

# University of Northampton Economic Impact Assessment

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A report to



November 2024



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# 1. Executive Summary

The University of Northampton generates an annual economic impact in Northamptonshire of **£366 million Gross Value Added (GVA)** and **5,410 jobs**. It is an anchor institution driving economic growth and supporting communities across the County.

In 2023/24, the University generated a quantifiable economic impact of:

- **£366 million GVA** and **5,410 jobs** in **Northamptonshire**; and
- **£456 million GVA** and **6,390 jobs** in the **Oxford Cambridge Arc**; and
- **£823 million GVA** and **10,610 jobs** in the **UK**.

The quantifiable economic impacts include:

- **Operational:** impacts arising from the University of Northampton’s role as an employer, a purchaser of goods and services, employees spending wages in the economy and capital investment;
- **Student:** including student spending in the economy, students working part-time and as volunteers;
- **Graduates:** additional productivity in the economy and taxation revenues associated with graduate workforce;
- **Knowledge Exchange:** purposeful impacts arising from education and from research and innovation activity, including services provided to businesses (including Knowledge Transfer Partnerships), expertise and knowledge transferred during placements; and
- **Tourism:** impacts arising from tourists attracted to visit Northamptonshire.

**Table 1-1 University of Northampton Summary of Economic Impacts, 2023/24**

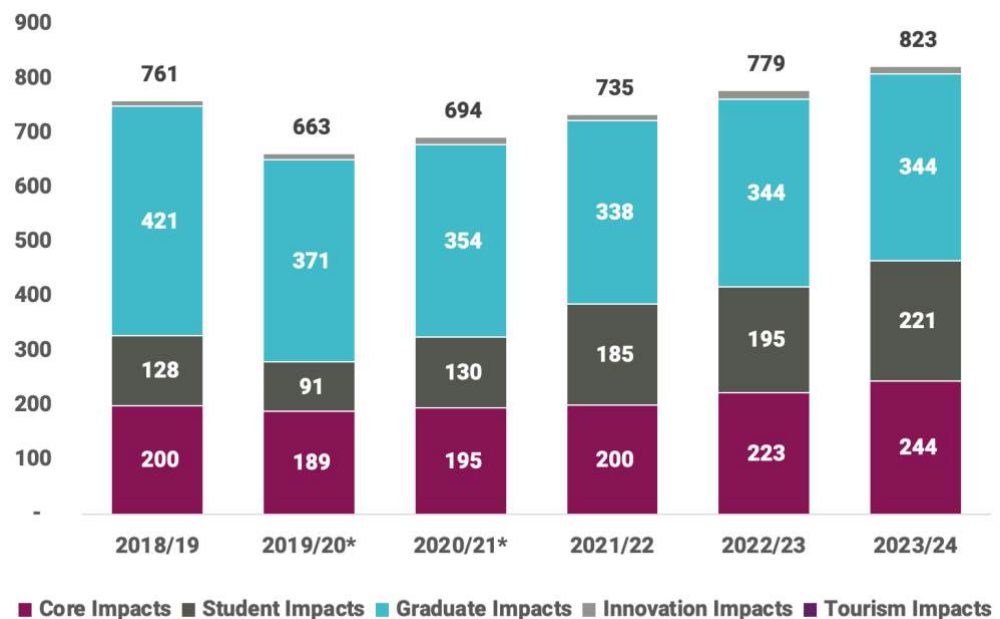
	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
<b>GVA (£m)</b>			
Operational	142	158	244
Student	91	115	201
Graduates*	128	180	382
Knowledge Exchange	5	7	11
Tourism	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>823</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Based on 2022/23 data.



At the UK level, the University's total GVA impact increased from £761 million in 2018/19 to £823 million in 2023/24 (an 8% increase). This growth, mirroring local trends, is primarily driven by enhanced student and core impacts. Concurrently, total annual employment impacts across the UK expanded from 7,880 to 10,620 (35%).

**Figure 1-1 UK level GVA Impacts (£m), 2018/19 to 2023/24**



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Years impacted by Covid-19. Note: graduate impacts for 2023/24 are based on 2022/23 graduate numbers.

In 2023/24, the University had an income of £195.5 million. Therefore, **for every £1 of income received, the University of Northampton generated more than £4 in economic impact across the UK** (inclusive of long-term graduate impacts).

As well as generating economic impacts through its core activities of teaching, research and knowledge exchange, the University **plays a wider role in supporting the economy and communities of Northamptonshire** and the wider region.

The University has **strong relationships with businesses and public sector organisations** across Northamptonshire, including West Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Police. It is a trusted and impartial partner that can bring together key institutions to overcome common problems, for example in the Northamptonshire Anchor Institution Network. It understands the needs of businesses and tailors its activities to support them to grow.

It has a continuing focus on **high quality research** and **expanding its knowledge transfer role**, so that businesses and organisations in the area have the information they need to tackle societal challenges. Examples of its research include improving the understanding of social impact and improving training and recruitment for police volunteers. Its research provides a basis for businesses and companies to generate impacts, and its Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and placements are highly valued by businesses, including in the engineering sector.



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Employers also value the graduates from the University, who **provide a ready workforce** for some of the biggest employers in the area. Without the University's graduates it may be difficult for these organisations to operate. The University plays a key role in **supporting foundational services** such as the NHS and the police.

Many of the University's students also study in areas, such as healthcare, where they support foundational services and have a value far beyond the wages they receive. It was estimated that over their lifetimes the **social value** of this contribution would be **£59 million** across the UK.

It **lifts the aspirations of school pupils** living in some of the most deprived areas in Northamptonshire, who face a host of barriers to entering higher education. Through its relationships with local schools, wrap around support and innovative programmes, the University shows that higher education is an attainable goal for young people who may never have thought of it.

The University also supports students from deprived areas through its approach to widening participation, which has lifelong benefits. For its 2023/24 full time undergraduate intake from deprived areas the **total cost of unemployment that will be avoided** over a 40-year period was estimated at **£123 million**.

The University **supports communities** in other ways too. Its research has been used as the basis for the activity of the **charity sector**, and it sponsors **Northampton Town Football Club**, providing the resources needed to run some of its youth programmes, in a lasting relationship with a key community organisation.

The spending and presence of staff and students creates demand, **making Northampton's town centre more vibrant and dynamic**, with a greater diversity of shops and businesses. The University has also directly contributed to physical regeneration through its Waterside Campus and support for the Active Quarter.

Above all, the University contributes to the **human and social capital** of the area. It produces graduates who go on to use the human capital that they have acquired to create value in the economy for their whole working lives. And it is an anchor institution that understands and communicates the needs of the area, acting in ways **that will continue to increase the prosperity of Northamptonshire**.



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## 2. Introduction

In 2024, BiGGAR Economics was commissioned by the University of Northampton to assess its economic and social impact over the past six years.

### 2.1 University of Northampton

The University of Northampton, as it is known today, is one of the youngest universities in the UK. However, the institution has foundations dating back to 1924, with the establishment of Northampton Technical College. Following several mergers and iterations over time, including Nene College and University College Northampton, research degree awarding powers and university status led to the establishment of the University of Northampton in 2005.

The next major milestone for the University occurred in September 2018 with the opening of its Waterside Campus, a capital investment designed to build a whole new, sustainable, University that enhances the experiential learning of its students, inclusive of accommodation, facilities and modern teaching spaces. The Campus is located close to Northampton town centre, alongside the River Nene, and brought together the University's existing two campuses into one central location that is easily accessible for students, staff, and the wider community.

The University's purpose is to create social impact<sup>1</sup> and was recently ranked in the top 100 universities in the world by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for its role in reducing inequalities, supporting students and improving sustainability<sup>2</sup>. In 2023/24, the University was home to 15,370 students and directly employed 2,580 members of staff.

### 2.2 Study Objectives

This report provides an assessment of the economic impacts generated by the University of Northampton during the 2023/24 academic year, representing an estimate of the **current value of the University's economic contribution to the local, regional and national economy**. Appended to this report is an assessment of this contribution over time (2018 – 2024), dating from the opening of the University's Waterside Campus.

In addition to providing a quantitative assessment of the economic value of the University's activities, this study also seeks to demonstrate the **social contribution**

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<sup>1</sup> University of Northampton (2023), Strategy 2023-2027: Supporting aspiration, creating opportunities, delivering impact

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-northampton>



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**the University makes to wider society.** This draws on existing research produced by the University and consultations undertaken with over 30 internal and external stakeholders. Where possible a quantitative analysis of the social value generated by the University is provided, as well as a qualitative analysis of the contribution that it makes.

## 2.3 Report Structure

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **section 3** provides an overview of the approach taken towards the study and the methodology followed;
- **section 4** describes the University's role in driving growth in the county, such as through supporting economic development and local employment;
- **section 5** highlights the University's role in generating innovation through its research and knowledge exchange services;
- **section 6** details the contribution the University makes to the social fabric of Northampton, including the university and wider community;
- **section 7** indicates the University's role in providing an educated workforce for the county, supporting access to higher education and producing employable graduates;
- **section 8** sets out how the activities of the University and its student and staff community contribute to the regeneration of Northampton; and
- **section 9** presents a summary of impacts, the impact of the University over time and a conclusion of the report.

The people who were consulted as part of the study are included in the **Appendix**. BiGGAR Economics would like to thank them for their time and valuable input.



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## 3.

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# Framework and Approach

This section outlines the approach and frameworks used to assess the University of Northampton's economic and social impact.

## 3.1 Theoretical Framework

Universities play an important role in human development, contributing to better knowledge, health, living conditions, social equity, and productivity. Whilst universities are a key driver in economic progress, with economic impacts being commonly articulated, much less attention is given to their broader role in driving social progress.

### 3.1.1 Universities as a Key Driver of Economic Progress

Several influential economists have published work which sets out a theoretical and empirical case for the role that high level skills and innovation play in boosting economic competitiveness and addressing inequalities in society.

In the late 1950s, Robert Solow demonstrated that it was not the savings rate or increases in factors of production (labour and capital) which determined the long-run growth rate, but that it depended on increases in productivity. In the early 1960s, Kenneth Arrow's research on 'learning by doing' showed that almost all economic growth could be accounted for by innovation. This referred to innovation from new ideas emerging from research, as well as improving productivity through 'learning by doing' during the production process. Building on this, Joseph Stiglitz and Bruce Greenwald argued that productivity is the result of learning and, consequently, a focal point of policy should be to increase learning within the economy<sup>3</sup>. The observation is made that even within countries and within industries there can be large gaps between the most productive and the others, which indicates the scope for potential innovation to improve productivity.

It is widely acknowledged that the dissemination of knowledge and innovation is essential for achieving productivity gains and, consequently, economic growth. In this context, universities play a pivotal role in promoting economic development at the local, national, and international levels.

### 3.1.2 The Wider Role of Universities

While universities contribute to society by providing intellectual and practical skills that enhance productivity and improve living conditions, their impact extends far beyond this. Universities play a fundamental role in social progress by shaping individual and collective values, enhancing public life and democratic participation,

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<sup>3</sup> Stiglitz, J. Greenwald, B. (2012), Creating a Learning Society





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taking a lead on key issues of the day, fostering social equity and justice, and having a day-to-day impact on the lives of local people.

While economic contribution can be a reliable predictor of wider contributions at lower levels of human development, this relationship weakens as economies grow<sup>4</sup>. In fact, many human activities that offer strong economic contributions can conflict with other important social objectives such as community cohesion, environmental protection, and good governance. It is therefore important to measure other contributions and to contextualise them.

If these wider contributions are not assessed there is not only a risk of undermining broader societal progress but also of misunderstanding and undervaluing the true benefit of universities to society. In recent years, finding ways to assess wider contributions has become an important frontier for organisations wishing to make a meaningful contribution to society.

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**“If we don’t measure something, it becomes neglected.”**

*Joseph Stiglitz, ex Chief Economist at the World Bank*

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## 3.2 Approach to Assessing Impact

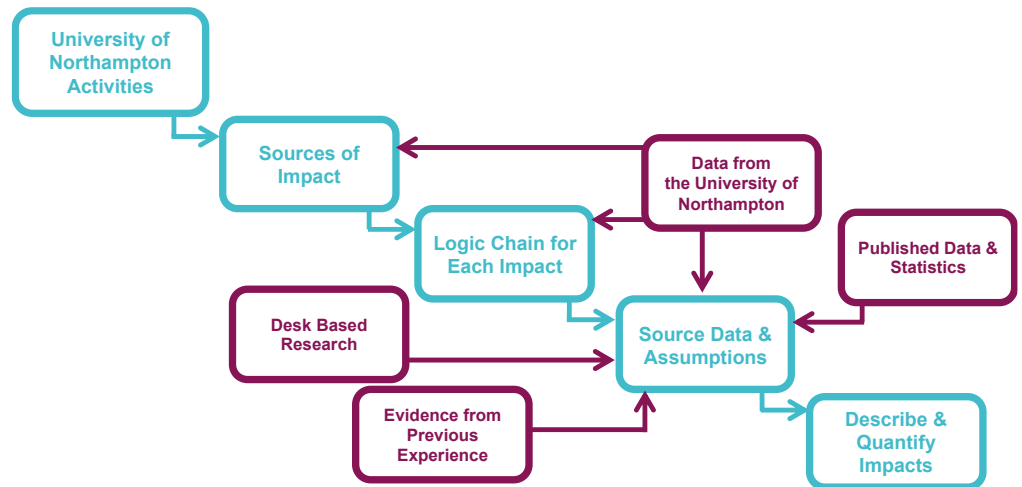
The assessment considers the current value of the University’s impact, as well as the impact generated over the past six years (2018/19 – 2023/24).

BiGGAR Economics has a well-established, reputable, methodology for assessing the economic impacts of universities, which has been applied to over 200 universities and research institutes across the UK and Europe. This involves identifying the activities of a university, considering how they create impacts and where possible quantifying these impacts (Figure 3-1). This method has been followed throughout this assessment, drawing on data gathered from the University of Northampton and publicly available sources of information.

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<sup>4</sup> Whilst Gross Domestic Product per capita (average income per person) has increased throughout most countries, other indices of societal progress, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator, the Sustainable Development Index, or self-reported wellbeing, have either stagnated or declined.

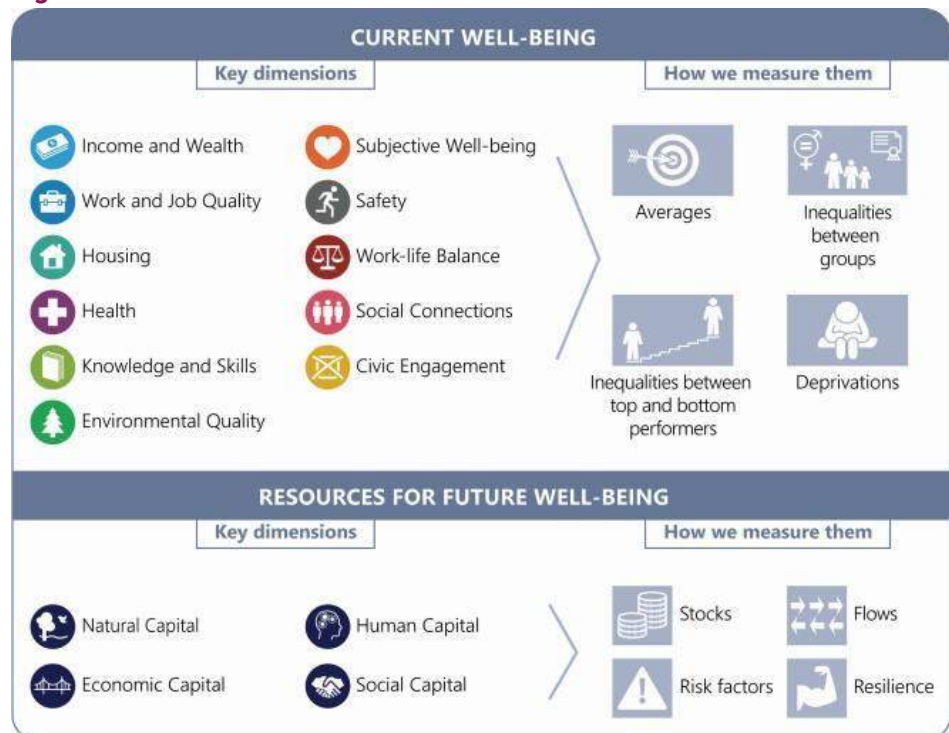
**Figure 3-1 Approach to Assessing the Impacts Generated by the University of Northampton**



Source: BIGGAR Economics

This process was supplemented by an extensive consultation programme with internal and external stakeholders of the University to identify its key areas of activity and contribution to generating social value. The consultation process, which included over 30 people from local authorities, government agencies, third sector organisations and businesses sought to identify the ways in which the University of Northampton generates social impacts based on the dimensions of the OECD Better Lives Index framework (Figure 3-2).

