



The Open
University

50
YEARS

SCOTLAND

THE OPEN
UNIVERSITY
IN SCOTLAND
OUTCOME
AGREEMENT WITH
THE SCOTTISH
FUNDING COUNCIL
2019 - 2022

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY: A UNIQUE INSTITUTION SERVING THE WHOLE OF SCOTLAND

Open to people, places,
methods and ideas.

1. Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything The Open University does: widening access to higher education is the ambition on which the University was founded. The Open University is committed to extending opportunities for educational success to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.
2. The Open University has always operated an open entry policy: our students can study modules and qualifications at undergraduate level with no requirement for previous qualifications. Over the period of this outcome agreement, The Open University in Scotland will continue to work with the Commissioner for Fair Access to Higher Education and play its part in developing a national framework for access.
3. The flexibility of part-time study allows students to work and learn at the same time with most of our students studying to improve their careers. Of our 16,500 students in Scotland, over 70% are in full or part-time employment. Most of our students are mature learners: the median age of our undergraduate entrants in Scotland is 27.

16,500
OU students
in Scotland



Over 70% of our
students are in
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27 is the median age of
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entrants

Geographical reach

4. The OU is proud to be the only university that operates across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The teaching of OU students resident in Scotland is funded by the Scottish Funding Council and we are able to bring to Scotland significant benefits derived from being part of the UK's largest higher education institution. The size and scale of the University allows it to offer a broader curriculum, a more diverse range of staff and students, wider access to educational innovation, including our strategic partnership with the BBC, and greater investment in systems and platforms which can improve the student experience and our efficiency.
5. In Scotland, The Open University reaches across the whole country giving us an unparalleled ability to undertake nationwide developments and support the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives. Our students are not required to attend a campus and can study with us wherever they might live, with access to our world-class online library and support services. This is of particular benefit to the 23% of our undergraduate entrants who live in remote and rural parts of Scotland, who would otherwise have limited options to access higher education.
6. The Open University works closely with partners across the whole of Scotland. We collaborate with employers, trade unions, public sector bodies, institutes, private, third sector and community organisations, universities, colleges and schools. By continuing to develop such strategic partnerships, we will enhance our position as the leading provider of flexible learning and increase the number of students who choose to study with us.
7. OU students are not just in Scotland; we have almost 175,000 students across the UK, throughout Europe and some worldwide – and many more are available through our partnerships and accredited institutions. The Open University delivers development programmes in partnership with governments, NGOs, funding institutions and local partners. Our programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia address areas such as front-line health services, teacher education and English language teaching. The Scottish Government is currently funding the [Zambian Education School-based Training \(ZEST\) project](#), enabling the OU to work with World Vision Zambia to develop and roll out a high quality, school-based, professional development programme which will reach up to 4,000 primary school teachers and leaders across Zambia's Central Province. The project began in October 2017 and will run to 2022.

Our curriculum

8. Our students can study both individual, credit-based modules and qualifications that are fully aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). We offer a wide range of qualifications, including the uniquely flexible suite of Open qualifications: the Open CertHE, Open DipHE and BA/BSc Open, which allow students to tailor a qualification around their interests and career needs.
9. The development of our modules is a uniquely collaborative process delivered by multi-disciplinary course teams. These teams include OU academic staff working in partnership with colleagues from other universities; educational technologists and media specialists contributing pedagogic and technical expertise; and external assessors to ensure academic standards are consistent with other universities. This model has helped to build the University's reputation for pedagogical innovation, academic rigour and quality and has since been adopted by distance teaching institutions worldwide.
10. The Open University is a mass communicator of free, informal learning both nationally and globally through its [OpenLearn website](#), iTunesU, the OU channel on YouTube, [The OpenSTEM Labs](#) and [FutureLearn](#). The OpenLearn website gives the public free access to learning materials from the OU. These materials either come from our modules or are developed to support our BBC television and radio programmes and provide expert comment on topical issues. All OpenLearn courses (over 1,000) are also available on Google Play and Amazon for Kindle.
11. [OpenLearn Create](#) is an innovative open educational platform where individuals and organisations can publish their own open content, open courses and resources. It allows The OU in Scotland to co-create open educational resources with partners, such as the Carers Trust and Parkinson's UK.
12. The Open University's unique partnership with the BBC continues to flourish and evolve with such programmes as Blue Planet II, Civilisations and The Bottom Line. In the UK, OU-produced programmes are viewed and listened to hundreds of millions of times each year. Academic experts from across the University are involved in all OU/BBC productions and inspire people to take their interest further by visiting the OpenLearn website; viewers are encouraged to access videos, interactive games and podcasts as well as articles and booklets.

Our staff

13. The Open University in Scotland has over 140 academic, academic-related and support staff based in our offices in Edinburgh.
14. We have over 450 associate lecturers living across Scotland, many of whom also work in business and industry or for other Scottish HEIs or colleges. Associate lecturers guide, advise and offer comprehensive feedback to students on their coursework. The majority of our undergraduate modules have a tutorial group of 20 students. Associate lecturers can be contacted by phone or online, and lead group tutorials and seminars, making use of online teaching technologies to link up student groups across the country.
15. The Open University is an accredited living wage employer.



Over 140 staff based in our offices in Edinburgh



We have over 450 associate lecturers in Scotland



“This is the first job I’ve had where I feel excited to go into work each day because I know that the OU really can change people’s lives”

PAGE

Employer Engagement Officer
The Open University in Scotland

Student and staff engagement in outcome agreement process

16. The Open University in Scotland strongly believes that the student body is a key stakeholder in the development of its outcome agreement and that its views and concerns are acknowledged. This outcome agreement has been considered and approved at an institutional level, with student and staff engagement through The Open University in Scotland's consultative structure: the Student and Staff Engagement Group, which meets twice a year, and the annual Student Consultation meeting. Both groups include representation from students, associate lecturers, faculty staff, academic-related and support staff.

Equality Impact Assessment

17. We note that the Scottish Funding Council requires institutions to undertake and publish equality impact assessments of their Outcome Agreements. [The Equality Impact Assessment of our Outcome Agreement will be published on The OU in Scotland's website.](#)

UK departure from the European Union

18. The Open University in Scotland is funded for the learning and teaching of students resident in Scotland. As a distance learning provider, our students study with us in their homes or workplaces, rather than being present on a campus.
19. Further to the publication of the Brexit White paper, The Open University has been developing plans to support staff who are affected by the decision to leave the EU. The University is privileged to have a diverse range of staff working here who have made, and who continue to make, an enormous contribution to the University across a range of roles and disciplines. The University recognises that the diversity of our colleagues is one of our greatest assets and we want to encourage and support our staff who are EU Nationals to continue working at the University regardless of their role or length of service.
20. The Open University in Scotland is not funded by the Scottish Funding Council for research but, given the proportion of research income secured by the OU as a whole from EU government sources, we are placing much greater focus on the need and our ability to harness external funding opportunities from a more diverse range of sources.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds.

