



Scottish Funding Council  
Promoting further and higher education

Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba  
A' brosnachadh foghlam adhartach agus àrd ìre

# Universities: Progress and Ambitions

## Summary of 2015-16 university outcome agreements



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# UNIVERSITIES: PROGRESS & AMBITIONS

## SUMMARY OF 2015-16 UNIVERSITY OUTCOME AGREEMENTS



Scotland's universities are playing their part in bringing about the Scottish Government's vision for a smarter, fairer, wealthier and greener Scotland. This year in return for the Scottish Government's £1 billion investment, universities have confirmed their ongoing commitment to:

- widen access to people from all backgrounds
- smooth transition from college to university
- retain and support students to completion
- develop highly skilled graduates ready for work
- deliver world-class research
- collaborate with industry for the benefit of the economy
- reduce their carbon footprint

This summary sets out some of the achievements of Scotland's higher education institutions in relation to the above seven key priority areas.

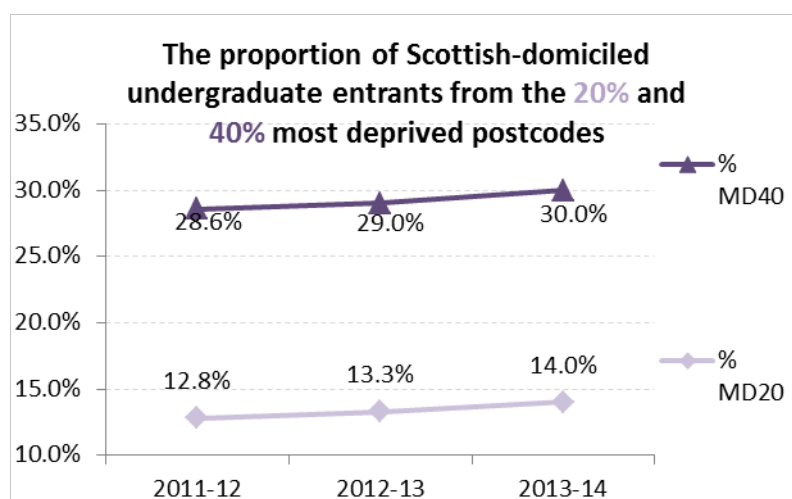


## Universities are improving access to people from the widest range of backgrounds

In their outcome agreements, institutions have restated their ambition to removing barriers to higher education, with commitments *to increase* the proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 40% most deprived areas, *to work* with schools with low progression rates to higher education, and *to develop* strategies to recruit and support under-represented groups across the curriculum.

Universities are steadily making progress towards increasing participation from the most deprived areas of Scotland.

### ***Proportion of Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants<sup>1</sup> from the most deprived areas, 2011-12 to 2013-14***



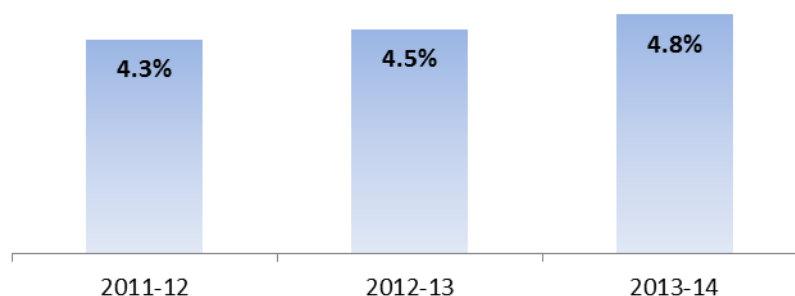
Source: HESA & NRS (SIMD2012)

*The 40% most deprived areas comprise the 0% to 20% most deprived areas plus the 20% to 40% most deprived areas, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).*

There is also evidence of universities successfully recruiting students from low progression schools. The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate (SDUE) entrants from schools taking part in the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) increased from 4.3% (1,414 entrants) in 2011-12 to 4.8% (1,635 entrants) in 2013-14.

