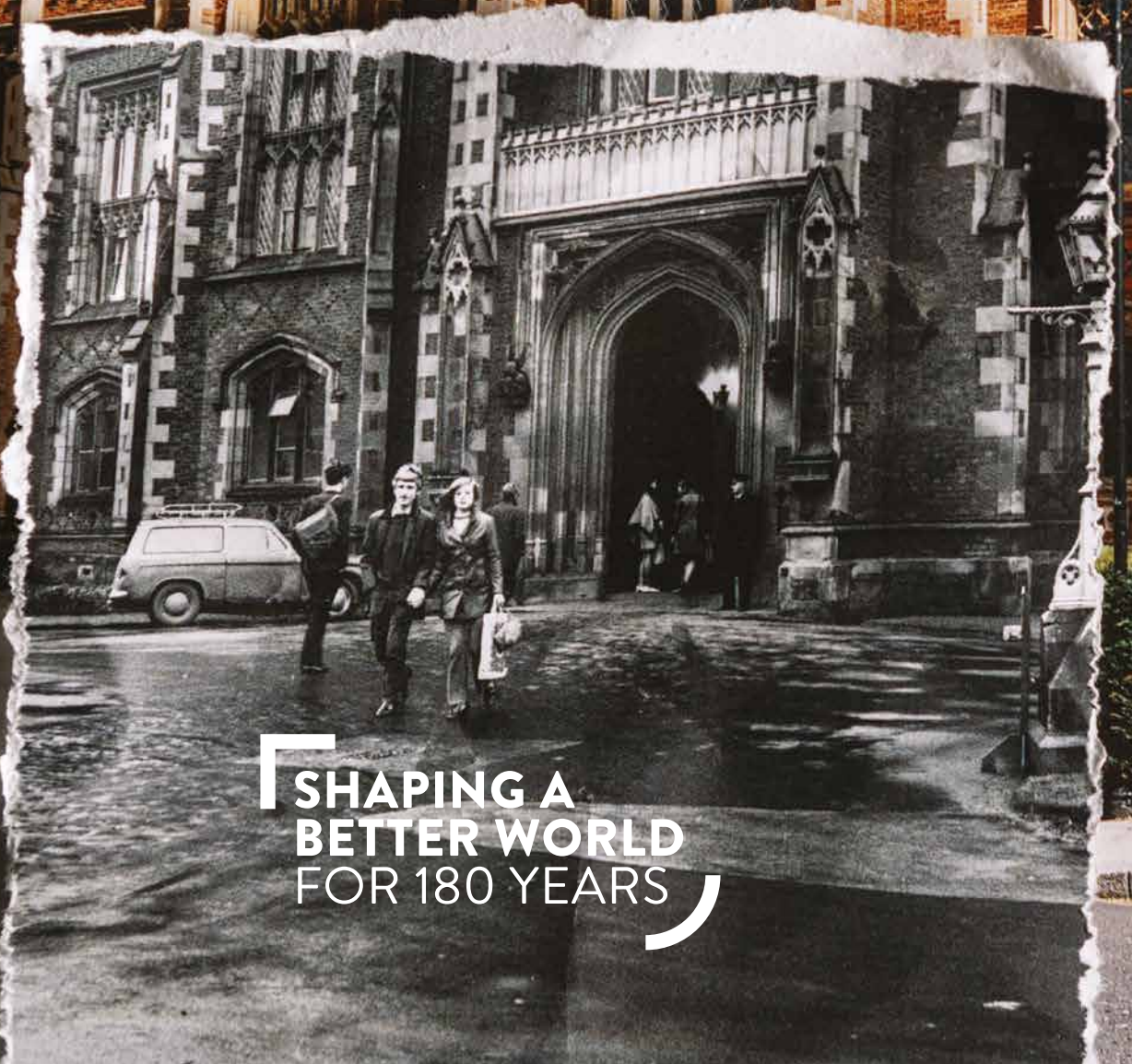




QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

180
YEARS

Civic University Agreement



SHAPING A
BETTER WORLD
FOR 180 YEARS

Our Civic University Agreement celebrates what is possible through authentic partnerships and genuine collaboration.

Our themes of work are anchored in The Belfast Agenda, and reflective of the Programme for Government, as we work together to create a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable City and region.



Belfast
City Council



Professor Sir Ian Greer

President and Vice-Chancellor

Queen's roots in our home city of Belfast run deep. This year we were proud to celebrate 180 years as a staple presence, a pioneer, and force for positive change locally, and globally.

Building on the foundations laid down in our Social Charter, this new chapter will see Queen's become an official Civic University, recognising our unique and privileged position in driving societal, economic, and environmental advancements across Belfast and beyond.

