



University of  
East London

**125** Years of  
Pioneering  
Futures

Vision 2028

# IMPACT!

Economic, Environmental, and Socio-Cultural Impact Report 2023



# INTRODUCTION

“I have had the privilege of being part of the University of East London’s transformational journey through Vision 2028 over the last five years. We have remained true to our 1898 founding roots as West Ham Technical Institute, with a focus on unlocking opportunities for people from all parts of global society to reach their potential, guided by a clear vision to be a powerful force for positive societal change.

UEL’s resolute focus on lifting up talent and tackling the world’s most pressing issues through innovation and research, means that its impact resonates not only within campus walls. Our work is also having a profound positive impact for the broader communities we serve. I continue to be inspired by the dedication of our staff and partners, to break new ground in social mobility and empower individuals to shape a more equitable and inclusive future, and in doing so, shining a light on just how transformational education can and should be.”



**John Garwood**

Chair of the Board,  
University of East London

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# IMPACT

## INTRODUCED BY PROFESSOR AMANDA J. BRODERICK, VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

**The University of East London (UEL) was founded 125 years ago this year, with a mission to help local people gain access to education in science, engineering, and the arts – providing emerging industries with skilled and creative workers from east London and empowering working-class men and women to gain a technical education that would once have been inaccessible.**

Our origin as a ‘people’s university’ remains our ‘guiding star’, but within a new technological paradigm, a unique industry partnership approach and an increasingly global reach. Our innovative 10-year Vision 2028 strategy creates powerful impact, pioneering future careers and sustainable innovation for a changing world. The strategy’s success throughout its first five years has enabled the University to flourish and thrive in the continuous next. UEL is rooted in east London, with three campuses across Stratford and the Docklands, each serving thousands of students. Our purpose is to address health and economic inequalities wherever they are found and, together with our UEL Global Family, we deliver a wide range of education, innovation, and enterprise provision, creating a flourishing, diverse community worldwide.

Over the last 125 years, UEL’s community has expanded. A growing number of students are able to access our pioneering, skills-based education, and we help to develop diverse talent from all around the world. UEL’s reach is now felt both nationally and internationally. Our thriving academic partnerships include those in Greece, India, Egypt and the US, and our student body spans over 160 nationalities across five continents.

This diversity is one of UEL’s great strengths. Inclusion is not just an ambition, but a tangible reality on our campuses. Vision 2028 reflects the University’s commitment to unlock the unique power of our communities, to increase the diversity of the talent pipeline in a changing world. We are preparing our students for the jobs and opportunities of the future and driving forward that future inclusively and sustainably.

UEL transforms lives by identifying talent wherever it lies. We support high-potential students who may not otherwise have considered university to access higher education. We grow this talent through our flagship

Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness curriculum, embedding social, emotional, physical, and cultural intelligence development, together with digital proficiency, into everything we do. This curriculum is built into every course, at every level, to facilitate our graduates flourishing and thriving in a 5.0 economy. As we strive towards becoming the country's leading careers-intensive university, we are focused on equipping our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to move seamlessly from their studies to the continuously shifting world of work. We are supporting the growth of a diverse talent pipeline by bringing together education, industry and talent in a new education and skills social value partnership. We are challenging employers to move away from old-fashioned proxies for talent and supporting them instead to access, grow and keep the best talent, wherever it is found.

UEL's distinctive approach to research has an emphasis on real-world benefits that impact both local and global communities. This has seen UEL's research profile steadily grow. We pride ourselves on driving innovation in areas which tackle global challenges, including urban sustainability in cities and communities, reducing health and economic inequalities, driving social inclusion, and harnessing the power of new technologies. Our strategic institutional research priorities of sustainability and green tech, wellbeing and health tech, and cyber and social justice all align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, reminding us of our wider global responsibilities. Our partnership with Siemens to become net zero as an institution by 2030 serves as a global urban model for higher education and is a great example of how our research combines with our other institutional activity to have long-term impact. As such, our research, as seen in REF 2021 (Research Excellence Framework), demonstrated real-world impact and benefits in areas such as health, social policy, and sustainability; 55% of the University's overall institutional submission was rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'.

For 125 years, UEL has demonstrated its resilience as an institution. The University has supported both our student body and wider community to overcome many challenges. Most recently, as the Covid-19 pandemic overtook the world, UEL once again showed its power as an anchor institution within east London, supporting our students, community, and NHS to overcome huge challenges. As these immediate challenges begin to pass, we look to the future to ensure we continue to make a positive difference to the communities we serve. We do so by identifying local challenges and opportunities, recognising the strengths that exist within east London's diverse population, and mobilising the global power of our staff and students to find solutions. .

Over the last five years, UEL has transformed as an institution. As we approach its mid-way point, Vision 2028 provides both the principles underpinning our success and our roadmap to continue to progress, evolve, adapt, and change. UEL has continually reshaped itself to meet the ever-changing demands of our modern world and to be true to our mission

to ensure our diverse students have the skills and opportunities to thrive. We are proud to provide a talent pipeline of diverse graduates, ready to succeed in a 5.0 economy, and to work in partnership with global industry to help them to harness this talent through our pioneering Diversity of Thought programme.

■ **“UEL is working to improve the lives of future generations locally, nationally, and globally. As we celebrate our milestone anniversary, we look forward with vision and purpose to the next 125 years.”**

UEL’s reputation continues to grow. The success of our approach and transformation over the past 5 years is evident: most recently we have been shortlisted for the Times Higher Education (THE) University of the Year Award 2023. We are the 3rd highest climber in the Guardian University Guide; we placed 13th for overall positivity compared to all UK institutions in THE’s analysis of National Student Survey; and we achieved a Silver rating in TEF 2023, with our learning environment and academic support evaluated as very high quality, and our approaches to supporting student success evaluated as outstanding quality. Over the past few years, we have won numerous awards for our innovative, sector-leading approach to teaching our students, our work with industry partners, and the impact of our research. We are proud to have been recognised for our work at local, global, and international levels.

The world doesn’t stand still, and neither will UEL. This report seeks to do more than to share the highlights of UEL. It aims to set out how UEL improves the lives locally, nationally, and globally of future generations. Throughout 2023, as we celebrate our milestone anniversary, we look forward with vision and purpose to the next 125 years.



**Professor Amanda J. Broderick**  
BA (Hons) PhD DipM DipMRS PGCTL FRSA MBGS FCIM PFHEA  
**Vice-Chancellor & President**



■ **“The transformation of UEL in recent years, has been underpinned by its commitment to driving social mobility. UEL’s determined focus on building career-readiness and providing an inclusive industry-facing environment, is having a transformative impact on its communities and exemplifies how education can be a force for positive change.”**

**Professor Sir Les Ebdon CBE**

Former Director of Fair Access to Higher Education  
UEL Independent Governor

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

In 1898, the newly formed County Borough of West Ham established a new technical institute to help educate and serve the local working-class community, women and others who were otherwise excluded from life-changing learning and modern careers. 125 years later, the University of East London - the “people’s university” - continues to pioneer futures for people from all backgrounds.

UEL now serves as both a leading anchor institution within east London, with deep and well-established roots in the diverse local community, and as a global gateway to the rest of the world. Based within the youngest, fastest growing and most diverse region in Europe and with a campus right next to London’s only Enterprise Zone, UEL holds a unique, 'glocal' responsibility and footprint to enhance lives and enrich futures in the continuous next.

As the economy transforms rapidly in line with an increasingly digital future, UEL is providing the next generation of digital workers, entrepreneurs, and researchers, partnering with some of the world’s leading technology companies including AWS, Microsoft, and Siemens.

At UEL’s heart is a mission for social justice and equity, tackling inequalities and increasing the diversity of the talent pipeline. Its ambitious and ground-breaking strategy to become the UK’s leading careers-intensive university has improved outcomes for students and helped businesses and organisations across the world progress their equality and diversity missions. UEL’s pioneering spirit, global partnerships, and dedication to equity have positioned it as a catalyst for positive change.

This report sets out UEL’s 'glocal' role, its commitment to sustainable economic development and social justice, and its significant impact on local communities, the UK economy, and the global stage.

This impact has been measured in a number of ways: by quantifying the University’s economic impact; measuring its civic footprint by looking at how UEL interacts with its various local and global communities; and by using case studies to show the breadth and depth of UEL’s partnerships and research expertise. We’ve structured our work using an integrative framework that captures the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impact of UEL’s activities. In reality, these forms of impact are not discrete – an environmental research project will also have economic and socio-cultural impact, for example – and each of the frameworks contains parts that are applicable across all of the work outlined here. For the purposes of this report, however, different parts will be introduced with a specific impact framework that relates most immediately to it.

Parts one and two are introduced with the economic impact framework, which focuses on GDP and GVA contributions, workforce impact, and growth and regeneration activity. Part one of the report outlines the work of UEL in building a more diverse local and global talent pipeline, developing skills, innovation and enterprise for business incubation, acceleration, and growth. Part two looks at the role of UEL as a local civic actor, its national contribution to the UK economy, and its global impact through partnership. This section includes information about UEL's economic output, including the economic impact of its teaching and research, as calculated by sector-leading consultancies Public First and London Economics.

Part three is introduced with the environmental impact framework, which examines measures taken to reduce carbon footprint, build carbon-free new economies, and increase the carbon-free brainprint. Part three shines a spotlight on UEL's mission to net zero, and the innovative work it is doing across its research and corporate functions to become a global blueprint for sustainability in higher education.

Parts four and five are introduced with the socio-cultural impact framework, which continues a focus on research expertise, aligned with outreach activity to inspire citizen scientists that operate across a range of disciplines, and examines the socially responsible behaviours and practices of the institution. In particular, part four looks at two of UEL's key areas of expertise, demonstrating where it is making a uniquely valuable contribution to policy and research relating to health inequalities and early years development. Part five illustrates UEL's ground-breaking approach to community and industry engagement, illuminating its sporting excellence at both grassroots and elite levels, and how its innovative research into future technologies including FinTech, AI and the metaverse is informing industry and policymakers alike.

For a list of sources cited, and for further information about our methodology, please see the end of this report.

UEL's Vision 2028 strategy is also aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 SDGs are an urgent call for action by all countries working together in a global partnership to build a better, fairer, more sustainable world. These ambitions are threaded through all of UEL's impact, and the impact frameworks also include information about which SDGs are most relevant to the following sections.



# UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

Parts 1 & 2



GDP and GVA



Workforce impact



Growth and regeneration

IMPACT VALUE

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Part 3



Reducing the carbon footprint



Increasing the carbon-free brainprint



Building carbon-free new economies

# SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT

Part 4 & 5



Research with impact



Citizen scientists: co-creation and knowledge exchange with communities



Socially responsible behaviours and practice

## UEL'S IMPACT IN NUMBERS

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**£814m**

The total annual impact of UEL on the UK economy.

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**£568m**

UEL's direct and indirect economic output.

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**£1 > £4.24**

Every £1 of university income returns £4.24 to the economy.

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**1st**

UEL has reduced its CO2 emissions more than any other modern university in London.

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**1 in 12**

1 in 12 Adult Nursing students in London is studying at UEL.

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**1st**

UEL is ranked 1st in the UK for the number of care experienced undergraduate students.

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**4th**

UEL is ranked 4th in the UK for annual student start-ups, and joint 3rd for social enterprises.

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**2,500+**

The number of active, engaged employer partners UEL works with.

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**160+**

The number of nationalities represented by the UEL student community.

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**1st**

The 2023 Times Social Inclusion ranking placed UEL 1st in London for social inclusion and 12th nationally.

# ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

In **parts one and two**, we will be exploring how our efforts to diversify the talent pipeline, our careers-ready curriculum, and our spending, growth and investment activity are having economic impact in a number of areas.



UEL strives to build a better, more inclusive and sustainable world. As well as being aligned to our Vision 2028 aim to increase the reach and value of our activities to the communities we serve, our economic impact and careers-first focus are contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8 and 9:

**4** QUALITY EDUCATION

An icon representing quality education, featuring a white outline of an open book and a pencil pointing upwards.

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

An icon representing decent work and economic growth, featuring a white outline of a bar chart with an upward-pointing arrow.

**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

An icon representing industry, innovation and infrastructure, featuring a white outline of three stacked cubes.

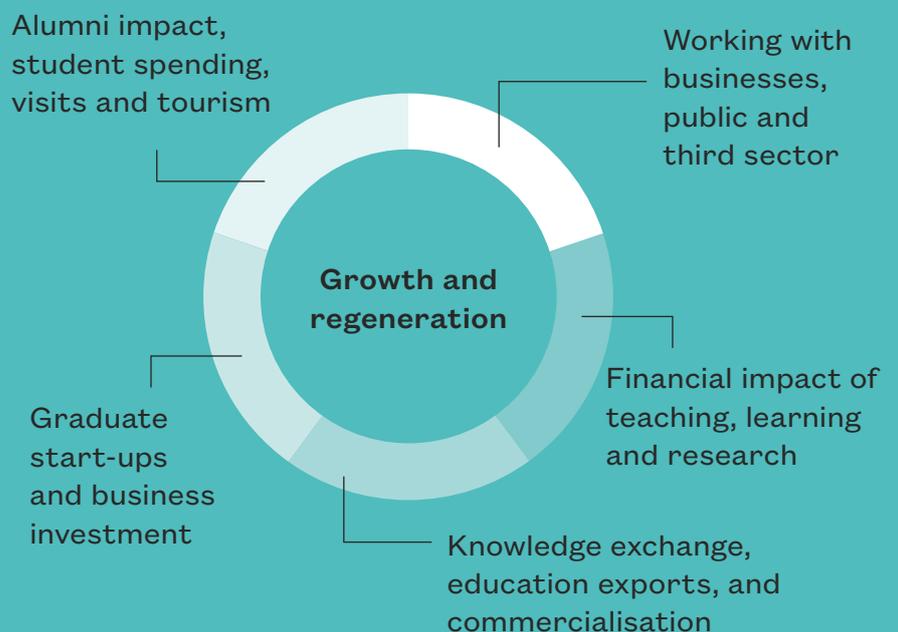
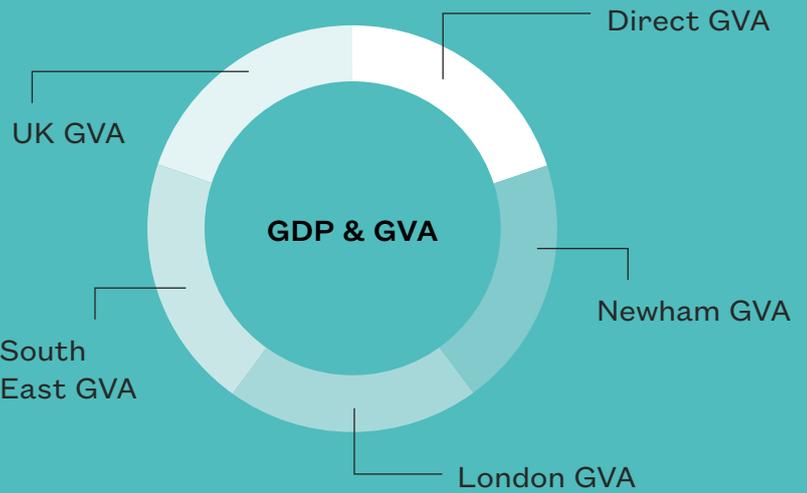
# IMPACT

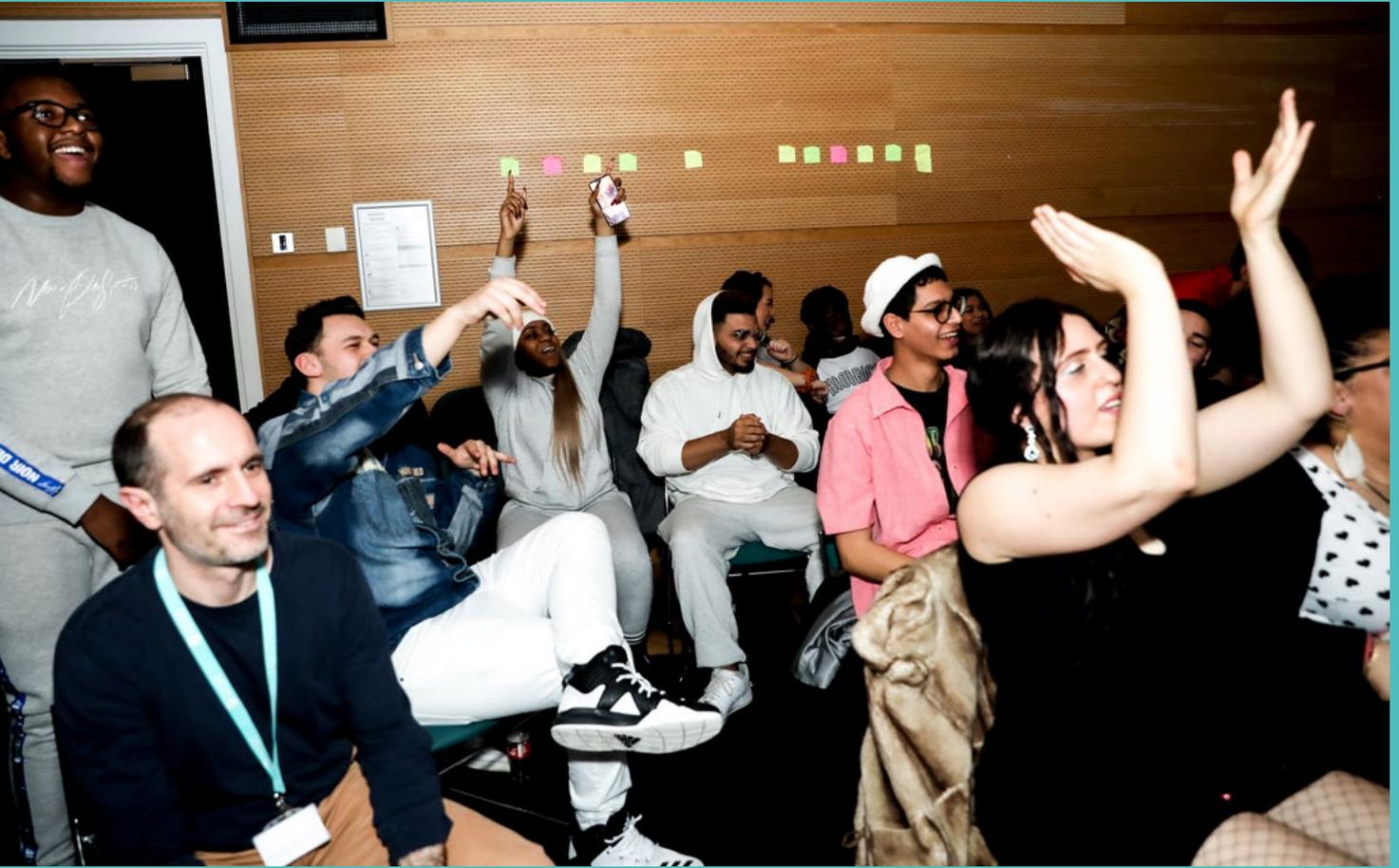
Our economic impact framework uses a range of measures to demonstrate the scale and breadth of economic value generated by UEL.

Each category includes a number of measurements and considerations we have used to demonstrate impact, as shown in these diagrams.

