Investing in Knowledge
Creating Opportunity
The economic impact - a summary report 2015
The economic impact of the University of Leeds -
a summary report.
The research that underpins this report was undertaken
in the summer of 2015 by Viewforth Consulting Ltd.
Introduction

Welcome to the University of Leeds - a great University in a great city; a University that transforms people’s lives and life chances through education, research and innovation.

This summary - which is based on the latest evidence - traces the remarkable contribution that the University makes to the economic, social and cultural life of the city, the region and the country as a whole. I hope that the breadth and depth of the University’s contribution might surprise you, and also encourage you to think about how we might create new partnerships and alliances to promote regional growth and prosperity.

Above all, we are committed to providing education that attracts, excites and retains high quality students from diverse backgrounds, equipping them to succeed in a competitive global employment market; and to delivering internationally excellent research, creating new knowledge and applying it to solve real world problems. By doing this well, we have built a highly respected University, we contribute £1.3 billion every year to the national and regional economy and, in the last twenty years, we have spun out more than 100 companies with a market capitalisation of more than £500 million.

The University has strong local roots and real international reach. We have active partnerships with universities, companies and NGOs around the world; our researchers work in the Arctic Circle, the South American rainforests and with some of the most deprived people in Africa; and we have an alumni base of 235,000 Leeds graduates in 190 countries who are always keen to open up their influential policy, business and professional networks to us.

Last month, we launched the Leeds: Southwest Jiaotong Universities joint school of engineering and computing to deliver world class education and research in Leeds and Chengdu, a rapidly developing city of 15 million people in China.

I hope that this summary will inspire you to find out more and to work with us to ensure that we can do even better in the future.

Sir Alan Langlands
Vice-Chancellor
18 November 2015


Economic impact

The importance of universities to supporting growth, particularly at a regional level, is increasingly well understood. The 2013 Witty Review of Universities and Growth explored the potential for better and stronger links between universities and their regions, particularly around how universities might help regions develop their comparative strengths.

Since 2014, the Chancellor George Osborne has promoted the notion of a ‘northern powerhouse’ at the forefront of efforts to rebalance the national economy. In essence, the combined ‘economic mass’ of cities in the North of England acts as a significant counterweight to London, thus reducing the nation’s dependency on the capital city. Economic growth in the North would be predicated on the combined effects generated by the City Region, and key economic strengths in science and technology, transport, governance and culture. Following the most recent budget, HM Treasury produced a ‘productivity plan’, Fixing the Foundations, which includes a series of commitments concerning ‘resurgent cities, a rebalanced economy and a thriving northern powerhouse’.

The Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership is pursuing an ambitious growth agenda with its core goal being to “unlock the Leeds City Region’s potential to become the growth engine for the North.”

The eight Higher Education institutions in the region will be important partners in helping to achieve this goal, as its priority industry sectors that are targeted for growth potential will all involve a need for the high level skills and research capacity of the Higher Education institutions.

The University of Leeds is well placed to be both a catalyst and supporter of economic growth in the region.

The region’s largest University
At £588 million, the University is the 8th largest in the UK by income, and the largest in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The University of Leeds contributed £1.3 billion in a Higher Education sector contributing £2.4 billion to the region’s economy in 2013-14.

To place the University’s size by income into a regional context, it is greater than those of Leeds Building Society, Bettys and Taylors Group Ltd, Leeds Rhinos and Yorkshire County Cricket Club combined.

