

Maynooth University Strategic Plan 2018-22





Maynooth University

Strategic Plan 2018–22

Contents

Introduction	5
Institutional Context	6
National Policy Context	8
Achievements under the University Strategic Plan 2012-17	11
University Strategic Plan 2018-22	14
Strategic Goals	18
Strategic Actions	20

Strategic Goals & Actions

Research and Innovation	26
Postgraduate Education	30
Undergraduate Education	34
Student experience, services and supports	37
Internationalisation	39
Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism	43
Excellent teaching and learning	48
Arts and culture	50
People and Organization	52
Digital Transformation	56
Quality, Planning, Finance and Governance	60
Estates, Capital Development and Campus Master Plan	62
Communications, Alumni and Philanthropy	64

Professor Philip Nolan
President



Introduction

The strategic trajectory and accomplishments of Maynooth University (MU) in the twenty years since our establishment as an autonomous public university, are exceptional and a source of great pride to the university community, our staff, students and alumni. MU is now acknowledged to be one of the leading young universities in the world.

Maynooth University's growing global reputation is based on the originality, quality, importance and impact of our research and scholarship, our commitment to teaching and learning, the quality of our academic programmes, and our leadership in widening participation in higher education. The sources of our success are the dedication of our staff and the energy and engagement of our students.

We have, under the *University Strategic Plan 2012-17*, further enhanced our capacity and reputation for research, transformed our undergraduate curriculum, grown postgraduate enrolments and become even more international, diverse and engaged. MU makes, and is seen to make, an important and distinctive contribution to our national system of higher education.

The *University Strategic Plan 2018-22* builds from a position of confidence: MU is a university with ambition, vision and values, a clear identity and sense of purpose, a history of achievement, and a future of considerable promise. This strategy builds on our accomplishments, and concentrates institutional energy and resources on further development in research and postgraduate education.

The strategy focuses on:

- Targeted investment in research capacity in a number of priority areas;
- Extending the postgraduate portfolio and growing the postgraduate community;
- Realising the full benefits of our innovative undergraduate curriculum;
- Enhancing the student experience;
- Comprehensive and ethical internationalisation;
- Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism as enablers of academic excellence.

"Our strategic goals are underpinned by a commitment to invest, first and foremost in people and opportunities for their development and success, and also in the systems and infrastructure required to achieve our scholarly and educational objectives."

Institutional Context

“The University Strategic Plan 2018-22 is rooted in the distinctive institutional characteristics of Maynooth University. This distinctiveness is our greatest asset.”

Our scholarly strengths are concentrated in the humanities, social sciences, and science and engineering. MU is home to the largest concentration of humanities and social sciences students and scholars in the Republic of Ireland and a thriving community of scientists and engineers, creating an exceptional milieu for disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and learning. MU has a deep and historic commitment to liberal education and fundamental research, seeing these as ends in themselves, and also the basis for applied research and professional education. Our programmes in initial teacher education, youth and community work, psychology, electronic engineering, business and law bring particular capacities and strengths, and allow us to broaden our engagement with the challenges faced by our society.

The culture of the University is vital to our success and central to our identity. MU is a dynamic, rapidly-growing and innovative institution, which nonetheless remains a collegial, collaborative and inclusive community, where staff and students can flourish, and there are manifold opportunities for interdisciplinary encounter, dialogue and learning. MU has always pursued a strategy of balanced excellence by equally valuing teaching and research and recognising the synergies between them, so that engagement in world-class research and scholarship is accompanied by a similar dedication to teaching and student success, and these are seen as mutually

supportive activities. An institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion enables excellence and ensures the benefits of higher education are equitably distributed within our society.

We set out our plans at a critical juncture: after a period in which Irish universities have expanded with very constrained resources, significant additional investment in higher education is needed and anticipated. We will in this context remain advocates for balanced investment across science, engineering, humanities and social sciences, knowing that major societal challenges require the knowledge, insight and creativity of each of these diverse disciplines, and our free exploration of all is essential to human flourishing.

Furthermore, the present times highlight the preciousness of informed discourse, understanding and tolerance, the true value of knowledge, learning and inquiry, and the importance of democratising knowledge through a public research and education system. We assert our purpose as a public research university: through our research, teaching and engagement we contribute to innovation, economic growth, social development and cultural vibrancy, and to underpin a free, open, equal, democratic and sustainable society. This purpose informs all aspects of our strategy, and in particular our commitment to the breadth of teaching and research activity which is essential to an innovative, creative and engaged citizenry.



Dr Jeneen Naji
Media Studies



National Policy Context

“A vibrant university system is essential to a flourishing and prosperous society. Maynooth University, as a distinctive and important component of the Irish higher education system, is guided and informed by national strategy and policy statements in developing its institutional strategic plan.”

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* sets a visionary and comprehensive policy framework for the development of our higher education system, outlining principles and goals in teaching and learning, research, engagement, internationalisation and governance. The National Strategy charts a path to ensure a higher education research and innovation system appropriate to the needs of growing and globally-engaged country. The *National Strategy*, and associated policy statement *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*, also set in train important structural changes, paving the way for the establishment of Technological Universities and creating regional clusters of higher education institutions to collaborate on academic planning, programme provision, widening participation and enterprise engagement. Maynooth University, with its partners in Dublin City University, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Athlone Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology and National College of Ireland, played a leading role in the development of such regional collaborations, creating the Mid-East North Dublin cluster, widely regarded as a model of good practice.

The *Action Plan for Education 2016-19* puts in place more immediate objectives for the education system, and the *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-20* specifies six high level objectives:

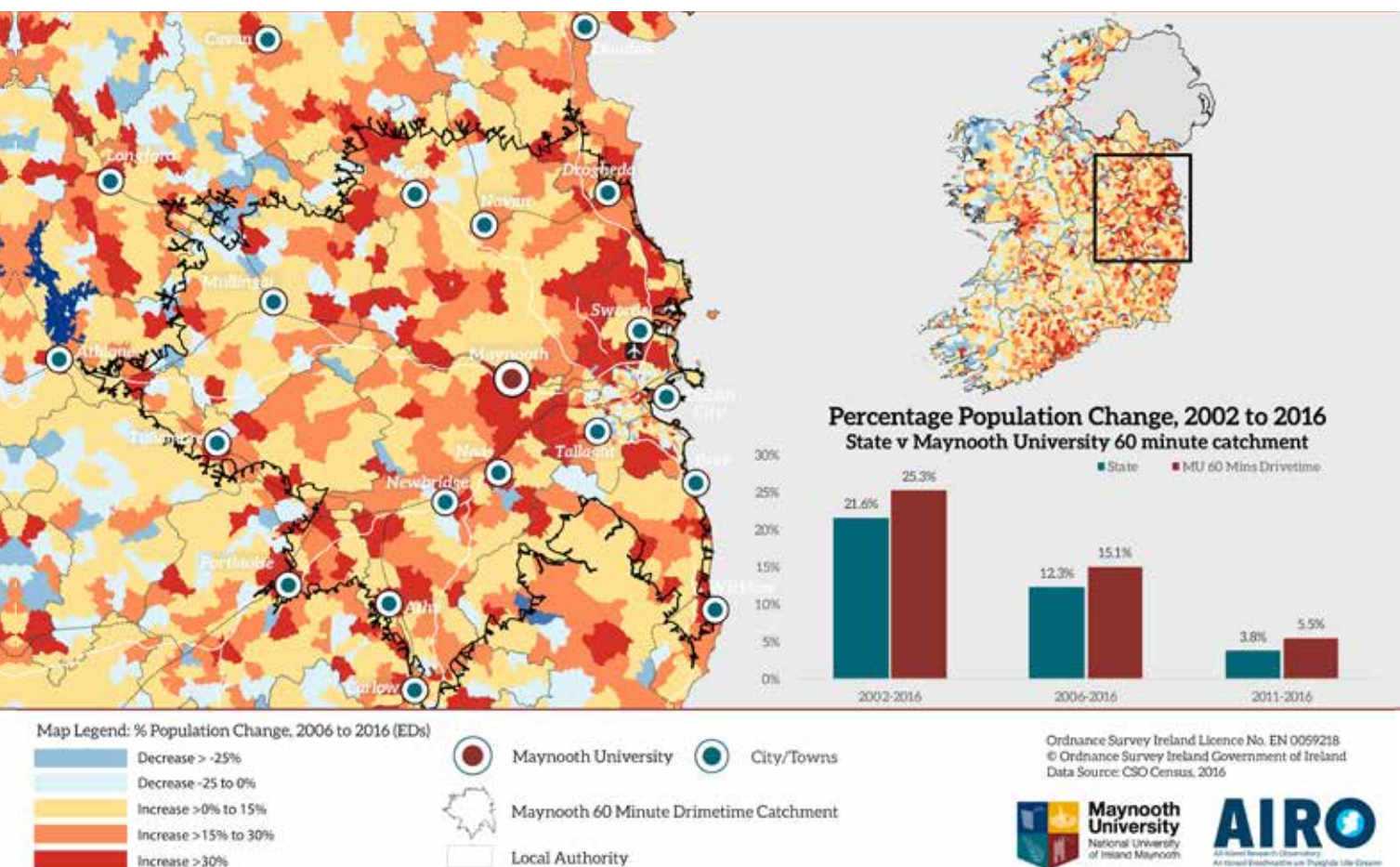
1. Provide a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability.
2. Create rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhance the learning environment and deliver a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community.
3. Conduct 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.

4. Significantly improve equality of opportunity through education and training and recruit a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.
5. Demonstrate 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.
6. Demonstrate consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence.

This strategy is informed by and aligned with these objectives, and our mission-based performance compacts with the Higher Education Authority will set out specifically how Maynooth University contributes to the achievement of these overarching system goals.

Innovation 2020: Ireland's Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology envisions Ireland as a global innovation leader, and focuses on research excellence, graduate talent and impactful, enterprise-facing and engaged research and development, with particular emphasis on national priority areas and greater involvement in EU research programmes. *Innovation 2020* will direct national funding to research that has direct relevance for the enterprise base, and meets the needs of society including improving the quality of public services, protecting the environment, natural resources and the climate, and ensuring food security and sustainability of energy supply. A range of enterprise and economic plans, including *Enterprise 2025*, the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the *ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-18*, the *National Action Plan for Jobs*, the eight *Regional Action Plans for Jobs*, and the *Action Plan for Rural Development*, propose important directions for higher education, emphasising research and innovation, skills and talent, and regional and rural economic development. Maynooth University is responding, emphasising the importance of breadth and creativity in the research and talent base, the vital contribution the University makes to regional economic and social development, and the value of regional clusters and Regional Skills Forums.

A Population Boom and a Growing Need for Education: Regional Demographic Growth in Mid-East/North-Dublin 2006 – 2016



The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* prompted more detailed considerations of teaching and learning, engagement and internationalisation. The work of the *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning* and *Campus Engage*, along with *Irish Educated Globally Connected – An International Education Strategy for Ireland*, are key resources in the design and delivery of our strategic plan.

The education system rightly pursues a strategy of excellence and equity through diversity and inclusion, and the recommendations and actions of the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19* and the *HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions* inform our approach to equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism.

