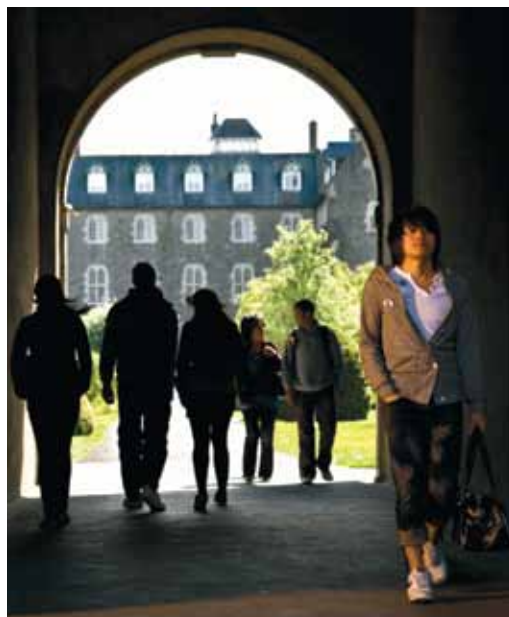


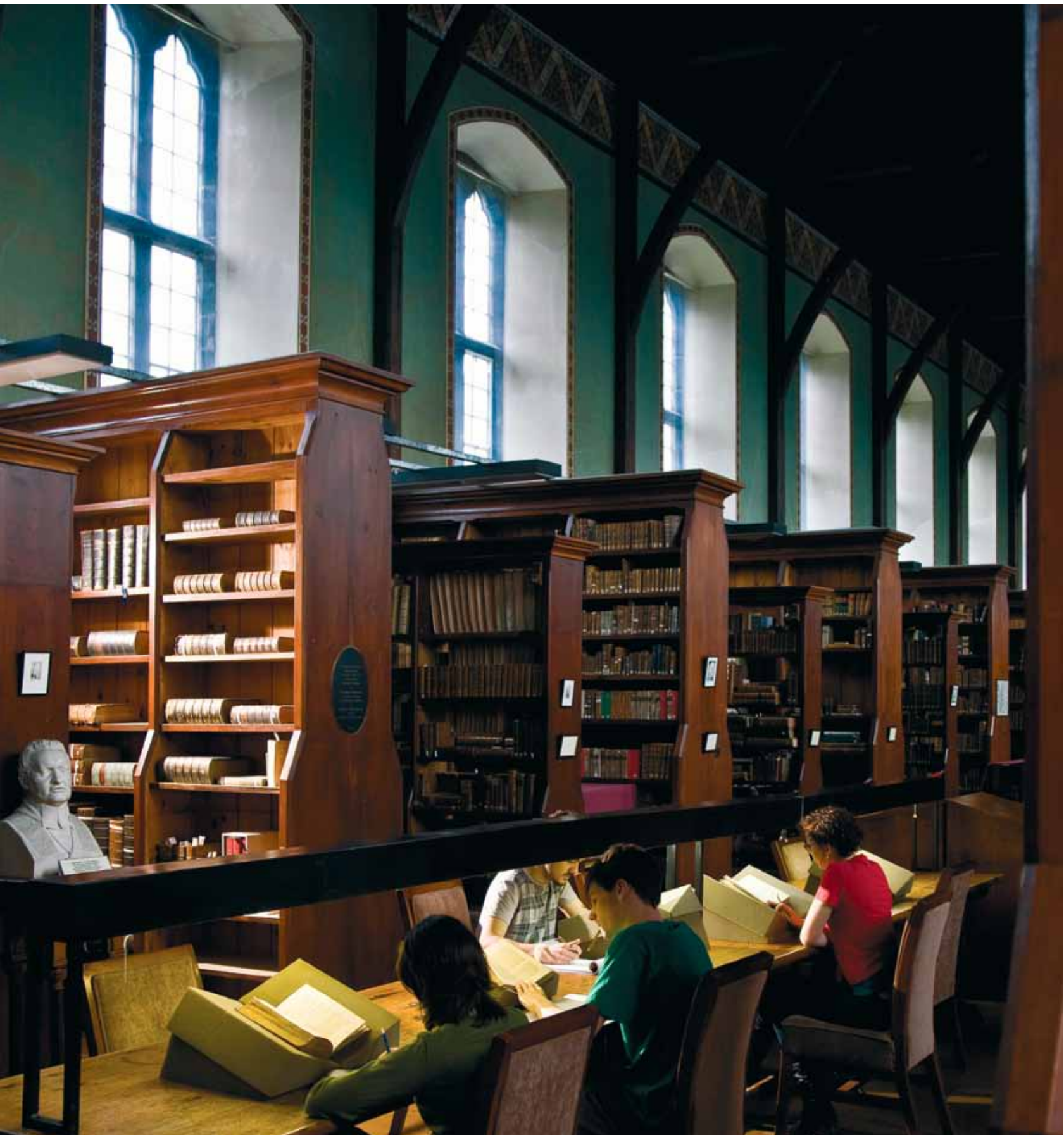


NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017





NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017

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Introduction

The achievements of the National University of Ireland Maynooth, in the fifteen years since its formal establishment as an autonomous university in 1997, are simply remarkable. NUI Maynooth is today a university of international standing, renowned for the quality and value of its research and scholarship, for its dedication to excellent teaching, and for providing an outstanding learning environment for its students. The university has grown rapidly in scale and stature. Student and staff numbers have doubled, and the university has built a strong research base and an international reputation for research and scholarship in a number of key areas.

NUI Maynooth's impact is significant at international, national and regional levels, and is reflected in the institution's performance in a variety of international assessments and rankings. The university's distinctive student profile, educational approach and research strengths, mean that it plays a particular and important role in the national system of higher education, and in the economic, social and cultural life of the fastest growing and economically most important region in the country.