**Figure 3-2 OECD Better Life Index Framework**



Source: OECD (2015), *How's Life? Measuring Wellbeing*, OECD Publishing, Paris



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The framework represents what matters for people to live well and for societies to flourish, highlighting areas that matter to people's current and future quality of life across 11 dimensions of current wellbeing and the four capitals which support future wellbeing.

The 11 dimensions of current wellbeing include:

- **Housing:** living in satisfactory housing conditions with privacy and personal space;
- **Income:** household disposable income and wealth which allows people to access higher living standards;
- **Jobs:** the provision of well-paid, secure jobs which help individuals stay connected to society, build self-esteem and develop skills;
- **Community:** a strong social network or community characterised by the frequency of contact with others and the quality of personal relationships;
- **Education:** the provision of a suitable number of years in education which develops students' skills, enabling them to participate effectively in society and the economy;
- **Environment:** the quality of the local living environment with high air and water quality, and access to environments that improve mental well-being;
- **Civic Engagement:** trust in government and high transparency, supporting social cohesion and well-being;
- **Health:** high life expectancy and good reported health, improving access to opportunities;
- **Life Satisfaction:** subjective reporting of quality of life;
- **Safety:** personal security, with a low risk of falling victim to crimes that can lead to physical pain, post-traumatic stress and anxiety; and
- **Work-life balance:** having a suitable balance between work and daily living, with time devoted to leisure and personal care as well as work.

The four capitals which support future wellbeing are:

- **Economic Capital:** financial, intellectual and physical assets;
- **Human Capital:** the knowledge, skills and health accumulated by individuals;
- **Social Capital:** the networks, shared norms, values and understanding that facilitate co-operation within and among groups; and
- **Natural Capital:** natural assets including, air, trees, water and all living things.

Discussions with consultees were structured to identify how the University generates impacts against each of the dimensions in order to determine where the key areas of impact are created. Throughout the consultations, it was apparent that the University of Northampton's work contributed to a number of the key dimensions of current wellbeing, particularly income, jobs, community, environment, health and life satisfaction.



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The University also made major contributions to resources for future well-being, the building blocks of a successful economy. In particular, the University contributed to economic capital, human capital, and social capital. The findings of this process therefore informed the social impact assessment in this report.

### 3.2.1 Metrics of Assessment

The quantifiable economic impacts have been assessed using two widely accepted economic measures:

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** which measures the monetary contribution that an organisation adds to the economy through its operations; and
- **Employment:** which is measured in terms of headcount jobs supported.

These measures provide a convenient way of capturing the entire economic contribution in a single number. However, monetary figures highlight only part of the value of an impact and this report recognises that it is not possible to value all of the impacts of a higher education institution in this way.

The economic impact assessment captures the full impact of the original activities, including effects down the supply chain and through increased consumer spending. For each area of activity, an assumption was made about the proportion that would occur in each study area and they were then assigned a sector. Based on these sectors, economic ratios and multipliers were derived, which were then used to estimate economic impacts.

There are three significant types of economic impact:

- **direct impact:** direct employment and economic output generated;
- **indirect impact:** associated with supplies of goods and services; and
- **induced impact:** associated with staff spending their wages in the economy.

### 3.2.2 Study Areas & Timeframe

Given the University's location, impacts have been assessed for the study areas of:

- **Northamptonshire;**
- **Oxford-Cambridge Arc** (inclusive of: Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, and Cambridgeshire); and
- **the UK.**

This report provides evidence of the **current value of the University's impact, as of 2023/24**. In designing this approach, it is recognised that some of the University's activities generate immediate economic impact, such as staff and student spending, while the economic impacts of most activities occur over a longer time frame, such as research. As a result, the impact generated in 2023/24 is the cumulative impact of historic activity plus some immediate impacts of spending in that year. Additionally, impacts associated with recent graduates will occur over the lifetime of their career and have therefore been included to provide an estimate of this long term impact.



# 4. Driving Growth in Northamptonshire

The University of Northampton plays a vital role in driving growth in Northamptonshire.

The University contributes to the driving growth in Northamptonshire by:

- acting as an anchor institution that generates a strong base of demand;
- playing a role in economic development, supporting businesses to grow and addressing long-term unemployment; and
- supporting Northamptonshire’s growth offer by providing the infrastructure and skills needed for businesses to grow.

## 4.1 An Anchor Institution

As well as playing a role in supporting businesses in Northamptonshire, the University is also a significant local employer, which generates impact through its spending on supplies and the spending of its staff.

### 4.1.1 Direct Impacts

The direct economic impact is the value an organisation adds to the economy through its operations and is measured in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) and the employment it directly supports. In the context of a university, the GVA it creates can be estimated as the difference between total income and total supply spending.

This includes all areas of the University’s activity, including research, knowledge exchange and commercialisation, teaching and support and administrative functions such as finance and IT.

In 2023/24, The University of Northampton had a total income of nearly £196 million and it spent £77 million on supplies of goods and services. Therefore, the direct GVA it created in the UK was £119 million. In addition, the University directly employed 2,580 staff, equivalent to 1,421 full-time equivalent employees.

**Table 4-1 University of Northampton Direct Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	119	119	119
Employment (Jobs)	2,580	2,580	2,580

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding



#### 4.1.2 Supply Chain Spending Impact

As large and complex organisations, universities have an impact on the wider economy by increasing turnover and supporting employment throughout their supply chain.

In 2023/24, The University of Northampton spent nearly £77 million on goods and services, excluding capital investment. Based on data provided by the University, around 14% of supply chain expenditure went to suppliers based in Northamptonshire, 26% went to suppliers based in the Oxford Cambridge Arc region, and 81% was spent with suppliers based in the UK.

The supply chain spending impact of the University of Northampton in the UK was £56 million GVA, supporting 2,200 jobs.

**Table 4-2 University of Northampton Supply Chain Spending Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	6	14	56
Employment (Jobs)	260	550	2,200

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

#### 4.1.3 Staff Spending Impact

The people who work for the University have an impact on the wider economy by spending their salaries in the areas where they live.

It is estimated that the University's 2,580 staff receive £88 million in salaries. Of those who work for the University, 69% live in Northamptonshire and 77% in the Oxford Cambridge Arc region.

The staff spending impact of the University of Northampton in the UK was £67 million GVA, supporting 670 jobs.

**Table 4-3 University of Northampton Staff Spending Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	17	25	67
Employment (Jobs)	160	240	670

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

#### 4.1.4 Capital Investment Impact

Capital investments made by the University have an impact on the construction sector and on businesses which supply capital equipment.



As capital spending fluctuates from year-to-year, an average has been calculated based on actual spending over the last five years and projected spending over the next five years (2019–2030). On this basis, it was estimated that the University spends around £4 million per year on capital projects.

Based on data provided by the University, 14% of recent capital spending has been secured by companies based in Northamptonshire, 26% by companies based in the Oxford Cambridge Arc region and 81% by companies in the UK.

The capital investment impact of University of Northampton in the UK was £3 million GVA, supporting 40 jobs.

**Table 4-4 University of Northampton Staff Spending Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	<1	1	3
Employment (Jobs)	<10	10	40

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

## 4.2 Economic Development

### 4.2.1 Supporting Small Businesses

The University of Northampton is widely seen as a trusted and respected partner in Northamptonshire, with a strong record of delivering for businesses and is widely seen as independent, pursuing no agenda of its own. As a result, it has played a strong role in supporting businesses to grow.

Growing out of the University’s role as the host of the Northamptonshire Growth Hub, which merged with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Growth Hub, based in Cranfield, the University has delivered or been a partner on a number of programmes that are designed to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to grow. This is particularly important in Northamptonshire, because while it has an entrepreneurial culture, it has a relatively low rate of start-up survival rates.

The University has significant expertise in delivering and co-delivering these types of programmes and has added extra capacity to the area during periods of challenge, such as Brexit and Covid-19. Examples of these types of programmes have included:

- Ready2Grow: a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme, which ran from 2016-2019, and was focused on SMEs in under-represented areas;
- Time2Grow: a European Social Fund (ESF) programme, led by the University of Bedfordshire, that placed graduates in businesses and provided tailored support;



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- South East Midlands Start Up Programme (SEMSUP): an ERDF funded programme led by Wenta, where the University provided support to small businesses and social enterprises; and
  - Accelerating Leadership and Productivity in High Ambition SMEs (ALPHAS): an ERDF programme led by the University of Bedfordshire, which provided grant support to businesses as well as graduate placement opportunities.

Typically, these programmes received European funding and were focused on traditional economic development activities. After an initial diagnosis the University provided workshops on popular subjects (e.g., finance, marketing and human resources), tailored 1-2-1 business support, grant funding and referral to specialist advice where necessary. In some cases, graduates were also placed within businesses on small-scale but high-impact placements.

Businesses reported a number of benefits associated with these activities, including greater confidence, growth in sales, a more developed network, a greater willingness to engage with universities and other external sources of support, and higher employment.

A more recent example of a project delivered by the University of Northampton was West Northamptonshire Knowledge Exchange for Better Businesses (West Northants KE4BB), which the University delivered in partnership with the Mallows Company and was funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund. The project, which was aimed at businesses with less than 50 employees, had a number of components:

- an assessment of the business's capacity and innovation readiness;
- knowledge exchange vouchers worth up to £7,500 that could be used for graduate internship, academic knowledge or supporting SMEs to invest in new markets;
- growth vouchers worth up to £2,500 to join business networks such as the Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce, join learning courses/webinars or attend networking events; and
- personalised business support, such as 1-2-1s and action plan development.

Businesses reported that the knowledge exchange element was particularly valuable, providing insight into how they could enhance sustainability by reducing waste (several food and drink businesses took part in the project), develop new tools and processes and build their network.

Some businesses reported that this was the beginning of a longer-term relationship with the University, which could be further developed through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and placements, and the University can incorporate insights from its engagement into improved teaching.





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## **“I can’t imagine the Northamptonshire business community without it.”**

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*Rachel Mallows, The Mallows Company, on the role of the University in the local economy.*

The role that the University of Northampton has played in economic development has enabled it to build strong relationships with businesses, and it is increasingly focused on leveraging its academic expertise to provide insights to businesses that only it can deliver. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The University has also recently led on TANZ West Northants, which supports businesses to transition to Net Zero.



## TANZ West Northants

Towards a Net Zero West Northants is a programme which supports businesses in the area to achieve Net Zero.

Businesses in West Northamptonshire, like those everywhere, are increasingly focused on reducing their carbon emissions and West Northamptonshire Council has a target of Net Zero by 2045. However, many businesses have neither the capacity nor the expertise needed to understand and reduce their emissions.

To address this the University has set up its TANZ West Northants project, which is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It will operate for two years and started in September 2023. It is focused on supporting SMEs by providing an accurate assessment of their emissions and developing action plans to reduce them, for example through the use of electric vehicles or smart technologies. As of August 2024, the University has engaged with over 120 businesses, the majority of which are small services companies, with others being in manufacturing and logistics.

To date the most significant output of the project has been a sophisticated tool that enables businesses to accurately calculate their emissions. This provides businesses with an overview of how their activities contribute to climate change and the information needed to change how their business operates. The main advantage is that the tool (and the University's action planning) is free at the point of use – typically this information would require external consultants to collect and analyse, which is beyond the financial means of many SMEs.

Due to the early stage of the project, it is too soon to say what the impact is likely to be. But it is worth noting that any effects will be long-term as businesses see reduced energy use each year. This will have long term positive effects on the environment, as well as reducing business costs and making them more competitive.

### 4.2.2 Long-Term Unemployment

Northamptonshire has a number of areas of deprivation that have much higher levels of unemployment than the national average. Many people who have been out of employment for long periods of time have complex and multifaceted problems that make it difficult to access work opportunities, requiring patience and care to bring them back into the workforce.

Between 2016 and 2023, the University of Northampton led the Building Better Opportunities programme, which aimed to bring economically inactive or



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unemployed people into employment. It was funded by ERDF and National Lottery, and participants were given a range of support by social enterprises including help on job searching, wellbeing and confidence building sessions, CV and interview skills sessions, and counselling.

An evaluation in 2023 found that over 500 participants had improved employment outcomes, as well as experiencing increased self-efficacy, improved confidence, stronger relationships and increased wellbeing. The social impact of the programme was estimated to be valued at £4.9 million by the evaluators. Building Better Opportunities was initially scheduled to finish in 2019, but the success of the programme led to it being extended until 2023, when ERDF funding ended.

Similarly, Pathways for Recovery was a programme that the University led in partnership with social enterprises that supported unemployed people across the South East Midlands. It was commissioned in the aftermath of Covid-19 and provided support tailored to each individual (examples included language classes for Ukrainian refugees).

Across each of these projects the University of Northampton was the lead organisation, providing a level of structure and management. This was indispensable in securing funding and allowed the partner organisations to focus on delivery. In addition, the University leveraged their connections with local employers (e.g. Northampton Town Football Club), shared best practice across different social enterprises and evaluated them in line with guidance. It also built capacity within partner organisations that often focus on the day-to-day rather than planning weeks or months ahead.

Evaluations found that these projects had strong social impacts, because being unemployed is associated with significantly poorer mental health, with higher incidences of depression, social exclusion and anxiety (often related to financial pressures). These projects had significant benefits for those who transition to employment, making them feel more confident and capable, improving their wellbeing and increasing their social skills.

## 4.3 Supporting Northamptonshire's Growth Offer

### 4.3.1 Driving Collaboration

The University has engaged widely with businesses and is seen as a trusted partner. As a result, it has a deep knowledge of business needs, is able to spot opportunities for increased collaboration between businesses and with government, and is able to bring them together, acting as a neutral convener.

For example, the University's role in setting up the Northamptonshire Anchor Institutions Network (NAIN), which brought together 23 public and private sector institutions, ranging from councils to healthcare and education providers and community and business associations. Without the University's input and impartiality this organisation would not have been founded, and it was invaluable in creating the



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space for these organisations to talk about how they can create social value that is tailored to local needs.

The University has been actively involved in setting up conferences and industry events that increase information sharing. These are typically held at the University's Waterside Campus, which is seen as adding physical infrastructure that previously didn't exist in the area.

The logistics industry in Northamptonshire is significant, with numerous companies operating in warehousing, distribution, and transportation. Given the importance of this sector to the local economy, the Northamptonshire Logistics Industry forum was established by the University in 2016 to facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking among stakeholders. This forum brings together businesses, government representatives, educational institutions, and other relevant organisations to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the industry and to work towards common goals such as improving infrastructure, promoting innovation, and supporting workforce development.

As well as the logistics forum the University recently relaunched the Northamptonshire Manufacturing Forum. Chaired by the Operations Director of Whitworths and supported by Make UK, the principal objective of this forum is to promote and support the interests of the manufacturing businesses and sector in the county.

In addition, the University organises the annual Sustainability Summit, which brings together businesses, academia and government to progress more sustainable practices. In 2024, the summit considered how innovation could be harnessed to increase sustainability.

The University is currently delivering a study which maps the innovation landscape across Northamptonshire, highlighting where the area has key strengths and where it has gaps. This will enable it and other providers in the county to target their innovation resources and engage more effectively with businesses.

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## **The University has a convening role, bringing together business, government and academia**

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### **4.3.2 Providing a Skilled Workforce**

One key theme of the University's appeal to businesses is the graduates it produces.

Barclays, which is the largest employer in Northamptonshire, has a campus in Northampton, one of only four in the UK and ten worldwide. Here, it employs around 5,000 professionals who, among other duties, manage all the company's card and payment services, managing 18 million transactions worth over £700 million a day.



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A range of talented individuals, including new graduates, are required to fulfil its needs across several business areas, including technology, human resources, marketing and finance. Many University students meet the company through its engagement with careers events and they can play a role in helping the company to meet future challenges and opportunities.

A further example is the University's annual Career's Expo. This brings together students and over 100 employers who are local to the area, ranging from large commercial employers such as Barclays, Weetabix and Dr Martens to large public sector employers such as Northamptonshire Police, the Probation Service and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue.

This includes not just graduate employers but those looking to fill part-time roles, internships and volunteering opportunities. It helps to link students with vacancies in a range of sectors such as retail, accommodation and food services, and arts and culture, which can be a good match for their skill set and timetables.

