

Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan



TUS

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir
Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest

www.tus.ie

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Table of Abbreviations

ACS	Approved Course Schedule
AnCO	An Chomhairle Oiliúna
APT	Applied Polymer Technologies
CLA	Consortia-Led Apprenticeship
CPID	Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ETB	Education and Training Boards
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAF	Higher Education Apprenticeship Forum
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IFOT	Institute Family of Trades
ITAC	Institutes of Technology Apprenticeship Committee
NAA	National Apprenticeship Alliance
NAO	National Apprenticeship Office
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
QAAF	Quality Assurance Apprenticeship Framework
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SOLAS	tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
TUS	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

1 Executive Summary



The vision of the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026, is to be a catalyst for sustainable change through education and research that transforms lives, in the Midlands and Midwest regions and the world beyond. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) Action Plan for Apprenticeship, 2021–2025 sets out to reimagine the apprenticeship system in Ireland and to recreate one that is flexible and responsive, providing a strong value proposition for employers and potential apprentices, is attractive and easy to engage with, and delivers high standards and sought after qualifications. This Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan lays out the ways and means through which TUS will be an active participant in, and contribute to, the DFHERIS Action Plan for Apprenticeship through the vision and priorities of the university Strategic Plan. This articulates the TUS commitment to the apprenticeship model of education and the vision of our Technological University for playing a leading role in the delivery of the Action Plan for Apprenticeships through the prism of the TUS Strategic Plan.

The TUS campuses, across both the Midlands and Midwest, have been leaders in apprenticeship education for many years. This Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan is developed at a time when the university educates in excess of 1,400 apprentices annually

and has become both a coordinating and a collaborating provider in a number of national Consortia-Led Apprenticeships (CLA) and is continuing to develop new apprenticeship offerings in concert with expansion of craft apprenticeship capacity across multiple campuses and regions. The DFHERIS Action Plan for Apprenticeship seeks to migrate the two forms of apprenticeship, Craft and Consortia-led into a single apprenticeship system underpinned by a clear governance framework with strong stakeholder input. This presents a unique opportunity for TUS, along with sectoral colleagues, to help shape the future of apprenticeship education during the lifetime of this Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan. This plan seeks to further develop apprenticeship education delivery and breadth through high-quality, industry-led, National, apprenticeship programmes that cultivate skilled and agile professionals, foster innovation and collaboration, and enhance competitiveness nationally with a particular focus on the Midwest and Midlands regions.

Through the lens of the university strategic priorities of Education, Research, People and Organisation, and Connecting Communities, this Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan sets out clear objectives, lays down an implementation plan and lists the indicators of success that will inform ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

2 Introduction



The Industrial Training Act (1967) (*Industrial Training Act, 1967*) established a legal basis for apprenticeships in Ireland and created a formal system for their regulation and operation. An Chomhairle Oilíúna (AnCO) was founded to manage apprentice training, and its functions were transferred to An Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) in 1988. Both organisations led apprenticeship programmes that required apprentices to “*serve their time*” under the supervision of a qualified trades person.

In 1994, a new model was introduced to make apprenticeship training and qualifications transferable abroad. This model involved taught elements in addition to the traditional “*served time*” approach and is still in use today as the Statutory Apprenticeship system and are known as Craft Apprenticeships (O’Connor and Harvey, 2001).

An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS) is currently responsible for delivering the craft apprenticeships of the Statutory Apprenticeship system, and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the validation of the quality of these apprenticeship programmes.

“*Generation Apprenticeship*” is an initiative launched by the DFHERIS in 2017 to promote awareness and engagement in the apprenticeship offering. Minister for State, Niall Collins, T.D., said that “*the broadening of apprenticeship opportunities will be a*

key component in the manner in which the Department focuses on opening up further education and training opportunities for all, providing a diverse and flexible range of pathways to support lifelong learning” (“Statement of Strategy 2021–2023,” 2021).

This led to the introduction of a new model apprenticeship, the CLA model (“Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021–2025,” 2021). Consortia consist of stakeholders, such as employers, unions, professional bodies and educational bodies that will drive the development and delivery of these apprenticeships. Over the next few years, the department plans to migrate both models into a single, integrated system of apprenticeship.

While TUS has long delivered the craft apprenticeships in areas such as Electrical, Plumbing and Light and Heavy Vehicle Mechanic, it has also been to the fore in the development of CLAs in areas such as Polymer Processing Technology and Manufacturing Engineering leveraging learning from the Applied Polymer Technologies (APT) Gateway Centre in Athlone and Industrial Electrical Engineering, again leveraging the strengths of Electrical programmes in Limerick. TUS is ideally placed to continue to lead during the largest disruption to apprenticeships this century.

3 Context



TUS, both in the Midlands and Midwest regions, have long delivered Craft apprenticeships phase 4 and phase 6. Illustration 1 shows that, in the year 2023/24, almost 1,400 Craft apprentices will pass through programmes in Athlone and Limerick.