The University Strategic Plan 2012–17, the fourth in the history of NUI Maynooth, reaffirms the purpose of the university as a place of scholarship and learning, establishes a shared vision for the future, and charts a clear strategic direction for the institution, guided by scholarly principles and values and cognisant of national objectives. NUI Maynooth embarks on the next stage of its development in challenging and uncertain times, but does so with confidence based on its achievements to date, and with the conviction that the success of the university is vital to the future of its students and graduates and to the renewal and regeneration of the region and the country.

Global, National and Regional Context

Global context

Higher education institutions and systems worldwide are in a period of extraordinary challenge and change. Governments throughout the world seek to increase participation in higher education but at the same time are withdrawing public funding, a trend which has accelerated through the global financial crisis, leading to difficult and usually unresolved tradeoffs between participation, quality, cost and price. The advent of mass participation in higher education, which has occurred within one generation, requires us to reassess the effectiveness of our modes of teaching and learning, to ensure each and every one of our students, with their diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests, goals and aspirations, benefits fully from their time in higher education. Globalisation, and its global flows of people, information, talent and knowledge, mean that no university or national system operates in isolation, but exists as part of a global higher education network. The speed at which information technology is developing and changing our world is both a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, technology threatens to disrupt or supersede our institutions and our ways of working; on the other hand, it provides us with pedagogical and research tools of extraordinary potential. Finally, as the cost and importance of higher education increase, public and political interest in its processes and performance also increase. We are required to demonstrate the value of our work, and to strike a balance between the intrinsic and instrumental roles of higher education, and between short-term and long-term benefits. This context reminds us that to serve our students and our society, NUI Maynooth must succeed by global standards and on a global stage, and that national policy reflects international trends and supranational pressures.

National context

NUI Maynooth is an integral part of Ireland's higher education system, which has been a major catalyst of the economic, social and cultural development of the State, and has brought enormous benefits to individual graduates and to society as a whole. The contributions expected from the sector, including NUI Maynooth, over the coming decades are even greater. The global challenges facing higher education are writ large in the Irish context, and in particular the problem of maintaining quality in the face of increased participation and reduced public funding is an especially pressing constraint. A new phase of knowledge-driven transformation of all aspects of society and the economy, and the urgent need for economic regeneration and growth, place an unprecedented responsibility on our universities acting individually and collectively, a responsibility which NUI Maynooth is committed to fulfilling.

The national context for higher education has been set out in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. The National Strategy addresses the full spectrum of issues that face our higher education system:

- how higher education can best contribute to economic and social renewal at the national and regional scales;
- how to manage demands for increasing and widening participation at a time of severe capacity constraints;
- how to devise an appropriate and equitable funding model to sustain the system;
- how to maintain and enhance the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate education with constrained resources;
- how to prepare graduates for the complexity and change that will characterise the 21st century, with the capacity to lead and adapt to changes in society and the workplace;

- how to enhance the contribution of academic research to innovation and economic growth;
- how to harness the potential of new technologies to enable greater flexibility and effectiveness in teaching and learning on- and off-campus;
- how to balance institutional innovation and autonomy with the need to meet system-wide and national objectives;
- how to ensure effective governance and management of institutions and the system as a whole.

A subsequent paper from the Higher Education Authority, *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*, responds to the National Strategy and proposes that system-wide organisational changes are required to achieve these objectives. It proposes that each higher education institution clarifies and focuses its mission and activities, leading to greater institutional specialisation and more diversity across the sector, while the effectiveness of the system overall will be increased through the merger of small institutions, greater levels of collaboration between larger institutions through formal partnerships and alliances, and the development of regional clusters of institutions to provide more coherent educational provision in a region.

Despite the economic crisis, Ireland's government has committed to maintaining a strong base for research and innovation. Nonetheless, funding for the humanities and social sciences is under great pressure, and in sciences and engineering, there is a clear shift towards supporting research that will yield a direct economic return on a short timescale. Funding will be directed into identified priority areas, and there is to be a consolidation of the numbers of research centres in Ireland, in order that the costs of a smaller number of high-performing centres may be adequately met.

Through Horizon 2020, the successor to the seventh framework programme, the European Commission will seek to achieve the ambitious objectives of the 'Innovation Union' policy by identifying the main societal challenges that Europe needs to address through research and innovation. This will be firmly predicated on building world-leading excellent research in Europe's universities and strengthening innovation links with enterprise, and bringing together networks of leading European researchers to tackle these societal challenges in a coordinated way. Successful participation in EU programmes is an important indicator as to the excellence, European relevance and international visibility of research at NUI Maynooth. Greater EU participation will be important in achieving enhanced recognition of NUI Maynooth researchers by their peers, both in Europe and further afield.

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and emerging research and innovation policy set a clear context for institutional strategy. NUI Maynooth must ensure it remains focused on its strengths, engages collaboratively with the wider higher education system, establishes clear priorities in research, builds on its success in industry partnerships, defends the value and funding of research in the humanities and social sciences, and greatly increases its share of EU research funding.

NUI Maynooth endorses the goals and objectives of the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, and will use its influence and best endeavours to ensure it is appropriately and effectively implemented. The higher education system in Ireland represents exceptional value for money, in terms of the quality and quantity of graduates, and the scale and impact of research output. Recognition of this extraordinary sectoral productivity and the reality that quality will not be maintained in the medium- to long-term unless a sustainable approach to the funding of higher education is put in place, should precede and inform all discussion of reform and change. Finally, while there is a need for a coherent system-wide approach to the achievement of national objectives, there is also a need to preserve the autonomy, creativity, diversity and capacity for innovation in the individual institutions, and to trust academic and professional expertise as the most effective path to enhancing education and research. The complex challenges we face require creativity and intellectual independence, and the preservation of academic freedom and institutional autonomy is both a professional responsibility and the best guarantee of the value of the university to the society of which it is a part.