<sup>1</sup> For the definition of a Scottish-Domiciled Undergraduate Entrant, please see SFC's Outcome Agreement Technical Guidance: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/guidance/outcomeagreements/UniversityOAGuidance.aspx>

### Proportion of Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants from SHEP schools, 2011-12 to 2013-14



Source: HESA & list of SHEP schools in SFC technical guidance

To achieve their ambitions to widen access and encourage inclusion from under-represented groups across subject areas, institutions are proactively engaged in a range of initiatives and programmes.

*The **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland** promotes access through its pre-higher education programme, **Transitions 20/40**, which recruits talented students from deprived neighbourhoods to its Junior Conservatoire to prepare them for the Conservatoire's rigorous selection process.*

***St Andrews** has targeted outreach work in deprived rural communities as part of its **Access for Rural Communities** research project.*

***Educated Pass** is a widening participation initiative working with Edinburgh and Lothians youth football clubs to help unlock the educational potential of 13-16 year old boys. The Scottish Youth Football Association fully support the project, which engages the boys, their parents and their coaches with the educational opportunities open to them at local colleges and universities. The project illustrates the overlap in skills, attitude and commitment needed to succeed in the classroom and on the pitch. The **University of Edinburgh** are exploring the expansion of the **Educated Pass** project to youth football clubs in areas of deprivation in South and North Lanarkshire.*

*Through the establishment of the Children's University, **Queen Margaret University** raises aspirations and promotes social mobility by offering innovative learning activities outside normal school hours for children aged 5 to 14.*

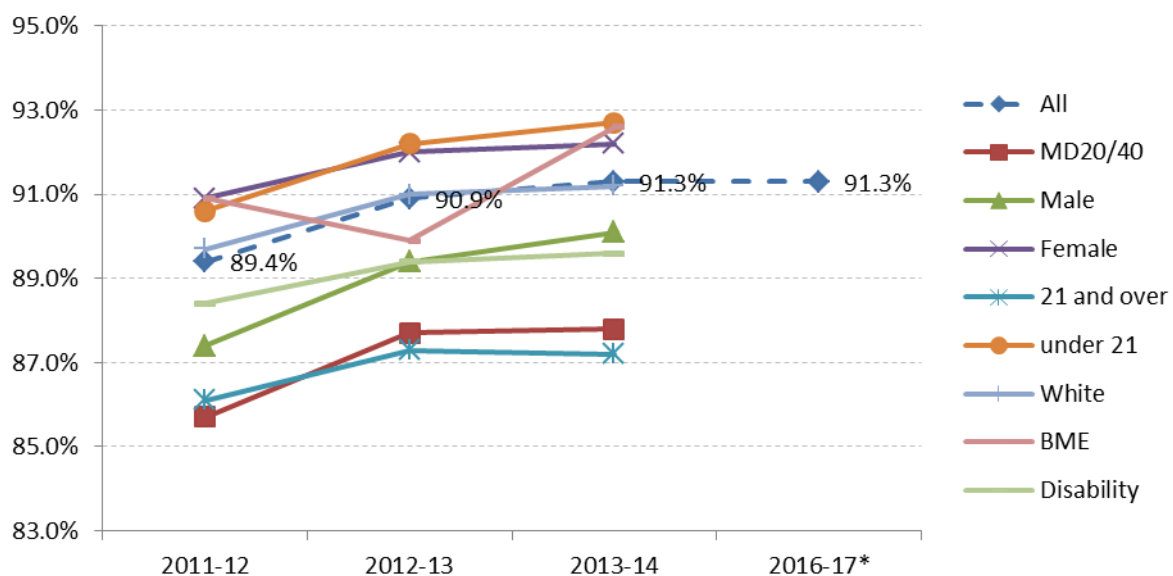
***Glasgow Caledonian University** has recruited over 150 pupils in 2014-15 to its **Advanced Higher Hub** offering pupils in 21 schools in Glasgow the opportunity to study on the University campus.*

*The **University of Dundee** has implemented a minimum tariff system for all registered **Care Leavers** with bespoke support from the point of application.*

## Universities are delivering high quality learning and improving the learner journey

Universities are committed to increasing the number of students who successfully complete their course and seek to do this by improving retention for all groups of students. The ambition to improve retention of all Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants to 91.3% by 2016-17<sup>2</sup>, has already been achieved in 2013-14. Efforts will now focus on at least maintaining the overall retention rate and improving rates for protected characteristic groups and students from SIMD20/40 postcodes.

