

# Performance Agreement 2024–2028 between the HEA and the Technological University of the Shannon



**HEA** | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

## Preamble

This Performance Agreement is established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023–28. The Agreement identifies the Technological University of the Shannon’s performance objectives and the associated implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting processes.

This Performance Agreement will be used by the HEA to measure and assess the strategic performance of the institution via an annual cycle of reporting against the agreement and strategy and performance dialogue. The Technological University of the Shannon should notify the HEA in writing of any proposed modifications to the Performance Agreement with a supporting rationale when submitting the annual report. Any agreed amendments to the Performance Agreement will be recorded by the HEA with the supporting rationale. This information may inform future monitoring and review processes and inform HEA reporting at a system level.

The HEA and the Technological University of the Shannon acknowledge that policy underlying some or all of this Performance Agreement is subject to review from time to time by the HEA or Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. The HEA and the Technological University of the Shannon agree that if changes need to be made to the Performance Agreement because of such a review, the HEA will notify the institution in writing.

This Performance Agreement will be published on the HEA website in line with the HEA mandate to measure and assess institutions’ strategic performance with a view to strengthening the performance of the higher education and research system and of Higher Education Institutions, and to ensure institutions’ accountability. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the Performance Agreement (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate.

The term of this Performance Agreement is from September 2024 to August 2028 unless terminated earlier by agreement.

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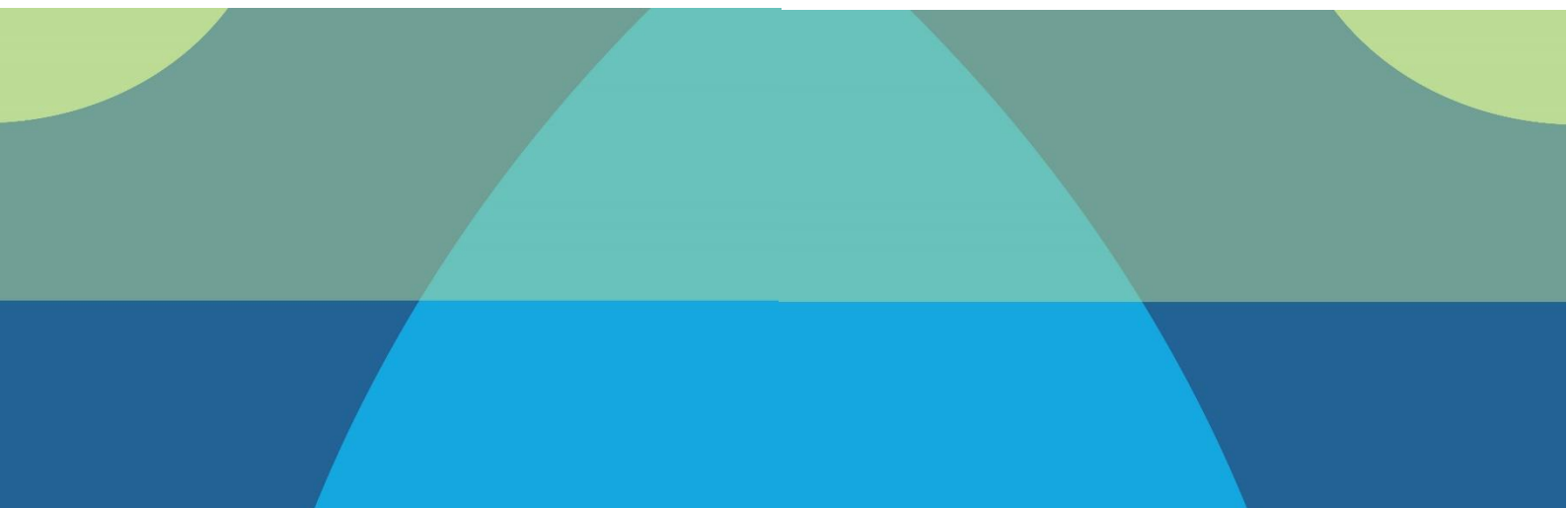
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# Performance Agreement 2024–2028

## Section 1: Context

### Overview of the institution and its context

The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) was designated a Technological University (TU) on October 1st, 2021, based on the merger of two well-established and prestigious Institutes of Technology. As a new Technological University and an independent autonomous Designated Awarding Body with powers to make awards from Level 6 to 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications, TUS has a regional and national impact with circa 15,000 students and 1,800 staff located in its campuses in Athlone, Limerick, Thurles, Clonmel and Ennis. TUS borders almost half of Ireland’s 26 counties and has potential to transform the availability and accessibility of university education in the regions it serves, providing leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally relevant, and accessible to all.

Supported by the EU Commission, TUS leads the Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) in creating one of several new European Universities alliances capable of transcending languages, borders, and disciplines and enabling the consortium to have enhanced influence and impact at regional, national, and international levels. TUS is the first Irish HEI to lead and hold the presidency of a European Universities alliance under the [European Universities initiative](#), thereby enabling deeper and sustained impact for the benefit of all TUS stakeholders.

<b>Strategic Direction</b>							
<b>Vision to 2030</b>	<i>To be a catalyst for sustainable change through education and research that transforms lives, our region and the world beyond</i>						
<b>Purpose</b>	<i>TUS provides leading student-centered higher education that is research-informed, regionally-relevant and accessible to all</i>						
<b>Values</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Inclusive</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Supportive</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Ambitious</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Innovative</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Sustainable</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Collaborative</i></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>We operate in a responsive manner where integrity and excellence underpin all we do. We are honest, fair and ethical through our words and actions.</i></p>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Ambitious</i>	<i>Innovative</i>	<i>Sustainable</i>	<i>Collaborative</i>
<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Ambitious</i>					
<i>Innovative</i>	<i>Sustainable</i>	<i>Collaborative</i>					

Figure 1: TUS Vision to 2030



Figure 2: TUS Strategic Plan 2023–2026 ‘Connecting and Creating’ sets out how the TUS Vision to 2030 will be achieved through a series of specified Strategic Priorities, carefully linked to an associated series of Strategic Enablers, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes.

The development of the TUS [Strategic Plan](#) 2023–26 was a collaborative, collegial process bringing together all stakeholders. Surveys, consultation groups, and engagement forums were used with a view to building cross-TUS relationships and communities, and with the purpose of gaining insight into views on strategic direction and priorities for TUS. Summary findings were presented to Governing Body and considered in conjunction with other elements of the development process, i.e. 10+ internally facilitated workshops; meetings with TUS staff and Governing Body members; 15+ internally facilitated consultation outputs; and 50+ external stakeholders engaged — industry being the largest stakeholder, with 16 written submissions across the region. Data from more than 10 benchmark institutions was also considered, with 50 documents reviewed. Formed by the views of its stakeholders, the TUS Strategic Plan benefits from a sense of purpose and a clarity of vision that are rooted in the University while also being ambitious for the institution and the communities it serves.

Performance against the Strategic Plan is being tracked through specified key indicators of success, as part of the broader implementation framework, and these measures align with the performance objectives identified in this Performance Agreement. The fundamental objectives now are continued development of the operational and organisational structure, functions, and outputs of the TU and monitoring of the Strategic Plan implementation and Performance Agreement to strengthen TUS’s contribution to the achievement of national strategies.

**Institutional data – an overview**

STAFF GROUPING	WHOLE-TIME EQUIVALENT				HEADCOUNT			
	Female	Male	Unknown	TOTAL	Female	Male	Unknown	TOTAL
Academic Core-Funded Staff	355.36	428.29	2.00	785.65	383	446	2	831
Academic Contract Research/Specialist Staff (Exchequer and Non-Exchequer Funded)	87.77	97.34	0.00	185.11	112	133	0	245
Professional, Management and Support Core-Funded Staff	248.76	161.73	0.01	410.50	320	187	1	508
Professional, Management and Support Contract Research/Specialist Staff (Exchequer and Non-Exchequer Funded)	124.91	76.67	0.00	201.58	145	96	0	241
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>816.80</b>	<b>764.03</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1,582.84</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,825</b>

Table 1: Total staff profile at TUS (Whole-Time Equivalent and Headcount) – data sampling point September 2023

ACADEMIC POSTS	WHOLE-TIME EQUIVALENT				HEADCOUNT			
	Female	Male	Unknown	TOTAL	Female	Male	Unknown	TOTAL
Senior Lecturer 3 (SL3)	3.00	5.00	0.00	8.00	3	5	0	8
Senior Lecturer 2 (SL2)	11.89	19.00	1.00	31.89	12	19	1	32
Senior Lecturer 1 (SL)	9.00	16.16	0.00	25.16	9	17	0	26
Lecturer (L)	223.08	254.75	0.00	477.83	230	255	0	485
Assistant Lecturer (AL)	93.74	113.93	1.00	208.67	104	122	1	227
Hourly Paid Assistant Lecturer	14.65	19.45	0.00	34.10	25	28	0	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>355.36</b>	<b>428.29</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>785.65</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>831</b>

Table 2: Core-funded academic staff profile – September 2023, distribution of academic management and teaching posts

