



Outcome Agreement

2019 - 20 / 2021 - 22



Introduction

The Robert Gordon University has a mission to transform individuals and communities by providing demand-led teaching and research to contribute to economic, social and cultural development regionally, nationally and internationally. This Outcome Agreement articulates how the university intends to fulfil this mission over the three-year period of the Agreement. The implementation of the university's strategy aligns closely to the five priorities of the Scottish Government, and of the Scottish Funding Council, summarised at the end of this introduction.



The university is known for its accessibility, approachable staff, high quality teaching facilities on its Garthdee campus and, crucially, for the closeness of its relationships with employers, professions and industry. Its reputation for teaching excellence is demonstrated through its Gold award in the UK Teaching Excellence Framework. The university is proud of its sector-leading partnership with its regional college, the North East Scotland College (NESCol) which is formally recognised as an associate college of the university. This relationship continues to flourish through the development of the new TWO PLUS initiative.

The university is proud of its reputation as a regional university. It is the first choice destination of students living in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire for higher education. The university plays a significant role in the life of the region. Through its considerable health and social care provision, it is the main source of graduates for NHS Grampian. The agility and responsiveness of the university to labour market requirements is reflected in the fact that it was the first university in the UK to introduce integrated master's provision in the allied health professions. The university plays a significant role in providing graduates to the oil and gas sector and its supply chain and is playing an active role in maximising the economic recovery of the region through its engagement in the City Region Deal. Over the course of the next few years this engagement will see the launch of the National Subsea Centre hosted

by the university. The university is also one of the largest providers of creative industries graduates in Scotland and has played a pivotal role in the development of Aberdeen City's new cultural strategy.

The university's reputation and impact reaches well beyond its region. It is one of the largest providers of Graduate Apprenticeships in Scotland with its recruiting reach stretching well beyond the north-east of Scotland. It is one of the largest providers of distance learning in the UK - a provision with has significant reach internationally. This international reach is further amplified in the approach to sector level international economic development through projects such as the university's work with the Mexican Government to support skills development in the hydrocarbon sector.

The university is one of the leading universities in the UK for positive destinations of its students post-graduation with consistently high performance in employability statistics. In the last year the university has regained its position as the top university in Scotland for employability (and equal fourth in the UK). It is in the top 10% of all UK universities for sustained employment and graduate earnings and is consistently ranked highly in the UK in these metrics across all its subject provision. The university's reputation for employability is more than just national: the QS World Rankings placed the university 34th in the world for graduate employability.

Access to education

The university is proud of its record of affording access to higher education in the north-east of Scotland. The university's achievements in access are significant. The university has the highest population of students with a disclosed disability of all universities in Scotland and one of the highest BME intakes (larger than the proportion of the local school leaving population). The university's record for providing access to learning for care experienced learners is strong. Student retention for these groups of students is above the Scottish sector average.

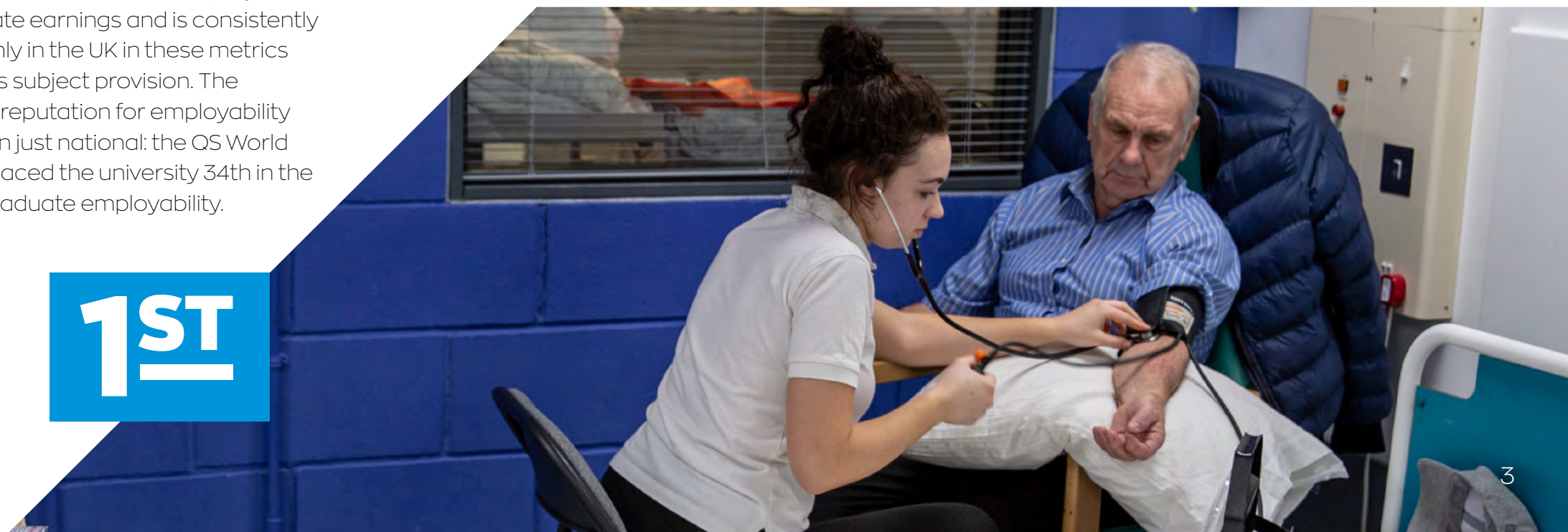
The university's sector-leading partnership with NESCol enables one of Scotland's largest cohorts of articulating students to enrol with advanced standing each year in the university. This partnership has individual course level agreements with the vast majority of the university's provision. This is supplemented with agreements with individual colleges out of the region in subject areas where recruitment to NESCol has been traditionally lower.

The university has grown the numbers of MD20 students enrolling in each successive year. The 2017/18 intake of MD20 students was 161 representing the largest cohort of MD20 students recruited at the university. Given the university has a strong focus of regional recruitment in a region with low numbers of MD20 school students, this creditable performance emphasises the significant recruitment of such students from out with the region.

High quality learning

The university prides itself on the professional-focused and relevant curriculum it provides learners. The university has strong and extensive links with professions, employers and industry. This has led to many distinctive features of the university's provision - one of the most important is the emphasis on work-based learning through work placement or work-based projects present in almost all of the university's undergraduate curriculum. As global society addresses the challenges and opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution, the university is now seeking to further enhance students' evidencing of their professional and associated metaskills, as well as

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embedding digital skills and innovation into the curriculum. This is reflected in the university’s unparalleled reputation in Scotland for employability which is articulated above.

Student satisfaction with the university’s courses is a notable feature. The university is one of a handful of Scottish institutions that have consistently scored above its benchmarked expected performance in the National Student Survey. One of the hallmarks of the university is the approachability of staff – academic and support – which is reflected in the scores for academic support which are significantly above the benchmark. As would be expected given the university’s reputation for employability, it scores well in surveys relating to the level of careers support and industry relations.

Impactful research

The university is seeking to grow its globally impactful research. This ambition is underpinned by the university’s recently agreed investment plan to develop research capacity in key areas of existing strengths: sustainable transport; built

environment visualisation; industrial biotechnology; and smart data and artificial intelligence.

In making these investment decisions the university has sought to advance research capacity in areas where it can make an impact on regional or national policies and economic development. This is reflected in the collaborative approach the university has taken as part of the City Region Deal and with industry partners in the development of a National Subsea Centre hosted by the university which will launch in 2019.

Knowledge exchange and innovation

This year has seen the launch of a new programme of support to develop entrepreneurial activity amongst staff, students and recent graduates. This activity will see a wide range of innovation and start-up support and the launch of the new RGU Accelerator which will be co-located with Opportunity North East’s Digital Entrepreneurship Hub at the university’s Schoolhill building in the centre of Aberdeen.

The university has traditionally had a strong focus on industry engagement regionally, particularly through the regional strengths in oil and gas production, and internationally as well. The university has structured its business development activities around sector portfolios with a business development manager heading each one up. This approach is one which is unique in Scotland and will see the university lead in the development of a sector approach to skills gap analysis and demand-led interventions to address these. This approach is further detailed in the



university’s University Innovation Fund annual plan for 2019/20.

Sustainable institutions

The university is a well-governed institution which is compliant with the Scottish Code of HE Governance and is currently progressing the necessary changes to its statutory instrument and other governance documents. The oversight and challenge afforded by the Board as a critical friend enables the

university to develop its financial resilience and commitment to sustainability which is articulated in more detail later in this Agreement.

As part of the process for developing this Outcome Agreement, the narrative and targets included in this document have been considered, in depth, by the university’s Academic Council. This involves elected student representatives.



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The university's sector-leading partnership with NESCol enables one of Scotland's largest cohorts of articulating students to enrol with advanced standing each year in the university. This partnership has individual course level agreements with the vast majority of the university's provision. This is supplemented with agreements with individual colleges out of region in subject areas where recruitment to NESCol has been traditionally lower. Over the period of this Outcome Agreement, the university will intensify its collaboration with existing partners to establish new articulation routes. The university will also extend its network for partner colleges and review the circumstances of the university's non-articulating HN entrants. Nevertheless the headcount targets for articulation with advanced standing in this Outcome Agreement are very slightly lower than in previous years. In part, this reflects increased competition for articulating students across Scotland but it is mainly driven by a declining number of HN enrolments at its most significant articulation partner college.

