

Employability Statement



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

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Employability Statement

This is a general Employability Statement for the Atlantic Technological University (ATU). It is based on a model which focuses on: Degree Subject Knowledge, Understanding & Skills, Experience (Work & Life); Career Development Learning; Generic Skills, and Emotional Intelligence. The statement was designed by a collaborative team of career professionals and academics from ATU and industry representatives.

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) is one of the largest multi-campus universities in Ireland, serving a diverse group of learners, staff, communities and organisations from our region and further afield. As a northern and western multi-campus technological university, we are dedicated to enabling sustainable economic, social and cultural development; connected to our region and with a mindset that reaches far beyond it. As a TU of scale, quality and impact, the University will have greater capacity for collaboration with international partners and ATU graduates will have excellent employment potential nationally and internationally. The three Institutes that came together as ATU in 2022 have been serving industry and advancing the skills of the workforce since their foundation in the early 1970s.

ATU is a key producer of work-ready graduates in collaboration with employers; a key partner and driver of research and innovation; and a key attractor of investment to the region. It builds on its current position as the national leader in blended education combining traditional methods of delivery with state-of-the-art online and distance learning. We strongly believe that our graduates will fully contribute to the social, economic and cultural betterment of society.

ATU acknowledges the diversity of the student population and the need to recognise that the individual aspirations and motivations of students are distinct and varied in relation to career and personal development. ATU undertakes to provide student-centred support for employability skills development which:

- responds to student motivations for study and changes in their goals over time;
- supports the aspirations of those in work and those seeking to begin or change their careers; and
- informs students about the local and global environment which forms the context for their study and working lives.

ATU has one overarching goal: the employability of our graduates as reflective lifelong learners, through equipping them with the requisite knowledge, skills, personal attributes and confidence to reach their career aspirations, whilst ensuring we meet the needs of our industry partners and employers from across the public and private sector. Using a well-established employability framework (below), we have set out the ways in which we provide opportunities for students to develop their employability skills so that they are empowered to become the best-prepared graduates in the region. To this end, ATU proactively considers relevant regional and national aspects and research with direct consultation with a wide range of external stakeholders, organisation, and publications, e.g. Regional Skills Forum, WDC, employer representatives, professional bodies etc., that continue to inform the evolution of this employability framework.



Employability Framework

The five employability elements underpinning the ATU employability framework align strongly with a well-established model from Dacre-Pool and Sewell. These are:

- Degree Subject Knowledge, Understanding & Skills;
- Experience (Work and Life);
- Career Development Learning; (Self-awareness, Decision Making)
- Generic Skills; and
- Emotional Intelligence (Self-confidence, Self-esteem).

The following overview of this framework illustrates the broad ATU student experience, which has elements prescribed as part of the curriculum and, most importantly, also shows the crucial role of other activities driven by staff and by students themselves. Our belief is that this broad approach is key to the development of transferrable skills which are effective in study, the workplace and life in general.



Reflection

A broad experience founded on student-staff interaction and variety of opportunity.

Self Efficacy | Self Esteem | Self Confidence

Employability



There are five key factors which contribute to the high levels of performance and success of our graduates. These are shown below along with some examples of how we address them within ATU.

Degree Subject Knowledge

Core disciplinary knowledge strongly underpins our programme development and delivery.



A basis for understanding and questioning current practice in a critical and constructive way

Curriculum:

We offer a flexible range of subject choices so that students can customise their own programmes in line with their interests and abilities. We continue to work with our industry partners and other stakeholders to design and deliver constructive and challenging programmes of education that foster, cultivate and develop our students' conceptual understanding, their know-how and practical skills and confidence in their competence and capabilities. All programmes are greatly enriched by having industry representation at design, approval and review stages.

Teaching and Learning Development:

We develop quality and engaging teaching and learning environments for students and staff. We aim to create an environment where all students have a chance to flourish, by developing a student-centred learning experience. The ATU Teaching and Learning ethos develops teaching, manages innovative projects and designs a range of learning, teaching and assessment tools that help us reach our goals. We invest in the development of our staff and student community, where we provide opportunities to engage with postgraduate teacher training, flexible online courses, a mentoring network, and creative and innovative workshops.

To solve a problem, we must first recognise and understand its context

Undergraduate research opportunities:

Our undergraduate curricula are research informed and our integrated approach to research, development and innovation is delivered through the ATU's individual research centres, placements, and collaborative projects with clients in each of the University's Innovation I-hubs.

