



The Open
University

SCOTLAND

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
IN SCOTLAND'S OUTCOME
AGREEMENT
WITH THE SCOTTISH
FUNDING COUNCIL 2021-2022**

The Scottish Funding Council's key priorities for AY 2021-22 are:

- Fair access and transitions.
- Quality learning and teaching.
- Learning with impact – students are equipped and ready to take up appropriate employment in the future.
- Student participation and engagement in their educational experience.
- Equalities and inclusion.
- High quality research and innovation.
- Meeting future skills needs, skills alignment and including upskilling and reskilling.
- Responding to the climate emergency.

Fair access and transitions

Education is accessible to students from all backgrounds and students at all levels are supported through successful pathways.

People from deprived areas have fair access and are supported to succeed.

1. Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything The Open University does. The Open University has always had an open entry policy whereby our students can study with us at undergraduate level with no requirement for previous qualifications.
2. The FTE number of undergraduate entrants in the two most deprived quintiles of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation has remained relatively stable, with the proportion of our undergraduate entrants living in the most deprived quintile (SIMD20) and two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40) at 18.7% and 39% respectively in 2020-21. As in the past two years, we have continued to attract more entrants in FTE terms from the most deprived quintile than the least deprived.
3. We are working towards an increase in the proportions of our undergraduate entrants living in both the most deprived quintile (SIMD20) and the two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40) in AY 2021-22.

People with experience of care have fair access and are supported to succeed.

4. Our open access policy enables care-experienced learners with low previous education qualifications to study with us. The number of undergraduate entrants declaring care-experience continued to increase in 2020-21, with 45 undergraduate entrants with care-experience registering last year.
5. Unlike other Scottish universities, OU students do not have access to the care experience bursary as they study part-time. For the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years, the OU has offered its students with experience of care a £250 bursary to help with study-related costs, such as internet or computer equipment. In AY 2020-21 The OU in Scotland was grateful to have received £23,531 from the SFC to support the provision of ICT equipment to tackle digital exclusion in AY 2020-21. We prioritised our care experienced students and student carers for this funding. We hope that similar funding can be made available in AY 2021-22.
6. The Open University in Scotland's [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) is published on our website.

Prior learning is considered and students are offered the best pathway for them.

7. The Open University encourages learners to apply for [credit transfer](#) towards their OU qualification if they have studied before, even if they didn't complete their previous study.

Transitions and pathways for students are supported and signposted.

8. We continue to focus on articulation, supporting learners progressing from HNC and HND courses at SCQF Levels 7 and 8 into university undergraduate programmes. Our articulation routes are available nationwide, unrestricted by the geographical location of the student or their college.
9. Building directly on the HN study the student has undertaken, we offer routes to a range of degree programmes in specific subjects. 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.

10. In addition to these named qualifications, the University's unique Open Degree is available to all HN students, regardless of the HN subject they studied at college. This allows the student to gain credit for previous study, whilst building a degree programme tailored to their own pathway development needs or to the needs of their employer.
11. The Open University in Scotland works closely with partner colleges to review and maintain articulation agreements and direct college learners to opportunities for articulation with the OU.
12. Our work with colleges has been impacted by the pandemic. We saw a drop in the proportion of undergraduate entrants coming to the OU with an HN qualification in AY 2020-21 but we are working towards returning this to over 18% of the undergraduate intake in AY 2021-22.
13. We also saw a sharp fall in both numbers and proportion of HN entrants who transferred credit from their HN qualification in 2020/21. Various explanations have been put forward for this fall relating to the pandemic including delays to the awarding of HN qualifications, delays in the OU credit transfer application process and an increase in the number of places offered by other institutions. We are aiming for a modest recovery in 2021-22.

Institutions work with schools and local communities to support successful pathways for students.