Throughout our history, we have been a safe haven to our staff, students and wider community during times of war and conflict, playing our part to support efforts during both World Wars, and offering a place of refuge during the Troubles.

In May 2025, we were delighted to become the first university in Northern Ireland to achieve University of Sanctuary status. This not only acknowledges the support we offer to our local refugee, asylum-seeker and migrant communities, but the ways in which we draw on their expertise to inform our work and vision, so that together we continue to weave a rich tapestry of culture and tradition.

These of course are incredible milestones. But they reflect a broader body of collaborative work that has been ongoing for a number of years between this University and our civic partners across Belfast.

These partners have helped shape the decisions we make, enhanced the quality of our research, the teaching experience we provide to our students, and provided innovative opportunities to address some of the most complex and interrelated challenges in our society.

Initiatives such as co-designed community-based projects in the Greater Shankill and Market areas, and Queen's Civic Commitment to South Belfast, have delivered hugely positive impacts and demonstrate how an inclusive partnership approach between communities, policymakers and academics can work towards lasting change.

Our civic partnerships, and the valuable relationships we have built with colleagues in the community and voluntary sector, reflect our belief that educational spaces should be accessible and empowering for all, regardless of background or circumstance.

This Agreement reaffirms our commitment to building a diverse, compassionate community and ensuring Queen's is a place of welcome, opportunity, and inclusion.

It serves as a reminder to our entire University family that becoming a Civic University is not just a status, but a promise in recognition of the central role we play in the Belfast story.

It is an invitation to further strengthen our ties and increase our impact so that we may continue to respond to the most pressing needs and challenges of the people of Northern Ireland.

We look forward to upholding this promise and providing a place where old and new neighbours alike, can feel safe, equally welcomed and equally valued.

INSTITUTIONAL CIVIC MAP



1 Civic Engagement and Strategic Communications
This directorate brings together Social Impact and Civic Engagement, Neighbourhood Engagement, Widening Participation, Culture and Arts and the Science Shop. It coordinates university wide civic activity, building strong partnerships, widening access to education, supporting community research and engaging the public through arts and culture.

2 Students' Union
Encourages student-led civic action through volunteering, campaigns, and over 200 clubs and societies that foster leadership, inclusion and community connection.

3 Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP)
Partners with Belfast communities to address poverty and deprivation, co-producing research that advances Queen's civic mission and delivers meaningful community impact.

4 Research
Leads on research strategy, innovation and impact. It includes Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, which embed Queen's expertise into local businesses and community organisations to solve real-world problems and support economic growth.

5 Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Connects civic, cultural and economic engagement through creative partnerships such as the Innovation Zones, and socially informed research.

6 Senator George J. Mitchell Institute
Uses interdisciplinary research, cultural events and public dialogue to explore peace, justice and security, both locally and globally.

7 Belfast Region City Deal
Queen's is leading a £230 million innovation programme that supports inclusive economic growth, job creation and community regeneration through centres like AMIC, iREACH and Momentum One Zero, aligning world-class research with civic priorities in health, manufacturing and digital technologies.

10 Open Learning
Delivers accessible part-time courses that support lifelong learning and open higher education to people who might not otherwise engage with it.

8 Estates and Finance Directorates
The Estates and Finance directorates includes the City Deal, Development, Sustainability and Finance team, all applying a strong focus on delivering social value through responsible campus development, procurement and shared spaces that support community benefit.

11 Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences
Applies STEM expertise to civic challenges through community research, Science Shop projects and industry collaboration.

9 Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences
Collaborates with the NHS, public health bodies and communities to improve health outcomes and tackle inequality.

12 Queen's Sport
Provides inclusive sports facilities, community outreach and health programmes that improve wellbeing and promote social inclusion.

13 Queen's Business School
is developing the next generation of business and economics leaders while injecting societal impact into the curriculum through social projects.

OUR AGREEMENT

For 180 years, Queen's University has been woven into the fabric of Belfast.

Our presence extends far beyond the boundaries of our campus, generating positive impacts that touch every aspect of city life. Through our students and staff, our teaching, research, and engagement, we contribute to the knowledge, prosperity, and social connections that define our place.

Our civic mission is central to who we are, acknowledging the profound responsibility that we at Queen's University Belfast must serve our place. Empowered by our Social Charter, we have embraced our role in tackling the real challenges that matter to individuals, families, communities, and society.

Strategy 2030 has enabled our civic mission, underlining the fact that our local impact and global reputation are not competing priorities, but complementary strengths that reinforce each other.

Our strategic alignment with Belfast City Council, and other statutory and community planning partners who drive the Belfast Agenda, is reflected in our priority strands of our civic work and reflected in this Civic University Agreement.

