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During the Enterprise Ireland led education mission late last year, Brazil announced that it is more than doubling the number of undergraduate scholarships to Ireland this year.

Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), with the largest number of Brazilian students of any Higher Education Institution in Ireland, is ideally placed to benefit from Brazil's investment in Ireland.

"This is indeed a most welcome development" commented Don O'Neill of WIT's Office for International Relations, "as Ireland is the only country to have been allocated a significantly increased number of scholarship places for the coming year.

"It is gratifying to see international recognition for the quality of academic work being carried out at Higher Education institutions nationally and of great importance to WIT - the city and the region - as we continue to develop a world class network for academic and industrial collaboration at WIT."

Dr Ken Thomas, the Head of School of Engineering and Mr O'Neill represented WIT on the education mission.

Both successfully developed a range of prestigious new partnership agreements for staff and student exchange and enhanced research collaboration with four of Brazil's top-ranked universities, namely Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) and Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES).

These agreements will form a solid foundation for advancing cooperation with Brazil's leading universities well into the future.

"Adding these leading universities to WIT's already significant portfolio of partner universities in Brazil is of great importance to the Institute's research community and opens doors for collaboration in a multiplicity of areas," commented Dr Thomas.

"WIT is already engaged in a variety of collaborative research projects with Brazilian universities in many areas and it is hoped to further strengthen this collaboration through work with these new leading university partners."