14. 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, which give them access to subjects which may not be available in their school. YASS outcomes are included in Insight, the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for the senior phase.
15. From AY 2020-21, the Scottish Funding Council embedded the strategic funding for YASS within The Open University in Scotland's main teaching grant. The SFC provide an additional 103 funded places to The Open University in Scotland, on condition that the University continues to run YASS. Student number registrations and participation by SIMD will be monitored through the outcome agreement and the self-evaluation process. In 2020-21 the headcount number of YASS entrants was 1,222 with over 25% in the two most deprived SIMD quintiles.
16. Despite the impact of COVID on schools, we are seeing growth in the number of entrants participating in YASS in 2021-22.
17. In addition to our SCQF level 6 access modules, we use open educational resources (OER) to support learners into higher education. This allows 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*.

High quality learning, teaching and support

Students at all levels experience a high-quality, safe and supportive learning experience that enables them to succeed in their studies and they find it easy to participate and engage in their educational experience.

18. The Open University has been a provider of distance learning for over 50 years and with our mission to be 'open to people, places, methods and ideas', we remain committed to using new and emerging technologies to make quality higher education accessible to more people around the world.
19. Most undergraduate modules have tutorial groups of 20 students. Making use of online teaching technologies, Associate Lecturers lead group tutorials and seminars to link up student groups across the country. Associate Lecturers are also contactable by phone, email, and via dedicated online tutor group forums.

Students are supported in their mental health and wellbeing.

20. 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 published its [Student and Staff Mental Health and Well-being Strategy](#) in July 2020 which is available on The OU in Scotland website.
21. The Open University works in partnership with TogetherAll, an online mental health and well-being resource available free to students, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. TogetherAll 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.
22. Using the funding from Scottish Funding Council for mental health counselling, we have extended this partnership with TogetherAll to be able to offer a virtual therapy service to our students in Scotland. Students are referred by our Educational Advisors for an initial clinical assessment followed by access to up to six counselling sessions.
23. Utilising this funding from Scottish Funding Council for mental health counselling, the OU is in the process of recruiting for a Mental Health Advisor (Casework) in Scotland who will support students with more severe difficulties and anticipate this will increase the number of referrals to the virtual therapy service.
24. During lockdown, we worked with our Students Association to create a sense of community and reduce isolation through initiatives such as the Virtual Wellbeing Packs, where we sent links to activities and resources to support wellbeing during lockdown to all OU in Scotland students, and the Big Blether series of events for students on mental health and wellbeing themes that allow them to meet and chat to other students and staff. Both of these projects were part-funded by the NUS Scotland's Think Positive Project through their Small Grant Scheme.
25. In AY 2021-22, we are promoting a new partnership with Shout 85258, a text message support service available to any OU staff member or student who is feeling overwhelmed or is struggling to cope. Shout's trained volunteers are available 24/7 and the service is free and confidential.
26. The Open University in Scotland launched its [Student Mental Health Agreement \(SMHA\)](#) in November 2021 in partnership with the OU Students Association and with

support from the National Union of Students Scotland's Think Positive project. This agreement aligns with the University's Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, setting out our joint commitment to work together to promote the mental wellbeing of our students.

Student participation and engagement in their educational experience.

Students find it easy to participate, have their voice heard and valued, and influence their educational and student experience.

27. The Open University's [Student Charter](#), which was developed in partnership with the Students Association, sets out our aims for working together as a learning community, illustrates our shared values and what we can expect from each other.
28. The Open University in Scotland is passionate about ensuring the student voice is heard at all levels and helps inform our decision making. This is a core aspect of all teams' activities, with development being led by our Access, Participation and Success team. The OU in Scotland actively participated in the OU's Student Voice week in November 2021, with a Student Twitter Takeover, a Green Entrepreneur Showcase; and a Big Blether focusing on study confidence and wellbeing.
29. The Open University in Scotland strongly believes that the student body is a key stakeholder in the development of policy and that its views and concerns should be acknowledged. Engagement is facilitated through The Open University in Scotland's Student and Staff Engagement Group, which meets twice a year, and includes representation from students, Associate Lecturers, faculty staff, academic-related and support staff.

