

# Institutional Profile



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

## Institutional Profile Prepared for the CINNTE Institutional Review

### Table of Contents

1	Overview .....	2
2	Mission, Vision & Strategic Plan.....	4
2.1	Mission & Values.....	4
2.2	UL@50 - Strategic Plan 2019-2024 .....	4
3	Governance & Management Structures .....	6
4	Approach to Quality.....	8
4.1	Management of internal quality.....	8
4.2	Professional Accreditations .....	10
5	Collaborations & Partnerships.....	11
5.1	Linked Provision.....	11
5.2	Collaborations .....	11
5.3	Enterprise Engagement .....	11
5.4	Other National & Local Bodies.....	11
6	Student Profile.....	12
7	Staff Profile .....	14
8	Research .....	15
9	Appendix 1: Membership of the Governing Authority.....	16

### Table of Figures

Figure 1:	Strategic Goals and Themes .....	5
Figure 2:	Governing Authority & its Sub Committees .....	6
Figure 3:	Academic Council at its Sub Committees.....	7
Figure 4:	Enrolment 2014/15-2018/19 .....	12
Figure 5:	Disciplinary mix .....	12
Figure 6:	Staff Profile by Post Type .....	14
Figure 7:	Gender Balance by Post Type .....	14

## 1 Overview

The University of Limerick (UL), is located on the west coast of Ireland along the picturesque River Shannon and enjoys an unspoiled natural environment blended with state-of-the-art teaching and research facilities.

With just over 16,000 students, including more than 2,000 international students each year, UL is a young and enterprising university with a proud record of innovation in education and scholarship.

UL offers more than 70 undergraduate programmes across Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Education and Health Sciences, Science and Engineering and the Kemmy Business School. UL also delivers a strong postgraduate offering with more than 200 taught postgraduate programmes to Doctoral and Post-doctoral level.

UL pioneered the concept of Cooperative Education in Ireland, placing more than 2,100 students in paid and semi-paid work placements annually - 30% of these as international placements. These valuable work experiences make UL graduates more employable, which is why the UL graduate employment rate is 15% higher than the national average.

The University has been recognised nationally and internationally for the quality of its programmes and graduates and the relevance and scholarship of its research. In 2018, the University was designated Irish University of the Year 2019 by the *Sunday Times* [Good University Guide](#), an accolade last held in 2015. The award was based on the University's graduate employability, cooperative education and internship programmes, research in partnership with industry and the expanded Glucksman Library.

In 2019, the University was ranked 35th globally in the inaugural [Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings](#). The ranking measures the impact of an academic institution on society based on the United Nations' sustainable development goals (see above). In the same year the University's position on the [Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities](#), 2019, rose by more than 300 places to 601 – 700, based on the publication impact of its researchers.

UL's current ([2020](#)) ranking in the 201-250 category of the QS Graduate Employability Ranking remains unchanged from [2018](#) and [2019](#). The ranking is based on five indicators of employability success: employer reputation, alumni outcomes, industry partnerships, student-employer connections and employment rates. The University currently ranks in the 81–90 band of the [QS Top Universities under 50 years old](#) and has been awarded QS 5 Stars in the areas of innovation, employability, teaching, engagement and internationalisation. It is ranked in the top 75 universities in Europe for excellence in teaching and learning.

With strong links to business and industry, UL excels at translational research that aims to accelerate the practical application of academic research to benefit society. UL houses some of the most innovative and successful research centres in Ireland. The Universities research institutes - Bernal, LERO, CONFIRM, MACSI and the Nexus Innovation Centre house a growing community of international researchers and entrepreneurs which supports new businesses and the creation of jobs.

The University's designation as a University of Sanctuary is built on an existing history of engagement with refugees and asylum seekers in a number of programmes of education and

research. For example, many refugees and asylum seekers have been involved in programmes captured under the UL Engage umbrella and this designation is a more formal commitment to enhancing access to a University education for refugees and asylum seekers. There are currently 48 students registered under this designation.