Investing in National Ambition: A Strategy for Funding Higher Education carefully and comprehensively documented the rising demand for higher education over the coming decade, and the concomitant investment required to ensure that our research and education are comparable to those of other successful nations. The subsequent *Review of the Allocation Model for Funding Higher Education Institutions* proposes significant changes to how the already inadequate funding should be allocated across institutions and disciplines. We strongly believe that the broad

range of disciplines constitutive of a university have a critical and essential role in economic development, social progress, cultural vibrancy and equality of educational opportunity, and any funding allocation model must provide appropriate resourcing for this diversity of disciplines. The *National Planning Framework* and the aligned ten-year *National Development Plan* outline the national, regional and local planning and investment decisions, including investment in education and research, to cater for an expected population increase of more than 1 million people by 2040.

We also are conscious, in preparing this plan, of developments in EU research, innovation and education policies. The EU agenda for the modernisation of higher education proposes an emphasis on: tackling skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development; building inclusive and connected higher education; ensuring higher education institutions contribute to regional innovation; and supporting effective and efficient higher education systems. Framework Programme 9 is expected to be an evolution of the current Horizon 2020 programme, with three pillars (Fundamental Science, Global Challenges and Open Innovation) and interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches to societal grand challenges. Our institutional and national strategies are well aligned to these EU policy objectives.



Achievements under the University Strategic Plan 2012-17

“The University Strategic Plan 2012-17 set out an ambitious vision and strategic direction for the University. The entire University community worked hard, with limited resources, towards its goals and objectives, and we are rightly proud of our very significant achievements over the last five years, especially in research and scholarship, curricular reform, internationalisation and widening participation.”

We have enhanced our research capacity in a strategic manner, focused on agreed research priorities, specifically: arts and humanities; social and spatial sciences; mathematics, communications and computation; and human health. The volume and quality of published scholarly work is excellent by national and international standards, and we have had significant successes with IRC, ERC and Horizon 2020 grants, building strong connections into major SFI Centres.

MU is known for engaged research and knowledge transfer, and in addition to an excellent institutional performance, we have led important national and regional initiatives. Our achievements include the Innovation Value Institute; the All-Ireland Research Observatory; the MaynoothWorks business incubator; a leadership role in the Technology Transfer Strengthening

Initiative; an excellent position in relation to patents, licensing and spinouts; and a range of public policy, community and cultural engagements with significant impact.

The Maynooth University Undergraduate Curriculum is widely seen to be the single most important development in undergraduate education in Ireland in recent decades. The emphasis on the fundamental skills of critical thinking and clear communication, unique subject combinations, added flexibility and choice, and the expansion of experiential learning are proving extremely attractive to students. We can build on this momentum to develop new undergraduate pathways and programmes which meet the changing needs of students and employers.



Since the recession began in 2008, Ireland's university sector has grown by 21,000 students. Maynooth University has contributed to 22% of that growth.

We have significantly enhanced the education and training of doctoral students, being the first university to introduce the structured PhD, and expanding our range of professional doctorates. We have strengthened our scholarship programmes to retain talented students for postgraduate study – and the rate at which these convert into successful IRC applications is a testament to the value of this approach.

We set ourselves the ambitious goal of doubling the number of international students at MU, and have exceeded this: international enrolments increased from 540 (or 5.6% of total enrolments) in 2010/11 to 1100 (9.1% of total enrolments) in 2016/17.

We remain a national leader in widening participation; the University is the most diverse in the sector. Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students and students with a disability—all of whom face barriers to participation in higher education—represent a greater proportion of our undergraduate student body than any other university in the State. This diversity is an asset, enhancing the experience of learning and working at Maynooth University.

MU has grown rapidly since its foundation, and particularly so over the last five years. In 2010/11, we admitted 2,000 first-year undergraduate students and had a total student population of 9,600; in 2016/17 we welcomed just over 3,000 first-year undergraduates and had over 12,000 students overall.

The academic staff has grown *pro-rata* from 297 (full-time equivalent) in 2010/11 to 402 in 2016/17. This growth has not been without its challenges, and the *University Strategic Plan 2018-22* recognises and responds to these challenges, with attention to detailed resource planning, investment in people, the provision of infrastructure and systems, and the preservation and enhancement of the student and staff experience. However, growth has allowed us to invest in staff, strengthening departments and maintaining a constant staff-student ratio through a very challenging period. It has given us the capacity and resources for strategic change, in areas as diverse as research capacity, gender equality, the development of new disciplines, and reform of the undergraduate curriculum. Finally, it has allowed us to invest in the campus in a planned and structured manner, and to begin to develop the facilities required for the future expansion of the institution.



We have seen significant organisational changes, including the establishment of the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, the rapid development of programmes in Business and Law, and the addition of International Development and Mediation and Conflict Intervention, all of which have achieved national and international acclaim in a very short time.

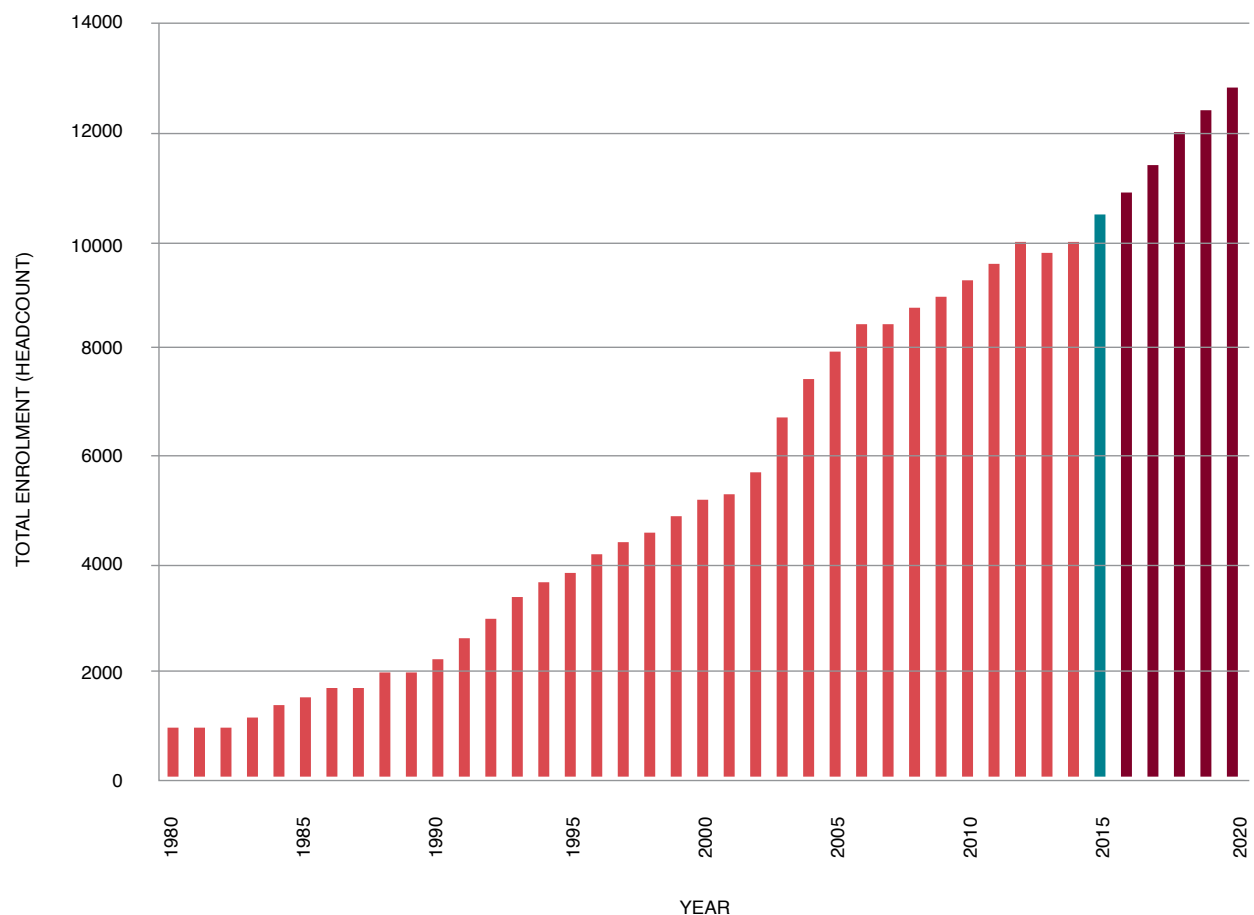
The administrative and support units of the University have been central to its success, contributing to and supporting research and learning. They have conceived, designed and delivered important strategic initiatives to enhance our research, teaching and operations. Many have been through very significant reorganisation, and all have worked to simplify processes, upgrade systems and improve services.

The University has seen significant investments in buildings and infrastructure, a trend which will accelerate in the coming decade. We have added 21,700 m² to the building stock of the University at a cost of €62m, including the Eolas building, the School of Education and the new 296-bed student accommodation.

We have, through careful consultation, developed and adopted a new campus master plan, which will guide the development of our environment over the coming decade, creating a living and learning realm which will be inspirational and sustainable; we have raised a loan from the European Investment Bank to fund the first phase of its implementation.

Maynooth University has developed strong partnerships: with St. Patrick's College Maynooth, with which we share an academic programme, a campus and a heritage; with the institutions of the Mid-East North Dublin Regional Cluster, and with a range of international partners. The Mid-East Regional cluster is an important vehicle to allow the institutions to collectively respond to the skills needs of the region, deepen our engagement with enterprise, and co-ordinate our work to widen participation in higher education. We recognise in particular the value of the Regional Skills Forum in assisting the university in addressing skills needs and ensuring the employability of graduates.

Enrolment Growth and Projections: 1980-2020



University Strategic Plan 2018-22

“The University Strategic Plan 2018-22 sets out the mission and purpose of Maynooth University, our vision for the type of university we wish to be in five years’ time, the principles and values which guide us, and our specific strategic goals and actions.”

Purpose

Maynooth University is a public research university dedicated to people, ideas and culture, a scholarly community working together to inquire and discover, to teach and learn, to create, conserve, disseminate and apply knowledge, and engage with the challenges that face modern society; through all these things in combination, we are central to innovation, economic growth, social development and cultural vibrancy, and are essential to a free, open, equal, democratic and sustainable society.



Dr John Stephens,
Department of Chemistry

Vision

Maynooth University will further advance its international standing as a leading research university, with a vibrant postgraduate community, a distinctive undergraduate provision, a comprehensive and ethical approach to internationalisation, and extensive engagement with external partners; we will be recognised for our commitment to the public and civic mission of the University, as a national leader in equality and diversity, an excellent place to learn and work, an inclusive community where students and staff can flourish, and as making a distinctive contribution to the national system of higher education and the public good.

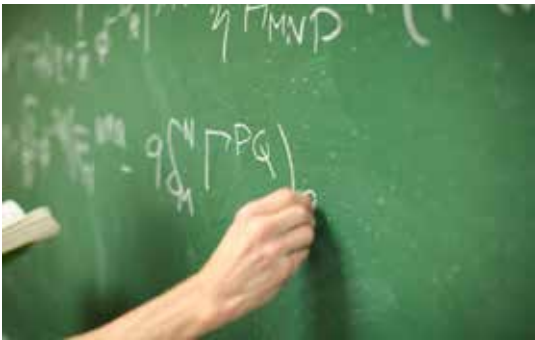
Principles and Values

Maynooth University is committed to the following values:

- scholarly rigour;
- academic freedom;
- integrity and ethical behaviour;
- collegiality, transparency and trust;
- equality, inclusiveness and social justice;
- operational excellence, organisational flexibility and responsiveness;
- dignity, respect and care for the individual.