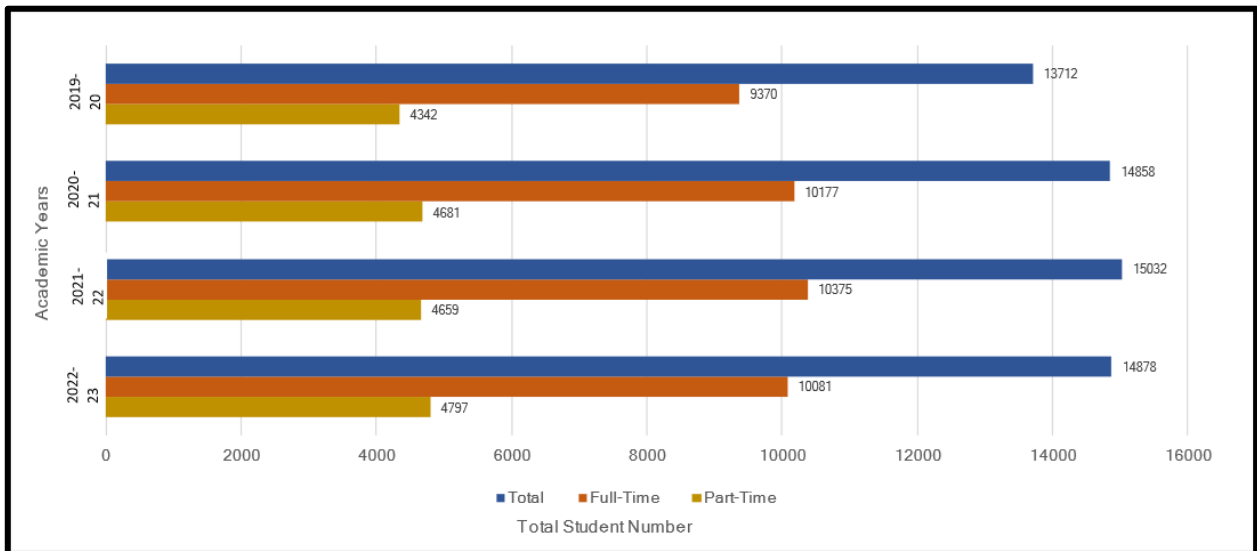


Figure 3: Profile of student numbers in TUS – academic years 2019/20 to 2022/23

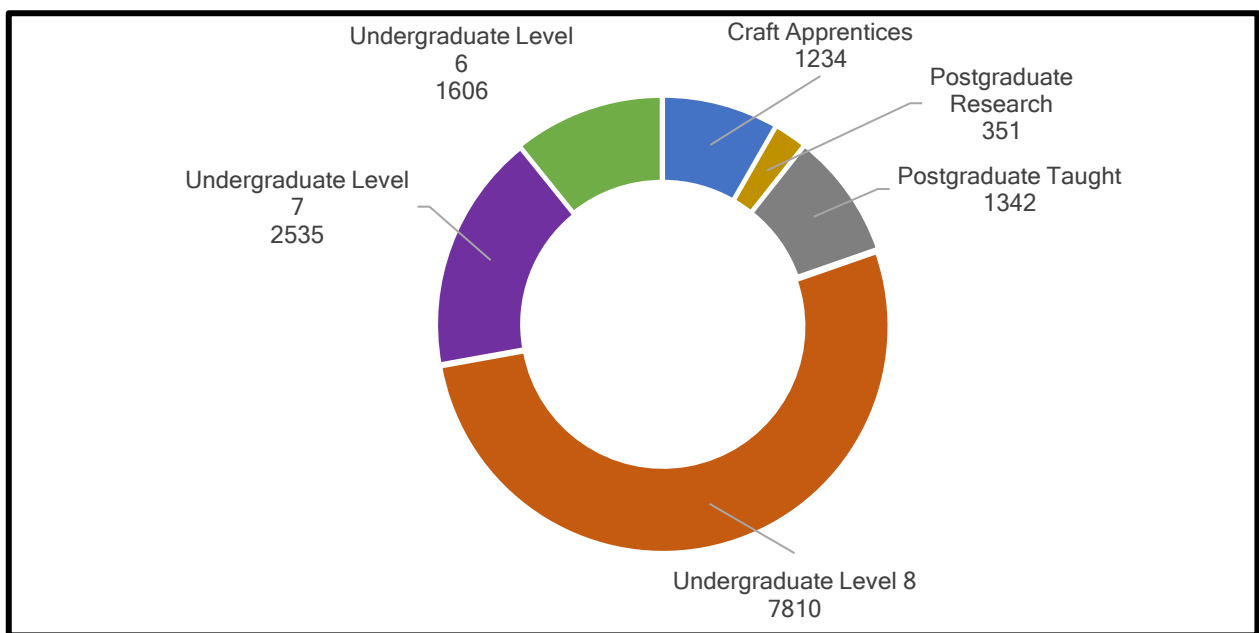


Figure 4: Profile of the TUS student population 2022/23

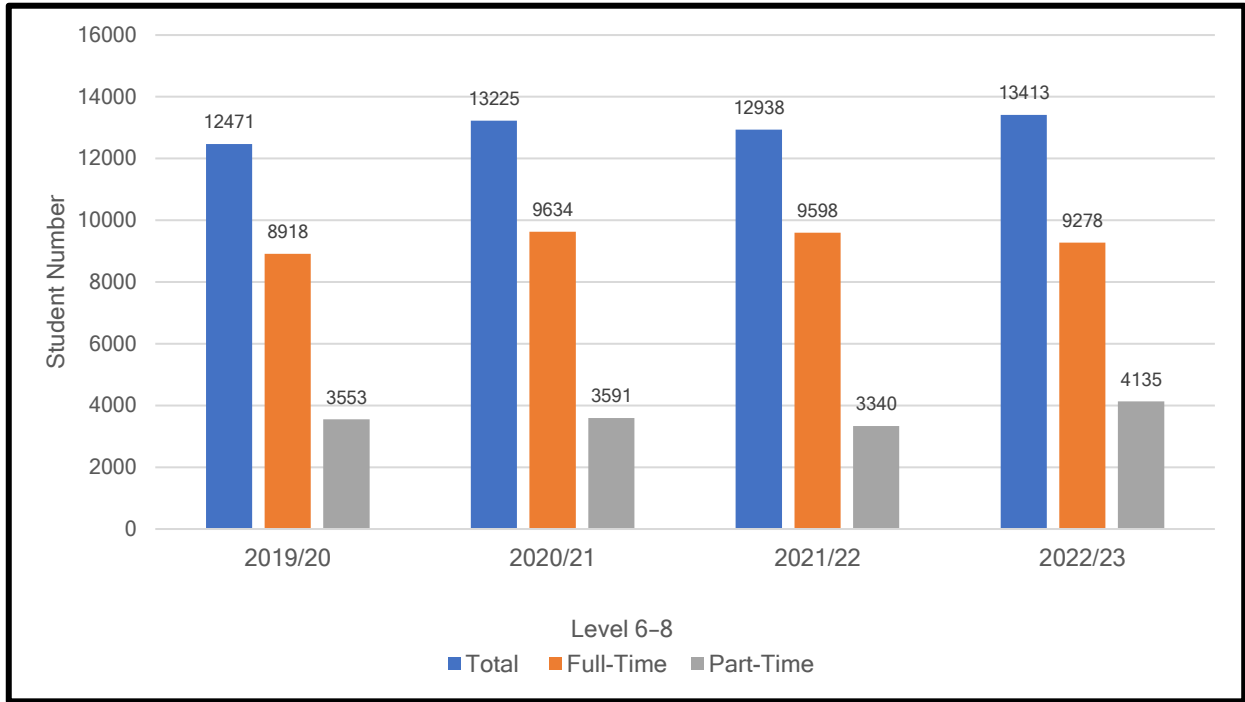


Figure 5: NFQ Level 6–8 student enrolments 2019/2020 to 2022/23<sup>1</sup>

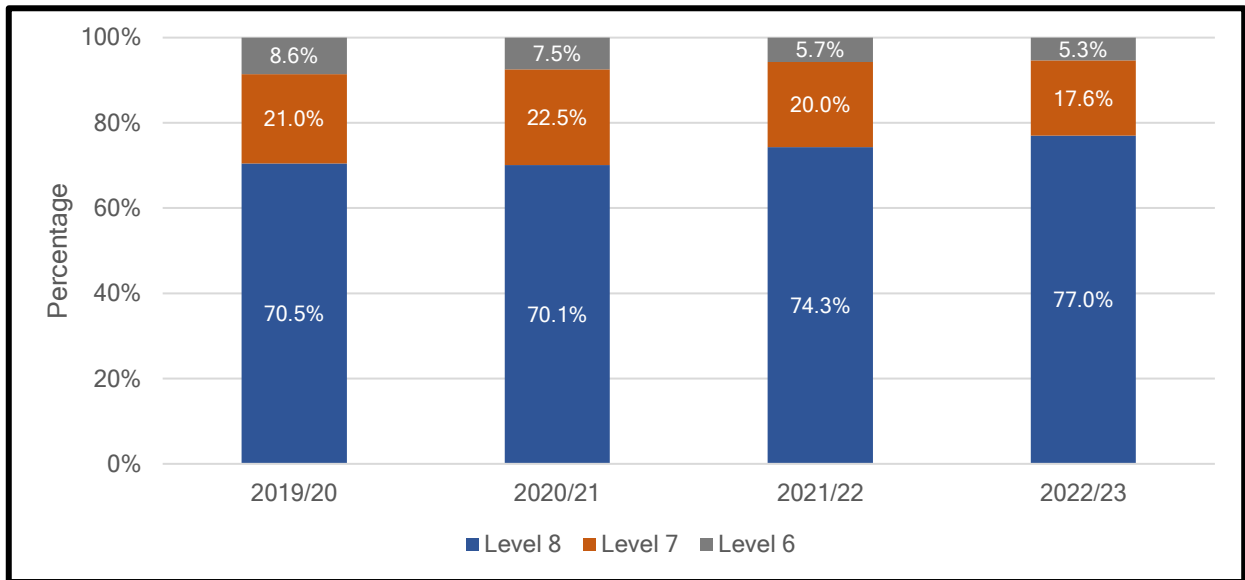


Figure 6: The % enrolments on Level 8, Level 7, and Level 6 full-time programmes as a percentage of TUS undergraduates 2019/20 to 2022/23

<sup>1</sup> Student enrolment data is based on the documentation compiled for the TUS CINNTE Review, which was collated in December 2023 using the November SRS interim statistics. The indicator data for respective performance objectives reflect the March SRS figures for the relevant reporting year.



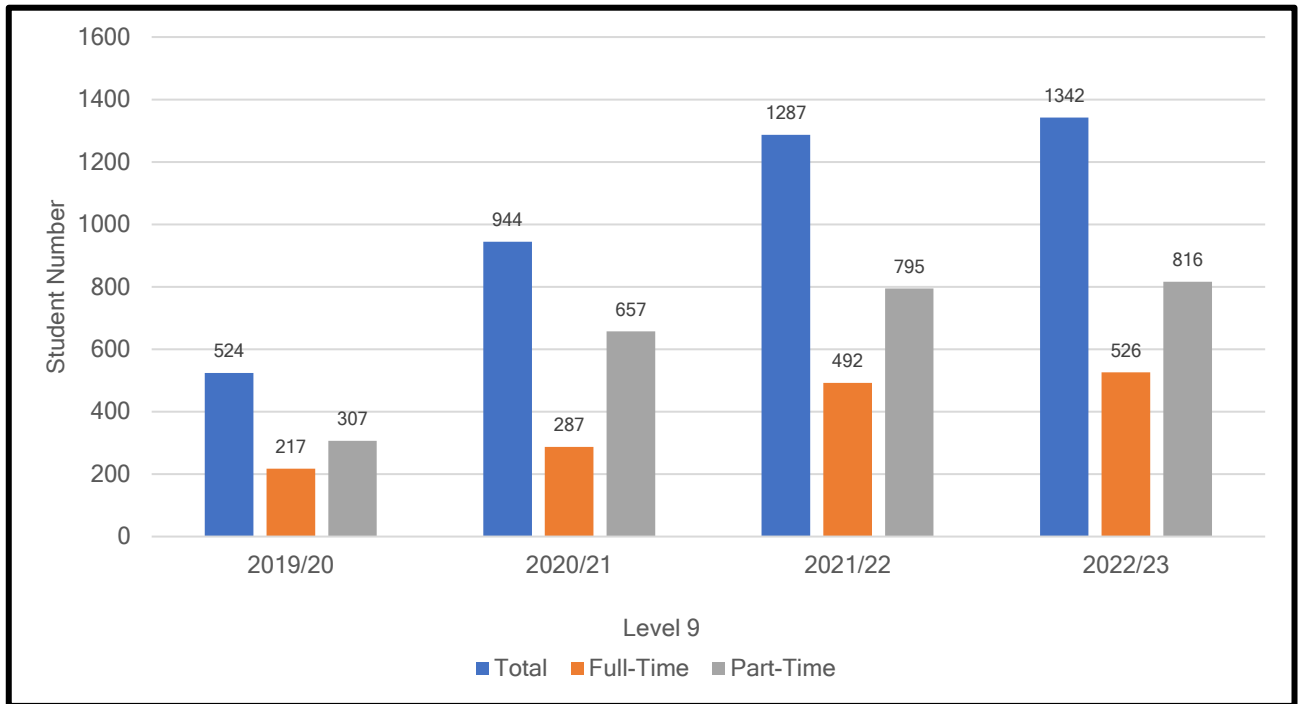


Figure 7: Taught Level 9 enrolments 2019/20 to 2022/23

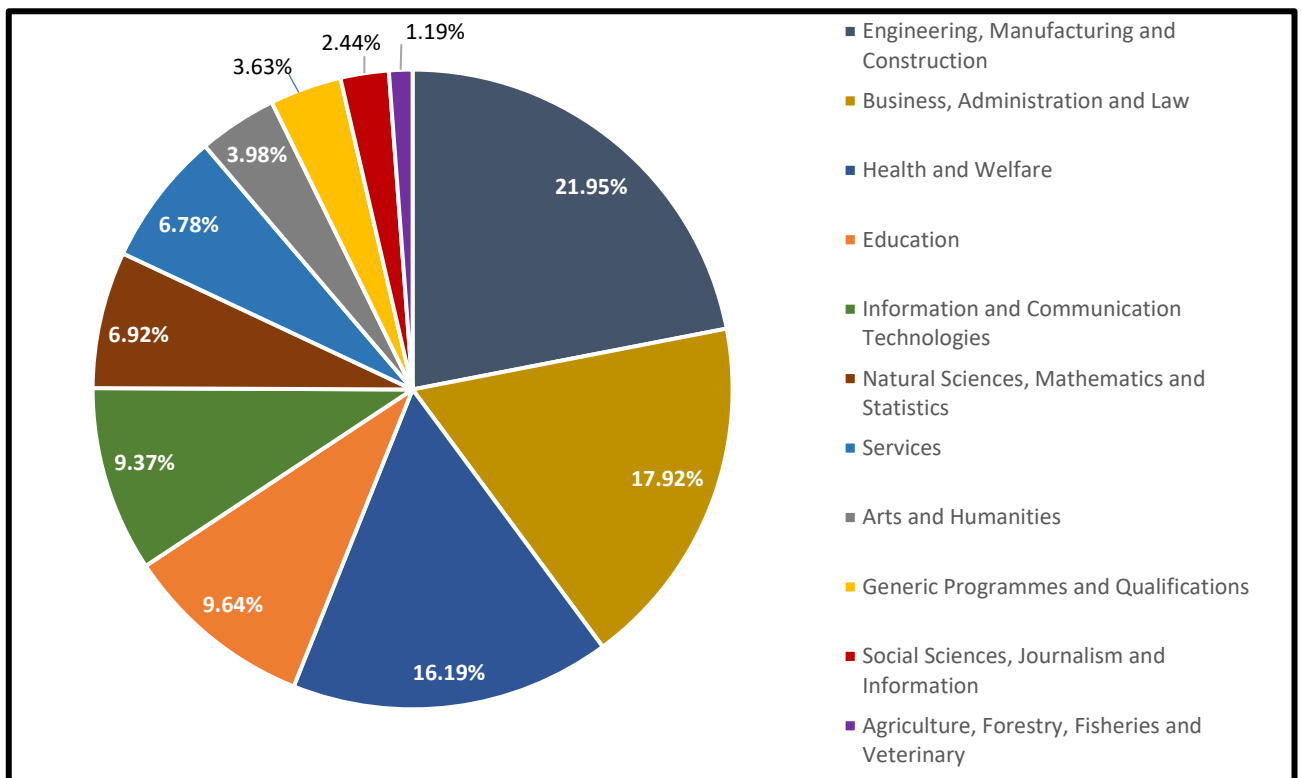


Figure 8: All students by ISCED broad area 2022/23

## Approach to the development of the Performance Agreement

The Vice Presidents and Deans Council, in conjunction with the President, is the executive body which has led on the development of this Performance Agreement, with overall coordination by the Vice President for Strategy, Transition and Projects. A working group was established to engage with key stakeholders across the University and with the HEA during the drafting process. Input provided by the Vice President and Deans Council, which was taken from the outcomes of discussions at faculty and function level, was considered together with the outputs and learnings from the previous round of strategy and performance dialogue, strategic plan development, and CINNTE and Athena Swan Ireland processes, as well as the Technological University Transformation Fund (TUTF), Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF), TU Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise (TU RISE), and National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) projects, which are underway. Drafts of the agreement, together with feedback from the HEA, were fed back to the Vice Presidents and Deans Council and Governing Body for input and approval. Dialogue with Governing Body and the HEA assisted with the development process and internal reviews by the Vice Presidents and Deans Council informed the final draft before presentation to the September 2024 Governing Body meeting for approval.

Building on the current strategic plan, this Performance Agreement acknowledges the connectedness of the priorities that define the ecosystem of TUS as an ambitious and evolving university. The institution has a specific focus on mapping and evaluating TUS’s major strategic initiatives to identify synergies and enable TUS to maximise impact from these key priorities. Indeed, the key pillars of the System Performance Framework — Teaching and Learning; Research and Innovation; Access and Participation; and Engagement — are very much in line with TUS’s own framing of its strategic direction and priorities. The extensive and wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and the views gathered to inform this Performance Agreement provided a rich source of data that has informed the development of objectives and indicators that are aligned with both national priorities and the TUS Strategic Plan.

The performance objectives and indicators identified in this Agreement reflect issues that are important to the TUS mission and purpose and have significance for its regions. TUS has identified indicators where it has a record of accomplishment and, in some cases, where it has forged a leadership role within the sector. TUS has also identified new areas of interest where it needs to further develop an expertise — for example, performance on the sustainability leadership scorecard.

TUS has taken a “whole-of-institution” approach to sustainability and, to this end, has established a University Sustainability Committee in Q2 2024. This committee, and its relevant sub-committees, will ensure oversight and considerations of climate, environmental and sustainability issues. TUS will use internationally recognised benchmarks (e.g. Sustainability Leadership Scorecard) to benchmark progress and assess impacts. TUS’s commitment to climate action and sustainable development is evidenced by its decision to create a senior post of Director of Sustainability. This will enable TUS to fully support its regions in addressing sustainability in partnership with a wide range of regional

bodies, including business & industry, social & cultural, and public sector organisations. An example of this is TUS’s support for the *Just Transition* agenda, which is providing significant funding that will assist TUS regions in responding to the sustainable development agenda and the transition to a low-carbon economy. While TUS has expertise in sustainable development, this expertise is not uniformly spread across the organisation, and TUS will need resources to strengthen and deepen its knowledge across all areas of sustainability, including environmental conservation, economic development, and social sustainability.