Programme	Campus	Terms			Totals	Phases
		1	2	3		
Carpentry and Joinery	Moylish	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (2 P4)
Electrical	Athlone	4	4	4	12	Terms 1-3 (4 P4)
	Moylish	8	8	8	24	Terms 1-3 (4 P4 + 4 P6)
Fitter MAMF	Moylish	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-2 (2 P6), Term 3 (2 P4)
Heavy Vehicle Mechanic	Athlone	3	3	3	9	Terms 1-2 (1 P4 + 2 P6), Term 3 (2 P4 + 1 P6)
Motor Mechanic	Athlone	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (2 P4)
	Moylish	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (1 P4 + 1 P6)
Plumbing	Athlone	6	6	6	18	Terms 1-3 (4 P4 + 2 P6)
Totals		29	29	29	87	Apprentices per year: 1,397

Illustration 1: Craft-based Apprenticeship provision, year 2023/24

Apart from Craft apprenticeships, TUS has been a pioneer in the coordination of consortia to develop new apprenticeships in the case of L7 Polymer Processing Technology and L7 Industrial Electrical Engineer and is an active collaborating provider for the L6 Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship, as laid out in Illustration 2.

Programme	Campus	NFQ	Duration	2022/2023				Total
				Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	
Polymer Processing Technology	Athlone	7	3	17	12	9		38
Industrial Electrical Engineer	Moylish	7	2	19	19			38
Manufacturing Technician	Moylish	6	2	61	23			84
Culinary Arts - Chef De Partie	Moylish	7	4			8		8
Culinary Arts - Sous Chef	Moylish	8	2		4			4
Totals				97	58	17	0	172

Illustration 2: Consortia-led Apprenticeship provision, year 2023/24

Furthermore, TUS is active in a number of new apprenticeship consortia leading the development of exciting apprenticeships such as L9 Advanced Quantity Surveyor, L6 Precision Machinist and Quality Control and L9 Electrical Engineering. The university is also an active collaborating provider for further developments at L7 and L8 in Manufacturing Engineering.

Apprenticeships Logic Model

Our Vision to 2030

"TUS will be a leading provider of high-quality, industry-led, national, apprenticeship programmes that cultivates skilled and agile professionals, fosters innovation and collaboration, and enhances competitiveness nationally with a particular focus on the Midwest and Midlands regions."

Our Strategic Priorities


Priority 1
Education

Priority 2
Research

Priority 3
People and Organisation

Priority 4
Connecting Communities

Our Objectives

1	To develop and deliver innovative, national, Craft and Consortia-led apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of apprentices and employers,	To conduct research to inform the development of apprenticeship programmes and support the continuous improvement of apprenticeship education,	To attract and retain high-quality academic staff with the skills and experience to deliver excellent teaching and learning,	To engage with local communities, in the Midlands and Midwest regions, to promote the benefits of apprenticeship education and facilitate access to apprenticeship opportunities,
2	To expand the range of apprenticeships offered to reflect emerging industries and occupations,	To encourage apprentices and employers to engage in research projects that address real-world challenges,	To invest in CPD opportunities for academic staff, who deliver apprenticeship programmes, so that they have the necessary transversal and technical skills to effectively engage with apprentices, their employers and other stakeholders,	To develop partnerships with employers to support the delivery of apprenticeship programmes to meet Midwest and Midlands regional needs as well as national needs,
3	To enhance the quality and relevance of Consortia-led apprenticeship curricula through ongoing review and improvement,	To foster collaboration between apprenticeship staff and researchers, both within TUS and external partners.	To foster a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and equity among apprentices, academic staff, and employers,	To collaborate with other HEI, ETB, government agencies, and industry bodies to promote apprenticeship education and share best practices.
4	To foster a culture of lifelong learning among apprentices, employers, and academic staff.	Conduct research to prepare for growth/expansion in the development and delivery of Craft and Consortia-led apprenticeships.	To develop partnerships with employers to facilitate the recruitment, training, and support of apprentices.	

Our Key Enablers

Physical Infrastructure

Consortia and Partnerships

Promotion of Apprenticeships

Apprentice Support Services

Finance

Communications

Our key Indicators

Intermediate Indicators of Success

1	Increase the percentage of national, Craft and Consortia-led apprenticeship programmes developed and delivered,	The number of research projects conducted to inform the development of apprenticeship programmes, improve apprenticeship education, and support the growth and/or expansion of apprenticeships,	The number of high-quality academic staff employed to deliver apprenticeship programmes, as well as the retention rate of these staff members,	The number of apprenticeship programmes developed and delivered in collaboration with employers in the Midlands and Midwest regions,
2	Feedback from apprentices and employers on the quality and relevance of Consortia-led apprenticeship curricula.	The level of engagement of apprentices and employers in research projects addressing real-world challenges.	The level of participation of academic staff in CPD opportunities, including the number of staff members who complete these opportunities.	The level of engagement of local communities in apprenticeship education and training initiatives.

Final Indicators of Success

1	Percentage increase in the number of apprenticeships completed,	The number of apprenticeship programmes updated or improved based on research findings,	The level of satisfaction of apprentices, their employers, and academic staff regarding the EDI culture within the university's apprenticeship programmes,	The percentage increase in the number of apprenticeship enrolments from the Midlands and Midwest regions,
2	Percentage of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship and progress to higher education or employment.	The percentage increase in the number of apprenticeship programmes offered due to research findings.	The number and quality of partnerships developed with employers to facilitate the recruitment, training, and support of apprentices, as well as the satisfaction of these employers with the university's apprenticeship programmes.	The number of successful partnerships developed with other HEIs, ETBs, government agencies, and industry bodies to promote and support apprenticeship education and training.