Just as each of our impact frameworks overlap in the holistic work and projects carried out by the University, these categories are not discrete, and these diagrams do not therefore represent specific percentages or portions of measurement.

Instead, they give a sense of the myriad activities that come together to create UEL's impact:





# PART ONE

# DIVERSIFYING THE TALENT PIPELINE

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, universities play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce. The demand for highly skilled professionals in new sectors continues to rise.

Since its foundation 125 years ago, UEL has been cultivating a diverse talent pipeline in east London. It supports students at every stage of their higher education journey, equipping them with the tools they need to access an education pathway that helps them achieve their aims and ambitions. Its focus now is on reimagining and reinventing the role of higher education for a sustainable future, ensuring the curriculum and UEL degree programmes are able to help bridge the gap between education and employment, and meet the expectations of an ever-changing 5.0 economy. This includes introducing new courses and opportunities to address existing national skills gaps and working with industry to identify future skills gaps.

At the heart of this sits a commitment to social justice and equity - ensuring that whatever their background, students can access a modern, careers-ready education and gain the skills they need to progress. UEL's triple helix approach brings together education, industry and talent in a new education and skills social value partnership, breaking down barriers to access and challenging employers to move away from old fashioned proxies of talent. UEL is making a major contribution to social mobility, and its whole-institution approach to equity and diversity means that both staff and students benefit from an inclusive environment which promotes student success. We know that talent is everywhere, and we are committed to ensuring opportunity is as well.

# FOREWORD

The University of East London is a huge part of our community in Newham. It has been a privilege to work with the institution across my nearly 30 years as an MP. Throughout that time, I have seen first-hand its positive impact on the lives of students, staff and the citizens of east London. It has always been an enterprising, vibrant, and forward-looking institution, and the sheer breadth and quality of impact described in this report is testament to that.

I campaigned for UEL's Docklands campus – at the time the first new university campus to be built in London for over 50 years – which marked an important step in unlocking Thames Gateway redevelopment. Since then, the University has invested further in our local area, and is playing a vital role in building up Newham for the future. Its new partnership with Newham Council on the Stratford Youth Zone, for example, seeks to unlock untapped potential in the wider area as a vibrant hub for creative arts and culture, driving arts sector innovation with the community voice at its heart.

With the expansion of its campuses, investment in facilities, and vision of its leadership, the University now attracts students from all over the world. The institution knows that this diversity is its greatest strength. Its growing international influence continues to enhance its civic activity. The University is an anchor institution with deep roots in the region, investing in and supporting our communities and economy, just as West Ham Technical College did when it opened in 1898. This report finds that UEL had an astonishing impact of £814 million on the UK economy in 2021/22.

UEL's economic impact is complemented by its mission to understand the future needs of our economy and embed this in its teaching and research. The University has undergone a transformation to deliver its Vision 2028. Every course has been redesigned, there are new buildings, and new opportunities, and the benefits of that are clear now for everybody to see.



I chair the Work and Pensions Select Committee in the House of Commons; we're concerned with increasing employment in the UK economy. UEL is equipping its students with the skills our economy needs, in order to secure for those students the best possible future.

Every year, I host students from the University's Legal Advice Centre who help with my advice surgeries. Many are aspiring lawyers. They work on cases which in the past might have attracted legal aid, but don't nowadays. I'm always impressed by the students' willingness to get stuck in, their commitment to help my constituents, and their drive to change the world in the future. I applaud this mindset of purpose and progress that runs through UEL, driving its mission to educate and empower.

UEL's leadership works hard to break down historic structural barriers and offer life-changing opportunities for students. The University has made great academic progress, turned its financial position around, and – as this report shows – is determined to build on what's been achieved and to redefine the boundaries of what is possible over the next 125 years.



**The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms**

MP for East Ham

Chair of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee

# CHAPTER ONE: UNLOCKING TALENT



# UEL OFFERS A TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO STUDENTS, SUPPORTING THEM TO THRIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT – BECAUSE TALENT IS EVERYWHERE, BUT OPPORTUNITY IS NOT.



**57%** of UEL UK undergraduate students are first in their family to attend university, and **75%** of UK students come from households with multiple indicators of deprivation.



UEL's **40,481** students represent over **160** different nationalities from across the globe.



UEL spent a total of **£2.2million** on undergraduate student bursaries in 2023.

**UEL was ranked 1st in the UK for the number of care experienced undergraduate students.**

**UEL has a growing community of over 12,200 international students.**

**UEL is a top destination for students from India and has the 2nd largest population of Indian students of any UK institution.**

**UEL now educates over 1,600 students across 13 degree apprenticeship courses, aimed at addressing skills shortages in key sectors such as policing and nursing.**

# A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY

For 125 years, UEL has played a key role in unlocking talent and potential for students from east London and beyond. This includes a huge focus on attracting talented students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education, including those identifying as from Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) backgrounds, mature learners and those from economically deprived households. Forging strong links within local communities and understanding the needs of these students has been instrumental in this.

■ **Almost half of UEL's students are mature learners and 75% of UK students come from the most deprived 40% of English households.**

UEL's search for talent is not limited by the UK's borders, with the 40,481 strong student population studying UEL courses at our campuses or with international partners hailing from over 160 different nationalities and spanning five continents.

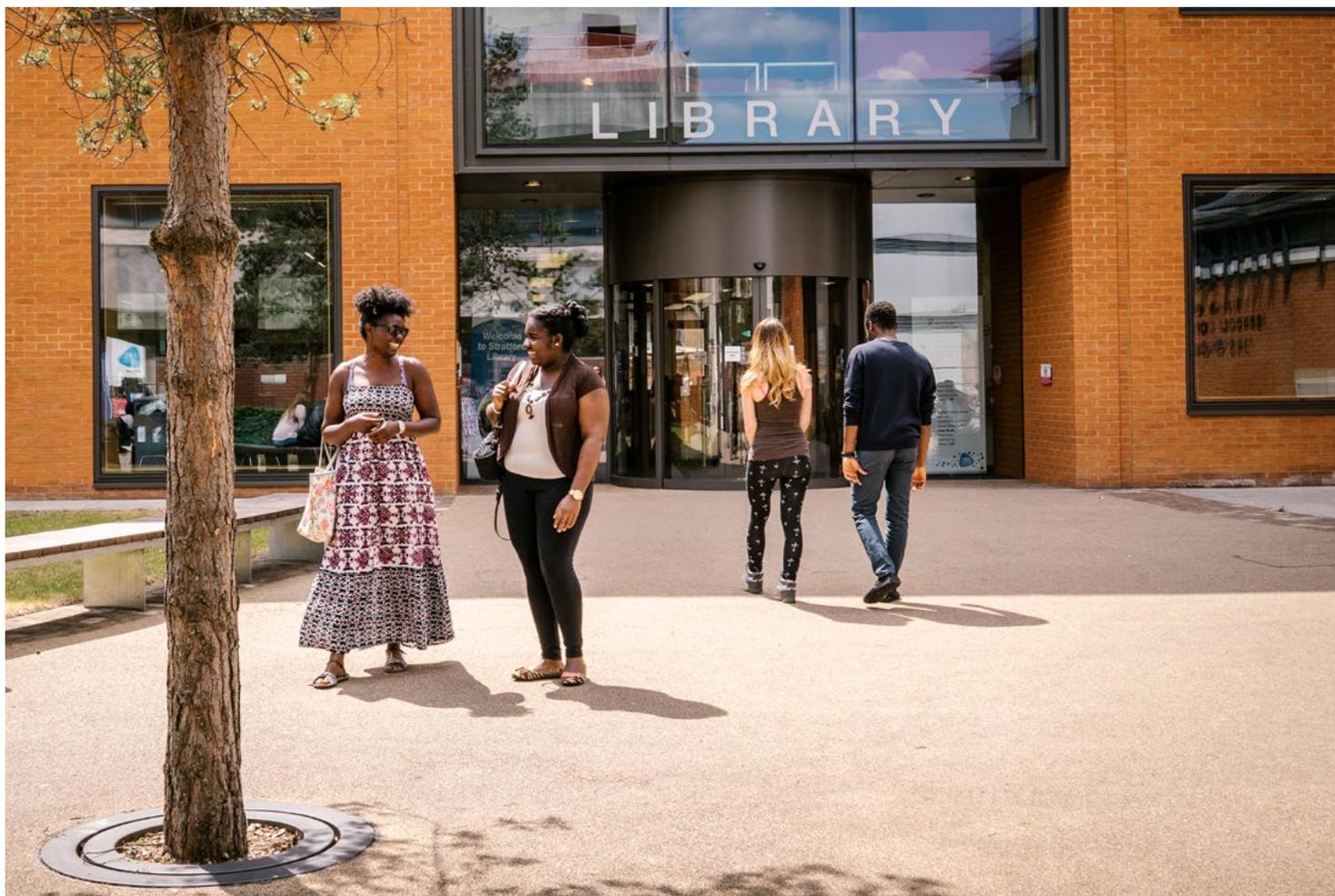
UEL also has a growing postgraduate talent pool, now making up 20% of our student body, and 1.2% of the entire UK postgraduate population. Growing a diverse body of postgraduate students is a vital part of UEL's education mission - and the University provides a supportive environment through which students can push the boundaries of existing academic frontiers.

As a result of efforts to recruit without boundaries both at home and abroad, UEL is proud to have the most diverse and representative cohorts of staff and students in the country. Underpinning this is a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion that is integral to everything UEL does for the communities it serves.



■ **70% of UEL students identify as being from Global Ethnic Majority backgrounds.**

■ **UEL removes barriers to access  
as part of a commitment to  
achieving social justice.**



## **REMOVING BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY**

Unlocking talent means removing barriers to access where they exist. UEL has a long history of supporting local people to access higher education and join its academic community. The University runs a wide range of activities to support prospective students from across the Newham borough and beyond to consider, apply and progress to higher education as a crucial stepping stone in their lives. UEL is proud to take a 'whole university approach' to access and participation, where academics, professional services and students come together to build the pipeline of new talent, supported by UEL's leadership team.

UEL is embedded in its local educational community and in the past three years the Schools and Colleges team has engaged with 14,855 prospective students from over 300 institutions to help them make the right choices about their education. This includes 21 UEL 'partner schools' across east London, which benefit from a close and ongoing working relationship with the University, with multiple activities delivered throughout the year.

The University engages with young people from primary school (through schemes like the Sport In Your Futures outreach programme, detailed later in this report) through to further education. This includes the London Design & Engineering University Technical College (LDE UTC), located just next to UEL's Docklands campus, which provides a pathway that integrates technical, practical, and academic learning and creates an environment where learners can thrive and develop the abilities that industry needs. UEL provides a Progression Scholarship Scheme to support LDE UTC students to embark on their undergraduate journey at UEL.

## ■ **Over half of UEL's UK undergraduate students are the first in their family to attend university.**

The transition between further and higher education can be a challenge for students who don't immediately have access to the relevant support and knowledge from their school or college, so UEL has also developed targeted progression pathways for these learners. This includes offering adjusted tariffs, academic readiness workshops and tailored transition programmes for mature learners across 200 Access to HE Diploma courses delivered by partner colleges across London. To signpost these progression pathways, UEL's Information, Advice and Guidance service has developed tailored support for these students to ensure they understand the opportunities available to them, in higher education and beyond.

UEL commands an impressive reputation for its ability to identify and support a diverse range of students to overcome barriers into higher education, and was highly commended in in the Best Widening Participation Initiative category at the 2022 Heist Awards.

# ■ UEL was highly commended in the Best Widening Participation Initiative category at the 2022 Heist Awards.



UEL's commitment to social mobility has also been recognised in the Sutton Trust's recent rankings which calculates a 'mobility rate' for universities, subjects, and individual degrees, based on how many students from disadvantaged backgrounds get in, and how many of them go on to be high earners after graduation. UEL was ranked 8th in England, demonstrating that even when compared to other similar institutions, UEL is punching above its weight, increasing social mobility and equality of opportunity in England. UEL was also ranked 1st in the UK for the number of care experienced undergraduate students in a recent league table compiled by Civitas.





## CASE STUDY: NEW BEGINNINGS

UEL's New Beginnings programme has been running for over 20 years, and is built on the belief that everyone should be given the opportunity to succeed at university. New Beginnings offers access to many degree programmes for around 600 mature learners each year, many of whom do not have any other formal qualifications. Students on the New Beginnings programme come from a range of diverse backgrounds - including care leavers, estranged students and students with disabilities. This reflects UEL's wider aim to ensure that those who may find access to higher education challenging are able to succeed.

On successfully passing the New Beginnings course, students are able to progress onto a wider range of selected degrees at UEL, from Business Management to Education Studies, and Sport to Counselling.

Since New Beginnings started, 72% of those on the programme have gone on to achieve a 2.1 or 1st. This year, 69% of students who would not otherwise have received a university offer were given unconditional offers at UEL through New Beginnings.



## CASE STUDY: OFFICE FOR INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

Inclusion and equity are at the heart of UEL as an institution – because only through embracing diversity can it push boundaries and find solutions to complex challenges. To drive forward change, UEL established the UK's first Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) in 2019, which aims to make UEL the country's most inclusive university. Its guiding principles to foster inclusion, promote success, enhance belonging and promote equitable culture and practice manifest themselves in a sector-leading approach to equity. Through its strategic plan to deliver and embed equity across the University, the OIE can dedicate resources and expertise to complex issues such as the Degree Awarding Gap. This historic gap observed between White and Black students in their First and 2:1 degree outcomes is currently 8.8% at UEL, the lowest it has been in recent years.

Social justice is an integral part of UEL's mission. It has been an accredited Living Wage Employer since 2013, holds the Athena Swan Bronze award for gender equality and it has no statistically significant gender pay gap – a particularly notable achievement compared to the average 12% gender pay gap for the higher education sector. The institution has achieved a Bronze Race Equality Charter (REC) award, is a disability-confident employer and works closely with Stonewall to ensure inclusivity for LGBTQ+ staff and students, receiving a Stonewall Silver Charter Award in February 2022. UEL has also joined the Women's Higher Education Network 100 Black Women Professors Now programme, which aims to proactively promote equity of opportunity, increase diversity in the academic pipeline, break down barriers to academic progression and eliminate bias from progression. Alongside this, the OIE provides additional support for participants, including one-to-one support, mentoring, and increased visibility within the institution.

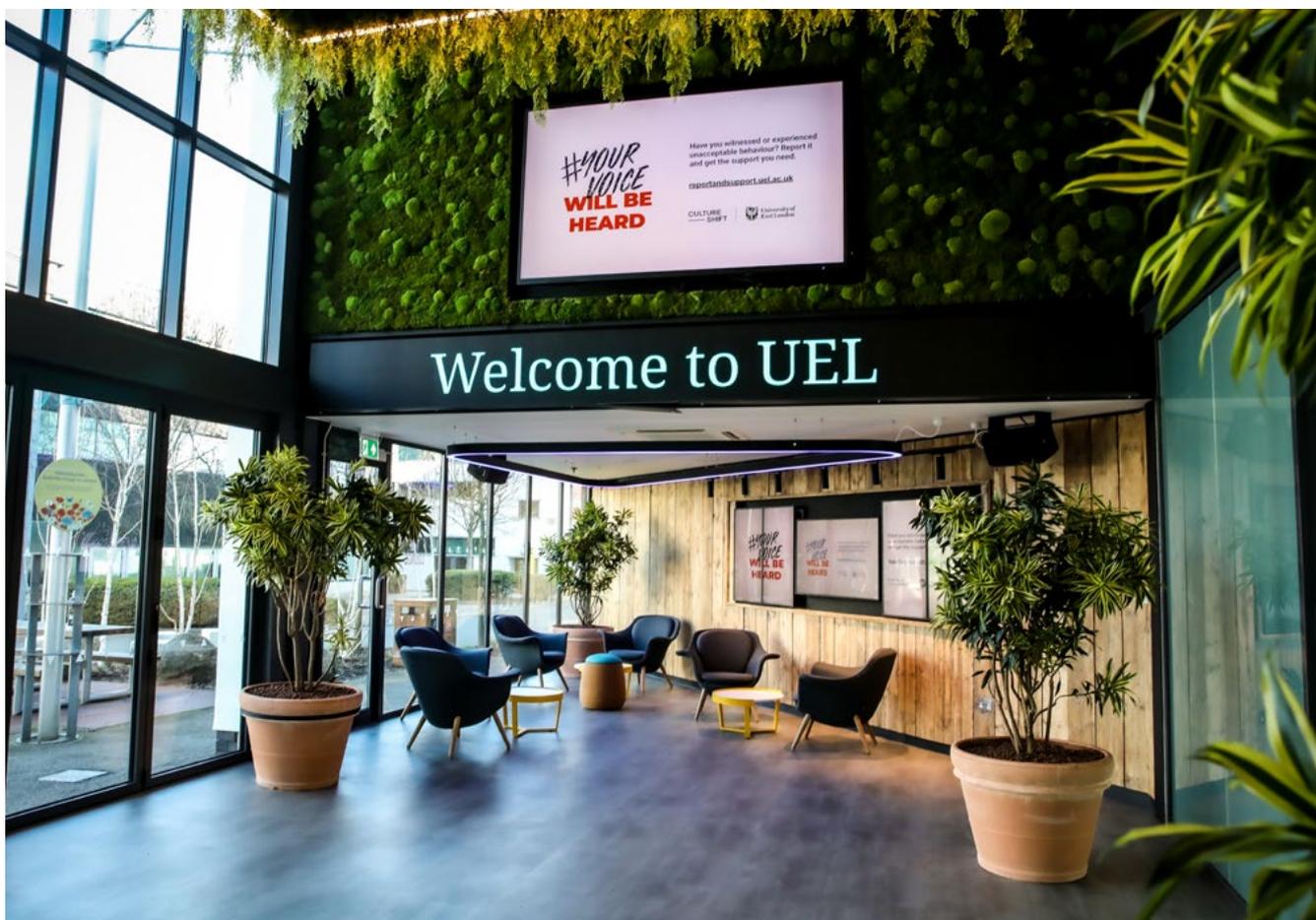
# DEVELOPING TALENT GLOBALLY

Talent can be found abroad as well as at home. UEL acts as a global gateway through which talent from across the world can access a modern, careers-focused education.



Over 50% of UEL's on-campus student body is international, with 12,206 students studying across the three east London campuses

It is UEL's power as a convening force for talented individuals from across the world that ensures the richness and diversity of its student body.



## CASE STUDY: METROPOLITAN COLLEGE, GREECE

UEL's partnership with Metropolitan College in Greece is the largest UK Transnational Education partnership in the country. The college has been offering high-quality courses in collaboration with international universities since 1982, and now has 8 campuses across Greece (with its state-of-the-art Maroussi campus shown below).

Metropolitan College and UEL's partnership was first established in 2011. UEL has been a key part of Metropolitan College's success, becoming the institution of choice for many Greek students, and over 4,400 students are enrolled on UEL courses.

Academic programmes are offered in partnership between the two institutions in a number of areas, including early childhood education, civil engineering and construction, and UEL's pioneering new MBA in Fintech Management. All courses are accredited by both the Ministry of Education in Greece and by UEL's Academic Board.





