

Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Annual Report

1 APRIL 2022 –
31 AUGUST 2023



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1. Foreward

1.1 Introduction from the Chair of Atlantic Technological University

I am honored to introduce the first annual report of Atlantic Technological University (ATU), covering the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2023. This report marks a significant milestone as ATU was established following the merger of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology, Sligo, and Letterkenny Institute of Technology under the Technological Universities Act 2018.

ATU is uniquely positioned to make a lasting impact on the communities we serve. Our establishment marks the beginning of a new era for the West and Northwest of Ireland, where our university will act as a catalyst for economic growth, social cohesion, and cultural enrichment.

The first meeting of the ATU Governing Body on 1 April 2022 laid the foundation for our strategic direction, with a strong focus on ensuring that our governance structures are aligned with our mission to serve and uplift our region.

These efforts are not just about building a university; they are about creating an institution that responds to the needs of our region, fostering opportunities for students, businesses, and communities alike.

As we reflect on our achievements, we look forward to continuing to build ATU as a hub of innovation and collaboration.

Sincerely,



Maura McNally S.C.
Chairperson
Atlantic Technological University Governing Body



1.2 Welcome from the President of Atlantic Technological University

I am delighted to welcome you to the first annual report of Atlantic Technological University (ATU), covering the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2023. This report chronicles an extraordinary time in our university's history as we embarked on a transformative journey, officially launching ATU on 1 April 2022. This new beginning unites the strengths of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology, Sligo, and Letterkenny Institute of Technology under a shared vision for the future.

Our first year has been defined by a blend of integration, innovation, and community building. As a new technological university, we are committed to advancing academic excellence, supporting cutting-edge research, and fostering meaningful collaborations with industry, local communities, and international partners. These commitments are reflected in our growing portfolio of over 350 flexible, accessible courses designed to meet the evolving needs of our students and the wider marketplace.

The establishment of ATU is not just about merging institutions but about creating a dynamic environment that nurtures creativity, inclusivity, and resilience. Our work over the past year has laid the foundation for a university that not only meets the needs of today's learners but also anticipates the demands of tomorrow's world.

As we look to the future, I am confident that ATU will continue to thrive as a leader in higher education, both in Ireland and on the global stage. I am grateful to our dedicated staff, students, and partners for their unwavering support and commitment to our shared mission.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey. Together, we are shaping a bright future for ATU and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



Dr Orla Flynn
President, Atlantic Technological University



2. Governing Body and Governance

At midnight on 31 March, 2022, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology, Sligo, and Letterkenny Institute of Technology were dissolved, and Atlantic Technological University was established under the terms of the Technological Universities Act 2018, through SI 56 of 2022. The first meeting of the Governing Body took place on 1 April, 2022. From then until 31 August, 2023, seventeen meetings of the Governing Body have been held.

At their first meeting, the Governing Body approved the powers delegated to the President - with the exception of the reserved functions of the Governing Body. Functions approved by the Governing Body for the President included Financial and Budgetary, Academic Council, Strategic Development, Human Resources and related matters, Code of Governance and other Statutory Obligations.

Maura McNally S.C. was appointed by the Minister as the first Chairperson of ATU's Governing Body for its first term 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. Ministerial appointees, Oonagh Monahan and Felim McNeela were also appointed, with Anne McHugh appointed to represent the education and training boards. Staff appointments have been made to the Governing Body following staff elections in May 2022. Student nominations were received from the Student Union and members appointed to the Governing Body. The Governing Body has established its Audit and Risk Committee, Finance Subcommittee, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee, Strategic Development Subcommittee, Appeals Committee and External Nominations Committee. The External Nominations Committee reviewed applications for external members of the Governing Body and recommendations were made to the Governing Body for approval in August 2022.

Jim Fennelly, Secretary to the Governing Body leads the Governance Team and is supported by Michael Henehan, Secretary to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Governance Team of Frances Wilson, Carol Geraghty and Paula Corless.

The Governance Team commenced meetings while working as legacy Institutes to plan for the first and subsequent meetings of the Governing Body. All members of the team have moved into university-wide roles since 1 April 2022 and have met collectively on a regular basis to plan and prepare for Governing Body, Committee and Subcommittee meetings. This involves preparing agendas and supporting papers.

The Governing Body adopted its Interim Code of Governance in June 2022. Since then, governance policies have been developed in the areas of Conflicts of Interest, Anti-Fraud & Corruptions, Capital Development Reserves, Protected Disclosure and Sponsorship.

The Governance Team with assistance from IT Services and the Quality, Assurance and Engagement Team (QAET) have developed an ATU wide Policies and Procedures SharePoint page for publication and dissemination of ATU wide documentation approved by the Governing Body and University Planning team.

The Chief Risk Officer, Michael Henehan has developed a Risk Management Policy, Corporate Risk Register for the University and Risk Appetite Statement. An Internal Control Framework has been prepared for the University and Internal Audit Plan established with internal audits carried out by internal auditors from Deloitte.

Since then, governance policies have been developed in the areas of Conflicts of Interest, Anti-Fraud & Corruptions, Capital Development Reserves, Protected Disclosure and Sponsorship.

The Governance Team has managed elections for staff membership on the Governing Body and elections for the Academic Council membership during the reporting period.

During 2023, the Governing Team worked on the implementation of the Higher Education Act (HEA) 2022 and developed the Regulations for Selection, Elections, Nomination and Appointment of Members to the Governing Body.

3. President's Office

3.1 Communications:

During the period spanning from April 2022 to August 2023, the Communications Office underwent a significant restructuring phase aimed at centralising efforts within the newly formed Atlantic Technological University (ATU). Aidan Haughey was nominated as the Interim Communications Manager for the University in October 2022. The Communications Offices in each college devised an interim structure to effectively serve ATU. This period experienced a fundamental shift in our operational framework, marked by improved collaboration, streamlined processes, and a heightened focus on both internal and external communications strategies.



Team Structure and Activities:

The communications team worked in a new organisational structure centered around regular editorial meetings and centralised communication channels overseen by the Communications Manager.



Achievements:

The Communications office compiled a monthly internal newsletter, sent to all staff in the first year. ATU Communications updated stakeholders through press releases, statements, ATU's website, intranet and social media. External stakeholders were also engaged through a comprehensive ATU magazine which is circulated via email, social media and ATU's website every eight weeks. The communications team also assisted the President's office with staff meetings and events throughout the year.

The communications team have achieved encouraging KPI's over the 17-month period:



Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE):

Press coverage translated into €11 million in AVE, as calculated by Kantar Media/Onclusive media monitoring analysis.



Opportunities to See (OTS):

Garnering 315 million OTS.



Article Publications:

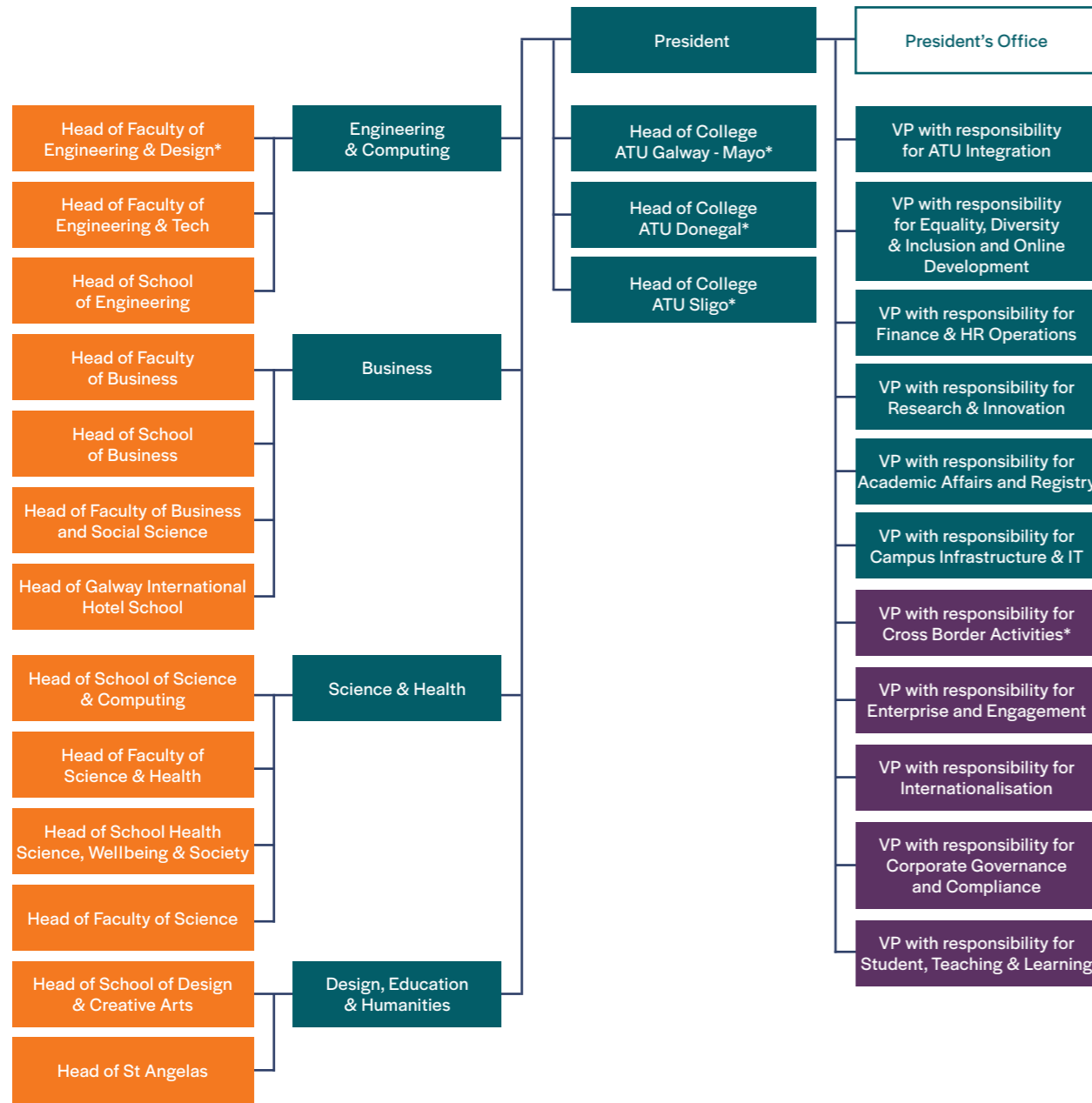
With a prolific output, we successfully published over 3,700 articles, averaging 10 articles per day, further reinforcing our university's narrative and brand.