Commission on Widening Access Implementation

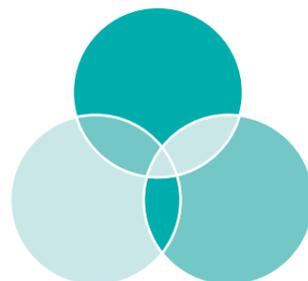
21. SFC have asked each institution to report on how they will achieve the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access.
22. Recommendations 5, 11, 12, 32, 25: The Open University's open access policy, flexible part-time delivery, school-university bridging programme ([YASS](#)), college articulation agreements and geographical reach all position us well as Scotland's national widening access university. Students can study modules and qualifications with no requirement for previous qualifications and there are no restrictions on the number of registrations. We take a whole institution approach to widening access and provide sector leadership in this area. The OU in Scotland is working closely with the Commissioner for Fair Access and the Fair Access Development Group. We welcome the Commissioner's recognition that learners of all ages and modes are included in his targets, not just school-leavers studying full-time.
23. The Open University in Scotland's widening access work targets those people with no previous experience of study at SCQF Level 7 or above, with low incomes and those for whom attending a campus would present significant challenges. Our outreach activity is enhanced by work with partners across the country and by the provision of supported pathways into degree level study that are appropriate to the individual learner. Our partnerships are uniquely Scotland-wide and include schools, colleges, other universities, employers, trade unions, third sector and community-based organisations. Much of the work outlined below and our associated work on retention, completion and success is facilitated by the Scottish Funding Council's Widening Access & Retention Fund, which enables us to support students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.
24. As a result of targeted marketing and outreach activity, the proportion of our undergraduate entrants living in the most deprived 2016 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) quintile reached 17% in 2017/18, with 38% joining us from the two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40). These proportions have been successfully maintained throughout 2017/18 and there are early signs of further growth in 2018/19.
25. Recommendation 9: details of our articulation work with colleges are given in paragraphs 88 - 98 with flexible pathways that support disadvantaged learners to progress to degree level study.
26. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will continue to target our marketing and outreach activity to promote access to higher education to learners from the most deprived backgrounds. However, it is important to recognise that there are people experiencing significant hardship in geographical areas that are deemed to be less deprived than SIMD20 and, equally, that not everyone in a deprived area is individually deprived. The majority of our students are on low incomes. In 2017/18, 69% of our undergraduate entrants received the Part-time Fee Grant, having declared an individual income below £25,000.
27. We report in our data table and our Self-Evaluation Return on the retention of our SIMD20, SIMD40 and care experienced students. The retention of these students is comparable to the institution norm. We are committed to using data and evidence to provide proactive student support with a focus on reducing gaps at all stages of the learner journey for disadvantaged students.
28. Recommendation 21: our open access policy enables care experienced learners with low previous education qualifications to study with us. Data on our care experienced students suggests that they may begin their learning journey later, with a higher average age than our non-care experienced students. More details of our work to support care experienced learners is given in paragraphs 34 - 41 below.



69%
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Part-time Fee Grant



29. Recommendation 7: The University's access programme provides three, highly-supported, 30-credit modules at SCQF Level 6 that facilitate the transition to HE level study and are designed to maximise student success, retention and progression. The number of entrants in Scotland starting with one of these access modules has remained steady over the last three years, with 155 FTE registered in 2017/18.



155 FTE
entrants study
access modules

30. Currently these access modules do not receive teaching grant from the Scottish Funding Council, but we believe they should be eligible in recognition of the bridging these modules provide towards an OU HE level qualification.

31. In addition to these access modules, we use open educational resources to support our widening access work. [Open Pathways](#) is a resource pack that offers various pathways from informal to formal accredited learning. This supports pre-access activity with learners who may be very distant from higher education, allowing them to start learning informally at their preferred level and pace, gradually building confidence and skills for learning. The pathways are currently being updated to reflect sector skills priorities and adult learning journeys. Our free learning platform [OpenLearn](#) has skills-based Badged Open Courses (BOCs) including Taking Your First Steps into Higher Education; Succeed with Learning; Succeed with English; Succeed with Maths; and Succeed in the Workplace.

32. The OU has recently launched an innovative and flexible module at SCQF Level 7: [Making Your Learning Count](#), which enables learners to count previous or current study from OpenLearn or specified other open educational resources (OER) towards our Open degree, Diploma or Certificate. Through a series of topics and assessment tasks, students explore what they have learned on these OERs whilst developing the skills they need to be a successful student.

33. Over the period of this outcome agreement we will build on our network of over 250 [Open Learning Champions](#). During this outcome agreement we will take a more segmented approach to our work with open learning champions, focusing on Scotland-wide relationships and those that deliver most to our widening access work.

Students from care experienced backgrounds

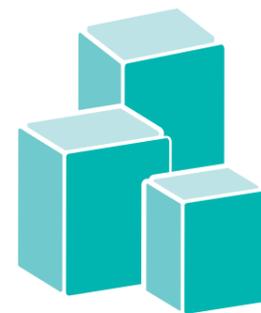
34. Since 2013/14, when The Open University first started to ask students to self-declare whether they had a care experience background, between 23 and 32 undergraduate entrants with care experience have registered in Scotland each year. Although small numbers, this appears higher than the sector average.
35. The majority of our students make no declaration as to whether they have had care experience or not. In common with many other demographic variables, 2017/18 saw a sharp increase in the proportion who did not provide information on their care experience status. The number of care experienced entrants should therefore be regarded as a lower bound on the true number of The OU in Scotland population.
36. With support from Who Cares? Scotland's Corporate Parent training, The OU in Scotland published its [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) in March 2018 on its website.
37. Our Corporate Parenting Plan aims to:
- ensure delivery of the University's Corporate Parenting obligations in Scotland;
 - support the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council in relation to care experienced students;
 - align with the University's Widening Access and Success strategy across the institution.
38. The OU in Scotland has a Corporate Parenting steering group with a remit to collaborate, plan, review and report on OU-wide activities relating to care experienced students. The steering group comprises representatives from staff across the University, as well as care experienced students and OU Student Association representatives. The group meets at least twice per year to review progress on the Corporate Parenting Plan and monitor the experience and success of care experienced students.
39. A forum for care experienced students to feed into the Corporate Parenting action plan and steering group has been established.
40. The OU in Scotland, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, are leading on the development of an open educational resource for training staff members in Scottish HEIs on their Corporate Parenting responsibilities. A steering group has been created to guide the project with the membership including nine HEIs, Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Funding Council.
41. The OU in Scotland is a partner in the Hub for Success, a collaboration of Edinburgh-based stakeholders to improve outcomes for care experienced learners.

Students and staff who are carers

42. The Open University's model of supported open learning is particularly suitable for carers, who can study from home and fit their learning around their caring commitments. 2.5% of our undergraduate entrants in Scotland declared themselves to be carers in 2017/18. However, the vast majority of new students do not tell us whether or not they are a carer so the true proportion with caring roles is likely to be far greater than the data suggests.
43. The University aims to improve student declaration of caring and dependency status across the UK. To achieve this, we are implementing the findings of The OU in Wales carers project which increased identification of carers at registration through increased staff awareness, proactive conversations with staff and the production of a carer's handbook. These initiatives are now being rolled out across the University.
44. We continue to put particular emphasis on working with carers in Scotland within our widening access activity: it augments our work in SIMD20 and SIMD40 areas, articulation, partnerships and work-based learning. We can make special exam arrangements for those students who would find difficulty in attending an exam centre.
45. Having been awarded the Carer Positive (Engaged) status in 2015, an award operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, the OU has now been recognised as a Carer Positive Established employer, the next status level.
46. Our open educational resources, co-created with carers and carers organisations, are being used by carers centres across Scotland. [Caring Counts](#) is a reflection course for carers. It is being delivered in a blended context with carers, working in groups both online and offline. Positive outcomes have been reported including increased confidence, return to the workforce and further study.
47. The University has an institutional Care and Carers Network set up for knowledge exchange around care and caring. Its four sub-groups are: widening participation and support for student carers, staff who care, carer research and curriculum development. These activities will support the University's application for the Going Higher for Student Carers recognition award, run by the Carers Trust Scotland.

Students in secure environments

48. The Open University has provided modules to students in prison since 1972. Through our partnership with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), we are able to facilitate access to higher education for those prisoners who have not previously had the opportunity to study at this level and who have demonstrated their potential and motivation. In 2017/18 we had 60 students studying in 15 secure facilities across Scotland (covering all security categories).



