



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

School of Law Strategic Plan 2022–2026



*Our Vision for Leading and
Contributing to Strategic Developments
in the School of Law*

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School of Law current position: External Quality Review of 2020

The School of Law underwent an externally-led Quality Review in March 2020. The reviewers commended a number of aspects of the School's work and made several **commendations** and **recommendations**.

Commendations

STAFF: Administrative and Academic staff demonstrate commitment, responsiveness, enthusiasm and innovation. This was both recognised by the Review Team and highlighted by students.

EDUCATION: Innovation in moving towards a skills-focused curriculum, greater use of placements and study abroad and student engagement with delivery, e.g. CÉIM.

REPUTATION: International reputation in Human Rights and Disability Law and strong national reputation of the quality of the graduates including in legal profession.



Quality Review Recommendations

Vision: Undertake a process to consult on and develop a vision which unites the School community.

Continue Curriculum Development: Develop a whole-school approach to curricula which builds on good practice and student aspirations and embeds an agreed assessment strategy.

Staff Experience: (1) Develop and implement a strategy for staff development, support and engagement in teaching; **(2)** Enhance graduate employability and develop opportunities for professional education.

Research: **(1)** Build distinctiveness in the University of Galway brand: extending the range of research excellence for which the School is known nationally and internationally; **(2)** Deliver excellent research through enhancing the research culture of the School.

Staff Experience: **(1)** Develop and implement a strategy for staff development, support and engagement in teaching; **(2)** Reflect on ways to foster a culture of shared understanding and ownership across the staff group of opportunities, challenges, responsibilities and expectations.

Student Experience: Reflect on ways to bring students together to enable them to develop a stronger sense of community and shared belonging including through events, support for student societies, peer learning and stronger communication across cohorts.

Stakeholders: Capitalising on existing goodwill, develop and execute a plan for stakeholder engagement including with alumni, employers, professional bodies, and other relevant stakeholders to better communicate the successes of the School, and the ways in which stakeholders can engage.



Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

Building on the commendations and recommendations in the External Review, the School has developed this Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2026.

The Plan comprises the following elements:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Values
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Actions

These elements of the Plan are set out in the following pages. They were developed through a consultation process explained on slide 8.





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School of Law

The School's Strategic Plan seeks to provide a foundation and framework for the School for the period **2022 to 2026**.

It provides a vision and values that have been designed in the light of the University's strategy (Shared Vision, Shaped by Values) and a School mission statement (set out below).

As such, the entirety of the School Plan supports the University's commitment that Schools will "show through operational planning how they will support the achievement of our commitments and flagship actions" (see *Implementing our Shared Vision, Shaped By Values*).

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University of Galway Vision and Mission

VISION

The University of Galway will be a leading global university, renowned for our distinctive areas of research, recognised as an institution of choice for our teaching and scholarship, celebrated for our outstanding engagement with wider society, and enriched by a dynamic network of partnerships.

MISSION

To foster a vibrant community of students and staff, where distinguished learning, impactful research, and creative thinking are shared with the world.



University of Galway's current strategy is available at:
www.nuigalway.ie/vision2020



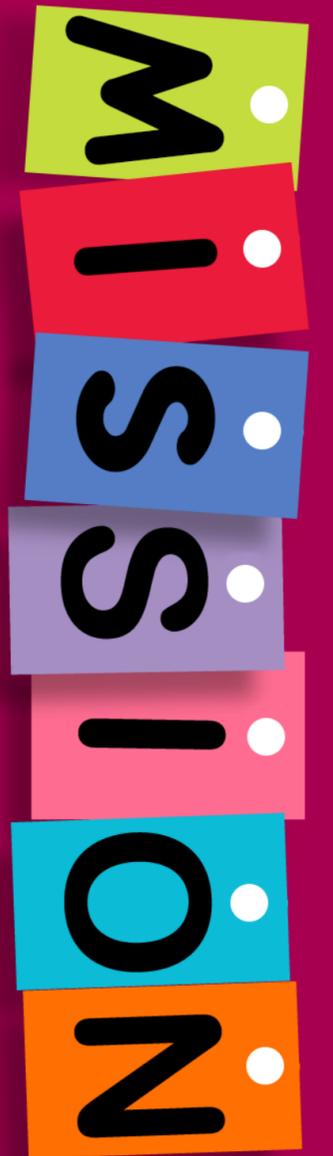
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School's Mission

The mission of the University of Galway School of Law is rooted in its commitment to the fundamental values of global democracy, to maximising educational opportunities for all, to public service, and to pursuing the highest standards in its teaching and research.

