Universities UK

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Generating growth and opportunity in the North East

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Newcastle

Universities in the North East: overview

The impact of universities on people and places can be truly transformational. Universities are crucial to sparking growth and opportunity, by bringing together student populations, research partners, local businesses, and employers to create vibrant communities, jobs, and opportunity across the UK.

In numbers

Number of universities: **5**

Number of full-time UK undergraduate students: **67,285**

Number of part-time UK undergraduate students: **8,125**

Number of UK postgraduate students: **17,240**

Number of international students: **32,100**

Total number of students: **124,750**

Number of staff (full time equivalent) employed: **20,020**

Gross output of universities: **£3.8 billion**

Universities in the North East stretch down the coast from Newcastle through Sunderland, down to Teesside, and in the historic city of Durham.

Recent analysis by London Economics estimated that universities in the North East alone contributed **£3.8 billion** in gross output and **£2.7 billion** in gross value added to the UK economy. This figure includes the economic activity generated by employing people, their purchasing of goods and services, and the local spending power of staff and students.

In 2021-22, universities in the North East spent **£1.1 billion** on staff. Staff spend a proportion of their income with local businesses and on local services, which supports a thriving economy.

Training public sector workers

Training key public sector workers is one of the most visible ways in which universities contribute to their local communities. Even at the height of the pandemic, universities were able to continue teaching students on vital medical courses and support them into front line key work.

Universities work closely with their local NHS services to train the doctors, nurses, paramedics and other allied health professionals of the future, but also to refresh the skills of key health workers to ensure top quality patient care.

Over the next five years, universities across the North East will train around:

- **11,000** nurses
- **4,000** medics
- **8,000** teachers

Case study: Newcastle Health Innovation Partners

Newcastle Health Innovation Partners was launched in April 2020, bringing together Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council, two NHS Foundation Trusts, and the Academic Health Science Network for North East and North Cumbria. Using world-class research, education, and clinical practice, the scheme aims to to address health inequalities in the region.

> *'Our region has some of the country's greatest health inequalities and the aim of this centre is to help address these by delivering new treatments, pioneering research and better workforce education.'*
>
> Pat Ritchie CBE, Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council

SMEs and business growth

Universities support existing businesses of all types through their infrastructure, facilities, and expertise.

An example of universities supporting local productivity and jobs is the Knowledge Exchange Concordat. Through the concordat, over 100 universities review the range and impact of their knowledge exchange activities and set ambitious targets for growth and development.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and microbusinesses are critical employers across the UK, particularly in areas that don't have larger employers or well-developed economic clusters. They are often the businesses that have the greatest potential for growth and job creation, but the least time or resource to achieve this.

Start-up companies started by graduates of universities in the North East turned over **£353 million** in 2021–22, and spin-out companies with some university ownership turned over **£31.5 million** in 2021–22.

Case study: University of Sunderland's Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing Project

At the University of Sunderland, the Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing Project (SAM) aims to help businesses become more productive and sustainable.

SAM participants reported an overall £47.1 million gross value added (GVA) to businesses, and growth in employment of 25.1% along with sales growth of 30.1% following programme support.

Research and development

Universities' research activities attract investment, make world-leading discoveries, generate knowledge, and create and nurture new, innovative businesses and jobs across the UK.

Universities support existing businesses of all types by using their facilities and expertise to drive local collaboration. They also encourage private sector investment into research and development by developing collaborative relationships with businesses.

In 2021–22, higher education providers across England provided the use of facilities to companies **29,210 times**, including, for example, a wind tunnel and a digital media suite.

The research universities conduct in partnership with business, the NHS, charities and other organisations is diverse in discipline and scope. University research is responsible for major scientific and medical breakthroughs, but also plays a major role in our day-to-day lives.

Case study: Newcastle Helix innovation district

A partnership between Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council and Legal & General established the Newcastle Helix innovation district.

The development is home to the National Innovation Centre for Ageing, the National Innovation Centre for Data and a wide range of SMEs and corporates working in life sciences, data, tech, and law. Bringing the organisations together fosters strong collaboration.

Building pride in place and local communities

The UK's creative industries are one of the economic success stories of the past decade, growing at four times the rate of the UK economy as a whole between 2010–19. They bring international production teams to the UK, while employing local and regional talent.

Universities play a key role in supporting the creative industries and cultural life in the UK, from producing skilled creative graduates to working with local councils to supporting the UK's cultural prosperity and social wellbeing.

A study by Savanta ComRes for Universities UK revealed that more than two thirds (69%) of parents think students gain vital creative skills at university, which are essential to powering the UK's creative industries.

The North East region is rich in culture. In 2021–22, over **667,000 people** accessed museum and gallery exhibitions run by universities in the region. Over **36,000 people** attended public lectures hosted by universities in the region.

Case study: preserving heritage in Tees Valley

Research from Teesside University informed a series of regional arts and culture projects seeking to preserve Tees Valley heritage.

Working in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and the SSI Task Force, a group set up to provide support after the closure of SSI steelworks in Redcar, the university contributed to the design and delivery of an award-winning exhibition at Kirkleatham Museum.

The 'Steel Stories' exhibition ran from April until December 2019, attracting over 30,000 visitors – a 28% year-on-year increase in visitor numbers for the museum – with 86% of visitors saying that they 'felt pride in Teesside's heritage after viewing the exhibition'.

Universities UK is the collective voice of 142 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our mission is to create the conditions for UK universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally.

Universities UK acts on behalf of universities, represented by their heads of institution.

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