Regional context

In addition to the national context the NUI Maynooth Strategic Plan must also take account of local and regional factors that impact upon the university. The demographic structure that has evolved in the hinterland of the university over the past twenty years is generating a demand for university places that is increasing at a rate much faster than for any other university. The region is economically complex: there is significant enterprise activity, particularly in the high-technology sector, while at the same time the economic profile throughout much of the region is weak, placing a dual responsibility on the university to support existing industry and to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development. Finally and uniquely, NUI Maynooth is not located in a city. While its location on the interface between metropolitan and rural environments brings benefits, it also places an obligation on the university, in partnership with local public and private interests, to provide and be a catalyst for many of the cultural, sporting and civic amenities typically associated with a university location.

**Institutional Context:
Distinctiveness and Differentiation**

History and trajectory

While formally established as an autonomous university in 1997, NUI Maynooth traces its origins to the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795, so that while in one sense it is Ireland’s newest university, it draws strength from a heritage that includes over 200 years of commitment to education and scholarship.

The history of the institution confers a unique identity. NUI Maynooth has the features of a new university: it is dynamic, rapidly-growing, research-led and engaged. Yet the ethos and disciplinary mix are characteristic of an older institution: there is great strength in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, teaching and research are equally valued and wholly interdependent, there is a strong commitment to liberal education and to fundamental research and scholarship, and a deeply collegial institutional ethos.

The early phase of the development of NUI Maynooth saw its formal establishment and maturation as an independent institution, very rapid growth in student and staff numbers, a strategic decision to establish a strong research base, the consolidation of its national position, reputation and unique identity, and an increasingly international profile and connectedness. This growth was accompanied by increases in indicators of quality: more students than ever are choosing NUI Maynooth as their first preference, average entry scores are increasing, first year retention rates have improved, and the university has also risen on most international rankings. The distinctive features of NUI Maynooth are fundamental to all its strategic considerations. The historic and strategic development of the institution confers a set of unique strengths and capacities, and the *University Strategic Plan 2012–17* builds on these, preserves and accentuates the distinctiveness of the university, to ensure its success by international standards and to deliver its special contribution to the national system of higher education.

Discipline mix and scope of provision

The disciplinary mix at NUI Maynooth is highly focused, the most focused of the Irish universities. The major strengths of the institution lie in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, with 69.2% of students in the humanities, social sciences, business and law (against a sectoral average of 47%) and 21.3% of students in the natural sciences (against a sectoral average of 17%). This strength in fundamental disciplines provides the basis for the main educational activity, liberal education in the arts and sciences, and interdisciplinary research in a number of priority areas where NUI Maynooth has an international reputation.

NUI Maynooth also offers professional programmes, cognisant of the strengths of the university and the needs of the region, in initial teacher education, youth and community work, psychology, electronic engineering, business and law. Business and law in particular have grown significantly in recent years in response to strong demand. These programmes are strongly connected to and informed by the relevant fundamental disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, and the principles of liberal education. Electronic engineering, alongside computer science, form the foundation of a broader interdisciplinary institutional research and teaching strength in applied ICT.

The *NUI Maynooth Strategic Plan 2012–17* will see the institution remaining focused on its strengths. There is no intention to expand into new disciplinary areas. The university's aim is to have the best humanities and social sciences provision in the country and be seen as a university that emphasises these areas, complemented by focused strengths in the mathematical and natural sciences and their applications in ICT and health. There will be considerable further developments in business and law over the coming five years, and the development of a major centre for initial teacher education, spanning the continuum from early childhood to adult and community education.

This focus will be supported by collaboration, centred on the new '*3U Partnership*' with Dublin City University and Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. These are the three most highly differentiated institutions in the university sector, and their commitment to sustained strategic partnership, collaboration and strategic co-development will serve to maintain and enhance their distinctiveness.

Research strengths

While NUI Maynooth has an outstanding reputation for teaching, objective analysis also shows an exceptional performance in research. NUI Maynooth consistently excels, especially when output is considered per academic staff member or per euro research income. NUI Maynooth conducts top-level international research in the natural sciences and engineering, social sciences and the humanities, with annual research expenditure from external sources of €21.9M in 2011. The outputs of this research investment are (i) high-impact books and top-tier international journal publications (ii) significant human capital development with over 220 PhD graduates over the last three years; and (iii) significant research links with industry and a rapidly developing enterprise culture that has resulted in seven spin out companies over the last three years across a range of areas. NUI Maynooth's published work is of a very high standard: publication impacts for 2006-2011 (normalised to world average of 1.0 for the field) include 2.20 in biology, 1.81 in immunology, and 2.89 in electronic engineering. NUI Maynooth has built its research capacity in a strategic manner, focused on agreed research priorities, specifically

- social and spatial sciences;
- applied mathematics and information and communications technology;
- immunology and chemical biology;
- historical and cultural traditions;
- business innovation.

The last ten years have seen very significant increases in research performance, with increased numbers of publications, increased citation and increased research expenditure, and a particularly strong performance when relevant metrics are expressed per academic staff member. The university has an outstanding record of success in commercialising research over the last five years, with the highest level of performance per euro invested in research of any Irish university.