As a University of Sanctuary, we focus on enabling access to third level through a number of financial support plans and programmes to aid with the transition to University. We also recognise that as an academic institution we provide a safe space in which issues that are directly impacting on the lives of refugees and asylum seekers can be discussed. The designation commits the University to a three year action plan with a focus on encouraging, promoting and enabling refugees and asylum seekers to access third-level education through various activities and bursary programmes.

Known as 'Ireland's Sporting Campus', UL boasts Ireland's first altitude training centre, an Olympic-sized swimming pool and the National Strength and Conditioning Centre. The new 3G pitches are the largest artificial grass development in Europe and the Sports Arena attracts more than 600,000 visitors each year.

## 2 Mission, Vision & Strategic Plan

Changing demographics, greater student mobility and evolving requirements and practices in higher education have all contributed to the ambitions outlined in the University's strategy. We also want to meet global challenges, in particular the UN sustainable development goals, through our community and volunteer programmes. The University is committed to contributing to the national objectives of quality and academic excellence, developing a talent pipeline for our citizens, ensuring equity of access, leading and contributing to world-class research and development through national and international engagement, and ensuring governance, leadership and operational excellence.

The University is also committed to attaining the highest standards of inclusivity, dignity, human rights and gender balance in all the work we do and to promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of all our students, staff and visitors.

### 2.1 Mission & Values

#### Mission

Our mission is to build on the expertise of our scholars in creating, harnessing and imparting knowledge for the benefit of our students and the enrichment of our community.

#### Values

The University of Limerick fosters curiosity, creativity and academic excellence in an inclusive community committed to social good.

Our core values are:

*Creative and Innovative* - Shape the future by looking at things differently to others.

Appreciating risks but trusting our judgement.

*Inclusive and Diverse* - Welcoming all. Rooted in Europe but global in reach.

*Ethical and Sustainable* - Doing the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons. Tackling national and global challenges, and supporting sustainable goals.

*Supportive and Transformational* - Empowering our students and staff to lead.

*Ambitious and Driven* - Working with all to push the boundaries of knowledge

### 2.2 UL@50 - Strategic Plan 2019-2024

The University's strategic plan, 'UL@50' was launched on the 1st November 2019, and sets out the University's ambitions and plans for the coming 5 year planning period and beyond.

Four key themes have shaped the development of UL@50,

- Transforming learning
- Digital transformation
- City and culture
- Health and wellbeing

Through a staff engagement process, the following emerged as the areas to focus on:

- Academic reputation – Growing and improving our academic reputation in Ireland and internationally;
- 'The UL graduate' – Educating outstanding graduates and active citizens;
- Supporting our people – Enabling our staff to achieve their ambition;
- 'Civic University' – Actively engaging with our city and our region to support the region and economy;

- Inclusion and diversity – Embracing and promoting an open and welcoming campus for all;
- Dynamism – Continually challenging our ambitions and proactively seeking out new opportunities.



Figure 1: Strategic Goals and Themes

The strategic plan is supported by the [Equality and Human Rights](#) Strategy of the University that was also launched in November 2019.

### 3 Governance & Management Structures

The University of Limerick operates under the aegis of the Universities Act, 1997. Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested by the State in the Governing Authority of the University of Limerick. The Governing Authority, a 29-member body, is appointed in accordance with the Universities Act.

The current Governing Authority's term of office is from 1st December 2017 to 30th November 2022. Membership of the Governing Authority is outlined in Appendix 1. Governing Authority has five sub-committees, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance, Human Resources and Asset Management Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Access, Equality and Student Affairs Committee and the Joint Honorary Doctorate Committee which is shared with Academic Council.