**60 students
studying in
15 secure facilities
across Scotland**

49. The OU in Scotland is maintaining a dialogue with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and the Scottish Government with the aim of enhancing our work with offender learners over the period of this outcome agreement.
50. The OU in Scotland is a member of the SPS National Advisory Group on prison education and is represented on the Higher Education Access Board (HEAB) which coordinates access by offenders to higher education provision.

Students with disabilities and additional needs

51. The Open University in Scotland offers a wide range of support services and facilities to enable learners with additional needs to succeed in their studies including course materials in alternative formats and are tested for compatibility with assistive software, special arrangements for tutorials and examinations including home examinations and where appropriate advice about funding.



**18% of
undergraduate
entrants identified
themselves as
having a disability**

52. In 2017/18, 18% of our undergraduate entrants identified themselves as having a disability. Students are most likely to declare mental health problems and dyslexia. In 2017/18, entrants declaring these conditions accounted for 40% and 26% of the disabled entrant population, respectively.
53. The OU in Scotland is partnering with LEAD Scotland, which provides 1:1 support to disabled learners and carers, to deliver workshops to its volunteers and staff on accessible open learning.

Mental health and well-being

54. The Open University is committed to supporting the well-being of its students and staff. We recognise that a positive and collaborative approach to the management of physical and mental health difficulties is crucial to the success of our students and the optimal performance of our staff. The Open University is currently developing both a Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and a Mental Health Plan for staff, with the view to both being published in 2019.
55. The Open University has a [Safeguarding Policy](#) and a [Safeguarding Referrals Team](#) for students who are experiencing, or believe themselves to be at risk of abuse as a vulnerable adult, or have concerns that someone is abusing another individual who is a vulnerable person.
56. Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism is synonymous with our concern for student and staff welfare and well-being; and to this end the University has adopted a set of [Prevent Principles](#). Students, staff or associates of the University can contact the [OU's Prevent Coordinator](#) if they should have any concerns.
57. On World Mental Health Day in October 2018, The Open University officially launched its partnership with The Big White Wall, a free, online mental health and well-being resource for students, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Big White Wall offers a safe space for students to voice their concerns and discuss issues. The website has a range of resources designed to help people self-manage and improve their mental health and well-being, including art and writing therapies and guided group courses.
58. The University provides well-being and mindfulness resources on its Student Help Centre. Further help and information on mental health and well-being is made available to students through the Mental Health Foundation website.
59. As part of The Open University's responsibility to all our students, we are currently consulting with our students and staff on a new Health, Well-being and Fitness to Study Policy. The procedures in the policy are designed to provide an effective framework for managing cases where, as a result of ill health or disability, a student's behaviour is having an adverse impact on their health, safety, well-being or academic progress or that of others. We will always seek to take a positive, managed approach to such cases rather than taking disciplinary action in the first instance. The policy is due to be published on 1 August 2019.

60. The Open University has produced Well-being+ resources to support its staff through some of the challenges they may face in life such as health, family and relationships, financial difficulties, work and career.
61. All Open University staff and their immediate family members have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, a free and confidential service available to all staff, offering expert information, advice, counselling and support on a wide range of issues. The service is provided by Health Assured (via Health Management Ltd) and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
62. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2018/19 set out plans to provide more than 80 additional counsellors in further and higher education. As a distance learning provider with no residential facilities and an older student population, we will work closely with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to consider how this resource can be used to support our students effectively.

Ethnicity

63. We monitor the number and proportion of undergraduate entrants from BME backgrounds, their progression and completion rates, and report on progress in our self-evaluation return each year. We note there was a sharp increase in both the number and proportion of those choosing not to disclose their ethnicity in 2017/18 which makes it challenging to identify genuine trends in BME numbers.
64. The [University's institutional Equality Objectives](#) includes three objectives to proactively address race equality issues:
- **Improve the retention gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and White students, for any cohort, from registration to qualification.**
 - **Improve the degree awarding gap between by BAME students and White students, to be in line with the Sector average.**
 - **Improve the representation of disabled, BAME, and female staff in senior roles.**
65. The OU is applying for a Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award, run by Advance HE.

British Sign Language (BSL)

66. In line with the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and following publication of the first Scottish BSL National Plan, The Open University published its own [BSL plan](#) in October 2018. The OU is committed to supporting the implementation of the BSL National Plan, ensuring we meet our BSL obligations and providing an inclusive service to our students. We are grateful for the support and training provided by deafscotland, the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Partners and the FE/HE Participation Officer at Deaf Action.

Gender identity

67. The Open University recognises that the experience of transition from one gender identity to another, or identifying as non-binary, may impact on a student's study experience. The OU's transgender support policy and guidance are published on our website: [Gender Identity Policy and Guidance](#).
68. The OU does not intend to introduce monitoring for gender identity. We have a legal duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned, and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. The University's approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on qualitative information derived from engagement and research. We have introduced an "Mx" category alongside Mr, Miss, Mrs and Ms to assist those who identify as non-binary for gender purposes.

Gender balance

69. In 2017/18, 63% of our undergraduate entrants were female, which is slightly higher than the sector average¹. We continue to analyse recruitment by sex and monitor trends at a subject level.
70. In common with all universities in Scotland, The OU in Scotland produced its first [Gender Action Plan](#) in July 2017. Our plan details the actions that are being undertaken to achieve a greater gender balance in particular subject areas and how we will strategically address any imbalances to achieve a more gender-balanced student population by 2025.
71. We have worked with Equate Scotland to review our marketing and prospectuses to encourage recruitment to subject areas that are currently gender-imbalanced. We are continuing to work with Equate Scotland to focus initially on engineering. Our approach is to consider the issue from the perspective of the overall student journey, looking at every touchpoint to identify the key areas of influence where we can really make a difference. We are then taking the learnings and rolling out as best practice across other gender imbalance subjects. We are running several marketing campaigns targeting specific gender imbalance subjects. From an intersectional perspective we are also running a campaign targeting SIMD20/40 men to help address the overall under-representation of this group.
72. We will continue to work to improve gender balance at a sectoral level with organisations such as Advance HE in Scotland.
73. The Open University is strongly committed to the advancement and promotion of the careers of women in STEM subject areas. The OU's Institutional Athena SWAN bronze award was renewed in 2016. The Open University was successful in achieving the Departmental Bronze awards for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, the School of Computing and Communications, the School of Engineering and Innovation and the Department of Life, Health and Chemical Sciences. The School of Physical Sciences has recently been awarded a Departmental Silver Award.
74. The School of Physical Sciences has also been awarded the JUNO Practitioner status. This award recognises actions that demonstrate commitment to addressing the under-representation of women, specifically in subjects allied to physics.

Veterans/early service leavers

75. The Open University signed up to the [Armed Services Covenant](#) in March 2016 and has 2,000 active or former service personnel studying courses.
76. Once they leave military life, veterans' transferable skills - developed in a unique environment that demands excellence, accomplishment and personal growth - can make a huge contribution both socially and economically. Higher education can be a valuable tool in carving a new career path.
77. In 2018/19 the OU established the [Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund](#) to enable disabled veterans to study for free with The Open University and receive wraparound specialist disability support and careers advice. The fund is the first of its kind in the UK dedicated to furthering the education of the men and women who have become disabled due to their time in the forces. Up to one in five veterans are discharged due to disabilities. The study opportunity with the OU will develop their skills, knowledge and experience. 50 scholarships are available in 2019/20.

Estranged students

78. The Open University is committed to supporting students who are estranged from their families to access education. The Open University in Scotland are a member of the Scottish sector-wide Stand Alone Stakeholder Group which aims to bring together Scottish HEIs with sector agencies to enhance the entry opportunities and support provision for estranged students in Scotland.