In that spirit, University of Galway's Law School seeks to—

- Manifest our commitment, in all that we do, to the furtherance of justice and upholding the rule of law, both at home and abroad, and to instil in our staff and students a commitment to those fundamental values.
- Be known for our belief in open enquiry, for rigorous and impactful research, for the accessibility of our staff, and for passionate and engaging teaching.
- Deliver transformative and inclusive legal educational opportunities to a diverse mix of local, national, and international students.
- Support greater access to educational opportunities, through a commitment to admit more students from non-traditional backgrounds, to providing more opportunities for flexible learning, and to working with our external partners to provide professional education to those in work.
- Serve our community—locally, nationally, and internationally—offering our students opportunities to serve the community during their studies and encouraging our staff to contribute to the development of public policy.
- Promote inclusion and respect for all.
- Contribute to sustainable education and a sustainable planet.



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The Planning Phase – Develop Your Vision

In order to develop the vision underpinning this School Strategic Plan, a planning day was organised to inform staff and to facilitate the development of the Plan. Following the Planning Day, staff were asked to comment on various suggestions made at the event and to rank a number of matters in order of priority.

The ideas gathered from staff were incorporated into a draft Plan which was shared with the School Executive. After further revision, the draft Plan was shared with the wider School (and the College) before its final adoption (May 2022).

This process was designed to ensure that the final version of the Plan reflects those matters identified by our community as core to the development of the School's teaching and learning, research, people, external engagement, estate, and its contribution to sustainable goals.





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The School's Vision

By 2026, The School sees itself as having—

- Enhanced our reputation for excellence in teaching and research into new areas, beyond our established core;
- Developed our research culture through a new research action plan, which ensures targeted research support and development opportunities for staff and builds capacity in those seeking to secure external research funding;
- Developed new programmes and new international partnerships, which will have allowed us access to a broader pool of international applicants and to have attracted a more diverse group of staff;
- Deepened our involvement with our local, practitioner, and alumni communities, in recognition of our responsibility to those among whom we live and work and in fulfilment of our desire to build a lifelong, engaged community of University of Galway graduates.
- Widened access to educational opportunities at the School;
- Achieved our goal to provide planned, targeted, and appropriate staff development opportunities for all our staff; and
- Contributed measurably to appropriate sustainable development goals of the University.





Challenges and Opportunities relating to our Vision – (1) Learning & Teaching

The School presently faces a number of challenges, which present it with opportunities for change and development. The first group relate to learning and teaching—

- *Building distinctiveness in the University of Galway brand:* we already enjoy a reputation for excellence nationally and internationally in a number of well-established fields (in which we have renowned Centres). The challenge is not only maintain this established reputation but also to develop both on campus and online programmes in *new* areas (one such area is mentioned in the next challenge) in order to ensure that our unique educational selling points embrace more of our staff (especially those outside our Centres).
- *Enhancing graduate employability, and developing opportunities for professional education, through embracing the LegalTech revolution.* This will require appropriate investment in additional, appropriately skilled colleagues working in the law & innovation/technology field.
- *Building on the experience of the pandemic:* the challenges presented during the COVID-19 pandemic presented opportunities to build on positive aspects of flexible, blended learning while retaining a campus environment anchored in face-to-face learning.



Challenges and Opportunities relating to our Vision – (2) Research

- *Building distinctiveness in the University of Galway brand* relates also to research, with the opportunity presenting itself of extending the range of research excellence for which the School is known nationally and internationally beyond our established fields.
- *Delivering excellent research* through enhancing the research culture of the School, building the support necessary to fulfil research aspirations at every stage of colleagues' careers, and building capacity in staff to secure external research funding.





Challenges and Opportunities relating to our Vision – (3) People

- *Connecting the University of Galway Law School community*: ensuring closer integration of the various parts of the Law School, fostering respect, openness, and cooperation between colleagues.
- *Supporting our staff* (both academic and professional services) in their career development & aspirations. Maximising opportunities for staff on fixed term and precarious contracts to secure permanent employment. Ensuring that staff receive targeted and appropriate support in career planning (including promotions application), mentoring opportunities, and access to appropriate training.
- *Respecting all the members of our community* through (a) delivering equal opportunities for all, and (b) ensuring that work undertaken by staff is properly recognised and equitably distributed.
- *Building a more global, diverse, and inclusive community*: diversifying our student and staff bodies.



Challenges and Opportunities relating to our Vision – (4) External Engagement

- *Opening up the Law School to greater service in the community:* extending the opportunities for staff and students to offer up their knowledge, skills, and energies in the service of our local and national communities; ensuring that our staff continue their tradition of public service and their extensive contributions to public policy debate.
- *Developing a lifelong Law School community:* fostering deeper and more engaged connections with our alumni, providing them with a range of opportunities for engaging with the School at all points in their post-graduation careers.
- *Creating a global community:* developing new, deep relationships with select Law Schools globally, to market the School as the foremost Irish Law School with aspirations in the field of global legal studies.



