School of Creative Arts

Powering Potential

Whatever your background, wherever you are from, higher education can be a transformational experience. And whoever you are, the application of university research can impact your life. We are committed to having a positive transformational impact on every member of our university community, and to sharing our successes with the community around us.

Professor Quintin McKellar CBE

Vice-Chancellor

Ranked 4th globally for research culture

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, 2019

Awarded an Ecofriendly campus platinum award

EcoCampus

Ranked 4th globally for research culture

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, 2019

One of 17 universities awarded the Race Equality Charter Mark

One of only 20 universities awarded University Enterprise Zone status

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Welcome to the University of Hertfordshire

Set across two campuses in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, just 20 miles from London,

we’re an innovative, enterprising university, focused on transforming lives. We give staff and students the opportunity to succeed no matter what their background.

We drive economic growth through cutting-edge research, creative and innovative thinking, skills development, bespoke training, and facilities that help businesses achieve their potential. All of our activities are underpinned by our core values; we are friendly, ambitious, collegiate, enterprising, and student-focused in everything we do.

We have more than 25,000 students studying over 550 undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees. Of those students over 4,000 are international students from 100 countries. We also have more than 6,000 students taking courses outside the UK through international partnerships and franchise arrangements.

Our teaching is delivered across eight academic Schools: Creative Arts, Education, Health and Social Work, Hertfordshire Business School, Hertfordshire Law School, Humanities, Life and Medical Sciences, and Physics, Engineering and Computer Science.

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Our history

1952-1959 Hatfield Technical College

1952 saw the opening of a new Technical College in Hatfield, with HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh performing the opening ceremony. With its roots in Britain’s pioneering aeronautical industry, the College soon established itself as an innovative force in education, awarding our first BSc (Engineering) qualifications to external students of the University of London in 1959.

1960-1968 Hatfield College of Technology

In 1960, the institution was renamed Hatfield College of Technology and began to invest in computer science, buying the College’s first digital computer in 1963 – a National Elliott 803B digital computer, at a cost of £24,010. In 1965, the college became recognised for 13 Honours Degree courses, including Computer Science and Civil Engineering, with BA (Hons) Business Studies coming a year later.

1969-1991 Hatfield Polytechnic

In 1969, the College was designated as Hatfield Polytechnic, and by 1970 had formed the best equipped and staffed Computer Centre in the public sector in education. In 1975, the Polytechnic was reorganised into five schools of study and a centre for Management Studies.

1992-Present University of Hertfordshire

Hatfield Polytechnic became The University of Hertfordshire on 29 June 1992. In 1998, our prestigious Formula Student team competed in the first ever competition held in the UK, winning the prize for the Best Presented Team. In 2003 the de Havilland Campus, a £120 million project, opened. Today, we have a student community of over 25,000 on UK based programmes across our two campuses.

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Executive team

As Chief Executive, the Vice-Chancellor exercises considerable influence upon the development of University strategy, the identification and planning of new development and the shaping of the University ethos. The executive team - the Deputy Vice-Chanellor, Group Finance Director, Secretary and Registrar, the Pro Vice-Chancellor Business and International Development, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience all contribute to this aspect of work.

Professor Quintin McKellar CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

Quintin has been the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University since 2011. His responsibilities include the day-to-day running of the institution, the delivery of strategic and operational plans, performance, its internal structure and organisation, and its interface with external bodies and agencies. In 2015 he was elected as a Board member of Universities UK, and in 2020 was elected as Vice-President (England and Northern Ireland). He was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2011 for services to science.

Professor Matthew Weait, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Matthew joined the University in March 2020, and as the sole Deputy Vice-Chancellor he is engaged in all strategic and operational decisions which underpin the positioning and success of the University. He will be leading the implementation of a new strategic plan for the University. Matthew has overall responsibility for University planning, including the development of all academic areas through the respective deans, staff development, international and regional partnerships and developments, recruitment, induction and retention of students, student experience and student outcomes.

Dr Mairi Watson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)

Mairi joined the University in May 2020 as Pro Vice- Chancellor Education and Student Experience. She leads strategy and performance, as well as policy development and delivery, in learning and teaching, student experience, quality assurance and student union relationships. Mairi is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute and regularly contributes to external events on the leadership of educational change in challenging contexts.

Professor John Senior, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)

Appointed in 2006, John is responsible for leading University research and the delivery of research degrees, chairing the University Research Committee, developing international research partnerships in Australia, China, Malaysia, and Vietnam, and overseeing the Doctoral College, which is a community of more than 700 research degree students.

