



2021 / 22

Annual Sustainability Report



Introduction

During 2021/22 we have seen the easing of COVID restrictions, and the university beginning to adapt to a post-pandemic world with a physical return to campus life. The pandemic, and peoples' reaction to it, has shown the incredible effect collective action has had on reducing carbon emissions and improving local biodiversity.

Through the many challenges and successes of 2021/22 there is much to celebrate with a continued and indeed renewed focus on sustainability right across the university.

We have worked diligently on creating a new governance structure, through a Sustainability Steering Group, establishing a solid foundation for embedding sustainability into the DNA of our university. This commitment was strengthened with the Vice Chancellor signing



Professor Ian Montgomery
Director of Brexit and Sustainability

the SDG Accord on behalf of the university, making a corporate commitment to supporting our institution's response to address, challenge and raise awareness around the global United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We also launched a new sustainability website highlighting our work within each of the 17 SDGs and demonstrating our collective contributions to sustainability and the SDGs across teaching, research, operations, and partnership activities. Ulster was also recognised as a global leader in sustainability achieving a Top 200 position in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings which assess universities against the UN SDGs, placing Ulster in the top 15% of participating institutions globally.

This Annual Sustainability Report shines a spotlight on specific areas of success, highlights some of the ongoing initiatives and campaigns, and provides an account of our progress aligned to the principles of the UN SDGs. As we look forward, as a community of student, staff, and external partners we will continue to identify opportunities to further drive sustainability alongside the People, Place and Partnership, Sustainable Futures for All strategy.

“

Whilst we have made noteworthy progress, we acknowledge that there is still a lot to be done. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved so far, and strongly believe that we are in a better position to achieve our sustainability ambitions than ever before. As we plan our further contributions to the sustainability agenda, we will prioritise specific SDGs where we know we can make the most significant impact and use their key themes to focus our actions and goals.

”

Foreword

Our planet is at a crossroads.

Each year, we see more severe weather impacts, loss of biodiversity and extinction. However, awareness of climate change is growing and so is the impetus for rapid action. Universities like Ulster University are crucial to that process.

We recognise the complexity of our organisation, the social, economic and environmental impact of our operations, and our key role in research, teaching and as community partners. We therefore strive to deliver and continually improve our performance, using an accredited environmental management system and a range of sustainability policies and operational plans.



I am very proud of the progress we have made as we continue with our net zero transition planning, step up preparations to welcome students and staff to the enhanced Belfast campus and support initiatives that raise the profile of sustainability right across the institution. In addition, we continue to make progress around sustainability engagement through launching the Net Zero digital engagement

app, tree planting events, supporting colleagues with embedding sustainability within the curriculum and delivering activities to promote and engage around COP26 the UN Climate Change Conference.

The teams involved in making our university more sustainable have done outstanding work at a challenging time, developing and delivering projects with both passion and rigour.



I commend all staff and students from across the University who have and continue to make Ulster proud of its reputation for sustainability impact and leadership. While there is more work to do to support the SDG 2030 Agenda, this report is evidence that the Ulster community has the skills and capability to make it happen.

Marie-Louise Gaile
Sustainability Manager





PEOPLE

AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY: EVERYONE MATTERS



New **School of Medicine** opens



Host to **Northern Ireland's first LGBTQ+ Sports Day**



Signatory of the **White Ribbon Pledge**



Athena Swan success (School of Psychology, Silver award & School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems Bronze award)



1st Anniversary **BAME and LGBT+ staff networks**



PLANET

A CLIMATE POSITIVE UNIVERSITY: PROTECTING NATURE-



Platinum Award - Environmental Benchmarking Survey



ISO 14001 - Environmental Management Certification



Pathway to Net Zero Carbon - Net Zero Modelling



Net Zero Challenge - App & Web engagement platform launched



Tree & Wildflower planting



Top 200 global institution - Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking



Top 3 Institution - SDG Teach IN



All-Island Climate and **Biodiversity Research Network - Co-chair**



Academy Restaurant - Love NI Veg Pledge



New Centre for Early Mathematics Learning - Inter-university research



NIE Networks electrical and energy engineering scholarships



Belfast Harbour care experienced community scholarships



StimOxyGen spin-off winner of INVENT 2021 (innovator and entrepreneur competition)



GradEmployNI life-changing employment initiative launched



1st Business School in UK & Ireland - New Sustainability Dashboard



PLACE

AN INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



PARTNERSHIPS

A CONNECTED UNIVERSITY: CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY

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PEOPLE

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



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We support students and staff with their health and wellbeing.



History was made at Derry~Londonderry campus with the opening of a newly refurbished building to welcome the first 70 students to the new School of Medicine.

Estates Services transformed a listed building to provide an anatomy laboratory, clinical and communication skills teaching rooms and hub spaces for collaborative and individual study. The vision for the School of Medicine is to recruit and retain high quality staff and students; produce doctors able to deliver whole-person care with skill, teamwork, and compassion for the benefit of people across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Appointment of the Radox Professor of Medicine who will shape the direction of clinical and translational research and inform the teaching of our future doctors within the School of Medicine.

NI students were encouraged to take up the vaccine as part of the **'Big Jab Weekend.'** With Northern Ireland mass vaccination centres winding down after nine months of intensive activity, students were encouraged to get their COVID-19 vaccination to help protect the community and to ensure the return to full and permanent campus operations.

Senior Lecturer, from the School of Engineering, took part in the Norn Iron 100 event, completing the 105-mile Ultramarathon in 34 hours and 38 minutes raising £1516.65 for AWARE NI, the depression charity for Northern Ireland and Diabetes UK, a research and education charity which aims to prevent Type 2 Diabetes.

Ulster University staff celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2022.

The week promoted community through 'Coffee and Connection' to help combat loneliness, by encouraging staff to reach out to each other and provided a range of talks on work life balance, good mood food, five steps to wellbeing and burn out and rest.





The Wo/men's Network held its third Annual Conference 'Cultivating health and wellbeing in 2022'. The conference included academic speakers, wellbeing practitioners, small business owners and influencers who provided keynote talks, panel discussions and breakout sessions on the importance of health, well-being, and practical methods to apply to cultivate a healthier lifestyle.

