



Strategy and Performance Dialogue 2018 – 2021

HEI Self Evaluation Report on Progress

1 September 2018 – 31 August 2021

Section A: Summary Information

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Date of submission	11 April 2022

Section B: Overview of Institutional Strategic Development and Performance

<p>Critical Reflection</p> <p><i>Max. 5,600-character limit (750-800 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>Launched in November 2019, the UL@50 Strategic Plan was recalibrated during 2020/21 in response to changes in the external operating environment (Government strategy, establishment of DFHERIS, Brexit, C19) and, internally, to the change in leadership. Underpinned by a campus-wide consultation process, it has resulted in adjustments of priorities and objectives strengthening the transformation of education, becoming research-led, internationalisation at home, the cultural dimension in our civil and civic mission, the professional development of staff and creating a more inclusive institutional culture and embedding sustainability. Changes to the EC organisational structure were implemented (2020) to strengthen governance, ensure representation of all organisational areas at senior level and enhance operational effectiveness.</p> <p>Our student intake has increased, the academic offer was enhanced, research capacity and innovation were grown to catalyse the transformation of the Mid-West-region and address national priorities for the knowledge economy. PGT and PGR numbers increased through new programmes/formats that: a) address the competencies required by digital transformation processes; b) support re- and upskilling due to C19 related disruption to employment; c) promote international cooperation by upskilling academics in other countries (Algeria, DIKTI).</p> <p>Responding to C19, UL transitioned seamlessly into online/blended education, research and operations supported by the entire campus community. The crisis accelerated the embedding of technology enhanced learning into the curriculum, including the use of learning analytics to underpin student success.</p> <p>Phase 3 of the Students Record System is approaching completion. More resources will be dedicated towards system's capabilities to manage flexible learning offers and diverse student profiles.</p> <p>Our new city campus (2019) supports the Limerick 2030 vision and engagement with local government, communities and business while contributing to the civic regeneration. The first phase of meanwhile use was delivered (2022); we are working with Limerick CCC on the master planning as part of the World Class Waterfront.</p> <p>The establishment of the UNESCO K4C hub (2020) in the realigned UL Community Engagement unit enabled the strategic cohering of civic initiatives in UL, training community mentors and creating a virtuous cycle with access.</p> <p>Collaborations between UL, LIT/TUS and MIC have continued after the dissolution of Shannon Consortium on funded projects (PATH, NISE, the Regional Teaching Excellence Awards) and pandemic management. Partnerships with Limerick IT, Exploring Engineering and Limerick Learning Festival support our access drive and the diversification of the student body.</p> <p>To mitigate C19 impacts, student and staff supports were enhanced with new equipment for remote studying/working utilising Government aid; upskilling staff in the use of digital technologies (incl. digital pedagogies); supporting health and well-being. The Healthy Campus Framework has been implemented and its impact is being monitored to support future enhancements.</p>
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	<p>Research excellence in Bernal and Health Research Institutes and beyond, network expertise across our SFI funded centres Confirm, Lero and SSPC, with Enterprise Ireland centres (DPTC, PMTC) and Nexus Innovation Centre/entrepreneurship hub enabled new research ventures in data science, modelling, energy, piezoelectricity with considerable funding success (European Research Council, SFI, HRB). Cross-disciplinary/cross-sectoral collaboration are nurtured to address complex societal issues including green energy and sustainability. Research initiatives responded to C19 and informed new programmes (MSc Public Health, 2020).</p> <p>An enhanced research support infrastructure is key to increasing research capacity/funding and fostering existing talent/attracting new talent. Strategic international cooperation enhances performance across the research cycle, maximise impact and enhance inter/national competitiveness.</p> <p>We have grown flexible study programmes using active learning, research-led and challenge-based approaches and work-integration particularly at PG levels: MSc Digital Health Transformation (2020) HSE/Irish universities; School Leadership programme (with NUIG + DCU, 2019/20); MSc in Artificial Intelligence (2019).</p> <p>Advancing dual education and research further through co-design and co-delivery with industry [HCI UL@Work (2020); Immersive Software Engineering (initiated 2020)] supports certainty in graduate profiles, a viable regional talent pipeline and innovation ecology.</p> <p>Our cyber-physical infrastructure requires ongoing investment for enrolment growth, to reshape the learning environment, implement new VLE, grow research, capitalise on hybrid working.</p> <p>Governance across all areas was strengthened to meet compliance requirements. The Equality and Human Rights strategy (2019) was enacted with enhanced structural support. We advanced the Athena Swan Extended Charter (renewed Bronze award 2019, preparing for Silver submission); and 2+2 SALI posts grow leadership in key research areas.</p> <p>360 degree internationalisation has been accelerated by shifting ownership from support divisions to academic units/staff underpinned by more efficient support structures. Diversification of modes of student/staff exchanges (short-term/virtual) could only partially mitigate the impact of C19. An increase in international examiners/supervisors/academic collaborations (EUI EMERGE) promoted external programme benchmarking.</p>
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Section C: Key System Objectives (KSOs)