The university has grown the numbers of MD20 students enrolling in each successive year. The 2017/18 intake of MD20 students was 161, representing the largest cohort of MD20 students recruited at the university, and on headcount (rather than proportion of Scottish

entrants) represented the ninth largest cohort in Scotland. The university has a strong focus on regional recruitment in a region with low numbers of MD20 school students, and this was the original reason why the Commission for Widening Access originally indicated that a 10% target for some northern universities (including this university) may not be suitable. Despite these regional challenges, within this Outcome Agreement, the university remains committed to achieving the target that by AY 2020-21, 10% of full-time Scottish-domicile undergraduate entrants should be from MD20 postcodes, and this document describes a range of activities through which we will deliver this. Over the period of this Outcome Agreement, the university is developing a better understanding of the MD20 cohort across the region by making better use of alternative indicators of deprivation, such as identifying learners in receipt of free school meals, and will use this intelligence to petition the SFC and the Scottish Government with regard to expanding the basket of measures currently in use that define those living in poverty.

Supporting those from protected characteristic and under-represented socio-economic groups into higher education

The university has undertaken significant work to address under-representation from protected characteristic and under-represented socio-economic groups such as MD20/40, BME, care leavers, and those with a disclosed disability.

Currently, the university enrolls the highest proportion of students with a disclosed

disability of all universities in Scotland and has one of the highest BME intakes (larger than the proportion of the local school leaving population). The university is actively engaged with the Scottish Race Equality Network Forum to further address representation of minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, the university's care experienced student numbers have continued to increase, comparing well against other Scottish universities.

Numbers of MD20/40 students have also steadily increased. Throughout 2017/18 the university met its MD40 headcount and proportion targets, recruited its MD20 headcount target but missed its MD20 proportion target by 0.2% due to a rise in the total number of Scottish undergraduate entrants to the university. This is despite there being a smaller number of such postcodes in the region; currently only 5% (233) of the 4,306 school leavers in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire fall into the MD20 category. For context, this is just 9% of the total MD20 school leavers from the city of Glasgow. The university has a strong focus on regional recruitment so its performance in this area reflects the significant recruitment of students from outside the north-east of Scotland. The university continues to be committed to further achieving progress in this area, supporting the Scottish Government's ambition to increase the uptake of higher education among groups that are traditionally under-represented at university.

Meeting these targets is the responsibility of the entire university. This sees the delivery of a number of outreach activities with schools and communities to provide advice and guidance for applicants and

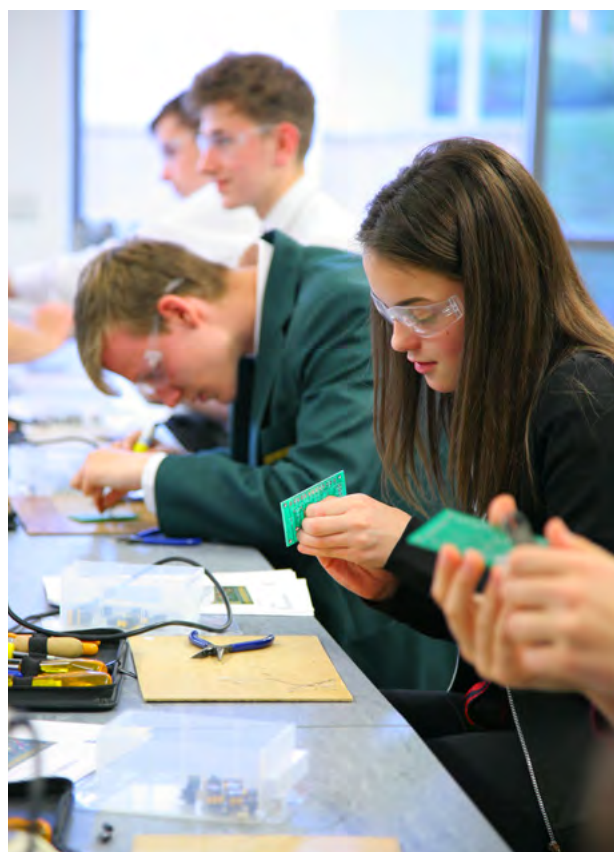
enrolling students. This is predominantly carried out in partnership with many stakeholder organisations across the north-east region, including local authorities and colleges, ensuring the most deprived learners are reached and supported effectively through a targeted and sustained programme of engagement.

One of the key approaches when it comes to recruiting those from protected characteristic groups is college and school engagement. Notably the university's partnership with NESCol is sector leading and provides students with a number of seamless articulation pathways in a range of subjects, further information on articulation can be found later in this Outcome Agreement. The university works in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to identify partner schools and care experienced young people. This has allowed partnerships to develop with seven schools in the region – including all four SHEP (Schools for Higher Education Programme) schools with a history of low participation in higher education.

Work has been developed collaboratively with these schools and is tailored to meet their needs. Activities include:

- The Northern Lights programme which supports Aspire North, one of four regional programmes created to provide targeted support to schools with a progression to higher education rate of 22% or below. It works with S1 and S2 pupils who have been referred by these schools and have the potential to achieve higher education entry but are at risk of not fulfilling this potential. Initial sessions are held

to introduce pupils and their parents and carers to the programme and the staff involved. Pupils then partake in five engagement sessions throughout the school year; these are designed to maximise the potential, and develop the confidence of participants, with reflection encouraged at each stage. This programme has now been expanded to include three schools. The university is looking to expand the reach of this programme to eligible pupils across all city schools and targeted schools in the shire. It is also planning to engage with S3/S4 pupils; engaging with S1-S4 pupils ensures they are better informed when making their subject choices.



ACES programme (Art & Design and Architecture); Communication and Media; Computing; Engineering; Health Professions; Law/Law & Management; Life Sciences; Nursing and Midwifery; and Tourism, Hospitality and Events. All programmes offer practical subject-focused sessions and support sessions delivered by the university's academic teaching staff. They run once a week from September to December after school and the cost of all materials, refreshments and transport are met by the university. Students on the Access To programme also become Associate Students, an initiative pioneered by the university and now mandatory across all Scottish universities. This gives them access to the university's library and support services.

- The ACES (Access to Creative Education in Scotland) programme supports students from MD20/40 backgrounds from schools with an average progression rate to higher education below the national average. The aim is to increase the number of entrants from those backgrounds into high demand professional degree courses. Currently, the subject offer includes Art & Design and Architecture.
- The Access To programme seeks to widen access to higher education for students who are often under-represented in universities. Funded by the SFC, the university has developed a range of nine programmes designed to support talented and committed S5 and S6 pupils who aim to study at degree level. These programmes cover: subjects included in the university's

CASE STUDY ONE

Widening access coming full circle



A common theme throughout RGU's history is widening access to education. This is a strong strand of the university's current strategy, demonstrated by its comprehensive programme of widening access initiatives. The impact of these initiatives is shown best through Jade Gilbert, a talented award-winning artist who graduated with a first class Honours Degree in Contemporary Art Practice in 2018, and was highly commended in the BP Fine Art Award. Jade has been supported in her studies by the university since secondary school; through her participation in the university's Access to Creative Education in Scotland programme and a scholarship from Baillie Gifford, coordinated through the RGU Foundation, the university's philanthropic fundraising arm.

Throughout her studies, Jade won awards for her work and regularly praised the quality of the support services offered by the university that aided her in achieving success. In her third and fourth years of study she acted as an ambassador for the university's Access To programme, encouraging participation in higher education for students who are often under-represented in universities. She is now the Youth Engagement Assistant within the university's Access and Articulation team where she works to evolve the current support offering in line with the needs of students. She does this alongside developing her individual art practice and achieving success in commissioned work; notably her final degree show piece has been acquired by the Aberdeen Art Gallery where it will be exhibited upon the opening of the new facilities.

By engaging with pupils throughout their secondary education, the university is able to build positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers throughout their school career.

The university's funded Scottish-domiciled undergraduate population has tended to be younger than the Scottish sector average (having a greater proportion of under 21 year olds), this is a reflection of the generally buoyant regional economic circumstances. The area of the university's undergraduate provision which has a larger number of students aged over 21 in subjects leading to careers in the health and social care professions. The university has observed that mature students tend to continue to work while they study and it is notable that amongst Scottish online learners, the over 35 year olds are the largest age group.

Recruiting those from care experienced backgrounds and supporting them in completing their studies

As mentioned above, close links are maintained with the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to identify pupils who are from care experienced backgrounds. The university is represented on the Aberdeen Champion Board, led by care experienced young people themselves. This allows the university to stay in tune with the needs of care experienced young people, providing the opportunity to ensure that its services are adequate and meet their needs. Furthermore, through the university's [Corporate Parenting Plan](#), support is provided directly to care experienced learners. This is promoted across

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire within specialist groups and also as part of the university's widening access programme. Additionally, if these students meet the access thresholds, they are always offered a place at the university.

Increasing the number of students articulating to university with advanced standing.

Building on a long-term commitment to widening access, the university has well-established articulation links with a number of educational institutions, resulting in 90 course level agreements across all schools in the university. Notably, the partnership with North East Scotland College (NESCol) is commonly seen as one of the strongest such partnerships in Scotland, enabling one of Scotland's largest cohorts of articulating students with advanced standing to enrol at university.