The following principles inform the development and implementation of our Strategic Plan:

- The University is a learning community, the strength of which lies in its talent and diversity, which can be extended and enhanced through engagement and strategic partnerships.
 - The University best serves the needs of a democratic society through free and untrammelled enquiry and the formation of graduates who are educated to question, analyse, reflect, think critically, act creatively and contribute positively to society.
 - Academic freedom is a central principle of a university committed to free enquiry; it carries with it a range of academic duties and responsibilities.
 - The space for critical reflection and creativity are essential features of a successful academic institution.
 - A collegial learning community is established and maintained by achieving an appropriate balance between our individual interests and the common good of the University community, realising the benefits of academic autonomy and collegial interaction.
 - Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism underpin academic excellence and enhance research and learning.
 - The University community has an obligation to put its capacities, insights, knowledge and learning at the service of society in facing the challenges of today and tomorrow.
 - Mass participation in higher education requires constant attention to the effectiveness of our approaches to teaching and learning and the nature of the learning environment, to engage and challenge a more diverse student body, with very different backgrounds, abilities, interests, goals and aspirations, supporting each student to achieve their full potential.
- 
- The University relies on the knowledge and practices of different disciplines: a diversity of strong disciplines is essential to rigorous scholarship and learning, to effective interdisciplinarity, and to the vitality of the University.
 - The University has an obligation to show leadership in sustainability, biodiversity and care of the environment.
 - The University is committed to preserve, promote and use the Irish language, not least through the implementation of its Scéim Teanga, and to preserve and promote the distinctive cultures of Ireland, through teaching, research and in all aspects of University life. The University will ensure that the visibility and relevance of the Irish language continues to increase across the campus.
 - Evidence and examples of best practice from across the University, and from other universities, are a fundamental resource in developing strategies for the future, encouraging and supporting academic initiative and sharing knowledge which has been tested in practice.



Designing Effective Support for All Job Seekers

Since 2017, Maynooth University has been working with the Ollie's Mhúiríard team to design, develop and deliver a range of support services for all job seekers, including those with disabilities, mental health issues, and those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

All interventions are designed to be inclusive, accessible and tailored to the needs of individual job seekers. The Ollie's Mhúiríard team works closely with the University's Disability Support Unit, the Student Union, and the local community to ensure that all job seekers have access to the support they need.

- **Employment Support:** One-to-one support with employers to ensure that all job seekers have access to the support they need.
- **Employment Support:** One-to-one support with employers to ensure that all job seekers have access to the support they need.

The Ollie's Mhúiríard team works closely with the University's Disability Support Unit, the Student Union, and the local community to ensure that all job seekers have access to the support they need.

For more information, please contact the Ollie's Mhúiríard team on 01 856 8800 or visit olliesmhuiriard.ie

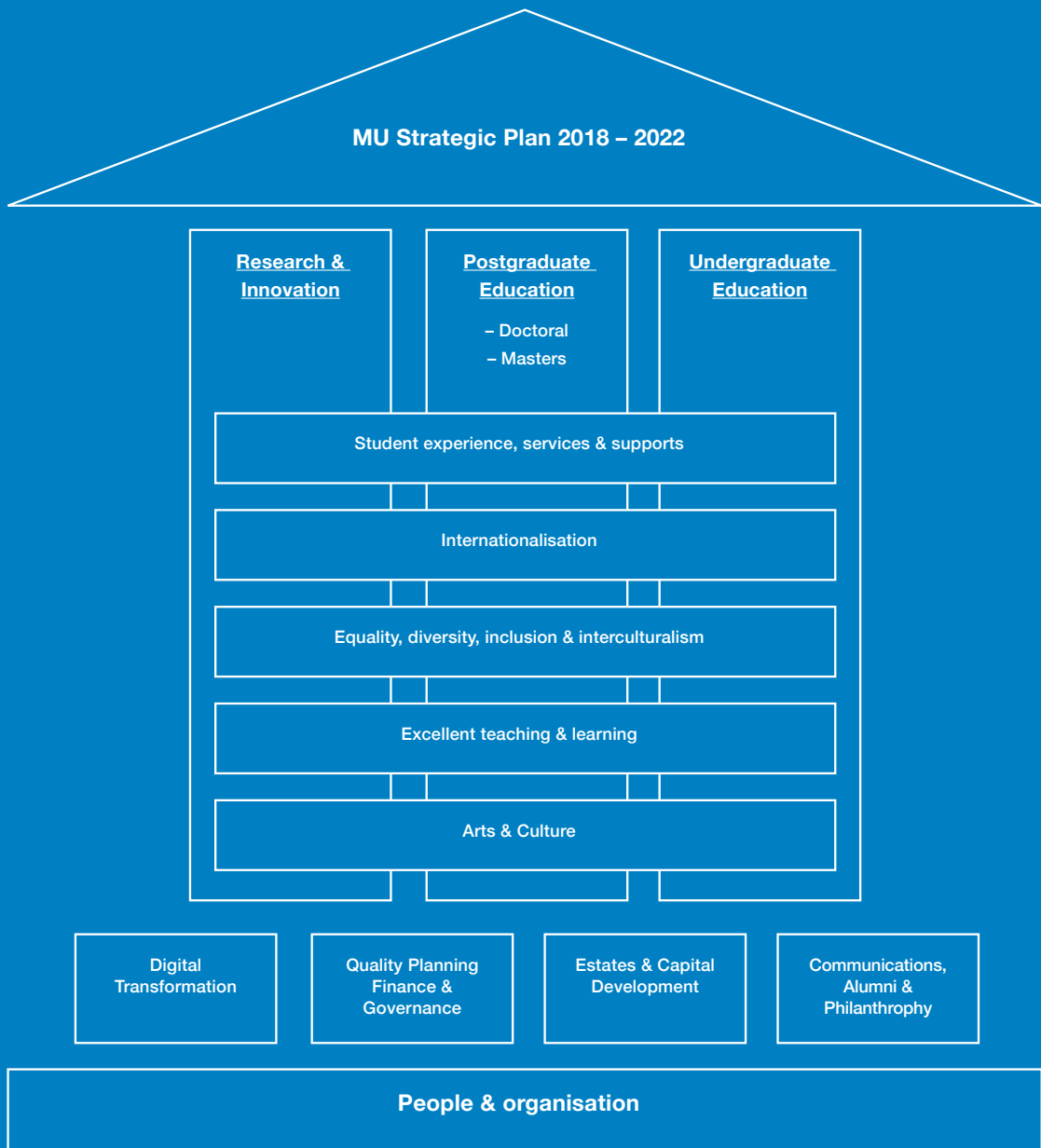
MAYNOOTH
UNIVERSITY
KNOWS NO
BOUNDS



Strategic Goals

We have set ourselves 13 strategic goals, and will, over the period 2018-22:

- Further strengthen our reputation as a research university of international significance, and secure our future standing, through **focused investment in research capacity** in a number of priority areas, a commitment to both fundamental and engaged research, and by empowering our staff and students to bring their collective creativity to bear on major societal challenges.
- Extend and enhance our portfolio of **postgraduate programmes**, ensuring an excellent advanced education that challenges our students and enables them to develop the intellectual skills and agility to succeed in a broad range of rewarding careers.
- Realise the full potential of the new Maynooth University **undergraduate curriculum** to deliver the best university education in Ireland, and equip our students for work, life and engaged citizenship by providing a unique, diverse, and intellectually challenging programme portfolio and learning environment, and offering new fields of study and subject combinations.
- Ensure that the **quality of the student experience** and engagement between staff and students are preserved and further enriched as the University grows.
- Be a truly international university, adopting a **comprehensive and ethical approach to internationalisation** with high levels of international mobility for students and staff, strong global partnerships, and a vibrantly international and intercultural campus.
- Build on our achievements to date and become a model university for equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism, where social justice, addressing inequality and empowering people are central to our mission.
- Offer sector-leading support to staff in the continued development of their **teaching and learning practice** at all levels of education from undergraduate to doctoral.
- Position an innovative **arts and culture** programme as central to the life of the University, animating the campus and the wider region.
- Be an **excellent place to work** because of the opportunities we provide for scholarly and professional development in a diverse and inclusive culture.
- Support research, teaching, engagement and institutional effectiveness by promoting **operational excellence and digital transformation** throughout the University.
- Further develop our **quality, planning** and financial management processes to support growth, development and innovation, and to ensure our success and build public trust through **good governance**.
- Provide a **vibrant sustainable campus environment**, rich in learning, culture, heritage and nature, with modern inclusive facilities and infrastructure commensurate with the needs of a growing community of students, staff and visitors, by implementing our campus master plan and capital development programme.
- Project a clear and accurate understanding of the activities and **value of the University**, and ensure that alumni and friends of the University remain connected and are motivated to support the institution.



Strategic Actions

1. Research and Innovation

- 1.1 We will continue to build research capacity and a research culture of international quality and outlook, investing across disciplines and in focused areas of strength to address major societal challenges.
- 1.2 We will further strengthen our capacity for excellent research and scholarship by investing in people.
- 1.3 We will increase support for engaged research and enterprise-facing research and innovation, building effective and sustainable research and innovation partnerships.
- 1.4 We aim to increase annual external research income by 50% by 2022.



2. Postgraduate Education



- 2.1 We will further develop the Maynooth University doctorate as a transformative educational experience, developing students' advanced research and intellectual skills and preparing them to contribute significantly to society in a wide variety of roles and careers.
- 2.2 We will enhance the attractiveness, sustainability and flexibility of our taught Master's portfolio, enabling an increase in taught Master's enrolments from 1,000 to 1,600.
- 2.3 We will work to ensure the graduate student experience is the best in Ireland, empowering diverse learners to achieve their academic and professional goals.

3. Undergraduate Education

- 3.1 We will further develop the unique Maynooth undergraduate curriculum, offering students new fields of study and subject combinations, greater choice of electives, and additional opportunities to develop critical and analytic skills.
- 3.2 We will provide students with an enhanced range of co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences, affording them broader opportunities to develop their skills and competencies for work, life and engaged citizenship.



1,600 Taught
Postgraduate
Students

50% We aim to increase
annual external research
income by 2022.

4. Student experience, services and supports

- 4.1 We will ensure that the quality of the student experience is enhanced and the richness of engagement between staff and students is maintained as the University expands.
- 4.2 We will ensure that student administrative and support services are sufficiently resourced and appropriately structured to meet the needs of a growing and diverse student population.



5. Internationalisation

- 5.1 We will significantly enhance the opportunities for international mobility of students to and from Maynooth University.
- 5.2 We will build sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships with key international partner universities.
- 5.3 We will support increased international mobility of staff to and from Maynooth University.
- 5.4 We will ensure an outstanding experience for international students and excellent services to support the internationalisation of the University.



6. Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism

- 6.1 We will—through our commitment to human rights, social justice and equality—strive to be a truly inclusive university, where scholarship and learning are enriched and excellence is enabled by the diversity of our staff and students.
- 6.2 We will build on our experience and achievements in supporting access, participation and success for students from diverse backgrounds, continuing our current programme and extending our work to address other groups that face barriers to participation and success in higher education.
- 6.3 We will support our staff in making curricula, teaching and learning more inclusive, international and intercultural, and will work to create an inclusive academic environment.
- 6.4 We will establish Maynooth University as a national leader in advancing equality and diversity amongst staff.