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Challenges and Opportunities relating to our Vision – (5) Estate; (6) Global Challenges

ESTATE

Improving our estate: securing a Law school building fit for the 21st century and equipped to deliver excellent legal education in a sustainable way. Achieving this will tie in closely with effective external stakeholder engagement.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Addressing global challenges, including those relating to sustainability.



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From Strategic Plan to Strategic Action

Implementing our Vision and responding to the challenges and opportunities identified will require the School to take effective, targeted action. Key actions are identified in the following pages.*

* Where these actions support University Commitments (C), Flagship Actions (A), or Capital Development Priorities (P), this is noted with an appropriate reference letter and number.





Strategic Actions: (1) Learning & Teaching

(CE01–CE05, AP05) Maintain our strong, international reputation in our existing recognised fields of excellence (human rights, disability law & policy, housing).

(CE01–CE05, AP05) Engage with staff working outside our already renowned Centres to develop other areas of teaching (and related research) expertise and renown, making targeted appointments of new staff to support these endeavours. Areas of particular interest for further growth include: law, technology & innovation; law & medicine/MedTech (recognising local expertise in this field); banking, commercial, & IP law; comparative law; EU Law; and environmental law, energy, and climate justice.

(CP02, CE02, AE11) In order to develop opportunities for students within the field of law, technology and innovation, we will launch a new LLM programme in Law & Innovation LLM. In addition, in pursuit of a commitment to contribute to legal educational opportunities for practitioners, we will also (in conjunction with external partners, including the Law Society of Ireland), develop a package of LegalTech continuing professional development (CPD) offerings.

(CP02, AP03) Review the opportunities and benefits of a continued measure of blended learning; explore and develop opportunities for greater online teaching & learning offerings.



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Strategic Actions: (1) Learning & Teaching (cont.)

- Ensure effective team structures and processes in support of service delivery in Teaching and Learning.
- Develop plans to ensure appropriate ongoing use of blended learning within a learning and teaching environment anchored in our campus.
- (CE02, CE05, AP03) Continue the School's curriculum development through consultation with CELT, the Career Development Centre, Programme Directors, and the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee.
- Expand the School's work with the International Office and the Global Galway project.





Strategic Actions: (2) Research

- (AP05) Attract a diverse and larger cohort of PhD students in areas where we wish to develop research expertise, building a pipeline through to appointment of PhD graduates as post-doctoral researchers and as permanent members of academic staff.
- Re-launch our Research Strategy, implementing it through a specific Research Action Plan.
- Maximise opportunities offered by: (i) the Research Office in relation to support for costed extensions; (ii) (AP08, AE09) Horizon Europe; (iii) the Research Community Portal; (iv) the Researcher Development Centre; and (v) new institutional partnerships.
- Develop a business case for an additional role within the School professional services team focused on research support, particularly in relation to support for applying for and managing externally funded research grants.
- Develop a Research mentoring programme.



Strategic Actions: (3) People

- Ensure continuing prioritisation of staff wellbeing initiatives.
- Deliver more opportunities for intra-School community building.
- **(CR10, CE04, AE01)** Establish a Staff Development Committee* and launch a Staff Development Policy.**
- (a) **(CR01)** Submit a strong Athena Swan Bronze Award application and establish a School EDI committee; (b) **(CR07)** Launch a new academic workload allocation model*** and monitor its successful operation.

** Established December 2021. ** Final draft ready (May 2022). *** Launched February 2022.*



Strategic Actions: (4) External Engagement

- **(CC02, AP10)** (a) Create more opportunities for students to undertake curriculum-based placement work with community organisations and NGOs; (b) further develop co-curricular *pro bono* and clinical legal education opportunities for students.
- **(CP01, CC01, AP07)** Work in partnership with Alumni Relations to develop and launch an Engagement Plan to draw alumni, donors, and practitioners more fully into the life and work of the School.
- **(CP04, CC02–CC06, AP06, AE12)** (a) Deepen external relations through forming new external partnerships, thereby increasing research and teaching opportunities for staff and creating new pathways for attracting students to study at the Law School ; (b) join the Law Schools Global League*; (c) develop proposals for new LLM programmes to attract more international students; and (d) launch a digital education plan to develop online education.



Strategic Actions: (5) Estate; and (6) Global Challenges

ESTATE

- Ensure all existing (and planned) staff have suitable office accommodation.
- **(CP03, CS02, AP01, PB01, PB09)** Secure University approval for a new, accessible, and sustainable Law School building, suitable for accommodating the entire School, and launch a fundraising campaign to support its development.* In fundraising activities related to this project, we will develop partnering programmes of activities with lead donor law firms.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

- **(CS01, CS04, CS06, AS19)** Incentivise opportunities for staff seeking to engage with global challenges and with sustainability goals and initiatives.



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Thank *you*



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