From 2003 to 2006 John was the University Director of Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer as well as being a Dean of Faculty.

He has an international research profile in the field of optical fibre communications and networking, is on the Executive Committee of the Engineering Professors Council and chairs the Research and Enterprise Network for Universities (RENU).

Professor Julie Newlan MBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business and International Development)

Julie is responsible for innovation, international growth and partnerships, enterprise, business development, and marketing and communications. As well as overseeing strategy in these areas, she manages teams and initiatives relating to commercial income, knowledge transfer, graduate enterprise and employability, reputation management, fundraising, and recruitment. Julie’s role also covers leveraging intellectual property and developing enterprise and entrepreneurship opportunities for students and staff.

Alistair Moffat, Group Finance Director

After a career in senior finance positions in the commercial world, Alistair was appointed Group Finance Director in 2009. He has responsibility for all aspects of financial management within the group, including financial control, statutory reporting, treasury, tax, insurance, payroll, pensions and procurement.

His role also incorporates board responsibility for the management of the Estate and Sport. He is a director of UH Holdings Limited, which oversees the commercial subsidiaries in the group, and is a director of our subsidiary companies.

Alistair is joint chair of the London and South-East British Universities Finance Directors’ Group (BUFDG).

Sharon Harrison-Barker, Secretary and Registrar

Sharon was appointed in January 2020. She was previously the Academic Registrar, Head of the Student Centre and Faculty Registrar for the Business School and has worked in various further and higher education institutions. She achieved an MBA in Higher Education Management from the University of London in 2010.

Sharon is responsible for the management and operation of the Board of Governors and the Academic Board, compliance with University policies, regulations and procedures, legal matters of the University and its wholly owned subsidiaries, health and safety, internal audit, equality, registry, the office of the dean of students, process review and professional staffing.

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Our vision and strategic plan

Our vision reflects the ambition and inspiration that is central to the University. It is built on the belief that whatever your background, wherever you are from, higher education can be a transformational experience. And whoever you are, the application of university research can impact your life. We are committed to having a positive transformational impact on every member of our University community, and to sharing our successes with the community around us.

The development of our strategic plan began with engagement with staff, students and governors at the University – which informed our focus on transforming lives. It reflects the values of ambition and inspiration that are central to the University of Hertfordshire. Our three key themes of opportunity, community and flexibility also grew out of this engagement. They reflect both what is important to the University, but also how we will approach challenges in the coming years.

The 2020-2025 strategy will build on our strengths and embed our focus on employability, enterprise and business partnerships into our plans. It also looks to future challenges. In 2018, we asked a group of students to present the challenges that they anticipated that they would encounter in the future to our Board of Governors.

They focused on new technologies, the changing world of work, and increasing interconnectivity across the globe. They were excited about the future, but they recognised that they needed to be ready for it. The pandemic has changed the way we live, work and study, and the future could look different but we are confident our students will have the skills to face those challenges.

Our strategy will develop graduates who are capable and professional, building on the engagement of employers and professional bodies who contribute to the development of our curriculum. We will encourage students to be creative and enterprising, as one of only 20 University Enterprise Zones. We will build student’s social and global awareness, and increase proportion of international students on campus, and the number of UK students who have international experience. We will be compassionate and inclusive, supporting students in their learning and their living.

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Education and student experience

We deliver high-quality and distinctive education that transforms lives by providing opportunities to develop students’ skills for life, working in partnership with our student community, and delivering flexible education with clear career pathways.

Our country’s education system is highly respected all over the world, and achieving a qualification at a British University is a passport to a rewarding career.

Higher education qualifications in Britain are rigorous and intellectually challenging. They have to be because we’re continuously assessed to make sure we give students the exceptional education they deserve.

We know that coming to university is a major investment of time and money, so we make sure our students graduate with the best possible knowledge, experience, skills and career prospects. Our lecturers have a wealth of experience in their field, not just in an academic setting, but also out in industry – whether that’s in business, law, healthcare, sciences, engineering or the creative sector. They’ve built businesses, developed technologies, saved lives, pushed boundaries and made a real difference. They’re here to help our students do the same.

In 2018, we were awarded the top accolade of gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), a system introduced by the government to help students judge teaching quality and the importance of teaching excellence at universities. A gold rating indicates that we have demonstrated the highest quality teaching standards and provide outstanding outcomes for students from all backgrounds, in particular retention and progression. It is a mark of excellence that no Russell Group university hold.