This is made possible through the university's Degree Link programme, a partnership that allows students to study first at college and then complete a degree without any time loss. Currently, 43 pathways have been created across a range of subjects, allowing students to seamlessly progress to the university, from HNC to second year and from HND to third year. The unique relationship between the university and NESCol has allowed the university to respond to demand for progression pathways where routes were not available, or where curriculum mapping for degree courses was unsuccessful. A number of top-up degree courses have been developed in Computing, Sports Coaching, and Commercial Photography for stages

three and four only, designed to build and expand upon the knowledge and technical skills gained during the HND at NESCol.

In 2017/18, the university strengthened its partnership with NESCol even further with the signing of the TWO PLUS alliance, which aims to build on the effective and inclusive tertiary education system in north-east Scotland. The TWO PLUS alliance will add value by:

- Developing a unified tertiary model from the skills-rich education in the north east, inspiring and supporting learning that transcends institutional barriers.
- Ensuring clear understanding of routes of learning for young people and providing clear advice and guidance on the progression pathways available.
- Building capacity for education through leadership in the region and nationally, connecting with the Scottish Government and its agencies, and with local authorities.
- Introducing new ways of harnessing the creativity of staff and students and capitalising on development opportunities with the public sector, business, and government.

Discussions are currently being held by the TWO PLUS steering group to identify enhanced areas of collaboration. The development of an integrated apprenticeship pathway is one proposed priority. This will enable young people to embark on a Foundation Apprenticeship in school and progress to a Graduate Apprenticeship whilst in full-time

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employment, it would be the first of its kind in Scotland. The group is also looking to adopt a joint programme of support for S5/S6 school pupils, looking to move into further and higher education. This is a response to recommendations in the Learner Journey Review, providing more coordinated bridging and transition programmes. It is targeted at S5/S6 pupils in the region that are under-represented in higher education. The development of new pathways in health is also being discussed. These pathways will help to address the sector's skills needs (currently there are 450 vacancies in the NHS regionally), and also support the NHS' aspiration to deliver a Transformative Healthcare Approach, allowing further training and development opportunities for staff.

In addition to the partnership with NESCol, the university has 32 agreements with Dundee and Angus College across a range of the university's provision. Furthermore, the university has sought to develop a series of agreements around particular subject areas with colleges out with the north-east of Scotland. This includes with Fife College where the university has five articulation agreements in Fashion Management,

Architectural Technology and Quantity Surveying, with further routes being explored. The university is also seeking to develop an articulation agreement with Glasgow Clyde College in the Art and Design subject area. In the area of Nursing and Midwifery, the university has a series of advanced entry agreements with the associate colleges of the University of the Highlands and Islands. This provides a link for a number of students from Moray into the university's adult nursing provision. These additional routes provide a solid foundation for the university to widen its reach outside of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, strengthening its commitment to meet MD20/40 targets.

The university is committed to building on these partnerships and continually looks for new opportunities to extend reach, ensuring that an education at the university is accessible to all students, no matter their background.

Improving retention and outcome for students from disadvantaged and under-represented socio-economic groups

Retention and achievement is monitored regularly as part of the university's course appraisal process, further information is provided in the second section of this Outcome Agreement. The university has the same target for all protected characteristic groups reinforcing the institution's strong belief in equality and diversity. In 2017/18 this target was 92%, which is above the Scottish target and recognises the university's strategic commitment to support students to reach their full potential. The most recent



data available for 2016/17 shows that all eleven protected characteristics groups out-performed the Scottish retention target, and seven groups met or exceeded the university's target. The highest retention rate was for care experienced students with 100% completing their studies, recognising the university's high quality student support services. Over the last few years, internal monitoring suggests that across the whole of the university's undergraduate student population, academic failure rates amongst disabled students has halved from 7% to 3.6%.

These results are down to the continual enhancement of the support services offered by the university which are designed to improve retention and meet the needs of these under-represented groups. A package of care is offered to students from disadvantaged and under-represented socio-economic groups which includes an enrolment pack, free or discounted accommodation to MD20 and care experienced students who

information on this can be found later in section one of this Outcome Agreement. The university is committed to undertaking further work to support these groups, ensuring all students feel they have the tools they need to achieve success and become truly adaptable.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff

The university creates a culture within its community that promotes and supports positive wellbeing. This is underpinned by a new Student Mental Health Agreement created in July 2018 and signed by the university and the students' union. Spearheaded by the then Student President of Education and Welfare, it sets out the university's and the union's commitment to improving the mental wellbeing of all students and staff, aiming to change perceptions of mental health amongst the student community, challenge any negative attitudes, and promote positive outcomes and supportive strategies to maximise the student and staff experience. Furthermore, on University Mental Health Day, the university announced the launch of Peer Support. This is a student-led support group that facilitates discussion around wellbeing and mental health. The launch of Peer Support follows the creation of the university's Mental Health Agreement which aims to raise awareness and promote positive wellbeing for staff and students.

live outside the city; accommodation is available for care experienced students for 50 weeks of the year. All care experienced students have ongoing access to a dedicated contact for pastoral and financial support. The university has also established a dedicated support initiative called Here for You which regularly contacts all wider access students to check on progress and ensure they are aware of the support services offered.

The services offered are a key aspect of making students feel supported as they navigate their studies and grow as individuals. The university proactively engages with students to ensure that many of the services available are designed and developed in partnership, the university's Student Mental Health Agreement is a key example, further

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CASE STUDY TWO

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Promoting and supporting positive wellbeing is crucial to creating a truly inclusive environment, ensuring students and staff have the resources at hand to seek help when they need it. Consequently, the university has rolled out two core initiatives to address mental health and wellbeing, including gender-based violence. Both have been drafted in partnership with the student community and according to national guidance.

The new mental health agreement makes five commitments to the student and staff community. These are centred on exploring mechanisms to identify those at risk of poor mental health, putting in place early intervention strategies and identifying pathways to appropriate support. This includes creating opportunities to normalise conversations around mental health, actively encouraging groups and activities to increase a sense of belonging, delivering sessions which help individuals confidently address their own mental health, and increasing the promotion of internal and external support services. Plaques outlining the agreement and the five commitments can be found at strategic points of high traffic throughout the university's campus. Furthermore, on University Mental Health Day, the



university announced the launch of Peer Support. This is a student-led support group that facilitates discussion around wellbeing and mental health.

Additionally, the university created a detailed gender-based violence action plan called Speak Up Speak Out to reinforce its zero tolerance approach to this issue. The campaign was the university's own interpretation of the Scottish Government's national campaign and was created in partnership with the student's union. It focuses on the promotion of a new web-based information platform called Report and Support. This intuitive platform provides students with a wealth of information on gender-based violence and lets them know of all of the support services available to them. Significantly, the Speak Up Speak Out campaign was shortlisted in the NUS Scotland Awards 2019 as Campaign of the Year.

The university also actively promotes resilience and mindfulness and this saw the launch of an annual resilience week in November 2018, a result of the university's student partnership initiative. Resilience Week aims to support emotional wellbeing amongst students and staff. Additionally, a resilience network was created in 2015 for student-facing staff with a core purpose to build a dialogue around mental health and wellbeing, offering further support to staff to encourage students to talk to them, helping students to seek advice when they need it. This focus on resilience has also seen the creation of Mental Health Movie Monthly, a now well-established social platform that aims to showcase one free film each month. These films are used as a platform for facilitated discussion around mental health issues. Additionally, the university has launched Snack and Chat, a weekly lunchtime session for students experiencing loneliness and isolation. A weekly drop-in outreach counselling service at student halls is also available, this allows students to meet with Counsellors and a Student Wellbeing Advisor to talk over any issues they may have, such as homesickness, family issues, sexual identity, mental health, or difficulty settling into university life. The university also continues to support Nightline, a student listening service open from 8pm to 8am run by student volunteers.

To promote health and wellbeing the university is reinvigorating its Healthy Universities Working Group, Fit for the Future, throughout 2018/19. This is a programme to promote a coordinated approach to the health and wellbeing of students and staff across the institution. Currently, the university is engaged with

the UK Healthy Universities Network, an organisation that provides guidance on implementing a 'whole university' approach to health, wellbeing and sustainability. Liaising with these groups also ensures that advice stays up-to-date and relevant. All main canteens on campus have achieved a healthy living award, a sign that the university is committed to ensuring that it is easy for students and staff to eat healthier. Additionally, staff are encouraged to partake in regular campus walks to get away from their desks, reduce sitting time, and socialise with their colleagues. Furthermore, RGU Sport boasts modern, world-class sporting facilities and services that are easily accessible to both staff and students with expert advice on exercise and wellbeing available from staff.

Working with students and staff to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence

The university has a zero tolerance approach to gender-based violence and is committed to providing a working and learning environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This has seen the creation of a detailed gender-based violence action plan called Speak Up Speak Out. This is the university's own individual interpretation of the Scottish Government's national campaign. It shows that the university takes an active stand against gender-based violence in all its forms and highlights the support available from trained first responders on campus as well as from other sources. Significantly, the Speak Up Speak Out campaign was shortlisted in the NUS

Scotland Awards 2019 as Campaign of the Year.



The approach was developed in partnership with Equally Safe, creators of the Higher Education Toolkit to challenge gender-based violence which is being trialled at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis, and Rape Crisis Grampian. It has seen the development of the university's own toolkit and a framework and implementation plan to tackle and respond to gender-based violence across the institution, in line with the Equally Safe recommendations. The university's approach to gender-based violence is also covered under its [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#).

The campaign focuses on promoting Report and Support, a new web-based information platform that provides students with information on exactly what gender-based violence is and how to seek support if needed. It also outlines all of the support services available at the university and across the region, such as:

- Information on bystander intervention, helping individuals or groups to actively address a situation they deem problematic.