Following on from TUS’s attainment of the Athena Swan legacy award, the University achieved an Athena Swan Bronze award in September 2024. The application development process involved engagement with staff by way of an all-staff survey in October 2023. This provided a rich source of information that has been of benefit in developing performance objectives and indicators. TUS now has three years of trend analysis of its staff profile data. This data has been shared with all staff, thereby building trust and openness across the organisation. TUS’s commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) can be seen by the awarding of Aurora certification to 59 female staff over the last three years. Another major initiative has been the introduction of the Embedding Equality Diversity & Inclusion in the Curriculum of the new Technological University Sector (EDIT) inclusive curriculum toolkit, the result of a collaborative project between TUS, ATU, MTU, and led by SETU. TUS’s commitment to EDI in the context of students is captured in the indicator and targets set under the ‘Access and Participation’ pillar of the System Performance Framework 2023–2028.

## Structures in place for evaluation

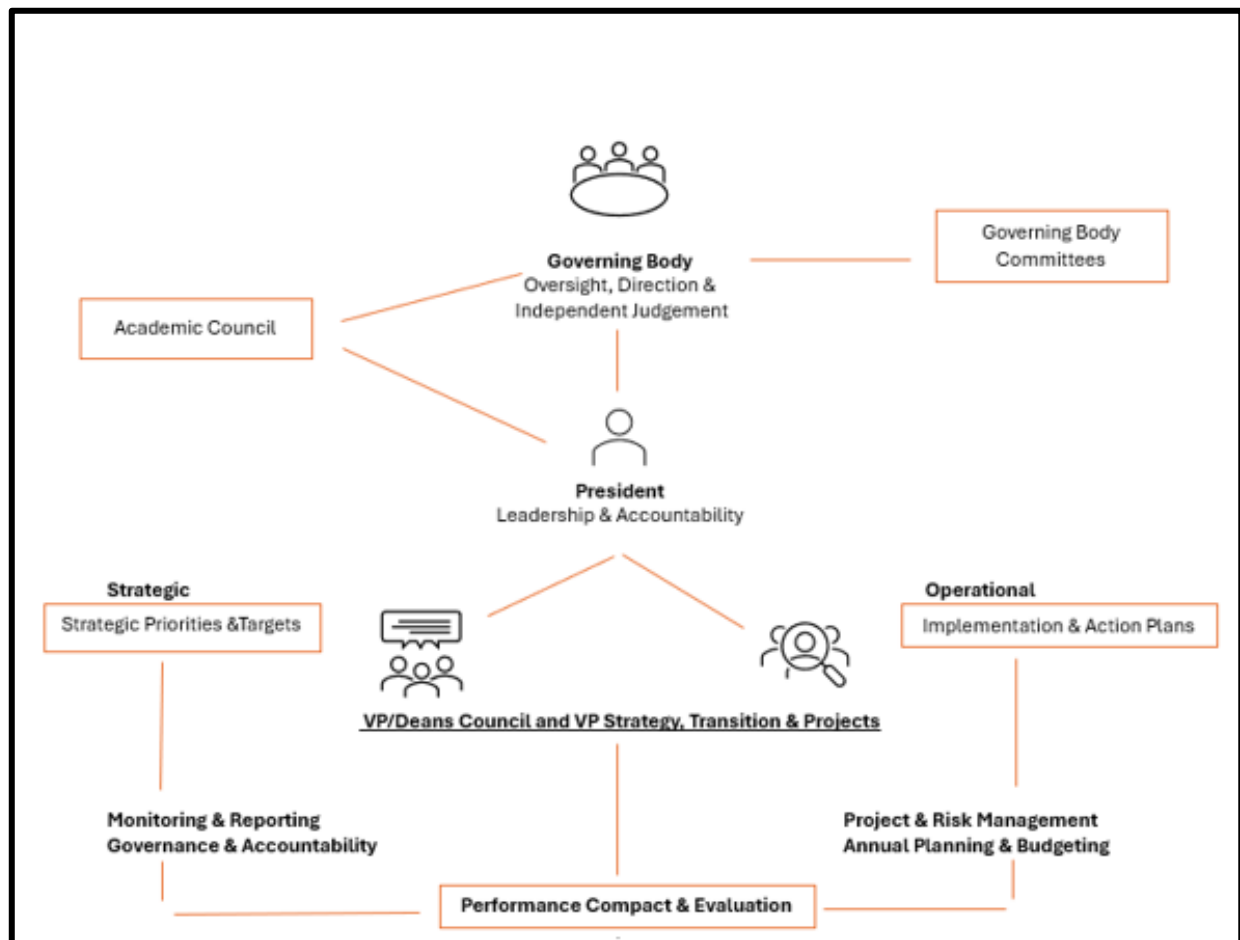


Figure 9. Structures in place for evaluation

The Vice Presidents and Deans Council (chaired by the President) is the executive body leading the Performance Agreement process. The Office of the Vice President for Strategy, Transition and Projects has responsibility for overall coordination and responsibility for ensuring measurement and monitoring of data on all the performance areas and meeting the reporting needs and expectations of the agreement, as set out in Figure 9.

The Performance Agreement will be a standing agenda item at meetings of the Vice Presidents and Deans Council, which will provide oversight of implementation, monitoring, and review, with corrective action being taken where necessary. Reports will be made twice yearly to the Governing Body and progress will be communicated to staff through staff information briefings in January and June of each year.

Consideration has been given to the recommendations from both the CINNTE Self-evaluation Review and recent dialogue with the HEA. Over the timeframe of this agreement, TUS will:

- Progress the implementation of the proposed new management structure to optimise the potential for achievement of the ambitions set out in both the Strategic Plan and this Performance Agreement.

- Develop a Project Management Office.
- Develop and improve data collection and evaluation processes through the creation of the Management Information System (MIS) Data Analytics Unit and appointment of a Director of Institutional Research and Data Analytics. This development and appointment will provide the resources necessary to progress in-house capacity to interrogate and understand TUS data.
- Continue to enhance and strengthen communication and reporting processes between the respective governance, management and academic fora and to stakeholders.

Utilisation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan Implementation Dashboard, aligned with the implementation of this agreement and other funding project deliverables (e.g. TSAF, TU RISE and N-TUTORR), will also be of significant benefit and contribution. The provision of data around Engagement has been identified as a challenge. However, this will be addressed with the development of an Engagement Tracking and Management Tool (through TSAF funding) that will enable TUS to generate useful data and insights on engagement activities across TUS regions and enable the University to better understand and serve its regions.

## Section 2: Performance Objectives

### Performance Objective 1

**To provide a student-centred, research-informed teaching and learning experience that enables a diverse cohort of students to achieve successful academic and graduate outcomes.**

**Pillar:** Teaching & Learning

**Transversals:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; International; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Institutional Leadership & Culture; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

#### Rationale for Performance Objective 1

This performance objective is aligned with Section 8 of the HEA Act (2022), ‘to promote the attainment and maintenance of excellence in teaching, learning and research in a high-quality higher education system.’ It contributes to the achievement of national policy objectives and specific policies, strategies, or agreements, as follows:

- 1) The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015), with particular emphasis on:
  - ESG 1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes
  - ESG 1.3 Student Centred Teaching, Learning & Assessment
  - ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff
  - ESG 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Review.
- 2) QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.
- 3) The National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning recommendation to create Open Education Resources (OER) and support open education principles and practices.
- 4) The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which emphasises lifelong learning, with Ireland’s workforce lifelong learning rate targeted to increase from 12% in 2022 to 18% by 2025.
- 5) Global Citizen 2030, which provides the contextual framework for TUS’s International Non-EU Student enrolment strategy, specifically the aims to be a first choice destination for international learners, researchers, and innovators and to produce global citizens in multi-national, multi-cultural and diverse workforces through the internationalisation of the TUS home curriculum, thereby providing ‘global’ graduates to the workforces and ensuring that the curriculum addresses all students’ needs, including international students who enrol in TUS.

- 6) The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) Strategy 2022–2025, which emphasises “embedding the student voice and actively creating initiatives that support a vision of a learning community where students are partners in the decision-making process”.

This performance objective addresses specific priorities and goals in the following internal strategies in TUS:

- [TUS Strategic Plan 2023–2026](#)
- [TUS Strategic Plan for Apprenticeships](#)
- [TUS Transition and Student Success Strategy](#)
- [TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy: Putting Learning First 2022–2025](#)

The respective indicators for this performance objective align with TUS core values of being: Inclusive, Supportive, and Collaborative, as well as the TUS Purpose Statement that states: “TUS provides leading *student-centred higher education* that is research-informed, regionally relevant, and accessible to all.” Priority 1 of the TUS Strategic Plan also commits to “provide[ing] a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in both traditional and flexible ways to cater to a diverse cohort of students, across multi-campus locations”. Indicators for this performance objective also align with the Strategic Plan commitment to:

- “Provide greater access pathways through progression options, apprenticeships, online delivery, flexible learning, international and non-traditional routes to education.”
- “Enhance student-centred teaching and learning that is research-informed and enables a diverse cohort of learners to achieve successful outcomes.”

To inform the development of this performance objective, and the selection of indicators and targets, TUS has drawn on a range of qualitative and quantitative data from TUS records and benchmarked, where relevant, against external data held by the HEA, including that on the System Performance Dashboard, and the published results of the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE).

### **Apprentice Student Enrolment (Indicator 1.1)**

Craft and consortia-led apprenticeships are an area of strength for TUS, so the goal in this indicator is to be a sector **leader** in apprentice student enrolment.

The rationale for the selection of this indicator is to support TUS’s Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan, launched in October 2023. This plan outlines TUS's commitment to becoming a **leading** provider of high-quality, industry-led apprenticeships. The target increases take account of: (i) TUS’s leadership in the sector across the range of craft enrolments; (ii) its prioritisation of significant growth, as evident by the recent campus development work undertaken on the Athlone East & Coonagh campuses; and (iii) its desire to keep pace with national requirements for HEIs to address the demand for apprentices. The targets year on year have profiled fluctuations due to market conditions

that may influence enrolments, such as the number of blocks of craft apprentice intakes across different discipline areas that are allocated to TUS.

This indicator directly aligns with the National Strategy for Apprenticeships, as outlined in the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021–25, which emphasises (a) increased access and participation, (b) a focus on new apprenticeship areas, and (c) working towards the single model of apprenticeship. The baseline enrolment of apprentice students was 1,157 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2022/23. The target is to increase enrolment to 1,379 FTEs in 2027/28, an increase of 19%, ensuring that TUS remains a high performer in the sector.

### **Part-time and Flexible Student Enrolment (Indicator 1.2)**

TUS aims to significantly **increase** its number of part-time and flexible student enrolments annually, on a diverse range of major, minor, special purpose, and micro-credential programme offerings.

This indicator was selected in accordance with TUS's Strategic Priority 1 (Education), which mentions enabling a range of diverse entry routes to higher education. TUS aims to expand its educational offerings and pathways, focusing on part-time and flexible learning to meet individual and enterprise demands regionally, nationally, and internationally. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 emphasizes lifelong learning, with Ireland's workforce lifelong learning rate targeted to increase from 12% in 2022 to 18% by 2025. The [OECD Skills Strategy Review 2023](#) underscores the need for more short and flexible upskilling options for workforce entrants or those seeking to transition, guiding TUS's efforts to increase enrolment of and options for these learners.

Targets for part-time and flexible enrolments are informed by a comprehensive analysis of sector-wide adjustments to address the fluctuating 'supply and demand' for part-time and flexible enrolments, including those influenced by government interventions. A continued focus on flexible programmes, beyond HCI/Springboard, ensures TUS can address diverse needs and mitigate risks related to fluctuating market demands and funding changes. Part-time and flexible enrolment targets will be achieved through innovative, industry-relevant programmes designed in collaboration with regional stakeholders, using part-time delivery modes, maximizing engagement and success for learners and industry, and through exploration of new funding opportunities (e.g., Skillnet, industry sponsorship). The baseline of 553 part-time and flexible enrolments is based on HEA SRS March 2024 student data, excluding FETAC, Apprentices, and HCI/Springboard enrolments. The target is to increase this number to 855 in 2027/28, a 55% increase.

### **International Student Enrolments (Indicator 1.3)**

TUS aims to increase enrolment of international (non-EU) students, thereby **increasing** its performance in this area against the TU sector.

The current national policy [Global Citizen 2030](#) provides the contextual framework for TUS's international non-EU student enrolment strategy. Accordingly, TUS aims to become *a first choice destination for international learners, researchers, and innovators* (Pillar 2) and to enable *Global citizens*



in multi-national, multi-cultural and diverse workforces (Pillar 3) by ensuring the [internationalisation of the home curriculum](#).

The rationale for the selection of this indicator is to take advantage of TUS’s recent international benchmark rating on the QS University rating system. QS is considered one of the most influential and credible ratings for universities internationally, as ratings are entirely based upon an institution’s performance. In early 2024, TUS achieved a maximum rating in the categories “Teaching” and “Academic Development” [[TUS on Top of the World as it Achieves QS 5-Star Rating – TUS](#)]. The aim is to retain this rating annually, which will be contingent on the achievement of the targets outlined for this performance indicator.

Targets take account of primary research on historical data on international student recruitment, as well as the geographical spread of those students and external variables that may impact the higher education sector and international student enrolments, for example, accommodation availability.<sup>2</sup> Growth in international enrolments will be supported by strategic marketing campaigns in selected markets and the opening of new representative offices in designated countries. Staff resources will be managed to support enrolled learners, their student experience, and their bespoke needs. Retention and promotion of TUS’s QS 5-Star University rating will support recruitment success. The baseline for this indicator is 768 international student enrolments (non-EU) in the 2023/2024 year. The aim is to increase this number to 985 enrolments in 2027/28, a 28% increase.

### Progression and Completion (Indicators 1.4 and 1.5)

TUS is a top performer in the TU sector in certain measures of student success, namely progression, and completion rates, as shown in the tables below. In indicators 1.4 and 1.5, TUS aims to **maintain a leading position** in the TU sector while improving performance with regards to these two key areas.