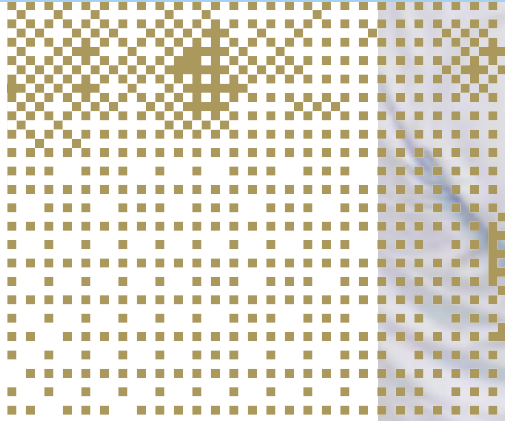
Illustration 3: TUS Apprenticeships Logic Model

4 Our Vision to 2030



“TUS will be a leading provider of high-quality, industry-led, National, apprenticeship programmes that cultivates skilled and agile professionals, fosters innovation and collaboration, and enhances competitiveness nationally with a particular focus on the Midwest and Midlands regions.”

5 Our Apprenticeship Strategic Priorities

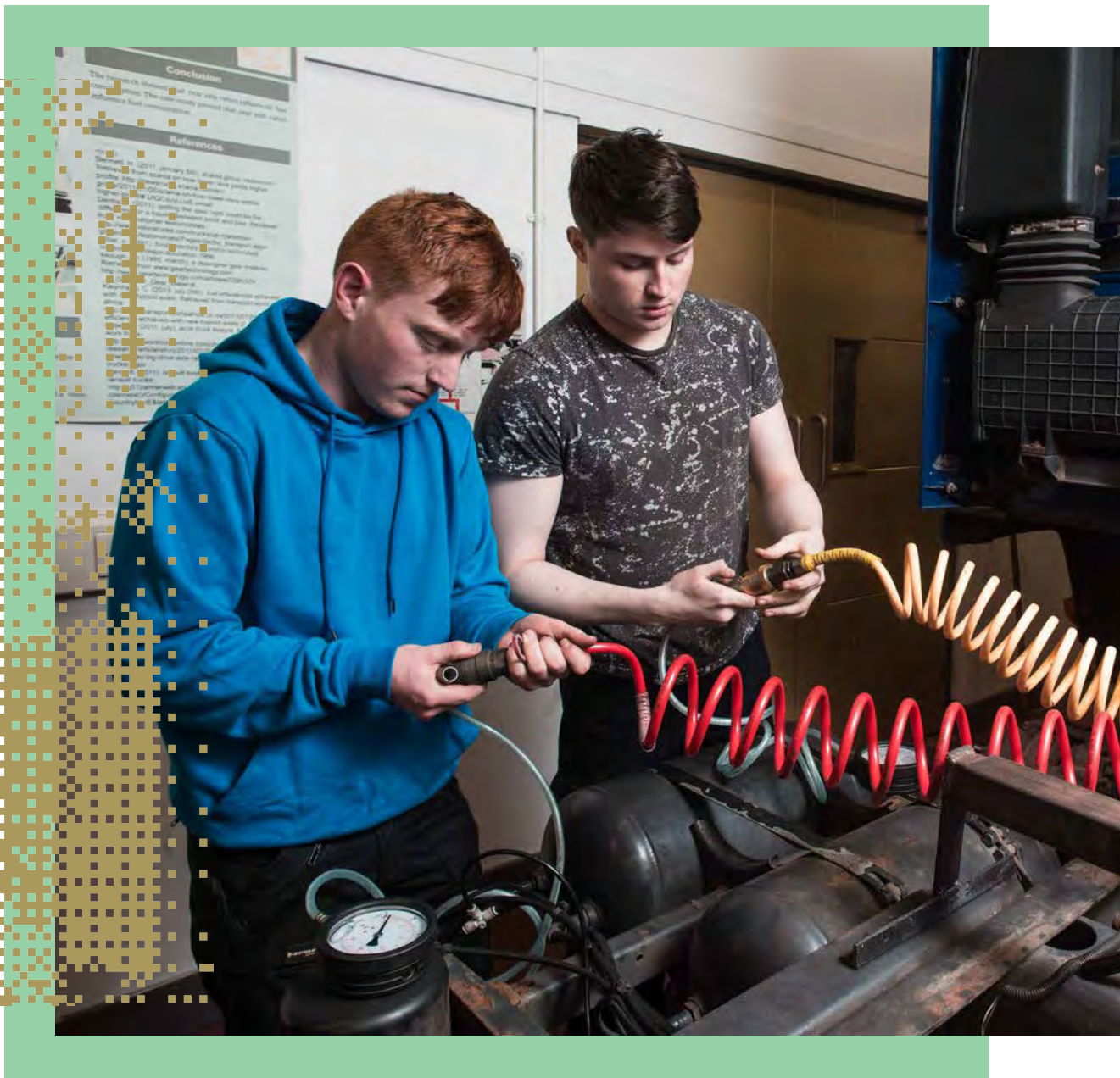


5.1 Priority 1: Education

Provide a relevant high quality apprenticeship education offering, focused on skills development, delivered using the apprenticeship mode of learning to cater to a diverse cohort of apprentices, across multi-campus locations.

5.1.1 Objectives

1. To develop and deliver innovative, national, Craft and CLA programmes that meet the needs of apprentices and employers,
2. To expand the range of apprenticeships offered to reflect emerging industries and occupations,
3. To enhance the quality and relevance of CLA curricula through ongoing review and improvement,
4. To foster a culture of lifelong learning among apprentices, employers, and academic staff.



