



A QUARTER CENTURY OF
TRANSFORMATION

Worcester News

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Jubilation in county at news of top class status

NOW WE'RE A FULL UNIVERSITY CITY



A group of students and staff are celebrating the granting of Worcester University status. They are posing for a photo, with some holding up their phones to take pictures. The group is diverse in age and appearance, and they are all smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, there are banners for the University of Worcester.

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A TEN-year dream has come true today with the news Worcester has finally become a full university city.

Students, staff and dignitaries across the county are delighted at the news University College Worcester has successfully gained university status.

UCW has met all the criteria laid down by the Government and is now to be known as the University of Worcester, the Privy Council has announced.

It will mean an extra 500 students per year, including many more from overseas.

The university plans to have 12,000 degree students by 2012 and more than 150 new jobs are likely to be created.

UCW was rated on the quality of its courses, the standard of its teaching, and how well it was governed. It was judged to be good enough for university status in every category.

Principal of UCW, Professor David Green, now the university's first Vice Chancellor, said it was an historic day for the university, the city of Worcester and the region.

"This is the first day in a new life for the University of Worcester and a successful and fitting end to a wonderful record of achievements as a University College," he said.

FULL STORY ON PAGES 4 AND 5

A sparkling moment for students and principal David Green as they celebrate the granting of Worcester University status.

A quarter century of transformation

Founded in 1946 as an Emergency Teacher Training College in the aftermath of the Second World War, the University of Worcester was established to help meet the urgent national need for teachers and to contribute to the rebuilding of society through education. Over the following decades, it evolved from a small specialist teacher training institution into a broad-based higher education institution serving students, employers and communities across Worcestershire, the West Midlands and beyond. It achieved university college status in 1997 and gained full university status in 2005.

The period from 2000 to 2025 represents one of the most significant phases of development in the institution's history. During these twenty-five years, the University expanded substantially in student numbers, academic provision, research activity and physical infrastructure. It developed new campuses and facilities, established innovative partnerships, broadened its contribution to healthcare, teacher education and professional training, and increased its influence regionally, nationally and internationally.

Yet the story of this quarter century is about more than institutional growth. What distinguished the University of Worcester's development was the way in which expansion was guided by a clear sense of its values and its purpose.

Throughout a period marked by significant challenges in higher education, including the global financial crisis, austerity, major changes to university funding and the Covid-19 pandemic, the University maintained financial stability while continuing to invest in people, facilities and new opportunities. Decisions were shaped not only by financial considerations but by a commitment to responsible stewardship, public service and long-term social value. The University sought to protect employment, sustain educational excellence and safeguard opportunity, navigating periods of uncertainty without compulsory redundancies while remaining focused on serving students and communities.

The University developed around a belief that higher education should be a force for public good: widening opportunity, strengthening public services, supporting economic and social development and helping individuals fulfil their potential. This philosophy shaped decisions large and small, from educating outstanding teachers, nurses and healthcare professionals to creating pioneering civic partnerships such as The Hive, Europe's first fully integrated university and public library. 🍷

Many universities experienced growth during the early decades of the twenty-first century. Worcester's distinctive achievement was to demonstrate that growth, educational excellence, financial resilience and civic responsibility could be pursued together. Across changing national circumstances, successive strategic plans and significant external challenges, the University maintained a strong commitment to service, partnership and social value, developing an identity rooted in place, responsive to society's needs and dedicated to improving lives through education, research and public engagement.

As the University enters its next chapter, it does so from a position shaped by eighty years of educational service and by the achievements of this transformative quarter century. While the challenges facing higher education, society and the economy will continue to evolve, the values that have guided the University throughout its history, including opportunity, public service, partnership, sustainability and responsible stewardship, provide a strong foundation for the future.

The achievements described here are therefore not simply a record of past success, but a platform for the University's continued development in service of its students, communities and the wider public good.



Opening of the St John's Sports Centre , creating a major new sporting facility for the University and the city.

Worcester Wolves basketball club founded.

2000



Digital Arts Centre opened by HRH The Earl of Wessex, creating a major centre for digital media, design and creative industries education.

2004



University of Worcester formally opened by HRH The Duke of Gloucester

2006



HRH The Duke of Gloucester installed as Founding Chancellor of the University at Worcester Cathedral.

Construction begins to transform the former Worcester Royal Infirmary and to create new residences at City and St John's campuses.

2008



Research Degree Awarding Powers granted, enabling the University to award its own doctoral and research degrees.

University of Worcester receives the largest increase in HEFCE funding of any university in England, reflecting national confidence in the University's growth, widening participation achievements and regional impact.

2010

The University Chancellor HRH The Duke of Gloucester formally opens the City Campus. This completes the transformation of the historic Worcester Royal Infirmary into a major centre of higher education and regeneration.

2011



Opening of the University of Worcester Arena, Britain's first purpose-built inclusive indoor sports arena, created through a partnership of public, sporting and philanthropic support, becoming a vibrant part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy.

2013



The leap forward in both quality and volume of research leads to Worcester quadrupling Quality Research income and being the **most improved university in the UK for research power.**

Worcester Wolves win first the BBL Trophy and then the BBL Play-Off Championship, qualifying for European competition.

