Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Outcome Agreement
2020 - 2023

ACADEMIC SESSION 2022-23

PRINCIPAL'S FOREWORD

There is no escaping the fact that these are challenging times for all organisations, nations and individuals, as we live with global instabilities, unprecedented economic and fiscal pressures, the legacy of COVID, and climate change.

Nevertheless, we look forward to Academic Session 2022-23 from a position of some strength. Our REF 2021 results demonstrate that QMU is delivering research with a strong reach and impact globally. It confirms that we have world-leading or internationally excellent research in every part of the University, encompassing hugely important themes ranging from refugee integration to transforming healthcare cultures.

Our National Student Survey 2022 results saw a student satisfaction rate 4.1% above our benchmark, and also above the UK average. We performed particularly well in the 'Learning Community' and 'Student Voice' categories of the survey, ranking 5th and 6th in Scotland respectively. In addition, we scored 2nd in Scotland for Students' Union representation of students' academic interests. Together, these results reflect the emphasis that we put upon community at QMU, and the focus in our refreshed Student Experience Strategy on students as partners and on providing a transformative student experience.

We have witnessed significant progress towards delivering an innovation park on land adjacent to the campus, in a joint venture with East Lothian Council, and with funding from the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. A design team has been appointed to take forward the delivery of an innovation hub that will form the heart of the park, with construction due to commence in the summer of 2023, and with completion scheduled for 2025.

We continue to deliver on our social justice agenda. Examples include our work to create an outdoor learning hub, the plans for which take account of the growing understanding of the value of learning in, and about, the natural environment, in light of the climate emergency, people's experience of COVID, and research on wellbeing. Our expanding suite of partnerships with colleges provide students on HND courses with the means to progress onto a degree from Queen Margaret University, without having to transfer from their college to the University campus. This important work responds to local demand, addresses skills gaps, and helps to close the educational attainment gap by providing greater equality of opportunity to access higher education. Through these partnerships, we are harnessing the potential of more talented young people from different socio-economic backgrounds across Scotland. We continue to build on our work enhancing the employability of our students, and to strengthen resources in our Student Services area, particularly in the areas of disability and mental health support, to reflect increasing demand from students. We are also introducing a dedicated staffing resource to help us to move forward our sustainability agenda.

We are managing our resources well and delivering on our mission to act as a force for good. What is more, the relevance of our work to the current and evolving needs of society means that there will be substantial opportunities ahead for us to help shape a better world through education, research and innovation.

In line with our history as an institution that provided education for working class women, at a time when society made that challenging, we will deliver on our stated commitments to widen access, to promote mental health and well-being, and enhance student progression, retention and attainment at a time of equal, if not greater challenge for society.

We will focus also on the generation of increased teaching and research income, strengthening external alliances, building on high quality, outcome driven partnerships, investing in infrastructure support, and maximising all available opportunities to collaborate. All with the underlying goal of contributing directly to wider economic recovery.

This Outcome Agreement is wide-ranging and ambitious in its scope, but the commitment, creativity and expertise of all with whom I engage within the University provides me with the confidence that the outcomes set out in this agreement will be achieved.

Sir Paul Grice FRSE FAcSS
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

1   INTRODUCTION

This Outcome Agreement sets out a number of objectives across the range of Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funded activity, namely, teaching, research and innovation. In line with previous versions of our Outcome Agreement, we have established outcomes that align with the SFC measures of progress where applicable.

We welcome the opportunity to publish an agreement for Session 2022-23 that captures, at a high level, the contributions, impact and outcomes to be delivered by the University, and provides reassurance on the use of allocated SFC funding for 2022-23. We welcome the SFC's confirmation that, in continuing the transition year approach of Academic Year 2021-22, it is asking institutions to submit one year of projections within the revised list of measures for AY 2022-23. This is in recognition of the additional challenges facing institutions as we emerge from the pandemic, continue with economic recovery and address the challenges of the cost of living crisis.

In setting outcomes for 2022-23, we continue to be ambitious – for our students, our staff and our wider stakeholders, including the SFC. We commit to continuing to deliver on key sector priorities and outcomes for students, for research, for economic recovery and social renewal, and for responsive and collaborative institutions. In all of this, we recognise the contribution to our ambitions represented by the funding allocations received from the Scottish Funding Council, including additional funding allocated in support of Covid recovery.

In the pages that follow, we set out our contributions to the priorities identified by the SFC in its guidance, namely how we are delivering on the following:

- Fair access and transitions.
- Quality learning and teaching.
- Learning with impact.
- Student participation and engagement in their educational experience.
- Coherent Learning Provision – meeting the needs of business, industry and stakeholders.
- Fair Work practices.
- Equalities and inclusion.
- High quality research and innovation.

Although now removed from the SFC reporting requirements for Outcome Agreements, we comment also on how we are addressing the climate emergency.

An updated statement on our use of University Innovation Funding (UIF) supports this agreement for the period 2022-23.

2   INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The University launched its refreshed Strategy in summer 2020. Our Strategic Plan, and this Outcome Agreement, reflect the University's established commitment to, amongst other things: delivering excellence in its core areas of expertise; promoting inclusiveness, equality, and a sense of community; working in partnership; encouraging and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship; maintaining the relevance of our academic portfolio, and equipping graduates with the skills and attributes necessary to succeed in an evolving economic and social context.

We are confident that these reflect Scottish Government priorities, and the SFC's Framework for Outcome Agreements.

We welcome the recognition by the Scottish Funding Council in its published Strategy that Scotland's universities and colleges are fundamental to social, economic and environmental wellbeing and prosperity, and that they are 'multiform and varied - major national, international and local assets, creating a pipeline of skilled and educated people across all levels and its investment in education, skills and research matters to the economy, employers and people seeking good jobs and career progression1'. We accept too the statements that we are working through unprecedented and uncertain times, which creates both opportunity and challenge, with a fiscal environment and multi-year spending review that provides a backdrop for difficult decisions.

We support fully SFC's commitment to place universities and colleges at the heart of a knowledge-based and innovation-led economy and nation, supporting a connected, creative, sustainable and agile tertiary education, skills and research system that develops the full range of people, skills and talent; enables the exploration of new ideas and thinking through discovery research; diffuses knowledge and makes research useful; and improves Scotland's economic prosperity and wellbeing.

The University Strategy 2020-25 sets out how we will respond to evolutionary change, building on our key strengths, adapting to overcome obstacles and creating new areas of strength. In so doing, we draw upon our heritage.

From its beginnings in 1875, Queen Margaret University has consistently addressed society's needs and enabled positive social change. Our Strategy holds true to the principles and values on which the University was founded.

We have reframed our Mission and Vision, and have reflected instead on our **Purpose**

We see our Purpose as helping to create a better society through education, research and innovation, and by providing a supportive and creative learning environment in which students and staff thrive.

In seeking to fulfil this purpose, we are clear and realistic about our strengths, focussed on strategic goals, persistent in pursuing opportunities and overcoming barriers and guided by our values.

Our purpose is underpinned by our **Values**.

We are a university that is modern in its outlook and facilities, but with a maturity built on a long history of serving the community, both locally and globally, and enhancing its wellbeing. We work in a transparent and inclusive manner and hold to core values in everything we do.

- We value **intellectual curiosity** and the journey of discovery: we design our teaching and research to facilitate this.
- We value **social justice**: in fact, it underpins our world view. We embrace equality, diversity, inclusion, respect, and supporting our communities. Opportunities and access are open to all and on a fair basis.
- We value **excellence**: this is embedded in our research, teaching and learning, knowledge exchange and the services we provide. It will be exemplified in the experience of our students, staff and partners.

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1 SFC Strategic Plan: https://www.sfc.ac.uk/about-sfc/strategic-plan/strategic-plan.aspx

- We value **ambition**: we inspire our students and staff to achieve the best that they can. We pursue opportunities, often in partnership and collaboration with others, to transform and influence society for the better and enhance our visibility within the higher education sector and the wider economy.

- We value **environmental sustainability**: we recognise the severe threats to our environment and will be a sector leader in response. Our modern campus is a great asset in this work.

- We value **the individual** and encourage **collective support**: each member of staff and each student has their own journey to make and their own contribution to give. Queen Margaret University provides the supportive environment to facilitate this.

To fulfil our purpose, we have developed a set of strategic goals, with associated outputs, that are underpinned by our values and our alignment to the internal and external environment. These are to:

- provide distinctive, accessible, high quality education;

- deliver transformative research and innovation;

- seek out partnership and collaboration;

- invest in the long term future of the university;

- embed sustainability across our portfolio and practices

Each of these goals finds expression in this Outcome Agreement, with its focus on supporting students, serving the community, creating meaningful partnerships, promoting impactful knowledge exchange, all within the context of a deep-rooted commitment to social justice. Queen Margaret University is part of a diverse sector, each part of which contributes to the drive for economic and social renewal and a green recovery. In fulfilling our purpose, and in pursuing our strategic goals, we align fully with Scottish Government priorities set out in the Outcome Agreement guidance.

Visitors to our annual stakeholder event learn about our plans for an Outdoor Learning Hub

Throughout this Agreement, we set out how we are demonstrably:

- Working with stakeholders to ensure that our course provision remains responsive to shifting needs of employers and industry in the short and longer term (Sections 5.5, 6.1, 6.2 refer).
- Utilising additional funding for economic recovery to best effect through support for identified individuals and groups, upskilling, reskilling and retraining (Sections 5.5, 6.2 refer).
- Preparing our students for the workplace (Section 5.5 refers).
- Supporting student transition, well-being, achievement and progression (Section 3, 4 and 5 refer).
- Working with students and their representative bodies to secure and enhance the quality of the student experience (Section 5.3, 5.4 and Section 8 refer).
- Supporting the sector's achievement of the Blueprint for Fairness's targets (Sections 3, 4 and 8 refer).
- Evolving our strategy for knowledge exchange and innovation through collaboration within HE and in partnership with agencies (Section 6 and Use of the UIF submission refer).
- Addressing net zero and the climate emergency (Section 7 refers).

Visitors chatting at the informal exhibition that made up part of our annual stakeholder event

3   COMMITTED TO NATIONAL MEASURES

We present below our targets for 2022-23 for the national measures set out in the Outcome Agreement Guidance, accompanied by baseline measures achieved in Session 2021-22. In so doing, we observe that 2022-23 is suggested as continuing to be a 'transitional year'.