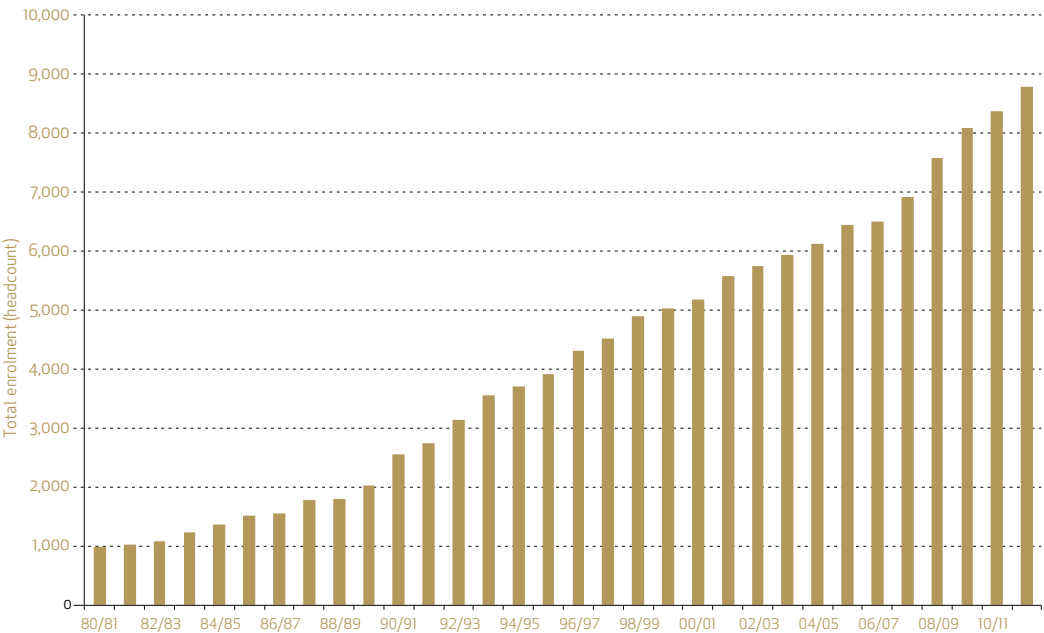
NUI Maynooth's strategy for the future of research is three-fold: to maintain and enhance our strengths in fundamental disciplines, to further focus this capacity on a number of priority research themes, and to strengthen our research partnerships and collaborations. A diverse research base is necessary for tackling the major challenges that society faces. NUI Maynooth is fortunate that we have that diverse base and strengths across a wide range of basic disciplines, and have developed a number of flagship areas over the last decade.

Nonetheless, we see that future developments and true sustainability will require a degree of consolidation to bring our research strengths to bear on a small number of thematic areas that align with major societal challenges, and a high degree of collaboration nationally and internationally.

Student profile

The total enrolment at NUI Maynooth has risen rapidly since the late 1980's when the total was approximately 2,000. It exceeded 4,000 for the first time in 1996/97. Following the formal establishment of NUI Maynooth as an autonomous institution under the Universities Act, 1997 the rate of expansion accelerated so that a total enrolment of almost 6,000 was achieved by 2003/04. Growth has continued since with a further acceleration post 2006/07 which brought the total to over 8,000 in 2009/10, and to almost 8,800 campus-based students in the current academic year (Figure 1). The proportion of postgraduate students is 22%. NUI Maynooth now accounts for 8.0% of the total enrolment in the seven universities and 4.4% of the total enrolment in the national system of higher education.

Figure 1: Total student enrolment (headcount) in NUI Maynooth, 1980/81 to 2011/12



Widening participation

NUI Maynooth is a national leader in widening participation, with particular success in recruiting first-generation students with no familial background in higher education, and in recruiting mature students. For 75% of undergraduate new entrants, neither parent has attained a qualification higher than level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Mature students accounted for 18% of new entrants in 2010/11, by far the largest proportion among the universities (university sectoral average 11%). Almost one quarter (24%) of new entrants to NUI Maynooth come from non-manual, semi- and unskilled socio-economic backgrounds, compared to a university sectoral average of 19%. Significantly, when account is taken of the social background of students, their field of study and their Leaving Certificate performance, NUI Maynooth has the lowest non-progression rate among the universities (*A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education*, HEA, 2010). This remarkable achievement is an important indicator of the real commitment by NUI Maynooth to actively supporting widening participation. This university, looking to the future, will maintain its commitment to widening participation, including the multiple challenges presented by urban and rural deprivation and immigration which are particular to its location on the outer edge of a major city-region.

University Strategic Plan 2006–11

The most recent University Strategic Plan (2006–2011) set nine strategic goals

1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a University of choice for increasing numbers of students;
2. Refine and enhance the provision of taught postgraduate activities;
3. Grow and enhance our postgraduate research activities in line with national objectives;
4. Develop research activity such that the University will be clearly recognised as a major research-led liberal arts and science institution by 2011;
5. Improve offerings as leader in the provision of access and lifelong learning;
6. Develop new inter-institutional collaborations in teaching and research to promote an enhanced sectoral approach to supporting national goals;
7. Develop an influential role in social, economic and cultural issues of national, regional and local importance;
8. Develop a strategic response to optimising its funding, financial management and resource allocation while minimising the risks and challenges of the new strategic plan;
9. Implement reform of its governance, management and organisational structures to ensure the internal capability and capacity to fulfil its academic objectives.

The performance against this plan has been outstanding, with most of the specific outcomes and targets met or exceeded. Between 2005/06 and 2011/12, total student numbers grew by 36% from approximately 6,500 to almost 8,800, postgraduate numbers grew by 75% to over 2,000 and doctoral student numbers increased to over 400 with an average of almost 80 graduations over each of the last three years. NUI Maynooth grew twice as rapidly as any other university in the State during this period. This growth was accompanied by increases in indicators of quality: more students than ever are choosing NUI Maynooth as their first preference, average entry scores are increasing, first year retention rates have improved, and the university has also improved its position on most international rankings. Over the period of the last Plan there were also significant innovations in teaching and learning and in the provision of structured graduate education programmes. NUI Maynooth played a leading role in promoting innovation in higher education throughout the Dublin region via the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance. In addition to the academic achievements the University has managed in very difficult circumstances to maintain a debt free balance sheet while at the same time continuing to expand the campus physical infrastructure and improve the quality of facilities for teaching and research.

There were very significant increases in research performance, with increased numbers of publications, increased citation and increased research expenditure, and a particularly strong performance when relevant metrics are expressed per academic staff member. The NUI Maynooth research strategy 2007–2011 and the designation process for centres of excellence have built on significant research strengths in spatial analysis and geocomputation; applied mathematics and applied ICT; immunology and chemical biology; historical and cultural traditions, and business innovation.

NUI Maynooth is already very much an engaged university making significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic development at local, regional and national levels. The university is involved in a number of highly successful university-enterprise partnerships, and its performance in commercialisation and knowledge transfer is the best in Ireland and outstanding by international norms.