Technological Universities (TUs)	TUS	MTU	SETU	ATU	TU Dublin	All TUs
2020	17%	17%	21%	20%	17%	18%
2021	21%	19%	25%	25%	24%	23%

Table 3. Non-progression trends in the TU Sector

<sup>2</sup> HEA statistics [[INT-Factsheet-Final-PDF-version.pdf \(hea.ie\)](#)]

Year	TUS	MTU	SETU	ATU	TU Dublin	All TUs
2017	65% (69%) <sup>3</sup>	64% (71%)	63% (67%)	60% (64%)	62% (66%)	63% (67%)
2018	68%	65%	64%	63%	62%	64%

Table 4. Completion trends in the TU Sector <sup>4</sup>

The aim of Indicator 1.4 is to decrease the non-progression rate of full-time students from 21% for 2021/22 new entrants (2023/24 baseline) to 18% for 2025/26 new entrants (2027/28 target). For comparison, the TU sector benchmark for the non-progression rate of full-time new entrants from 21% for 2021/22 was 23%. In the context of the current environment, meeting this 3-percentage point target could make TUS a leader in the TU sector and the wider HE sector. The TUS [Transitions and Student Success Strategy](#) supports the University’s approach to the attainment of these targets.

The aim of Indicator 1.5 is to increase the undergraduate completion rate from 65% for 2017/18 new entrants by 2022 to 68% for 2021/22 new entrants by 2026. For comparison, the TU sector benchmark for the undergraduate completion rate was 63% for 2017/18 new entrants by 2022.

### **Enrolment of TUS Staff in Pedagogical Innovation and Development Learning Activities (Indicator 1.6)**

The Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID) was established in TUS in October 2021 by the Office of the Vice President of Student Education and Experience. A critical education priority for CPID, with the creation of the new structure and function, is to embed a flexible pathway for staff to engage in both accredited and non-accredited learning activities. This performance indicator represents the ***maintenance*** of current performance for TUS staff enrolment in Special Purpose Awards (SPAs) & research modules by academic and professional staff. This demonstrates a commitment to promoting innovation, diversity and excellence in learning, teaching, and assessment practices in TUS.

The baseline for the performance indicator is the number of staff enrolled on accredited Special Purpose Awards (SPA) & research modules, out of the total number of academic (829) and professional management support staff (318) employed in TUS (December 2022 figures). Of these 1147 staff, 86 completed SPAs/research modules by the end of the academic year 2023/24. The target is that by 2027/28, 105 staff members per annum will complete SPAs/research modules.

<sup>3</sup> The 69% in brackets is the published completion rate for the 2017 intake published in March 2024. This means 4% of the 2017 intake completed their studies during the latest academic year. This statistic can continue to rise as students complete their studies after the theoretical timeframe.

<sup>4</sup> The completion rate dataset does not fully allow for a direct year-on-year comparison. As students complete in the years after their theoretical timeframe of completion, they are added to the completion data.

### Student Survey related Indicators (1.7 and 1.8)

These performance indicators include the **maintenance** of current high performance and the ambition **to be a leader** in the sector in two key areas of strength for TUS, as identified in the annual national ISSE, namely: (i) Collaborative Learning and (ii) Student–Faculty Interaction. The evidence base includes the related data profiles of TUS and its legacy organisations (formerly LIT & AIT) on these indices in the national ISSE. As shown below, *Collaborative Learning* and *Student–Faculty Interaction* have traditionally been key strengths of TUS. Comparatively, TUS performs better than the average score for all HEIs’ on these indices in ISSE. Maintenance and improvement of current performance in this critical area is vital. The data illustrates the potential for TUS to be a leader in the sector, and the planned strategic action to develop Open Education Resources further supports this.

Indicators have been selected to align with strategic actions in TUS to enhance the concept of students as partners and TUS’s core commitment to student engagement and student-centred approaches, as articulated in the recent [TUS Student Charter](#). Working towards the chosen targets will support the development of a collaborative environment among and between students and staff and contribute to the development of key graduate attributes including communication, critical thinking, and teamwork.

Indices	2023		2022		2021		
	TUS	All HEIs	TUS	All HEIs	LIT	AIT	All HEIs
<b>Collaborative Learning</b>	30.5	30.2	30	29.2	27.6	28.5	25.4
<b>Student–Faculty interaction</b>	15.1	14	13.6	13.2	12.1	12.3	10.2

Table 5. Student Survey scores relating to (i) Collaborative Learning and (ii) Student–Faculty Interaction within TUS and across all HEIs

The targets are to increase the Collaborative Learning indicator score (from 30.5 in 2023 to 32.5 in 2028) and to maintain the Student–Faculty Interaction score (15.1 in 2023). Achieving these targets would allow TUS to continue to exceed the average score in these indices (30.2 and 14, respectively, in 2023). The aim is to become a sector leader in Collaborative Learning and to continue to be a leader in Student–Faculty Interaction.

## Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 1

The structures for the management of the indicators and targets associated with Performance Objective 1 include:

**(i) Operational management: the relevant Vice President and the Deans/Heads of function.**

**(ii) Academic governance: Academic Council and several of its sub-committees:**

- Apprenticeships
- Admissions Transfer and Progression
- Flexible Learning
- International & RUN-EU
- Programme Revision and Reviews
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Student Experience and Access
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

**(iii) Executive management/oversight: the Vice Presidents and Deans Council.**

TUS has adopted an evidence-based methodology to guide its decision making regarding the selection, monitoring, and evaluation of targets, including the use of data analytics to provide reports to functional areas responsible. Detailed goals and associated activities to enable the achievement of the targets outlined in this performance objective are defined in several TUS strategies, including:

- TUS Strategic Plan 2023–2026
- TUS Apprenticeship Strategy
- TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy 2022–2025
- TUS Transition and Student Success Strategy

The reporting of outputs and outcomes is outlined in the implementation plans for the above strategies. The impact of initiatives and/or any gaps in the achievement of targets will be monitored through the reporting forums outlined above.

The achievement of student enrolment targets is monitored through the TUS Strategic Plan implementation & monitoring processes, with progress reported to executive management and to Governing Body. The achievement of targets set for 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 will be supported by the implementation of the Apprenticeship Strategy (1.1), the establishment of wider recruitment offices and targeted pathways for international students (1.3), and the creation and delivery of flexible learning programme options for students including the usage of learning gates to ensure that

programmes are available locally for students (1.2). The initiatives and actions to enable the achievement of the non-progression and completion rate targets are set out in the TUS Transition and Student Success Strategy, including the TUS Second Shot project (1.4, 1.5). The targets on staff enrolment on accredited learning (1.6) are set annually by CPID and implemented, as framed within the wider TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy, Putting Learning First. Finally, progress on targets relating to the Student Survey (indicators 1.7 & 1.8) are reviewed initially by the TUS Quality Office with results then provided to Faculties to enable any remedial activity on respective indicators. Further details on strategic actions and initiatives related to indicators for Performance Objective 1 are provided in Appendix 2.

Finally, resource provision for the delivery of this performance objective is enabled by both core funding, income, and ring-fenced project funding, including TSAF, SATLE funding, and N-TUTORR funding. The dependency on project funding to deliver on the above Teaching and Learning performance objective, and its related scale and scope, is managed through the resource planning process in TUS. This is to ensure that future strategic work to deliver on Teaching and Learning takes account of factors such as resource allocation, funding source dependency, impact assessment, accountability and building reserves, to ensure stability and TUS development of Teaching and Learning activities. The extent of the project-based funding is a key risk to the achievement of the performance indicators. If such funding ceases, or changes, there will be a requirement to consider the adequate availability and usage of core funding to enable the sustainability of activities to achieve the targets set.

The risk level is medium to high, particularly for the achievement of the enrolment targets associated with this performance objective. In addition to funding, a range of external variables not under the control of TUS could severely impact on the achievement of the targets defined (for example, the availability of accommodation).

## Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 1

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target <sup>5</sup>
1.1	<b>Number of Apprentice enrolments – through Craft and Consortia-led apprenticeships – as a proportion (%) of total enrolments (FTE)</b>	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2022/23: 1,157 (8.7% of total enrolments, FTE)	TU sector average	<b>1,380</b> <b>(9.1%)</b>	<b>1,460</b> <b>(9.7%)</b>	<b>1,313</b> <b>(8.7%)</b>	<b>1,379</b> <b>(9.1%)</b>	<b>19% increase on baseline</b>
1.2	<b>Number of part-time and flexible learners as a proportion (%) of total enrolments (FTE)</b>	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 553 (3.6% of total enrolments of 15,049)	TU sector average	<b>560</b> <b>(3.7%)</b>	<b>658</b> <b>(4.3%)</b>	<b>749</b> <b>(4.9%)</b>	<b>855</b> <b>(6.0%)</b>	<b>55% increase on baseline</b>
1.3	<b>Number of international (non-EU) students enrolled as a proportion (%) of total enrolments (FTE)</b>	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 768 (5.1% of total enrolments of 15,049)	TU sector average	<b>821</b> <b>(5.4%)</b>	<b>878</b> <b>(5.8%)</b>	<b>939</b> <b>(6.2%)</b>	<b>985</b> <b>(6.5%)</b>	<b>28% increase on baseline</b>
1.4	<b>Non-progression rate (%) new entrants (full-time, level 6,7, and 8)</b>	HEA SRS and Non-Progression and Completion Dashboard	Quantitative	2021/22: 21%	Continue to perform better than average, all TUs; 23% in 2021/22	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3 p.p. improvement</b>

<sup>5</sup> The attainment of the student enrolment targets is co-dependent on the achievement of the overall target student enrolments for the respective years outlined above.

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target <sup>5</sup>
1.5	<b>Completion rate (%) new entrants (full-time, level 6,7, and 8)</b>	HEA SRS and Non-Progression and Completion Dashboard	Quantitative	2023/24: 65% of 2017/18 intake completed by 2022.	Match or exceed average for all TUs; 63% completion rate for 2017/18 intake	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>3 p.p. improvement</b>
1.6	<b>Number of staff completing CPID Special Purpose Awards (SPAs) &amp; research modules annually</b>	TUS Banner	Quantitative	2023/24: 86	Not available	<b>90</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>390 over 4 years 22% increase on baseline</b>
1.7	<b>Collaborative Learning index score</b>	StudentSurvey.ie	Quantitative	2023: 30.5	Continue to exceed national average (30.2 in 2023) and aim to lead TU sector by 2027/28	<b>N/A<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>
1.8	<b>Student–Faculty Interaction index score</b>	StudentSurvey.ie	Quantitative	2023: 15.1	Continue to exceed national average (14 in 2023) and maintain highest score in TU sector	<b>N/A</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

<sup>6</sup> Note: 2023/24 and 2024/25 are follow Years for ISSE due to the National Review of the Student Survey

## Performance Objective 2

**To increase staff and student participation in research to drive Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) income, increase postgraduate research enrolments, enhance graduate student satisfaction, and improve overall growth in research outputs.**

**Pillar:** Research & Innovation

**Transversals:** Enterprise; Society; Region.

### Rationale for Performance Objective 2

The selection and delineation of this performance objective is informed by in-depth analysis of intersecting institutional, regional, national, and international trends/factors and the prioritisation of research and innovation nationally in policies such as the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (DES, 2011), Impact 2030 (Government of Ireland, 2022), and Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape (HEA, 2012). TUS has also made a commitment to “generat[ing] new knowledge and provid[ing] impactful solutions that address regional, national and global challenges and opportunities” in the TUS Strategic Plan 2023–2026.

OECD statistics highlight the relatively low levels of doctoral-level graduates in Ireland in comparison to other countries. Only 1% of graduates in Ireland hold doctoral qualifications (OECD, 2011), although the number holding NFQ Level 10 degrees nationally rose by 31% from 2011 to 2016 (CSO, 2016). Ireland (10) performs well in participation of tertiary education students in doctoral-level studies in comparison to countries like Cyprus (1.7) and Malta (0.7) but is significantly below Belgium (19.3), France (66.5) and Poland (26.9) ([Eurostat, 2021](#)).<sup>7</sup> This performance objective contributes to bridging the gap in national doctoral education to bring Ireland more in line with tertiary participation rates in countries such as Belgium and France. At TU designation, 4.28% (318) of TUS students were registered on doctoral programmes; currently the number stands at 351, with further expansion planned (see indicator table).<sup>8</sup> The prioritisation of this objective contributes towards achieving institutional, national, and international policy and research targets.

Significantly, with regard to student researchers, the objective contributes towards Impact 2030, which espouses ‘nurturing and attracting R&I talent’ (p. 44) whilst emphasising ‘interdisciplinary research activity, informed by involvement with enterprise and other R&I stakeholders’ (p. 43) and optimising staff members’ opportunities to engage in research activities (p. 47 of Impact 2030 and indicators). By increasing the number of staff and students involved in research activities, this performance objective will contribute towards the number of staff members undertaking training at NFQ Level 10 ([Towards-a-Higher-Education-Landscape](#), HEA, 2012, pp. 15–16), as well as improving

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<sup>7</sup> This represents the number of students in doctoral or equivalent education by country in 2022 per 1000 students.

<sup>8</sup> In Winter 2023, TUS graduated the highest number of PhD graduates; 26 in total and 19 Masters by Research students.



research outputs and increasing RDI income. Furthermore, in focusing on ‘applied, problem-oriented research and discovery’, the objective contributes towards fulfilling the vision for the TU sector as outlined in *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape* (HEA, 2012, p. 14) and DES (2011) in progressing industry-based research engagements (DES, 2011, pp. 76–77; see indicator table). Significantly, the increase in PhD and Masters by Research students develops ‘a cadre of highly trained PhD students, producing new knowledge to address national and international problems’ (DES, 2011, p. 12; see indicator table). The prioritisation of this performance objective is also informed by the importance accorded to innovation and research in supranational educational policies (*European Strategy for Universities*, European Commission, 2022). Finally, the objective demonstrates TUS’s commitment to enhancing its research students’ experiences. This is commensurate with the *National Framework for Doctoral Education in Ireland: Report on its Implementation* (HEA et al., 2021).