7. Excellent teaching and learning



- 7.1 We will further enhance our supports for teaching development and learning innovation.

8. Arts and Culture

- 8.1 We will further develop arts and culture as intrinsic to our research, teaching and engagement, focused on an innovative programme and a set of physical infrastructure interventions.



9. People and Organization

- 9.1 We will provide an environment where all staff can flourish, develop, advance and further contribute to the University and the success of its students and scholarship.
- 9.2 We will focus on empowering support staff to develop as professionals and to adapt to the changing needs of the University.
- 9.3 We will invest in leadership and management structures and development appropriate to the challenges facing a modern, medium-sized university.



10. Digital Transformation

- 10.1 We will build capacity for operational excellence and digital transformation and adopt a 'digital first' strategy in the design and implementation of all University processes.
- 10.2 We will adopt a dual approach to IT governance and service delivery, balancing the need for stable and effective operations with the need to accelerate digital innovation in support of the strategic goals of the University.



11. Quality, Planning, Finance and Governance



- 11.1 We will carefully manage the growth of the University towards a desired enrolment profile.
- 11.2 We will enhance our quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, and strengthen the link between quality enhancement and strategic planning.
- 11.3 We will build on the professionalism of our finance and governance functions to ensure they are centres of excellence.

12. Estates, Capital Development and Campus Master Plan

- 12.1 We will invest in campus facilities and infrastructure—according to a five-year capital development plan—to meet the learning, research, cultural, social and recreational needs of a growing campus community and to support engagement with the wider region.
- 12.2 We will implement the Campus Master Plan and public realm strategy to create an inspiring and sustainable campus environment.



13. Communications, Alumni and Philanthropy



- 13.1 We will build on our collegial ethos and excellent reputation with more structured internal communications processes and strategic external communications and marketing.
- 13.2 We will further and systematically engage our alumni, connecting them to each other and to the University, and mobilising alumni and philanthropy in support of the goals of the institution.





Strategic Goals & Actions

1. Research and Innovation

Maynooth University is a research-intensive university, and as such, research and scholarship are fundamental to our mission: research contributes to the advancement of human knowledge and understanding, addresses major societal challenges, infuses our teaching and enthuses our students. The overall quality and impact of our scholarly work is excellent by national and international standards, but also has a character specific to the University. Our diverse disciplinary strengths across science, engineering, social science and humanities—combined with our commitment to interdisciplinarity, collaboration, engagement and partnership—mean that Maynooth University already excels in a number of important areas of research with significant global impact.

Maynooth University's greatest strength in research is the people in departments, institutes and research support units, and their capacity to work collaboratively across disciplines and with external partners to address important questions. Our strategy is to invest in people. We will continue to strengthen our departments and our wide spectrum of disciplinary expertise. We also will focus our energies and investment, through our research institutes, towards a relatively small number of strategic areas to create centres of high ambition and critical mass with strong international networks. The opportunity now exists to sharpen our attention to issues that will shape our world in the middle part of this century. An increasing number of these issues are at the intersection of science, technology, society and the humanities, and will be areas in which Maynooth will aim to make a strong and distinctive contribution.

We will be guided in our research strategy by national research and innovation priorities, the grand challenges identified by the European Union, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We recognise that research and innovation are dynamic, and will ensure that structures and supports are sufficiently flexible to nurture new ideas and developments. While there is an appropriate emphasis in this strategy on major collaborative programmes, we recognise that much of the scholarly work of the University is advanced by individuals and small groups funded from diverse sources, work which will continue to be strategically supported by the University.

Basic and fundamental research across the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences are central to the purpose of the University and are the wellspring from which application and utility flow. Equally, research that genuinely engages with communities and actors beyond the University, for societal benefit, is also a recognised hallmark of Maynooth University. Engaged research can be described as a wide range of rigorous research approaches and methodologies that share a common interest in collaborative engagement with the community and aim to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern and significant societal questions and problems.





Engaged research is advanced with community partners rather than for or about them. We will, alongside our supports for basic research and scholarship, strategically enhance our capacity for research pursued in collaborative engagement with communities, civil society organisations, the public service and enterprises. The difficult challenges that face modern society require the collaborative efforts of the full spectrum of our research capacity, from fundamental to engaged, across all disciplines, each of which bring unique and irreplaceable value. National and international collaborative networks are central to much of our work, and we will align our research and internationalisation strategies in support of such partnerships and networks, with due regard for the development of the regional and national research and innovation ecosystem, the changing dynamics of the European Union, and our strategic objective of greater engagement with partners in the global south.

A thriving research culture requires that scholars have sufficient freedom, time and support to pursue research to the highest international standards, and connect it to their work

in teaching, service and public engagement. A good research university supports the scholarly work of all: students, early-career researchers and established scholars. We will ensure that the University attracts and supports talented researchers and provides them with the environment, mentorship and leadership to succeed. Research student and postdoctoral supervision, publication, and securing external funding all place significant demands of staff and it is essential that the University supports and incentivises these activities. Finally, a sustainable research culture and environment can only be built on a firm financial foundation. We intend to significantly increase our external funding for research and innovation and have set clear targets in this regard. The purpose of increasing research funding is to increase our capacity to do excellent research and to support talented students and early-career researchers to work at Maynooth University. We know that this will require specific and focused investments in research capacity, and the allocation of resources and supports in a transparent and outcomes-driven fashion.

“Our goal is to further strengthen our reputation as a research university of international significance, and secure our future standing through focused investment in research capacity in a number of priority areas, a commitment to both fundamental and engaged research, and by empowering our staff and students to bring their collective creativity to bear on major societal challenges.”



1.1. We will continue to build research capacity and a research culture of international quality and outlook, investing across disciplines and in focused areas of strength to address major societal challenges.

1. We will strengthen our University research institutes and centres, to provide dedicated space, time and infrastructure for research, to support major research programmes and grants, to foster interdisciplinarity, to stimulate and nurture the development of research groups of varying scale, and to provide a platform for major interdisciplinary research programmes addressing significant societal challenges.
2. We will prioritise participation in SFI Centres which align with our areas of strength and will invest in research capacity which enables such participation.
3. We will add unique value to the national research landscape through a specific initiative at the intersection of technology and society, which will facilitate deeper consideration of the diffusion and impact of new and emerging technologies.
4. We will build on our national leadership in open access to research and will continue to actively promote open science and open data.
5. We will ensure that internal research funding allocations support high quality research and scholarship across all our disciplines; in particular, we will ensure support for quality publications and outputs, international engagement and collaboration, early-career researchers, and departments and institutes generating significant research income.
6. We will further raise the profile of our research and scholarship with important external audiences, highlighting its quality, value and relevance, and promoting public engagement with and understanding of our research work.

1.2. We will further strengthen our capacity for excellent research and scholarship by investing in people

1. We aim to double the number of postdoctoral researchers by 2022 via external funding, particularly in priority research areas; and we will enhance our postdoctoral career development structures and supports, encouraging postdoctoral researchers to gain an appropriate breadth of skills and experiences for a diversity of career opportunities.
2. We will establish a formal professional development programme and set clear expectations for early-career academics in building an international research profile.
3. We will revise sabbatical and research leave schemes to provide much more flexible forms of leave—including short periods of leave—which do not impose financial penalties, are incorporated into departmental workload allocations and models, and are aligned with our internationalisation and equality strategies.
4. We will ensure strong research leadership both by supporting and developing existing and emergent leaders within the institution and by targeted external recruitment.



1.3. We will increase support for engaged research and enterprise-facing research and innovation, building effective and sustainable research and innovation partnerships.

1. We will create a new senior leadership role with a clear remit to develop activities and partnerships in support of engaged research and teaching, supported by a new MU Engage office, the current successful MU Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation office and MaynoothWorks business incubator.
2. We will continue to encourage appropriate academic participation in mutually beneficial enterprise partnerships, knowledge transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship; we will augment our support for student and postdoctoral entrepreneurship.
3. We will launch two major initiatives in engaged research: extending the role of the Innovation Value Institute (IVI) to become the National Centre for Service Innovation and Technology Adoption and establishing the National Centre for Design Innovation.
4. We will build a new enterprise co-location facility on campus, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the IDA.



1.4. We aim to increase annual external research income by 50% by 2022.

1. We will increase our overall annual external research income by 50% and will at least double our income from EU, enterprise and non-governmental sources.
2. We will implement a refreshed strategy for EU funding to include targeted recruitment and specific supports for ERC and large EU project and consortium grant applications.
3. We will establish a new internal seed funding scheme and short-term research leave programmes to support the development of high-potential proposals for external research funding.
4. We will support the Research Development Office and research institutes in offering high quality pre- and post-award support, and making it as straightforward as possible to seek funding and carry out externally-funded projects.

2. Postgraduate Education

As a public research university, Maynooth University has since its foundation been committed to providing postgraduate education of the highest quality.

We have an excellent track record in doctoral education, founded on excellent opportunities for research and scholarship, outstanding supervision, and clear and flexible structures for research degrees. A Maynooth University doctorate challenges and enables students to develop the research, analytic, synthetic, communication and collaborative skills that are essential not only in academic work but also in careers across all sectors in our knowledge society. Doctoral education transforms the individual and changes societies because highly trained researchers are uniquely equipped to address the urgent challenges of today and lead initiatives that imagine and create new futures.

We will significantly increase the number of doctoral students at Maynooth because they are an integral part of our research and research-led teaching; because they energize the intellectual and cultural life of the University and the region; because national and international evidence shows that doctoral education is an excellent preparation for a wide range of challenging careers; and because doctoral graduates are a force for real and positive change within society as a whole. This strategy recognises that the core of a doctoral degree is original research, as it is through this experience that the most important outcomes of the

degree are achieved. It is our objective to scaffold this central activity with elements that broaden the skills and support the future employability of graduates. Furthermore, this strategy specifically acknowledges the potential of engaged, practitioner and professional doctorates to enrich our research portfolio, diversify the doctoral experience, and build partnerships between the University and broader communities.

Maynooth University has a growing portfolio of quality taught postgraduate programmes, created through the commitment of staff in the individual departments of the University. Our experience in developing and introducing our new undergraduate curriculum demonstrates the value of choice, flexibility, and interdepartmental collaboration in creating a unique programme offering that is particularly attractive to and stimulating for students. Our strategy is to build on this success to develop a distinctive postgraduate portfolio that is agile and responsive to student needs, and challenges them to meet their academic and professional goals. This will require a greater strategic role for the Graduate School (to provide strategic oversight and co-ordination of postgraduate programmes and create a sense of community amongst postgraduate students) and planning structures at faculty level. We will continue to pay careful attention to the quality and rigour of the postgraduate student experience, ensuring that processes and supports are appropriate, and providing dedicated space and facilities.





We recognise that for many students the decision to complete a postgraduate programme is a conscious step in their professional and career development, and so an important element of our strategy for postgraduate education is to significantly augment the supports for graduate employability.

Maynooth University's strength lies in its distinctive collegial culture. In planning growth in postgraduate education, we recognize that our ethical foundation, humane scale and collaborative approach are the factors that drive our outsized impacts in teaching and research. These unique attributes must be preserved and enhanced so that Maynooth continues to generate a global footprint that far exceeds its size.