Measure		2021-22 Outcomes	2022-23 targets
A	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	891	850
B	Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes	286	300
	Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	129	140
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	45.1%	50%
	COWA measure: Total number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants	891	850
	COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	121	136
	COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	13.8%	16%
D	Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	15	25
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	2%	2.5%
E	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants	891	850
	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	738	782
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	89.2%	92%
F	The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey.	+4.12	N/a
G1	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination.	96.6%	96%
G2	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment.	61.3	70%
H	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers.	666	668

Measure F will be reviewed in light of changes to the benchmarking of the NSS.

4   FAIR ACCESS AND TRANSITIONS

Queen Margaret University promotes and supports fair access in a number of ways.

The projects and programmes of delivery detailed below respond directly to a number of recommendations detailed in 'A Blueprint for Fairness: Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access', including recommendations 4,5,7,9,11,12,15 and 21. We continue to focus on ensuring that this work is embedded in our practice and contributes to a holistic institutional approach to widening access and participation.

This section of the Outcome Agreement, together with Section 5 below, addresses how we are contributing to the sector's achievement of the Blueprint for Fairness's targets, and how we are utilising our WARF funding allocation in support of that achievement. Importantly, along with the remainder of this document, it describes how we are delivering on our strategic objectives in terms of an excellent student experience, maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and quality of provision, and equality of opportunity.

Much has been reported concerning the impact of the pandemic on those identified traditionally as harder to reach, and who disengaged further as learning moved online. As reported in our Self-Evaluation 2021-22, we have continued to deliver across the range of our outreach activities. The disruption to primary, secondary school and college education arising from the COVID-19 emergency has been significant however, and presented a number of operational challenges, not least in terms of our delivering face-to-face engagements. We reflect in this agreement on the impact of the pandemic on our activity and our targets going forward. This reflection has contributed to the refresh of our Widening Access and Retention Strategy, due to be published in Session 2022-23.

4.1   WARF allocation

We are committed to widening participation amongst those who have previously been inhibited from entering Higher Education for social, economic or cultural reasons, and to taking active steps to maximise their persistence and success. Our published widening participation and retention strategy seeks to increase student numbers from non-traditional groups, including those that are: first generation to go to Higher Education; from low progression schools; reside in communities in the lowest 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (MD20); articulating students from Scotland's Colleges; disabled students; BAME students; male students studying Nursing and Allied Health programmes; ex-service/armed forces; estranged students; student carers and those who are care experienced.

Our approach to widening access offers built-in tailored support throughout the learner journey, including at points of transition. We work to raise awareness of higher education within target communities, including those local to the University. Our Widening Participation and Outreach Plan 2022 to 2023 outlines the wide range of awareness and access activities undertaken with schools, colleges, local authorities, partner agencies and local communities. Our contextualised admissions process provides the basis for fair offers to study at the University.

We support the successful transition of those entering the university through QM Advance, Direct Entrant Induction Week (induction programmes), PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Scheme), Academic Skills support through the Effective Learning Service (ELS), and QMCares (support for student carers, care experienced and estranged students). Student services provide

support from pre-entry to post-graduation through funding advice, careers and employability support, disability support, counselling, and wellbeing support. Students are supported through employer mentoring, work experience opportunities and support with developing CVs and job applications.

To deliver on these commitments, we have invested carefully in people and structures, utilising fully our SFC Widening Access and Retention Funding (WARF) allocation of £623k (April 2022) for this purpose. Specifically, we currently invest some 90% of our WARF funding on dedicated people who develop and implement our access and retention agenda through school, college and community engagement, and provide the tailored support to applicant and student groups whom we have identified through our research and evaluation are at a higher risk of not persisting with their studies. The latter includes entrants from SIMD20 and SIMD40 quintiles, articulating students, those from a care-experienced background, student carers, those estranged from their families and most recently, male students.

Our Widening Participation and Outreach (WPO) Team, consisting of four staff funded directly by WARF, works with a range of partners, including schools, colleges, community groups, third sector and voluntary agencies, and local authorities to maximise the opportunities of people in Edinburgh and the Lothians and beyond. Detailed explanation of many of the projects and initiatives on which the team lead, or in which they are involved, is provided within this Agreement.

Both of our Academic Schools also receive funding for a WISeR Coordinator, a role that supports the embedding of best practice within each School, and engages staff at the local level with the University's access and retention priorities. Priorities established for each School are evidence based, drawing on programme level data, including application, admission, retention and attainment.

4.1.1   SIMD 20 and 40

We remain committed to a baseline target of recruiting 16% of our Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) from SIMD20 and 28% from SIMD 40. For entry in 2022-23, indicative internal data suggests that 13.8% of Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants (SDUEs) are drawn from the SIMD 20 demographic, and 38.1 % from SIMD 40. This aligns with SFC's stated ambition that by 2021 entrants from the SIMD 20 demographic should represent at least 10% of full-time first degree entrants to every Scottish university, and 16% of full-time first degree entrants for the sector as a whole.

Although we recognise that the percentage of students from SIMD20 postcodes is below target, this represents a 0.7% increase on the %age achieved in 2020-21, and takes us back to the percentage achieved in 2019-20, suggesting a partial recovery. The absolute number of SIMD20 students has doubled in recent years (from 63 in 2015/16 to 121 in 2021/22). However, as a percentage of overall eligible students, growth has been at a slower rate, due to the increase in total student numbers, and in particular those undertaking highly competitive, controlled programmes introduced over recent years (such as ITE and Paramedic Studies).

We would want to signal at this stage that our experience during the 2022-23 cycle has been that the acceptance rate for offers made to SIMD20 applicants has reduced, which could make the achievement of our stated targets challenging. We are addressing this directly through our student number and offer targets for this application cycle, and through a range of targeted student entrant conversion activities.

4.1.2 LEAPS, SHEP and SWAP – access and transition

We continue to contribute fully to the Lothian Equal Access Partnership for Schools (LEAPS), the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) and Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) East. We recognise that applicants from low progression schools face additional barriers in applying to University, and address these through our contextualised admissions arrangements. We were pleased to recruit 55 entrants from SHEP schools in 2021-22, which represents 6% of all SDUE entrants. This is an increase on the 43 entrants and 4.5% achieved in 2020-21.

In 2022-23, we look forward to supporting the introduction of the refreshed National Schools Programme, developing and contributing to both new and existing successful projects that act as a bridge between Senior Phase school and tertiary education.

For instance, in 2022-23, we will deliver the third iteration of our 'Step Into Health @ QMU' programme aimed at S5 and S6 LEAPS eligible students interested in applying to our Nursing, Paramedic Science and Allied Health programmes. 'Step into Health' sees academic staff and current students provide pupils with experience and insight into studying these subjects at University, and upon which such pupils can draw for their university application personal statement.

In addition, in 2022-23 we are introducing a new schools based programme 'QMU Creates'. QMU Creates will pilot within East Lothian and offer 25 LEAPS eligible S2 and S3 pupils the opportunity work with current QMU students studying across our creative industries programmes to write, produce and direct a series of short films that will be showcased at an end of project celebration within the local community. This pilot programme will afford our students the opportunity to undertake a community engagement module as part of their programmes of study and increase local applicants to UG programmes such as Film and Media, Costume Design and Construction and Drama.

4.1.3 HN Entrants

Using QMU data to match the SFC national measure, we calculate that 45.1% of HN entrants admitted to the University did so with advanced standing in 2021-22, which we recognise is short of our target of 62%. In previous years we have discussed the impact of the introduction of new undergraduate programmes, including Initial Teacher Education and Paramedic Science, which offer limited opportunity for articulation due to placement requirements for professional registration, resulting in an increased number of HN students being admitted to the University into Level 1 rather than into Level 2.

However, the reduction in the number of entrants receiving full advanced standing has been exacerbated further by the large first year intake in 2020-21 arising from the SQA grading issue during COVID, leading to a large level two population in 2021/22. We anticipate this issue will also have an impact in 2022-23, as the large first year intake from 2020-21, moves into 3rd year, thereby reducing the number of available places for 3rd year entry in some subject areas.

Our experience has been that, despite increased communication with offer holders, and redesigning our interventions to align with online delivery, college students have continued to have persistently low levels of engagement in pre entry activities. The ongoing effects of online learning and changes in assessment methods for college students in their HN courses

(or other alternative FE courses), alongside the poor engagement in online transition activities, continues to be felt in the demands on our learning support and student support services.

In our Outcome Agreement 2021-22, we advised of a need for a period of recovery for college applications to university, with levels of application and acceptance being influenced by, amongst other factors, rates of deferrals by College applicants, and by existing university students. We judge that still to be the case but we look forward to being able to re-engage with college learners in 2022-23 in a face to face manner as the COVID years undoubtedly reduced our access to college students, and the promotion of opportunities for further study.

We will continue our involvement in sector level meetings, such as the Joint US/CS Advisory Group on Articulation, and the SCAPP Articulation Network, which provide us with the opportunity to highlight our concerns around the impact of COVID on articulation opportunities. We will also represent the HE Sector on the SQA Next Gen Articulation and Progression Stakeholder Group, and conversations about the potential impact of the SQA's development of the Next Gen HN qualifications.

Whilst we recognise the importance of articulation agreements, we reiterate the importance of our collaboration and partnership work with the college sector in the development of college partnership degrees. We believe that offering college learners the ability to study for a degree at a convenient local location, without the disruption of relocating and the consequent upheaval this can cause for mature learners with families and work commitments, is an effective way to widen participation in HE, whilst also responding to local student and employer demand.

Our existing partnership with Fife College in the delivery of the BA (Hons) Childhood Studies, BA (Hons) Childhood Practice, BA (Hons) Creative Enterprise is now well established, and adds to our portfolio of QMU degrees delivered on college campuses. We continue to validate a number of drama degrees at West College Scotland and New College Lanarkshire, and in March 2022, we validated a new route with Edinburgh College and City of Glasgow College for a BSc (Hons) Sports Rehabilitation, offering progression from HND Sports Therapy.

