



l-r Chris Skidmore MP with Northumbria University Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Andrew Wathey CBE

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Northumbria welcomes Minister of State

In a tour of North East universities, Chris Skidmore MP visited Northumbria University and saw a variety of research projects relating to energy, climate, smart materials and bioengineering being undertaken there, and talked with staff about universities contributing to economic growth in the region and the productivity challenge.

The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation saw some of the University's world-class facilities for research, learning and teaching, including its £6 million new architecture studios and £7 million Computer and Information Sciences building, both of which opened in the

last academic year. He also heard how Northumbria puts more graduates into professional and managerial jobs in the North East of England than any other university - and more than the Russell Group of universities combined.

The Minister spent time with academics and students undertaking ground-breaking research in areas of global significance, including those working in cold and palaeo-environments to understand how climate change is affecting the Antarctic ice sheets, and the world's-first use of biotechnologies in the built environment. He heard how Northumbria was recently named as the lead partner working with Newcastle and Durham Universities to open an £11 million national Centre for Doctoral Training in renewable energies, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The Minister also saw how the University was taking a leading role in creating a £40 million International Centre for Connected Construction based in Newcastle, and he met academics carrying out world-class research into the experience of volunteers working in international conflict zones.

During his visit, the Minister also heard how Northumbria is supporting a new generation of graduate entrepreneurs and innovators through assistance in start-ups and new business launches, and with a new incubator hub offering well-equipped and affordable premises for fledgling ventures. Northumbria has been ranked 1st in the UK for graduate start-ups based on turnover for the past three years, and these new businesses are helping to grow the regional economy and boost productivity.

Commenting on his visit, Chris Skidmore MP, said: "I was hugely impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff and students I met at Northumbria University - especially around the graduate start-up firms which can help the local economy. The university's research in renewable energy and Antarctic climate science is outstanding and will contribute to UK's status as a global science superpower."

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: "Universities are essential partners in the delivery of the Government's wider industrial strategy for economic growth and bridging the skills and productivity gap in the UK. We were delighted to welcome the Minister of State to the Northumbria campus, and to showcase a small sample of our world-class research."

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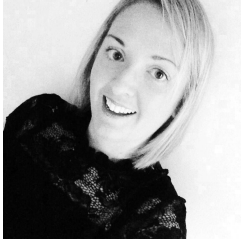


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