Following a Worcester Students' Union led campaign, the Arena hosts the UK's first ever student wheelchair basketball competition, sponsored by GB Wheelchair Basketball, which Worcester win.

2014



Shortlisted for Times Higher Education University of the Year for the first time, the first of four shortlistings in ten years, the most of any UK University.

Law School established in the Jenny Lind Building, with specialist courtroom and legal practice facilities.

The Hive wins the SCONUL Library Design Award.

2016



Shortlisted for University of the Year in the UK Social Mobility Awards – the first of four shortlistings, including 2026.

Named UK and Ireland's Sustainability Institution of the Year for Universities and Colleges – the top educational institution environmental sustainability award in the UK.

Publication of the 'Inspired for Life' Strategic Plan, the 5th new type plan published in the 21st century.

2019



The Art House opens for students, creating a new city-centre home for arts education, creativity and public engagement.

2018



Winner of the inaugural Times Higher Education Award for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, while also shortlisted for University of the Year, Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year, and the THE Datapoints Merit Award for service to the community during the pandemic.

2020



The Riverside building is repurposed to include a gym and extensive facilities for physiotherapy and sports therapy. The Elizabeth Casson building becomes a new centre for paramedic education. Electric car charging facilities, parking, landscaping, walking and cycling routes are all created at Severn Campus.

The Arches project, a partnership between City Council, Severn Arts and the University, opens attractive new creative spaces.

2022

HRH The Duke of Gloucester opens The Duke's Building at the Severn Campus, expanding specialist clinical simulation, sport science research and healthcare education facilities.

University Board of Governors publish 'Values and Vision' strategic plan.

University awarded more than £2.2m from the NIHR to establish a Rural Mental Health Research Unit, one of the largest research grants in the University's history.

2025

2003

University's Board of Governors publishes the first of a new generation of ambitious Strategic Plans, establishing a long-term vision for growth, inclusion, academic quality and civic engagement.

2005

After a year of in-depth examination of whether Worcester meets demanding, rigorous standards, full **University title is granted** by the Privy Council. The newly minted University of Worcester is eligible to educate Commonwealth scholars and much besides.

2007

Direct-entry Paramedic programmes launched, extending the University's contribution to healthcare workforce development.

Appointment of the UK's first Professor of Perinatal Education, establishing a pioneering focus on maternity, parenting and early years wellbeing.

2009

University of Worcester Business School moves into elegantly refurbished, historic buildings at City Campus.

Charles Darwin Building opened, creating major new science teaching and research facilities.

The Association for Dementia Studies is established, becoming a nationally recognised centre for research, education and innovation in person-centred dementia care.

2010

Teacher Education rated Outstanding by Ofsted whose findings include that there is "high quality personal and professional support for trainees, ensuring that individual needs are met exceptionally well" and that there is a strong "culture of continuous improvement that permeates all teacher education".

2012

HM The Queen opens The Hive, Europe's first fully integrated university and public library, which goes to win multiple awards for learning, architecture, community engagement and environmental sustainability.

2013

Launch of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy programmes.

Inclusive and disability sport becomes one of the University's defining strengths.

Winner of the national Guardian University Award for Contribution to the Local Community, recognising the University's civic impact and community engagement.

2015

University becomes the first University ever to host the European Wheelchair Basketball Championships (Men's and Women's).

University research in plant and microbial biosciences gains increasing international recognition through advances in plant disease and crop-protection research.

2017

First publication of Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data. These newly developed official statistics come to show that **Worcester achieves the strongest average graduate employment and further-study outcomes** among UK multi-subject universities from 2017 onwards.

First cohort of students graduate from the University's pioneering Physician Associate MSc, helping establish a new generation of healthcare professionals to support health and medical teams in hospitals and community settings.

2019

University ranked **1st in the UK for Quality Education, and 1st in the UK for Gender Equality** in the inaugural Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

Shortlisted for Times Higher Education University of the Year.



2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the University places all clinical simulation equipment at the disposal of the NHS, helping Worcestershire Royal Hospital expand intensive care capacity while staff, students and graduates support frontline healthcare services.

The University is Highly Commended at the United Nations International Green Gown Awards, having represented the UK and Ireland as Sustainability Institution of the Year.



2021

The University becomes the first in the UK to host in-person graduation ceremonies following the pandemic, welcoming the Class of 2020 to graduation ceremonies in Worcester Cathedral.

Shortlisted as Nurse Education Provider of the Year (Pre-registration) for the seventh time, establishing an all-time record for any English university in the Student Nursing Times Awards.



2023

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building opens, providing a major new centre for health and medical education and becoming the home of the Three Counties Medical School.

First medical students begin their studies.

Primary and Secondary Teacher Education rated Outstanding by Ofsted. The inspectors' report describes Worcester's provision as "exceptional".

2025

Shortlisted for Times Higher Education University of the Year for the fourth time in a decade.

Staff launch a major fundraising campaign for student scholarships and hardship support. Over half the £100,000 target raised by sponsorship of a 280km walk from Porto to Santiago de Compostela.

The Joel Richards Scholarship is established in memory of student Joel, the youngest victim of the 2015 terrorist attack in Sousse, Tunisia, helping future students access educational opportunities and fulfil aspirations.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE WORCESTER



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