



NUI Galway  
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# NUI Galway Institutional Profile



National University of Ireland Galway  
Institutional Profile

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Prepared by NUI Galway  
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by QQI



**QQI**

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Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



## Overview and Background

Founded by royal charter in 1845, Queen's College Galway opened its doors four years later with just 68 students. From its location on the edge of Galway city, the University began a distinguished tradition of teaching and research that endures today. 170 years later, our name has changed, and the city has spread out around our campus, but NUI Galway shares the same ambition as its founders. We continue to serve the educational, societal and economic needs of our region with pride.

Since 1908, our University has been a constituent of the National University of Ireland (NUI). We are a member of the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the European University Association (EUA) and the Coimbra Group of universities. The work of NUI Galway is governed by the Universities Act, 1997 and is guided by a strategic plan, published by the University every five years. You can find *Vision 2020*, the University's Strategic Plan 2015-2020, online at: [www.nuigalway.ie/vision2020](http://www.nuigalway.ie/vision2020)

NUI Galway is the oldest and largest university in the West of Ireland, and an engine for innovation and growth in our city and region. Over 18,000 students from 110 different countries study in the University. Our outlook is global, and we reach out to the world through a network of international partnerships, collaborations and over 90,000 alumni.

### *Our Campus*

The main NUI Galway campus is located in the heart of Galway city, and covers 104 hectares that extends along the River Corrib. It includes a mix of architectural styles, which reflects the evolution of the campus over 170 years. Some older buildings – such as the Quadrangle and Arts/Science Building – are protected structures, and many of the most recently constructed buildings have won awards for their architecture. Both the Alice Perry Engineering Building (2012) and the O'Donoghue Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance (2017) were voted Ireland's favourite building by a Public Choice vote in the RIAI Irish Architecture Awards. Beyond Galway city, NUI Galway serves our region through a network of medical academies, Gaeltacht centres and teaching and research locations stretching from Letterkenny, Co. Donegal in the north to Shannon, Co. Clare in the south (see Our Regional Reach below).

### *Our Research*

The University has prioritised five cross-disciplinary research themes, building on international success to date. Our research community, including 1,067 academic staff and 650 post-doctoral researchers, is focused on delivering impact in Applied Social Sciences and Public Policy; Biomedical Science and Engineering; Environment, Marine and Energy; Humanities in Context; and Informatics, Physical and Computational Sciences. Internationally recognised research institutes, such as the CÚRAM Centre for Medical Devices, the Insight Centre for Data Analytics, and the Ryan

Institute for marine, energy and environmental research, are having a transformative impact on some of the world's most pressing challenges.

### *Our Reputation*

The quality of our staff and students is recognised through the University's rise in the most competitive international rankings in recent years. NUI Galway is ranked 260<sup>th</sup> in the world according to the QS World University Rankings, while the *Times Higher Education* (THE) World University Rankings positions us in the Top 250, which represents the Top 1% of universities worldwide. In 2018, NUI Galway was named *The Sunday Times* University of the Year.



## Educational Awards and Programme Information

The University offers over 60 undergraduate taught programmes at Level 8 and over 100 postgraduate taught programmes at Level 9 and 10. In addition, there is a range of part-time programmes at 7 Certificate and Diploma levels, as well as a comprehensive suite of research Masters and PhD programmes available in each of the University's four Colleges and 17 Schools. Table 1 illustrates the number of students attending the University over the last five academic years and the number of graduates each year.

**Table 1:** Student Profile

Students	2012/2013	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Undergraduate	13,935	13,713	13,905	14,379	14,070
Postgraduate	3,548	3,569	3,637	3,833	3,995
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,483</b>	<b>17,282</b>	<b>17,542</b>	<b>18,212</b>	<b>18,065</b>
Part-time	2,784	2,610	2,815	2,898	2,827
International	2,749	2,994	3,233	3,685	3,116
Graduates	5,656	5,798	5,248	5,693	5,706



## Staff Profile

The University is Galway's second largest employer, with over 2,600 staff in total. Approximately 2,000 staff deliver and support our academic mission, offering the very best in research-led education across a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate level programmes. Table 2 illustrates the staff numbers at the University over the last five academic years.