To change and shape the world, we must first know and understand it

Graduate and Professional Development:

ATU is a national leader in blended education that combines traditional methods and online and distance learning. It is a key provider of education to mature learners and other groups, for example international students. ATU offers a series of postgraduate programmes specifically designed to enhance graduates' career development. Through its recognition of prior learning policies, ATU recognises the value of labour market participation and professional experience to the lifelong educational experience. ATU is committed to serving industry whilst advancing the skills of working people through the development of programmes which are co-produced by academic experts, industry partners and our students themselves, making them contemporary, interdisciplinary and relevant to the world of work. Some existing programmes are already accredited by industry bodies, meaning they are respected and valued by employers.



Experience

Work experience is accepted as a hugely valuable asset for students



Emphasising conceptual understanding, business and organisational awareness, applied knowledge in diverse contexts

Work experience and placements:

ATU has a well-established track record of developing successful working relationships with industry, supporting student work placements, insight and projects. It also gives students an opportunity to reflect on their experience. We aim to enhance this further through the development of strategic partnerships and deeper collaborations with industry, employers and other stakeholders.

Entrepreneurship:

ATU values self-employment and enterprise skills and has incorporated the principles of entrepreneurship into our programmes. For the student who is keen to start up in business or become freelance, we aim to help. We provide activities aimed at nurturing our students' enterprising skills with expert business advice and mentoring through the various modules we run. The modules can help make a business a reality through the provision of creativity and innovative techniques as well as helping the student to plan their business model. In short, we help the student to get started and thrive in the world of business through support from our contacts in business promotion agencies and regional businesses. This learning helps students appreciate the importance of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship and its socioeconomic value. ATU plans to increasingly look towards other forms of work placement/employment experience.

Career Development Learning

Career Development Learning assists the learner to plan for and achieve their career goals.



Career planning and development:

We guide our students towards their future career from the first day they join us. The comprehensive careers and enterprise advice and information offered on each campus helps our students to develop and improve their job seeking and career planning skills and explore their career options, including support with CVs, LinkedIn profiles, job applications, interviews and assessment centres. Through our academic programme, students are informed of new and emerging recruitment trends and practices. They get opportunities to avail of software packages that enable them to become more competent in new practices, such as video interviews and assessment centres. As a result, students are better prepared and more confident when applying for employment, and develop ambitions and skills to seek, retain, and even change careers during the course of their working lives.

A range of career supports such as interest inventories and psychometric tests are available to students and graduates. Individual 1:1 and online sessions are available in addition to employer presentations and workshops. The University's careers service hosts numerous employers, facilitates employer-led workshops and advertises hundreds of job vacancies on its website.



Preparing for a long-term career, as well as for the immediate future

Employability modules:

ATU will harmonise its offerings in terms of an online careers module which aims to develop the student both professionally and personally and equip them with the skills and knowledge to plan for and achieve their career goals. The module is monitored through 100% continuous assessment which includes a recruitment portfolio (CV and branding, LinkedIn profile, elevator pitch, video CV, personal development plan and portfolio development, mock assessment centre, skills and competencies, emotional intelligence, alumni and employer mentoring, postgraduate options, etc.), a mock recruitment interview (with industry representation on the interview panel) and an informational interview and reflection.

Programme Advice:

This is a service for intending and current students seeking guidance when deciding subject combinations, optional modules and electives.

Generic Skills

As well as subject-specific skills, employers also seek skills that will transfer readily to a range of contexts in the workplace



Seeking to combine academic rigour with an applications orientation

Generic Skills:

Programmes feature many opportunities for students to acquire and hone generic skills such as teamwork, collaboration and multi-disciplinary working, leadership, entrepreneurship, communication, ethics, resilience, reflection, problem solving, numeracy, critical thinking, time management and working under pressure, information management, report writing, adapting to new technology, creativity and so on. These are learned and assessed through a variety of methods such as project work, team assignments and making presentations.

Diversity:

ATU is home to a diverse community of students from different backgrounds and levels of education. We value this diversity and are committed to providing all of our students with a fulfilling experience so that, whatever their personal circumstances, our students will be supported to take maximum advantage of the same opportunities as their peers.

Projects:

ATU has placed a strong emphasis on project work for individuals and teams to help develop discipline specific knowledge and, equally importantly, generic skills such as project planning, problem solving, reflective learning, teamwork and so on. These projects give an ideal opportunity to apply the learning from the programme to practical situations including problems set by enterprise.