As a non-profit making organisation, the University’s income supports its key challenge across education and research, namely increasing knowledge and creating opportunity, the defining feature of life at Leeds.
Relative size of the University (by gross output) compared to other well-known local organisations

- Yorkshire Water: 984.2 m
- Skipton Building Society: 617.6 M
- First West Yorkshire Ltd: 131.4 m
- Bettys and Taylors Group LTD: 149.1 m
- Leeds Building Society: 198.4 m
- Yorkshire Building Society: 565.2 m
- University of Leeds: 587.4 m
- University of Leeds 2013-14 Total £772 million

Secondary output generated by the University of Leeds 2013-14 Total £772 million

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<th>Sector</th>
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<th>Rest of UK</th>
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<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>4.20 m</td>
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<td>Mining &amp; Quarrying</td>
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<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade</td>
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<td>Transport Storage &amp; Communication</td>
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Driving regional growth
By modelling the impact of University of Leeds expenditure on the UK as a whole, analysis could then be made of the proportion of that impact accruing to Yorkshire and Humber. This takes into account the business and industry structure of the region as well as consideration of spend more likely to be locally based.

Through the ‘knock-on’ effects of its expenditure, the University generated an additional £772 million in other industries throughout the UK, with the majority (£570 million) accruing in Yorkshire and Humber industries.

“In other words, every £1 million of University revenue will generate a further secondary output impact of £1.31 million in the UK, £0.97 million of which will be in Yorkshire and Humber.”

Supporting employment
This expenditure, combined with direct employment by the University (6,569), supports around 14,238 jobs (full-time equivalents), of which around 12,610 are in Yorkshire and Humber.

“In other words, for every 100 direct full-time equivalent jobs created in the University itself, another 117 UK jobs would be generated in other industries, 92 of which would be in Yorkshire and Humber.”

The University of Leeds integrated strategy for research, impact and innovation delivers international research excellence and maximises impact through our innovative approaches to knowledge exchange. This strategy has also delivered over 100 spin-out companies since 1995, with the University currently holding equity in a further 35 companies, seven of which are market listed on AIM, more than any other University.

The market capitalisation of the University’s spin-out portfolio is in the region of £500 million and collectively these companies employ over 600 people. In addition we hold in excess of 70 current technology licences with UK and international organisations.

Collaboration
Our new University Innovation and Enterprise Centre (UIEC) will house a team of experienced professionals who will work to understand companies’ innovation needs, and put them in touch with the support they require. It is our experience that developing a set of shared longer-term objectives with a company means that the projects we collaborate on are of higher quality and more impactful.

Connectivity
In support of companies’ ambitions the Centre will bring together people from organisations with a shared interest in innovation. These will include: research partners, investors and funders of research and innovation, IP lawyers, market researchers and other providers of specialist support, and business agencies and networks.

Enterprise
The Centre will play an important role in creating a culture of enterprise, equipping students and staff with the skills they need to collaborate with business, and make connections across the region and beyond.
Ongoing support instrumental to success

A brand new purpose designed facility for companies and other research and innovation partners, the University Innovation and Enterprise Centre (UIEC) is due to open in 2018.

The Centre will:

• enable companies – of all sizes in all sectors – to more easily and quickly tap into our research, the know-how of our staff, our state-of-the art facilities, and our student and graduate talent, to help them grow and be more productive
• provide high quality office and laboratory space for technology-led companies looking to accelerate their growth and development
• connect companies with our research, innovation and funding partners to meet their wider needs and create additional opportunities.

Our ambition is to create a vibrant community that fosters collaboration and partnership, and inspires innovation and enterprise, so at the heart of the UIEC is a fantastic space in which to network, share and develop new ideas, hot desk, meet privately and run events.
We contribute £1.3 billion to the UK’s economy every year.

For every 100 full-time jobs created by the University, 92 of which are located in Yorkshire & Humber.

In other words, we generated an additional £772m in other industries throughout the UK.

Every £1m of revenue generated by the University produces a further economic impact of £1,300,000.

That’s £570 million in Yorkshire & Humber industries.

Our partnership with the Goldman Sachs Small Business Programme... supports 275 regional businesses.

We are the 8th largest university in the UK in terms of income.
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NATIONAL IMPACT

We’ve created over 100 spin-out companies with market capitalisation of over £500m.

7 are listed on AIM, that’s more than any other university in the UK.

