

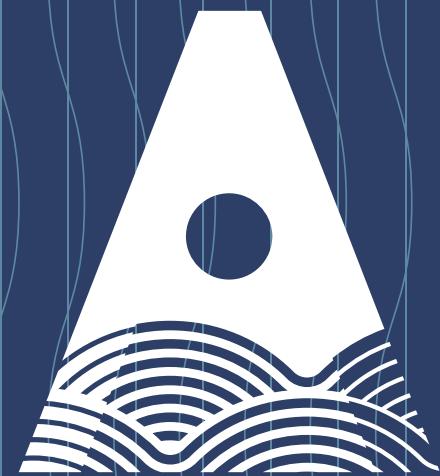


Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

# Annual Report

1 SEPTEMBER 2023 –  
31 AUGUST 2024





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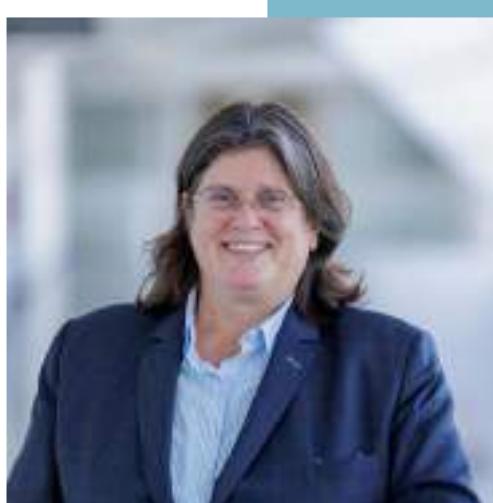
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# 1. Foreword

## 1.1 Welcome from Chair of Governing Body

On behalf of the Governing Body, I am pleased to welcome you to this Annual Report for Atlantic Technological University (ATU), covering the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. This year reflects a pivotal chapter in our development as Ireland's largest multi-campus university.

Key among our achievements was the integration of St Angela's College into ATU. This formal incorporation expanded both our institutional footprint and our potential to deliver enhanced educational access, research, and community engagement in the west and northwest.



This year also saw the culmination of Phase 1 of ATU's Organisation Design process, involving extensive consultation, national and international expert input, and the articulation of a unified structure to support academic, executive and support service excellence.

From research funding to infrastructural growth, from student access to international collaboration, ATU's trajectory this year has been clear: one of expansion with purpose, and integration with vision. Initiatives such as the TU RISE investment, the opening of new hubs like CREW and AIM, and the expansion of campus facilities under Project Ireland 2040, demonstrate the Government's confidence in our role in regional development and national transformation.

We are confident that ATU is evolving with both clarity of purpose and commitment to public good.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maura McNally SC".

Maura McNally SC  
Chair, Governing Body  
Atlantic Technological University

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## 1.2 Welcome from the President of Atlantic Technological University

This reporting period marks a further phase of growth, integration, and ambition for Atlantic Technological University (ATU) as we continued to shape a university of regional strength and national significance.

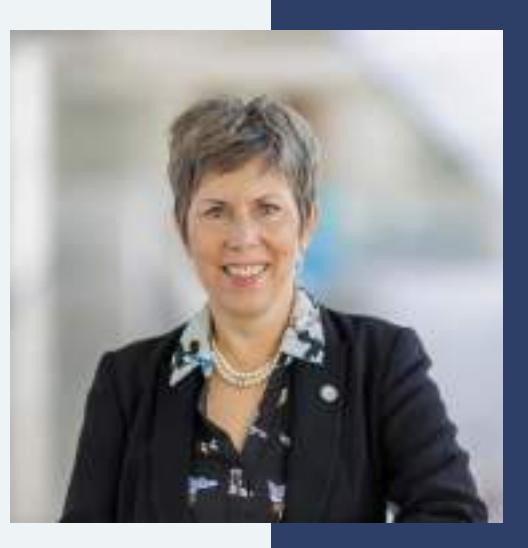
One of the most significant developments during this year was the formal incorporation of St Angela's College into ATU on 1 November 2023. This historic step expanded our university community and enriched our academic offerings and student experience across the north-west region.

In parallel, ATU advanced its organisational design process, engaging in wide-ranging consultation with staff, students, and external experts. This process culminated in a proposed high-level university structure, designed to empower strategic leadership and unified academic delivery across four faculties and six senior professional functions.

Academically, our momentum continued to build. With over 4,600 new first-year students joining us in September 2023 and a 5% increase in CAO Round 1 offers, we saw clear evidence of ATU's growing national appeal. We celebrated significant infrastructural milestones, such as the opening of the PEM Technology Gateway and the expansion of the Sligo campus with the official opening of the €35m new development.

Research and innovation were central themes, bolstered by €19.6 million in TU RISE funding, 60 new PhD scholarships, and targeted investment through the Technological Sector Advancement Fund.

Our Alumni Office was officially launched in October, tapping into a potential alumni network of over 100,000.



Finally, I want to thank our staff, students, alumni and partners for their commitment, creativity, and shared belief in our mission. The foundations laid this year position ATU for even greater impact in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orla Flynn".

Dr Orla Flynn  
President, Atlantic Technological University

## 2. Governing Body and Governance

### 2.1 Legislative Background

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 (the University) was established under the terms of the Technological Universities Act 2018, through SI 56 of 2022. In a further development of the University, St Angela's College, Clogherrevagh, Sligo was incorporated into the University on 1 November 2023 on foot of an order from the Minister for FHERIS dated 5 July 2023 (SI no. 356 of 2023). Section 22 of the Act empowers the C&AG to prescribe dates for the first financial period after establishment of a technological university. The first financial period of the University covered the 17-month period from 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2023, with subsequent financial periods covering 12 months and ending on 31 August each year.

### 2.2 Governing Body

The University's Governing Body was established under the Technological University Act 2018, as amended by the HEA Act 2022. The University's Governing Body is accountable to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and is responsible for ensuring good governance. The University's Governing Body is collectively responsible for leading and directing the University's activities and fulfils key functions, including reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets and business plans, setting performance objectives, monitoring implementation and University performance, and overseeing major capital expenditure and investment decisions. The University's Governing Body acted on a fully informed and ethical basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the University, having due regard to its legal responsibilities and the objectives set by Government. The University's Governing Body seek to comply with best practice public principles in its own activities and its use of committees.

### 2.3 Strategic Plan, Annual Programmes and Budget

The University's Governing Body had formally undertaken an evaluation of actual performance by reference to the Connacht-Ulster Alliance application for designation as a Technological University which sets out the initial strategic pillars for the University and has subsequently approved an Annual Programme and Budget for the University. The University's Strategic Plan was approved by the Governing Body on 19 February 2024.

### 2.4 Governing Body Operation, Reserved Functions and Decisions Delegated to Management

The University's Governing Body is collectively responsible for leading and directing the University's activities in compliance with the Interim Code of Governance. All functions and decisions that are not specifically listed within the Code of Governance are functions and decisions of management.

### 2.5 Compliance with Public Spending Code and the Infrastructure Guidelines

The University adhered to the relevant aspects of the Public Spending Code and the Infrastructure Guidelines and the University's Governing Body ensured robust and effective systems and procedures were in place to ensure compliance with the relevant principles, requirements, and guidelines of the Public Spending Code and Infrastructure Guidelines. ATU adhered to the Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Proposals where appropriate. The Capital Works Management policy was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 24 June 2024.

### 2.6 Governing Body Meetings

During the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 the University's Governing Body met on eight separate occasions on the following dates: 4 September 2023, 2 October 2023, 6 November 2023, 11 December 2023, 19 February 2024, 25 March 2024, 13 May 2024, 24 June 2024.

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**Governing Body Meetings Attended from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024****Number of meetings: 8**

Name	Role	Date Appointed	Meetings attended
Maura McNally	Chairperson	01.04.2022	8/8
Dr Orla Flynn	President	01.04.2022	8/8
Barry Breslin (30.06.2024)	Student Member	24.07.2023	4/8
Dr Brian De Souza	Staff Member	06.11.2023	5/5
Brian McCann (31.03.2024)	Staff Member	13.06.2022	6/6
Dara Foynes	External Member	04.07.2022	7/8
David Minton	External Member	04.07.2022	3/8
Felim McNeela (31.03.2024)	External Member	01.04.2022	6/6
Jeremiah Egberongbe (30.06.2024)	Student Member	24.07.2023	8/8
Joanne Grehan	External Member	06.11.2023	3/5
Joe Cunningham	External Member	06.11.2023	4/5
Dr John Bartlett	Staff Member	06.11.2023	5/5
John Daffy	Staff Member	06.11.2023	5/5
Dr Martin Robinson	Staff Member	13.06.2022	8/8
Michael Geoghegan (31.03.2024)	Staff Member	13.06.2022	6/6
Michael Gilvarry	External Member	29.08.2022	7/8
Oonagh Monahan	External Member	01.04.2022	6/8
Prof Rachel Ashworth	External Member	26.09.2022	3/8
Regina Daly	Staff Member	06.11.2023	5/5
Sarah Mohan	Student Member	24.07.2023	6/8
Séamus Hughes	External Member	29.08.2022	6/8
Ursula Cox (17.02.2024)	Staff Member	13.06.2022	5/5
Anne McHugh (12.12.2023)	External Member	01.04.2022	2/4
Dr Mary Kelly (31.10.2023)	External Member	29.08.2022	0/2
Mary McGinley (12.12.2023)	External Member	04.07.2022	4/4
Gareth Roe (07.11.2023)	Staff Member	13.06.2022	3/3
Patricia King (31.10.2023)	External Member	29.08.2022	2/2
Kevin Sweeney	Student Member	01.07.2024	0/0
Julia Bocianowska	Student Member	01.07.2024	0/0

Governing Body members are appointed for a term of four years with the exception of student union nominees who are appointed to serve for a term of one year.

## 2.7 Risk Management

The University's Governing Body approved the risk management framework and monitored its effectiveness, approval, and exercised oversight of ATU's Risk Management Policy including structured and periodic reviews and updates to the University Corporate Risk Register by the Executive Management Team. This review included an assessment of the principal risks, risk rating and associated mitigations for each of the risks set out in the University Corporate Risk Register.

- Membership
- Reporting Requirements
- Authority to investigate
- Meetings – timing, conduct and frequency
- Information requirements
- Value for money
- Governance and responsibilities regarding;
  - Risk Management
  - Internal Control
  - Internal Audit
  - External Audit
  - Review of its own effectiveness

## 2.8 Audit and Risk Committee

The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee were set by the Governing Body of the University and included provision regarding:

The University's Governing Body was satisfied that the Audit and Risk Committee has discharged its role effectively and efficiently and had met the requirements with regard to frequency of meetings in this academic year.

### Audit & Risk Committee Meetings attended from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

Name	Date Appointed to Committee	Meetings attended
Mary McGinley	13.04.2022	6/6
Paraic Casey	13.04.2022	4/6
David Leahy	13.04.2022	2/6
Philip Maguire	13.04.2022	5/6
LeeAnn McGinley (24.10.22 to 22.01.25)	24.10.2022	4/6
Anne McHugh (13.04.22 to 11.12.23)	13.04.2022	3/3
John Geary (21.11.22 to 11.03.24)	21.11.2022	2/4
Joe Cunningham	11.12.2023	3/3
Joanne Grehan	25.03.2024	1/1
David Minton	25.03.2024	0/1
Áine Murray	24.06.2024	0/0

Audit and Risk Committee meetings were held on 12 September 2023, 20 November 2023, 27 November 2023, 6 February 2024, 15 March 2024 and 14 May 2024.

## 2.9 Other Committee Meetings

Details of membership and meetings held during the year.