“Our goal is to extend and enhance our portfolio of postgraduate programmes, ensuring an excellent advanced education that challenges our students and enables them to develop the intellectual skills and agility to succeed in a broad range of rewarding careers.”



2.1. We will further develop the Maynooth University doctorate as a transformative educational experience, developing students' advanced research and intellectual skills and preparing them to contribute significantly to society in a wide variety of roles and careers.

1. We will show international leadership in ensuring the doctoral degree adapts to meet the changing needs of students and society.
2. We will refine and enhance our approach to the structured doctorate, ensuring the effective and efficient provision of taught elements, developing specific arrays of skills, enhancing graduate employability throughout the programme, and explicitly preparing graduates for a wide range of challenging careers.
3. We will support an expansion of interdisciplinary, engaged, industry, practitioner and professional doctorates, including new arrangements for co-funded doctorates.
4. We will ensure excellent and consistent supervision of research students across the University.
5. We will increase doctoral student numbers towards a target enrolment of 600.

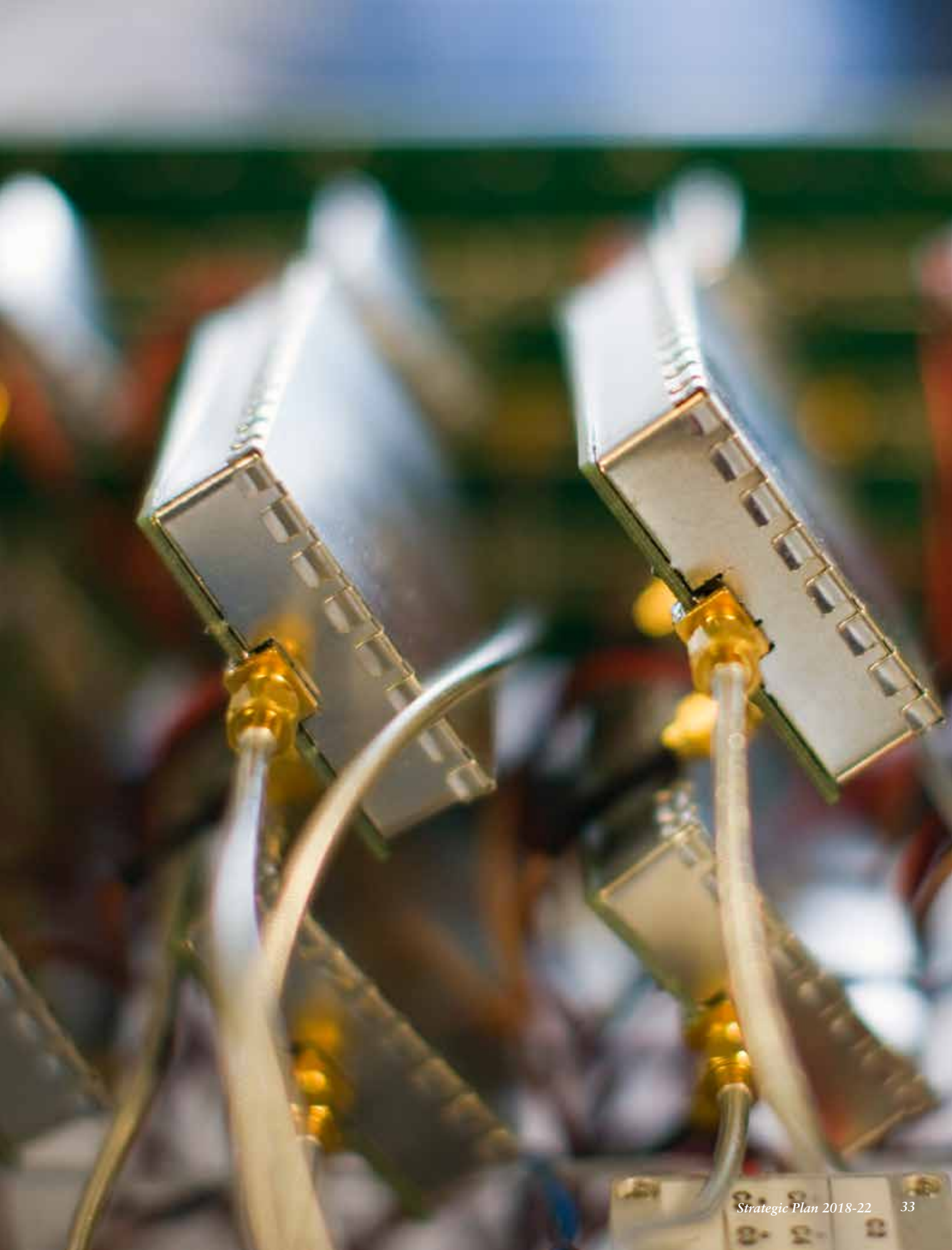
2.2. We will enhance the attractiveness, sustainability and flexibility of our taught Master's portfolio, enabling an increase in taught Master's enrolments from 1,000 to 1,600.

1. We will establish a Master's Task Force (MTF) to oversee a review and restructuring of the taught Master's portfolio, taking a faculty- and University-wide view, and sponsoring a greater level of interdepartmental collaboration to optimize the contribution of each department and each faculty member to the overall programme portfolio.
2. We will ensure that our Master's programmes prepare graduates for challenging and varied careers, both in the overall design of our programmes and by the inclusion of elements focused on employability.
3. We will develop a clear marketing and recruitment strategy for all postgraduate programmes and ensure that the University website transmits a clear and dynamic picture of postgraduate programmes and the student experience.
4. We will build on our record of widening participation to ensure equitable and inclusive access to postgraduate study, through flexible and part-time programmes, recognition of prior learning, specific access programmes, supporting students in obtaining financial support, and marketing and outreach.

2.3. We will work to ensure the graduate student experience is the best in Ireland, empowering diverse learners to achieve their academic and professional goals.

1. We will resource the Graduate School and Graduate Studies Office to provide excellent support to postgraduate students and postgraduate programme development in a manner that affirms Maynooth University's values of inclusion, collegiality and academic excellence.
2. We will further enhance the sense of community amongst postgraduate students through intellectual, cultural and social actions, events and facilities.
3. We will provide additional dedicated space for postgraduate teaching and research postgraduate students.





3.

Undergraduate Education

Maynooth University has an outstanding reputation for undergraduate education, and the recent extensive reform of the undergraduate curriculum is one of the signal achievements of the University Strategic Plan 2012-17. The resultant Maynooth University curriculum is a major enhancement of our undergraduate offering and is arguably the most significant and comprehensive development in undergraduate education in this country in recent decades. Its emphasis on intellectual skills, flexibility, unique subject combinations, electives, and experiential learning has resonated with students and driven increased demand for our programmes. Important components of the new curriculum include:

- Fewer, broader entry routes into undergraduate education;
- Greater flexibility in subject choice and progression pathways;
- An explicit focus on the development of the skills of critical thinking, analysis, and clear communication starting with dedicated first-year critical skills modules;
- New majors, fields of study and unique subject combinations;
- Credit-bearing elective modules open to all students, including modules in modern languages, entrepreneurship, science and society, and environmental change;
- A framework for enhanced experiential learning; and,
- Revised academic policies, rules and regulations.

Students are encouraged to co-create their educational pathway, and choice is central to this personalised experience.

This strategy will realise the full potential of the new Maynooth University undergraduate curriculum, with an emphasis on fully embedding and developing our new programme offerings. It will be informed by the needs of our stakeholders and developed in partnership with students to ensure the adaptability and employability of our graduates over a lifetime of change. This will result in a superior student experience, and will support our students in becoming lifelong learners and engaged responsible global citizens, empowered to make a difference in the world.

We cannot take for granted the quality of the undergraduate student experience or the ongoing development of our undergraduate programmes: They require time, energy and resources. Furthermore, the nature of the second-level experience means that, for many students, university presents a challenging learning transition; thus, we must respond, especially in the early years, to set clear and high expectations and support students in meeting them. This plan seeks to cultivate and enrich the undergraduate experience which is characteristic of Maynooth University—in particular the quality and frequency of engagements between students and staff. This requires benchmarking and maintaining an appropriate staff-student ratio, strengthening student supports, and providing a stimulating learning environment that promotes intellectual and social interaction.



3.1. We will further develop the unique Maynooth undergraduate curriculum, offering students new fields of study and subject combinations, greater choice of electives, and additional opportunities to develop critical and analytic skills.

1. We will empower our students to be independent learners and foster their self-efficacy by providing a research-informed learning environment and a personalised educational experience, which stimulates critical thinking, supports independent learning and intellectual endeavour, and equips students with the necessary attributes for their future success.
2. We will continue to work on the transition to university education, setting clear and high expectations for our students, and providing them with the resources and supports to achieve the highest possible standards.
3. We will continue to develop the undergraduate curriculum, with an emphasis on:
 - Supporting approaches to large group teaching which best engage students;
 - Optimising the opportunities for small group learning;
 - Fully embedding and developing our new programme offerings;
 - Further development of analytic, critical thinking and research skills from first year to final year;
 - Interdisciplinary learning modules and pathways;
 - Language learning; and,
 - Enhanced flexibility of provision.
4. We will review and optimise the structure of the BSc degree, and, informed by our research strengths, will increase enrolments and the range of subject offerings to better address the needs of students and skills shortages in society.
5. We will further enhance the BA degree by:
 - Exploring ways to allow our BA students to extend their programme to four years; and,
 - Building on our experience and success in adult education to develop a part-time option for the BA with appropriate supports for part-time learners.
6. We will develop a number of new arts and sciences two-subject degrees, prioritising those combinations of most value to students and society.
7. We will adopt a student life-cycle approach to supporting students through all years of their undergraduate degree, including enhanced orientation to university life and learning, additional supports to empower students to make informed programme choices, developing and strengthening existing student peer-to-peer initiatives, and promoting experiential learning and personal and professional development.
8. We will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the reform and development of our undergraduate curriculum.

“Our goal is to realise the full potential of the new Maynooth University undergraduate curriculum to deliver the best university education in Ireland, and equip our students for work, life and engaged citizenship, by providing a unique, diverse, and intellectually challenging programme portfolio and learning environment, and offering new fields of study and subject combinations.”





3.2. We will provide students with an enhanced range of co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences, affording them broader opportunities to develop their skills and competencies for work, life and engaged citizenship.

1. We will enrich the student experience by providing a portfolio of experiential learning opportunities across the arts, humanities, social sciences, science and engineering; they will be formalised and recognised by the University as an experiential learning pathway, and focussed on undergraduate research, work placement, service learning, volunteering, study and work abroad and student leadership.
2. We will strengthen our capacity to support the personal and professional development of students and support them in planning their careers.
3. We will engage a wide range of external partners (industry, enterprise, public sector, civil society, community, and arts and culture) and mobilise our alumni to provide co- and extra-curricular learning opportunities and mentorship to our students.
4. We will strategically support the development of student clubs and societies to support experiential learning.

4.

Student experience, services and supports

Maynooth University has a deserved reputation for offering an outstanding student experience based on the accessibility of staff, a strong sense of community amongst staff and students, and the quality and frequency of interactions between staff and students. This strategy will ensure that the quality of the student experience and the richness and frequency of engagement between staff and students are maintained and enhanced as the University grows.

