

# Generating growth and opportunity in the North West



# Universities in the North West: overview

The impact of universities on people and places can be truly transformational. Universities are crucial to sparking growth and opportunity, by bringing together student populations, research partners, local businesses, and employers to create vibrant communities, jobs, and opportunities across the UK.

Universities in the North West can be found in the major, world famous cities of Liverpool and Manchester, but also in smaller towns and cities dotted across the region.

Recent analysis by London Economics estimated that universities in the North West alone contributed £10.4 billion gross output and £6.5 billion gross value added to the UK economy. This





# SMEs and business growth

Universities support existing businesses of all types through their infrastructure, facilities, and expertise.

An example of universities supporting local productivity and jobs is the Knowledge Exchange Concordat. Through the concordat, over 100 universities review the range and impact of their knowledge exchange activities and set ambitious targets for growth and development.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and microbusinesses are critical employers across the UK, particularly in areas that don't have larger employers or well-developed economic clusters. They are often the businesses that have the greatest potential for growth and job creation, but the least time or resource to achieve this.

Start-up companies started by graduates of universities in the North West over more than £14 million in 2021–22, and spinout companies with some university ownership turned over 15 million in 2021–22.

## Case study: Help to Grow scheme

Universities across the North West are taking part in the government's Help to Grow: Management scheme delivered in partnership with the Small Business Charter.

Business schools in the University of Salford, Lancaster University, Manchester Metropolitan University, and the University of Liverpool are offering courses to senior managers within SMEs.

Dr Sharon Lemaitre, Help to Grow Programme Director,  
Lancaster University Management School

# Research and development

Universities' research activities attract investment, make world leading discoveries, generate knowledge, and create and nurture new, innovative businesses and jobs across the UK.

Universities support existing businesses of all types by using their facilities and expertise to drive local collaboration. They also encourage private sector investment into research and development by developing collaborative relationships with businesses.

In 2021-22, higher education providers across England provided the use of facilities to companies 29,210 times, including, for example, a wind tunnel and a digital media suite.

The research universities conduct in partnership with business, the NHS, charities and other organisations is diverse in discipline and scope. University research is responsible for major scientific and medical breakthroughs, but also plays a major role in our day-to-day lives.

## Case study: new walking frames developed by the University of Salford

Researchers from the University of Salford and NRS Healthcare designers have teamed up with Belong to develop a new type of walking frame. They hope to better understand the biomechanics of adults using walking frames.

The final product will have the potential to help the estimated 22% of UK older adults who use two-wheeled walkers indoors.



