



O'LLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–30

University
ofGalway.ie/arts

I bhfách
le cách.

Think, act
and live for
everyone.

CONTENTS

Introduction	03
Who We Are	04
Vision, Mission, Values	07
Distinctive Research Impact	12
Education for the Future and Galway Graduates	16
Effective and Sustainable Organisation that Empowers People	20
Key Enablers	21
Measuring Success	22
Strategy Implementation and Governance	22



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies Strategy 2026–2030. This strategic plan builds on the ambition, strengths and vision of our previous strategy while setting out our priorities for the next four years.

Much has been achieved since 2021. We have increased the number of our highly ranked subject areas, launched a new research institute, diversified our student body, strengthened our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through three Athena Swan awards, grown our research income, and improved undergraduate progression rates. These achievements reflect the dedication and talent of our community, and there is much to be proud of.

At the same time, the world around us is changing rapidly. Global political instability, the impact of artificial intelligence on learning and research, and the increasing challenges faced by our students all demand reflection and thoughtful response. Yet it is precisely in such times that the Arts are most important. The expertise, creativity and critical insight of our community of researchers, educators and students position us uniquely to address the complex challenges of today, and tomorrow.

As the college that encompasses the Irish language, we have a responsibility to nurture and advance the Irish language and the rich cultural traditions it carries. The Irish language and culture are central to our teaching, research and our public engagement, and they connect our community to a distinctive cultural heritage while shaping new conversations about identity, creativity and belonging in a global context.

Our strategy is structured around three core pillars, aligned with the University's strategy. Through our focus on research and updated signature research areas, we will strengthen our impact locally, nationally and globally. Our educational provision will evolve to meet the changing needs of students and society. We will empower our people through an effective, sustainable organisation that enables our community to do its best work.

Running throughout this strategy are key commitments: a global outlook, a strengthened focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, and a dedication to placing the student experience at the heart of everything we do. Our enablers will support the delivery of these ambitions and ensure we are well-positioned to achieve our goals.

This strategy is the result of the contributions of many colleagues across the college. I would like to thank everyone who helped shape it, and all those who will bring it to life in the years ahead. I look forward to working with colleagues, students and partners across the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies as we build on our achievements, respond to new challenges, and deliver impactful work together.

Professor Rebecca Braun,
Executive Dean, College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, University of Galway

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WHO WE ARE

STRUCTURE

8
Schools

2
Research
Institutes
Plus one affiliated
Research Institute

359 
FTE Academic/
Research Staff

3 
Athena
Swan
Awards

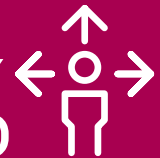
90 
FTE Professional
Support Staff

STUDENTS

3,932 
FTE Undergraduate
Students

1,029 
FTE Taught Postgraduate
Students

299
FTE Postgraduate
Research Students

96% 
Career Employability
Rate Undergraduate
and Postgraduate

RESEARCH

€32.3m
Research Income
Over 4 Years

27% 
of Publications in
Top 10% of Journals

SUSTAINABILITY

6
Schools with
Sustainability
Modules

85
Modules with
Sustainability
Principles

GLOBAL

470 
International
Collaborations
(2021–2024)

1,251
International
Students

250
Students
Studying
Abroad

REPUTATION


A Centre of
Excellence for
Irish Language
and Culture

6 
of Top 10
University QS
Subject Ranked
Areas 2026



VISION, MISSION, VALUES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are a **creatively curious, collaborative community** and committed to **critical change**.

Our distinctive expertise facilitates the provision of exceptional education, and transformative student experiences. We empower ourselves with rigorous research, analytical approaches and an open mindset to delve deep, to explore, to uncover and envision solutions where others see problems.

Our endeavours across education, research and operational effectiveness are underpinned by inclusion by design, leading on decolonisation of our curriculum and the creation of inclusive research environments.

Our college is the place where creativity and innovation helps us ***think, act and live for everyone. I bhfách le cách.***

OUR VISION

To empower our people to create global impact through our **distinctive research, exceptional education** and **transformative student experiences**.

OUR MISSION

A research-intensive college where we **nurture talent** and **generate knowledge** for the world.



OUR VALUES



Excellence

We are dedicated to supporting excellence in teaching, research, and innovation, empowering our people with the skills and knowledge to reach their potential and drive positive societal, cultural and economic change.