- Information that outlines exactly what consent is and what it is not.
- The university's safe taxi scheme, letting students know how to get home in an emergency if they don't have access to any money (the scheme advises students to order a taxi with a specific firm, and exchange their student card for a receipt. The taxi fare can then be paid at the union at a later date and the student card returned).
- Ask for Angela, a national campaign aimed at helping those who feel unsafe when on dates.

The online platform also provides access to a web-based reporting system that allows users to report anonymously or seek out an advisor. The university is carrying out a period of continual monitoring of this new system. This includes monitoring reporting levels, student awareness, and using website analytics to measure usage. This will ensure that the system stays fit for purpose.

The university has trained a number of staff on levels one and two of Equally Safe's Higher Education Toolkit: level one focuses on awareness raising, and forty staff and students attended this half day workshop; level two is for those who will deal with initial disclosures and provide support, twenty members of staff received this first responder training. The university is also working alongside the University of Strathclyde, and Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis to develop the level three training. The university will continue to work with Equally Safe and University of Strathclyde to further develop areas of its toolkit and share best practice.

Proactively addressing gender imbalances in programmes

The university's strategic commitment to building a culture of access and inclusion also incorporates work carried out to address gender imbalance. The university is committed to proactively addressing this across its student and staff communities in order to deliver equal opportunities for all, contributing to SFC targets on extreme gender imbalance.

To address gender imbalances amongst the student population, the university is continuing to develop and implement an institutional [Gender Action Plan](#) (iGAP). This plan is influenced by the ambitions of the SFC; to half the number of subjects with extreme gender imbalance by 2025/26, and to reduce the gap in male and female participation in undergraduate study to 13.6% by 2019/20. The university currently has a participation gap of 26% and will work towards reducing this gap by implementing actions through its widening access agenda and iGAP.

The university's iGAP relates directly to its equality outcomes and so covers the same period; 2017/18 - 2020/21. The plan has been updated in 2018/19 to incorporate further actions and to ensure it addresses the recommendations of both the TransEDU and Equally Safe in Higher Education initiatives. A number of actions to develop gender equality amongst staff have also been included. The plan is monitored by the Gender Working Group which reports to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. The group's membership includes staff and students and is jointly chaired by the

university's Gender Equality Champion and the Director of Student Life.

Additionally, to fully address issues of gender imbalance, the university has identified a number of subject areas in which there is an imbalance, these include Computing Sciences, Engineering, Subjects Allied to Medicine, Creative Art and Design, and Social Studies. A wide range of actions have been undertaken to reduce severe gender imbalances and this work is coordinated across individual Schools, Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment. Some key activities include: the School of Engineering has undertaken a review of course materials to deliver gender neutral classrooms; the School of Nursing & Midwifery participated in a joint study with the NHS and higher education providers to understand the influences and causes of male recruitment and retention issues in Nursing; Gray's School of Art is developing a contextualised interview process and received funding for a Mobile Art School to visit primary and secondary schools to provide careers information; plus the use of female engineering and computing students as case studies in marketing materials.



CASE STUDY THREE

Addressing gender imbalances

The university is committed to addressing gender imbalances and proactively seeks out and creates opportunities to make positive change. A number of the activities that are ongoing are led by the university's schools. Some examples are below.

The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment is introducing initiatives aimed at reducing the marked dominance of male representation in the construction industry, especially in areas such as surveying and construction management. This is being delivered by a team of predominantly female academic staff, and harnessing the support of professional bodies where appropriate. The School is working closely with Women in Property; a national organisation founded around 30 years ago, that has very active regional representation, including a number of the School's successful alumni. Working with secondary schools, including guidance teachers, and showcasing the careers of the School's alumni will form important strands of this work.

Gray's School of Art has been undertaking a review of its application process and is developing a contextualised interview process to address male under-representation in

this subject area. The outcome of which will be implemented by May 2019.

The School has also undertaken a range of consultation exercises with art and design secondary school teachers and held focus groups with students to understand the key issues contributing to gender imbalance in the subject. As a result, the School successfully applied for funding for a Mobile Art School to provide workshops and talks in primary and secondary schools, focusing on careers information, and information on male role models in the creative industries.

The School of Engineering has participated in a range of events throughout 2017/18 designed to encourage women into engineering. At these events, the School ensures there is a gender balanced representation of staff. The School has also begun a review of course materials and is working with the Marketing department to produce promotional materials to assist in attracting female applicants to courses. This includes featuring video case studies with female students where they discuss what it is like to study engineering at the university. This video case study approach has also been used by the School of Computing Science and Digital Media. Here, female students have discussed why they chose computing and their journey at the university so far.

The university is also involved in #NaeGenderLimits, a north-east campaign that asks people to challenge their thinking. As part of the campaign, the university has gone out to schools to speak with young people to understand their preconceived notions around certain subjects and careers, before showing them that these limitations and stereotypes should have no place in their minds when thinking about their future. The campaign has been covered by the university's official podcast RGU Talk to promote conversations on the topic and to help widen the message's reach.

When it comes to the staff community, the university's professoriate and vice principal team is fully gender balanced. The process of applying for Athena SWAN also identified that its academic staff is reasonably gender balanced. Further work has been carried out, and will be planned, to ensure that this progress continues. Examples include:

- Appointing academic subjects leads and heads of school for two years and five years respectively to ensure rotation, providing increased levels of opportunity for academic staff; addressing the gender pay gap with an action plan devised as a result of biennial equal pay audits. [A link to the university's Gender Pay Gap Report has been provided.](#)
- Continuing to celebrate International Women's Day, notably in 2018 the university has honoured six women through honorary graduations.
- Delivering unconscious bias training to staff.

- Reviewing the university's family friendly policies, such as premature birth, miscarriage, fostering, and IVF, to include gender neutral language and to be more accessible to staff.

Finally, the university's Board of Governors is committed to achieving a broad gender balance and recent appointments have further increased the number of female members. To support this, adverts for Board members are worded to specifically encourage candidates from the widest range of backgrounds. The Board's criteria for membership now explicitly refers to the diversity of the Board being a consideration in the appointment process and members of the Board (along with members of the Executive team) have received training in unconscious bias. Additionally, the Board undertakes its anonymous equality and diversity monitoring which is reported as part of the university's annual report on equality and diversity.

Implementing COWA targets and responding to recommendations of 'A Blueprint for Fairness'

The university is focused on implementing its CoWA targets and will regularly review activities to ensure progress continues to be made. This next section will run through the work done so far, and the future work that is planned to meet CoWA targets.

- **Recruitment of SIMD 20/40 students (recommendations 9 and 32):** This topic is covered earlier in section one of this Outcome Agreement under the heading of Increase the number of

students articulating to university with advanced standing.

- **Work on retention of SIMD 20/40 and care experienced students (recommendation 21):**

This topic is covered earlier in section one of this Outcome Agreement under the heading of Improve retention and outcome for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented socio-economic groups.

- **Implement access thresholds (recommendation 11) and admissions processes (recommendation 5):**

The university has offered contextualised admissions for a number of years. Most recently, this has been in conjunction with NESCoI and work has been undertaken to establish access thresholds in respect of the CoWA targets. Contextualised admissions will be published for 2019 and clear targets will be set at School level.

The review of contextualised admissions has provided increased opportunities for applicants by considering the context in which they have achieved and giving them a reduced offer to recognise their academic achievements and potential.

All applicants from low progression schools identified by the SFC are eligible to gain entry on these adjusted rates, as are MD40 applicants and applicants from partner schools. Draft access thresholds are in place and once reviewed these will be published and promoted as per Recommendation 11. These will be in place for the 2019 deadline.

- **Promoting access by partnering with schools (recommendation 12):**

The university has longstanding partnerships with seven schools in the region. These schools are highlighted to the university through the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. To further strengthen work in this area, a pilot project has been completed with a non-partner school, Harlaw Academy, to engage with MD20/40 students and this has been very successful. This pilot will be expanded throughout 2019 to include other non-partner schools to ensure the university widens its reach regarding MD20/40 targets.

The low number of MD20 datazones in the local area makes hitting targets challenging so work will be done to increase the university's presence outside of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. This will allow the university to provide on the ground understanding of the routes available to students and provide practical routes of engagement. Further information on this can be found earlier in section one of this Outcome Agreement under the heading of: Identify and address under-representation from protected characteristic and under-represented socio-economic groups.

- **Rate of the conversion of applications to offers to acceptances for SIMD20 and care experienced students:**

The conversion rate of applications to offers for MD20 students was 61% in 2017/18, while the rate of offers to acceptances was 35%. The conversion rate of applications to offers and offers to acceptances for care experienced students was 100%. In 2018/19 there

were two types of adjusted offer for MD20 applicants: a one year pilot scheme which saw unconditional offers made based on predicted grades; and differential offers which saw individuals who didn't meet the criteria noted above offered a conditional place.

- **Use of Bridging Programmes (recommendation 7):**

A number of bridging programmes are provided to ease the learner's journey and provide a supportive transition. The university's Degree Prep programme is designed to support the transition from studying at college to studying at university. It builds on the knowledge and experience gained at HN level to equip students with essential course information and study skills, and familiarise them with the university's staff, campus and facilities. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme found that 100% of participants felt the programme made them better aware of the help and resources available at the university, and that it made them feel more confident in continuing their studies at RGU.