5.2 Priority 2: Research

Deliver applied research, growing the research community, engaging in next generation thinking and tackling apprenticeship issues at a regional and national level.

5.2.1 Objectives

1. To conduct research to inform the development of apprenticeship programmes and support the continuous improvement of apprenticeship education,
2. To encourage apprentices and employers to engage in research projects that address real-world challenges,
3. To foster collaboration between academic staff, who deliver apprenticeship programmes, and researchers, both within TUS and with external partners,
4. To conduct research to prepare for growth/expansion in the development and delivery of Craft and CLA.

5.3 Priority 3: People and Organisation

Operate as an integrated organisation, where each apprentice's potential can be realised, and where all apprentices are provided with equal opportunities.

5.3.1 Objectives

1. To attract and retain high-quality academic staff, who deliver apprenticeship programmes, with the skills and experience to deliver excellent teaching and learning,
2. To invest in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for academic staff, who deliver apprenticeship programmes, so that they have the necessary transversal and technical skills to effectively engage with apprentices, their employers and other stakeholders,
3. To foster a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and equity among apprentices, academic staff, and employers,
4. To develop partnerships, with employers, to facilitate the recruitment, training, and support of apprentices.

Note 1: Aspects of Key Enabler 4: Apprentice Support Services objectives, 5.3.1, require consultation, with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID), internally within the University.





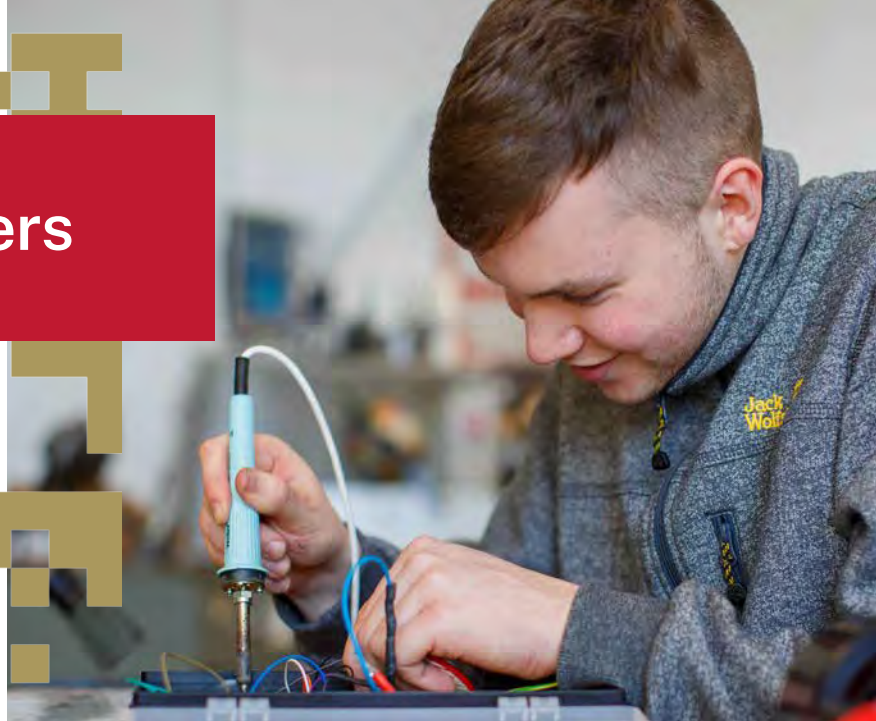
5.4 Priority 4: Connecting Communities

Build and enhance relationships and partnerships to drive the development of apprenticeships within our regions.

5.4.1 Objectives

1. To engage with local communities, in the Midlands and Midwest regions, to promote the benefits of apprenticeship education and facilitate access to apprenticeship opportunities,
2. To develop partnerships with employers to support the development and delivery of apprenticeship programmes to meet Midwest and Midlands regional needs as well as national needs,
3. To collaborate with other Higher Education Institutions (HEI), Education and Training Boards (ETB), government agencies (National Apprenticeship Office (NAO), National Apprenticeship Alliance (NAA), SOLAS, Higher Education Authority (HEA) and others), and industry bodies to promote apprenticeship education and share best practices.

6 Our Key Enablers



6.1 Key Enabler 1: Physical Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure plays a crucial role in facilitating the delivery of apprenticeships by providing the necessary spaces, resources, and technology for skills-based training. By focusing on the development of training spaces, simulated work environments and technology integration, then optimal learning environments can be created.

To this end TUS understands the importance of apprenticeship requirements assessments, infrastructure investment, technology integration and accessibility considerations can empower apprentices with valuable skills for their career advancement. With the financial and other supports from the HEA, NAO and NAA, TUS will:

- Deliver apprenticeship programmes in purpose-built training spaces and well-equipped workshops that provide appropriate space, tools, and machinery for apprentices to develop practical skills in their respective trades,
- Develop simulated work environments within training facilities to replicate real-life working conditions, allowing apprentices to gain hands-on experience and develop problem-solving abilities,
- Integrate technology infrastructure, such as computer labs, digital resources, and online learning platforms, to enhance the digital literacy of apprentices and provide access to interactive learning materials,
- Providing supporting facilities such as libraries, study spaces, and recreational areas to foster a conducive learning environment and promote the well-being of apprentices,
- Ensure that physical infrastructure is designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Note 2: Aspects of Key Enabler 1: Physical Infrastructure require consultation, with the TUS Libraries, Facilities and Estates, as well as other functions, internally within the University.