Over 600 people are employed by these businesses.

CITY IMPACT

We’re the City Region’s 3rd largest employer.

Supporting more than 14,000 jobs across the city.

48 start-up companies were launched by students last year.

37 student enterprises launched in our first dedicated business incubator.
Research and innovation

World class research drives economic growth and promotes health, quality of life and environmental sustainability, and University of Leeds’ research really is changing the world around us. From developing innovative health technologies to illuminating the cultural significance of literature and landscapes, the University's broad research base is vital in fostering innovation, and is considered an essential part of the framework supporting innovation as well as regional and national economic competitiveness.

Already rated amongst the world’s top 100 universities (QS World Rankings 2015), the University’s strategic plan is committed to making a step change in the quality, volume and impact of world-leading research carried out at Leeds, building on existing research strengths and our commitment to interdisciplinary working. The plan commits us to growing our vibrant PhD and postdoctoral community, and utilising our technology platforms and interdisciplinary research capabilities across some of the greatest challenges facing our society and the economy.

Partners in research
Our academics are involved in every stage of the research process, from fundamental research at the frontiers of science, to near market-ready applications that are transforming our economy and the wider society in which we live and work. We have extensive experience of establishing and maintaining long-term research collaborations with blue chip organisations from a range of industries including; Jaguar Land Rover, Marks & Spencer, Procter & Gamble, AstraZeneca, Unilever, Volvo and Yorkshire Water.

Our work with Jaguar Land Rover is delivered via the £10 million Programme for Simulation Innovation (PSI). This public/private sector funded initiative is the first phase of a 20-year programme led by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) in partnership with four of the UK’s leading research intensive universities. First phase projects led or co-led by Leeds include Analysis of the vehicle as a complex system; and Driving simulation, and we are proud to play a leading role in creating the virtual simulation technologies that the UK’s advanced manufacturers require if they are to keep ahead of the global competition.

“This project will help us analyse increasingly complex cars at whole vehicle, system and component levels. It will also help us make advances in the simulated driver and passenger experience, including more realistic imagery, sounds and even smells.”

Bob Joyce, Jaguar Land Rover Engineering Director

Experts from Leeds are engaged on a number of projects with AstraZeneca, based around Manufacturability Design. The collaboration is working to understand the chemical and physical engineering issues involved in ensuring reliable production of pharmaceutical materials.

Over £7.4 million worth of joint research activity with high street giant Marks & Spencer is underway or in the pipeline, ranging from the evolution of international business models to the role of Generation Y in the workforce today.
Our strategic partnership with Procter & Gamble has identified potential strategic research projects across a wide range of disciplines, including; engineering, maths and physics, design, computing, chemistry, psychology, business and the arts. Many of these joint projects are aimed at improving production techniques as much as developing new products. In the Faculty of Engineering’s Simulation Centre for example, the team is able to model processing equipment to predict how changes in processing conditions will impact product quality, which can provide significant cost savings in re-engineering or reformulation for our partner organisation.

A research powerhouse
Universities are sometimes referred to as ‘ideas factories’, and at Leeds, our researchers are responsible for more than 70% of the patents coming out of the City Region’s eight universities.

These patents (347 out of a total of 480) are the seeds from which we are can grow whole new businesses. Businesses as diverse as Xeros, who have developed a near waterless washing machine process, Tissue Regenix, a leading medical devices company in the field of regenerative medicine, and Glucosense, focused on the creation of non-invasive, continuous glucose monitoring technologies to help diabetes sufferers worldwide.

The results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 saw Leeds ranked in 10th place for research power, a measure of the number of people producing the highest quality research.

The assessment identified that over 80% of research at Leeds has a top quality rating of either “world leading” or “internationally excellent”.