The University Strategic Plan 2012–17 builds on this success, many of the goals and actions outlined are natural developments of those set in 2006, and the achievements of the university to date give us every reason to approach the future with confidence.

PURPOSE

NUI Maynooth is a university dedicated to people, ideas and culture, where we work together as a scholarly community to inquire and discover, to teach and learn, to create, conserve, disseminate and apply knowledge, and to engage with the problems and 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.

VISION

NUI Maynooth will consolidate its international reputation as a university known for outstanding teaching, excellent research, its global outlook, effective engagement with the society it serves, and its distinctive approach to the challenges facing modern higher education.

NUI Maynooth will further enhance its international reputation for:

- the exceptional and distinctive education it offers to students;
- the quality and impact of its research and scholarship;
- the connection between its research and teaching;
- the diversity of its student body and the quality of its student experience;
- the global scope of its teaching and research;
- effective engagement with enterprise, the community, civil society and the state;
- its commitment to excellence, innovation and collegiality;
- its unique and collaborative contribution to the national system of higher education and to the economic, social and cultural life of the region, the nation and the world.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

NUI Maynooth is committed to the following values:

- scholarly rigour;
- academic freedom;
- integrity and ethical behaviour;
- collegiality, transparency and trust;
- equality, inclusiveness and social justice;
- 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.
- 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.

- 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, to engage and challenge a more diverse student body, with very different backgrounds, abilities, interests, goals and aspirations, supporting each to achieve her or his full potential.
- The university relies on the knowledge and practices of different disciplines: strong disciplines are essential to rigorous scholarship and learning, to effective interdisciplinarity, and to the vitality of the university.
- The university is committed to preserve, promote and use the Irish language, and to preserve and promote the distinctive cultures of Ireland, through teaching, research and all aspects of university life.
- 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 and is appropriate for our particular circumstances.

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NUI Maynooth has established seven strategic goals for the period 2012–2017

1. To offer students an outstanding university education, the best available in Ireland, an education which challenges and supports all students to achieve their full potential, and prepares students for life, work and citizenship, and for complexity, diversity and change.
2. To be recognised by 2017 as playing a leading international role and being the clear national leader in a number of thematic areas of research that address the major societal challenges of the 21st century.
3. To achieve a step change in its international activities, doubling the number of international students on campus and doubling the number of domestic students spending time abroad, in order to create a truly intercultural and multilingual institution.
4. To strengthen its engagement with all stakeholders through sustained partnerships with enterprises, communities, civil society and public bodies, to build support for the mission of the university, to serve the needs of society, and to open new opportunities for research and learning.
5. To maximise its unique and distinctive contribution to the national system of higher education through a set of purposeful and sustained strategic partnerships at regional and national level, and to extend its international reach through a network of global partnerships.
6. To be an excellent place to work, known for a collegial ethos which empowers all staff to contribute fully to the development of the university.
7. To enable the achievement of ambitious strategic objectives in challenging circumstances through careful planning, excellent services and infrastructure, and sound governance and management.



1 EDUCATION

NUI Maynooth's strategic goal is to offer students an outstanding university education, the best available in Ireland, an education which challenges and supports all students to achieve their full potential, and prepares students for life, work and citizenship, and for complexity, diversity and change.

A Maynooth education will be truly distinctive, based on a set of approaches to teaching and learning which prioritise the development of the fundamental intellectual skills of analysis, reflection, critical thinking and clear communication, and expose students to the breadth and richness of human knowledge. These are ends in themselves, an essential preparation for work and citizenship, and the basis of a rich intellectual life.

A degree programme, whether academic or professional, has core requirements for knowledge, skills and competencies according to the norms of the discipline or profession. A Maynooth education goes further, to develop intellectual skills through deep engagement with the knowledge, methods and questions of the students chosen disciplines, through opportunities to encounter and engage with other disciplines and other ways of thinking, and through a campus environment that is intellectually and culturally vibrant. Formal undergraduate programmes in liberal arts, and liberal arts and sciences, will also be developed to provide a broad education and a strong intellectual base for those students who wish to choose this mode of study. These approaches in combination constitute a unique Maynooth model of liberal education.

We have identified ten strategic actions to achieve our goal in education.

1.1 Undergraduate education

We will conceive, develop and deliver a distinctive Maynooth model of liberal undergraduate education, forming graduates competent in their chosen disciplines, with the fundamental intellectual skills of analysis, reflection and critical thinking, and fostering an appreciation of the breadth and richness of human knowledge and culture

The Maynooth curriculum will:

- provide a thorough grounding in the principles, current knowledge, modes of enquiry and emerging developments in the core disciplines of study;
- demand of students a deep and thorough engagement with their learning;
- develop in students fundamental intellectual skills of analysis, reflection, critical thinking and clear communication, and the personal attributes of confidence, commitment and integrity;
- foster curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong interest in learning and culture;
- include structured opportunities to appreciate the perspectives, concepts and methods of other disciplines, and new opportunities for interdisciplinary study and a broader education;
- have strong links between research and learning, with student enquiry as an important mode of learning;
- have structured opportunities for language learning, intercultural learning and study abroad;
- offer opportunities for experiential learning, specifically work-based learning, service learning and civic engagement opportunities, as widely as is appropriate and feasible;
- be adaptable to the needs of different learners;

- cater for a very diverse student body, in a manner that is intellectually challenging and promotes high academic standards, while unlocking the potential of all.

1.2 First year undergraduate curriculum

We will continue to enhance our first year curriculum, ensuring that teaching within each discipline focuses on core concepts, reinforces the development of fundamental intellectual skills, and provides an effective transition to independent higher learning, in a manner that is coherent across the programme of study and consistent with the need to build knowledge and competence within each subject area.

1.3 Connecting research and teaching

We will strengthen the connection between education and research at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and ensure that students at all levels have the opportunity to engage with our leading scholars, and to participate in formative and challenging research activities, promoting student enquiry as an important mode of learning.

1.4 Undergraduate programmes

We will continue to develop, enhance and refresh our portfolio of undergraduate programme to meet the changing needs of prospective students in a strategic and planned manner within the framework of an overall enrolment plan for the university.