6.2 Key Enabler 2: Consortia and Partnerships

The primary vehicle for collaboration between industry and academia in relation to CLAs is the consortium. A well-managed and active consortium is essential to facilitate collaboration between members, industry and academia, to ensure that each apprenticeship programme is up-to-date with the latest industry trends and practices. This can involve joint research projects, industry placements for academic staff, and guest lectures from industry experts to academia.

It is also essential that, during on-the-job phases, apprentices are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful work experience related to their learnings from previous off-the-job phases.

From an academia perspective, TUS consider active participation in the committees of the Higher Education Apprenticeship Forum (HEAF), the Institutes of Technology Apprenticeship Committee (ITAC) and the Institute Family of Trades (IFOT) as essential drivers of apprenticeship development nationally, representing the interests of the HEI sector in apprenticeship education and as a vehicle to remain informed.

TUS operates within a principles-based Quality Assurance Apprenticeship Framework (QAAF). While each CLA is overseen by industry and academia, and where TUS participates as either a coordinating or collaborating provider, it undertakes to fulfil its quality assurance responsibilities defined by the principles of; Values and Quality Culture, Regulation and External Accountability, Quality Assurance Responsibilities, Core Quality Assurance Arrangements, Learner Experience and Engagement, and Engagement with Employers and the Statutory Regulator.

To this end TUS, within consortia and with industry in general, will work with employers, focusing on its four priorities. TUS will:

1. Work with employers, within consortia, to develop apprenticeship programmes that are aligned with industry needs and provide relevant skills and training,
2. Partner with ETBs and other HEIs to provide apprentices with theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are necessary for success in their chosen field,
3. Collaborate with employers, within each consortium, to create a sense of community among apprentices across their specific discipline,
4. Partner with community organisations to identify potential apprentices and support them through the "Access to Apprenticeship" programme.



6.3 Key Enabler 3: Promotion of Apprenticeships

TUS believe that the promotion of apprenticeships as a viable career pathway for those leaving secondary school as well as those considering a career change is essential.

TUS will develop an apprenticeship marketing and outreach strategy within each CLA.

To achieve this TUS will:

1. Extend current second level partnerships, within the Midlands and Midwest regions, to educate students about apprenticeships, their benefits, and the various opportunities available. This can be achieved through seminars, workshops, and apprenticeship showcases.
2. Work with each consortium, it participates in, to create specific apprenticeship educational content such as blogs, infographics, and videos to help students and parents understand the apprenticeship system and its benefits.
3. Participate in, and add to, NAO social media campaigns to raise awareness of apprenticeships and their benefits.
4. Through the “*Access to Apprenticeship*” programme, encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to take up apprenticeships.



6.4 Key Enabler 4: Apprentice Support Services

TUS offer a number of Support Services to all students; however, the nature of apprentices who have short intense blocks within the university and spend the major part of the apprenticeship away from the university, as part of on-the-job blocks, have need for more dedicated apprentice supports. To support this TUS will:

1. Adapt existing university supports, through the learning support unit, available to students both online and in person,
2. Promote the establishment of peer mentoring programmes to provide additional support for apprentices. This will help create a sense of community and foster peer-to-peer learning among former and current apprentices,
3. Include transversal skills within new and updated apprenticeship curricula. These skills are essential in the workplace and can enhance the apprentice value to employers.

Note 3: Aspects of Key Enabler 4: Apprentice Support Services, 6.4.1, require consultation, with the CPID and the Learning Support Unit, internally within the University.

(“Putting Learning First: TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022 -2025,” 2022)

6.5 Key Enabler 5: Finance

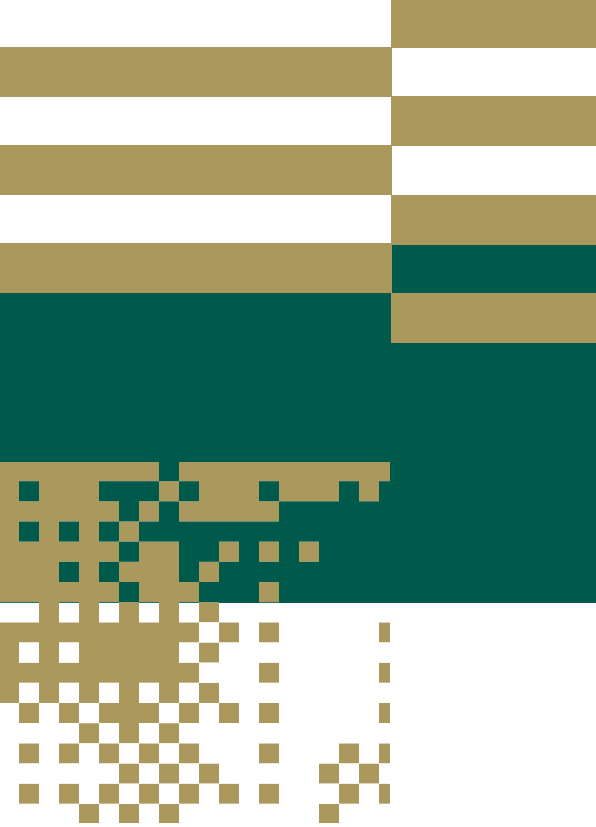
Finance is a critical key enabler for the success of each apprenticeship programme, and it is essential for TUS to have a strong financial foundation to support its apprenticeship initiatives.