<p>KSO 1</p>	<p>Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability</p>
<p>KSO 1 Summary Statement</p> <p><i>Max. 4,200-character limit (550-600 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>Over the period of this compact, a key objective of UL was to broaden beyond being a largely regional and undergraduate university, in order to provide greater opportunities for our students, to develop more diverse learners and faculty and to support the social, cultural and economic development of the Mid-West, while contributing to national education and training in key disciplines and professional programmes. Over the period 2018/19 to 2020/21, the following objectives were achieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The UL Graduate School and Continuous Professional Education (CPE) were merged to create the new Graduate and Professional Studies, with its own Executive Dean. This was completed in 2019/20. 2. The range of Executive Education and Continuous Professional Development offerings was expanded, aligned to national skills strategy targets with companies. With the HCI funded UL@Work project, we have extended our interaction with industry in the development of flexible, work based Professional Diplomas. Seven new programmes have been co-designed with industry to support upskilling and reskilling in areas such as Industry 4.0, Digital Futures, Data Analytics and Digital Leadership. During 2020/21 UL registered 934 students on Microcredentials, including 850 July Stimulus students making it the highest performing university on this programme. 3. The number of postgraduate students experiencing a work-based placement or project increased to 1,727 or 26.3% by the end of 2020/21, exceeding the 24.5% target. 4. We have embedded entrepreneurship in the UG and PG level curriculum in a four-fold approach: through dedicated modules, projects and the design of programmes of study and underpinned by co-curricular activities through the UL Enactus Social Entrepreneurship Society and the Consulting and Entrepreneurship Society as well as an annual university-wide entrepreneurship competition. 5. Our flexible learning enrolments, in particular for mature and work-based learners, grew from 2,164 (pre-Compact Baseline) to 2,790 by the end of 2020/21. Due to the increase in CAO entrants in 2020/21, however, despite the increase in flexible enrolments, the percentage of total enrolments at the end of 2020/21 was 16.0%, below the 19.5% target.

	<p>6. The Educational Assistive Technology Centre’s (EATC) remit has expanded to include strategic projects including; the development of a Universal Design for Learning strategy and programme, and promoting inclusive and accessible T&L practices in close collaboration the Centre for Transformative Learning (CTL), Learning Technology Forum, Web Accessibility team.</p> <p>7. Establish a Learning Innovation Centre, this was achieved through the structural review and realignment of the Centre for Transformative Learning (CTL) in 2019 to the strategic goals of the UL academic transformation programme. The CTL plays a pivotal role in strategic project delivery, CPD in T-L-A, the implementation of the curriculum development framework to grow the quality talent pipeline.</p> <p>8. The consolidation of mature student activities to a limited age group within the broader mature student cohort was not considered feasible from an equality and inclusion perspective. Therefore MS activities and services continue to equally target all adult learners over the age of 23, as per the National Access Office definition and to ensure equity of access to higher education for all.</p> <p>9. All programmes have an employability statement.</p> <p>10. The number of Springboard students has increased in line with increased funding.</p> <p>11. UL has led the Irish universities in its development of industry-led New Apprenticeships. Seven programmes have been developed and more than 200 apprentices registered at UL to date, including 152 on masters level programmes and 12 on a Level 10 Principal Engineer apprenticeship.</p> <p>12. UL continues to collaborate closely with regional bodies in developing and delivering industry focused upskilling programmes, including the Mid-West Skills Forum, Limerick for IT, Skillnets. UL currently chairs Explore Engineering (formerly Limerick for Engineering) and will host an INSPIRE event promoting inclusion and diversity in engineering.</p>			
<p>Strategic Priority 1.1</p> <p>Addressing the needs of students and employers to sustain</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Pre-compact Baseline 2018</p>	<p>Overall Target 2018-2021</p>	<p>August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i></p>
	<p># and % level 9/10 enrolments</p>	<p>3,033 (21%)</p>	<p>24.5%</p>	<p>4,535 (26.3%)</p>

and grow employability	# and % of flexible, part-time, blended, distance and work-based learning offerings	2,164 (16%)	19.5%	2,790 (16.0%)
	# Non-standard entrants to undergraduate programmes	27%	3,515	3,430 (27%)
	# of PG students with work placements or work – based projects	No baseline	1,100	2,057
	% of undergraduate students spending at least one semester abroad (EU Bologna 2020 target)	No baseline	37%	25.4%* *impact of Covid (EU Bologna target is 20%)
	Amount (€)scholarship funding available under new institution wide UG and PG scholarship programmes	€273,545	+100%	€395,280 (+45%)
	Graduate employment rate ≥10% above national university average	22%		UL graduate employment rate is 5% above the national average.
	# Co-op placements annually	1,605	1,600+ Co-op placements annually	2,106
	Co-op annual placement rate	98%; International 20.6%	Co-op annual placement rate of 90%+ with 20% of all placements being international	80% 9% International