¹HEI sector proportions: FTE, all students, 2017/18: 58% Student instances, UG&PG entrants, 2017/18: 60%

Gender-based violence

79. The Open University aims to maintain a learning environment in which all members of its community treat each other with dignity and respect and in accordance with [The University's Student Charter](#). Both as a provider of higher education and an employer, we welcome all actions which are designed to reduce and ultimately eradicate gender-based violence.
80. The Equally Safe in Higher Education toolkit is an important resource but adopts an explicitly campus-based approach that the OU will need to interpret and adapt for our unique model of supported distance learning and teaching. We are partners in the Fearless Edinburgh group, which is a regional group of universities and other agencies dedicated to the addressing the issue of gender-based violence, and we benefit from the dissemination of good practice within this forum as well as awareness raising amongst our staff.
81. Over the period of this outcome agreement, the OU will review its existing policies and procedures to ensure that gender-based violence is specifically addressed and that we have established a clear support and referral system for student and staff.

Working with schools (Bridging Programme)

82. The Open University in Scotland's Young Applicants in Schools Scheme ([YASS](#)) allows students in the final year of secondary school to experience higher education level study in school alongside their other subjects. Students can choose from a range of high-quality modules at SCQF Level 7 and give them access to a subject which may not be available in their school. YASS outcomes are included on Insight, the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for the senior phase.
83. Experience of independent study at degree level and access to all OU student facilities helps to prepare pupils for the transition to university or college and to enhance their career prospects. Pupils can use the credit they gain towards a qualification with The Open University.
84. Since its 2007/08 Scottish pilot with Highland Council, YASS has grown considerably year-on-year: All 32 Scottish education authorities have schools who have participated in YASS. Over 100 schools and over 1,000 pupils throughout Scotland participated in 2017/18. YASS has proved to be a very attractive curriculum addition for many schools, particularly those with a small pupil roll, those with limited numbers staying on to S6 and those in remote areas, which encounter difficulties in providing breadth of choice for their pupils.
85. The OU in Scotland is working towards increasing the proportion of individual pupils from the 40% most deprived areas and increasing the number of schools identified as having low participation in higher education, those in the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP). 13 SHEP schools participated in YASS in 2017/18.
86. We will continue to monitor the impact of YASS and take an evidence-based approach to developing the scheme. We will explore further opportunities to build on our presence in schools to promote learning in the wider community via the parents and carers of pupils, stimulating learning cultures and supporting wider access.
87. The OU in Scotland has been grateful to the Scottish Funding Council for strategic funding towards OU module fees for school pupils, as YASS students are not eligible for the Part-time Fee Grant. 2019-20 is the final year of this current three-year strategic funding arrangement and we look forward to discussing the continuation of this valued national bridging programme with the SFC over the next year.

Over
25
modules
offered to
YASS
students

Over
250
schools have
participated in
YASS since
2007

Over
7,500
students have
taken YASS
modules since the
programme
started

All
32
Scottish education
authorities have
schools who have
participated in
YASS

 The pupils and staff at Doon Academy are grateful for the opportunities the YASS scheme provides.

For us, YASS ticks just about all of the boxes of a good widening access initiative: it fills a curricular gap; it provides opportunities to deepen and broaden learning; it provides routes into higher education; it encourages our young people to take responsibility for and be positive about their futures; and it limits the disadvantage faced by pupils from one of the most deprived parts of the country 

DOON ACADEMY
UCAS Adviser/
Widening Access Coordinator

Working with colleges (Articulation)

88. The Open University in Scotland has formal articulation partnerships with the 15 regional colleges across Scotland that facilitate and promote progression opportunities for students who wish to progress from college to university-level study with the OU.
89. In line with Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council policy, the focus of our work is in articulation: supporting learners progressing from HNC and HND courses at SCQF Levels 7 and 8 into university undergraduate programmes.
90. A significant proportion of undergraduate entrants come to the OU with an HN qualification: numbers have risen year-on-year and in 2017/18, they accounted for 18% of the undergraduate intake.
91. The Open University's offer in this area is distinct: all students with HNC and HND qualifications have the opportunity to transfer credit. Our articulation routes are available nationwide, unrestricted by the geographical location of the student or their college.
92. We offer routes to a range of degree programmes in specific subjects (building directly on the HN study the student has undertaken). Current named qualifications available as articulation routes include Social Science, Natural Sciences, Social Work, Health and Social Care, Healthcare Practice, Adult Nursing, Mental Health Nursing, Childhood and Youth Studies, Business Management (including Accounting, Marketing and Economics pathways), Sport, Fitness and Coaching, Engineering and Computing and IT.
93. In addition to these named qualifications, the University's unique Open Degree is available for all HN students regardless of the HN qualification they have studied at college, allowing the student to gain credit for previous study, whilst building a degree programme more tailored to their own pathway development needs or the needs of their employer.
94. The OU in Scotland works closely with partner colleges to review and maintain articulation agreements and signpost learners within colleges to opportunities for articulation with the OU. The University is committed to a substantial programme of outreach work in this area and to the development of high-quality information for college students considering progression to university.
95. Articulation opportunities provided by the OU are particularly important in providing opportunities for HN students who:
 - **want to enhance their skills and qualifications by studying towards a degree on a flexible, part-time basis;**
 - **want to progress to university while maintaining their existing paid employment;**
 - **have followed a part-time programme of HN study and wish to continue their studies at university on this basis;**
 - **are restricted in accessing other university programmes due to personal, family or geographic circumstances;**
 - **have completed an HN qualification which offers limited opportunities for articulation generally or to a university local to the college at which they study;**
 - **Want to take a break between completing their HN qualification and progressing to a degree programme or want to return to study after a break.**

96. The University is committed to strengthening links with Scotland's colleges and exploring opportunities for innovative partnership working. Examples of such partnerships include the development of campus-based teaching models which allow cohorts of HN students to progress seamlessly to OU study at their existing college campus. In July 2017, The OU in Scotland won the "Best Use of Articulation" award at the Herald HE awards for this collaborative approach, which provides a high level of support to students making the transition from HN to degree study. The University currently delivers campus-based Social Sciences curriculum at Ayrshire College, North East Scotland College and City of Glasgow College. In 2019/20, we will be piloting a new Social Work pathway with Ayrshire College.
97. In 2018/2019 we successfully piloted the OU Choices programme with Dundee and Angus College, integrating online OU Access modules into a wider programme of face-to-face study skills units delivered the college. This unique, blended learning approach to Access aims to support learners considering full or part-time Higher Education, and we plan to work with the college beyond the pilot year to extend this programme to a greater number of learners in the region.
98. The OU in Scotland has developed OU Learning Spaces in several colleges which offer OU students access to college facilities. Learning Space arrangements are in place with Dumfries and Galloway College, New College Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire College, West College Scotland and Fife College, providing articulating students within these regions with the opportunity to continue utilising their college campus and facilities as a base for their OU studies.
99. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will introduce additional articulation routes to named degree programmes and will prioritise the development of routes offering full credit transfer, in line with the recommendations of *A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access (2016)*. We will continue to offer full credit transfer towards our Open degree to all HN applicants and will continue to support the delivery of our campus-based articulation model in partner colleges. We will seek to work closely with college partners and SWAP in the development of our Access offering and will explore opportunities for creating synergies between these partnerships, our articulation activities with regional colleges and our work with schools (through the Young Applicants in Schools Scheme), supporting regional models for access to, and progression through, further and higher education.