**The proportion of full-time first year Scottish-domiciled entrants from different protected characteristic groups returning to study in year two**



Source: HESA

\* Data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is not yet available. The 2016-17 figure is an estimate based on cumulative 3 year OA aspirations

*Heriot Watt University has recently supplemented pastoral and academic support services with two new dedicated posts in recognition of increased demands likely to arise with more students transitioning from college to university.*

*The University of Aberdeen has established a Retention Task Force which will carry out a detailed analysis of retention by School and subject area and identify areas where improvements to retention are needed.*

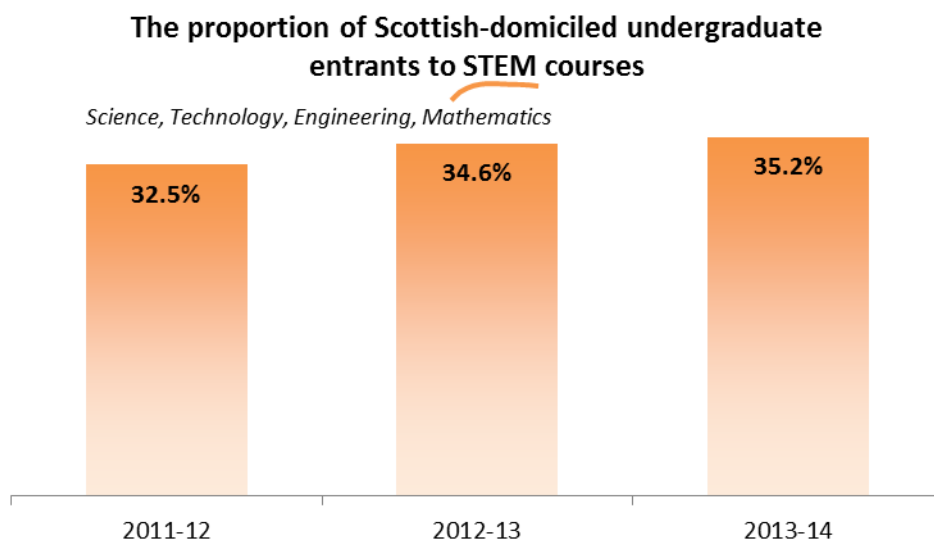
## Universities are delivering 'the right learning in the right place'

In their Outcome Agreements, institutions have committed to providing education that best meets the changing social and economic needs of Scotland and supports a

<sup>2</sup> Estimate based on cumulative 3 year OA aspirations to AY 2016-17

flourishing and diverse culture. Some of the ways they have said they will do this include: offering more opportunities to study STEM subjects, supporting the National Gaelic Language Plan, and collaborating where possible in relation to nursing provision.

Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) to STEM courses in universities have increased from 10,352 to 12,102, enabled by the additional 300 places released to the sector by SFC in 2012-13. For example, SDUE numbers in Biology have grown from 745 in 2009-10 to 810 in 2013-14, an increase of 9%; and SDUEs in Physics have gone up from 350 in 2009-10 to 425 in 2013-14, an increase of 21%.