These partnerships are built on shared purpose, demonstrating we can achieve far more together than any of us could alone.

This work was shaped by listening and responding to our partners.

This Civic University Agreement reaffirms our commitment to being a driver for positive change in our place, enabled by meaningful partnerships and strategic alignment with city-wide goals. Together we will continue to contribute to Belfast's story of growth, innovation, and inclusive prosperity

“WE'RE IMMENSELY PROUD OF THE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES, BUSINESSES, AND POLICY MAKERS, RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE **ENRICHING LIVES AND STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS.**”



DISTANCE TRAVELLED

Queen's University is on a path to deepen its civic mission. Having travelled some distance as an institution committed to authentic engagement and collaboration, we celebrate what has been achieved so far whilst challenging ourselves to keep building on the momentum. The road map demonstrates the distance travelled by the University and its partners, and the structures that are now in place to ensure the continued sustainability of this work.

2017

Social Charter launched: guiding and inspiring our engagement with local partners and our commitment to give back to society

2019

Engaged Research Action Plan launched: creating a culture where researchers, research partners and beneficiaries feel supported and valued in the work they carry out together

2020

Queen's Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Network established: a community of best practice ensuring the voices, opinions and insights of those with lived experience are heard and embedded in approaches to research and teaching

2020-21

Covid-19 and Post Covid Recovery: Queen's supports the Department of Health by increasing the capacity of Covid-19 diagnostic testing in Northern Ireland. Final year students in medicine, nursing and social work receive specialist training to join the workforce early and our trained and registered healthcare academics are also moved into full-time NHS activity.

We focused our research on the global fight against Covid-19 and deliver free postgraduate certificate courses for people whose career has been impacted by Covid-19

2021

QUB PPI Network invited to become a partner university of the PPI Ignite Network in the Republic of Ireland

2021

Strategy 2030 launched: Social and Civic Responsibility, and Economic Prosperity is one of four strategic priorities enabling Queen's intention to shape a better world through life changing education and research

2021

Launch of Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP): supporting communities through long term engagement, academic research and impact

2024

Social Impact and Civic Responsibility team formed: tasked with advancing the University's Civic Mission

2022

MoU with Market Development Association signed: advancing a new research-led framework for community-academic partnership

2024

MoU with the Greater Shankill Partnership signed: formalising a shared commitment to further collaborative work to progress and enhance the Greater Shankill area

2024

Civic Mission launched: Queen's pledges to become a Civic University and University of Sanctuary

2024

Service Level Agreement signed with RCITY and Foróige: enhancing commitment and collaboration to work with young people to build pathways to higher education

2024

Civic Commitment to South Belfast University Area launched: in partnership with Belfast City Council underscoring a dedication to improving community relations and student welfare

2024

Internal and External Governance structures created: including the Governance and External Affairs Committee; Path to Sanctuary Operational Group and the Civic Advisory Board

2025

Queen's is awarded University of Sanctuary status: recognising our good practice in welcoming people seeking sanctuary and fostering a culture of belonging and inclusion for all

2024

CiviContribution Fund created: providing funding to staff and students to develop and implement projects that make diverse and impactful contributions to society

Ahead: Queen's continues its mission to benefit our city and region through genuine collaboration and engagement

OUR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Through our Social Charter, community partnerships and civic mission, Queen's University creates lasting positive change for residents throughout our region. We focus our efforts on empowering individuals and communities, delivering accessible education and lifelong learning, strengthening social cohesion, improving health and wellbeing, and creating pathways to opportunity and personal development for our people.

EMPOWERING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

We work directly with residents, local organisations and community groups to co-design solutions that address real challenges and create meaningful change from within communities themselves.

We are pioneering new models of community engagement that put residents at the centre of research and innovation, recognising that the most effective solutions emerge when academic knowledge combines with community understanding and expertise.

Our **Social Impact and Civic Responsibility** team are responsible for the development and oversight of the civic mission. The team has grown to include five full-time members of staff demonstrating the core investment made by the University in resourcing and prioritising authentic partnerships and engagement.

Through our **Research programme and the work of the QUB PPI Network**, we are dedicated to ensuring research, expertise

and resources serve community priorities, whilst the deep local knowledge, lived experience, expertise and practical insights that communities bring enhance the relevance and impact of our academic work. An example of this is the cross-disciplinary work spearheaded by local communities working with researchers in public health and psychology, as well as advocacy groups and statutory agencies, to address violence against women and girls.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD



Open Learning short course programmes serving the community since the

1850s



1/3

of our students come from widening participation backgrounds



£17.1m

gross aggregated investment leveraged by QCAP for community partners.