For the first time, research was also judged on its impact outside academia, such as its effects on the economy, public policy, civil society or culture. The results position the University 9th when it comes to the impact power of its research.
Changing the way we diagnose heart disease
Accounting for 5% of all emergency visits worldwide, heart disease is a major global health issue. However, studies show that between 2% and 8% of patients are inappropriately discharged with an undiagnosed heart attack. But a new device developed by a University of Leeds spin-out company, Quantum Imaging Ltd, could change that.

Detecting heart disease in minutes
Currently when a patient goes to hospital with chest pains they are presumed to have suffered a heart attack until proven otherwise. Doctors rely on a series of ‘rule in’ tests which can take a while to show the patient is having a heart attack, and it is widely accepted that the longer a patient waits for treatment following the onset of chest pain, the worse their outcome can be.

Research led by Professor Ben Varcoe, Chair of Quantum Information Science at Leeds, has resulted in a new and patented methodology to detect and record the magnetic physiological indicators associated with electrical signals present in certain body tissues. This can help with the diagnosis of a range of potentially life threatening medical conditions, including heart attacks.

Using this research the team at Quantum Imaging Ltd have developed a portable, battery operated device that can be used in both routine and acute hospital settings, even emergency triage. Where the portable magnetometer comes into its own is that it can be used to immediately rule out cardiac-related conditions in a simple five-minute test. Not only is this test non-invasive, but it is also passive so it can be used safely in a wide range of patient groups.

Benefits and impact
The potential market for this technology is huge; the company conservatively estimate the total available market in Europe for such a device would be around £700 million, and globally in excess of £2 billion. With the potential to diagnose other diseases these figures could grow exponentially.

"Magnetocardiography is the first new cardiac imaging modality since MRI and could well be a game changer. Now the equipment is smaller and more mobile, its potential is huge."

Professor Mark Kearney, Chair of Cardiovascular and Diabetes Research, British Heart Foundation
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Top 10

Top 100 Universities
(QS World Rankings 2015)

Top 10

For Research Power in the UK

70%

Over 200

Collaborative Research Projects

Worth

£26.6m

Delivered in 2013-14

One of the World’s

Top 100 Universities

One of the World’s

Top 100 Universities

70%

Of Patents from

The City Region’s Universities Came

From the University of Leeds

Contract Research Projects with 160

Business Partners Worth

£48.7m

70%

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Contract Research Projects with 160

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Research impact: terahertz technology

The University of Leeds’ School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering is leading the way in terahertz frequency research on a global level. World-class research has led to award-winning advancements in terahertz science and technology, with potential real-world applications as diverse as satellite remote sensing, chemical analysis, medical imaging and telecommunications.
The University of Leeds is a big University in every sense. 31,000 students are drawn from 146 countries, meaning we are home to almost 30% of the 102,600 students across the Leeds City Region’s eight universities in 2013-14. Our strategic plan is founded on the vision of increasing knowledge through opportunity for each and every one of our students, and our distinctive Leeds Curriculum puts research-based learning at the heart of the student experience.

This approach enables students to undertake a personal learning journey incorporating both depth and breadth. Critical thinking and independent learning enable students to develop new knowledge and personal insight.

22 prestigious National Teaching Fellowships, the largest number of any university in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, backs up our commitment to teaching excellence.

The Leeds academic experience is enhanced by the integration of employer needs and co-curricular experiences designed to prepare our students to be successful and to make a difference in a global marketplace. As graduates our students are highly sought after and the University is in the top 10 most targeted universities as ranked by the top 100 UK companies.

We want our students to be prepared for the world of work, and we help them achieve this through developing personal and professional skills as part of their time with us. Each year around 750 students opt to undertake a year in industry, 1,200 study overseas and many more undertake professional and clinical placements as part of their degree programme. In 2014-15 over 100 students received subsidised internships providing three-month summer projects supporting the development and productivity of regional SMEs and charities.

We work with strategic partners such as Marks & Spencer to create student placement opportunities to meet their emerging business needs and simultaneously develop the employability of our students.

