

University of Bristol and UWE Bristol Joint Impact Statement

Bristol's universities – University of Bristol and UWE Bristol – are both highly successful and significant civic assets for our city-region.

We play a major role in helping to meet the projected skills needs of our thriving regional economy, and the wider UK; equipping people from all backgrounds with the skills they need for work and life. We underpin the NHS, educating the doctors, nurses, surgeons, dentists and veterinarians that local people rely on. We train the teachers, engineers, artists, and social workers; and we back the innovative spin-outs and start-ups growing the economy and raising the international profile of our city-region. In fact, our combined economic impact is very significant indeed, as the following table illustrates:

The regional¹ economic impact of University of Bristol and UWE Bristol

The collective economic impact to the West of England by both universities is approximately²:

- ✓ £1.6Bn contribution to regional GDP, comprising
 - £850m direct University expenditure
 - £260m indirect supply chain and wage-related expenditure
 - £490m expenditure by students and visitors
- ✓ 28,000 supported jobs, comprising
 - 14,000 directly-employed University staff
 - 14,000 indirect jobs, due to supply chain, wage-related expenditure, students and visitors
- ✓ £150m of procurement expenditure with local suppliers

- ✓ Projected £2.0Bn contribution to regional GDP in 2030
- ✓ Projected 35,000 supported jobs in 2030

Both institutions undertake a wide range of initiatives to address educational inequity in Bristol, supporting local students from under-represented backgrounds via guaranteed offers/interviews, specialist scholarship offers, and new alternative entry routes into their degree programmes. We engage in outreach with local schools, colleges, educational charities, and community organisations to inspire children and young adults to develop the skills that will take them into new careers for tomorrow's economy. We partner to deliver the FutureQuest programme to raise HE participation rates in the city's 'cold spots' and help tackle the challenge of educational attainment through, for example, co-sponsorship of a Multi Academy Trust.

With advanced research departments leading globally significant discoveries in robotics, environment and life sciences, digital technologies, quantum, data science, population health and assisted living, among many other initiatives, we underpin the local innovation ecosystem. This attracts and sustains high-value industry, creates substantial direct and indirect employment, contributes significantly to local GDP, and generates a wide variety of quality societal improvements that are invaluable for local residents.

We are two of the largest employers in the city-region, and two independent reports by Oxford Economics^{i ii} found the University of Bristol alone contributed £920 million to local GDP in 2020/21, supporting 14,000 jobs. This contribution is underpinned by the University's procurement practices,

¹ Based on WECA for Bristol and WOE (WECA plus North Somerset for UWE)

² Based on analyses provided by Oxford Economics, prepared in 2017 for UWE and 2022 for UoB, uprated to 2023 and 2030 values pro rata with actual and proposed total full-time students

with a substantial proportion of its goods and services (£74 million that year) acquired from local businesses.

Both universities work with community partners to recruit staff from a diverse range of communities who might not otherwise consider universities as an employer. Elsewhere, we offer Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses in key areas, and make our apprenticeship levy funding available to organisations who would not otherwise be able to access such support (with University of Bristol alone having shared £220,000 with SMEs since 2020). This is helping to create a diverse talent pipeline to underpin future growth and productivity.

Neither university would enjoy the success we do if we were not located in such a distinctive and vibrant city-region – one that works with us to put our research into action in everything from vaccine development to policy research around domestic violence.

We collaborate with each other, with schools, the local NHS Trusts and charities, and with the support of businesses based in Bristol and beyond. These collaborations have seen, for example, the development of new materials which will help Airbus make more sustainable airplanes; and ground-breaking projects like the Children of the 90s study, which has followed the lives of families in Bristol for over 30 years, leading to many important health discoveries. Academic and research expertise is also informing policy and supporting the city to address One City challenges in everything from climate change and flood risk, through to health and wellbeing inequalities.

Student number growth

While there has been significant growth in student numbers at both institutions in recent years, these students bring a diverse and dynamic population to the city, enriching the cultural and social landscape which helps make Bristol so special.

They also make a significant economic contribution, including to the city's hospitality sector. According to Oxford Economics, the demand for goods and services stimulated by student (and their visitors') subsistence expenditure totalled an estimated £490 million within the city-region in 2022/23.

More than a hundred organisations welcome the support of thousands of student volunteer hours every year. Our students also bring huge benefits in terms of cross funding regeneration of de-industrialised or de-retailed areas, breathing new life and vitality into parts of the city that need it.

Elsewhere, the forward-looking capital investment undertaken by both institutions provides high-quality infrastructure, drives urban regeneration, and represents a key engine of inclusive and sustainable growth.

Major new developments like Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus offer further opportunity for our city-region to build on its strengths and cement its reputation on the international stage as a place to collaborate and innovate. This £500 million project will give confidence to the wider private sector developer community to proceed with its planned investment of an additional ca. £2bn in Temple Quarter, leading to the creation of 22,000 quality jobs, 10,000 new and affordable homes, and much improved physical connectivity for areas representing the 10%, 20% and 30% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England.

Construction of the main academic building is expected to provide an estimated 2,000 construction jobs, with 70% of the scheme's value expected to be delivered by regional companies within a 30-mile radius.

Planning for the future

We are very conscious of the importance of a sustainable relationship between the city and the universities and welcome a plan-led approach to the future development of the city. We further welcome a detailed understanding of the complex issues the economic sectors, and supporting sectors, are facing, via a plan-led approach.