The 'OUR Generation' team at Ulster University partnered with Action Mental Health to launch Transgenerational Trauma Awareness Day. 'OUR Generation' aims to help address Transgenerational Trauma by building emotional resilience and peace for generations to come. The launch event included guest speakers on the background to Transgenerational Trauma, the 'It Didn't End in 1998' Report and Therapeutic approaches to Transgenerational Trauma.

A collaborative project supported by Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities, the **Irish Football Association and Gaelfast launched a free nutritional resource pack developed by Ulster University Sport and Exercise Nutrition staff and graduates.** The nutritional tool is for educating athletes, coaches, and teams across all sports on the importance of nutrition in improving athletic performance.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

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



The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion team completed a review of the three-year disability action plan with a comprehensive report 'Effectiveness review of the University's Disability Action Plan (2019-2022)'.

Consultation on a new action plan commenced with engagement with key stakeholders including the University Staff Disability Network and feedback from a staff survey.



Ulster University Business School and Arts & Business NI delivered a conference inspiring ways of starting conversations around Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

To celebrate equality, diversity and inclusivity in sport, Ulster University hosted Northern Ireland's first LGBTQ+ Sports Day supported by Sporting Pride Ireland and the network of managers within Student Sport Ireland and Ulster University Sports Services.



BAME and LGBT+ staff networks celebrated their 1st anniversary. Over the last year, the BAME Network has held many events and discussions to support its aim of seeking to identify, address and find solutions to the disparities, needs, priorities and concerns of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, and students at Ulster University.





Ulster University joined the Breastfeeding Welcome Here scheme, a positive step to increase awareness about breastfeeding and to let all students, staff, and visitors know that babies can be breastfed on any of our campuses.

The Wo/Men's Network showed its support of White Ribbon Day and the Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland by signing the White Ribbon Pledge to share the message that men's violence against women and girls must end.

As part of the pledge, people, especially men, are encouraged to wear a White Ribbon and make the Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. Representatives from the University's Wo/Men's Network, as well as People

and Culture, UU Students' Union, The Confucius Institute and international students were in attendance to see the White Ribbon Pledge being signed.

Athena Swan success with the School of Psychology achieving Silver award and School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems retaining Bronze award.

The Athena Swan Charter recognises advancement of gender equality: representation, progression, and success for all. This University has been highly committed to the principles that underpin the Athena Swan Charter for many years with 11 Schools at Ulster currently holding Athena Swan awards.

To mark **International Women's Day**, Ulster University hosted a virtual event by colleagues from Athena Swan and the Development and Alumni Relations Office to enjoy an **'In Conversation' with Monica McWilliams** to hear about her story. The theme for International Women's Day 2022 was **#BreakTheBias**. To explore this



theme, Monica outlined how she had chosen to break the bias, forged women's equality, and her passion for a gender equal world.

The **NI Sports and Human Rights Forum**, with support from Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and in partnership with Ulster University's School of Sport, hosted its first ever **Annual Sports and Human Rights Conference on International Women's Day**. The conference aimed to raise awareness of Sports and Human Rights with a focus on upskilling student teachers and grassroots coaches, share knowledge, learning, progress and to champion girls and women in sport.



PLANET

Our breath-taking and vibrant spaces are designed to inspire collaboration and deliver transformative experiences for all. Achieving Platinum accreditation in the NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey and our ISO 14001 certification recognises the proactive management of our campus-based impacts.



CARBON – OUR PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

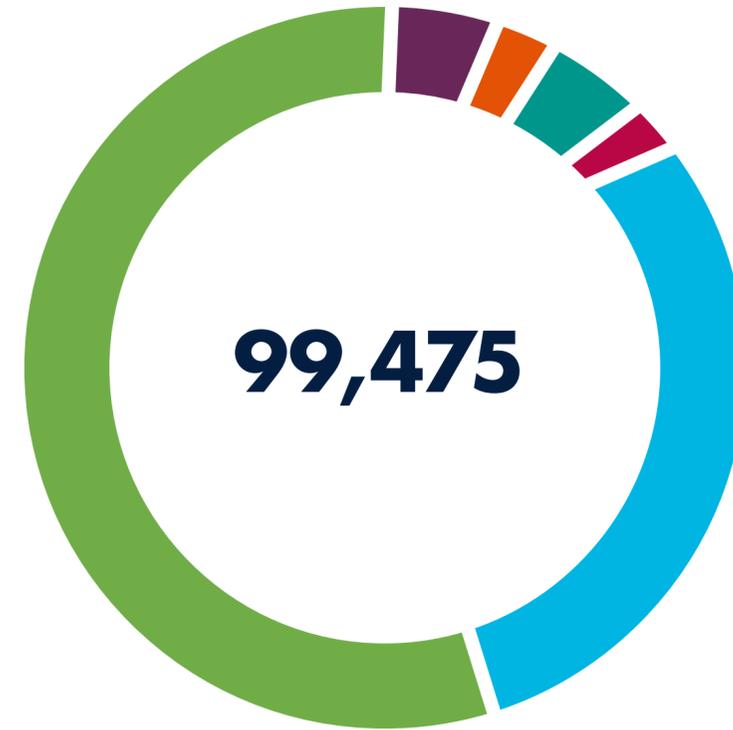
Utilising carbon emissions baseline assessment to model pathways to net zero.



The University has completed a carbon emission baseline assessment across all its activities using the most recent pre COVID 2018/19 academic year. From this the university understands its baseline emissions data across Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. The emissions baseline has provided the foundation for conducting a net zero modelling exercise.



Baseline Scope 1, 2 & 3 Emissions tCO₂e (AY 2018/19)



6,330 Scope 1 - Gas & Fuel
3,360 Scope 2 - Electricity
5,237 Scope 3 - Business Travel (air&car)
2,205 Scope 3 - Other
28,319 Scope 3 - Staff & Student Commuting
54,024 Scope 3 - Supply Chain

The university has commenced a Net Zero Modelling exercise to model interventions across university campuses, operations, and supply chain to establish a viable route to achieving net zero carbon. A range of decarbonisation scenarios will be modelled to provide a series of decarbonisation pathways reaching net zero at different target dates. The

modelling will apply a mix of varying investment and project interventions. We expect the decarbonisation scenarios will focus on core influenceable interventions such as: prioritising refurbishment, improving space utilisation, higher building specification for new build, electrification of campus heating and electric vehicle charging, modal shift, reduction in flights and supplier engagement and targets.