The Access To programme seeks to widen participation to higher education for students who are often under-represented in universities. Funded by the SFC, it features nine programmes designed to support talented and committed S5 and S6 pupils who aim to study at degree level. Students on this programme also become Associate Students giving them access to the university's library and support services.

The ACES (Access to Creative Education in Scotland) programme was established in 2010 and focuses on pupils from MD20/40 backgrounds from schools with an average progression rate to higher education below the national average. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of entrants from those backgrounds into high demand professional degree courses. Currently, the subjects offered include Art & Design and Architecture.

The Northern Lights programme supports Aspire North and works with S1 and S2 pupils from three local schools who have the potential to achieve higher education entry. Initial sessions are held to introduce pupils and their parents and carers to the programme and the staff involved. Pupils are then involved in five engagement sessions throughout the school year.

- **Use of core funding (recommendation 25) and the Widening Access and Retention Fund:**

For 2018/19, the university received £1.1 million from the SFC's Widening Access and Retention Fund (WARF). This funding has been essential to enabling the university to develop more ambitious ways to enhance and sustain widening access pathways, with a focus on providing the right opportunity at the right time.

This work includes supporting and engaging with MD20/40 and care experienced young people through the Schools Outreach Programme (S1-S6), the Northern Lights Programme (S1-S2), which has been expanded from one school to three schools, and

the Access To Programme (S5-S6). Additionally, any student studying a HN course at a Scottish College is eligible to become an Associate Student which provides access to the university's library and support services. All applicants who meet the university's Widening Access criteria are contacted to advise them of the help and support available to them, answering any queries they might have about coming to study at the university and providing support to attend open days and visit afternoons, allowing them to experience life at the university. WARF has also enabled the development of a range of services for MD20/40 and care experienced students to support retention. Scholarships specifically for MD20 and care experienced students provide financial as well as pastoral and study skills support, and several scholarships offer paid placement opportunities with the supporting employers.

The ACCESS RGU Scholarships were launched in the academic year 2014/15 in conjunction with the RGU Foundation to mitigate financial barriers to study, widening access and supporting retention. The scholarships are made available through donations from companies which seek to widen access for under-represented students at higher education level.

In session 2017/18 the university has doubled the number of scholarships available. Furthermore, it also funds the Student Help Point which assists students on a range of issues including accommodation advice, fees and finance advice, study skills appointments, and covers a

range of other student issues; the Counselling and Wellbeing service which recognises the specific needs of students from disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds; and a chaplaincy service which is available for those with all faiths and none. Additionally, it funds the university's enrolment pack, offered to all MD20/40 and care experienced students, and accommodation discount: throughout 2018/19 and 2017/18, 76 students received this discount totalling just under £100k.

Committing to students who are carers and/or veterans

The university is committed to enhancing its support of students who are veterans and/or carers or estranged students. This includes work to expand the university's Access and Articulation Team.

Implementing of British Sign Language Plan

The university published its British Sign Language Plan in October 2018 in British Sign Language (BSL) and English to cover the period 2018-2024. The university plan is aligned with the aims of the Scottish Government action plan, but specifically focuses on providing support to BSL users to ensure they are able to participate in higher education and engage fully in the learner journey. The finalised plan has three themes:

- To enable access to the university for potential applicants who are BSL users
- To provide an inclusive and full university experience for BSL users

- To contribute to wider societal aims to improve access to public life for BSL users

The plan was developed through a short-life working group, involving staff from across the university including staff with experience of using BSL. The university has successfully supported a small number of students who are BSL users previously and this plan, and the commitment to pursue the actions outlined within it, is just one way in which the university articulates its commitment to creating an inclusive learning and working environment.

A draft plan was presented to local BSL users through a joint consultation event with other education providers in the area. From this a number of barriers to higher education for BSL users were identified. The university incorporated this feedback into the finalised plan and will continue to engage with BSL users as it implements actions to monitor impact. The university also continues to invite feedback on the ongoing process of delivering the plan. Governance and monitoring of this plan is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. [A link to this plan has been provided.](#)





High Quality Learning

The university prides itself on the professional-focused and relevant curriculum it provides learners. The university has strong and extensive links with professions, employers and industry. This has led to many distinctive features of the university's provision – one of the most important is the emphasis on work-based learning through work placement or work-based projects present in almost all of the university's undergraduate curriculum. As global society addresses the challenges and opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution, the university is now seeking to further enhance students evidencing of their professional and associated metaskills as well as embed digital skills and innovation into the curriculum. This is reflected in the university's unparalleled reputation in Scotland for employability which is articulated above.



Student satisfaction with the university's courses is a notable feature. The university is one of a handful of Scottish institutions that have consistently scored above its benchmarked expected performance in the National Student Survey. One of the hallmarks of the university is the approachability of staff – academic and support – which is reflected in the scores for academic support which are significantly above the benchmark. As would be expected given the university's reputation for employability, it scores well in surveys relating to the level of careers support and industry relations.

Identifying and addressing barriers to student retention

The latest retention data for 2016/17 showed that the university's retention rate was 92.9%, this is above the Scottish sector average and matches the UK sector average. The university's quality assurance processes aid retention rates by examining this issue annually through course appraisals. This monitoring results in the development of action plans to enrich student experience. This focus saw the university perform well in the last Enhancement-Led Institutional

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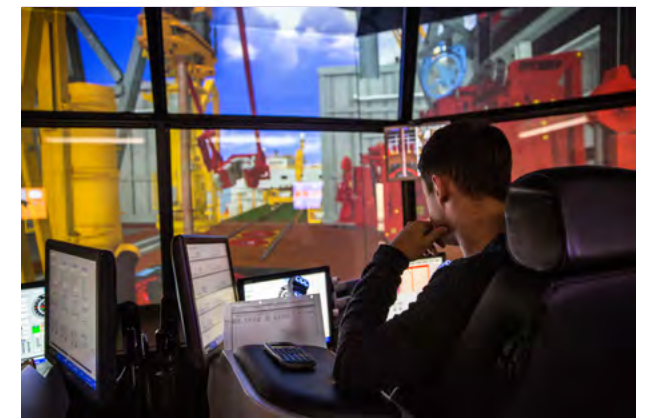
Review. The university is currently undertaking a review of its retention data and the results of this exercise, due by the end of the academic session, will be used to inform future actions. The review includes further analysis on the university's current priorities in relation to retention and progression; how subject areas identify the need for interventions; challenges for subject areas in designing retention initiatives; and examples of successful interventions and how these are evaluated. This review will also take into consideration the outcomes of the sector-wide Enhancement Theme activity due to be published in July 2019. This review seeks to enhance retention of all students, including protected characteristic groups such as 21 and over, to ensure individuals feel supported in their studies to achieve success. Further information on student retention can be found in section one of this Outcome Agreement.

One critical aspect of the university's approach to quality assurance and enhancement is the Annual Course Appraisal process. This process seeks the reflective engagement from course teams and School Academic Boards to report on the performance of the university's teaching portfolio. This process has been re-designed over the summer and implemented during the first semester of the 2018/19 academic session – one of the changes has been to highlight far more explicitly the need for course teams to reflect on the student experiences of those from different protected characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds. This re-design has been accompanied by the launch of a new series of dashboards presenting the range of data sources in one place,

making analysis easier, adding clarity, and increasing the understanding of the metrics used within the process. This approach has led to an enhanced evaluation of the teaching portfolio and allowed course teams to more readily develop action plans to address areas for improvement. One of the actions at institutional level that has emerged from the appraisal process has been a need to examine retention rates in more detail to inform further improvement in the university's measures of retention.

Potential barriers to retention are faced by articulating students joining into an existing cohort. One of the university's strategic commitments is to widen access to higher education and a core part of the approach here is building strong and robust partnerships with colleges. This sees students seamlessly transfer from college via pathways agreed by formal articulation partnerships. Further information on articulation can be found earlier in section one of this Outcome Agreement.

The pathway courses that allow students to seamlessly move from college to the university are designed to specifically marry up with the curriculum taught at the university. This ensures that the learner journey is well-connected across institutions and makes the educational transfer much easier for the individual. The university's course appraisal process helps to make sure that the connecting curriculum evolves simultaneously to maintain the seamless nature of articulation from these colleges. Furthermore, a number of services are offered by the university to ensure that the students who make this move feel fully supported throughout.



Ensuring curriculum responds to employment and skills needs of students, employers and the economy

The university has established extensive engagement with industry and professional bodies in the design, approval, and delivery of its courses, many of which are professionally accredited. Employer stakeholder groups representing the sectors the university operates in, feed into the delivery of courses through advisory panels and boards, school reviews, course validations, external examiners, and guest lectures. This ensures the university's education programmes address current employer demands and are regularly reviewed to reflect future skills needs for changing working environments.

This challenges the university to ensure its curriculum is responsive to the needs of the economy and employers. One example of this can be illustrated in the field of energy, a priority sector and STEM subject. On the back of the RGU/OPITO UK Continental Shelf Workforce Dynamics Review, the need was identified to shape a skills strategy to support the delivery of the Oil and Gas Authority's Vision 2035. The creation of this strategy, led by the RGU Oil and Gas Institute, will help



to inform the methods of teaching and the type of courses required to meet the changing skills needs of the industry.

The university has a varied STEM provision across a range of subject areas covering Engineering, Computing and the Life Sciences. The university continues to develop its undergraduate portfolio in these subjects with recent new course developments both in Bioengineering and Biosciences. These courses are aimed at diversifying the university's portfolio and may not therefore result in a change in the proportion of STEM undergraduate entrants. The university's range of Graduate Apprenticeships have in the last two years shifted the proportion of undergraduate entrants in favour of STEM subjects. The university supports its undergraduate Skills for Growth places in Engineering with scholarships from industry.

