



# Queen's University Belfast Social Charter Newsletter

May 2021. VOL 25

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## **Figures revealed at ECIT summit show cyber security worth £110m in salaries in Northern Ireland**

A report launched at the Secure Connected Intelligence Summit, which took place this week at Queen's shows that Northern Ireland's cyber sector now employs 2,300 people across 104 companies, generating £110m in salaries each year.

The three-day virtual event, opened by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis, is being hosted by ECIT - The Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology at Queen's - and over 300 delegates from across the UK and beyond attended.

Belfast-based Perspective Economics has collaborated with The Centre for Secure Information Technologies at ECIT to carry out a review of the cyber security sector in Northern Ireland, focussing on skills, employment and its economic potential.

Building on the strong research base at ECIT, the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Sector Snapshot 2021 found that that foreign direct investment has played a key role with Invest NI providing around £27m funding to support the creation of over 1,300 cyber security roles in Northern Ireland between 2015 and 2020.

***"Cyber security is critical to our future prosperity - Northern Ireland is recognised as a global leader in the cybersecurity industry and is the top destination for US cybersecurity investment."***

Brandon Lewis MP, Northern Ireland Secretary of State

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## Research with Impact:

### Researchers pilot plans for new national birth cohort study

Researchers are set to test innovative approaches to a major new UK-wide study that will follow babies born in the 2020s over many decades to understand how societal circumstances and events affect them.

A £3 million investment, made by the Economic and Social Research Council, part of UK Research and Innovation, will allow researchers to develop a two-year-long birth cohort feasibility study.

The Early Life Cohort Feasibility Study will be led by UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies and includes researchers from the universities of Queen's University Belfast, Swansea, Edinburgh, Ulster and Manchester Metropolitan.

This study will develop and test the design, methodology and viability of a full-scale Early Life Cohort Study that is likely to follow participants for more than 70 years, starting from 2024.



### Higher grades awarded to students seen as agreeable, research finds

Teachers grading their students' work may be influenced by their perceptions of the students' personalities, according to the findings of an international research collaboration.

Led by academics from Queen's University Belfast, Goldsmiths, University of London and Sirius University of Science and Technology in Russia, the research found that teachers awarded higher grades to Russian students with more 'desirable' personality traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness.

The study is the first of its kind to explore and compare the connection between students who are selected for their exceptional performance and their personality and behavioural strengths and difficulties.

***"These results suggest that teacher ratings might reflect some conscious or unconscious biases, such as judging more leniently the students that they perceive as more focused on school tasks, who are well behaved in interpersonal contexts and who are more emotionally fragile."***

Dr Kostas Papageorgiou, School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast

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## Education with Social Purpose: Queen's students support children in care

Students from Queen's have been working in partnership with a local independent fostering agency to help children in care with their reading and education. Foster Carers Association Northern Ireland (FCA) specialises in the care of children who have experienced developmental trauma and deprivation.

The Reading Together programme, delivered by the Widening Participation Unit, brings together trained Student Mentors with children in care aged 7-10 to help them improve their literacy skills. The programme has been running since September 2020 and while it's designed to be delivered in a classroom set up, the virtual roll out of the programme has meant that six children were able participate in the weekly sessions.

***"The students who delivered the programme worked hard to build relationships with the young people and although we were unsure of how effective this could be in an online environment we were delighted with the success of the programme. We look forward to continuing our work with Foster Care Associates in the years ahead."***

Paula Moran, Outreach and Learning Development Manager, Queen's University Belfast

## 'Handy Helpers' Training Sessions

Despite some volunteering activities being paused due to COVID-19, the 'Handy Helpers' at Queen's University are using the time wisely, delivering two virtual training sessions during Development Weeks in May.

On Monday, 24 May, Alzheimer's UK will facilitate an online training session about Dementia Awareness, a condition which around 850,000 people in the UK are living with.

On Tuesday, 25 May, 'Cultural Awareness Training', delivered by colleagues at The Language Centre at Queen's, will explore what diversity means in an interactive and engaging way, and relevant to groups that the students will encounter through their volunteering.

As well as providing practical experience of working in the community, Handy Helpers provides students with the opportunity to secure Degree Plus when they graduate.

Upcoming Training Sessions



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## **Breaking Boundaries to Produce New Knowledge: New DNA research could help combat cancers that are resistant to current standard treatments**

In a groundbreaking first, research led by Queen's University Belfast has found thousands of 'Achilles Heels' or 'cancer vulnerabilities' in an analysis of more than 700 different cancer cell types.

In future, this could lead to new ways to stop cancer cells in their tracks by using existing drugs, as well as proposing new targets for drug development.

These drugs could even be used to combat cancers that are resistant to the current standard treatments.

Cancers usually have many mutations which can cause genetic weak spots or 'Achilles Heels'. For example, cancers frequently become more dangerous by mutating to stop some protective genes called tumour suppressors - leaving the tumour reliant upon a back-up gene. Hitting the back-up gene with a 'chemical hammer', can therefore kill the cancer cells.