With the NAO and the HEA, TUS must develop a sustainable financial model to provide the necessary funding, the capital expenditure to ensure that apprentices are exposed to relevant equipment that mirrors that which exists in the workplace, the operational expenditure associated with the delivery of the skills training during off-the-job phases as well as the overall operational expenditure to support apprentices throughout their programme, while also ensuring that the programme remains affordable and accessible to apprentices.

As the single, integrated model becomes the primary apprenticeship system, the university must establish financial policies and procedures that promote accountability and transparency for apprenticeships. This includes developing clear financial reporting mechanisms and ensuring that all financial transactions are conducted in accordance with best practices and regulatory requirements. This may require investment in financial planning and forecasting tools to ensure that TUS can anticipate and respond to changes in the funding landscape.

A strong financial foundation will enable TUS to invest in its apprenticeship programmes, attract and retain top talent, and provide apprentices with the tools and resources they need to succeed in their chosen fields.





6.6 Key Enabler 6: Communications

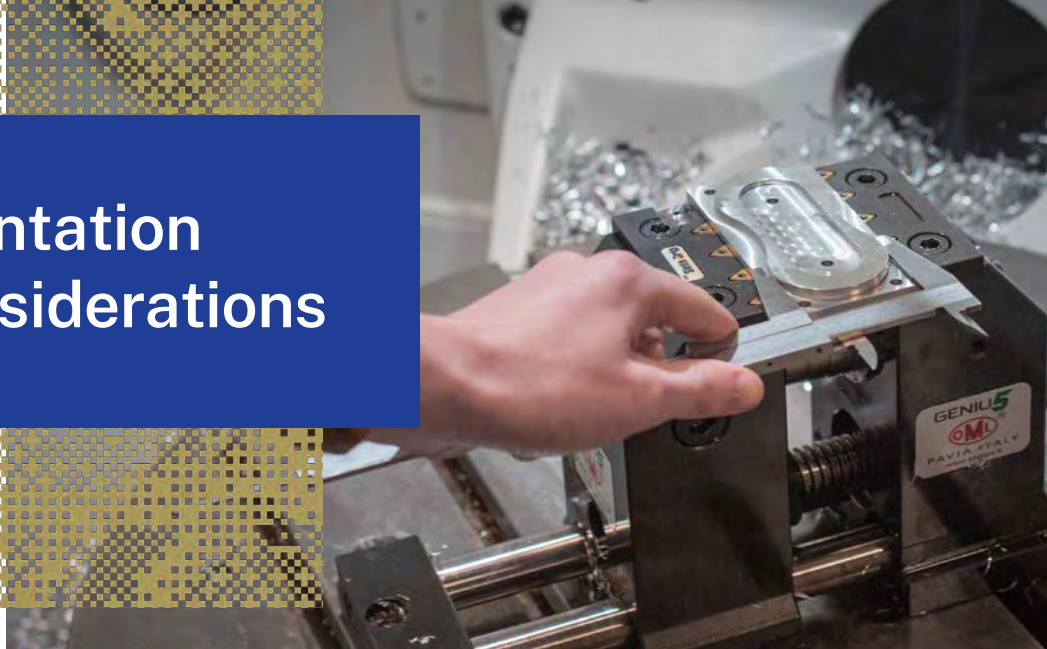
Clear and effective communication is critical to the success of each apprenticeship programme at TUS. The university recognises that effective communication is a two-way process, and as such are committed to engaging with all stakeholders, including apprentices, staff, and consortia partners, in a transparent and collaborative manner.

The TUS apprenticeship communication strategy will:

- **Build awareness:** TUS will create targeted communication materials to raise awareness of the apprenticeship programme among potential apprentices, employers, consortia and industry partners. This will include the development of a comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign, as well as the use of social media, email marketing, and other digital channels.
- **Foster engagement:** TUS will establish clear communication channels to engage with apprentices, staff, consortia and industry partners. This will include regular updates via email, newsletters, and social media, as well as the establishment of regular feedback mechanisms to solicit input and suggestions.
- **Build trust:** TUS will be transparent and open in its communications, providing accurate and timely information about the programme's progress and results. The university will also establish clear communication protocols to address any concerns or issues that may arise.

Each consortium will oversee the development and implementation of communication materials, as well as the management of communication channels.

7 Implementation Plan Considerations



7.1 Migration of Craft to the Single Integrated Model Apprenticeships

The Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025 envisages that all apprenticeships will be part of a unified delivery model, based on the Single Integrated Model, and managed by the NAO. With the NAO, other HEIs, ETBs and employers, TUS will be an active contributor to this process. TUS understands that this process is a very significant change to apprenticeship delivery and the universities approach to migration is as follows:

- Depending upon each migrated craft apprenticeship, TUS will participate either as a coordinating or collaborating provider in selected apprenticeships where TUS has existing experience and will join new apprenticeships where the university believes it can add value and meet the needs of the Midlands and Midwest regions.
- Where TUS is a coordinating provider, and where it is appropriate, TUS may delegate some of the functionality of its QAAF to other HEIs or ETBs.
- Craft apprenticeships, assigned by the NAO for migration to the single, integrated, model, and where TUS is appointed as a coordinating provider, will be re-validated in line with the university QAAF.
- TUS will collaborate with the NAO to monitor the migration progress.