- **UEL has academic partnerships with institutions in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, attracting 17,818 students to study as part of its transnational education programmes. The UEL community is truly international.**

# CHAPTER TWO: A CAREERS- READY UNIVERSITY



# UEL IS PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE DEMANDS OF A 5.0 ECONOMY AND COLLABORATING WITH INDUSTRY IN A UNIQUE WAY TO ADDRESS SKILLS AND INNOVATION GAPS.



UEL works with over **2,500** active employer partners, an increase of more than **830%** since 2018.



**85%** of students reported that the skills and experience they developed through the Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness curriculum were useful to their future career.



The 2023 Times Social Inclusion ranking shows our success in placing UEL **1st** in London for social inclusion and **12th** nationally.

**In the last five years, UEL has helped support 543 new student start-ups and is now ranked 4th in the UK for annual student start-ups, and joint 3rd for social enterprises.**

**In the last three years, over 500 on-campus graduates have secured graduate employment with companies in the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers 2023. UEL is now working directly with 15 of the Times Top 100 graduate employers including KPMG, IBM, HSBC, Barclays, NHS, Civil Service, Police Now, BT and British Airways.**

**The turnover of UEL's active graduate start-ups in 2021-22 was estimated at over £5 million.**

■ **“The University’s focus on honing students’ creative and critical thinking skills, regardless of degree subject, sets UEL apart and will help ensure Britain has one of the world’s most talented workforces of the future.”**

**Robin Strup**

Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

 **Dataminr**<sup>®</sup>



# A NEW SOCIAL VALUE PARTNERSHIP

**UEL's commitment to addressing structural inequalities doesn't end with access to higher education – this is only part of the journey. To offer a truly inclusive university education, students also need the right assistance to empower them while they study, and tailored support to help them achieve their aims and ambitions in a competitive graduate job market.**

UEL's mission is to diversify the talent pipeline, ensuring students from a diverse range of backgrounds can access the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. It both empowers students to become highly skilled professionals and gives employers access to the diverse talent they need to innovate and grow in order to meet the demand of the 125,000 new jobs being created in east London by 2030, and across the world as interconnected global economies continue to develop.

The University works towards this goal through a careers-first approach that prioritises partnership with employers. This relationship-focussed strategy underwrites the relevance of our courses, preparing students for an ever-evolving economic future and putting success as much as access at the heart of UEL's mission. It's also of mutual benefit to employers, who know that diversity and inclusion are vital values for sustainable success. This is our challenge to industry: to replace old-fashioned proxies of talent, and instead let it thrive wherever it is found.



**“When universities and businesses collaborate on common goals, we can create a powerful force for good. The great strides UEL has made in recent years in improving graduate employability prospects, proving itself as an engine of innovation, and its ongoing positive civic impact, shines a light on that potential.”**

**John Dickie**  
Chief Executive

**BUSINESS  
LDN**

# A CAREERS-READY CURRICULUM

**UEL's careers-first approach informs everything that the University does. Their work to change industry's approaches to recruitment, address inequalities at every stage of the talent pipeline, and boost the economy through investment and supply, all feeds into that central purpose.**

So it's no surprise that the University's careers support offer to students is as comprehensive and innovative as everything else they do.

To make sure UEL students are careers-ready, the University had to make sure their curriculum was too. In 2018, UEL underwent a transformation as an institution, implementing the ambitious Vision 2028 strategy. As part of this, the curriculum for each course was completely rewritten in partnership with employers, and teaching methods were emboldened and enhanced to ensure that UEL graduates are armed with more than just technical skills, but also the knowledge, qualities, and connections they need to thrive in our evolving economy.

## ■ **The Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness programme won the HE Innovate Award in 2022 for most innovative approach to developing employability skills.**

At the core of this approach is the award-winning Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness curriculum, which puts holistic career development centre-stage, and nurtures and supports students' aspirations throughout their time at UEL. As part of the programme, students take a module across each year of their degree. The curriculum focuses on the key competencies – developed in consultation with UEL's industry partners – needed for successful progression onto professional careers (including emotional, social, physical, and cultural intelligence and digital proficiency). These skills equip students for the future – providing them with the flexibility to achieve their full potential, whatever they decide to do after graduation, ensuring they develop the mental resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing workplace, and the skills needed to become the leaders of the future.

By embedding the Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness programme for every student, UEL seeks to 'level the playing field', ensuring that all students develop these skills at every stage of their learning.

UEL students come from a range of backgrounds and different prior educational experiences, and the University knows that tailored support is often the most valuable. UEL's approach to careers support is therefore data-led, and starts before students have even attended their first classes.

Pre-enrolment support and careers registration allow the University to tailor interventions from day one, so students can hit the ground running. A suite of co-curricular and extra-curricular schemes are also on offer: career development planning, careers passport sessions, skills development, volunteering opportunities, internships, mentoring, start-up support, one-to-one coaching, temp work and more. These opportunities ensure that outside of the classroom students are empowered to take control of their own development and invest in their future.

## ■ **UEL was awarded Best University Employer Engagement Strategy 2023 at the Institute for Student Employers Awards, and Best University Employability Strategy 2022 at the National Graduate Recruitment Awards.**

UEL also offers paid work experience through its funded internship scheme, which provides students with flexible paid internships both within UEL and externally. The scheme provides opportunities for students from under-represented groups with traditionally lower graduate outcomes to gain work experience without financial barriers. It is embedded with wrap-around employability support, including careers coaching, mentoring, workshops and monthly check-ins. The scheme won the NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Progression) award in 2023.

The results of schemes like this are already clear to see: UEL's graduate outcomes have significantly improved since 2018 (the University is in the top 10 for greatest gains in The Times' Good University Guide 2023) and they continue to pioneer new ways of upskilling students and collaborating with employers.



## CASE STUDY: TRACK MY FUTURE - CREATING A PERSONALISED LEARNER JOURNEY

Students succeed when they have access to all the information they need. So UEL developed an online data analytics dashboard called Track My Future (TMF), aimed at boosting engagement and facilitating access to information for students. It provides a personalised, online platform to give students holistic support across all elements of their student experience: monitoring their studies, booking appointments, or helping find a part-time job. Students who use TMF are more likely to have positive attainment and continuation rates.

TMF allows students to access personalized careers and engagement data, to identify their own weaknesses and strengths, and to access support accordingly. In 2022/23, Track My Future was used over two million times by students to enhance their education and career development.

## SUPPORTING DIVERSE TALENT INTO INDUSTRY

Diverse businesses make better, bolder decisions, come up with new ideas and solutions, and perform better financially. Boston Consulting Group have estimated that companies with diverse management teams generate 19% more revenue from innovation than those with less diverse teams, and a 2020 report from consultancy firm McKinsey found that the positive relationship between company diversity and financial performance has only strengthened over time.



But there are significant challenges for students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds when trying to access graduate jobs at some of the world's top companies. Data shows that students from the lowest socio-economic backgrounds are 10.6% less likely to be in full time graduate employment than their average counterpart and students identifying as from Global Ethnic Majority backgrounds are 8% less likely to be in full-time graduate employment.

UEL's flagship Diversity of Thought employer partnership programme is designed to tackle both issues. It helps encourage and empower UEL's diverse student body to access the best graduate jobs - boosting social mobility by targeting support to students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds at key stages throughout the recruitment cycle. And it supports employers to gain a competitive edge by recruiting and retaining diverse talent with different viewpoints and a range of life experiences.

The programme is premised on three core elements: mentoring, work-based learning, and exposure to professional environments. It was developed and is delivered in collaboration with a range of progressive industry partners including AWS, WPP, Siemens, MSCI, ITV, KPMG and Madison Square Gardens. Students on the programme receive a personal mentor appointed from within the business along with work-based learning experience, and targeted employability support designed to maximise their potential. Through this, students can access high-quality careers support and guidance, tailored to the student and their future goals.

**“We market and create advertising campaigns across the world and to do that we need people from all backgrounds offering authentic voices and varied life experiences. That’s why there is such synergy with this programme and the demographic of UEL.”**

**Michael Ludlow**  
Director of Talent



Diverse students need diverse ways to interact with industry. UEL has piloted alternative recruitment events such as its 'Talent Hack', which offers hackathon style challenges in collaboration with industry partners. These act as a vehicle to showcase students' skills and create dynamic connections with industry partners, as well as offering valuable experience for UEL students. Recent events with WPP, Coca Cola and Siemens resulted in multiple paid internships with high profile companies. From over 2,500 blue-chip and SME employers actively engaged with UEL, the 16 Diversity of Thought partners have led the way in replacing old-fashioned proxies of talent with new solutions to the skills gap in the continuous next, supporting diverse talent who can drive forward organisations' competitive advantage of the future.

UEL graduates from the 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts are now working at Times Top 100 Employers such as the NHS, Amazon, Accenture, Barclays, E&Y, JP Morgan, GSK, Bank of England, IBM, BT, Mercedes Benz, and British Airways.

■ **“The students we recruited through the Diversity of Thought Programme really impressed us. They were intelligent, enthusiastic, and highly professional in their approach. They delivered high-quality work and we have strongly encouraged a number of them to apply for a role with Siemens. We have already agreed to take on another cohort next year.”**

**Simon Burgess**  
Renewable Energy Project Developer

**SIEMENS**

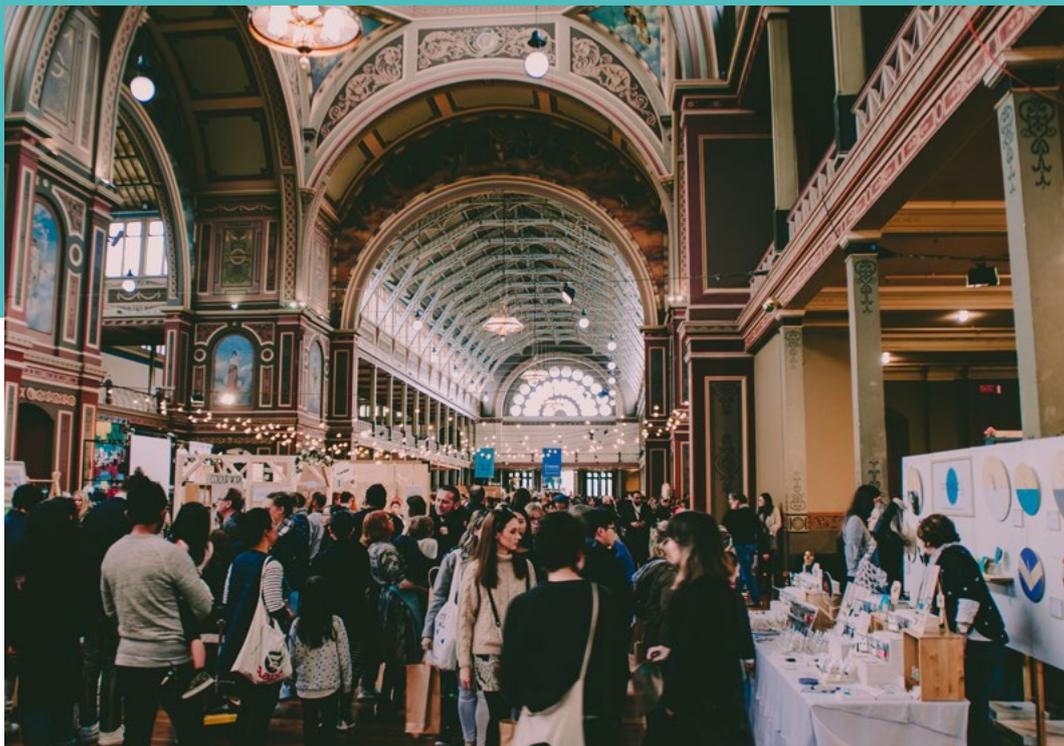
## CASE STUDY: DRIVING DIVERSITY AT AWS

Companies increasingly understand the need to recruit staff from a diverse talent pool. UEL has partnered with AWS as one of its Platinum Diversity of Thought employers, to deliver an innovative approach to employability and skills development. The University has adopted AWS Educate to prepare students for industry-recognised certifications and careers in the cloud.

In addition, the AWS team supports UEL students through targeted mentoring, participation in careers events, and a more strategic understanding of the needs of employers, creating a holistic package of progression support.

**“UEL’s hugely diverse population of students was a main appeal of the AWS partnership. The partnership has had a direct impact on both UEL students and employers in the area, as well as benefiting our workforce by engaging with students who have different backgrounds and perspectives.”**

**Amanda Kiely**  
AWS Partnership Manager



- **UEL is ranked 1st in London for apprenticeship achievement, with our 2022/23 achievement rate 8.8% higher than the government target, two years ahead of schedule.**



# LEADING THE WAY ON APPRENTICESHIPS

**Some students' pathways to higher education start with employment. UEL's degree apprenticeship programmes offer an alternative route into higher education for students who know what industry they would like to work in, and want to study for a higher qualification alongside it. The University partners with trailblazer companies and key public sector partners to offer high-quality degrees and higher technical qualifications, ensuring apprentices are both highly skilled and prepared with transferable qualifications for lifelong employability.**

UEL is on its way to becoming one of the leading higher and degree apprenticeships providers in the country with a strong network of high-profile engaged employers across various sectors.

Since 2019, the number of higher and degree level apprenticeships UEL offers has increased almost 10-fold, to around 1,600 across 13 different courses and qualifications.

**■ 88% of employers said the overall quality of apprenticeships at UEL is at an excellent or good standard.**

UEL's apprenticeship scheme has been designed to specifically focus on sectors where there are skills shortages. These include providing apprenticeship training for civil engineers, nursing associates and registered nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and chartered managers. UEL is now also the largest provider of apprenticeships for the London Metropolitan Police.

UEL apprentices are proving to be exemplars of the apprenticeship experience, with a number of finalists at the Multicultural Apprenticeship Awards representing the university in recent years. Ciara Williams, a Geospatial Apprentice at UEL, was winner of the Robin Jones Award 2022 in the category of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, given in recognition of significant contribution to the civil engineering surveying industry.

UEL's apprenticeship programmes are accredited by leading professional bodies including the Chartered Management Institute, Nursing and Midwifery Council, and Institution of Civil Engineers.

# DRIVING STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**UEL not only provides students with the support to reach a graduate career - it also supports them to start and develop their own businesses and become the entrepreneurs of the future. With SMEs and start-up businesses expected to make up 52% of total business turnover in the UK economy by 2025, UEL helps students turn their entrepreneurial ideas into reality.**

A deliberate strategy to develop student entrepreneurship has seen UEL rise to be the 4th best university in the UK for student start-ups and joint 3rd for social enterprises, with an incredible 580% increase in graduate starts up from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Schemes such as BACK:ED offer funding, support and mentoring to help students test, start and develop their business ideas. The programme is delivered at scale and supports solo entrepreneurs and start-ups to reach the critical one-year milestone, before supporting them to identify further support from external agencies. UEL's central funding stimulates entrepreneurship across the institution, investing small pots of money in promising ideas, putting serious commitment behind concepts that are market-ready, and providing a boost to existing businesses to help them grow.

The scheme is also making a significant impact on increasing the diversity of UK entrepreneurship - 63% of UEL student enterprises were founded by women, and 86% were founded by a student from an ethnic minority. This is in comparison to a national average of 1 in 3 entrepreneurs being female and 1 in 6 entrepreneurs being founded by those from ethnic minorities.

**■ UEL provides a broad range of support for students to start and develop their own businesses so that they can become the entrepreneurs of the future.**



## IN THE LAST 5 YEARS UEL HAS SUPPORTED

**543**

student start-ups

**27**

social enterprises

**400+**

jobs in innovative  
start-up companies

## CASE STUDY: ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR ALL

UEL's commitment to entrepreneurship is demonstrated by the breadth of support it offers students and graduates. The University looks to foster an entrepreneurial spirit across disciplines, and to develop promising ideas wherever they are found. Amadou Kassarate, a graduate of UEL's Sport and Exercise Science course and an elite sports scholar, has blended his professional footballing career with running a clothing line, SCJ. Amadou's business received free office space at UEL for a year, as well as continuing mentoring and the help of an intern for three months, as part of the University's support programme for entrepreneurs.

This level of support allows space and time for socially driven businesses to grow in their early stages. Dennis Boateng, a MSc Sports Management graduate, founded InUse ReUse as a response to finding an alternative way for the redistribution of discarded wooden pallets in Brixton Market. Through the University, Dennis received grant funding as part of the Haberdashers' Entrepreneur Award which as well as a mentor for 12 months who he described as "instrumental to the company's success." Since 2019, InUse ReUse has collected and redistributed over 14 thousand pallets, recycled 25 tonnes of wood waste, and utilised over 700 pallets for indoor and outdoor production projects.

As with everything else UEL does, diversity is at the core of its entrepreneurship support, and investment is targeted to make sure that funding and support is available to those who need it most. The UEL Female Founders Day aimed to drive diversity within entrepreneurship by creating and supporting more diverse and innovative female entrepreneurs. Supported by Ankh Impact Ventures, three UEL students were awarded £10,000 worth of grants to further their business ventures following a competitive pitch round. Ashlea Cromby was awarded the top prize of £5,000 for her Mansimble Tea and Estate venture, an ethical tea company producing tea from the Kangra region of India. The business partners with family-owned tea estates and its hand-filled cotton tea bags are currently selling to high-end hotels.



# PART TWO



# A GLOCAL GATEWAY

East London has long served as an historic global gateway, connecting continents, cultures and commerce. From the banks of the Thames, the area has played a pivotal historic role facilitating global connection.

Since it was founded in 1898, the University of East London has played an important role in facilitating education, innovation and cultural exchange.

This original civic mission has shaped the evolving identity and activity of UEL over the past 125 years. UEL plays a role as an anchor institution in east London, through strong partnerships in the local community. At the same time, it opens the door to students and partners from all corners of the world. This local to global - 'glocal' - approach celebrates the international outlook of east London and helps the UK to build strong partnerships around the world through education and research.

