



The Quayside in Newcastle

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The Power of Five

How the North East's universities are working together to help drive forward the Levelling Up agenda and grow the region's economy.

Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside universities have today (Friday 3rd Feb) launched a [joint report](#) highlighting the regional impact made by universities across the North East.

The **Innovating Together – Universities in the North East (InTUNE)** report showcases the contribution of the five universities to the innovation and

business growth agenda in the region, and their potential role in delivering activities which contribute to the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

This includes support for businesses and the creative industries, R&D collaborations, and workforce training in key sectors.

As key anchor institutions and major employers – between them they support more than 34,000 jobs and contribute £2.2bn annually to the North East economy – they play a huge role in the health, wellbeing and resilience of communities across the region.

With the launch of the report at the Transforming Tomorrow Together

Roundtable, hosted by CEO of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Dame Ottoline Leyser, the aim is to explore the potential for further collaboration for the benefit of the region and local people.

Professor Jane Robinson, Newcastle University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Place, said:

“The North East's five universities have a long history of generating economic, social and cultural benefits for their local areas.

“Increasingly we are working together to deliver even greater regional impact, developing the talent and skilled workforce of the future and leading the research and innovation to address the impacts of a changing global climate and improving the health and wellbeing of local people.

“Together with our partners in the public and private sectors, working with local communities, we are adding real value, positioning us to help deliver on the promises of the Levelling Up agenda and build a more resilient society and economy in the North East.”

Professor Colin Bain, Durham University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) said:

“This report demonstrates our successful track record of working together on key economic development and innovation initiatives. Thanks to our complementary institutional strengths we have created opportunities that would have not been possible without working together.

Our strong ethos of collaboration is central to the ambitious work we seek to do together in the future. Universities are key partners in economic growth, underpinning place-making in our cities, towns and communities and by working together we continue to make a positive difference in the region.”

Dan Monnery, Chief Strategy Officer at Northumbria University, said: “We are proud to partner with our fellow northeast universities, working together as anchor institutions to help drive forward the levelling up agenda and grow the region’s economy.

“As a research-intensive university we embed quality research at the centre of everything we do, enabling us to meet the world’s changing needs and make a positive difference. This is significant for the region, not only for local students who wish to benefit from a research-informed education, but also for regional businesses who can access impactful research and innovative partnership opportunities.

“With well over half of our students coming from the local area and 63% of our graduates staying in the region for employment, we’re also helping to create the conditions that retain a skilled and talented workforce that is vital for the region’s pipeline of activity. All this, combined with Northumbria’s sustained mission to drive social mobility, will ensure we continue to unlock opportunities for students with potential and ability, irrespective of background.”

Professor Michael Young, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Sunderland, says: “This report comes at an exciting time for Sunderland with major investments underway in the city and our University.

“Through applied research and collaborative working with industry, the public sector and our regional university partners, we are committed to making a positive impact on our city and region.

“The combined strength of our five universities will continue to drive economic growth, provide social and cultural benefits and help to improve health and wellbeing across the North East.”

Professor Stephen Cummings, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at Teesside University, said: “At Teesside University, transforming lives and

economies through industry-focussed research and innovation is central to our ambitions.

“Therefore, we are delighted that our collaborative work with North East partner institutions is delivering such impact; helping to create jobs and opportunities and addressing the economic and societal challenges faced in our region and beyond.

“Working together with our industry and academic partners, we are ensuring the North East is a global leader in sectors which are vital to innovation and economic growth in today’s society, such as Net Zero, digital technology and the biosciences.

“We look forward to further developing this work, enabling this region to continue to benefit from progress and meet the challenges of the 21st century.”

Working together

Over the past seven years, 465 projects involving two or more of the five universities have **been delivered with a research value of £243M.**

In 2020/21, the five universities collectively supported over 700 graduate start-ups and 59 spin outs, with almost 80% of these being based in the North East and benefitting the local economy.

The report focuses on nine joint innovation projects which target some of the region’s priority sectors and were set up to stimulate innovation, support business growth, and improve productivity. To date:

- Eight of the nine are forecast to contribute £33.3m and support 1,524 SMEs, generate an increase in employment of 662 FTE jobs, and help SMEs bring 768 new products/processes to either the market or the firm. To date, these eight projects have created 500 net new jobs and £23m GVA (net), with more jobs and GVA expected to be created in the future, as a result of the investment.
- The ninth project, Northern Accelerator has been a game changer for commercialisation in North East England, significantly

increasing the average number of spin-outs from 1.8 per annum pre-project, to an average of more than 8 per annum

Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser, UKRI Chief Executive, said: "This report demonstrates very clearly how collaboration between diverse regional partners can fuel innovation with real impact. UKRI is committed to working with our partners in the North East to shape a dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system that creates high quality jobs and public services, benefitting the whole region."

Case Studies:

Arrow

Arrow provides innovation support for North East SMEs to develop the capacity and ability to innovate, with a focus on developing new products/processes. Over the last four years, Arrow has helped more than 150 regional SMEs innovate by connecting them with expertise from across Newcastle University, strengthening the local economy along the way. Following the initial programme's success, which is forecast to generate 116.5 FTE new jobs by 2028, plans are underway to extend Arrow to other regional universities; Arrow 2.0 is being developed by Newcastle University in collaboration with Durham, Northumbria & Sunderland Universities.

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/business-and-partnerships/expert-solutions/arrow/>

Northern Accelerator

Northern Accelerator is an innovative collaboration between Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside and York Universities. Funded by Research England's Connecting Capability Fund, the programme has transformed the commercialisation of research in the North East, making a significant contribution to the region's economy and creating a great return on investment.

Northern Accelerator delivers a targeted approach to build on areas of research strength and address key areas that were constraining economic activity in the North East. An integrated model provides end-to-end support

through the commercialisation journey, from awareness raising and capacity building, through to seed investment funding.

Today the Northern Accelerator universities are part of a thriving innovation ecosystem, with many spin-out businesses based in innovation clusters in the Newcastle Helix and County Durham's NETPark, accessing new funding routes and support networks generated directly and indirectly through Northern Accelerator activity.

<https://northernaccelerator.org/>

Intensive Industrial Innovation Programme (IIIP), a collaboration between Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Teesside universities to support PhD students become embedded in regional SMEs. Successful SMEs are supported by a dedicated PhD research student for three years, as well as gaining access to senior academic researchers and university research facilities. The project is targeted at supporting businesses in (or hoping to access) the priority sectors identified in the economic plans of the North East and Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership. The ultimate aim of the IIIP is to encourage a culture of innovation that benefits business, leading to greater export opportunities and increased graduate employment, particularly in science and engineering.

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/helping-business/intensive-industrial-innovation-programme/>

Creative Fuse

A unique partnership between the five universities which has supported small businesses in the creative, cultural and digital sectors, helping boost innovation, create jobs, and attract additional funding.

<https://www.creativefusene.org.uk/>

Insights North East

A partnership between the NHS, North of Tyne Combined Authority, Newcastle City Council, and the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria, which aims to improve the links between research and policy.

Northumbria is a research-intensive modern university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk --- Please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

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