Emotional Intelligence

People with high levels of emotional intelligence motivate themselves and others to achieve more: they also tend to enjoy more career success



Providing students with ways of looking, ways of seeing, ways of thinking

The ATU Student experience:

We have placed student experience at the heart of our vision and it is important to encourage students to recognise the part that their activities play in enhancing their employability. Our students are provided with opportunities inside and outside the curriculum to develop their emotional intelligence and learn to confidently convey employability to potential employers. Emotional intelligence can be fostered and improved through strategies such as agreeing action plans with students to work on areas which will improve self-expression, self-perception, self-reflection, interpersonal aspects, stress management, and decision making.

The world of work will change beyond recognition in the years to come. Jobs for life will be in the minority and future generations will change roles and careers much more frequently than current workers. In order to compete effectively in today's work-force it is vital that employees avail of education opportunities throughout their lives.

An ATU education is built on a strong tradition of excellent student-staff interaction, the applied focus of our programmes and the expertise of our staff in providing a wealth of opportunities for students to broaden their experience.

We provide a strong foundation for our graduates to take their place in a dynamic, knowledge economy where communication skills, leadership, teamwork, ethics, resilience and change orientation are required. ATU's employability framework ensures our students not only undergo a rigorous educational experience, but their student experience will contribute meaningfully to their personal and professional development.

Building an authentic partnership and mutual respect

Monitoring Employability of Graduates in ATU

The prime quantitative measures we use for employability are shown below.

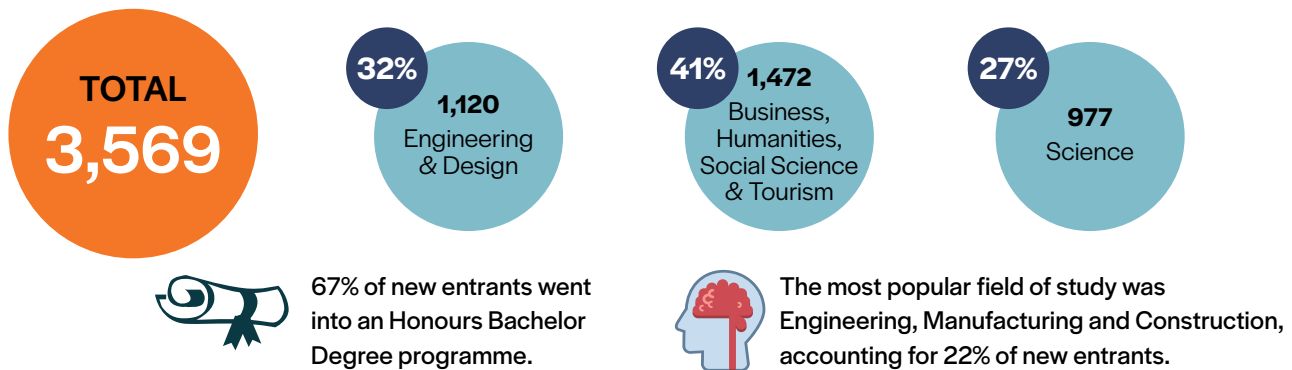
- In 2017, 92% of our graduates had gained employment or gone on to further study and 69% of those employed were working in the ATU region.
- We have increasing numbers of students undertaking placement and professional practice each year.
- Employers from a vast range of sectors visit each of our campuses each year and through Virtual Fairs to recruit students and graduates.
- We are beginning to use data from the national student survey to benchmark employability in ATU.