# FOREWORD

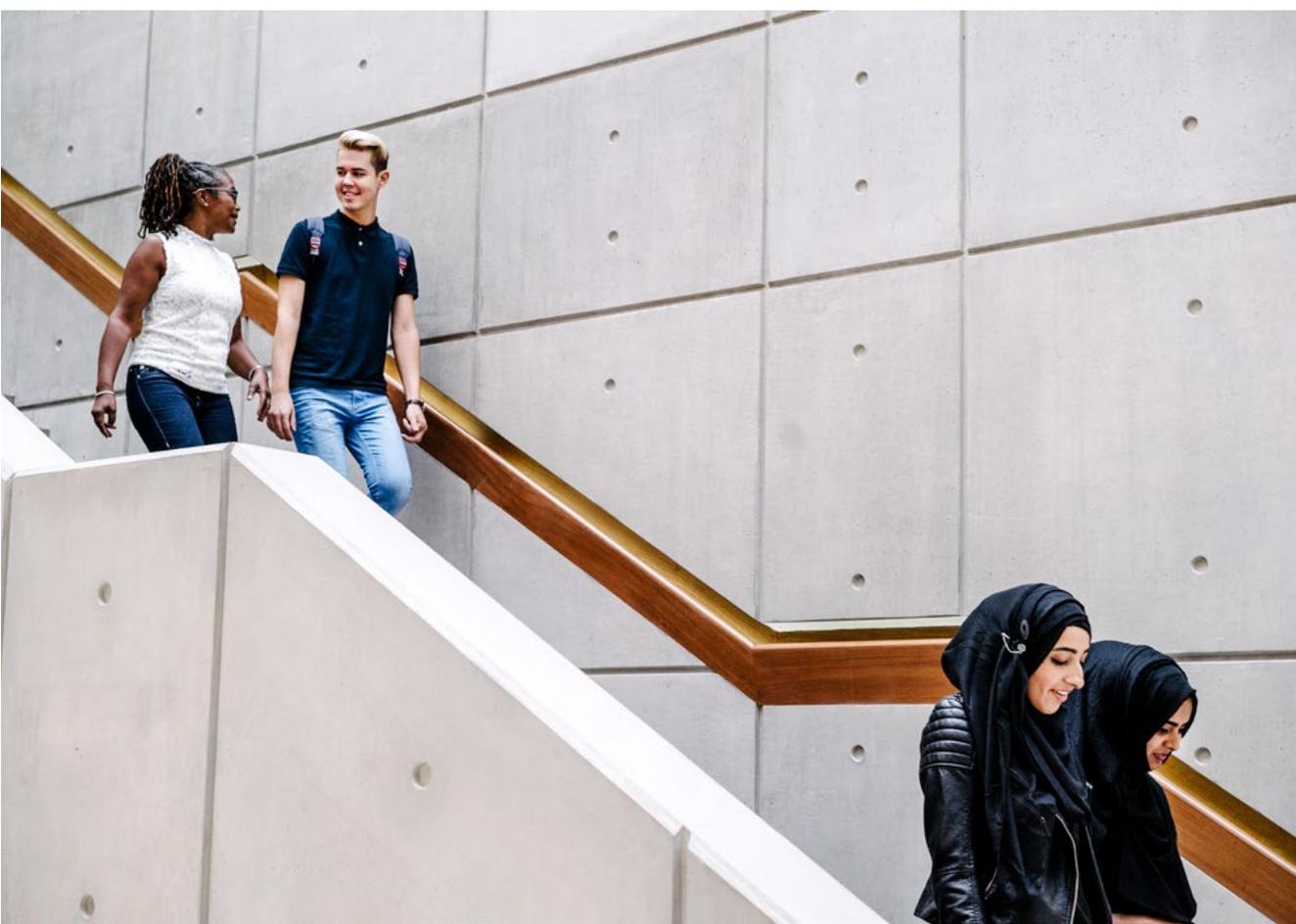
Universities are much more than education providers. While ensuring first-class pedagogy and pastoral support for their students rightly remains a core priority, Britain's universities should be much more widely recognised for their critical importance as economic - both local and national - powerhouses, and engines of social mobility, as well as the research and development innovation for which the UK rightly has world renown.

This report helps elucidate how universities can and do help tackle some of the country's - and world's - most complex challenges. The University of East London's prescience in 2018 has enabled it to lead the way in working with industry to tackle both the current UK skills gap, and identify those skills needed into the future. Through its unique approach to industry collaboration, it is harnessing the drive and innovation of talented students from across the international social spectrum, equipping them with the skills and confidence to allow them to chart their own prosperous futures while giving employers a competitive edge.

In its research, it is helping to ensure our youngest and most vulnerable can thrive regardless of their background, and collaborating with colleagues across the world to tackle global issues including improving health outcomes, tackling online harms, building community cohesion, addressing inequality and driving sustainability.

While it remains an institution clearly rooted in and committed to supporting east London and the UK as a whole, the University is unlocking the power of education and knowledge creation across geographical boundaries. Thanks to its approach to developing partnerships with countries based on shared values and vision, UEL now has the largest proportion of Indian students compared to any other UK university, and educates over 12,000 international students annually at its London campuses.

By diversifying their academic partnerships and international student bodies, with increasingly strong links in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, UEL is creating a roadmap for sustainable positive impact far beyond its London location.



I have long been a passionate advocate for the significant benefits international students bring to the UK. I very much welcome the clear evidence in this report, that UEL's planned growth and ongoing diversification of its student body is a vital component of its positive impact – socially and culturally, as well as economically. International students provide a cultural cross-fertilisation that benefits everyone, while attracting top student talent globally offers clear gains in innovation, research and a broader skills base.

I congratulate UEL on how far it has come over the last five years, led by its forward-thinking Vision 2028, underpinned by a drive for social justice which dates back to its origins as 'the people's university'. I have no doubt that the University and its global family will continue to thrive whilst driving pioneering solutions and social mobility worldwide.



**Lord Jo Johnson**

International Higher Education Commissioner  
UK Minister for Universities and Science (2015-18 & 2019)

# CHAPTER THREE: FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL



# THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON ANNUALLY CONTRIBUTES £814 MILLION TO THE UK ECONOMY, INCLUDING £245 MILLION IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH IMPACT.



Every **£1** of university income returns **£4.24** to the UK economy.



UEL supports **3,545** jobs across the UK, including **2,130** in London.



UEL is ranked **69th** in the world (and joint **6th** in the UK) for Gender Equality, and ranked inside the world's **top 200** institutions for its works on the goals 'No Poverty' and 'Reduced Inequalities.'

**Over 28,500 people visited UEL in the last three years to take part in free public engagement activities, including public lectures, performance arts, and exhibitions.**

**UEL contributed £228 million to the government, health and education sectors within the UK economy, as well as £60 million and £55 million to the professional activities and production sectors retrospectively.**

**UEL is in the top quarter of institutions worldwide for impact on and commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.**



## IN THE LAST 3 YEARS

**14,728**

visitors attended UEL  
public lectures

**6,641**

people watched UEL  
music, dance and drama  
performances

**7,125**

people visited UEL's  
exhibitions and galleries

# AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION IN EAST LONDON

**With its diverse and inclusive environment, UEL attracts students from around the world, fostering a vibrant community of international learners from over 160 different countries. Through its curriculum, UEL prepares its students to be global citizens, equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Through its education and research activity, it serves as a dynamic bridge connecting individuals and ideas from different corners of the world, fostering cross-cultural understanding and driving innovation on a global scale.**

In order to play both a global and local role, UEL harnesses talent and builds partnerships in its local community and connects these to organisations and students from all over the world. These “glocal” communities create a ripple effect whereby UEL’s reach is felt far beyond the physical space of the institution.

UEL has been rooted in its community for 125 years and as a result has developed a granular understanding of the challenges and opportunities that come from serving a diverse and ever-evolving community.

## **■ UEL is rooted in its local community so that it can support east London to grow and develop.**

UEL’s commitment to place means it has developed a strong civic mission, demonstrated by its footprint in its local communities. It acts as an anchor institution, a key employer, and a critical force for progress. Place is an important part of its mission and impact: the University is powering the growth and regeneration of Newham, which has some of the highest levels of child poverty in Europe.

UEL identifies local challenges, honouring and recognising the knowledge and power to find solutions that lie within the communities themselves and ensuring they are heard. Its strength lies in mobilising the global power of its staff and students to co-create solutions when working in this shared space.

UEL also provides a number of public events free of charge - including public lectures and talks, art, music and drama performances, and exhibitions. Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, in the last three years, over 28,000 people visited UEL to take part in a free cultural event.

# CASE STUDY: CLINICS SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

UEL students are supported by qualified professionals who are our staff, providing a free service to the community through our clinics.

The Legal Advice Centre (LAC) – This is open 5 days a week throughout the year providing free advice covering every area of law. Students see a client, take instructions and do legal research under the supervision of a qualified solicitor who provides the advice to a client. The Centre works with local charities and supports local MPs where legal advice is needed by their constituents. Over the last 12 months, the LAC has provided support to over 150 clients and provided over 200 students with experience in practice. The LAC also runs a criminal justice project working on cases where there have been wrongful convictions, and an Immigration Advice Service in partnership with the Newham Renewal Programme.

The Tax and Accountancy Clinic (TAC) – This provides free accounting advice to those struggling to deal with their taxation requirements in relation to self-assessments, final accounts or general accounting queries. The service supports those who are unable to afford to pay for professional accounting services, and is run by students and supervised by UEL staff who are also qualified practising accountants.

The Business Advice Centre (BAC) – The BAC is staffed by experts in the field of business management and entrepreneurship, providing advice in every area of business from start-ups to established businesses facing financial difficulty. The advice is provided by UEL staff working with students on a project basis, and extends to supporting students with their own business endeavours.





## CASE STUDY: UEL ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS

UEL Archives is home to a large collection of donated material that is available for access to staff, students and members of the public. Amongst its collections are the British Olympic Association archive, containing material detailing the history of both British participation in the Olympic Games and the history and development of Olympianism as a movement. The Archive covers the period from 1906-2009, and notably includes records concerning the organisation of the 1908 and 1948 London Olympic Games.

UEL has also been home to the Refugee Council Archive since 2002, a significant collection of materials that represent the movement and voices of displaced people post World War II. The archive serves students, academics, researchers, policy makers, agencies, and in particular refugees, for whom access to dedicated materials on forced migration is often difficult. In 2023, the UEL Archives successfully bid for an Archives Revealed Scoping Grant which will enable further development, discovery and preservation of the Refugee Council Archive. Archives Revealed is a partnership programme between The National Archives, The Pilgrim Trust, and the Wolfson Foundation, and is the only funding stream in the UK dedicated to cataloguing and unlocking archives. The award of this grant reinforces the national importance of the Refugee Council Archive and the positive reputational impact it has for the wider institution.

The UEL Archives has also been supporting a National Lottery Fund project looking at the exploring the lived experiences and histories of migrant women in Greenwich. The project was entitled The Colours of Greenwich and participants created a patchwork map of Greenwich documenting their own lived experiences, with an exhibition event hosted at UEL.



# CASE STUDY: STRATFORD YOUTH ZONE

In 2023, UEL launched a partnership with the London Borough of Newham to work on the Council's flagship Stratford Youth Zone, injecting a £733,000-a-year investment to support creative and performing arts opportunities for young people in Newham.

The Youth Zone will offer a range of programmes and activities for young people with a focus on drama, music, dance and digital arts.

UEL will support young people in Newham through work experience, mentorship, internships and industry placements, and its arts students (numbering 2,000) will run education workshops in the zone.

The project will also draw on the insights and expertise of UEL staff, who have substantial experience as practitioners and cultural producers and are able to share their knowledge so students not only become experts in their chosen disciplines, but also understand how to succeed in and sustain a career in the creative industries.

**“This report quantifies the value that University of East London brings to Newham and its communities; and I am excited by all the possibilities that our partnership will unlock for more our residents including for our young people.**

**Our pioneering collaboration at Stratford Youth Zone will shine a light on the diversity of talent in our borough, offering an array of opportunities in the cultural and creative industries.**

**From training Newham's health sector talent pipeline and working with us to tackle health inequalities that exacerbates racial inequity; the University is an anchor institution boosting our inclusive economy and community wealth building intentions.**

**As we celebrate 125 years of powerful impact and learning, I am looking forward to the ongoing collaboration between the University and Newham Council as we look to the future together with confidence.”**



**Rokhsana Fiaz**  
OBE  
Mayor of Newham



## POWERING ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS THE UK

**UEL has its roots in east London - but its wider impact is helping to drive economic growth and productivity across the UK. By attracting students to the area, bringing in visitors, employing staff, supporting local businesses, and procuring goods and services from a wider supply chain, UEL is contributing to both the local and national economy. Its research activity also attracts wider investment, including in emerging companies and social enterprises.**

To better understand the extent of its economic activity, UEL commissioned Public First and London Economics to conduct an independent assessment of its economic impact. The overall economic impact of UEL based on data from the 2021/22 economic year. A full methodology is available as an annex at the end of this report.

UEL also takes a proactive approach to investing in its staff and rewarding those who consistently contribute to the success of the University. Its People Strategy aims to evolve the professional fitness of existing staff, attract new talent, nurture staff communities, and build on the University's reputation as a great place to work. These strategic pillars, like all of UEL's activities, are founded in the values of the organisation, and backed up by rigorous data collection and analytics. In 2023, UEL conducted a whole-staff survey to find out more about how engaged staff are in working at UEL, how they are supported to succeed, how their workload is managed and what they feel would improve their work lives. 72% of the University's staff responded to the survey, and this information was used to co-develop action plans for every School and professional services department in the University.

But UEL wishes to go further, and as part of the University's commitment to enhance the environment and conditions to enable staff to flourish at work, is introducing a range of initiatives that recognise and reward, through a new Total Reward Deal. This includes pay incentives through Shared Success Awards, a one-stop learning portal and comprehensive new curriculum for career development and role-based learning, a flexible benefit offering and online platform with a wide range of retail benefits, and new ways of working to ensure balance between organisational need, ability to attract talent, productivity and staff wellbeing.

UEL is also collaborating with other anchor institutions on the Living Wage Action Group, aiming to make the Royal Docks area a 'Living Wage Place' and uplift all workers in the area to the real Living Wage. There are currently nine employers in the area accredited by the Living Wage Foundation for a commitment to making a 'Living Wage Place' and for the number of accredited employers in the area to increase, including UEL, London Borough of Newham, Tate & Lyle Sugars, and London City Airport.



**In 2021/22, UEL contributed £814 million in total to the UK economy, including through its teaching and education, institutional activity, supply chain spending, and research.**

**This includes:**

- £195 million of economic impact through its direct operations (such as spending on staff salaries).
- £374 million indirect and induced effects throughout the wider economy (through UEL's supply chains as well as its employees' purchases of goods and services throughout the economy).
- Creating £245 million through its teaching and research impact, including the graduate wage premium (the expected increase in earnings for graduates as compared with non-graduates) for UEL students.



**UEL's wider economic activity supported over 3,545 jobs, primarily in east London.**

**This includes:**

- 1,385 directly employed by UEL
- 2,160 indirectly supported by UEL's activities throughout the wider economy
- 1 in every 100 jobs in Newham is supported by the activities of UEL

# COLLABORATION ACROSS THE GLOBE

**The benefits of global engagement are reciprocal. They are of benefit not just to the countries with which universities engage, but to the UK campuses and their collective students and staff, and the local communities in their city and region.**

UEL's work with communities therefore not only has a positive impact in east London, but also abroad.

Researchers across UEL are working with governments, universities and NGOs in countries including India, Zambia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Brazil in order to contribute to evidence-based policymaking, research to close global inequalities and sharing their expertise with communities internationally.



**Examples of UEL's impact through research partnerships with institutions across the globe include:**

**Work in Japan in collaboration with Waseda University on establishing disaster prevention mechanisms against tsunamis.** UEL research teams from the School of Architecture, Computing & Engineering worked on post-tsunami field investigations to improve understanding of the impact of tsunamis and to develop new tools to mitigate their effects. This work has been recognised by the American Society of Civil Engineers, and is now included in their current design standards. UEL research teams also provided disaster learning workshops with vulnerable coastal communities in Sumatra, to raise awareness and preparedness for the next tsunami.

**Research in India to support the prevention of blindness due to diabetes.** India has 77 million people with diabetes, a figure which is expected to increase to 100 million in the next decade. Currently, up to 5% of diabetics in India can develop severe vision loss - but early detection can help to prevent this. The UEL Institute for Connected Communities has worked in Kerala to strengthen primary health care services, piloting a new care pathway aimed at reducing vision loss associated with diabetes, developing affordable technologies and encouraging more community screening.

**Work in Rwanda with the Government of Rwanda, University of Rwanda and 5Rights Foundation, to develop a Child Online Protection Policy.** This included a national awareness raising campaign which was designed to be rolled out through community networks and schools in 2019. The work is being continued in a newly formed Youth Safeguarding Network in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Zambia and South Africa.

**UEL has a founding partner role in the Open Learning Initiative (OLive) consortium which stretches across Europe.** OLlive offers key bridging courses which help refugee and forced migrant students to start or resume higher education study in the UK. As part of the programme, UEL offers a suite of courses for academic English, IT and Microsoft accreditation, public speaking, and other vital skill building classes for social inclusion. These classes are unique in design, prioritising compassion and understanding for the wide variety of challenges faced by refugees. Around 70% of OLlive UP students are accepted into UK graduate degree programs.

## **CASE STUDY: INSTITUTE FOR CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**

The Institute for Connected Communities, based at UEL, is an interdisciplinary cluster of world-leading academics from disciplines including health, criminology, psychology, law and sociology. Its role is to encourage research that responds to global issues, including improving health outcomes, tackling online harms, building community cohesion, addressing inequality and driving sustainability. The research spans local, regional, national and global geographies.

The Institute has 12 ongoing research projects, covering a diverse range of topics: from developing training in Hackney for those working with elderly or frail residents; to promoting social inclusion for difficult-to-reach young people locally and internationally; to understanding youth pathways to cybercrime, and promoting child safety in the metaverse, with partners throughout the EU and in Australia.



# ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

In **part three**, we will lay out how our mission to net zero combines with our research expertise in green tech and support for sustainable business to have environmental impact:



Our commitment to striving for a better, more sustainable future, aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 7, 11, and 13:



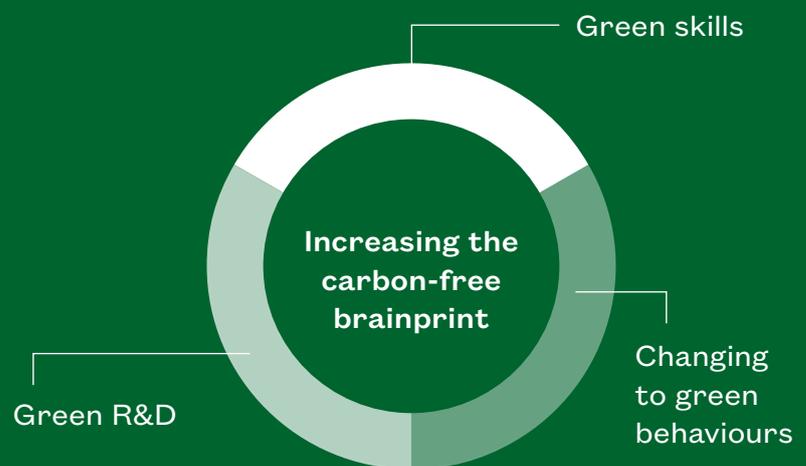
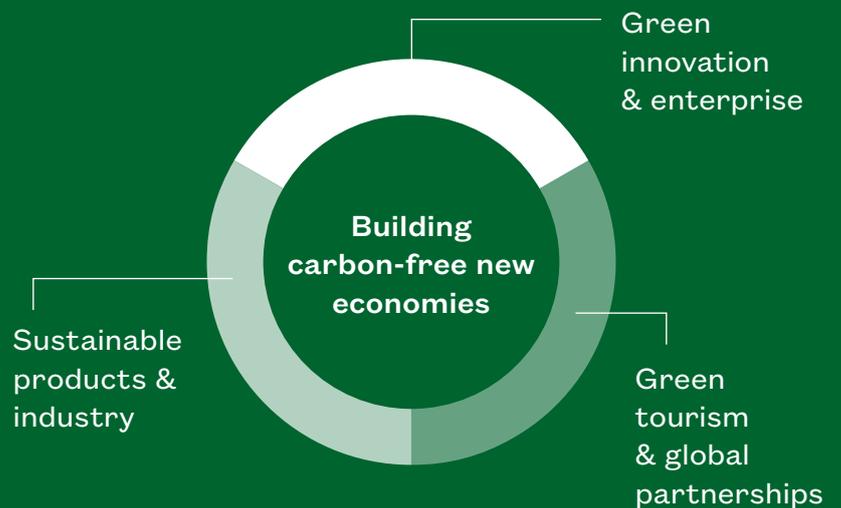
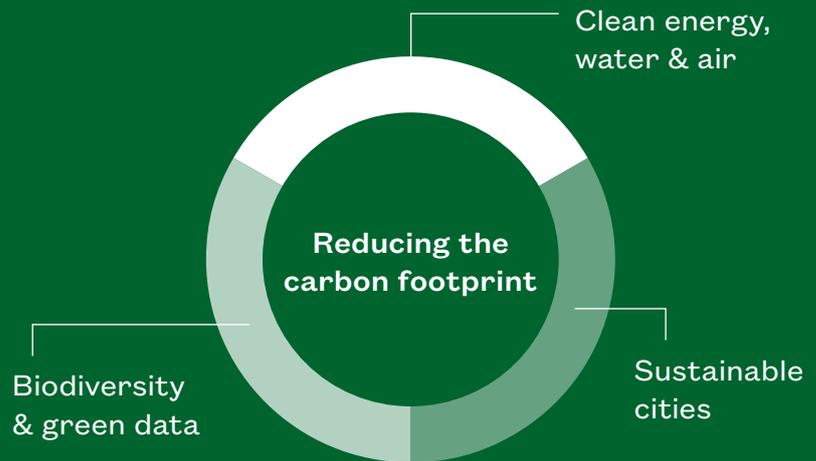
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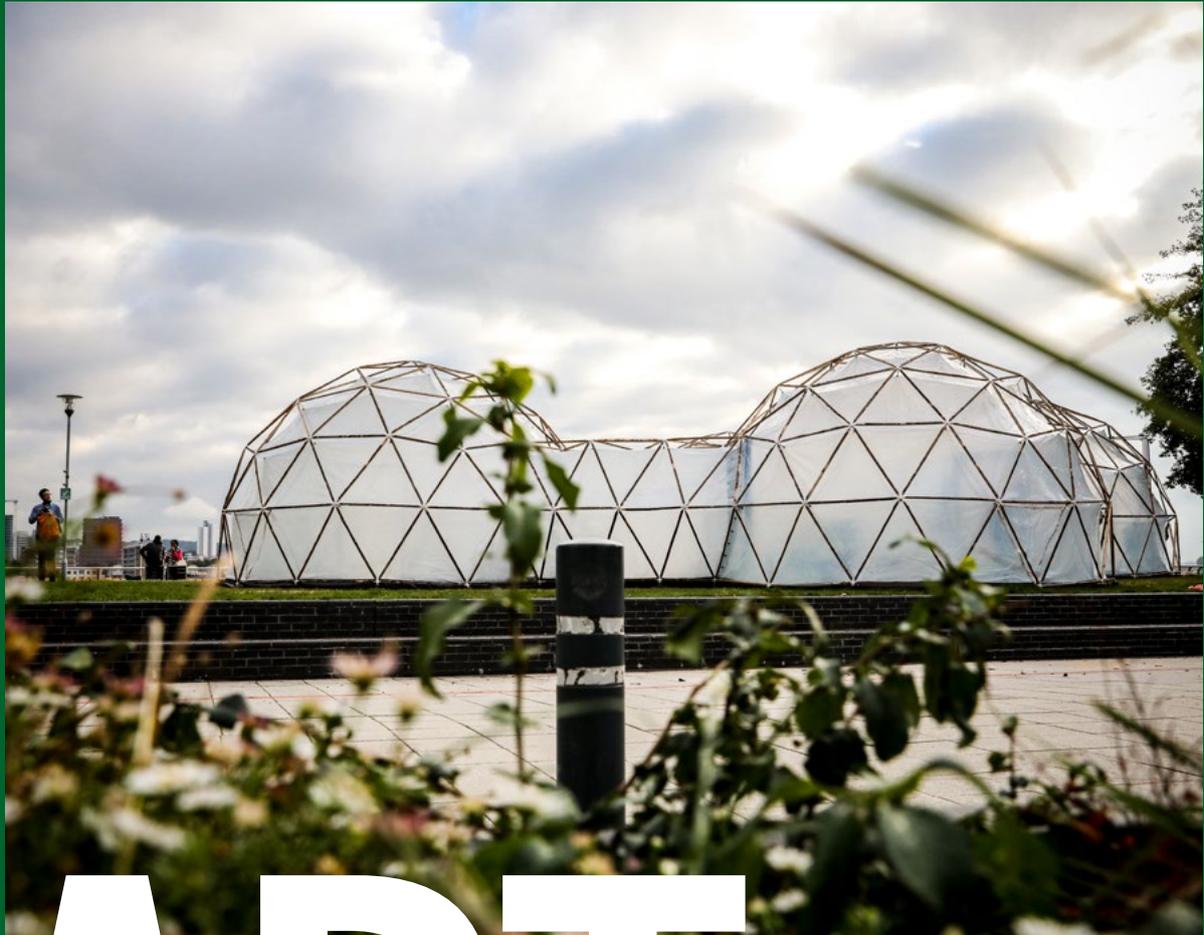
Our environmental impact framework focuses on three main forms of impact achieved through a range of activities.

Each category includes a number of measurements and considerations we have used to demonstrate impact, as shown in these diagrams.

Just as each of our impact frameworks overlap in the holistic work and projects carried out by the University, these categories are not discrete, and these diagrams do not therefore represent specific percentages or portions of measurement.

Instead, they give a sense of the myriad activities that come together to create UEL's impact:





# PART THREE

# A GLOBAL BLUEPRINT FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Without our precious planet, we are lost. At UEL, researchers are rebuilding the way we think about how we protect our planet from the ground up. From the smallest bee-friendly garden or green roof to the largest computer networks and vast peatlands, the University sees sustainability as an essential responsibility, and has the research credentials to prove it.

Underpinning this groundbreaking research is an inspiring institutional promise: UEL is committed to be net zero carbon by 2030. This journey will change the way things are done across the whole University, and will not only lower emissions but improve the health and wellbeing of the UEL community, and provide a pathway for those with interests in green careers and sustainability research.

As ever, the University recognises the importance of partnership in tackling the world's greatest challenges – and none more so than the climate crisis. In practical terms this means that bringing people together so that schools, services and stakeholders can work collaboratively, and looking beyond the physical boundaries of the University.

UEL's partnership with Siemens detailed in this chapter offers solutions to the societal and environmental challenges that we face. Matching UEL's global ambitions, this strategy will act as a blueprint for decarbonisation in urban higher education settings across the globe. Informed by real-time data and aided by innovative technologies, the University's net zero strategy is truly pioneering.

The promise that UEL makes is to bring everyone with them on this journey to net zero: all staff will understand the commitments UEL is making to sustainability, and how their role is driving positive change for the university community and our environment; and all students will leave as responsible graduates and global citizens with the knowledge and skills to live sustainable lives after their time at university.



# FOREWORD

Bold ideas and brave approaches are needed if the UK is to tackle the climate crisis and take full advantage of the huge opportunities afforded by the green economy.

As centres of innovation and expertise, universities are the obvious place to look for solutions for complex challenges. The University of East London (UEL) recognised that over 20 years ago by creating the UK's first Sustainability Research Institute. Now, UEL is demonstrating how universities can unlock the power of collaboration to deliver the progress we need in the green revolution and race against the climate crisis.

I encourage other universities, and indeed businesses, to draw inspiration from the urban sustainability work that UEL and Siemens are pioneering. Their approach to achieve net zero on UEL campuses by 2030, develop a unique Living Lab for real-time and real-world teaching and research, and create new future-focused degrees, is fast becoming an example of how to combine with an industry partner to achieve a goal of global importance.

As Mayor, I am committed to advancing sustainability research and making it a cornerstone of London's growth and development, a pathway to a more equitable, resilient, and environmentally responsible future. Sustainability is not merely a field of study; it is a moral and ethical imperative, a driving force for change, and a blueprint for the future we want to build.

I applaud the University's visible and vocal drive to improve sustainability in all areas. Throughout its practices, teaching, and culture, the institution is aiming to empower staff and students to champion sustainability and develop the skills and innovation for a green economy.

The UK leads the way in clean technologies, manufacturing, and green finance. UEL's ambitious commitment to sustainability helps to explain how. By embedding sustainability into courses, making the UN's Sustainable Development Goals central to research projects, and expanding industry experience opportunities, UEL is making a positive impact on our society and our planet. And together, we can build a better London for everyone.



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

# CHAPTER FOUR: PIONEERING A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD



# THE TRANSITION TO NET ZERO REQUIRES A FUNDAMENTAL RE-SHAPING OF THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT URBAN PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR CITIES.



UEL has worked with more than **250** small and medium enterprises in the East of England to increase production and local consumption of renewable energy.



UEL has committed to lead by example, aiming to become a carbon net zero campus by **2030**.



UEL's partnership with Siemens was recognised with the Net Zero Leader Award at the 2023 Decentralised Energy Awards.

**UEL is in the top 50 universities for the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**

**The University is opening a Centre for Sustainability, a regional hatchery for innovation, skills development, and enterprise.**

**UEL had the 3rd largest reduction in water consumption across all London institutions.**

**UEL has reduced its energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions more than any other modern institution in London.**

# A GREEN AND HEALTHY WORLD

In an era marked by rapid urbanisation and environmental challenges, UEL has emerged as a frontrunner in championing urban sustainability. Through partnerships both at home and internationally, UEL provides technical support to governments, develops sustainable materials and environments, creates innovative tools empowering poor and disadvantaged groups, informs policy making and expands critical capacity.

UEL is leading by example through its campus redevelopment and commitment to becoming carbon net zero by 2030. It is capitalising on its truly urban setting, right in the heart of the east London community, flanked by the river Thames and London City Airport, to provide a blueprint for urban sustainability around the globe.

For the aim of UEL's net zero programme is more than simply reducing energy use. It also focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of the local community and nurturing green careers and sustainability research. By embedding sustainability into course programmes, by putting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into the heart of research projects, by offering real-life sustainability projects through the Sustainable Research Institute, and by expanding industry experience opportunities, UEL is showing its commitment to making a positive impact on society and the planet.

**“Working with UEL is very inspiring - they have a strong sustainability strategy, students who live the values of the university and a great leadership team embracing it. And this gives us a purpose and an energy that powers our work together.”**

**Bjorn Burbach**  
Partner Digital Transformation

**SIEMENS**

- **UEL's flagship partnership with Siemens will help the campus adopt the technologies it needs to decarbonise, and was recognised with the Net Zero Leader Award at the 2023 Decentralised Energy Awards.**



# UEL 2030: THE NET ZERO CAMPUS CHALLENGE

UEL is committed to being a net zero carbon campus by 2030. This is both an immense challenge and an opportunity, which UEL has fully embraced as a role model for how higher education institutions can decarbonise and maximise the value of data – as well as understanding better how achieving net zero can be done in large urban centres like east London.

And it isn't doing this alone. UEL has established a long-term partnership with industry leader Siemens in order to turbo-charge its mission to net zero. The partnership focuses on energy reduction and green energy production, on UEL campuses, green business development and growth, establishing a diverse talent pipeline for the green economy, and creating a Living Lab of green data for research and innovation. The partnership earned the organisations a joint victory at The Decentralised Energy Awards 2023, where they were recognised as the Net Zero Leader.

Siemens has already supported overall improvements to measures to reduce energy use, and engineered solutions to drive the shift to renewable and on-site low carbon energy generation at UEL's campuses in the London Docklands and Stratford. The first phase of the project has immediately cut 10% of UEL's carbon emissions. The installation of 11,000 LED lights across its campuses and the replacement of ageing building energy management systems have resulted in a reduction of 470 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and substantial financial savings. The University is now poised to take the next steps, including a large-scale water-source pump project which will use the River Thames as a heat source and be one of the largest projects of its type in the UK.

■ **“UEL is one of the most ambitious universities in the country. They have a clear vision of how they can reshape education for the benefit of all - giving students from any background the skills and opportunities they need to thrive in the modern world.”**

**Simon Burgess**  
Renewable Energy Project Developer

**SIEMENS**



## CASE STUDY: UEL AND SIEMENS LIVING LAB

As part of their wider partnership, UEL and Siemens launched the Living Lab project in 2023, aiming to create a smart and sustainable environment to test green innovation. The Living Lab will offer UEL students, staff and researchers access to campus energy data, which they can use to understand UEL's energy usage and simulate changes. It will also provide space for students and staff to research and adapt technology in a real-world living test bed.

Both Siemens and the University of East London believe that community collaboration is essential to stimulating the local area's green economy. The development of a Living Lab will allow students and researchers to use real data from the campus environment to enhance learning, teaching, and collaborative research, as well as investigating ways to introduce local-scale projects and encouraging the community to campus to learn about the work in place.

The Lab will provide a space to develop and run hackathon initiatives and an internship program, all with the wider aim of supporting sustainable enterprise across campus.

# CASE STUDY: REPLACING CONCRETE WITH SUGARCANE

Between 4-8% of global carbon emissions come from the production and use of concrete as a construction material.

UEL's Sustainability Research Institute (SRI) has pioneered a way to turn biowaste from sugarcane into a sustainable alternative for concrete which is ultra-low carbon.

Working in collaboration with leading construction firm Grimshaw Architects and Docklands-based food manufacturer Tate & Lyle, the "SugarCrete Slab" can offer an alternative to concrete while demonstrating environmental benefits.

The system reduces curing time to one week compared to standard concrete which takes up to 28 days. Sugarcrete is five times lighter than concrete, and generates substantially cheaper costs compared to concrete production.

The three partners are identifying where the 'Sugarcrete slab' prototype will now be tested in the sugar producing Global South countries with high numbers of sugar plantations, to reduce the environmental impact of transporting concrete and remove the need of mixing it by hand which can be structurally unreliable, even dangerous.

Sugarcrete was nominated for the prestigious 2023 Earthshot Prize, which is awarded to solutions that are innovating in the sustainability space.



THE  
EARTHSHOT  
PRIZE

# GREEN TECH: R&D FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The ARENA (Advancing Resource Efficiency and Urban Ecology Innovations) was a successful pan-London business support project led by UEL's SRI in partnership with Barking Riverside Limited, which operated from 2019 to 2023 with support from the London European Regional Development Fund programme. UEL as project lead provided research and development support to 44 London businesses, most of which were small-to-medium enterprises, focused on technological validation for 'green' product and service innovations in the emerging areas of nature-based solutions, urban green infrastructure, resource efficiency and the circular economy.

■ **A recent independent evaluation of the project estimated that by 2030, every £1 of public funding invested in ARENA is expected to generate between £1.68 and £3.43 of gross value added.**

UEL's work in partnership with the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales provides up to date green skills, jobs and training, inspiring a workforce for the future.

The "Eastern New Energy" (ENE) project helped to develop the low carbon energy economy across the east of England in collaboration with LEPs in Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough, Hertfordshire and East Anglia. This involves working with more than 250 SMEs in the region to increase the production and local consumption of renewable energy; increase the region's energy efficiency; enhance the capacity of the local supply chain; and accelerate the rate of innovation and local ownership of energy assets. Research conducted through the project also contributed to developing an understanding of the barriers SMEs encounter when attempting to decarbonise and the most effective ways to support them to reach their decarbonisation objectives.

The Transitioning Towards Urban Resilience and Sustainability (TURAS) project engaged city stakeholders across Europe to explore how a nature-based solutions approach to urban infrastructure design can support the shift needed to achieve more globally sustainable development and construction.

# REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN DATA AND TECH

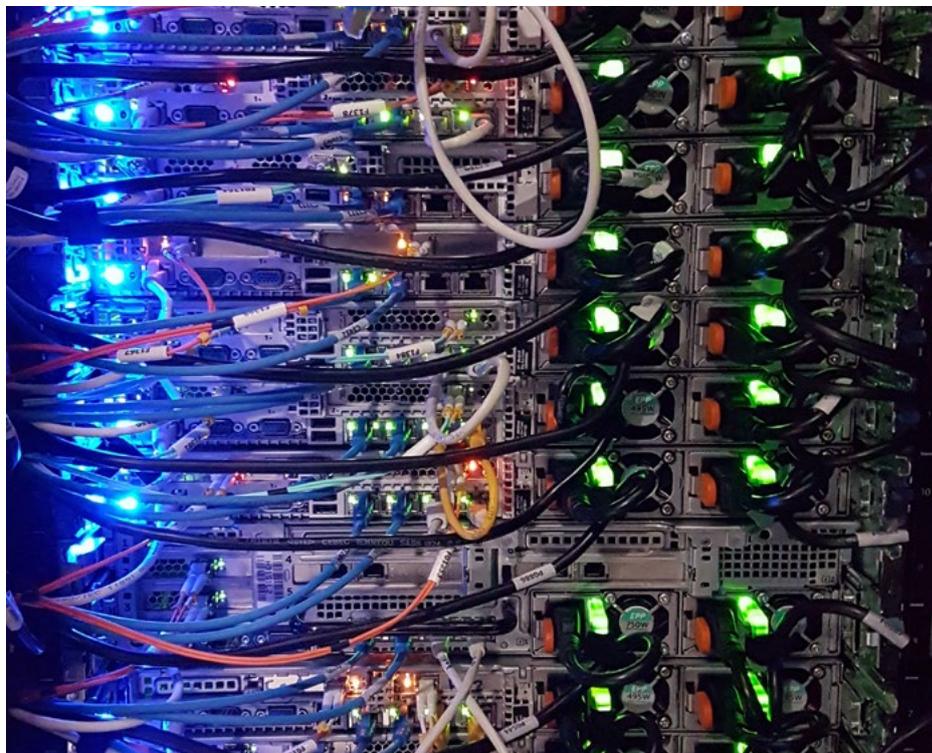
**Achieving global net zero goals will require a reduction in energy intensive sectors - not just traditional heavy industry but in tech and data too.**

The AI revolution will require a dramatic increase in computer power in the UK. The data centres which provide this are some of the largest energy consumers in modern industry. It is estimated that 3% of world electricity is consumed by data centres, and it accounts for more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire aviation industry.

Improving the energy efficiency of data centres is therefore a vital part of achieving national and global net zero goals.

Research at UEL has played a pivotal role in reducing data centre power consumption. Working in partnership with Techbuyer, UEL has developed the world's first commercial tool to optimise energy efficiency in data centres. The tool has been used more than 100 times, saving 8.3 million WH in electricity and cutting 2,800 tonnes of CO2 emissions over a five-year period. The partnership was recognised with a Certificate of Excellence from Innovate UK.

The University is opening the Royal Docks Centre for Sustainability in December 2023, a regional hub for innovation and enterprise with data centres as a core element, leading to the creation of green jobs and sustainable businesses in east London.