Net Zero Roadmap

A preferred decarbonisation scenario will be selected detailing a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and a Climate Action Position Statement (CAPS). The Net Zero Roadmap will:

- Summarise the targets and milestones required for the preferred decarbonisation scenario.
- Outline the actions required to achieve reductions against each emissions category in line with best practice approaches and guidance.

A further phase of the university net zero transition will include campus-specific transition plans. These will be in-depth plans providing feasibility assessments around energy efficiency, low carbon heat and climate resilience.

Additionally, the university will seek to avoid unnecessary procurement alongside identifying more sustainable purchasing options and improving the understanding of the carbon impacts of our expenditure.

The Net Zero Challenge

Ulster joined the Net Zero Challenge (NZC) in October 2021. The sustainability engagement App and web platform provides incentives for students and staff to make positive changes in their daily routine on campus and on the go – from learning about carbon to travelling actively, and from eating less meat to litter picking. Completing activities earn points, a place on the leaderboard and prizes.

In addition to the promoted activities students and staff received regular newsletters and information on campaigns linked to themes such as **COP26, Wellbeing, #NoBuyNovember and World Environment Day/ #OnlyOneWorld.**

Performance is tracked via a dashboard illustrating the impact of student and staff completed activities, the results from some of the popular activities completed in the year are below:



	Distance Stepped	3,828 km
	Electricity Saved	2,702 kWh
	Meat Free Days	424
	Plastic Items Avoided	143

ENERGY – AN ENERGY EFFICIENT ESTATE.

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



While 2019/20 and 2020/21 saw reductions in the University’s electricity and heating, it was to be expected that this would rise post-pandemic. This was proven correct, with electricity and heating consumption rising in 2021/22.

The University’s energy usage (electricity and heating) per m² for 2021/22 was 189.2 kWh/m² which represents a 5.8% increase from 2020/21 and 14.0% reduction in the last ten years. This positions Scope 1 and 2 emissions at 8,903 tonnes CO₂e, a year-on-year increase of 12.4% or 985 tonnes CO₂e

Energy costs dramatically increased due to extreme volatility across global energy markets. The University’s energy consumption did increase year-on-year, but market factors were the primary force behind inflated costs.

Whilst Ulster University strives to reduce energy consumption across the estate, a safe environment upon return to campus had to be provided for staff, students and visitors. **The University took advice and reviewed guidance from multiple sources and industry standards, to ensure health and safety continued to be a top priority.** Emerging from the pandemic, fresh ventilation was supplied across the estate, providing a safe space for all building-users.

Driving high energy efficiency standards continues to be a key aspect of how we design new buildings and conduct building refurbishments.

As part of a building refurbishment for the relocation of programmes delivered by School of Health Sciences on the Derry~Londonderry campus, more than 100 traditional lights were replaced with energy efficient, cost effective and low maintenance LED lights.

Heating and Electricity Consumption 5 Year Trend



WATER - REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION

Proactive programme in place to minimise water consumption.

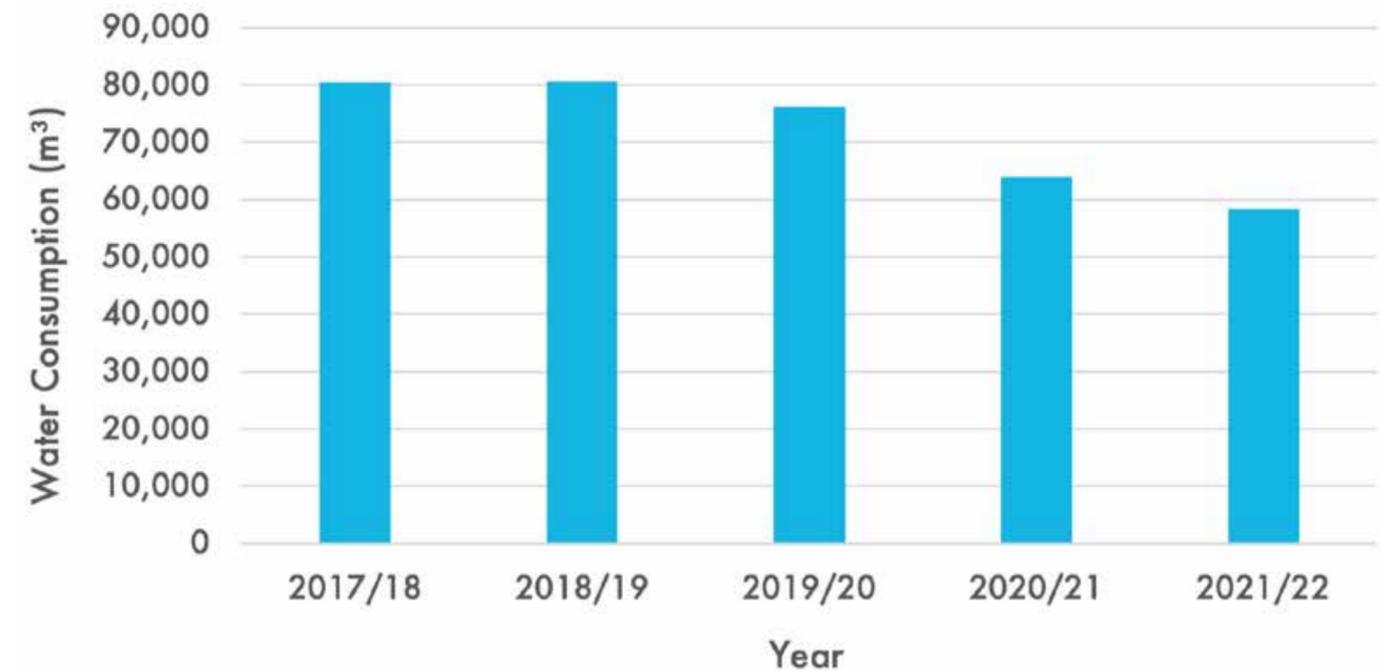


Water consumption decreased by 9% in 2021/22. This is the lowest level within the last five years, partly due to numbers of students and staff on campus and continuous improvement regarding water management.