The student learning experience is supported by an array of services which enrich student life, learning and personal development. These services work in partnership with Maynooth Students' Union to provide a diverse range of sporting, social and cultural activities which form an important part of student life; these units also provide specialist services to support the health and wellbeing of students. The focus of this strategy is to invest in and enhance student support services, as appropriate to the growth of the University and the changing needs of our students; to promote sport and fitness with new facilities and augmented programmes; and to further animate the social and cultural life of the campus.

“Our goal is to ensure that the quality of the student experience and engagement between staff and students is preserved and further enriched as the University grows.”



4.1. We will ensure that the quality of the student experience is enhanced and the richness of engagement between staff and students is maintained as the University expands.

1. We will benchmark our staff-student ratio in detail at broad discipline level against other Irish universities, and set and maintain an appropriate target staff-student ratio.
2. We will significantly invest in new and existing teaching spaces and learning infrastructure, providing state-of-the-art flexible facilities to meet the changing needs of our growing student body.
3. We will expand the provision of informal learning, social, meeting and community spaces across the campus for staff and students, to keep pace with the growth of the University and stimulate conversation and interdisciplinary interaction.
4. We will develop the relationship between the University and Maynooth Students' Union, clarifying the role and responsibilities of each and aligning our strategies for student life, clubs and societies, and student support.

4.2. We will ensure that student administrative and support services are sufficiently resourced and appropriately structured to meet the needs of a growing and diverse student population.

1. We will take an integrated whole-of-university approach to student administration and supports, considering the life-cycle needs of each category of student (undergraduate and postgraduate, full-time and part-time, domestic and international, traditional and access) and ensuring that policies, processes, systems and supports meet the differing needs of an increasingly diverse student cohort.
2. We will augment and better integrate experiential learning, placement, service learning and career development functions to better support the learning, professional development, preparedness for work and career planning of students; and we will ensure these functions meet the needs of students at all levels of education—undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral.
3. We will, within the limits of data protection legislation and principles, consolidate the range of student data collected by the University, and use appropriate data analytics to identify and support students at risk.
4. We will support vibrant sport, recreation and fitness programmes for students.
5. We will review the funding model for and invest appropriately in student services and supports, with an emphasis on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students.



5.

Internationalisation

The number of international students choosing to learn and research at Maynooth University has increased greatly over the last five years, and this, along with a broader international orientation which is intrinsic to our scholarly work, has brought greater diversity to the student experience and made us a more cosmopolitan community.

This strategy emphasises a comprehensive and ethical approach to internationalisation that stimulates students and staff to be active and engaged citizens in an interconnected and globalised world. The strategy is concerned with creating, implementing and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that international dimensions of learning, scholarship and services are included in all University activities and initiatives. We are cognisant of the International Education Strategy for Ireland (2016-2020) and thus stress the quality of learner experiences, research and mobility to create a distinctive Maynooth University offering at the centre of Ireland's delivery of international education.

We recognise that the value of internationalisation lies in bringing the national into dialogue with the international, the local with the global. As a result, our approach is rooted in our scholarly and cultural heritage and distinctive to the institution.

Inward student mobility cannot be the sole objective if internationalisation is to be a sustainable proposition that adds long-term value to the University and its students. We

intend, therefore, to enhance outward mobility by reducing the barriers to learning overseas and extending our participation in the Erasmus exchange programme.

Maynooth University has an impressive portfolio of international partnerships which will be further developed in a targeted, structured and systematic way, including the development of an international branch campus.

MU recognises the privileged position it occupies as a relatively well-resourced university in a wealthy democratic society, and its consequent obligations to ethical internationalisation, genuine partnership and sustainable development.

The international mobility of staff—to and from Maynooth University—is a priority for the benefits it brings to research, teaching and the ongoing enhancement of University services and operations.

MU is consistently rated very highly by international students as being an excellent destination for international study. However, academic and social integration remain major hurdles for international students and we need to support acculturation and integration processes specific to international students. We will adopt a “student life-cycle” perspective to ensure seamless and comprehensive supports before, during and after the student's international education experience.



“Our goal is to be a truly international university, adopting a comprehensive and ethical approach to internationalisation with high levels of international mobility for students and staff, strong global partnerships, and a vibrantly international and intercultural campus.”



5.1 We will significantly enhance the opportunities for international mobility of students to and from Maynooth University.

1. We will build on our success to date to create wider opportunities for international students to study at Maynooth University, including short programmes, study abroad, Erasmus and full-degree enrolments, increasing the international student population to 15% of the total student body.
2. We will extend our range of student exchange partnerships with leading international universities to support balanced outward and inward student mobility, and will increase our participation in the Erasmus programme through the development of a targeted portfolio of Erasmus and exchange partnerships.
3. We will enhance our supports for outward student mobility and will double the proportion of the graduating student cohort who spend a period of time overseas as a formal part of their studies.



5.2 We will build sustainable mutually beneficial relationships with key international partner universities.

1. We will work to consolidate our relationships with existing partners and build relationships with new ones in a targeted, structured, systematic and prioritised way, based on a Strategic Partner Engagement Framework that reflects the culture and ethos of the University, the advantages and opportunities for all partners, and the principles of ethical internationalisation.
2. We will identify a limited number of key international strategic partners in different regions of the world with which we will build deep research, teaching and institutional relationships.
3. We will, consistent with our commitments to justice, equality and inter-culturalism, establish key strategic partnerships with institutions in the Global South to support joint research and mutual learning.
4. We will align our research and internationalisation strategies so that our international partnerships support strong research collaborations.
5. We will offer MU or joint programmes with international strategic partner universities provided (i) we can be assured of the quality and academic capacity of the partner and the programmes; (ii) the successful provision of the programmes will enhance the profile and reputation of Maynooth University; and (iii) the partnership is financially sustainable.
6. We will establish a joint international college with a leading Chinese university to further build our presence in China.
7. We will respond to the challenges presented by the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union by strengthening our connections with UK and EU researchers, and by ensuring Maynooth University is well-placed to support resultant changes in patterns of international student and staff mobility.

5.3 We will support increased international mobility of staff to and from Maynooth University.

1. We will include the potential for research collaboration as a criterion in establishing major international partnerships.
2. We will provide support for research collaborations with our key international partners, communicate current collaboration activities and explore international funding opportunities in this area.
3. We will prioritise sabbatical leave and short-term research leave applications that build or consolidate research relationships with key international partners.
4. We will dedicate a number of John and Pat Hume doctoral studentships to applications for joint doctoral study with international strategic partners.
5. We will develop international short-term programmes (e.g. summer/winter schools) directly associated with our major research institutes and research strengths.

MU more than doubled its international student population between 2010-11 and 2016-17 - from 540 to 1,100. Next move: giving more domestic MU students international experiences.





5.4 We will ensure an outstanding experience for international students and excellent services to support the internationalisation of the University.

1. We will take a student life-cycle approach to the provision of services in support of incoming and outgoing students.
2. We will resource the International Office to provide excellent support for the internationalisation of the University, in a manner that affirms our reputation as an excellent destination for study abroad, and for being a good strategic partner committed to comprehensive and ethical internationalisation.

6.

Equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism

Maynooth University, since its foundation, has had a deep commitment to equality and inclusion. We have consistently attracted students and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds and offered an environment in which they can flourish and succeed. This has made Maynooth University a more diverse and interesting place to study and work, and an inclusive and collegial community. We have—through our scholarship, teaching, engagement and advocacy—advanced social justice and human rights.

We are a national leader in widening participation in university education: In 2017, 15% of our new undergraduate students had a disability; 28% came from social groups under-represented in higher education; and 47% came from families where neither parent had a higher education qualification. This has made the University both a provider of educational opportunities and an agent of social change.

We distinguish students based only on their achievements, and support all to attain the outcomes associated with a university qualification. We value the diversity of our staff and students, and the variety of perspectives and experiences they bring to our institution. We are proud of our record of inclusivity, and the opportunities that has enabled for non-traditional students. We understand the power of education, and its transformative potential for the individual and for society.

Consequently, we believe that is important for the University to be egalitarian and inclusive, and to reflect those values in both its own actions and its public advocacy.

A commitment to equality is embedded in the culture and ethos of the University. We are proud to deliver on our public sector duty to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights. Social and environmental justice are concerns of all disciplines and programmes within the University—and not just with regard to student access and participation, as colleagues are encouraged to consider issues of social and environmental justice in the processes and practices of teaching, learning and research, and in administrative and operational aspects of the work of the University.

This strategy builds on our ethos, culture, experiences and successes; and it seeks to establish MU as a model university for equality, diversity and inclusion which pursues excellence through equality and inclusion, and where diversity and interculturalism are opportunities for learning and scholarship.

We recognise that a strategy of excellence through equality and diversity creates possibilities for research, and that excellent research can support the changes in practice required to have truly inclusive communities, organisations and societies. Research and scholarship in equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism present a strategic opportunity for the University.



Leon Diop, President of Maynooth Students Union; Claire Shorten, Maynooth University graduate; and Dr Karen Herdman, Department of Chemistry

“Our goal is to build on our achievements to date and become a model university for equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism, where social justice, addressing inequality and empowering people are central to our mission.”



6.1 We will—through our commitment to human rights, social justice and equality—strive to be a truly inclusive university, where scholarship and learning are enriched and excellence is enabled by the diversity of our staff and students.

1. We will appoint a Vice-President for Equality and Diversity, and establish an oversight structure and cross-functional implementation team to advance, in an integrated manner, equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism across the entire University community.
2. We will take an institution-wide approach to ensure that the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism are considered in all aspects of the University strategy, policy, processes, systems and functions.
3. We will develop comprehensive equality action plans, first in the priority areas of gender (building on the Athena SWAN action plan), disability, and ethnicity.
4. We will focus on results by including equality and diversity indicators in our key performance indicators and in our quality assurance/quality enhancement processes.
5. We will promote research and scholarship in equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism.

6.2 We will build on our experience and achievements in supporting access, participation and success for students from diverse backgrounds, continuing our current programme and extending our work to address other groups that face barriers to participation and success in higher education.

1. We will intensify the efforts of the Maynooth Access Programme (MAP) for those groups it currently serves (socioeconomic disadvantage, disability, and mature students) and extend our work to address the needs of other groups who experience barriers to participation and success (including lone parents, migrants and refugees, prisoners and former offenders, Traveller and Roma).
2. We will adopt a strategic approach to outreach and civic engagement activities which will focus more intensively on communities and groups who face the greatest barriers to participation in higher education.
3. We will strengthen connections between MAP and academic departments with a particular commitment to community engagement (such as Education, Adult and Community Education and Applied Social Studies).
4. We will work with partners in the HE and FE sectors to clarify and streamline the transition from FE to HE.

6.3 We will support our staff in making curricula, teaching and learning more inclusive, international and intercultural and will work to create an inclusive academic environment.

1. We will develop a framework for inclusive teaching; provide colleagues with the resources and support to use the framework in the design, delivery and review of modules and programmes; and raise awareness of the value of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism in supporting academic excellence and enriching the learning experience for all students.
2. We will put specific supports in place to enable colleagues to make curricula, teaching and learning more international and culturally diverse.
3. We will create structures and opportunities, curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular, to promote interculturalism and development of students' intercultural competence.