Widening Access and Retention Fund (formerly Regional Coherence Fund)

100. We use WARF funding to support our work to increase the number of people from the most disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds, particularly those from the 20% most deprived areas, able to access higher education. We do this through our work with colleges, schools, employers, trade unions, third sector and community-based organisations as detailed above.
101. WARF funding facilitates our work on the retention, completion and success of students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. We have committed to increase our retention rates for all students, SIMD20 and SIMD40 students and other protected characteristics. Details of what we are doing to achieve this is given in paragraphs 105 - 110. We note the guidance to use WARF funds to target male retention rates for improvement, particularly males from SIMD20 areas and we will incorporate this into our work over the period of this outcome agreement.
102. Our work using WARF funding to increase the numbers and proportions of students from a care experienced background and improve student retention rates is detailed in paragraphs 34 - 41.
103. Our work using WARF funding to identify and support student carers is detailed in paragraphs 42 - 47.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

High quality learning in a learning system which is seamlessly connected for the learner, including learning which prepares people well for the world of work, prioritising provision that meets known skills gaps in the economy.

National Student Survey

104. In the 2018 National Student Survey, 90% of Open University students in Scotland declared themselves satisfied with the quality of their OU study experience; this placed the OU second in Scotland for overall satisfaction. We have set ourselves a satisfaction rating target of 90% or more over the period of this outcome agreement.



We are the only Scottish university rated top 3 for student satisfaction in every year of the National Student Survey

(National Student Survey 2007 - 2018)

Retention, completion and success

105. The key strategic priority for The Open University is student success. Over the period of this outcome agreement, The Open University in Scotland is committed to improving retention, completion and positive career development outcomes. We will deliver supported open entry for all undergraduate provision, helping students get onto the right level and study option for their needs.

106. The Open University in Scotland offers a unique level of flexibility to students in that they can choose to study individual, credit-based modules or towards qualifications. However, we recognise that retention, completion and success are complex for part-time learners, whose journeys are often necessarily non-linear. This means our metrics are not comparable with full-time, campus-based institutions. For some OU students, success may be defined by completion of an individual module that is relevant to their professional development requirements or use of their OU study to access qualifications at another higher education provider.

107. The current SFC sector-wide progression metric relates to full-time students. The OU in Scotland negotiated an equivalent metric, which was used for the first time in the 2015/16 reporting cycle.

108. An analysis of our data has demonstrated that our student demographic is continuing to change. For example, we are continuing to see growth in the number of students with low incomes and from deprived areas. These characteristics, particularly for entrants, are associated with lower module retention and progression rates, placing a downward pressure on our overall rates. We are committed to using data and evidence to undertake test-and-learn activities with a focus on reducing gaps at all stages of the learner journey for SIMD20 students. This builds on our commitment to taking a broad focus to widening access - ensuring access to success and a qualification, as well as access to entry.

109. The OU in Scotland continues to monitor the progression and completion rates of our students by deprivation, appropriate protected characteristics and other significant predictors of poor outcomes. Analysis of this information helps us to evaluate the impact of our retention work and to implement appropriate actions.

110. [The University's institutional Equality Objectives](#) are focused on reducing attainment gaps between black and minority ethnic students, and the rest of the population.



Skills

- 111.** With three-quarters of our students in work while they study with us, and well over half of all part-time learners in Scotland, The OU in Scotland is uniquely placed to support the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of Scotland's workforce across the length and breadth of the country. The OU's expertise in accessible, flexible, modular distance learning, means that employers and learners can be offered high quality, adaptable, work-based learning solutions that meet the workforce development needs of employers and the skills aspirations of individuals regardless of where the workplace is in Scotland.
- 112.** The OU's expertise and unique access, accessibility and delivery model give us a key role in supporting government ambitions in relation to the Future Skills agenda articulated in (amongst others) the Enterprise and Skills Board Strategic Plan and Skills Development Scotland's Skills 4.0 report. The onset of the 4th industrial revolution, the requirements to improve productivity and economic growth in Scotland and the changing demographics which will require an increase in caring for our elderly roles all necessitate an education and skills system that enables skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the workforce. The OU is well placed to respond to these challenges through our work-based and work-related learning routes and experience in short course, modular delivery, MOOCs, open educational resources and lifelong learning.
- 113.** The University takes advantage of its size and reach to develop vocational and work-based curriculum in partnership with organisations across a number of sectors, appropriate to the learning needs of the organisation and the individual. From bite-sized CPD workshops to the shaping of specific and/or bespoke qualifications, and work-based learning offers, including Graduate Apprenticeships, we are open and responsive to changing employer needs and ensuring that our students can make a meaningful impact on the Scottish economy and society.
- 114.** Face-to-face workshops, with a specific skills focus encouraging reflective practice, have become particularly popular alongside a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities that include specific and relevant work-related curriculum. The increasing use of open educational resources in the workplace has allowed experimentation using that methodology to support learning and we are working with employers to develop open educational resources as part of bespoke learning packages for their workforce, particularly for employees who require an introduction to or reacquainting with formal learning.

- 115.** The OU's own commissioned research, our Business Barometer, highlighted that the current skills shortage is costing organisations in Scotland £352 million per year. 86% of senior business leaders in Scotland report difficulties in hiring workers with the required skills and nearly half report their organisation has struggled because of the skills shortage in the past year.
- 116.** In recent years we have been able to expand our portfolio of approaches to skills development and work-based learning and our work across a number of the sectors that can be supported in support of workforce development: this is a core part of our work in Scotland. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will be continuing to take forward a range of skills focused work-based initiatives:
- **Continuing to provide, and seeking to develop new Graduate Apprenticeships in collaboration with Skills Development Scotland as funder and a wide range of employers as partners. The OUs unique fully online GAs enable the upmost flexibility for both employer and apprentice and our well-established experience in delivering work-based learning means learning can be put into practice immediately. We will continue to develop discussions with partners and SDS in relation to future Graduate Apprenticeship Framework development in areas of demand.**
 - **We will continue to engage with Skills Development Scotland, SFC, Universities Scotland and the Strategic Board to ensure that the OU plays a central role in the development of the Future Skills agenda and to develop robust, flexible provision in support of the Scottish workforce.**
 - **Utilise repurposed funding from SFC to develop, test and roll-out flexible skills focussed learning solutions, utilising our expertise in this area and working with partners and employers to ensure our provision is employer-led and meets the needs of the Scottish economy and employers' skills gaps.**
 - **Engaging proactively with Scottish Government economic priority sectors in Scotland.**
 - **We will introduce our [Making your learning count](#) module enabling accreditation of experiential learning and previous study to count towards accreditation.**
 - **Skills utilisation and learning transfer.**
 - **Developing innovative approaches to partnership and engagement with employers, trades unions and third sector organisations.**
 - **Strengthening learning communities and building community capacity and assets.**
- 117.** We will maintain our strategic partnership with the STUC and Scottish Union Learning; building on our community outreach model to offer higher education to groups in the workplace. Typically, the participants are non-traditional learners. We will also seek to engage with partners in the National Retraining Programme.
- 118.** The Open University is a major partner in the UK's [Institute of Coding](#), a national initiative led by the University of Bath and supported by theme leaders Aston University, Coventry University, the OU and Queen Mary University of London. The Institute brings together a range of universities, industry, training providers and professional bodies to address the UK's digital skills gaps.
- 119.** We work in partnership with the Scottish Government to deliver their priorities in health, social care and education. We have a well-developed work-based learning curriculum that enables students to access professional programmes in nursing and social work. For 2019/20, the Scottish Government has almost doubled the number of pre-registration nursing places that The Open University can offer across Scotland to 93 places. The flexible nature of the OU offer means that students are often attracted to a distance learning route who would not be able to access a mainstream professional campus-based programme.

- 120.** In 2017, a Scottish Government-funded project to widen access into nursing was launched in partnership between The OU in Scotland, North East Scotland College and NHS Grampian. The project enables students, largely health care and social care support workers, to undertake literacy and numeracy study. Those successfully completing the programme are encouraged to consider further study, including application to the OU's nursing degree. The University has now received Scottish Government funding to support the roll-out of this programme nationally.
- 121.** Widening access, partnership and sustainability are cross-cutting themes, which inform these activities. Through multiple initiatives across the public and private sectors, we are increasing the range of opportunities for workplace learning and systematically collecting and disseminating evidence of good practice.