#### **4.3.3 Attracting Inward Investment**

The University is seen as a key part of Northamptonshire's appeal in attracting companies to the area. In particular, its close relationship with businesses and the skilled graduates that it produces mean that it can provide businesses with the skills and talent that they need to expand and grow. By coordinating across different organisations it is able to present a joined-up view of the county's position and direct businesses to the most appropriate support.

In addition, the University has a role in supporting the logistics sector, which is increasingly important to the county. In recent years, the sector has seen significant inward investment, including from Amazon, Maritime and GXO, with continuing investment at the Segro Logistics Park.

While the main attraction of the area is its central location and transport infrastructure, recruitment is a major issue in the sector. As the industry becomes more productive it requires more specialised skills, as well as more generalised roles that the University can support (e.g. HR, business management). As a result, the University offers courses focused on logistics and supply chain management, tailored to the sector's needs, as well as a neutral forum to discuss industry issues.

Furthermore, the University has played a key role in shaping Northampton as a place (discussed in further detail in Chapter 8). This means that Northampton is a more vibrant area, with more interesting and diverse businesses, which makes it more attractive to young professionals than other areas which may have a similar offering.



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## **“The University of Northampton is a key pillar of our offer for businesses”**

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*Inward Investment and Business Growth Manager at West Northamptonshire Council*

### **4.4 Summary of Role in Northamptonshire’s Growth**

The University of Northampton has played a key role in supporting businesses to grow in Northamptonshire in particular.

Across businesses in a wide array of sectors, it has provided foundational economic advice on how they can grow and sustain their businesses. Typically, this has involved providing workshops, 1-2-1 tutoring and access to the University’s researchers. Given its capacity and expertise the University also has a niche in supporting organisations to reduce unemployment among deprived communities and increase the capacity of individuals. Through these activities the University contributes to the Better Life Index dimensions of work and job quality, social connections and knowledge and skills.

Due to its wide-ranging relationships and deep understanding of businesses, the University has played an important role in bringing businesses and public sector organisations together. By providing the connective tissue needed to communicate, the University enables a joined-up approach to common challenges.

The University also plays a role in attracting and retaining inward investment, addressing skills shortages and creating a more vibrant and attractive town centre. This contributes to the dimensions of civic engagement, social connection and environmental quality, while creating social capital.

The University itself is an anchor institution, employing over 2,500 people directly, and generating an economic impact of £142 million GVA and 3,000 jobs in Northamptonshire through its direct impact, spending on supplies and capital projects, and spending by staff. At the UK level, this impact is equal to £244 million GVA and 5,500 jobs.



**Table 4-5 University of Northampton Operational Impacts Summary, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
<b>GVA (£m)</b>			
Direct impact	119	119	119
Supplier spending	6	14	56
Staff spending	17	25	67
Capital spending	<1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Employment (Jobs)</b>			
Direct Impact	2,580	2,580	2,580
Supplier Spending	260	550	2,200
Staff Spending	160	240	670
Capital Spending	<10	10	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,010</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>5,500</b>

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.



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## 5.

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# Addressing Societal Challenges with Innovation

The University has areas of research excellence and a growing focus on translating its expertise for businesses and organisations.

The University contributes to addressing societal challenges through innovation by:

- undertaking and publishing cutting edge research, contributing to the store of knowledge and supporting businesses and policymakers to make better decisions; and
- carrying out knowledge exchange activities, which transfer its expertise to businesses and other organisations.

### 5.1 Research Strengths

When first established, the University has primarily been focused on teaching, but research is of growing importance. The University wants its research to contribute to wider societal goals, with research that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is reflected in its contribution to the Research Excellence Framework, which is based on a periodic assessment of the research carried out by universities in the UK. Compared to 2014, in the University's 2021 submission it had more researchers in more areas, with the share of research rated as world-leading or internationally excellent rising from 30.7% to 41.7%.

The University undertakes research across a variety of disciplines, including public health, engineering, business and management studies, education and biological sciences. Some examples of the University's 17 research institutes and centres are discussed below, and other are available online<sup>5</sup>.

#### 5.1.1 The Centre for Advanced and Smart Technologies (CAST)

As well as providing engineering graduates for a range of manufacturing and logistics businesses locally and nationally, the University of Northampton has key expertise in engineering and computer science.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/research/research-institutes-and-centres/>





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This includes embedding considering how artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and other technologies such as virtual reality (VR) can be used to tackle key societal challenges and business problems.

An example of this approach is VR Therapies, a company which is based in Northampton and uses VR technology to provide therapy to children with special needs and adults with disabilities. The University has a long history with the company, which took part in one of its business support programmes, and the University played a key role in developing the VR technology that the company utilises. Researchers are further developing the possibilities of VR in therapy, for example to help treat anxiety and depression.

One area of particular strength at the University relates to vertical transportation in buildings (i.e. elevators/lifts and escalators). The University of Northampton is the only university in the UK and one of the few globally with education and research expertise in this area.

This is an important sector of the UK economy, with increasing demand for maintenance and growing opportunities in design and consultancy. In 2023, there were more than 362,000 elevators and escalators in the UK, with a further 8,000 installed annually and a market size of \$2.9 billion<sup>6</sup>. In the UK, there is increasing demand for maintenance, given the age of many lifts, and growing installation.

The University of Northampton has supported the sector and developed world-leading expertise over 40 years. It continues to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, to support workforce throughout their engineering career, from apprentice entry level through to senior engineering design and management responsibility. In the past 20 years, more than 80 students have graduated with MSc degrees in Lift Engineering. The programme delivers an academic provision without which the sector would face difficulties in training and attracting staff.

The University also has relationships with a number of multinational companies such as TK Elevators (formerly Thyssen-Krupp Elevators), which is one of the largest companies in the sector and with which the University has had a research partnership since 2012. This has led to new, safer design guidelines for the high-rise building market (e.g. predicting and mitigating the influence of tall building sway induced by wind forces on high-rise elevator systems), resulting in increased competitiveness in securing world-wide projects. Other projects for the sector have included using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to determine when repairs are needed (reducing maintenance costs) and research on how to reduce injuries associated with escalators, which also involved using AI.

In addition, the University supports the Lift and Escalator Symposium Education Trust and has played a leading role in increasing collaboration and engagement across the industry. The Lifts and Escalators Symposium has been held in

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<sup>6</sup> Arizton Advisory and Intelligence (2024), UK Elevators and Escalators – Market Size and Growth Forecast 2024-2029



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Northamptonshire since 2011, attracting national and international companies, and in 2023 this event attracted more than 100 researchers and industry experts.

### **5.1.2 Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII)**

Founded in 2014, the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII) evaluates and measures social impact, which it defines as ‘the economic, social and environmental benefits delivered by an organisation to society’.

Since it was established the ISII has received £3.7 million in contracts, published over 200 research papers and contributed to more than 60 social innovation projects. The ISII’s work spans across a number of themes, including social investment, education innovation, social enterprise and public service reform.

The ISII’s work both quantifies existing social impact and drives progress towards new impacts. By working with third sector organisations to quantify their impact, the ISII gives these organisations independent evidence of the benefits they generate which will support them in funding applications. In addition, the ISII’s work actively engages with areas where research can support the effective creation of social impact, resulting in material changes which positively affect people and communities.

The ISII’s recent work includes:

- measuring the social impact of Northampton Association for the Blind;
- an evaluation of the social impact of a new YMCA building in Milton Keynes which houses young people with a range of complex needs;
- a review and improvement of the approach to identifying ex-service personnel in the Criminal Justice System in England, Wales and Scotland;
- work to ensure that AI is used in the prevention and detection of crimes is applied ethically, preserving human rights as new crime prevention AI technology is developed; and
- an international study working with communities in Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Rwanda, aiming to provide a comparative approach to peace-building using youth-led arts-based practices.

### **5.1.3 The Northamptonshire Dementia Research and Innovation Centre (NDRIC)**

The NDRIC is based in the University’s Faculty of Health, Education and Society, and its work is underpinned by a commitment to centring the voices of people living with dementia.

It collaborates with healthcare providers, the third sector, and members of the public to develop new, innovative and effective approaches to diagnosis and ongoing care. Research undertaken by the NDRIC focuses largely on early diagnosis, community-based interventions following diagnosis, and social support for people with carers, aiming to promote personal independence, social integration and normalisation, with the understanding that people with dementia want to live normal lives.



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The NDRIC runs three special interest groups, developing research which works to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their carers:

- Dementia-Friendly Campus and Communities: aiming to explore how people with dementia can continue to be active citizens within organisations and communities which acknowledge and support them;
- Personhood and Lifestyle Factors: aiming to investigate lifestyle factors which impact cognition as well as the overall health and wellbeing of those at risk of developing dementia, those with dementia, and their families; and
- Community Interventions: aiming to explore the ways of providing evidence-based community support for those living with dementia and their caregivers, supporting independent living.

The NDRIC has also produced research focused on early onset dementia which is discussed in the case study below.



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## The Angela Project

The University of Northampton set in motion the UK's largest study of early onset dementia.

Currently over 70,000 people in the UK have early onset dementia, which may be less likely to be diagnosed and typically has different symptoms to other forms of dementia and requires different adaptations.

In 2016, the University of Northampton, in partnership with three universities, set up the Angela Project to research and improve the practice of diagnosing early onset dementia and providing support for those with early onset dementia and their carers.

The project was initially proposed by the University of Northampton, inspired by the case of a person with early onset dementia who experienced symptoms for three years before being diagnosed and a national survey conducted by the University which showed the lack of age-appropriate care for people under 65 with dementia.

The University led on the first workstream, reviewing existing scientific evidence and collecting the views of leading experts, people with dementia and their carers. This emphasised the aspects of referral, assessment and diagnosis that younger people with dementia felt were most important based on their experiences.

The Angela Project, which ran for three years and was the largest study of its kind in the UK, established a consensus on the indicators of dementia in younger adults and outlined a gold standard for initial diagnosis. It also demonstrated the impact of services focused on people with early onset dementia, leading to improved care for them and their caregivers.



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#### 5.1.4 The Institute of Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ)

The IPSCJ was established at the University of Northampton in 2015, and was the first research institute of its kind in the UK. It has a core mission of supporting positive evidence-based policy and practice change for the benefit of society.

Partnering with regional, national and international organisations, the IPSCJ produces academic research which brings together evidence on practices, training and development across public safety agencies. It aims to develop greater understanding of community priorities and the experiences of victims of crime and witnesses, as well as criminal justice and public safety interventions.

Key research topics include exploring the intersection of health and justice, how young people and children experience crime, and how to support organisations to develop more effective practices, structures and cultures (see the example below, which formed part of a Research Excellence Framework (REF) case study). The IPSCJ's recent work includes:

- conducting a survey of members of the public in Northamptonshire in order to understand their perceptions of policing, crime and anti-social behaviour, worry and personal experience of victimisation, and willingness to engage with policing. It analysed changes over time in public perceptions with a particular focus on the experiences of ethnic minority groups;
- an evaluation of Women's Health Services provided to women in an English prison who were pregnant or had recently given birth. The research established what services, care and support women released from the prison need;
- producing two practice manuals supporting the development of new sites running Community Sentence Treatment Requirement programmes; and
- an evaluation of the emerging individual and collective impact of Place-Based Leadership Development Programme with Intersectoral Urban Violence Prevention in Kenya, demonstrating the positive impacts of the programme on participants and influencing how violence is addressed in areas of Kenya.



## Citizens in Policing

The IPSCJ undertook the largest national research programme into police volunteering programmes.

The IPSCJ, in partnership with the National 'Citizens in Policing' portfolio, was awarded a Home Office Police Transformation Fund grant of £545,000 for the delivery of research and evaluation across nineteen service transformation projects in 2017.

This research programme involved using innovative new research approaches to understand the experience of volunteers across police volunteering programmes, helping to address major knowledge gaps and to understand the perspective of volunteers in terms of their motivations and experiences. The research also collated evidence from different police volunteer programmes on innovations and systems which improved the efficacy of the service they provide.

This work, the largest-scale research programme undertaken in this field, delivered an evidence-base with which strategies for citizens in policing could be developed to best deliver effective community policing which attracts, supports, and retains volunteers across programmes. The provision of this evidence has helped shape national strategy for over 38,000 volunteers in Special Constabularies, Police Support Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets and Mini Police.

### 5.1.5 The Centre for Education and Research

The Centre for Education and Research undertakes research that promotes positive outcomes for children, young people and adults in the education system. It focuses on education processes across social contexts and throughout life and works in partnership with local, national and international educational stakeholders, including nurseries, schools, charities, governments, and other higher education organisations.

The Centre's areas of activity include inclusion and diversity in education (particularly for children with special educational needs), children's rights in education, the factors that affect learning in early childhood and how to improve education in schools.

As part of its work, the Centre produced case studies submitted to the REF 2021 and 100% of the University's research impact was assessed as being world leading or internationally excellent. These case studies included work improving the understanding of parents and professionals around autism in South East Europe.



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This project identified through exploratory research that education and general support was severely limited or non-existent in the researched countries, with knowledge about autism still scarce amongst professionals and the public. By surveying parents of children with autism, the project found evidence of high interest in parent education.

The Centre then developed and introduced locally accessible education for parents of children with autism aimed at addressing the specific topics identified by respondents. During the initial offered workshops 335 parents of children with autism attended and they later reported increased parental skills, understanding, confidence and happiness. Following this, over 2,700 parents, professionals and students in Croatia, Cyprus and North Macedonia attended workshops, leading to sustainable changes in the wider understanding of autism.

The University also submitted a case study focused on the provision of special education in Ireland. The Centre led a multidisciplinary international research team with researchers from different research facilities to conduct a longitudinal study assessing students' educational outcomes and schools' implementation of including education policy over three years in Irish mainstream and special schools. This was the first study of its kind in Ireland and the largest study of schools based Special Educational Needs provision conducted in Europe.

The research, which collated the responses of staff across schools in Ireland, evidenced widespread commitment to principles of inclusive education, but highlighted the variable practice in schools and a need to enhance teacher training to improve confidence and skills, as well as geographic inequalities in resourcing and access to services. The project then undertook qualitative research, consulting with teachers, SEN assistants and national stakeholder groups, and conducted longitudinal case studies at 24 schools in Ireland, strengthening the evidence base demonstrating the need for improved training in SEN support provision.

This work helped to shape Irish national policy on special education. The Irish Department of Education and Skills increased the allocation of SEN support resources and changed longstanding models of support for SEN students. The project also drove a shift towards improved teacher training around SEN and inclusion.

#### **5.1.6 Spatial Practices in Art and Architecture for Empathetic EXchange (SPACEX)**

SPACEX is a research action to better understand, communicate and maximise the ways that art, architecture and design can improve how people interact in urban spaces.

The work, which brings together academic institutions and third sector organisations across Europe, aims to reduce rising social tensions by highlighting the ways in which diversity in urban areas creates social benefit. It collates evidence from across different disciplines to support the development of new, more inclusive ways of living together.



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The University of Northampton has contributed to a number of research outputs to SPACEX, which influence commissioning agencies, policy makers and the public. This includes work detailing the major problems that art, design, and architecture should address to enable better ways of living together, highlighting the loss of public spaces, gentrification practices, and the effects of Covid-19. This work has shaped the direction of SPACEX's research on how art, design and architecture can work for the common good.

## 5.2 Knowledge Exchange Impacts

The University of Northampton supports the development and growth of local businesses through its knowledge exchange services, including services such as consultancy work, collaborative research, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and continuing professional development (CPD) courses.

Consultations with beneficiaries of the University's knowledge exchange services highlight how important it is to Northamptonshire, and its local presence is instrumental to the impact of these services on local businesses. Many businesses have on-going, lasting relationships with the University.

### 5.2.1 Services to Businesses

Through collaboration with the University, businesses benefit from leading research and best practice which can enhance their own productivity. Economic value is created by a range of services that the University provides, which include:

- CPD;
- consultancy; and
- access to facilities and equipment.

During 2023/24, the University of Northampton received a total combined income of £0.8 million from these sources, as reported in the University's Higher Education Business and Commitment Interaction Survey (HEBCI) return<sup>7</sup>.

The value to an individual business of collaboration with the University will vary considerably between projects. It will be based on the type of work done, the stage in the development process that the project relates to and the capacity of the company to absorb the knowledge and developments that result from the collaboration. To quantify this impact, it was necessary to assume what the value would be to a company based on typical returns from these collaborations.

The economic impact associated with spending on engagement with a university partner was assumed to be 340%. This was based on evidence from meta review of

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<sup>7</sup> HESA (2024), HEBCI 2022-23



evaluation evidence<sup>8</sup>, which found that interventions in Science, R&D and innovation infrastructure had achieved cumulative GVA equivalent to 340% of the cost of the projects in the short to medium term and up to 870% in the long term. This study is representative of the evaluation literature which finds similar rates of return from business collaboration with universities. The economic impact of these services is summarised at Table 5-1, below.