6.4 We will establish Maynooth University as a national leader in advancing equality and diversity amongst staff.

1. We will promote equality, diversity and inclusion with specific attention to gender (including transgender), family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and ethnicity.
2. We will implement the Athena Swan Gender Equality Action Plan for Academic Staff; develop and implement a comprehensive Gender Equality Action Plan for all staff which will address the recommendations of the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions and the Task Force on Gender Equality in Higher Education; and we will prepare the University to apply for an Athena Swan Silver award.
3. We will target recruitment and retention of excellent women researchers and academics, particularly in disciplines and at grades where women are under-represented.
4. We will develop an equality-in-employment monitoring system, undertake an equality-in-employment workforce profile and produce equality-in-employment data annually.



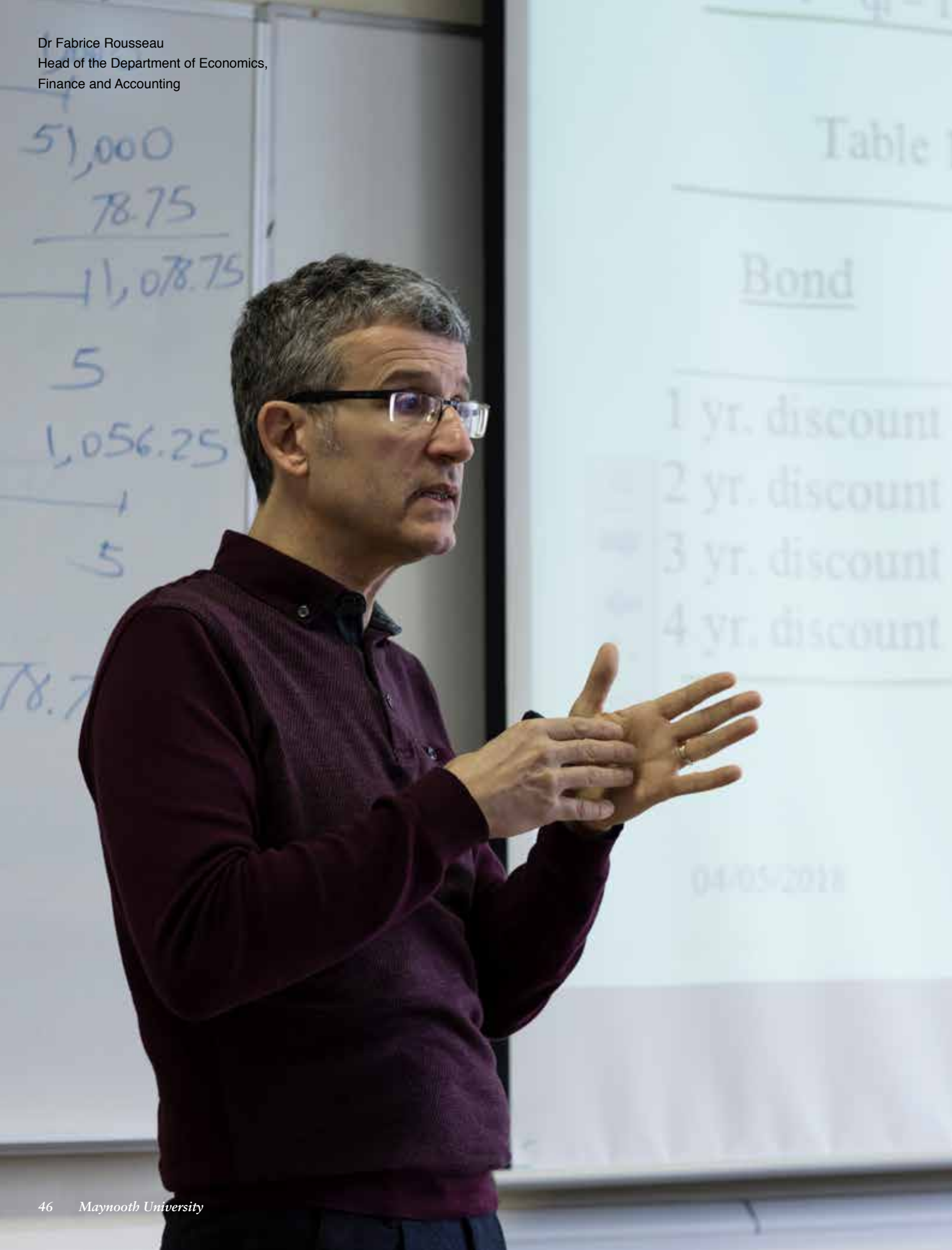


Table 1

Bond

- 1 yr. discount
- 2 yr. discount
- 3 yr. discount
- 4 yr. discount

04/05/2018



7.

Excellent teaching and learning

Maynooth University has a deserved reputation for outstanding research-led teaching, staff engagement with students and educational innovation. This strategy seeks to ensure the very best student learning experience by reinforcing and disseminating good practice, and supporting colleagues to develop and enhance teaching and learning, while supporting and challenging a diverse student body and introducing mainstream interventions that remove barriers to learner engagement, retention, and success. We will recognise and support good teaching practice and its enhancement through professional development, addressing specific challenges such as large-group teaching.

We aim in particular to stimulate developments in digitally-enabled and technology-supported learning. We intend to sponsor three significant pilot projects in this area and will build on the experience of these to establish a clear strategy for flexible and blended learning that is specific to the needs and objectives of Maynooth University.

“Our goal is to offer sector-leading support to staff in the continued development of their teaching and learning practice at all levels of education from undergraduate to doctoral.”



Dr Rosemary Monahan
Department of Computer Science





7.1 We will further enhance our supports for teaching development and learning innovation.

1. We will strengthen our capacity to support a culture of reflection and continuous improvement in teaching and learning practice and the adoption of innovative methodologies, through a seminar and masterclass series and a formal professional development programme.
2. We will establish a Teaching Innovation Fund and extend the Teaching Fellowship programme to sponsor novel approaches to teaching and learning that have the potential for wider application and transformative impact and to support pedagogical research.
3. We will fund the development and launch of three blended e-learning programmes in the 2019-2021 period, and will use our experience of these to develop a Maynooth University Strategy and Action Plan for blended and e-learning.
4. We will further develop and refine our approach to gathering student feedback and information on the effectiveness of teaching, informed by the best available evidence, with the goal of better supporting departments in enhancing teaching and learning.
5. We will bring together and review our policies that guide teaching and learning to create a single integrated Teaching and Learning Policy framework.

8. Arts and Culture

Maynooth University is home to one of the largest concentrations of arts, humanities and social sciences scholars and students on the island of Ireland. It is host to a wealth of arts and cultural activities which spring from and are intimately connected to our research and teaching. We now intend to take a strategic approach to further animating the intellectual and cultural life of the University and the wider region through deeper engagement with the arts.

The strategy includes three principal components: the development of a sustained programme of coordinated artistic activities; the planning and implementation of a series of physical infrastructure interventions; and the positioning of the arts as a transversal theme within the University Strategic Plan 2018-22.

“Our goal is to position an innovative arts and culture programme as central to the life of the University, animating the campus and the wider region”





8.1 We will further develop arts and culture as intrinsic to our research, teaching and engagement, focused on an innovative programme and a set of physical infrastructure interventions.

1. We will build on our existing scholarly activities and experience in Visual Arts, Music, Literature, History, Languages, Cinema, Film, Interactive Media, Theatre, Dance and Design to build a comprehensive programme and infrastructure for Arts and Culture at Maynooth University.
 - A basis for practice-based research and doctoral programmes;
 - A mode of engagement with local and regional communities; and,
 - Supported by regional, national and international partnerships.
2. We will co-ordinate an excellent Arts and Culture programme which will be:
 - Intrinsic to the life of the University;
 - A component of a Maynooth education;
 - A means to promote interculturalism;
 - An opportunity for dialogue between the arts and sciences;
 - Linked to our academic, educational and artistic expertise;
 - Well-designed with a clear annual programme;
3. We will develop a set of interconnected physical spaces dedicated to the Arts—centred on the Lyreen riverside but distributed across the campus—which serves the entire campus community and attracts local, regional, national and international partners and visitors.

9.

People and Organization

The continued success of Maynooth University depends on the commitment and professionalism of its staff. The University has a strong and deserved reputation as an excellent and inclusive place to work. Recognising the significant changes in scale, culture and staff profile over the last decade, as Ireland's fastest growing university this strategy defines our planned investment in people as we enter our next phase of development. The well-being and morale of our staff are a central consideration for the University. This strategy seeks to preserve and enhance our workplace culture of collegiality, engagement, inclusion, professionalism and operational excellence, where we recognise the importance of balancing the demands of work and life. We will invest in people through renewed staff development programmes, improved approaches to recognition and reward, and excellent staff support programmes.

We will broaden our leadership capacity and strengthen our human resources service to ensure we remain responsive to the opportunities presented over the lifetime of this plan. We recognise the value and benefit of engagement with staff and their representative trade unions, with whom we will build upon our established partnership model to achieve enhanced consultation and engagement, whilst having regard for the various processes and norms associated with the industrial relations practice. The strategy also focuses on enhancing the work environment, and optimising our structures, processes, work practices and physical environment; our objectives being to support excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and to retain the strong sense of collegiality and campus community for which Maynooth University is known.



9.1 We will provide an environment where all staff can flourish, develop, advance and further contribute to the University and the success of its students and scholarship.

1. We will support the development and advancement of our staff through:
 - Clear career frameworks and progression pathways for all categories of staff;
 - Appropriate performance management and development systems;
 - A formal induction and mentoring programme for early career academic, research and support staff; and,
 - Renewed and significant investment in mentoring and staff development for all parts and levels of the organisation.
2. We will implement an enhanced and integrated staff recognition and reward policy to support the development and advancement of staff and the strategic objectives of the University, including:
 - A range of awards to recognise service and achievement;
 - Enhanced academic promotion processes with regular promotions rounds;
 - A researcher career framework;
 - Clear regrading and appropriate promotion opportunities and processes for library, information services, administrative, technical, professional and general services staff.
3. We will ensure appropriate balance between research, teaching and service through a review of academic workload models, work practices and teaching commitments to enable the optimal teaching and service contribution from each academic colleague and department.
4. We will institute a regular organisational climate and culture survey to better understand and respond to the experience of working at Maynooth University, and follow each survey with clear action plans to address such issues as may arise.
5. We will promote a positive organisational culture by:
 - Supporting staff participation in inclusive decision-making processes;
 - Building a collegial and collaborative environment amongst all our staff;
 - Establishing an annual calendar of events to stimulate cross-departmental discussion, sharing of good practice, and innovation;
 - Create a Services Innovation and Good Practice Seminar programme;
 - Enhancing our employee engagement, health and well-being events and programmes;
 - Developing additional informal working and social spaces where colleagues can collaborate and support each other;
 - Strengthening the employee relations function to work in partnership with staff and their representatives to support colleagues through the challenges of growth and organisational transformation; and,
 - Providing effective and trusted complaints and dispute resolution procedures for staff.
6. We will deliver an enhanced HR service to support the growth and strategic development of the University.

“Our goal is to be an excellent place to work because of the opportunities we provide for scholarly and professional development in a diverse and inclusive culture.”



Trevor Vaughn (centre)
Department of Design Innovation

9.2 We will focus on empowering support staff to develop as professionals and to adapt to the changing needs of the University.

