

# EAST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITY COMPACT

East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

University of Derby

Nottingham Trent University

University of Nottingham



University of  
Nottingham  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



UNIVERSITY OF  
DERBY



Nottingham Trent  
University

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MAYOR OF THE  
EAST MIDLANDS



East Midlands  
Combined County  
Authority



# **Compact between the East Midlands Combined County Authority and the University of Derby, Nottingham Trent University, and the University of Nottingham**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Compact is to deepen the emerging collaborative relationships between the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and the region's three universities, the University of Derby, Nottingham Trent University, and the University of Nottingham (the Universities). This Compact agreement is valid for three years and will be reviewed annually to assess progress and plan for renewal.

Working together, we affirm a shared commitment to civic engagement and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth by creating a foundation for strategic cooperation and joint action on matters of common interest.

Together we aim to:

- Ensure that the University expertise is deployed to EMCCA to help build strategy and address regional challenges.
- Tackle regional inequalities and improve social mobility and life chances.
- Strengthen skills and education pathways for all ages to higher education.
- Drive research, innovation and sectoral growth, in alignment with the Local Growth Plan.
- Attract investment and improve prosperity.
- Build capacity for evidence-based decision-making within the region.
- Working in partnership with other regional Universities and mayoral authorities as required to advance our shared agendas.
- Build a communication strategy, and governance structure.

This Compact looks to complement existing Civic Agreements held by the University of Derby, Nottingham Trent University, and the University of Nottingham, through which the Universities work alongside signatories for the benefit of the EMCCA region.

## **2. Shared Ambition**

EMCCA and our Universities share a commitment to transforming the East Midlands into one of the most innovative, productive, inclusive, and sustainable regions in the UK. By working together for the greater good, we will strengthen the region's economic and social foundations through collaborative action in education and skills, innovation and research, knowledge transfer, business support and inclusive growth.



This Compact:

- Recognises the unique strengths and contributions of each University, and of their collective value as regional assets.
- Acknowledges the importance of a strong, unified voice in articulating the contribution of higher education to the East Midlands.
- Articulates our shared interest in championing the region with government, investors and other stakeholders, highlighting the East Midlands as a place to live, work, invest, visit and study.

### **3. Principles of Collaboration**

The signatories agree to work in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, guided by the following principles:

- Mutual respect and recognition of institutional autonomy.
- Transparency, accountability and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Alignment with EMCCA's strategic priorities and the Universities' missions.
- A focus on co-designing new approaches to Inclusive Growth.

### **4. Areas of Collaboration**

#### **4.1 Education and Skills**

We will work together to:

- Develop higher education provision that is responsive to regional workforce needs and able to adapt to future demands.
- Expand access to higher-level qualifications, linked to regional and national priorities, for example through the national Industrial Strategy and regional Inclusive Growth Plan.
- Promote lifelong learning and workforce adaptability, giving people the chance to reskill and upskill throughout their lives.
- Strengthen graduate retention by aligning graduate outcomes with job creation and promoting these opportunities to local graduates.
- Scale current and future provision, including degree apprenticeship and other relevant skills programmes in priority sectors, and in alignment with the Universities and EMCCAs strategies.
- Deepen our collaborations with further education and schools, and local employers to raise aspiration and attainment, developing clear learner pathways post-16.

#### **4.2 Research and Insights**

We will work together to:



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- Build a regional insights model that allows us to better connect academic expertise and research to regional challenges and opportunities.
- Work together to co-develop and co-deliver an evidence-informed insights function that utilises the best available evidence and expertise across the region to inform strategic decision planning.
- Foster research collaboration that translates our region's academic excellence into real-world impact across EMCCA key sectors, recognising the different strengths of each of the Universities.
- Leverage our respective expertise to attract major research funding.
- Explore models to expand knowledge exchange, partnerships and R&D using existing resources.

#### **4.3 Business Growth and Innovation**

We will work together to:

- Through the Innovation Advisory Board, establish a shared innovation and research infrastructure that brings together EMCCA, the Universities and businesses to solve regional, national and global challenges.
- Co-develop and co-deliver regional innovation programmes that drive growth, productivity and investment.
- Explore innovative and creative models of joint working to deliver shared objectives, e.g., around sectoral skills initiatives or collaborative centres of excellence.
- Coordinate our regional business support offer to ensure it meets the needs of all our businesses, from start-ups and SMEs to large organisations, in line with the Inclusive Growth Plan.
- Maximise the opportunities of the region's key growth initiatives, including the Freeport, Trent Supercluster, and the East Midlands Investment Zone.
- Attract inward investment by leveraging the combined profile, expertise, and assets of EMCCA and the Universities to bring to life the EMCCA Vision for Growth Strategy and position the region as a nationally and globally competitive destination for investment.
- Deploy networks (research collaborators, alumni, thought leaders and practitioners), to support place marketing and investment promotion.
- Commit to exploring a coordinated business engagement across the partnership.

#### **4.4 Inclusive Growth**

We will work together to:

- Develop solutions to address the recommendations of the Inclusive Growth Commission, including building an Opportunity Escalator.



- Support access and participation from underrepresented groups, particularly from areas with limited access to higher education and areas with low progression rates into higher education.
- Progress our shared Youth Ambition, promoting social mobility through targeted outreach, community engagement, and partnerships with schools and FE providers.
- Enhance wellbeing and civic outcomes through applied research, culture, creative industries, and the visitor economy.
- Embed sustainability and Net Zero goals into all joint activities.
- Share knowledge and skills alongside best practice in digital transformation and innovation.

## 5. Governance and Delivery

We will work together to:

- Use this Compact as a basis for ongoing strategic dialogue between EMCCA and the Universities, both collectively and bilaterally.
- Leverage and support EMCCA's role to convene regional stakeholder conversations that bring together higher education with wider partners.
- Develop an EMCCA-Universities forum that ensures regular and open dialogue, reviews progress against the areas identified above and develops new opportunities for collaboration.
- Identify points of contact at both senior and operational levels on strategic and tactical initiatives and ensure the systems are in place to coordinate input from the Universities.
- Work collectively to promote the work of this partnership to internal and external stakeholders.
- Share data and insights to inform evidence-based decision making.
- Explore opportunities for more practical collaboration, such as secondments, executive education, co-located hubs, procurement or shared services, where they add value.
- Regularly review the formal governance arrangements for EMCCA-University coordination, for example University representation on EMCCA Boards and Committees.
- Acknowledge that this agreement is complementary to the existing Civic Agreements held by the Universities.



## Signatories

**Signed on behalf of the East Midlands Combined County Authority:**



Claire Ward  
Mayor of the East Midlands and Amy Harhoff  
Chief Executive

3 February 2026

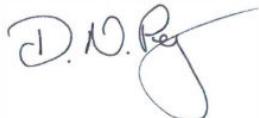
**Signed on behalf of the University of Derby:**



Professor Kathryn Mitchell CBE DL  
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

3 February 2026

**Signed on behalf of Nottingham Trent University:**



Professor Dave Petley  
Vice-Chancellor and President

3 February 2026

**Signed on behalf of the University of Nottingham:**



Professor Jane Norman  
Vice-Chancellor and President

3 February 2026



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