**Table 5-1 University of Northampton Services to Businesses Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	<1	1	3
Employment (Jobs)	-	<10	<10

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

As an example, the University has undertaken research on behalf of Big Film Group, a local company that works with major brands to supply their products to production companies for use in television and film. It recently had a University of Northampton student working on a software/AI development to improve its stock management procedures, making it more productive and stream-lined. The new system is expected to be industry leading and help the company to generate a 10% increase in turnover in its first year of being rolled out.

A case study of the University’s collaboration with Stephenson’s Online is presented below.

<sup>8</sup> PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Impact of RDA spending – National report – Volume 1 – Main Report, March 2009, DBERR.





## Stephenson's Online

The University dramatically lowered costs and provided access to graduates and local networks.

Founded in 2012, Stephenson's Online Ltd owns and operates the online commerce website, Sol Retail. The company, which has its head office and warehouse in Northampton, enables health and beauty brands to sell their products globally by managing their logistics and distribution services. Through sites like Amazon and Ebay it sells goods worth tens of millions of pounds.

After meeting representatives of the University at the Northampton Logistics Forum, it considered how the University's research staff could support its growth goals. This culminated in taking part in the KE4BB programme which led to the implementation of a new IT system that cut costs to the business by tens of thousands of pounds per month.

One of the main benefits of the interaction was noted as the relationship building the collaboration has afforded the organisation, connecting it to funders and networks that they may not otherwise have been able to access. Additionally, the interaction led to the organisation being introduced to InnovateUK, becoming part of its Scale Up Programme.

### 5.2.2 Student Placements and Clinics

Placements provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in the workplace while allowing employers to benefit from the knowledge that students have acquired during their studies.

In 2023/24, 3,796 students from the University of Northampton undertook placements of over 8 weeks, usually as part of the University's commitment to incorporating professional experience into their learning. Of these placements, 73% took place in Northamptonshire, while 88% took place in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc region (including Northamptonshire), highlighting the University's deep engagement with regional businesses and organisations. Many students go on to work for the organisations where they completed their placements.

The contribution that students on placement make to the organisations they are placed in is lower than the average output expected from a worker in the sector and requires more time spent on training. To reflect this, it was assumed that the GVA of students undertaking a placement is 33% of an average worker in the sector.



The University of Northampton student placements had an impact of £8 million GVA and 280 jobs in the UK.

**Table 5-2 University of Northampton Student Placements Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	5	6	8
Employment (Jobs)	160	200	280

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

An example of the University’s approach to placements is the University’s Northants Engineering Training Partnership (NETP). This programme has a long track record of success, having been started in 1989, and it has placed over 600 students within sought after local engineering companies.

This programme gives engineering students an experience of working within highly advanced engineering and manufacturing companies, allowing them to gain skills and better understand the world of work. Companies have access to engineering students who may go on to work for them, reducing the cost of recruitment.

Many of these companies, such as Cummins Engineering, Festo and Cosworth, are part of the automotive supply chain that supports companies like McLaren, Mercedes and Red Bull that have centres of operations at or near Silverstone. The University plays a key role in providing the human capital that enables them to grow.

Other examples of companies that have taken part in the programme include food manufacturing, logistics and pharmaceutical companies.

### 5.2.3 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

The University of Northampton participates actively in the KTP programme, where recent graduates collaborate with companies on industry-academic projects. These partnerships, typically spanning three years, allow companies to tap into University research to address challenges. The University of Northampton has completed seven KTPs in the past six years (from 2015 to 2023), with two on-going projects.

KTPs address specific issues faced by businesses, which leads to improved productivity. Data from the wider UK programme was applied to assess the economic impact of the University’s KTPs. An evaluation of the KTP programme found that each one contributes £826,000 GVA to the UK economy over six years post-completion, supporting three jobs. While a KTP is ongoing its economic impact is assumed to be smaller as the benefits of research will not be realised in the early stages of development.

The economic impact of KTPs is summarised in the Table 5-3.



**Table 5-3 University of Northampton KTPs Impact, 2023/24**

	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Oxford Cambridge Arc</b>	<b>UK</b>
GVA (£m)	<1	<1	1
Employment (Jobs)	10	10	30

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding



# The University and the leather industry

Northampton has long been a centre of the leather industry, and the University has played a key role in supporting the sector.

For hundreds of years, Northamptonshire has been a centre of leather working and shoemaking, with prominent brands, such as Clarks, Church's and Doc Martens, being established in the area. Northamptonshire continues to be the centre of the UK's shoemaking industry. The University of Northampton has played a prominent role in supporting the cluster and the industry more widely and is the only University in the UK with a specialism in leather.

For example, it has provided a course that trains leather technicians, many of whom go on to work for prominent British companies overseeing and improving the complex manufacturing process. Many of the most senior engineers in the sector have been trained at the University, and this expertise underpins the sector more broadly.

At the Institute of Creative Leather Technologies (ICLT), a partnership with industry, the University has undertaken research to support the sector and develop innovative new methods. For example, a KTP with the Scottish Leather Group (SLG) has led to the implementation of a new, more environmentally friendly production method for leather production.

This will now be the standard production method for the company, which supplies the automotive and aviation industry and has a turnover of over £100 million annually. It has led to additional opportunities for export. Another KTP is underway, aiming to produce lightweight leather on behalf of the aviation industry, where increased weight can substantially increase fuel costs.

Due to high costs and falling demand for its educational courses (for example European students no longer coming to study on the leather course), the University has been scaling back its presence in the sector. This has involved closing the ICLT and the leather engineering course, though the University retains research capability and will continue its courses on shoe design.

## 5.2.4 Regeneration and Development

In addition to its knowledge exchange impacts, the University has attracted funding that supports the regeneration of Northamptonshire, which also generates a positive



economic impact. The qualitative impacts of these projects are covered in more detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 8.

Based on the University’s HEBCI return, the University has attracted an average of £0.6 million in income over the years 2018/19 to 2022/23. Whilst the economic impacts of these projects will vary, typically projects of this type are expected to generate a certain level of economic return, with a minimum threshold of the impact being valued at least at double the cost.

On this basis, it has been assumed that the University’s economic impact in 2023/24 would be around £1 million across each of the study areas, though this is likely to be a conservative assumption given the positive impacts typically associated with these projects.

**Table 5-4 University of Northampton Regeneration and Development Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	1	1	1

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

## 5.3 Addressing Societal Challenges Through Innovation Summary

The University of Northampton undertakes research across its 17 research institutes and centres, which have deep specialisms in a number of areas that are valued by businesses and other organisations, including in engineering and social impact. This provides the basis for improved decision making, contributing to the Better Life Framework dimensions of knowledge and skills and civic engagement while adding to the stock of human capital.

A growing focus of the University is translating this research into improved outcomes for businesses and other organisations, which it does through student placements, KTPs and services to businesses. These organisations go on to experience a range of positive outcomes such as new products, higher income and lower costs. This contributes to the dimensions of income and wealth and knowledge and skills.

As shown in Table 5-4, in 2023/24 the economic impact of the University’s knowledge exchange activities was £6 million GVA and 170 jobs in Northamptonshire, £8 million GVA and 210 jobs in the Oxford Cambridge Arc region and £13 million GVA and 310 jobs in the UK.



**Table 5-5 University of Northampton Knowledge Exchange Impacts Summary, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
<b>GVA (£m)</b>			
Service to Businesses	<1	1	3
Placements	5	6	8
KTPs	<1	<1	1
Regeneration	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Employment (Jobs)</b>			
Service to Businesses	-	<10	<10
Placements	160	200	280
KTPs	10	10	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>310</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.



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## 6. Supporting the Social Fabric

The University of Northampton actively seeks to address challenges for the community it serves, including students, staff, and the wider population of Northamptonshire.

The University of Northampton's work supports the social fabric of Northampton and Northamptonshire by:

- supporting the local community through acting as a local asset for those in need, and supporting local people and local organisations, such as Northampton Town Football Club; and
- supporting the University community by addressing key factors which negatively affect wellbeing amongst students and staff and enabling the wellbeing benefits to students which are generated by volunteering.

### 6.1 Strengthening Communities Northamptonshire

#### 6.1.1 Hidden Needs in Northamptonshire

In 2023, the University of Northampton's ISII worked with Northampton Community Foundation (NCF), a third sector organisation which supports local charities by awarding grants, to produce a report on urgent and priority needs in Northamptonshire. This built on a report undertaken by ISII in 2018.

The Hidden Needs reports<sup>9</sup> assessed the needs of Northamptonshire and identified the main issues and challenges requiring the most urgent attention. The report analysed a number of issues, collating descriptive data and highlighting the most significant needs for each factor specific to Northamptonshire. These included:

- access to services: assessing how easy it is for people in rural areas of Northamptonshire to access transport, fast and reliable broadband, shops, and healthcare;
- inequality and deprivation: assessing disparities in deprivation using the Index of Multiple Deprivation which accounts for income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment;
- health and wellbeing: assessing the main health issues, including life expectancy, lack of physical activity, and the prevalence of smoking, and alcohol-related hospital admissions;
- challenges for children: assessing development levels, secondary education qualification attainment, and health issues faced by children;

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/news/northamptonshire-community-foundation-highlights-urgent-need-across-the-county-in-latest-hidden-needs-report/>



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- education, skills and training: assessing employment levels, youth unemployment, and educational attainment;
  - older people: assessing poverty amongst pensioners, hospital admissions, and dementia diagnoses;
  - housing and living environment: assessing barriers to housing, overcrowding, homelessness and fuel poverty; and
  - crime: assessing the prevalence of crime, the share of offenders who re-offend, and the number of violent crimes.

These reports, completed for NCF at a discounted rate compared to the University's usual research activities, has been an invaluable asset for the third sector in Northamptonshire. The work has enabled NCF, as well as other community groups and charities, to be able to make more robust applications for funding as they are able to demonstrate how their work will address pressing issues in Northamptonshire. The reports have also acted as a useful tool for third sector organisations to report on their work, enabling them to show where they have had impact.

Paired with the reports, the University of Northampton carries out webinars on behalf of third sector organisations in order to discuss the major needs of the area with stakeholders. Following the production of the reports, the University continues to engage donors, generating funding for the third sector to tackle the challenges Northamptonshire faces.

### **6.1.2 Enabling Community Support for People with Dementia**

Building on its work on community-based interventions for people with dementia, in 2018, the University set up UnityDEM in partnership with Northampton Central Library. This pilot project aimed to improve the lived experience of people with dementia and their carers.

This provided a space for community support and access to a number of free services. People recently diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers could receive specialised care, information, and training. The project also ran group creative activities, sports, and dance classes focused on supporting physical and mental health, and provided Cognitive Stimulation Therapy activities specially designed to preserve and enhance the mental capabilities of people with dementia. Caregivers could also attend a Carer's Support Workshop each month.

This 12-month project created a space for people affected by dementia to access a community there to support them, and worked to demonstrate the range of impacts community-based service provision can have. The University also supports Forget-Me-Nots Social Group, a group run by and for people with dementia, their family, and carers, providing people affected by dementia a place to socialise.

Through its research and in activities to directly provide and enable community-based care, the University of Northampton enriches the lives of people in ongoing





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treatment for dementia and the people caring for them, helping them to live normally with tailored support.

### **6.1.3 University as a Local Asset**

As well as contributing to the physical fabric of Northampton, the University's facilities and accommodation have supported the community in times of crisis.

For example, during the early phase of Covid-19 as students returned home and vacated their halls of residence the University provided this accommodation to NHS staff and non-critical patients. This increased the capacity of the sector and reduced staff stress. The University also provided space for homeless people and students self-isolating, reducing strain on other services during a difficult period. Furthermore, it provided its grounds and buildings for use in testing for Covid-19.

The University has also provided accommodation, free of charge, to care-experienced young people, who often face challenging circumstances once they have reached adulthood. The University has provided four young adults with places in halls of residence, supporting them to get on their feet and have a stable home. The University also has a bursary for care givers, who can stay in its accommodation for free for the first year of their studies.

### **6.1.4 Northampton Town Football Club**

Since 2013, the University of Northampton has been the main sponsor of Northampton Town FC, with its logo appearing on the League One side's strips. In the following decade the partnership has deepened and become more strategic.

Over 30 students have undertaken placements at the club, in areas ranging from sports physiology to marketing. Students are able to get hands-on experience of sport at an elite level, for example building on the classroom lessons to experiment with different approaches to strength and performance. As a result of these placements and the broader relationship with the University several key staff are from the University of Northampton, including the strength and conditioning coach and Head of Academy Sports Science.

As well as providing staff, the University supports the club in its community engagement activities, including youth sports, with a particular focus on women and girls' teams and disability teams. Around 100 children and adults participate regularly in these teams. Without the University's support the Girls' Emerging Talent Centre, which plays at the Waterside Campus, would likely be unable to operate. The University and the club's partnership continues to develop and strengthen.

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**This is not your regular sponsorship. This is a deep-rooted partnership**

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*James Whiting, Northampton Town FC Chief Executive*



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### 6.1.5 Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area

In 2012, the University of Northampton supported the establishment of Nene Valley Nature Improvement Plan (NIA), which covers over 41,000 hectares along the River Nene between Daventry in Northamptonshire and Peterborough.

This was one of twelve NIAs established by the Government in England. They are run as a collaboration between local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations. They aim to address pressures on local ecosystems, reverse the decline in biodiversity and restore ecological networks.

The University of Northampton was a key driver of Nene Valley being awarded NIA status, which was secured through a competitive process. Researchers at the University contributed to the formative evidence review which established the intentions for Nene Valley NIA. It also produced a needs analysis specifying the needs of local pollinators, flora, hedgerows, urban waterways and green infrastructures. This improved the understanding of where investment needed to be directed for the NIA to most effectively address the needs of local ecosystems.

## 6.2 The University Community

### 6.2.1 Wellbeing

In 2023/24, the University undertook a survey of its student's wellbeing in which two-thirds of students (67%) reported that the University had a positive or slightly positive impact on their confidence and self esteem, while 55% of students reported that the University had a positive or slightly positive impact on their physical health and wellbeing.

As part of the student survey, the University collected data on areas where students reported feeling concerned in the last two weeks. This included areas that would typically be considered important by students, such as exams and assignments (70%) and academic achievement (62%), and also included affordability, with 62% of students feeling concerned about being able to pay for the things that they need.

### 6.2.2 Improving Support

The University of Northampton is taking direct action to address the factors which negatively impact wellbeing among both students and staff. In the University of Northampton's strategy for 2023-2027<sup>10</sup>, one of the key priorities for 2027 is to develop the support provided by the University around health and wellbeing. The strategy lays out five key actions it is taking to support health and wellbeing.

To address key issues around wellbeing of staff, the University has committed to:

- relieving administrative pressures faced by staff to allow them to focus on objectives;

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<sup>10</sup> University of Northampton (2023), Strategy 2023-2027



- 
- continuing work to codify and balance workloads for all categories of staff to ensure equity; and
  - enhancing childcare and sports facilities on campus.

To support the health and wellbeing of students, the University has committed to:

- ensuring specific support groups which address particular needs, such as those of international students; and
- developing on-campus social and sports facilities reflecting the diversity of students and their needs outside of core working hours.

The areas where students report particular concerns are also highlighted in the University's approach to supporting students going forward. With the overall aim of strengthening the supportive environment for students to thrive, the University has committed to developing the role of Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) within a strengthened Integrated Learner Support (ILS) offering.

PATs are seen as integral to the unique offering of the University of Northampton, aiming to provide additional academic support above that provided by module tutors and programme leaders. The PAT role is performed by school-based academic staff with an assigned number of students in their first year. Staff in the PAT role work with students to engage them in personal development planning and support them in making the most of their time at university.

The ILS model used by the University aims to deliver a 'super supportive' student experience, through which students are made aware of and are given full access to a range of support services provided by the University. The model is made up of four key elements:

- centralised professional support from a Student Support and Advice Team;
- centralised professional support from other specialist support teams around areas like finances, counselling, and residential life;
- programme focussed support from professional services teams providing academic, employability and digital skills sessions to all students; and
- academic support through the programme from the PAT, Module Team and Programme Leader.

The model recognises that, in order to support students in succeeding to the best of their ability, they benefit from academic guidance which promotes progression and helps them achieve their academic goals.

Through these schemes the University of Northampton is working to address key concerns for students around their academic achievements which can negatively impact wellbeing.

In addition, the University of Northampton actively engages with the concerns of students around affordability, working to address food insecurity and food poverty amongst students.