Learning with impact

Students at all levels are equipped to flourish in employment, further study and to lead fulfilling lives.

30. 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 Open University 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 based in Scotland.
31. The University takes advantage of its size and reach to develop vocational and work-based curriculum in partnership with organisations across several sectors; these are 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 changing employer needs and ensuring that our students can make a meaningful impact on the Scottish economy and society.
32. The increasing use of open educational resources (OER) in the workplace has allowed experimentation using that methodology to support learning and we are working with employers to develop OERs as part of bespoke learning packages for their workforce,

particularly for employees who require an introduction to or reacquainting with formal learning.

33. In 2021-22, 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.
34. We have developed a dedicated suite of Employability badged courses on the OpenLearn website to help those facing new career choices.
35. Our Employability of Qualifiers Survey 2020, which aims to gather insight into the impact of OU study and the careers and employability success of OU students, was sent to qualifiers from 2016/17. These 2020 survey results were as follows:
 - 94% of respondents in Scotland were satisfied with their experience at the OU.
 - 94% of respondents in Scotland would recommend the OU to others.
 - 80% of respondents in Scotland agreed that OU study has/will help them achieve their career goals.
 - 88% of respondents agreed that OU study has/will help them achieve their personal goals.

Equalities and inclusion

Institutions ensure through effective equality impact assessment that the needs of the diverse student body are considered in every aspect of the student experience.

36. The Open University was founded to widen access to higher education, and we place social justice and equality of opportunity at the centre of all we do. The University is committed to extending opportunities for educational success to every potential student who wants to achieve their ambitions.
37. The Open University's Council approved the new strategic plan for 2022-27 in November 2021 with equity, *greater diversity at all levels, and inclusion in every aspect of how we work and what we achieve* being one of the five institutional goals. Following the appointment of a Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in December 2020, a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has been established within the University's formal governance.
38. As required by the Public Sector Equality Duty and the specific requirements for Scotland, The Open University in Scotland published its [Public Sector Duty Report](#) on its website in April 2021.
39. With constructive feedback from Advance HE and taking into account the 2019 EHRC report on racial harassment in universities, the OU is currently developing a submission for a Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award.
40. The Open University was re-awarded its Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze status in May 2021. In our STEM Faculty, the School of Physical Sciences has renewed their Silver award, and the School of Computing and Communications has successfully moved from a Bronze award to a Silver. All Faculties are now engaged with Athena SWAN and our Business School was awarded a Bronze award in November 2021. We aim for all Schools to have applied for awards and current Bronze STEM Schools to have applied for Silver awards by 2023.

41. 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. These include course materials in alternative formats and are tested for compatibility with assistive software, as well as special arrangements for tutorials and examinations and, where appropriate, advice about funding. In 2020-21, over 19.5% of our undergraduate entrants by FTE identified themselves as having a disability.

High quality research and innovation

Institutions are focussing and prioritising their knowledge exchange and innovation activity on Scotland's recovery.

42. The majority of The Open University's research funding is from UK Research and Innovation, with the SFC allocating a small amount of University Innovation funding to The OU in Scotland. The last Research Excellence Framework ranked the OU in the top third of UK universities for research power and 72% of the University's research, which spans 18 broad and distinct disciplines, world-leading or internationally excellent.
43. More details about the research and projects going on at The Open University to help in the fight against coronavirus can be found at <http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/coronavirus>. We will continue to promote the University's research and communicate the benefits it brings to Scotland over the period of this outcome agreement.
44. 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. An updated University Innovation Fund plan for AY 2021-22 is submitted alongside this Outcome Agreement.

Meeting future skills needs, including upskilling and reskilling.

Institutions are responsive to employer and industry needs and to current and future skills requirements.