The delineation of the benchmarks and baselines for the indicators occurred prior to the initial application for TU status. This encompassed in-depth reviews of graduate school registration (e.g. number of students registered on Masters by Research and PhD programmes), case studies on Collaborative Research Design and Regional Development, numbers of staff with doctoral degrees (227 at designation), reviews of research funding, research activity (in 2020, 87 staff supervised students on a programme leading to a doctoral degree), commercialisation, and ORCID profiles pre-TU. Crucially, the development of the performance objective and selection of targets was informed by qualitative research commissioned pre-TU on staff attitudes towards the new TU (Broadmore, 2020) and a working group comprised of researchers, academic staff and management prior to the merger to plan effectively for research development and resourcing.

The 2021 Student Survey reported higher than average scores for overall student satisfaction from research students (i.e. Masters by Research and PhD) pre-TU. 75.87% of respondents reported their overall experience at the institution was good or excellent,<sup>9</sup> in comparison to 74.9% of all Student Survey postgraduate research student (PGR) participants. However, the 2023 Student Survey result decreased for TUS, with 55.7% of TUS PGR respondents indicating ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, in comparison to 72.9% of all PGR student respondents nationally. Improvement will be achieved through the strategic actions set out below.

The application for TU status encompassed a strong emphasis on research and innovation based on a ‘pipeline’ approach to optimise sustainability in graduate student enrolments and staff research activities (e.g. sustainable financial model as per the R&I Development Plan). This activity informed subsequent benchmarking to optimise clarity of purpose and implementation and monitoring activities for RDI, including the identification of baselines for this performance objective. The baseline year of 2022 is chosen (principally) as it is the first year after TU designation and marks the beginning of co-ordinated cross-campus activities in research and innovation<sup>10</sup>. An exception to this is the increase in research-active staff, which is benchmarked using data from the 2021 HERD return. The benchmarking comparator (all TUs) is chosen due to TUS’s growth ambitions in relation to income, graduate school enrolments, research outputs, and research-active staff. The timeframe including the baseline (2022–2028) is justified by the length of the performance agreement. The sources of data,

<sup>9</sup> 76.7% of LIT students; 74.9% of AIT students – 75.8% average.

<sup>10</sup> 2022 is the baseline year chosen for all indicators except the student experience, which is benchmarked at 2023 (the first year of studentsurvey.ie TUS data).

including statutory accounts, KTI reports, HERD data, and SciVal data, are readily accessible which facilitates in-depth analysis of comparators both in and across time. Furthermore, the indicators are chosen to manifest the strategic areas where TUS aspires to be an institutional leader and/or match the TU average. The target of €86 million in RDI income, for example, is chosen to achieve steady, attainable, and sustainable growth from a strong base in 2023/2024, matching the TU average.

This performance objective represents the **continual development** in a TUS priority area and furthers TUS's ambition to become a sectoral leader in research and innovation, developing co-funded research with industry, commercialisation and maximising research engagements with companies and communities. Research has expanded rapidly since the creation of TUS in 2021, an expansion reflected in the increase in research degree candidates across seven campuses.<sup>11</sup> This is coupled with ambitious plans to grow postgraduate research enrolment numbers in TUS by 2028. Currently, TUS offers postgraduate research degree programmes in a wide range of disciplines: nursing and healthcare, business, humanities, engineering, art, design, science, and technology.

The number of peer-reviewed research outputs in TUS also demonstrated an increase, as did the proportion of externally funded research activity. At year end 2021 (TU designation year), TUS's peer-reviewed research outputs stood at 184 (SciVal data). That figure increased by 24.46% to 229 in the year ending 2023 (11.76% of percentage share for 2023 of the 5 TUs, DKIT and IADT). TUS intends to continue this trend, and as a COARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment) signatory, is committed to increasing non-traditional and traditional research outputs. Industry collaborations also increased from 198 in 2021 to 202 in 2022 (Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (AKTS), 2021, 2022) and 236 in 2023 (Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative, TTSI, 2023), which demonstrates further growth.

In KTI's Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2022, TUS was second among all RPOs (Universities, College & State Research Organisations, Technological Universities, and Institutes of Technology), and second among the Technological Universities (TUs), for industry and innovation activity, as measured by 'Total Number of Collaboration, innovation voucher and consultancy services agreements with industry'. TUS intends to continue to exceed the TU average and at least maintain its current ranking amongst all TUs. This statement applies to all increases in non-traditional outputs as stated here: 2.3 to 2.6 on the subsequent indicator table.

### Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 2

While targets in the indicator table are per annum, TUS will further delineate this into targets to be met for three-month intervals. This ensures that any implementation gaps will be rectified early on.

Implementation monitoring shall be completed quarterly by the heads of respective RDI functions: growth in research income and research outputs by the Head of Research; graduate school enrolments by the Dean of Graduate Studies; increase in staff involved in RDI activities, industry collaborations, non-traditional outputs and staff involved in industry-based collaborative research

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<sup>11</sup> Predominantly on the Moylish and LSAD Limerick and Athlone campuses.

activities by the Head of Innovation and Enterprise, the Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation Manager and the Research Support Manager; and financial risks by the Vice President of Finance. Financial risks will also be discussed specifically at each quarterly meeting and documented in reports compiled by managers at each three-month period alongside the extent to which targets have been achieved and strategic measures adopted. These reports shall note factors that adversely affected the achievement of the target for that period (if applicable). The Vice President of RDI has overall responsibility for implementation and monitoring. Four meetings of the management team with responsibility for implementation and monitoring shall be completed annually. The emphasis is on the targets achieved for the time-period, financial risks, gaps/areas for improvement, delineation of strategies to maintain/enhance performance, shared learning, and action plans.

An assessment report is to be prepared by administrative and research support staff at the Research Office and TUS Graduate School annually which critically examines implementation and the achievement of targets. This report will form the basis of reporting within TUS and to the HEA. The institution adopts a ‘whole-of-institution’ approach to implementing this PO.

TUS has also invested in PURE, which facilitates the evidence base for extending research outputs. This is a key strategic enabler for this performance objective and pivotal to enabling TUS to achieve the national goal of 100% open access to publications by 2030, as per the [National Action Plan for Open Research 2022 – 2030](#). It will facilitate the reporting of additional research activity (e.g. editorial work, conference hosting, peer reviewing). [Impact 2030](#) also highlights that there is a need for capturing outputs, impact and metrics that fall outside of the traditional publication and citation data used for evaluation. PURE is being rolled out on a phased basis since Q2 2024.

Other strategic measures are being implemented to increase research outputs, including publication strategy workshops and international research series (Global Conversations on Excellence in Graduate Education)<sup>12</sup>, which are oriented towards discussion of research student supervision.<sup>13</sup> The Research Office is co-developing (with UCD, DCU and UCC) a training module on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics to enhance institutional awareness of research metrics and encourage good practice. The Graduate School runs training in Advancing the State-of-the-Art in Research Supervision, Your IRC Funding Application, Applying for Industry Co-Funds, excelling in the Viva Voce, and Completing your PhD, which is orientated to timely completions and reducing financial strain. TU RISE is funding grant writers to further support research activity and enhance commercialisation opportunities. European grant writing training is also provided by the Immersive Research Institute (IRI), diversifying funding streams.<sup>14</sup> Strategic actions are informed by international best practice and factors identified in Towards a New Technological University: What Staff Think – Views of Staff Within AIT and LIT (Broadmore 2020).<sup>15</sup> Strategic activities have led to a vibrant research culture in TUS where research activity among staff and students is visible in activities like Research Week, year-round

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<sup>12</sup> This series, run and led by the TUS Graduate School, encompassed critical dialogue from internationally renowned scholars on trends and developments in graduate level education, research student supervision quality, theoretical frameworks and methodological and empirical research developments.

<sup>13</sup> In total, 299 TUS staff and students registered for four workshop sessions.

<sup>14</sup> The IRI is led by TUS as part of RUN – EU.

<sup>15</sup> The total sample size in the survey questionnaire for this study was 657 (response rate of 54.8% of staff overall). 52.1% were from LIT and 47.3% were from AIT. 0.6% did not say which institution they were from.

training opportunities provided by the Research Office and Graduate School, and increased opportunities for collaboration (e.g. RUN-EU).

As active participants in the COARA national chapter, TUS is fully committed to the principles of transparency and integrity. TUS is preparing a strategy document to monitor institutional awareness and build infrastructure to implement research indicators that recognise the value of all research at TUS, including interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. The formation of the Graduate School programme board and dedicated student feedback forums established in 2024 will also enhance the student experience.<sup>16</sup>

The delivery of this performance objective has several interdependencies from the perspective of staff, including the availability of funding, effective cross-campus communication, teaching loads, and attracting high-quality postgraduates. Other factors identified at institutional level as affecting the targets include lack of awareness among staff about how to get involved in research and where/how to access research opportunities.

Some of the potential risks to this objective include failing to recruit the requisite number of graduate students, which is partially contingent on winning competitive external funding. Failure to recruit postgraduate research students / postdoctoral researchers would also impact adversely on research activity, income, and outputs. The risk level is medium/high, due to rising stipend levels in some institutions to €25,000 p/a. TUS has raised the research postgraduate stipend to €14,000 p/a, with a further €1,000 p/a scheduled for January 2025. This should offset this risk to some extent; however, the lower stipend may still impede graduate enrolments and attracting high-achieving students. To offset this, TUS is developing Doctoral programme models including Professional Doctorates, Article-Based PhDs/PhDs by Publications, and Industry-Based Doctorates to target professionals who wish to study part-time and whose companies/workplaces would pay full/partial fees (and the latter case, industry-based doctorates, will further strengthen commercialisation).

Furthermore, the Graduate School and the Research Office work collaboratively with TUS Industry Clusters and Technology Gateways<sup>17</sup> developing industry co-funds. RUN-EU has also added 20 additional PhD students to TUS and TUS forecasts that this upward trend will continue due to the volume of ongoing collaborative work with companies, which will offset risks. There are also risks to on time completions of PhD and Masters by Research programmes within the requisite timescale (see indicator 2.10). However, this is offset by enhanced training by the TUS Graduate School and RUN – EU to students and supervisors on doing graduate-level research, an emphasis on ‘on time’ completions and enhanced monitoring and evaluation of data in and across time.

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<sup>16</sup> As per the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023–2026, students have been elected to this board to enhance student voice. This shall also be complemented by a dedicated student forum on feedback run by the TUS Graduate School.

<sup>17</sup> Industry Clusters – Advanced Technology in Manufacturing (ATIM) and Irish Digital Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Cluster (IDEAM); Technology Gateways – APT, COMAND, Shannon ABC and Smarter Factory.

## Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 2

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
2.1	<b>Annual RDI income</b>	Statutory Accounts, TUS Financial Reports	Quantitative	2021/22: €11m	Exceed TU average	<b>€19.7m in 22/23</b>	<b>€21m in 23/24</b>	<b>€22m in 24/25</b>	<b>€23m in 25/26</b>	<b>€86m over 4 years</b> <b>109% increase on baseline</b>
2.2	<b>Number of research publications</b>	SciVal, Scopus	Quantitative	2022: 220	Match TU average	<b>250 in 2024</b>	<b>280 in 2025</b>	<b>330 in 2026</b>	<b>440 in 2027</b>	<b>1,300 over 4 years</b> <b>100% increase on baseline</b>
2.3	<b>Number of IDFs, Patents, LOAs, Spinouts</b>	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (AKTS)	Quantitative	2022: 7	Exceed TU average	<b>12 in 2024</b>	<b>15 in 2025</b>	<b>18 in 2026</b>	<b>20 in 2027</b>	<b>65 over 4 years</b> <b>186% increase on baseline</b>
2.4	<b>Number of Spin-ins/ Entrepreneurs</b>	TUS Records, Reports to Enterprise Ireland	Quantitative	2022: 71	Exceed TU average	<b>78 in 2024</b>	<b>85 in 2025</b>	<b>94 in 2026</b>	<b>100 in 2027</b>	<b>357 over 4 years</b> <b>40% increase on baseline</b>
2.5	<b>Entrepreneur and innovation development programme participation</b>	TUS Annual Report and Enterprise Ireland (EI) New Frontiers Report	Quantitative	2022: 188 New Frontiers Programme Participants: 88 Other programmes: 100	Exceed TU average	<b>203</b> <b>NF: 88</b> <b>TUS Works: 10</b> <b>Other: 105</b>	<b>218</b> <b>NF: 88</b> <b>TUS Works: 10</b> <b>Other: 120</b>	<b>233</b> <b>NF: 88</b> <b>TUS Works: 10</b> <b>Other: 135</b>	<b>238</b> <b>NF: 88</b> <b>TUS Works: 10</b> <b>Other: 140</b>	<b>892</b> <b>NF: 352</b> <b>TUS Works: 40</b> <b>Other: 500</b> <b>c.36% increase on baseline</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
2.6	<b>Number of Collaboration, Innovation Voucher and Consultancy Agreements with industry</b>	KTI Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey	Quantitative	2022: 202	Exceed TU average	<b>227 in 2024</b>	<b>252 in 2025</b>	<b>277 in 2026</b>	<b>304 in 2027</b>	<b>1,060 over 4 years</b> <b>50% increase on baseline</b>
2.7	<b>Number of Research-active staff</b>	HERD Data	Quantitative	2021/2022: 307 (25%)	Exceed TU average: 341 (28%) in 2022/2023	<b>353</b> <b>29%</b>	<b>373</b> <b>30.37%</b>	<b>406</b> <b>33%</b>	<b>425</b> <b>35%</b>	<b>425</b> <b>10 p.p. increase on baseline</b>
2.8	<b>Number of Postgraduate research enrolments</b>	HEA SRS, Graduate School data/ RDI reports and RUN-EU reports	Quantitative	2022: 373	Exceed TU average	<b>388</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>1673 enrolments over 4 years</b> <b>20% increase on baseline</b>
2.9	<b>Proportion (%) of Research students reporting a positive experience<sup>18</sup></b>	Student Survey.ie	Quantitative	2023: 55.7% responses as 'good' or 'excellent' combined.	Match university sector average; All PGR student respondents in Student Survey <sup>19</sup>	<b>55.7%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>14 p.p. increase on baseline</b>

<sup>18</sup> Question from Student Survey is 'How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?'