18,500

students involved in volunteering, clubs and societies through the Students' Union



**“I HAVE HAD A VERY
SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL
JOURNEY WITH QUEEN’S,
FROM A PARTICIPANT TO NOW
WORKING ALONGSIDE THE UNIVERSITY
IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY.”**

Donovan Evitt
RCITY



SPOTLIGHT

COMMUNITY-LED PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION

We are committed to ensuring Belfast is a city that creates opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential. We work to create pathways that we are not just raising aspirations to study here but are empowering young people to bring their lived experience and influence to bear on the University.

To achieve this, we partner with organisations across the city such as RCITY, which is a youth leadership organisation based in North Belfast who have partnered with us since 2017. Throughout this time the

young people and leaders have influenced our civic mission, and the partnership has developed and grown. Initially focused on programmes delivered with postgraduate students, the work has evolved to include Queen's accrediting a Youth Leadership course in collaboration with RCITY and Foróige, a youth development organisation based in Dublin. The Queen's University Belfast Level 4 Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action (30 CATs), develops young people's leadership skills over a two-year period and allows them to earn CATs points, which will support further academic pursuits. The first cohort of 33 young people graduated from the programme in October 2024, with new cohorts starting each year.

**“THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN
COMPLETED AND THE
OPPORTUNITIES
CREATED FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE
UNIMAGINABLE.”**

COMPASSIONATE

Through Strategy 2030, along with our policies and practices, Queen's University honours a deep commitment to being welcoming, caring, fair, and inclusive. We focus our efforts on widening access to higher education, offering an education for societal impact and supporting cultural diversity while fostering an inclusive research environment addressing real-world challenges.

CHAMPIONING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

We are committed to promoting and celebrating equality both on and off campus. We have embedded inclusive practices in every system and process of university life, with our **Diversity and Inclusion team** helping to create a culture that is inclusive at all levels. Not only does this enrich education and foster fairness, it creates an inclusive social environment where everyone can thrive and contribute.

As one of Northern Ireland's largest employers, our approaches to equality and inclusion have

an impact beyond our staff and student body. We are working outside of our footprint to address inequalities. We're partnering with communities to build tools that make essential data to address design solutions to persistent inequalities more accessible.

The **Research Culture Roadmap** sets a framework for an inclusive approach to our shared challenges, articulating a vision and priorities that connect people, practices, and initiatives across Queen's. By recognising that it is individuals within our research community

who bring these ambitions to life, it creates an environment where everyone can thrive and contribute. Among the many examples of collaborative work involving Queen's researchers and external partners, is the recent stakeholder and community engagement process to look at the Connswater Community Greenway through the lens of accessibility and inclusion with an emphasis on engaging with older people and people with disabilities.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD



We are a
UNIVERSITY OF SANCTUARY
building a culture of welcome and inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers and those seeking sanctuary



Second University in the UK to receive
ATHENA SWAN GOLD
for advancing gender equality



We are a signatory of Advance HE's
RACE EQUALITY CHARTER,
aiming to improve representation and success for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students



THE ADMINISTRATION ACADEMY
delivered with Belfast City Council designed to reduce barriers to employment for those with limited or no qualifications



OUR PATH TO SANCTUARY

We support the 'City of Sanctuary' vision that the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

We endorse the City of Sanctuary Charter, and agree to act in accordance with City of Sanctuary values and apply the network principles within our work, as far as our specific context enables us to.

We recognise the contribution of people seeking sanctuary. Sanctuary seekers are welcomed, included and supported within our context.

SIGNED:

PROFESSOR SIR IAN GREER
PRESIDENT AND
VICE-CHANCELLOR

MR MEHRSHAD ESFANDIARI
CHAIR OF BELFAST
CITY OF SANCTUARY

MISS BETH ELDON
PRESIDENT QUEEN'S UN.
STUDENTS' UNION

KIERAN MINTO
VICE-CHAIR QUEEN'S
STUDENTS' UNION



SOCIAL CHARTER

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING LEADERSHIP
LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON
SOCIETY THROUGH OUR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

WE ARE COMMITTED TO EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

THEMES



RESEARCH WITH IMPACT



EDUCATION WITH
SOCIAL PURPOSE



BREAKING BOUNDARIES TO
PRODUCE NEW KNOWLEDGE



CIVIC CULTURE AND
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE



EQUALITY AND EXCELLENCE



SUSTAINABILITY



RECOGNISING AND REWARDING
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
STUDENTS AND STAFF

SIGNED:

PROFESSOR SIR IAN GREER
PRESIDENT AND
VICE-CHANCELLOR

MISS BETH ELDON
PRESIDENT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

MR KIERAN MINTO
PRESIDENT (ELECT) QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

DR RYAN FEENEY
VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

PROFESSOR JUDY WILLIAMS
PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR
EDUCATION AND STUDENTS

ACADEMIC OFFICERS:

HINDLEY

SMITH



SPOTLIGHT



RECOGNISED AS A UNIVERSITY OF SANCTUARY

In May 2025, Queen's University became the first in Northern Ireland, and one of fewer than 40 in the UK, to be awarded University of Sanctuary status.