3.2 Strategic Planning

In June 2022, a workshop took place in Letterfrack on strategic planning, involving the combined group of vice-presidents and heads/deans of faculties. External speakers with expertise and experience in strategic planning in the TU sector presented at the workshop. This was followed by a discussion about the approach ATU might take in the development of the strategic plan. It was clear for the external speakers that internal consultation would be an essential and significant task, especially as this was to be the first strategic plan for ATU. The recommendation from the meeting was to drive the strategic plan with an internal facilitator rather than a heavy reliance on external consultants. In addition, some preliminary thoughts on the mission of TUs and specifically for ATU were collected from the various groups.

3.3 Organisation Structures including UPT

Interim Executive Structure



*Heads of College all hold dual roles

- Current members of UPT
- VPs not on UPT but with University Wide roles
- Heads of School/Faculty Rotating terms on UPT

4. High-level integration activities

ATU integration activities are managed by the ATU Integration Office and supported by a range of teams, groups and project steering committees which operate on a university-wide basis. The Integration Office is responsible for managing HEA funding to support the development of ATU. These funding allocations have been provided via the Technological University Transformation Fund – TUTF (2020 – 2023) and the Technological Sector Transformation Fund – TSAF (2024 - 2026). The office provides support to the President in relation to the development of a high-level organisational structure, systems and processes integration. Activities relating to the incorporation of St Angela's College Sligo into ATU, including the incorporation of a Steering Committee are managed within this function.

Following the establishment of ATU, in April 2022, ATU's President formed a University Planning Team (UPT). The group is representative of all ATU heads of function. All appointments to the UPT are on an interim basis. Four representatives of the Heads of Faculty/School join the UPT on a rotational basis. In addition to strategic and operational activities, the focus of all functional areas is on integration and transformation issues.

Within its first year, ATU initiated an organisation design process involving extensive stakeholder consultation and engaged the services of external consultants to advise and support the University on Change Management and Organisation Design. After a discovery phase was completed, working groups were established to develop and assess the design options for the academic and PMSS structures. The working group membership represented support services and academic areas across all levels and campuses of the University. The Academic Working Group and the Operations/PMSS Working Group commenced their work in Q2 2023. It is planned that the outcomes from both groups will report to the Design Advisory Group in November 2023. The Design Advisory Group was comprised of four experienced external experts (national & international) from the higher education sector to support the President in reviewing the organisation structure options. All options are being assessed against an agreed set of organisation design

principles. The principles reflected the developing ATU strategy and are being used to objectively assess the options for each of the high-level structures (Executive, Academic and PMSS).

During the period April 2022 – August 2023, significant progress was made relating to the incorporation of St Angela's College, Sligo (STACS) into ATU. An Incorporation Steering Committee over-see three key areas:

1. Development of a linked provider agreement in May 2022. As STACS does not have designated awarding body status to confer academic awards, it was important that STACS became a linked provider of ATU until full integration with ATU.
2. Drafting of a joint submission document for incorporation of STAC with ATU. ATU and St Angela's College, Sligo (STACS) submitted a joint application for incorporation on 2 November 2022 to DFHERIS. An advisory panel visited STACS and ATU in mid-January 2023. In February 2023, a positive report was received from the Advisory Panel. A legal agreement between ATU, St Angela's College and the Ursuline Order was signed in May 2023. The Statutory instrument formalising the incorporation was signed in June 2023 with an agreed date for incorporation set for 01 November 2023.
3. Arrangements for the transition and integration of STACS into ATU.



5. Academic Affairs

5.1 Academic Council

An Interim Academic Council operated from April 2022 to January 2023 to address crucial matters such as the ratification of exam results and the approval of programme validation reports. Following the Governing Body's approval of the new ATU Academic Council formation regulations in September 2022, elections were held in December 2022. The elected academic staff membership is evenly split, with 50% male and 50% female representatives. The inaugural meeting of the ATU Academic Council took place on 20 January 2023.

Below is the schedule of meetings of Academic Council for the reporting period:

- 20 January 2023 (ATU Mayo)
- 17 February 2023 (online meeting)
- 28 April 2023 (ATU Sligo)
- 14 June 2023 (online meeting)
- 20 June 2023 (online meeting)

The Council established the following six Committees to help it in its work:

- Academic Planning & Strategy
- Academic Programmes
- Academic Standards & Policy
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Student Experience and Access
- Research and Innovation

The main work of Council in its initial six months focused on forming its committees and on approving new policies for the University.

Summary of items approved at Academic Council (20 Jan 2023 – 31 August 2023):

- Policies: eight
- Major Programmes: nine
- Special Purpose Awards: ten
- Collaborative Agreements : one



5.2 Quality Office

From September 2022, the legacy Institute Quality Offices were integrated into a single university Quality Office, structured into five key functions, each led by an Assistant Registrar:

- Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs
- Quality Data, Reporting and Planning
- Academic Programme Planning and Accreditation
- Academic Recognition and Research QA
- Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs

Dr Aodhmar Cadogan, Assistant Registrar, has university-wide responsibility for academic policy and regulatory affairs. Since the formation of ATU, much has been accomplished in Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs. Outlined below are the main areas where significant progress and developments have taken place.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Framework

Significant progress has been achieved in the review period, towards the development of a QAE framework with a unified set of policies and procedures for the University. The QAE development team, led by Dr Michael Hannon, was established, consisting of four full-time senior academics. The initial work focussed on approval of a change control mechanism with subsequent work focussed on prioritising, drafting, consulting, and approving of a suite of early ATU policies and procedures. Eight new policies, one revised policy, three new procedures and four new forms for the academic area have been issued in the period to 1 Sept 2023. A staff portal has been developed as a repository for all policies and related procedures and documents. This continues to evolve to improve use and accessibility.

Marks and Standards

At the time of establishment, ATU Marks and Standards Policy Version 1 had been agreed. This represented challenges for all staff across the University as it contained changes in practices, and regulations which were new to staff in all colleges. To meet this challenge, the University rolled out extensive communication and training across all campuses.

Linked Provider Arrangement for St Angela's College, Sligo

Following discussions with St Angela's College Sligo (STACS), University of Galway (UoG) and ATU Sligo, it was decided that the previous linked provider

arrangement in place to award degrees through UoG would cease for all first-time registrations with STACS from September 2022 and would instead move to an alternative awarding arrangement with ATU. Following approval of the formal report, STACS became a linked provider of ATU in June 2022. The Linked Provider arrangement provided security of awards for students and facilitated the planned formal integration of the college into ATU later in 2023. Work also commenced on building STACS programmes on the ATU curriculum management system and all student records on the ATU Student Record Management System (Banner).

External Examination

In terms of the relationship between the ATU and its external examiners, the University has completed extensive work to consolidate an ATU-wide approach. Although the substantive content of all legacy contracts was similar, the fee element differed. A single ATU contract and fee is now in place for all external examiner contracts commencing in the new academic year 2023/24. Clarifications from revenue regarding the tax treatment of the travel and subsistence for external examiners is also aligned.

Quality Data, Reporting and Planning

Aedín O'Heocha, Assistant Registrar, has university-wide responsibility for Quality Data, Reporting and Planning. In recognition of the importance of university-wide data reporting, and even though the University is still operating from separate student record management systems aligned to the founding Institutes, progress has been made on the analysis and reporting of ATU-wide student data sets to support decision making. An area on the Staff Hub, dedicated to making reports and dashboards available to staff across ATU, has been launched and a suite of reports and dashboards, developed by the Quality Data, Reporting and Planning Office, has been made available, including:

- First Year Progression Statistics
- ATU Retention and Pass Rate (Dashboard)
- ATU Graduation Report (Dashboard)

These new University reports were produced for the first time in respect of the academic year 2021/22, which will serve as the benchmark year for future reporting and for analysis of trends since formation of the University. During this period, planning began to create a Student Numbers Dashboard, to be launched in 2023/24. The Office also coordinated the submission of ATU's inaugural Annual Quality Report to Qualifications and Quality Ireland.

Academic Programme Planning and Accreditation

Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar, has university-wide responsibility for academic programme planning and accreditation. A project was established with funding from the Technological University Transformation Fund (TUTF) to introduce Academic Module Manager (AMM), to the Donegal campus as it was already being used as the module and programme creation software and database in Sligo and Galway-Mayo.

Almost 1,900 approved modules in ATU Donegal were inputted during the reporting period. In parallel, work was undertaken to align the settings on Galway-Mayo's and Sligo's AMM in addition to introducing new features and testing AMM v4.0 preparing for launch in October 2023. Module and programme documents from the legacy colleges were considered, and agreement reached on ATU templates in parallel with the QAE team's development of a Programme Design Policy. These new templates were inputted into AMM.

The UPT established the Academic Programme Provision Committee (APCC) with representatives from Faculties, Quality Office, Registration, Marketing and Finance. The committee has responsibility for reviewing new programme proposals for major awards and considering them from a university-wide strategic perspective in addition to an initial examination of costing and feasibility. An ATU-wide template was agreed for new programme proposals and the committee began operating in March 2023 following approval of the Developing and Validating New Taught Programmes Policy by Academic Council. The APCC approved 31 proposals for new major awards during the reporting period.

With Quality Office staff spread across university campuses, much work was undertaken to establish processes and document repositories relating to new programme approvals, including initial automation. Work is ongoing on developing supports for all categories of staff involved in the process of programme development and validation.

To implement the validation policy, interim faculty groupings were established and operated as Faculty Executives and Faculty Academic Planning Committees to review proposals and establish internal validation panels for major awards and review panels for Special Purpose Awards. During the reporting period a total of 93 programmes were approved by

Academic Council as outlined in the Table below. The number is high because the reporting period covers a 17-month period and includes programmes which had gone through the initial stages of development in the legacy colleges. These included approval of three innovative tertiary education programmes to be delivered in conjunction with the three local Education and Training Boards namely, GRETB, MSLETB and Donegal ETB.