## Tackling Food Poverty

The University of Northampton actively works to reduce food poverty amongst its students.

Following work with Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network to analyse the prevalence of food poverty among their students, the University of Northampton works to enable all of its students to access the food needed to eat a healthy diet.

The University raises awareness, directs students to charities and services that they could access for support, offers subsidised catering and enables eligible students to opt in to receive credit for catering outlets on campus during their second year.

In December 2023, the University set up its first Pop-up Pantry on campus for students in need of support during the winter months. It has since organised five more, both raising awareness of food poverty and directly supplying food to students in need. The University also keeps a Campus Pantry of essential food and toiletry items collected from staff and through charity donations which can be accessed by students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through student support services. Students also have access to grab bags of essential items through the Financial Guidance Team, ensuring that practical support is always available to students in need.

In addressing food poverty amongst students, the University is tackling an issue that can have a significant negative impact on mental health.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ejiohuo, O., Onyeaka, H., Unegbu, K. C., Chikezie, O. G., Lawal, A., & Odeyemi, O. A. (2024). Nourishing the Mind: How Food Security Influences Mental Wellbeing. *Nutrients*, 16(4), 501. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10893396/#:~:text=Food%20insecurity%20is%20considered%20a,stress%20%5B36%2C37%5D>



### 6.2.3 Student Volunteering – Economic Impact

Students at the University also create an economic impact through their activity as volunteers.

The analysis in this report was informed by an NUS Connect Survey produced in 2014<sup>12</sup>, which reported that 31% of students had volunteered over the previous academic year, for an average of 44 hours per year. For the University of Northampton, during 2023/24 this amounted to approximately 209,650 hours of activity from around 4,765 students.

As with part-time work, it was assumed that students volunteered in the areas where they lived. To estimate the economic contribution this supported, the total number of hours volunteered was multiplied by £11.72, which represents the estimated value of unpaid volunteering in the UK based on Community Life and time use surveys<sup>13</sup>.

The student volunteering impact of the University of Northampton in 2023/24 was £2 million GVA in the UK.

**Table 6.1 University of Northampton Student Volunteering Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	2	2	2

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

### 6.2.4 Student Volunteering – Wellbeing Impact

As well as the economic impact generated by volunteering there is also a wellbeing impact on the volunteers themselves. In 2021, a journal article<sup>14</sup> reviewed existing papers and developed the methodology around understanding the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing. It found that volunteering has a positive causal effect on wellbeing, highlighting the benefits of volunteers feeling that the work they are doing is worthwhile.

It was calculated the average wellbeing impact of volunteering as £911 per volunteer per year, meaning that the **wellbeing impact on student volunteers** from the University of Northampton was **£0.4 million**.

## 6.3 Supporting the Social Fabric Summary

The University of Northampton improves life for people in Northampton and Northamptonshire, supporting the town centre as well as facilitating work that benefits different communities in the area.

<sup>12</sup> NUS (2014), Still in the Red

<sup>13</sup> ONS, 2017, Changes in the value and division of unpaid volunteering in the UK: 2000 to 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Lawton, R. N., Gramatki, I., & Watt, W. (2021), Addressing the problem of reverse causality when estimating the wellbeing impacts of volunteering.



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By supporting the capacity of the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic and providing housing to people in need, the University of Northampton contributed to the dimensions of housing and health. The University also delivers benefits to health through its sponsorship of Northampton FC. Its community-based care for people with dementia contributed to the Better Life Index dimensions of health, life satisfaction, and community.

Through its work producing the Hidden Needs reports, the University delivers to a wide range of Better Life Index dimensions. By supporting charities to understand and address the main challenges of the area across a number of different issues, the University has delivered against housing, education, health, life satisfaction, and safety.

The University of Northampton identified the factors that negatively affect wellbeing for students and staff and has delivered or is committed to actions which directly tackle these issues, working to improve wellbeing amongst the University community. The University of Northampton also facilitates student volunteering, the wellbeing benefits of which can be valued at £398,107 for the estimated 437 students volunteering. Through this work, the University of Northampton delivers against the dimensions of life satisfaction and health.



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# 7. An Educated Workforce for the County

The University of Northampton provides high quality graduates for local organisations and supports people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The University of Northampton:

- educates graduates from across the UK and elsewhere, who go on to have higher salaries and generate increased tax revenues;
- provides workers who generate additional social value and form the workforce of pivotal public services; and
- supports pupils from disadvantage backgrounds into higher education and other career paths.

## 7.1 Graduate Impacts

By undertaking and completing their studies, graduates gain skills which make them more productive than they may otherwise have been. Furthermore, graduates are also more likely to be employed than those without a university education. Therefore, the decision to go to university not only means that graduates are more productive when they are employed, but they are also more likely to be in employment than individuals who chose not to go to university.

A crucial role of universities is to support graduates to develop their skills and access relevant opportunities for their field of future work, leveraging its expertise, network and relationships with industry. This is evidenced via the:

- destination of the University of Northampton graduates after their studies are complete; and
- the value of the earnings premium and social value associated with the degrees awarded by the University of Northampton over the lifetime of the graduates' working life.

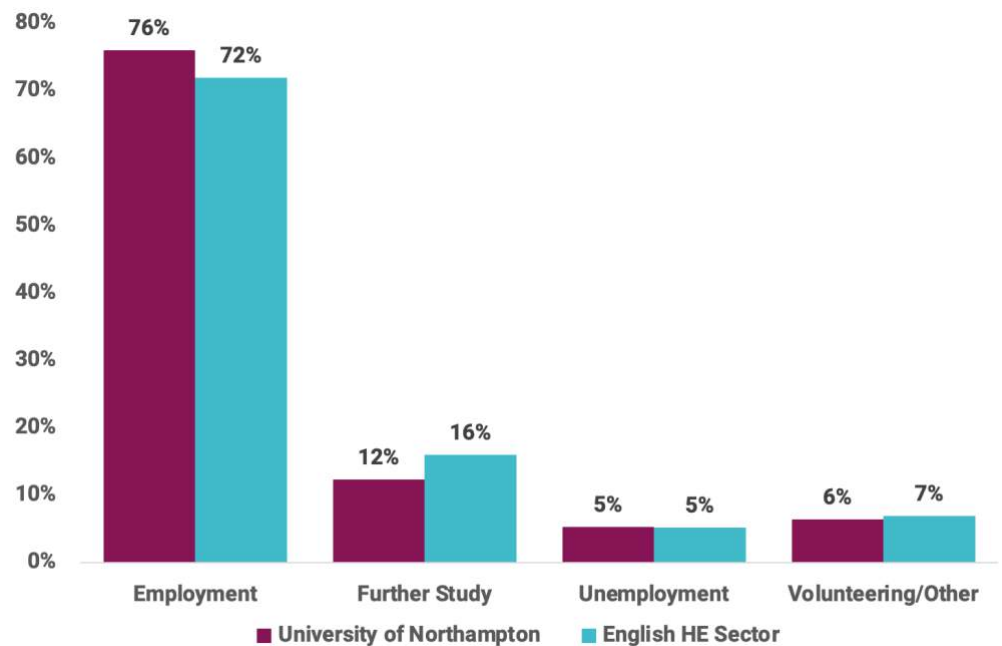
### 7.1.1 Graduate Destinations

The work the University does to equip graduates with the skills they need to thrive in the workplace and connect them to opportunities to apply them is reflected in graduate destinations. Information about these destinations is produced annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The dataset is gathered from a population survey of university graduates across the UK approximately 15 months after graduation to determine what they went on to do after their studies.



The most recent data is based on graduates from 2021/22 and suggests that around 88% of University of Northampton graduates go on to employment or further study within 15 months of graduating (Figure 7-1), including 76% in employment. This is greater than average for the sector.

**Figure 7-1 Graduate Destinations, 2021/22 Cohort**



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis of HESA 2021/22 Data

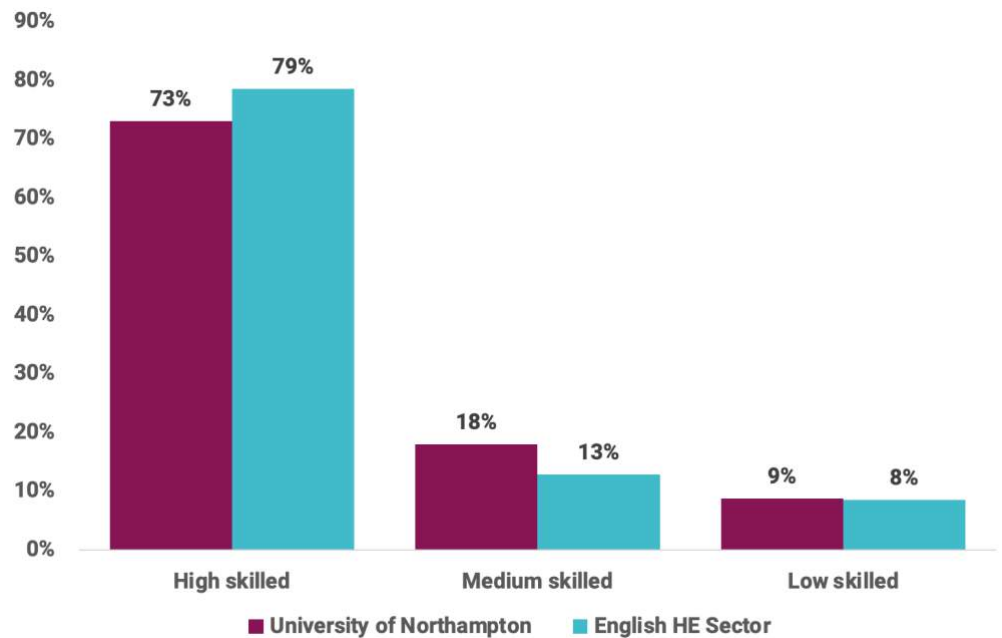
As shown in Figure 7-2, of those graduates who enter full-time employment 73% end up in high skilled jobs, such as managerial positions. This is lower than the total for graduates across the HE sector (79%), whilst the share in medium skilled occupations is higher (18% compared to 13%).

Medium skilled occupations account for more University of Northampton graduates as the share of graduates employed in caring and other service roles is greater than across the sector. This is reflected in the fact that more University of Northampton graduates enter into education and healthcare sectors of employment. Of the 2021/22 cohort, these two sectors accounted for 54% of University of Northampton graduates entering full-time employment, compared to the sector total of 38%.





**Figure 7-2 Occupation Level of University of Northampton Graduates, 2021/22 Cohort**



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis of HESA 2021/22 Data

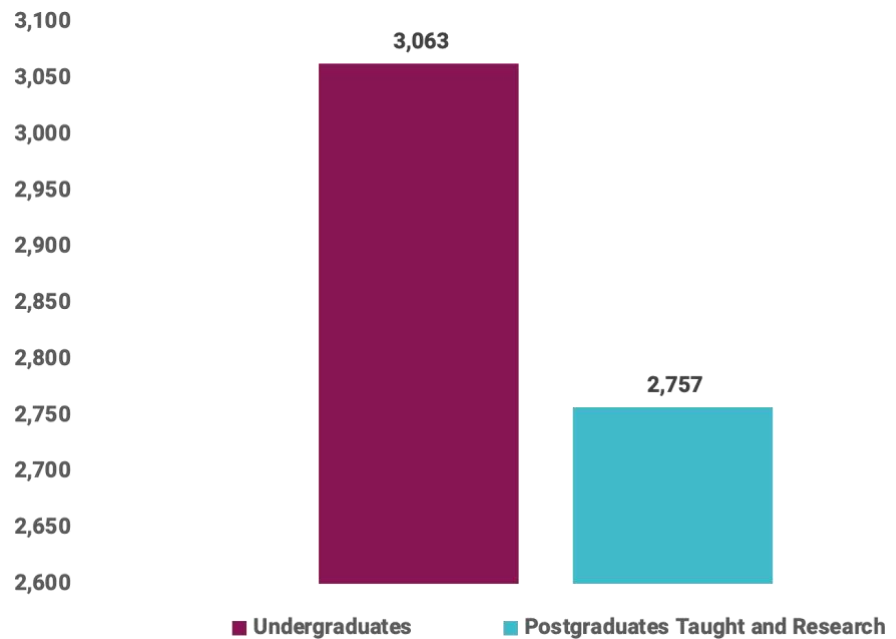
The Graduate Outcomes Survey also asks graduates to reflect on their current activity, and the extent to which they feel that activity is meaningful. Of the 2020/21 cohort, 85% of University of Northampton graduates agree, or strongly agree, that their current activity is meaningful. This is an important positive impact for graduates, since meaning is associated with high levels of wellbeing.

### 7.1.2 Lifetime Contribution to the Economy

The employment of University of Northampton graduates generates economic, and fiscal, benefits for the UK. This is reflected in the personal premium graduates gain from the additional earnings typically associated with having a university degree (as opposed to not having one) and the returns to the exchequer as a result of this premium, through the payment of higher taxes. There is also a social value attached to the graduate premium, indicating the wider benefits associated with graduates, including in those subject areas where social value is a better measure of their contribution than earnings.

The starting point in estimating the graduate premium associated with the University of Northampton was to consider the number of awards delivered. In 2022/23 the University awarded 3,063 undergraduate degrees and 2,757 postgraduate degrees (Figure 7-3).

**Figure 7-3 University of Northampton Degrees Awarded, 2022-23**



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis

To estimate both the personal and fiscal graduate premium from undergraduate degrees, it was necessary to consider the awards by their subject areas. As shown in Figure 7-4, Business and Management accounted for the largest number of degrees awarded by the University of Northampton in 2022/23 (21%), followed by Subjects allied to Medicine (19%) and Social Sciences (11%).

**Figure 7-4 University of Northampton Undergraduates by Degree Subject, 2022-23**



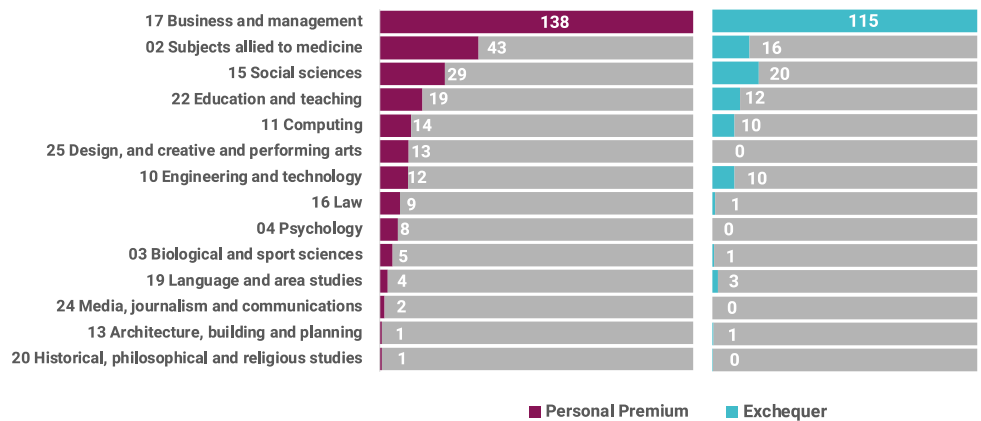
Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis.



The estimate of personal graduate premium relies on data from a 2021 study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) on the impact of undergraduate degrees on lifetime earnings. The study accounted for the background of students, including their sex, ethnicity, and participation of local areas (POLAR) status, and also considered the earnings premium associated with different types of universities.

The average premium per graduate for both personal returns and exchequer returns, as a result of obtaining an undergraduate degree from universities similar to the University of Northampton is £97,000 and £40,000 respectively. Figure 7-5 shows the total personal premium and exchequer returns per subject for the University of Northampton.

**Figure 7-5 Graduate Premium and Exchequer by Subject, 2022-23 (Undergraduates, £m)**



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis of IFS Data.

The total undergraduate productivity impacts, combining both personal and exchequer impacts, were estimated by multiplying the number of graduates by their respective premiums. This was applied to both UK and non-UK domiciled graduates by subject.

Having applied these assumptions, it was also necessary to determine where graduates work and live after graduation. This suggests that, immediately following graduation, **of UK UG graduates:**

- 32% live/work in Northamptonshire; and
- 96% live/work elsewhere in the UK.

The University of Northampton had 603 **non-UK UG graduates** in 2022/23. It is likely that these graduates will not all remain in the UK following graduation, at least not for the lifetime of their careers. Evidence from the Home Office suggests that approximately 17% of non-UK graduates remain in the UK around ten years after graduation<sup>15</sup>. As the graduate premium effect is estimated over the lifetime of graduates, this assumption was applied to the impact of non-UK graduates to

<sup>15</sup> Home Office, Migrant Journey Report 2021.



account for the fact that their earnings premium will likely be felt in other countries' economies.