	# of visits by employers to UL campus annually; # of visits by UL to employer sites	763; 850	No specific target	Visits curtailed due to Covid-19, however number of employer virtual meetings was 1,425
<p>SP 1.1 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>The growth in Level 9/10 students surpassed our target for 2020/1, reaching 4,535 or 26.3% of total enrolments, ahead of the 24.5% target, as predicted in 2019/20 following the award of the HCI Pillar 3 award for UL@Work project. This also led to an increase in the number of flexible enrolments, but the percentage of overall enrolments for this category was depressed by the growth in CAO entrants. Non-standard entrants to undergraduate programmes were slightly below target by 2020/21, which was a result of the national lockdowns, which prevented this target group receiving guidance counselling at school. There has been an impressive increase in the number of postgraduate students with work placements or projects, reaching 2,057 in 2020/21 ahead of the 1,100 target.</p> <p>While the percentage of undergraduate students spending a semester abroad in 2019/20 and 2020/21 was badly impacted by the pandemic, the Co-op placement programme proved much more resilient. Including virtual placements, Co-op placement numbers in 2020/21 reached 2,106, ahead of the 1,600 target. It is notable that many graduates secured graduate employment through their Co-op placement employers, and student attendance at large-scale and tailored individualised employability provision remained high. Reflecting employability as a cornerstone of UL, our graduate employment rate is 5% above the national average.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green</p> 
<p>Strategic Priority 1.2</p> <p>Building on its strengths in Modern Foreign Languages and in response to Languages Connect</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Pre-compact Baseline 2018</p>	<p>Overall Target 2018-2021</p>	<p>August 2021 KPI Value</p> <p><i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i></p>
	<p>% of undergraduate students spending at least one semester abroad (EU Bologna 2020 target)</p>	<p>30%</p>	<p>37%</p>	<p>25.4%*</p> <p>*impact of Covid (EU Bologna target is 20%)</p>

	# of staff undertaking Irish language training annually	No baseline provided	33	13* *impact of Covid
	# of graduates from programmes with significant modern language components	Graduates from programmes with significant modern language components: 139	No specific target	208
	# of registrations on modern languages modules	Registrations on modern languages modules: 1,953	No specific target	2,571
	# of unique students taking a language module	Number of unique students taking a language module: 797	No specific target	1,032
<p>SP 1.2 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>UL has a distinctive commitment to undergraduate student mobility, with a target of 37% of students spending at least one semester abroad. Despite the innovation of virtual exchange, international outbound mobility was badly disrupted in 2019/20 and 2020/21 by the pandemic. However, UL continued to focus on increasing the number of students studying modern languages with the number of graduates rising from 139 in 2018/19 to 208 in 2020/21 and registrations on modules increasing from 1,953 to 2,571 over the same period.</p> <p>Innovations included increased staff and student engagement in informal language learning, as well as student engagement with the Languages Learning Hub. There was new provision of Mandarin (2020) with Arabic and Irish Sign Language to begin in Autumn 2022. A pilot microcredential in heritage language competence is also under development in an effort to recognise the rich linguistic diversity of our campus. UL is also emerging as a Centre of Excellence in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), with significant growth in the number of international academics engaging in such up-skilling in 2020-21 and 2021-22, largely from Latin America.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Amber</p> 

KSO 2: Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community

KSO 2 Summary Statement

Max. 4,200-character limit (550-600 words approx.)

Over the period of this compact, UL was committed to developing a spectrum of engagements nationally and internationally, to increase the diversity of its staff and students, to offer our students an experience beyond the university (in industry, the community and overseas) and to contribute to the social and cultural development of Limerick city, the Mid-West and nationally.

Initially, our Internationalisation Strategy was operationalised via the International Education Division through three key programmes: Full Degree; Study Abroad and Erasmus+ and Non-EU exchange. The University appointed an Associate Vice President Global Engagement (AVPGE) to lead internationalisation, who took up the new post in April 2020. In Autumn 2020, Global and Community Engagement were brought together in one VP portfolio to support internationalisation at home and in the community.

International student recruitment continues to recalibrate following the impact of COVID. Despite these challenges, UL has exceeded its target of 60% increase in international full degrees students, with an increase of 80% recorded for 2020-21. This increase can be accounted for in the continued effort to diversify our reach. For example, UL takes the highest proportion of Nigerian international students across the Irish HEIs. Equally, our region specific working groups with a targeted focus on strategic partnership building with India and China are having an impact.

Our US targets have been the most affected by COVID 19, which is a result of the difficulties in recruiting from a market that favours in-person activity. A return of travel and in-person activity should see UL regain study abroad numbers in the short term.

In terms of Erasmus Mobility, mobility of both staff and students remained below target as a result of COVID 19, with a drop from 587 (2019-20) to 52 (2020-21). UL saw an increase in the number of students engaging in shorter term and virtual mobility in 2020/21. While staff mobility declined from 103 in-person mobilities in 2018/19, over 60 virtual mobilities took place in 2020-21.

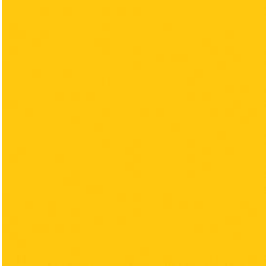
2020-21 Update on Strategic Initiatives

International Student Recruitment


- Building on the success of the region-specific approach to International Student recruitment, UL added a South American working group in 2020-21. This resulted in a growth of activity in Colombia, Brazil and Mexico.
- UL approved a number of joint degrees with key European partners via activity in the Kemmy Business School which will lead to target growth in European student recruitment.