Respect

We are committed to ensuring a culture of respect, equality, trust and empathy, and supporting the wellbeing and equitable treatment of students and staff.



Openness

We are committed to fostering openness, diversity, and inclusion, while engaging with local and global communities to drive positive change and make education and research accessible.



Sustainability

We aim to lead the transition to a sustainable future by embedding sustainability into its teaching, research, operations, and partnerships, fostering the next generation of leaders and innovators to tackle global challenges.



Belonging

We strive to create an environment where students, staff and alumni feel welcomed, supported, connected and valued as an integral part of a community of learning that fosters academic engagement, professional development and personal growth, health and wellbeing.



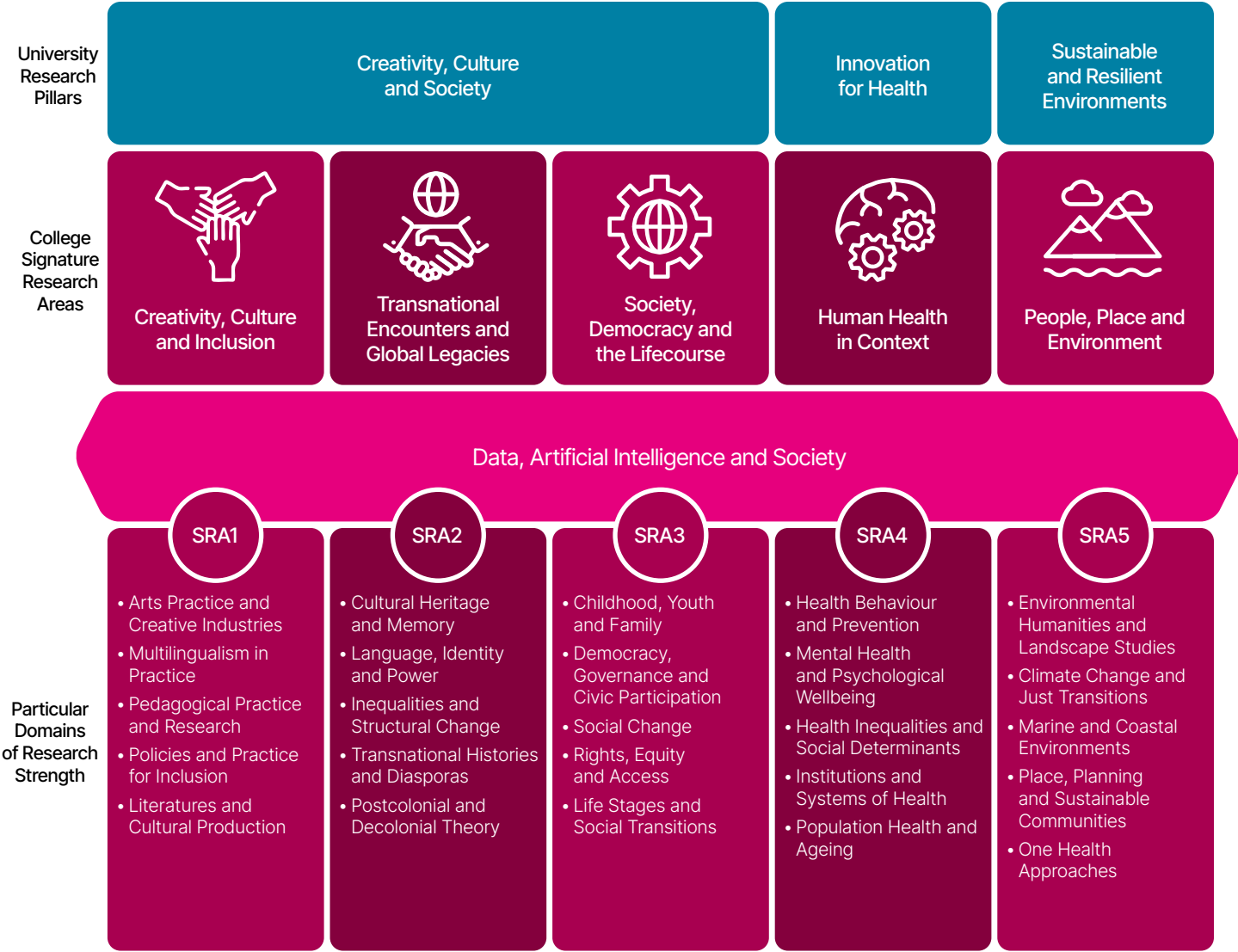
DISTINCTIVE RESEARCH IMPACT

Our college is home to research that is at once local in its roots and global in its reach. Our Signature Research Areas (SRAs) give expression to the breadth and depth of that work: five interconnected areas of research collaboration, and one cross-cutting theme, that together represent the college’s most distinctive and sustained contributions to knowledge and its application in the world.