Name	Date Appointed to Subcommittee	Meetings attended
<b>Finance Subcommittee</b>		
Felim McNeela (24.10.22 - 31.03.24)	24.10.2022	6/6
Ursula Cox (24.10.22 - 20.02.24)	24.10.2022	2/3
Larissa Feeney	21.11.2022	5/7
Dr Orla Flynn	24.10.2022	7/7
Joe Gannon	21.11.2022	5/7
Dr Mary Kelly (24.10.22 - 04.11.23)	24.10.2022	0/1
Paul Shelly	21.11.2022	7/7
Conor Murphy	11.12.2023	6/6
John Daffy	25.03.2024	1/1
<b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EDI) Subcommittee</b>		
Maura McNally	09.05.2022	2/4
Dr Orla Flynn	09.05.2022	4/4
Prof Jacqueline McCormack	09.05.2022	4/4
Prof Owen Barr	26.09.2022	2/4
Brian McCann (20.02.23 - 31.03.24)	20.02.2023	3/3
Tonye Benson Olatunde	15.05.2023	4/4
Sarah Mohan	04.09.2023	3/4
John Daffy	11.12.2023	2/2
Regina Daly	11.12.2023	2/2
Oonagh Monahan (15.05.23 - 25.03.24)	15.05.2023	2/3
<b>External Nominations Committee</b>		
Maura McNally	09.05.2022	4/5
Oonagh Monahan	09.05.2022	3/5
Ann McHugh (09.05.22 - 04.09.23)	09.05.2022	0/0
Felim McNeela (09.05.22 - 31.03.24)	09.05.2022	4/4
Joe Cunningham	13.05.2024	1/1
David Minton	13.05.2024	1/1
Brian De Souza	13.05.2024	1/1

Name	Date Appointed to Subcommittee	Meetings attended
<b>Strategic Development Subcommittee</b>		
Oonagh Monahan	20.02.2023	3/3
Dr Orla Flynn	20.02.2023	3/3
Maura McNally	20.02.2023	1/3
Henry McGarvey	20.02.2023	3/3
Dr Martin Robinson	20.02.2023	3/3
Dara Foynes	20.02.2023	0/0
David Minton	20.02.2023	0/0
Allan Mulrooney	19.02.2024	2/2
Majella Maher	19.02.2024	2/2
Breege Conroy	19.02.2024	2/2
Seamus Hughes (20.2.23 - 19.2.24)	20.02.2023	0/1
Sarah Mohan (01.09.23 - 30.06.24)	01.09.2023	2/3
<b>Honorary Doctorate Committee</b>		
Maura McNally (Chair)	19.02.2024	1/1
Dr Billy Bennett (Secretary)	19.02.2024	1/1
Dara Foynes	25.03.2024	1/1
Frances Lucy	19.02.2024	1/1
Sarah Mohan	19.02.2024	0/1
Dr Orla Flynn	19.02.2024	1/1
<b>ICT (Information &amp; Communication Technology) Subcommittee of Audit and Risk Committee</b>		
LeeAnn McGinley (14.05.24 - 22.01.25)	14.05.2024	0/0
Mary McGinley	14.05.2024	0/0
Sean Hanna	14.05.2024	0/0
Tony Miller	14.05.2024	0/0
Joe Dolan	14.05.2024	0/0

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Finance subcommittee meetings were held on 25 October 2023, 19 January 2024, 12 February 2024, 6 March 2024, 15 March 2024, and 5 June 2024.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee meetings were held on 11 September 2023, 13 November 2023, 11 March 2024 and 27 May 2024.

External Nominations Committee meetings were held on 4 September 2023, 11 September 2023, 23 October 2023, 13 March 2024 and 13 May 2024.

Strategic Development subcommittee meetings were held on 23 January 2024, 30 April 2024 and 6 June 2024.

The first meeting of the Honorary Doctorate Committee was held on 26 April 2024.

The first meeting of the ICT subcommittee of ARC was held on 24 September 2024.

## **2.10 Performance Evaluation of the Governing Body and its Committees**

The University's Governing Body was committed to performing annual reviews of its effectiveness. An external review was not carried out during this period but is planned for 2025. A Self-Assessment by the Governing Body took place in May 2024.



## 3. President's Office

### 3.1 Communications

From September 2023 to August 2024, ATU's Communications Office continued to embed and evolve the integrated communications structure introduced during the previous reporting cycle. With the foundational restructuring complete, the team transitioned from interim operations to a more coordinated, university-wide model that prioritised collaboration, consistency of messaging, and strategic engagement with internal and external audiences.

The communications function now operates under a unified structure. The team spans all campuses and includes dedicated officers for digital communications, regional media relations, and publications. With the formal incorporation of St Angela's College into ATU on 1 November 2023, the Communications Office expanded its remit to the University's ninth campus. This centralised and coordinated model ensures that communications staff are contributing to shared goals and university-wide messaging.

Throughout the year, the Communications Office continued to:

- Produce and distribute a **monthly internal staff newsletter**.
- Issue **press releases, statements**, and updates via the **ATU website, intranet**, and **social media**

### platforms.

- Circulate the **ATU Magazine** promoting institutional developments to external stakeholders through email and digital platforms.

This period marked a consolidation of ATU's communications capability, laying a strong foundation for future engagement, brand development, growth and strategic visibility. The coordinated approach continues to build awareness of ATU's mission, values, and impact across Ireland and beyond.

### 3.2 Strategic Planning

Atlantic Technological University's Strategic Plan envisions ATU as a globally connected, regionally embedded university driving academic excellence, innovation, and sustainability. Its five pillars centred on education, research, ecosystem, transformation, and sustainability, guide its mission to enrich the West and North-West of Ireland.

The HEA Performance Agreement (2024–2028) aligns with this vision, setting measurable objectives across learning and teaching, research, enterprise engagement, and regional development. It supports ATU's role in addressing socio-economic challenges in a diverse region, ensuring accountability through annual reporting and strategic dialogue with the HEA, while enabling ATU to scale its impact and infrastructure.



### 3.3 Organisation Structures including UPT

UPT listing with the standard members and the rotating HoF/HoSs during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

#### UPT members as of 1 September 2023

- Dr Orla Flynn, President
- Dr Michael Hannon, Head of Galway-Mayo College (replaced by Professor Graham in November 2023)
- Paul Hannigan, Head of Donegal College
- Úna Parsons, Head of Sligo College
- Dr Billy Bennett, VP with responsibility for Academic Affairs and Registry
- Elizabeth McCabe, VP with responsibility for Finance
- Henry McGarvey, VP with responsibility for Campus Infrastructure, HR Operations
- Professor Jacqueline McCormack, VP for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Online Development
- Dr Sean Duffy, VP with responsibility for ATU Integration
- Dr Rick Officer, VP with responsibility for Research and Innovation (*replaced by Dr Des Foley, January 2024*)
- **Thomas Dowling** (*Faculty representative on a rotational basis Aug 2023 – Dec 2023, replaced by Úna Parsons, January - April 2024 and Graham Heaslip May – August 2024*)
- **Dr Lisa Ryan** (*Faculty representative on a rotational basis Aug 2023 – Dec 2023, replaced by Dr Joanne Gallagher, January - April 2024 and Justin Kerr, May – August 2024*)
- **Dr Breda McTaggart** (*Faculty representative on a rotational basis Aug 2023 – Dec 2023, replaced by Dr Seamus Lennon, January- April 2024 and Michael Margey, May – August 2024*)
- **Dr Amanda McCloat** (*Faculty representative on a rotational basis Aug 2023 – Dec 2023 and May - August 2024, replaced by Cait Noone/Patrick Tobin, January 2023- April 2023*)

### 3.4 Compliance with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

During the reporting period of September 2023 to August 2024, Atlantic Technological University (ATU) continued to strengthen its compliance with the Official Languages Act, including the new obligations set out in the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021. In accordance with Section 4B(b), updates

were provided where appropriate by the Irish Language Development Officer, who was appointed on a full-time contract in January 2024, in conjunction with the named senior management member regarding the implementation of the University's statutory obligations under the Act.

Progress was made across several key areas, including the provision of bilingual services, the publication of official documents in both Irish and English, the visibility of Irish in signage and stationery, and the handling of correspondence received in Irish.

Notable progress was made in increasing the visibility of the Irish language across the University, including the continued rollout of bilingual signage, the use of Irish in recorded announcements, and the inclusion of Irish in public-facing promotional materials and advertisement. Internal awareness-raising initiatives were also conducted to support staff and student understanding of the University's obligations and to encourage the organic and appropriate use of Irish across University settings.

No major discrepancies were reported by the Irish Language Officer during this period. Nonetheless, several areas for continued development were identified, among them but not limited to:

- Standardisation of bilingual practices across all campuses and departments remains an ongoing challenge, particularly in relation to consistency in communications and signage.
- Capacity for Irish language training for staff should be expanded to meet increased demand and support frontline service delivery.
- Lack of formal mechanisms for internal tracking or evaluation of the extent to which Irish is used in communication with the public or within the University itself.
- Inconsistent availability of bilingual forms and templates, particularly in digital formats, has been noted in some administrative units.
- Delayed or limited simultaneous publication of certain documents in both Irish and English requires further attention to ensure compliance with legislative timelines.

ATU remains committed to meeting its statutory obligations under the Official Languages Acts and to supporting the broader aim of fostering Irish as a living and working language within the University community.

## 4. High-level integration activities including STACS

Within its first year, ATU commenced 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. This work continued during 2023 and 2024.

The Academic Working Group and the Operations/PMSS Working Group reported 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 were assessed against an agreed set of organisation design principles. The principles reflected the developing ATU strategy and were used to objectively assess the options for each of the high-level structures (Executive, Academic and PMSS).

In early 2024, the President held a series of consultation sessions with all professional, management and support service functions and all heads of faculty/school and departments. Following feedback from the managers, the high level organisation structure model was finalised by the President by the end of Q1 2024. The design of ATU's Executive Structure focused on two elements, the Academic Structures which proposes four university-wide faculties which will include Schools and Departments. The second component was the Professional, Management and Support Services (PMSS) model which will comprise six Chief Officer roles.

A Business Case was prepared and presented to DFHERIS in Q2 2024, outlining the rationale for ATU's new Senior Leadership Team (SLT). At the start of Q3 2024, following a tendering process, external consultants were appointed to assist ATU with Phase 2 of its Organisation Design process.



During the 2023/2024 period, ATU's President chaired meetings of the University Planning Team (UPT) which are scheduled to be held in person (rotating amongst the University campuses) and online. The group is representative of all ATU heads of function. Four representatives of the Heads of Faculty/School join the UPT on a rotational basis.

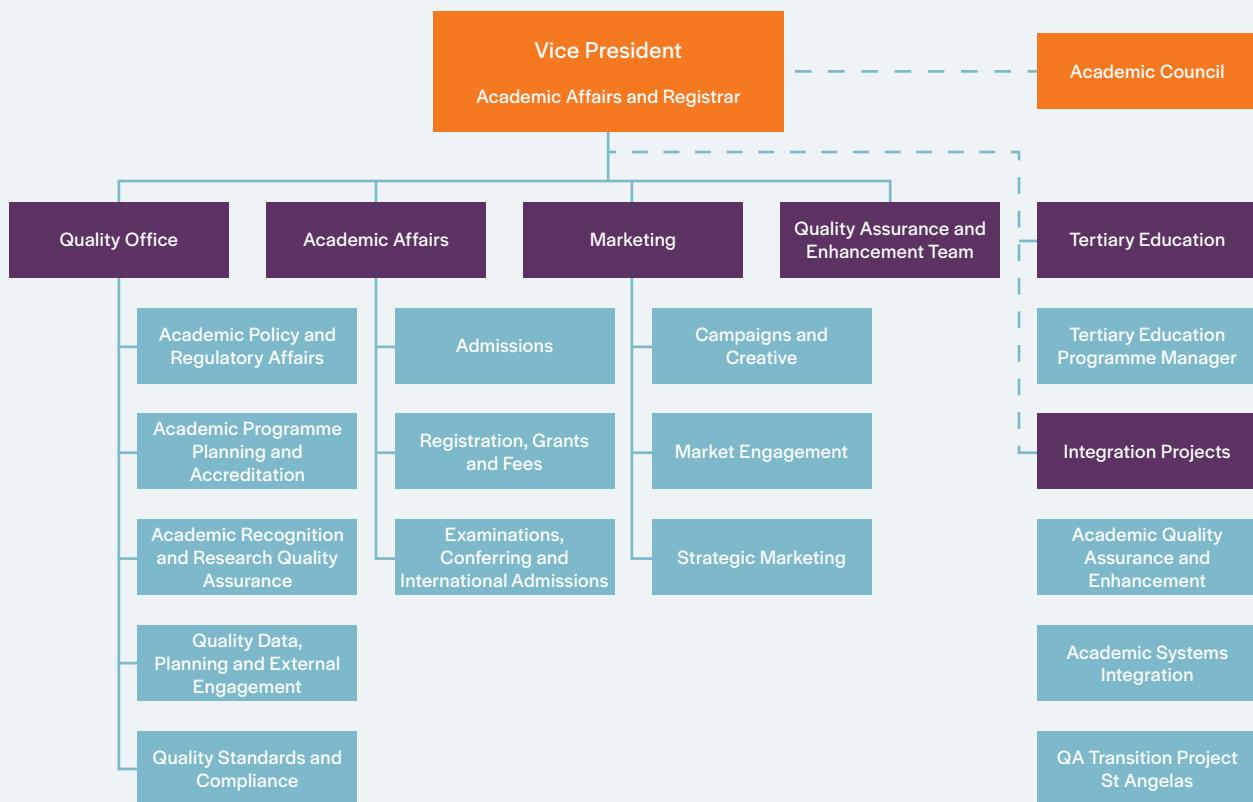
Under section 44 of the Technological Universities Act (2018), as amended by the Higher Education Authority Act 2022, St Angela's College was incorporated into ATU on 01 November 2023. IT and systems integration commenced in advance of the 2024/25 academic year, enabling St. Angela's staff and students to access ATU's e-mail, MS Teams and related systems.