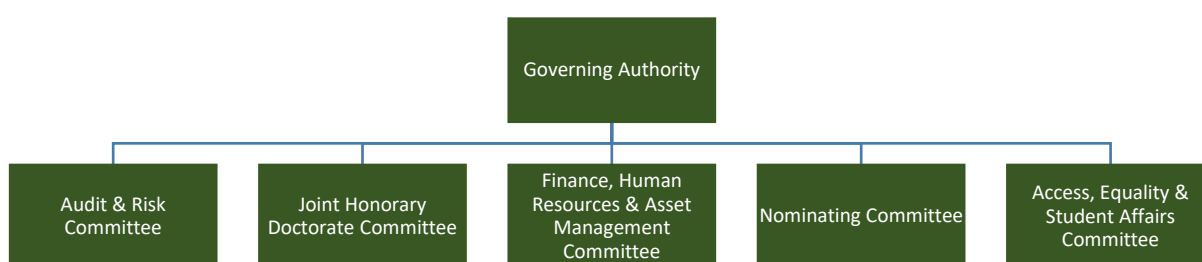
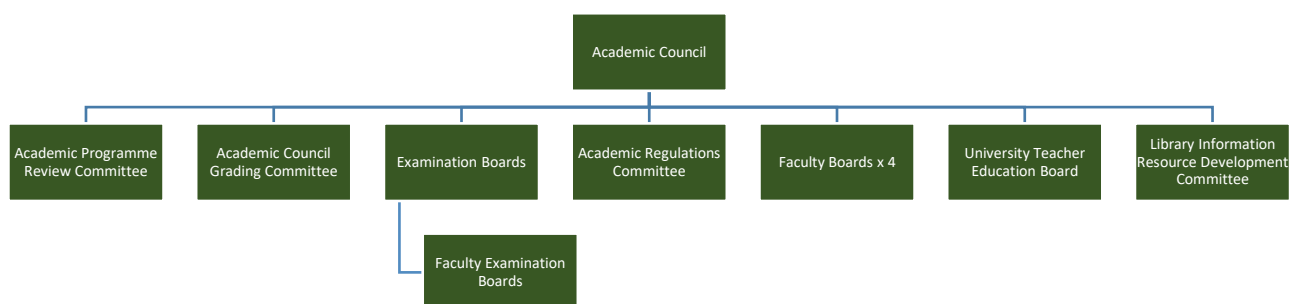


Figure 2: Governing Authority & its Sub Committees

In accordance with the Universities Act, [Academic Council](#) is responsible for the academic affairs of the University. It oversees academic awards, standards and regulations and approves new programmes and changes to existing programmes. Commencing in June 2018, the fifth statutory Academic Council has 65 members. Section 1 of [Statute 6](#) of the University governs the composition of Academic Council, which includes the President, Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement, senior officers, deans of faculty, heads of academic units, the officers of the respective students' unions, assistant deans of academic affairs and elected staff representatives. Academic Council has a number of subcommittees, whose reports are considered at Academic Council meetings.



*Figure 3: Academic Council at its Sub Committees*

The University comprises [four faculties and 28 academic units](#), variously termed departments or schools. The faculties are (i) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; (ii) Business (Kemmy Business School); (iii) Education and Health Sciences; and (iv) Science and Engineering. Overall responsibility for faculties resides with the executive deans, who report to the President and Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement. Each dean is supported by heads of academic units, the faculty manager and assistant deans of academic affairs, research and international affairs.



## 4 Approach to Quality

To achieve the University's strategic objectives, we must continually strive for excellence in all of our activities. Assuring and continually enhancing the quality of these activities is a prerequisite to achieving excellence. An institutional commitment to quality is therefore central to realising our goals.

Accordingly, the University is committed to assuring and enhancing the quality of its activities and to fostering a quality culture throughout the institution. The University recognises the pursuit of quality, and hence excellence, as a core value. Responsibility for the quality of our activities rests at institutional, local and individual level.

In 2019, the University developed an overarching [quality policy](#) to bring together different strands of its quality ethos and processes into a single comprehensive document. The policy outlines how the University aims to foster a quality culture across the institution. It sets out the principles that underpin the University's approach to quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE), internal arrangements, the roles and responsibilities of offices and units, and the management of policy compliance.