Table: Summary of Programme Validations (1 April 2022 – 31 August 2023)

Programme Type*	Number Validations
Doctorate	1
Masters	20
Higher Diploma	5
Bachelor (Hons)**	17
Bachelor Ab initio ***	8
SPA/Minor/Supplemental Awards	30
Differential Validations	12
Total	93

*Includes highest award in 'family' of programmes only.
 ** L8 programmes would generally have embedded L6 and 7
 ***L7 included in Bachelor Ab Initio

Academic Recognition and Research QA

Dr Simon Stephens, Assistant Registrar, has responsibility for Academic Recognition and Research QA. A new Research Degree Policy was approved 2023. This is an important next step in the provision of appropriate QA for our research students and their supervisors.

The RPL Unit concluded the implementation of our RPL Action Plan 2 as part of commitments under the HCI/THEA National RPL project. The RPL Unit continues to coordinate and manage a substantial increase in RPL activities, leading to increased RPL applications for entry, advanced entry and module exemptions. Key activities during the past 17 months include the two RPL for Industry Cohorts, (n = 40) who will graduate at NFQ Level 7 in November 2023. Additional cohorts are planned. ATU was the national pilot site for the development and testing of a RPL Patch for Banner 9. The patch is now available to all the HEIs who will use Banner 9.

The RPL Unit supported the QAE team in the development of AQAE027 Procedure for Assessing Prior Learning (and associated forms). A new SharePoint page is under development and training for Assessors and Mentors will take place during 2023/2024.

5.3 Academic Affairs

In the Academic Affairs function, there were significant changes at management level during this reporting period. A new Academic Affairs Manager, Gerald Gavin, was appointed on the Galway-Mayo campus in April 2022; a new Academic Affairs Manager, Deirdre Johnston, was appointed on the Sligo campus in July 2022; and following the retirement of Irene Heavy from the Donegal campus, a new Academic Affairs Manager, Jacinta Ryan (based on the Galway campus) was appointed in June 2023. By the end of the reporting period, the Academic Administration function was restructured into three functions, each led by an Academic Affairs Manager:

- Admissions
- Registration, Grants and Fees
- Examinations, Conferring and International Admissions

Admissions

Irene Heavy had university-wide responsibility for admissions from April 2022, until her retirement in April 2023. New Central Applications Office (CAO) Handbook course codes were decided for ATU programmes prior to designation, with the first entry on the new codes from September 2023.

This involved aligning course codes with departments and schools across ATU. It also involved aligning the codes with the levels and campuses – e.g., courses beginning with: number 3 – Level 8, Donegal; number 6 – Level 8, Galway-Mayo; and number 9 - Level 8, Sligo and so on for the Level 6 and 7 programmes. Alignment was also agreed in respect of the HEAR and DARE schemes. It was agreed that ATU would offer reduced points for HEAR and DARE applicants of 50 points across all ATU programmes. It was also agreed that all ATU programmes would have a minimum points entry of 160 points on all programmes. On formation, one designated ATU CAO Correspondent was confirmed by the University.

Jacinta Ryan was appointed as Academic Affairs Manager with university-wide responsibility for admissions in June 2023.

During June and July, procedures were aligned for the assessments of mature applicants through CAO and for those presenting Other School Exams (OSE). Regular meetings of all admissions staff were initiated and all staff met for a face-to-face meeting on our Sligo campus in July 2023. Thereafter, weekly online meetings took place for the function. ATU was also involved in a national weekly meeting that entailed discussing the OSE assessments with other higher education institutions in the CAO.

During the month of June, the VPAAR and Academic Affairs Manager (Admissions) met with all 13 Schools/Faculties across the University to discuss the CAO allocation and to determine potential programmes that may not be viable to run. A total of 12 programmes were removed from the CAO Handbook for 2024 intake with nine programmes not issuing any offers at Round 1 2023. The first fully centralised ATU CAO allocations process was run from July-October 2023.

Registration, Grants and Fees

Deirdre Johnston, Academic Affairs Manager, has university-wide responsibility for registration, grants and fees. The following were the main areas of focus during this reporting period: Banner integration – registration and fees; unified application processes; Student Record Management System (SRMS)/ (SRMS)/Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM) Returns; and the ATU Fee Schedule for 2023/24.

The registration and fees teams across ATU worked closely with the Banner integration team in relation to registration and fees. All communications to students regarding registration and fees were aligned for the 2023/24 student intake using Banner Communication Management (BCM) and Action Item Processing (AIP). All registration status codes, and sponsor details forms were also aligned. Work took place with colleagues across ATU to align application forms (direct entry) regardless of application type – online (CRM), Banner admissions, paper forms. As there are three separate Student Record Management Systems (Banner) in ATU, there are three separate SRS/RGAM returns for completion and return to the HEA. The Fee Schedule for 2023/24 was developed and was approved by UPT and Governing Body. Work commenced on drafting a new ATU Fees Policy which would bring a consistent approach to the setting of fees and fee bands across the University.

Examinations, Conferring and International Admissions

Ger Gavin, Academic Affairs Manager, has university-wide responsibility for examinations, conferring and international admissions. Following the formation of ATU, the former entities Exams and Conferring Units were combined. This unification of offices began with a strategic analysis of how each office operated and how the delivery of graduation was achieved. From August 2022 the offices came under the leadership of one Academic Affairs Manager with responsibility for the delivery of all ATU Examinations and Conferring Ceremonies. Alignment of the preparations and delivery of the conferring ceremonies were approached via a cross ATU Conferring Committee with representation from Heads of School/Faculty, Heads of Department and PMSS Staff along with Students' Union representation.

The first Conferring of the new University took place in October and November 2022 at ATU Donegal, ATU Sligo, ATU Mayo, ATU Connemara and ATU Galway. They comprised 21 ceremonies and the awarding of over 5000 major awards to students from Level 6 through to Level 10. It was decided that the University should have a second exit point to allow for the awarding of Levels 6 through to 10 to students who had non-standard start times or were in receipt of research degrees etc. The first Spring Conferring's took place in May 2023 at ATU Galway campus where over 300 ATU graduates were hosted.

The delivery of Examinations is centrally managed and operates locally with four ATU Exams Officers representing the service at ATU Donegal, ATU Sligo, ATU Mayo and ATU Galway. The Exams office is supported by staff at ATU Connemara and ATU Mountbellew in exam delivery. They also operate from two locations in Dublin three times a year in support of online and distance learners. May 2023 saw just under 19,500 students sit exams with ATU.

Academic Systems Integration

Anne-Marie McCormack, Academic Systems Integration Project Manager, leads the University's academic systems integration project. Following designation, an Academic Systems Integration Project Manager and project team were appointed to oversee the alignment of business processes within the academic affairs area and the implementation of a merged Banner™ Student Record Management System (SRMS). The systems integration team have worked closely with the Academic Affairs Managers

and Schools/Departments for the purposes of aligning business processes across the University. Working groups have been established in each functional area with staff representatives from across ATU and STACS. These groups enable end users to input into the business process review as well as providing an information forum for agreed coding structures and processes to be introduced with the implementation of a single Banner™ system.

In March/April 2023 ATU engaged in a series of Discovery Workshops with EduCampus and DXC to assess the readiness of ATU to proceed with the system merger and the final Merge Options Report was agreed and signed off by ATU in June 2023. The agreed decision was to proceed with a greenfield site solution. Work is continuing pre-merger activities within ATU while DXC are preparing their detailed Statement of Work. Preparations are underway for a deeper scoping exercise in preparation for the system design and implementation phase of the project.

The external funding and resourcing of the SRMS integration project has been slower than anticipated, but this has afforded ATU time to focus on business process alignment, which continues in parallel with the implementation phase. During this reporting period, the academic systems integration project team also worked to support planning for the integration of STACS into ATU's academic systems, including Banner. The project team also supported the planned rollout and integration of Academic Module Manager (AMM) and GURU across the university. These academic systems integration projects are scheduled for completion in 2023/24.

Tertiary Education Programme Pilot

In November 2022, a Tertiary Education Programme (TEP) pilot initiative between higher education institutions and the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) was initiated by SOLAS and the HEA, supported by DFHERIS. ATU, together with their collaborative partners, Galway and Roscommon ETB, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB and Donegal ETB, formed a Steering Committee to provide oversight and guidance of the TEP pilot project; membership of this group comprised the Chief Executives of the three ETBs, the President, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar from ATU.

A TEP Working Group, made up of representatives from ATU and the three ETBs, was created to lead the project and deliver enhanced progression



opportunities and pathways for learners. Membership comprised the Further Education and Training Directors, Adult Education Officers, two ATU representatives, and the respective Heads of School/Faculty for each TEP programme. An MOU and Consortium Agreement was signed on 8 June 2023 by the Tertiary Education Steering Committee, affirming the commitment by all to this project.

Following the invitation to submit new TEPs, three new programmes in the areas of Business, Science and Engineering were put forward. Each degree programme provided learners with the opportunity to study a common year one with their local ETB as a registered ATU student, before continuing to the ATU campus of their choice in year two:

- Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business with specialisms (Supply Chain; Enterprise & Innovation; Digital Business)
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sustainable Engineering Technologies with specialisms (Manufacturing and Computing)
- Bachelor of Science in Industrial Laboratory Science with specialisms (Life Science, Biochemistry, Biopharmaceuticals)

In addition, a tertiary Nursing pathway was designed to overcome the barriers to entry for further education learners. The tertiary pathway to the BSc (Hons) General Nursing was put forward as an interim solution, to allow a Nursing TEP to be developed by the ATU Departments of Nursing (and accredited by the regulatory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland). The one + four model provides learners with a guaranteed pathway to General Nursing; the additional places will support the employment need in the HSE across the region, with 60 additional

places (and clinical placements) allocated. In July 2023, recruitment actively started, with the first intake scheduled to commence in September 2023.

5.4 Marketing

In advance of designation as a technological university, the marketing and student recruitment teams based in Donegal, Sligo and Galway-Mayo aligned as one marketing team to support the implementation of the new University identity.

In April 2022, the new brand identity for Atlantic Technological University was launched to staff, students, stakeholders and the public. A dedicated section of the new ATU website provided brand guidelines, enabling staff and students to adopt the new identity. Staff information sessions were held in-person and online to support brand queries. A new brand spirit video communicated the scale and impact of the new University within our region and beyond.