4.1.4 Students from Care Experienced Background, Student Carers and Estranged Students

We continue to be humbled by the number of care-experienced students who have chosen to study with us, and we are committed to ensuring they receive the student experience they so richly deserve. Our commitment in this area is published at the following link: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-care-leavers/

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we maintained recruitment in 2021-22 with the baseline of 16 (2%) recruited in 2019-20. In line with sector best practice, we provide a named point of contact for all Care Experienced, Carers and Estranged Students, along with a dedicated corresponding webpage: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/

For academic year 2021-22, we recruited an additional staff member to our WPO team to lead on our support for members of 'QMCares', our dedicated support group for students with care experience, those estranged from their families and student carers.

In 2022-23, we will introduce a new dedicated QMCares webpage. This new resource is being produced in partnership with QMCares members to ensure the lived experience is at the heart of development. In addition, the WPO team will engage the services of a care-experienced 1st year Initial Teacher Education student to support the design and content development as part of their community engagement module.

We continue to work with a range of agencies and local authorities to support care-experienced applicants, and contribute directly to a number of projects aimed at supporting these young people into Higher Education.

We work in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, Care Experienced, Estranged & Carers East Forum (CEECEF), East Lothian Champions Board and the Hub for Success, to support care experienced young people and to promote the University as a positive destination. We are also active partners in East Lothian's Corporate Parenting Board.

In 2022-23, we will publish our Corporate Parenting Plan 2022 to 2025 to set out the University's commitment to supporting applicant and entrants to QMU with experience of care and the Care Review recommendations detailed in The Promise. We have engaged with, and listened to our internal and external care experienced community, including QMCares members, and colleagues from Who Cares? Scotland, to ensure the Plan, and associated policies, is ambitious and reflects current best practice.

We are partners with East Lothian Council and Rock Trust in the delivery of an innovative housing project for care experienced young people in East Lothian. 'My Place' offers two care experienced young people a room in a 3-bed property in Musselburgh as their first 'adult' tenancy. Each property has a Peer Flatmate, who acts as a role model for the care experienced young people. Peer Flatmates are recruited through the University, and through partner universities in the Lothians, and live rent-free for at least a year with the young people. Queen Margaret University students are supporting three properties currently. We hope to place further QMU students as new properties are added to the project in 2022-23.

We partnered with 'Carers Trust Scotland' in the development of our 'Student Carers Support' policy, and have established formal links with 'Edinburgh Young Carers' and the 'Edinburgh Young Carers Network Group'. This engagement supports delivery of presentations to our Initial Teacher Education students on the educational challenges often faced by young carers. Details of our commitment in this area are published here: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-student-carers/

Our commitment to provide support for estranged students during the pandemic lockdown was recognised in November 2020 through the Stand Alone Pledge Award. That commitment will continue throughout 2022-23, and through the lifetime of our three year Outcome Agreement: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-estranged-students/

In 2022-23, our on-going support for our estranged students will draw on the recommendations detailed in the recently published ScotCen Social Research (ScotCen) report on the experiences of estranged students in Scotland (available here). The report will inform future policy and help to improve the provision of support for our estranged students.

4.1.5 Support for Ex-Service and Veterans

We are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, and have supported a number of engagements aimed at supporting ex-military/armed forces students and their families. In the capacity of Armed Forces Champion, the Head of Widening Participation and Outreach attends related events and, together with staff from across the university, represents our interests on the City of Edinburgh Universities Joint Military Education Committee. A dedicated webpage sets out the support we have put in place, including a guaranteed offer of admission at the minimum level of entry requirement, advice about funding and financial support, priority places

on transition and support activities, extended leases in accommodation, and priority access to opportunities for paid employment on campus. https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/support-for-armed-forces/

In 2022-23, our Head of WPO will work with current ex-service students to establish QMU Veterans and Families – a student-led support group for ex-service/armed forces students and their family members.

4.1.6 Protected characteristics

On the basis that we have adopted a wider definition of 'under-represented groups' that has extended beyond that of the SIMD national indicator, we have included specific outcomes for protected characteristic groups in our Outcome Agreements since 2011. We have in place a range of initiatives to increase the participation and retention of those from a broad range of non-traditional groups. This includes disabled students, BAME students, mature students, and male students studying Allied Health programmes.

We publish specific outcomes for protected characteristic groups in our Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes, the most recent version of which, published in April 2021, covers the period of this Outcome Agreement.

Under the arrangements set out in the memorandum of understanding between the Scottish Funding Council and the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Commission in 2020, designed to ensure greater alignment between University Outcome Agreements and their Public Sector Equality Duty Reporting, a link to our Mainstreaming Report is included in this Outcome Agreement 2021-22. https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/v3zlyk5k/mainstreaming-report-and-equality-outcomes_2021.pdf

We are committed to enhancing the student experience by creating and promoting an inclusive learning environment. This applies to recruitment and admission, to the curriculum, teaching and assessment, to welfare and support services, and to staff development and training. We continue to benchmark and evaluate our performance in this area, primarily through the Equality and Diversity Committee and through the Widening Participation and Student Retention (WISeR) Board.

Regarding the proportion of entrants with protected characteristics, using the SFC national measure, our internal data (November 2022) for Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants (SDUEs) in 2021-22 suggests that 27% have declared a disability, 6% are from BAME backgrounds, and 57% are mature.

We know from experience that the percentage of disabled students reported will increase during the year as additional students declare, or are assessed through referral to the disability services team. The percentage of disabled students remains high, reflecting our continuing efforts to identify students with disabilities, and students becoming more confident in self-declaring. We have robust procedures in place to support disabled students in terms of the delivery of teaching and learning and assessment. We have utilised a proportion of our WARF funding to this area, recognising that disabled students are at higher risk of withdrawal if their support needs are not met. Our statistics on the retention of disabled students suggests that we are succeeding in this respect.

We are committed to our duties under the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act, and to contributing in a meaningful way to the first BSL National Plan.

We published our BSL Action plan in October 2018: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/footer/bsl-action-plan/

Our Plan 2018-2024 is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to our work. In its BSL Progress Report, published in October 2021, our work in embedding BSL into our Initial Teacher Education programmes is highlighted as one of the key successes to date of the BSL National Plan: https://www.gov.scot/publications/british-sign- language-progress-report/pages/4/

We are progressing a programme of work in support of our Race Declaration, made in August 2020: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/we-stand-united-against-racism. The Race Equality Steering Group, under the leadership of the Principal, is progressing priority work-streams, including:

- Fostering an anti-racist culture of understanding.
- Decolonising the curriculum.
- Constructing systematic, anti-racist development practices.
- Investing in a diverse workforce.
- Recording and responding effectively to racist incidents.
- Monitoring and reviewing organisational race data.
- Consulting with Black community partners.

We are supported in our anti-racism work by the appointment of Professor Paul Miller PhD as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion & Anti-Racism Adviser to the Principal. Professor Miller is assisting us to advance further in our equality, diversity and inclusion work, and to foster an anti-racism culture of understanding. Professor Miller is supported by Visiting Fellows (Race Equality), Dr Leroi Henry and Dr Kenisha T. Linton.

Building on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work at the University, Prof Miller is engaged in an EDI culture review of the experiences and outcomes of BAME students and staff as part of the university's focused anti-racism work. Through this full EDI Culture Review, QMU is the first university in the UK to undertake such a broad review looking into EDI issues affecting both staff and students. The findings from this review will enable us to strengthen our current EDI strategy and action plan, and to develop a meaningful anti-racism strategy and action plan. Further details can be found here:

https://www.qmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/20220601-paul-miller-appointment/

We recognise that application and entry to some degree programmes is subject to wider societal influences. Audit Scotland's report on the Scottish NHS workforce records that 1 in 10 of the Nursing workforce is male, and that 2 in 10 of the Allied Health professions are male. A rebalancing of the student demographic requires partnership working with schools, Colleges, parents, and with the professions and wider community influencers.

4.2   Contextualised Admissions

We publish our standard and minimum entry requirements for undergraduate programmes in our University prospectus and on our website. The prospectus includes information presented in simple, clear language and developed in accordance with the 'Common Language' guidelines produced by Universities Scotland: https://viewer.joomag.com/qmu-2022-ug-prospectus/06431 89001620143847?short

We commit to making offers at the published minimum entry requirements to identified groups where we recognise that a range of factors has influenced attainment. These groups include:

- Living in an area of deprivation, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), and in particular, SIMD 20 and SIMD 40.
- Care experienced.
- Eligible for the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS).

The following groups are also identified, but as the contextual information is not currently captured in the UCAS application process, we rely on applicants disclosing the information through the personal or referee statement.

- Caring responsibilities
- Estranged from their family
- Armed forces/ex-military veteran.

QMU has a very similar percentage of males to females to the national picture (differences of 1%). The data on mature students shows that the gender split is far less pronounced, and the conversion rates are much higher, which may be evidence of the work QMU staff are doing with applicants entering QMU through alternative routes. We will continue to address this issue as part of outcomes set out in our Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes.

Sections 6 and 8 of this Agreement describe progress in and our continued commitment to advancing the position of women in Research and through our governance structures.

4.3   Closing the gap: work with Schools

The disruption to primary and high school education arising from the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant, and delivery of face-to-face engagements presented a number of operational challenges to the University initially. We moved the majority of our school engagement activity successfully to on-line delivery, and from September 2021, we have re-engaged, on a face-to-face basis, with a number of partner schools and agencies. The focus on on-line engagement promoted a review and refresh of our web pages and resources, and the production of enhanced content by our Recruitment and Widening Participation and Outreach teams.

Our Chancellor, Dame Prue Leith, chats to participants in our ELTI programme

The extent to which individual pupil learning has been affected has still to be fully understood, but it is clear that many pupils have missed out on learning, and that disadvantaged individuals are likely to have been disproportionately affected. A research brief from the Sutton Trust states that 'the impact of the pandemic on learning continues to be unevenly felt, with over half (55%) of teachers at the least affluent state schools reporting a lower than normal standard of work returned by pupils since the shutdown, compared to 41% at the most affluent state schools and 30% at private schools'. It was in recognition of this immediate crisis that the University and East Lothian Council joined forces with the STV Children's Appeal and a local family charity to launch the Enhanced Learning Tutoring Initiative (ELTI): https://www.qmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/2021-01-21-east-lothian-tutoring-initiative/

Launched in January 2021, the programme initially delivered 10 weeks of graduate-led online sessions to senior phase (S4-S6) pupils across East Lothian's six high schools who meet one or more of the following criteria:

• from a low income background (for instance where a student is entitled to EMA, free meals in school, or where the family is entitled to a benefit such as Universal Credit);

• has spent time in care or being looked after or who is estranged;

• is a young carer - by this we mean a young person who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support;

• lives in one of Scotland's 20% most disadvantaged communities as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20).

