also smiling and looking at the first woman. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box with a white diagonal line pattern is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "BUILDING ON OUR".

BUILDING  
ON OUR





# ACHIEVEMENTS

A man and a woman are captured in a dynamic, expressive pose, possibly dancers, against a dark background. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored tank top, with his arms extended. The woman is on the right, also in a light-colored tank top, with her arms outstretched and her hair flowing. A central rectangular overlay with a dark purple background and a subtle geometric pattern contains the text "ACCENTUATING OUR".

ACCENTUATING  
OUR



A photograph of three dancers in white leotards performing a synchronized dance move on a stage. The dancers are captured in a dynamic pose, with their arms extended and legs bent. A large, white, stylized 'X' graphic is overlaid on the image, composed of many thin, parallel lines. The word 'DISTINCTIVENESS' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**DISTINCTIVENESS**





# RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL





# PROFILE





As President of the University of Limerick,  
I am delighted to present our strategic plan  
for the period 2015 to 2019.

**Professor Don Barry**

President of the University of Limerick

MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT



When launching our previous plan, *Pioneering & Connected*, I offered the view that its title “reflects both the history of this wonderful institution and my ambition for its future”. Looking back over the last five years, it is clear that *Pioneering & Connected* was highly successful in directing UL’s strategic development during that time. It resonated deeply with our staff and students, and the significant achievements during that period were recognised when we were named as Ireland’s University of the Year in the 2015 Sunday Times University Guide.


The title of this new plan, *Broadening Horizons*, reflects our intention to further raise the level of ambition of our staff and students. This plan is very much outward facing. It reaches out to communities and employers, to Limerick city and the local region, to our alumni, to external collaborators and to the international scene in a particularly forceful way.

Firstly, I believe that lasting transformation will be achieved by sustaining and **building on our achievements**. We therefore commit ourselves to embedding in *Broadening Horizons* the activities that have incrementally gathered momentum under *Pioneering & Connected*.


Secondly, we will focus on **accentuating our distinctiveness**. As a research-led university, we will remain distinctive through our relentless focus on research with impact, graduate employability, industry engagement and the provision of an outstanding campus environment.

Finally, we will continue to **raise our international profile**. This will be achieved by further internationalising the UL student experience, improving the global currency of UL degrees, attracting more international students and staff and accessing leading international research networks. This will enable our staff and students to bring their particular UL story to the world and create new opportunities to invite the world to Limerick.

This is a highly ambitious and challenging plan. My view is that we have competitive advantages in the quality of the student experience we offer and in the way we contribute to our communities. However, we also have competitive challenges in terms of research performance and international profile. The essence of this plan, therefore, is to maintain our competitive advantages while simultaneously facing our competitive challenges.



*Our innovations have been imitated by many but surpassed by none. By bringing our creativity to the new challenges we face as educators and producers of knowledge under this new plan, I am confident that we will continue to be a pioneer in higher education and to shape our identity as a modern, confident, self-steering university.*











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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Enabling the Strategy

- Devolve planning to academic and support units
- Resource the plan
- Communicate our ambition and success

Implement | Monitor | Review

## Theme 1

Building on our achievements

### 1.1 Our core missions: research and teaching

- Ensure excellence in research
- Provide a highly engaged learning experience for students
- Strengthen undergraduate programmes
- Increase postgraduate and doctoral enrolments
- Embed technology-enhanced learning across curricula

### 1.2 Our local and regional communities

- Support the Limerick 2030 vision
- Champion civic engagement
- Collaborate with regional partners
- Widen the diversity of the undergraduate student population

### 1.3 Staff, students and alumni

- Support staff
- Address student needs
- Engage with alumni





## Theme 2

### Accentuating our distinctiveness

#### 2.1 Research impact

- Build critical mass in translational research
- Deliver research that benefits the economy and society

#### 2.2 Industry engagement and employability

- Reaffirm our commitment to Cooperative Education and graduate employability
- Respond to industry's research and development needs
- Develop a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation

#### 2.3 Infrastructure and campus life

- Develop campus infrastructure
- Enhance campus life

## Theme 3

### Raising our international profile

#### 3.1 International research profile

- Increase funding from international sources
- Strengthen international research collaborations

#### 3.2 International opportunities for students

- Attract international students
- Increase the number of international opportunities for outgoing students

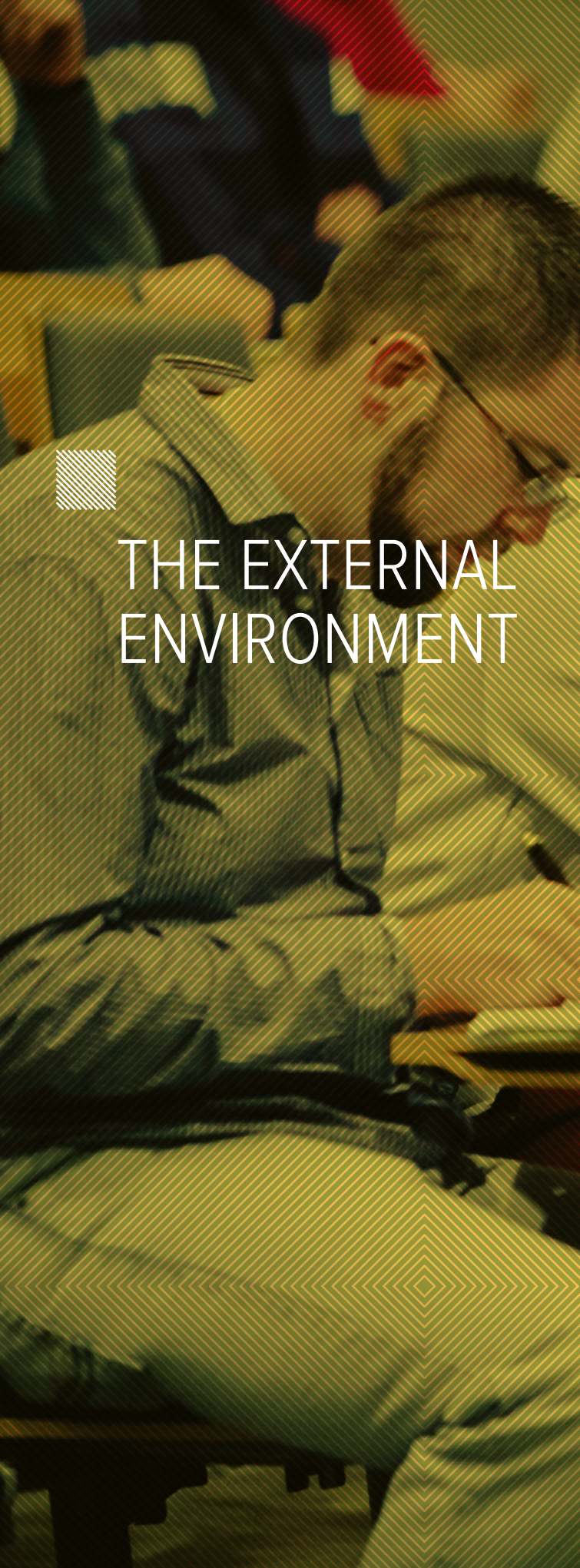
#### 3.3 International opportunities for staff

- Seek new international partnerships
- Invest strategically in international activity

#### 3.4 Our global communities

- Expand our global networks
- Benchmark our programmes internationally





# THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT






## THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Demand for higher education no longer stops at national borders. Students attend universities outside their home countries in increasing numbers, and it is anticipated that by 2020, eight million students, representing 4% of the global student population, will be international students.


Student mobility is now complemented by transnational education (TNE) activities where, in effect, the educator travels to the student's location. In the past decade, the concept of internationalisation in higher education has grown from being solely preoccupied with foreign student recruitment to embracing student transfer and exchange programmes, extensive collaborations in research and teaching and a range of other global higher education professional networking activities. Consequently, an international profile can only be raised through successful international endeavours in all areas of university business.

Research has also become a truly global activity. International collaboration and funding is part and parcel of the everyday lives of researchers, as is the expectation that research findings will be disseminated to international audiences. Funding diversification is critical in higher education, where public investment is shrinking. Despite reduced levels of research funding in many countries, the European Union (EU) has demonstrated its continued commitment to investing in research and innovation. This is evident in the scale of the Horizon 2020 programme and the strong emphasis it puts on the translation of research to address prioritised grand challenges. Therefore, at a European level, success in attracting Horizon 2020 funding will be a key element of funding diversification.

The increasing internationalisation of higher education is most tellingly evident in the various ranking and rating systems that are used as a basis to compare institutions. Whatever their imperfections and limitations, we ignore them at our peril. Where other information is not available, those with whom we wish to engage - students, research agencies and potential partners and benefactors - will use the information gleaned from such sources to evaluate us.



*We fully understand the strategic importance of developing our international reputation by consciously focusing on the global dimension of our activities.*



# THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

In 2011, the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (the Hunt Report) set out the strategic direction for the Irish higher education system. The overall national strategy is to develop a world-class higher education system that meets national needs and is geared towards the demands of the knowledge society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The report envisages a future higher education environment of inter-institutional collaboration, institutional mergers (especially in the area of teacher education), regional clusters and the more efficient use of resources through shared services and appropriately aligned programme provision. A performance-based framework for the governance of higher education was put in place following the publication of the Hunt Report. Under the terms of the framework, each third-level institution agrees detailed targets with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in its Mission-Based Performance Compact. Each institution's performance is reviewed annually with the HEA. A proportion of each institution's public funding (ultimately rising to 10%) is allocated on the basis of the institution meeting its Compact targets. In this very real sense, the achievement of an institution's strategic targets is vital to its financial health.

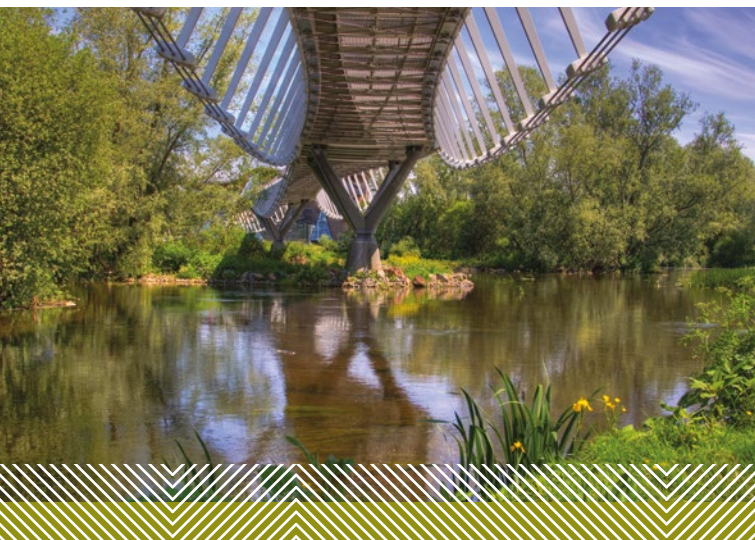
To support the national imperatives of job creation and economic recovery, national policy on research funding has been restructured to focus on investing in areas of impact. In 2013, the remit of Science Foundation Ireland was extended to fund translational research as well as fundamental research. This trend is reflected in the *National Prioritisation Report*, which is being implemented

as part of the Government's *Action Plan for Jobs* initiative and which identifies 14 priority research areas. The emerging *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2015-2020* is likely to further prioritise public research funding into areas that offer the most potential for economic and social progress, consolidate resources in units of scale and reward increased collaboration with industry.