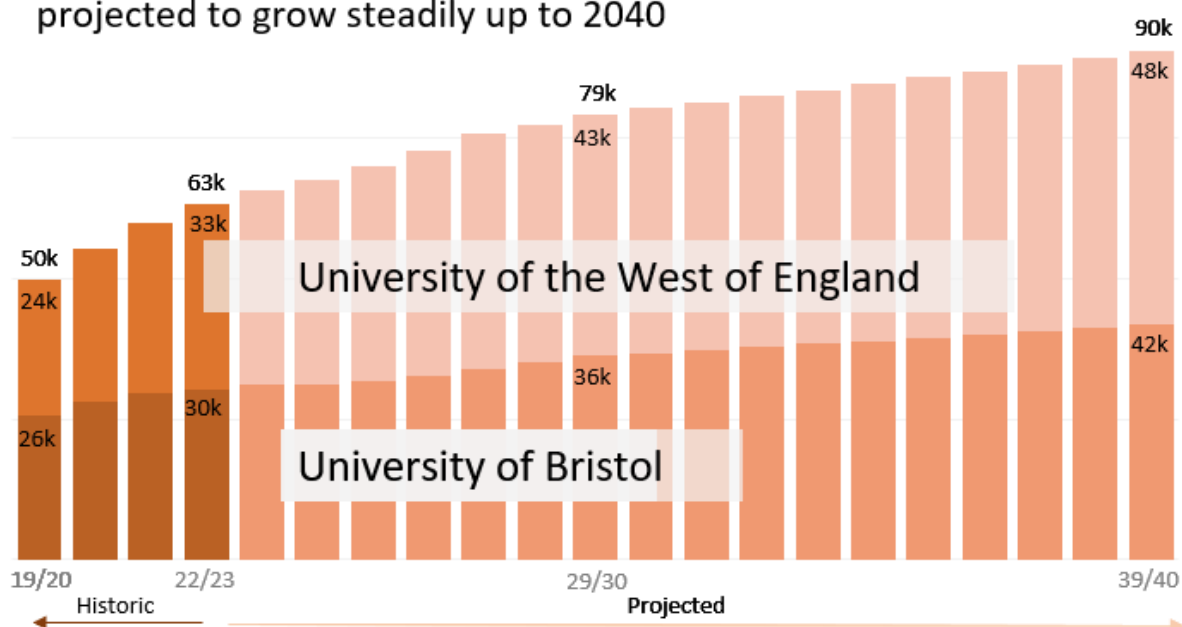
Central to both universities is the need for all our students to belong, to feel respected, and to have access to quality, affordable and appropriately located housing so they can flourish in their university life.

Crucially, the ability of both institutions to remain internationally competitive, and to continue supporting a more prosperous and dynamic local economy, is contingent on remaining financially resilient within an increasingly challenging operating environment – one that currently requires universities to do *more for less* each year as home undergraduate fee income is continually squeezed in real terms.

Steady, planned growth in student numbers is therefore a *critical* route to secure this financial resilience for both institutions.

The University of Bristol currently has 30,000³ full-time students, 30% of whom are International. It is planning to grow by 25% to 36,000 by 2029/30, of which 40% will be international. A significant proportion of that growth will be within our Engineering Faculty and Business School, both of which will see an expansion of distance learning programmes. This means not all growth will necessarily translate to students being physically present in the city.

Bristol's Universities' full-time total student population is projected to grow steadily up to 2040



UWE Bristol currently has 33,000 full-time/sandwich students. It is targeting student number growth to 42,000 by 2029/30 (growing at 5% a year – largely driven by overseas student recruitment). The combined student population of UoB and UWE is currently 63,000 students. This has increased steadily in recent years – by 13,000 since 19/20, and is projected to increase over the next two

³ For simplicity and relevance, student figures quoted are full-time students only.

decades; to c79k at the end of this decade and up to 90k by 2040 (i.e. 2% per annum – a very modest level of growth compared to the recent past).

As the universities grow, so does their local economic footprint, driven by their procurement expenditure, their payment of staff wages, their students' subsistence expenditure, and the visitors that will be attracted to the region. Based on the projected and necessary growth of their student bodies, the forecasts by Oxford Economics gives an estimated combined contribution to regional GDP of £2.0 billion by 2029/30 (in 2021 prices), with some 35,000 jobs supported that year.

If a modest growth in student numbers is curtailed by the Local Plan, this will have substantial implications for both universities, the future economy of the city, for jobs, the dynamism of the local innovation ecosystem, and for the many social and cultural benefits realised by the city.

We note there has been a positive and constructive dialogue between the universities and the City Council on the issue of student accommodation in recent years. Progress has also been made to identify solutions to associated challenges. For example, we have been working hard with the City Council to implement a plan of new purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) to increase supply in parts of the city where student housing investment is beneficial to the local community, and to relieve pressure on other parts of the housing market.

We are also exploring new approaches to integrate student housing with other housing needs in the city, including, for example, via the development of new inter-generational housing.

Bristol is a truly remarkable city, and both universities strive to make a positive difference to the people who call it home. There is no divide between the city, the universities, and our students. Each is intricately connected; as is our shared future, the success of which will only be achieved through partnership. Together, we can forge new opportunities for education, for innovation, and for inclusive and sustainable economic development that benefits *all* Bristolians.

We further set out in the accompanying report our detailed representations which have been prepared by Rapleys LLP on behalf of the University of Bristol. They have been submitted in response to Bristol City Council's Local Plan Review: Draft Policies and Development Allocations: Further Consultation – November 2022.

ⁱ The Economic Impact of the University of Bristol (2022) Oxford Economics. Available at: [The economic benefits of the University of Bristol \(oxfordeconomics.com\)](https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/bristol) (Accessed: 13.01.2023)

ⁱⁱ The Economic Impact of the University of the West of England (2017) Oxford Economics. Available at: [open20170406030700.pdf \(d2rpq8wtqka5kg.cloudfront.net\)](https://open20170406030700.pdf(d2rpq8wtqka5kg.cloudfront.net)) (Accessed: 13.01.2023)