45. The OU's expertise and unique access, accessibility and delivery model give us a key role in supporting government ambitions in relation to economic recovery and social renewal. The OU is well placed to support the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the workforce through our work-based and work-related learning routes and experience in short course, modular delivery, MOOCs, microcredentials, open educational resources and lifelong learning.
46. As part of our COVID-19 response, we collaborated with Skills Development Scotland, Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), sector and community partners to provide access to OU learning and skills development. We believe that part-time study and flexible work-based education initiatives can play an important role in supporting the economic recovery.

47. We will continue to utilise the Flexible Workforce Development Fund to support SMEs in Scotland, particularly in supporting employers to adapt and respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and help employees to upskill and retrain.
48. We will continue to fully utilise the SFC Upskilling Fund 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.
49. We have already fully utilised one tranche of National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) in AY 2021-22 to support those looking to transition into/between roles within the Health & Social Care Sector through 30 & 60 credit undergraduate and postgraduate modules identified by The OU in Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We will utilise the second tranche of NTTF to provide microcredentials to support the over 25s, unemployed, graduates without a graduate destination and those affected by Brexit, Covid or Transition to Net Zero.
50. We will continue to promote our Graduate Apprenticeships in collaboration with a wide range of employers as partners, working with both Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and from this year the SFC as funders. The OU's unique fully online Graduate Apprenticeships enable flexibility for both employer and apprentice and our well-established experience in delivering work-based learning means learning can be put into practice immediately.
51. We will continue to engage with SDS, 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 support programmes such as The Young Person's Guarantee with flexible and quality skills provision.
52. As part of The OU in Scotland's response to the pandemic, we were able to rapidly develop curriculum and resources to support teachers and adult learning practitioners in delivering online learning. In AY 2021-22 we will be delivering workforce development opportunities to the CLD Workforce through a Scottish Government funded project. A customised portal will focus on development areas identified as part of the recent workforce consultation, such as taking teaching online which we will support with OU microcredentials on FutureLearn.

Responding to the climate emergency

Institutions take urgent action to help reduce or halt climate change, avoid irreversible damage, and support environmental sustainability measures.

53. The distance learning delivery model is inherently environmentally sustainable. The Open University believes it can play a key role in supporting the transition from a carbon economy to a green economy and developing an informed public.
54. The Open University's Council approved the new strategic plan for 2022-27 in November 2021 with sustainability as one of the five institutional goals. We have committed to divestment from fossil fuels by 2023, decarbonising our energy supplies by 2030 and being 'net zero' by 2050 institutionally and across our supply chains. Our policies, statements, reports and guidance relating to sustainability are available on the OU website: www.open.ac.uk/sustainability/policies
55. The Open University offers both a wide range of modules and qualifications relevant to climate change and sustainability, and careers information. The OU also provides a

significant range of free informal learning for resources relevant to climate change on OpenLearn, iTunesU and YouTube. These channels reach millions of people beyond our own students. There are also online citizen science projects such as Treezilla, a project to map all Britain's trees and iSpot, the community website for wildlife identification. The OU's partnership with the BBC has delivered impactful programmes such as Blue Planet II, Our Coast and Perfect Planet. A new co-produced series with the BBC, Green Planet with David Attenborough is scheduled to be broadcast in early 2022

56. The OU delivered a programme of activities with external partners in the lead up to and during COP26 in Glasgow, November 2021:
 - Led a highly successful event in the Green Zone with Glasgow Life with an arts and science focus
 - Creative writing workshops on the environment in Glasgow
 - Worked with a charity Border Crossings on an Arts programme involving a Totem dedicated to the planet in both Glasgow and Dumfries
 - Developed a COP26 hub of free resources on OpenLearn that will run till early summer 2022
 - A mock COP with S6 students in Culloden Academy
57. We have developed a new 10 credit undergraduate microcredential: [Climate Change: Transforming your Organisation for Sustainability](#), with a course start date in March 2022.
58. The Open University in Scotland complies with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and submitted its annual Climate Change report for 2020/21 to the Scottish Government in November 2021.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND'S OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2021-2022 MEASURES TABLE

National measures are typically defined with conventional, full-time, student populations in mind and therefore often do not fully reflect the unique contribution The Open University (OU) makes in enabling flexible, part-time, non-linear and modular student journeys. Where appropriate, the OU and SFC have agreed a set of parallel bespoke measures in the table below that align with national priorities and measures. Progress towards the agreed bespoke measures, and other OU-specific targets, will continue to be shared with SFC via our annual Self-Evaluation Return.