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

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

Water Consumption 5 Year Trend



RESOURCE USE - INCREASE IN RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

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

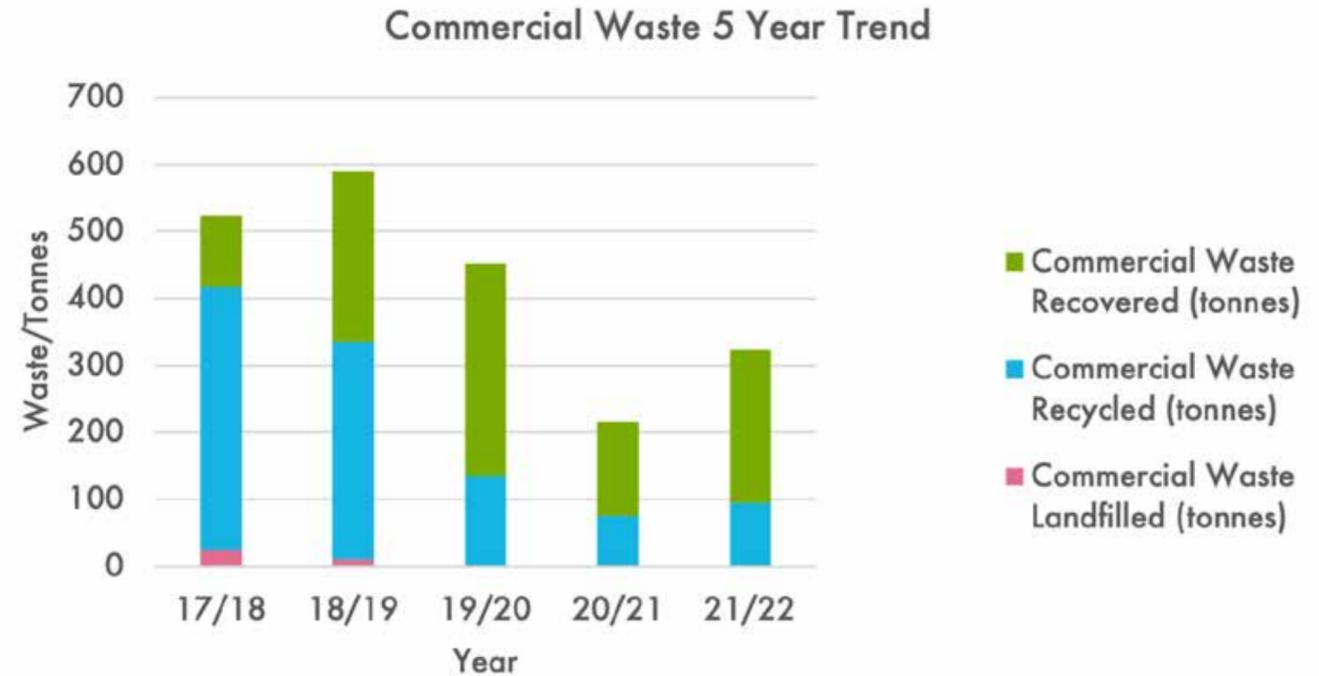


Ulster’s total routine office and commercial waste volume in 2021/22 was 325 tonnes, 100% was recycled and recovered with zero waste to landfill achieved again this year.

This represents an increase in more than 100 tonnes from the previous year, however lower than in recent years as campus occupancy and operations continued to be impacted by COVID and the introduction of hybrid and flexible working patterns.

5.2 tonnes of unwanted items were donated to the British Heart Foundation ‘Pack for Good’ campaign delivered by Residential Services, with a value to the charity of £9,240.

We have engaged with the Invest Northern Ireland Industrial Symbiosis Programme. Resource Matching Practitioners access a wide network of solution providers to come up with cost effective, innovative solutions and coordinate logistics for the reuse of obsolete items from campus during refurbishment projects such as equipment and furniture.



The matching service diverts items from waste streams and supports local organisations and charities. The university donates obsolete furniture and equipment to charities with business organisations providing a donation to the university student hardship fund for matches. Examples of successful matches in 2021/22 include provision of:

- Cafeteria catering equipment from Derry~Londonderry campus to a charity in Ghana via a surplus equipment brokerage service. Equipment included Bain Marie’s, refrigerated food display units, fridges, stainless steel counters and tables.

- Seminar chairs from Coleraine campus to a counselling charity that offer professional counselling for children, young people, adults, and couples to ensure no one journeys alone.
- Dining chairs and tables from Belfast campus to a Not-for-Profit furniture restoration and resale organisation who through their profits help vulnerable people with meals, accommodation, training, and employment.
- Conference chairs from Belfast campus to a training and employment organisation who support people before and after they complete prison or community sentences.

TRAVEL - REDUCE EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL



The changes to working practices made necessary by COVID, and the subsequent reductions shown in 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, present a huge opportunity to deliver long-term organisational change for Ulster University business travel.

Virtual meetings and virtual attendance at conferences became the norm and should be encouraged as the default option in the long term.

To deliver this, we must ensure that post-pandemic we travel less, make more use of digital technologies to connect, factor sustainability into the mode of travel we select and maximise the value of any given travel episode.





Air Travel

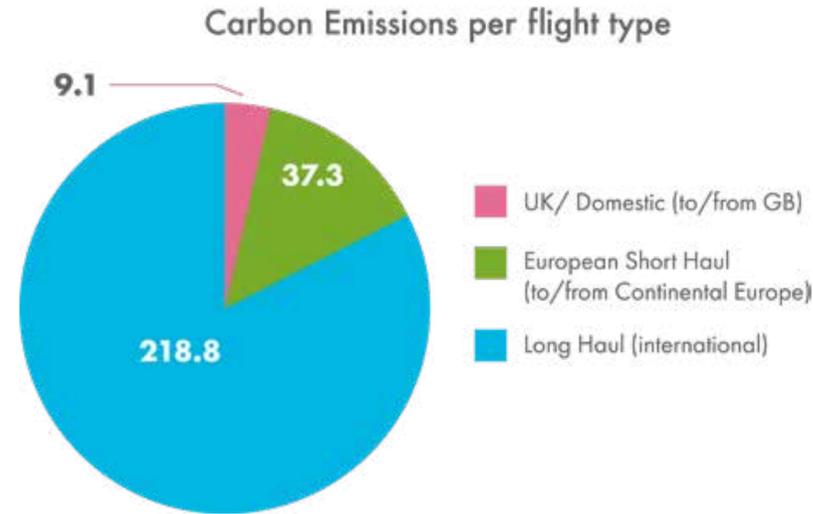
During 2021/22, there were 2,406,030 Kilometres of business air travelled by university representatives with associated carbon emissions of 265 tonnes, an increase on the previous year, however remaining lower than pre-COVID levels.