Source: HESA

*The **University of Glasgow** has engaged in a number of collaborations, with industry and other universities, with the aim of producing better trained and more employable STEM graduates. For example, they host the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance which is a pooling of physics research expertise and postgraduate education in eight universities.*

*Enrolments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects at the **Open University in Scotland** have grown considerably in the past few years and now stand at well over 2,300 FTEs. In 2013-14, STEM students at the OU in Scotland accounted for nearly two-fifths of the total student cohort; 42% were female.*

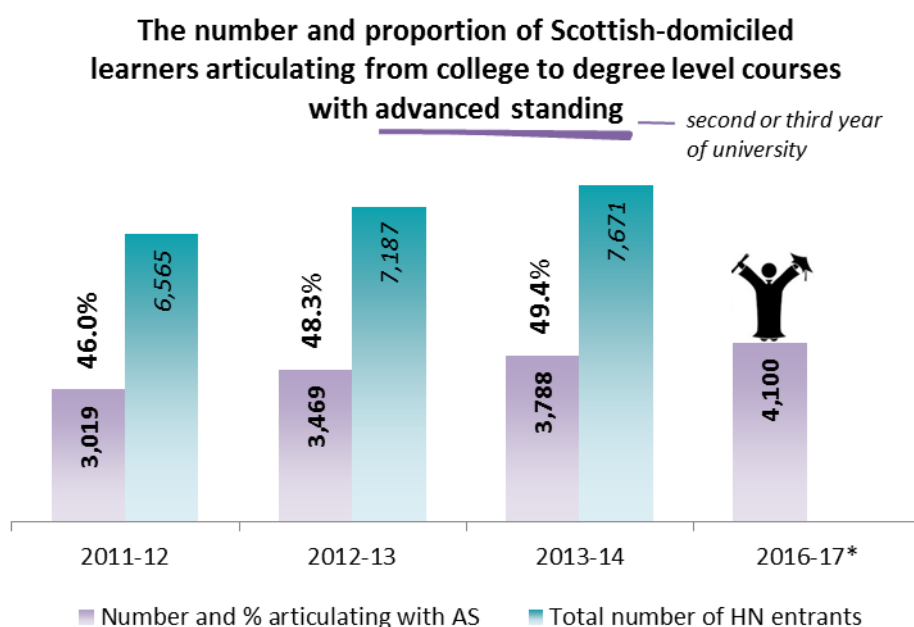
*The allocation of an additional 2,500 funded student places from the SFC over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16 has enabled the **University of the Highlands and Islands** to respond to both student and employer demand by extending its academic portfolio. Curriculum developments planned to be introduced from 2015-16 include Aircraft Engineering, Marine and Coastal Tourism, Accounting and Finance, Interactive Media and a range of joint honours programmes with Gaelic Studies.*

The **University of Strathclyde** has increased the availability of Gaelic learning opportunities through involvement with the Gaelic Adult Learning Operations Group and has contributed to the development of the Glasgow Gaelic Learning Map.

## Universities are increasing the number of students progressing from college to HE

As a direct result of close partnership working between colleges and universities, there has been a steady increase in the number of learners articulating with advanced standing (that is, transitioning from college into year two or three of university). Close to 3,800 learners articulated with advanced standing in 2013-14, a significant increase from the 2011-12 baseline.

Looking forward, based on meeting current targets, we expect articulation numbers to exceed 4,000 students in 2016-17.



Source: National Articulation Database (compiled from data supplied via FES, HESA and SQA)

\*Data for 2014-15 and 2015-16 is not yet available. The 2016-17 figure is an estimate based on cumulative 3 year OA aspirations

**Heriot-Watt University** has developed a new Associate Student programme, guaranteeing a university place with advanced standing for students successfully completing courses in partner colleges. Combined with existing articulation routes, this new programme will increase the number of articulation students from approximately 55 in 2011-12 to approximately 160 in 2015-16.