Advancing internationalisation at home and the internationalisation of our communities


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UL has made gains in its approach to internationalisation at home in the reporting period. UL has been successful in two Erasmus+ capacity building bids to develop internationalisation at home competences amongst teaching faculty and to expand on its framework for enhanced and increased virtual mobility via the FRAMES project. Increase in number of students taking a global citizenship module with a focus on challenge-based learning to find solutions to global grand challenges (e.g Race and ethnic diversity in Irish higher education). <p>Increase in International PhD registrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UL's partnership with the Algerian Ministry of Education and Science has led to an increase in our PhD student registrations and we are now leveraging our experience with the Algerian PhD project with other markets (DIKTI). Significant growth in international co-supervision, with an emerging toolkit for excellence in international co-supervision as an example of international best practice. <p>Engagement at the European and Global level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UL is placing a renewed focus on Europe evidenced through the establishment of Erasmus+ projects office to further enhance our engagement with the Erasmus+ programme and hiring of EU recruitment manager. <p>Locally, UL is very engaged in the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, https://www.limerick.ie/discover/whats-on/festivals/limerick-lifelong-learning-festival-2022. UL will be delivering about 30 talks and will host the Flagship Event in the Citizens Innovation Hub, City Centre Campus.</p>			
Strategic Priority 2.1	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Internationalisation	Non-EU International Students as a % of all student registrations (FTEs)	No baseline provided	10.5%	7.8%* *impact of Covid
	Study Abroad Student FTEs	No baseline provided	200	43* *impact of Covid


	# of international full degree student	331	+ 60% by 2019	595 (+80%) (excludes GEMS and Research)
	# of US Study Abroad student	198	+ 12% by 2019	7* *impact of Covid
	Staff mobility Erasmus Exchange Numbers	40	88	zero* *impact of Covid
	# of international external examiners	187	230 (20% increase)	214 (+14%)
	# of international research co-supervisors	4	+ 20%	26
<p>SP 2.1 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>UL academics and researchers are collaborating with peers across 97 countries and 1,743 organisations including leading academic institutions with particular strengths in USA, UK, China and European partners in Germany, France, Spain and Italy. These collaborations are measured in terms of our publication outputs and reflects the depth of partnerships across the global academic community.</p> <p>UL remains Ireland's most successful University in the Erasmus+ programme. This is especially evident in the success of UL in ICM (International Credit Mobility). The benefits of our ICM success are evident in the reporting period, with over 40 joint research publications and successful capacity building projects with Algeria and Ghana. In addition, UL is the first Irish University to take the lead on an EUI submission via the EMERGE alliance.</p> <p>UL is working with its strategic alliance partners, EMERGE, YERUN, WAW to develop dual PhD awards to further enhance our PhD recruitment amongst European students.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Amber</p> 

Strategic Priority 2.2 Building partnerships with industry	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
	# visits by employers to UL campus	763	750 per annum	Visits curtailed due to Covid-19, however number of employer virtual meetings was 1,425
	# visits by UL to employer sites	850	850 per annum	Visits curtailed due to Covid-19, however number of employer virtual meetings was 1,425
	# Licences, options and assignments per €10m investment per annum	5	5 per €10m investment per annum	5.38 per €10m
	# Invention disclosures per €10m investment per annum	15	15 per annum	16.6
	# Patent applications per €10m investment per annum	3	5 per annum	5.4
	# of active Spinouts	8	16 (33% increase by 2021)	16
	% increase in research income from industry	€1.97m	20%	€4.154m (+110%)
	Enterprise training (Nexus)	0	100+ employees from 2016 (BH 2.2.3)	61
	Entrepreneur events	0	8 annually	No events due to COVID-19

	# Outward mobility	451	+ 30%	248* *impact of Covid
<p>SP 2.2 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>During 2020/21, labour markets were dramatically disrupted by the pandemic. The scale and volatility of the fallout meant undergraduate placement and graduate recruitment structures & processes were interrupted. UL employers' vulnerability to the effects of the pandemic was unevenly disrupted, with the pivot to remote provision proving easier for some sectors than others. For many UL undergraduates & early career graduates, their entry into the world of work took place without traditional supports of on-boarding, induction, development programmes. UL's longstanding collaboration with industry proved reassuringly hardy. Although physical visits were adversely impacted, both visits to UL by employers and vice versa were replaced by virtual visits and virtual engagements was 1425, in line with the visit target of 1600.</p> <p>UL's collaborations with enterprise have strengthened with increases in industry research income & excellent spin-out activity. This performance builds on our network of industry partnership across UL's EI and SFI Centres together with our strong talent pipeline. Both Lero and SSPC have commenced their next phase of funding, while Bernal Institute has established itself as a leading R&D partner with research strengths to tackle energy and climate action. Bernal is an active partner in the Shannon Estuary initiative addressing Ireland's green energy opportunity.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green</p> 
<p>KSO 3: Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe.</p>				
<p>KSO 3 Summary Statement</p> <p><i>Max. 4,200-character limit (550-600 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>In the period, UL has continued to strength its research ecosystem as evidenced in the growth of talent and research performance across the organisation. Our research institutes Bernal & HRI network expertise across our SFI funded centres Confirm, Lero and SSPC, our industry engagement with Enterprise Ireland centres (DPTC, PMTC) and our on-campus entrepreneurship hub via Nexus Innovation Centre. New research areas have emerged from across this network with growth in data science, modelling, energy, piezoelectricity and this is evidenced in success in funding programmes across European Research Council, SFI, HRB and the recent Shared Ireland North South Research Fund. UL is now home to six European Research Council Award holders across starting and advanced grant categories.</p> <p>UL secured over €35million in Horizon 2020 programme. By building on its strengths and focusing on supporting talent, a bedrock for future growth has been established. Widespread consultation on the development of UL's forthcoming research strategy focuses on</p>			