More than half (60%) of business travel emissions arose from air travel. 83% of air travel emissions were from long haul flights.



Where air travel is unavoidable, the most emission-efficient passenger class should be used (i.e., economy class as default).

Aviation as a sector will be more difficult to decarbonise than road transport as the potential for battery electricity to run planes is limited by the range and power required. Improved efficiency and alternative aviation fuels will help to reduce the emissions associated

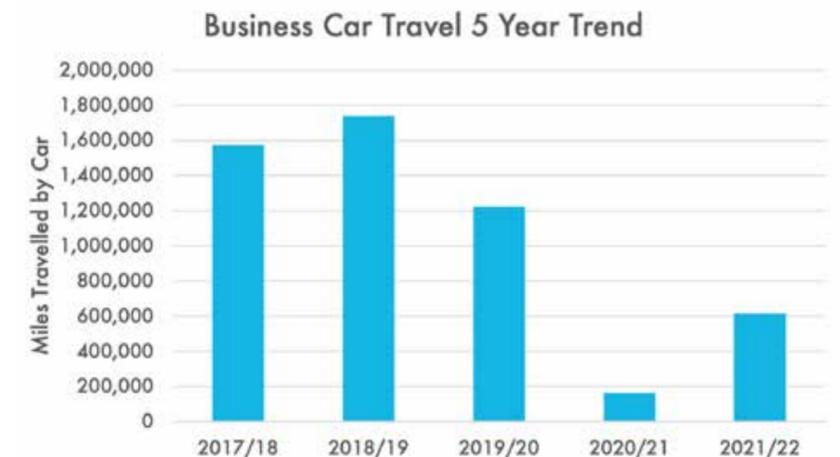


with air travel. It is widely accepted however that the UK Higher Education Sector cannot continue with business as usual in terms of air travel and that a significant reduction in flights will be needed to meet UK net zero ambitions.

During the reporting year, staff travelled a total of 615,628 miles by car on university business, which resulted in approximately 169 tonnes of carbon emissions. This is more than three times higher the number of miles travelled by car than the previous year however lower than pre COVID levels. The decrease in last two years is attributed to ongoing impacts of COVID to campus



operations and the introduction of flexible and hybrid working arrangements and greater use of sustainable transport.





Sustainable Travel Plans and Initiatives

Ongoing implementation of the Northwest campuses and Greater Belfast Development Travel Plans.

The University's travel plans aim to reduce the impact of transport associated with our campus activities on local communities and the wider environment.

As part of preparations to welcome students and staff to the enhanced Belfast campus a range of activities were progressed including:

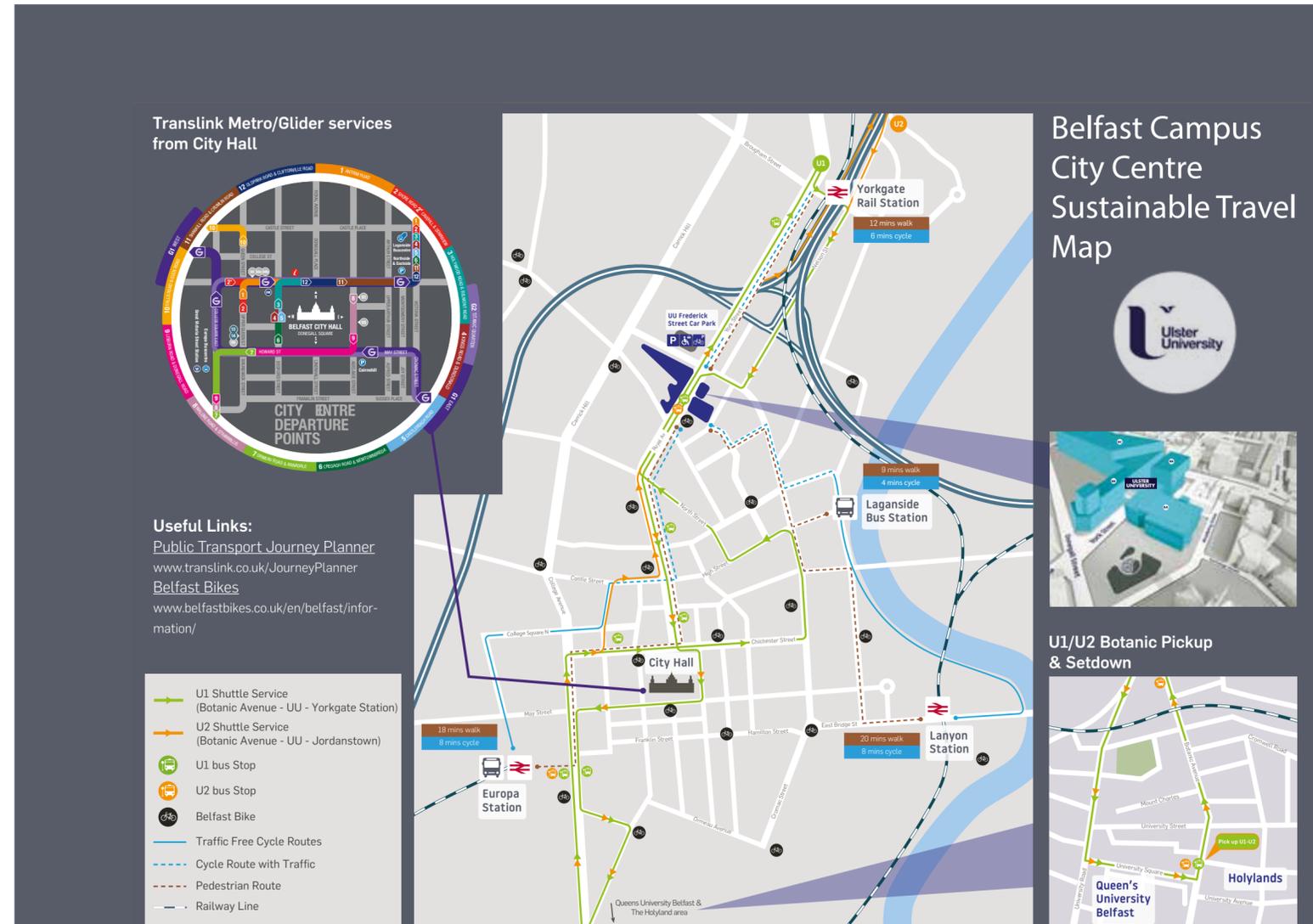
- Refinement of the Transport Operational Readiness Plan including updated integrated communication plans and arrangements for enhanced monitoring of bus and rail services, traffic volumes and parking in the vicinity of the campus.
- Continued collaboration with Translink on a range of initiatives including an enhanced bus service to and from the Jordanstown and Belfast campuses, Park & Ride facility at Jordanstown campus as an option for travelling to Belfast campus using the U2 bus service or Jordanstown Rail Halt, with free parking for those using the onward bus and train services. New U1 bus service with free onward travel from Yorkgate train station to Belfast campus. On-going engagement with multi agency external