The *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland* (the Sahlberg Report) is of particular importance to us given that teacher education accounts for 10% of our academic programme activity. That report lays the foundations for the development of teaching as a research-led profession operating to the highest international standards. The need to create critical mass in initial teacher education is a key underlying theme, and the report recommended that the University of Limerick (UL), Mary Immaculate College (MIC) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) "should form one integrated centre for teacher education" across the continuum of initial teacher education. To this end, the National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) was established in 2014. Under this revised structure, LIT's art teacher education programme is now accredited by UL.



## LOCAL IMPERATIVES



A university can transform its region by producing highly educated graduates, developing large-scale research capacity and making available to the public world-class facilities and a myriad of creative activities. A university that emulates the highest international standards boosts regional economic, social and cultural development.

The impact that a university has on its region is multi-faceted. In the first place, a university is a significant economic entity in its own right. It contributes to its regional economy as an employer of staff and a purchaser of goods and services. UL's annual pay bill amounts to €100 million, which circulates throughout the region along with a further €25 million that we spend on locally sourced goods and services. Our students spend €80 million per annum locally (excluding tuition fees), of which close to €20 million is contributed by overseas students.

Secondly, a university attracts investment into its region. Proximity to a university that produces high-quality, work-ready graduates and has a strong research base is a compelling attraction for employers, especially those engaged in high-value, knowledge-intensive activities. Since 2010, the University of Limerick has been instrumental in attracting new foreign investment to the region and supporting existing companies' diversification into higher-value areas including research and development.

Finally, a less tangible, but nonetheless real, benefit is the sense of vibrancy that a university brings to its region. The presence of a university enhances the region's reputation and strengthens the regional brand by, for example, recruiting students and staff to the region from Ireland and abroad.



# THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT





Since 2008, like all third-level institutions in Ireland, the University of Limerick has been subject to reduced public funding in a time of increasing demand for higher education. In spite of this challenge, **UL has not stood still**, and we can point to many significant achievements during that period, including:

- A growth in student numbers from 11,300 in 2008 to our current enrolment of 13,500
- A 20% growth in postgraduate student numbers over the same period
- Leadership of key national research clusters, involving collaboration with other higher education institutions and major industrial partners, that have secured €130 million in research funding since 2013 alone
- The graduation in 2011 of the first cohort of students from the Graduate Entry Medical School, the first medical school to be established in Ireland since the 19th century
- A doubling of international students from 2008 to 2013, with a corresponding tripling of international student revenue
- Investment of €80 million in the ongoing capital development of student residences, research and teaching, enterprise and sports facilities



### STUDENT NUMBERS

↑ 20% increase



### MEDICAL SCHOOL

The first to be established in Ireland since 1900



### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

From 2008 to 2013



### RESEARCH FUNDING

Since 2013



### GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

92% employed or pursuing  
further study

22% higher rate than  
national average



### COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

1,700 students  
placed annually

20% placements in  
25+ countries

Two developments stand out in terms of their potential to transform the university's future profile. The first is the inception and launch in 2013 of the Bernal Project, a €52 million investment encompassing the creation of new professorships and the construction of a new research building to support priority areas in engineering and science research. The Bernal Project is an important strategic initiative funded through a combination of exchequer funding and a major investment by The Atlantic Philanthropies. The project will enable the university to enhance its research capability in areas of advanced materials and manufacturing that will have a far-reaching scientific, social and economic impact.

The second key development is the establishment in 2014 of the University of Limerick Health Research Institute (HRI), which encompasses the themes of lifestyle & health, technology & health, and health service delivery. The HRI will build upon and hone existing expertise within all UL faculties and among our healthcare partners and will complement

existing institutes and centres in other institutions by emphasising multidisciplinary research that focuses on the later stages of translation to patients and practice.

We are now poised to embark on a new phase of ambitious development, one in which we will **build on our achievements**. In doing this, we will **accentuate our distinctiveness** with a renewed focus on what we have always done well. In the process, we will **raise our international profile** by taking the University of Limerick story to the world and by inviting the world to Limerick.

Accordingly, this strategic plan is built around the above three interlocking themes. Each theme is subdivided into a number of key areas, and each area is addressed with respect to aims, objectives, outcomes and indicators of success.



## Theme 1 Building on our achievements

Lasting transformation will be achieved by sustaining the strategic developments that have incrementally gathered momentum throughout our organisation in recent years and by committing ourselves to embedding them even further into our institutional culture over a sustained period. To build on our achievements is not to say that the University of Limerick should stand still or retreat into the past. Conversely, this theme supports the view that change is inevitable but is best achieved through a sustained, interlocking impetus that builds on prior success and continues to shape our identity as a modern, confident, self-steering university.

This understanding of organisational change will ensure that successful elements of transformation become core elements of our future sustainability and that cumulative gains generate increasingly positive momentum into the future. Through a united determination to succeed, we will proactively position ourselves to achieve higher standards in everything we do and will gain greater international prominence.

## Theme 2 Accentuating our distinctiveness

Being truly distinctive is something that matters greatly at the University of Limerick. Our distinctiveness is deeply embedded in our history, traditions and values. As a pioneering institution, we have been an innovating force in Irish and European higher education. We introduced many novel elements into our research, teaching and general way of doing business and are distinctively connected to the cultural, economic, professional and business domains.

We understand distinctiveness to refer to the creation of a particular kind of identity comprising a number of parts that, taken together, function as a unified whole. Distinctiveness calls for innovation rather than imitation. In this strategic plan, we wish to develop our mission's distinctive features, which have grown out of our founding heritage and have been sustained over the past 40 years. In particular, we reaffirm our enduring commitment to research activity that has a meaningful impact, to educating for employability and to the further development of our breath-taking campus infrastructure and unrivalled campus living.

## Theme 3 Raising our international profile

Since the founding of the University, we have adopted a global outlook. We introduced the first BA in European Studies in Ireland and later created the first European-themed MA programmes. UL was an early adopter of Erasmus and is now the largest Irish participant in that programme. Our global reach is further demonstrated by the fact that international students now represent almost one in five of the total student population and that one-third of our undergraduate population spend at least one semester abroad as an accredited part of their studies.

This new plan sets out how we plan to address the complexity of internationalisation trends that shape higher education today. The plan specifies a course of action that clearly embraces a much broader and ambitious global vision for our university. In particular, we will raise our international research profile, create international opportunities for students and staff and connect with our global communities.

# BROADENING HORIZONS



## MISSION

The mission of the University of Limerick is to be a distinctive, pioneering and connected university that shapes the future through educating and empowering people to meet the real challenges of tomorrow.



## VISION

Our vision is to be internationally recognised as a distinctively progressive, research-led university that provides an engaging student experience, conducts world-class research renowned for its translational impact and is globally and locally connected in terms of its contribution to economic, social and cultural life.



## VALUES

Reinforced by an abiding commitment to the principles of academic freedom, we will be guided by six core values in the realisation of our vision: excellence, creativity, ethics, sustainability, community and global focus.



## EXCELLENCE

A highly engaged, student-centred, research-led education that empowers, inspires, develops and sustains productive, critically engaged and enquiring citizens who place a premium on contributing to society

World-class research with distinctive translational impact to address global challenges and realise profound social and economic benefits

A performance-driven, quality-improvement ethos underpinned by strong academic and organisational governance and demanding standards of performance

## CREATIVITY

The strong *esprit de corps* among our staff, which is characterised by a distinctively bold creative and entrepreneurial spirit

A clear and unique sense of institutional identity that is outward-facing, forward-looking and operationally agile

A willingness to explore emergent fields of academic enquiry and other development opportunities

## ETHICS

Strong and explicit ethical practices that are underpinned by honesty, integrity, diversity, equity and respect for all

## SUSTAINABILITY

A commitment to the sustainable development of our natural environment, both within and beyond the campus

An emphasis on sound financial management and institutional self-reliance that supports continual re-investment in our research, teaching and campus infrastructure

## COMMUNITY

Being connected in a manner that ensures access and supports the development of physical, economic, educational, social and cultural wellbeing across all of our communities

## GLOBAL FOCUS

Globally connected with academic institutions, research organisations, corporations, government agencies and other stakeholders in ways that support mutually beneficial and impactful activities