Ensuring students are fully equipped to seamlessly enter the workplace also involves embracing the application of digital skills, equipping students with the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours to self-learn and adapt to changes throughout their careers. Building knowledge and skills, such as cyber security, data analysis, data manipulation, critical thinking, and problem solving, into courses helps students adjust to these changes. Currently, the university is collaborating with Skills Development Scotland and Cyber Security Scotland to facilitate a personal digital security safety workshop for students. This collaboration will see the mapping of digital literacy requirements for all levels of study against the Scottish Qualifications Framework.

CASE STUDY FOUR

Supporting the development of cyber security skills



There is a large and growing demand locally, nationally, and internationally, for graduates who have the ability to secure computing networks and protect the critical information systems of businesses and government organisations. The cyber security courses offered by the university have been created with insight from the industry to address this need. Recently the BSc programme was launched following successful uptake of the MSc.

A key feature of the BSc and MSc programmes is a 12-month paid placement to help students use their knowledge in a practical environment and gain valuable experience. To encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration, a cyber security meetup has been created to allow for the discussion of trends in the sector.

The course has recently been accredited by the British Computer Society (BCS). This now means that every course offered by the university's School of Computing Science and Digital Media is accredited by the BCS.

The university recognises that the broad range of transferable skills developed through university education are in high demand. The university's Employability Hub has therefore established a Graduate Outcomes Framework which brings together all of the elements that students need to become employable. The Graduate Outcomes Framework was created following research into universities and employers across the world, and consideration of the Scottish Government's Education Scotland Curriculum for Excellence Purpose and Four Capacities, and the QAA "Graduates for the 21st Century" enhancement theme reports. It outlines that a successful RGU graduate should be an experienced professional, creative innovator, confident life-long learner, and global citizen. The Framework is a tool for students to measure and improve their skills development based on a combination of academic learning designed to meet the needs of industry, work experience opportunities, and transferable employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, creativity, and enterprise. It facilitates self-reflection, helping students to relate their skills and experiences to graduate attributes sought by employers in an environment where portfolio careers are increasingly the norm. It also identifies gaps in skills and experiences which students will need to develop for graduate employability.

This embedding of employment within curriculum is further supplemented by the university's Employability Hub. The Employability Hub aims to further enhance the ability of the university's graduates to allow them to thrive in an

employment environment where portfolio careers are the norm. This has seen the development of an online and mobile app hosted resource library called the EHub. It contains a wealth of career management tools, videos, articles, business modules, amongst others, and easy access to materials that support the development of foreign language skills. It is available to all staff, students, and alumni. A student focus group is used to ensure the service is effectively meeting their needs. It also sees the Hub partner with employers to facilitate engagement with students in the longer term so that the interaction starts in the first year of study, rather than on an immediate graduate employment basis in the final year. This provides employers with an opportunity to showcase their employment and work experience opportunities, and supports the employability of students throughout their studies and after graduation. It is achieved through hosting employer events on campus, employer visits and workshops, assessment centres, and a student ambassador programme where students represent employers on campus, delivering presentations and holding pop-up sessions. In 2017/18, the university's What's Next Employability Conference ran for the first time, giving students even more access to employers, and further information on career development. This saw employers run specific sessions for students on innovation skills, PG studies, and preparing for employment. The conference was developed with widening access in mind so that students could attend during teaching hours to mitigate costs associated with additional travel and out of hours.

CASE STUDY FIVE

Employability success

The university has a track record of exceeding benchmarks for employability. Currently, it is the top, non-specialist university in Scotland and fourth equal in the UK for employability (HESA, July 2018), and it has been placed 34th for Graduate Employment Rate in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings. This performance demonstrates the University's commitment to preparing students well for the world of work by providing a high quality learning experience.

A key part of the university's success in employability is its' effective approach to engaging with employers and professional bodies in curriculum design, delivery, and assessment. This includes an emphasis on work-related learning; every school in the university offers the opportunity to go on placement within a variety of industries. Practical and varied placements are just one way the university ensures students are exposed to wide range of professional experiences, allowing them to prosper in an employment environment where portfolio careers are the norm.

Much of this activity is coordinated by the University's Employability Hub. The Hub is focused on supporting students in gaining the transferable skills and experience required to thrive in the workplace. It has established a Graduate Outcomes Framework after research into universities and employers across the world. This Framework outlines that a successful RGU graduate should be an experienced professional, creative innovator, confident life-long learner, and global citizen. It gives students the opportunity to measure and improve their skills development, facilitating self-reflection and identifying any gaps in their skills and experience that they should address. The Hub has recently launched a mobile app called eHub to make this process even simpler for students. The app supports students to proactively direct their own career development and learn from professional career coaches through hundreds of elearning resources and career tools.

Student satisfaction with the university's courses is a notable feature. The university is one of a handful of Scottish institutions that have consistently scored above its benchmarked expected performance in the National Student Survey. One of the hallmarks of the university is the approachability of staff – academic and support – which is reflected in the scores for academic support which are significantly above the benchmark. As would be expected given the university's reputation for its graduates entering positive destinations, it scores well in surveys relating to the level of careers support and industry relations. Currently, it is the top non-specialist university in Scotland and fourth equal in the UK for employability (HESA, July 2018), and it has been placed 34th for its Graduate Employability rate in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings.

The impact of all of this activity is demonstrated through the university's performance in the Longitudinal Employment Outcomes (LEO) data provided by the UK Government. The most recent LEO 2017 data relates to those who graduated in 2010/11 and looks at their positive destination outcomes three years after graduation. It showed that 11 subjects areas, out of the 15 provided by the university, feature in the top 10% of all higher education institutions in the UK, these subject areas include: Architecture; Biosciences; Nursing; Pharmacology, Toxicology & Pharmacy; and Subjects Allied to Medicine.

Meeting the skills needs of employers as outlined in the Sector Investment Plans

Much of this section has discussed how the university engages businesses, employers and the professions in meeting the current and future skills requirements of the labour market across its portfolio of courses. This portfolio reflects the needs of local industry and those sectors that Skills Development Scotland indicate will grow substantially in the period to 2030: Life Sciences; Tourism; Digital/ICT; Social Care; Construction and the Energy Sector. This focus is not only reflected in the university's degree courses but also across its short course provision enabling individuals to develop skills while remaining in the workforce. Complementing this support of sector skills investment plans, the university has a rigorous course development process, the starting point of which is in the assessing of market demand; not merely in terms of student demand but most critically employer and labour market demand for new course titles. In recent years all new course developments have been developed with both qualitative labour market information on likely demand and supply as well as quantitative evidence on skills requirements from employers and professional bodies to aid development of content.

Enhancing the provision of work-related learning opportunities

The majority of courses at the university see placements embedded into the curriculum. The university's Employability Hub helps employers to understand the range of work experience opportunities available, such as short and long term placements, so that there is more flexibility for employers and increased learning opportunities for students. This allows students to test their skills and knowledge in a practical environment and gain valuable professional contacts. The style of placements vary according to the curriculum; for example, the university's health and social care students take part in placements every year of study. These placements are designed to ensure that students encounter a wide range of experiences while working in the sector, such as, working in a rural unit or high dependency care. This ensures that the university's graduates are well-rounded individuals and better able to adapt to the needs of the patient and the sector. These placements help the NHS to answer needs in the short term while preparing the workforce of the future. They can also lead to future short and long term work to assist the sector; as a result of the university's close relationship with NHS Grampian, some of the university's senior physiotherapy students are currently working with the health board to help reduce musculoskeletal waiting lists. Another example is in the university's School of Computing Science and Digital Media. Students can take advantage of high quality industry placements and also apply their skills in an innovative, practical workshop called RGU Hack. This 24-hour 'hackathon' sees

teams of students compete in a selection of coding challenges, allowing them to really test their skills and network with other developers. The event is funded by employer sponsors who also provide mentoring.

Drawing on its expertise of working with employers, the university continues to be at the forefront of work-based learning. Additionally, as a founding member of the Centre for Work-Based Learning, the university is able to shape and influence the development of these learning opportunities.

The university was the first in Scotland to approve the delivery of Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs). Initially two programmes were introduced, IT Management for Business and Software Development for Business, to address the national digital skills shortage. Since then, in 2018, the university's offering has expanded to include seven GAs spread across a range of disciplines, including Construction, Engineering, Business Management, and IT. In the last academic session, the university recruited 143 students to the seven courses offered and subsequently secured funding for 180 places across the seven frameworks in 2019. This include the addition of Data Science and a 5-year degree and professional qualification in Accounting.

The university's innovative model of GAs takes it into the workplace, which reflects the importance of the university's approach in engaging employers to design the degrees based on the value of the workplace as a learning environment. The graduate apprentices benefit from a new type of learning, putting what they have learned into practice immediately with support from both their employer



'THE UNIVERSITY WAS THE 1ST IN SCOTLAND TO APPROVE THE DELIVERY OF GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS AND IS NOW ONE OF THE LARGEST PROVIDERS'

and the university. The employers also benefit in a number of ways, from being able to plan for their skills needs in a new way and develop existing staff with emerging and transferable skill sets, to improving employee retention by supporting and investing in their development.

