How Russell Group universities engage with their local communities

# Summary

Russell Group universities are active members of their local communities. They are anchors for growth in their regions and are major contributors to the UK economy, with the effects being felt right across the country. Our members are:

* Working with LEPs, City Regions, local authorities and others to **provide local leadership** and help to develop local innovative capacity
* Acting as **magnets for the creation of knowledge-intensive industry clusters**, attracting research partners and inward investment
* **Providing the cultural, social and sporting focus for communities** and raising aspirations
* Educating a highly skilled workforce for the UK**, producing the graduates and postgraduates that can help drive local and regional growth**
* **Investing significantly in outreach and access initiatives in their local areas to widen HE participation** for disadvantaged and under-represented students
* Working with a wide range of local employers, hospitals and health trusts to **ensure that all students develop the core skills and experience they need** to succeed in the workforce
* Supporting tens of thousands of SMEs in their region every year**. Our members provide a wide range of support services and advice for SMEs and start-ups including legal and consultancy support,** helping them to tap into expert knowledge, talent and resource both from within and outside the university.

# Russell Group universities drive growth and investment in their regions

**We estimate Russell Group universities help support around 300,000 jobs and at least £32 billion of economic output every year[[1]](#footnote-1).** Our members are currently investing £9 billion in major capital projects in their local areas. These figures exclude the wider impact of our research and its longer term contribution to UK GDP.

Our universities are often among the largest employers in their regions: on average each of our universities employ 6,900 staff and turn over £659 million a year.[[2]](#footnote-2)

*The* ***University of Nottingham*** *generates: £677 million total economic impact in Nottingham each year and supports 14,000 jobs; £781 million across the East Midlands, supporting 16,000 jobs regionally; £1.1 billion across the UK, supporting 18,000 jobs.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

*The* ***University of Southampton*** *supported economic activity in: Southampton of more than £729million GVA and 11,700 jobs; the regional area of more than £1.0 billion GVA and over 16,300 jobs; and the UK of more than £2.0 billion GVA and over 26,500 jobs.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

# An integral part of the community

# Facilities at Russell Group universities are regularly open to the public and our institutions play an active role in their local communities, collaborating with community leaders on research, running student volunteering schemes and providing grants to local organisations.

***Warwick University*** *Arts Centre plays host to events, performances, schools engagement work and community-led productions. Three**quarters of the Arts Centre’s audience live within 45 minutes of the university and the facility attracts one million visitors a year.*

*The dental school at* ***Cardiff University*** *has been leading the Welsh Government-funded ‘Designed to Smile’ programme aimed at national oral health improvement. It now reaches over 1400 schools and 59% of pre-school to Year 2 children in Wales.*

# Meeting local skills and training needs

## **Russell Group universities play a critical role in educating and training a highly skilled workforce for the UK**. This work starts with local schools and our members have partnerships with more than 2000 schools across the country.

***Queen Mary University of London*** *co-sponsors the Draper’s Multi-Academy Trust in London, supporting specialisms in maths and science through close contact with academic departments and help with curriculum development – helping students realise their aspirations.*

## **Russell Group universities work with a wide range of local employers to ensure that students develop the core skills and experience they need to succeed in the workforce.**

## Our universities collaborate with employers to ensure courses are targeted to businesses’ needs. They work collaboratively on curriculum design and delivery and on the provision of placements and careers advice which embeds employability skills. All Russell Group universities provide students with the opportunity of undertaking work-based placements.

## *In 2013, the* ***University of Sheffield*** *welcomed its first cohort of 150 Advanced Apprentices to its purpose built Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) Training Centre. Sponsoring companies range from global leaders such as Boeing to local high-tech supply-chain firms.*

# Working with local SMEs to help them develop new products

**Almost half of all interactions between UK universities and SMEs on contract research involve Russell Group universities: in 2014/15 this work linked our universities to over 1,000 SMEs.**

In addition, 20,000 SMEs benefitted from Russell Group university consultancy services in 2014/15, while facilities and equipment related services were provided to over 3,500 SMEs.

*The Exeter Technologies Group at the* ***University of Exeter*** *comprises two world-leading innovative manufacturing centres supported by Rolls-Royce and Airbus. The Centres have worked with almost 400 SMEs in the region, supporting improvements to their manufacturing processes and the development of new products.*

All Russell Group universities offer services for university spin-off companies and start-ups, but tailored to local needs, including: entrepreneurship training, on-campus incubators, science parks, seed corn investment and venture capital funding. All offer business advice services for local firms.

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1. Russell Group analysis of *The impact of universities on the UK economy* (Universities UK, April 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HESA staff and finance data, 2014/15 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *The Economic Impact of Britain’s Global University –* report by Oxford Economics(October 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Economic Impact of the University of Southampton* – report by BiGGAR Economics (January 2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)