## 5. Academic Affairs, Students, Teaching and Learning

This is the second report from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) covering the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. Since the establishment of ATU the

office of the VPAAR has responsibility for: Quality, Academic Affairs, Marketing, Academic Council, and since May 2024 the Quality Assurance Enhancement Framework (QAEF).

### Organisational Chart 31 August 2024



The University Academic Affairs Executive (UAAE) comprises the three Academic Affairs Managers; the five Assistant Registrars; the Academic Systems Integration Project; the Tertiary Education Project Manager; the St Angela's QA Transitions Project Manager and the VPAAR (Chair).

Towards the end of this period, a further restructuring of the function was planned, with a fourth pillar to come under Academic Affairs (Academic Planning, Reporting and Systems), with a commensurate change in the structure of the Quality Office; this revised structure will be implemented early in the 2024/25 academic year.

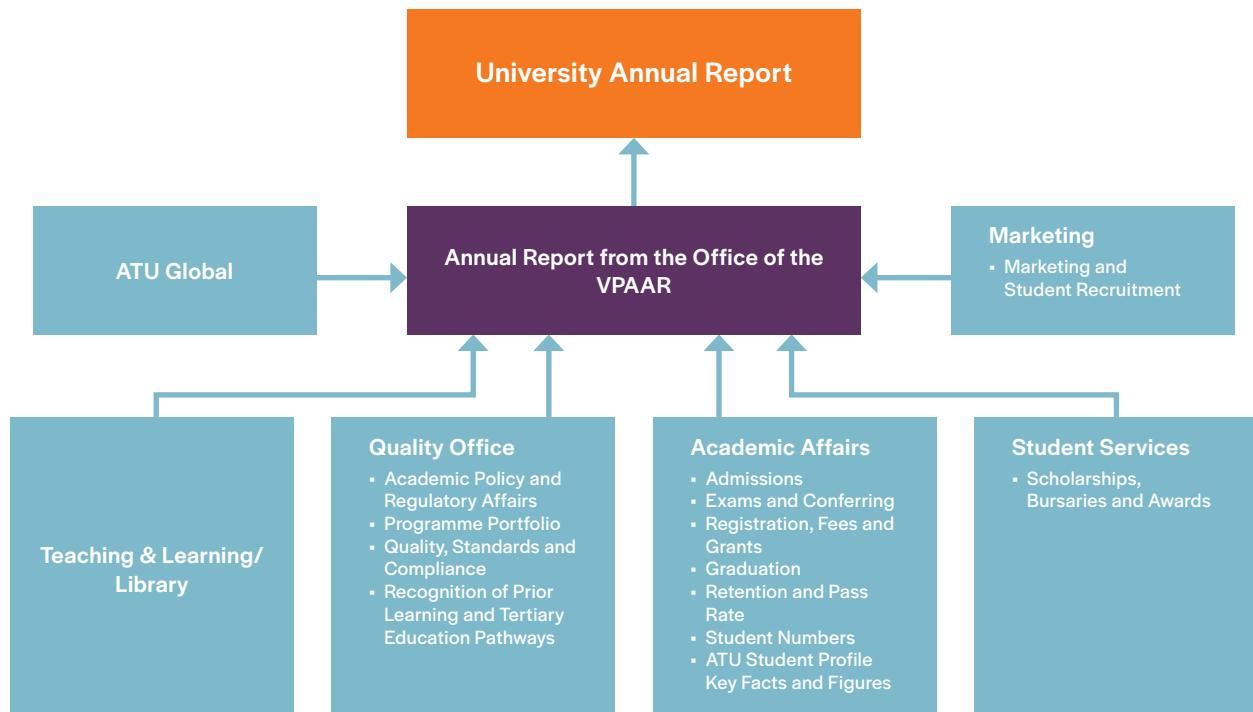
Each of the Academic Affairs Managers and Assistant Registrars have a university-wide remit, while retaining responsibility for management of staff and budgets on their local campus; the latter was necessary as three separate HR and Finance systems were in place. During 2024/25 we will further centralise management of staff and budgets via the merged CORE and AGRESSO systems.

The University Marketing Executive (UME) comprises the Marketing Managers and the VPAAR (Chair). Both the UAAE and UME meet approximately every three weeks, with meetings alternating between in-person and online, and meeting venues rotating

between campuses. At each executive meeting, the VPAAR reports on key decisions and issues from the Governing Body, Academic Council and UPT. Each of the managers reports on their ATU wide activities, progress on integration, policy, procedural and process developments, budgets and staffing.

Executive meetings are important in managing, planning, and communicating the work of the Quality, Academic Affairs, and Marketing functions. The meetings provide a forum to align activities with the Strategic Plan (Section 8) and our responsibilities under the Climate Action Mandate (Section 9).

### Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar – Reporting Framework



### 5.1 Academic Council

The Academic Council has a statutory basis under the Technological Universities Act 2018 as amended by the Higher Education Authority Act 2022. The Governing Body has responsibility to set out the regulations for the operation of the Academic Council for the number of members, selection and appointment, term of office, Standing Orders, and other criteria for operation. The Academic Council of ATU comprises elected and ex-officio academic staff and managers, student representatives and administrative staff. The functions of the Academic Council are set out under Chapter 5 of the Technical Universities Act, in short this is to:

- Control the academic affairs of the Technological University, including the curriculum of the instruction and education provided by the Technological University.
- Have regard to the resources available.
- The Council operation itself is subject to review.

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

- 15 September (online)
- 27 October 2023 (Donegal, Letterkenny campus)
- 8 December 2023 (online)
- 9 February 2024 (online)
- 19 April 2024 (Galway City campus)
- 17 June 2024 (online)

The President is the Chairperson of the Council and chairs all meetings when present. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar is the Secretary to the Council. The Council may establish any number of committees as it considers necessary in specialised areas to assist it, in its work. The members of the committee may be drawn from the Academic Council and other members of ATU staff. The Council established the following six Committees to help it in its work:

- Academic Planning and Strategy
- Academic Programmes

- Academic Standards and Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Student Experience and Access
- Research and Innovation

The agenda and documents for Academic Council are shared one week in advance of the meetings via the Academic Council SharePoint site. The approved minutes are saved on the staff hub for all staff to view and a reminder is sent to all staff when they become available. They are also shared with Governing Body. The actions and decisions from Academic Council are shared with UPT.

A summary of the main work of Council is captured below:

Approved at Academic Council 2023/24	Total
Revision to Policies	3
New Policies	12
Major Programmes	11
Micro-credentials Awards	29
Special Purpose Awards	13
Differential validations	10
Collaborative Agreements	5

*Table 1: Summary of items approved at Academic Council (2023/24)*

## 5.2 Quality Office

### Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs

Dr Aodhmar Cadogan, Assistant Registrar, has university-wide responsibility for academic policy and regulatory affairs, which includes the following areas:

- Marks and Standards Policy and related processes
- Collaborations and Partnerships
- External Examination Management
- Document Control and support the development of QAE Framework
- Support integration of ATU St Angela's campus

### Marks and Standards Policy

The rules and regulations for the assessment of student awards is detailed in the Marks and Standards Policy. This was revised twice in the review period based on feedback and use in 2022/23. Recorded training videos for Marks and Standards were provided separately for staff and students.

### Collaborations and Partnerships

The Collaboration and Partnerships Committee of UPT met regularly during the year with some changes to the membership and chair. The committee review proposed collaborations and draft agreements and makes final recommendations to the President/UPT. The quality assurance for collaborative programmes is governed by AQAE038 Collaborative Provision of Programmes Policy, approved in April 2024.

The management of the administration of the collaborative programmes for two Insurance Institutes continues, with significant increase in student numbers and programme development.

### External Examination Management

The consolidation and integration of External Examination is largely complete. All External Examiners' contracts commencing from 01 October 2023 were aligned. Criteria for appointment of External Examiners were aligned from September 2023 and formalised with the approval of AQAE014 Procedure for External Examination in December 2023. As part of the preparation for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) for CINNTE, a survey of active External Examiners was completed in mid-February 2024. A total of 101 responses were received from 323 active External Examiners. Overall, the response from the survey was positive has provided some very rich and valuable feedback for future enhancements.

### Support development of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Framework

More progress has been achieved in the review period, with the development of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) framework i.e., unified policies and procedures for the University, led by the QAE Team (see Section 7 below). A substantive amount of award standards (12) and forms (8) were approved. This work will continue for the next academic year, prioritising areas based on academic need, risks, and status of legacy documents.

The Policy and Procedure Repository continues to evolve to improve use and accessibility, the total number of approved documents increased from 12 to 43 by 31 August 2024.

### Support Integration of ATU St Angela's campus

The enactment of the Technological Universities Act, 2018 (TU Act) set out the process of consolidation and merger of the Institute of Technology sector and provided the legislative basis for the formation of ATU. Under section 44 of the Technological Universities Act 2018, as amended by the Higher Education Authority Act 2022, St Angela's College was fully incorporated into ATU on 1 November 2023 to become ATU St Angelas. This will allow the linked provider agreement of 2022 between St Angelas and IT Sligo/ATU to cease. All student records are now managed in the ATU Banner system and curriculum management, financial, human resource and other systems are now aligned. Any remaining alignment of systems will be completed by the end of 2024.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs Report	Academic Council

Table 2: Reports produced by Academic Policy and Regulatory Affairs 2023/24

### Quality Standards and Compliance

Declan Courell joined the Quality Office as an Assistant Registrar following the integration of St Angela's College into ATU. His previous role was Registrar of St Angela's College. Declan assumed responsibility for various functions within the Quality Office, including membership of the CINNTE Coordination Group and Chair of the CINNTE Communications Committee.

He collaborated with Dr Aodhmar Cadogan in developing various Marks and Standards related procedures. Once draft procedures are ratified, online WebApp forms and process flows will be designed. Data protection requirements are being addressed. These online forms will assist in collating essential data for quality monitoring and report purposes.

Once procedures are ratified, the management and oversight of ATU Student Complaints and ATU Disciplinary Hearings will be centralised to ensure a streamlined, efficient and consistent process relating to Student Complaints and Disciplinary Hearings.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Quality Office Standards and Compliance Report	Academic Council

Table 3: Reports produced by Quality Standards and Compliance 2023/24

### Academic Programme Planning and Accreditation

In 2023/24, 52 new families of programmes went through validation and were approved by Academic Council as outlined in Table 4.

Programme Type*	Number of Validations
Doctorate	0
Masters	10
Higher Diploma	0
Bachelor (Hons)	2
Bachelor Ab initio	0
SPA/Minor/Supplemental Awards	5
Differential Validations	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

\*Includes highest award in 'family' of programmes only.

Table 4: Summary of Programme Validations 2023/24

During the same period, changes were made to 41 programmes, including 16 Differential Validations, and 20 submissions to amend modules were made in accordance with policy. See table 5.

Programme/Module Changes Processed 2023/24	Total
Type A Major Changes to Programmes	16
Type B Minor Changes to Programme	25
Type C Major Changes to Modules	15
Type D Minor Changes to Modules	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

Table 5: Types of Changes to Programmes and Modules 2023/24

During the reporting period, 23 new programme proposals for major awards were approved as outlined in Table 6.

Proposals by Interim Faculties 2023/24	Total
Business	2
Education, Design & Humanities	1
Engineering & Computing	7
Science & Health	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 6: Proposals by Interim Faculties 2023/24

A resource hub to support staff involved in developing, validating and modifying modules and programmes was created and populated with relevant information, links, timelines, videos and FAQs, as part of the Quality Office SharePoint on StaffHub.

Academic Module Manager (AMM) was upgraded to version 4.0 in all legacy colleges following extensive testing and building of new output documentation and help documents and videos. The input of modules (1,900) and programmes (464) from the Donegal campus onto AMM was completed with staff introduced to the system through online information sessions. St Angela's programmes were later added.

Following the approval of the micro-credential policy, systems and processes were developed to allow their approval, with the first micro-credential being validated in June.

A register of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) who recognise ATU programmes was compiled. 40 bodies recognise nearly 100 programmes. As part of ATU's obligation in relation to public information a Quality Assurance section of the website was developed providing access to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework, and information on Academic Council, programme quality, monitoring and reviews.

Title of Report	Submitted to
1 Programme Portfolio Report	Academic Council

Table 7: Reports produced by Academic Programme Planning and Accreditation 2023

### Academic Recognition and Research QA

The Access, Transfer and Progression working group and the QAET coordinated the introduction of AQAE037 Access, Transfer and Progression Policy. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Unit continues to work to meet ATU's commitments under the HCI/THEA National RPL project. The RPL Unit coordinates RPL activities, including RPL applications for entry, advanced entry and module exemptions. The RPL unit provides an additional support to the faculties resulting in enhanced capacity to deal with the increasing number of RPL queries received by ATU.