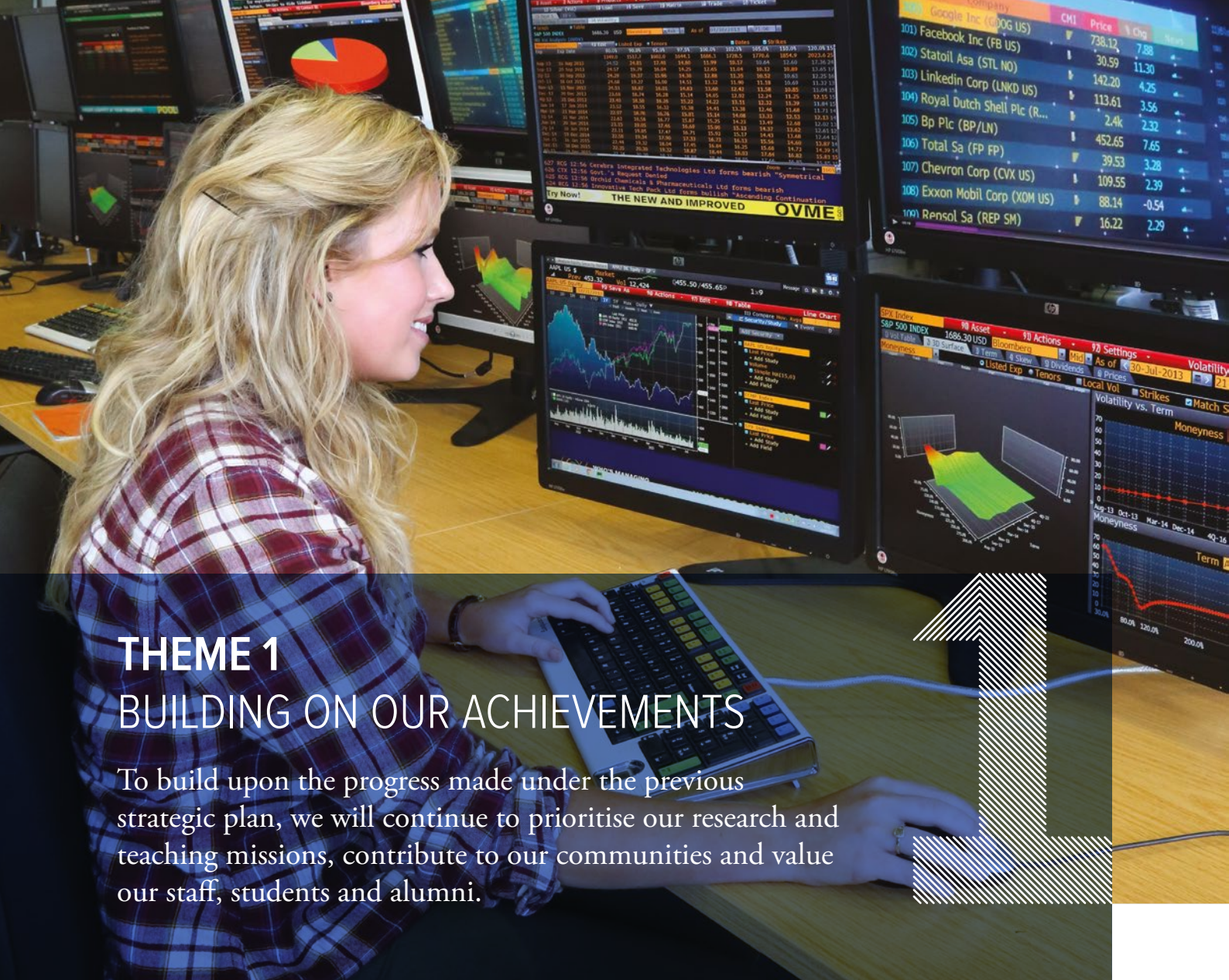






ENGAGED





# THEME 1 BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

To build upon the progress made under the previous strategic plan, we will continue to prioritise our research and teaching missions, contribute to our communities and value our staff, students and alumni.

## 1.1 OUR CORE MISSIONS: RESEARCH AND TEACHING

*Pioneering & Connected* successfully directed our strategic development from 2011 to 2015. It was clear that the priorities in *Pioneering & Connected* resonated deeply with our staff and students, particularly in terms of the focus they placed on the core activities of research and teaching.

We will continue to strengthen our research and teaching missions by: (i) ensuring excellence in research; (ii) fully implementing *Engaged Learning*, the University's teaching, learning and assessment strategy; (iii) strengthening our undergraduate programme offerings; (iv) increasing the number of postgraduate taught and doctoral enrolments; and (v) embedding technology-enhanced learning across our curricula.



### 1.1.1 Ensure excellence in research

To firmly establish our reputation as a research-led university and to deliver excellent research that makes an impact, we are committed to establishing and supporting a research culture across all disciplines. This ethos will improve the quality and quantity of our research outputs, inform our academic programmes and support our strategy of enriching the student experience.

The University's research strategy (2016-20) is designed around the following four strategic research goals:

- 1 To achieve research of the highest quality
- 2 To have an impact that yields economic, social and cultural dividends
- 3 To support and develop our staff and ecosystem
- 4 To enhance our international reach

Part of our strategy to produce excellent research will involve investing in and empowering staff to achieve their full potential, fostering a research-led education ethos at all levels of the curriculum and optimising research management structures and performance measurement.

### 1.1.2 Provide a highly engaged learning experience for students

This plan aims to capitalise on our established reputation for excellence in teaching, learning and the quality of our educational offerings so that we remain the destination of choice for students who are intent on pursuing globally focused and relevant, high-quality educational programmes taught by leaders in their field.

In 2014, we adopted a strategy to enhance the student experience. *Engaged Learning: University of Limerick Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy 2014-18* comprises three key streams:

- **Stream 1:** Engagement through Broadening
- **Stream 2:** Engagement for Excellence
- **Stream 3:** Engagement towards Employability



## ENGAGED LEARNING

In this strategic plan, *Engaged Learning* will be fully incorporated into the University's overall planning process to drive institutional performance in teaching, learning and assessment.

### 1.1.3 Strengthen undergraduate programmes

To improve the quality of our undergraduate offerings and that of the student experience, we will implement a five-year cyclical review of all undergraduate programmes. The reviews will be undertaken to ensure that our programmes are relevant, research-led and appropriately aligned to employer needs. Programme entry structures, options and delivery methods will be revised. Broad entry programmes will be available through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Grading, assessment and student feedback processes, including survey management, will be reviewed and refined.

### 1.1.4 Increase postgraduate and doctoral enrolments

Whilst *Engaged Learning* encompasses the breadth of the cross-campus activities that will further our educational mission, we will pay special attention to postgraduate taught and doctoral programmes. We will increase postgraduate student numbers by initially conducting a comprehensive review of our level 9/10 programmes and fee structures and subsequently developing and aligning new taught postgraduate programmes to research strengths and market needs. This work will include setting ambitious targets for growth in PhD enrolments and developing further the UL structured doctoral model, including setting policies related to professional and practice-based doctorates.

### 1.1.5 Embed technology-enhanced learning across curricula

*Engaged Learning* envisages that technology will be used in pedagogically beneficial ways to enrich the experiences of different types of student. A strategically directed and coordinated approach will be adopted to ensure that specialist pedagogical and technical support is provided to academic staff. To this end, a technology-enhanced learning unit will be established: relevant expertise from different parts of the institution will be harnessed to ensure staff and students develop the strong digital capacities required to thrive in a fast-moving digital environment.

*Engaged Learning* proposes an ambitious expansion of part-time and distance provision, the delivery of which will be underpinned by robust technology and pedagogical support. Our part-time and distance programmes will be managed by the newly created institution-wide Continuing Professional Education (CPE) unit, which offers an integrated service for flexible learners of all kinds who wish to avail of the University's educational offerings in part-time, blended or online modes.





What do we know about the Rules Managers Face?

Interpersonal Rules involve acting as:

- Figurehead—representing organization at external events
- Leader—direct & coordinate people
- Liaison—dealing with outside contacts for organization

John C. Maxwell

## THEME 1: BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### 1.1: OUR CORE MISSIONS: RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.1.1: Ensure excellence in research</b>	Firmly establish our reputation as a research-led university	New institutional research strategy 2016-20	30% increase in number of publications in top 10 percentile journals
		Enhanced quality and quantity of research outputs	50% increase in citation impact of publications
		Research-led education ethos at all levels in support of <i>Engaged Learning</i>	Major increase in number of research books and book chapters with high-impact publishers
	Invest in and empower people through a culture of research excellence and impact	Strategic investments/ appointments in areas of demonstrable strength	30% increase in publications with international co-authorship
		Optimised research management structures and performance measurement	40% increase in number of tenured academics supervising doctorates
<b>1.1.2: Provide a highly engaged learning experience for students</b>	Implement <i>Engaged Learning</i> : University of Limerick Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2014-18	Enhanced reputation for excellence in teaching, learning and the quality of our educational offerings	Implementation plan for <i>Engaged Learning</i> comprising three key streams: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement through Broadening</li> <li>2. Engagement for Excellence</li> <li>3. Engagement towards Employability</li> </ol>

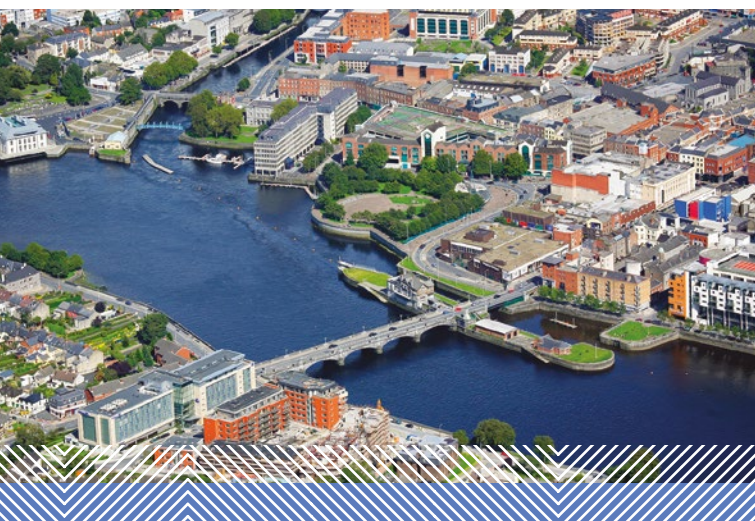


Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.1.3: Strengthen undergraduate programmes</b>	Enhance the quality of undergraduate offerings	Five-year cyclical programme review in place to ensure relevance, research-led teaching and programme alignment to employer needs	Programme review initiated (2015 onwards)
	Enhance the quality of the undergraduate student experience	Revised programme entry structures, module options and programme delivery methods	Broad entry programmes available through CAO by 2017
			Grading, assessment and student feedback/survey management processes reviewed and refined
		Better student retention and success	First-year retention rate at least 91%
<b>1.1.4: Increase postgraduate and doctoral enrolments</b>	Review level 9/10 programme offerings and fee structures	Revised suite of level 9/10 offerings	High-level working group for review and planning of all level PG programmes (established end 2015) with accompanying implementation plan (produced by June 2016)
	Produce new/revised programme offerings aligned to research strengths and market needs	Research further embedded into postgraduate teaching	New or revised programmes in each faculty linked to research strengths and market demand
		Appropriate incentives via resource allocation model for new and revised programme development	Increased level 9/10 enrolments representing 30% of overall student population by 2019
<b>1.1.5: Embed technology-enhanced learning across curricula</b>	Improve staff capabilities in all facets of technology-enhanced learning	Dedicated technology-enhanced learning unit to support staff	Bespoke training and development for academic staff in technology-enhanced learning (2015)
	Increase the number of flexible learning offerings	Continuing Professional Education (CPE) unit offering an integrated service for flexible learners	Growth in number of flexible, part-time, blended, distance and work-based learning offerings (representing 20%+ of overall student intake by 2019)

## 1.2 OUR LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The mutual benefits that flow from engaging with our communities have always been central to building institutional character and identity. Under this plan, UL will seek to build upon the “*strong and enduring sense of connection to our communities*” that Pioneering & Connected identified as a defining feature of our institution.

To contribute more to our communities, we will (i) support Limerick’s development plan as articulated in *Limerick 2030*; (ii) champion civic engagement by embedding it across our curricula and developing an institution-wide civic engagement strategy; (iii) collaborate with our regional partners; and (iv) widen the diversity of the student population by ensuring that our offerings are equally accessible to all.