	<p>the need to bolster strength areas while also enabling excellence to grow across all disciplines. The community have identified the need to provide continued research support into the future, including post-award, seed funding, capital and equipment investments to enable growth, particularly in high performing areas such as materials, psychology, artificial intelligence, digital, modelling, energy and education. While focus on research excellence will remain front and centre, building on the performance in the period which saw a 34% increase in publications in top 10% journals since 2017 and a 73% increase in international co-authorship. In addition, UL has performed strongly in the Shanghai Global Rankings of Academic Subjects across a number of subjects including Education, Chemical Engineering (both first in Ireland) and Political Science and Hospitality/Tourism Management (joint first in Ireland).</p> <p>Research excellence with impact continues to play a central role to UL's organisational strategy, with the University currently ranked in 50th place globally in the Times Higher Research Impact Ranking. UL's Research Impact programme is in line with international best practice and has embedded the UN Sustainable Development Goals as its framework for addressing grand challenges. UL is part of the national working group on research impact as funded through the HEA and has established links with Campus Engage through the President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards. The Awards recognise Outstanding Research Collaborations and Early Career Researchers and have been an important focal point to highlight the contribution of the scientific community and their research collaborators within the public and private sectors www.ul.ie/researchimpact</p> <p>UL is building for the future with a pipeline of excellent research talent in place across career stages. Programmes such as the HEA SALI Professorships have reinforced strengths in data science, biochemical and digital engineering and genomics, while success in European Research Council - Advanced and Starting Investigator programmes further excellence across psychology, chemistry, bioscience, with applications in energy and public health. Our strategic emphasis on prestigious training grants such as MSCA Fellowships maintains a high success rate for UL. UL hosts the CRT in Foundations in Data Science and partners in the CRT in Artificial Intelligence, which now has 88 full-time students in the programme across the 3 institutions and 3 part-time PhD students (employees of Hertz, Microsoft, and the CSO) from our Enterprise Alliance. UL also hosts SMART 4.0 (Smart Manufacturing Advanced Research Training for Industry 4.0), a Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme aimed at providing world-class training and research opportunities to 16 post-doctoral fellows in the area of Smart Manufacturing.</p>			
<p>Strategic Priority 3.1</p> <p>Developing new areas of research</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Pre-compact Baseline 2018</p>	<p>Overall Target 2018-2021</p>	<p>August 2021 KPI Value</p> <p><i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i></p>
	<p># of tenured academics supervising doctorates</p>	<p>282</p>	<p>40%</p>	<p>360</p>

	# of Int'l research co-supervisors	4	13	26
	# of Research Impact Assessment Case Studies	4	18	22
<p>SP 3.1 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>UL has realised strategic objectives in growing new research areas: psychology, energy, genomics, materials, modelling. Our partnership with University Hospital Limerick Group (UHLG) has been furthered through the establishment of the Limerick Digital Cancer Research Centre as a priority centre focusing on digital approaches to diagnosis and treatment for cancer patients. This position is strengthened with attraction of a leading Professor in Cancer Genomics via the HEA SALI programme in 2021. This strategic recruitment has since led to the All Island eHealth Hub for Cancer in partnership with Queens University Belfast via the Shared Ireland North South Research Fund.</p> <p>The establishment of the President's Research Excellence and Impact Awards in 2020 has been an important development for UL's Research Impact Programme. The awards have 2 categories, Outstanding Research Collaboration & Early Career Research which recognise excellent research with impact beyond academia. These awards have contributed to a significant increase in the number of research impact case studies developed and broader engagement with the programme. In addition, a dedicated Research Impact module has been established for Doctoral students as part of the CRT programme and plans to scale this to other doctoral cohorts are underway.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Amber</p> 
<p>Strategic Priority 3.2</p> <p>Diversifying the research-funding base</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Pre-compact Baseline 2018</p>	<p>Overall Target 2018-2021</p>	<p>August 2021 KPI Value</p> <p><i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i></p>
	Income from EU funding sources relative to that achieved under FP7	No baseline provided	Double (100% increase)	€20.454m

	Amount (€) of Research funding	2017-18: €41,857,000*	€46,000,000 (+6%)	€53.579m
	Value (€) of total research awards from Horizon 2020	2018: €20,000,000	€30,000,000	€35.506m
SP 3.2 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	<p>In the period, UL established important support structures to grow its research funding base. This included a dedicated EU funding team, growing supports in the area of post-award and business development. A strategic focus on talent at all levels has played a significant role in this performance during the period.</p> <p>UL's European focus has been enhanced with our membership of the Young European Research Network (YERUN) which provides an important vehicle to strength and grow strategic partnerships with European Universities. UL is also a member of a number of European technology platforms and associations, which are transitioning into European Partnerships, aimed at increasing its influence over Horizon Europe work programmes in areas of strategic importance to UL. These include: EFFRA (manufacturing); EARPA, CCAM & ERTRAC (transport); Spire (process industries); BBI-JU (bio-based industries); and BEPA (batteries).</p> <p>UL's research community has responded strongly to the Covid-19 challenge and many have been involved in special response calls (SFI, HRB and the EU) and also played leadership roles in national committees including the COVID-19 Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group (IEMAG) and the National Public Health Emergency team via the Behavioural Change sub-group.</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green</p> 
KSO 4:	Significantly improves the equality of opportunity through Education and Training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population			
KSO 4 Summary Statement	<p>Goal 4 of UL@50 addresses UL's longstanding commitment to civic and community engagement, and also to social justice and transformation in education through the implementation of access, equality, diversity and social inclusion measures and practices that support our students to success.</p> <p>Non-standard entrants on UL's undergraduate programmes is currently estimated at 27%, slightly below our projected target. UL's access and widening participation services deliver a range of pre-entry, transition and post-entry supports to traditionally under-represented student groups. Covid-19 presented challenges to the achievement of our overall target, in particular for school-leavers</p>			