In September 2022, following consultation, functional teams aligned under an interim structure across three pillars, under the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar:

- Market Engagement (eight staff)
- Campaigns and Creative (six staff)
- Strategic Marketing (five staff)

This facilitated cross-campus collaboration across all aspects of marketing and student recruitment. Resource gaps were identified, and a student growth

strategy was prepared, highlighting opportunities to harness the scale and impact of the multi-campus University. Recruitment commenced for several roles, including Marketing Intern (Galway), Alumni Officer (ATU-wide), Website Manager (ATU-wide), and NI Schools Engagement Officer (ATU-wide) to facilitate alignment of resources and building of capacity across the marketing function.

Market Engagement

Fiona Kelly is the Marketing Manager for Market Engagement with responsibility for undergraduate recruitment across the University. The full-time undergraduate student recruitment function performed strongly during this period, with record numbers of attendees at on-campus open days throughout the academic year. A new undergraduate Prospectus was produced in August 2022 for the 2023/24 intake. In this period, total net CAO acceptances increased by 6% compared with the previous year.

ATU attended significant external events such as Higher Options, regional and national careers fairs, presenting 260 CAO full-time undergraduate options. In March 2023, ATU hosted the Institute of Guidance Counsellors annual conference at the Sligo campus, as the first technological university to host this industry event.

The Schools Liaison function aligned across ATU to collaborate on the production of all marketing collateral, including Undergraduate Prospectus, Parents Guide, Northern Ireland Guide and Sports Scholarship promotional materials. Communication with guidance counsellors was unified with centralised newsletters, supported by local campus level contact for schools' engagement.

Campaigns and Creative

Karen Smyth is the Marketing Officer with University-wide responsibility for campaigns and creative. New structures were implemented to help transition the digital footprint of the legacy institutions, along with establishing and growing the new communication channels for ATU. A process of auditing, producing guidelines and centralising management and monitoring was undertaken. Responsibility for social media management was aligned to the Campaigns and Creative team, supporting corporate brand messaging, communications, and student recruitment needs.

An interim ATU website was established to support brand identity with a focus on high level news, events, recruitment, and functional areas being supported. Recruitment of a new Website Manager in June 2023 commenced the strategic focus on building an ATU-wide digital platform to service the University. The Campaigns and Creative team launched and managed a brand awareness campaign with regional placements across billboards, cinema and bus corridors. During this time all legacy marketing assets across digital and physical Infrastructure were re-branded to reflect the new University identity, including promotional videos, campus signage, digital signage, social profiles, brochures etc, with naming conventions and sub-brand guidelines developed in consultation with the marketing office.

Strategic Marketing

Cleo Devaney is the Marketing Manager for Strategic Marketing with responsibility for postgraduate, online and part-time recruitment across the University. ATU's part-time and postgraduate student recruitment aligned under a new identity - Online, Flexible and Professional Development - informed by market research. A portfolio of 370 flexible courses was promoted in a single Prospectus, supported by virtual recruitment fairs, digital and traditional media campaigns across radio, press and social media. All campaigns targeted those seeking to upskill, re-train or change careers. In this period, an ATU-wide Springboard+ recruitment campaign was implemented, aligning the offering across all ATU campuses under a single Quick Guide and supported by digital and social media marketing campaigns.

Procurement of marketing services such as merchandise, print, and graphic design were aligned across ATU led by Strategic Marketing. Supported by TUTF, a new Marketing CRM system was introduced under this pillar providing a centralised system for the management of programme portfolio information. Within this phase, CRM was implemented for management of lead generation and email marketing journeys, connecting those registering their interest in further study with programme information and opportunities to engage with the University.

5.5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team (QAET)

A key principle underpinning the development of the new Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (QAEF) for the University is to ensure quality assurance is owned by all. The approach to

consultation ensures this is achieved in addition to the visibility and accessibility of draft policies, approved policies and approved procedures on the Staff Hub. In January 2023 the first meeting of the new Academic Council was convened.

The QAET is a standing item on the agenda and for the first meeting, four policies were presented for consideration / approval. Chief among these was what might be referred to as a 'Policy on Policy Development', named: 'Policy for the Development of Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework'.

The QAET also adopted a consistent template and format for all policies, a revision history process and a repository for approved policies. Evident among this approach is lessons learned from experiences of the legacy institutions in developing and managing the QA Framework. This highlights the maturity of the emerging University and confirms its status as a Designated Awarding Body. By August 2023, eleven policies were approved and ready for implementation from September 2023.

At the June Academic Council meeting, Council was presented with a project plan for QA policy development for the following academic year. This outlined approximately 14 additional policies in need of development, which would then end the work of the QAET as it was established as a two-year project.

The work of the QAET is deemed very successful as it is developing a singular and unified QAEF for ATU. It has been commended on the extensive consultation process in place and the open and transparent approach towards capturing feedback and reflecting same in the next iteration of the policies. Once approved, the further development; updating and review of the policies becomes the responsibility of the policy owner, identified in the revision history at the start of each policy.

6. Students, Teaching & Learning

6.1 Teaching & Learning

During the reporting period, the Teaching & Learning Centre provided a wide range of accredited and non-accredited continuing professional development opportunities for staff. These initiatives included

various workshops and masterclasses, the award of self-paced digital badges, research projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the HEA, and Post-graduate programmes in Teaching & Learning at Level 9. Additionally, the Centre hosted conferences and



events focused on Universal Design for Learning, Digital Education, and Re-Imagining Assessment, launched a newly developed Academic Induction Programme for new staff (Sligo and Galway-Mayo), and initiated the Advance HE Fellowship for staff. Simultaneously, the ongoing expansion of academic support centres under the TLC continued to evolve, addressing the needs of both students and staff. SATLE funding supported 45 teaching and learning projects in areas such as Education for Sustainability, Academic Integrity, and Digital Transformation. The TLC collaborated with N-TUTOR on several projects focused on enhancing staff capabilities in transforming learning, teaching, and assessment. A key achievement was the development of a curricular framework for digital transformation, resilience, and sustainability.

The UDL Centre of Excellence led two Path 4 projects nationally, created the first NFQ Level 9 major award in UDL, developed digital resources and training to embed UDL across the University, and established UDL communities of practice. TUT funding initiated the development of the University's first strategic plan for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Additionally, the Teaching & Learning Centre launched a newsletter to communicate ongoing activities and resources, which has been well-received by both staff and students.

Events hosted 2023:

- Digital Ed Conference (May 2023)
- Re-Imagining Assessment Symposium (June 2023)
- National Universal Design for Learning Conference in collaboration with MTU (June 2023)



6.2 Student Services

The student services function was re-structured in Q3 2022 to operate as a single student facing entity. Four pillars of activity were identified:

Pillars:	Student Services Manager:
Widening Participation & Access and Sport	Mr Rory Mc Morrow
Disability & Learning Support	Ms Debbie Molloy
Student Experience	Mr Gerry Hegarty
Student Health & Wellbeing	None

Student services managers from each legacy institution assumed responsibility and leadership for one pillar, with shared responsibility for the fourth pillar - Student Health & Wellbeing. Dr Perry Share, Head of Student Success, worked alongside the managers.

Activities within each pillar:

- Widening Participation & Access and Sport:**
 National Access Plan, PATH Projects, Access Provision, SAF, Scholarships, Sport @ ATU
- Disability & Learning Support:**
 Disability provision, FSD, learning support
- Student Experience:**
 First year student experience, careers, chaplaincy, student complaints, Students' Unions @ATU
- Student Health & Wellbeing:**
 Student Health Service-medical & nursing, Counselling, Mental Health framework

Each manager worked with their respective teams/ individuals in the legacy institutions to form unified team structures. They reviewed processes/policies to identify points of divergence and convergence in service provision, with the goal of developing an equitable student service experience. In preparation for St Angela's College integration into ATU, the student services personnel of St Angela's College also became adjunct members of respective pillar activity.

A review of existing policies, procedures and guidance documents was conducted to inform prioritisation of policies/ procedures for University student services.

Newly established University steering groups lead out on the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Framework, and the Consent Framework. They reviewed legacy Institutes' action plans and restructured to create new University action plans.

A number of university scholarship schemes were agreed by UPT: Sports Scholarship scheme launched Q1 2023 and Sanctuary Scholarship programme launched Q2 2023. ATU and the then NUI Galway signed a collaboration agreement to align to revised national processes for administering and distributing Path 2 (1916 Bursary) with 96 ATU students awarded a bursary in the academic year 2022/23.

HEA approved West Northwest Cluster (Connect) 3-year project plan for Path 3 funding which focuses on mentoring, traveller engagement and pathways to higher education.

Path 4 funding (Phase 1) awarded in Q4 2022, and five discrete work packages commenced in Q1 2023 to increase the University's responsiveness to UD/ UDL and prepare a funding bid for the development of a programme for persons with an intellectual disability. The University received Path 5 funding to support Traveller and Roma Student participation in higher Education.

A review of disability service expertise and staffing provision was conducted to ensure the University had capacity and capability to address an increasingly neuro diverse student population registered with disability services. A four-year plan was subsequently developed. ATU Sligo achieved Autism Friendly Campus Accreditation from AslAm in Q 4 2022. A university agreed induction and first 5 weeks programme (Connect for Success) was prepared in Q1/ 2 2023 for launch in academic year 2023/2024.



6.3 Library

In Q 2-3, 2022, the three legacy institutions Head Librarians with the VP for Students, Teaching and Learning agreed to work as one unitary library from 1 September 2022, with each Head Librarian assuming university library leadership and responsibility for the following areas:

ATU Donegal: User engagement, surveys, reviews, infrastructure, collections

ATU Sligo: Research, information literacy, copyright, cataloguing

ATU Galway-Mayo: Library budget, electronic resources, digital systems, strategic plan

The library vision is to provide an equitable, seamless service to all stakeholders. To support integration, a member of the ATU Galway library was seconded (TUT funded) for 12 months to support library systems integration. To align processes and procedures and support integration nine university library working groups have been established:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Acquisition & Procurement | 5. Information Literacy |
| 2. Cataloguing | 6. Research |
| 3. Circulation | 7. Serials |
| 4. Communications | 8. Strategic plan |
| | 9. Systems |

During the reporting period, the Head Librarian, ATU Donegal - Mr John Devlin- retired after 42 years and was replaced by Ms Micheala Campbell in May 2023. ATU Library worked with the Mc Keown Library team (St Angela's College) in preparation for their integration in Q4 2023. It was agreed that the Head Librarian in ATU Sligo would manage the Mc Keown Library on integration.