1.5 Postgraduate programmes

We will continue to strengthen our portfolio of taught postgraduate programmes with an emphasis on

- advanced disciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes aligned to academic and research strengths and important societal needs and challenges;
- advanced education in a discipline or profession;
- preparation for research degrees.

1.6 Widening participation

We will sustain our success in widening participation in higher education, strengthening access programmes, responding to new needs, ensuring an inclusive curriculum, and mainstreaming and integrating our supports for student success.

1.7 Educational technology

We will adopt a strategic approach to the use of educational technology to support student learning.

1.8 Modularisation

We will refine our modular degree structures

- to support liberal undergraduate education, interdisciplinarity, and a broader curriculum;
- to promote interdepartmental collaboration;
- to facilitate new interdisciplinary postgraduate programmes;
- to support the internationalisation of the university.

1.9 Quality teaching

We will build on NUI Maynooth's established reputation for quality teaching, and will take specific steps to support the ongoing enhancement of teaching, learning and the student experience. Specifically, we will:

- enhance our capacity for academic development, reflective practice, critical pedagogy and research in teaching and learning;
- extend our range of supports for innovation in teaching and learning;
- modernise our teaching infrastructure and develop a state-of-the-art dedicated teaching facility;

- adopt a systematic approach to gathering and acting upon student feedback, combining standardised methodologies with ones tailored to the needs of individual disciplines and services, and providing appropriate protections in regard to the use of feedback data;
- promote other methods of evaluating and enhancing the quality of our teaching and, including peer review and mentoring.

1.10 Student support

The increasing diversity of the student body brings more and varied needs for student assistance and support. We will further develop the range of supports available to students, and in particular will:

- enhance and integrate our institutional supports for student learning, student welfare, student life, civic engagement, work-based learning and student personal and career development to provide a seamless set of quality services;
- mainstream supports for access and international students, and other students requiring specific supports, into the wider student support network;
- adopt a clear and comprehensive approach to student financial support, based on need and merit, including scholarship, work-study, and graduate teaching assistant programmes.

2 RESEARCH

NUI Maynooth's strategic goal is to be recognised by 2017 as playing a leading international role and being the clear national leader in a number of thematic areas of research that address the major societal challenges of the 21st century.

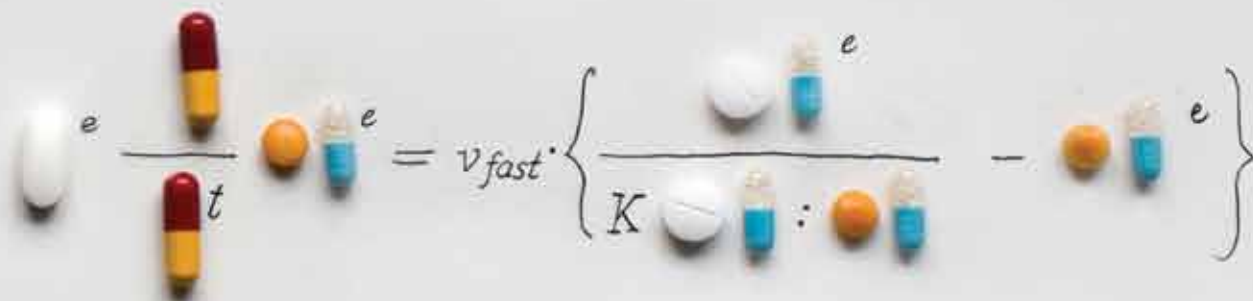
We have identified six strategic actions to achieve this goal.

2.1 Research capacity

We will continue to build our capacity for research and scholarship of the highest international standard by:

- strengthening academic departments by attracting, retaining, developing and supporting outstanding scholars who are committed to research and teaching;
- pursuing excellence by supporting excellent research and scholarship, encouraging appropriate specialisation within disciplines, and providing thematic focus across disciplines;
- identifying distinctive research priorities which build on our established strengths, address important questions and challenges, and using these priorities to guide the recruitment of staff and allocation of resources, mindful that our fundamental commitment to academic freedom requires that any such policy cannot limit the right of academic staff to pursue their individual scholarly interests and set their own research questions;

- supporting the evolution of research institutes and centres of different scale to express our research strengths and priorities, to support networks of researchers and to facilitate collaboration across disciplines;
- engaging in a range of research collaborations and partnerships to build capacity across institutions;
- increasing participation in EU networks and programmes;
- providing and renewing the infrastructure, resources and facilities required to pursue our research, attentive to the needs of staff and students in all disciplines;
- providing excellent research development and support services.



2.2 Research postgraduate education

We will further enhance the research postgraduate and postdoctoral experience, drawing on experience and best practice within the university, with an emphasis on

- planning, supervision and support of postgraduate and postdoctoral research in line with the best international standards;
- building a greater sense of community amongst postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers;
- ensuring postgraduate research degrees and postdoctoral training prepare students for a variety of careers in the national and global labour markets.

2.3 New modes of knowledge generation

While fundamental research will remain central to the mission of the university, we will engage with new modes of knowledge generation and co-production, in partnership with enterprise, communities, civil society, public bodies and the state, and will adapt our structures and ways of working to make the most of these new opportunities for research and learning.

2.4 Knowledge exchange

We will maximise the value and societal return of our research and scholarship, through partnership and knowledge exchange with enterprise, community and other organisations, prioritising engagement with partners in the region, and through appropriate commercialisation and knowledge transfer.