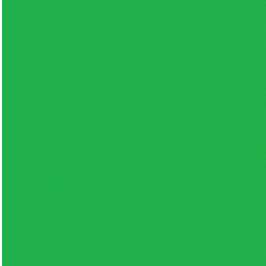
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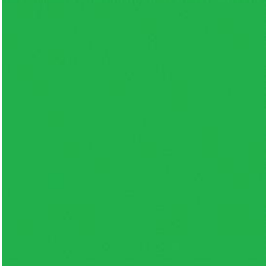
progressing on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage (HEAR students). Disrupted education for leaving certificate students, caused by the pandemic, saw a lower than anticipated number of students being deemed eligible for the HEAR scheme in recent years. A significant drop in HEAR entrants in UL occurred in 2018/19 (22% decrease to 215 entrants that year), however, intake had increased slightly by 2020/21 to new 235 students.


The number of new entrant students with disability (SwD) remained reasonably steady throughout the period of this compact agreement (214 in 2018; 216 in 2020). Intake has increased again in 2021 to 228 new entrants and overall figures for SwD continues to grow e.g. 12% increase in students in receipt of FSD support between 2018/19 and 2020/21 (899 students). This continued overall increase in SwD challenges UL to create ways to more sustainably support students to engage in their learning on an equitable and inclusive basis. The identification and embedding of universal design practices across all aspects of UL's teaching and non-teaching activity will be crucial going forward, including embedding UDL in a forthcoming UL Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy.


PATH 1 (led by MIC and working with NISE in UL), which supports the participation of under-represented student groups on teacher education programmes, and PATH 3 (led by UL) which supports the development of regional and community partnership strategies, were both successfully awarded funding for an additional three years to 2024. In addition, UL has led the Mid-West Regional Cluster in the continued management and administration of PATH 2, 1916 Bursaries (35 bursaries per annum awarded across the Cluster, 19 of these per annum in UL, to non-traditional students commencing full-time undergraduate studies), during the time period of this Compact Agreement. The Cluster is participating in the national working group in the development of a centralised application and assessment process for this scheme for the future.

UL's outreach work with DEIS schools and under-represented communities continued through the regular work of the Access Office and also through the PATH 3 Destination College programme. Despite the unprecedented disruptions caused by C19, in Phase 1 of PATH 3, the Mid-West Regional Cluster's Destination College programme supported an increase in the number of socio-economically disadvantaged students from our catchment areas entering our HEIs and reached 389. This exceeded the original 3-year target of 200 for this National Access Plan (NAP) group. Learning from Phase 1 of this initiative demonstrated that a presence in the communities of target groups, as well as in educational settings is key to access to higher education for under-represented target groups. Experience has also shown that some very disadvantaged individuals/families also require practical individualised support with making applications and navigating systems. This work is a blend of systematic and individual support at a macro and micro level and thus requires a longitudinal partnership approach, embedded and mainstreamed as part of UL's core work.

Strategic Priority 4.1	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Access Limerick	# of students participating in the PVA programme	217	550	750
	# and % Non-standard entrants to undergraduate programmes	27%	3,550	3,430 (27%)
SP 4.1 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	<p>The President's Volunteer Award (PVA) has seen an overall increase of 60% to 750 awards made in 2021.</p> <p>PATH 3 will include the introduction of a Traveller Programme Coordinator in UL to support both school leaver and adult traveller access. This is a crucial step in furthering the access & widening participation agenda, as self-reported participation by students from the traveller community in UL is still quite low (6 students in 2021). While PATH 2 and Dormant Accounts Funding have been helpful in supporting retention of students from this community, pro-active engagement at pre-entry level is now required to develop further meaningful engagement with and support of traveller students.</p> <p>UL strategically expanded its access and widening participation work with the development of the Academy for Children in 2020/21, with funding for a Primary Access Coordinator from UL Engage. The goal of the Academy is to encourage and support primary school children in local DEIS designated schools to reach their full potential and begin their journey onto higher education through in-school bespoke programmes and exploration days. The pilot phase of this initiative worked with one local DEIS primary school in 2021 and expanded to 3 schools in the current year. The initiative's pilot French language programme achieved the European Language Label Award in 2021.</p>			Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green 