The quality policy explicitly recognises the responsibility of every individual member of the University to promote and enhance quality. Institutional arrangements for developing, monitoring and enhancing the quality of activities are multi-layered and, in many instances, integrated into academic and institutional structures.

### 4.1 Management of internal quality

The University's institutional arrangements for developing, monitoring, reviewing, enhancing and managing the quality of its activities have evolved to suit the organisational structure and mission. The arrangements are informed by legislation, statutory quality guidelines and international best practice.

Primary institutional quality mechanisms and processes include:

- maintenance of an institutional governance and organisational architecture;
- development, implementation and review of institutional policies and processes;
- application of a quality management system for support (professional service) units;
- a system of internal quality reviews that focus on QA and QE;
- inclusion of University programmes in the [National Framework of Qualifications](#);
- a system of programme approval and review;
- a system of external examination;
- continually updated academic regulations and procedures;
- development and application of mechanisms by which feedback from key stakeholders – particularly students – is gathered, considered and acted upon; and
- systems for the continuing professional development and performance review of staff.

The Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement is responsible for quality systems, structures and new initiatives and is assisted by the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs and the Director of Quality in this regard.

The Quality Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, is responsible for promoting a quality culture throughout the University.

The Associate Vice President Academic Affairs supports the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement in ensuring the overall quality of programme delivery, development and review. The role focuses on improving accountability, systems, policy and procedures and ensuring that policy is successfully deployed.

Led by the Director of Quality, the [Quality Support Unit](#) plays a cross-institutional role in supporting the University's strategic priorities and fulfilling institutional statutory quality obligations. Core activities include quality-related strategic leadership and policy development; coordination of assessment of institutional compliance with statutory QA requirements and guidelines and institutional contact point for QQI; management of internal, institutional and linked-provider quality reviews; supporting the development of quality management systems; management of student surveys; and the provision of a management reporting service.

The [Centre for Transformative Learning](#), which reports to the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement, plays a significant quality enhancement role by providing a range of services aimed specifically at encouraging and facilitating improvements in learning and teaching, including distributing and managing the student evaluation of teaching process (see section 3.7.1) and assisting with the coordination of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (see section 3.7.3).

[Academic Council](#) is the supreme authority with regard to all academic matters.

A subcommittee of Academic Council, the Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) oversees programme development as well as the annual and periodic review of programmes. It is chaired by the Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and includes two student representatives. APRC reviews new programme submissions and modifications to existing programmes that are proposed by the four faculties.

A subcommittee of Academic Council, the Academic Regulations Committee (ARC) makes recommendations on the University's academic regulations and procedures. It is chaired by the Associate Vice President Academic Affairs and includes two student representatives. Since September 2011, the ARC advises and makes recommendations on admissions, including developing admission policies and processes for underrepresented groups.

Chaired by each dean of faculty, faculty boards review new programmes and manage the changes required to maintain and improve standards of existing programmes.

Faculty exam boards verify grades and assure the quality of academic awards.

The Academic Council Grading Committee reviews and approves grades submitted by the faculty exam boards.

Academic and support units are responsible for ensuring the quality of their own activities. In compliance with the Universities Act, the quality review process evaluates the extent to which academic units monitor their own quality mechanisms and includes a quality impact element in the form of reviewer recommendations and faculty action plans.

Support units implement quality management systems to assure and improve the quality of the services they provide. They are also subject to quality reviews by external personnel within a seven-year cycle.