Enhanced Employability and Career Progression

- 122.** Enhanced Employability and Career Progression (EECP) has been identified as a Strategic Priority within The Open University's Strategic Plan with the specific aim to increase the number of students achieving positive personal and career development outcomes. EECP will use investment in a three year plan to fulfil the University's strategic vision to "reach more students with life-changing learning that meets their needs and enriches society". Enhancing student employability outcomes will realise life-changing ambitions for our students in securing new and or improved career prospects.
- 123.** Aims of EECP programme are to:
- **Orchestrate, develop and deliver an institution-wide strategy for embedding employability and career progression focusing on the three strands of student experience, employer relationships and staff culture.**
 - **Develop a sustainable infrastructure which will foster research and knowledge exchange and provide enhanced capabilities to achieve, evidence and promote employability excellence.**
 - **Support business units in responding to our institutional strategic objectives and ensure employability enhancement and careers progression can be embedded in ways which are consistent, cost effective and quality assured.**
- 124.** There are eight project areas within the EECP Programme with the Careers and Employability Service Expansion project increasing resource in Scotland to a full-time Scotland Careers Consultant, and Senior Manager with a responsibility for Scotland.
- 125.** The Careers and Employability Service Vision statement is "To empower OU students to realise their career and life ambitions by building their confidence to articulate their capabilities and skills, helping them carve out their career journey and navigate the job market, and connecting them to new opportunities".
- 126.** The OU in Scotland and Careers and Employability Service have developed a collaborative Strategic Action Plan to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to deliver on the Outcome Agreement targets and align with The OU in Scotland Business Plan.
- 127.** Within the EECP Programme, the Embedding Employability in Curriculum project is reviewing current employability approaches to all elements of curriculum design. It will recommend revisions where appropriate, seek opportunities to introduce consistency across a framework for embedding and making explicit employability within curriculum, and engage employers in the development of curriculum, where appropriate. The Employability Framework is an expansion of the current Personal Development Planning and the CBI employability, skills-based approach. It provides a common reference point for curriculum teams to use in determining how a more staged approach to employability can be integrated and underpin learning outcomes and teaching activities.

- 128.** A series of employability related Badged Open Courses (BOCs) are available on the [OU's Open Learn website](#).

STEM subjects

- 129.** In 2017/18, 36% of undergraduate entrants began OU study with a module in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) subject. Although this proportion was slightly down from the previous year, absolute full-time equivalent numbers rose from 859 to 900.
- 130.** In 2017/18, 49% of undergraduates studying a STEM module were female.



49% of our Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) students are female

Languages

- 131.** As the provision of foreign languages at HE level decreases across Scotland, The Open University has seen a growing demand for our modules in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Welsh and Mandarin. There has been an increase in the number of S6 pupils on our Young Applicants in Schools Scheme studying language modules.
- 132.** The Open University welcomes the Scottish Funding Council's encouragement of institutions to increase the number of students with practical skills in languages. The OU in Scotland, working with Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT), has developed short modules for primary school teachers to enhance their ability to deliver language learning.
- 133.** The Open University does not offer Gaelic language provision but in reference to the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17, we developed [Gaelic in modern Scotland](#): a free online learning resource in both English and Gaelic to raise awareness of Gaelic and to encourage interest in learning the language.
- 134.** A collaborative project, led by The Open University in Scotland, is currently developing an open educational resource for learning facilitators to enhance the understanding and awareness of Scots language, literature and culture and contribute to widening the relevance of and access to Scots to as broad an audience as possible. We aim to deliver this open educational resource towards the end of 2019.

English for Academic Purposes

- 135.** Whilst The Open University does not provide English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) qualifications, we offer a free course, [Am I ready to study in English?](#) providing learners with an opportunity to reflect on their English language skills prior to studying at higher educational level through a series of academic exercises.
- 136.** In early 2019 a cross-faculty pilot was launched to help students with their academic English. Individual study support sessions were offered to any student who needed support with English for academic purposes. Tutors with specialist skills and experience have been recruited to provide these sessions.
- 137.** Feedback is requested from both the student and the tutor to help evaluate the scheme and the pilot has been very well received by both parties to date.

Health outcomes

- 138.** In 2019/20, The Open University in Scotland will provide 93 places on its undergraduate adult and mental health pre-registration nursing programmes. This is an increase on the number of places offered in previous years; in 2016/17 we provided 26 places and in 2018/19 we provided 50 places.
- 139.** We are scheduled to start our new Learning Disability pre-registration nursing programme in 2020/21.
- 140.** We are proud of the retention and completion rates on our pre-registration nursing programme and believe that our robust recruitment and selection process is a significant contributory factor.
- 141.** Gender balance in nursing is included in our institutional Gender Action Plan and we are working towards increasing the proportion of male undergraduate entrants on the pre-registration nursing programme to 25% by 2025. We are currently developing a marketing campaign focussed on attracting men into nursing.
- 142.** The unique delivery of our programme means that we collaborate with other universities in Scotland to deliver placements.
- 143.** We are working to increase collaboration with Scotland's colleges to strengthen access and articulation onto our pre-registration nursing programmes. We have recruited a Project Development Manager (Widening Access) to develop robust relationships with colleges and increase pathways into pre-registration nursing for healthcare support workers. This builds on the pilot widening access programme we have with North East College Scotland College and NHS Grampian.

The Crichton Campus

- 144.** The Crichton Campus is a unique and inspiring learning environment, located in Dumfries. The Campus provides the option of university learning within a region where choice has previously been extremely limited and provides opportunities for people to access further and higher education in a range of ways that meet their needs. The academic partners of the Crichton Campus are the University of Glasgow, the University of the West of Scotland, The Open University in Scotland, Scotland's Rural College and Dumfries & Galloway College. Over the previous outcome agreement period, The OU in Scotland has continued to expand its contribution at the Crichton Campus and more generally across Dumfries and Galloway and has laid the foundation for further developments over the next three years.
- 145.** The OU in Scotland is the only institution of the academic partners that does not receive any specific funding to support its work with the Crichton Campus. In order to expand our work further, we would require funding to support a post physically located in the region.
- 146.** We will continue to play a full and active role in supporting the Crichton Campus, through the Joint Academic Strategy Group. We believe The Open University makes a valuable contribution in expanding the curriculum offer in the region, opportunities for college articulation and the capacity of the sector to contribute to widening access across the region.
- 147.** We will continue to explore how the OU can make a distinct offer to employers in the region to help them upskill their workforce and to contribute to the local economy. We are establishing links with a number of umbrella organisations in the locality, building on the strong networks established by the Crichton Campus Leadership Group and the Crichton Campus Development Manager.