7. Research and Innovation

7.1 Postgraduate students and supports

ATU continues to offer academic and other supports to postgraduate students and launched two cohort-based postgraduate training programmes in Modelling and Computation for Health and Society (MOCHAS) and Operations and Supply Chain Research (OSCAR), with funding for 30 PhD scholarships. These are in addition to continuing work in existing research centres and groups, many of which have won external funding to support researchers for the duration of their projects.

7.2 Innovation Hubs and Entrepreneurship

There are four incubation centres in ATU, with a total of nine staff. All report on an interim basis to the VP for Regional Development & Engagement. The centres provide office accommodation, specialist facilities, meeting rooms and other support services to the 134 start-up companies accommodated, as well as links to ATU staff and students in progressing their growth. They also organise training for entrepreneurs engaged in founding start-ups, with 141 participants on such programmes currently.

The incubation centres have continued to develop their work. In Galway the iHub tenant companies raised over €25m in investment funding. One company, Rockfield Medical, secured FDA approval for its product, a significant milestone. Three companies won awards during the year as leading emerging tech start-ups. The iHub won the Galway Chamber Sustainability award. Mayo iHub clients raised €19m in investment. It conducted a study to investigate the feasibility of focusing on Allied Health as a sector, just as the Galway iHub focuses on Medical Devices.

Sligo Innovation Centre has been impacted by ATU staff using the centre's space while capital projects were under way on the campus, and at its lowest point had reduced to just seven companies - this recovered to 15 during 2023. CoLab is working with Donegal County Council to support development of more enterprise space, to give its tenants more opportunities to grow to the next phase. A significant development was the establishment of a presence in CoLab by RegTech software leader FinTrU, employing



7.3 Technology Gateways

There are three Technology Gateways in ATU, funded by Enterprise Ireland, which provide outreach to company clients for applied research and problem solving with technology, as well as access to specialist equipment and facilities. The Gateways focus on the Internet of Things (WISAR, Letterkenny), Precision Engineering and Manufacturing (PEM, Sligo), and Medical Device Technology and Health (MET, Galway). Two of the Gateways report to Engineering Deans of Faculty (WISAR and PEM), one to the VP for Research (MET). They have 15 staff but also employ staff on additionally funded projects. The three Technology Gateways were successful in securing a further round of five years funding from Enterprise Ireland.

7.4 Technology Clusters

There are four Industry Clusters hosted by ATU, relating to the Marine, Manufacturing, Digital Health, and Wood and Interiors. All report on an interim basis to the VP for Regional Development & Engagement. These posts are funded by an Enterprise Ireland programme which supports twelve such clusters, meaning that ATU hosts a quarter of these. Their purpose is promote collaboration between companies in the region within the cluster and promote the region as a centre of excellence in that industry. Over 100 companies have participated in these clusters.

7.5 KTI Metrics

The metrics reported by all three Gateways in their recent performance reviews with Enterprise Ireland have indicated that they will meet the metrics targets for the new period. The first three-year funding period for the industry clusters ends in 2024, but an interim 12-month extension has been awarded by Enterprise Ireland. A larger government announcement on industry cluster strategy is expected. The uncertainty about future funding has been affecting the clusters, with many managers moving to jobs elsewhere.

This area of activity must be seen together with the Enterprise and Innovation area, including the Incubation Centre, Technology Gateways and Industry Clusters, as all are directly engaged in helping to develop the region's economy.

In addition, ATU participates in the Regional Enterprise Programmes organised by the Department for Enterprise Trade and Employment in the West and Northwest regions. These programmes provide a framework to bring together stakeholders in the regional economy, focus on issues and analysis of critical importance and identify priority developments which all will support. The ATU staff engaging in this do it as part of a broader range of duties. Some report to the VP for Regional Development and Engagement, but others are in Faculties or other teams. ATU is a stakeholder in the Regional Skills Forum in both the West and Northwest regions.

8. External Engagement and Partnerships



8.1 International

ATU's Mission commits us to enriching our region by delivering academic and research excellence, working collaboratively with regional, national and international partners.

ATU envisages leveraging our international reach to be a hub for international collaboration, fostering academic partnerships, cultural exchange, and research initiatives that transcend borders particularly at a European level. Our international reach will enable the University to contribute to a more interconnected and mutually beneficial global community, and to cultivate a sense of sustainable global citizenship among our students and stakeholders.

Our priorities for enhanced internationalisation across ATU consist of three key activities encompassing Internationalisation at Home (including Internationalisation of the Curriculum, Intercultural Training, International Student Ambassadors), Internationalisation Abroad (including Recruitment, Exchange, Transnational Education, Alumni), and the Internationalisation of Research (including Innovation and Enterprise), in which our membership of the European University Alliance EU GREEN (emphasising the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals) has a key role to play.

ATU Global key actions for the reporting period:

- Strategic International Market Review.
- Appointed Senior International Student Ambassadors.
- In 2022/2023 ATU welcomed 816 full-time Non EU Students from 80 countries, 555 e-Learning Non EU Students from 71 countries and 507 part-time Non EU Students from 32 countries, an overall total Non EU Student number of 1878 from 104 different countries across the globe.
- In 2022/2023 ATU welcomed 73 incoming Erasmus Students from 10 European countries and 3 Non-EU Exchange Students from Brazil and Taiwan. In 2022/2023 ATU supported 22 outgoing Erasmus Students on Study and Traineeship exchanges, 1 on a Study Exchange to Germany and 6 on Study Exchanges to Northern Ireland with 15 outgoing students undertaking traineeships in Northern Ireland.
- Launch of ATU Global.
- Visits to Key Overseas Events including Canada, India, Africa, ASEAN, Mexico, Vietnam, US, Indonesia and Brazil.
- New International Fee / Refund Policy developed.
- Admissions and English Language requirements aligned.
- Agent Procurement and Training.
- Erasmus+ aligned, including supporting Ukrainian Students.
- Supported a number of pilot BIPs (Blended Intensive Programmes).
- Hosted numerous visits to ATU by Ambassadors and other VIPs.
- Supported ATU participation in EU GREEN European University Alliance.
- ATU Wide Application system being procured.
- Significant progress made with the IVEL project.
- ATU-wide Representative Team attended COIL Conference in Valencia.

The Alumni Office, supported by the steering committee developed an interim statement on the vision and strategy for the ATU Alumni Office. The positioning statement was presented to the ATU President, Heads of Faculty, Schools & Departments University Planning Team (UPT).

8.2 Online, Flexible and Lifelong Learning

ATU offers online, flexible and professional development courses, that respond to student demand and deliver skills needed in the marketplace. Built on our expertise and in collaboration with industry partners, our accredited courses support students at all stages, regardless of location, to access and continue life-long learning, develop new skills, and advance their careers. With over 350 online, blended and on-campus courses available, ATU offers students fully accredited flexible qualifications matched to industry demand. Graduates are equipped with the skills and confidence to excel in their chosen career, create change and build their future.

At the time of merger, the administration and support related to online, flexible and professional development was organised differently in each of the three legacy colleges, with the provision of online learning being a specific strength of IT Sligo. This necessitated building a new team with an ATU-wide remit by amalgamating various teams from across the University that had differing remits and make-up.



The Online, Flexible Professional and Development (OFPD) Team are organised with the following teams in place:

- Business Development for Online, Flexible & Professional Development (Gathering business intelligence and supporting marketing and recruitment; includes Springboard and HCI)
- Faculty Support for Online, Flexible & Professional Development (Supporting Faculties and Departments with developing and providing provision in response to business intelligence and employer/employee needs)
- Online, Flexible & Professional Development Student Experience (Supporting and advocating for OFPD Learners; includes team of Online Student Advisors)
- Online, Flexible & Professional Development Educational Technology (Ensuring appropriate educational technologies are in place and staff & students are trained to use them)
- Online, Flexible & Professional Development Innovation (Driving continuous improvement and innovation)
- Online, Flexible & Professional Development Innovation Projects (currently Higher Ed 4.0 and N-TUTORR)
- Online, Flexible & Professional Development Governance and Internal Strategy

In addition, this is underpinned by an Instructional Design Team who focus on supporting educational technology and innovation. Currently there are several projects ongoing utilising the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System. This work is currently located within ATU but this may change in the future once the CRM is fully established as an enterprise system within the University and expanded to other areas.

ATU offers students fully accredited flexible qualifications matched to industry demand

OFPD also have very close relationship with our Marketing Department Business Partners, AA&R Function, Teaching & Learning, IT Services and other functions across the University.

A significant amount of work has been involved in integrating the function from the three teams from the legacy colleges, and developing a draft OFPD strategy and an organisational structure with an ATU-wide remit. This has involved building the Business Development and Faculty Support Teams and extending the Online Student Advice system across ATU. A key focus has been several major integration projects which are being carried out with colleagues from other functions:

- Unification of the applications process for non-CAO/Apprenticeship applicants.
- Unification of educational technology including working towards a single VLE (virtual learning environment).
- Merger of Springboard Processes.
- Unification of induction processes for OFPD students.
- More recently a working group has commenced to work towards unification of the registration and enrolment process for OFPD non-CAO/Apprenticeship students.

In addition, OFPD are providing leadership in two taskforces within the University, one of which is developing a draft ATU Microcredentials Strategy and the other an ATU position on Artificial Intelligence.

8.3 Regional Engagement

The Regional Skills Manager in the Northwest is employed by ATU, while the Manager in the West is employed by the University of Galway. These Fora bring together employers with education and training providers to identify emerging sectoral skills needs and negotiate responses to these.