In this way, it was estimated that those receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of Northampton in 2022/23 would be expected to earn a premium of £201 million more over their lifetimes than they would if they had not had university education. The benefit to the Exchequer would be £117 million over their lifetimes because of their university education. This gives a total economic impact to the UK economy of £318 million GVA.

**Table 7-1 University of Northampton Undergraduates Impacts (£m), 2022/23**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
Graduate Productivity	67	95	201
Exchequer Impact	39	55	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>318</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.

The estimate of economic impact from postgraduate awards was based on evidence from the ONS. This found that the lifetime earnings premium associated with holding postgraduate qualifications is 10% larger than for those with an undergraduate degree. To estimate the extra premium from a postgraduate degree, the undergraduate premium was applied to the distribution of postgraduates by subject and weighted by 10%. This figure was multiplied by the number of postgraduate awards in each category. A similar approach was taken for fiscal impacts. This method was applied to the impacts of both UK and international graduates.

International graduates accounted for 73% of postgraduate degrees at the University of Northampton in 2022/23. The postgraduate productivity impact associated with this is estimated at around £78 million GVA, and £35 million impact to the exchequer. This gives a total premium effect of £113 million. However, as with undergraduate degrees, it is unlikely that these graduates will all remain in the UK in the years following graduation. Following the same methodology, it was assumed that 17% will remain in the UK and this assumption was applied to the impact of non-UK PG graduates.

On this basis, it was estimated that those receiving a postgraduate degree from the University of Northampton in 2022/23 would be expected to earn a premium in the UK of £21 million. The benefit to the Exchequer would be £5 million, giving a total economic impact to the UK economy of £26 million.



**Table 7-2 University of Northampton Postgraduates Impacts (£m), 2022/23**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
Graduate Productivity	7	10	21
Exchequer Impact	2	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.

## 7.2 Making a Positive Contribution to Society

### 7.2.1 Supporting Foundational Services

The University actively engages with public services, including the police and health, to ensure that they have the workforce that they need.

In 2022/23, the University provided hundreds of graduates in allied health subjects particularly podiatrists, paramedics and nurses. It places in the top 12 higher education institutions for nursing and covers all four areas (adult, children’s, disability and mental health). The University engages deeply with the local NHS Trust, placing students on wards and in the community and ensuring that they have the skills needed to face the day to day challenges of working in the health sector.

A long-time partner of the University of Northampton is St Andrew’s Healthcare, a mental health charity based primarily in Northampton which provides services for people with complex mental health needs, including patients with dementia or serious brain injury. The centre hosts around 400 inpatients in Northampton, delivering specialist inpatient and community services.

The University places between 30-70 nursing students in placements at St Andrew’s Healthcare each year, where they gain valuable experience in mental health treatment. The University of Northampton delivers a two year course for nurses employed by St Andrew’s Healthcare who aim to specialise in mental health, helping to deliver the workforce with the skills required to provide high quality care for patients.

As well as working with the health services, the University provides degree apprenticeships in policing. The co-designed programme with Northamptonshire Police provides students with the skills needed to be in the police force, as well as providing continuing professional development to those already in the force.

The University’s facilities are state of the art, with an immersive augmented reality suite (called HYDRA) that allows students to role play real scenarios (e.g. a domestic abuse call) and react in real time to situations as they happen, explaining their reasoning in terms of the situation and the law. Similarly, students have mock interrogation scenarios.



Typically, a cohort consists of around 20 students, with another 50-60 members of the police force taking part in CPD courses. These CPD courses are focused on ensuring that existing staff within the force, particularly police community support officers (PCSO) have the grounding in neighbourhood policing necessary to do their jobs.

### 7.2.2 Estimating Social Value – Looking Beyond Pay

Lifetime earnings is not the only way to think about how graduates contribute to society. Conventional economic theory suggests that what an individual receives in income will reflect the value they add to the economy, but for many kinds of occupations, pay is a poor indicator of social value.

Some occupations which have wider benefits, particularly those related to education, health, and engineering, have a social value that exceeds an individual’s pay. Therefore, it is important to take this into consideration when thinking about wider contributions of the University of Northampton’s graduates.

A paper produced for the American Economic Association<sup>16</sup> examined a range of occupations and suggested social-value multipliers up to +4.0 to illustrate benefit to society in addition to what the individual receives in wages.

Table 7-3 demonstrates the impact of applying these multipliers to the personal premiums for UK domiciled undergraduates assessed in the previous section. The findings indicate that many of the University of Northampton’s graduates make social contributions that are not fully captured by focusing solely on lifetime earnings. The analysis reveals an increased **overall impact of £59 million**, incorporating the additional **social impacts** generated.

**Table 7-3 Estimating Social Value (Undergraduates, £m), 2022/23**

	Personal Premium	Social Value Multiplier	Social Value
Education and teaching	19	2.6	49
Computing	14	0.3	4
Engineering and technology	12	0.3	4
Subjects allied to medicine	43	<0.1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>		<b>59</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis of IFS Data. Social value multipliers are taken from Lockwood et al. (2012)

<sup>16</sup> Lockwood, Nathanson, & Weyl (2012). Tax and the Allocation of Talent, American Economic Association conference paper.



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## 7.3 Widening Access and Higher Aspiration

The University actively works to widen higher education participation in Northamptonshire and to support students from deprived backgrounds.

### 7.3.1 Schools Engagement

The University of Northampton's Schools Engagement team works with schools in areas that have low participation in higher education to support more children to have successful educational outcomes. It provides a wrap around service that covers every stage of the educational journey.

The University works with over 60 primary schools and 33 secondary schools across West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire. Generally, more than 70% of pupils in these schools are from the two most deprived quintiles (i.e. in the 40% of most deprived areas) and they experience a range of different circumstances that make it more difficult for pupils to access higher education. These include very high levels of pupils where English is a second language (over 70%) to areas that have suffered from deindustrialisation and generational unemployment.

As many pupils are from families that have no experience of higher education it can seem distant and therefore it is important to demystify and normalise university. This process begins when pupils are in primary school where the University's staff provide sessions, such as Your Future Your Choice and Ignite Your Future University Visit for Year 6 pupils. These sessions are designed to be fun and engaging, while giving pupils a chance to ask questions.

For secondary pupils there are over a dozen different programmes that are aimed at different groups, with higher or lower levels of engagement. These include Saturday Art Club, Higher Education Experience Days (including visits to the Waterside Campus) and I Don't Even Know (IDEK), a performance by a University drama group that matches the experiences of students.

The University makes considerable effort to recruit students from similar backgrounds to the pupils they are speaking with and runs in-depth training sessions to make them the most effective advocates of higher education. They can explain their stories, answer common queries and model a life that pupils can imagine (e.g. First Generation Student Talks), making higher education feel more accessible. This also benefits the University students, who become more comfortable and fluent speaking in front of a group.

The University also provides more hands-on support. Some schools struggle to attract teachers in certain subjects (e.g. maths), so the University provides additional capacity, helping pupils to attain better grades. Students at the University also help pupils with their UCAS applications, particularly medical school, a highly prestigious course. The team is impartial and tries to support pupils to make the best choice for them.



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Other programmes of the University tackle myths and misconceptions that are held about university, including that it is very expensive or that there is no support available. One programme involves an interactive puzzle where pupils must identify which University departments are able to provide different kinds of support. Knowing that this help is available can ease the transition and reduce drop out rates.

While visits to the Waterside Campus are particularly important for pupils, they are often difficult for schools due to stretched budgets and staff resources. To address this, University staff are available to increase staff-student ratios and can provide transport or other types of support as needed. As a result, schools see the University as a highly valued partner, which tailors its programmes to their individual needs.

While University's activities have resulted in many pupils going on to higher education, it also emphasises other pathways such as vocational training and work programmes. For example, it organises traineeships through the University in areas such as social care, as well as talks with employers. One example of this approach is Steam Northants, a careers event for pupils.



## STEAM Northants

### A careers event for pupils

Every year, the University of Northampton brings together over 2,500 visitors, 50 employers and a range of exhibitors.

Each year in June Year 6 to Year 13 pupils from across Northamptonshire come to a free STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts and Maths) careers event organised by the University of Northampton and hosted at its Waterside Campus.

The event attracts over 50 employers from Anglian Water to Doc Martens, Northants Police and VW, several of whom host workshops and exhibitions. It also attracts exhibitors such as the Birdman. Medical Mavericks and Science Made Simple, who combine education and entertainment. This also provides an opportunity for the University to showcase what it has to offer, including courses in engineering, dental nursing, logistics and sports and exercise science.

Pupils are presented with a number of potential options for how they can develop and use STEAM, with a particular focus in careers and education.





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### 7.3.2 Access and Participation Statistics

The University has a higher share of students from deprived and low access to higher education areas compared with other universities.

Widening participation statistics are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).<sup>17</sup> One level at which this is produced is that of POLAR4: representing the participation rates of young people entering higher education as a share of the young population of that area.

Each area (represented at the level of the Middle Layer Super Output Areas) is split into quintiles, with quintile 1 representing the least participation area and quintile 5 representing the most participation of young people in higher education in that area. Quintile 1 represents areas where higher education of young people is lowest and who would therefore be targets of widening participation agendas.

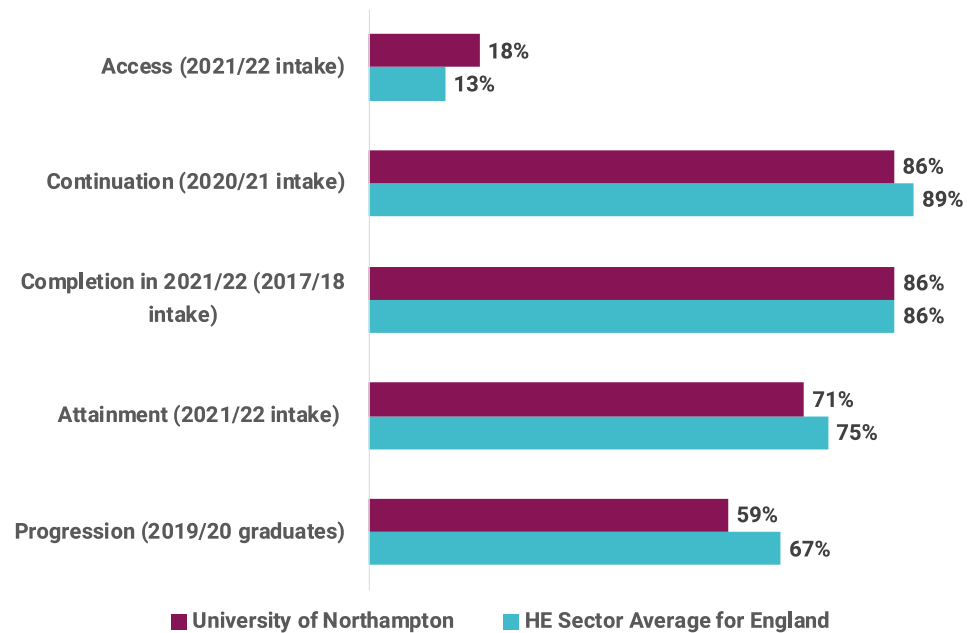
Figure 7-6 shows the latest outcomes of the University of Northampton's widening participation agenda on Quintile 1 areas. In its 2021/22 intake, 18% of the University of Northampton's intake was from young people located in Quintile 1 areas. This is above the sector total of 13% and also represents an increasing trend in the share of intake from these areas – between 2016/17 and 2021/22 intakes, the rate has increased by 38% (from 13% to 18%). Access rates for Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 are at their highest ever for the University of Northampton, representing the success of the University's widening participation agenda.

Completion rates for Quintile 1 students in 2021/22 were in line with the sector total of 86% (reflecting previous cohorts reaching completion). Progressions and attainment for some years is lower than the national average, which may reflect increased difficulty in supporting these students and/or the effects of Covid-19 on these cohorts.

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<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://tableau.hefce.ac.uk/t/Public/views/APDashboard2023-1/Overview-Indicators-Timeseries?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y>

**Figure 7-6 Access & Participation Statistics: Outcomes for POLAR4 Quintile 1**



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis of ONS data

### 7.3.3 Additional Fiscal Benefits of Widening Access

The economic, and social impacts of graduates was evaluated in the above sections. However, for some students at the University of Northampton there is an additional impact that attaining a higher education can have on their life trajectory than is captured in these figures. In addition to the graduate premium, the costs of poorer life outcomes that have been avoided can be assessed.

The latest widening participation statistics from ONS (2022/21) suggest that over 18% of the University of Northampton’s full time undergraduate intake (equating to 1,919 full time students) came from the 20% most deprived areas in England.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure of deprivation which ranks small areas of England across seven dimensions: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment deprivation. These areas are ranked from the least to the most deprived areas according to these metrics. The number of individuals out of work and rates of long-term structural unemployment is far greater in the more deprived areas of England than in more affluent areas. Unemployment in these deprived areas leads to a multitude of economic and social costs, which include:

- personal costs of unemployment (loss of income, harms future prospects, loss of sense of value, lower on-the-job training, lost human capital, increased chance of mental health problems, and increased risk of homelessness);
- costs of unemployment to the UK Exchequer (reduced tax revenues collected in income tax, national insurance contributions, and VAT, and increase in expenditure on unemployment and housing benefits); and



- costs of unemployment to society (lower economic output, increase in social problems, higher rates of criminality, and greater risk of political uncertainty).

The costs of unemployment to the UK Exchequer for each unemployed individual is estimated to be £8,418<sup>18</sup> each year, after adjusting for inflation. Given that this is solely focusing on the fiscal costs to the UK Exchequer, it is likely to substantially underestimate the true cost, as it neglects to consider the broad range of economic and social costs that are outlined above. The unemployment rate in the most deprived areas of England can be estimated from the employment data in the IMD indicators. Referring to the IMD employment data, it was estimated that the unemployment rate was 19% in the most deprived areas of England.

Combining these assumptions, it was estimated that the **total cost of unemployment that will be avoided** over a 40-year period for the University of Northampton’s full time undergraduate intake in 2023/24 from deprived areas was **£123 million**. This estimate is likely to be an underestimate due to conservative assumptions employed. Thus, the University of Northampton plays a crucial role in altering life trajectories and reducing long-term economic and social costs for students from deprived backgrounds.

## 7.4 Learning Impacts Summary

One of the most sizeable contributions that the University of Northampton makes is the education that it provides to its students. Over the course of their working lives, they go on to earn more than they would have otherwise as well as having levels of life satisfaction and generating more revenue in taxes. This makes a strong contribution to human capital, while also contributing to the dimensions of knowledge and skills and subjective wellbeing.

It was estimated that the graduate premium and exchequer impacts associated with graduates would be £116 million GVA in Northamptonshire, £162 million GVA in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and £344 million in the UK (Table 7-4).

**Table 7-4 University of Northampton Graduate Impacts Summary (£m GVA), 2022/23**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
Graduate Productivity	75	105	222
Exchequer Impact	41	58	122
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>344</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

<sup>18</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (2015).



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Many of the University's students also study in areas, such as healthcare, where they support foundational services and have a value far beyond the wages they receive. It was estimated that over their lifetimes the **social value** of this contribution would be **£59 million** across the UK. As a result, the University contributes to health and civic engagement.

As well as providing the educational foundation of a lifetime of higher earnings, the University plays a strong role in supporting young people from deprived backgrounds into higher education. Through its deep partnerships with schools, wrap around support and innovative programmes the University raises aspirations and widens access to university and better outcomes. Therefore, the University contributes to reducing inequalities in knowledge and skills, while increasing knowledge and skills and subjective wellbeing.

The University makes an important contribution to providing opportunities for those from some of the most deprived areas, and for some of those students, the graduate premium does not cover the full extent of the benefit. The **total cost of unemployment that will be avoided** over a 40-year period for the University of Northampton's full time undergraduate intake in 2023/24 from deprived areas was estimated at **£123 million**.



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## 8. Regenerating Northampton

The University of Northampton is actively involved in the regeneration of Northampton through the impacts generated by students and their work facilitating physical projects.

The University of Northampton contributes to the regeneration of Northampton through:

- attracting students to Northampton, generating student expenditure and enabling students to work in the local economy;
- delivering physical regeneration of the area through the construction of the Waterside Campus and engaging the community in the delivery of the Active Quarter;
- supporting local organisations by contributing to funding bids; and
- supporting tourism by working with local tourist attractions to improve visitor experiences, driving tourist visits with University events and improving the skills of the workforce to meet the needs of local tourism companies.