The OU is funded by the SFC on full-time equivalent (FTE) completions rather than registrations, with no restriction on the number of registrations. To this end, the majority of our targets are based on proportion of FTE rather than FTE numbers which may fluctuate according to demand. We have used headcount for targets relating to the retention and progression of undergraduate degree entrants.

	Actual	
	2019-20	2020-21
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions		
Measure 1: Total number of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants		
FTE number of UG entrants at start	3,004.1	3,993.7
Headcount at start	6,457	8,103

The Open University in Scotland saw significant growth in the number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants in 2020-21, reflecting a UK-wide recruitment surge related both directly to the pandemic and to our specific COVID response in Scotland (including our utilisation of the Upskilling Fund). Early data indicates a return to 2019-20 levels of recruitment for AY 2021-22.

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 2 Deprivation: The number and proportion of UG entrants resident in Scotland from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes.			
FTE number of UG entrants resident in the most deprived 2020 SIMD quintile	564.7	731.5	
FTE proportion of UG entrants resident in the most deprived 2020 SIMD quintile	18.9%	18.4%	19.0%
FTE number of UG entrants resident in the two most deprived 2020 SIMD quintiles	1,177.6	1,571.4	
FTE proportion of UG entrants resident in the two most deprived 2020 SIMD quintiles	39.4%	39.6%	40.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 3 Care experience: Headcount number of Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience.			
Headcount number of UG entrants who are care leavers	39	45	
Headcount proportion of UG entrants who are care leavers	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 4 Articulation: The number and proportion of UG entrants resident in Scotland transferring credits from college to degree level courses.			
FTE number of UG entrants with an HN background	563.6	657.4	
FTE proportion of UG entrants with an HN background	18.8%	16.5%	18.5%
FTE number of HN UG entrants with credit transfer	145.3	112.8	
FTE proportion of HN UG entrants with credit transfer	25.8%	17.2%	19.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2018-19	2019-20	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 5 Retention: The number and proportion of UG degree entrants resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year			
Headcount number of UG degree entrants	3,091	3,573	
Headcount number of UG degree entrants who were retained	1,867	2,342	
Headcount proportion of UG degree entrants who were retained	60.4%	65.5%	65%

	Actual		Ambition
	2018-19	2019-20	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 6 Module completion: The number and proportion of UG entrants and continuing UG resident in Scotland who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity			
FTE number of continuing UGs	5,651.9	5,875.1	
FTE number of UG entrants	2,589.8	3,003.6	
FTE completion rate of continuing UGs	70.7%	75.4%	75%
FTE completion rate of UG entrants	62.4%	66.6%	66%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 7: The proportion of National Student Survey respondents resident in Scotland reporting satisfaction with the overall quality of their course			
Headcount proportion satisfied	90%	92%	92%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Scottish Funding Council priority: Learning with impact			
Measure 8 Graduate Outcomes: The proportion of OU Employability of Qualifiers Survey respondents reporting positive career development outcomes as a result of their OU study			
Headcount proportion of alumni agreeing that OU study had/will help them to achieve their career goals	82%	80%	82%

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND

UNIVERSITY INNOVATION FUND PLAN

AY 2021-22

SUMMARY REFRESHED NOVEMBER 2021

The Open University in Scotland utilises the University Innovation Fund (UIF) Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to maintain and develop its knowledge exchange and innovation activities. We continue to develop activity to support the National Outcomes identified in relation to the Outcome Grant.