This national recognition honours our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for refugees, asylum seekers, and others seeking sanctuary. It reflects our proactive

efforts to embed sanctuary values across teaching, institutional practices, and community engagement - going beyond legal obligations to stand in solidarity with those seeking sanctuary.

The University has conducted extensive consultations with representative groups and individuals most affected by displacement, ensuring that the emerging three-year implementation plan is based on need. Belfast City of Sanctuary have travelled on this path with us as our primary Sanctuary partner, providing expertise, amplifying impact and enhancing public awareness.

“MY JOURNEY WITH QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STARTED WHEN I WAS AWARDED THE ASYLUM SEEKER SCHOLARSHIP FOR MY MASTER'S DEGREE. **THAT OPPORTUNITY TRULY CHANGED MY LIFE.**”

Enas Abdelfatah
PhD Student

“QUEEN'S DIDN'T JUST GIVE ME ACCESS TO EDUCATION; **IT GAVE ME A SENSE OF BELONGING** AND A PLATFORM TO REBUILD MY LIFE. NOW, AS A PHD STUDENT, I FEEL DEEPLY CONNECTED TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.”

ECONOMY

At Queen's University, we collaborate with partners across Belfast and Northern Ireland to drive transformative economic change. Working together with government, communities, businesses, and other stakeholders, we generate opportunities for high-value employment, foster inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship, and develop accessible skills pathways for the future economy. Through these collaborative partnerships, we are building sustainable and equitable routes to prosperity that will bring benefit across the region.

DRIVING COLLABORATION

Our independent economic impact analysis shows we contribute over £3 billion annually to the economy, derived from our research, knowledge exchange, teaching, job creation and operational spending. We are transforming how we prepare students for tomorrow's jobs through our innovative programmes including AI capability development, digital skills enhancement, and entrepreneurship education.

The Business Engagement team serves as the University's strategic gateway for innovation, thought leadership, and research collaboration. Working closely with industry bodies, the team engages academics to help address critical regional business challenges such as productivity, infrastructure, skills, and net zero transition, positioning the university as a catalyst for regional economic growth and innovation.

Our **Research Directorate** facilitates collaboration with industry, government and communities to embed sustainable practices and work with partners to build models of inclusive growth that benefit individuals and society alike. These research initiatives are key to economic prosperity, creating good jobs and accelerating innovation-led growth across all sectors.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD



Lead the **£220 MILLION** innovation pillar of the transformational Belfast Region City Deal



30 YEARS OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP
driving growth and competitiveness



42

active spin-out companies through QUBIS, employing over 3,500 people, with an estimated combined annual turnover of circa £500 million



Queen's Business School is in the
TOP 1%
of business schools in the world



AMBASSADOR STATUS
in the City Council's
BELFAST BUSINESS PROMISE

exemplifies our commitment to working with local businesses to drive economic growth





SPOTLIGHT

DRIVING COMMUNITY ECONOMIC IMPACT

Since 2018, Queen's University has been in partnership with The Turnaround Project, a Belfast-based charity that supports people transitioning from the justice system through training, support, and employment opportunities.

From the very early days of Turnaround's development, the University supported the charity in developing its initial model of support. Master's students, interns, placement students and volunteers worked alongside Turnaround's staff team, supporting people to turn around their futures.

Emerging collaborative projects included 'The Big Loop Bike Hub', a social enterprise opening in 2021 and operating for three years on Queen's campus. Throughout the partnership, academic oversight and rigour has been applied to review and assess impact, and through engaged research projects, an evidence base has been gathered to shape future work.

The continued relationship reflects how a genuine collaboration can enhance research and teaching opportunities, while supporting criminal justice rehabilitation and environmental sustainability in Belfast.

“OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH QUEEN'S HAS ENABLED US TO BETTER SERVE THE PEOPLE OUR ORGANISATION SEEKS TO SUPPORT, ENSURING THAT OUR APPROACH IS **ROOTED IN ACADEMIC EVIDENCE AND THAT WE CAN DEMONSTRATE OUR IMPACT**”

Richard Good
The Turnaround Project

“IT HAS ENABLED STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE WHO THEY MAY NOT OTHERWISE MEET, AND TO SEE THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. IT HAS HELPED US INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT TURNAROUND OFFERS, AND TO PROVIDE THOSE TO MORE PEOPLE.”