Funding has been secured for several significant initiatives also designed to support the region's development. ATU Sligo has established a joint venture with Sligo and Leitrim County Councils which has secured €3m in funding to establish the AIM Centre - Advancing Innovation in Manufacturing, which now has four employees. ATU has partnered with the University of Galway and regional development bodies including the Northwestern Regional Assembly, Western Development Commission, Údarás na

Gaeltachta and others to secure €5.4m in funding for a European Digital Innovation Hub to strengthen the capacity of SMEs and local public services to harness digital technology. The CREW Centre (Creative Industries West) is established on the CCAM ATU campus in Galway to promote entrepreneurship in the sector and collaborates with ATU's School of Design and Creative Arts.

The Regional Enterprise Programmes have selected a number of strategic issues for development over the past year, including the Infrastructure deficit, mapping and supporting industry clusters, the entrepreneurship ecosystem, developments in offshore renewable energy, and the digital, food and creative sectors.

The Regional Skills Fora have pursued skills audits and organised stakeholder events in key selected sectors, including renewable energy, digital manufacturing, biopharma and apprenticeships.

Buildings have been completed and are now occupied by both the AIM Centre in Sligo and the CREW Centre in Galway. The AIM Centre has secured EU funding for projects engaging with SMEs to strengthen their digital skills, while the CREW Centre has collaborated with ATU to launch enterprise development programmes for the creative industries sector.

The Data2Sustain Digital Innovation Hub has recruited its core team and has been developing a pipeline of service projects for SMEs and public services. Negotiations are underway to further scale up this project's engagement level from academic staff in ATU.

A particular challenge for all such projects over the next period is a new approach from the EU Commission to monitoring of state aid, requiring all clients in receipt of services to sign forms confirming the value of the services that they receive.

Further funding bids are being pursued in Smart Region development.

In addition, OFPD are providing leadership in two taskforces within the University, one of which is developing a draft ATU Microcredentials Strategy and the other an ATU position on Artificial Intelligence.



ATU sees its role as the University in the state best placed to deliver on North South policy objectives

8.4 Alumni

The ATU Alumni Office was established in February 2023, with the appointment of an Alumni Officer. The function reports to the Strategic Marketing Manager, with the vision to create and develop an ATU Alumni network, offering approx. 100,000 graduates of ATU and our legacy Institutions, the opportunity to connect and engage with the University.

An ATU Alumni steering committee was established to support the function, creating a cross functional and cross-campus representative body to support the Alumni office.

The Alumni Office, supported by the steering committee developed an interim statement on the vision and strategy for the ATU Alumni Office. The positioning statement was presented to the ATU President, Heads of Faculty, Schools & Departments, University Planning Team (UPT) and in 2023,

To support the vision, a brand position to activate and engage ATU's alumni was launched under four key pillars:

- **Always Connected:** Fostering lasting connections among alumni.
- **Always Learning:** Providing continuous learning opportunities.
- **Always Inspired:** Cultivating inspiration and motivation.
- **Always ATU:** Instilling a sense of belonging and connection with ATU.

the Alumni Office prioritised the launch of the ATU alumni network. The aim was to provide a platform to mobilize existing networks and commence engaging in a programme of benefits, fostering connections with the new University. A communications plan was established to actively engage with the network via the ATU website, email marketing, social media and leveraging the ATU magazine publication. An ATU alumni database was created, facilitated through collaboration with IT Services, DPO, Academic Affairs and Careers, identifying key touchpoints leading to registration with the alumni network.

8.5 Connected Eco Systems – North South Collaboration

Paul Hannigan, Head of College at ATU Donegal has overall responsibility for North South collaboration across the ATU. ATU sees its role as the University in the state best placed to deliver on North South policy objectives and as the best partner university in Ireland for bodies interested in advancing the aims of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding.

The North West Tertiary Education Cluster (NWTEC) is a strategic alliance of all four publicly funded tertiary educational institutions in the North West City Region, Atlantic Technological University, Ulster University, Donegal Education and Training Board and the North West Regional College. NWTEC is supported by Dr Paddy Hannigan, Senior Lecturer, Strategist and Programme Manager of NWTEC and JoAnne Kilmartin, Project Development Officer in place since August 2022.

NWTEC achievements for the reporting period:

- Established a coherent tertiary cluster with an executive-level Steering Group that meets monthly.
- Provided a governance structure that facilitates all existing collaborations between the partners, such as joint programmes and allows for a joint response from the tertiary education partners to regional needs.
- Established the Smart Industry Board with strong stakeholder engagement, complementing the work of the Derry City & Strabane District Council's Education and Skills Delivery Partnership.
- Hosted the 'Smart North West Conference' in October 2022 that showcased the education, economic and life style opportunities in the North West City Region.
- Developed research links between the partners, increasing the number of jointly supervised research programmes, and established the AI NoW research centre with leading enterprises in the region.
- Collaborated on apprenticeships allowing ATU Donegal to roll-out the Electrical Apprenticeship with further plans to deliver on Metal Fabrication Apprenticeship across Donegal ETB and ATU Donegal
- Collaborated on the innovative Electric



Vehicle programmes across Donegal ETB, NWRC, and ATU Donegal which has involved the sharing of facilities and staff to reskill mechanics to work on electric vehicles.

- Developed a proposal to the Shared Island Unit to deliver on a Skills Escalator and Research Centre that will help support the upskilling and reskilling of individuals and provide the leading-edge research to support innovative enterprises in the region.
- Adopted a strategic approach to engaging with and shaping Peace Plus funding opportunities to maximise the longer-term benefits for the North West City Region.
- Employed four Project Development Officers (one at each partner) with responsibility for developing collaborative relationships with external stakeholders and to assist with implementing initiatives which will improve access, transfer and progression opportunities for students via NWTEC.



9. Updates from Faculties

9.1 Business

The Faculty of Business ATU Donegal, the School of Business Galway, and the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences ATU Sligo continued their work on integration during the reporting period.

The faculty comprises twelve departments working diligently to deliver learning, research, and engagement programmes and projects across six of ATU's nine campuses. The faculty's scope reflects the business world itself. Offering a wide range of programmes that not only reflect traditional models of business education, such as general business, economics, law, and accounting, but also more contemporary, applied, and in-practice models tailored to meet industry needs. These include executive and professional leadership, digital business, digital accounting, agribusiness, sustainable tourism, financial planning, sustainability, and hospitality.

The faculty has a long tradition of community and industry engagement that extends beyond their support for learning programmes to a two-way working relationship in the development of project ideas and research ideas. For example, staff at ATU Galway-Mayo are working with Data2Sustain (a European Digital Innovation Hub) to offer training in business analytics to local and regional businesses and organisations. ATU Donegal and ATU Sligo have developed several collaborative programmes across various industries (e.g. insurance, Retail, FinTech, Hotel); these continue to evolve annually.



The faculty's focus is on continuing to deliver on the University and TU Bill's mandate of quality education while working towards a successful faculty integration model. Consequently, all new programme and project developments and all strategic and operational activities are considered within a faculty lens. Working as one, the following provides a sample of activities in the reporting period.

- January 2023 - April 2023. In response to the Minister of Further and Higher Education's sectoral request, the faculty worked together to develop a new BB Honours in Business Studies with specialisms. This programme was the first tertiary award to be validated in ATU.
- September 2023. Demonstrating the scale and impact of the new University, ATU's Faculty of Business Donegal launched a new flexible four-year DBA. The delivery of this award includes team members from across the ATU Faculty of Business.
- November 2023. The Atlantic Sustainable Tourism Observatory, Ireland, ATU, proudly became the newest member of the United Nations Tourism Organisation's International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO). The announcement, made during the 2023 Global Meeting of INSTO held at the UN Tourism Organisation Headquarters in Madrid, is a significant achievement for ATU and Ireland.
- December 2023 : The Faculty adopted a collaborative and inclusive approach to responding to the TU RISE call. Based on areas of strength and expertise within the Faculty, the submission focused on Innovation, Digitalisation, Enterprise, and Society (IDEAS).



9.2 Science & Health

The ATU Faculty of Science and Health was managed by four senior managers during this period. Dr Amanda McGloat, President of St Angela's College, attended our Faculty meetings to provide forward planning for the integration of St Angela's programmes into the developing Faculty.

The ATU Science and Health Faculty comprised eleven departments. The Faculty comprised 5382 FTE students and 402 staff (student:staff ratio 13.4:1) and delivered 184 programmes of learning by August 2023.

The developing Science and Health Faculty set in place a number of interim structures during this period. From April 2022 to spring 2023 a "Faculty Formation team" comprising the Heads of Science was formed. This team held detailed meetings on future academic structures for the Faculty as well as a comprehensive review of existing programmes, gap analysis and identification of future programme opportunities.

Key actions for the reporting period:

- HEA/ DFHERIS Call for Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine and Nursing in October 2022
- The Faculty made submissions under Phase 1 and Phase 2 Expressions of interest to the HEA for an M.Pharm. Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine and Nursing programmes. The Faculty Heads subsequently met with the HEA and the Chief Executive, Alan Wall (9 March and 26 July 2023). The Faculty has continued to work collaboratively on the Veterinary Medicine submission between ATU Donegal and ATU Mountbellew Agricultural

College. The Faculty has continued to work collaboratively on the joint HEA EOI submission in Nursing between ATU Donegal, ATU Mayo and ATU St Angela's College.

- Submitted a joint response to a DFHERIS call for additional places on priority programmes for September 2023 across a number of science programmes including Nursing, Biomedical Science etc.
- Worked collaboratively on the DFHERIS Tertiary initiative for the provision of a novel pathway Level 7 programme which facilitates direct progression from the ETB to ATU in Industrial Laboratory Sciences and General Nursing.
- Completed a review of new programme planning submissions from the legacy Institutes and agreed a Faculty position on the legacy programmes at the Faculty executive (21 April 2023).
- Supported the integration of St Angela's Nursing programmes into the new Faculty.
- Hosted the Heads of University Centres of Biomedical Science Conference
- The Faculty of Science at ATU Sligo hosted the 2023 Heads of University Centres of Biomedical Science meeting on 5-6 September 2023.
- Hosted Environ 2023 at ATU Donegal.
- The 33rd Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium (Environ 2023) was organised and hosted by ATU Donegal and the ESAI and was held on 3-5 April 2023.
- Supported the EU Green European Alliance
- ATU Science and Health Faculty is an active participant in the EU Green European Alliance.
- Established the MOCHAS postgraduate research training programme (PRTP).
- Completed a collaborative submission for an SFI research center involving University of Galway, ATU Galway (Dr Deirdre Brophy) and ATU Sligo (Dr Salem Gharbia).
- The Science Faculty Heads (with Dr Lisa Ryan, Dr Jerry Bird, Dr Joanne Gallagher) and VP Research (Rick Officer) met with Professor Lisa Connolly (QUB) on research collaboration in the area of Environmental Factors and reproductive health.
- Three Science project nominations were made for the Education Awards on 27 April, 2023.
- ATU has published 254 publications in Science disciplines between April 2022 and August 2023 ("Web of Knowledge" analysis).