We will support Limerick City and County Council in delivering the *Limerick 2030* plan.

### 1.2.1 Support the *Limerick 2030* vision

*Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick* is a development strategy to guide the economic, social and physical renaissance of Limerick city. The plan identifies seven transformational projects, one of which is defined as a city centre higher education campus.

We will develop a 350-room student residence in the downtown Limerick Opera Centre with Shannon Consortium partners and Limerick City and County Council. Also in the Opera Centre, UL’s Fab Lab will include design teaching studios, an exhibition and design activity space, labs and an incubation centre for enterprise and innovation. The inter-professional, community-based health hub will enable staff from the health sciences to deliver health and wellbeing programmes to community groups.

We will also work with Limerick City and County Council to improve transport links between the campus and city and will engage with local and regional strategies to support graduate employment in key sectors of the economy.



### 1.2.2 Champion civic engagement

In June 2014, the University of Limerick became one of the founding signatories to the *Campus Engage Charter for Civic and Community Engagement*. The signing of the charter was indicative of our desire to strengthen the links between the University and our communities. To underpin this goal, we will develop an institution-wide strategy that will embed civic engagement in our research and teaching activities. We will establish the UL Engage office to promote civic engagement while capturing and showcasing the entire breadth of civic engagement activity in a coordinated manner.

The President's Volunteer Award (PVA), which is one of the largest student volunteering programmes in Europe, will be expanded by increasing student participation rates and offering a tailored version of the programme to our visiting international students.

### 1.2.3 Collaborate with regional partners

Through our work with the Shannon Consortium and the Mid-West Regional Cluster, we reaffirm our commitment to achieving shared national objectives for the development of regional higher education in line with government policy. In particular, we will focus on developing the National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE), launching a joint Bachelor of Arts programme with MIC and establishing a federated Limerick Graduate School.

The UL-NUI Galway Strategic Alliance promotes collaboration between the two institutions in the areas of teaching and learning, research and innovation, and shared services. While the work of the alliance has been overtaken to some extent by national policy on regional clusters, we remain committed to continuing to work collaboratively with NUI Galway through the alliance.

We will continue to work closely with the University of Limerick Hospitals Group and will invest in the development of the Clinical Education and Research Centre on the campus of University Hospital Limerick. We will also strengthen our collaboration with the Shannon International Aviation Services Centre with a view to contributing more to the vibrant aviation sector in Shannon Airport and the surrounding region.

### 1.2.4 Widen the diversity of the undergraduate student population

Providing equal access and widening participation remain key elements of this strategic plan. Our commitment to equal access flows from a philosophy that values social justice, inclusion and diversity. In being responsive to an increasingly diverse social world, we are dedicated to providing appropriate entry mechanisms, tailored programmes and support services to ensure equality of access, participation and outcomes for student groups that are under-represented in the University. As part of our strategy to widen the diversity of the student population, we will set regionally appropriate targets in relation to mature students, students with disability and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. We will also put in place a tracking system linked to tailored support-service planning for students from these groups.

## THEME 1: BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### 1.2: OUR LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.2.1: Support the <i>Limerick 2030</i> vision</b>	Support Limerick's economic, social and cultural development	Increased visibility of UL in the city centre	City-centre student residence development in partnership with Shannon Consortium partners and Limerick City and County Council
			City-centre inter-professional, community-based health hub and permanent residence for UL's Fab Lab
		Enhanced transport links between the campus and the city	Reduced car usage and more use of public transport, walking and cycling to campus
	Partner with Limerick City and County Council to deliver key elements of the <i>Limerick 2030</i> plan	UL engagement in job creation/retention strategies to support graduate employment in key growth sectors	Limerick for IT and Limerick for Engineering initiatives launched in 2015
<b>1.2.2: Champion civic engagement</b>	Embed civic engagement as a routine component of our curricula	More opportunities for students under the President's Volunteer Award (PVA), including a bespoke programme for visiting international students	50% increase in student participation in the PVA programme
	Further harness UL's civic engagement activities	A one-stop approach to staff civic engagement activities	UL Engage: a central office to manage and coordinate civic engagement activity (established by 2016)
		Institution-wide UL civic engagement strategy (published 2017)	Audit of civic engagement activity (completed 2016)



Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.2.3: Collaborate with regional partners</b>	Address current national policy on the reconfigured higher education landscape and the further development of the Mid-West Regional Cluster (UL, MIC and LIT)	Shared academic provision across the cluster in key areas to support the achievement of shared objectives for regional higher education cluster activity in line with government policy	Shannon Consortium/Mid-West Regional Cluster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) (fully operational by 2016)</li> <li>- Federated Limerick Graduate School (established 2016)</li> <li>- Joint Arts degree (UL &amp; MIC) (AY 2017/18)</li> </ul>
	Strengthen our research and teaching linkages with the University of Limerick Hospitals Group	Active engagement of healthcare staff and students in a clinical setting	Clinical Education and Research Centre established on the campus of University Hospital Limerick in 2016
	Further develop UL's relationship with the Shannon International Aviation Services Centre	Enhanced contribution to the vibrant aviation sector around Shannon Airport and surrounding region	Detailed scoping exercise completed (end 2016)
<b>1.2.4: Widen the diversity of the undergraduate student population</b>	Ensure that UL programmes are equally accessible to all	A tracking system linked to tailored support-service planning for mature students, students with disability and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds	Percentage of full-time non-standard entrants to undergraduate programmes to increase to 28% of overall intake by 2018

### 1.3 STAFF, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Our staff, students and alumni represent *the* central component of the University's performance: they are our greatest institutional asset, and we reiterate our commitments to them in this strategic plan. Our shared determination to succeed will enable us to achieve higher standards in everything we do and allow us to gain greater international prominence.

We believe that those who work towards common goals are bound together, collegially and communally. By supporting our staff, addressing student needs and working more closely with our alumni, we can better achieve our long-term goals. In the great Irish tradition, this is the University's unique *meitheal*. Developing and nurturing this relationship will involve a mixture of tangible actions, strategies and behaviours.

#### 1.3.1 Support staff

We aim to be a university that empowers staff to excel and achieve their potential in a collegial and supportive environment. We will invest in building staff capacity through recruitment, retention and continuing professional development and in broadening our leadership competencies. We will align responsibilities with individuals' capacities to contribute to the overall strategic objectives of the University.

We seek to exemplify gender equality best practice in all aspects of our activities. We will reinforce our position as the leading university in Ireland in terms of female representation in senior roles. We will seek Athena Swan accreditation in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine) disciplines and strongly support the proposed extension of Athena Swan to non-STEMM disciplines.

We will continue to promote the use of the Irish language on campus by implementing the requirements of the Official Languages Act, creating informal opportunities for conversations *as Gaeilge* and ensuring that the number of staff awarded the Certificate of Irish Language Proficiency continues to rise.

#### 1.3.2 Address student needs

By placing staff and students in an interconnected place that is real and mutually beneficial, we will build a community of learning based on a reciprocal relational value system. To give wider reach to the student voice, we will introduce new structured interactions between the Students' Union and the University's senior leadership and will ensure that students are represented on all course boards. We will adopt protocols for student contact time and research supervision and will revitalise the student advisor system. To attract and retain talented students, we will put in place scholarship schemes that recognise students' academic, sporting, cultural and civic engagement contributions. We will also develop stipend schemes for doctoral students.

We recognise that our students are ambassadors for UL. To acknowledge the honour they bestow on the institution and their contribution to UL's reputation, we will showcase their achievements and activities in our internal and external communications.



### 1.3.3 Engage with alumni

Located in over 100 countries, our 70,000-strong alumni community embodies the spirit of excellence and achievement that has become central to UL's ethos. We seek to foster lifelong relationships with our alumni; we wish to celebrate their achievements and to harness their support for their *alma mater*. We will invite faculties, divisions and research institutes to promote alumni-focused activities. At senior level, we will improve our communications with alumni. In particular, we will organise themed annual alumni colloquia to support university planning and will foster closer interaction between the University of Limerick Alumni Association (ULAA) and the University of Limerick Foundation.

An alumni ambassador scheme will be launched to highlight international alumni successes and develop peer-to-peer communications with potential UL students and their families. After focusing initially on countries where we have well-established networks and international alumni, we will look to other countries to broaden the scope of the alumni venture.



We will seek to build relationships with our international alumni with a view to involving them in recruiting students to the University of Limerick and raising the University's profile abroad.

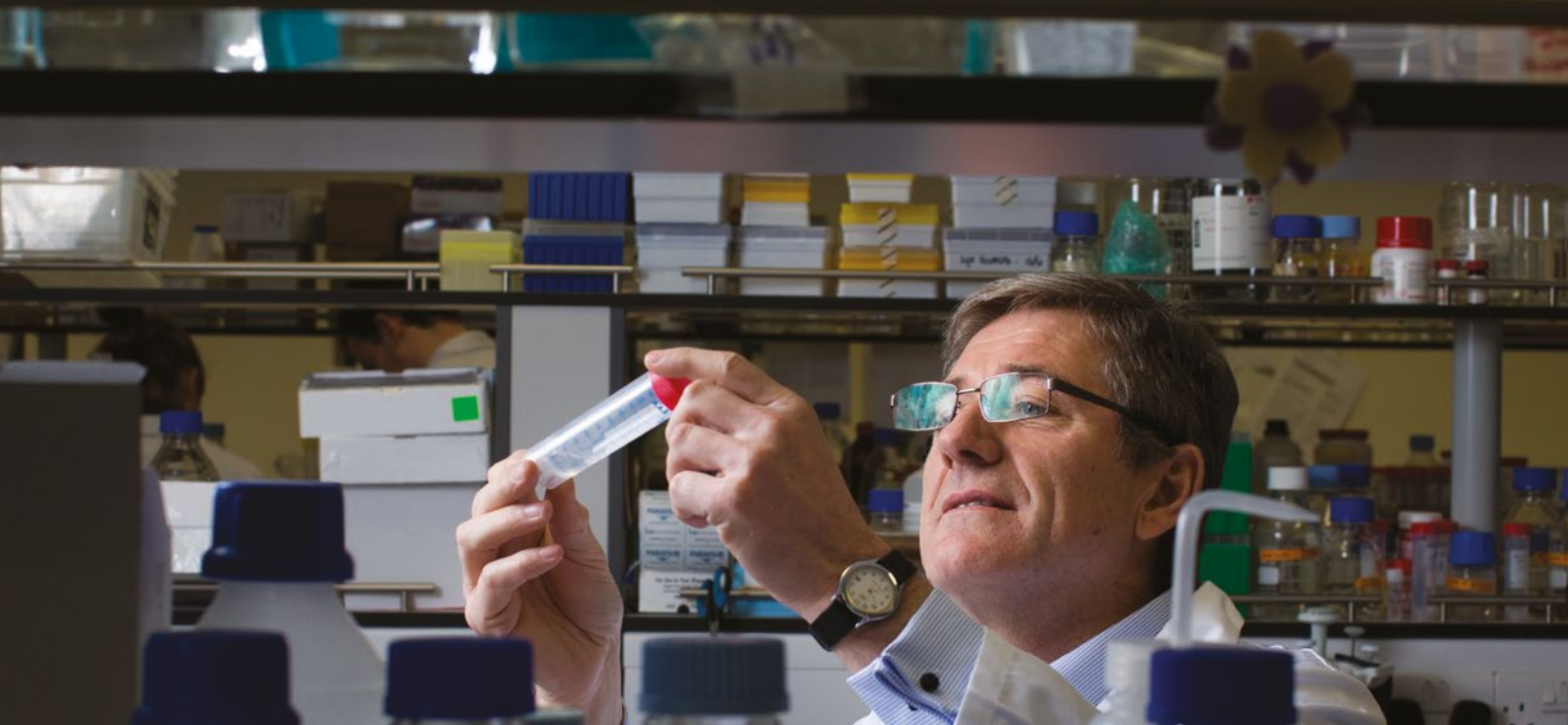
## THEME 1: BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### 1.3: STAFF, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.3.1: Support staff</b>	Support the continuing professional development of staff	Revised training programmes linked to Performance Development Review System (PDRS)	20% increase in staff undertaking training and development opportunities
		Tailored training and development for researchers	Action plan for researcher professional development based on European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers (2015-19)
	Develop leadership competencies	Leadership development embedded in PDRS process	≥ 2 leadership programmes delivered annually
	Attract and retain the best staff	Recruitment and promotion policies strengthening critical mass in high-performing, emerging and niche areas	3-yearly recruitment planning for appointments in high-potential units/new and emerging areas
			Continuation of academic and non-academic promotions/grade review processes (2015-19)
	Closely align staff workload to specific institutional goals	Timetabling/scheduling and workloads facilitating greater research output	Reviews of timetabling/scheduling and workload allocation models completed
	Build on our leading national position in terms of female representation in senior academic roles	Athena Swan actions extended to all disciplines	Athena Swan accreditation achieved (Bronze, 2015; Silver, 2019)
	Promote the use of Irish on campus	Irish language training available to all staff annually	Increased number of staff who attain the Certificate of Irish Language Proficiency



Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>1.3.2: Address student needs</b>	Identify high-performing students and offer incentives or opportunities that nurture their talents	Scholarship opportunities available for those who excel in academic, sporting, cultural, international and civic engagement activities	Doubling of scholarship funding available under new institution-wide UG and PG scholarship programmes (by 2019)  Research stipend schemes for doctoral students in place by 2016
	Increase feedback mechanisms (formal and informal) between staff and students	Protocols for student advisor, contact time, research supervision (FYP, master's, PhD, etc.)	Revised student advisor systems (in place 2016)
	Give wider reach to the student voice	Greater student representation on UL fora	Regular structured meetings between UL Students' Union (ULSU) and Executive Committee; students represented on course boards (2016 onwards)
	Raise the profile of student-led activities	Increased visibility of student activities in UL communications, including website	ULSU information embedded on main UL website
<b>1.3.3: Engage with alumni</b>	Develop a shared strategy for alumni-focused activities	Greater collaboration between ULAA, UL and UL Foundation in relation to planning, recruitment, research and service to the community	Benchmarking review of alumni structures and activities conducted  Annual themed alumni events
	Facilitate alumni to support international student recruitment and to enhance our global profile	Alumni abroad having a positive impact on international student recruitment and profile raising	Alumni ambassadors appointed in priority countries  Alumni gatherings incorporated into overseas promotional events



## THEME 2

# ACCENTUATING OUR DISTINCTIVENESS

To accentuate our distinctiveness, we will ensure our research has an impact, reinforce employability and engagement with industry and develop our infrastructure and campus life.



### 2.1 RESEARCH IMPACT

The University of Limerick places a premium on the independent pursuit of knowledge through critical inquiry and the advancement of new ideas, and we expect all our academic staff to engage in high-quality research. Accordingly, we value and support the research efforts of all members of the campus community.

Our distinctive research ethos has always emphasised convergent translational research in a manner that transcends the traditional dichotomy between basic and applied research to yield accelerated economic, social and cultural dividends. This approach now aligns well with current national and EU policy, and research income has grown significantly as a result – from €20 million in 2008 to more than €50 million in 2015. To ensure that our research continues to make an impact, we will build critical mass in traditional areas of strength and nurture emergent and niche areas that have the potential to deliver research that benefits the economy and society.





### 2.1.1 Build critical mass in translational research

To ensure sustainability, we will implement detailed plans to promote the long-term development of areas of recognised research strength, namely materials, advanced manufacturing, software, health and applied mathematical sciences. To intensify critical mass in areas of strength, we will reconfigure our structures by amalgamating the Materials and Surface Science Institute (MSSI) and the Stokes Institute into a consolidated Bernal Institute. This development will give rise to creative synergies that are not possible in other Irish institutions.

Lero (the Irish Software Research Centre) and the Health Research Institute (HRI) will be central to delivering our strategic research targets and will provide a stable and sustainable platform for the further development of our distinctive research strengths. The work of the HRI in supporting collaboration with clinical partners abroad, in Ireland and locally at University Hospital Limerick will raise the quality of research outputs and give rise to improved health outcomes.

Emerging and niche research areas will be nurtured, and detailed criteria and plans will be drawn up for recognising, developing and sustaining all of our research efforts.

### 2.1.2 Deliver research that benefits the economy and society

As a research-led institution, it is not enough to say that our research makes a difference: we seek to validate its impact. Through our ecosystem of multidisciplinary research teams, our contributions are evident across a range of areas, from award-winning inventions to national policy, improved patient care and the generation of high-value jobs.

During the course of this plan, we will refine our distinctive identity to become a recognised leader in terms of articulating research impact. Researchers from all disciplines will be encouraged to develop research-impact case studies that demonstrate a clear link between their research and broader economic, social and cultural applications. The institution-wide Research Impact programme will focus on maximising the translational value (within and beyond academia) of both individual and collective research efforts. The programme will define our outputs and will foster a research culture that enables new and emergent areas to flourish and thrive. In short, *Research Impact* will become synonymous with our institution over the lifetime of this plan.



#### RESEARCH INCOME

€20m 2008 → €50m 2015



#### COLLABORATIONS

182 research collaborations with industry



#### COMMERCIALISATION

Venture capital investment €50m+  
Spin-out companies sold €100m+

## THEME 2: ACCENTUATING OUR DISTINCTIVENESS

### 2.1: RESEARCH IMPACT

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>2.1.1: Build critical mass in translational research</b>	Integrate areas of research strength through strategic investment and alignment of appointments in faculties and institutes	Research institutes capitalising on strategic investments in human capital and physical infrastructure to realise their full potential as key drivers of research activity and as world-leaders in their disciplines	Bernal Institute established (AY2015/16)
		Best-practice planning and oversight models for hosted national centres strengthening critical mass and driving recruitment and funding diversification strategies	Multi-annual development plans for three institutes (Bernal, Lero, HRI) produced
			Processes to ensure internal oversight and support for hosted national centres established
	Nurture emerging areas of strength and niche areas	Established foresight planning for developing and sustaining emerging research areas	Detailed criteria specified for recognising and developing niche and emerging research areas
<b>2.1.2: Deliver research that benefits the economy and society</b>	Showcase the impact of UL research across all disciplines	National/international engagement with and recognition for the Research Impact programme	UL Research Impact programme: high-profile events, case studies, awards, seed funding initiatives, bespoke staff and doctoral training (2015-19)  Economic and Social Impact Report produced (2016)



## 2.2 INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

Our pioneering focus on learning that is intrinsically linked to the world of work has placed us in a pre-eminent position in terms of employability. We refer to this as the UL Edge. However, the attention we have always placed on employability and engagement with external partners is now matched by a policy shift towards graduate work-readiness and translational research that specifically address employer needs across the entire higher education sector. To maintain our leading position in this regard, we will reaffirm our commitment to Cooperative Education (Co-op) and graduate employability, respond to industry's research and development needs and further develop a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.

### 2.2.1 Reaffirm our commitment to Cooperative Education and graduate employability

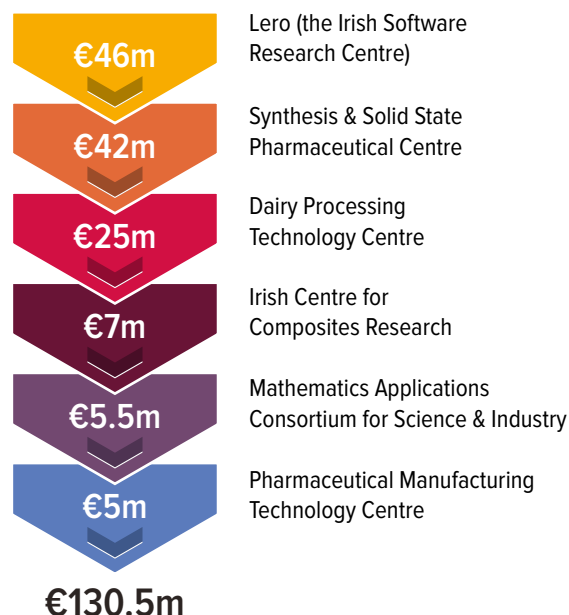
We equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their chosen careers. Our approach is predicated on engaging with all undergraduate students from the first year of their degree programme prior to their participation on a compulsory work-placement programme (Co-op).

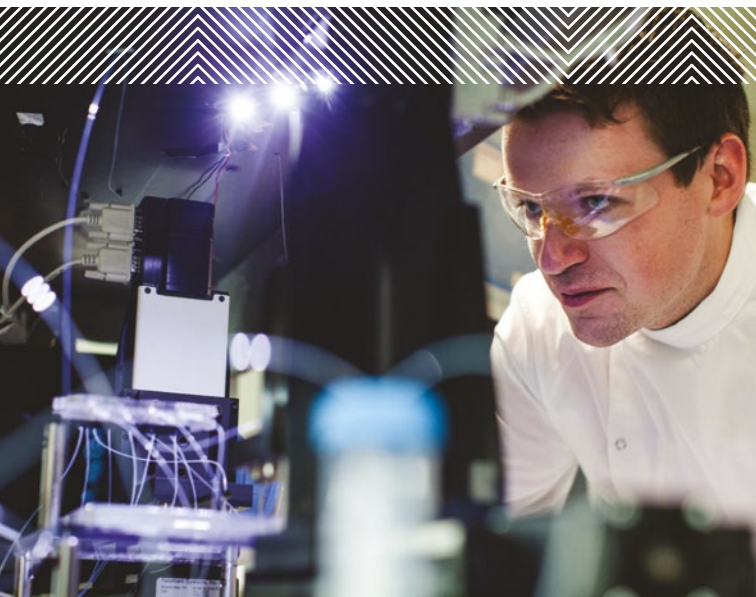
In this plan, we will reaffirm our commitment to Co-op and graduate employability by (i) endeavouring to maintain our leading position in terms of national graduate employability rates (the UL Edge); (ii) aligning undergraduate programme content more closely with employer needs; and (iii) being more responsive to the changing needs and expectations of employers and industry. Expected outcomes will include an expansion of the Co-op programme, greater engagement by employers on programme design and review processes, targeted employability/career development modules and a network of partners to work collaboratively on job creation and regional economic development needs.