<sup>19</sup> The respondents to this question are all PGR students from the university sector. Data from the TUs solely is not available

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
2.10	<b>PhD and Masters by Research completion figures per annum and completion rate (%) within timescale</b>	Graduate School Data	Quantitative	Total intake <sup>20</sup> , 2017-2018: 76 2021/2022 total completions: 35 Completion within timescale <sup>21</sup> : 46% Total intake, 2018-2019: 82	Not available	<b>46</b> <b>Total intake, 2020-2021: 80</b> <b>Completion within timescale: 58%</b>	<b>56<sup>22</sup></b> <b>Total intake, 2021-2022: 42</b> <b>Completion within timescale: 63%</b>	<b>58</b> <b>Total intake, 2022-2023: 74</b> <b>Completion within timescale: 71%</b>	<b>59</b> <b>Total intake, 2023-2024: 71</b> <b>Completion within timescale: 73%</b>	<b>219</b> <b>Completion within timescale average over 4 years, 66%</b> <b>(20% increase on baseline)</b>

<sup>20</sup> For indicator 2.10, 'total intake' refers to total numbers of part-time and full-time Masters by Research and PhD students that were registered for the first time on said programmes during the time period as stipulated.

<sup>21</sup> For indicator 2.10, the term 'within timescale' here refers to the percentage of students who completed their research within the requisite timeline. As per the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023–2026, the length of time allocated to a full-time PhD student is 4 years and to a part-time PhD student is 6 years. For Masters by Research students, this length of time is 2 years full-time and 3 years part-time.

<sup>22</sup> This projection of 56 is also inclusive of students who received COVID-19 extensions and other delays due to the pandemic, who are expected to graduate in 2025/2026.

## Performance Objective 3

**To maximise the range of equitable access opportunities to TUS for a diverse range of students; their enrolment success; and their student experience.**

**Pillar:** Access & Participation

**Transversals:** Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning; Student Success; Society; International; Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; Institutional Leadership & Culture.

### Rationale for Performance Objective 3

The selection of this performance objective and designated indicators has been informed by several key factors including alignment with: (i) TUS Strategic objectives and TUS’s long-standing commitment to access and widening participation; (ii) National Policy objectives and (iii) Evidence-based evaluation and consultation processes in TUS.

Specifically, this performance objective aligns with the following, as defined within the [TUS Strategic Plan](#):

- (i) TUS core values: Inclusive, Supportive, and Ambitious.
- (ii) TUS Purpose Statement: “TUS provides leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally relevant, and accessible to all.”
- (iii) TUS Strategic Plan Priority 1: Education: TUS “provides a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in both traditional and flexible ways to cater to a **diverse** cohort of students, across multi-campus locations”.
- (iv) TUS Strategic Plan Priority 3: People and Organisation: “operates as an integrated organisation, where everyone’s potential can be realised, and where all individuals are provided with equal opportunities”.

### Alignment with National Policy Objectives

The selection of this performance objective is aligned with The National Plan for Equity of Access 2022–2028 (NAP). Specifically, the indicators selected directly align with the three overarching priority groups identified in the NAP: students who are socio-economically disadvantaged; are members of the Irish Traveller and Roma communities; and students who have disabilities, including intellectual disabilities. In addition, the indicators are informed by the following policies, strategies, and/or bodies:

- [The Traveller and Roma Education Strategy](#).



- The Final Report of the Joint Committee on Autism, which highlights the challenges and barriers faced by people with autism in Irish society and the recommendation for transitional planning for autistic students entering higher education.
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals, and specifically Goal 4, which speaks to ensuring equitable and quality education for all.
- The University of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI), an initiative to encourage second-level and higher education institutions in Ireland to welcome and enable refugees and protection applicants / people seeking asylum access into their university communities and foster a culture of welcome and inclusion for all those seeking sanctuary.

The evidence to assure the rationale for this performance objective includes both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from TUS records and benchmarked, where relevant, against external data available from HEA Statistics, including the System Performance Dashboard.

TUS has a long-standing commitment to addressing educational disadvantage by developing and operating initiatives and programmes to support students in Higher Education from underrepresented and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Cognisant of the Pobal Deprivation Index scores (DIS), and that students who are socio-economically disadvantaged are a priority group identified in the National Access Plan (NAP), TUS has identified the **enrolment of students from socio-economically disadvantaged areas** as a key indicator for this performance objective. The most recent available DIS data (2020/21) indicates that 11% of new entrants nationally are socio-economically disadvantaged. In TUS, 15% of new entrants in 2020/21 were socio-economically disadvantaged. Over the lifetime of this PA, TUS will continue to target incremental increases in the proportion of new entrants who are socio-economically disadvantaged (from the baseline of 15% in 2020/21 to 15.8% in 2027/28), thereby contributing to national objectives to increase participation by socio-economically disadvantaged students in higher education.

Mindful of the ever-increasing complexity of the disabilities of students presenting to TUS's Disability Services, the national growth in DARE applications and the significant growth in participation rates by students with disabilities<sup>23</sup>, TUS includes **the enrolment of students with a disability** as a key indicator of this performance objective. TUS proposes to build on performance to date by increasing the first-year new entrant rate of students with disability from 11.6% - 307 students (TUS Student Records 2023/24) to 12.4% over the timeframe of this agreement. TUS's recent successful submission of a proposal to deliver an accredited programme for students with intellectual disabilities for delivery from January 2025 should also assure these related enrolment targets.

TUS is committed to ensuring its student body are representative of a diverse society. The [TUS Strategic Plan 2023–2026](#), recognises '... diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve.' Cognisant of the low participation rates amongst the Traveller and Roma Community, and the barriers to education they face, TUS has identified **the enrolment of students from Traveller and Roma communities** as a key indicator as part of this performance objective. TUS can demonstrate that targeted, timely and accessible financial supports

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<sup>23</sup> [Students with Disabilities Engaged with Support Services in Higher Education in Ireland 2021/22 \(Ahead.ie\)](#)

to Traveller and Roma students via PATH 5 have contributed to the continued successful engagement, progression, and retention of these students in their studies. Successful enrolment of Traveller and Roma students highlights the importance of maintaining specific Traveller Project Officer roles within TUS to continue relationship development and building trust with such prospective students. For example, partnerships have been formalised with two DEIS secondary schools in the Midlands, each with a high population of Traveller and Roma students.

TUS will continue to build on achievements and efforts achieved through PATH 3 and PATH 5 funding. As a benchmark, in 2022/23, 0.2% of all new entrants to TUS identified as Traveller, compared to 0.1% nationally. TUS proposes to maintain a participation rate of 0.2% over the timeline of this framework, increasing from its current baseline of five Traveller new entrants in 2024/25 to nine new entrants by 2027/28.

### **Access to Apprenticeships Enrolments**

The central mission of the Access to Apprenticeship programme is to provide pathways to skilled employment and a career in an apprenticeship to a cohort of young people who are vulnerable to long-term unemployment or progression to low skilled, poorly paid, or sporadic work. These include Travellers, young people affected by homelessness, those who have been in the care of the state, and/or those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. The Access to Apprenticeship programme is a TUS-validated Special Purpose Award Certificate on the National Framework of Qualifications at Level 6.

The baseline for the enrolment of Access to Apprenticeship students is based on total enrolment numbers per annum in the TUS Midwest region, that is, 48 students in three intakes. From 2024/25, TUS plans to extend the enrolment on the Access to Apprenticeships programme to the TUS Midlands region. This would equate to 48 additional students annually. The total enrolments for TUS Midlands and Midwest would therefore equate to 96 students annually in the reporting period. There is no benchmark to use on this indicator as TUS is leading on this initiative nationally.

### **University of Sanctuary Scholar Enrolments**

Immediately following its designation and appointment as a Technological University in October 2021, TUS applied to the University of Sanctuary Ireland committee to be accredited as a University of Sanctuary. This action demonstrated TUS's commitment to widen access and participation to higher education for those seeking international protection and/or residing in direct provision centres in the environs of TUS campuses.

TUS successfully achieved the designation of University of Sanctuary status from 2022–2025. The executive management of TUS and its Governing Body committed to fund ten students entering TUS through the CAO and ten through the ACCESS Programme from 2022 annually. TUS has recently commenced the expansion of potential enrolments by seeking philanthropic funding from private benefactors and industry partners. TUS had 20 University of Sanctuary scholars in 2022/23 and the targets for this indicator are based on a comparative analysis of funded opportunities provided by other HEIs, which is available via the [Irish Refugee Council](#). It is evident from this profile that TUS,

based on its scale and funding streams, is leading on the number and type of financial supports provided by the institution itself to attain the enrolment numbers for Sanctuary Scholars in TUS.

### **Societies & Student Participation**

A new function, TUS Student Societies, was created by the Office of the Vice President for Student Education and Experience in December 2021. A TUS Societies Officer was appointed in January 2022, with their role focusing on promoting participation in TUS societies across the diverse student population. TUS Student Societies host numerous ceremonies, community events, and initiatives that are central to the TUS student experience. TUS Student Societies offer a sense of belonging for all and encourage and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The skills and competencies developed by students who engage in societies align with those identified in the [Putting Learning First: TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022 – 2025](#) and specifically the attainment of many of the graduate attributes identified therein. Enrolment in societies demonstrates students' **participation** in university life outside of the classroom and assures the development of their social and professional skills, which are key graduate attributes.

### **Evaluation and consultation processes in TUS – An evidence-based approach**

A key factor in the selection of respective performance indicators for this performance objective is the robust evidence TUS has collected over many years, which highlights the importance of targeted initiatives directed at improving access to education via pathways, information, initiatives, knowledge sharing, and consultation with key stakeholders. This evidence base is qualitative and quantitative and has directly involved the voices of key stakeholders such as students, school management and community partners.

This performance objective represents continuing development as well as the ambition to be a **leader** in the following areas:

- (i) To **continue development** in the achievement of the targets set out in the National Access Plan 2022–2028 for under-represented priority groups including:
  - Students who are socio-economically disadvantaged
  - Students with disabilities
  - Traveller and Roma students
- (ii) To **lead** in the enrolment of students on the Access to Apprenticeship programme nationally including the rollout of the programme across TUS campuses (Reference: TUS Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan, 2023 [[TUS Strategic Plan for Apprenticeships](#)]).
- (iii) To **lead** TUS's engagement with local communities through targeted outreach, events, and information sessions.
- (iv) To **lead** in the enrolment numbers of University of Sanctuary scholars in TUS.

### Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 3

The structure for the implementation, monitoring, assessment and reporting of the performance indicators associated with this performance objective include:

- (i) Operational Management: the Vice President for Student Education and Experience and the following Heads of Function:
  - Student Service & Resource Managers
  - Access Officers
  - Disability Officers
  - University of Sanctuary (UoS) Officer and TUS UoS committee
  - Societies Officer
  - Access to Apprenticeship Coordinator
  
- (ii) Academic and Governing Body governance:
  - Academic Council
  - Academic Council Subcommittees:
    - Apprenticeship
    - Student Experience and Access.
    - Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
  - Governing Body EDI Committee
  
- (iii) Executive management: oversight of the achievement of the indicators associated with this performance objective lies with the TUS Vice Presidents and Deans Council.

Resource provision for the delivery of this performance objective is enabled by both core funding, other income streams, and ring-fenced project funding, including PATH funding. The dependency on project funding to deliver on the Access and Widening Participation agenda, and its related scale and scope, is managed through the resource planning process in TUS. A substantial percentage of staff engaged in access and widening participation activities in TUS are funded through PATH-related funding streams.

A recent review of PATH funding has been initiated by the HEA and conducted by Crowe Consulting. Internally, a recent review of PATH funding in TUS has noted its positive impact on access and widening participation for targeted students through the cluster structure. The identified impacts include:

- Increased outreach which allowed TUS to connect with communities it would traditionally not have reached.
- Increased numbers of students enrolling from the most disadvantaged backgrounds/communities.

- Higher student aspirations, new targeted student supports, improved student experience.
- Maintained strong retention, progression, and student success rates.
- New higher education offerings, more inclusive learning environments, structures, and strategy.
- Targeted student support (example: Traveller & Roma Officers, Student Advisors).

Any decisions to curtail, reduce, or cease PATH Funding or other funding sources that support the enrolment of under-represented students pose a substantial risk to the achievement of the performance targets associated with this performance objective.

## Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 3

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
3.1	<b>Proportion (%) of new entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas</b>	Equal Access Survey reported on HEA <a href="#">SP Dashboard</a>	Quantitative	2020/21: 15% (397 students)	Continue to exceed average for all HEIs: 11% in 2020/21	<b>15.2%</b> <b>(402)<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>15.4%</b> <b>(408)</b>	<b>15.7%</b> <b>(412)</b>	<b>15.8%</b> <b>(418)</b>	<b>0.8 p.p increase<sup>25</sup></b>
3.2	<b>Proportion (%) of new entrants with a disability</b>	Equal Access Survey reported on HEA <a href="#">SP Dashboard</a>	Quantitative	2023/24: 11.6% of 2,647 total new entrants (307)	Attain average for all HEIs: 13.8% in 2022/23 (TUS 18.1% in 2022/23)	<b>12%</b> <b>(319)</b>	<b>12.5%</b> <b>(330)</b>	<b>12.9%</b> <b>(343)</b>	<b>13.4%</b> <b>(355)</b>	<b>1.8 p.p. increase on 2023/24 baseline</b>
3.3	<b>Number of new entrants from the Traveller &amp; Roma communities<sup>26</sup></b>	Equal Access Survey reported on HEA <a href="#">SP Dashboard</a>	Quantitative	2022/23: 0.2% ██████████	Lead nationally, continue to exceed average for all HEIs: 0.1% of new entrants identified as Traveller/Roma in 2022/23	<b>+1</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>+4 80% increase</b>
3.4	<b>Number of new entrants to Access to Apprenticeship Programme</b>	HEA SRS	Quantitative	2022/23: 48	Lead nationally. National data currently not available	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>384 over 4 years 100% increase</b>

<sup>24</sup> Within year target for all years noted from baseline year

<sup>25</sup> Average proportion across four years

<sup>26</sup> The level of disaggregation of data disseminated publicly is subject to data protection considerations. Data disaggregated to a level which may allow individuals to be identified (even indirectly) is not disseminated publicly. See the HEA Statistics: [Privacy, Data Protection and Disclosure Control](#).