ATU operates the Postgraduate Research Admissions Committee (PRAC) to approve all new admissions for MRes and PhD students. PRAC approves the transfers of existing students from Level 9 MRes to Level 10 PhD. The operation of PRAC has supported the development of shared, best practice across the University and has facilitated the approval for registration of all 60 of ATU's TU RISE PhD scholars; 34 new and/or transfers to PhD; and 5 MRes. AQAE011 Research Degree Policy provides for the continuation of PRAC with an ATU wide remit and membership.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Recognition of Prior Learning and Tertiary Education Pathways Annual Report	Academic Council

Table 8: Reports produced by RPL and Tertiary Education 2023/24

### Quality Data, Reporting and Planning

Aedín O'Heocha, Assistant Registrar, has university-wide responsibility for Quality Data, Reporting and Planning. An area on the Staff Hub, dedicated to making reports and dashboards available to staff across ATU, has been maintained and a suite of reports and dashboards, developed by the Quality Data, Reporting and Planning Office, are listed below:

Reports produced by this function in 2023/24		Submitted to
1	Graduates 2023	Academic Council
2	Student Numbers 2023/24	Academic Council and Governing Body
3	Key Facts and Figures 2023/24	Academic Council and Governing Body
4	Retention and Pass Rate	Academic Council
5	First Year Progression 2022/23 into 2023/24	Academic Council

Table 9: Reports produced by Quality Data, Reporting and Planning 2023/24

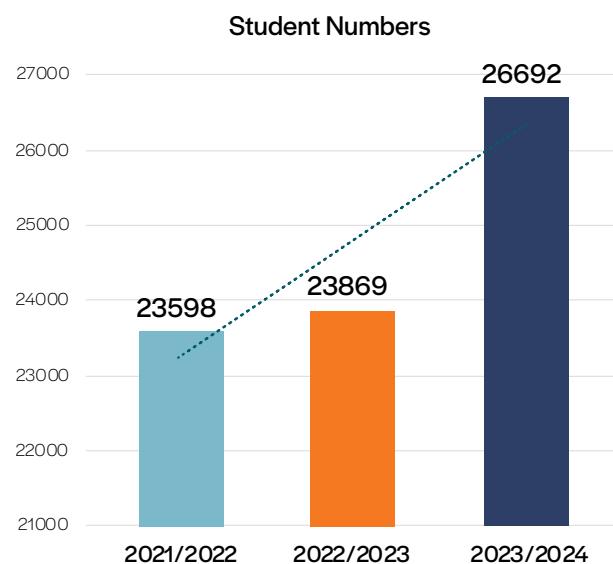
Weekly student numbers are also available to staff via Operational Power BI and the reports above are also available to all staff. Below is an overview of ATU student numbers over the last three academic years, showing an increase of 13% from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

### 5.3 Academic Affairs

#### Admissions

The first ATU CAO season closed on the 5 October 2023 with a net acceptance of 4,701 students; in 2022/23, CAO admissions were managed via the legacy structures. Following the close of CAO, the Admissions staff had a face-to-face meeting which took place on the Sligo campus to discuss the processes and procedures and any planned changes for the following season. Weekly meetings continued throughout the year. The CAO conferences took place in the first two weeks of November. These were an opportunity for the Academic Affairs Manager (Admissions) to present any changes/additions to our CAO portfolio to Guidance Councillors across Ireland.

The Admissions Office had a presence at all three main campus Open Days and gave a talk and presentation to parents and potential applicants. The same presentation was delivered at all Open Days ensuring the same message was delivered regardless of campus location. Work commenced on the new Access, Transfer and Progression policy in early October. The Academic Affairs Manager (Admissions) was part of a working group that fed into this policy. The policy was approved at Academic Council on 19 April 2024.



In March 2024, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and the 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. These were face-to-face meetings on the campus that the school was based on with the Head of School/Faculty and Heads of Department.

Formal confirmation was then issued to the Academic Affairs Manager (Admissions). These meetings led to 13 programmes being removed from the CAO Handbook for 2025 entry and 10 programmes not being offered for 2024. Further discussions took place during the week of Round 1 allocations. These meetings led to a total of six programmes not issuing any offers at Round 1 2024. During the course of June and July, procedures were further aligned for the assessment of mature applicants through CAO and for those presenting Other School Exams (OSE).

The Defer Application process and the Internal Transfer process were both aligned across ATU with online forms introduced to assist with the inter campus requests.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Admissions Report	Academic Council /UPT

Table 10: Reports produced by Admissions 2023/24

## Registration, Grants and Fees

Deirdre Johnston, Academic Affairs Manager, has university-wide responsibility for registration, fees and grants. The following were the main areas of focus during the reporting period: ATU Fees Policy, ATU Fees Committee, and development of relevant procedures. The Academic Affairs Manager, in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar drafted the ATU Fees Policy which was approved by the ATU University Planning Team (UPT) on 29 November 2023 and the ATU Governing Body on 11 December 2023.

The Academic Affairs Manager, in consultation with the VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar drafted the ATU Fees Policy which was approved by ATU Governing Body on 11 December 2023. As approved in the ATU Fees Policy, the Fees Committee was established to oversee and review the Fee Schedule for approval to Governing Body. The Fees Committee will ensure that ATU remains competitive in the setting of fees for postgraduate research, online, flexible and professional development programmes in comparison to other higher education institutions.

The Registration teams worked closely to further align communications to students, building on feedback from various stakeholders. Campus specific registration emails were created to improve the responses to student queries. Each campus used the new aligned registration status codes and enrolment status codes from September 2023.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Registration, Grants and Fees	Academic Council /UPT

Table 11: Reports produced by Registration, Grants and Fees 2023/24

## Examinations, Conferring and International Admissions

Ger Gavin, Academic Affairs Manager has responsibility for the delivery of all ATU Conferrings and Examinations. Conferring ceremonies took place in Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Connemara and Galway. They comprised of 20 ceremonies with the awarding of 4,725 major awards to students from Level 6 through to Level 10. Following the success of the additional ceremony for a second exit point in May 2023 to allow for the awarding of Levels 6 through to 10 for students who had non-standard start times or were in receipt

of research degrees etc., a second venue Donegal was added to the Spring Conferring which took place in May 2024. In total over 300 ATU graduates were hosted along with their parents and guests in Donegal and Galway.

The delivery of examinations is centrally managed and operates locally with four Exams Officers representing the function in Donegal, Sligo, Mayo and Galway. The Exams office is also supported by staff at the Connemara campus and Mountbellew in exam delivery. The exam function also operates from two locations in Dublin three times a year in support of the online and distance learners. May 2023 saw just under 20,000 students sit exams. As the Examinations Office continues to grow and support the learners, it continually looks for ways to support their needs such as additional exam locations and the provision of proctored online exams where applicable.

## Graduation 2023/24

Award Type	No. of Graduates
Higher Certificate	292
Undergraduate Ordinary Degree	1179
Undergraduate Honours Degree	2197
Higher Diploma	301
Postgraduate Diploma	321
Masters Taught (Postgraduate)	409
Masters Research (Postgraduate)	17
PhD (Postgraduate)	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4725</b>

Table 12: Breakdown of Graduates per award type 2023/24

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Examinations and Conferring	Academic Council /UPT

Table 13: Reports produced by Examinations and Conferring 2023/24

## Academic Systems Integration

Anne-Marie McCormack, Academic Systems Integration Project Manager, leads the University's Academic Systems Integration project with primary focus on the implementation of a merged Banner™

Student Record Management System (SRMS), the first merger of its kind in the sector.

During this reporting period the Academic Systems Integration Project Manager and project team continued work on the alignment of business processes within the academic affairs area in preparation for the system merger. The team has worked closely with the Academic Affairs Managers and Schools/Departments for the purpose of introducing lean business processes across the University. Change management has been facilitated through university-wide working groups with representatives from all operational areas within academic affairs which provide a forum for consultation with end users ahead of the implementation of a single Banner™ system.

In Q2 2024, the team managed the roll out of the technical phase and go-live of a pilot of the GURU exam paper management system on the Donegal campus as well as completing the technical phase of the roll out to the St Angela's campus in Q3 2024. The completion of the implementation phases is planned and on schedule for Q4 2024.

During April/May 2024 ATU engaged in a deep dive scoping exercise with Ellucian and DXC to assess the requirements for the detailed Statement of Works for the design and implementation phase of the merger. The final statement of works is expected in Q4 2024.

#### **Tertiary Education Programme Pilot**

September 2023 saw the first cohort of Tertiary Education students enrolled. The West/North-West

Tertiary Education Cluster embarked on their higher education journey in a further education setting. 54 students registered on the Nursing pathway across the West/North-West Tertiary Education cluster, 18 per centre. The students in Dunmore (GRETB), Sligo (MSLETB) and Letterkenny (Donegal ETB) completed the QQI L5 Nursing Studies in year 1, progressing to the ATU campus aligned to the ETB upon successfully meeting the distinction requirement and completion of the full major award.

Tertiary degree programmes, BSc Industrial Science, BSc (Hons) Sustainable Engineering Technologies and BB (Hons) Business, did not run for 2023/24. Running the programmes with low numbers would have had a detrimental effect on both student experience and institutional reputation. The decision was commended (and supported) by the National Tertiary Office.

Claire Fiddaman was appointed Tertiary Education Programme Development Co-ordinator in November 2023 and continued the work of Jacinta Ryan. Marketing, promotional and information materials were created, external events were attended such as Higher Options, School Summit, FET Fairs as well as many post-primary school visits. A marketing plan was devised and shared with ETBs for implementation to increase awareness of the Tertiary Education options at ATU, (September 2023 to May 2024).

The Nursing pathway students completed their studies in June, qualifications and eligibility checks were completed in July for confirmation of progression to ATU and issued in July, in line with CAO Round 0. There were significant differences in student success and achievement between the centres.

Centre	Enrolled	Completed	Achievement				CAO	Progressed to ATU
			No Award	Component	Full	5 Ds		
Letterkenny, Donegal ETB	18	18	2	5	11	8	0	8
Dunmore FET, GRETB	18	18	3	2	13	9	0	9
Sligo CFE, MSLETB	18	18	1	1	16	16	5	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>

Table 14: Tertiary Access Route to Nursing Achievement and Progression Aug 2024

Project Phase 2: To deliver progression and pathways opportunities between ATU and its ETB partners, is underway. Objectives are firstly to identify the further to higher education progression pathways, both existing and potential development opportunities for both advanced entry from Level 6 and entry to year 1. Secondly, to identify and remove the barriers that affect or prevent progression from further to higher education. Between July and August 2023 all Level 5 and Level 6 programmes were collated and linked to the QQI award and module specifications. The existing advanced entry pathways were detailed and updated. MOUs and progression agreements are to be introduced and/or updated in 2024/25.

The Tertiary Education initiative has contributed to programme development across the University creating avenues of progression to more students from the FET sector to higher education.

#### **QA Transition Project ATU St Angela's campus**

Prior to the incorporation of St Angela's College Sligo into ATU in November 2023, it was approved as a linked provider of ATU Sligo in May 2022. The actions associated with the linked provider agreement were completed during this reporting period, and it is no longer in use. The transition principles agreed with the University of Galway were upheld and remain in place for those students who will receive a University of Galway award.

To support the incorporation into ATU, and to provide oversight of QA and the linked provider agreements, Dr Marie Moran was appointed as QA Transitions Project Manager for the academic year 2023/24. All ATU policies and procedures were adopted in ATU St Angelas, with University of Galway and ATU St Angela's College legacy policies and procedures remaining in place where required. All ATU programmes, student registrations, academic records and academic processes were managed using ATU systems. This included all new programme development and examination boards. All programmes were reviewed in preparation for the implementation of the examinations management system GURU in the academic year 2024/25. Bespoke training in the change process and the use of ATU systems, policies and procedures was provided to the ATU St Angela's campus leadership team, academic and administration staff.

## **5.4 Marketing**

### **Market Engagement**

Fiona Kelly is the Marketing Manager for Market Engagement with responsibility for full-time undergraduate student recruitment at ATU. In the academic year 2023/24, the total net CAO acceptances increased by 3% compared with the previous year.

ATU's Schools Liaison Officers attended 105 external events during the academic year 2023/24. The student recruitment team co-ordinated 500 school visits, taster days and recruitment events across the academic year promoting ATU's 236 CAO full-time undergraduate programmes.

The Schools Liaison function produced all the marketing collateral for the undergraduate market which included the undergraduate prospectus, undergraduate quick guide, parents' guide, Northern Ireland quick guide, CAO applicant newspaper, and sports scholarship promotional material. A Schools Liaison Officer for the Northern Ireland market was recruited during this period to support and enhance engagement with the Northern Ireland market.