### 2.2.2 Respond to industry's research and development needs

To ensure that we continue to respond to industry's research and development needs, we will review our industry-engagement structures and strategies and build on our already-strong technology transfer and business incubation record. Under the terms of a new knowledge transfer and enterprise strategy, we will put in place a strategic partnerships forum to identify, inform and provide feedback on partnerships between industry and our industry-supporting centres and institutes (which currently represent a €130.5 million investment and involve more than 85 industry partners). The knowledge transfer and enterprise strategy will ensure that reviews are conducted annually with our key industry/research partners.

#### INDUSTRY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AT UL





To maintain our position as the partner of choice for research that addresses specific industry needs, we will aim to reach international best practice technology transfer indicator levels by 2019 with respect to the number of licences, options and assignments signed with industry and the number of invention disclosures and patent applications made. We will also aim to significantly increase the number of new spin-out companies formed at UL and the amount of research income raised from industry.

### **2.2.3 Develop a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation**

An additional means of maintaining the UL Edge is to embed our widely recognised culture of entrepreneurship and innovation across all facets of the institution and to support business incubation, start-up activity and entrepreneurship training at all levels. At a time when start-up investment has been challenging, University of Limerick spinouts realised in excess of €150 million since 2006. We now wish to do more.

The Nexus Innovation Centre will continue to provide support and training to start-up companies, staff and students. In addition, a new institution-wide initiative, the UL Enterprise Corridor, will bring together enterprise activity already taking place in various units across UL to provide bespoke entrepreneurship training, assistance to those establishing new business ventures and opportunities for students to interact with the start-up community.





IMPACT



## THEME 2: ACCENTUATING OUR DISTINCTIVENESS

### 2.2: INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>2.2.1: Reaffirm our commitment to Cooperative Education and graduate employability</b>	Maintain our leading national position in terms of graduate employment	Sustained or exceeded graduate employment rate	Graduate employment rate $\geq 10\%$ above national university average
		The most comprehensive Co-op programme in Ireland	1,600+ Co-op placements annually; annual placement rate of 90%+ with at least 20% of all placements being international
	Align undergraduate programme content more closely with employer needs	Employer engagement on programme design and review process for all undergraduate programmes	Employability-related outcomes embedded within the cyclical programme review process (from 2015/16 onwards)
		Suite of targeted employability/career development modules (undergraduate and postgraduate)	Compulsory employability skills self-assessment and reflection for all Co-op students
			Generic skills personal development plan available to all research postgraduate students (AY 2015/16) as part of structured doctoral model
	Be more responsive to the changing needs and expectations of employers and industry		Sharing of Co-op skills-development data with faculties and departments (AY 2016/17)
		A managed network of partners (employers, state development agencies [including FDI agencies], sectoral associations and professional bodies) serving job creation and regional economic development needs	750 visits by employers to UL campus annually; 850 visits by UL to employer sites annually
			Sector-specific group 'think tank' events; biennial survey of graduate employers; networking with employers to identify re-skilling and upskilling needs

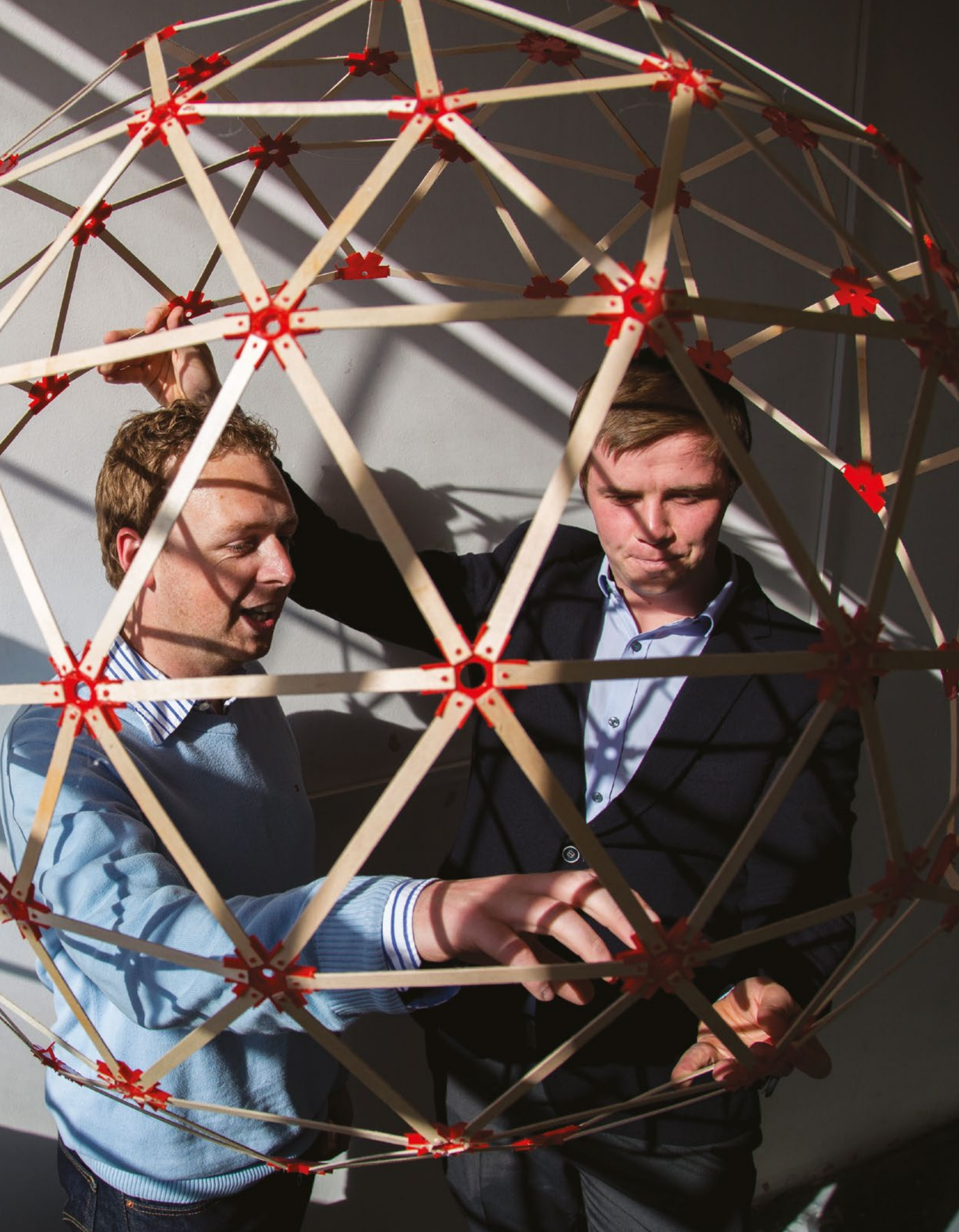


Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>2.2.2: Respond to industry's research and development needs</b>	Review our industry-engagement structures	Knowledge Transfer and Enterprise Strategy published (2017)	Strategic Partnerships Forum to identify, inform and provide feedback on industry partnerships for strategic research (institutes, centres) established (2016)
	Build on our strong technology transfer and business incubation record	Maintained position as the partner of choice for research that addresses specific industry needs	Annual customer survey/reviews with key industry/research partners
<b>2.2.3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation</b>	Embed a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation across all facets of the institution	Bespoke enterprise development programme engaging with industry and supporting regional economic development	Review of implementation of new IP framework completed (2016)
	Support business incubation, start-up activity and entrepreneurship training at all levels	Nexus Innovation Centre providing continued support and training to start-up companies, staff and students	Technology transfer indicators at international best practice level (by 2019): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Licences, options and assignments per funding signed with industry – 5 per €10m investment per annum</li> <li>- Invention disclosures – 15 per €10m investment per annum</li> <li>- Patent applications – 5 per €10m investment per annum</li> </ul> 25% increase in number of new spin-out companies formed 20% increase in research income from industry
			Launch of UL Enterprise Corridor initiative
			Training designed and delivered annually with 100+ employees supported on site; 8 entrepreneur events delivered annually (2016 onwards)



**INNOVATION**







## 2.3 INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMPUS LIFE

Now spanning 133 hectares, the University of Limerick has expanded rapidly and is regarded as having one of the most impressive campuses in Europe. With world-class facilities designed to enhance the learning and living experience of our students and with its unrivalled location and tranquil beauty, the campus continues to enthrall returning and new visitors alike. We have ambitious plans for further developing our infrastructure and unique sense of campus living.

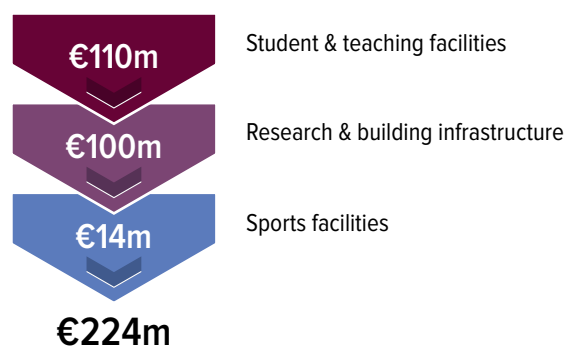


### 2.3.1 Develop campus infrastructure

Our overarching aim in relation to campus infrastructure is to complete our current capital development plan, which runs to 2018 and targets 12 major capital investment projects at a cost of €224 million. The projects centre on research infrastructure, teaching, student supports and sports and recreational facilities as well as developments in off-campus locations in Limerick city and at the University Hospital Limerick. On-campus priorities include the Glucksman Library Phase 2, the Materials and Surface Science Institute Phase 2 and the Bernal Building.

In addition to the development plan, we will invest significantly in equipment and the virtual campus (IT systems) in support of our research and teaching core missions. This will be done by integrating equipment and IT renewal funding into recurrent budgets.

### CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-18





### 2.3.2 Enhance campus life

To enhance life on campus, we will improve the experience of living on and visiting the campus; increase the number of summer-time programmes and events, including sports, music and arts events; develop green campus initiatives; and strive to become a world-leading campus for physical activity, sport, recreation and health. To enhance the experience of visitors and resident students, we will be directed by a five-year student residence refurbishment plan, which will include proposals for a visitor centre and merchandising store.

It is envisaged that more summer-time programming will increase revenue, which will be used to contribute to achieving our strategic goals. The number of music and arts events on campus will grow as a result of greater collaboration between the relevant on-campus arts-related entities. We will maintain or improve our GreenMetric World University ranking and will launch at least four new green campus initiatives. To copper-fasten our reputation as a world-leading campus for physical activity, sport, recreation and health, we will launch an institution-wide strategy for sport and physical activity and aim to secure 'Health Promoting University' status.



#### SPORT

Ireland's premier sporting campus  
UL Arena - 700,000 visitors annually  
Ireland's largest all-weather pitch complex  
Ireland's only indoor rowing tank



#### LIVING

Distinctive 133-hectare parkland campus  
5 purpose-built student villages with capacity for over 2,400 students  
Smarter Travel - €9 million investment supporting the promotion of sustainable transport schemes on campus



#### CULTURE

Home to the Irish Chamber Orchestra & Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
60,000 visitors to the University Concert Hall annually  
11 national visual arts collections housing 1,700 artworks

## THEME 2: ACCENTUATING OUR DISTINCTIVENESS

### 2.3: INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMPUS LIFE

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>2.3.1: Develop campus infrastructure</b>	Complete the UL Capital Development Plan (2014-18)	World-class research, teaching, living and recreational facilities	€224m investment in 12 major capital investment projects with 1,000 jobs created (290 full-time, high-value positions + 710 construction jobs)
	Invest further in equipment and the virtual campus in support of core research and teaching missions	Equipment and IT renewal funding integrated into recurrent budgets	Significant equipment and IT systems investments
<b>2.3.2: Enhance campus life</b>	Improve the experience of living on and visiting the campus	5-year student residence refurbishment plan	Student residence refurbishment plan implemented in full (2018)
			Visitor centre and merchandising store opened (2015)
	Expand summer-time programming (academic, non-academic and commercial)	Increased revenue streams contributing to strategic goals	35% increase in summer-time and sporting events by 2018
	Increase the number of music and arts events on campus	Greater collaboration between IWAMD, UCH and ICO to develop campus-wide creative arts strategy	35% increase in music and arts events by 2018
	Develop green campus initiatives	World-leading position re. environmentally friendly university management maintained in GreenMetric University rankings (2015-19)	At least four new green campus initiatives launched (2015-18)
	Become a world-leading campus for physical activity, sport, recreation and health	UL Beo: Institution-wide strategy for sport and physical activity in place	'Health Promoting University' status secured (2018)









## THEME 3

### RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

To raise our profile internationally, we will endeavour to raise our international research profile, continue to internationalise the student experience, create opportunities abroad for staff and connect with our global communities.

#### 3.1 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROFILE

Finding solutions to complex problems requires multidisciplinary, cross-national research collaboration on a global scale. Competing in the global research arena is of fundamental importance to us, and it will be *the* key contributing factor to our becoming more widely regarded internationally as a truly research-led, pioneering and connected institution.

To extend the global reach of our research efforts, we will endeavour to increase the level of research funding from international sources and will strengthen our collaborations with international research networks.



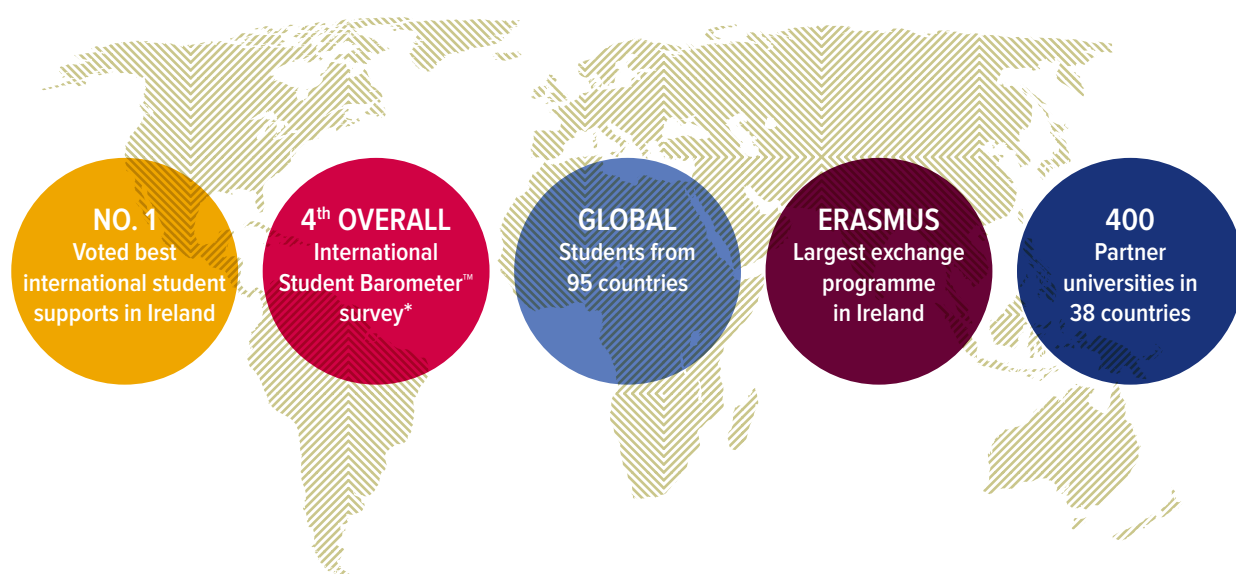
### 3.1.1 Increase funding from international sources

Our research environment will support and be informed by national and international strategic priorities, particularly those identified in the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme (2012). Horizon 2020 offers the potential to further diversify research funding sources. We will engage more intensively with the European Research Area in our research undertakings. It is expected that our ambitious plans to support researcher engagement with EU funding programmes will bring about a 100% increase in funding. To help achieve this, we will put in place a working group to drive a Horizon 2020 implementation plan for institutes, centres, faculties and departments. The working group will target research areas, identify funding streams and activate support mechanisms. It is anticipated that this work will give rise to a marked increase in the number of principal investigators (PIs) working on projects funded from EU and international sources.

### 3.1.2 Strengthen international research collaborations

Researchers who network internationally produce the most highly cited research publications, which is evidenced by the fact that approximately one-third of all global academic output comes about through international collaboration. Not surprisingly, there is a strong correlation between research impact (including citations) and international joint publications.

This strategic plan will promote collaboration between University of Limerick researchers and the global research community by aligning new international networks to our existing, emerging and niche areas of strength and by increasing the number of international research events hosted by the University. In particular, we will host a biennial, high-profile Bernal conference, which will attract world-leading scholars and will focus on challenging themes of global significance.



\* Global top ten rankings including employability, language support, accommodation and campus environment.

## THEME 3 RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

### 3.1: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROFILE

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>3.1.1: Increase funding from international sources</b>	Increase the number of PIs leading and participating in internationally funded projects (EU and non-exchequer international sources)	Targeted research areas and funding streams identified in institutes, centres, faculties and departments	International funding plans in institutes, centres, faculties and departments
		Dedicated staff supporting academic efforts in a range of international research projects	Bespoke training programmes and information on supports
	Engage more with Horizon 2020	High-level working group driving Horizon 2020 implementation	Doubling of income from EU funding sources relative to that achieved under FP7
<b>3.1.2: Strengthen international research collaborations</b>	Establish new international research networks	UL researchers participating in key international research groups aligned to our existing, emerging and niche strengths	Comprehensive audit/ gap analysis of existing international research partnerships conducted (2016) and new actions identified (2016-19)
			30% volume increase in UL-hosted international conferences/summer/winter schools
	Attract key international researchers to UL	Significant increase in the number of international research events on campus	Major (biennial) Bernal international conference launched (2017)





RESEARCH-LED

### 3.2 INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The internationalisation of higher education has immense potential for Ireland, and the quality of our higher education system is greatly enhanced by the inward and outward movement of students. Increasing student mobility at the University of Limerick over the lifetime of this plan will improve the quality of our research, teaching and learning and will enhance the overall student experience. We will achieve this by attracting international students to the University and providing more overseas learning opportunities for our own students.

#### 3.2.1 Attract international students

Over the lifetime of this plan, we will achieve a 60% increase in the number of full-degree international students by expanding our recruitment activities in established EU and non-EU countries and in new and emerging markets. It is intended that growth in international student numbers will occur across all faculties. We will expand our Study Abroad programme for incoming international students by offering new three-week and six-to-eight-week summer-school programmes, thereby increasing revenue. Furthermore, we will endeavour to maintain our leading position in the *i-Graduate* student survey by continuing to offer excellent support to international students who choose to study at the University of Limerick.

#### 3.2.2 Increase the number of international opportunities for outgoing students

We aim to be recognised as *the* leading Irish university in terms of internationalisation. Our ambitious goal is to ensure that every undergraduate student has the opportunity to engage in a relevant international learning experience such as a period of study abroad, an overseas internship or a volunteering placement. Specifically, we intend to increase outward mobility by 30%. We will expand our portfolio of exchange partnerships and maintain our position as Ireland's leading institution on the Erasmus exchange programme. Under Erasmus, we will endeavour to meet the EU Bologna 2020 target of one-fifth of undergraduate students spending at least one semester abroad. Outside of Erasmus, we will provide students with new mobility opportunities to support their career development.





## THEME 3 RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

### 3.2: INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>3.2.1: Attract international students</b>	Optimise student recruitment in new and established (EU and non-EU) markets	Further diversified student community and extended international profile	Detailed marketing and communication plans for key markets (EU, Brazil, China, India, Middle East and USA) produced in 2016
			New markets in South East Asia and Africa for student recruitment established (2016-19)
			60% increase in international full-degree student numbers by 2019
	Further develop UL's Study Abroad programme for incoming international students	Summer offerings attracting new international audiences	New summer-school programmes (3-week and 6-8-week programmes (2016 and 2017)
		Study Abroad programme strengthened and generating increased revenues	12% increase in US Study Abroad student numbers by 2019
<b>3.2.2: Increase the number of international opportunities for outgoing students</b>	Expand the portfolio of Erasmus and exchange partnerships	Our position as Ireland's leading institution on the Erasmus exchange programme maintained (2016-19)	20% of undergraduate students spending at least one semester abroad (EU Bologna 2020 target)
			New mobility opportunities for research students identified
	Provide all students with international mobility opportunities to support their future careers	Student mobility opportunities supporting future career development	30% increase in outward mobility (2019)  New semester abroad options available on degree programmes (2016 onwards)

### 3.3 INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

The University of Limerick is Ireland's leading Erasmus university. Emboldened by this success, we have built well-established partnerships with 400 institutions in 38 countries. By further developing our network of international partners and investing strategically in international activity, we will deliver new transnational education (TNE) programmes and facilitate greater staff mobility globally.