As The Open University in Scotland receives the base level Platform Grant only, we do not match fund however we leverage a variety of internal OU wide funding streams to increase our activities and to support our aspirations. For example, we draw on the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), from an OU wide allocation to support our work, central OU QR policy monies to drive our policy-related activity in Scotland, and other ad hoc funding streams when available. During the Covid-19 pandemic there has been internal funding to support recovery work in Scotland. As a four-Nations University, we are able to draw on the extensive capabilities of the University to support our UIF outputs, and we have been very successful at doing that especially during the pandemic.

Our outputs for 2021–22 reflect the unique operational model of The Open University and our commitment to be open to people, places, ideas, and methods – especially relevant as Scotland plans its post Covid-19 recovery. For 2021–22 we have identified 8 core themes that reflect our strategic direction, and underpinning key strengths.

Although Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has been identified as an underpinning theme, it is also reflected throughout all of our work and is integral across all of the other themes. The OU has partnered with Santander Universities and FutureLearn to launch *Union Black: Britain's Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-Racism*. Developed in response to Universities UK's "Tackling racial harassment in higher education" report, the course has been designed to drive cultural change across the higher education sector.

This is a summary plan, outlining our strategic intent and the related proposed aims and outcomes for 2021-22.

For further information on this plan, please contact:

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STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND OUTPUTS IN 2021-22

In 2021–22, The Open University in Scotland will continue to build our expertise in knowledge exchange and innovation, stimulating new opportunities throughout Scotland post-pandemic. We will continue to adopt a pro-active approach, horizon scanning and seeking out appropriate opportunities that are aligned to Scottish Government key priority areas.

We collaborate openly, and across the Scottish HE sector. In the broader UIF space, we play an active role in the various groups that have been established to support collaboration such as our involvement in the UIF Industrial Strategy group and the Entrepreneurial sub-group where we have played an important role in the development of the scale up programme for SMEs. We are currently working with other sector partners, exploring how we can co-create resources to support entrepreneurs in the creative industry sector.

We are in contact with the UIF collaboration manager periodically to keep channels of communication open, and to help to drive new ideas forward. Given the OU's unique delivery model and distinctiveness, we are often able to occupy a neutral space, effectively bringing partner institutions together for the greater good.

Our 8 key overarching themes

- Theme 1 : Covid-19 Recovery (UIF outcome 6)
- Theme 2 : The Crichton Campus, Dumfries & Galloway (UIF outcomes 1, 4 & 6)
- Theme 3 : Engaged research and influencing policy (UIF outcomes 1, 3 & 5)
- Theme 4 : Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (UIF outcome 7)
- Theme 5 : Entrepreneurship (UIF outcome 4)
- Theme 6 : Public and Cultural Engagement (UIF outcome 1)
- Theme 7 : Maximising Resourcing (UIF outcomes 1 & 2)
- Theme 8 : Sustainability, climate change & the environment (UIF outcomes 3, 5 & 6)

Theme 1: Covid-19 recovery

Addressing UIF outcome: **6** - *inclusive growth and social impact*

- We will continue to evolve new partnerships, particularly in response to the challenges presented by Covid-19, and ways that the OU can contribute positively going forward.
- During 2021–22 we will endeavour to further increase our offer and support to Scottish Union Learning (SUL), exploring new avenues and opportunities particularly in the economic recovery context, and opportunities related to reskilling and upskilling the workforce. Opportunities also exist to promote the green skills agenda with SUL.
- Our OpenLearn platform has grown considerably in recent months, and there are opportunities for organisations looking to upskill, and individuals looking to reskill going forward. We continue to explore and develop relevant and appropriate open educational resources – especially in response to post Covid-19 issues, whether professional or broader public courses.
- We will explore further opportunities to provide wraparound content to support open educational resources to organisations especially post pandemic.
- We will deliver a number of online public events, with a range of partners, in a strategic response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An example includes working with Voluntary Health Scotland on a range of public health events – starting initially with the health and wellbeing of older people (with an emphasis on consequences post Covid-19), and on mental health issues and older people post pandemic.