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
3.5	<b>Number of University of Sanctuary Scholars – new entrants</b>	University of Sanctuary Programme <a href="#">University (Sanctuary Scholarships) Funding   Irish Refugee Council</a>	Quantitative	2022/23: 20	Lead on University of Sanctuary Scholars as compared to other HEIs; data available through published institutional self-reporting	22	24	26	28	<b>100 new entrants over 4 years</b> <b>40% increase on baseline</b>
3.6	<b>Number of TUS Societies</b>	Internal TUS Records	Quantitative	2022/23: 63	Not available	69	72	75	77	<b>22% increase on baseline</b>

## Performance Objective 4

**To enhance the sustainable development of our University and our region through a whole-of-institution approach to engagement and sustainability.**

**Pillar:** Engagement

**Transversals:** Climate & Sustainable Development; Enterprise; Region; Institutional Leadership & Culture; Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion.

### Rationale for Performance Objective 4

This performance objective has been informed by TUS’s ambition to be a regionally engaged university which takes a whole-of-institution approach to sustainability challenges. The themes of engagement and sustainability are woven throughout the TUS Strategic Plan as values, priorities, and objectives. This objective responds to the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (DoE, 2011) where an emphasis is placed on HEI engagement with enterprise and industry, communities, cultural and sporting organisations, and other educational providers at regional, national, and international level. The Regional Enterprise Plans for the Midwest and Midlands place a specific emphasis on the role of TUS in providing highly skilled graduates to employers in the region. The National Education for Sustainable Development Strategy (DoE, DFHERIS, 2022) demands HEIs take a whole-of-institution approach to sustainability and the Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2024) requires the public sector, including HEIs, to reduce carbon emissions by 51% by 2030. TUS is particularly focused on the Just Transition agenda, given the significant social, economic, and cultural impacts that the shift away from peat industries is having within the region.

This performance objective reflects continuing development in a priority area for the University. TUS is proud of its extensive engagement across both regions, nationally and internationally. TUS’s legacy organisations had a deep linkage with their regions, as evidenced by the Socio-Economic Impact report. TUS now seeks to strengthen its engagement activity across the entire TUS region while simultaneously addressing the theme of sustainability.

TUS’s engagement indicators are strategically chosen to prioritise its efforts on regional and national engagement through TUS Learning Gates, growing TUS Alumni connections nationally and internationally, and deepening its regional engagement with employers via placement and graduate recruitment.

Learning Gates are a unique TUS initiative representing partnerships between TUS and the network of Connected Hubs established by the Irish Government under the Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2020–25 (supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development). TUS Learning Gates represent a network of community spaces located throughout Ireland where TUS students and academic staff can meet and learn together through the provision of online programmes. TUS currently has partnerships with over 50 of the [300 hubs](#). By working with the network of Connected Hubs, TUS plans to expand its portfolio of Learning Gates to 95 by 2027/28.



While TUS achieved the highest employment rate in the HEA 2022 Graduate Outcomes survey (86.9% of graduates on Level 8 programmes in employment), TUS has decided to focus on employment within the TUS region (Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, and Longford) for the period of this agreement. 2022 data indicates that 58.8% of TUS Graduates are employed within the region and TUS predict a 2% increase over the period, which is informed by benchmarking of performance against similar multi-campus HEIs (e.g. ATU 56%, SETU, 51%).

TUS targets for work placements are informed by a 2023 PwC report, commissioned by TUS, on work placement and careers services, which recommended that specific structures be put in place to deliver a target of 100% of our 4-year Level 8 Honours programmes having work placement. A review of Level 8 programmes offered in 2023/24 indicated that 93% of programmes had work placement. Work placement is also encouraged and facilitated in Level 6 and Level 7 programmes, where appropriate and feasible.

TUS needs to build the TUS Alumni community with a view to maximising opportunities for research and development, employment, community development and sponsorship. Two separate TUS Alumni datasets currently exist and indicate a total Alumni population of 4,723. TUS is developing an integrated TUS-wide Alumni system and contacting all 2023 and 2024 graduates to confirm if they wish to receive updates when the new Alumni platform is established.

Recent research has made clear that universities need to take a holistic approach to the integration of sustainable development (Lozano and von Haartman, 2018; Sanches, Campos, et al., 2022).<sup>27</sup> TUS has the ambition to move towards delivering a whole-of-institution response to sustainability and has committed to benchmarking its progress using the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC) Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS). The SLS enables TUS to evaluate performance under 18 priority areas across categories of Leadership & Governance, Estates and Operations, Partnership and Engagement, Learning/Teaching and Research, while also mapping activities against the UN SDGs. The TUS self-evaluation baseline assessment, completed in 2023, provided TUS with a score of 34%, indicating that TUS is making progress on areas related to buildings/carbon (Estates & Operations) and staff engagement (Leadership and Governance). The analysis also indicates that TUS is achieving medium impact in relation to some SDGs (e.g. 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), but that there is significant potential for increased impact in areas such as SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals), 5 (Gender Equality) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). TUS will benchmark its progress under the various categories against the Higher Education organisations within the SLS database (Figure 10). The TUS Score is shown in darker colours with the average scores for HE organisations in SLS is shown in lighter shades. Each segment refers to a specific priority under key themes of Leadership/Governance, Estates and Operations, Partnership and Engagement and Learning, Teaching and Research.

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<sup>27</sup> Lozano, R. and von Haartman, R. (2018) 'Reinforcing the Holistic Perspective of Sustainability: Analysis of the Importance of Sustainability Drivers in Organizations', *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 25(4), pp. 508–522. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1475>; Sanches, F.E.F., Campos, M.L., et al. (2022) 'Proposal for sustainability action archetypes for higher education institutions', *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 23(4), pp. 915–939. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-01-2021-0026>

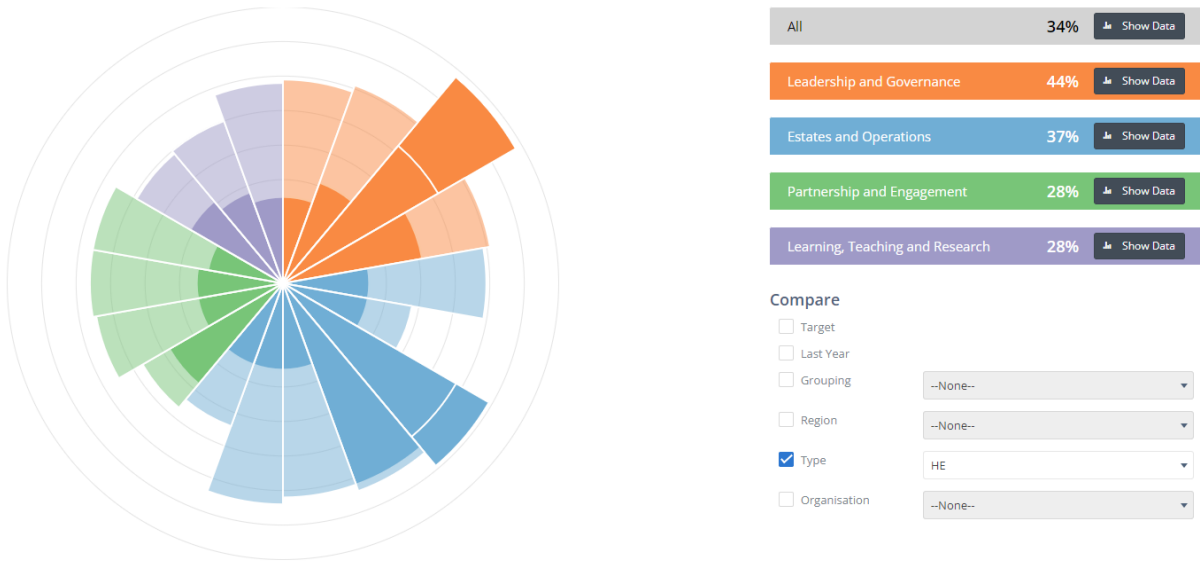


Figure 10: EUAC SLS Progress Chart – TUS 2023 Assessment

Data on energy consumption is collated and submitted to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system annually. Up until 2024, this was completed at the level of the legacy organisations (LIT and AIT). From 2024 onwards, TUS will report as a single organisation. Working in collaboration with SEAI, TUS baseline data from 2016–2018 indicates that the combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 5.227 MtCO<sub>2</sub>, with 2023 reported data showing emissions of 3.659 MtCO<sub>2</sub>. The TUS Climate Action Plan data has informed the targets for this indicator with the ambition to achieve 2.310 MtCO<sub>2</sub> by 2028 and 1.584 by 2030.

### Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 4

As the engagement and sustainability agenda are identified as whole-of-institution priorities, reporting will be directly through the Vice Presidents and Deans Council of the University. Several specific measures have been taken to align reporting within the University.

A new External Engagement Working Group of the TUS Vice Presidents and Deans Council has been established to develop a framework for TUS to map engagement activities, identify data gaps, develop systems, and propose a TUS Engagement Policy. The Working Group is Chaired by the Dean of Flexible and Work Based Learning, Director of Industry Engagement and will initially oversee monitoring and evaluation of the indicators related to Learning Gates, Work Placement and Graduate Employment. A new Learning Gate Engagement Manager is being appointed within TUS, reporting to the Dean of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning (CPODL). They will be responsible for building the strategic partnerships with Connected Hubs and reporting on progress against targets. The TUS Careers and Employability (CandE) service, previously established in TUS Midwest, is being expanded across TUS, with new staff being appointed in Q3 2024 on the Athlone campus. The CandE Manager will report to the Dean of Flexible and Work Based Learning and will manage and monitor progress against integration of work placement into Level 8 programmes. CandE will, working with Faculties,

Departments and Programme teams, engage with regional employers to deliver on regional graduate employment targets. The new TUS Alumni Office and Alumni Coordinator will drive the growth in Alumni membership. The Vice President of International will have responsibility for the Alumni Office and report on progress against the indicator to the Vice Presidents and Deans Council.

A New University Sustainability Committee (USC) was established in Q2 2024. This will report to a sub-committee of Governing Body and inform the TUS Vice Presidents and Deans Council. Relevant sub-committees of the USC will be established, aligned to the SLS Categories of Teaching, Learning and Research, Operations and Engagement. The USC will be chaired by the TUS President. The USC will develop a new University Sustainability Strategy. Under the new organisational structure, there are plans to establish a new Director of Sustainability to lead the sustainability agenda across the organisation. A Sustainability Coordinator has been appointed and they will collate data required to complete SLS analysis. TUS Energy Performance Officers (EPOs), reporting to the Vice President of Campus Services & Capital Development as members of the USC, will monitor and report on progress against TUS energy and carbon emissions targets.

There are several risks which TUS must manage in relation to this performance objective. Data and information on engagement with employers is dispersed throughout the organisation (across staff, Departments, Faculties, CandE, Research etc). To maximise engagement with employers and ensure TUS can deliver on its work placement and employment targets, new systems and solutions to manage these relationships will have to be put in place. While TUS has significant expertise and knowledge on sustainability across the organisation, it is currently siloed within research, estates, and some faculties. The University now plans to grasp the opportunity to expand this expertise while also coordinating efforts and maximising impact. It is beneficial that this expertise is located across the seven TUS campuses, but specific efforts will be required to coordinate and deliver on this agenda. There are also significant risks associated with the financial investments required to deliver on the challenging decarbonisation agenda and enabling and supporting staff and students to build their competencies and knowledge in relation to sustainability.

## Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 4

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
4.1	<b>Number of TUS Network of Learning Gates</b>	TUS Learning Gate Audit System	Quantitative	2023: 50	No benchmark available	<b>65</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b> <b>90% increase</b>
4.2.	<b>Number of TUS Alumni registered members</b>	TUS Alumni Database and other Published TU Alumni databases	Quantitative	2023/24: 4,724	Exceed TU Average based on other Published TU Alumni databases	<b>4,974</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>5,474</b>	<b>5,724</b>	<b>5,724</b> <b>21% increase</b>
4.3	<b>Proportion (%) of graduates in full-time employment in TUS Region</b>	HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey	Quantitative	2022 Graduate Outcome data: 58.8%	Exceed TU Average	<b>59.3%</b>	<b>59.8%</b>	<b>60.3%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>	<b>60.8%</b> <b>2 p.p. increase</b>
4.4	<b>Proportion (%) of programmes (full-time Level 8) with a work placement associated</b>	Banner, HEA SRS	Quantitative	2023/24: 93% Total no of programmes = 97	Exceed TU Average	<b>95%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(7 p.p. increase)</b>

No.	Indicator	Data source	Data type	Baseline	Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Cumulative target
4.5	<b>Proportion (%) reduction in greenhouse gas emissions MTCO2 (from 2016-2018 baseline)</b>	SEAI Monitoring & Reporting (M&R) System	Quantitative	5.227 MTCO2 SEAI M&R Baseline (as calculated on Calendar Year average for 2016-2018)	Maintain current progress benchmarked against similar multi-campus TUs	<b>3.659 in 2024</b> <b>30% reduction</b>	<b>3.165 in 2025</b> <b>39% reduction</b>	<b>3.058 in 2026</b> <b>41% reduction</b>	<b>2.836 in 2027</b> <b>46% reduction</b>	<b>Progress towards CAP target 51% reduction by 2030</b>
4.6	<b>Percentage (%) score on Sustainability Leadership Score Card (or alternative)</b>	EUAC SLS	Quantitative	2023: 34%	Exceed TU (or equivalent) average	<b>40%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b> <b>36 p.p. increase</b>

## Section 3: Matrix and Signatures

### Framework Matrix

Transversal areas of impact	Pillars				
		Teaching & Learning	Research & Innovation	Access & Participation	Engagement
	Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning	PO 1		PO 3	
	Climate & Sustainable Development				PO 4
	Student Success	PO 1		PO 3	
	Enterprise		PO 2		PO 4
	Society		PO 2	PO 3	
	Region		PO 2		PO 4
	International	PO 1		PO 3	
	Digital Transformation				
	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging	PO 1		PO 3	
	Institutional Leadership & Culture	PO 1		PO 3	PO 4
Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion	PO 1			PO 4	

## Signatures

### On behalf of the Technological University of the Shannon



**Professor Vincent Cunnane**  
**President**

Tuesday, 19 November 2024



**Josephine Feehily**  
**Chair of the Governing Body**

Tuesday, 19 November 2024

### On behalf of the Higher Education Authority



**Dr Alan Wall**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Tuesday, 19 November 2024

## Appendix 1:

The national, European, and regional strategies that informed the objectives of this Performance Agreement include those outlined in Figure 11–14, below.