- 148.** We continue to surface opportunities to widen access to higher education and work to support specific needs of particular groups of students. We continue to build on our outreach work, including our network of [Open Learning Champions](#), via third sector organisations, Community Learning and Development, and other key local stakeholders.
- 149.** We will continue to run a wide range of knowledge exchange and public engagement events on the campus. We have run successful events for those working in education and in the health and social care field. Where appropriate, we will work in collaboration with Crichton Campus partners in these events.
- 150.** The Crichton Care Campus: a multi-institutional research and development group coordinated and led by The Open University, has been established to develop this concept. The group involves representatives from all the academic partners.
- 151.** We intend to further strengthen our use of the Learning Space for OU students hosted in Dumfries and Galloway College. We will also work in collaboration with local students to explore ways of strengthening peer support and a sense of OU student community.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

**Internationally competitive
and impactful research.**

Research

- 152.** The Open University ranked in the top third of UK universities in the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) using The Times Higher Education Power Score. We have improved the quality of our research with 72% scored as 3 star or 4 star – the highest available, indicating that the research is world-leading or internationally excellent in terms of quality, impact and environment. More details can be found [here](#).
- 153.** The Open University spends approximately £60 million on research each year, generating an income of circa £30 million annually. The majority of the OU's research funding is from UK Research and Innovation, with the SFC allocating University Innovation funding to The Open University in Scotland.
- 154.** The Open University has two collaborative research centres in Scotland with the University of Edinburgh (Innogen) and the University of Stirling (the Institute for Social Marketing) and has over 35 research partnerships with other Scottish universities. The Open University in Scotland is a member of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), a strategic collaboration between 14 of Scotland's universities and the Scottish police service.
- 155.** The Open University has key research themes aimed at addressing 21st century global challenges and promoting social justice:
- **Space science and exploration**
 - **Citizenship and governance**
 - **Health and well-being**
 - **International development**
 - **Technology enhanced learning**
- 156.** We will continue to promote these priority research areas and to raise the profile of the University's research and communicate the benefits it brings to Scotland over the period of this outcome agreement.
- 157.** Open Research Online (ORO) is The Open University's repository of over 38,000 research publications and other research outputs. It is an Open Access resource that can be searched and browsed freely by members of the public. The University has recently introduced the Scholarship Platform for internal staff to share learning and teaching research and scholarship activity.
- 158.** The University's Honorary Associate status enables OU Associate Lecturers, who wish to undertake research in collaboration with the OU, to apply to a faculty or institute, similar to Visiting Academic status. This scheme recognises the research of associate lecturers in Scotland and strengthens our academic community.
- 159.** The Open University has recently expanded its range of [Professional Doctorates](#) – work-based programmes studied part time - with a new Doctorate in Health and Social Care that sits alongside our Doctorate in Education.



SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

**Effective knowledge
exchange and innovation
including excellent
collaboration between
universities and industry.**

University Innovation Fund

160. The Open University in Scotland utilises the University Innovation Fund (UIF) Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council to maintain its knowledge exchange and innovation activities.
161. Our full University Innovation Fund plan is attached as Appendix 2 to our Outcome Agreement () and reflects how the increased UIF in 2018-19 enhanced our outcomes and our collaborative activity with industry, the public sector and the third sector.
162. We have fully engaged with the UIF Collaboration Manager on working collaboratively across the sector, sharing our experiences and learning from other institutions. Going forward, we will reflect and learn from the outputs of the cluster groups to further develop best practice in relation to innovation at The Open University in Scotland.
163. We will further promote our open educational resources, including Badged Online Courses, working with other organisations, business and industry to engage more people in online skills-based learning.
164. We will continue to strengthen and build on our previous knowledge exchange related successes with the third sector, Scottish Union Learning and in remote and rural areas.
165. We will actively seek out opportunities to engage with the South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership to help them deliver on their aspirations in the early years of the new agency.
166. We will continue to develop our work as an academic partner on the Crichton Campus and will expand our activity in the Dumfries and Galloway region.
167. We will continue to promote entrepreneurialism in students through our Careers and Employability Service in Scotland including free online resources such as [Explore your future entrepreneurial ideas](#), [Entrepreneurial behaviour](#) and [Entrepreneurship – from ideas to reality](#).
168. We will continue to focus activity around the University's key research themes – and source out new or developing activities in Scotland. Examples include opportunities related to space science: working with this sector in Scotland and drawing on the OU's world class expertise.
169. The OU will co-host the Commonwealth of Learning's ninth [Pan-Commonwealth Forum](#) at BT Murrayfield, Edinburgh from 9 to 12 September 2019. The PanCommonwealth Forum is one of the world's leading international conferences on open, distance and technology-enabled learning. It attracts over 600 delegates from the 53 Commonwealth nations and beyond.
170. We will continue to embrace innovative engagement strategies to encourage more disenfranchised, under-represented and marginalised groups to engage in our UIF related activities.

Cultural engagement

171. We will continue to support a programme of cultural and public engagement, key sector seminars, lectures and events at book festivals, arts festivals and science festivals across the whole of Scotland.
172. Our cultural engagement programme complements our ambition of delivering journeys from informal to formal learning: we promote our free learning resources delivered through the OpenLearn website, iTunesU, the OU channel on YouTube and The OpenSTEM Labs and we support events that are relevant to our curriculum and provide a pathway to particular modules/qualifications. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will align our cultural engagement programme to our wider outcomes and strategy, ensuring a wide geographical spread and attracting diverse audiences.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Ensuring provision of quality learning in Scottish higher education institutions, i.e. HE strategic futures, Quality Assurance and HE governance.

Good governance

- 173.** The Council is The Open University's governing body for all its operations across the UK including The Open University in Scotland. It has a membership of 25, which includes a majority of external members co-opted for their experience and expertise in line with the requirements of [Scottish Code of Good HE Governance](#), the Vice-Chancellor, five members of the Senate, the President of the Open University Students' Association and one other student, two Associate Lecturers and one member of the non-academic staff. Much of the detailed business of the Council is conducted through its specialist committees, which advise the Council on Audit, Development (fundraising), Finance, Membership, Remuneration, Staff Strategy, and Strategy, Policy and Resources (joint with the Senate). The Council is chaired by the Pro-Chancellor and has the ultimate authority within the OU but has to respect the views of the Senate in academic matters.
- 174.** The Senate, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, is the academic authority of the University which, subject to the powers reserved for the Council, is responsible for promoting the academic work of the University in teaching, learning, and research and enterprise. The Senate has an academic majority with 57 representatives of the academic and research staff. It comprises ex-officio members such as the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and some other officers, seven Associate Lecturers, six students and 14 academic-related staff. There are in addition a number of co-opted places, one of which is held by the Director of The OU in Scotland.
- 175.** The Open University is a unique institution, which delivers teaching in all four nations of the UK and is funded by the governments and devolved administrations in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. As such, it has governance structures which recognise and work within the increasingly diverse policy contexts of each nation. The Director of The OU in Scotland acts as the Vice-Chancellor's Delegate in Scotland and is responsible for the provision of services to students based in Scotland.
- 176.** The Open University in Scotland convenes two groups as part of its consultative structure: the Student and Staff Engagement Group, which meets twice a year, and the annual Student Consultative meeting. Both groups include representation from students, associate lecturers, academic staff and non-academic staff.

Students as stakeholders

- 177.** The Open University in Scotland strongly believes that the student body, as a key stakeholder, should be represented formally on the University's governing bodies and that its views and concerns are acknowledged. Our charter states that there must be an organisation of students of the University, and that the President of The Open University Students' Association (OUSA) is an ex-officio member of the University's Council. In addition, OUSA elects a further member to Council and appoints six students to Senate. OUSA in Scotland has an Assembly with the power to act autonomously in relation to those issues affecting students in Scotland. OU students in Scotland elect a member to OUSA's Central Executive Committee to represent the interests of Scottish-domiciled students and to participate in institutional decision-making.
- 178.** The University's student consultative structure makes use of online forums and meetings to enable consultation with students on a range of topics. It acts alongside the University governance structure, as detailed above. Introduced by the University and the Students' Association, the forums enable consultation on OU strategy, policy and other developments to take place virtually as and when necessary rather than be restricted to fixed dates in the year. Their membership consists of a mix of Students' Association representatives, individual student volunteers and staff. There is also an online Scottish Consultative Forum in order to consult students in Scotland on a range of issues.
- 179.** Each student support team (SST) has its own student consultative online forum to consider aspects of provision within its curriculum area, and there are separate forums for international, Open Degree and Postgraduate research students.

180. [The Open University's Student Charter](#), was developed by the University and OUSA. It sets out what the responsibilities are and what staff and students can expect of each other. We review this Charter every year to ensure it reflects our current needs and challenges, while continuing to support the key aim of helping all our students to succeed.