Theme 2: Crichton Campus - Dumfries and Galloway

Addressing UIF outcomes: **1** - *demand stimulation*, **4** - *entrepreneurialism* and **6** - *inclusive growth and social impact*

- By working collaboratively, we will continue to concentrate efforts on contributing to the academic partnerships at the Crichton Campus – developing knowledge exchange activities where appropriate and working with other partners to ensure that the Crichton is more than the sum of its parts. We will by default assist in the development of the new facility, Crichton Central.
- Where appropriate, we'll look at opportunities to partner and support other academic institutions and external organisations too on the Crichton Campus (third sector, public sector and businesses).
- Work with partner organisations on providing expertise in this area e.g. working with the Crichton Trust on a project related to food miles and local produce.
- We will continue to expand our reach to more remote and rural areas in the South of Scotland, sharing our expertise and knowledge to the benefit of organisations and communities across the country.
- We will continue to seek out opportunities to engage with the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency to help them deliver on their aspirations. We will actively contribute to discussions and consultations where the OU has a unique role to play.

Theme 3: Engaged research and influencing policy

Addressing UIF outcomes: **1** - *demand stimulation*, **3** - *simplification/greater innovation* and **5** - *international*

- In 2021–22, we will continue to strengthen our partnerships with the third sector in knowledge exchange related activities – including working with the sector to help inform their work from an evidence and impact base. We will also draw on expertise and support from our Research and Enterprise Team to help support this aspect of our work – drawing on the full capabilities from across the OU.
- We will also seek to work more closely with the OU and the University of Edinburgh research institute Innogen, to explore ways that they can support our work. In collaboration with Innogen, we will also create opportunities to influence policy in Scotland.
- We will continue to work with our Strategic Research Areas – and develop new activities in Scotland. Our SRAs have world leading scientists and researchers, and we will continue to seek out opportunities for them to develop work in Scotland.
- The OU will focus much of its research on societal challenges, and where possible we will match in opportunities to The OU in Scotland.
- We will look to explore our key areas of strength to support the Scottish economy – including collaborating with the Scotch Whisky Research Institute on innovation and research to detect counterfeit scotch whisky (and related themes).
- We will continue to develop a range of policy related projects in response to opportunities and needs in Scotland. We will work in partnership with various organisations including the Scottish Policy Research Exchange and Policy Connect.
- We will continue to develop the relationship with the OU Business School, to explore other potential opportunities in Scotland, especially those supporting SMEs and micro businesses. Opportunities also exist to promote entrepreneurship as a potential career option, as well as contributing to the start-up and scale up ecosystems in Scotland.
- We will work closely with the UIF collaboration manager to maximise cross-university opportunities especially related to societal challenges.

Theme 4: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Addressing UIF outcome: **7** - *equality and diversity*

- Going forward in 2021-22, we will continue to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion continue to be at the centre of our identity as a University that is open to people, places, ideas and methods.
- We will endeavour to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our work in the knowledge exchange and innovation area, reflected in all of our key themes.
- As part of our wider social mission, we will endeavour to ensure we reach an even wider demographic audience at our public events, reflective of the OU community and our beliefs.
- We will endeavour to continue to collaborate across the HE sector, in partnership arrangements responding to opportunities and emerging priorities. In particular, we will

be promoting the free online course *Union Black: Britain's Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-Racism* which the OU has partnered with Santander Universities and FutureLearn to deliver to staff and students at all UK Universities over the next three years.