9.3 Engineering & Computing

The faculties of Engineering and Computing in ATU have continued to operate within their existing structures whilst awaiting the new faculty formations to be developed for ATU. However, there have been many cross-faculty collaborations amongst staff and researchers since ATU was established. The Faculty Executive was set up in June 2022 comprising of Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department and Administration Managers from all campuses. The Executive meets a minimum of six times a year to discuss a range of topics including new programme developments and issues/opportunities facing the faculties.



The faculty structures, staffing and student numbers during the period April 01, 2022 to August 31, 2023 for each faculty is summarised below:

Faculty of Engineering & Design Sligo:
4,182 (2,375 WTE) Staff: 261 (243 WTE)

Faculty of Engineering Galway:
Students: 2,907 (2,231 WTE) Staff 155 (148 WTE)

Faculty of Engineering & Technology Donegal:
Students: 1,615 (1,337 WTE) Staff: 106

Each faculty continued to grow and develop in 2022/23 with many new programmes developed and a continued expansion of craft and new consortium apprenticeships. The following is a high-level summary of some of the cross-faculty activities and inter faculty collaborations that took place:

- Launch of two new cohort-based doctoral training programmes at ATU. These Postgraduate Research Training Programmes (PRTP) were led out from the faculties of Engineering. 30 research scholarships were offered across several disciplines which commenced in 2022. They are:

Modelling and Computation for Health and Society (MOCHAS) is an interdisciplinary research training programme on modelling, computational methods, and AI applied to health, environmental and societal problems. The programme commenced in September 2022, with an induction and modelling training week in ATU Sligo in November 2022. The first ATU MOCHAS Symposium was held on the ATU Galway City campus in January 2023. A summer school for the MOCHAS programme, focussing on transversal skills was held on the ATU Letterkenny campus in June 2023.

The Operations and Supply Chain Research (OSCAR) postgraduate research training programme is a multi-disciplinary programme that focuses on training, developing and disseminating knowledge in operations and supply chain management domain, as well as advancing managerial practices through close interactions with various industries and agencies. The programme commenced in September 2022, with an induction training week in ATU Galway in October 2022. The first ATU OSCAR Symposium was held on the ATU Galway City campus in April 2023. A summer school for the OSCAR programme, focussing on transversal skills was held on the ATU Letterkenny campus in June 2023.

- Research - encouraging staff to become more research active (successful participation in PRTP calls, SFI applications, Peace+ applications, numerous Applied Research projects). Staff from Engineering were included as PIs in SFI Centres – LERO Dr Liam Morris; BiOrbic Prof Graham Heaslip, Dr Trevor Clohessy and Dr Edna Curley ATU Mountbellew.
- Successfully secured Enterprise Ireland Funding for another seven years for the Precision Engineering and Manufacturing (PEM) Centre.
- Expansion of craft and consortium apprenticeship programs and significant success in the 2023 apprenticeship expansion call for Electrical, Metal Fabrication, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning craft apprenticeships. Manufacturing Engineering apprenticeship welcomed new academic partners in TU Dublin.

- Launch of a new Civil Engineering Apprenticeship
- New tertiary programme, BSc (Hons) in Sustainable Engineering Technologies launched in July 2023.
- External Engagement & Outreach Activities included participation in Engineers Ireland STEPS Engineering your Future programme, Engineers Week, Vex Robotics competition for secondary schools, Maths Week Ireland, ICT summer camps and many more.
- WorldSkills National Apprenticeship Competitions Success: ATU had 25 students compete in the 2022 Worldskills competitions and won in five categories. The winners were:
- Achieved and retained accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) in February 2023 for new and existing construction programmes.
- Annual Engineering Expos held in Galway, Letterkenny and Sligo campuses attracting companies and showcasing 100 final year projects.
- Engineering Scholarships: Secured four Female engineering scholarships from industry.

Category	Rank	Student
Joinery	1	Barry Gordon
Joinery	2	Conor Hannify
Joinery	3	Bobby Douglas
Automotive Technology	1	Dion O'Sullivan
Restaurant Service	1	Jordan K Barrins
Digital Infrastructure Design	1	Colm Healy
Plastic Die Toolmaking	1	Conor Whelan



9.4 Education, Design & Humanities

The school was originally identified in an interim faculty of the 'Creative & Cultural Industries'. The proposed faculty was based on the strengths of the region, potential for growth, and the applied practice-based nature of the schools, departments and programmes expected to make up the faculty. This interim faculty was broken up following the KMPG brainstorming sessions and their proposal for new faculty structure.

The new proposal was also influenced by St Angelas joining the ATU. The School of Design & Creative Arts and its departments now appear in a new interim faculty with a working title of 'Education, Design & Humanities'. The proposed faculty (and its working title) is heavily focused towards the academic narrative of a traditional or classical university, reflecting the culture and aspirations of the St Angela's departments of Education and Home Economics and the department of Social Sciences (Sligo). Unfortunately, this is not a great narrative fit for practice-based industry-focused programmes that reflect the historical values and mission of Irish Technological Higher-Education Institutions. Alternative names/narratives have been proposed including 'Creative Industries, Education & Social Sciences'.

The development of a coherent, integrated faculty, operating in and across multiple campuses is expected to take some time, possibly several years. Thus, it has been suggested that this faculty may present as a coalition of strong independent schools in the intervening period.



School of Design & Creative Arts - key achievements for the reporting period:

- Continued growth in student numbers in School of Design & Creative Arts.
- Added new programme on CAO for 2023 – BA (Hons) in Creative Media & Storytelling.
- Added new entry options on CAO for 2023- BA (Hons) in Textile & Fashion Design, BA (Hons) in Interior Design, BA (Hons) in Graphic Design & Illustration, BA (Hons) in Product Design.
- Doubled first year intake capacity on CAO for 2023 – BA (Hons) Animation & Game Design.
- Expanded apprenticeships intake from six blocks to nine blocks of 'Wood Manufacturing & Finishing'.
- Progressed from semester-long to year-long placement/work-integrated learning on a number of programmes.
- Continued high levels of external engagement and partnership with Creative Enterprise West (CREW), Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI), Irish Furniture & Interiors Network (IWIN), Western Institute for Studies in Education (WISE), Ardán, Galway Culture Company, TG4, Greasán na Mean Skillnet, Western Development Commission, Údarás na Gaeltachta and others.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ATU's EDI Function is led by Professor Jacqueline McCormack as Vice-President for EDI and Online Development, an ATU-wide role which was established in April 2022. The reporting lines for the EDI Managers / Leads in the three Institutes of Technology were changed so that these positions now report to the Vice-President and thus the ATU EDI Team was effectively established in April 2022. Administrative support was available on a part time basis in each of the Institutes, but these arrangements were replaced with the creation of a full time EDI Team Administrator post, which was advertised in early 2023. The three EDI leads each have specific university-wide responsibility for one of the three national EDI priorities, namely Gender Equality, Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment, and Race Equality, in addition to maintaining a lead role on local EDI issues.

The remit of the EDI Team is, through collaboration with colleagues across the University, to promote equality and human rights in all aspects of ATU's activities, creating an environment where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect. The Team develops policies, implements action plans and organises training and awareness raising events.

ATU's Governing Body has established an EDI Committee, chaired by the Governing Body Chair, Maura McNally. The Committee held its first meeting in September 2022, meets four times per year and its role is to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities and to provide leadership and accountability for equality and diversity in all aspects of the University's activities.

An EDI Steering Group, made up of senior managers from across the University, was established in February 2023 and meets four times per year, with the role of leading and promoting the EDI agenda in the University, in recognition of the ATU's responsibility to promote human rights and equality.

Built upon the base of strong collaboration prior to the establishment of ATU, the EDI Team was able to hit the ground running. An ATU Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment policy had been developed prior to ATU's establishment and was approved by the ATU Governing Body in April 2022.



In September 2022 ATU achieved an Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Legacy Award after submitting a three-year Gender Action Plan. Emanating from the Action Plans of the three Institutes of Technology, the plan sets out 49 actions that ATU will take to promote gender equality. A range of EDI training programmes and awareness raising events were held including a Men's Health Promotion student poster competition for International Men's Day and a panel discussion for Black History Month.

From a communications perspective, the EDI Team has created an EDI website and staff portal, a monthly EDI Newsletter and is active on Social Media, initially via Twitter and currently on LinkedIn. As a result, the EDI Team and its activities are widely known across ATU, leading to significant staff engagement.

The first ATU cohort of 15 women were selected to attend the Aurora Programme, a leadership development programme for women in higher education. Across the 2022/23 Academic Year four of ATU's campuses hosted the "We are here, HEAR" exhibition which documents some of the barriers faced by refugees and people in the protection process aspiring to further their education in Ireland.

The EDI Team supported the establishment of two staff networks, AURA, the LGBTQI+ network and the Race Equality Network. These networks provide an opportunity for the voices of staff from minority groups to be heard and influence ATU policy development. In December 2022 a Universal Design and Accessibility Audit was carried out and this will provide the baseline for a Universal Design and Accessibility Policy and Action Plan which will be progressed in 2023/2024.

11. Infrastructure – digital and facilities

11.1 Infrastructure digital

Since the merger of the three former Institutes to form ATU, the Information Technology (IT) Services department acted swiftly to merge the key IT platforms that would enable and facilitate the University-wide integration projects that were to follow. The merger of expertise, resources, and a common vision within the IT Services department underscores our ambition of delivering a technologically advanced and integrated academic and professional services environment. Within the IT Services department, our day-to-day activities are managed and supported by three IT Operations managers, based on the larger campuses. At present, our IT team comprises 85 staff members who are distributed across all facets of ICT responsibility and locations.