We were delighted to receive confirmation in May 2021 that increased funding would be provided to support a second year of ELTI and to widen the initiative to the six high schools in Midlothian. Launched in October 2021, the second year of the initiative targeted 400 pupils across the twelve partner schools and delivered both online and in-person sessions. In addition, the programme was offered to S3-S6 pupils at risk of exclusion via in-community learning partners such as East Lothian Works and Heavy Sounds and in July 2022, we ran our second on-campus Summer Activity Week for ELTI pupils.

We are working with academic researchers from QMU on Year 2 and 3 evaluation, and have engaged with other HEIs who are developing similar projects, in order to share learning and explore the potential for future expansion of tutoring within Scotland's schools. In order to support this work, we have engaged an additional Project Lead (Strategy) for 2022-23 who will work with WPO and the ELTI Project Team to inform programme development and strategy beyond a third year of delivery.

5   HIGH QUALITY, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING.

5.1   Articulation

We are committed to working with college partners to maximise progression from college to university and have a comprehensive set of articulation agreements with colleges across Scotland. We are committed also to retaining such entrants, and are pleased to report a retention rate of 93% for this category of student entrant.

As referenced in section 4.1.3 above, we are working to develop articulation opportunities beyond those afforded by articulation agreements. The BSc (Hons) Degree in Sport Rehabilitation to be delivered with Edinburgh College and City of Glasgow College will

WE are offering a NQ Access to Paramedic Science course developed in partnership with Edinburgh College

provide an Associate student route to a professionally recognised award not available currently in Scotland that we are confident will provide an attractive option for students at the partner colleges. The development is part of our commitment to providing an integrated tertiary education model through collaboration with further education partners, and adds to the growing portfolio of QMU degrees delivered at college campuses across the country. We consider that this model of delivery has the potential to increase student articulation numbers, but it does require a flexible funding approach across all partners ie the university, colleges and the SFC.

The NQ Access to Paramedic Science course developed in partnership with Edinburgh College welcomed its first cohort of students in September 2021. This programme offers learners a qualification that will be accepted for L1 entry, or for a relevant HN if this is required. Developing this qualification in partnership with Edinburgh College secures a more coherent learning experience, and provides opportunity for university-to-college mentoring and volunteering.

We are delighted to continue to be the main HEI partner in the Pathways.ac.uk web based application (see www.pathways.ac.uk). We are working with Edinburgh and Fife Colleges on phase two of this exciting development, and are delighted that Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has integrated the database into 'My World of Work', which will significantly increase its reach and usage. Through our College Partnership Manger we will continue to contribute to the development of articulation policy and practice through membership of the SCAPP Articulation Network, the US/CS Joint Advisory Group on Articulation, and the SQA NextGen HN Project Articulation and Progression Working Group.

5.2 Retention

We have a number of strategies in place to enhance student engagement, persistence and retention. Our approach offers support to students throughout their student journey and beyond, recognising that promoting retention and success to all, benefits all. Initiatives are evaluated through student feedback and evidence of impact.

We have a robust system in place to record student withdrawals, meaning we can establish students' reasons for leaving and incorporate mitigating action within our approaches to improving retention rates. Withdrawal and deferral reports are reviewed on a weekly basis.

Importantly however, our 'Thinking of Leaving' resource, which is managed by our Student Retention and Surveys Team, is designed to engage students at the point at which they are

considering whether to continue with their study at the University. Staff are available to offer support and advice, to signpost as appropriate, and to discuss options, other than withdrawal. We do recognise however that it can be a student's best interest to defer or to withdraw where circumstances warrant this.

https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/thinking-of-leaving/

We recognise that a range of factors contribute to student persistence, including good mental health and wellbeing, engagement in academic study and participation in social groups. Student resilience and persistence is promoted also by access to dedicated support for additional learning needs, through peer mentoring, by providing access to financial advice and support and through targeted interventions at key transition points, from pre-entry through to post-graduation. The Coronavirus emergency had an impact on many of these contributing factors, and will continue to do so for a further period. We set out in Section 5.3 below the specific steps we continue to take to mitigate against some of the specific harms arising from the coronavirus emergency. We recognise too the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on students, and include below details of how we are working with our Students' Union to mitigate against the impact of the crisis on students.

Our self-evaluation for Session 2021-22 reports on progress against our retention targets.

Achievement of targets established for 2021-22 for full-time first year Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUEs) returning to study in year two and to progress are detailed below. For Session 2022-23, we remain committed to an outcome that would see 93% of Scottish- domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2. We believe this will be challenging however, especially for some key groups, such as SIMD20 entrants, that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

5.3 Student engagement, support and wellbeing

As stated in 5.2 above, we recognise that there are a number of factors that contribute to student retention, including student engagement in their studies,

We continued to provide a full service to students during 2021-22, with all services offered both online and face to face. Services are trauma informed and responding well to student demand, as shown in the recent NSS survey, with 84.09% of students responding that there is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet their needs, compared to 61.85% nationally. Similarly, 76.59% agreed that the support from welfare and student service is helpful compared to 62.96% nationally.

Our Principal (Far right) and Deputy Principal (second right) serve food at our regular student wellbeing and cost-of-living support event, Thank Goodness It's Thursday (TGIT)

During Session 2022-23, we have worked with our Students' Union to address the severe cost of living challenges as they impact on our students. The working group established to oversee our response promotes the various aspects of our support through social media messaging and through a dedicated webpage: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/cost-of-living-crisis-support-for-students/

The Thank Goodness It's Thursday (TGIT) events in particular have been well received by students and supported by dedicated staff volunteers. The weekly event sees some 300+ meals provided to students, with feedback suggesting that the social aspects of the evening – games/films/bingo – is supporting a sense of community.

The number of students receiving support from Student Services continues to be high, with increased demand on the disability, counselling and wellbeing services. All Student Services continue to provide the option of online and in person appointments, and have seen a shift in preferences to face to face appointments, particularly in counselling and wellbeing. The Counselling and Wellbeing team provided support to 417 students in 2021-22 through 1038 appointments.

The reasons for support being sought remain those relating to stress and feelings of being overwhelmed, anxiety, low moods and depression, as well as relationship and family issues. We have seen a continuation of students struggling with loneliness and isolation and feeling "cut off" which is likely linked to some extent to the pandemic, and to students finding it difficult to get to know other students due to lack of opportunity to socialise.

We reviewed our Counselling Service and Wellbeing Service in early 2022, and merged the two services with a simplified referral route. This has reduced waiting times and improved the capacity to respond to emergencies. There is now scheduled "emergency appointments" available each day for any critical incidents. In addition, we have increased the availability of evening appointments, as this has proved popular with students who are working or are on placements. We have continued to provide one to one support as the main form of support, but also provide group support, workshops and webinars for students on areas such as managing stress, coping with anxiety, building resilience etc.

We have continued to roll out our Placement Wellbeing Toolkit and this has been very popular among students and staff as a support tool for students on placements.

We continue to provide support to a significant number of disabled students, providing support through individual learning plans, study supports, assistive technology etc. Through the disability service, we have seen an increase in students with mental health conditions, as well as a significant increase in students seeking diagnosis for neurodiversity, with related increased waiting times to be diagnosed.

We continue to work with partner organisations, such as alcohol and drugs services (MELDAP), local Eating Disorder Supports, Primary Mental Health Service (CWIC), and with local Women's Aid and Rape Crisis groups.

Our Student Mental Health Strategy has been refreshed through the Student Mental Health Working Group. SFC funding for additional counselling continued to support two counsellors, each at 0.6 FTE, to the existing Counselling and Wellbeing teams. Specifically, the additional resource has:

- Provided additional drop-ins for self-help and wellbeing support, and for preventing/ tackling sexual harassment and violence.
- Delivered psycho-education workshops and staff training.
- Undertaken Counselling assessments.
- Delivered brief Counselling and One-at-a-time Therapy/Single Session Therapy.
- Increased links with local stakeholders

We have built into this additional resource specialist support to assist us in our commitment to addressing sexual harassment and violence.

Report and Support provides a platform for students to report various forms of harassment and violence. It also provides access to advice and support.

We continue to work collaboratively with Edinburgh Universities through the GBV steering group, working with Rape Crisis in providing support to students. We are active members of the Fearless Partnership, working with a variety of stakeholders including the Universities, NHS and the Police to improve responses to GBV in the Edinburgh Area, sharing good practice and linking supports. We also work collaboratively through the Thrive group to strategically improve mental health among students in the Edinburgh area.

Our Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) continues to develop, offering our students the opportunity to engage in additional study sessions, facilitated by trained peer Leaders. After six years of operation, we now have a solid evidence base of the impact of the scheme on student attainment and retention.

5.4 Quality Enhancement and Student Satisfaction

The University's framework for institution-led quality review is available on the University's Quality website at: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/.

Our Annual Statement on Institution-led Review of Quality 2021-22, submitted to the SFC in September 2022, provides an overview of our learning and teaching activity during the period under review, and advises of our programme of review in 2022-23, including that we would be subject to the QAA Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) early in Session 2022-23.

The review report, published in February 2023, has expressed confidence in Queen Margaret University's progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student experience: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/news-events/news/ review-team-expresses-confidence-in-queen-margaret-university-s-quality-arrangements

The review team recognised the University's achievements in student engagement and enhancement-focused annual monitoring. The team identified as good practice our continued cultivation of a student-centred approach to strategy development and implementation, particularly as developed by our Student Engagement Strategy. We are particularly delighted with the emphasis in the report on our strong partnership with students, reported as providing 'a dynamic and embedded student-centred framework for transforming the student experience.'

We will progress during 2022-23 those actions identified by the reviewers as contributing further to our enhancement activities.