OUR PLACE

Queen's University Belfast works in partnership with communities, businesses, and civic leaders to create meaningful change that improves lives and strengthens neighbourhoods across Belfast and beyond. Our strategic partnerships demonstrate long term commitment to collaboration across diverse communities, as we work together to support Belfast's growth as a vibrant, inclusive and connected city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

CREATING LASTING CHANGE TOGETHER WITH THE COMMUNITY

Since 2021, **Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP)** has advanced a model of university-community collaboration across the Market and other inner city Belfast communities to address place-based challenges across health and wellbeing, education and skills, and community wealth building.

QCAP represents a fundamental shift in how universities engage with communities, positioning local knowledge and lived experience as equal to academic expertise.

This approach has generated tangible results for the community: the work has leveraged £17.5 million in external funding for community partners from sources including the National Lottery, Shared Prosperity Fund, and Urban Villages Fund.

The programme's success is measured not just in funding, but in authentic engagement. Over 1,000 residents participated in community events, workshops, and working group meetings. Co-

produced initiatives like Tackling Substance Use Together, the Community Wellbeing Kitchen, STEAM Summer Scheme and SMART Cityzens demonstrate how academic research can address critical local needs while building community capacity.

QCAP has also catalysed cross-community networks including the Belfast Community Research & Innovation Network and Community Wealth Building Partnerships that transcend traditional community boundaries.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD



10+ YEARS

of partnership work with community organisations producing real, positive change for the people of the **GREATER SHANKILL AREA**



RECLAIMING SPACE for accessible and inclusive use through academia-community-government programmes like **STREETSPACE** and the **OPEN BOTANIC FESTIVAL** driven by partners **FORWARD SOUTH PARTNERSHIP**



Transforming the City landscape by investing **£100 MILLION** in student accommodation while our **ACCOMMODATION BURSARY SCHEME** reduces costs for lower income families by 37%



Our thriving cultural landscape spans the **NAUGHTON GALLERY** and **QUEEN'S FILM THEATRE** to **THE MANDELA HALL** and **THE WHITLA HALL** - venues that have hosted iconic musicians and performers



“THROUGH QUEEN'S, QCAP REPRESENTS A TRULY NEW WAY OF WORKING, ONE WHERE **UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS DON'T JUST STUDY OUR COMMUNITY, THEY WORK WITH US AS EQUAL PARTNERS.**”

Fionntan Hargey
Director, Market Development Association



GREATER SHANKILL SCHOOLS NETWORK

Since 2020, in collaboration with the Greater Shankill Partnership, Queen's University has been working with, and helping to develop, a network among 11 schools serving children and young people in the Greater Shankill area. The school network, which comprises eight primary schools and three post primary schools, has been supported by Queen's University academics helping them to identify three priority strands of work that would deepen the school connections; shape teacher professional development priorities; and provide new teachers with a contextual induction to the area.

Over the past five years, the 11 schools, Queen's University and the Greater Shankill Partnership have worked to deliver upon these priorities.

Queen's has supported an annual principal residential; the WJ Clinton Leadership Institute at the University have delivered a series of leadership training sessions to vice-principals and senior teachers; and the University's

Foundation Fund enabled access for a three year term with PIXL, a large school improvement network. The Greater Shankill Partnership deliver the annual induction programme for new and even established teachers within the network, providing a cultural and historical overview of the Greater Shankill area.

The Network has also prioritised teacher collaboration and the sharing of their own good practice. August 2025 saw the first joint INSET day between the 8 primary schools, bringing together 130 teachers at Riddel Hall. A key aspect of this professional development day involved schools showcasing aspects of their practice that address some of the collective challenges that schools face in the Children and Young People's Zone, including innovative approaches to literacy and numeracy, the use of virtual reality for activity-based learning, restorative practices and nurture approaches.

“QUEEN'S COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IS REAL, AND THROUGH COLLABORATION, **WE CAN MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS AND WIDER COMMUNITY.**”

Jill Black
Principal, Black Mountain Primary School

OUR PLANET

As part of our Strategy 2030, we are committed to embracing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leading the transition to a carbon-neutral society. In June 2023, we strengthened this commitment by setting an ambitious target: achieving net zero emissions by 2040.

This ambitious target reflects not just the critical contribution that the University makes through world-leading research and education provision on sustainability, but also through its role as a social civic leader in the transition to net zero within the Island of Ireland.