1. We will further professionalise the management and delivery of University services, investing in staff and their development, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement across administrative and support units and functions.
2. We will appoint one member of the University Executive to take overall responsibility for the strategic development and transformation of the administrative and support units and services of the University.
3. We will develop and implement a matrix organization structure which provides for the smooth operation of individual functions but also supports cross-functional teams to deliver major projects, simplified business processes, and integrated services using a life-cycle approach.
4. We will establish a Process Quality Improvement Centre to drive business process improvement and redesign across the University, and support the delivery of digitally enabled, optimised and simplified business processes using best-practice delivery models.

9.3 We will invest in leadership and management structures and development appropriate to the challenges facing a modern, medium-sized university.

1. We will strengthen and clarify our academic and administrative leadership structures to support operational excellence and organizational transformation.
2. We will provide high-quality induction, management and leadership programmes for department, institute and unit heads, and for potential managers and leaders, including a bespoke development programme for women leaders.



MU staff gather to celebrate
the institution's 20th anniversary



10.

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation involves a strategic shift from legacy approaches to new ways of working and thinking, using existing and emerging technologies to transform and simplify work practices. It promotes innovation and new delivery models, incorporating digitisation and increased use of technology to improve the experience of staff, students, and stakeholders. A combination of operational excellence and digital transformation can drive process optimisation and continuous improvement whilst also encouraging a culture of quality, consistency and reliability in all services throughout the University.

The fundamental objective is to enhance the learning and working lives of students and staff, and to release additional time for research and teaching. The strategy therefore concentrates on operational excellence, digital transformation, a 'digital first' agenda, strengthening IT operations and building capacity for digital innovation.

"Our goal is to support research, teaching, engagement and institutional effectiveness by promoting operational excellence and digital transformation throughout the University."



10.1 We will build capacity for operational excellence and digital transformation and adopt a ‘digital first’ strategy in the design and implementation of all University processes.

1. We will increase our capacity to optimise and simplify business processes and to design, implement and transform digital services.
2. We will adopt a ‘digital first’ strategy in the design and implementation of all University processes.
3. We will build on the expertise of the Maynooth University Library and the Maynooth University Arts and Humanities Research Institute to provide additional digital infrastructure and tools for research and curriculum innovation.
4. We will continue to enhance the teaching and learning technologies that underpin engaging and flexible delivery of our academic programmes, and will support a number of transformative pilot programmes to expand our use of e-learning and blended learning.
5. We will establish strategies for the development of each of the major University administrative systems, and will prioritise the provision by 2020 of a student information system that supports enhanced curricular innovation and flexibility.
6. We will support students and staff in the effective use of digital technologies for teaching, learning, research, innovation and administration.

10.2 We will adopt a dual approach to IT governance and service delivery, balancing the need for stable and effective operations with the need to accelerate digital innovation in support of the strategic goals of the University.

1. We will reorganise the IT Services function and funding model to support a dual approach to IT governance and service delivery, balancing operational IT (managing the stability, security and accuracy of existing systems) with agile IT (focusing on innovation, adaptability and speed to develop new solutions).
2. We will ensure current IT and digital services are stable, secure, cost-effective, sustainable and up-to-date.
3. We will create a ‘Digital Innovation Hub’ to catalyse digital innovation, productivity and collaboration and to launch suitable projects in support of research and innovation, teaching and learning, engagement and operational excellence.





Prof Peter McNamara
Head of the School of Business



11.

Quality, Planning, Finance and Governance

Quality assurance and enhancement are key drivers of institutional strategy, effectiveness, innovation and change. The success of the University depends upon excellent quality assurance and enhancement processes, linked to good strategic, operational and financial planning, and robust governance. The University has grown significantly in the last decade, and has invested in people and infrastructure to support that growth: The staff-student ratio has been held constant and academic space per student has increased. The University will continue to grow in the coming decade, driven by increasing demand for our programmes, our mission to widen participation and offer learning opportunities, regional demographic growth and national learning and skills needs. It is essential that this growth is planned and resourced, and is used as an opportunity to strategically develop the institution.

The University provides an extraordinary service to society, but public trust in institutions is in decline. It is essential that in our conduct and through our governance structures we demonstrate in a transparent manner our value and contribution to society and build public trust.

This strategy seeks further to improve our quality, planning, finance and governance structures and processes to support planned growth, increased research capacity, excellent student and staff experience, transparency and public trust.

“Our goal is to further develop our quality, planning and financial management processes to support growth, development and innovation, and to ensure our success and build public trust through good governance.”



11.1 We will carefully manage the growth of the University towards a desired enrolment profile.

1. We will plan the growth of the University over the next five years towards a desired mix by discipline, level (undergraduate, taught postgraduate, research postgraduate) and mode (full-time and part-time) using sectoral benchmarks and international comparators as a guide to planning.
2. We will benchmark our staff-student ratio at broad discipline level against other Irish universities and set and maintain an appropriate target staff-student ratio.
3. We will ensure our financial and business planning processes and resource allocation processes are easy to understand, transparent, and support the strategic objectives of the University, specifically planned growth, excellence in research and scholarship, quality teaching and learning, widening participation and an increase in postgraduate and international enrolments.

11.2 We will enhance our quality assurance and quality enhancement processes, and strengthen the link between quality enhancement and strategic planning.

1. We will use the forthcoming CINNTE independent review of our quality assurance/quality enhancement processes to further develop a culture of continuous quality enhancement and to formalise the links between quality assurance and strategic planning at institutional, faculty and departmental levels.
2. We will implement a faculty-level strategic planning process to support the planned growth of the University, foster interdepartmental collaboration, promote quality enhancement, and link quality assurance/quality improvement processes to formal strategic planning.
3. We will establish annual quality enhancement themes derived from those recommendations within quality reviews that are best delivered at faculty or university level.



11.3 We will build on the professionalism of our finance and governance functions to ensure they are centres of excellence.

1. We will further develop our policies and processes for financial planning, resource allocation and risk analysis to support strategic decision-making, the planned growth of the University and the maintenance of a strong balance sheet.
2. We will ensure Maynooth University finance services are a centre of excellence in transaction processing, control and reporting.
3. We will be an exemplar in the tertiary education sector in terms of governance and transparency.

12.

Estates, Capital Development and Campus Master Plan

A particular sense of place is one of the distinguishing features of Maynooth University. Two hundred years of history and heritage are represented on the campus we share with St. Patrick's College. The development of the University itself is an ongoing opportunity to create a special learning landscape, and the town of Maynooth and the University combine to form a community that is unique in Ireland.

The University, with the support of the State, has invested significantly in facilities and infrastructure over the last decade to support a growing population of learners. A highly visible manifestation of this investment is the delivery of world-class facilities such as the School of Education, Eolas and Iontas buildings, the new Library and the latest phase of on-campus student residences. The next five years will require considerable additional capital development, which is an opportunity to transform the campus; to further enrich the experience of living, learning and working here; and to develop a resource for the local and regional communities. The University has adopted a Campus Master Plan to guide this development which supports the academic mission; is concerned with people, programmes and places; and builds on the rich heritage and biodiversity of our parkland setting to form a sustainable and inspirational learning and research environment.

The core of this strategy is the implementation of this Campus Master Plan and associated capital development programme to enhance the student and staff experience, strengthen disciplines while catalysing strong interdisciplinary interaction, and establish a unique sense of place and identity for Maynooth University. These activities will support growth in student numbers, graduate education, internationalisation, cultural engagement and collaboration with external partners.

“Our goal is to provide a vibrant, sustainable, campus environment that is rich in learning, culture, heritage and nature, with modern, inclusive facilities and infrastructure commensurate with the needs of a growing community of students, staff and visitors, by implementing our Campus Master Plan and capital development programme.”



MU will complete construction of the International Centre for Science, Technology & Innovation, designed by RKD Architects, in 2020.



12.1 We will invest in campus facilities and infrastructure, according to a five-year capital development plan, to meet the learning, research, cultural, social and recreational needs of a growing campus community and to support engagement with the wider region.

1. We will finalise a phased five-year capital development programme, guided by the Campus Master Plan, to provide modern research and learning spaces, facilities and infrastructure to support planned enrolment growth and developments in research, teaching and learning.
2. The capital development programme will provide for:
 - A new academic building, to open for the 2020/21 academic year;
 - The refurbishment of older buildings and the decommissioning and replacement of facilities which are no longer fit for purpose;
 - A network of arts spaces and venues;
 - A range of technology-enabled informal learning, social, meeting and community spaces;
 - A new Student Centre;
 - A range of new and enhanced sports and physical recreation facilities; and,
 - 1,000 beds of additional on-campus student accommodation.
3. We will complete a campus-wide access and inclusion audit and develop a costed implementation plan to meet legal obligations and the strategic imperative to be an inclusive campus.
4. We will, in implementing the capital programme over the next five years, facilitate where possible and appropriate the co-location of cognate disciplines to support interdepartmental collaboration and interdisciplinary work.
5. We will continue to strengthen campus services and development operations.



A new Student Centre, designed by Scott Tallon Walker Architects, will open to MU students in 2021.

12.2 We will implement the Campus Master Plan and public realm strategy to create an inspiring and sustainable campus environment.

1. We will, in partnership with St. Patrick's College Maynooth, develop our historic landscape and parkland setting to create an animated public realm in a bio-diverse and sustainable garden campus as an inspirational setting for learning and scholarship.
2. We will, in the development and management of the campus, seek to be an internationally recognised model in relation to environmental sustainability and environmental justice, and will continue to support the excellent work of the Maynooth Green Campus initiative.
3. We will, working with external partners, build stronger links between the campus and the community, establishing the University as a resource for the local and regional community.

13.

Communications, Alumni and Philanthropy

Maynooth University is Ireland's youngest university, with a strong reputation for its research and scholarship, innovation and knowledge transfer, undergraduate portfolio, widening participation, and an inclusive and collegial campus community. Our alumni are diverse and exceptionally supportive. Nonetheless, we have yet to fully establish in the public mind a comprehensive picture of the nature, activities, impact and value of Maynooth University, and we could do more to engage our alumni and to mobilise them in support of the University.

This strategy will drive a more systematic approach to communications, alumni and development to:

- Raise the profile of Maynooth University, focusing especially on our research and scholarship, postgraduate education and our contribution and successes in arts, humanities, social sciences, business, law, education, science and engineering;
- Better engage and connect our alumni with each other and the University; and,
- Raise philanthropic funding in support of innovative and important projects.



13.1 We will build on our collegial ethos and excellent reputation with more structured internal communications processes and strategic external communications and marketing.

1. We will continue to transition to a more digitally-focused communications strategy aimed at raising awareness and understanding of our strategic direction and successes, research and scholarship, taught programmes, international offerings, and opportunities for engagement—both internally and externally.
2. We will improve internal communication and collaboration processes.
3. We will raise the public profile of the University through targeted marketing, media relations and public relations—emphasising the research, postgraduate, engagement, diversity and international activities alongside the quality of our taught programmes and our broader value to society.

13.2 We will further and systematically engage our alumni, connecting them to each other and the University, and mobilising alumni and philanthropy in support of the goals of the institution.

1. We will strengthen our alumni engagement programme, recognising the desire amongst alumni to continue to learn and retain an intellectual connection with the University and professional connections with each other.
2. We will mobilise alumni in support of graduate employability by acting as role models and mentors, forming affinity groups, and offering work placement.
3. We will increase our fundraising capacity and secure additional philanthropic funding in support of the strategic priorities of the University.

“Our goal is to project a clear and accurate understanding of the activities and value of the University, and ensure that alumni and friends of the University remain connected and are motivated to support the institution.”