Until July 2022, our response to COVID continued to be co-ordinated by our Business Continuity Group (BCG). With the easing of restrictions in Scotland, we established a refocussed COVID Response Group, which is meeting regularly but less frequently.

Over Session 2021-22, we increased the element of face-to-face delivery to levels resembling those pre-pandemic. This is continuing in 2022-23 ie we are prioritising in-person learning, but also retaining online delivery where it is evidenced as having benefitted the student experience. In June 2022, the University Senate approved learning, teaching and assessment guidance for 2022-23 that sets out normal expectations for each of the Schools in respect of on-campus and online provision.

At its June meeting, the Senate approved the reinstatement of the extant published regulations with effect from semester one of Academic Session 2022-23, with the caveat that alternative arrangements may be considered for overseas partners on a case by case basis in response to any local COVID restrictions.

The University's Student Experience Strategy (SES) provides a framework for the delivery of a high quality student experience, within which all academic provision is subject to periodic evidence-based review. We undertook significant work on the review of the SES during 2020-21, and concluded on that work in 2021-22, publishing the Strategy for the period up to 2026.

An accompanying Delivery Plan sets out the priority activities for Academic Session 2022-23 under the following headings: The Learner Journey; Innovation in Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Healthy Universities; Quality Enhancement; and Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. These sit within the context of the following overarching themes: Students as Partners; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; and Sustainability and Social Justice.

National Student Survey 2022

Ranked in the top 5
(out of 18) Scottish higher education institutions for Learning Community

Ranked in the top 2
(out of 18) Scottish higher education institutions for Students' Union representation of students' academic interests

Ranked 6th
out of the 18 Scottish higher education institutions for Student Voice

Acting and Performance
100%
satisfaction

Diagnostic Radiography
95%
satisfaction

In parallel with the review of the SES during 2021-22, we concluded the review of the Graduate Attributes and developed an associated implementation plan, and we also commenced a review of our approaches to academic integrity, aligned with the QAA Academic Integrity Charter. We will continue this work in 2022-23.

Our 2022 NSS results show that 76.4% of students were satisfied with the quality of their course. While this represents a decrease in satisfaction from 2021, our score remains above our benchmark (4.1%) and 0.1% above the UK average. In all but two of the individual survey questions, we were above our benchmark. The two areas below benchmark are concerned with opportunities to apply learning, and with timely feedback on course work, and we are exploring these further.

We were particularly pleased to receive strong scores for Learning Community, Student Voice and the Students' Union, given the value we put on community at QMU, and the focus in our Student Experience Strategy on students as partners and providing a transformative student experience. There were also some strong results at programme level, with Acting and Performance receiving 100% overall satisfaction, and both Diagnostic Radiography and Public Sociology scoring above 90% (94.74% and 90% respectively).

The NSS Results Working Group met to consider the initial analysis in July 2022. Some of the more detailed discussion focussed on the category of Assessment and Feedback, with particular discussion around formative assessment. Consideration was also given to the timing of assessment in the context of Organisation and Management, which scored lower than in previous years, although 2.5% above our benchmark. The LEAD Centre will be providing support for programme teams in relation to assessment and feedback under the umbrella of CPD and sharing practice opportunities linked to authentic assessment. Our next scheduled Learning and Teaching Symposium (January 2023) will focus on authentic assessment, serving as a launch for a series of related workshops.

We have positioned academic session 2022-23 as one of transition between the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LT&A) adaptations that it necessitated, and a refreshed approach to LT&A from academic session 2023/24 onwards that learns from, and builds upon, the effectiveness of those (primarily digital) adaptations. Both the Student Union and the University surveyed students on their experience of digital learning and teaching during the pandemic. The results from those surveys were considered by the Student Experience Committee, and have informed this transition year's blended learning approach and adoption across the two academic schools. Further review and development work will inform and support the University's emerging approach to, and resourcing of, blended and fully online learning, supported by students and staff, and facilitated through engagement with JISC. Additionally, during session 2022/23, the University is preparing for its adoption of Canvas as its replacement Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and progressing to validation a number of new fully online postgraduate programmes.

The NSS represents one of the avenues for student feedback but we continue to work hard to ensure direct feedback through our student representative systems. The University and the Students' Union work in partnership to ensure its success, and that there is coverage of most undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. Under our established arrangements, students continue to be full members of key committees and working groups, and also participate as full institutional review panel members. Our annual Class Reps Survey, which we run in partnership with the Students' Union, will continue to be an important mechanism for developing the Class Rep system.

Our Student Experience Strategy Delivery Plan for the period 2022-23 includes the establishment of a 'Students as Partners' Group. In September 2022, we recruited the first four Student Champions to join the Group. The Student Champions are remunerated for this role, which involves working with QMU staff and students to support the development and delivery of projects in line with the priorities identified in the QMU Student Experience Strategy and our current Enhancement Themes project focussed on loneliness and isolation. Individual Student Champions will represent and help to champion specific strands, including: the learner journey; healthy universities; employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship; quality enhancement; innovation in learning, teaching and assessment; equality, diversity and inclusion; sustainability and social justice; and loneliness and isolation. We will evaluate the impact of this new initiative after the first year of implementation.

Our Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) was refreshed in September 2022 and is due to be relaunched early in 2022-23. The SPA includes projects to be progressed in partnership between the Students' Union and the University under the following thematic headings: Student Life; Academic Life; Communication with and by Students; Student Experience Strategy. SEC oversees the implementation of the SPA and also receives annually the SU Impact Report which captures key SU initiatives, including some that are related to the identified partnership projects.

5.5 Learning with Impact: Graduate Outcomes and Skills

Through our portfolio of socially and economically relevant educational programmes, we are contributing directly to the outcomes for economic recovery and to developing graduates and postgraduates who are able to think independently, reflectively and creatively, who are ready for employment, and who have an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. We aim to provide an infrastructure and environment that actively supports graduate start-up.

The most recent HESA PI for employability (published as experimental statistics in July 2022, and based on the status of the 2019/20 graduating cohort 15 months after graduation) shows that 96.6% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey were in a positive destination.

Regarding graduates in professional employment, our overall figure derived from the experimental statistics referred to above is 61.3%.

Our focus on graduate employability is being advanced through our Employability Strategy, which outlines the measures we will take to create an environment in which students develop the skills and attributes needed to flourish in a rapidly changing labour market. The strategy has been developed through consultation with representatives from students and graduates, employers, programme teams and Student Services, all of whom share responsibility for implementation. It represents an agreement on the focus and priorities of the Careers and Employability team, programme teams and our external partners over the period 2021-2026. It has been developed against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and includes projects which will support students to navigate uncertain labour markets and an anticipated economic downturn, and to maximise the opportunities presented by changing working practices across all industries and sectors.

A copy of the strategy and delivery plan can be found here: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-enhancement-and-external-context/queen-margaret-university-employability-strategy/

Over the past year, our upskilling development activity has focussed on three strands of work: British Sign Language; Outdoor Learning Education; and Screen Education. Our Audiology team developed a micro-credential on 'Working with Sign Language Users and Interpreters'. The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, places a duty on public bodies throughout Scotland to promote the use of BSL and improve provision of services through BSL. We are responding to the demand for professionals working in both public and private sectors to develop a better understanding of communication and other issues that create barriers to inclusion and access for sign language users. The module is both online and asynchronous, comprising 100 study hours in total, and is thus suitably flexible for the intended participants. The micro-credential is worth 10 SCQF credits at either Level 10 or 11, with the first intake anticipated in January 2023.

We have also developed a new short course that aims to provide educators with the knowledge and skills to create outdoor learning spaces. This will be delivered for the first time in early 2023. We have also explored the possibility of developing further modules, leading to a PG Cert, to build on the success of the 'Introduction to Film Education' module (which we offered free places on this year as part of the NTTF).

In running courses over the last two years through the Upskilling fund, we have had feedback from participants that they would want to 'stack' courses into a named PG Cert Award (60 credits). In response, we have made several short courses available where, if three are completed successfully, they would lead to either a PG Cert Applied Arts, PG Cert Arts Management, or PG Cert International Marketing

We have focused our attention on sectors of the economy that were impacted seriously by the pandemic, and for which there appeared to be fewer opportunities being offered through the Upskilling funds, namely, hospitality & tourism, the creative and cultural industries, and third sector charities. We made free places available for freelancers working in these sectors, recognising that they are a vital part of the workforce in these areas, yet have been disproportionally affected by the disruption of the past two years. We see this as part of our commitment to delivering a Fair work economy.

The Upskilling/NTTF funding has particularly supported collaboration with other organisations/ third sector bodies to develop and deliver bespoke provision that addresses the very specific skills needs identified by those bodies. In our report to the SFC on our use of this funding we have outlined the challenges and opportunities presented by the annual allocation of such funding.

In a joint venture with East Lothian Council, we are developing the City-deal funded Edinburgh Innovation Hub

6   RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

6.1   Research and KE Strategy

The University published its new Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (2022-2027) in April 2022 (https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/strategy-and-culture/research-strategy-and-culture/).

The review of the previous strategy and development of this new one followed iterative consultation across the University and was informed by our submission to REF 2021. While the delay to the REF 2021 exercise meant that the development of the Strategy was not informed by the outcome of that exercise, the subsequent results from that exercise (outlined in the accompanying Self-evaluation document) did not require any adjustments to the Strategy itself.

Those results will however be a key source of evidence for our ongoing review of our Research and Knowledge Exchange Centers, listed below, which function as the organisational home for our research and knowledge exchange activity.

• Institute for Global Health and Development
• Centre for Health, Activity and Rehabilitation Research
• Centre for Person-centred Practice Research
• Clinical Audiology, Speech and Language Research Centre
• Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies
• Centre for Applied Social Sciences

The Centre review will be completed by early 2023.

Central to our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy is a focus on consolidating and developing areas of research excellence with the greatest potential, using our institutional REF 2021 results and external UoA benchmark data to determine those areas. Within those areas, we will support the initiation and development of mission-led and challenge-based ideas that contribute to social, cultural and economic prosperity and wellbeing, and that are aligned with applicable Scottish Government National Performance Framework Outcomes and the UN Sustainable Development goals.