We are committed to ensuring that we attract and retain the brightest and best students from the most diverse backgrounds, providing affordable access for all who can benefit. Our extensive outreach programme supported 153,000 learners in the past year alone, from primary school children to mature students. Since 2003 our alternative admissions routes have supported over 3,500 students from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their potential with us. Our intake from lower socio-economic groups continues to rise and currently accounts for 24.5% of the student body.

As one of the largest research-intensive universities in the UK, it is perhaps not surprising that 36% of all Leeds City Region postgraduates are based at the University of Leeds. We engage in world-class research across an enormously diverse range of disciplines. And some 2,500 postgraduate researchers are working alongside academics at the forefront of their subjects and develop their own research as they learn. Our aim is to challenge, inspire and support them so that they could be part of the next big research breakthrough.

Our Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Studies and Spark business service combine to offer practical support to enable students to turn new ideas into flourishing businesses as part of an exceptional enterprise education. 48 Leeds student start-up companies were launched last year alone, with a further 1,200 students studying enterprise modules. 2014 saw the launch of our first business incubator, which is now home to 37 emerging student enterprises.
Effective employer engagement

The University’s partnership with Unilever began in 2009, focusing on recruiting undergraduate students for internships. Unilever wanted to give students the opportunity to experience what it is like to work at one of the world’s leading consumer goods companies while working on genuine business projects alongside experienced Unilever managers. The success of the programme has meant that increasing numbers of exciting opportunities have been offered.

Interns have been able to experience working in a fast-paced manufacturing environment, learning key employability skills such as communication, project management and commercial awareness while delivering real value for a regional business via the projects they are involved in.

Since 2009, nearly 60 Leeds students have undertaken highly valued internships and industrial placement years.

“The best thing about studying International Business was the relevance of my study to the real world; many of the topics we are learning about and discussing have close links with the current economic environment and are reinforced with real business case studies. I applied my academic learning during my year in industry working at Unilever and my course provided me with many transferable skills, such as confidence in my presentation ability which supported me in my year away from Leeds.”

Adam Smith (BSc International Business 2014)

Adam went on to successfully secure employment with Unilever on its graduate trainee scheme.

“Employing these high calibre students brings fresh new ideas to the business and allows us to initiate projects which might otherwise not have been possible. We feel the financial investment is outweighed by the contributions the interns make to the business in terms of improved process, efficiency gains and implementation of environmental initiatives. The success of the programme has meant that we have been able to offer increasing numbers of exciting opportunities. Many of the interns have impressed so much that they continue to work with us during their final year.”

Kirsten Wood, Finance Manager, Unilever
People think that the University is on a pedestal and that they can’t get there but they can.

Access to Leeds, is the University’s widening access scheme, which guarantees special consideration for applicants whose personal circumstances have affected their ability to demonstrate talent and potential through grades alone. The scheme enables our admissions tutors to consider the context surrounding an applicant’s educational achievements in order to more fully understand their potential to succeed here at Leeds. Successful applicants typically receive an offer two grades lower than the standard entry requirements.

Since Access to Leeds first began in 2003 we have welcomed over 3,500 students who have gone on to succeed here at Leeds. In 2015, the University welcomed 734 undergraduates through this route. The scheme is nationwide and is a key element of our engagement programme, building on our commitment to reach out and enable progression to the University of Leeds. Research on the progression and attainment of our Access to Leeds students has found their subsequent performance to be in line with that of their peers who have entered the University by the standard route.

“I came across the Access to Leeds scheme early on in the application process. At the time I felt overwhelmed by the process of applying to university because I didn’t know anyone planning to study the same course as me. I am really pleased to have taken part in the scheme because it allowed me access to lots of support which helped me through the process – I felt like they were doing everything they could to help me.

Taking part in Access to Leeds ensured that I chose the best university for me. I am studying in an environment where I feel happy, comfortable and valued. The study skills module was great for giving me a taste of what it’s really like to study at university before I arrived.”