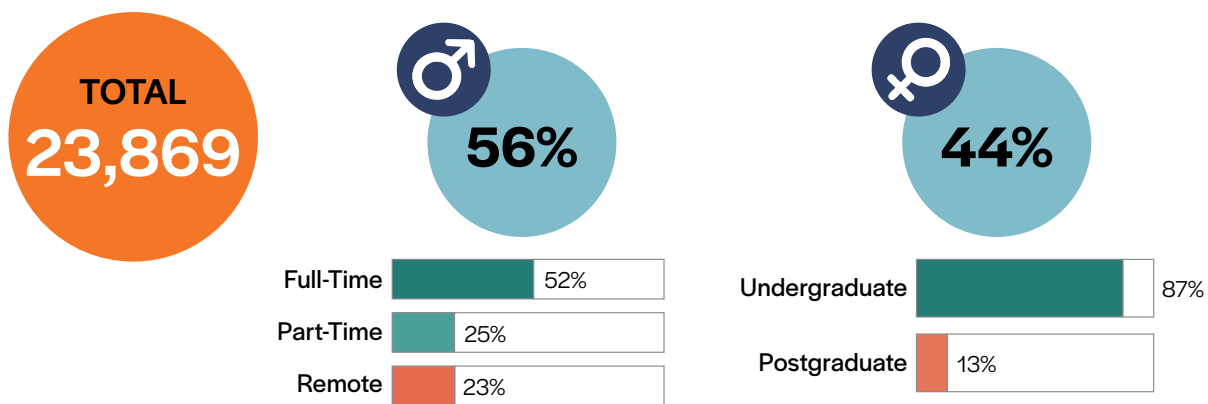
2022-23

Key Facts and Figures

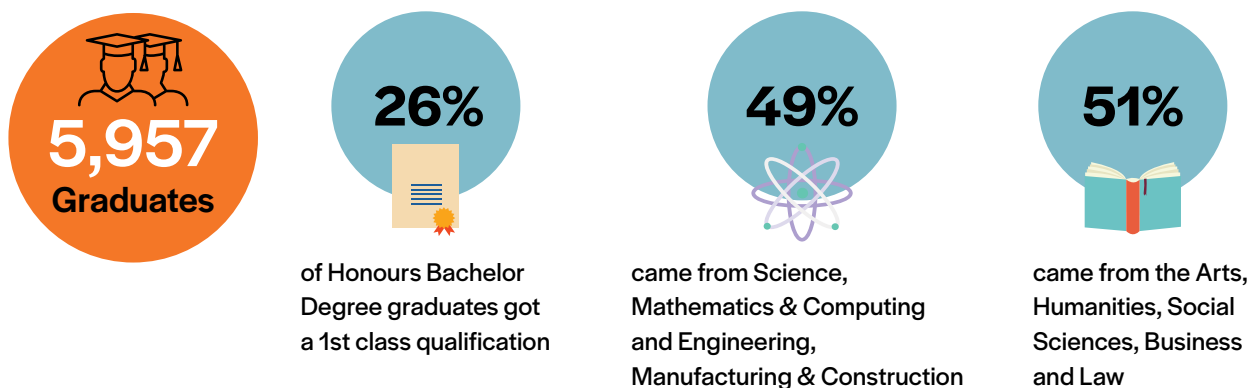
New Entrants



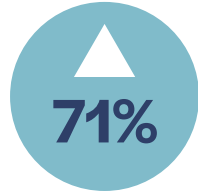
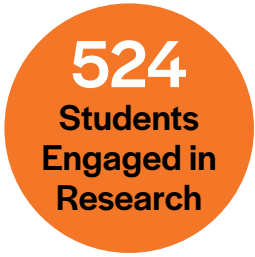
Enrolments



Graduates



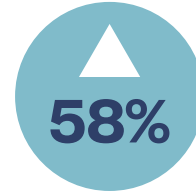
Research



Increase in research provision in the past 3 years



Contract research income 19 months to 31st March 2022



Increase in contract research income since 2018-2019

Participation



2022/23

Mature New Undergraduate Entrants



2019/20

Mature New Undergraduate Entrants



1,755
Springboard



2022/23

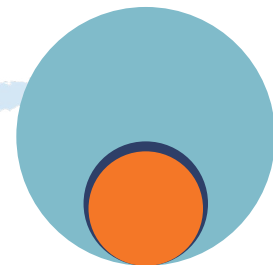
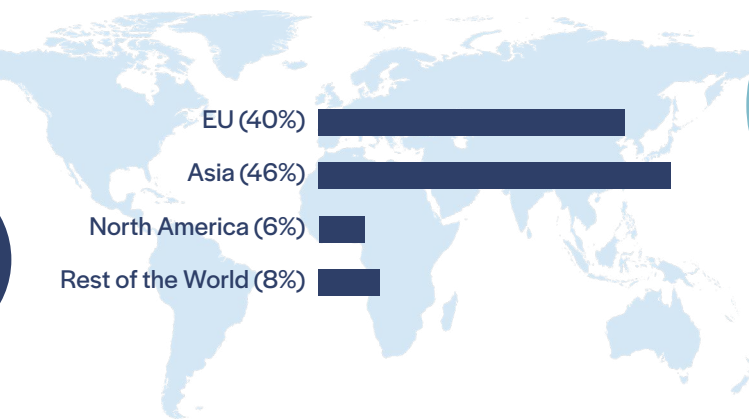
Flexible Learners