2.5 Supporting individual scholars

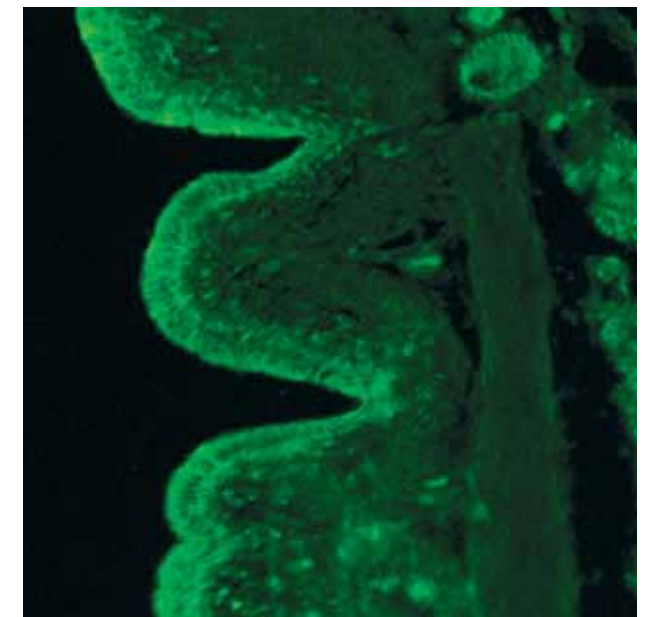
We will support individual researchers to carry out high quality research by providing an environment conducive to research and scholarship, specifically through

- approaches to workload allocation which achieve an appropriate balance between different aspects of the academic mission;
- a range of research supports for academic and research staff, including specific supports for post-doctoral, early-career and mid-career researchers;
- support for the dissemination of work at national and international conferences, short research visits and sabbatical research periods.

2.6 Research profile

We will enhance our national and international research profile by

- supporting the dissemination of our scholarly work through conferences and respected publication channels including open access;
- developing a cogent and accessible articulation of our research strengths and vision, which will be communicated to all appropriate audiences
- building strategic partnerships with a small number of select top-level international institutions;
- active support for major national and international conferences held at Maynooth;
- a university visiting scholars programme.





3 INTERNATIONALISATION

NUI Maynooth's goal is to achieve a step change in its international activities, doubling the number of international students on campus and doubling the number of domestic students spending time abroad, in order to create a truly intercultural and multilingual institution.

We have identified five strategic actions to achieve this goal.

3.1 International curriculum

We will prepare students for life, work and leadership in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world by internationalising the curriculum and student experience at NUI Maynooth, in particular by

- further emphasising the international and global perspective where appropriate in our teaching;
- building on the diversity of our teaching capacity to create new programmes and fields of study in areas such as global studies and international development;
- promoting study, work and service-abroad opportunities and encouraging and supporting students to travel abroad in the course of their studies;
- promoting intercultural interaction, discourse and learning;
- encouraging language learning and proficiency and supporting the development of a multilingual campus,

- developing and delivering a range of joint postgraduate programmes with international partner institutions.

3.2 International student recruitment

We will attract international students in significantly greater numbers, in a variety of modes (full degree, joint programmes, year and semester abroad, exchange, short courses and summer schools), offering them an excellent learning experience, maintaining high academic standards, responding and adapting to their needs, and providing outstanding student support including language support.

3.3 Global scholarship

We will increase the global reach of our research and scholarship, adopting a comparative and global outlook, promoting staff mobility and international dissemination and collaboration, attracting international scholars to NUI Maynooth, and building strong international research partnerships.

3.4 International engagement

We will ensure an international dimension to our public engagement and partnership strategy, focussed on research, teaching and development partnerships and exchanges with institutions and communities in disadvantaged regions of the world.

3.5 Regional strategy

We will develop specific regional strategies to guide our international engagement with different regions of the world.

4 ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP

NUI Maynooth's strategic goal is to strengthen its engagement with all stakeholders through sustained partnerships with enterprises, communities, civil society and public bodies, to build support for the mission of the university, to serve the needs of society, and to open new opportunities for research and learning.

We will pursue this agenda through partnership, engaging with different sectors (enterprise, community, public, private, non-governmental, professional, state, civil society and development organisations) at different scales (from local to international) and in different dimensions (economic, political, societal and cultural), prioritising engagement with partners in the region.

We have identified eight strategic actions to achieve this goal.

4.1 Campus community

We will build upon the existing strong sense of community on campus, with specific initiatives to enhance internal communication and discourse, and to strengthen the intellectual, collegial, cultural, political, sporting and social life of the campus.

4.2 Alumni

We will engage with alumni as advisors, supporters and friends of the university in ways that allow our graduates to retain a continuing close relationship with NUI Maynooth over their lifetime, for the mutual benefit of alumni and future generations of undergraduates.

4.3 Open campus

We will create an open campus, physically opening the campus to the community, and extending it into the community, so that it becomes a centre of learning, culture, sport and recreation for the wider region, and use technology and media to connect the campus to the community, the region and the wider world.

4.4 Regional engagement

We will actively engage with enterprises and other partners in the public and private sectors to contribute to the economic development of the region.

4.5 Extended learning community

We will extend our learning community, finding new ways to engage individuals, enterprise, public bodies and civil society in learning, in the education of students, and in scholarly work, including a range of flexible appointment, employment and secondment arrangements, without undermining security of employment and tenure.



4.6 Social and cultural innovation

We will continue to stimulate social and cultural innovation through critique, evidence, informed opinion, collaboration with civil society and support for the development and evaluation of public policy.

4.7 Civic engagement

We will continue to contribute to our local community and wider society, providing structures and supports that promote social innovation, where staff and students can engage and volunteer, and by integrating civic engagement and service learning into our curriculum.

4.8 Enhancing participation

We will build on our extensive engagement with schools and other educational partners and our successful outreach campus in Kilkenny to work together in communities to enhance educational and civic participation, with the objective of having a lasting impact on educational participation and attainment.

5 INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

NUI Maynooth's strategic goal is to maximise its unique and distinctive contribution to the national system of higher education through a set of purposeful and sustained strategic partnerships at regional and national level, and to extend its international reach through a network of global partnerships.

We have identified seven strategic actions to achieve this goal.

5.1 Existing collaborations

We will support our existing wide range of teaching and research partnerships and collaborations across multiple institutions, and allow these to develop and change as suits the needs of our collaborative teaching and research programmes. We will in particular strengthen our important relationships with the Military College and the Crafts Council of Ireland.