Engagement with guidance counsellors continued as a unified approach with centralised newsletters being dispatched during this period to the key stakeholder groups. ATU's Market Engagement function embedded Power BI within the function to support business intelligence and data driven decision making within the function.

### **Campaigns and Creative**

Karen Smyth is the Marketing Officer at ATU, overseeing university-wide campaigns and creative initiatives. Her team is responsible for implementing integrated campaigns focused on CAO recruitment, alongside broader brand awareness efforts across digital and traditional media platforms. The Campaigns and Creative team also provide ongoing support for branding queries and projects across the University.

CAO campaigns started with promotion of the new undergraduate Prospectus, followed by campaigns to promote eighteen Open Days throughout the year.

Campaigns included both digital and traditional media such as radio, signage, and print ads. Digital channels were key to the success of these campaigns with 39% of those registering for Spring Open Days citing social media as their source of information.

During the CAO Change of Mind period, the team executed nine discipline-specific campaigns, three new programme promotions, and a general awareness campaign. This marked the first in-house execution of ATU's CAO Change of Mind campaign, reducing costs significantly (from €0.40 per click in 2023 when run by an agency, to €0.15–€0.20 in 2024) while increasing flexibility. From June to September, additional campaigns focused on ATU's Access Programme, Tertiary degrees, Offers, Available Places, and Accommodation.

Brand Awareness campaigns ran over December and January, incorporating digital advertising, cinema ads, billboards, and bus advertisements. Summer brand awareness initiatives included event sponsorship, TV advertising on TG4, and GAA programme advertising.

Development of a new integrated ATU website was a major project led by the Website Manager in 2023/24. Following a comprehensive tender process, work commenced in January 2024 with UX workshops and the development of user journeys, information architecture, wireframes, and designs, with the website scheduled for launch in November 2024.

Social media management remained a vital function for Campaigns and Creative. There was further consolidation of communication channels in the merging of all legacy LinkedIn accounts to a single account for ATU and merging of the Sligo and new St Angelas campus channels. The team also provided digital and social media support for university events across all nine campuses throughout the year.

### Strategic Marketing

Led by Cleo Devaney, ATU's part-time and postgraduate student recruitment continues to align under the identity, Online, Flexible and Professional Development. A new ATU wide campaign was launched focusing on postgraduate study opportunities "Your Masters, Your Way", strategically positioning ATU as a significant provider of postgraduate education. The campaign was activated across the region raising awareness of the

110 Masters programmes across Business, Science, Health, Engineering, Computing, Education, Design and Humanities.

A new 250-page Prospectus showcased the portfolio offering full-time, part-time, on-campus, online and blended learning opportunities. In-person events were held in Donegal, Galway, Sligo and Mayo, supported by digital and traditional media campaigns across radio and regional press.

In this period, six new Masters programmes were launched by Strategic Marketing, with in-person and virtual events and digital marketing campaigns, targeting specific audiences. The programmes successfully generated 147 applications for the new programmes.

The ATU-wide Online, Flexible and Professional Development national campaign promoted 410 flexible learning opportunities across levels 6, 7, 8 and 9. Virtual information sessions were held throughout March, May, and June with over 1,000 registered and 500 attending live online. The campaign resulted in an 8% increase in applications for online & flexible learning courses. In addition to the lead campaigns, ATU promoted Springboard opportunities and HCI funded micro-credentials to raise awareness of funded programmes supporting upskilling and re-training of the workforce.

### Digital Transformation

Supported by TSAF, phase 2 of the Marketing CRM rollout commenced, with a focus on integration between academic systems and marketing platforms. The Marketing CRM evolved into a central repository for programme information, working collaboratively with the Quality team to synchronise Academic Module Manager with Marketing CRM, thereby ensuring integrity of programme information being presented to external audiences. The Marketing CRM is now the engine that drives ATU's external facing website, with all programme information sourced and verified via the CRM platform.

Title of Report		Submitted to
1	Marketing and Student Recruitment Report	Academic Council/ UPT

Table 15: Reports produced by Marketing 2023/24

## 5.5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team

Following the retirement of Dr Michael Hannon, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team transferred under the remit of the VPAAR, Dr Billy Bennett in May 2024. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (QAEF) continues to evolve to improve use and accessibility. The work this year focused on the development of further policies in the areas of programme management, academic integrity, admission, research and collaborative provision. The total number of approved documents increased from 12 to 43. A key policy in relation to standardised admissions was approved. In addition to new policies (12), there were revisions (3) to policies and the approval new (6) and revised (2) procedures. A substantive amount of award standards (11) and forms (8) were approved.

List of Approved items	Number
New Policies	12
Revision to Policy	3
New Procedures	6
Revisions to Procedures	2
New Standards	11

Table 16: List of Approved Policies and Procedures 2023/24

The model for development, consultation and approval of policies is now established within the University and is functioning well. The all-staff consultation process has allowed contribution to policy and procedures from across the University. The approval of TSAF funding has extended the term and remit of the QAET to support the development of the procedure. Challenges have emerged in the development of procedures, as we work to embedding ATU-wide practices. Furthermore, the volume of documents and scheduling of consultation has been a source of frustration for some. The QAET are working with the Quality Office to address this for the coming academic year.

During the reporting period the Institutional Co-Ordinator for the CINNTE Institutional Review, Dr Jacqueline O Toole was appointed from within the QAET and led out on the development of the Institutional Profile and the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report. Both documents were approved by

the University Planning Team, Academic Council and Governing Body of the University before submission to QQI for the next stages of the review process.

## 5.6 ATU Global

ATU Global was formally launched in September 2023 by the President of ATU at the European Association for International Education (EAIE) Conference in Rotterdam. The launch symbolised a key milestone in ATU's evolution, consolidating international functions across the University and marking the beginning of a unified, strategic approach to global engagement. ATU Global drives the University's international ambitions through a blend of strategic engagement, quality assurance, and global outreach, and is a principal engine for embedding a global perspective within the University's academic, cultural, and research environments.

The unit operates under the leadership of the Vice President for Internationalisation, aligning closely with the strategic priorities of the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar. During the reporting period, ATU Global adopted an interim organisation structure underpinned by a territory-based leadership model which allows for coordinated planning across regions, with dedicated managers overseeing activity in:

- Territory 1: Internationalisation at Home
- Territory 2: Internationalisation Abroad – Americas & Europe
- Territory 3: Internationalisation Abroad – Africa, Middle East & Asia

This structure ensures that both student recruitment and strategic partnerships are responsive to institutional goals, market intelligence, and international best practices.

### International Student Recruitment and Global Reach

During the 2023 / 2024 academic year, ATU welcomed:

- 796 full-time Non-EU students from 66 countries
- 245 e-Learning Non-EU students and 341 part-time Non-EU students representing a total international student body (EU and non-EU) of 2156 individuals from 119 countries.

ATU Global undertook a comprehensive Strategic Market Review and continued to enhance its global presence through targeted recruitment activities

and attendance at priority events in Canada, India, Africa, ASEAN, Mexico, Vietnam, the US, and Brazil. Admissions processes, English language requirements, and agent training protocols were further streamlined and aligned University-wide during the reporting period.

### **Mobility and Partnerships**

ATU Global remains strongly committed to enhancing mobility through Erasmus+ and other exchange programmes. In 2023 / 2024, ATU Global:

- Supported 56 incoming Erasmus+ students and 35 outgoing students
- Achieved its first ATU-wide Erasmus+ KA131 grants, managing a combined fund of €1.165 million
- Hosted and delivered four Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)

Staff and faculty engagement with Erasmus+ also increased over the reporting period.

### **Internationalisation at Home**

Internationalisation at home remains a strategic focus, with ATU Global expanding initiatives supporting intercultural learning, curriculum internationalisation, and international student experience. The network of part-time Senior International Student Ambassadors and over 50 (voluntary) Student Ambassadors played a key role in student engagement and peer support. Cross-campus collaborations were also established to integrate international perspectives in teaching and learning.

## **5.7 Teaching and Learning**

The ATU Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) collaborates with academic and professional services colleagues across ATU's nine campuses in Galway-Mayo, Sligo and Donegal. The Centre aims to support staff across the University to build greater capacity in designing curriculum and teaching practices to ensure a positive student learning experience and robust academic standards.

The TLC has been highly active in offering a wide array of programmes and support services aimed at enhancing the educational and digital learning experience for both students and academics. The Centre provides a mix of accredited and non-accredited programmes, digital badges, and courses tailored to meet the diverse needs of the academic community to support professional development and promote quality in teaching and learning practices.

A key achievement was ATU becoming the first university in Ireland accredited by Advance HE to award Fellowships through its ENGAGE programme, with over 80 staff attaining Fellowship awards across all categories to date. This demonstrates ATU's strong commitment to teaching excellence and recognition of professional practice.

To further support students, the TLC runs the First Year Experience student leadership programme named PASS and Academic Support Centres, essential resources helping students achieve their academic goals. Significant strides were made with the development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure demonstrating the Centre's commitment to maintaining high standards of education and academic honesty.

The Academic Orientation Programme has been expanded across the University, ensuring new faculty receive comprehensive support as they begin their teaching careers.

The First Steps in Teaching programme has been enhanced and is available to all staff across ATU providing foundational skills and knowledge.

On a national level, the TLC has made notable contributions under the N-TUTORR, PATH 4 and SATLE. Achievements include the launch of the National Charter in Universal Design (ALTITUDE); development of the ATU Curriculum Framework in partnership with N-TUTORR covering Digital T&L, UDL, EDI, SDGs, Academic Integrity & Employability; and contributions to MyDigitalBackpack.ie.

Furthermore, the Centre has led several initiatives enhancing excellence across 40+ academic departments including designing an Academic Integrity hub; promoting education for sustainable development; developing digital learning and artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives; and establishing a national universal design and leadership programme and the national web accessibility statement.

These accomplishments highlight the TLC's dedication to curriculum innovation, education for sustainable development, advancing teaching and learning practices, supporting academic integrity in the age of AI, and promoting digital accessibility and inclusivity within ATU and nationally.

## 5.8 Library

ATU Library is a unified academic library service comprising eight fully staffed and resourced libraries across the University's campuses. Managed by three Head Librarians (Donegal, Galway-Mayo, and Sligo), the service is supported by a team of 58 staff working collaboratively to deliver a consistent and high-quality user experience across the region.

Library sites offer over 400 hours of staffed spaces and technology for individual, group and collaborative learning and study per week during term time to ATU students.

ATU Library's core mission is to provide equitable access to learning resources and services that support ATU's teaching, learning and research priorities. This includes access to print and digital collections, academic collaboration on knowledge resources and reading lists and a wide range of training initiatives that develop digital and information literacy skills for students and staff alike. ATU Library also provides specialist support for postgraduates, research and scholarly publishing, managing key infrastructure in this area such as the ATU institutional repository.

To support the integration of services across the newly established university, nine cross-campus working groups have been created, bringing together library staff from all sites to align systems, collections, services, policies and strategic initiatives.

The 2023/24 reporting period marked significant progress in the integration and enhancement of ATU Library services. With support from the TUTF funding stream, the Library standardised and upgraded its RFID technology infrastructure. New RFID gates, self-issue kiosks, handheld inventory scanners and tagging systems were installed across all sites between December 2023 and January 2024, improving efficiency and user experience.

A major achievement during this period was establishing ATU-wide access to all databases, making ATU the first Technological University to do so. Further supporting student engagement with resources, ATU Library consolidated its online subject & skills guides into a streamlined, user-friendly platform, achieving a notable 169,512 views over the year.

Another significant achievement in the period was the adoption of a Library-developed Academic Study Skills/Information Literacy Digital Badge into a Digital Backpack for TU/IoT students (further extended to all HEI students since) via the NTUTORR project.

Onboarding to IRel, the national e-resources consortium was started in January 2023 which provided access to 13 key scholarly resources spanning multiple disciplines with the support of N-TUTORR funding. This included access to high-quality video content to support researchers in their training.

In collaboration with the Research Office, the Library also helped secure institutional access to Scopus through TU RISE funding. The Library strengthened its role in promoting open research by entering into Transformative Agreements with multiple publishers, including Elsevier, enabling 75 researchers to publish Open Access during the period, enhancing global access to ATU research and the international profile of ATU researchers.

### **New staff (including progression opportunities for current staff) appointments during the reporting period 2023-24**

Name	Grade	Campus
Dr Johanna Archbold	Head Librarian	Sligo & St Angelas
Dr Sarah McCann	VII	Dublin Rd, Galway City
Gerry Walsh	III	Dublin Rd, Galway City
Jorden McMenamin	IV	Sligo and then Letterkenny
Jorden McMenamin	III	Letterkenny
Lisa Moore	.5 VI	Sligo
Mark Mulholland	Attendant	Sligo
Louise McMonagle	VI	Killybegs
Shane Leavy	IV	Sligo
Dr Ian Kennedy	III	St Angelas
Edel Hession	IV	Letterkenny
Conor Whyte	III	Killybegs



## 5.9 Student Services

Student Services comprises of a number of distinct but interrelated professional support disciplines which provide students with a responsive supportive environment. It includes ATU Disability & Learning Support Service (DLSS), Access & Widening participation, ATU Respect, Health & Wellbeing, ATU Sport, ATU Careers and Chaplaincy. Engagement with students commences pre-entry through many university led access initiatives and continues until conferring. In the reporting period, the staffing complement was 103.5 WTE, with a number of positions fully or partly supported by external funding. There has been no structural changes in the reporting period. Dr Maura Finegan commenced as the University's first Head of Student Health & Wellbeing in September 2023.