**Table 2:** Staff Profile

Staff	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Academic Staff	1,076	1,051	1,041	1,068	1,067
Research Staff	490	489	539	601	650
Support Staff	995	918	926	948	949
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>2,506</b>	<b>2,617</b>	<b>2,666</b>



## Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan

NUI Galway's mission is to foster a vibrant community of students and staff, where distinguished learning, impactful research, and creative thinking are shared with the world. In delivering this mission, the University's activities are underpinned by five core values:

- **Ambition** – we share a drive for excellence and leadership, working to a common purpose with confidence in our mission
- **Creativity** – inspired by our unique location, a distinctive spirit of creativity imbues everything we do
- **Impact** – our engagement and actions make a meaningful difference in Galway, across the country, and around the world

- **Collaboration** – strong, mutually-beneficial partnerships are at the heart of our approach, as we engage locally and internationally
- **Integrity** – building on our rich heritage, we value openness, diversity and good citizenship

## Key Challenges

NUI Galway operates within a higher education landscape that is constantly evolving. As the University continues to adapt and enhance our activities in line with strategic objectives, we do so mindful of a number of challenges and changes facing higher education in Ireland and internationally.

### *Financial Crisis*

The economic downturn that occurred in Ireland following the 2008 financial crisis – and specifically, the collapse in Government finances – led to major cutbacks in the funding of higher education in Ireland. The negative impact of the financial crisis has been most pronounced in four key areas:

- Significant reduction in the amount of direct State funding to universities
- Direct reduction in public sector pay for University staff
- Private funding and philanthropy for University activities have become more difficult to source
- Greater pressure on students and their families to fund higher education

Between 2008 and 2017, the direct State grant to NUI Galway more than halved, falling from €70.3m to €31.5m. The proportion of NUI Galway students receiving State grants is the second highest among Ireland's universities, with over 51% of students receiving grants in 2016/17.

### *Funding Landscape*

While there are indications of some recovery in State investment in higher education, the University must continue to diversify its income to secure its financial stability and to fulfil its ambition. It is vital that the University has the ability and flexibility:

- to compete for research funding through EU and other non-exchequer programmes
- to work with business and industry to encourage investment in research activities
- to harness philanthropic support through Galway University Foundation
- to commercialise our research outputs
- to recruit and retain excellent academic and research staff

### *Higher Education Landscape*

In 2012, the Department for Education and Skills initiated a new policy for the promotion of regional clusters of higher education institutions in a document entitled 'Towards a Higher Education Landscape'. NUI Galway has been working towards the establishment of a regional cluster in the West of Ireland, specifically through the incorporation of the Shannon College of Hotel Management and St Angela's College, Sligo into the University. Despite the challenges of managing the incorporation process and integrating shared services and offerings, the University has made significant progress in recent years. Shannon College of Hotel Management became a constituent college of NUI Galway in 2015. Work is ongoing on the full incorporation of St Angela's College, Sligo.

### *Compact Agreements*

The Compact Agreements initiated by the Higher Education Authority have set specific targets for each institution in areas such as access for disadvantaged groups, drop-out rates, the quality of teaching and learning, and research, innovation and internationalisation. Up to 10% of HEA funding can be withheld if these targets are not met, and the introduction of these compacts has increased the pressure on institutions to implement and track their progress.

NUI Galway's 'Mission-based Performance Compact' for 2014-17 focused on five particular areas of impact: a) Research; b) Teaching and Learning; c) Regional Engagement; d) An Ghaeilge; and e) International Orientation. It set out detailed targets to increase commercialisation, increase the proportion of international students, increase the number of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, increase instances of 'blended learning' through e-learning, and increase the number of doctoral graduates by about 5%. This has now been succeeded by the new 'Strategy and Performance Dialogue' for 2018-2021.

### *Changing Demographics*

While the national population continues to rise, the University has faced some demographic challenges in recent years in its traditional heartland of Galway city and county. This, coupled with the impact of the financial crisis on students' ability to travel to University, has added to the challenge of student recruitment. Between 2011 and 2016, there was a fall of 2.5% in the numbers of 17-24 year olds in Co. Galway. When other traditional regions of student recruitment – Connacht, plus Donegal and Clare – are taken into account the decrease is 6.3%. These unfavourable demographics have improved in recent years. However, they indicate the societal, as well as financial, challenges that impact university activities.