Theme 5: Entrepreneurship

Addressing UIF outcome: 4 - *entrepreneurialism*

- We will continue to develop the relationship with the OU Business School, to explore other potential opportunities in Scotland, especially those supporting SMEs and micro businesses.
- Opportunities also exist to promote entrepreneurship as a potential career option, as well as contributing to the start-up and scale up ecosystems in Scotland.
- We will continue to work across the HE sector to develop resources to support entrepreneurs working in the creative industries.
- We have identified green entrepreneurship as a potential development area and will seek out opportunities to provide bespoke learning resources in this area.
- We will continue to support the Scotland Can Do Scale programme and will collaborate with colleagues across the sector to further develop this programme as required.
- We will promote our free to access Badged Online Course, “Ideas into Action” for prospective Entrepreneurs, that has seen significant growth in learners accessing it during the pandemic.
- We will engage with the ongoing sectoral discussions about the implementation of the Entrepreneurial Campus model with a view to developing our student entrepreneurial activities.

Theme 6: Public and Cultural Engagement

Addressing UIF outcome: 1 - *demand stimulation*

- We will seek new opportunities to engage with the public, including new partnerships – and build on existing relationships e.g., with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and their flagship Inspiring Talks programme.
- We have developed a new partnership with Glasgow Life Museums, and plan to continue to work with them on a series of climate related events post COP26.
- We will develop a new public engagement programme targeting organisations that we can work with where there are mutual reciprocal benefits. The intention is to work with at least 4 new organisations in 2021–22.
- We will seek to pro-actively seek out public engagement opportunities, drawing on the OU’s expertise.
- We will pilot a Citizen Assembly approach with the Faculty of Business and Law, with climate change as the underlying theme.
- We will continue to support and work in partnership with a number of cultural organisations in Scotland including the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

Theme 7: Maximising Resourcing

Addressing UIF outcomes: **1** - *demand stimulation* and **2** - *simplification/diversification*

- Where appropriate, we will continue to promote Interface to academics in the OU - matching opportunities for innovation. We will explore opportunities in the external funding environment generally to maximise opportunities and to contribute to Scottish Government priorities.
- We will further consider how we can develop opportunities by exploring more co-funding opportunities e.g., through seeking external funding or drawing on other sources to amplify impact (the Higher Education Innovation Fund would be an example) of pooling resources for better impact.
- We will explore how we can further collaborate with other units within the University to maximise resources, and to create a pipeline of potential new organisations that we can work with going forward.
- We will seek out opportunities in the funding environment generally to act as a catalyst to further increase activity and output.

Theme 8: Sustainability, climate change and the environment

Addressing UIF outcomes: **3** - *simplification and greater innovation*, **5** – *international* and **6** - *inclusive growth and social impact*

In 2021–22 we will major on sustainability, climate change and the environment as an overarching driving theme in our work. This will include:

- Developing an extensive citizen engagement programme on climate literacy, and behavioural change building on our highly successful programme during COP26.
- Lead on various interventions to promote dialogue and debate in this area by developing new materials on our OpenLearn COP26 hub – working across the OU community.
- Create inter-disciplinary opportunities for academic specialists across the University to support citizen science type interventions, and empowering people around climate action projects.
- Provide specialist support, and guidance to organisations working in this area including the PowerHouse in the Moray Firth on their aspirations for a large-scale offshore wind project.
- Explore opportunities to promote our curriculum in this area – including short industry-focused microcredentials in the climate change/sustainability area.
- We will work closely with colleagues across the OU to develop a range of impact assessment tools to inform what difference our interventions have made.
- We will work closely with Communication colleagues at The OU in Scotland to profile our work in this area more widely on The OU in Scotland website and across other channels and outlets where appropriate.
- Work across the University to galvanise opportunities in this area (sustainability is now one of the five goals in the OU's new strategy over the next five years)

Outcome Agreement between The Open University in Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2021-22

On behalf of The Open University in Scotland:

Signed:



Print name: Susan Stewart

Position: Director

Date: 24/05/22

Signed:



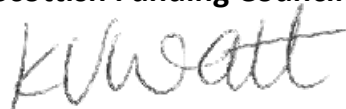
Print name: Malcolm Sweeting

Position: Chair

Date: 25/05/2022

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:



Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 28 July 2022