7.2 Validation of Consortia-led Apprenticeships

Validation and re-validation are essential processes associated with academic programmes within TUS. Such processes apply equally to CLAs. Where TUS is appointed as a coordinating provider for a CLA it will initiate a process to review the occupational profile for graduates, the CLA syllabus, programme and learning outcomes, quality assurance processes for all phases of the CLA including those that take place with the employer. The composition, functions and processes within the consortium as well as the role profile and duties of the apprenticeship manager will need to be defined with the consortium members.

Where TUS is a collaborating provider it will engage with the coordinating provider, within the consortium, to assist with their equivalent process as required.



7.3 Validation of Craft apprenticeships migrating to Single Integrated Model Apprenticeships

Traditional craft apprenticeships, currently managed by SOLAS, have undergone significant revision over time as they are mapped onto the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) at Level 6, Advanced Craft Certificate. Where TUS is appointed as the coordinating provider it will initiate a full re-validation process with significant consultation with consortium employers, employer groups and industry representative bodies as well as collaborating providers. This process will develop new single, integrated, model apprenticeships that may ultimately be positioned at a different level on the NFQ.

7.4 World Skills Ireland

Participation in the *WorldSkills* Ireland showcase event has, and will continue to be, an excellent opportunity for high performing TUS apprentices to demonstrate their skills and compete on a national stage. The university is committed to encouraging apprentices to participate in this event and will provide the necessary resources and support to enable such participation. This includes identifying and selecting apprentices who have the potential to excel at the event, providing them with training and coaching to prepare them for competition, and covering the costs of participation.

In addition to supporting apprentices' participation, TUS also recognise the value of having a stand at the event to promote our apprenticeship programmes and engage with potential apprentices, employers, and industry partners. The university will ensure that the stand showcases its apprenticeship programme's strengths, highlights the success of our apprentices, and provides information about our programmes and services. Participation in the *WorldSkills* Ireland event will enable TUS to establish new partnerships, attract top talent, and position the university as a leader in apprenticeship education in Ireland.

8 Implementation Plan



Each priority, within this implementation plan, is divided into intermediate actions, those actions to be prioritised out to 2026 and latter actions, to be completed by 2030. Each implementation action has an associated indicator, used to monitor progress and success. Overall, successful implementation of the plan will require close collaboration between academic staff, consortia members, the apprentices, and their employers, to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes are relevant, of high-quality, and effective in meeting the needs of each apprentice and the industry they work in.

8.1 Priority 1: Education

8.1.1 Intermediate Stage Strategies

1. Collaborate with industry consortia partners to identify, develop and update apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of both apprentices and their employers. This will involve conducting research on industry trends and engaging with industry leaders to ensure that the programmes offered are relevant and innovative.
2. Conduct regular surveys and focus groups with apprentices and employers to gather feedback on the quality and relevance of CLA curricula. This feedback will be used to identify areas for improvement and implement changes to apprenticeship curricula as necessary.

8.1.2 Final Stage Strategies

1. Increase outreach efforts to promote apprenticeships as a viable career path to potential candidates, including: school leavers, unemployed youth, and under-represented groups.
2. Provide additional support services to apprentices, such as mentoring, career guidance, and academic support, to increase the number of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeships and progress to higher education or employment.
3. Support the provision of Apprentice education on all TUS Campuses.



8.2 Priority 2: Research

8.2.1 Intermediate Stage Strategies

1. Support a postgraduate research study to build a dataset of information on apprenticeships to inform the development of apprenticeship programmes by investigating evolving trends and identifying potential areas for apprenticeship expansion and innovation.
2. Develop a system to identify and prioritise potential apprenticeship projects that address real-world challenges faced by apprentices and employers and encourage their participation in the development of new apprenticeships where they make sense.

8.2.2 Final Stage Strategies

1. Implement changes to apprenticeship programmes based on research findings, such as updating curricula or adding new modules to meet the evolving needs of industries and employers.
2. Expand the number of apprenticeship programmes offered based on research findings, collaborating with consortia partners and industry leaders to ensure that they meet the needs of both the apprentices and employers.

8.3 Priority 3: People and Organisation

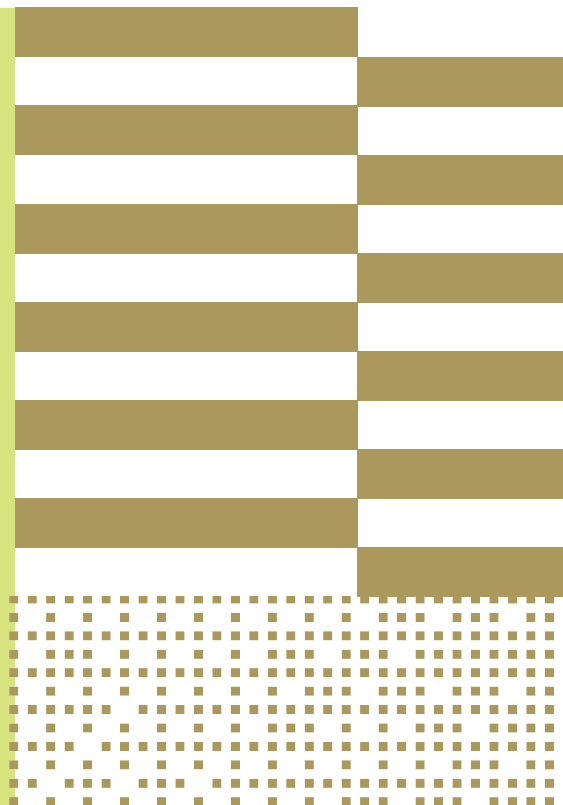
TUS understand that success for apprentices is obtained through the quality and motivation of the staff who lecture on these programmes. Subject to the funding available for staff development TUS will:

8.3.1 Intermediate Stage Strategies

1. Develop and implement effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain high-quality academic staff, from the Community of Practice (CoP) of each apprenticeship, with the skills and experience to deliver excellent teaching and learning.
2. Develop and provide accessible, relevant, and high-quality CPD opportunities for academic staff who deliver apprenticeship programmes. This may include academic progression pathways, workshops, seminars, online training modules, and other forms of professional development.