At the heart of each SRA is what we call ‘connective expertise’: distinctive research held at scale across the college that transcends any single disciplinary location through the intellectual partnerships, applied collaborations, and community engagements it has inspired. The SRAs are thus living expressions of how our researchers think and work together, while the cross-cutting theme of Data, Artificial Intelligence & Society underlines the essential perspectives that humanities and social science scholars bring to these fields.

Our SRAs encompass both engaged and curiosity-driven research. We value the full spectrum of activity underway in our college – from individual-led inquiry with uncertain but potentially transformative outcomes, to research undertaken in direct partnership with communities, policymakers, and practitioners.

We recognise a wide range of impacts: cultural, educational, environmental, social, political, and economic. We remain dedicated to ensuring that the opportunities and benefits of research are equitably distributed across career stages and research communities within the college. And we are committed to promoting an inclusive research environment that integrates equality in the delivery of our distinctive research.



Actions

The college will champion research in all its forms – from fundamental, investigator-led inquiry to research that directly engages communities and shapes policy – while working to ensure that access to research opportunities and their benefits is equitable and inclusive.

- Optimise use of our resources to help build and sustain international networks and partnerships.
- Work with our schools, the Institute for Creativity and ILAS to support colleagues at each stage of the research process – from seeding new ideas and engaging with funding opportunities to promoting pathways to impact.
- Continue to develop a sustainable, targeted, and impactful research ecosystem that supports discipline-sensitive publication strategies that prioritise output quality over quantity.
- Develop a CASSCS-specific approach to innovation that reflects the character of our research, with appropriate emphasis on social innovation, and build supporting infrastructure for researchers and doctoral students.
- Enhance working conditions, equality and inclusion for researchers through the implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Charter and Code.
- Amplify our research, nationally and internationally, through strategic dissemination on relevant platforms.



EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE AND GALWAY GRADUATES

The education we provide to our students can be truly life-changing, shaping their futures and the world within which they live. We are focussed on making the most of that impact by ensuring our programmes respond to the changing needs of students and society; are developed in collaboration with others; and are delivered in a way that is innovative, engaging and adaptable.

We are committed to integrating equality in the delivery of exceptional education, and transformative student experiences. The college will deliver inclusive, student-centred education that removes barriers to participation and progression, and prepares graduates for diverse, global and civic contexts.

We support the success of our students for the full duration of their education, recognising that their journey commences at application and continues to graduation and beyond. We also see support as system-wide, integrating personal and professional development, academic guidance, and student health and wellbeing in a coordinated wrap-around service for students.

We will continue to weave and embed sustainability competencies across programmes ensuring the curriculum is impactful, inclusive, integrated, and that students develop the skills, knowledges, values and agency that will equip them to address interconnected global challenges. This work links scholarly research and teaching practices to produce student-centred, experiential and transformative learning across the college.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

The college will collaboratively transform its undergraduate curriculum offering. This pioneering endeavour is driven by a shared vision of the value of arts graduates globally, and the pivotal responsibility the university holds in preparing students for their place in the world as creative, curious and critically engaged citizens. Our expertise, networks of practitioners and understanding of the talent requirements of tomorrow's industries, ensure that the benefits from this ambitious programme will be experienced by all of our students.





Actions

The college is committed to **impactful**, **inclusive** and **integrated** education in delivering teaching and learning excellence.

Impactful Transformation

- Transform our curriculum, and deliver an ambitious transformation programme, grounded in evidence-based decision making, which will include collaboration with students, colleagues, future employers and others to better identify the needs of our stakeholders.
- Support the continued evolution of more diverse ways of assessing students, ensuring that assessments are fair and authentic.
- Embed personal and professional development into new courses through our new 'Curriculum for Life', supporting students to develop the skills and resilience to thrive right across their lives.
- Build a structured and supportive system across the whole college that helps talented students move smoothly from undergraduate study through to postgraduate education, with active measures to keep and develop that talent.
- Equip our graduates with resilience, leadership, social influence (citizenship), curiosity, environmental stewardship and adaptability for a rapidly changing world. We will deliver AI ready and critical digitally literate students.
- Promote measures that achieve the highest calibre graduates, and foster engagement and attainment of all students throughout their learning journey.
- Establish programme learning outcomes that make visible and further embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within the curriculum. This approach weaves sustainability competencies throughout undergraduate and postgraduate programmes using curriculum design processes.