### *Gender and Equality*

The University has led a wide range of initiatives to address the challenges of equality, diversity and inclusion in the University, and in the higher education sector more broadly. The University established a Gender Equality Task Force in 2015, chaired by Professor Jane Grimson (TCD), which published its final report in 2016 outlining 24 recommendations for action. In 2016, the University appointed Professor Anne Scott as Vice-President for Equality and Diversity. Professor Scott's Office has led the implementation of these actions, and other initiatives, to address the issues of equality, diversity and inclusion across the University. NUI Galway received an Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2018.

## **Strategic Objectives**

The University's strategic objectives are outlined clearly in *Vision 2020*, NUI Galway's Strategic Plan 2015-2020, with explicit measures of success for each objective. The strategic plan is divided into four main themes: Teaching & Learning, Research & Innovation, Internationalisation, and Our Communities. The University's major goals over the coming years include:

### *Teaching & Learning*

- Work-based learning experience embedded in 80% of undergraduate programmes
- 30% of the student population on postgraduate programmes
- 20% of the student population on part-time, flexible and blended learning programmes
- 24% of the student population from traditionally under-represented groups
- Graduate attributes identified and embedded at institutional and programme levels

### *Internationalisation*

- Ranked in the Top 200 in at least one world university ranking
- 25% of the student population from outside Ireland
- Opportunities for international engagement on all programmes
- 10,000 graduates linked into online NUI Galway Global Alumni Network

### *Research & Innovation*

- €100m research funding from EU programmes
- €60m annual research funding
- In excess of 200 doctoral graduates per year
- Increase in commercialisation outputs
- Increase in citations per academic and their impact scores

### *Our Communities*

- New student facilities, including student accommodation and sports facilities
- Shannon College of Hotel Management fully incorporated into the University
- Industry and Innovation Hub established
- Gaeltacht semester/placement available to NUI Galway students
- Athena SWAN award for good employment practice for women in higher education

## **Major Developments**

The past decade has been an extraordinary period of growth for the University. Advances have been most pronounced in the University's built environment, in the establishment of medical academies across our region, in the launch of new research centres, in the expansion of our archives, and in our research community's success in European funding programmes.

### *Capital Development*

Over the past decade, NUI Galway has invested over €350m in a capital development programme that has seen 16 new buildings and facilities opened on campus. These include award-winning buildings that have greatly enhanced the University's built environment and empowered us to deliver on our ambitions for teaching and research. Highlights include:

- 2011: Alice Perry Engineering Building
- 2014: Hardiman Building; Psychology building; Biomedical Sciences building; Lifecourse building
- 2015: Lambe Institute for Translational Research & HRB Clinical Research Building
- 2017: O'Donoghue Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance; Human Biology building

### *Medical Academies*

Further capital development has seen the University open new medical academies on the grounds of three hospitals in our region. These new facilities support the training of medical students in a practical hospital setting in:

- Mayo Medical Academy, opened in Mayo University Hospital, Castlebar in 2015
- Sligo Medical Academy, opened in Sligo University Hospital in 2016
- Donegal Medical Academy, opened in Letterkenny University Hospital in 2016

### *New Research Centres*

With an extensive network of industry, community and academic collaborators around the world, NUI Galway researchers are tackling some of the most pressing issues of our time. With the support of private and public funding, most notably through Science Foundation Ireland, the University hosts internationally renowned research centres focused on our key research areas. They include:

- 2012: Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change; Ryan Institute for Marine, Energy and Environment



- 2013: Insight Centre for Data Analytics
- 2015: Institute for Lifecourse and Society
- 2016: CÚRAM Centre for Research in Medical Devices

### *Archives*

In recent years, the University's Library has welcomed a number of prestigious archives from iconic individuals and institutions. These archives are concentrated in the areas of Irish theatre, literature, politics and society, and provide invaluable insights into the development of the nation and our cultural institutions. Their preservation, cataloguing and digitisation at NUI Galway is attracting researchers from around the world, and providing opportunities for new research projects and collaborations. Some highlights in recent years include:

- Abbey Theatre, Gate Theatre and Druid Theatre archives
- Conradh na Gaeilge and Muintir na Tíre archives
- Personal Archives of: Mary Robinson, Brendan Duddy, Kevin Boyle, Éamon de Buitléar, Margaretta D'arcy & John Arden, and Michael M. O'Shaughnessy

### *European Funding Programmes*

Our research community has had sustained success in European funding in recent years, with NUI Galway projects securing €59m through Horizon 2020 and other EU funding programmes. Our researchers are involved in over 100 research projects funded by the EU. The University has one of the highest success rates in Horizon 2020 in Ireland, with 15.1% of our bids awarded funding, worth over €50m to date. Highlights from Horizon 2020 include:

- Coordinating five large health research projects worth over €4.5m
- Coordinating seven large Innovative Training Networks (ITN) valued at €5.8m
- Seven staff have received individual European Research Council (ERC) awards

The University has also secured €9m in funding from other EU sources, mainly Interreg. Some highlights include our success in the first Atlantic Area call where NUI Galway secured over €3m in funding (coordinating four projects and partnering in a further six funded projects).



The three pillars of NUI Galway's organisational structure are:

- Údarás na hOllscoile
- Academic Council
- University Management Team

Údarás na hOllscoile, the University's governing authority, is responsible for managing and controlling all of the affairs of the University.

The Academic Council is the chief academic authority and, subject to review by Údarás na hOllscoile, controls the academic affairs of the University, including the curriculum, instruction and education provided by the University.

Both Údarás and the Academic Council have a number of other key sub-committees that discuss quality improvement on various aspects of the University's processes. Key sub-committees are:

- Graduate Studies Board
- Research Committee
- Standing and Strategic Planning Committee
- Academic Council - Standing
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Colleges and School Boards
- Risk Management Committee
- Library Strategy Committee

The University Management Team is led by the President who is the Head and Chief Officer of the University and appointed for a 10-year term. Acting under the President, the various members of the University Management Team (UMT) each have a specific area of responsibility and includes the Registrar and Deputy-President, the University Secretary (Rúnaí na hOllscoile), the Bursar, the Chief Operations Officer, up to four Vice-Presidents including Vice-President for Equality and Diversity, the four College Deans, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Academic Secretary and the Director of Human Resources.

## Colleges, Schools and Centres

### College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies

- School of Education
- School of Geography and Archaeology
- School of Humanities
- School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
- School of Political Science and Sociology
- School of Psychology

### College of Business, Public Policy and Law

- J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics
- School of Law
- Shannon College of Hotel Management

### College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing and Midwifery
- School of Health Sciences

### College of Science and Engineering

- School of Chemistry
- School of Computer Science
- School of Engineering
- School of Mathematics, Statistics and Applied Mathematics
- School of Natural Sciences
- School of Physics

### Centres

- Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge
- Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development

## Research Units, Centres and Institutes

Research is also managed through over 50 research centres and units and a number of major research institutes:

- CÚRAM Centre for Medical Devices
- Insight Centre for Data Analytics
- National Centre for Biomedical Engineering Science (NCBES)
- Ryan Institute - Marine, Energy & Environment
- Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change
- Institute for Lifecourse and Society
- Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies



NUI Galway has made significant progress on institutional consolidation with Shannon College of Hotel Management, now fully integrated into NUI Galway, and through its linked provider, St Angela's College, Sligo. These colleges, in addition to NUI Galway's Medical Academies in Letterkenny, Sligo, Castlebar and Ballinasloe; our Gaeltacht centres in Gaoth Dobhair, Carna and An Cheathrú Rua; and our remote research centres in Carna and the Burren, bring to eleven the number of satellite campuses run by NUI Galway outside of Galway city. This emerging multi-site University provides for cohesion in meeting the region's needs. It draws on the unique environment, natural resources, culture and language of the West of Ireland, and addresses the reality of our dispersed student population.



## Approach to Quality

Continuous improvement to the quality of all activities across NUI Galway is the responsibility of every member of staff through their own individual efforts and through various organisational committees and units. Staff are guided in this endeavour through three key external standards:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines
- Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

In addition, staff activities are guided by a number of additional external guidelines published by Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) and other bodies.