- **Fighting climate change needs new skillsets, a shift in mindset, innovative technologies, thought leadership and inclusive collective actions.**

# SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

In parts four and five, we will showcase how our research activity (focussing on health inequalities and early years development), and our industry and community engagement (through cutting-edge cyber research and inclusive sport-focussed outreach), are helping UEL have socio-cultural impact:



Our commitment to striving for a more equitable future through innovation, teaching, research, and industry and community engagement, aligns the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3, 5, and 10:

**1** NO POVERTY



**3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



**5** GENDER EQUALITY



**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES



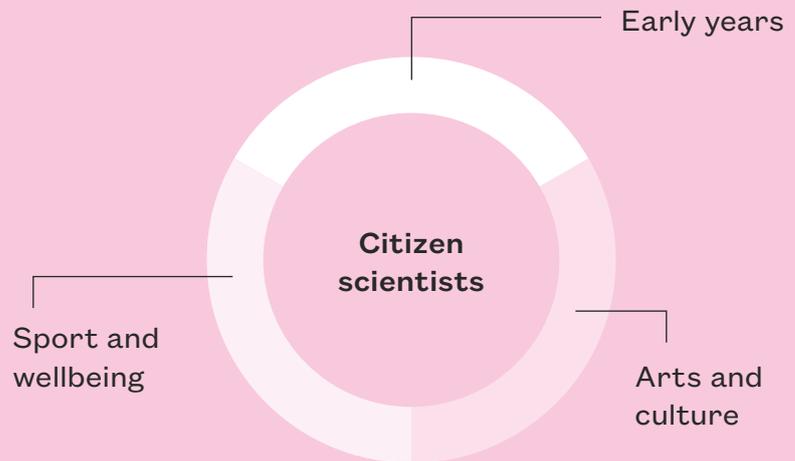
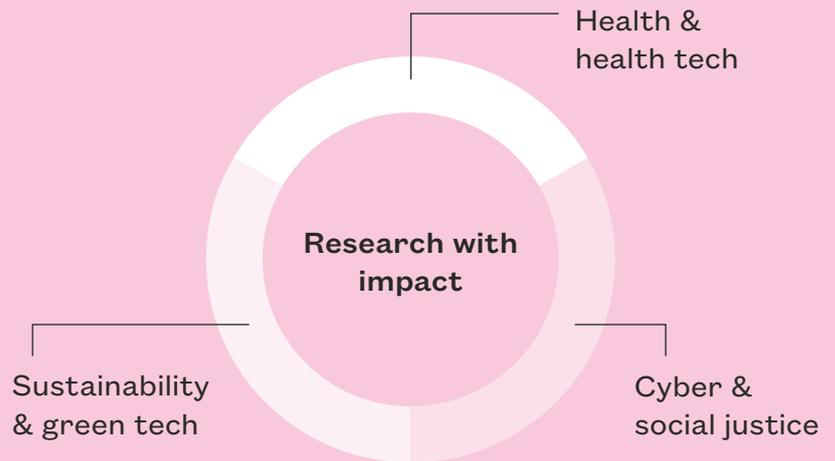
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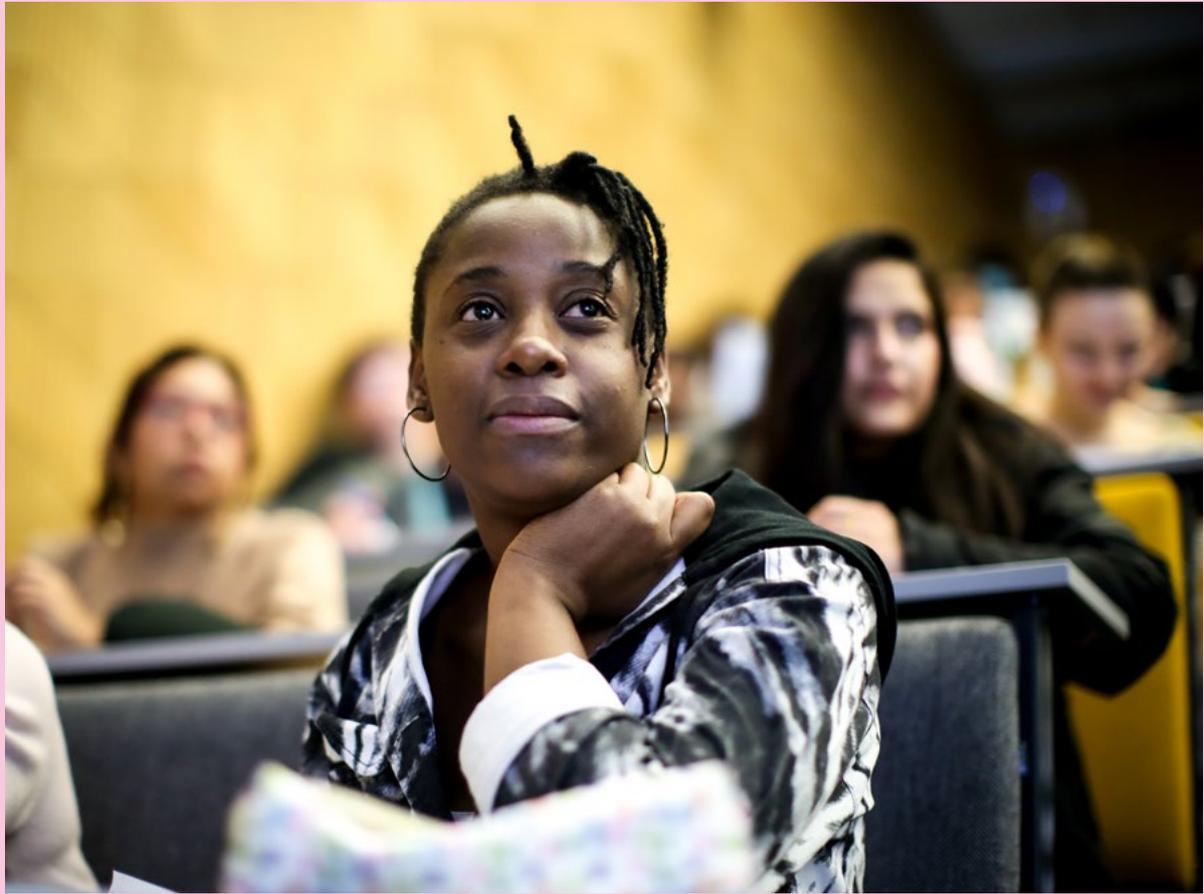
Our socio-cultural impact framework focuses on three main forms of impact achieved through a range of activities.

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Instead, they give a sense of the myriad activities that come together to create UEL's impact:





# PART FOUR

# IMPACT THROUGH INNOVATION, TEACHING AND RESEARCH

**How do urban environments affect the crucial first 1,000 days of a child's life? How do you tackle deep-rooted health inequalities in diverse communities? How can we use the latest research to train a workforce fit for the future?**

Universities play a vital role in shaping society and driving progress. As centres of knowledge creation, innovation, and human development, higher education serves as a catalyst for positive change - delivering transformation through research, which underpins the pathways needed to train the professionals of the future.

This research is varied - but what links it all is an institutional commitment to tackling economic and health inequalities, pioneering new practices, developing disruptive technologies, and influencing policy in support of a fairer, more sustainable world. We are proud that this mission sees real world impact and is increasingly valued locally, nationally and internationally. 55% of UEL's research was rated "world leading" or "internationally excellent" in the 2021 REF exercise.

This section of the report highlights just two of the areas in which UEL's research and institutional activity is contributing solutions to some of the most challenging problems facing our world today.

# FOREWORD

The picture of health inequality in Britain is a stark one. Official figures show that men living in the most deprived areas live 9.7 years fewer than males in the least deprived areas, while the gap for women is 7.9 years. And in recent years that gap has grown wider, with both men and women in deprived areas living shorter lives than they did a decade ago. Distressingly, the number of children living in poverty also continues to rise: 4.2 million - or 29% of children - last year, a 17% increase since 2010. No child should go to bed hungry, and the damaging effects of growing up in poverty can be lifelong.

It is statistics like this that make the work undertaken by the University of East London to address health and economic inequalities so vital. It is work rooted in the University's location, in some of the most socio-economically impoverished, yet most multi-cultural, boroughs in the country.

The healthcare sector needs skilled staff if it is to fight inequity and improve lives; as a former health minister and nurse, I know the importance of a well-trained workforce in this battle. The challenges currently faced by the NHS are well documented, with record waiting lists and numerous nursing vacancies. UEL is a vital partner in addressing this, educating more than 2,200 students in health science subjects since 2018. It has also recognised and is responding to the bottleneck in availability of clinical placements. Many UEL graduates trained in its £10m Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub, a European first in end-to-end healthcare education which includes a simulation suite equipped with the latest augmented and virtual reality equipment and virtual placement software - meaning students can get placement experience despite the bottleneck. It is no surprise that the Hub was highly commended in the Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year at the 2023 Times Higher Education Awards.

Perhaps just as significant is the way that UEL students across disciplines are taught about health inequalities, engaging with local NHS Trust partners and schools. Many students are from the local area and work there after graduation. It is increasingly recognised that those who understand the needs of their communities best, can help shape the right type and level of service.

The University's impact in tackling inequalities is a powerful combination of experiential place-based teaching and learning, and through its research. An example is how its Institute for Connected Communities is providing an evidence base for social prescription, a new healthcare framework that seeks to treat people holistically. Or in the pioneering research led by the Baby Dev Lab, to understand how society can better support our youngest and most vulnerable in their most formative years. Those findings are being directly applied by UEL's early years students and graduates, working in local schools and nurseries.



In His Majesty's first university visit of his reign, King Charles III visited the University of East London's Stratford Health Campus, including the pioneering Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub.

UEL's partnership work in both health and early childhood, are examples of how UEL is reimagining the role of higher education. At times we hear people question the value of going to university. I would urge those people to look at how institutions like UEL are doing ground-breaking work to train the future health and teaching workforce to both reflect and respond to our rapidly changing society. Or to consider how universities formed a critical part of the nation's fight against Covid-19, such as UEL's collaboration with Newham Public Health to develop the Covid Champions to support the dissemination of public health information locally – a model rolled out nationally.

The University's impact is underpinned by its multi-disciplinary approach – departments and teams are combining skills and expertise to help develop the innovative solutions needed for the complex challenges our health and social care, and early years sectors face. It is becoming very clear that understanding and better supporting the needs of children in their first five years, will help to reduce the level of mental and physical health challenges they may face as adults. UEL is showing how we need to take a much broader, holistic view, and harness the collective insights and commitment of the many stakeholders who want to improve outcomes for our most marginalised. Genuine and sustainable collaboration will drive the radical solutions needed to shift the dial on complex issues, and I urge UEL to continue its drive to shape a healthier and more equitable society.



**Ann Keen**

RN NDN FRCN FQNI FAAN

MP for Brentford and Isleworth (1997-2010)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health Services (2007-2010)

# CHAPTER FIVE: ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES



# UEL IS PLAYING A PIVOTAL ROLE IN TACKLING THE ROOT CAUSES OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES, HELPING TO SOLVE NHS WORKFORCE CHALLENGES, AND PIONEERING NEW APPROACHES TO HEALTHCARE IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.



In the past five years, UEL has educated over **2,200** students in health sciences subjects – over **50%** of which are in subjects directly aligned to medicine.



UEL is part of a **£5 million** project to boost research into health inequalities in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.



UEL-designed software aimed at supporting people with learning disabilities to access healthcare is now used in **13** local governments and was selected by the NHS National Innovation Accelerator to scale up health service adoption nationally.

**Our nursing course has grown student numbers by 1500% since 2018, so now 1 in every 12 Adult Nursing students in London is studying with UEL.**

**Pioneering work in social prescribing has helped train a network of 1,000 volunteers to provide support on improving health outcomes.**

**Since 2021, the Office for Students has awarded UEL £8.3m in funding to develop the Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub, with the University contributing a further £2m in capital funding.**

# COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR COMPLEX CHALLENGES

Health outcomes for people living in UEL's surrounding boroughs are poor compared to much of the country. Healthcare providers in our area must understand a complex tapestry of socioeconomic factors if they want to deliver equitable care to all. Newham is the most diverse borough in London. No one ethnic group makes up more than 15% of the population. As many as 52% of Newham's children live in poverty, and 37% of the borough live below the London poverty line after rent. Life expectancy for males in the most deprived quintile of Newham has decreased by 3.7 years between 2014 and 2021.

UEL is committed to partnering with local and national services to overcome the challenges which cause and result from health inequity. Its research has a direct impact on its immediate communities. It's also a vital partner in creating a medical workforce which reflects these communities for the future, increasing diversity amongst NHS staff. Through state-of-the-art training and facilities, UEL is helping tackle some of the challenges facing the UK's modern healthcare system.





## CASE STUDY: PROMOTING HEALTH IN DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES

UEL's 'Communities Driving Change' programme led by the Institute for Connected Communities (ICC) designed a 'health creation' platform for Tower Hamlets Council Public Health Team. The platform improves the health of communities by identifying issues impacting health and well-being, recruiting volunteers and developing new ways to improve health and well-being of local people. The programme operates in the 12 most deprived neighbourhoods in Tower Hamlets. The level of engagement with the community within a six-month period resulted in 259 volunteers, 2,967 residents attended events, 827 resident-led activities were initiated, 56 residents have attended training around building capacity in their communities, and 176 young people have been involved in the programme.

## CASE STUDY: UEL RIX CENTRE

UEL's RIX Centre co-developed digital tools with learning disabled citizens, their families and communities, working with local authorities and NHS providers to put the voice of disabled people at the heart of regional health and care services. The centre was established with over £2 million investment from corporate sponsors and grant-funders and has pioneered digital health and care solutions with the local east London community since 2014.

The Centre has pioneered a 'multimedia advocacy' approach to health and social care for people with learning disabilities as part of a knowledge-exchange programme promoting social inclusion and challenging health inequality. The resulting RIX Wiki software has secured revenue from 13 local government contracts across the UK since 2017 and has been selected by the NHS National Innovation Accelerator to scale-up health-service adoption nationally.

A pilot implementation programme of RIX software-as-service beyond London includes services in Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Cambridge, Norfolk, North Tyneside, Devon, Cornwall and North Wales.





## TRAINING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

**It has been estimated that by 2030/31, almost half a million additional healthcare staff will be needed to meet the pressures on the NHS.**

Since the academic year 2018/19, UEL has educated over 2,200 students in the health sciences field - over half of which studied subjects allied to medicine (1,265). This number has grown significantly in the past five years - in direct response to local need and working hand in hand with local NHS trusts - with UEL's nursing course growing from 60 students in 2018 to 1000 students in 2021/22. This includes 350 nursing apprenticeships, who work directly with NHS partners, enabling employers to develop their workforce more effectively based on local demands. UEL funds a dedicated member of staff to work alongside the integrated care board to identify where placement capacity can be increased in primary and social care settings, further boosting vital NHS workforce capacity.

UEL has invested significantly in modern facilities so that healthcare students at UEL are using up-to-date technology fit for a modern NHS workforce. The importance of new facilities to healthcare training was only made clearer by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions put on placement capacity, through lockdowns and subsequent hospital reprioritisation. Placing technology and innovation at the heart of UEL's training offer safeguards students against difficulties like this.

## ■ **UEL's Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub was highly commended at the Times Higher Education Awards 2023 for Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year.**

The Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub is a European first in end-to-end simulated health and social care practice, the result of over £10m worth of investment from the Office for Students and UEL. In early 2023, the Hub was toured by His Majesty King Charles III on his first official visit to a university during his reign. The King was able to meet with students, staff and visitors who have benefitted from this investment in UEL's healthcare training facilities, as well as celebrating the university's 125th anniversary and offering timely commemoration of the National Health Service's 75th anniversary.

The educational advances demonstrated to the King at the Hub, which showcased the University's commitment to training the next generation of healthcare professionals, includes a multi-professional simulation suite that boasts the latest in augmented and virtual reality equipment. This includes high-tech patient simulator mannequins, which can display a range of neurological and physiological symptoms such as sweating and crying. A mock A&E department, training ambulance, intensive care unit and model flat are also used to engage students in real life health scenarios.

UEL has additionally invested heavily in online simulation technology, providing students with the opportunity to undertake an initial virtual placement. The software provides basic competence training meaning that students enter their clinical placement with a higher degree of confidence in their skills and ability. Students reported reduced anxiety when beginning placements after using the software.

With the challenges and complexity of global healthcare - including in the NHS - recruiting, developing and retaining healthcare staff are critical. It is more important than ever that we have the best-trained healthcare professionals. And this training must prepare graduates for the realities of working in diverse communities with distinct needs. Throughout UEL's healthcare education courses, students are taught about health inequalities - particularly in the context of the local community. Many of those who study at the University remain in the area after graduation and go on to work in the health system in the local area - therefore this approach to the curriculum of health education courses is key to helping address health inequalities in the area.



The Hospital and Primary Care Training Hub incorporates mannequins with different skin tones to reflect the population the students will go on to serve so they can recognise conditions on different skin colours, and Venepuncture arms from different ethnic backgrounds are used for cannulation and injections.

Different health outcomes for people from ethnic minority backgrounds are a growing policy challenge facing the UK healthcare system. For example, black women are four times more likely to die while pregnant or just after childbirth than white women. The causes of this are complex; but one factor is a lack of training and awareness of the needs of black women, and certain unconscious biases.

Current NHS strategies to address this particular health inequity include hiring diverse staff who have a greater likelihood of empathising with black women. Given this, UEL's work to diversify the pipeline of talent feeding the NHS is key to helping address health inequities across the UK.

Healthcare educators at UEL are more ethnically diverse than the average healthcare education faculties in UK universities. Having a diverse range of educators delivering courses in this area is vital for a number of reasons - academics who have similar lived experience to their areas of academic expertise are more able to understand issues that impact them.

## CASE STUDY: TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN NEWHAM AND TOWER HAMLETS

UEL is a partner in the £5 million NIHR funded Tower Hamlets Health Determinants Research Collaborative which will be a powerful collaboration between the council, local universities, and community organisations to embed a culture of research to make evidence-based decisions, making it easier to do and use research about health determinants and inequalities and to improve the health of the Tower Hamlets community. The project is part of a collaborative research effort between UEL, Tower Hamlets Council, Queen Mary University and London Metropolitan University. It aims to deliver innovative, on the ground research into the wider causes of health inequalities amongst some of the UK's most diverse communities.

The University's Royal Docks School of Business and Law is also involved in a project with the London Borough of Newham that involves young people in decisions about their health and wellbeing, ensuring that their voices are heard by healthcare providers and other stakeholders. The project will involve young people, NHS health providers, youth and social groups, EDI advocates, health and social care professionals, local businesses, and researchers. It aims to develop a framework for a new social contract that involves young people in the design and delivery of youth health services. The project will be youth-led at all levels and will create 30 youth champions from among 300 young people aged 16-25. It will document and disseminate its values, principles and ways of working as examples of best practice, and aims to inspire future health leaders.





■ **“The University of East London  
has made a significant contribution  
to building the social prescribing  
movement across England.”**

**Bev Taylor**  
Operations Director



# AT THE FOREFRONT OF RESEARCH INTO HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

**As long-term health conditions and mental health challenges become more prevalent, GP surgeries are becoming overwhelmed by demand. Conversely, these health issues may not be treatable through prescribed medication or typical treatment. Social prescribing is a new framework of healthcare which seeks to treat patients holistically. GPs can prescribe a variety of activities, groups, and services to meet the practical, social, and emotional needs of patients.**

UEL's Institute for Connected Communities led the efforts to provide an evidence base for social prescription which contributed to the expansion of the social prescription network (of research, advice, conferences and training on social prescribing) from 10 members in 2016 to 5,000 members in 2020. UEL-led research has had significant influence on the social prescription vision for London 2018 - 2028. The evidence base which UEL helped create has led to the development of the only accredited Level 3 qualification in social prescribing, training link workers on how to best support social prescribing service users. 1,000 link workers have now been trained and the course received very positive feedback.