Florence Mutlow, MBChB, Medicine, Year 3
Each year our students undertake voluntary outreach and aspiration raising activity in the region’s schools, equivalent to delivering 443 weeks of classroom support.

We are one of the top 10 universities in the country targeted by the UK’s top graduate employers.

Our outreach programme engaged 153,000 learners in the past year.

31,000 students drawn to Leeds from 146 countries.

8,221 postgraduate students.
Global impact: climate research

The Leeds Priestley International Centre for Climate is a world-leading centre for policy-relevant, solution-driven climate research. With five lead authors of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) latest report, we contributed more expertise than any other UK university. Our work on climate smart cities demonstrates that taking action can boost economic development: Our findings suggest that low-carbon urban actions available today could generate savings in the period to 2050 with a current value of US$16.6 trillion.

Photo taken by Dr Roger Norum, School of English, University of Leeds
Community

It’s about who we are
With over 7,000 staff and 31,000 students, the University of Leeds is a diverse community in itself, as well as an integral part of the local and regional population. We are determined to play our part in making the Leeds City Region a better place to live, work, study and play. Community is a cornerstone of the University’s values.

Our volunteering programme is one of the biggest in the country, providing a huge range of opportunities to develop our students’ skills, broadening their life experiences and making a real difference to the community, the University and their individual employability.

Volunteering, alongside the University’s Access programme, supports the vital work we do to increase the social mobility of young people from low socio-economic backgrounds through access to education.

The conservation society are getting hands-on work in and around Leeds, including preserving local woodland, planting and habitat management. Our School of Law and student law society provide pro-bono work to those in need, and our researchers offered international support during the Ebola crisis.
A better place to be
Most of the University's outstanding sport and leisure facilities are open to the public, and in 2014 our sporting facilities attracted over 150,000 public visits. Our swimming programme is attended by 750 local children on a weekly basis, and weekend swimming lessons for children aged from six months to 16 years old are also hugely popular.

Our student hockey club delivers a programme to over 30 primary schools alongside the Leeds Active Schools programme, culminating in the Quick Stix tournament held at Sports Park Weetwood, passionately contested by 240 primary school children.

The Chinese Olympic team famously chose Leeds as its pre-Olympic training camp ahead of the 2012 London Olympics, as did Canada’s Paralympian rugby players. In September 2015 elite sports coaches, practitioners and academic specialists from China met the University of Leeds’ famous alumni Jonny and Alistair Brownlee as part of a two-week international development programme hosted by the University. The wide-ranging conference included visits to the variety of sports venues, the University’s sports science laboratories, as well as a range of lectures and discussions delivered by elite sports professionals who are based in Leeds, including GB coaches Malcolm Brown (GB Triathlon) and Ady Hinchcliffe (GB Diving) about the latest enhancements in sports coaching, sports science and sports medicine.

The University plays a key role in supporting Leeds to be an active, healthy and vibrant city. Like everyone across the region, we were thrilled to be part of the celebrations when Sky Ride 2015 saw more than 10,000 cyclists ride through campus, enjoying our activation zone which provided activities for everyone, including free bike hire, a bike obstacle course, blingabike and even a smoothie bike!

“Sky Ride closes big towns and cities for big bike events so you can ride safely on traffic-free streets, with a huge festival atmosphere and loads to do both on and off the bike. They are good fun and a great way to get on your bike.”

Sir Chris Hoy, Olympic Champion and Sky Ride Ambassador

Culture helps to define a sense of place and community, and the University plays a leading role in initiatives like ‘Light Night’, a celebration of culture which sees more than 60 performances, displays, films and interactive installations enthral crowds of over 50,000 spread across the city.

The University is proud to host to the Leeds International Piano Competition, rightly recognised by the international musical community as one of the world’s most important platforms for the emerging generation of young professional musicians.

