

Why We Need Higher Education.



Northern Ireland's population of about 1.8 million is one of the youngest in Europe and, with a growing knowledge economy, Northern Ireland's greatest resource is its people and their skills. **It is clear that as we grow our knowledge economy we will become increasingly reliant on higher level skills**, with over 52% of the 2020 workforce expected to require sub-degree qualifications and above.



Northern Ireland's universities and university colleges are our main providers of higher level skills at the first-degree and postgraduate levels (6-8), while the six regional further education colleges specialise in sub-degree provision (4-5).

In 2012/13 Northern Ireland's higher education institutions directly **created over 6,000 jobs** and indirectly supported **almost 12,000** in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's higher education institutions and their students also **generated over £1.6 billion of spending in the Northern Ireland economy.**

6,000 jobs created

£1.6 billion spending into economy



Outside of London Northern Ireland is the leading UK region for attracting inward investment, due to the strength of our higher education providers, and the supply of highly skilled individuals which they produce.

2013/2014
51 Spin Out
Companies

5% still active
after 3 years

Every year Northern Ireland's higher education providers generate numerous new spin-out companies, helping them to commercialise their activities and contribute to the economy. **In 2013/14 there were 51 spin-out companies still active after 3 years in Northern Ireland**, which represented over 5% of the UK total.



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SKILLS
TO SUCCEED

80% will secure a job in NI



50% earn more than the Northern Ireland average



Northern Ireland's universities, as the largest practitioners of research in the country, have a particularly important contribution to make to the economy in this respect. Through a wide range of commercial interactions with businesses and wider communities, **Northern Ireland's universities are now securing over £90 million per year in funding.**

The employment rate amongst people with a degree level or 'other tertiary' level qualification was over 80%. People with higher level qualifications in Northern Ireland also earn on average roughly 50% more than the Northern Ireland average.

£90 million funding per year

Important research being undertaken at our universities is also helping to transform people's lives in a range of areas, notably in areas such as cancer care **where cancer survival rates in Northern Ireland have moved from the bottom of the UK league table to the top.**



Open and accessible to all on the basis of ability and attainment, rather than background or circumstance, **higher education is also a setting for individuals to meet and interact with new kinds of people and to learn about different cultures.** Northern Ireland's higher education providers also have impressive records in reaching out to their local communities through sport, music, art, literature, drama and educational activities which are open to the public.

Higher education is open to everybody with the ability and the desire to benefit from it, regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. **In 2012/13 some 38% of young full-time first degree entrants from Northern Ireland came from lower socio-economic classifications, compared to a UK average of 32%.** Most people enter higher education to gain a qualification, normally to improve their employment prospects.