UEL's expertise in working on community-focussed healthcare interventions, built up through work like that done on social prescribing, proved invaluable during the Covid-19 pandemic, and informed the University's rapid response. Activities focused on providing scientifically-sound information to the public through sustained engagement, media appearances and consulting, primarily addressing the health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic. Researchers also collaborated with Newham Public Health to develop the Covid Champions, an innovative approach to the dissemination of public health information, which was replicated nationally.

Researchers at UEL are also working across communities to build awareness of, confidence with, and access to healthcare interventions for young people. Researchers from UEL, in collaboration with UCLAN, were commissioned by Natural England to form a group of young advisors to scrutinise and feedback on four different aspects of their Children's People and Nature Survey. Elsewhere, UEL academics are helping to research the youth mentoring landscape in London as part of the London Recovery Board's New Deal for Young People mission. And associates from UEL have collaborated on research and resource creation with the Peer Action Collective, a £5.2 million programme which aims to give young people the chance to make their communities safer, fairer places to live.

# CHAPTER SIX: SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH EARLY YEARS RESEARCH



# UEL IS WORKING TO UNDERSTAND, ENGAGE, CO-CREATE AND SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITHIN SOME OF THE MOST DIVERSE AND VULNERABLE ENVIRONMENTS IN THE UK.



On average, UEL trains **325** teachers every academic year.



UEL works directly with over **40** local schools and nurseries in the borough through the Newham Learning network.



UEL's early years researchers contribute to the University's impressive research profile. In the REF 2021, **54%** of UEL Research was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent, with a further **37%** internationally recognised.

**Research findings from UEL's Baby Dev Lab has reached over 50,000 early years practitioners in 2000 primary schools, leading to substantial changes in early years teaching environments to support learning and development.**

**The Baby Dev Lab has received £3.2 million in external funding since 2019, from funders including the European Research Council, Economic and Social Research Council, and the Medical Research Council. This research is being used in the public and private sectors to improve children's wellbeing, including by the Department for Education, Public Health England, Thomas Cook and Center Parcs.**

# EARLY YEARS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The University of East London has a strong tradition in supporting children and families through research and training in a range of related disciplines including early childhood education and care, developmental psychology, neuropsychology, counselling, community work, global development, law, health promotion, and social work. UEL also has a 125-year history of training and supporting teachers in east London and beyond.

Through its work in these areas, UEL is:

## **Raising awareness of the impact of early years on our lives**

UEL's Baby Dev Lab conducts research to help us understand how babies think and behave. Researchers have pioneered state-of-the-art wearables and naturalistic brain recording techniques to study how the diverse early living environments and relationships experienced by children in our catchment area influence early stress – both in the child themselves, and their parents.



His Majesty King Charles III speaks with researchers and families at UEL's Baby Dev Lab on his visit to the University.

### **Solving challenges in early years policy and support**

Work conducted by UEL's International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare is highlighting the impact of the growth of private, for-profit childcare provision, and the overall sustainability of early childhood services. Academics from the Centre have advised governments in the UK and abroad on childcare policy and on social and emotional wellbeing. Researchers are also collaborating with the NIHR Children and Families Research Policy Unit to improve outcome measurement of targeted psychosocial interventions for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Creating communities of support**

Through partnerships with Newham Learning and the East London Research School, UEL is working to enhance early years provision and support practitioners, children and families. Its Wellbeing & Psychological Services Centre also advises the NICE expert panel on the development of its public health guidance on early years wellbeing. UEL researchers are leading work to support high risk groups, including Family Recovery After Domestic Abuse, a group-based psycho-educational programme for children and their female caregivers, and a project evaluating the impact of schemes delivered by leading domestic abuse organisations, which is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

### **Strengthening the early years workforce**

UEL is one of the largest Early Childhood Degree providers in London with our Early Childhood Studies course, alongside degrees in Psychology with Child Development, Special Education and Education Studies. We also offer the first full Montessori Pedagogy BA (Hons) Degree Programme, in partnership with Maria Montessori International.

By harnessing the power of partnership, UEL's early years researchers are supporting global, long-term, and intergenerational change. UEL is speaking to key stakeholders, including the Royal Foundation's Centre for Early Childhood whose focus on making a positive difference in early years aligns closely with the University's multi-disciplinary and innovative approach to rethinking early childhood as the foundation of a healthier and fairer society. Through this, the University is working to extend the international impact of its early years research through a partnership with the Governor of Western Australia and the Telethon Kids Institute. UEL leads a European-wide consortium (the European Cooperation in Science & Technology Network) in the measurement of how early home and educational environments influence development across 20 different countries. A global focus also informs work done in collaboration with the Home Office evaluating cross-cultural differences in early autism diagnosis. UEL is also involved in the UK-wide Early Life Cohort Study, providing valuable insights into the impact of growing up in areas of significant socio-economic deprivation.



## **CITY LIVING: THE IMPACT OF URBAN ENVIRONMENTS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

UEL's Baby Dev Lab plays an internationally leading role in early years research, pioneering new methods to uncover how changing modern living environments affect early cognitive and emotional development. Innovative wearable technology and naturalistic brain recording techniques allow researchers to understand how early life stress affects parenting and mental health development in children. This research is of vital importance considering the dramatic increase in children being raised in urban environments. 300 years ago, 5% of children grew up in cities; now it's 50%.

Baby Dev Lab-led research has found that by the age of one, children growing up in noisier home environments have higher levels of physiological stress, affecting both their cognitive performance and their emotional responsiveness. The research included both babies and parents participating in lab-based studies where readings were taken from physiological stress monitors. Children growing up in urban environments showed lower sustained attention and greater emotional instability – although they also showed faster learning speeds in some contexts.

A major focus of the Lab's work is on how to help adapt teaching styles to play to the strengths of high stress, inner city children. Additionally, UEL has secured a Medical Research Council grant to lead work to further understanding about ADHD, a disorder that disproportionately affects children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but about which there has been little research into to date. The Lab's specialisms will allow researchers to investigate how early home environments affect ADHD development.

A further project examines how outdoor learning in natural settings affects young children from urban backgrounds – concentrating in particular on children from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds. With almost 70% of the world's children expected to grow up in cities by 2050, UEL research has proven links between increased access to nature and improved cognition, behaviour, and school performance in young children.

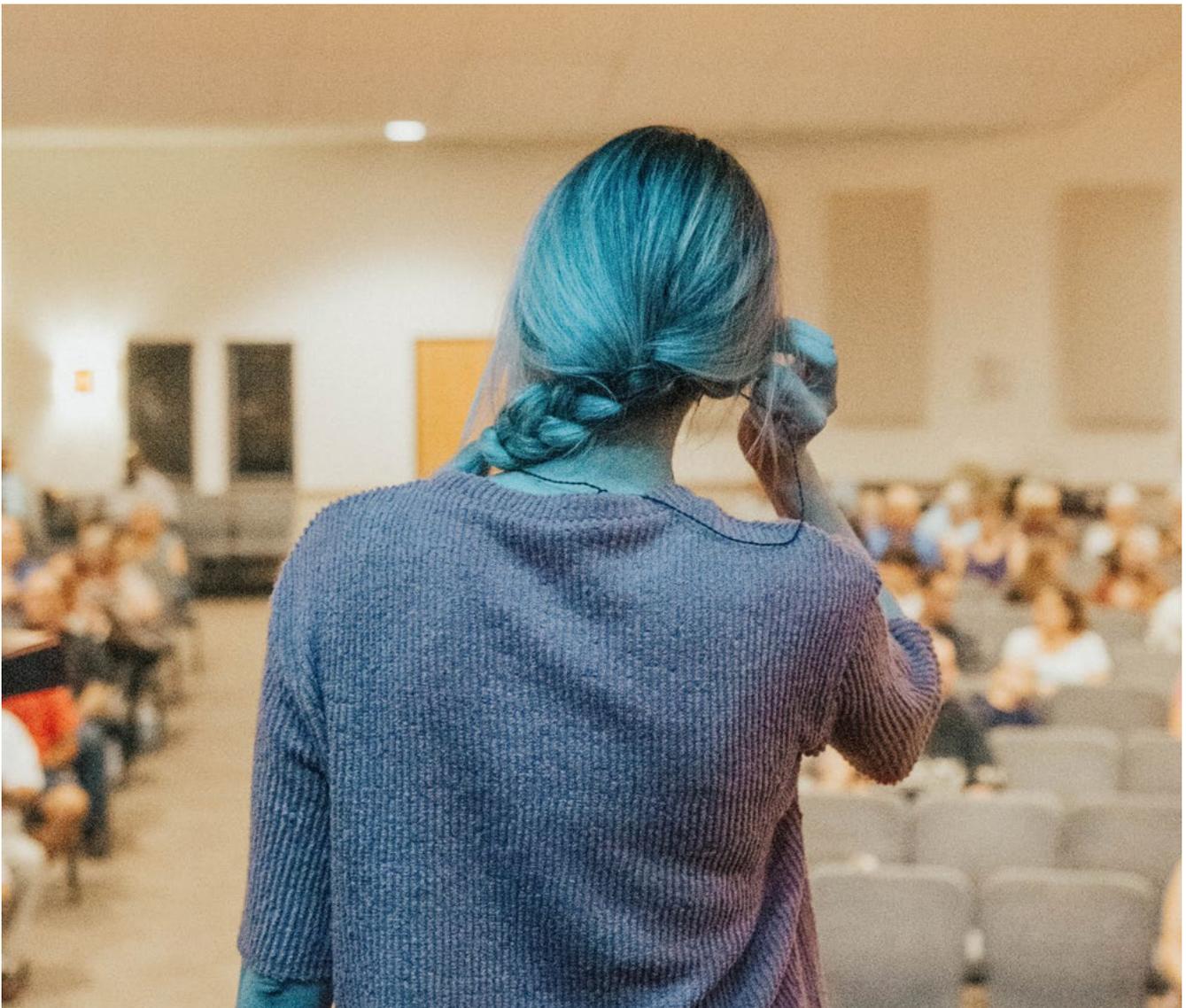
## ■ **The University of East London is uniquely well positioned to help both assess and address early life vulnerability, and to optimise early learning outcomes for vulnerable children.**

The team are committed to finding new, evidence-based ways to improve the lives of local children and families and using that knowledge to roll out life-changing impact across the UK and beyond. The Baby Dev Lab's work has had wide-reaching and sustained impact with research findings being presented to over 50,000 early year practitioners, including headteachers of over 2,000 primary schools, nurseries and 40 local councils or academy trusts in the UK. Research from the Lab has had direct impact on councils' early years provision plans within the UK, contributed to governmental campaigns from Public Health England and the Department for Education, been involved in high-impact television and media work and fed into projects with commercial organisations including shopping centre and hotel design.

# EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

**Newham has the second highest rate of child poverty in London and the lowest life expectancy of all London boroughs. High-quality teacher training, including in early years, is therefore vital to providing young people in Newham with the best possible start in life and to their education journey.**

UEL is one of the largest providers of early childhood courses in London. Its academic team has extensive experience not just in teaching, but also family support and early intervention methodologies. Capitalising on the University's east London location, the School of Education and Communities has earned an excellent reputation for working in partnership with schools to prepare teachers to work in the most diverse schools in the country.



Trainee teachers and UEL staff are embedded in local schools, multi-academy trusts and communities, and trainee teachers spend extensive time in classrooms on placement in local schools. This means that every day, hundreds of UEL trainee teachers are in classrooms across the city and region, improving their teaching practices and supporting young people in some of London's most deprived communities.

## **■ The 230 teaching graduates reported to be in full time employment in the 2020/21 Graduate Outcomes Survey will be educating 6,141 children in one academic year across London and beyond.**

Since the academic year 2018/19, UEL has, on average, educated 325 teachers every year through its teacher training pathways. 73% of people who graduated from an education or teaching course at UEL were in full time employment 18 months later. A further 8% were in part time employment.

UEL is also a hub supporting teachers and best practice in the borough. The Teacher Education Research Group, based in the School of Education and Communities, offers a forum for informed debate and discussion on all aspects of teacher education, and promotes the work of pioneering teacher educators and researchers through the Research in Teacher Education Journal, which utilises qualitative and quantitative evidence to inform best practice across the sector. This means that UEL teacher training is informed by the latest research, including research into improving emotional resilience and wellbeing through positive education programmes, which led to changes in government education policy around the teaching of wellbeing and resilience in the UK and EU.

UEL has hosted the Newham Learning Conference, Head Teachers Conference, and the largest Early Years Practitioner Conference in the UK, as well as other school training events on campus. By bringing practitioners together and fostering collaboration between schools and the academy, UEL is contributing to the growth and improvement of the educational landscape in its borough and beyond. These efforts are leading to better learning outcomes for students and building a more cohesive and effective education system overall.

## CASE STUDY: NEWHAM LEARNING

Newham Learning is a partnership of over 40 schools that work collectively to give every pupil the best start in life. It aims for all the borough's children and young people to have the best possible educational opportunities, outcomes, and life chances.

UEL is involved across the partnership, including undertaking collaborative research into early childhood development, supporting the establishment of thematic learning communities, presenting at headteacher conferences, and taking an active role in the strategic vision for the partnership through representation on its Board.

■ **“In Newham and around east London, UEL’s reputation is very strong. By reputation alone, it’s a good enough reason to work with UEL above anybody else. But the fact that it’s been in east London for 125 years, it knows east London better than any other university – that’s the unique selling point.”**

**David Bailey**  
Director



NEWHAM LEARNING



# PART FIVE



# IMPACT THROUGH INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**The world is changing rapidly - and UEL is having to transform at pace to keep up. Fostering meaningful connections between the University, the local community, and industry are vital components of UEL's overall societal impact.**

This section showcases two innovative ways in which UEL's wider societal engagement plays out - with a focus on driving social inclusion through sport; and through forging deep links to new and emerging industries that are going to shape the future in the decades to come.

# FOREWORD

In the spirit of introspection and progress, the University of East London is thrilled to present its Impact Report. This document serves as a testament to the unwavering commitment of the institution to inspire positive change and catalyse transformative initiatives in the pursuit of knowledge, progress and societal betterment.

On speaking to undergraduates, it is clear to me that their university education had instilled in them the skills and qualities that we most need during periods of change: curiosity, determination, insight, and collaboration. This was not least because UEL is an institution that embodies these values through and through.

I have spent my career working with people, governments, private companies, and public institutions to navigate new opportunities, and to ensure that the spirit of innovation translates into sustainable impact. I believe that the key to this sustainability is a holistic approach, which recognises that none of us can succeed in isolation. UEL recognises this too and prioritises partnership to guarantee that the innovations of today and tomorrow won't leave anyone behind. I was delighted to officially open the University's Centre of FinTech in 2022. The Centre's work is a leading example of the application of this holistic approach to an area ripe for innovation, which I argued was vital in my independent review of the UK Fintech sector commissioned by the Government in 2020.

UEL is establishing an enviable reputation for its work in this area, harnessing the latest data to inform strategy, contributing to the regulatory policy agenda, attracting global talent to the UK, and supporting start-ups to thrive. This work also underpins the innovative learning pathways that the Centre has developed, including first-in-sector courses such as the LLM Fintech Law.

UEL's careers-first approach to education comes into its own here, as the University has listened to employers and collaborated with them in development of their programmes, making sure they are fit for the future. The fact that many of these courses are now also being offered overseas by partner organisations also highlights the University's role as a global gateway, with their brand respected around the world.

This worldwide reach does not come at the expense of local communities, however, and UEL remains an invaluable anchor institution in east London. The way that UEL interacts with and invests in local communities is inspiring – particularly, as shown in the coming chapters, in the sporting arena. When I joined the England and Wales Cricket Board in an advisory



role, I made it my mission to focus on both the importance of sport as a force for good in our communities, and on the need to foster elite talent to ensure that professional teams continue to thrive. UEL's ethos spans these ends of the sporting spectrum too, recognising they are both vital to a successful sector. Their Sport in Your Futures programme is an exemplar of pioneering university outreach, and their collaboration with Sport England provides, in the words of that organisation, "a nationwide blueprint for city-based talent recruitment and development."

As this section of this report shows, UEL's impact extends far beyond the classroom, to industries and communities in east London and beyond. Herein lies UEL's unique value, for innovation cannot exist inside a vacuum, and industry must be mindful of its effects on communities. Our world is evolving, but to ensure that it does so for the better, we must effectively prepare ourselves and others for the changes that await us. UEL is perfectly positioned to do this, understanding the need for innovation, but also the importance of history, and the complex needs of people and the communities it serves.



**Sir Ron Kalifa**  
OBE

# CHAPTER SEVEN: DRIVING INCLUSION THROUGH SPORT AND WELLBEING



# UEL IS HARNESSING THE POWER OF SPORT TO OVERCOME BARRIERS, BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, SUPPORT AND DEVELOP TALENT, AND PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION.



**80** young athletes are engaged in the Sport England-funded East London Sport Talent Pathway pilot.



The East London Phoenix wheelchair basketball team is the first sporting franchise in UEL's history.



UEL currently funds over **150** sport scholars, and has **13** alumni who are Olympians or Paralympians.

**Over 1,500 primary aged children from a network of 20 local schools have taken part in the Sport In Your Futures programme in 2022/23.**

**35,000 students and local residents have used UEL's SportsDock facilities. Since making off-peak gym membership free to students, UEL has seen an 800% increase in the number of students using SportsDock facilities.**

**UEL is one of only five universities to be awarded the University Mental Health Charter Award.**

# ACTIVE CAMPUS, ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Through a wide range of sport-related initiatives, UEL actively engages with local communities, empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion. Its aim is to remove barriers to participation in physical activity, and utilise the power of sport to transform lives and communities. It is also a key partner in ensuring the legacy of the 2012 London Olympics is not forgotten, with a focus on sport that is deeply rooted in a commitment to the local community.

In the 2021 census, Newham had the fourth highest number of people rating their health as 'very bad' in the UK. Surrounding boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney were the highest and second highest respectively. Given this, the University's approach to increasing access and exposure to exercise and sport is one key part to helping tackle health inequities in the area.

UEL's partnerships with sports organisations, grassroots programmes, and community projects create opportunities for participation, skill development, and personal growth.

Its state-of-the-art sports facility - SportsDock - was recently refurbished as part of a multimillion-pound investment programme to improve facilities. And through work in east London with Sport England, UEL is helping to identify and support the sporting talent of the future.