### 8.1 Student Spending and Working

#### 8.1.1 Supporting the Town Centre

Like many towns and cities, Northampton has experienced reduced footfall and struggling businesses in its town centre, which can create a self-reinforcing cycle where footfall continues to reduce. The University has played a role in helping to regenerate Northampton and make the town centre more vibrant.

Students have played an important role in supporting the regeneration of Northampton. They are large consumers of local services, such as supermarkets and cafes, and also support the nightlife of an area. This could be increased in the future by investment in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in the city centre. This baseline of demand, as well as the diversity that students typically bring, supports a wider variety of businesses in Northampton which makes the centre more attractive to other residents, increasing footfall.

This virtuous circle is also supported by the ready availability of students to provide a local workforce. Students work in sectors such as food services and retail, which provide flexible employment that may be less attractive to other workers. As a result, businesses are more competitive, while students benefit from experience in the workplace.



As with students, staff at the University, which is one of the most significant employers in Northamptonshire, also make a major contribution to demand in the town centre.

### 8.1.2 Student Spending

For the period of the analysis, there were 15,370 full-time students enrolled on courses at the University of Northampton. Around 74% were undergraduates and 26% were postgraduates.

Students term-time spending habits support turnover and employment in local businesses. Their spending is additional to the area as they may not otherwise have come to Northamptonshire (or stayed in the county if they already lived there), were it not for the University.

To estimate the impact associated with student spending, it is necessary to determine:

- **where students live:** the type of accommodation students occupy during their studies is a key influence on their expenditure. For example, students living in rented accommodation spend significantly more on housing costs, food and household goods than those who live with their parents or guardians. Data from HESA suggests that around 18% of students live in University owned accommodation, 61% in rented accommodation, and the remaining 22% live with parents or guardians;
- **their spending patterns:** this can be estimated based on data from the Student Income and Expenditure Survey for 2014 to 2015 which was published by the Department for Education in 2018. It suggested that, on average, students spent £11,750 on housing and living costs in 2014/15. Adjusting for inflation, the annual spend per student in 2023/24 was estimated to be £15,737.

Collectively, the annual expenditure on living costs and rent for all full-time students at the University of Northampton amounted to £183 million. This figure was apportioned to the different study areas based on where students lived.

The student spending impact of the University of Northampton in the UK was £141 million GVA, supporting 2,630 jobs.

**Table 8-1 University of Northampton Student Spending Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	59	78	141
Employment (Jobs)	1,060	1,410	2,630

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding



### 8.1.3 Student Employment

Students who work part-time while they study also contribute to the local economy. This is usually in businesses close to where the students live and provides an important source of additional labour for the area.

Based on ONS Labour Force Survey, it was estimated approximately 33% of full-time students work part-time alongside their studies, equivalent to around 5,026 students at the University of Northampton. Of those, 694 students work for the University. However, not all these jobs will be additional as some may displace non-students, so an adjustment was made to account for the youth unemployment rate in each of the study areas. On this basis, 80% of all student part-time jobs were assumed to be additional to the labour market.

The impact of student employment was converted into GVA and employment impacts by applying appropriate sectoral ratios and multipliers (though induced effects have been considered elsewhere and therefore are not considered). Students working for the University have also been excluded from the analysis in this section as their impacts have been accounted for in the section which considers staff employment.

The student employment impact of the University of Northampton in the UK was £78 million GVA, supporting 2,140 jobs.

**Table 8-2 University of Northampton Student Employment Impact, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	40	48	78
Employment (Jobs)	1,140	1,350	2,140

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding

## 8.2 Physical Regeneration

### 8.2.1 Waterside Campus

In 2018, the University opened its £330 million Waterside Campus on the site of a former power station, consolidating its campuses. It was designed to be open to the public and promote sustainable travel.

The new campus includes a learning hub, a creative hub, University administration buildings, research buildings and several halls of residence as well as sports facilities. The Campus is open to the public, with several open green spaces, that are actively used by local residents. The University has invested in cycling and walking paths, and the campus is well-connected to the town centre.



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### 8.2.2 Active Quarter

In 2023, West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet made the decision to support plans to develop an Active Quarter, utilising existing green and urban spaces and transforming them to create a space which would benefit the community. The Active Quarter provides an accessible, high quality, safe space that has enabled people to live healthier lives by providing a recreational space which supports physical and mental wellbeing.

In support of the project, the University undertook community engagement activities, speaking directly with residents of Northamptonshire to understand what the community wanted the Active Quarter to be. This ensured that what the people of Northamptonshire wanted was fully incorporated into the project so that plans delivered a public asset that would work for the people who would be using it.

In 2024, the Active Quarter covers 900 hectares of land, encompassing 15km of cycle paths and 44km of footways, as well as 158 hectares of greenspace incorporating public parks, playgrounds, and areas for outdoor sports. As it has developed, the feedback from the University's work with the community has helped to shape a number of features including signage on recreational trails and video maps of cycling and walking routes which were made available online.

By supporting the development of the Active Quarter using its internal resources and ensuring that residents opinions were embedded into design features, the University of Northampton has been instrumental in delivering a space which benefits the community through the provision of free access to engage in physical activity and a green space with benefits for mental health outcomes.<sup>19</sup>

The University's work in prioritising the Active Quarter helped centre the public health benefits associated with access to green space and active travel in developments to Northamptonshire, supporting the delivery of the Active Quarter as an accessible space which serves the needs of residents.

### 8.2.3 Collaboration

As well as directly investing in the physical infrastructure of Northampton through its Waterside Campus, the University has also played a strategic role in supporting funding bids and contributing to organisations such as the Business Improvement District (BID) Board and Northampton Forward.

Founded in 2019, Northampton Forward plays a key role in co-ordinating and driving forward regeneration within Northampton and delivering the strategic vision for Northampton Town Centre. This has included working on the Northampton Town Centre Masterplan and the Northampton Town Investment Plan.

As a result, Northampton Forward has secured £33 million in funding from the Government's Towns Fund and the Future High Street Fund, which will be used for a

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<sup>19</sup> NHS Providers (2022), Using Green Spaces to Support Local Health. Available: <https://nhsproviders.org/being-an-anchor-institution/using-green-spaces-to-support-local-health>





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variety of town centre improvements. This includes the redevelopment of Greyfriars, which includes revitalising derelict buildings into cultural and creative hubs, developing improved sustainable transport options and creating new outdoor spaces.

In the past, the University of Northampton has also collaborated on the development of Delapré Abbey (see case study), projects in Northampton's Cultural Quarter and Enterprise Zone, e.g. the Vulcan Works Creative Hub.

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## Delapré Abbey

The University of Northampton supports the development of tourism and active travel at the historic local attraction.

The University of Northampton has been working with Delapré Abbey, a local tourist attraction, since 2020. The historic house has since undergone a significant restoration to become a visitor attraction complete with gardens and a park, as well as hosting events, exhibitions and an on-site café.

Delapré Abbey approached the University of Northampton, which is a short walk away and has deep knowledge of the local context, to undertake research to optimise the signposts for visitors. The project's aim was to increase walking activity and improve local people's physical health. The research produced by the University has been important for providing an evidence base for the organisation to use in funding bids, which has since led to new paths being created onsite.

The project has also helped to increase awareness of the site and the activities available among local staff and students, as well as helping to give local people a sense of pride in the area, leading to increased footfall. While admission to the park is free, the additional footfall is likely to have supported an increase in admissions to paid activities on site. An evaluation project, led by the University, is now in the process of being completed.

The University of Northampton continues to work with Delapré Abbey in its vision for the site's future, and students at the University have also undertaken projects on behalf of Delapré Abbey to develop the 19<sup>th</sup> century stables.

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## 8.3 Tourism and Culture

This section considers the economic activity generated by visitors to the University and to its staff and students. This includes activity from:

- prospective students visiting the campus for open days;
- conferences and events held by the University; and
- friends and relatives visiting staff and students at the campus.

It is important to consider how much of this activity is additional to each study area (i.e. how much activity would have happened anyway, in the absence of the University). Taking this into account, the University of Northampton attracted an estimated 15,676 visitors, of which 83% were estimated to be day visitors and 17% local visitors.

Total visitor spending was estimated from data provided by the Great Britain Day Visits Survey (GBDVS) and the International Passenger Survey on average visitor spend, the average number of visits to friends and relatives and the associated spend per head in each study area.

The additionality of the tourism activity is greater at the local level than for the larger study areas because it was assumed the visitors would have made trips to other areas of the UK if they had not visited Northamptonshire.

The impact of tourism activity was converted into GVA and employment impacts by applying appropriate sectoral ratios and multipliers. Overall, tourism activity associated with the University of Northampton was estimated to support £1 million GVA and 20 jobs in Northamptonshire; and £1 million GVA and 30 jobs in the UK.

**Table 8-3 University of Northampton Tourism Impacts Summary, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
GVA (£m)	1	1	1
Employment (Jobs)	20	20	30

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.

The University has recently begun a project focused on building skills and impact within Northamptonshire. In partnership with the University of Bedfordshire and using funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the University of Northampton works across two main areas, which are focused on Corby:

- the Heritage Impact Accelerator is an incubator that aims to build capacity among organisations delivering heritage projects; and
- the Heritage Skills Hub provides training and events for professionals in the heritage sector, as well connecting them with local heritage networks.



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The University has a longstanding partnership with Northamptonshire Surprise, a tourism working group which brings together local stakeholders which champions Northamptonshire's tourism offering in order to attract visitors and support local tourism businesses as well as working for sustainable development in the sector.

The University recently hosted a Careers Fair for companies involved in the event, tourism and hospitality sector, organised in collaboration with Northamptonshire Surprise and the Northamptonshire Tourism Business Network. The event invited students at the University and Northampton College to engage with employers from across the sector, including tourist attractions, hotels, and festivals, as well as West Northamptonshire Council.

This event demonstrated to students undertaking courses related to the sector the opportunities available to them in Northamptonshire, improving links between students and local companies and encouraging students to stay in the region following their graduation.

## 8.4 Supporting the Regeneration of Northampton Summary

The University of Northampton has supported the regeneration of Northampton by enabling the impacts generated by students, contributing to the OECD Better Life Index dimensions of income and jobs.

The University has also helped to deliver the physical regeneration of the area through the construction of Waterside Campus and engaging the community in plans for the Active Quarter, contributing to the dimensions of environment, health, civic engagement, and life satisfaction, as well as to the economic capital of Northampton.

By playing a strategic role in supporting funding bids and contributing to other organisations in the county, the University has delivered on the dimensions of health and environment.

When combined, the economic impact of the University's students and its tourism activities generated £102 million GVA and 2,230 jobs in Northamptonshire, £128 million GVA and 2,790 jobs in the Oxford Cambridge Arc region, and £222 million GVA and 4,810 jobs in the UK.



**Table 8-4 University of Northampton Student and Tourism Impacts Summary, 2023/24**

	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Oxford Cambridge Arc</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>GVA (£m)</b>			
Student Spending	59	78	141
Student Employment	40	48	78
Student Volunteering	2	2	2
Tourism	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Employment (Jobs)</b>			
Student Spending	1,060	1,410	2,630
Student Employment	1,140	1,350	2,140
Tourism	20	20	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>2,790</b>	<b>4,810</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.



# 9. Summary and Conclusion

In 2023/24, the University of Northampton generated an economic impact of £823 million GVA in the UK, supporting 10,610 jobs.

## 9.1 Quantifiable Economic Impact Summary

In 2023/24, the University of Northampton generated an estimated economic impact amounting to:

- £366 million GVA and 5,410 jobs in Northamptonshire;
- £456 million GVA and 6,390 jobs in Oxford-Cambridge Arc; and
- £823 million GVA and 10,610 jobs across the UK.

**Table 9-1 University of Northampton Total GVA Impacts (£m), 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
Direct	119	119	119
Supplier spending	6	14	56
Staff spending	17	25	67
Capital spending	<1	1	3
<b>Operational</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>244</b>
Service to Businesses	<1	1	3
Placements	5	6	8
KTPs	<1	<1	1
<b>Knowledge Exchange</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>
Graduate Productivity	75	105	222
Exchequer Impact	41	58	122
<b>Graduate*</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>345</b>
Student Spending	59	78	141
Student Employment	40	48	78
Student Volunteering	2	2	2
Tourism	1	1	1
<b>Student and Tourism</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Total GVA</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>823</b>

Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Note: graduate impacts based on 2022/23 graduate numbers



**Table 9-2 University of Northampton Total Employment Impacts, 2023/24**

	Northamptonshire	Oxford Cambridge Arc	UK
Direct	2,580	2,580	2,580
Supplier spending	260	550	2,200
Staff spending	160	240	670
Capital spending	<10	10	40
<b>Operational</b>	<b>3,010</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>5,500</b>
Service to Businesses	-	<10	<10
Placements	160	200	280
KTPs	10	10	30
<b>Knowledge Exchange</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>310</b>
Student Spending	1,060	1,410	2,630
Student Employment	1,140	1,350	2,140
Tourism	20	20	30
<b>Student and Tourism</b>	<b>2,030</b>	<b>2,790</b>	<b>4,810</b>
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>5,410</b>	<b>6,390</b>	<b>10,610</b>

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding.

Many of the University’s students also study in areas, such as healthcare, where they support foundational services and have a value far beyond the wages they receive. It was estimated that over their lifetimes the **social value** of this contribution would be **£59 million** across the UK.

The University makes an important contribution to providing opportunities for those from some of the most deprived areas, and for some of those students, the graduate premium does not cover the full extent of the benefit. The **total cost of unemployment that will be avoided** over a 40-year period for the University of Northampton’s full time undergraduate intake in 2023/24 from deprived areas was estimated at **£123 million**.

### 9.1.1 Impact Multipliers

Impact multipliers are a useful summary indicator to express within a single figure the returns from investment in an organisation. The University of Northampton had an income of £196 million, directly employed 2,580 people and generated £823 million GVA. Therefore:

- for **each £1 of income received**, the University generated more than **£4 in economic impact** across the UK (including long-term impacts); and
- for each person it directly employed, the University supported 4 jobs across the UK.

## 9.2 Economic Impact Over Time

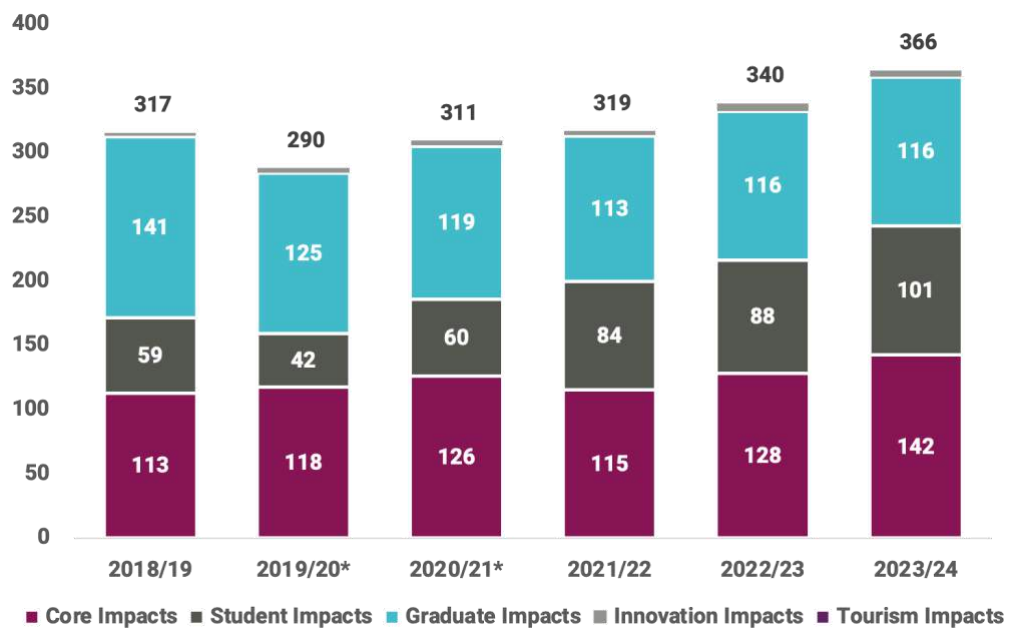
As part of the work programme, BiGGAR Economics also estimated the economic impact of the University over time, from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

The impacts are presented in 2024 prices and so changes over time are in real terms, after accounting for inflation.

### 9.2.1 Local Impacts

The University's total GVA in Northamptonshire increased by 14% in real terms (after accounting for inflation) from 2018/19 to 2023/24, from £317 million to £366 million. This growth primarily stems from increased core impact, with student impacts also contributing significantly. Figure 9-1 presents a breakdown of these evolving impacts, illustrating the shifts in each component over the five-year period.