2019/20

Flexible Learners

International Participation

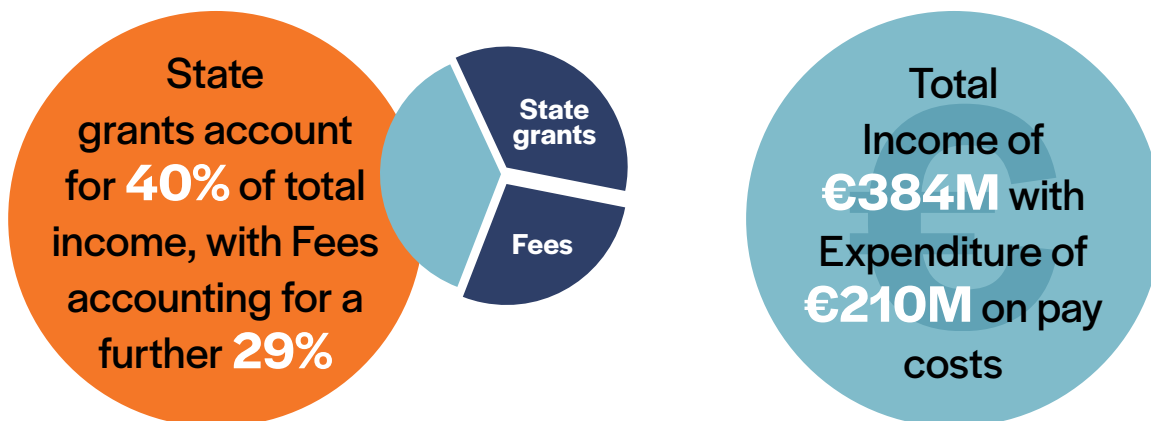


● Full-Time (52%)
● Part-Time (25%)
● Online (23%)

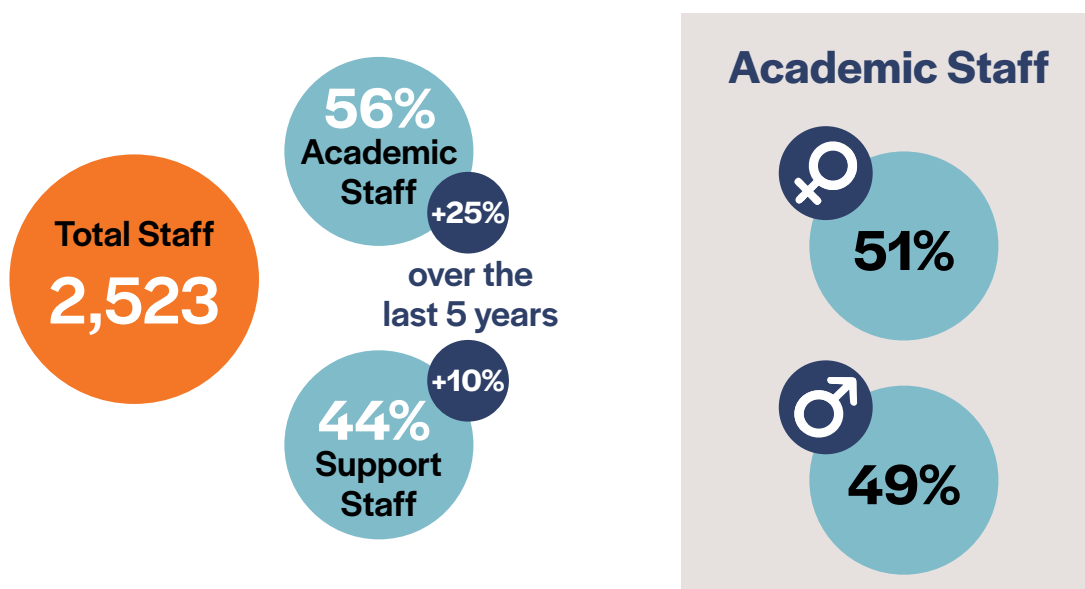


Finances

Financial information relates to 19 months to 31 March 2022



Staffing





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