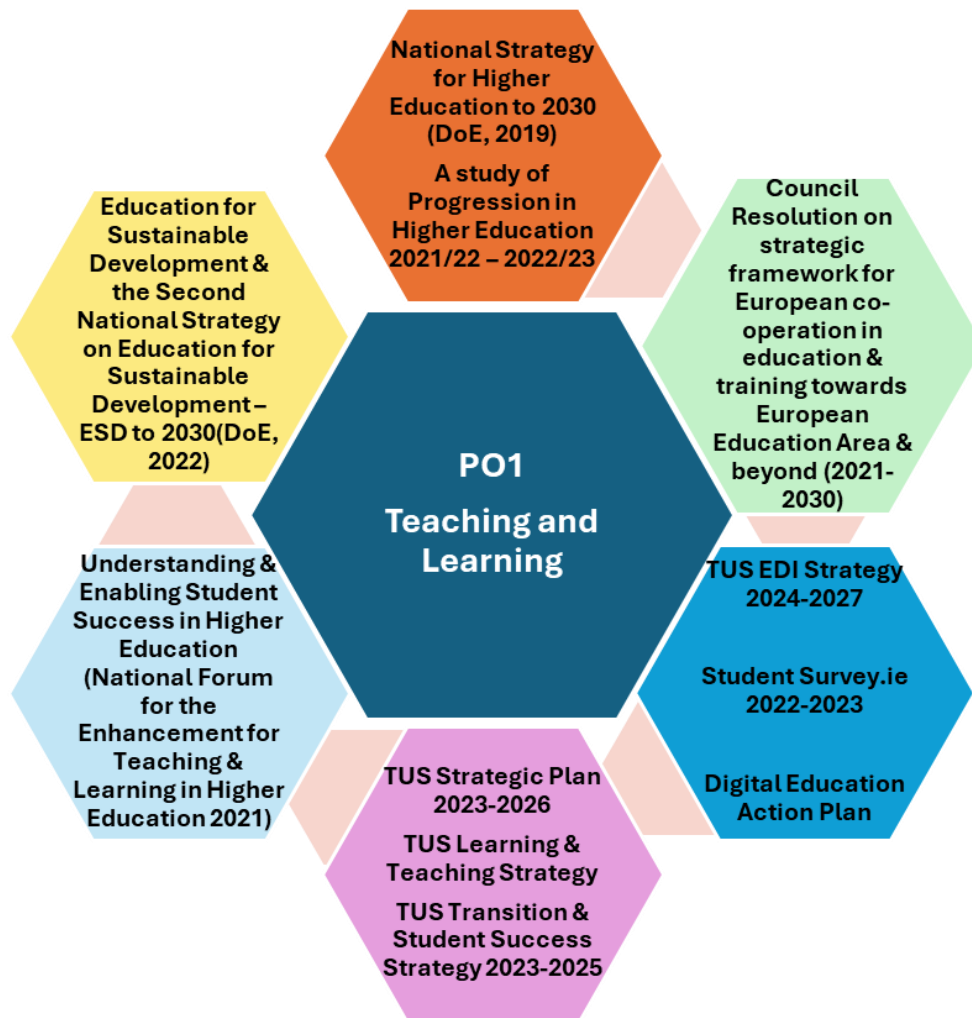


Figure 11. TUS Performance Objective 1, Teaching and Learning – informed by and responding to key national, European and regional Strategies



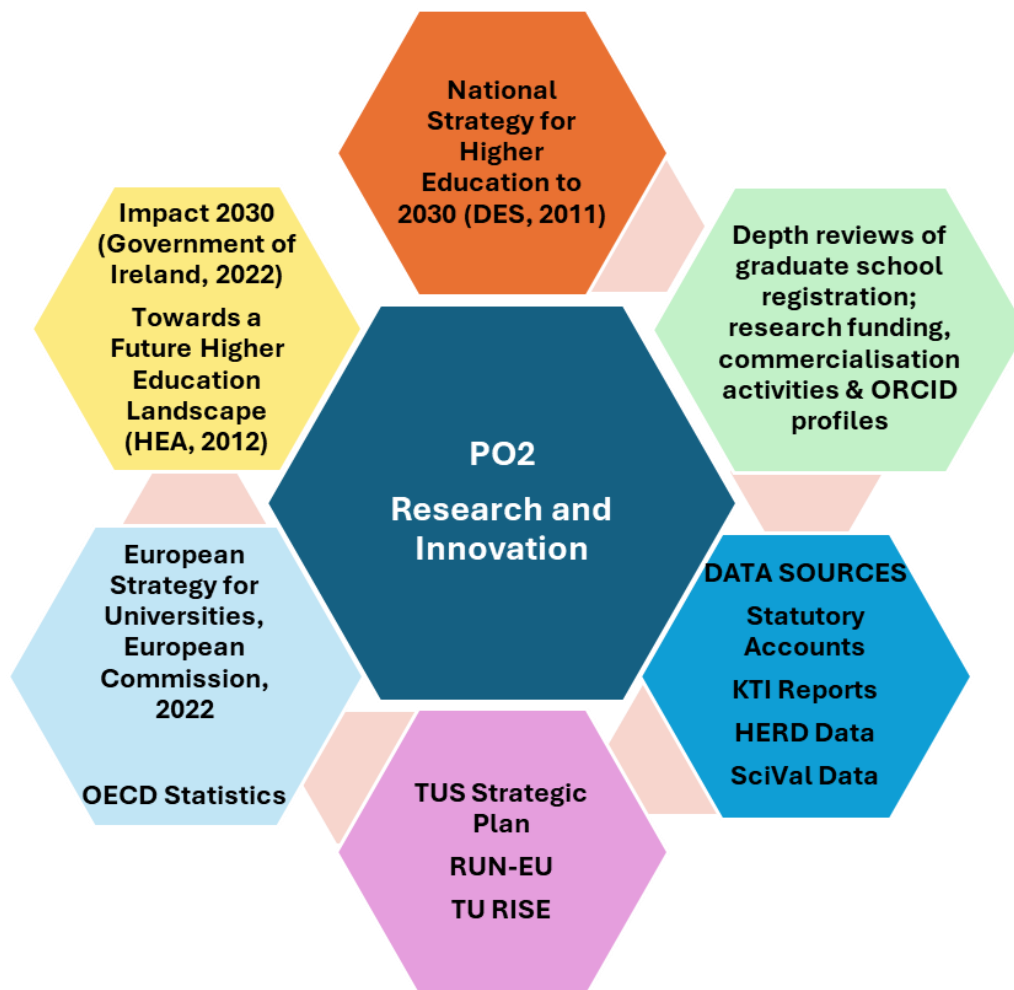


Figure 12. TUS Performance Objective 2, Research and Innovation – informed by and responding to key national, European and regional strategies



Figure 13. TUS Performance Objective 3, Access and Widening Participation – informed by and responding to key national, European and regional strategies

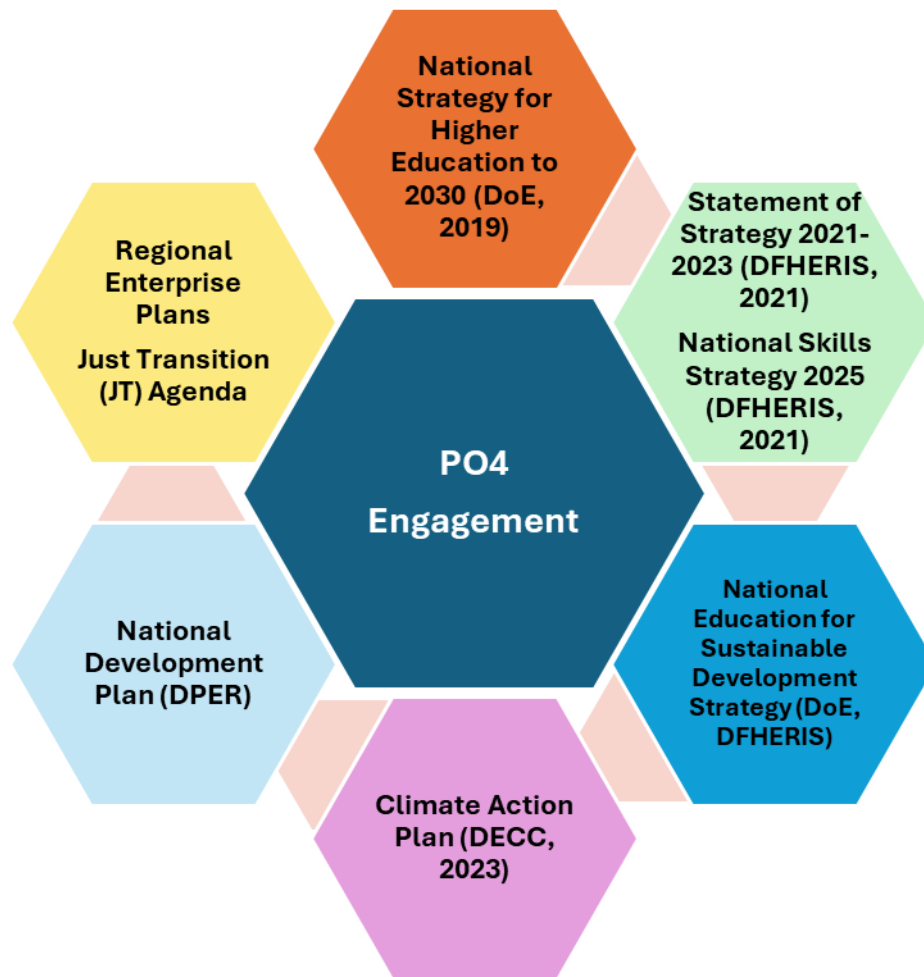


Figure 14. TUS Performance Objective 4, Engagement – informed by and responding to key national, European and regional strategies

## Appendix 2:

### **Addendum of information related to respective indicators included for Performance Objective 1: Teaching and Learning.**

#### ***1.1 Apprentice Enrolments: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting***

TUS has also appointed dedicated Consortium-Led Apprenticeship (CLA) programme managers and programme administrators to co-ordinate and manage apprenticeship programmes including enrolments. Additionally, TUS student supports are being reviewed, through a strategic review process, to accommodate the projected apprentice enrolments rates so that these students benefit from these comprehensive support systems.

TUS is working with the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) on the development of new apprenticeship programmes.

#### ***1.2 Part-Time and Flexible Enrolment: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting***

Both flexible learning faculties employ expert industry liaison and administrative staff to manage programme provisions and funding streams. Training and capacity-building initiatives will be provided to adapt to new funding streams. Programme delivery will be managed by adjusting full-time and part-time (HPAL) academic staff resources based on demand. This approach ensures TUS remains responsive to emerging needs and continues to provide valuable learning opportunities for part-time and flexible learners.

#### ***1.3 International (non-EU) Enrolments: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting***

The actions to deliver on the performance indicator for international enrolments (non-EU), and associated targets, include:

- Strategic marketing campaigns in selected markets.
- The appointment of staff resources to support enrolled learners, their student experience, and their bespoke needs.
- The opening of new representative offices in designated counties.
- The maximisation of the QS 5 Star University rating, awarded to TUS in 2024, to publicise the exceptional performance and quality standards TUS has been rated on, specifically its maximum rating scores for: (i) teaching, (ii) graduate employability, (iii) inclusiveness, (iv) online learning, (v) programme strength, (vi) social responsibility, and (vii) innovation.

#### ***1.4 & 1.5 Non-Progression and Completion Rates: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting***

A key action to address non-progression is the "TUS Second Shot" project, which aims to enhance student success in the autumn repeat examinations. This project, which saw improved exam performance in 2022/2023, involves both University-level activities and localised actions at departmental and faculty levels. Central to the project is the use of data, with a TUS Second Shot Dashboard created to provide current statistics on student performance, extracted from the Student Record System. Additionally, the N-TUTORR “A Focus on Retention” workshop series has been implemented across TUS, reaching six full academic departments and additional staff from five other departments by June 2024. These workshops focus on the curriculum's role in improving student retention. Collaboration with academic departments facing local challenges has led to various programme-level or departmental-level projects.

**1.6 Staff Enrolments in accredited learning opportunities to enhance their pedagogical practices: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting**

Targeted actions that will influence the achievement of this performance indicator include:

- Commitment to funding staff enrolment on accredited learning activities.
- Participation by staff on non-accredited CPD activities related to pedagogical practices: this is a TUS target in the TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy: Putting Learning First (2022–2025). 751 staff were enrolled in such activities in the baseline 2022/23 academic year, with a projection of 3,300 staff having done so in the period 2024–2028.
- Promotion of leadership in the sector by making Learning and Teaching resources available through Open Education Resources (OER) formats on the TUS research repository each year: 89 OER publications were published in the baseline 2022/23 year, with a projection of 520 publications in the period 2024–2028.
- Increase the number of SATLE projects/fellowships: this is a TUS target in the TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy: Putting Learning First (2022–2025). 20 projects were completed in the baseline 2022/23 academic year, with a projection of 80 projects to be completed in the period 2024–2028.

**1.7 & 1.8 Teaching and Learning Indices from Student Survey: Implementation, Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting**

This will be achieved by the following specific actions:

*Building Capacity*

- (i) Develop and disseminate a *TUS Guide for Students to Support Collaborative Learning and Effective Participation in Teamwork*
- (ii) Incorporate an emphasis on effective practices relating to the indices into the delivery of accredited CPD offerings in TUS

- (iii) Explore further opportunities for students to participate in committees, working groups and quality assurance fora such as programme boards/programme validation panels
- (iv) Develop a pathway for recognition of student participation in quality assurance fora by way of a digital Badge/Micro-credentials
- (v) Continue to promote career opportunities through annual careers fairs

*Student Survey Participation and Utilisation*

- (i) Continue to promote the high TUS student participation rates in the survey
- (ii) Analyse survey results at Institutional and Department levels and disseminate findings to Governance and Management fora, TUS staff and TUS students to support University wide as well as local reflection and enhancements:
  - disseminate findings for consideration at (i) Academic Council sub-committees, (ii) Academic Council, and (iii) Vice Presidents and Deans Council
  - disseminate findings at Departmental level for consideration at Department and Programme Boards
  - complement the quantitative data with a bespoke analysis of the rich Qualitative data of the ISSE survey, with a focus on gaining insights on (i) effective practices and (ii) areas for improvement and development relating to Collaborative Learning and Student–Faculty interaction.



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