Furthermore, in recognising the need for integrated systems, four IT Project managers were appointed in 2023 to spearhead and supervise the diverse ICT integration projects. Supported by a number of staff in dedicated project roles and further supported by specialist staff in the wider IT Services team, they orchestrated the convergence of infrastructure, systems, services, and processes across the amalgamated entities which has been critical in facilitating the University from its early days and up to now as day-to-day University activities merge and mature. The concerted efforts of the project teams have facilitated the integration of disparate technological environments, thereby laying the technological foundation of the unified ATU. The integration projects and initiatives have progressed well and continue apace, under the strategic project pillars of communication & collaboration, identity, and security.

As we advance through this transitional phase, our focus is shifting towards establishing and consolidating long-term department structures to support the strategic objectives of delivering optimal IT solutions across the four main themes of operational service delivery, best practice security services, value-adding development services, and a scalable and resilient cloud infrastructure. The commitment of our team, coupled with strategic leadership and strong planning discipline and execution, ensures that ATU is well positioned to

take advantage of technological innovation and opportunities. In parallel with our integration projects, bolstering our cybersecurity posture has become a critical pillar within the IT Services department. Recognising the evolving landscape of cyber threats and the potential impact of a cyber security attack, we embarked on a range of projects to enhance our cybersecurity protections. This has entailed a multifaceted approach encompassing a gap analysis audit, robust infrastructure improvements, comprehensive threat detection measures and response mechanisms, stringent access controls, regular staff training, and alignment to industry best practices. By prioritising cybersecurity in tandem with the IT integration projects, we continue to improve the resilience of the University against emerging cyber threats. IT governance has also been enhanced through the establishment of an IT Governance Committee and a Software Evaluation Committee.

The IT Governance Committee is a cross-functional group comprising of representatives from staff and is responsible for prioritising IT initiatives and projects in support of the University strategic goals, ensuring prudent allocation of resources, appropriate governance and oversight of IT projects, and that any technology or cyber related risks are addressed. The Software Evaluation Committee has been constituted to streamline the process of software and platform selection, procurement, and implementation. This committee evaluates prospective software solutions and cloud platforms against predefined criteria such as functionality, scalability, interoperability, security, GDPR compliance and cost-effectiveness.





11.2 Infrastructure – facilities

Progress was made during the reporting period for the appointment of various key resources in Buildings and Estates to build capacity, including the position of Head of Capital Development and various enabling resources with combined campus specific and University-wide duties.

During the reporting period, the Building & Estates team have continued to work ensuring the smooth operation, maintenance, and development of the University’s physical infrastructure across all locations. The Estates executive group continue to meet regularly and work collaboratively to meet the demands of the multi-campus environment.

Key funding applications were made during this period targeting multi-campus programmes of work including the Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF), the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme 2023-2024 (EEDPP) and the Apprenticeship expansion 2023 programme.

Key capital projects such as the EEDPP 2020/2021 projects in Letterkenny, Refurbishment & Extension Block (L) in Sligo and new Science Labs (Phase 1) on the Galway campus have been completed. Construction work neared completion on Extension (E01) during this period. Various apprenticeship projects have been completed and the University contributed to the HEA Student Accommodation Survey 2023 as part of phase 1 of the Feasibility Study. The B&E team has actively engaged with the HEA and NDFA to progress the Public Private Partnership Projects (PPP). Engagement commenced with the HEA regarding multi campus space utilisation surveys. Land registry activities and key acquisitions have also been progressing.

12. Human Resources including staffing

Category of Staff	Total	Female	Male
Academic	1,126	534	592
Admin	548	436	112
Support	273	77	196
Research/ Self-financing	189	111	78

Project Team is led by Dr Carina Ginty and is comprised of the following lecturing and support staff (x12):

- VP EDI and Online Development
- N-TUTORR ATU Institutional Lead (SLII)
- Stream 1 Student Empowerment Co-ordinator (G7)
- Stream 2 Teaching & Learning Co-ordinator (G7)
- Staff Development Coordinator (G7)
- Senior Technical Officer
- Instructional Designer
- Academic Developer (SL1 ½ post)
- Academic Developer SDGs (SL1 ½ post)
- Data Analyst/Researcher Stream 1
- Research Assistant
- MRes Researcher

13. Financial Report

The Financial Statements for the University for the 17 months ended 31 August 2023 will be published when approved by Governing Body and the Auditor’s Report issues.

N-TUTORR Fellowship Project Teams (ATU students and staff) x 28

N-TUTORR Student Champions (ATU students) x 22

N-TUTORR Academic Champions (ATU academic staff) x 22

14. Special Projects

14.1 N-TUTORR

Ireland’s technological sector, combining the new technological universities and institutes of technology, have formed a partnership to develop and deliver on the National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) programme.

The N-TUTORR programme is designed to transform learning, teaching and assessment by focussing on transforming the student experience and developing the capabilities of all staff to address a sustainable pedagogical and learning environment with particular and critical focus on Academic Integrity, Digital Transformation, Education for Sustainability, Employability, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

The N-TUTORR project is funded by the European Union and Next Generation EU.

This programme, which is overseen by the HEA, proposes to utilise the national scale and scope of the sector to deliver a best-practice suite of initiatives and opportunities for the learner, for staff development and supported by necessary enabling technologies.

The national programme of work is designed to enable and leverage digital transformations to achieve sustainable and long-lasting change in the higher education student experience. The programme aims to implement and utilise digital technologies and platforms in a manner which will enable and empower students and staff to enhance and develop their higher education experience.

Key achievements for the reporting period:

ATU was awarded funding from the N-TUTORR Students as Partners in Innovation and Change Fellowships Programme to provide an opportunity for 200 students and 68 staff members to collaborate on 28 small scale enhancement projects that will have an immediate impact on the student experience within ATU.

The N-TUTORR Student Champion Programme at ATU includes 22 students who act as change agents in transforming the student experience. These Student Champions are involved in consulting, co-creating, and leading new projects to actively engage learners in shaping the educational environment.

[Click here to find out more](#)

MyDigitalBackpack.ie, developed by N-TUTORR with ATU leading out on this development, is an online learning platform for students and staff in the TU sector that offers short courses complemented by digital badges aligned with N-TUTORR's core themes. The platform was piloted with 100 Student Champions across the TU sector. Visit [MyDigitalBackpack.ie](#)

N-TUTORR and the T&L Centre team worked on the national guiding principles for the Curriculum Framework and designed a suite of resources to support engagement with UDL, EDI, Digital T&L, Academic Integrity and Employability.

The N-TUTORR [Academic Champion](#) Programme at ATU includes 22 academic staff who play a pivotal role in the N-TUTORR project and ensure its positive impact on the University and the region. The Champions are dedicated advocates and mentors for the N-TUTORR themes and dedicate a number of hours per week to their champion role.

The reporting period also saw the design and rollout of a training needs analysis survey for all staff across ATU. An audit was conducted across the University for the allocation of funding to develop 15+ hybrid classroom facilities. The N-TUTORR project also commenced a digital transformation project including the CRM system for ATU.

14.2 Higher Ed 4.0

OFPD is also leading on two large externally funded projects within the University. Higher Education 4.0, which is funded by the HCl Pillar 3. In this project, firstly, there is an externally facing service, "Learning Pathways", which provides RPL and careers/study advisory services via [mycareerpath.ie](#), focused on accessibility and future proofing learners with industry relevant skills. This is informed by regular engagement with employers via the Business Liaison Team and various industry engagement events. The service has established a range of learning pathways and uses these pathways to advise individuals on the learning pathways available to them to achieve their career objectives or improve their employability. Further information is available via [www.mycareerpath.ie](#)

A second, internally facing service involves building a system to respond quickly to employer and learner needs in an agile, efficient and cost-effective way. Agility and responsiveness also require agile processes and appropriate policies and regulations within institutions so a significant part of this project is dedicated to developing evidence-based recommendations for policy, regulation and process changes required by agile HE institutes.

Projects completed to date include microcredential-based awards, work-based learning, project-based learning, MOOCs and Maker Spaces.

14.3 EU GREEN

In January 2023, ATU joined eight other European Universities as partners in EU GREEN, a new European University alliance for sustainability: responsible Growth, inclusive Education and Environment. EU GREEN brings together nine peripheral regionally-anchored but globally-oriented mid-sized universities from across the continent to serve our students, staff, communities and regions by working together to scale up and promote sustainability and address the major societal challenges identified in the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

GREEN is an umbrella term for sustainability and reflects our mission to contribute to a more equitable society, a more balanced economy and a more viable environment. EU GREEN is led by the University of Extremadura, Spain, the other partners are Atlantic Technological University; Évora University, Portugal; Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life

Sciences, Poland; University of Oradea, Romania; University of Gävle, Sweden; University of Angers, France and University of Parma, Italy.

The Alliance aims to increase capacity by developing joint programmes of education, building networks of researchers to target European funding bids, harnessing mobilities of students and lecturers through Blended Intensive Programmes (BiPs) and other Erasmus mobilities. Students and all staff categories can share best practice across the universities. Apart from education and research, EU GREEN has transversal work-packages on innovation, engagement, access, diversity and inclusion, and on sustainable campuses. All partners contribute to the activities, deliverables and goals of EU GREEN.

ATU are leaders for the EU GREEN's work-package on 'Engagement for Sustainable Societies and Economies' and hosted a three-day workshop in March 2024 on the Castlebar and Letterfrack campuses to co-create annual joint challenges and activities for our regions and work on strengthening strategies towards building an engagement hub to connect society and business in the EU GREEN regions. In addition, EU GREEN will host the Researcher's week in June 2024, the Academic Retreat in October 2024 and the Rector's meeting in November 2024.

ATU already has 75 staff involved in EU GREEN and there is very positive feedback on opportunities for staff and students in the Alliance. The student body is represented in the Student Council and through involvement in BiPs. Each work package is developing ways to increase and develop student activities in the coming academic year. This means that our student body will have many opportunities to share with students across the alliance in academic and extracurricular activities.

The Alliance is funded for an initial four-year period and is expected to extend for a further nine years subject to its success and implementation of a new Erasmus funding model for all Alliances. Moreover, EU GREEN partners are already working on external streams of funding to develop and strengthen the future of the Alliance.





Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University



An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education,
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