Strategic Priority 4.2	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Progression and Retention	First-year retention rate (%)	87%	92%	94.9%
	# of entrants to Springboard / Apprenticeship and Skillnet programmes	No baseline provided	1,460	1,701
SP 4.2 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	<p>The retention of under-represented students in particular during C19 was a distinct risk. The dedication of UL staff – professional support, administrative and teaching staff – was a significant factor in ensuring that UL’s overall first year retention rate improved from 91% in 2018/19 to almost 95% in 2020/21, although as noted in 5.2 below, other factors were also at work. Funding from the HEA to offer practical and financial support for under-represented student groups assisted significantly during this period e.g. laptop loan scheme, Covid Contingency Fund and increased Student Assistance Fund.</p> <p>The continued over-reliance on external funding to support UL’s access and widening participation activity is not sustainable. There is also an increasing burden on services to manage and administer multiple funding schemes. UL will undertake benchmarking and a re-evaluation of the structure and resourcing of its AWP services in 2022/23 to identify the optimal and sustainable model to enable us to continue to support this mix of person-centred and administrative work.</p>			Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green 
KSO 5: Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence				
KSO 5 Summary Statement	<p>UL has a central focus on the quality of the student academic experience, the transformational impact of its academic programmes and the importance of providing support to enable all students to succeed. The period 2018/19 - 2020/21 was dominated by the pandemic which emerged in mid-2019/20. This enabled the newly established Centre for Transformational Learning (CTL) to accelerate its programme of staff training and development of innovative pedagogies and underpin the pivot to online and blended learning in March 2020. Major investments in educational software, hardware and staff development allowed major advances in student-centered learning, flipped classroom pedagogies and new approaches to flexible learning. These advances were supported</p>			

<p><i>Max. 4,200-character limit (550-600 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>by a regular programme of workshops and seminars, nationally and interationally, to share best practice and learn from experience. The learnings from this period have informed the recalibration of the UL@50 strategic plan, which places Transforming Education at the heart of UL's strategy, to move to a new challenge-based, research-led approach to curriculum design.</p> <p>A review of UL's current and future virtual learning needs has been completed and a new institutional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Brightspace, selected. All teaching and learning will be migrated to the new VLE by the end of AY 2023/24, this will be the foundation for Transforming Education at UL.</p>			
<p>Strategic Priority 5.1</p> <p>Improving progression and completion</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Pre-compact Baseline 2018</p>	<p>Overall Target 2018-2021</p>	<p>August 2021 KPI Value</p> <p><i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i></p>
	<p>First-year retention rate</p>	<p>87%</p>	<p>92%</p>	<p>94.9%</p>
	<p># of students attending new Life Skills Module</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>500</p>	<p>All first-year undergraduates took part in the First Seven Weeks programme.</p>
	<p># of Leadership training programmes annually</p>	<p>No baseline provided</p>	<p>2 Leadership training programmes annually</p>	<p>2 Leadership Programmes</p>
<p>SP 5.1 Commentary</p> <p><i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>During the pandemic, there was an increased focus on supporting vulnerable students and responding quickly to those identified at risk. At the same time, students were largely working from home with none of the usual social, sporting and cultural distractions. The combined result was that first-year retention rates improved sharply in the latter years of the Compact Period reaching 95% in 2020/21 compared with the 92% target. While this increase was very positive, it is likely that it will decline slightly as society returns to normal and alternative employment opportunities increase.</p> <p>UL invested significantly in the First Seven Weeks programme to support first-years as they transitioned to third-level education. The programme was enhanced in 2020/21 to reflect the fact that first-years and returning second-year undergraduates had spent the previous six months</p>			<p>Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green</p> 

	studying from home. The First Seven Weeks programme was reviewed and redesigned for largely online delivery in 2020/21 and incorporated the Life Skills module and sexual consent training.			
Strategic Priority 5.2	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Common entry into undergraduate programmes	# of departmental quality reviews	No baseline provided	7	10 departmental reviews + CINNTE
	# of staff undertaking training and development opportunities	1,772	2,300 (40% increase)	3,584* *Count of attendances at training/development events
SP 5.2 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	Ten departmental quality reviews and an institutional quality review were conducted in the period of this compact. The UL Institutional Review in August 2020 by QQI was followed by the publication of the CINNTE review report in January 2021. UL provided an implementation plan to QQI in April 2021 addressing each of the recommendations. Progress on the implementation plan has been monitored by the Quality Committee. Significant progress has been made on most recommendations as there is a natural overlap between them and the recalibration of UL@50 and its associated actions. The departmental quality review schedule remained on target as all reviews took place virtually and reports were published. A consolidated annual quality report on quality assurance and enhancement activities for 2020-21 has been submitted to QQI.			Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Green 
KSO 6:	Demonstrates consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence.			
KSO 6 Summary Statement	UL has demonstrated considerable improvements to its governance structures and procedures in pursuit of this KSO over the reporting period. These developments and enhancements were reported specifically each year and all recommendations are now near full completion. In addition, UL has conducted: a complete overhaul of UL's Policy Management Framework (Feb 2020) in a one-stop shop portal hosted by UL Corporate Secretary's Office; a new UL Code of Governance (Dec 2021); regular training on Annual			