5.2 St Patrick's College, Maynooth

We will develop our relationship with St Patrick's College Maynooth, establishing a joint approach to the development of the campus, and exploring opportunities for collaboration that may be to the benefit of both institutions.

5.3 Froebel College of Education

We will complete the transfer of Froebel College of Education to NUI Maynooth, and develop a major centre for teacher education, spanning the continuum from early childhood through primary, secondary, and tertiary education to adult and community education.

5.4 Strategic partnership with DCU and RCSI

We will build a strong inter-institutional partnership with Dublin City University and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, building on the complementary strengths of these three institutions to:

- enhance our research capacity through collaboration and build our competitiveness for major national and EU research awards;
- deliver innovative and more comprehensive education through co-operation in teaching and learning and joint educational programmes;
- support the development of shared services;
- contribute collectively to the cultural, social and economic development of the region.



5.5 Regional cluster

We will build on our partnership with DCU and RCSI to establish a regional cluster of appropriate scale, including universities, institutes of technology and other educational institutions, to meet the needs of our region, as envisaged by the National Strategy for Higher Education.

5.6 Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance

We will further develop the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance, giving it very focused and refined objectives in areas where collaboration across such a large network is feasible and desirable, such as doctoral education, widening participation and academic development.

5.7 International alliance

We will seek to establish an international alliance of universities of similar scale, scope and values to NUI Maynooth, to build our international profile, and provide opportunities for international collaboration.



6 STAFF

NUI Maynooth's strategic goal is to be an excellent place to work, known for a collegial ethos which empowers all staff to contribute fully to the development of the university.

We have identified six strategic actions to achieve this goal.

6.1 Human resources strategy

We will develop our human resources strategy and policies to support and develop staff, to build the highest levels of performance amongst staff, and to promote the organisational development of the university.

6.2 Recruitment and retention

We will attract the very best of talent to NUI Maynooth through rigorous search, selection and retention processes, and will adopt a strategic approach to recruitment based upon individual departmental plans and the overall university strategic plan.

6.3 Early-career support

We will establish NUI Maynooth as an extremely attractive environment to commence an academic career through

- a clear, fair, stable and empowering career structure for post-doctoral researchers;
- the establishment of a progressive tenure-track system for early-career recruits.

6.4 Recognition and reward

We will review and enhance our promotion schemes and supports for the professional development of staff, ensuring they are in conformity with national and international norms for career progression and congruent with the strategic direction of the university, and will develop new ways to recognise and reward exceptional contribution and performance amongst staff.

6.5 Gender equality

We will develop and implement a plan to promote gender equality in the staffing of the university.

6.6 Leadership and management

We will enhance leadership and management capability within the university, and in particular will provide opportunities and support for the professional development of staff so that they may successfully undertake management and leadership roles within the university.



7 ENABLING THE STRATEGY

NUI Maynooth's goal is to enable the achievement of ambitious strategic objectives in challenging circumstances through careful planning, excellent services and infrastructure, and sound governance and management.

We have identified four areas of strategic action to achieve this goal:

7.1 Academic and Financial Planning and Sustainability

The achievement of the strategic objectives outlined in this plan require that the university secures and appropriately allocates adequate resources, and to this end we will:

- develop an academic plan and financial strategy based on realistic projections of enrolment growth over the coming 10 years, with NUI Maynooth accounting for between 8% and 10% of the total enrolment across the existing seven universities;
- diversify the income streams to the university, optimise the use of our resources, and manage our costs and risks, so that we can invest in our future and achieve our strategic objectives;
- implement a transparent process for enrolment, financial, staffing and infrastructure planning and resource allocation, which will allow faculties, departments, institutes and support units to take responsibility for their development, provide the resources required for quality education and research, and ensure academic and financial sustainability for the university as a whole.

7.2 Campus planning and development

The development of the university in the coming decades will require significant development of the campus. We will, during the period of this strategic plan:

- create, finance and deliver a campus development and infrastructure plan, addressing the maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure as well as the addition of new, to provide a first class environment for staff, students and the wider community, which matches and supports our strategic ambition;
- further develop and detail the campus master plan, linking the development of the North and South Campus, and integrating the university with the town of Maynooth and its hinterland;
- establish the university campus as a model of sustainability and accessibility through green campus and access strategies and initiatives;
- establish the campus as the intellectual, cultural, sporting and recreational centre for the wider region connected to the academic and intellectual life of the campus, investing in
- a major cultural facility for film, theatre, music, art and assembly, to support education in creative disciplines and as an inclusive cultural resource for the university and the region;
- state-of-the-art sporting and recreational facilities for the university and the community.
- enhance the use of the campus as a conference venue.

7.3 Services and transformation

The service and support functions of the university make a vital contribution to the achievement of our strategic goals. The successful implementation of this strategic plan requires collaboration between academic and support units, and, cognisant of constrained resources, focused investment in critical services. We will, therefore:

- invest in and develop library and information technology services as critical enablers of our strategic goals;
- ensure effective collaboration between and among academic and support units, and joint planning of strategic initiatives;
- implement effective, efficient and standardised processes across support services, and ensure that interactions between academic and support units meet the needs of students and are scheduled in the most efficient manner
- work to provide key support units with appropriate resources to perform their functions efficiently and effectively, including examining the delivery of improved services on a collaborative basis with others.

7.4 Governance, responsibility and accountability

The autonomy of the university, and public trust in it as an institution, are secured through good governance and by clearly demonstrating the value of the university to society. We will:

- ensure that university governance and management structures support the mission of the university, focus on the effective delivery of the strategic plan, provide for effective, transparent, responsible and accountable leadership of the university, are appropriately participative, and afford appropriate levels of devolved authority and subsidiarity to faculties, departments and support units;
- develop appropriate ways to give a clear account of ourselves to the society we serve, including robust quality and performance review processes, and ongoing assessment of institutional performance against our strategic plan and national and international benchmarks.





NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2017