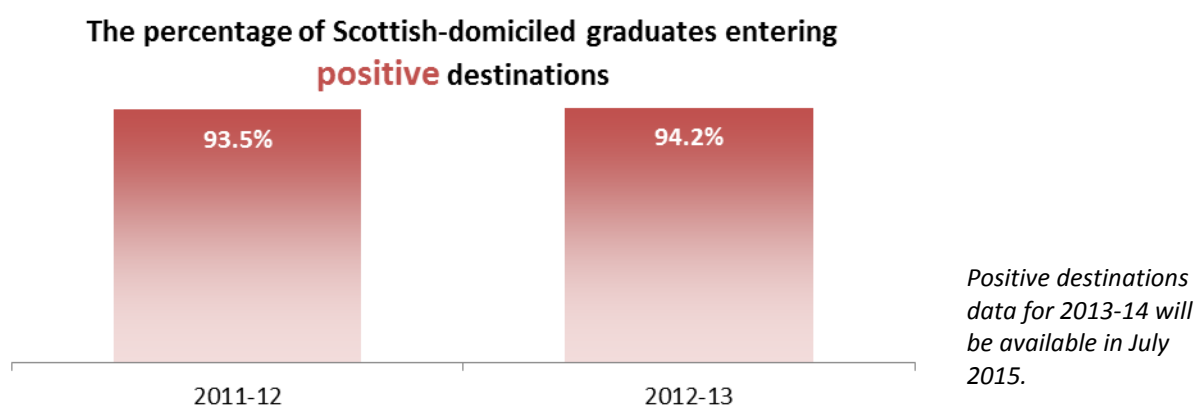
**Robert Gordon University** works in partnership with colleges to develop and support individual articulation routes with guaranteed places for learners. Each route is detailed within a formal Course Level Agreement. The number of students who have

*entered the university with advanced standing has increased year-on-year from 292 in 2011-12 to approximately 530 in 2014-15.*

## **Universities are developing work-ready students**

Institutions remain committed *to increasing* the proportion of students entering graduate-level occupations, *enhancing* skills for the work place and *developing* students for a competitive international labour market.

The most recent indicators suggest that the sector's initiatives are turning out successful and employable graduates with a 0.7 percentage points increase in students entering positive destinations from 2011-12 to 2012-13.



Source: Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey data provided by HESA

Through curricular and extra-curricular activities, universities across the sector are developing new and innovative ways to foster students' prospects. For example –

*At the **University of Glasgow**, the Careers Service has partnered with the Alumni Office to maximise the contribution of alumni to enhance the employability of students. This has resulted in the Glasgow Careers Alumni Network, as well as the creation of 650 alumni career profiles accessible online and a mentoring scheme offered via LinkedIn called Ask our Alumni.*

***The University of the West of Scotland** aims to increase the proportion of graduates entering professional employment through its Employer Mentoring Programme, where final year students are matched with a mentor in industry to help bridge the gap between study and graduate employment.*

***Edinburgh Napier University** hosts and works with EQUATE Scotland to enable women studying science, engineering, technology and the built environment to pursue a career in their chosen discipline.*



## Universities are continuing to grow their reputation for world-class research

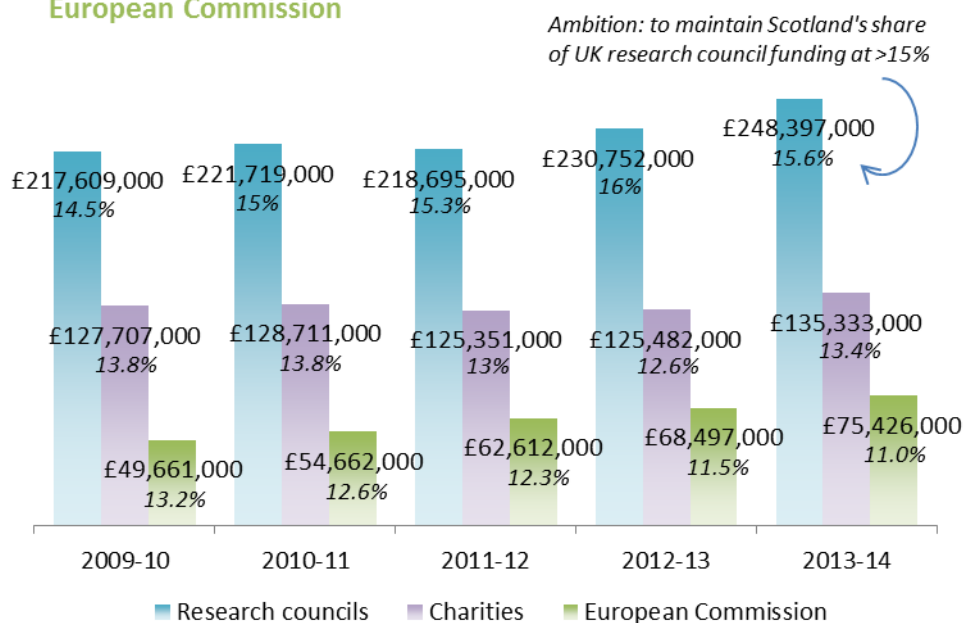
The UK's ultimate guide to the quality of university research, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), identified *world-leading research in all 19 of Scotland's universities*. It revealed that Scottish universities were leading the UK in many areas of research as diverse as Physics, Modern Languages and Agriculture.

