



Northumbria's Vice-Chancellor Professor Andy Long meets the Rt Hon Gillian Keegan.

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Northumbria welcomes Secretary of State for Education

The Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Gillian Keegan, visited Northumbria University, Newcastle, to discuss unlocking opportunities for young people in the region and to hear about ground-breaking research in areas of global significance.

During a visit to Northumbria University – Times Higher Education's University of the Year 2022 – the Secretary of State for Education, heard about the strength of Northumbria's degree apprenticeship provision, that

supports skills growth in the workforce as well as thousands of students looking to develop their careers and professional expertise.

Recognised as a leading degree apprenticeship training provider, Northumbria University was one of the first in the UK to offer the government-supported programmes.

The University now works with around 400 different companies annually – large and small and across the public and private sector – to co-create and deliver tailored and practical degree apprenticeship programmes designed to meet specific business needs.

Meeting some of the University's current apprentices and business partners, Ms Keegan heard how the collective efforts of employers, apprentices and Northumbria University is having a hugely positive impact on people's lives and the UK workforce.

Gillian Keegan meets degree apprentices from Northumbria University

She also took a tour of some of the University's world-class facilities for research, learning and teaching, including its £7 million Computer and Information Sciences building and Student Central, a space designed to host award-winning student support services in one place at the heart of Northumbria's Newcastle City Campus.

Meeting some of Northumbria's staff and students, Ms Keegan learned about the University's cutting-edge research in space and solar physics.

Northumbria's solar and space researchers work with partners including NASA, the UK Space Agency, the European Space Agency and the UK Met Office to understand the physics of the Sun, space weather and all aspects of the solar-terrestrial connection. The team is also working to improve satellite technologies, and, through the University's state-of-the-art Northumbria Space Technology Laboratory, will help train the next-generation of space-related engineers and instrument teams, with plans to develop a North East Space Skills and Technology Centre.

She also attended a roundtable event bringing together Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors from all five North East Universities Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside to discuss unlocking opportunities for young people and driving innovation and economic growth in the region.

Commenting on her visit, the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, said: “I was blown away by the energy and enthusiasm of the staff, students, degree apprentices and employers I met at Northumbria University.

“Students and apprentices studying here get the opportunity to work on some fantastic space and solar physics projects at the university’s cutting edge research facility, gain valuable experience working alongside employers such as Lockheed Martin and NASA, and even operate their own small businesses.

“It is great to see universities like Northumbria nurturing our science and technology talent, helping us maintain our status as a science and technology superpower, while ensuring more people across the region gain the skills needed for the jobs of the future.”

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: “We were delighted to welcome the Secretary of State for Education to Northumbria, and to host our regional university partners in an important discussion, highlighting how universities are vital partners for the government to deliver on its key priorities for the country. Today’s conversations have reinforced how collaborations between leading businesses and higher education institutions can serve as a driver for regional growth and “levelling up”, provide opportunities for skills’ development within the labour market, and make a positive difference to people and communities in the North East and beyond.”

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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