We passionately believe in powering potential; for students this means equipping them with skills for life. We are very proud that our teaching has been recognised as the highest quality found in the UK, having been awarded gold in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

Mairi Watson, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience

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Research

We carry out research that transforms lives, and addresses fundamental global and societal challenges. We do this by offering research opportunities for staff and students, engaging the community in impactful research, and adapting flexibly to research partnerships.

Through their research, UK universities are contributing more than ever to future economic growth and to positive changes in the way we all live, work and learn. At the University of Hertfordshire we are proud to play a significant role in these developments, engaging with other academic institutions, business and industry.

Our research culture, which is defined by a strong spirit of enquiry, innovation and enterprise, also feeds into teaching and learning to enrich our students’ experience. Artificial intelligence and robotics, data innovation, climate change together with toxicology and pharmaceutics, food security and health care are just some areas where we are breaking new ground for societal benefit, and our research has helped keep people safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Professor John Senior, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise

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Enterprise

We deliver transformative benefits for the economy and our communities through outstanding expertise in business, innovation and skills.

To support micro, small and mediumsized businesses in Hertfordshire that are struggling as a result of the pandemic, we launched the Volunteer Business Support Scheme in partnership with Hertfordshire Growth Hub. The scheme, which is funded by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, matches businesses with mentors that are highly experienced in managing or coaching at a strategic level. They provide tailored support and point businesses in the right direction of finance and support packages in the county. The scheme has supported over 140 businesses across a range of sectors, including health and retail.

We provide regional firms with access to research expertise to help them translate their ideas into successful products and services, and we contribute to eight ongoing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships – a three-way collaboration between a business, the University and a talented graduate.

The Enterprise Hub on de Havilland Campus significantly enhances and expands the existing support we provide to businesses both big and small, locally and nationally, together with our talented students and graduates that are looking to start their own business.

Our start-up challenge award, flare ignite, offers student entrepreneurs the support, advice and training they need in areas like proposal writing, planning, finance and marketing, and the opportunity to win up to £8,000 to get their business idea off the ground. With more than 100 entrants each year, flare ignite has awarded more than £200,000 to student start-ups since it started in 2005.

It’s vital these businesses have access to the right support, particularly during this challenging period. The Enterprise Hub contributes significantly to the existing support we already provide at Herts and it will allow us to enhance and expand our community of practice, where entrepreneurs, with the support of their peers and like minded professionals, can discuss their challenges in a supportive environment and meet them head-on.

Professor Julie Newlan, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Business and International Development

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Global engagement

We are a globally engaged university, transforming lives by providing international opportunities for staff and students, building a diverse community on our campus, and increasing flexible programme delivery for the overseas market.

The University has a longstanding, successful history of engagement with international partners and we have been praised for our approach towards the extensive and complex range of collaborative partner institutions, by the most recent QAA Review.

With more than 70 international partnerships across five regions, and partnership models including franchise, dual awards, fly-in faculty, academic support, supported distance learning and recognition and articulation agreements, we remain passionate about offering the opportunity to students across the globe to study for a University of Hertfordshire award. This drives our commitment to continue with the development of strategic partnerships worldwide.

The University has been a pioneer in Transnational Education (TNE). In 1995 we became one of the first UK Universities to offer Franchise degree programmes in Malaysia, with college group INTI International University and Colleges.

In 2019 the University launched its latest large scale transnational education partnership with a new institution, Global Academic Foundation. Students will be able to study a University degree in multiple subject areas, including Business, Mass Communications, Pharmaceutical Science and Engineering.

Our strategy supports an international approach to education, and we have forged strong relationships with partners across the globe. This benefits our students by giving them diverse international experiences that prepare them for global careers, and it has helped us to build a vibrant global community and outlook, which also benefits our staff and the wider community.

Professor Julie Newlan, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Business and International Development

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School of Creative Arts

Subject areas:

Architecture

Art and Design

Fashion

Film, Digital and Animation

Music, Performance and Production

Photography

Our vibrant School of Creative Arts provides an inspiring and supportive environment for our students and staff to thrive. Our film, media, design, visual arts, music and art therapy courses are led by talented artists, experienced lecturers and industry experts providing valuable opportunities to challenge themselves and the status quo.

Fundamental to the success and delivery of our courses, our extracurricular programmes, such as ‘live projects’, which are based on industry led professional briefs, place our students in the world of work enabling them to gain valuable industry experience before graduating.