The reporting period saw the successful completion of five HEA PATH funded distinct work packages focused on creating an inclusive universally designed higher education environment. ATU took the national lead on two of the work packages. Significant outputs included the development of a National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education, Development of Web Accessibility Statements & Toolkit for Higher

Education Institutions and the development of a bespoke programme on Leadership in Universal Design for senior leaders in the tertiary sector. Locally, the most significant output for the University was the successful application to the HEA for PATH IV funding to develop a programme for students with intellectual disabilities and in June 2024 Academic Council approved the first bespoke programme for persons with intellectual disabilities. A number of university wide processes and procedures were developed and agreed such as a University Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme. An external review of sport provision at ATU was also conducted.

The Access and Widening Participation service provides support for people identified in the **National Access Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2022-2028** and are committed to creating an inclusive, equitable learning experience for every student. Students accessing the University via the DARE scheme increased by 1%, Further Education sector by 3% and via Access programmes by 3% on the previous year. The Access & Widening Participation Service distributed funds to the value of €3,016,228 in 2023/24. The total number of students in receipt of Access scholarships and bursaries increased by 79% and the total value

of bursaries distributed increased by 69% on the previous year. The DLSS enables vital processes to support the successful access, participation, progress and attainment of students with a disability who register with the service. There was a 25% increase in students registering with the service on the previous year. Specific Learning Disability is the largest reported disability (46%) and has seen a 33% increase since 2021. ADD/ADHD accounts for next largest proportion at 13% and has experienced the largest growth since 2021 – up 214%. Mental Health is third largest proportion at 10% and has seen a 38% increase since 2021. There has been notable increases since 2021 in Neurological Speech & Language (up 70%), Aspergers/Autism (up 57%), DCD Dyspraxia (up 40%) and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (up 35%). The model of support is changing in response to the increasing complexity of disability type and number of students requiring support. The FSD allocation to the University was €724,904 in 2024. Significant work on aligning policies, procedures and data collection processes was conducted in the reporting period.

ATU Student Health Service is a nurse-led, on-campus service, complemented by externally contracted GP services on the three most populated campuses. Only two campuses have no onsite student health provision - ATU Connemara and Mayo. However, local GPs services attend to the students' health needs. All student health services are free of charge.

The service activity ranges from the provision of nursing and medical services to individual students, to the provision of specific clinics to universal health promotion and sexual health promotion activities. The student health services offered a total of 17,749 appointments in the 2023/24. In total, 3,294 individual students attended the service over academic year, representing 27 per cent of the on-campus student population. The Counselling and Wellbeing Teams together provide a range of mental health awareness and promotion activities; students supports and counselling services.

In 2023/24 a total of 16 counsellors worked in the service (making up the equivalent of 9.4 FTEs) offering 4,785 counselling sessions of which 81% were attended. The Student Counselling team work closely with the Mental Health Project Workers (n, 3), who have two key functions – to implement the HEA Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Framework and the HEA Consent Framework across ATU.

ATU Respect Programme was established as a response to the University's obligations under the 2019 *HEA framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions: Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive – Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education*. Through comprehensive training, awareness campaigns, and workshops, ATU Respect equips students and staff with the tools to prevent violence and harassment. In the reporting period, the programme engaged 3,775 participants across 80 events held on all 9 campuses, offering training on consent, active bystander intervention, and GBV awareness.

The primary objective of the ATU Careers Office which comprises of a team of 3.5 WTE is to support students and recent graduates to effectively career plan. In 2023/24 ATU careers teams collectively delivered 1,315 one to one appointments and collectively delivered 166 presentations/workshops to students. ATU careers provides the link between learners and employers, facilitated via careers platforms and events both on campus and online.

A new model of chaplaincy and pastoral care provision was agreed in 2023/24 for implementation in the academic year 2024/25 which will result in the service transitioning from a tendered service to a bespoke university service comprised of three pastoral care workers and one chaplain.

The first iteration of ATU Sports Scholarship Programme was completed with 158 recipients (40% female) awarded scholarships across 19 different sports.

## 6. Research and Innovation

### 6.1 Research Centre Highlights

#### TU RISE

In December 2023, ATU was awarded €19.6M under the TU RISE (Technological University Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise) programme, a transformative initiative aimed at scaling research capacity, fostering enterprise engagement, and enhancing innovation across the West and Northwest of Ireland. The programme at ATU is structured around five core areas:

- Building institutional research and innovation capacity through the establishment of four directorates and recruitment of key staff. It also includes digitalisation efforts, ethics systems integration, and enterprise engagement through structured phases.
- Research Advisory and Support Services, embedding Research Business Partners across faculties and functions. It supports smart specialisation, research communications, and impact analytics.
- Postdoctoral research capacity by recruiting 10–13 fellows aligned with regional priorities. It includes structured enterprise engagement and strategic partnership development.
- Postgraduate research capacity through five cohort-based PhD programmes involving 60 students, each completing enterprise placements. It also includes seasonal schools and conferences to disseminate research outcomes.
- Design and digitisation of undergraduate and postgraduate modules to deepen research-led teaching and enterprise collaboration.

The overall aim of TU RISE is to create a sustainable, scalable research ecosystem that supports innovation, enterprise development, and regional growth. TU RISE is a strategic driver for ATU's evolution into a leading research and innovation hub, fostering impactful collaborations between academia and industry.

TU RISE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EDRF Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-27.

#### Knowledge Transfer Office

In April 2024, the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) was formed as a strategic initiative supported by the KT Boost Programme, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021–2027.

The KTO is designed to foster innovation, collaboration, and the successful transfer of knowledge between ATU's research community and industry.

The KTO's core mission is to ensure that new knowledge generated through research at ATU is translated into real-world impact—economically and socially. This includes facilitating partnerships, managing intellectual property, supporting commercialisation, and enabling collaborative research projects with enterprise.

KT Boost funding has enabled the recruitment of specialised staff and the development of operational capacity within the KTO, helping ATU scale its research output and strengthen its role in regional innovation ecosystems.

#### 6.2 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.

### 6.3 Innovation Hubs and Entrepreneurship

ATU has four Innovation Hubs located in Sligo, Donegal, Mayo & Galway. These Hubs provide capacity for over 100 incubation units with R&D, Incubation, Co-Working and Virtual space available across the West and North-West region for Start-Up companies.

Clients at these Enterprise Ireland supported Innovation Hubs have access to a Portfolio of Business Development Supports, Investment Funding network, Research skills & expertise from ATU staff and specialist support from three ATU Technology Gateways – MET, PEM & WiSAR.

The strength and depth of ATU research integration with Start-up clients was evident from the 12 successful Innovation Hub clients who were awarded a total of €47M Disruptive Technology Innovation Funding (DTIF) from a national Enterprise Ireland funding programme.



*ATU iHub Galway Sustainability Award.  
Photo L to R: Tony O'Kelly, Mary Considine, Orla Flynn, Evanna Ryan, George McCourt, Michelle Lee, David Lee, Turlough Rafferty*

Two New Frontiers entrepreneur development programmes are managed each year in the Galway-Mayo and Sligo-Donegal regions. Each programme selects 15 participants per year who have full access to the four Innovation Hubs and ATU Start-up support eco-system.

In addition, Innovation Hub Mayo, manages an entrepreneur development programme dedicated to females called EMPOWER Cumású. This national programme is funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta and is implemented in seven Gaeltacht region – Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Cork, Waterford and Meath in partnership with the Rubicon Innovation Centre of Munster Technological University (MTU) for the southern regions. EMPOWER Cumású was launched in May 2024 and will provide entrepreneurship training for 150 females over the next three years.

Donegal Innovation Hub, CoLab, played a pivotal role in helping FinTrU establish and scale its operations in the Northwest region using the Hub as an initial base and growing to 32 desks in the facility. Co-lab created a network of like-minded businesses and entrepreneurs that helped FinTrU flourish in a collaborative and fast-paced setting. FinTrU specialises in software for financial services regulation and has been central to ATU partnering in a successful Peace Plus bid to grow a RegTech Industry Cluster in the Border region.

As part of ATU's development plan, the iHub has integrated a range of sustainability initiatives. This includes the adoption of energy-efficient LED lighting, the installation of solar panels that generated over four thousand kilowatt hours of renewable energy in 2022, and the incorporation of two electric vehicle charging stations. It also includes the recently completed extension designated a 'Nearly Zero Energy Building'. In addition ATU Galway iHub was a winner at the 2023 Galway Chamber Business Awards, securing the Sustainability Initiative award.

### 6.4 Technology Clusters

ATU has a team of four cluster specialists, whose focus is on providing support to the companies in four recently developed clusters, providing guidance to what support they can access from agencies and local authorities, and introducing them to the resources that ATU can offer.

Karl Bonner coordinated the **Killybegs Marine Cluster** in Donegal. This cluster brings together companies involved in fishing, marine tourism, marine engineering and services, aquaculture, seafood processing, and offshore wind energy – distinct areas that support each other as a successful community of inter-related economic activity related to the sea.

Brian Durnin coordinated the **Border Region Manufacturing Cluster (BORMAC)**. This brings together a community of companies from Louth to Donegal who are all faced with the twin challenges of Brexit and the digital revolution that is transforming manufacturing, known as Industry 4.0. The companies involved all operate within complex supply chain that regularly cross the Border between the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Joe Friel coordinated the **WoodConnect Cluster** until his departure in March 2024 (He has since been replaced in this role by Gareth Sherry). This cluster

looks at the whole supply chain in wooden furniture and interiors, as well as the timber products, from forestry to the final consumer product.

John Gaffney, who left to lead the Irish operations of a multinational company in December 2023, has coordinated the **Digital Health Cluster**. He has since been replaced by Rosanna Loftus. Digital technology is playing an increasingly powerful role in how healthcare is organised and delivered. For a more sparsely populated region such as ours, this is particularly important in dealing with the problems of distance from healthcare providers.

The four managers have been working on a range of initiatives with companies over the past two years in upskilling, fundraising, technology development, internationalisation amongst others, and in the process have been helping to build the confidence of the communities of companies in each other and in themselves.



# 7. External Engagement and Partnerships

## 7.1 Online, Flexible and Lifelong Learning

ATU maintains its national leadership position delivering online, part-time, flexible, accredited learning that responds to both industry needs and learner demand. During the reporting period of 2023 – 2024 there was a total of 372 online, blended, and on-campus programmes. This has expanded to 477 programmes for 2024 – 2025 which reflects the fact that the core focus remains on expanding access to lifelong learning and professional development for a diverse learner base.

Over the 2023 - 2024 period the Online, Flexible and Professional Development (OFPD) Function has:

- Advanced the integration of legacy systems and teams across ATU
- Supported the implementation of ATU's new organisational model, ensuring it is fit for purpose and aligned with how OFPD needs to operate going forward
- Expanded student supports and progressed the unification of applications and learner processes across non-CAO pathways
- Continued to lead two major externally funded projects (Higher Education 4.0 and N-TUTORR)
- Contributed to strategic developments in Micro-credentials and Artificial Intelligence
- Maintained close working relationships with other key university functions (Faculties, AA&R, Marketing, Teaching & Learning, IT)

Core funded staffing has remained broadly stable, with targeted growth in high-priority areas. Work continues the adoption of an institutional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, currently housed within OFPD.

### Function overview

ATU offers flexible, accredited learning opportunities that are market-responsive and accessible to learners regardless of location. We support individuals seeking to reskill, upskill, or advance their careers through a range of delivery modes. For the reporting period we had a portfolio of 372 programmes - 201 online; 156 blended and 15 on campus.

### Organisational development

As part of the ATU merger, administration and delivery of OFPD services - previously managed differently across legacy institutions - have been brought together into a unified structure. Over the reporting period OFPD played a key role in supporting the implementation of the new ATU organisational structure. The administration and delivery of OFPD services remains a core focus and is progressing steadily.