## 4.2 Professional Accreditations

The University recognises the positive impact that professional accreditation can have on its programmes and its value to its students. Over 80 of the University's programmes are accredited by a wide range of professional recognition and statutory bodies (PRSBs). The University of Limerick has been awarded AACSB accreditation for the Kemmy Business School (KBS). The school joins the top 5% of international business schools recognised by AACSB International (AACSB) for demonstrating excellence in teaching, research, curriculum development, and student learning. Other accrediting and statutory regulatory bodies that the University works with include

- CORU – Ireland's health regulator
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
- Medical Council
- Teaching Council of Ireland
- EFMD
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Association of MBAs (AMBA)
- Engineers Ireland
- Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

## 5 Collaborations & Partnerships

### 5.1 Linked Provision

The *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012* establishes the concepts of a designated awarding body (DAB) and a linked provider. As a DAB, the University recognises its statutory responsibilities in respect of linked providers and commits to meeting those responsibilities.

The relationship between UL and its linked providers is largely framed by inter-institutional Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or Memoranda of Agreement (MoA) and the quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) oversight arrangements articulated in the University's Linked Provider Framework document. The University's current linked providers are

- Mary Immaculate College
- Garda College, Templemore

### 5.2 Collaborations

In recent years, the University has worked to establish partnerships and collaborations with universities in Ireland, Europe and beyond to provide opportunities for students and staff to enrich the learning experience and broaden horizons in line with University strategy.

Collaborations take the form of articulation agreements, Erasmus exchanges, study abroad programmes, joint and dual awards as well as the recent addition of statutory apprenticeship programmes.

### 5.3 Enterprise Engagement

The University of Limerick has long had a track-record of excellent industry collaboration. UL is partnering with over 85 multinational and SME companies in leading sectors for our economy from pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, agri-food, software, materials. These partnerships are formed through our position as hosts of Science Foundation Ireland funded Centres of Excellence – the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) and Lero – Irish Software Engineering Research Centre together with the Enterprise-Ireland/IDA supported Irish Centre for Composites Research (IComp), Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre (PMTc), Dairy Processing Technology Centre (DPTC). These partnerships anchor R&D activity firmly within the Irish enterprise landscape which leads to job retention and creation, skills enhancement, increased competitiveness and ultimately ensuring Ireland's future as a knowledge-based economy

### 5.4 Other National & Local Bodies

The University has relationships with a number of agencies such as the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as its regulator and Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). It also works with the local authorities, civic and community agencies through the emerging community engage platform, faculty based practica, placements in communities and the global knowledge for change (K4C) network.

## 6 Student Profile

There has been a steady increase in student registration over the past five years as shown in figure 4. Undergraduate enrolments make up a significant percentage of the total student population.