Our campus itself enhances both the cultural and natural environment of the city; our campus art trail provides free public access to art and sculpture, sitting alongside open areas of edible planting and wildflower meadows.

We make a point of trying to incorporate the findings of some of the world-class research undertaken at the University into our operational processes, with cutting-edge ideas being applied on campus through our ‘Living Lab’ programme. This seeks to embed sustainability by making sustainable practice and values a part of every decision and action we make. We have extended this concept, through the City Region’s Sustainable Economic and Culture Board, to create exciting and relevant City Living Lab projects. Working with Leeds City Council we are learning together while enhancing the sustainability of the city.
Bringing innovation to policing across West Yorkshire

A year-long ESRC funded collaborative project, between the University of Leeds, West Yorkshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire, will create opportunities for research, information sharing and skills training which could change policing across the region.

The project will focus on four key themes: Partnerships and Culture Change; Understanding Acquisitive Crime such as burglary and shoplifting; Community Engagement; and Public Order. This unique approach will bring academic researchers and police practitioners together to share their expertise, ensuring that rigorous research is grounded in the operational reality of policing.

“We are building a stronger partnership of collaboration and a more robust evidence base upon which police can draw. We see this as a pilot project that will transform relationships between police and universities in years to come, with benefits in knowledge creation, innovation and learning that could impact on policing across the United Kingdom.”

Professor Adam Crawford, School of Law, University of Leeds

“This new research progresses the 3i strategy launched earlier this year which seeks to develop innovation, income and investment in policing. The findings from this research will add great value to the way in which we keep our communities safe and feeling safe.”

Mark Burns-Williamson, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire
Sustainable growing projects
Bardon Grange was established as a community and volunteering project by Leeds University Union in 2009, in partnership with the University, in response to students’ interest in finding a communal space to grow food.

Since then the project has developed unused land into a productive growing space, running weekly drop-in food growing sessions, and putting on regular workshops and events to help people learn more about sustainable food production and gain new skills. The project has also led gardening sessions for young children in schools, planting an edible/wildlife garden at the St John’s shopping centre in Leeds city centre, and works to provide and promote fresh, local food and support local sustainability issues.

Now, under the remit of the Green Exchange, the project has transformed its original site to produce salad and herbs to generate a sustainable income. Drop-in food growing sessions at the University’s Sustainable Garden are run for all members of the community. Work has begun with students and landlords to create more growing spaces around the city and on campus, creating a garden and propagation space on the roof of the Union.
Reach and influence

An international community
Our diverse student population is a truly global community, with students from 146 countries across the world and 235,000 alumni worldwide. This community consistently demonstrates huge affection and pride for Leeds and Yorkshire and the time they spent here. They are strong global advocates for the city and broader region.

This advocacy should not be underestimated as some of our alumni go on to occupy positions of significant influence in government, industry and public service. Notable alumni include:

- Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Bekele Geleta, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2007-14)
- Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate: author and playwright
- Xiuqin Zhang, Ambassador / Chinese representative at the Executive Board of United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- Hage Geingob, President of Namibia.

Today students of all disciplines and all backgrounds are recognising the importance of international experience to help them compete and make an impact in an increasingly globalised world.

In one of the largest student mobility programmes in the sector, at least 1 in 5 Leeds students will go overseas as part of their studies to work or study abroad. In the current academic year our students will be spread across 50 countries.

A gateway to Leeds and beyond
Of course our international profile works both ways. Along with attracting international students, the University of Leeds draws significant numbers of visitors – both business and leisure – to the city every year. As an organisation with an international outlook, significant export earnings and with research connections across the globe, the University regularly attracts visitors on individual research visits, study visits or to participate in academic conferences.