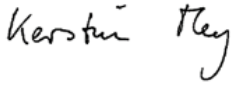
<p><i>Max. 4,200-character limit (550-600 words approx.)</i></p>	<p>Governance Statement and Statement of Internal Control by external experts (PWC); a new Internal Audit structure; a new risk management structure and reporting mechanism at GA; and full roll-out of GDPR compliance structures and mechanisms.</p> <p>Further to the changes set out in the attached and in our annual HEA Compact reports, the Interim President has also put in place a revised Executive Committee management structure with an appropriate division of portfolios aligned to EC members’ abilities and experience, following her appointment in 2020. This new, devolved structure of senior management, with clear roles and responsibilities, was strongly endorsed by the Governing Authority and facilitates greater information sharing and communication between the Governing Authority and all of the members of the Executive Committee than previously. Upon her appointment to the President's role in October 2021, the structure was reaffirmed.</p> <p>The Governing Authority (GA) and its sub-committees were also subject to an external review conducted by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in 2020. Recommendations arising from the review are either implemented or in the process of being implemented, the latter closely monitored by the GA through its Governance Committee, which reports regularly on progress to GA. The GA also approved a revised Schedule of Matters in 2021, which provides for enhanced clarity on the role of GA and delegated authority to sub-committees. This review included a significant reduction in the delegated authority level for major contracts of the University and its subsidiaries and these changes and assurances have been reported seperately to the HEA. The outstanding matters include: a new contract signing policy, which will be approved in June 2022; and a 5-year work plan, which cannot be progressed further until the the new GA is established in line with the Government's planned legislative changes and new provisions in December 2022.</p> <p>Governing Authority is satisfied that it now has a strong committee structure in place with increased levels of external expertise to support expert consideration of proposed policies and to monitor the effectiveness of their implementation. The Sub-Committees meet regularly and report to Governing Authority following each of their meetings. These reports provide Governing Authority with required information on matters agreed by the relevant sub-committee or those being recommended to Governing Authority for approval.</p> <p>Further developments in relation to governance in the coming years will be cognisant of the pending revisions to the Act currently being progressed through the Houses of the Oireachtas and will, of course, heavily inform the establishment of an entirely new Governing Authority structure in December 2022 in line with the new legal provisions and UL's obligations.</p> <p>In relation to our commitments set out with regard to the Equality and Diversity, UL has met or exceeded all of its targets in this regard. It is notable that the UL Physics Department became the first Irish department achieve Athena Swan Silver award in late 2021 and the University is well on track to becoming the first Irish University to achieve institutional Silver status with plans to begin the formal review and evaluation scheduled for December 2022.</p>
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Strategic Priority 6.1	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Equality & Diversity Strategy 2018-2021	% Non-standard entrants to undergraduate programmes	27%	Target headcount is 3,515, no target set for % of overall undergraduate body	3,430 (27%)
	Cumulative number of Departments/Faculties attaining Athena SWAN accreditation leading to Institutional Silver Award	No baseline provided	13 Bronze 1 Silver	13 Bronze 1 Silver
	% of female Academic Professorial Staff	31%	32%	31%
	SP 6.1 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	<p>Non-standard entrants - see KSO 4.</p> <p>UL was the first university to be awarded an Athena Swan Bronze Award in 2015, which was re-accredited in 2019. This has created significant cultural changes within the University, highlighted through the receipt of 12 departmental level Bronze Awards including 2 Faculty Bronze Awards, and Ireland's first departmental level Silver Award in 2021 by the Dept. of Physics. 27 out of 30 UL academic departments now hold Athena Swan Awards. Work is underway to apply for a Silver Institution Award in 2022.</p> <p>HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Funding was used to instigate a programme which provides cross sectoral senior mentors to female staff committed to apply for promotion to Associate Professor Level within 2 years. 24 Senior Lecture staff have completed the programme to-date. Cohort 2 will be rolled out in the coming months. This strengthens the professorial pipeline to help UL reach its ambitious target. In November 2021, UL was awarded 2 SALI Professorships. A SALI Chair in Digital Engineering and a SALI Chair in Biochemical Engineering will be appointed in 2022.</p>		

	The Ethnic Diversity forum was launched in December 2021, to provide a space to understand and advocate for a positive campus climate in relation to ethnicity, equality, diversity, and inclusion to help make UL an equitable, safe, and respectful work and study environment for all.			
Strategic Priority 6.2	Key Performance Indicators	Pre-compact Baseline 2018	Overall Target 2018-2021	August 2021 KPI Value <i>Max. 210-character limit (30 words approx.)</i>
Implementation of Recommendations of Reviews 2016-2018	Implementation of Crowe Horwath Report Part 2	No baseline provided	Complete final four recommendations	1 of 4 outstanding recommendations complete (new Code of Governance). Remainder pending new legislation and establishment of new GA structures in Dec 2022.
SP 6.2 Commentary <i>Max. 1,400-character limit (200 words approx.)</i>	<p>Recommendation 1 Core Principles of Governance: A revised UL Code of Governance was approved by Governing Authority in December 2021. This item is now complete.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 Scheme of Delegation: Executive Committee structural work completed with clarification on delegation of authority. Revised Schedule of Matters Reserved to Governing Authority approved by Governing Authority in April 2021. A revised Contract Signing Policy will be considered by Audit & Risk Committee in June for approval by Governing Authority end June 2022.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 Provision of Information to Governing Authority: Agreed by Governing Authority that this will be considered further when the new Strategic Plan has been approved. Calibration of the Strategic Plan was approved by Governing Authority at the end of February 2022. The development of a five-year work plan will be a matter for the incoming Governing Authority the timing of which is dependent on the new HEA Act.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 Other Committees at the University of Limerick: The process to review the University's Committee structure is underway and will be completed by the end of Q2 2022.</p>			Colour rating for this Strategic Priority: Amber 

Section D: Signature

Note: This section should be signed by the President or on behalf of the President.

Name of signatory	Prof. Kerstin Mey
Title	President
Signature	
Date	11 April 2022