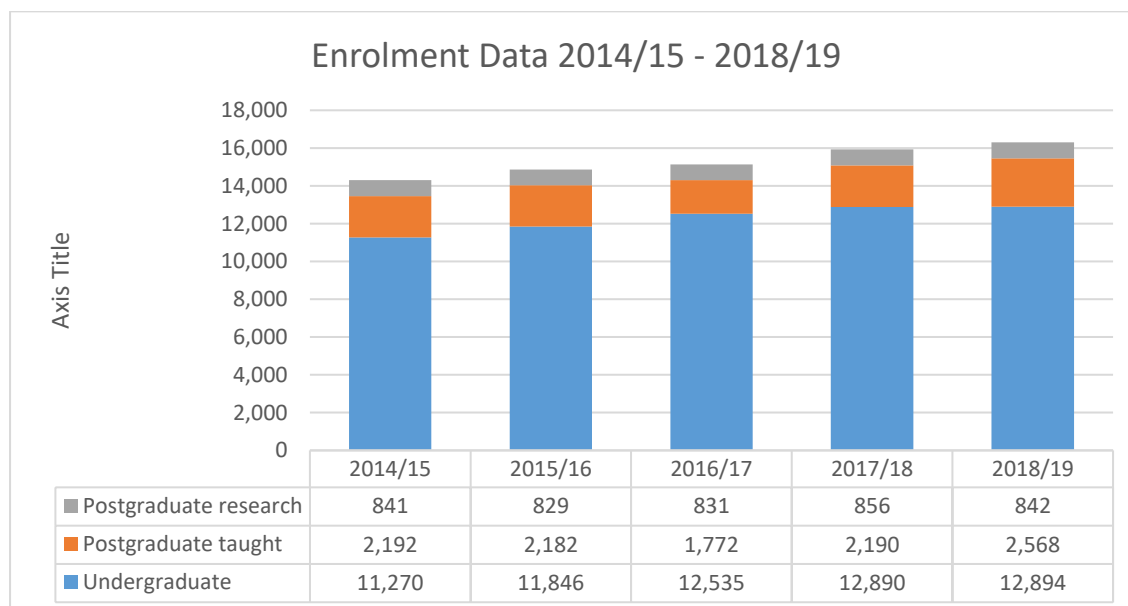


Figure 4: Enrolment 2014/15-2018/19

The disciplinary mix of undergraduate enrolments is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

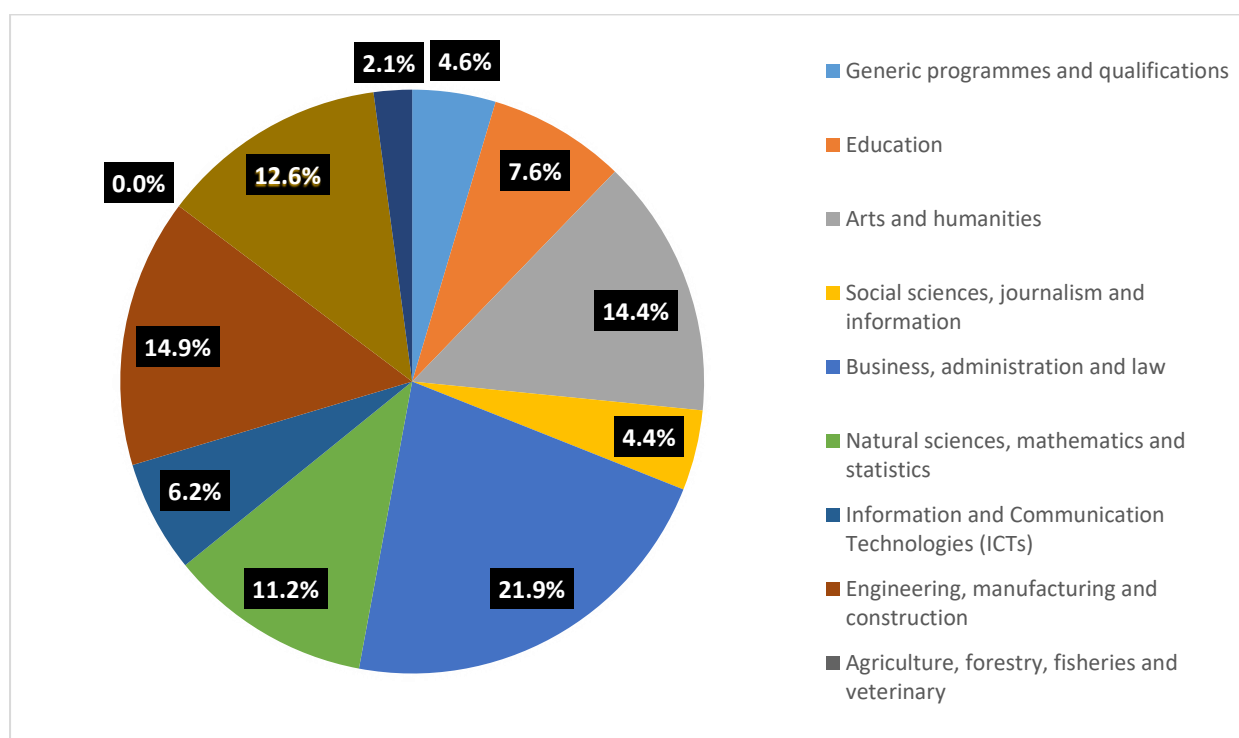


Figure 5: Disciplinary mix

These data show the strength of the University in engineering and business, but also show that there is a scale of provision in other disciplinary areas.