stakeholders to develop active travel infrastructure to improve connectivity to Belfast campus including way finding, cycle routes and junction upgrades.

- Progress with plans for an Active travel hub in partnership with Belfast City

Council and Public Health Agency to promote walking and cycling to staff, students and members of the public.

- Regular communications to promote sustainable and active travel via bespoke videos, podcasts, and maps.



BIODIVERSITY - ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

Pride in the natural capital of our estate.



Coleraine campus

To enhance the diversity of plant species within previously mown areas wildflower plug plants have been incorporated within the grass. These will eventually spread and naturalise.

Yellow Rattle seed has been sown amongst grassed areas. Yellow Rattle thrives by obtaining nutrients from the roots of neighbouring plants, in particular grasses. It is hoped the introduction of Yellow Rattle will over time, reduce the vigour of existing grasses and aid the establishment of more native plants.

Planting of naturalised bulbs suitable for the woodland edge habitat continued during the autumn at the Coleraine campus. Each year for the last three years 20,000 native bulbs have been planted, including Bluebells, Snowdrops, Tulips and Wild Garlic.

Tree thinning continues within the campus woodlands to open the overall canopy to encourage a more diverse habitat and provide space for re-planting.

Derry~Londonderry campus

Plantlife’s “No Mow May” campaign was supported. During May grass areas were not mown allowing lawn flowers to bloom providing nectar for bees and other pollinators.

Mapping was undertaken of existing tree stock with a view to identifying and developing interventions that will create more diverse urban woodlands/forests. Computer software is currently being evaluated for use in a detailed analysis of the environmental benefits that trees bring to Derry~Londonderry campus.

A programme was undertaken to control both invasive and noxious plant species. Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed were controlled by chemical means. Ragwort was removed by hand pulling.

Ulster University’s **use of tree cloning has allowed a 150-year-old cut leaf Hornbeam tree situated on the grounds of the former Foyle College to live on at two different local sites.** The original College Tree now in its veteran stage and due to natural decline will soon be lost to the landscape. **To mark the COP26 Climate Change Conference students from Foyle College with an interest in sustainability were invited by the Vice Chancellor to plant trees both on their new school site and at the Derry~Londonderry campus.**



PLACE

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



TEACHING AND LEARNING

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



For the fourth consecutive year **Ulster participated in the Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS) UK SDG Teach In.** Ulster achieved third place for staff engagement, with 63 colleagues pledging to include the UN SDGs within their learning and teaching. As a result of this commitment by staff, Ulster was on the top 10 Leaderboard for institutions with the highest percentage of students reached by the campaign.



Ulster University School of Nursing participated in a Collaborative Online International Learning Initiative.

Over 13 weeks staff and students from Ulster and sixteen other international universities took part in virtual exchanges on the Climate Crisis and Sustainable Healthcare, promoting sustainability through healthcare curricula and practice.



As part of **Northern Ireland Consumer Week** our **Senior Lecturer in Consumer Management and Food Innovation at Ulster University Business School** participated in the

Consumer Councils 'Let's talk about food insecurity' roundtable conversation.

The panelist of experts discussed food insecurity, what it means, how prevalent it is, who is at risk, and what is being done and can be done to address this growing issue.

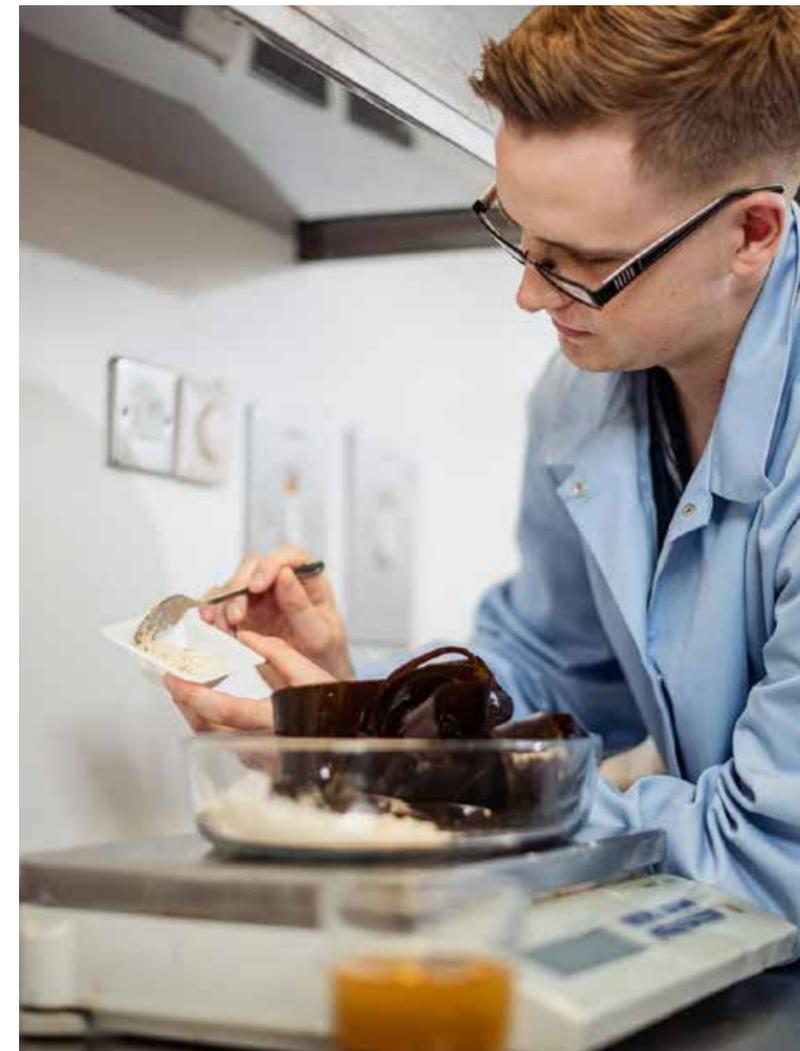
To reduce waste, **an unlikely and creative partnership between two Ulster University degree programmes emerged with students from the BSc Marine Science partnering with students from BSc Consumer Management and Food Innovation.**