In particular, given the University's academic portfolio and demonstrable areas of research strength, we will focus on the following areas of the NPF: Children and Young People; Fair Work and Business; International; Education; Health; and Culture. Similarly, of the Sustainable Development Goals, we will focus on producing research and engaging in knowledge exchange activity that has an impact on: Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; and Reduced Inequalities.

Our refreshed research and knowledge exchange strategic objectives are to:

1. *Drive Excellence through Impact*, supporting high quality research and KE that is, or has the potential to be internationally excellent or world leading, focusing on the quality and impact of our outputs, and securing greater diversity and sustainability of income streams.
2. *Focus our Strengths*, focusing on existing areas of excellence with the greatest potential for growth, increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and being alert to emerging areas of opportunity.

3. *Develop and Value People*, enhancing the capacity and capability of our researchers and securing development time for their success across multiple career pathways through leadership, mentoring, and unlocking the potential of Early Career Researchers and Contract Research Staff.
4. *Promote Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity,* by continuing to pursue research and research development partnerships, embedding a challenge-led approach to our internal allocation of research funding through alignment with external priorities such as the National Performance Framework and UN Sustainable Development Goals.
5. *Embed a Healthy and Positive Culture*, by developing and sustaining a distinctive, positive, inclusive and healthy research and KE culture that supports the capacity of our staff and students to be curious, creative and innovative in a variety of contexts.
6. *Embrace Open Innovation*, ensuring that open research and KE increasingly defines our outputs, culture, campus and practice.

6.2   Research Excellence Grant (REG) case studies

Two case studies illustrate how we have used our SFC Research Excellence Grant (REG) funding to underpin and support excellent research that aligns with priorities in the National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

REG has been used to invest in institutional research infrastructure, in keeping with our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2022-25.

Case Study 1: Shaping refugee integration policy and practice globally
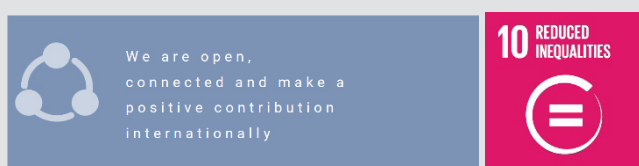
Our researchers in the Institute for Global Health and Development developed a framework, the 'Indicators of Integration', which has shaped debate on refugee integration and focused attention on the need for social connection and its impact on access to rights and services, and refugees' opportunities to live independently.

Our policy, practice and community focused research has shaped the Scottish Government refugee integration policy, along with other integration policies globally – particularly in Australia and the USA. The knowledge gained from our research has influenced the design of major support programmes for refugees, helping agencies involved in service provision to prioritise building 'connectedness'.

Using REG funding towards the costs of the associated research staff salaries and our researcher development training (for contract research staff in particular), has enabled us to attract and retain high quality research talent, and to work in partnership with policy makers to develop evidence-based solutions to grand challenges such as these.

The research highlights the important diversity of connections essential to building a new life and to developing integrated communities - including reuniting families and building friendships with other migrants, as well as between newcomers and settled community members. To feel at home and live independently, people need connections to services such as housing,

language provision, education and health. However, they also need opportunities to participate in, for example, their own particular religious communities, or leisure activities. Our research is being used to identify refugees' levels of trust in both personal relationships and in services. In this way, service providers can target their work more effectively to help build supportive social networks and access to crucial services.

One example of the impact of this research is our work for the Home Office. The research broke new ground in providing a holistic model of refugee integration by bringing community members and refugees, as well as experienced service providers and policy makers, into the conversation. This approach identified ten distinct domains of integration, each of which requires distinct policy measures - but which are also interdependent – and requires a cross-sector approach to integration policy. It enabled social connections to emerge very clearly as a hugely important factor for people themselves. It was clear that a whole range of types of connection are valued, and play a crucial role in enabling integration – from the chance encounter in the street (friendly or hostile?) to the forging of deep relationships that become 'like family' to those who have lost their families.

Using the framework, another research project, conducted in collaboration with the Scottish Refugee Council, identified key areas that need to be addressed to improve future integration: significant delays in welfare benefits payments; conflicting demands on refugees undermining their access to language classes; the detrimental effects of housing policy on education and the development of social networks. Clear evidence emerged of the importance of beginner level language support across all domains of integration, and challenges in finding employment – especially commensurate with refugees' pre-migration educational/skill levels. This insight into difficulties faced by refugees is crucial in helping government and agencies shape future services/provision to improve integration in the future.

Case Study 2: Ultrasound of tongue position and movements to analyse speech and provide real-time visual feedback in the speech therapy clinic.
:

We are healthy and active

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
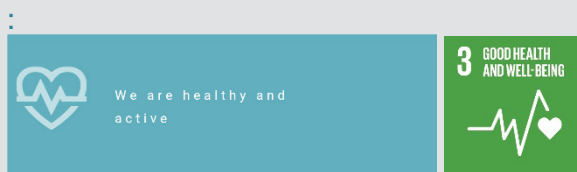
Our pioneering use of ultrasound technology for speech therapy

A team of the University's speech scientists and speech and language therapists has analysed the articulation of speech and applied their findings to improve the speech communication of children with persistent speech disorders.

The research team has pioneered the use of ultrasound technology to view in real time the movements of the tongue inside the mouth during speech. This has allowed children to see where their tongue is positioned during speech, and to master the production of key speech sounds. The research intervention has ultimately transformed their speech communication and improved their quality of life. REG funding has enabled us to retain key contract research staff contributing to this work by providing bridging funding when those staff were between the end of one research grant related contract and the start of another.

During the project, two thirds of the children who were suitable for ultrasound-based therapy to treat apparently intractable speech disorders (errors that had been persistent and unresolved), improved by a "clinically significant" degree. This was measured in terms of a reduction in perceptible errors in the consonants (or vowels) treated, in new words that had not been practiced in treatment. Further, the parents rated their children's speech as improving from being "sometimes understood" to "usually understood". Our treatment model was generally successful across a wider range of disorders than any other articulatory intervention research, and required only one hour therapy sessions in a 10-12 week block.

A wide range of other disciplines also need to understand how the movements of the vocal tract generate speech, from surgeons to speech technologists, voice coaches, language teachers and animators. We provided the initial content for UltraSuite, an open curated repository for machine learning engineers. Our "Open Science" contribution comprised over 13 hours of speech from 76 children, of which the clinical speech component (from before and during treatment) is still the largest such articulatory dataset worldwide.

In collaboration with five other Scottish universities, we developed Seeing Speech, a free-to-use website used for phonetic courses, self-learning, and continuing professional development for speech and language therapists. Clinicians use the audio-visual examples on the site to develop the knowledge of the child and the parents of how particular sounds are made, enhancing therapeutic intervention and providing motivation.

REG funding has also supplemented funding from charity and health partnerships. One example of this is our Frame Running project, where our researchers and our collaborators, Action Medical Research and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, developed a classification system for Frame Running based on scientific evidence developed at our Gait Analysis Research Laboratory. This has allowed Frame Running to be considered for inclusion as a future Paralympic sport. This in turn has enabled international collaboration within (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam) and beyond academia (Racing Running Scotland and the International Paralympic Committee) and enhanced our ability to respond to emerging priorities and leverage funding.

Further details of some of our REG funding enabled research impact, including Frame Running, are available here: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/qmu-research/research-and-knowledge-exchange-case-studies/ref-2021-impact-case-studies/.

6.3   Research Culture and Environment

We value all contributions within an open, positive and healthy research and KE culture, underpinned by integrity and a sustainable environment. We are dedicated to building and sustaining a supportive, collegiate and highly motivated research culture based on diversity, inclusivity and mutual respect across all activities to help us to attract and retain our talented staff and students.

Equality of opportunity is essential to achieving research excellence, and we believe our diversity of thought and culture is fundamental to our ability to solve complex challenges. We aim to remove barriers, eliminate discrimination and make sure all researchers have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

We offer researcher development training and mentoring, funded initiatives, interdisciplinary events, support for external collaboration, enterprise and innovation services, grant writing support, and career and professional resources to enhance employability. We promote opportunities to meet others and become part of our vibrant research community.

We are driving tangible and sustainable positive developments in our research culture through:

- Our commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and potential resubmission to the HR Excellence in Research Award (Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the HR Excellence in Research Award);

- The University's Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;

- Participation in the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey – (CEDARS);

- Our membership of the collaborative Teaching Research and Academic Mentoring Scheme (TRAMS) led by the University of St Andrews and University of Dundee;

- Our annual QMU Researcher Development Training Programme;

- Our commitment to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and institutional subscription to the UK Research Integrity Office;

- Our commitment to the Responsible Use of Metrics in Research Assessment, as a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Leiden Manifesto and through our Institutional Statement on the Use of Metrics in Research Assessment;

- Our Commitment to the Knowledge Exchange (KE Concordat) as one of the three Scottish HEIs who submitted to the Development Year;

- And through supporting sector best practice and Narrative CV developments through participation in the UK Research and Innovation Alternative Users Group.

7   SUSTAINABILITY

We continue to define sustainability according to its three pillars – environmental, economic and social. We lost some momentum during Session 2020-21 in terms of the planned review of our Sustainability Committee but the work delayed by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was taken forward in 2021-22.

We are a signatory to the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfS) which supports delivery of the Public Bodies Duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. We are also a signatory to the Education Race to Zero and the net-zero plan will support our commitments to this. We continue to work with the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. We engaged the Alliance as consultants to advise on our CCAP, and representatives from the Alliance are co-opted members of our Sustainability Committee.

We have concluded on our work to establish a net-zero date, recognising the legislative drivers while assuming a pragmatic approach which recognises:

• 	alignment with the planned elemental asset lifecycle renewal of the estate with lower embodied energy and low carbon technologies introduced;

• 	that carbon reduction targets are not a linear regression but that the introduction of transformational technologies at key stages of the transition will achieve a paradigm shift.

A target for the University to be net-zero by 2044 was agreed by the University Court on 30 November 2022, with interim reduction targets of 32% by 2030, and 53% by 2038, based on the reductions required by aligning with Science Based Targets. Achievement of these targets is supported by the options appraisal undertaken.