- **UEL is developing an integrated Active Campus on its Docklands site, engaging those who do not usually take part in mainstream sports to enhance belonging and connection. Activities include a pop-up swimming pool and student-designed skate park, as the University continues to shape a programme of active health and wellbeing tailored to student, staff and local community needs.**



# SPORT IN YOUR FUTURES: CONNECTING THE INSTITUTION TO LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE

**Sport In Your Futures is a programme which aims to directly tackle issues such as obesity through increasing exposure and access to high-quality sport facilities and experiences at the University. Many young people experience significant challenges to being active and rarely get to enjoy live performance sport. 50% of children live in poverty in Newham – the second highest rate in the UK. In 2020, 43% of year 6 pupils were obese, compared to a regional average of 38%.**

The programme, designed in collaboration with a range of partners and stakeholders, including East London Schools Sports Partnerships and Active Newham, offers primary school aged children the opportunity to come out to campus and take part in exercise and sporting activities delivered by UEL staff and students as well as a number of local community organisations.

Sport In Your Futures was designed to capitalise on the strengths of the University - such as high-quality sporting facilities and subject area expertise - and the needs of, and barriers which face, the community when it comes to engaging in physical activity. Therefore, participants on the programme are able to watch UEL sports matches, meet sporting scholars at the University and hear more from specialist UEL staff on the wider health and wellbeing benefits of sport.

In 2022/23, the Sport In Your Futures programme reached over 1,500 primary school children from a network of 20 participating schools across the borough. The programme has also brought together 28 student volunteers and six different community partners to help support delivery.

As part of the annual Sport In Your Futures Summer Festival, more than 400 pupils try a range of exciting new sports such as laser tag, skateboarding and breaking, and are given the opportunity to explore sporting history via an exhibition of items from the British Olympic Association archive collection - which is held by UEL's Library, Archives and Learning Services. Sport In Your Futures continues to go from strength to strength and is now attracting interest from organisations such as the British Olympic Foundation as potential delivery partners.

## ELITE SPORT WITH GLOBAL REACH

The East London Sport Talent Pathway is funded by Sport England and delivered at UEL as a prototype talent identification and development programme. It aims to support aspiring young athletes based in east London to progress in their chosen discipline, achieving sporting excellence alongside whole-person development.

Through its uniquely inclusive and holistic approach, the programme seeks to radically diversify the regional and national talent pool. It provides the young people with bespoke access to quality athlete support services, experience of a range of different sports, and exposure to relatable, role-model athletes, coaches and speakers.

With unique partnerships across a wide range of sports (including West Ham Foundation, Essex County Cricket Club, London Lions, London Youth Rowing, Essex Blades, Rackets Cubed and Volleyball England), UEL also opens up opportunities for students to link with high profile sports clubs across the country. Its focus on providing pathways to elite sport means we attract talent from across the globe to study whilst they continue to develop their sporting careers.



■ **“The magic of working with UEL is the way they understand the needs of their local community. We have worked in partnership to create and pilot a place-based approach to talent development that we now hope will provide a nationwide blueprint for city-based talent recruitment and development.”**

**Hannibal Morris**

Head of England Talent Development Pathways



UEL is at the forefront of university sport across its focus high performance sports, including volleyball, basketball, football and wheelchair basketball. Its facilities, infrastructure, talent pathway and sports scholarship programme give current and alumni athletes a strong platform for success. The University had particularly noteworthy success at the 2022 Commonwealth Games: if UEL had been part of the final results table, its athletes would have finished 20th out of the 40 countries that medalled.

The University of East London also has a rich history of current and former students competing in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, including in athletics, swimming, judo, paralympic powerlifting and wheelchair basketball. UEL alumni have competed for nations across the globe, and the University maintains a Roll of Honour to recognise their achievements and inspire their peers.

UEL sports teams are also achieving enviable success in university leagues – the British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS) league 21/22 ranks UEL as the 5th best of all London institutions. Such success is bolstered by the University’s support package. UEL athlete scholars receive bursaries, unlimited physiotherapy and sports massage, UKSCA-accredited strength and conditioning training, lifestyle and performance workshops, access to sports science support, including nutrition, psychology, physiology, biomechanics and performance analysis, a flexible elite athlete academic study policy, and priority access to on-campus accommodation.



## CASE STUDY: EAST LONDON PHOENIX

The East London Phoenix wheelchair basketball team is the first sporting franchise in UEL's history. The British Wheelchair Basketball Women's Premier League team is made up of talent from across the local community including a number of UEL students. Home games are played at the University's £21m SportsDock facility - where members of the local community are able to purchase tickets for games for £3 - £5. The franchise also provides a number of free fan days to help reach all corners of the community. The team has reached the final of the Women's Premier League for the first two seasons that the league has been running.

# CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

UEL believes that a student's mental and physical health is a necessary foundation for effective learning, and actively structures its approach to teaching around students' wellbeing. UEL was one of the first five universities to be granted the University Mental Health Charter Award in December 2022. Some examples of UEL's work and initiatives that led to its successful award of the charter include:

- The Student Wellbeing Service, a multidisciplinary team of psychological professionals, is UEL's central service that supports students who are at risk. It has a dedicated duty worker whose role is to respond immediately when students at risk are brought to their attention.
- Better gathering and analysis of cross-institutional data, to assess the effectiveness of interventions.
- Investment in online resources including self-help options: Blackbullion, Being Well, Living Well and Consent Matters courses, Togetherall's Live Therapy, and Report + Support are all available to students. Providing a broad range of channels and methods, both online and in person, encourages students to access help in a way that works for them.
- Recognising that external services support is often the most appropriate intervention, UEL invested significant internal funding (£300k) to the OfS Challenge project testing mental health analytics and paid to be part of the Advance HE 'Embedding wellbeing in the curriculum' project.
- Student wellbeing is part of the University's audit cycle. The University's Health Gain and Wellness Committee was established to ensure student support is embedded in governance. With cross-institutional representation, the committee works to embed wellness into all working practices, monitor benchmarks and KPIs, and oversee the implementation of relevant policies, procedures and training.



# HARNESSING THE POWER OF SPORT AND EXERCISE TO TRANSFORM LIVES

SportsDock and its facilities are not only open to UEL staff and students but also provide the local community with the opportunity to engage with sport and physical activity. The facilities have been used by over 35,000 students and residents in the last 10 years, and the fitness centre underwent a £500,000 refurbishment in 2022. The University has also been able to take its wellness mission outside the walls of these facilities and introduce different initiatives in new spaces such as the library, where they now run lunchtime relaxation and stretching sessions for all students and staff.

UEL's gym facilities are free for students to use - which has led to an 800% increase in the number of students engaging with East London Sports over the past year.

Initiatives such as the Move East London programme allow all students at UEL to take part in sport and physical activity across Docklands and Stratford campuses. Activities range from yoga to boxing and basketball - all of which are free to attend. As part of UEL's commitment to ensure physical and mental wellness across campus, sport and physical activity form a key part of strategies to support the health of students and staff.





## CASE STUDY: STUDENT EXERCISE REFERRAL PROGRAMME

East London Sports Centre staff have developed an exercise referral scheme in partnership with UEL's Wellbeing Team. The scheme aimed to support students experiencing mental health issues to exercise to improve their mental and physical health, reduce isolation and increase social engagement.

In a pilot during the 2021/22 academic year, the Wellbeing team referred 42 students to the programme with 29 students being reported as becoming more active following the referral. One year after joining the scheme, 90% of the students engaging with the programme either continued, graduated or repeated the year, higher than the broader completion rate at UEL. Two of the students referred onto this programme now work for the University.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: PREPARING FOR THE TECHNOLOGIES OF THE FUTURE



# UEL RESEARCH IS ENSURING A DIGITAL FUTURE THAT IS SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL - INFORMING POLICY AROUND ONLINE HARMS AND CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGING ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS, USING AI TO HELP TACKLE INSURANCE FRAUD, AND TACKLING CYBERCRIME.



UEL is one of **30** universities selected as part of an Office for Student-led programme delivering postgraduate level conversion courses in AI and data science.



UEL's Centre of FinTech works closely with industry including Barclays, HSBC, and Nano Foundation, to develop partnerships and create opportunities for students; and its collective expertise is shaping the Bank of England's emerging policy on the digital pound.

**UEL has a growing research strength exploring how to best utilise the technologies of the future, including projects recognised as 'excellent' by the European Commission.**

**UEL has received over £1.4million in research funding to study youth cybercrime and child online harms in the UK, EU and Africa over the last 3 years.**

**UEL researchers conducted the largest survey of youth cybercrime in the EU ever undertaken with 8000 respondents in 8 countries.**

# STAYING SAFE IN AN ONLINE WORLD

As society progresses towards an increasingly digital future, it will be crucial to understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

With expertise in computer science, AI, cybersecurity, data analytics, and digital innovation, UEL is at the forefront of research and education in this rapidly evolving field. Through collaborations with industry partners, policy engagement, and cutting-edge research, UEL aims to drive innovation, address emerging digital challenges, and ensure an inclusive and secure digital future. UEL has also contributed to the UK's rapidly growing safety tech sector, helping make the online world safer for millions of people. UEL's vision for the future of the internet combines technical expertise, ethical considerations, and a commitment to safeguarding digital rights and privacy.

## ■ UEL researchers are helping policymakers to understand drivers of cybercrime and to build a safer online world.

The internet is undergoing a period of rapid change in increased connectivity. New technologies such as the metaverse offer huge potential benefits. But they also come with increased risks - particularly for children and young people.

UEL's Institute for Connected Communities and the newly launched Online Harms and Cybercrime Unit explore a range of issues surrounding online harms and cybercrime. Its Director, Professor Julia Davidson OBE, is Chair of the UK Council for Internet Safety's Evidence Group, and provides expert advice to national and international governments. Professor Davidson has also directed a study for the UK Government exploring adult online hate, harassment and abuse, which highlighted patterns of abuse based on age, sexual orientation, race and religion.

## CASE STUDY: CONVERSION COURSES IN DATA SCIENCE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

There is a national shortage of data science and AI specialists in the UK, with a recent Government report finding that there were more than 111,000 AI and data science vacancies in 2020. Addressing this shortage will be of vital importance if the UK is to keep up with the pace of technological change, and the supply of skilled graduates needs to increase significantly to keep pace with demand. It is also important that AI and data science fields continue to encourage graduates from diverse backgrounds to consider a career in these areas.

UEL is one of 30 universities selected as part of an Office for Students-led programme delivering postgraduate level conversion courses in AI and data science. The programme will provide scholarship funding to students from currently under-represented groups who wish to pursue a future career in data science.





## CASE STUDY: EXPLORING THE HUMAN AND TECHNICAL DRIVERS OF CYBERCRIME

UEL was part of a consortia of partners awarded €5 million Horizon 2020 funding to better understand drivers of cybercrime.

The emergence of new platforms for criminal activities and the flourishing cybercrime economy have yielded a staggering sum of \$1.5 trillion in illicit profits acquired, laundered, spent, and reinvested by cybercriminals. This significant increase can be attributed to the evolution of cybercriminal practices, which no longer need intricate or meticulously orchestrated operations to infiltrate IT systems.

UEL's research focused on developing prevention strategies to discourage young people from engaging in cybercrime activities. Their research found that two thirds of young people in Europe engaged in some kind of online risk taking that could lead to criminal activity - including using Dark Web forums or engaging in non-consensual sharing of images. Their research aimed to better understand the drivers behind this and to prevent initial exploration developing into more serious cybercriminal behaviour.

As a result of the research, a new taxonomy of cybercrime has been created to inform governments, policy makers and law enforcement across the globe. A number of resources have also been created for young people and their families to raise awareness of what types of online behaviours are risky, harmful, or criminal. The materials have been disseminated throughout the EU to thousands of young people and parents on Safer Internet Day 2023 via the network of Safer Internet Centres.

# CASE STUDY: STAYING SAFE IN THE METAVERSE

The world of 3D headsets and virtual reality is still in its infancy - but millions of children already engage in the metaverse every day, through online games such as Roblox and Minecraft. These apps are popular and ever present - but come with a number of downsides including online harm and exploitation; cyberbullying; and increased risk of child abuse.

The UEL Institute for Connected Communities is part of a UKRI-funded collaboration working with partners from policy, practice and industry to:

1. Understand the challenges that tech companies using metaverse apps face while ensuring that as many children, including those with neurodivergent conditions, can use their platforms safely.
2. Identify the knowledge gaps and resource needs of professionals and practitioners who work with children at risk of abuse and exploitation in the metaverse.
3. Improve safeguarding measures and the ability of law enforcement to report and investigate instances of child sexual abuse that may occur on new metaverse platforms.
4. Listen to the voices of children themselves and understand their needs for safety and support while using the metaverse.

The research aims to help industry and policy makers create a safer and more supportive environment for children in the digital world.



# BRINGING THE TECH REVOLUTION TO INDUSTRY: FINTECH

**In our globally interconnected world, improving financial technology is becoming increasingly crucial.**

In particular, the increasing growth of the application of AI significantly impacts the finance sector in all domains of finance such as investing, lending, borrowing, budgeting, saving, and forecasting.

The UK is a global financial hub; but to remain a financial powerhouse, it will need to adapt rapidly to embrace the ongoing technological revolution. Financial technology - known as FinTech - has a multitude of potential applications, from consumer banking through to financial services industries.

## ■ UEL is supporting industry and governments to adapt to new financial technologies.

Crucially, FinTech has the potential to disrupt traditional financial systems, challenge established players, and foster financial inclusion by reaching underserved populations who may have limited access to traditional banking services. And UEL is determined to be a leader in this disruption.

Launched in 2022, the UEL Centre of Fintech aims to be a hub for expertise, research, and information on all aspects of financial technology, building a pipeline of FinTech talent and facilitating a global digital economy. The Centre has already made a significant contribution to policy, most recently responding to the Financial Stability Board's Public Consultation. Working in collaboration with industry partners such as Arm, Radix, and Finder, the Centre acts as both a dynamic research group producing new insights and technologies, and a route through which to engage with the wider financial services industry.

UEL has recently launched some of the first higher education courses in FinTech, including an MSc in Blockchain and Financial Technologies, and an MBA in Fintech Management. All students will work closely with financial services industries throughout their studies - critical to keeping up to date with developments in both research and industry.

# CASE STUDY: USING AI TO TACKLE INSURANCE FRAUD

The UK insurance market has seen a surge in insurance fraud, with estimated annual costs of £40 billion.

A team led by Dr Julie Wall worked with the tech and insurance industries to create an innovative AI-based software to expose potential insurance fraud - with the aim of reducing fraud and associated financial losses, that would ultimately lead to lower costs on insurance premiums.

Researchers worked in collaboration with leading industry partners, Intelligent Voice and Strenuus, as well as with insurance companies.



# CONCLUSION: THE NEXT 125 YEARS?

**UEL's story is one of resilience, innovation, and transformation.**

The original West Ham Technical Institute – the “people’s university” – was open for only a year before it burnt down in 1899. But, like the phoenix which now sits on UEL’s crest and logo, the Institute was rebuilt from the ashes to continue its mission of educational empowerment.

This was the first of many instances of radical transformation in UEL’s institutional history, capturing the spirit of a university that always seeks to evolve in the face of extraordinary challenges to serve its communities. That spirit continues to underpin everything UEL does today.

Yet today the University’s ambitions and activity, though rooted in that same spirit, also extend beyond it. UEL is still a local anchor institution, but also now has global reach; it is still providing the skills students need for our current moment, but is also working with employers to make sure courses prepare graduates for the jobs of the continuous next.

This report tells a story about the institutional transformation that has taken place since implementing our innovative Vision 2028 strategy. It has demonstrated how the scale of UEL’s impact has aligned with the expansion of its ambitions during recent years, outlining the bold action being taken to provide a socially-just education that is life-changing for students and graduates; to unlock diversity in the talent pipeline, while helping to evolve recruitment practices and culture with top employers; and to create a 5.0-ready, green and healthy world with and for the communities it serves.

**How will this work continue into the next 125 years?**

London is moving east, with the area undergoing another period of rapid growth and regeneration. It’s estimated that 125,000 new jobs will be created in east London by 2030. Finding talented people for these roles will require an institution that fully understands the area, its diversity, and

its history. UEL will therefore continue to be a key partner in the region's future, reflecting its vibrant multicultural heritage, and acting as a 'glocal' gateway to both attract talent from all over the world to work and study in the area, and to connect local people and institutions with global partners working towards the same goals.

UEL does the work it does because it wants the world to change, with the hope that one day the old proxies of talent that have dominated industry for so long will be consigned to history. UEL believes that it is diversity – of people, of thought, of ambition – that can solve the unprecedented challenges we will all face over the coming century. It's not just a platitude to say that UEL is breaking down barriers to work and education – it's at the core of the University's mission.

As UEL celebrates 125 years of impact, it remains mindful of how that impact has changed over this time. None of us knows what will constitute that impact in another 25 years, let alone 125. Staff, students and stakeholders are only custodians of this institution, which will continue to transform lives long after they have left it. In the meantime, every member of UEL's communities can be proud of the part that they are playing in having impact now.



# ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

Our Economic Impact was calculated by London Economics using the following methodology:

Economic Impact is calculated by estimating direct, indirect and induced effects associated with operational and capital expenditures.

Direct effect is derived from finance and staff data provided by HESA (from HESA 'Finance' and 'Staff' datasets for 2021-22) which had been returned by the University to the relevant data agencies and undergone their validation and publication processes. The data items used include capital expenditure, operational expenditure (including staff and non-staff spending) and FTE of staff employed to consider the economic output generated by the University by the purchase of goods and services (including labour) from the economy.

Indirect effect is derived from a multi-regional Input-Output analysis undertaken by London Economics which uses Office for National Statistics tables measuring total production output of industries in the UK economy and the flows of goods and services. These tables are combined with further regional-level ONS datasets to achieve granular region and sector breakdowns. 2019 is the latest year for which the Input-Output tables are available.

Induced effect is a further measure of the ripple effect of the institution's economic impact, based on the same Input-Output tables and the assumed wage income spending which the University generates in its status as an employer.

Impact is measured in terms of economic output (operational and capital expenditures combined, excluding depreciation and amortisation costs and movements in pension provisions); Gross Value Added (GVA) (sum of employment costs, surplus on operations, interest payable and depreciation and amortisation costs); and FTE jobs supported (rounded to the nearest 5 Full Time Equivalent jobs.)

**Our Teaching Impact and Research Impact were calculated by Public First using the following methodology:**

Teaching Impact is calculated by subtracting the value of tuition income from the value of earnings uplift for the 2021/22 starting cohort. This is based on Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) analysis of Longitudinal Employment Outcomes (LEO) data in 2018, uprated in line with inflation. This analysis includes both UG and PG students and is apportioned in line with the UK's graduate employment rate and the number of graduates that stay in the UK.

Research Impact is calculated by the value of the investment in Research & Development and the return on that investment and assumptions derived from Treasury 'Green Book' advice on appraisal of policy, programmes and projects. The initial financial figures are as published in UEL's annual financial accounts.



**NB:** The analysis of the direct, indirect and induced expenditure includes the expenditure undertaken by the University of East London resulting from income received from tuition fees and education contracts, funding body grants, total research grants and contracts, total 'other' income, investment income, and total donations and endowments. However, there is no direct mapping between university income and expenditure, so the expenditure associated with research grants and contract income was not able to be removed from the subsequent analysis. As a result, there might be a relatively small overlap (comprising approximately 1% of total institutional expenditure) between the direct, indirect and induced economic impact associated with university expenditure and the estimate of the economic impact associated with research activity.

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For a playlist of videos exploring some of the case studies mentioned in this report, scan this QR code.

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