The findings of REF 2014 confirmed that Scotland's universities are holding their own with those of the other nations of the UK. The collaborative approach to research which Scotland has pioneered – research pooling – continues to make significant contributions to the sustained excellence of research across a wide range of disciplines in our universities. This is evidenced by Scotland's performance in the REF and by the attraction of significant investments to Scotland such as the EPSRC Quantum Technology Hub and the International Max Planck Partnership.

In addition to highlighting the quality of the research itself, for the first time the REF also scored the extensive impact on society and the economy of the research in Scotland's universities. Scotland's universities scored well on impact and this impact was demonstrated across diverse areas including industrial processes, cultural enrichment, medical advances and government policy.

Due to their excellent performance in research, Scotland's universities receive a proportionately high share of UK research council funding at >15%.

### The amount and percentage share (UK) of income from Research Councils, major research charities and the European Commission



Source: HESA

*Agricultural and veterinary research at **SRUC** and the **University of Edinburgh** was ranked as the most powerful in the UK in terms of its volume and quality. In their joint submission to the REF 2014 – and the first ever by SRUC in a national quality assessment – over three quarters of the research and related activity was judged to be of ‘world leading’ standard.*

***Queen Margaret University** achieved its best ever results in the REF with over 58% of its research outputs rated as either world leading (4\*) or internationally excellent (3\*), moving it up 49 places in the Times Higher rankings for research excellence. Of particular note was the University’s research in Speech and Language Sciences - with 92% of outputs assessed as either 4\* or 3\* it sits second in the UK in terms of its quality.*

*The **University of Dundee** achieved the highest proportion of world-leading (4\*) research in the Biological Sciences for any university in the UK.*

## **Universities are strengthening ties with industry**

Higher education institutions are continuing *to develop*, and be involved with, new and innovative structures for industry-university collaboration and *to exploit* research for the benefit of the economy. Also, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is working closely with Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to improve the links between our universities and businesses.

The first eight Innovation Centres (ICs) launched by SFC over the past two years are now established. The centres are intended to facilitate collaboration between universities and businesses to deliver transformational change and growth in key industry sectors. They include the Digital Health Institute, CENSIS (sensors), Scottish Aquaculture IC, Construction Scotland IC, Industrial Biotechnology IC, Stratified Medicine Scotland IC, Data Lab (big data) and Oil and Gas IC (OGiC). There will be opportunities for all of Scotland’s higher education institutions to engage in collaborative projects with industry and other organisations and to deliver IC taught postgraduate places.

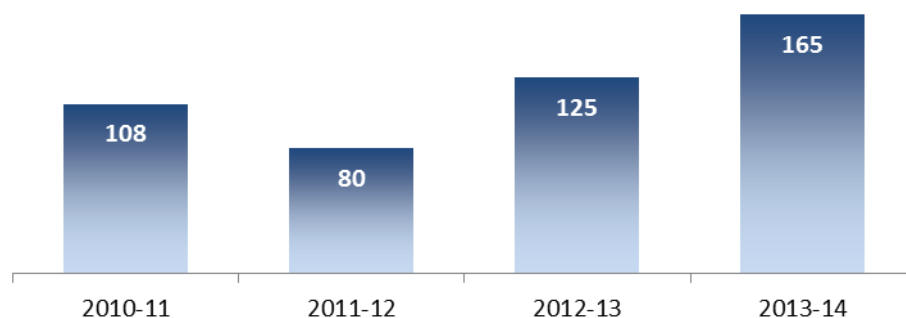
In 2015 SFC plans to launch a £1m Innovation Challenge fund - this will call for action across more than one industry sector stimulating multiple centres to draw collaboratively on the expertise of our world-leading universities and other stakeholders to bring innovative, industry focused solutions to market to benefit the people and economy of Scotland.