Internationalising the student experience

As part of the university's Employability Plus strategy, the opportunities for student exchange across the course portfolio has been actively investigated and expanded where possible. Currently, the university has study abroad partnerships in place with 24 countries and with over 100 institutions. The university actively engages in the Erasmus+ programme and as a consequence the implications of Brexit are being closely monitored. The university has met with the SFC and discussed the areas of concern regarding Brexit for the university. The university's areas of concern are centred on the value of links with Europe for funding opportunities, research collaborations, and the greater diversity which European students and staff bring to its community. The university is following advice provided by appropriate sector bodies, most notably Universities UK and Universities Scotland.

Student mobility is well-established and encouraged, with the university enjoying some high quality exchange partnerships in some subject areas, for example nursing. For almost 25 years, the university and Houston Baptist University (HBU) has been involved in a student exchange programme. Similar exchange

programmes exist with the University of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK), UTK also has programmes in place with the university's School of Creative and Cultural Business and School of Applied Social Studies.

The university is focused on encouraging students who are interested in studying abroad so a number of student support services exist. Information is also available online to provide the parents of students with all of the information they may need.

Progressing with each of the health outcomes

The university has risen to the challenge of increasing numbers, seeing overall student numbers, and retention and completion rates increase in the School of Nursing and Midwifery over the past three years. Proactive actions are in place to ensure this continues to improve. These include: implementing enhancements in support for assessment and assessment feedback, an enhanced model of support for students who are on placement, standardisation of the information in module handbooks, and a key personal tutor who ensures consistent approaches to academic and pastoral support.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, in close collaboration with four other Scottish universities, has published a NES commission report exploring the influences and causes of under-representation of men in pre-registration nursing in Scotland. To further address this area, the School is working with the Chief Nurse's Office and NHS Grampian, plus engaging with school-aged males and carrying out specific activities to challenge gender stereotyping.



Further work to support nursing and midwifery in Scotland focuses on increasing regional collaboration between universities and strengthening access and articulation into pre-registration programmes. Currently, the university is in discussions with the University of the Highlands and Islands to support the development of midwifery education in Inverness. Additionally, the university now has a formal agreement with NESCol to enable Scottish Wider Access Programme students to apply for entry to year one of the B Nursing Programme across all fields in 2019. Agreed increases in Degree Link students with NESCol in 2018/19 will also provide enhanced opportunities for HNC students to directly enter B Nursing programmes in year two in 2019. A new set of nursing and midwifery outcomes has been attached to the annex of this Outcome Agreement.

Training and developing the health and social care workforce

In 2016, Scottish Government legislation saw health and social care brought together into a single, integrated system. This move is well-reflected across the full range of the university's health and social care provision. The university has long been seen as a provider of high quality health and social care education, with its students and graduates making a significant contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of the local and wider communities. For instance, responses from the 2016/17 DLHE survey showed that 184 Nursing and Midwifery graduates went on to work for NHS Scotland, with 149 of them based in NHS Grampian, and 10 who went on to work for NHS England.



The university is committed to working alongside, and in collaboration with, key stakeholder groups such as, the Scottish Government and NHS Grampian, and being represented on sector committees, such as the Council of Deans of Health, to inform policy and ensure that the courses and experiences provided meet critical skills needs.

Engaging with the sector in this proactive manner has seen the creation of four-year undergraduate integrated Master's degrees in Dietetics, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Diagnostic Radiography. It's also seen the creation of a full-time clinical practice route into the university's Advanced Nursing Practice course, and similarly the creation of a pharmacist prescribing module to enhance clinical skills. Additionally, the MSc Strategic Service Planning and Delivery has been developed, a course created to support the Scottish Government's 2020 Vision for health and social care. Furthermore, the university teamed up with Outreach Rescue Medic

Skills (ORMS) to create a new training course for paramedics, BSc Paramedic Practice – Remote and Hazardous Environments. These are just a few examples of the courses that have been designed, adapted, and developed as a direct response to the needs of the sector and the challenges facing society.

'THE UNIVERSITY HAS LONG BEEN SEEN AS A PROVIDER OF HIGH QUALITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE EDUCATION, WITH ITS STUDENTS AND GRADUATES MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITIES.'

CASE STUDY SIX

Designing courses that fulfil sector and skills needs

Directly answering the skills needs of the economy, as well as the challenges facing society, is a crucial consideration of course design at the university. This is well demonstrated through the university's health and social care course provision where it has a strong reputation for innovatively answering the skills needs of this ever-evolving sector.

The aim of the university's health and social care provision is to produce graduates that are skilled for the present and prepared for the future. Delivering on this commitment saw the university become the first in Scotland to create four-year undergraduate Master's degrees in Dietetics, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Diagnostic Radiography – the programmes in Occupational Therapy and Diagnostic Radiography are also the first of their kind in the UK. These degrees are designed to enhance the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in leadership, service improvement, research and public health. These are qualities the sector has identified as essential for the delivery of effective integrated health and social care services, and the development of sustainable clinical teams. The accreditation for an integrated master's

in Dietetics comes as the university marks 50 years since the subject was first taught at the institution. There is a rich and impressive history of leading dietetics education at the university; the university launched the first dietetics degree in Scotland, then created the first Honours programme, and now has launched the first integrated Master's.

A full-time clinical practice route into the university's Advanced Nursing Practice course has also been introduced. This will support the sector's needs to have multi-disciplinary teams of patient-centred clinicians from varying healthcare disciplines, improving access to, and efficiency of, core services in the acute sector and allowing patients to benefit from a unique blend of specific expertise. Another recent addition to the university's School of Nursing and Midwifery is the MSc Strategic Service Planning and Delivery. This directly addresses the Scottish Government's Vision 2020 for health and social care that everyone can live longer healthier lives at home or in a homely setting. The interdisciplinary programme provides students with the opportunity to learn the range of skills and knowledge they need to be successful in strategic service planning and delivery.



Additionally, the university has created a pharmacist prescribing module to address demand for pharmacist prescribers, an important commercialisation activity. This module is supported by three experienced pharmacist prescribers who each contribute 100 hours as face-to-face and

online tutors. Currently, the university's School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences produces the greatest number of Pharmacist Independent Prescribers in Scotland (approximately 50% of MPharm graduates in Scotland come from the university).



Another core focus of the health and social care education at the university is producing practitioners who are responsive to, and understanding of, the needs of their patients. A key aspect of this approach is embedding Interprofessional Learning (IPL) throughout all courses. This improves collaborative practice and the quality of care. Placements are integrated into each stage of the provision to allow students to practice the collaborative approach in action, instilling in them the values needed to provide a high quality service. Placements can be undertaken with any of the 14 NHS Health Boards, local authorities, third sector agencies, and/or private organisations.

Furthermore, the university recognises that the educational landscape has changed drastically over the past decade. The university continues to be at the forefront, taking advantage of emerging technology to innovate its teaching. This approach uses a variety of practical techniques, including simulation activities in bespoke subject-specific environments. For example, students from across health and social care courses benefit from working with high-fidelity training mannequins, and a community of volunteer patients in the university's clinical skills centre. This allows students to experience effective learning in a realistic and safe environment, ensuring they are work-ready upon graduation.



Impactful Research

The university is seeking to grow its globally impactful research. This ambition is underpinned by the university's recently agreed investment plan to develop research capacity in key areas of existing strengths: sustainable transport; built environment visualisation; industrial biotechnology; and smart data and artificial intelligence.

In making these investment decisions the university has sought to advance research capacity in areas where it can make an impact on regional or national policies and economic development. This is reflected in the collaborative approach the university has taken as part of the City Region Deal and with industry partners in the development of a National Subsea Centre hosted by the university which will launch in 2019.



Enhancing performance in the next REF exercise

The university's research base is characterised by a number of very high quality researchers who are distributed across its academic disciplines. This provides a network of proficient researchers with the ability to collaborate across traditional research boundaries to find novel solutions to the many challenges facing modern society.

Currently, the institution is working to grow its research activity, research income, impact (the uplift in the Research Excellence Grant (REG) of £5k in 2018/19 saw expertise brought in to provide training in delivering greater research impact), and demand-driven knowledge exchange that harnesses this improved capacity for interdisciplinary research activity. This is demonstrated by a commitment to enhancing the university's performance in REF 2021.

This ambition is underpinned by the university's research priorities:

- To build critical mass, foster excellence, exploit new research and knowledge exchange opportunities, and increase funding by leveraging existing strengths in key areas.
- Stimulate excellence in interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange with societal and economic impact through the appointment of leading or rising research leaders, supporting them with postdoctoral researchers and research students.
- Support the development of researchers to be adaptable and

flexible in an increasingly diverse and global research environment through provision of mentoring, research training, and open-access publication support.

- Build on the establishment of the pan-university Graduate School to offer high quality, integrated training programmes for postgraduates and early career researchers to embed interdisciplinary working in the next generation of researchers.
- Develop further strategic collaborations through national and international academic and industrial research and knowledge exchange alliances.

Using the SFC Research Excellence Grant (REG) to support research excellence and grow research income

By freeing time for focused research activity and providing improved facilities for research, the Research Excellence Grant (REG) is being targeted towards those with a track-record of delivering research excellence, supporting the university's ambition to produce world-class research. This provides an improved research environment and supports early career researcher training and development. This approach is already seeing the university's researchers pursue projects that carry authentic community impact, as evidenced by case study seven of this Outcome Agreement..

The university's new research strategy is reinforced by a long-term investment of close to £30m spread over the next



ten years. The focus of this investment is on the transformation of research at the university, boosting its national and international reputation.