The University's list of programmes can be found at <https://www.ul.ie/study-ul>.

## 7 Staff Profile<sup>1</sup>

The balance of core academic, research and administrative, professional and technical staff is outlined in Figure 6. .

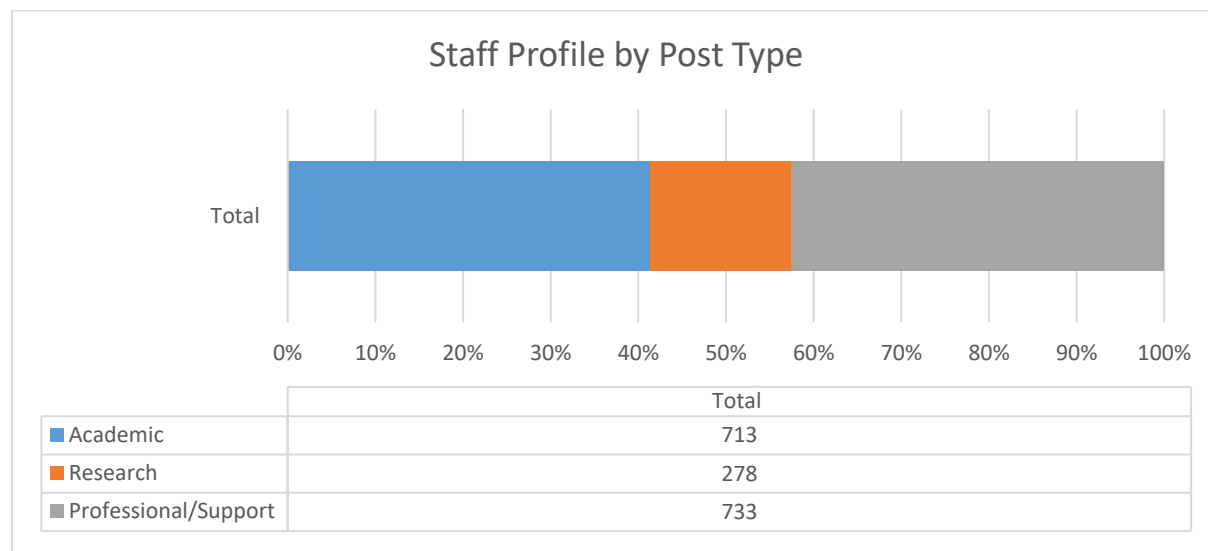


Figure 6: Staff Profile by Post Type

As part of its long-term commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, the University engages with the [Athena SWAN](#) (Scientific Women's Academic Network) charter organisation, which was established in the United Kingdom to recognise and celebrate good practices in higher education and research institutions that promote gender equality. In 2019, the University was awarded a [Bronze Athena SWAN award](#) to the expanded charter (which includes the arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law). In addition, eight individual departments and faculties have been recognised by Athena SWAN awards. Figure 7 shows the gender balance of the various post types.