We are finalising on our 'Climate Change and Net Zero Strategy – A Shared Common Future'. The process to create the Strategy draws on our previous *Climate Change Action Plan*. Key themes emerging from review of internal and external sources were considered by the Sustainability Committee, and put out for consultation with relevant stakeholders, with a final version presented for approval by the University Court in spring 2023.

The strategy draws on the role of the University as an enabler in educating and inspiring future generations in influencing sustained and embedded change, rather than focusing purely on carbon metrics or the physical and operational boundaries on the University operations. The ability to adapt delivery to reflect the dynamic and changing nature of the challenges, including accounting for the growth of the University in on-campus, online and partnership activity is embedded in the approach adopted. The strategy builds on the work we have already undertaken to identify decarbonisation options in the physical campus and in policy and practice areas which support carbon reduction in operations.

The 'social' pillar of sustainability is embedded throughout the University's mission and vision, values and actions. It is in evidence from our academic curricula to our approach to learning and teaching. Previous sections of this report provide examples of this commitment in action.

We recognise the need to take action beyond simply fulfilling mandatory reporting duties however. For climate change action to work most effectively, all of the university's occupants and stakeholders need to be invested in the cause. While there may be growing recognition for action on climate change, it is important to maintain and build momentum over the long

term. To move beyond compliance and into a position of leadership, we will continue to take the necessary steps in educating and engaging with staff and students.

The 'social' pillar of sustainability is embedded throughout the University's mission and vision, values and actions. It is in evidence from our academic curricula to our approach to learning and teaching. Previous sections of this agreement provide examples of this commitment in action.

8   EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Progress on the achievement of our Equality Outcomes will be published in April 2023, when we provide an update to our Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes, published in April 2021: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/equality-and-diversity/mainstreaming-report-equality-outcomes-and-employee-information/

We are committed to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, free from bias and based on objective criteria. Analysis of the data set within our Equal Pay Review 2022 (based on data from 30th March 2021) indicates that, for all staff (including the Senior Leadership Team), there is a pay gap in terms of mean salary of some -3.89% between female and male employees, in favour of male employees. This has reduced slightly since 2020 and is now considered not to be significant. Future reviews will continue to monitor progress of this figure.

When excluding the salaries of SLT members, the Mean Pay Gap favours female employees at 1.17%. Exclusive and inclusive of SLT salaries, the median pay gap is now 0.00%. By way of context, the Advance HE report titled 'Equality and Higher Education Staff Statistical Report 2021', reported a mean pay gap of 15.7% in favour of male employees and a median pay gap of 11.1% across UK HEIs. As with previous years the overall gender pay gap in Scotland continues to be wider, with a mean negative female pay gap of 16.6% and median pay gap of 16.2%. In terms of benchmarking, QMU continues to perform significantly better in terms of the pay gaps reported for UK and Scottish HEIs.

We have appointed Professor Paul Miller as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion & Anti-Racism Adviser to our Principal

As noted in pargraph 4.1.6 of this agreement, as part of our commitment to social justice, we appointed Professor Paul Miller PhD as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion & Anti-Racism Adviser to the Principal. Building on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work at the University, Prof Miller is engaged in an EDI culture review of the experiences and outcomes of BAME staff and students in particular, as part of the university's focused anti-racism work. Through this full EDI

Culture Review, QMU is the first university in the UK to undertake such a broad review looking into EDI issues affecting both staff and students. The findings from this review will enable us to strengthen our current EDI strategy and action plan, and to develop a meaningful anti-racism strategy and action plan.   Further details can be found here:

https://www.qmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/20220601-paul-miller-appointment/
We developed and launched our Diversity, Inclusion and Well-being Calendar as a visual focus for the equality activities, events and initiatives on which we focussed during the year under review. Our Gender Based Violence Working Group continued to meet during the year under review, and to progress our approach to the prevention and reporting of gender-based violence. During 2021-22 we 'soft' launched our 'report and support' reporting tool: https://u.qmu.ac.uk/eforms/sexualharassmentandviolence/

Support and advice for students is set out on a dedicated page on our website: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/sexual-harassment-and-violence/

9   EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The University Court has overall responsibility for the strategic direction of the University, the approval of overall institutional budgets and major developments. In discharging its obligations, Court receives strategic advice and regular reports from executive officers on the day-to-day operation of its business and its subsidiary companies. The University Senate has delegated authority from the University Court for oversight of all academic matters.

In late 2021/early 2022 we conducted our five yearly externally facilitated Court Effectiveness review, having extended the timeline for this because of the impact of COVID on University business. A Court Effectiveness Steering Group was established to oversee the review, and its work was facilitated by Advance HE. The scope of the review was defined as being to 'provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current arrangements for Court and Senate'. The overarching judgement arising from the review is that the University Court continues to have in place effective arrangements to meet its key obligations, as set out in the University Court Statement of Primary Responsibilities. On the basis of the evidence considered in relation to ILR, the review concluded that the Court can have full confidence in QMU's arrangements for academic assurance and enhancement, noting that quality mechanisms are applied consistently, including across online, international and collaborative provision.

The action plan to address recommendations arising from the Court Effectiveness Review Report is a standing item on Court's agenda during Session 2022/23. All actions arising from the review are to be completed by June 2023.

The Review Report can be accessed at the following link: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/university-court/court-effectiveness-review-2022/

During Session 2021-22, the gender balance of membership of Court was maintained at 50% female and 50% male. The lay member gender balance was 47% female and 53% male.
Equality Monitoring is in place for all Court members. During 2022-23, we will continue to reflect on the balance of diversity on the Court, while maintaining the gender balance required under the Gender Representation on Boards legislation. The gender balance of membership at the time of writing is 52% female and 48% male, with female lay members continuing to account for 47% of the membership.

10   FAIR WORK

A commitment to equality shapes our institutional Strategic Plan. This Agreement embodies our commitment to attract and retain students from a wide range of backgrounds, and to support them to achieve successful outcomes. Equally, we will attract and retain good staff by valuing them through transparent promotion opportunities, appropriate staff development, inclusivity and equality, and through instilling in our staff a strong sense of social responsibility.
We are committed to advancing the Fair Work First criteria, and address this commitment in the following ways.

We have an appropriate channel for effective employee voice

We engage in constructive dialogue with our employees and their Trade Union representatives to address workplace issues and disputes.

Through our Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee, we negotiate and consult with our recognised Trade Unions on agreed areas for such negotiation and consultation. Our recognised TUs are represented on major committees, including the University Court, Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity Committees. We provide facility time to promote and support regular engagement between our Trade Unions and their members.

Our governance arrangements also provide for staff and student voices to be heard through membership of all senior decision making bodies.

We invest in workforce development

Formal and informal learning is delivered and encouraged across the workforce, with learning opportunities for employees at all levels delivered through our YourDevelopment calendar. Specific development opportunities for academic staff are provided through our Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) team, and through our Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Development Unit (RKEDU).

We are committed to providing apprenticeships and other opportunities for young people. We provide training for employees to become Mental Health First Aiders, who volunteer to offer a confidential support to other employees in times of vulnerability.

We hold an institutional Athena Bronze Award and are signatories of the Scottish Business Pledge.

 We do not use zero hours contracts inappropriately

We abolished the use of zero hours' contracts in 2014. We are committed to minimising our use of casual and fixed term contracts through the implementation of our Appropriate Contract Use Policy. We have a clear process in place to allow workers to move from a casual engagement to a temporary or open-ended contract where a longer-term need for the work has been identified.

We take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace

Our equality outcomes support several actions to ensure we continue to understand any actual or perceived barriers to employment and progression. We gather data to understand our workforce diversity and pay gap information and report on our progress annually through our Equality and Diversity committee to the University Court.

We support flexible working across the University, offering a wide range of working options, with all employees entitled to apply for flexible working from day one of employment. We offer employees the opportunity to adopt hybrid working, supporting employees to find the appropriate balance of home and on campus working.

We are committed to a working environment where carers and those with caring responsibilities are valued and supported.

We are a Disability Confident employer, encouraging the employment and retention of disabled people and those with health conditions. We make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability or who have a short- or long-term impairment that could affect their ability to work.

We commit to paying the Real Living Wage

We are an accredited Living Wage employer. The Living Wage commitment sees everyone working at QMU, regardless of whether they are permanent employees or third party contractors, receive a real Living Wage. The University's third party contractors adopt the Living Wage as and when existing contracts are renewed.

We offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all staff

These include Part time and term time working arrangements, Flexible and Hybrid Working, Maternity Leave, Partner Leave and Shared Parental Leave, Time off for Care of Dependents, Parental Bereavement Leave/Baby Loss Leave, Fertility Leave, Career Break and Bereavement Leave

We oppose the use of fire and rehire practice

We only consider effecting change where there is a legitimate business need. We are committed to working with our Trade Unions to ensure there is effective consultation and negotiation relating to significant organisational change.

Open Day helpers

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, EH21 6UU.
T: 0131 474 0000   E: marketing@qmu.ac.uk   W: www.qmu.ac.uk

University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data - Queen Margaret University Edinburgh

Measure		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
A	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	757	756	760	679	783	812	947	827	850
B	Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes		193	242	265	335	227	219	286	300
	Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing		113	156	167	211	144	119	129	140
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing		58.5%	64.5%	63.0%	63.0%	63.4%	54.3%	45.1%	50%
C	COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived postcodes	80	63	67	65	88	109	121	120	136
	COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived postcodes	11.0%	9.1%	9.1%	9.9%	11.7%	13.8%	13.1%	13.8%	16.00%
D	Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	5	7	5	7	9	12	16	15	25
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	1.0%	1.1%	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%	2.50%
E	Total number of full-time first year SDUE	679	716	687	729	661	764	791	827	850
	Number of full-time first year SDUE retained	594	615	615	656	577	680	735	738	782
	Proportion of full-time first year SDUE retained	87.5%	85.9%	89.5%	90.0%	87.3%	89.0%	92.9%	89.2%	92%
F	The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey	0	2	-6	-1	-1	1.58	6.44	4.12	n/a
G1	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey					318	362	355	324	
	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination					303	346	343	315	
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination					95.3%	95.6%	96.6%	97.20%	
G2	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment					231	252	269	289	
	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey employed at 'Professional' level or above					147	147	165	177	
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey employed at 'Professional' level or above					63.6%	58.3%	61.3%	61.2%	
H	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers	604	662	546	587	608	639	613	567	

Please note that 2018-19 and 2019-20 figures for measures G1 and G2, 2019-20 figures for measures F and H and all 2020-21 figures were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be directly comparable to other years.

