

# Queen's University Belfast



Queen's University Belfast, which celebrates its Centenary this year, is a leader in innovation and education, and an international centre of academic excellence rooted at the heart of Northern Ireland.

The University is the leading higher education institution in the UK in terms of the annual turnover of its spin-out businesses.



Professor John McCanny, Director of ECIT

As one of Northern Ireland's largest employers with an annual turnover of some £240 million, Queen's has a huge impact on local wealth and job creation and is a major driving force in local economic development. It is also the leading higher education institution in the UK in terms of the annual turnover of its spin-out businesses, which reached £80 million in 2007.

In Queen's, Northern Ireland has one of the most important resources of all – intellectual capital – and the University is ensuring that this is exploited to the full to underpin the knowledge and innovation base for future economic prosperity. Among the key contributions the University makes to the local economy is its supply of well-qualified enterprising and innovative graduates who will add value to local industry and commerce and who will become business leaders in their own right.

## ECIT- The Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology

Located in the Northern Ireland Science Park, ECIT - Queen's Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology is an example of the University's emergence as a hub of excellence in advanced digital and communications technology.

ECIT provides incubation facilities to support the establishment and development of new companies. ECIT is the NI Science Park's research flagship. The Institute's Director, Professor John McCanny, said: "It is part of a greater vision to create a new 'silicon valley' in Belfast coupling university research with economic development to attract and grow high technology companies."

In 2003 the Science Park was a derelict site. Today 1,000 people are employed there. ECIT is playing a full part in the ambitious £1.5 billion development of the 250-acre 'Titanic Quarter' area of Belfast.

ECIT develops collaborative relationships with other stakeholders through joint research and development programmes. These operate through PhD student sponsorships, Government assisted grant programmes, direct industry funding and EU funded projects.

There is also a strong emphasis on technology transfer aimed at generating new business opportunities. ECIT provides space for spin-out companies who can benefit from in-house experience. It also encourages staff to commercialise ideas by creating their own companies. ►

► 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



CBI Director-General Richard Lambert who addressed local business leaders at Queen's in a keynote event organised jointly by the CBI and the University's Chief Executives' Club

## Entrepreneurship

One of the most evident ways in which Queen's University contributes to economic prosperity is in producing graduates with the knowledge and skills to compete in the global marketplace.

The University is supporting the emergence of a new generation of entrepreneurs through initiatives that boost business skills and unlock creativity and innovative thinking in its students.

The Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship (NICENT), a partnership between Queen's and the University of Ulster, has gained national recognition for leading the way in fostering business enterprise. University-sector representative body Universities UK featured the unique project in its top level briefing document 'Higher level learning: Universities and employers working together', demonstrating how NICENT is developing a new culture of entrepreneurship.

The Centre's primary focus is to embed the spirit of entrepreneurship in universities in Northern Ireland. The Centre has introduced the concept of entrepreneurship to over 7,500 students since it was first established in 2000. Head of the Centre at Queen's, Richard Millen, said: "Our efforts within NICENT to promote entrepreneurial attitudes among students reflect our belief that entrepreneurship is not just about starting a new business. Within the NICENT partnership we seek to engender a change in attitude among students and inspire them to be entrepreneurial and innovative so that they can make a difference as employees or employers."

Queen's has also developed the Headstart programme, designed to help students explore entrepreneurship and generate viable business ideas. The initiative includes master-classes with some of Northern Ireland's leading entrepreneurs and business leaders. Many students involved

in NICENT and Headstart programmes go on to enter the prestigious £25,000 Entrepreneurship Award, organized by the Northern Ireland Science Park. The award scheme seeks to encourage students and researchers from the local universities to act on their talents, ideas and energy to produce tomorrow's leading firms.

Queen's is also involved in extensive networking activities to help local students and business leaders in acquiring the skills, knowledge and global connections to compete on the world stage. A range of keynote addresses, lectures and master classes are held throughout the year at Queen's bringing world experts in innovation, entrepreneurship and science to Northern Ireland to share their insights and knowledge with student and business audiences.

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