The Innovation Scotland Forum (ISF) has been working with its partners (SFC, SE, HIE, Scottish Government and Universities Scotland) and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to develop and enhance the relationships between employers, industry

and academia. Going forward the ISF will work closely with the Can Do Innovation Forum to address innovation issues in Scotland.

In addition, SFC's Innovation Voucher (IV) Scheme has been highly successful. The scheme supports businesses to develop new products, services or processes by collaborating with a university for the first time. Since the launch of the IV Scheme in 2009, nearly 900 vouchers with a combined project value of over £4.5m have been awarded to Scottish universities and businesses.

**The number of SFC Innovation Vouchers**



Source: Interface

*Thanks to IV funding Solar Bear worked with the **Royal Conservatoire** to create a 10 week pilot to test the concept of a deaf theatre short course. The success of this pilot led to the creation of a full short course and summer school programme. Now in its second year the short courses run 40 weeks of the year and have nine regular student participants.*

*The **University of Stirling's Sporting Chance Initiative (SCI)** acts as a hub for business innovation in sport and is the only support organisation for sports innovation in Scotland. Drawing on the University's expertise SCI helps businesses to develop products and services for sports, physical and active leisure markets. Since 2011, SCI has supported 693 small to medium sized enterprises, creating or safeguarding an estimated 522 jobs and adding a predicted £6m to their turnover.*

*The **Digital Health Institute** has created 'My little one' in collaboration with industry, academia and the NHS. It aims to alleviate stress when a newborn baby is separated from its family by allowing parents to view their baby live through a tablet connected via wifi to a camera in the neonatal cot.*

*The **Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC)** was launched in October 2014 following a £7.5m investment from SFC, to provide the estimated 31,000+ construction related businesses in Scotland with access to academic expertise and innovation. Based at **Edinburgh Napier University** CSIC is a partnership between SFC, enterprise agencies and **11 universities** to deliver transformational change and*

*growth in the construction industry. CSIC is also expected to play a key role in meeting Scotland's ambitious carbon reduction targets.*

## **Universities are working towards lowering their carbon footprint**

Universities are working towards becoming environmentally sustainable. The Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009 has set an ambitious target for a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across Scotland by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The Act imposes duties on carbon reduction on public bodies. The majority of Scotland's universities have signed up to the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfS) and are looking at ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

*In 2014 the **University of Abertay** refreshed its Environmental and Sustainability Development policies and aims to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions of 30% by 2016 from 2008 levels.*

*The **University of Strathclyde** has targeted a 50% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030. With the support of the £8M SFC carbon reduction grant the University will be able to accelerate progress and provide a step change with a £16.2M investment in a CHP and district heating network in Glasgow City Centre. It is estimated that the project will deliver a 6,600 tonne carbon reduction per annum and an annual saving of £2.5M. The wider benefits are that the University will act as a catalyst for a much larger "Sustainable Glasgow" municipal district energy network to reduce carbon and with an ambition to alleviating fuel poverty.*

*Running from October 2014 to February 2015, reSOURCE sought applications from 10 students at **Glasgow School of Art** and 5 artists/designers/architects from Glasgow's greater creative community. Facilitated by members of the GSA student-led sustainability team, reSOURCE is a process to develop an understanding of the environmental impact of artwork. The project aimed to stimulate and inspire creative practitioners to become conscious of the carbon footprint associated with materials choices.*