PRIORITISING SUSTAINABILITY

At Queen's, our academics collaborate across disciplines and sectors to tackle both local and global issues, advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals and generating real-world impact. Much of our research directly addresses environmental, social and economic challenges – by focusing on these interconnected elements, we ensure that our work drives positive change for society, and our planet. Outreach and engagement are central to our civic mission and to delivering the University's Net Zero Plan.

We continue to prepare our students for leadership and citizenship in a global society, committed to sustainability and social responsibility. Since 2020, students within the School of Medicine have been driving change in how sustainability is embedded within their education and campus, whilst aiming to highlight how sustainability plays a key role in keeping our society healthy and happy. Increasingly, our graduating doctors are leaving the University and educating patients about planetary health – how human

activity is impacting the health of our planet, and the growing impact of climate and ecological breakdown on human health.

The University has committed significant resources to enhancing the sustainability of our campus infrastructure, addressing our direct and indirect environmental impacts – including energy use, water consumption, waste, travel, purchasing, and biodiversity.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD



Queen's University is advancing **NET ZERO** and are the first and only University in the UK to be awarded a **GOLD** Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) rating



First purpose-built **PASSIVHAUS** student accommodation on the island of Ireland has been developed at our Dublin Road site



Signatory to the UKRI **CONCORDAT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PRACTICE** maximising the contribution academic research makes to the region's climate goals



'**SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CONVERSATION**' events drive positive sustainability change within Belfast and beyond





SPOTLIGHT

IMPLEMENTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN BELFAST AND BEYOND

Queen's University Belfast researchers have joined an international team of experts to develop nature-based solutions (NbS) to address pollution, urban regeneration, citizen health and climate resilience.

Researchers are supporting five city partners - Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Katowice and Maribor - to share learnings and good practice on how to implement a range of NbS, from rain gardens to green bus stops.

In Belfast, Queen's researchers are working alongside Belfast City Council and local stakeholders including

community groups Friends of the Field and Friends of Botanic Gardens. An underused green space in the city's Lower Botanic Gardens has been regenerated into a climate-resilient garden to enable local users to engage with nature conservation, research and food production.

The site is now used to grow produce by the local community, as an educational facility for local schools to learn about nature and by researchers within Queen's to drive knowledge on how nature-based solutions can save, enhance and protect our vital habitats.

“MY ROLE IS TO TRY AND BREAKDOWN THE BARRIERS BETWEEN THE ACADEMIA AND POLICY-MAKING, BRING LEARNING INTO COMMUNITIES AND HELP COMMUNICATE CHALLENGES AND REAL WORLD PROBLEMS SO THAT WE CAN GET **THE GREAT UNIVERSITY ECOSYSTEM THAT WE HAVE ON OUR DOORSTEP TO HELP US ACHIEVE THE 3 OUR PLANET GOALS OF THE CITY'S COMMUNITY PLAN.**”



Mura Quigley
Adaption and Resilience Advisor,
Belfast City Council Climate Team

The Civic Lab is a flagship platform to drive forward our civic mission through collaboration and accountability. Shaped to offer inclusivity and openness to new and emerging partners, The Civic Lab will ensure our civic mission can be as reflective of our city as possible.

As we continue to grow and improve as a Civic University, evaluation will be embedded in every aspect of the Civic Lab.

In partnership with the University's Impact and Engagement team, we will design creative and inclusive evaluation processes that are integrated in our activities.

From the outset, we will work with our partners to agree what success looks like, the changes we want to see, and the best ways to capture them. Our approach will combine reflection, dialogue, and creative evidence-gathering embedded into projects from start to finish.

This approach will enable us to learn in real time, understand what works and why, and share compelling stories of change that strengthen the impact for our people and communities, our economy, our place, and our planet, with compassion at the core.

The academic year 2026/2027 will serve as the pilot year for the Civic Lab. During this time, we will focus on a range of innovative projects aligned to our civic themes. These projects represent the first wave of Civic Lab activities, shaped by local partnerships and designed to deliver meaningful, measurable outcomes.

The Civic Lab is not just a platform but it's a statement of intent. Through its launch, Queen's University Belfast reaffirms its role as a convenor, catalyst, and co-creator of civic change. Together with our partners, we are shaping a more inclusive, compassionate, and sustainable future rooted in our shared values, guided by evidence, and powered by collective action.

In its pilot year and beyond, we will continue to test, refine and scale initiatives that enhance our civic mission. With compassion, creativity, and accountability at its core, the Civic Lab places Queen's at the forefront of civic innovation in higher education.

To find out more, scan the QR code.



