

Press release

State-of-the-art apprenticeship facility for the midlands opened by Minister Harris

From [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science \(/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/\)](#)

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Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris today officially opened the expanded Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Midlands Apprenticeship Facility in Athlone.

The expanded facility gives TUS the ability to double their craft apprenticeship delivery capacity at the midlands campus and will help support the Housing For All strategy.

This means 720 craft apprentices can be trained there annually across Motor, Heavy Goods Vehicle and Plumbing trades. It has also allowed them train electrical apprentices for the first time.

Apprentices have access to state-of-the-art laboratories, workshops and classrooms specifically designed for their training needs.

Speaking at today's launch, Minister Harris said:

"This is a really exciting development for apprenticeship delivery in this country.

"We have placed an unrelenting focus on the delivery of apprenticeships in Ireland and it is working. More people are signing up than ever before.

"That means we need bigger and better facilities. I want to thank TUS for having the vision and commitment to invest and co-fund this significant expansion of apprenticeship training in the midlands region.

"This will double apprenticeship delivery here in the Midlands and expand the number of programmes too.

"And with the apprenticeship programmes in question, it will also help to meet some of the skills demand needed for our Housing for All targets."

TUS Athlone received €2.3 million for the expanded facility, which was completed in Quarter 4 2022. TUS already offers a range of apprenticeship programmes across the Midlands and Midwest regions.

Professor Vincent Cunnane, President of TUS said:

"As a regionally focused technological university, our job is to provide skills and abilities for the region, recognising skills gaps where they exist and rising to meet the challenge, and we work closely with our industry partners and with government to identify and address those needs.

"I am pleased to say we now have the infrastructure in place to meet the current demand for apprenticeship education, whether that be traditional craft or modern apprenticeships, with room to allow for future expansion. This demonstrates our commitment to apprenticeship education in the Midlands.

“We are actively looking to expand our apprenticeship offering in high growth areas like robotics and automation, and we now have brand-new state-of-the-art labs, IT and lecture theatres that are specifically designed for apprenticeship education to support that ambition.”

In addition, there is a significant commitment to the expansion of apprenticeship programmes and infrastructure, with several initiatives already underway.

The total provision of craft apprenticeships between TUS Athlone and TUS Moylish (the Limerick campus) is now at 1,392 apprentices per year.

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