

Generating growth and opportunity in the North West

Contents

Universities in the North West: overview	2
Training public sector workers	4
SMEs and business growth	5
Research and development	6
Building pride in place and local communities	8



Salford, Greater Manchester

Universities in the North West: 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: **12**

Number of full-time UK undergraduate students: **156,460**

Number of part-time UK undergraduate students: **12,170**

Number of UK postgraduate students: **46,660**

Number of international students: **51,735**

Total number of students: **267,025**

Number of staff (full time equivalent) employed: **39,515**

Gross output of universities: **£10.4 billion**

Universities in the North West can be found in the major, world-famous cities of Liverpool and Manchester, but also in smaller towns and cities dotted across the region.

Recent analysis by London Economics estimated that universities in the North West alone contributed **£10.4 billion** in gross output and **£6.5 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 West spent nearly **£2.6 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.

Our report published in 2021 found that in the next five years, universities across the North West would train around:

- **29,700** nurses
- **7,850** medics
- **27,150** teachers

Case study: University of Cumbria's Centre for Excellence in Paramedic Practice

The University of Cumbria contains the Centre for Excellence in Paramedic Practice, which offers undergraduate courses for students starting out on their journey to becoming a paramedic, alongside modules and master's opportunities for existing workers.

'We're proud that this course supports any learner to realise their ambition to become a paramedic no matter their background or previous academic achievement.'

Tom Davidson, Director, Centre of Excellence in Paramedic Practice

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 West turned over more than **£187 million** in 2022–23, and spin-out companies with some university ownership turned over **£14.6 million** in 2022–23.

Case study: Help to Grow scheme

Universities across the North West are taking part in the government's Help to Grow: Management scheme delivered in partnership with the Small Business Charter.

Business schools in the University of Salford, Lancaster University, Manchester Metropolitan University, and the University of Liverpool are offering courses to senior managers within SMEs.

'Business growth begins by empowering business leaders to define their future. Our 'Help to Grow' programme is designed to support business leaders to reflect, learn and develop strategies for future growth and development.'

Dr Sharon Lemac-Vincere, Help to Grow Programme Director,
Lancaster University Management School

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 2022–23, higher education providers across England provided the use of facilities to companies **47,562** 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: new walking frames developed by the University of Salford

Researchers from the University of Salford and NRS Healthcare designers have teamed up with Belong to develop a new type of walker. They hope to better understand the biomechanics of adults using walking frames.

The final product will have the potential to help the estimated 22% of UK older adults who use two-wheeled walkers indoors.

'It has been a pleasure working with Belong's residents to achieve our research goals. Using their insights and studying the biomechanics of how they physically handle the prototype has been instrumental to the design process.'

Dr. Sibylle Thies, senior research fellow at the University of Salford
School of Health and Society

Case study: Advanced Manufacturing in the North West

The Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton and Salford and Manchester Metropolitan University have clustered together to form the North West's Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst (IBIC). IBIC is a collaborative initiative which harnesses the region's research expertise to accelerate knowledge exchange, impact, and innovation, while manufacturing food, fuels, and medicines.

IBIC is poised for significant growth with a market potential exceeding £34 billion in the UK alone. The cluster is predicted to directly stimulate £2.5 million cash and £4 million in-kind co-investment, establish 150 collaborative projects, train 200+ students, create up to 100 green jobs, and establish 20+ new commercial ventures which could attract a further £10 million in investment.

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 recent 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 West region is rich in culture. In 2022–23, over **2 million** people accessed museum and gallery exhibitions run by universities in the region. Over **335,000** people attended public lectures hosted by universities in the region.

Case study: University of Central Lancashire's developed of Newtown Mill

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), working with Burnley Council, acquired the vacant Newtown Mill with funding from the government's levelling up programme.

The university plans to further develop the thriving canalside campus in the historic Weavers' Triangle Area. The redevelopment of the mill will create 35,000 sq ft of space for innovative teaching facilities, a business and enterprise zone, and creating new public spaces for community benefit.

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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