### OFPD structure

OFPD is organised into the following functional areas:

- Business Development  
(Market intelligence, recruitment, Springboard+, HCI)
- Faculty Support  
(Collaborating with academic units to respond to learner and industry needs)
- Student Experience  
(Including the growing team of Online Student Advisors)
- Educational Technology  
(Supporting VLE and training across ATU and ed. tech. integration)
- Innovation  
(Fostering continuous improvement in delivery and learner support)
- Innovation Projects  
(Including Higher Educational 4.0 and N-TUTORR initiatives)
- Governance and Internal Strategy  
(Ensuring strategic alignment and operational cohesion)

These teams are supported by a cross-functional Instructional Design Team, which plays a vital role in enhancing digital delivery and supporting innovation across the University.

### Key activities and projects (2023 - 2024)

- Integration initiatives
- Progressed toward a unified applications process for non-CAO/apprenticeship students
- Foundation work toward a single Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Merged Springboard+ operations across campuses
- Introduced a standardised induction process for OFPD learners
- Initiated a project to unify admissions for non-CAO pathways

### **Strategic leadership**

- Providing leadership in the development of ATU's Micro-credentials strategy
- Leading the development of ATU's position on Artificial Intelligence

### **Externally funded projects**

1. Higher Education 4.0 (HCI Pillar 3): Externally, this project provides advisory services through mycareerpath.ie, including career guidance, RPL support, and personalised learning pathways informed by industry needs. Internally, it supports the development of agile systems capable of responding quickly to emerging demands, such as work-based learning, micro-credentials, MOOCs, and Maker Spaces.
2. N-TUTORR Programme: Funded by the EU's NextGenerationEU and supported by the HEA, this cross-sectoral collaborative project supported the transformation of the learner experience in the technological higher education sector through technology and staff/student collaboration, in alignment with sustainable development goals. It advanced:
  - Student empowerment
  - Staff capability
  - Digital Transformation
  - Education for Sustainability
  - Employability
  - Academic Integrity
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

### **Collaboration and CRM development**

OFPD continues to work closely with colleagues in Marketing, AA&R, Teaching & Learning, and IT. Development of a University-wide CRM system is ongoing, with future plans for broader institutional integration once initial deployment within OFPD is complete.

## **7.2 Regional Engagement**

### **7.2.1 Regional Enterprise Plans**

ATU External Engagement leads an objective within the NW Regional Enterprise Plan focussed on the unfortunate reality that as a region, the Northwest is a laggard in infrastructure development (roads, ports, electrical grid amongst others). The objective of this action is to work with all stakeholders in region and nationally to ensure our infrastructure deficits are clearly documented, their impact to enterprise understood and working with our partners in local and national government to ensure optimum plans are in place to rectify including recommendations on future plans.

The working group commissioned a report which was funded by DETE. It included 12 case studies from businesses which highlighted the impact of poor infrastructure development on enterprise in the Northwest. The report and findings were presented to Minister Peter Burke TD and Minister Dara Calleary TD in Government buildings in Dublin in July '24. Since then, follow-up actions have been responded to and inputs submitted to the National Planning Framework. The NWREP continues to work with regional stakeholders in highlighting the impact of infrastructural imbalances on enterprise development in the region.

### **7.2.2 Regional skills Fora**

ATU are members of the West and NorthWest Regional Skills fora. In early 2023, the NW Regional Skills Forum issued a report of 'Cyberskills in the NW'. 3 recommendations were highlighted in this report:

- Promoting the NW region's cybersecurity sector
- Creating a strong cybersecurity culture
- Building a cyber talent pipeline

ATU External Engagement lead a working group to progress the recommendation around cybersecurity culture. In collaboration with NW Chapter of the Cyber Ireland Cluster, Regional Skills and Data2Sustain Digital Innovation Hub, a programme of work was developed aimed at building awareness of cybersecurity rationale with micro and SME's. The programme of work delivered an online interactive Cybersecurity Roadmap for micro business owners and managers, cybersecurity awareness workshops and one-to-one consultancy for businesses. It is intended that case studies from the participant companies will be gathered to assess level of awareness and how well cybersecurity practices have become embedded since interventions were made.



### 7.3 Alumni

The ATU Alumni Network was officially launched on 6 October 2023. The event unveiled the network's ethos, "Always ATU," highlighting its commitment to fostering connections, lifelong learning, and serving as a source of inspiration.

To enhance alumni engagement and activate the ATU Alumni Network, five key focus areas were established to align with the pillars: Always Connected, Always Learning, and Always Inspired. In February 2024, the Alumni Steering Committee was mobilised into working groups to advance and develop these focus areas. These areas include:

1. Database Growth – ATU Alumni Network has approximately 5,500 members. Supported ATU

Global engagement at two international events in 2024.

2. Alumni Events – drafting and approval of procedures and committees to support the establishment of ATU Alumni Awards.
3. Mentorship – research and foundational work for the establishment of an Alumni Mentorship programme. The pilot programme is scheduled for September 2024.
4. Fees, Bursaries & Scholarships - In March 2024, a new ATU Alumni Scholarship was launched offering a 20% discount on taught postgraduate fees. In 2024, 28 benefited from the fee reduction scholarship.
5. Communications - The Alumni Office has provided regular, targeted communications to promote alumni programmes, activities, and events.

## 8. Updates from Faculties

### 8.1 Business & Social Sciences

2024 marked a year of significant growth and achievement for the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, supporting over 7,000 students (3,500 FTEs) – a 30% increase over the past two years. Guided by a practice-led model, our work continues to emphasise academic quality, professional relevance, and real-world impact.

New programme development remained a priority, with the launch of industry-informed Certificates, Diplomas, and Masters in Digital Business, Financial Management and Sustainability, and Strategic People Management (CIPD-accredited). We introduced a BA (Hons) in Business and Irish, secured national approval for Ireland's first NTO-awarded qualification, and partnered with Cavan Institute on a new Social Care Practice qualification. Fifteen micro-credential programmes, co-developed with industry, supported upskilling in areas such as insurance, pensions, and sustainable finance.

Student success was further strengthened through our Onwards, Upwards and Outwards initiative, which delivered measurable improvements in student retention and engagement. We also retained our distinction as Ireland's only UNWTO Tourism Observatory.

Research activity reached new heights, with over €11 million in funding applications and €5 million already secured for projects in digital innovation, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

Flagship Initiatives in 2024 include:

- IDEAS Programme – Funded by the Government of Ireland and the EU Regional Development Fund, IDEAS supports 12 PhD students on enterprise-aligned projects linked to regional priorities, with integrated industry placements.
- Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) – The first in the West and North-West, this Level 10 programme equips senior leaders with advanced research skills to address complex organisational challenges through a flexible blended model.

- University Fitness Games – An inaugural, inclusive sports competition in January welcomed over 120 third-level students from across Ireland, promoting wellbeing and community engagement.
- MBS Executive Leadership Seminars – A two-part series in Galway and Donegal challenged traditional thinking on leadership and decision-making for senior executives and emerging leaders.
- DICE Labs Conference – Celebrating its tenth anniversary on 7 March at ATU Letterkenny under the theme Driving Innovation in Business, the DICE conference brought together business leaders, academics, and policymakers to explore AI and digitalisation opportunities for commercial and social enterprises.
- REMODEL Project – A €1.5m EU-funded collaboration with Universidad de León and Bursa Uludağ University, enhancing research capacity in innovative business models, establishing a Business Model Innovation Laboratory, and delivering joint PhD supervision, specialist training, and summer schools in Spain and Donegal.

Through innovation in teaching, strong industry collaboration, impactful research, and community engagement, 2024 has reinforced the Faculty's leadership role in advancing education, enterprise, and regional development.

### 8.2 Science & Health

Faculty of Science & Health have continued to make significant strides over the past year, reinforcing its role as a leader in science and health across Ireland.

Organisationaly, ATU completed the amalgamation with St Angela's College with its broader science faculty, enhancing academic cohesion and expanding research capacity across campuses. The integration of St Angela's marks the incorporation of the School of Nursing, Health Sciences and Disability Studies into the faculty thus paving the way for multicampus structural alignment of Nursing in ATU.

ATU also played a central role in the €34 million ARC Hub for HealthTech, a collaborative initiative with

University of Galway and RCSI. The hub supports translational research in smart implants, wearables, and AI-driven diagnostics, aiming to commercialise solutions for chronic disease management.

In January 2024, ATU and the Health Service Executive (HSE) signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding, formalising a strategic partnership to advance education, research, and skills development. The collaboration spans Community Healthcare West and North West, Saolta, and the National Ambulance Service, aiming to address health inequalities, support clinical placements, and foster innovation in healthcare delivery.

During Science Week 2023, ATU hosted the Sligo Science Festival and took part in the Galway Science and Technology Festival, offering hands-on science experiences and public talks that promoted curiosity and learning.

A key achievement was the CORU accreditation of ATU's Higher Diploma in Science in Medical Science, a two-year part-time programme designed for medical laboratory aides with a Level 8 science degree. ATU submitted an application to CORU for accreditation of the BSc Honours in Health and Social Care. ATU's Higher Certificate in Dental Nursing was reaccredited by the Dental Council of Ireland for a further five-year period to 2028.

In May 2024, ATU celebrated the official opening of €35 million campus developments at its Sligo site. These include a four-storey extension housing advanced science and IT labs, clean room, science research labs and PC labs. The new facilities, funded under Project Ireland 2040, also feature a Maker Space for STEM outreach and project-based learning, significantly enhancing ATU's research and teaching capabilities.

The cross-border Irish Students Wellbeing and ADHD project (I-SWAP), lead by Dr Louise McBride, (ATU) and Dr Elaine Murray (UU) received the Best Research Project award at the 2024 Education awards.

Research staff across the Faculty of Science and Health worked collaboratively across campuses in the submission of applications for TU Rise research funding.

During this period staff have been involved in the co-development of a number of academic programmes

building on the joint expertise provided across the various campuses. This co-development resulted in the validation of three Master of Science programmes:

- MSc in Bioinformatics
- MSc in Digital Innovation in Sports
- MSc in Gerontology Nursing

### 8.3 Engineering & Computing

The Faculty of Engineering and Computing ATU Donegal, the School of Engineering ATU Galway and the Faculty of Engineering and Design ATU Sligo continued their work on integration to one new Faculty of Engineering and Computing during the reporting period. 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/ School, 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 faculty.

The faculty structures and student numbers during the reporting period is summarised below:

#### **Faculty of Engineering and Computing ATU Donegal**

Departments:	3	
Student numbers*:	1,615	1,369 FTE

#### **School of Engineering ATU Galway**

Departments:	5**	
Student numbers*:	3,079	2,350 FTE

#### **Faculty of Engineering and Design ATU Sligo**

Departments:	6***	
Student numbers*:	4,488	2599 FTE

\*Student numbers - HEA return date of 1st March 2024

\*\* includes Department of Computing and Applied Physics

\*\*\* Includes Department of Yeats Academy of Arts, Design & Architecture

Each Faculty has undergraduate, craft apprentice, consortia apprentices and postgraduate programmes as well as a significant flexible learning offering and remote learners in engineering and computing.



Apprenticeship education is a core aspect of the education provided by the faculties with five trades (Electrical, Motor Mechanic, Carpentry & Joinery, Metal Fabrication and Tool Making) offered. The Civil Engineering Apprenticeship continues to grow with a new cohort of 48 apprentices to start in the Galway campus in September 2024 and will continue to run in the Sligo campus.

Faculty programmes are accredited by their relevant professional body including, Engineers Ireland, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists, the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Institute of Building and others.

There is a long tradition of working closely with industry to develop partnerships including the delivery of bespoke programmes developed for industry and new programme development to meet industry needs. The following is a high-level summary of some of the activities during the reporting period:

- **Electrical Apprenticeship Expansion:** Work commenced in our Galway, Letterkenny and Sligo campuses for the expansion of electrical apprenticeships in response to a national call to provide more phase 4 and phase 6 electrical apprenticeship provision.
- **Manufacturing Engineering Apprenticeship:** The Manufacturing Engineering Apprenticeship was launched in 2024. The BEng in Manufacturing Engineering is Ireland's first consortium-led, multi-campus manufacturing engineering apprenticeship programme to receive accreditation from Engineers Ireland. This apprenticeship was co-developed by a consortium led by IBEC's Irish Medtech Association, representatives from the manufacturing industry and academic partners.
- **Quantity Surveying Apprenticeship:** ATU continued to work with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and the Quantity Surveying consortium to develop the new suite of apprenticeship programmes.

- **Opening of EU Co Funded Precision Engineering and Manufacturing (PEM) Technology Gateway:** The PEM Technology Gateway officially opened in October 2023. It is a hub of research, development and innovation dedicated to supporting regional and national industries. PEM provide industry-focused RD&I services in precision engineering, manufacturing, materials technologies, and innovation.
- **Engineering Expos** took place in our Donegal, Galway and Sligo Campuses in April and May 2024. Final year students had an opportunity to showcase their final year projects with a number of awards for best projects in varying categories been awarded.
- **Summer Camps:** Staff across all campuses ran a number of summer camps for children from ages of 8-16 in many different discipline areas including computing, engineering and construction.