Delivering the practical classes on mollusc anatomy in the Food and Consumer Testing Suite kitchens rather than a teaching lab meant that after the dissection the seafood could be used for recipe innovation and turned into a tasty paella meal.

Ulster's Culinary Arts Students pledged to take the Love NI Veg 7-Day Meal Challenge.

Students in the Academy Restaurant took part in Love NI Veg workshops dedicated to including a variety of vegetables grown locally and in season on the menu. The initiative aimed to encourage people to eat more vegetables to support local food producers and to improve health and the environment.

The Ulster University **'Being Entrepreneurial' Schools Outreach programme** attracted more girls to take up the challenge of presenting their pitch for a business idea.





Two of the three winning entries, including overall winner, were female. Through the Schools Outreach programme, we are engaging school pupils across the region and giving them the opportunity to participate in programmes co-designed by Ulster University academics, to ensure that personal backgrounds and gender do not determine future prospects.

Ulster University, in partnership with Manchester United Foundation, welcomed former Manchester United player to the Derry~Londonderry campus to celebrate four years of the University and Manchester United Foundation's Schools Outreach programme.

The dedicated educational and community outreach programme has engaged with the schools and regional college from the Foyle Learning Community since it was launched in 2018. Led by Ulster University and supported by Manchester United Foundation, over 500 pupils from across Derry-Londonderry have engaged in a range of initiatives designed to motivate and inspire the next generation, widen access, and create pathways to Ulster University.



Having received the Covid Recovery Funding, the PGCE Primary course within the School of Education was able to partner with the Northern Ireland Forest Schools Association to engage the PGCE Primary students to complete their level one certificate in Forest Schools. Students were able to effectively

utilise the Coleraine campus to explore the educational possibilities of extending teaching and learning outdoors. Following the COVID

pandemic, this certificate had many impactful benefits for the students in terms of facilitating outdoor education during their school placements and it also increased their employability prospects.

Ulster University's Business School launched a new advanced certificate in Management Practice (Developing Leaders in Agri-Food) to provide aspiring farmers with the latest thinking on the principles of leading and managing an agri-food business in today's fast-changing environment. Participants will benefit from best practice field trips to highlight how leading local agri-food players have diversified, innovated, and grown highly successful businesses through strong and effective leadership.



RESEARCH

Our research is addressing the grand challenges of the world and our teaching is providing people with new skills so they can enhance their own life choices and outcomes for society.



Ulster University was ranked in the top 200 global institutions for impact based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2022 and ranked within the top 25 of UK universities across four categories, and the first on the island of Ireland in two of the categories. This was the first year that Ulster participated in the rankings, the performance is testament to the hard work and commitment of our students, staff, and university partners, who strive to have a positive impact on the world around us and continue to develop and support sustainability initiatives across various aspects of teaching, research, professional services operations, and governance.

A research project, funded by Invest NI and led by Ulster University, will be supported by industry partners **Causeway GT, Atlantic Hub** and **Enisca** to find novel ways to make industrial facilities efficient in their clean energy use. The project will consider all new renewable energy sources like wind and solar

while exploring opportunities and barriers to harnessing Northern Ireland's geothermal energy resources in the form of natural heat emanating from the earth's core.

Economy Minister launched the expanded, world class Biomedical Sciences Facility at Coleraine campus. The university's Biomedical Sciences Research Institute has added a new state-of-the-art laboratory within its Mass Spectrometry Centre. The new lab is a further boost to the world class research already taking place at the Coleraine campus across disciplines including nutrition, diabetes, vision science, pharmaceutical science, and genomics, and will lead to the discovery of new treatment pathways and better patient outcomes.

As part of an inter-university research team **Ulster University's School of Psychology will receive over £8.23m in funding from the Economic and Social Research Council,** part of UK Research and Innovation, to establish a new Centre for Early Mathematics Learning (CEML). Research shows that individuals with higher levels of mathematics skills are associated with improved employment prospects, positive health outcomes and a better quality of life. The CEML will work with children, parents, childcare workers, and teachers to investigate the development of mathematics knowledge and skills in the early years.

An Ulster University Professor of Coastal Geomorphology and specialist on climate change impacts on coasts, has been **appointed as one of the four co-chairs of the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network.**





The network is a researcher-led initiative, bringing together experts from multiple disciplines across the island of Ireland to undertake research on areas such as biodiversity rich renewable energy, low carbon biodiversity friendly agriculture and nature-based solutions for climate action, amongst other projects.



Research by Ulster University, co-produced with local organisations **Mencap NI, Positive Futures, CAN,** and **Families Involved in NI,** has highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with learning disabilities. The research was undertaken as part of a **Medical Research Council funded research project** to hear how adult persons with learning disabilities in the four UK nations had been affected by COVID-19. Ulster University were part of a consortium of 22 researchers across the UK and worked closely with local organisations to seek the views of adults with learning disabilities and their carers.



Ulster University, along with a network of educationalists, is undertaking **a new trial to address the educational underachievement of boys in Northern Ireland** by listening to the concerns of the students themselves and putting their voices front and centre. Research from the **Taking Boys Seriously programme** shows that boys begin to fall behind educationally, early in life and the trial will see the implementation of 10 principles which seek to reverse this trend.

