

► Queen's University continued...

Opened in 2005 with a total investment of £40 million from Queen's, the Department for Employment and Learning and Invest Northern Ireland; ECIT is the largest research-based project on which Queen's has embarked.

Its core activities are strengthened by a close partnership with industry. This synergy ensures that researchers have a broader understanding of the industrial relevance of their work and equips postgraduate students for careers in industry.

One of ECIT's biggest success stories is Queen's lecturer Dr Maire O'Neill, a Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellow, who was named British Female Inventor of the Year 2007 for her invention of a product to tackle cybercrime.

QUBIS

QUBIS Ltd was established in 1984 by the University to commercialise the University's research and development activities through the formation of 'spin-out' businesses.

A major milestone in Queen's University's contribution to economic prosperity was passed in June 2007 with the news that the number of jobs created by its spin-out businesses had reached 1,000.

Queen's graduate Emer Campbell's appointment to the staff of Kainos, one of the University's earliest and most successful spin-out companies, was a tangible development in the success of the University's technology transfer company.

In 2004, turnover for Queen's companies was £49.6 million, placing the University first out of 164 higher education institutions in the UK. The turnover figure reached £80 million in 2007.

QUBIS has created some 50 hi-tech companies and retains a shareholding in 30. These companies, in industry sectors such as software, chemicals and engineering, represent a significant proportion of the hi-tech companies in Northern Ireland and have a growing wealth creation role in the economy.

In May 2007 Kainos Software announced the spin-off of its speech recognition business into a new division. The company, which last year had sales of £11 million, is investing some £5 million over the next three years in the new operating division, which is called SpeechStorm.

Scholarships Scheme

Queen's University has launched a scholarship scheme aimed at attracting students to subjects essential for economic growth in Northern Ireland.

The scheme offers awards of £1,000 to all students achieving three As at A-Level (or equivalent) and enrolling on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects at Queen's.

Employment and Learning Minister Sir Reg Empey has welcomed the initiative. He said: "A future Northern Ireland economy, capable of competing on an international platform, will rely heavily on people who have studied these subjects. Schemes, such as this one at Queen's University, play an important part in encouraging our brightest students to enrol in these vital areas."

Nigel Smyth, Director of the CBI in Northern Ireland, also stressed the importance of the scheme. He said: "Science and engineering

companies are struggling to fill essential posts and this trend cannot be allowed to continue if Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole are to compete in the worldwide economy. Our universities have a key role to play in ensuring that the next generation are equipped for the economic challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Queen's University is to be commended for this pioneering and far-sighted scheme which will serve as a role model for others."



Dr Maire O'Neill of ECIT receives her British Female Inventor of the Year Award from John McParland of London Metropolitan University



Queen's Chancellor Senator George Mitchell (centre) with Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Gregson (left) and President of Georgetown University Dr John J DeGioia at the signing of a research and education partnership between both universities