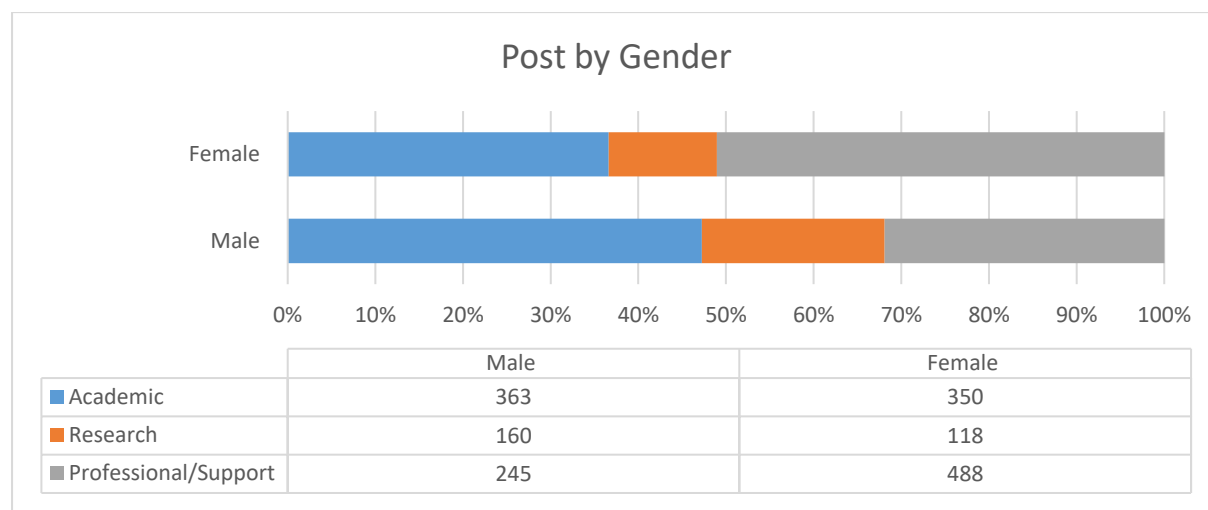


Figure 7: Gender Balance by Post Type

<sup>1</sup> Data as of July 2018

## 8 Research

UL's research and knowledge transfer activities span all of its faculties and disciplines. The University values and supports the excellence of output and achievement by its research community across all of its research areas. In addition, the University has identified a number of areas of research strength, characterised by having critical mass, addressing common research questions, having a significant body of research inputs and outputs, attracting international scholars, and having a national and international reputation. These areas of strength are:

- Materials
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Software
- Health
- Applied Mathematical Sciences

### **World-Leading Centres of Research Excellence**

UL's research successes are enhanced by the ongoing development of interdisciplinary research institutes, centres & units, and collaboration with international academic and industrial partners. UL currently has three multidisciplinary institutes, Bernal Institute, Lero – The Irish Software Research Centre and the Health Research Institute (HRI) together with a number of national externally-funded research [centres](#).

UL Research Ethics Governance & Faculty Research Ethics Committee. ULREG (University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance committee) is primarily concerned with research related policies, procedures and governance, whilst all research ethics applications are considered at Faculty level by Research Ethics Committees (RECs).



## 9 Appendix 1: Membership of the Governing Authority

<b>Chief Officer</b>	Dr Des Fitzgerald
<b>Chancellor:</b>	Ms Mary Harney
<b>Senior Officers of the University:</b>	Mr Gerry O'Brien
<b>Professors/Associate Professors:</b> (elected by such staff)	Professor Seán Arkins Professor Eoin Devereux Professor Kevin M Ryan
<b>Academic &amp; Research Staff:</b> (elected by such staff)	Dr Seamus Gordon Dr Amanda Haynes Mr Gerard Slattery Dr Peter Tiernan
<b>Support Staff:</b> (elected by such staff)	Ms Michelle Breen Ms Kim O'Mahony
<b>Student Representation Undergraduate:</b>	Mr Jack Scanlan, President, UL Student Life  Ms Serena Hare, Deputy President, UL Student Life
<b>Postgraduate:</b>	Mr Abraham Agboola, President, Postgraduate Students Union
<b>Nominees of Organisations</b>	Ms Joan Aherne Mr John O'Connell
<b>Nominees of Minister for Education &amp; Skills:</b>	Ms Grainne Barron Dr Garret A FitzGerald
<b>Persons appointed having regard to Artistic/Cultural Interests:</b>	Ms Trish Long Ms Judith Woodworth
<b>Graduates of the University of Limerick</b> (elected by such graduates)	Mr Liam Carroll Mr Colin Clarke
<b>Mayor of the City and County of Limerick</b>	Cllr Michael Sheahan
<b>Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick</b>	Cllr James Collins

<b>University of Limerick Foundation Nominees</b>	Ms Rose Hynes Mr Eddie Sullivan
<b>President, Mary Immaculate College</b>	Prof Eugene Wall