Please note that figures for measures G1, G2 and H listed under 2020-21 were published by HESA on 31 May 2023, and relate to graduate outcomes 15 months after graduation.

Measure F will be reviewed in light of changes to the benchmarking of the NSS.

UNIVERSITY INNOVATION FUND (UIF) PLAN - AY 2022/23

Statement re the Platform Grant Allocation

The Grant will be used to enable the knowledge exchange and innovation priorities detailed in our new Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2022-27 (themselves detailed in our accompanying Outcome Agreement 2022-2023). Our priorities and associated activities are consistent with those detailed in our previous UIF update.

QMU will match and use its UIF platform grant to support core infrastructure primarily focused on investment in the staffing of our Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Unit and specifically to support our programmes of: KE, including further embedding the KE Concordat in our KE culture; place-based regional economic development and SME engagement; student enterprise; entrepreneurship education and training; public engagement; social innovation and improving impact capture.

Commitment to All Outcomes

Through the Universities Scotland Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group (RCDG), Researcher Development and Training Sub Committee (RDTC) and the UIF Clusters, QMU recognises the importance of partnerships in the delivery of national outcomes and is committed to collaboration. We welcome the UIF as a focal point for Scottish Universities to develop and co-ordinate resources to address innovation challenges and opportunities. We will work consultatively and collaboratively with the other Scottish HEIs to benefit from new perspectives, and will continuously improve our innovation profile, as measured by key national/international benchmarks, and strive to deliver maximum benefit to society from our activities.

Knowledge Exchange (KE) Concordat Action Plan

As previously reported, QMU was one of only three Scottish universities who self-selected to submit to the national KE Concordat (Development Year). Our KE Action Plan for 2022/23 maps to our UIF activity and we will be partly using UIF to take forward the KE enabling actions detailed in that plan.

Queen Margaret University
December 2022
Updated March 2023

University Innovation Fund (UIF) Plan Priorities AY 2022/23

Key UIF Activities for 2022/2023

- Enhance our culture for KE and identify and improve KE process enablers via the KE Concordat Working Group, chaired by our Principal, looking at KE career pathways, improving equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in KE and exploring the use of narrative CVs to address reward and recognition in KE.

- Maintain engagement with the Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Network.

- Continued investment in the Scottish Centre for Development and Innovation (SCFDI) and activities aligned with the development of our Edinburgh Innovation Hub.

- Build on last year's appointment of a female Entrepreneur in Residence to further increase the strategic profile of female entrepreneurship and social innovation.

- Continue to offer our two collaborative and industry focused Entrepreneurship programmes:

  - THRIVE - focused on the Food and Drink Sector with SRUC and Abertay University.
  - SHIFT - focused on the Creative Industries with The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS).

- Invest in QMU Innovation Fellowships aligned with the well-being economy (specifically in the area of Food and Drink, Health and Creative Industries).

- Review our strategy for entrepreneurship and relaunch our Business Innovation Zone (BIZ), informed by the sector wide Entrepreneurial Campus developments.

Success Measures

- Delivery of key actions identified in our KE Concordat Action Plan 2021.
- Evidence of an enhanced culture for KE as measured by the UK Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS).
- Rolled out the Concordat to Support Research Integrity Self-Assessment Toolkit.
- Increase in Innovation Voucher and KTP activity.
- Innovate UK grant income.
- Student and Graduate Start-ups in our Business Innovation Zone.

National Outcome one (demand stimulation): (QMU part of the sector collaborative partnership) (Ref PA5) (Ref PA6) (Ref PA10) UIF Outcome 1, 2 and 3 and Innovation Cluster

Informed by the outcomes of REF 2021 we are reviewing our research and innovation Research and Knowledge Exchange Centre infrastructure.

We will we re-invigorate Innovation Voucher and KTP activity in new and emerging areas including social care, creative industries and education.

We will continue increase our client base of New Product Development contracts from UK Research Institutes and Industry Bodies. By embodying place-based dimensions through the new Edinburgh Innovation Hub, we will translate our research in academic expertise in SCFDI to support Scotland's Food and Drink and Wellbeing sectors.

We will continue to grow our partnership with GSA and RCS to explore the development and advancement of Practice as Research (PaR) in Scotland, framed around innovation in creative practice

Through investment to support collaborative proposals to develop a Rural Arts Network (RANS) with the University of the Highlands and Islands and the creative industries, we will support and strengthen the sustainability of the rural cultural sector in Scotland, recognising the need for more infrastructural mechanisms to support exchange between rural arts organisations and the creative industries within their SIMD communities.

Outcome two (simplification/commercialisation) (Ref PA8) (Ref PA7)

Increased emphasis will be placed on Open Innovation to maximise support to researchers through the use of our institutional e-repositories, recognising these represent an alternative gateway to knowledge. We welcome opportunities to promote access to cutting-edge facilities and equipment, proprietary data and industry resources.

We will continue to build a governance framework to enable responsible KE and innovation by mapping all activity to the sector Concordats– Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Concordat on Open Research Data, and Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research. Through our institutional membership of the UK Office for Research Integrity (UKRIO) we will roll out the UK Research Integrity Self-Assessment Toolkit to cover KE.

The development of our researchers in the areas of innovation and enterprise will be maintained via an our collaborative mentoring schemes, including QMU's participation in the Teaching, Research & Academic Mentoring Scheme (TRAMS) led by the University of St Andrews and the University of Dundee.

The Action Plan that underpinned our KE Concordat submission is being progressed through an institutional KE Concordat Working Group, chaired by the Principal and via the Research and KE Strategy 2022-2027. This activity will support strategic commitments to improve our KE culture in ways aligned to sector developments for more positive and healthy research cultures, including equality and diversity.

Outcome three (simplification/greater innovation): (QMU part of the sector collaborative partnership) (Ref PA3) (Ref PA4) (Ref PA7) (Ref PA5) (Ref PA10) Outcome five (international): (Ref PA11)

Approval of our Full Business Case for the City and Region Deal unlocks £40 million for the Edinburgh Innovation Hub and presents an unparalleled opportunity to contribute to economic development and recovery in East Lothian and the wider region.

The QMU partnership with the on-campus Business Gateway, will continue to exemplify QMU's ongoing commitment to supporting sustainable enterprise creation in the region and to assisting students, staff and graduates considering setting up their own businesses as well as providing an important and accessible resource for members of the public in East Lothian.

We will continue to use UIF to support activity that addresses the NPF priorities and UN SDGs. In particular, we will continue to invest in our successful Innovation Fellowship Scheme to explore and develop a range of projects with the potential to have significant health, cultural, economic and environmental impact.

Outcome four (entrepreneurialism): (QMU part of the sector collaborative partnership) (Ref PA1) (Ref PA5)

Our underpinning strategy is to grow KE with external stakeholders that enhance the student experience by fostering collaboration in economic sectors of prime relevance to teaching and future graduate careers. Through alignment of priorities, we will ensure that enterprise and

employability are a core component of academic provision by: increasing start-up activity; supporting opportunities for developing and understanding enterprise skills both within QMU and externally, including placements, internships and participation in enterprise competitions; presenting a single, coherent message about enterprise to all stakeholders; and nurturing relationships developed with employers through other interactions to maximise graduate employment opportunities. We will continue to embed KE and entrepreneurial skills within the curricula.

We will continue to deliver our two high profile, industry-focused, collaborative Entrepreneurial Programmes:

- THRIVE, our Food and Drink collaboration with SRUC and Abertay University. Launched in 2021, this (2-day) programme included a keynote address from James Withers, CEO, Scotland Food and Drink with contributions from other industry leaders. Through the combined research expertise of the THRIVE partners we hope to redefine boundaries of innovation and challenge preconceptions that the Food and Drink sector has a low propensity for R&D. THRIVE aims to equip the next generation of start-ups with new skills, enabling them to build new businesses which are 'fit for the future', agile, focused on emerging markets, and committed to growth.

- SHIFT, focused on the Creative Industries with GSA and the RCS and with increased emphasis on supporting economic recovery in the Creative and Cultural sectors, including new opportunities arising from AI. SHIFT is now positioned as a critical part of the professional skills mix for creative enterprises emerging into a post COVID -19 economy. It is also an excellent example of partnership and collaboration, and has been selected as a case study by OECD as an effective contribution to the entrepreneurial ecosystem and a model to share internationally.

Through the Researcher Development Concordat, we are committed to working in partnership to develop people exchange between academia and industry. We are also keen to explore the tracking of researcher career destinations as the training and movement of skilled researchers is one of the most impactful routes of KE but is one of the most challenging to capture. Our Business Gateway has developed a novel programme to support enterprise creation as a form of bridging for contract researchers.

Through their on-campus location, the Business Gateway provides ongoing mentoring and support– bringing an invaluable and real time perspective on company creation and entrepreneurial skills. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the importance of this work and the team have actively engaged and presented virtually into a wide range of modules. By 2023, we will have doubled the direct delivery of entrepreneurial education into the curriculum, including doctoral education by the Business Gateway.

Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact): (QMU part of the sector collaborative partnership) (Ref PA10)

We will continue to champion alignment between the focus of innovation and the pressing enterprise and societal issue of gender inclusion. We are committed to addressing gender disparity in entrepreneurship and are proud that nearly two thirds of QMU start-up companies are created by females. Providing a dynamic, supportive and connected environment in which female entrepreneurs can grow and sustain resilient businesses is an area of growth and where we want to lead the sector. We will actively promote sector wide accelerator programmes specifically catered towards female entrepreneurs and will continue to work with WES, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Santander in an effort to create an environment where more women can start up in business and enable businesses to thrive and grow.

We will continue to promote the Beltane Public Engagement Partnership to PG research students, academic colleagues and contract researchers.

Outcome Agreement between Queen Margaret University and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2022-23

On behalf of Queen Margaret University:

Signed:

Print name: PAUL GRICE

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 26 / 4 / 23

Signed:

Print name: PAMELA WOODBURN

Position: Chair, University Court

Date: 26 / 4 / 23

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 26 July 2023