***"Understanding the molecular fingerprints of cancer can pinpoint ways to target drugs precisely to those patients where they will be most effective. Our work makes a step towards more effective and personalised cancer treatments, ultimately saving lives."***

Dr Ian Overton, Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research, Queen's University Belfast

## **Queen's University partners with SVG Ventures for the Inaugural THRIVE Europe Challenge**

Queen's University has become the first UK university to partner with the leading global Agrifood Venture and Innovation Platform.

Silicon Valley based SVG Ventures have recently launched the 'THRIVE Europe Challenge' programme to seek out the most innovative Agri-Food Tech start-ups across the continent who are solving some of the critical challenges facing the global agriculture industry.

Queen's is ranked 1st in the UK as the most entrepreneurial university in 2020 and the THRIVE Europe Challenge will strengthen connections between the University and US based partners including leading corporations in Silicon Valley.

***"I am delighted that an internationally renowned company such as SVG Ventures has joined with Queen's University, Belfast, as co-marketing partners of the THRIVE Global Initiative Europe Challenge. I would encourage entrepreneurs from Northern Ireland to consider entering the Challenge, to accelerate the development of an innovation ecosystem here, as outlined in DAERA's new Innovation strategy."***

Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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## Equality and Excellence:

### Beyond Coronavirus: How does the world recover?

Queen's University Belfast was delighted to host Professor Henrietta Moore, Founder and Director of the Institute for Global Prosperity, UCL, to deliver a keynote address 'Beyond Coronavirus: How Does The World Recover?'

The event examined the health and socio-economic impact of Covid-19 in the most vulnerable countries, and featured reflections by Professor Diarmuid O'Donovan, Clinical Professor, School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, Queen's University Belfast.

To view a recording of the event, please click on the image below.



## Inclusion Health Seminar Series

Inclusion Health (IH) at Queen's University has held the third event of the of Inclusion Health Seminar Series. IH is a research, service and policy agenda that aims to prevent and redress health and social inequities among the most vulnerable and marginalised people in a community.

Dr Caroline Mitchell, University of Sheffield, led the event on 19 May, discussing how to improve access to healthcare for underserved communities.

Previous events in the series had focused on 'Tackling health inequalities and homelessness' and 'Making sense of street chaos'.

To view the three events which have taken place so far in the series, and the final one to come, please click **HERE**

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## Sustainability: Pack for Good

Queen's University is proud to support the British Heart Foundation 'Pack for Good' campaign, which encourages donations at the end of the academic year.

Students who are doing a room clear out or leaving their accommodation, and have unwanted household items, are encouraged to leave them at the donation station located in the Treehouse in BT9 Elms Village.

Items donated go to British Heart Foundation for sale in their shops, with money raised in turn supporting research and services.



## Civic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue: In Conversation with Jonathan Powell

Queen's University welcomed Jonathan Powell, for an 'In Conversation' event hosted by Professor Richard English on 19 May, 2021.

Jonathan Powell, Honorary Professor of Queen's University is CEO of Inter Mediate, the charity which he founded to work on conflict resolution around the world. He previously served as a British diplomat from 1979 to 1996, Chief of Staff to Tony Blair from 1997 to 2007.

Delivered live from Queen's University's Great Hall, the event was streamed to an online audience. Constitutional questions relating to Scottish independence; a border poll; English nationalism; the conflict in the Middle East; Brexit and conflict mediation were all discussed. To watch a recording of the event, please click on the image below.



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## **Recognising and Rewarding Contributions from Staff and Students: Queen's Management School awarded prestigious EQUIS accreditation**

Queen's Management School has been awarded the prestigious and internationally recognised EQUIS accreditation for management and business schools.

EQUIS is the leading international system of quality assessment, improvement and accreditation of higher education institutions in management and business administration.

Institutions that are accredited by EQUIS must demonstrate not only high general quality in all dimensions of their activities, but also a high degree of internationalisation. With companies recruiting worldwide, with students choosing to get their education outside their home countries, and with Schools building alliances across borders and continents, there is a rapidly growing need for them to be able to identify those institutions in other countries that deliver high quality education in international management.

Queen's Management School is one of just 197 business and management schools worldwide to have been awarded EQUIS accreditation to date.

## **Virtual reality film to shine light on impact of mental abuse and coercive control**

A filmmaker has launched a Virtual Reality (VR) film to raise awareness of the impact of mental abuse and coercive control on victims.

Lucy Baxter, director of domestic abuse charity Mental Abuse Matters and a Film Practice lecturer at Queen's University Belfast is using Mental Abuse Matters as her PhD subject.

The VR film shows the hard-hitting and traumatic impact of mental abuse on the victim, through an immersive film experience. The project was funded by Future Screens NI and is now being developed into a wider business idea through a Tech Start funded customer discovery process with Qubis.

The video is available to view on the QFT player and by clicking on the image below.