SCAN HERE



“I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER TO REALISE THEIR COLLECTIVE POTENTIAL. SUCCESS WILL LIE WITHIN IMAGINATIVE, BUT PRACTICAL COLLABORATIONS, **UNLEASHING NEW IDEAS AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE THE MANY ISSUES THAT ARE FACED BY PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES WITHIN BELFAST AND BEYOND.”**

Richard Good
The Turnaround Project





BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM: CIVIC PRIORITIES



Community-led Pathways to Education

We are working with our community partners to create inclusive education interventions, delivered through alternative pathways.

The RCITY Youth Academy Partnership is an innovative pilot initiative that will be developed with RCITY Youth group, offering an alternative pathway for young people who may not be effectively engaged through conventional educational channels. The programme will be measured against the established school-based provision, evaluating both participation rates and progression outcomes to assess the effectiveness of community-based identification and mentor support mechanisms.

The Sanctuary Scholars Programme is an emerging flagship suite of opportunities for those seeking sanctuary, creating a dedicated pipeline into Queen's University. A three-tier approach, the programme offers Foundation, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Pathways to support displaced individuals who face significant barriers to accessing higher education. By broadening the range and reach of our scholarships, we aim to support people seeking sanctuary at every stage of their academic journey and contribute meaningfully to a more compassionate city.

The STEM Passport Partnering with Maynooth University, Queen's University will deliver a 12-month pilot to enhance STEM education delivery among underrepresented groups. The STEM Passport, an established programme facilitating innovation and skills, will empower learners with a STEM qualification in addition to connecting with Industry mentors.



Empowering Civic Participation

We are engaging purposefully with partners to empower civic participation, creating accessible pathways for community members to influence decisions affecting their lives.

Civic Ambassadors

To ensure accountability and embed lived experience into strategic decision-making, we are launching our Civic Ambassadors. This group of community-identified experts meets quarterly to reflect, challenge, co-design initiatives, and help define success across all Civic Lab activity.

Investing in Partnership

We are creating a new co-located post based on the Shankill Road to support coordination of local programming, foster two-way learning, and ensure long-term presence and trust between Queen's and the local community.

Chancellor's Medals

We will align the awarding of our Chancellors Medals to our civic mission, recognising the exceptional contributions individuals make at a local level across our society.



Embedding Sustainability

We will continue to collaborate strategically with partners to integrate sustainability principles into policy and practice, ensuring long-term environmental resilience and social responsibility.

Net Zero by 2040

The University will continue to build on progress to ensure we achieve our objective of net zero by 2040, whilst embedding the Sustainable Development Goals across our activities. Going forward, a systematic approach will ensure we minimise carbon emissions across our buildings, energy, supply chains, waste and travel.

Creation of Co-Centres

With the creation of Co-Centres for Climate, Biodiversity, Water and Food, academics are increasingly committed to collaborating across disciplines and sectors to tackle local and global issues, advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and generating real-world impact.

Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum

We will continue to embed sustainability within our curriculum by evaluating, supporting and encouraging academics to include sustainability within their teaching, to ensure students are prepared for the challenges they will face.



Enhancing the impact of Social Value

We are harnessing the power of convening partners to influence policy and create change that amplifies social value and drives meaningful impact.

Strategic Engagement

Queen's will use its convening power to facilitate the establishment of a strategic collaborative forum to explore how data and engagement can be used to inform the delivery of assets and programmes in Belfast. We are committed to harnessing the power of social value through influencing policy and ensuring social value is at the heart of all our core investments.

Social Value Review

We are committed to conducting a comprehensive review of our social value policies and practices to ensure they meaningfully address community needs and drive measurable impact. Through stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and policy assessment, we will identify gaps between commitments and outcomes, then implement evidence-based improvements that strengthen our contribution to social equity and community wellbeing.

Harnessing our Supply Chain

We are committed to reviewing our supply chains to explore where it is possible to be more inclusive and to maximise both economic and social impact for diverse communities.



Civic Research

We will continue to work purposefully with partners to enhance the impact of civic research, investing in areas which will inform evidence-based policy to drive community change.

Queen's Communities and Place

Queen's University is committed to providing core funding for Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP) over the next four years guaranteeing sustained research activity, effective programme coordination and expanded PhD opportunities. This funding from the University ensures the work with community partners will continue over the long term, tackling local challenges the areas face.

Partnering with Belfast City Council

Strengthening our strategic partnership with Belfast City Council, Queen's University will waive overhead costs on research proposals to maximise resources for addressing complex local challenges. This commitment will enable our researchers to work directly with policymakers and decision-makers, applying academic expertise to real-world problems whilst ensuring every pound goes towards solutions that benefit our city.

Primary Area Learning Community

Supported by Queen's University academics, The Shankill School Network will prioritise developing further connections between teachers, accompanied by ongoing professional development across the network and continued engagement with educational officials and support services, with the aim of formal recognition of a Primary Area Learning Community.





180
YEARS