**Figure 9-1 Local GVA Impacts (£m), 2018/19 to 2023/24**



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Years impacted by Covid-19. Note: graduate impacts for 2023/24 are based on 2022/23 graduate numbers.

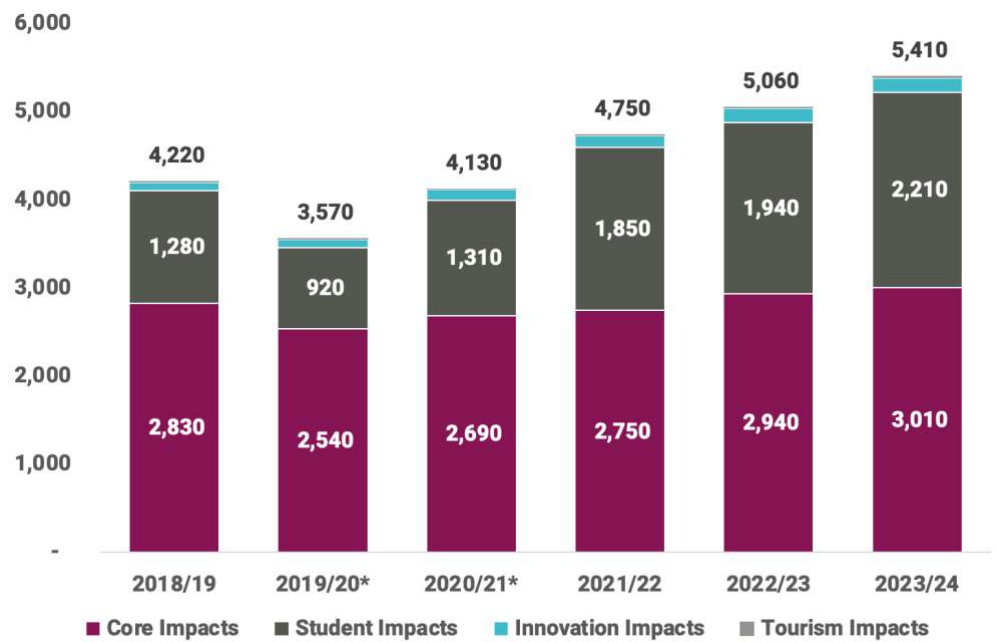
The growth in student impact is driven by increased enrolment, with student numbers rising from 9,525 in 2018/19 to 15,370 in 2023/24 (an increase of 61%). The rise in core impacts is primarily attributed to a 24% increase in university income.

Graduate impacts decreased, primarily due to lower UK undergraduate and postgraduate numbers in 2019/20 and 2020/21, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Following this period, both undergraduate and postgraduate figures increased, though this has not yet returned to 2018 levels.



Total annual employment impacts associated with the University rose from 4,220 in 2018/19 to 5,410 in 2023/24, representing a 28% increase. This growth is primarily driven by the expansion of student employment, reflecting the overall trend of increased student impact on the local economy.

**Figure 9-2 Local Employment Impacts (Jobs), 2018/19 to 2023/24**



Source: BIGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Years impacted by Covid-19

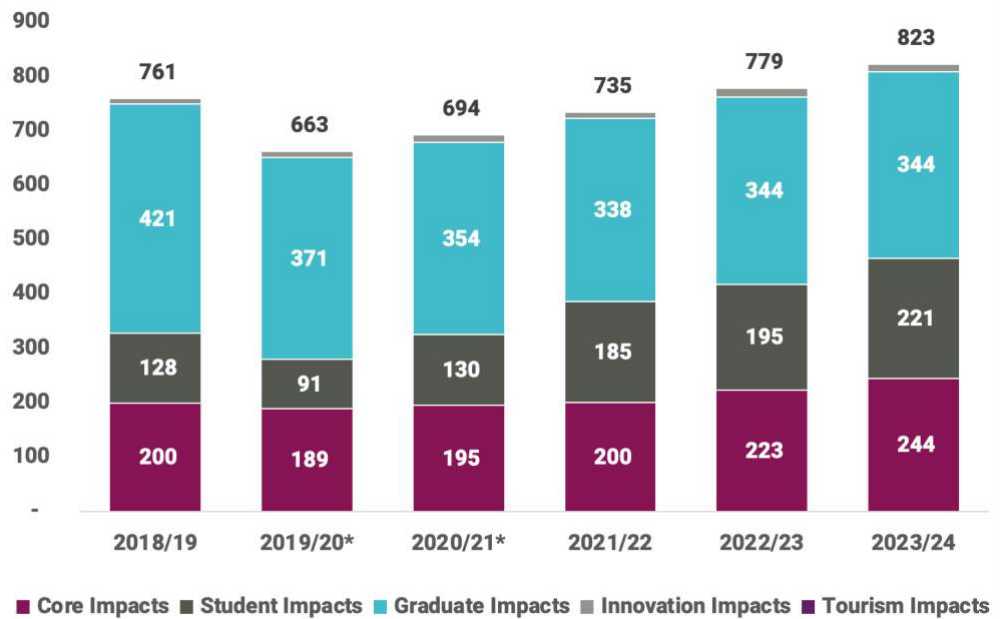
### 9.2.2 UK Impacts

At the UK level, the University's total GVA impact increased from £761 million in 2018/19 to £823 million in 2023/24 (an 8% increase). This growth, mirroring local trends, is primarily driven by enhanced student and core impacts. Concurrently, total annual employment impacts across the UK expanded from 7,880 to 10,620 (35%), reflecting the University's widening economic influence on a national scale.



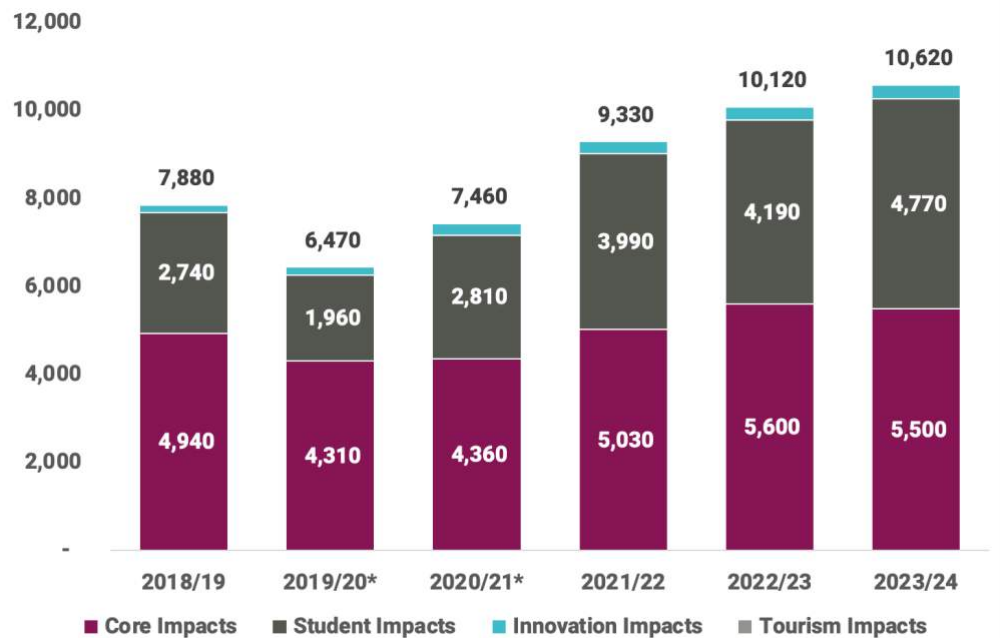


Figure 9-3 UK level GVA Impacts (£m), 2018/19 to 2023/24



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Years impacted by Covid-19. Note: graduate impacts for 2023/24 are based on 2022/23 graduate numbers.

Figure 9-4 UK level Employment Impacts (Jobs), 2018/19 to 2023/24



Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. Note: totals may not sum due to rounding. \*Years impacted by Covid-19.

In summary, the University's economic impact in the UK has shown resilience and growth after the Covid-19 shock. GVA increased by 15% from 2018/19 to 2023/24, reaching £366 million, driven by increased core and student impacts.



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## 9.3 Dimensions to Assess Current Wellbeing

The economic impacts captured by quantifying jobs and GVA are a vital part of the ways in which the University of Northampton generates impact. Supporting job creation is a key element of contributing to a strong economy which creates opportunities for the population. This is why jobs and income are both part of the 11 dimensions to assess current wellbeing under the OECD Better Life Index. The provision of good quality jobs which generate enough income for the people working them are a key factor in what makes a strong society.

The University of Northampton also contributes to a number of other dimensions under the Better Life Index, generating far-reaching social impacts which form the basis of a society which works for its people. This includes driving growth, core impacts, supporting the social fabric, providing an educated workforce for the county, and regenerating Northampton.

Through these areas, the University makes an impact across the majority of the dimensions of the OECD framework:

- **Income:** as well as delivering income to University staff, the University supports local businesses to grow, improving their ability to offer well-paid jobs;
- **Jobs:** the University generates jobs in Northampton, supporting people in the county to develop skills and stay connected to society;
- **Housing:** the University provides accommodation free of charge to care-experienced young people, giving them a home with privacy and personal space;
- **Community:** by enabling a space for people with dementia to access community-based care, the University allows people suffering from dementia and their carers to form strong social and support networks;
- **Education:** by engaging with young people in schools and working to widen participation, the University supports people in continuing their education;
- **Environment:** through the TANZ West Northants project, the University is working to support businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, protecting the environment;
- **Civic Engagement:** through the Northamptonshire Anchor Institutions Network, the University supports engagement between businesses and local government, enabling the private and public sector to work together towards shared goals;
- **Health:** the work of NDRIC supports healthcare practitioners to deliver the highest quality care to people with dementia, from initial diagnosis through to ongoing care. The University has also supported the health of students by tackling food poverty and improving access to food;
- **Life Satisfaction:** the University has identified areas which negatively impact the wellbeing of students and staff and is taking action to address these issues in order to improve life satisfaction in the University community.



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### 9.3.1 Delivering Across Dimensions

Some areas of the University of Northampton's activities contribute to several dimensions of the Better Life Index, demonstrating the University's commitment to the delivery of social impact.

**The Hidden Needs Report:** The Hidden Needs Report supports charities to understand where the need in Northamptonshire is greatest across several different areas. The report collates data on a number of different issues, including crime, health, and children, enabling the local charities to both direct funds where the need is greatest, and generate additional funding with the ability to demonstrate why their work is needed. In this way, the Hidden Needs report has enabled charities in Northamptonshire to address impacts related to housing, education, health, safety, and life satisfaction.

**Physical Regeneration of Northampton:** The University's presence in Northampton has wide reaching impacts across the dimensions of the Better Life Index. By attracting students to the area, the University has generated jobs through their expenditure, the work they do, and their volunteering. The benefits of attracting students to the area also contribute to the dimension of community, establishing a strong social network amongst students and the people who live in Northampton.

The University has also supported regeneration through the construction of the Waterside Campus, improving the visual appeal of the area and therefore the life satisfaction of the people who live there. By engaging the community in plans for the Active Quarter, the University of Northampton ensured that the development not only contributed to the dimensions of health and environment, but also civic engagement, demonstrating to the people of Northamptonshire that their voices matter and can genuinely influence large community projects.

## 9.4 Capitals to Assess Future Wellbeing

As well as delivering social impact in the present, the University of Northampton has contributed significantly to three of the four capitals with which future wellbeing can be assessed. Understanding the contribution the University makes to the different capitals allows an understanding of what it contributes to the stock of benefits which will last into the future, ensuring that the benefits generated by the University are ongoing and build upon current benefits. Capital accumulation is crucial to creating a successful economy and society for future generations.

By investing in the construction of the Waterside Campus and facilitating plans to develop the Active Quarter, the University of Northampton contributed significantly to Northampton's **economic capital**. The development of economic capital supports the material living conditions of society.

The University of Northampton contributes to **human capital** by educating students and producing skilled, knowledgeable graduates whose improved productivity will help to drive economic growth. These form the basis of the future workforce.



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By establishing the Northamptonshire Anchor Institution Network and its other partnerships, the University of Northampton brings together key stakeholders for the future of Northamptonshire, creating a space for productive co-operation and establishing the shared goal of building **social capital** which positively influences the way people experience Northamptonshire. This social capital also provides the strong institutional framework that a successful economy and good society require.

## 9.5 A Continuing Contribution

The University of Northampton makes a strong and growing contribution to the economy of Northamptonshire and the wider region and country. In 2023/24, it was estimated that it contributed £366 million GVA and 5,410 jobs in Northamptonshire, and £823 million GVA and 10,610 jobs in the UK. This has grown over time in line with its income and the number of students that it educates.

The University's impacts have been considered within the framework of the OECD Better Life Index, which identifies the things that matter beyond economic output and jobs. The University makes a broad and deep contribution to the fabric of life in Northamptonshire. As an anchor institution its staff and students make the area more vibrant and economically sustainable. It supports pupils from the most deprived backgrounds into higher education and a range of new opportunities. Its research and its engagement with third sector organisations help to solve society's problems at a local and international scale. Its graduates provide the skilled staff needed for a broad range of organisations in Northamptonshire, from businesses to public sector organisations such as the NHS.

In addition to supporting the regeneration of Northampton, by increasing the stock of human capital, through its graduates, and the stock of social capital, through its engagement and leadership across organisations, the University is providing the foundations necessary for Northamptonshire's future prosperity.

As has been captured throughout this report, the University of Northampton makes a substantial contribution across many of the domains that are necessary for an economy and society to flourish.



# 10.

## Appendix: Consultations

The study was supported by an extensive consultation exercise.

### 10.1 Consultation List

BiGGAR Economics would like to thank each of the consultees who gave their valuable time to inform and improve the study. Details of each consultee are listed below

**Table 10-1 Consultation List**

Consultee	Organisation
Alistair Lomax	Arc Universities Group
Paul Jury	Barclays
Nicole Atkinson	Big Film Group
Richard Clinton	Delaprè Abbey
Jennifer Thomas	Federation of Small Businesses
Robert Edwards	GXO
Jon Lawson	Kingswood Secondary Academy
George Chandler	North Northamptonshire Council
Guy Holloway	North Northamptonshire Council
Jo Gordon	Northampton Arts Management Trust/Royal Derngate
Mark Mullen	Northampton BID
Geraldine Tandoh	Northampton International Academy
James Corrigan	Northampton Town Football Club
James Whiting	Northampton Town Football Club
Louise Wall	Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce
Rachel McGrath	Northamptonshire Community Foundation
David Maher	Northamptonshire NHS Foundation Trust
David Williams	Northamptonshire NHS Foundation Trust
Damian Hiscocks	Northamptonshire Police
Warren Bowden	Scottish Leather Group
Luc Vogtlander	Scottish Leather Group
Ruth Roan	SEMLEP Growth Hub



Vivienne McVey	St Andrews Healthcare
Sarah Sivyer	Stephensons Online Ltd
Rachel Mallows	The Mallows Company
Robin Webber-Jones	Tresham College
Dan Bailey	University of Northampton
Becky Bradshaw	University of Northampton
Sana Chishty	University of Northampton
Stefan Kaczmarczyk	University of Northampton
Ebenezer Laryea	University of Northampton
Institute of Social Innovation x 2	University of Northampton
Knowledge Exchange Team x 2	University of Northampton
Sadie Beishon	West Northamptonshire Council
Sally Burns	West Northamptonshire Council
Louis Devayya	West Northamptonshire Council
Rebecca Purnell	West Northamptonshire Council
Louise Seymour	West Northamptonshire Council

## 10.2 Key Themes

A number of key themes emerged as part of the consultation process:

- The University **attracts and retains people to the area**
- The University is a **key pillar** of Northamptonshire’s offer to potential investors
- It is **strongly integrated with the local economy**, and has lots of relationships with businesses
- The University plays a **convening role**, bringing together businesses and/or other organisations, e.g. careers fair, other events.
- It is seen as **independent** and ‘not having something to gain’ from engagement
- The biggest contribution that the University makes is its **graduates and skills**. It provides a **steady stream of graduates** which is vital for the local economy
- Northampton is a **much more attractive place** because of the University, e.g. students spending and working, place shaping
- The University is playing a role in **regenerating Northampton**, particularly from its students spending and working but also related to funding bids etc.
- The University provides **additional capacity** for services, e.g. public health, supporting funding bids
- The University plays a strong role across Northamptonshire in **increasing aspiration and widening participation**. It is seen as a vital partner to schools and provides a wrap up around service
- The University **supports foundational services**, e.g. police and health system

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