Financial sustainability

181. The Open University has a well-developed financial strategy, reviewed annually by the Finance Committee, that specifies parameters for borrowings, net current assets and surpluses. Each year, the starting point of the annual budgeting process is the maintenance of the University's financial sustainability over both the short-term and the long-term. The annual recurrent teaching grant from the Scottish Funding Council contributes to the University's overall income and its financial condition.

182. The University has prioritised a number of pan-University student success initiatives for rapid impact, in addition to ongoing work embedded in faculties and units. This strategic change programme will also deliver new core administration computer systems and restructured People and Finance services. The programme will run across several years, with benefits being progressively delivered and accumulated. Underpinning everything is delivery of financial sustainability through strategic change and building a platform for future growth.

183. Further information on The Open University's financial position is available in our audited [financial statements](#).

184. The OU in Scotland has asked the SFC to consider increasing the number of funded places it receives to a level that recognises the true number of OU students in Scotland successfully completing their modules. Unlike other institutions in Scotland, The OU in Scotland is uniquely funded on completion and we have seen our FTE student numbers increase each year since 2013 particularly in the Scottish Government priority area of widening access. Our 2018/19 Early Statistics return forecast our completions to be 38% above our budgeted funded completions.

185. The OU in Scotland works closely with colleagues from University's Development Office to raise the profile of the University in strategic networks and explore the potential for more philanthropic giving from Scotland for specific projects.

186. As The Open University celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2019, we have launched a new fundraising campaign to support our founding vision of education being open to all. [Open up the future](#) aims to raise at least £50 million by 2019 for projects grouped under four pillars, which broadly represent the University's mission and strategic priorities:

- **Open up minds**
- **Open up opportunity**
- **Open up thinking**
- **Open up lives**

Environmental sustainability

187. The Open University is committed to the principles of sustainability and sustainable development. By its very nature, distance learning is inherently environmentally sustainable, and the University strives to achieve even higher standards.

188. The Open University in Scotland complies with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and submitted its most recent Climate Change report to the Scottish Government in November 2017. This report is required annually.

189. The University has committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 36% by 2020 against the 2005 baseline. The University has introduced the Go Green programme, which aims to contribute a 5% year-on-year reduction.

190. Go Green is a University wide programme to reduce our impact on the environment. It aims to achieve environmental and financial savings across the University by empowering staff to take action on energy, waste, water and travel. The Go Green programme is intended to be an integral part of staff behaviours in the future to enable the University to manage its energy needs and energy costs.

191. The Open University is a member of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and liaises in Scotland with EAUC-Scotland.

Cyber security

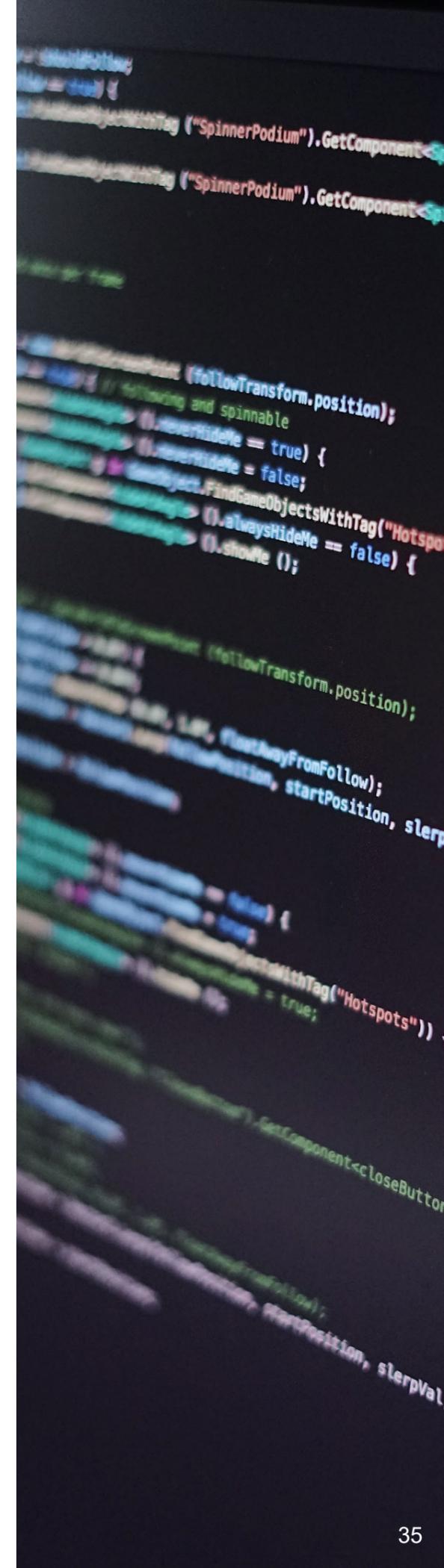
192. Before staff and third parties use Open University systems and handle information, they have a responsibility to read, understand and comply with the OU Information Security policies. This may be conducted either as part of the OU induction process for new staff, or as on the job training for existing staff.

193. Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation is a UK government supported and industry security certification scheme that prescribes a set of standards to manage cyber risks. The Open University has received its annual re-accreditation to Cyber Essentials Plus on 4 April, 2019.

194. ISO/IEC 27001:2005 is an industry standard which specifies the requirements for establishing, implementing, operating, monitoring, reviewing, maintaining and improving a documented Information Security Management System within the context of the organisation's overall business risks. It specifies requirements for the implementation of security controls customised to the needs of individual organisations or parts thereof. The Open University aligns to the ISO27001 standard and requirements.

195. The OU offers a free course [Introduction to Cyber Security: stay safe online](#) on both OpenLearn and FutureLearn, which was developed with support from the UK Government's National Cyber Security Programme.

196. The OU also offers Graduate Apprenticeships in Cyber Security at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to employers in Scotland, funded by Skills Development Scotland.



Equality and diversity requirements

- 197.** [The Open University's Equality Scheme for 2016-2020](#) includes our equality objectives and action plans, our annual report and monitoring statistics. As good practice, the objectives were reviewed in 2018 and subsequently revised.
- 198.** We are creating an inclusive university community and a society:
- **where people are treated with dignity and respect**
 - **where inequalities are challenged and**
 - **where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances**
 - **so that everyone can achieve their potential.**
- 199.** The Open University has published a statement on what the University is doing and is planning to do to help eradicate [modern slavery](#).
- 200.** The Open University participates in a number of equality charter marks, benchmarking activities and awards to support our agenda with regard to protected equality characteristics including:
- **Athena SWAN Charter.**
 - **Disability Standard.**
 - **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index: in 2017, The Open University has participated in the prestigious Stonewall Top 100 Employers and in 2017 was ranked as the 93rd best place to work in Britain.**
 - **The OU is applying for a Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award, run by Advance HE. The REC helps HE institutions to identify and self-reflect on barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students.**
 - **Having been awarded the Carer Positive (Engaged) status in 2015, an award operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, the OU has now been recognised as a Carer Positive Established employer, the next status level.**
 - **Public Sector Equality Duty: as required by the specific duties for Scotland, The Open University in Scotland publishes its Public Sector Equality Duty report on its website.**



The Open
University

50
YEARS

SCOTLAND



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www.facebook.com/OpenUniversityinScotland

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Outcome Agreement between the Open University in Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2019-20

On behalf of the Open University in Scotland:

Signed:



Print name: Susan Stewart

Position: Director

Date: 09/07/2019

Signed:



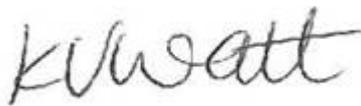
Print name: Malcolm Sweeting

Position: Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor

Date: 13/08/2019

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:



Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 28 June 2019