#### 3.3.1 Seek new international partnerships

We wish to work with leading international universities that are distinctive and feature multidimensional elements. New international partnerships will provide staff with more opportunities to work at highly ranked universities and to develop transnational education (TNE) programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels in countries of strategic interest. We will ensure that at least two TNE programmes are offered in part or entirely overseas.

In addition, we will create a small number of coordinated, integrated strategic international partnerships in research, teaching and engagement. Potential partners include universities, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and industrial and business partners.

#### 3.3.2 Invest strategically in international activity

We will allocate strategic funding to increase the level of staff engagement in international activities and will put structures in place to support staff in these activities. Funding will be aligned to performance outcomes specified in the University's research strategy. An international activity challenge fund will be established to support significant new internationalisation initiatives overseas as well as on campus, and a travel, exchange and fellowship scheme will be launched to support international research activities.

We will adopt an institution-wide approach to the internationalisation of academic activities. In this regard, we will appoint an 'assistant dean international' in each faculty to coordinate all international activity in their respective disciplines, liaise with relevant stakeholders, develop new strategies, respond to international opportunities and manage resources efficiently.





## THEME 3 RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

### 3.3: INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>3.3.1: Seek new international partnerships</b>	Leverage our strengths in the Erasmus+ programme	More opportunities for mobility of staff to highly ranked universities	New EU and non-EU partnerships through Erasmus+ programme with international partners in countries of strategic interest
	Develop new partnerships and transnational education (TNE) programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels in priority countries	Consistent flow of excellent international staff and students to UL through prestigious partnerships	High-level, cross-faculty steering group on TNE established to identify opportunities in key countries
			At least two new joint/dual degrees offered in part or entirely overseas
<b>3.3.2: Invest strategically in international activity</b>	Allocate strategic funding to increase the level of staff engagement in international activities	Strategic funding in place to support international engagement	International Activity Challenge Fund established in 2016
		Alignment of funding to specific performance outcomes in research strategy	Travel, exchange and fellowship scheme launched in 2016 to support international research activities
	Put structures in place to support staff in their international engagement activities	University-wide coordinated approach to the internationalisation of academic activities (partnership development, research collaborations, distance learning and wider TNE)	'Assistant dean international' roles established in each faculty (2016)

### 3.4 OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

The UL community stretches far beyond the borders of the campus: academic collaborators and alumni reside in over 100 countries. The international higher education community and our expanding network of international alumni represent distinctive networks that will be leveraged far more actively to support many of the international initiatives included in this plan and to raise our international profile and standing.

#### 3.4.1 Expand our global networks

By the end of this plan's lifecycle, we expect to increase by 20% the number of international external examiners and research co-supervisors associated with internationally renowned institutions in their respective disciplines. Furthermore, we will conduct a benchmarking exercise to assure the quality of our international external examiners, research co-supervisors and adjuncts on all programmes. We will also launch a centrally coordinated international visitor programme to provide a one-stop-shop support service for sabbatical academics, speakers and conference delegates who visit our campus.

#### 3.4.2 Benchmark our programmes internationally

Achieving global accreditation indicates that the quality of our programmes is of a world-class standard. We will seek to maintain current and secure new international accreditation and validation of our programmes, particularly in relation to Kemmy Business School (KBS) programmes. Our accreditation planning processes will be fully revised with a view to renewing current and achieving new programme accreditations, where relevant.



To better connect with our global communities, we will expand our networks of UL advocates and benchmark our programmes internationally.



## THEME 3 RAISING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

### 3.4: OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>3.4.1: Expand our global networks</b>	Expand international networks of external examiners, adjuncts, research co-supervisors and industry partners	A global community of advocates of UL established	Benchmarking exercise re. international external examiners, research co-supervisors and adjuncts conducted for all programmes (2017)
	Launch an international visitor programme	One-stop-shop support service for academic (sabbatical) visitors, speakers and conference delegates	20% increase in the number of international external examiners/research co-supervisors linked to internationally renowned institutions in their respective disciplines (by 2019)  International visitor protocols produced and programme launched
<b>3.4.2: Benchmark our programmes internationally</b>	Maintain existing and secure new international accreditation and validation, particularly in relation to KBS programmes	Fully revised accreditation planning processes	Accreditation review conducted at KBS (2016)  All current KBS accreditations renewed (e.g. EPAS and AMBA) and new accreditations achieved (e.g. AACSB)

The background of the image is a blurred photograph of a wooden walkway or boardwalk, with the wooden planks running diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. A white, thick diagonal line, composed of many fine parallel lines, runs from the top right corner towards the bottom left corner, intersecting the word 'COMMUNITY'.

**COMMUNITY**







# ENABLING THE STRATEGY

## **DEVOLVING PLANNING TO ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT UNITS**

As a research-led institution, we embrace disciplinary diversity. We appreciate the contribution that all disciplines make to the University's goals and we understand the differentiation of the academic profession. The demands of research, teaching, internationalisation and engagement vary across different disciplines and academic areas, and the University's expectations and planning processes will be suitably nuanced. Therefore, we will develop a sophisticated strategic planning framework that is more sensitive to academic diversity and the differing stages of development.

Shared responsibility for the outcomes articulated in this new overarching institutional strategy will be *decentralised to the key academic units and support divisions* with a view to ensuring an optimal balance between internal autonomy and accountability. By introducing this type of devolved, evidence-based performance planning culture, all staff will be empowered to contribute to the University's development according to their particular strengths. This will drive measurable improvements and will facilitate the evaluation of performance across the institution. In this way, we aim to strike an appropriate balance between autonomy and accountability to ensure that performance-improvement shades into self-improvement, management shades into self-management and our staff and students truly flourish.



## **RESOURCING THE PLAN**

We recognise that managing our human and financial resources is vital in terms of resourcing this new plan. We also understand the need to provide our staff and students with a working and learning environment that does not compromise the high standards we set ourselves.

Furthermore, the desire to maintain and further develop our excellent physical campus and virtual facilities will require significant investment.

Whilst we will continue to maintain balanced budgetary out-turns and an appropriate balance between pay and non-pay expenditure, we will endeavour to pursue new, innovative and pioneering approaches to seek alternative and sustainable sources of revenue and to manage our costs. The necessity to innovate demands a degree of flexibility that facilitates appropriate levels of risk. Risk management and governance structures will be continually reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate to the implementation of this plan. The use of resources will always be grounded in strong governance and risk management practices and will comply with regulatory requirements.

## **COMMUNICATING OUR AMBITION AND SUCCESS**

In the modern, highly competitive environment of higher education, acquiring and maintaining institutional reputation is an issue of increasing importance. We are acutely aware that institutional reputation can be built only on the basis of strong performance. Moreover, we clearly understand that institutional ambition fuels our future success. Therefore, choosing the most appropriate stories that communicate this ethos will make a very important contribution to defining our distinctive image, attracting energetic and ambitious new students and staff, and raising confidence to ensure that the University of Limerick's story is related globally.

The development of a new institution-wide communications and marketing strategy will be a priority. We will be more innovative, professional, coordinated and targeted in our communications and marketing activities and will use the most appropriate and effective media to communicate our distinctiveness to our multiplicity of stakeholders.



## ENABLING THE STRATEGY

### DEVOLVE PLANNING TO ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT UNITS

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>Devolve strategic and operational planning</b>	<p>Devolve strategic performance planning to faculties, divisions and research institutes</p> <p>Embed annual strategic action planning across all academic, research and support units</p>	<p>Significantly improved localised performance planning against agreed criteria spanning the breadth of academic and operational activity</p> <p>Deans/HoDs empowered to adapt workload models that align designated responsibilities to individuals' strengths and maximise individual contributions to strategic goals</p>	<p>Performance funding mechanism(s) identified with baseline data and KPIs established for each unit</p> <p>Revision of current resource allocation mechanisms to include a performance funding element (fully operational by 2017); linkages to the planning process incorporated across all key academic, research and support units</p>

### RESOURCE THE PLAN

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>Align resources to strategic goals</b>	<p>Strengthen the alignment between resource allocation and strategic priorities</p> <p>Diversify income sources from academic, non-academic and commercial activities</p> <p>Refine the annual budget process</p>	<p>Clearer identification of income streams from core and non-core activity in support of strategic goals</p> <p>Income diversification planning in all academic, research and support units</p> <p>Foresight planning linked to budget projections for sustainable recruitment strategies</p>	<p>Balanced budget out-turns returned annually</p> <p>Increases in non-state research and teaching income and income from commercial activities</p> <p>30% increase in non-core budget income</p> <p>University of Limerick Foundation philanthropic donations in support of strategic goals</p>

## COMMUNICATE OUR AMBITION AND SUCCESS

Aims	Objectives	Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<b>Coordinate communications and marketing activity</b>	Develop and implement integrated strategies, plans and operations to optimise UL's image and reputation	Increased awareness of the University of Limerick brand identity	Initial review and report on implementation of UL's strategy in relation to marketing, communications and branding (review completed by mid-2016)
	Closely align strategic communications and marketing activity to strategic objectives	Alignment of strategic communications and marketing activity to business objectives and business-case-based developments	University of Limerick communications and marketing strategy in place
		An acute focus on coordinated end-to-end processes that maximise UL's communication and engagement with stakeholders with a view to optimising the University's reputation and outcomes in all areas of activity	Demand upturns in a wide range of contexts, from programme demand/intake to securing research contracts

# IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING & REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

## IMPLEMENTATION

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this strategic plan rests with the University's Executive Committee, which comprising the President (chair), Vice President Academic & Registrar, Vice President Research, faculty deans, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources. In addition to the implementation of the devolved planning process described above, task-specific sub-groups of Management Council will be charged with devising implementation plans to realise particular strategic goals.

## MONITORING

The plan contains a broad range of actions and targets and will require a broad range of monitoring methods. Quantitative actions with target dates for completion will require monitoring based on the assessment of progress towards completion of the action by the target date. Non-measurable qualitative actions will require a different form of monitoring – one that is based on an evaluation of institutional commitment to the achievement of the particular objective. Where relevant and with the exception of our research metrics, which will be measured from a baseline of the 2014 calendar year, we will use AY 2014/15 data as benchmarks against which progress towards achieving our targets is evaluated.

## REVIEW

Progress on the plan's implementation will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Executive Committee. The President will present a twice-yearly update to the Governing Authority Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee and an annual update to the Governing Authority. This review cycle will examine the current list of aims, outputs and outcomes in terms of their relevance and their achievability in the context pertaining at that time.





# AMBITION



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