Continuous improvement by all staff to improving quality is also guided by the University's *Vision 2020* Strategic Plan that outlines specific goals for quality and performance enhancement, as well as the agreement between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and NUI Galway in the Mission-Based Performance Compact 2014-2017 and the Strategy and Performance Dialogue 2018–2021.

NUI Galway implements external standards and guidelines through a comprehensive QA system focussed on over 250 internal Policies and Procedures, which includes internal monitoring and Quality Reviews. Quality Assurance (QA) is also implemented through a comprehensive annual Operational Planning process linked to Strategic Planning. An extensive number of statutes and organisational structures define the role, duties and responsibilities of key organisational units and committees and the responsibilities of key individual staff.

NUI Galway manages the competing needs of external regulations, internal strategic objectives and risk management through the enhancement of a responsive culture. This culture is characterised by a willingness by staff to engage with stakeholders, including learners, in a way that responds to their needs for continuous improvement to quality.



## Management of Quality Assurance

Decisions around the development and continuous improvement of our internal Policies and Procedures (P&Ps), including those related to internal monitoring and Quality Review (QR), are taken at a number of major committees and meetings. These are led by the Governing Authority (Údarás) and its principle sub-committees, which include Academic Council, the Support Services Committee representing all support services, and the University Management Team. Decisions around development and changes to the P&Ps that relate to academic activities are taken mainly by the Academic Management Team, whose Deans represent all of the University's Colleges and Schools.

Decisions around P&Ps related to internal monitoring and Quality Review are taken by the Quality & Innovation Committee, which reports to Údarás through key committees, in particular the Support Services Committee, the Academic Priorities and Resources Committee, and Academic Council. The Quality Office is responsible for executing P&Ps related to internal monitoring and QR and for supporting all units in the development of internal P&Ps.

Quality assurance and enhancement are also covered through the operational planning process where every major unit in the University – Schools, Colleges and Support Services – provides details of completed and planned enhancements to a special Institutional Operational Planning Sub Group (IOPSG) of the UMT each year. These reports reflect the work of many committees and boards across these units. Learners are represented on all major committees dealing with quality and quality assurance and liaise directly with the University through the above committees and also through the Office of the Vice-President for the Student Experience.

A sample of policies related to a comprehensive system of internal review and continuous improvement include:

- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Review of Research Performance
- QA005 External Examiners
- QA006 Review of Taught Programmes
- QA007 Operational Plans
- QA008 Taught Programme Boards
- QA009 Review of Linked Providers
- QA012 Review of Research Institutes
- QA013 Review of Services
- QA221 Feedback on Programmes and Modules
- QA244 Accredited Programmes
- QA246 Collaborative Partnerships



## Collaborations and Partnerships

### Collaborative Partnerships

The University collaborates with a number of universities in Ireland and abroad on partnership agreements for the development and awarding of degree programmes. These collaborative partnerships include joint, double and multiple degree awards as well as student exchanges, for example through ERASMUS. Our partner universities include University of Limerick; Queens University, Belfast; Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy, UK; Burren College of Art and Design, Co Clare; Jiangnan University, China; Regis University USA; and McMaster University, Canada, among others. NUI Galway currently has one Linked Provider whose QA policies and procedures are approved and periodically reviewed: St. Angela's College, Sligo.

### Professional Bodies

The University collaborates with a number of professional bodies on the development and accreditation of taught programmes. There are currently over 60 professionally accredited programmes at NUI Galway from organisations such as: Teaching Council of Ireland; Psychological Society Ireland; International Union for Health Promotion and Education; Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland; International Engineering Alliance; Honourable Society of Kings Inns; Irish Medical Council; and the Irish Taxation Institute, among others.

### National Bodies

NUI Galway's policy is to engage widely with all of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include learners, schools, other colleges and universities, research funding agencies, the general public, industry, national and local government, and many more. Key stakeholders in the context of quality assurance include:

- Irish Universities Association (IUA)
- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- European Universities Association (EUA)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- North-West Cluster (GMIT, LYIT, IT Sligo)
- Research Funding Bodies (SFI, HRB, etc.)