Linking all of our courses are our exceptional facilities, including television and photography studios, sound control rooms and postproduction suites. With these tools at their disposal, our students are free to express their creativity to support their academic development.

To help our students build professional connections, they have the opportunity to visit our partners from around the world. This support has led to successful national and international competition victories, industry placements and employment with companies that include Ted Baker, Sony, Tesco, Norman Foster and partners, Warner Brothers, Monster Audio, and many others.

As Dean of the School, I want our students to love their time here. We encourage them to be free to explore, experiment and create amazing work in an inspirational,

supportive, friendly and ambitious art school environment, then to go on to glittering careers and achieve their dreams.

Phil Healey, Dean of the School of Creative Arts

Our experts

Dr Silvio Carta ARB

We have a wealth of knowledge and insight in the School of Creative Arts, including Dr Silvio Carta who is an ARB RIBA architect, Head of Art and Design, and Director of the Professional Doctorates in Fine Arts and Design. His expertise in research and design focuses on digital design and public space. Silvio is Head of the Editorial Board of Seoul-based C3 magazine and editor of A\_MPS Architecture Media Politics and Society (UCL Press). He is also the author of Big Data, Code and the Discrete City (Routledge).

Dr Shaun Borstrock

Dr Borstrock, is our Associate Dean of Business and Innovation, and a regular speaker at government, corporate, and education events around the world. He specialises in delivering design education as well as subjects that include luxury branding and fashion, consumerism, branding and brand strategies.

Shaun is a former Creative Director at Asprey and has worked with luxury brands and associations around the globe, including Unity PR, Ford, Finpro, the Cape Town Fashion Council, Thomas Pink, Fortnum and Mason, Dolce Gabbana, Gucci, the British Luxury Council and Alessandra Gradi.

Professor Timothy Blinko M Mus (London), B Mus (Hons), Dip RCM

Professor Blinko specialises in music research activity and research degree supervision.

He was Bliss Composition Scholar at the Royal College of Music, becoming a Junior Professor there while still a student, then Head of the Musicianship Faculty soon after. He was also a Visiting Professor for the State University of New York and

taught conducting at the University of Cambridge for 10 years.

Tim has many published works, recordings and broadcasts in the UK on BBC 1, Channel 4, Radio 3 and Radio 4, alongside many international performances. Amongst many of his achievements in the UK and the USA is his three-movement saxophone quartet, Sculptures, which has been played by most leading quartets in

the world and recorded by six. His collaboration with a colleague in theSchool of Life and Medical Sciences, Professor Richard Wiseman, resulted in writing the music for the World’s Most Relaxing Room - a top global news story of the week and covered by international media, BBC TV News, the Times, Telegraph, and Guardian.

Dr Barbara Brownie

Dr Barbara Brownie is our Principal Lecturer and her research and writing focuses on graphic design, popular culture, and costume. Barbara’s recent publications relate to typography and include the books, ‘Spacewear: Weightlessness and the final frontier of fashion’ (Bloomsbury, 2018), ‘Acts of Undressing’ (Bloomsbury, 2017), and ‘Transforming Type’ (Bloomsbury, 2015).

Research

At the School of Creative Arts, we carry out research that transforms lives, addressing fundamental global and societal challenges. From Cosmology to climate change, our artists and musicians explore the overlap between art and science and

some of the ways in which the arts can help us understand complexity in the natural world. Our outstanding design and art historians explore ways our cultural heritage can help us understand our place in the modern world.

Cosmoscope, led by Professor Simeon Nelson, is an Artichoke/Arts Council-funded research project undertaken with the University of Durham’s Ogden Centre for Fundamental Physics and University College London into some of the ways in which the arts can help us understand the complexities of modern science.

The Games and Visual Effects Research Laboratory, which is led by Professor Peter Richardson, is working with the UK drug discovery company Pharmidex to develop an animated film. The film highlights the advantage of the various treatments on offer to clinicians to alleviate the symptoms of the Covid-19 and help service users across the country.

Future research plans

The School’s €I.2M EU funded Games and Visual Effects Research Laboratory is the UK hub of the European Create Converge network and is led by Professor Peter Richardson. We work alongside Warner Bros, Elstree Studios, Oxford University Clarendon Physics Laboratory, University College Hospital London and University

College London.