## 8.4 Education, Design & Humanities

The provisional title of the faculty evolved during the year and reflects the mix of disciplines across three distinct emerging schools in the areas of Design & Creative Industries, Education Sciences, and Social Science & Humanities.

While the development of a coherent, integrated faculty, operating in and across multiple campuses is the long-term aspiration; the team has worked well together during the year to progress towards an interim structure. The primary objective of an interim structure is to preserve the strengths of the existing departments and emerging schools, while creating time to solve potential problems, put solutions in place to deliver a final structure and develop a faculty strategy.

The faculty is spread across six of the nine campuses, namely Galway City (Wellpark road), Connemara, St Angelas, Sligo, Mayo, and Letterkenny. There are very high levels of integration and sharing between programmes and departments on the smaller campuses includes shared lecturing staff, technicians,

administrators, labs, workshops, technology/equipment and materials. As some of these programmes and departments are expected to reside in different schools in the final structure, a detailed implementation plan is being prepared, to take the faculty from an interim structure to final structure, that both allows current operations to continue unhindered and develops new operational processes in parallel.

The collaboration and consensus gradually being achieved by the faculty team is steadily building confidence in the direction of travel and in the ability of the team to deliver a unique and effective faculty strategy for our region. The discussions are turning more towards the future potential value, for the communities and stakeholders in our region, of a faculty that combines these important disciplines and areas of expertise to deliver high quality education and experiences for our students and delivers real and enduring societal impact.

Examples of activities during the reporting period:

- Continued strong performance in student numbers right across the schools and departments involved in the faculty
- Regular meetings of the Faculty Executive Team and Faculty Academic Programmes Committee
- Added new undergrad programme for Sep 2024 launch – BA (Hons) in Jewellery & Goldsmithing – to be delivered in partnership with Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCI) based in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny
- Gradual but steady increase in research activities, including structured Masters research students and staff PhD engagement
- Continued high levels of external engagement and partnership with organisations including Creative Enterprise West (CREW), Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI), Irish Furniture & Interiors Network (IWIN), Western Institute for Studies in Education (WISE), TG4, Greasán na Mean Skillnet, Western Development Commission, Údarás na Gaeltachta and many others

## 9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Through the Public Sector Duty, ATU has a responsibility to protect and uphold equality and human rights recognising the promotion of equality of opportunity and respect for diversity in all aspects of the University's activities as a key contribution to good governance.

ATU's EDI Subcommittee of Governing Body assists ATU in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities and provides leadership and accountability for equality and diversity in all aspects of the University's activities. This Subcommittee meets four times annually and is chaired by Maura McNally S.C.

An EDI Steering Group, comprising of senior managers representing faculties and functions from across ATU, meets a minimum of four times each year to provide leadership and accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the University's activities and to assist in good governance.

Professor Jacqueline McCormack is the VP with responsibility for EDI and leads ATU's EDI team, overseeing a team of three EDI Leads and an EDI Team Administrator. Each of the three EDI Leads holds a specific organisation-wide role aligned to one of the three national EDI priorities as determined by the HEA Centre of Excellence for EDI: Gender Equality, Race Equality and Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment.

ATU's EDI team support ATU in fulfilling its human rights and equality obligations. The team promotes awareness and understanding of equality and human rights issues, develops evidence-based policies with key University functions, and empowers staff and students to lead initiatives that foster a safe, inclusive culture. The team also promotes inclusive curriculum design, content and pedagogy.

Following institutional approval, ATU's EDI Policy and Gender Identity & Expression (GI&E) Policy and Procedures were published on the EDI SharePoint in early 2024. Trans Inclusivity and Pronouns training was delivered in February and May, and three GI&E procedure sessions were held in June. The procedure allows students to use a preferred name via an online form, and staff through campus HR.

ATU's Athena Swan Ireland Self-Assessment Team (SAT) was established in December 2023 to prepare the University's first bronze award application and new gender action plan for submission in May 2025. Fourteen women completed Aurora, the AdvanceHE leadership programme for academic and PMSS female staff who are not currently in senior management roles.

In September 2023, President Dr Orla Flynn signed the HEA Race Equality Anti-Racism Principles for Higher Education Institutions on behalf of ATU. In line with the HEA Race Equality Implementation Plan, ATU established a university-wide Race Equality Working Group in June 2024 to develop an institutional action plan.

ATU's Gender-Based Violence Policy was issued for consultation in May 2024. A Dignity and Respect Working Group was formed to coordinate related policy development, training, and implementation. Disclosure training for Student Services staff was delivered in April 2024.

In October 2023, the EDI team launched the EDI Activity Support Fund for innovative staff and student-led EDI projects. The team also supported the LGBTQ+ and Race Equality Networks and organised events for Black History Month, International Women's Day, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women & Girls.

# 10. Infrastructure

## Current Greenhouse gas emissions v 2016-18 baseline

ATU comprises more than 40 buildings with over 19 Gwh of energy use and excess 149,000 sqm of floor area across 9 campuses.

The proportion of carbon attributable to each of Galway-Mayo, Sligo and Donegal is split approximately as a ratio 44:35:21, this is aligned to the area split at 42:35:23. Up until 2024, each regional campus reported emissions separately to SEAI M&R. ATU will merge reporting in 2025 now the University is reaching full integration. The following are the emissions targets for ATU:

- Reduce GHG emissions by 51% in 2030.
- Increase the improvement in energy efficiency in the public sector from the 33% target in 2020 to 50% by 2030.

The total carbon emissions baseline for ATU was 6,581,105 kgCO<sub>2</sub> with a 2030 target of 2,139,663 kgCO<sub>2</sub>.

The current gas emissions as reported to SEAI monitoring and reporting are 4,655,427 kgCO<sub>2</sub>.

The current Gap-to-Target (GtT) is 2,515,764 kgCO<sub>2</sub> or 54%.

## Implementation of the requirements of the Climate action Mandate

ATU has published the second Climate action roadmap that includes changes from the 2023 to 2024 Climate action mandate. The roadmap demonstrates the pathway to meeting the targets by 2030. This roadmap and delivery on the 2030 targets are highly dependent on building fabric investment with approximately €73m identified in projects. Refurbishment projects in both the Galway and Sligo campuses have been delivered as part of the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme (EEDPP). Significant efforts will be applied to operational optimisation of existing building heating and electrical systems while focusing on delivering fabric upgrades to the largest, least efficient buildings across the campuses.



## Sustainability activities undertaken

The Management board is fully committed to the Public Sector Climate Action Strategy and compliance with the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate. In support of our obligations the University has signed up to sustainable development goals including the SDG Accord and the Race to Zero campaign.

## 11. Human Resources including staffing

	Headcount			FTE		
	Female	Male	Total Headcount	Female	Male	Total FTE
Academic	684	680	1364	627.64	642.45	1270.09
PMSS	639	396	1035	527.68	336.75	864.43
Research / Self Financing	117	77	194	93.72	71.60	165.32



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## 12. Financial Report

ATU's Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2024 are available to view here:

<https://www.atu.ie/app/uploads/2026/01/financial-statements-year-ended-31-august-2024.pdf>



# 13. Special Projects

## 13.1 N-TUTORR

The N-TUTORR programme of work (2022-2024, 40 million fund, 7.11 million ATU allocation, funded by NextGenerationEU) was designed to transform learning in the technological higher education sector by focusing on three streams:

- **Stream 1** Student empowerment and partnership
- **Stream 2** Building staff capabilities
- **Stream 3** Digital transformation in our learning and teaching environment

ATU engagement numbers reached 6,918 unique participants including 5,568 students and 1,350 staff across the nine campuses. The figures represent engagement and interest in 150+ funded initiatives delivered over a two-year timeline, under the themes; education for sustainability, academic integrity, UDL, EDI, employability, and digital teaching and learning. Some of the key initiatives that had a significant impact on the learning and teaching experience at ATU include the Students as Partners in Innovation and Change Fellowship programme. At a sectoral level the fellowship programme involved 175 project teams and in ATU alone, 35 projects were implemented involving a network of 350 staff and students across ATU.

N-TUTORR week (February 2024) also delivered on national engagement with 50 events running across ATU's nine Campuses.

A further achievement under the N-TUTORR programme of work has been the development of the ATU **Curriculum Framework** and **AREA Student Competency Framework** (AREA stands for Awareness, Responsibility, Empowerment and Action).

A standout innovation under N-TUTORR has been the development of MyDigitalBackpack.ie, also led out by ATU; its design and development involved 100 student champions from across the sector. Engagement to date has been excellent, with 8,000 national digital open badges issued from 2023-24.

N-TUTORR funding has enabled significant investment in the implementation of 45 theatres and meeting rooms that have been upgraded as a hybrid learning and collaboration space. Furthermore, a VLE integration project named the ATU Learning

Ecosystem project has laid the foundation for the development of a new learning management system project plan for ATU's nine campuses. In addition, N-TUTORR invested in the foundation of a MY ATU APP, a Chatbot solution and a state-of-the-art media production facility, exam management solutions and a unified applications CRM solution for ATU. A collection of case studies outlining the ATU specialist projects [are available here](#).

Overall N-TUTORR has been impactful, creating a culture of engagement and collaboration both at a sectoral level and across the University, involving staff and students.

## 13.2 Higher Ed 4.0

Higher Education 4.0, which is funded by the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3, is one of two large externally funded projects that OFPD is leading on within the University. The project has two primary strands. The first is an externally facing service, 'Careers & Learning Pathways', which provides RPL and careers/study advisory services via [mycareerpath.ie](http://mycareerpath.ie). It is 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 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](http://www.mycareerpath.ie).

The second is an internally facing service – 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.

Sub-projects completed to date include MOOCs (see, [freecourses.atu.ie](http://freecourses.atu.ie)), micro-credential awards, work-based learning awards, project-based learning awards, along with the creation of 5,000 Reusable Learning Objects and Modules (RLOs and RLMs).

The project has also led the way in Remote Labs, Adaptive Learning, Instructional Design, and Digital Credentials, while also fitting out multiple Professional Recording Studios, enhancing the quality of ATU's online educational content, across the University's nine campuses.

Under the Higher Education 4.0, physical MakerSpace facilitates have been established on the Galway and Sligo campuses, with a third to be created at ATU Donegal once a suitable space has been identified. An ATU MakerSpace outreach programme visiting secondary schools across the region has also proved successful in promoting the STEM subjects among students. For more on ATU MakerSpace, see: [atumakerspace.ie](http://atumakerspace.ie).

A key innovative achievement of the Higher Education 4.0 Project has been supporting the Atlantic Sustainable Tourism Observatory Ireland project. The observatory became a member of the UN Tourism International Network of Sustainable

Tourism Observatories (INSTO) in November 2023. As Ireland's first INSTO observatory, it collaborates closely with tourism destinations along the Atlantic coast, Ireland's islands, and heartlands.

For further information on Higher Education 4.0's many sub-projects, go to [www.highered4.ie](http://www.highered4.ie).

### 13.3 EU GREEN

EU GREEN, a European University Alliance, was launched in January 2023, as the European Universities Alliance for Sustainability: Responsible Growth, Inclusive Education and Environment. ATU is a full partner along with eight other University partners across peripheral regions of Europe.

#### Staffing

EU GREEN at ATU is aligned with the President's Office. The ATU EU GREEN lead also reports to the Vice President of ATU Global. There are five staff in the EU GREEN team.

No.	Role	Name	Start Date
1	ATU Lead	Prof. Frances Lucy	Appointed 16 May 2023 (official start: 1 September 2023)
2	Project Manager	Margaret Mulchrone	Commenced 9th October 2023
3	Grade IV	Deirdre Whelan	Commenced 15 May 2023
4	Grade III	Paul Cairns / Ciara Griffin	Commenced 21st of August 2023
5	Grade VI	Lorraine Cunningham	Commenced July 1 2024

#### Roles and Responsibilities

- Lead Partner for the management of Work package 5: Engagement for sustainable societies and economies
- Co-lead partner for Work package 4: Innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainability
- EU GREEN's ATU team support ATU staff and student activities and mobilities for all nine work

packages in EU GREEN. 46 staff and student outbound mobilities for EU GREEN for this time period.

- EU GREEN team at ATU organise events for EU GREEN staff weeks and workshops held on ATU campuses.

**EU GREEN Events – Organisation of three Annual Staff Weeks at ATU**

Event Name	Dates	Campus Location	Incoming Mobilities
Sustainable and Healthy Campus Staff Week – Work Package 8	15-18 January 2024	ATU Donegal and ATU Sligo	32
Engagement for Sustainable Societies and Economies Staff Week – Work Package 5	12-14 March 2024	ATU Galway/Mayo/Connemara	42
Researchers Staff Week – Work Package 3	17-19 June 2024	ATU Sligo	103

Total Incoming Mobilities for events: 177

Total Outgoing Mobilities: 46







Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University



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

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