Inclusive Transformation

- Embed inclusive learning environments and supports, removing barriers to participation.
- Support access participation and attainment in higher education for people from underrepresented socio-economic groups, and minority status groups through widening participation pathways.
- Attract a diverse student community through targeted outreach and strengthened recruitment in key markets.
- Integrate the principles of decolonisation across the curriculum.
- Equip students with global competencies, including cultural intelligence, ethical global citizenship, and global employability readiness.
- Promote and deliver opportunities for international learning, including physical and virtual mobility.
- Continue to develop and promote norms of practice across our curriculum, giving students a sense of belonging to our programmes beyond individual disciplines.

Integrated Transformation

- Collaborate with university-level supports such as the Disability Support Services, the Academic Writing Centre, Student Services and others, to ensure that students receive the support they need to succeed in their studies and to acquire the skills they need for their future.
- Optimise onward development of knowledge and skills from undergraduate to postgraduate programmes.
- Beyond graduation, our alumni networks will continue to support the success of our current and future students.

Through our impactful, inclusive and integrated transformation we will deliver on our responsibility to prepare our students with the confidence, knowledge and adaptive skills for their future careers.

EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION THAT EMPOWERS OUR PEOPLE

Our college will thrive through embedding practices which cultivate talent, leadership and diversity, sustainably supported by an infrastructure which optimises resource utilisation in research and education.

Actions

- Communicate strengths of the college on a global scale and leverage global and national partnerships to advance our research and education ambitions. We will build a partnership strategy that delivers on our mission.
- Develop and support accountable leadership across the organisation.
- Review and stratify the college's processes to assure infrastructure for delivering excellence.
- Embed Inclusion by Design in strategy, policy, plans and practice and accessibility into physical infrastructure, digital platforms and services.
- Embed EDI objectives and robust accountability mechanisms in existing frameworks and people processes such as Performance for Growth and workload planning.
- Articulate a space strategy for our Estates footprint which optimises learning and research infrastructure and works in tandem with our philanthropic targets.
- Continue to embed financial sustainability into all future decision making, supported by clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and strong alignment between budgets and strategic priorities.



KEY ENABLERS

- Realising our **supportive environment** through removing barriers to participation, creating welcoming environments where diverse identities are affirmed and celebrated, ensuring accessibility by design, and fostering a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, empowered and able to thrive.
- Enhancing student success, using **data and feedback** to shape educational interventions and opportunities to support students in their journey with us and into the world.
- **Fostering alumni networks**, where lived experience identifies learning as a lifelong activity, facilitating clear articulation of career pathways and awareness of opportunities.
- **Leveraging the National Philanthropy Policy** to expand the college's capacity for transformational giving to secure a long-term supportive environment in which our programme offerings and research capability can thrive.
- Establishing a **Community of Practice** to connect curriculum designers, faculty, and professional services staff (academic administrators, Careers Development Centre, Library, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, University Skills Passport team) to collaboratively shape inclusive, future-focused modules and programmes, in accordance with our strategic and **sustainable** goals.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Our progress in delivering on our strategic priorities will be underpinned by metrics in the following areas:

✓ Distinctive Research Impact

Growth in publications in top journals, enhanced research reputation, increasing research income, growth in our community of doctoral researchers and a focus on innovation.

✓ Education

Student access, engagement, success and attainment, graduate employability, increase in the number of modules with embedded sustainability development goals, innovation in design and delivery of programmes, including the undergraduate transformation programme, and recruitment of high-calibre students.

✓ Effective and Sustainable Organisation that Empowers our People

A college-wide bronze Athena Swan award, enhanced staff satisfaction, student engagement and core operations fully supported by own revenue streams.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

- Leadership and accountability for delivery of strategic areas clearly defined.
- Biannual updates on progress to College Executive with formal midterm review in 2028. Reports will signpost exceeding targets and innovate solutions for challenges.
- Work to commence in 2029 for college strategy 2030–2034.



College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies

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