One of our experts is undertaking research to create resilient zero carbon cities. Professor Ljubomir Jankovic leads the Zero Carbon Laboratory, and is looking at transforming building design through collaboration with biologists, architects, and computer scientists.

Highlights

New Designer of the Year

Rimal Bhatt, a recent graduate of the School’s Industrial Design course, has been named the Business Design Centre New Designer of the Year at the prestigious New Designers 2019. The annual event showcases the work of 3,000 hand-picked graduate design talents from around the country, recognising new design, thinking and innovation. It is also an opportunity to view the emerging design trends to look out for in the year ahead. Rimal’s exceptional design was for a fire evacuation mask that allows 15 minutes additional breathing time in a smoke-filled building, such as a tower block. The innovative respirator mask can also track and monitor residents as they exit the building. His design was commended for being a ‘simple, easy to implement solution to a very current issue’.

Graduate wins prestigious student Oscar

Mart Bira, a recent Film and TV Production graduate, received the Gold Medal Student Academy Award by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences at the Samuel Goldwyn Theatre in Beverly Hills.

She won the Documentary (International Film Schools) category with her entry, Nomadic Doctor, beating all film schools from outside the USA. The documentary follows a doctor who travels long, isolated distances, up to 100km in a single day,

often in harsh weather conditions. She travels day or night, by horse, camel or car to provide medical care to nomadic families in the Gobi Desert in Mongolia.

“ It wasn’t easy to find a topic for my MA final major project and I had so many ideas in my head. I am originally from Mongolia and always wanted to introduce my culture to the world. My sister was a doctor there and she told me about the long distances travelled and frequent walks or rides in the dark that she undertook to reach patients. Through my discussions with her, I began to formulate the idea of Nomadic Doctor. My film has been so well received and I am delighted to win a Student Academy Award. It will also be an honour to be considered for The Academy Awards along with so many other amazing film-makers.”

One of the best in the world for digital creative courses

The University is one of the best universities in the world for animation, games design and visual effects courses, according to the Rookies World School Rankings 2019 – the world’s most renowned rankings for institutions that prepare artists for careers in creative media and entertainment. Put together with the help of 120 influential industry experts, the Rankings are based on the quality and performance of the 3,458 student entries submitted to the Rookie Awards 2019 from artists in 89 countries.

It was also rated:

First in the world for Game Design and Development Production

Second in the world for Visual Effects and Animation Production

Third in the world for Immersive Media Production

Fifth in the world for 2D Animation

Seventh for best overall Animation School

Best in the world for ‘Console and PC – Production Excellence’

Second in the world (best in the UK) in the ‘Top Visual Effects Schools’

Third in ‘Immersive Media – Game Design and Development for

Production Excellence’

Fifth (best in the UK) in the ‘Top 2D Animation Schools for Production Excellence’. Production excellence is an accolade awarded to the very best schools that focus on

working as a team to create full 3D animation short films.

The University was also ranked best in the UK in:

‘Top Animation Schools’ (seventh in the world)

‘Top Visual Effects Schools’ (seventh in the world)

‘Top Game Design Schools’ (eighth in the world)

And also:

Our animations have been shortlisted over 140 times in international animation festivals.

Winners of the TIGA Award for Best Educational Institution for Games Art and Design in the UK 2019.

Future aspirations

We continue to transform the economy and our communities through driving expertise in business, innovation and skills and offeringflexible ways for businesses to work with us.

Supporting small businesses

Propeller Creative

Through our internal design agency (Propeller Creative), we provide our local businesses and new small businesses in the University’s Enterprise Zone with the opportunity to work with our talented students, graduates, staff, and external industry experts.

The agency works across multiple design disciplines, which provides businesses with the flexibility to take on unusual or large-scale projects that cross boundaries. From branding to interior architecture, film production and interactive experiences Propeller Creative draw on the experience and expert knowledge housed within the School to create inspirational, professional design solutions.

propeller.herts.ac.uk/about-us

Digital Hack Laboratory

The Digital Hack Laboratory is a research unit that investigates the impact technology is having on creative practice. The diverse expertise of the team enables

specific research areas to be tackled while realising the opportunity for innovation, encouraging change through new thinking offered by digital technologies.

herts.ac.uk/digitalhacklab/digital-hack-lab

Media production

Video, audio, and high-quality image skills are important for all small companies but many do not have the funds to make use of the huge potential that digital media platforms and apps offer. Our School provides technical support, equipment hire,

and training for small business to help them produce materials and develop their in house skills.

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