The important role universities play in attracting business tourism is increasingly recognised and encouraged in many cities across the UK, with links to convention and tourism bodies, and ambassador programmes designed to attract major academic conferences – some of which can bring thousands of delegates to the city and region.
Global networks and thought leaders
We have over 900 international academic leaders and staff, representing 27% of all academic staff, each with their own connections and links with universities, business and governments around the world. The University is part of the Worldwide Universities Network, which brings together 18 research-intensive universities to collaborate on research, postgraduate degree programmes and continuing professional development. There is a thriving study abroad programme for our undergraduate students and the University has links with over 350 universities around the world.

Worldwide collaborations
At the University of Leeds we strive to create, advance and disseminate knowledge, which not only develops outstanding graduates and scholars, but also has a direct impact on global society. We are undertaking world leading research and education on every continent in the world.

A team of scientists from the UK Centre for Polar Observation and Modelling, led by researchers at the University of Leeds, have produced the first complete assessment of Antarctic ice sheet elevation change. Three years of observations show that the Antarctic ice sheet is now losing 159 billion tonnes of ice each year – twice as much as when it was last surveyed.

A collaboration between the University and Southwest Jiaotong University (SWJTU) in China will see the development of a new joint school at SWJTU, based in the city of Chengdu in Sichuan province. The school will allow high-achieving Chinese students to study for dual degrees over four years, taught in English from both Leeds and SWJTU, while giving Leeds-based students the opportunity to study in China.

The University has collaborations with a broad range of international companies and organisations whose outcomes are changing lives across the globe.

Our Business School academics are working with Marks & Spencer, the global retailer founded in Leeds, on the evolution of international business models.

Together we are challenging global cultural boundaries by using digital technology to offer a joint MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) in innovation, supported by real business case studies from Marks & Spencer. Over 26,000 learners have already taken part.

Scientists at the University of Leeds are collaborating with the Met Office on understanding the weather and climate of tropical regions; climate impact specialists model the impact of projected climate change on crop yields, while social scientists specialise in the impact of a changing climate on livelihoods. A significant proportion of our joint programme of work is focused on Africa.

Robotic and autonomous systems, identified by the UK government as one of the ‘eight great technologies’, are revolutionising our lives, the economy and human society. At Leeds, we are driving innovation in this growing area of technology. Whether it is designing systems to help patients recover after a stroke or building robots to explore previously unseen chambers in the great pyramids of Egypt, we are recognised as being at the global forefront of robot design and construction. Our industrial partners, researchers and students can now access a suite of technologies for robot design and construction that is among the most advanced in the world. Our multidisciplinary teams of engineers, scientists and clinicians are developing novel robotic systems and the underpinning technologies with the aim of improving people’s lives and satisfying human curiosity.

The University hosts the prestigious Business Confucius Institute, partnered with the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. It is one of only three business-focused Confucius Institutes in Europe and builds cultural and business links between Chinese and UK business communities.
International volunteering
Andrew Buckley, Ebola volunteer
In early 2015, four Leeds researchers from the University’s Faculty of Biological Sciences volunteered to fight the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone. Each researcher spent five weeks working in diagnostic laboratories, run by Public Health England, to identify cases in the West African country.

Andrew Buckley, a third year PhD researcher at the time of deployment, said: “This is what we come into this field for. If you are a virologist, you want to be active in the fight against dangerous viruses like Ebola. It is something that I feel I have to do because I am a specialist in this area, and this is a unique situation that requires specialised skills.”

Although the scientists in the laboratories did not have to work directly with Ebola patients they were vital to the international effort because of the importance of diagnosing cases quickly and accurately.

Professor Mark Harris, Professor of Virology at the University, said: “Sierra Leone has been at the centre of the outbreak, but the fact that there has been an international response in recent months and that this efficient screening programme has been put in place has undoubtedly helped slow down the epidemic. There is some evidence that the epidemic may have peaked and the hope is that our researchers may be playing a part in the successful control of the disease.”

Mr Andrew Buckley with Dr Hazel Stewart, Dr Zsofia Igloi and Dr Rebecca Surtees