8.3.2 Final Stage Strategies

1. Foster a culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) among apprentices, academic staff, and employers by implementing policies and practices that promote these values.
2. Establish and maintain partnerships with employers to facilitate the recruitment, training, and support of apprentices, and engage in regular communication and collaboration with these employers to ensure that the university's apprenticeship programmes meet their needs and expectations.





8.4 Priority 4: Connecting Communities

8.4.1 Intermediate Stage Strategies

1. Develop partnerships with local employers in the Midlands and Midwest regions to identify apprenticeship education and training needs.
2. Engage with local communities through targeted outreach efforts through events and information sessions, such as the "Access to Apprenticeships" initiative, to raise awareness of apprenticeship opportunities.

8.4.2 Final Stage Strategies

1. Increase the number of apprenticeship programmes offered in the Midlands and Midwest regions in collaboration with employers and other stakeholders.
2. Develop and foster partnerships with other HEIs, ETBs, government agencies (NAO, NAA, SOLAS, HEA and others), and industry bodies to share best practices and promote apprenticeship education and training.

9 Indicators of Success



The implementation plan will require ongoing evaluation and monitoring of these indicators of success to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the plan remains responsive to changing industry needs and market demands. The plan is also subject to the numbers of apprentice blocks offered by the NAO or HEA.

9.1 Priority 1: Education

By achieving the following indicators of success, the university will demonstrate its positive contribution to the skilled workforce, evidenced by an increased number of completed apprenticeships and successful apprentices' progression to higher education or employment.

9.1.1 Intermediate indicators of success

1. Increase the percentage of national, Craft and CLA programmes developed and delivered.
2. Feedback from apprentices and employers on the quality and relevance of CLA curricula.

9.1.2 Final indicators of success

1. Percentage increase in the number of apprenticeships completed.
2. Percentage increase of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship and progress to higher education or employment.



9.2 Priority 2: Research

The indicators of success listed will allow the university and its consortia to evaluate research objectives, track progress, and make informed decisions regarding any required modifications or adjustments to the plan.

9.2.1 Intermediate indicators of success

1. The number of research projects conducted to inform the development of apprenticeship programmes, improve apprenticeship education, and support the growth and/or expansion of apprenticeships.
2. The level of engagement of apprentices and employers in research projects addressing real-world challenges.

9.2.2 Final indicators of success

1. The number of apprenticeship programmes updated or improved based on research findings.
2. The percentage increase in the number of apprenticeship programmes offered due to research findings.

9.3 Priority 3: People and Organisation

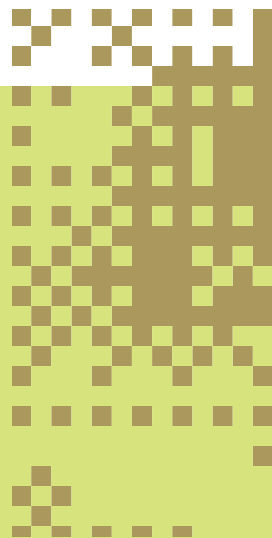
Achieving these indicators of success will enhance the university's ability to attract and retain high-quality academic staff, improve the CPD opportunities for academic staff, foster a culture of EDI, and develop partnerships with employers to successfully recruit, train, and support apprentices.

9.3.1 Intermediate indicators of success

1. The number of high-quality academic staff employed to deliver apprenticeship programmes, as well as the retention rate of these staff members.
2. The level of participation of academic staff in CPD opportunities, including the number of staff members who complete these opportunities.

9.3.2 Final indicators of success

1. The level of satisfaction of apprentices, their employers, and academic staff regarding the EDI culture within the university's apprenticeship programmes.
2. The number and quality of partnerships developed with employers to facilitate the recruitment, training, and support of apprentices, as well as the satisfaction of these employers with the university's apprenticeship programmes.



9.4 Priority 4: Connecting Communities

Achievement of these indicators of success will demonstrate that the university has: increased its engagement with local communities; developed deeper relationships with employers; promoted apprenticeship education; and shared best practices, thereby enhancing its reputation and the impact in apprenticeship education.

9.4.1 Intermediate indicators of success

1. The number of apprenticeship programmes developed and delivered in collaboration with employers in the Midlands and Midwest regions.
2. The level of engagement of local communities in apprenticeship education and training initiatives.

9.4.2 Final indicators of success

1. The percentage increase in the number of apprenticeship enrolments from the Midlands and Midwest regions.
2. The number of successful partnerships developed with other HEIs, ETBs, government agencies (NAO, NAA, SOLAS, HEA and others), and industry bodies to promote and support apprenticeship education and training.



10 References



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