Ulster University colleagues were awarded a British Association for International and Comparative Education research network grant to set up and lead the **Comparative and Interdisciplinary Education Research Network,** an interdisciplinary education and life and health sciences partnership focused on research into inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Third phase of UK wide research study highlighted the **ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic on the health and social care workforce.** The study revealed a workforce under pressure, working longer hours and at risk of burnout. The project team developed 15 good practice recommendations at individual, organisational and policy level to support the health and social care workforce.

Ulster University Law Research Director and an Independent Consultant authored a report urging the Government to **put equality at the heart of future funding policies in preparation for the withdrawal of the European Union** funding next year in hope of encouraging continued support for equality, diversity, and inclusion programmes throughout our society.

Ulster University is one of six organisations working on a major research initiative Protein-I, to diversify plant protein production across the island of Ireland. The sustainability of our food system is a major challenge and becoming more critical because of population growth and climate change.

Along with colleagues from the Ulster University School of Computing, the project will see the co-creation of a technical solution tailored to the needs of the agri-food industry, that can be used throughout the supply chain to increase supply chain efficiency, food safety and reduce environmental degradation.

PARTNERSHIPS

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



INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

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



Ulster University Elks secured £10,000 Randox sponsorship for the USA championship.

The global healthcare company provided an in-term sponsorship supporting the teams travel and accommodation enabling them to compete with some of the best women hockey teams at a tournament in Boston, highlighting the sporting and academic talent, giving the opportunity of competing on the world stage and developing students' networks and experiences globally.

Ulster University partnered with NIE Networks to offer first year electrical and energy engineering students the opportunity to be awarded a scholarship opportunity worth over £30,000. As the power sector aims to decarbonise by 2050, NIE Networks are embarking on what will be the most significant change to the electricity network since rural electrification in the 1960s and the successful

scholarship students will be fundamental in helping Northern Ireland realise that renewable energy vision.

Ulster University Business School was the first Business School in the UK and Ireland to report their sustainability impact to a new global data analytics tool established by the Haub School of Business at Saint Joseph's University (SJU) in Philadelphia USA. The international partnership aligns to Ulster's strategic commitment to enhance sustainable leadership, management and responsibility while encouraging sustainable principles within future business leaders.

One of Ulster University's spin-off companies has been named **overall winner of INVENT 2021**, Northern Ireland's most exciting and challenging competition for entrepreneurial early-stage businesses. **StimOxyGen** is a cutting-edge cancer treatment technology company developed at the Ulster University Coleraine campus. It uses oxygen generating nanoparticles to generate transient oxygen within solid tumours and has the potential to improve the efficacy of many cancer treatments and transform patient outcomes across the world.





A new podcast episode from the Ulster University Business School 'The Business of Possibility' podcast series explored the powerful work being done to empower the next generation of female entrepreneurs across Northern Ireland. The podcast looked at the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northern Ireland, barriers facing aspiring entrepreneurs and a unique programme delivered by the University and funded by Ulster Bank aimed at helping female students achieve their entrepreneurial ambitions.



Ulster University and Belfast City Council's Resilience & Sustainability Board have partnered in a unique research partnership to deliver a free training programme for business leaders to bridge the green skills gap. Architects of Change is a programme that will support Belfast's ambition for 'an inclusive, low-carbon, climate-resilient economy' and build upon green skills to show the pathway for introducing net zero carbon practices into organisations to combat the climate change emergency.



New employability initiative created providing life-changing employment opportunities to university graduates with disabilities in Northern Ireland. **GradEmployNI, delivered by Ulster University Business School in partnership with leading charity Leonard Cheshire is transforming the employment prospects with disabilities** by matching 25 talented individuals with paid placement opportunities in leading businesses across NI.

An MSc in Sports and Exercise Nutrition won The Dairy Council for Northern Ireland 'Sports Nutrition Award' which is given to the Ulster University student who receives the highest mark on their programme.

The joint **Ulster University and Irish FA Girls' and Women's Performance Academy provided players for Northern Ireland's UEFA Women's Euro 2022 squad.** Four players from the academy trained full time in Belfast for six months in the run up to the Euros. Utilising the university's world class training facilities and education, players at the academy are supported both on and off the pitch with coaching, strength, and condition, mentoring and scholarship opportunities.



COMMUNITY

We support the development of communities, giving the passion and purpose of local leaders the means and support to make real and lasting change for stronger communities and the benefit of all.



Belfast Harbour pledged £45,000 in community scholarships for care experienced applicants to Ulster University. Aiming to increase access to higher education, the scholarship fund will provide £1,000 per academic year to fifteen applicants to support their educational journey, provide equity of access and provide an opportunity to support the students to reach their full potential.

Research by Ulster University Professor of Social Policy revealed 'hidden homelessness' problem in Northern Ireland - people sleeping in their cars, in squats, on the floors or sofas of family and friends or in unsafe accommodation. The report, commissioned by Simon Community and supported by Nationwide Building Society identified that there is not enough support for the hidden homeless and that there are indications that this is a growing problem.

Ulster University's Science Shop supported community partners across Northern Ireland.

This year the program developed 239 real world connected learning projects across twenty disciplines for under and post graduate students through inclusion in module coursework and final year projects enabling students to engage within community-based research and learning.

Highlights from some of the work include:

- **Psychology@Work project involving 132 students** working with eighteen community partners to explore how psychology can be used to resolve issues in the community and outside a clinical setting offering psychology students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experience.





- **Online Symposium supported by the NSPCC to discuss Post Pandemic Poverty** and its impact on communities in Northern Ireland. The Symposium facilitated by the School of Law Social Justice Hub was part of the Ulster University programme for the Derry and Strabane Lifelong Learning Festival.
- **The Sailortown Gathering, celebrating 150 years of the Sailortown community in the heart of North Belfast.** Students worked directly with Sailortown Regeneration to support how St Joseph's church could be used by the community as a local hub providing a range of services and a venue for community activity.
- **Culinary Arts Management secured funding to lead a team of Culinary Arts students to support The Pantry which is Ashton Community Trust's local Social Supermarket.** The students designed a range of recipes for local families to create at home. A creative cookery workshop for The Pantry volunteer staff was also hosted in The Academy restaurant on campus.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED



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

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

During the 2022/23 academic year there will be more opportunities for all University staff, students, and stakeholders to get involved as we increase engagement activities and further progress actions towards delivering on sustainability.

Get involved and find out more:



ulster.ac.uk/sustainability



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