In the first year of investment (2018/19), the funds are being used to: build critical mass in areas where established research leads are already present through the external recruitment of complementary expertise; provide targeted internal support for postdoctoral research assistants to support both established and up-and-coming researchers; and release competitive proof of concept funding for small-scale research and knowledge exchange projects that will generate preliminary data for large scale grant applications to external funders. In the first semester of 2018/19, over £160,000 worth of proof of concept funding has been given to 20 projects.

A robust internal review of draft grant applications and manuscripts has been put in place with the intention of increasing the number of successful

applications and delivering more high quality publications. This will provide targeted and bespoke support to individual researchers and the coordination of major institutional projects. A notable development in supporting research excellence is the introduction of research sabbaticals. This programme has supported three academics, freeing their time for dedicated research activity and grant writing. This strategy is proving to be highly effective.

'THE UNIVERSITY'S NEW RESEARCH STRATEGY IS REINFORCED BY A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT OF CLOSE TO

£30m

SPREAD OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS.'

CASE STUDY SEVEN

Delivering globally recognised impactful research

The university has endorsed its largest ever research investment to grow its globally recognised impactful research. Together with the SFC's Research Excellence Grant, the phased release of this funding over the next ten years will be used to build critical mass in areas where the university has established research leadership. To further support this aim, a sabbatical leave policy has been implemented; so far, three staff have taken advantage of this policy, most recently Professor Christine Edwards from the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences.

Professor Edwards has developed a number of projects which promise to provide major economic, health and environmental benefits. This has resulted in the achievement of UK Research and Innovation funding of £3 million. Her work is focused on addressing the challenges presented by a group of organisms known as cyanobacteria (blue-green algal toxins). They produce toxins that affect animals and humans, and may be responsible for significant chronic diseases as they have a significant impact on the quality of drinking water. They also accumulate in shellfish, posing

a serious threat to human health through acute exposure to fatal doses. Shellfish are an essential commodity for the UK, employing over 3,000 people and producing revenues of over £40 million per annum. Substantial increases in seafood consumption, together with the globalisation of the seafood trade, has increased potential exposure to these agents. Professor Edwards has been working with a consortium of national and international, academic and industry partners to develop solutions allowing shellfish growers to protect public health by detecting and eliminating these toxins.

She is also involved in Global Challenges Research Funding to develop a scalable bio-based strategy to eliminate cyanotoxins in drinking water. These are known to frequently occur in dug wells in Sri Lanka and are thought to be linked to an increasing occurrence of chronic kidney disease and other adverse health effects. She is also working on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Scottish Bioenergy (ScotBio). This collaboration will develop the knowledge and capability for increasing the value and usefulness of the waste biomass from the production of phycocyanin.

Engaging with the principles of the “Concordat on Open Research Data”

The university's library hosts a 'Managing and Sharing Research Data' guide to support staff to store their research data in a publicly accessible way. It explains how to write a data management plan and shares examples of best practice and legal requirements for research data management.

Committing to the principles set out in the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity

The university has included the provisions of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity within its Research Governance and Integrity Policy. The university has also published a Statement on the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. A review of how the university supports ethical concerns in research projects is underway, oversight of compliance is monitored by the university's Research Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Council.

Ensuring a high quality environment for research training and development

Home to high quality research and training facilities, the university trains, nurtures, and develops researchers. Major changes have been made in the way that postgraduate researchers are trained and supported: the establishment of a single Graduate School has coordinated

postgraduate researchers, enhancing collaboration; and the creation of the Researcher Training Coordinator post has supported growing researcher development activities.

The aim is to provide both generic skills training (including proposal writing, research integrity, and REF2021) and state-of-the-art, discipline-specific training across all areas of the university's research portfolio, including the Early Career Researcher Network. The university is also actively engaged in the pan-Scotland Arts and Humanities Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council Graduate Schools, and is substantially committed to supporting participation in the Aurora programme – the university has supported Aurora since it began in 2013 and since then has sponsored 63 women through the programme. This has been supplemented by an internal leadership programme. Furthermore, a commitment to promoting inclusivity will influence those selected for inclusion to REF2021, ensuring equality and diversity.

The action plan from the university's Athena Swan application is focused on promoting and supporting gender balance, amongst other equality and diversity issues. To support this, the university has recently appointed an Athena Swan coordinator who will lead on the next application. Once an institutional Bronze award is secured, consideration will be given to an application for the HR Excellence in Research award.

CASE STUDY EIGHT

Supporting Researcher Development

To increase the ability of the university's research active staff to undertake high quality research, a sabbatical leave policy was implemented in March 2016. Since implementation, three academic staff have taken sabbatical leave and two are due take advantage of this opportunity throughout 2019/20; and of these five, three have been women.

In 2017, Professor Christine Edwards from the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences developed a number of large collaborative projects in line with her research on combating cyanobacterial outbreaks during her sabbatical leave. This led to Dr Edwards competing to win UK Research and Innovation funding of over £3m. Further information can be found in case study seven of this Outcome Agreement.

Again in 2017, Professor David Gray, from the School of Creative and Cultural Business submitted eight proposals for external research funding during his sabbatical, resulting in awards totalling £465k. While, Professor Richard Laing from the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and the Built Environment, spent his sabbatical completing a book entitled 'Digital Participation and

Collaboration in Architectural Design'. During their sabbaticals Professors Gray and Laing continued to be academic leads for the university's Orkney Project.

In 2019/20 two academic staff will be undertaking sabbaticals. From Gray's School of Art, Dr Josie Steed will continue her research into smart textiles and from the School of Creative and Cultural Business, Professor Sarah Pedersen will further her research around gender and also the suffragette movement.

The policy applies to all research active academic staff on permanent contracts of employment. Entitlement to sabbatical leave is not automatic but is based on the merits of a proposal and how those merits fit with the strategic needs of the university. It is expected that during the sabbatical leave (of up to six months) the individual will be able to produce higher quality research outputs or substantial increases in external funding than possible during their standard employment. The university recognises that research can take a variety of forms according to the academic discipline and requires applicants to detail their specific goals and plan of work.

Committing to international collaboration, mobility, and openness

The university is one of only four European institutions to be chosen by the Mexican Government to work in collaboration with Mexican universities to address the future needs of the country's energy sector. The university has built a relationship with Mexico over the last three years after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with SENER (Mexico's Secretary of Energy), and has since worked with both the UK and Mexican governments to understand and recommend the skills and capabilities required to develop an international hydrocarbon sector.

Recognised as a global leader in meeting the needs of the oil and gas sector in terms of education, training and research, the university will lead on the development of a Mexico:UK Smart Data for Energy Research Centre. In developing the centre, the university will work with a consortium of Mexican institutions that will be led by the Instituto Mexicano del Petróleo (IMP). It is expected that this centre will further enhance the university's reputation and standing, and provide a platform for it to nurture, develop and train the international research leaders of tomorrow with a series of collaborative projects and exchanges across the participating institutions. It is anticipated that the collaboration will extend to assisting in the development of longer-term relationships between governments, trade bodies, industry associations and educational institutions in Mexico and the UK, and to use lessons learned from the North Sea to support capacity building and operational excellence in both countries.

A further demonstration of the university's successful international collaboration and engagement with partnerships comes from its participation in the European Commission's CIVITAS initiative. CIVITAS is a network of cities, dedicated to cleaner, better transport in Europe and beyond. Since 2002, CIVITAS has seen over 800 innovative urban transport measures and solutions demonstrated in over 80 living lab cities. The university is a partner in the initiative together with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, Aberdeen Harbour Board and NESTRANS. The initiative is testing innovative and sustainable urban mobility solutions in five European port cities, Aberdeen, Antwerp, Trieste, Constanta and Klaipeda. The five living labs will implement mobility measures, supporting the multifunctional role of cities, ports and gateways to inland areas. The project aims to show that sustainable mobility can increase functional and social cohesion between city centres and ports, while pushing the economy forward and boosting the allure of modern urban environments. As a result of high population growth and increasing demand on old infrastructure, Aberdeen has ambitious plans to transform the transport network and encourage sustainable modes of travel in line with ambitious climate change targets.

Enhancing research collaboration

The university actively supports and is committed to encouraging interdisciplinary research across all areas. Notably, the university's work in Orkney, a project for public benefit, is an important example of this work.

The Orkney Project is focused on finding effective solutions to some of the challenges of island life. The work is truly multidisciplinary, seeing the involvement of many individuals from across the institution, both from academia and the professional support departments. This followed a number of smaller scale interactions between the university and various stakeholders from Orkney which saw the launch of a wider collaborative effort with the support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Orkney Islands Council. The work is at an early stage and the current focus is on smart buildings, health, transport, and tourism.

The university has participated in discussions on the creation of an Islands Deal, similar to the Aberdeen City-Region Deal, with Orkney Islands Council, the Scottish Futures Trust, and other partners. Additionally, a number of successful sandpit events have been held to develop research. Most recently, the university has been involved in the submission of the Horizon 2020 proposal (£732k university involvement) relating to smart and healthy living at home. This included a case study incorporating NHS Orkney Dementia Specialists. Furthermore, 3D digital scanning undertaken in Stromness by staff from the university's Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, in collaboration with the University of the Highlands and Islands

'THE ORKNEY PROJECT IS FOCUSED ON FINDING EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAND LIFE.'

has generated good publicity, widespread public engagement, and potential follow-on activities with Orkney Islands Council.

The university also makes a significant contribution to some Scottish research pools, notably the Scottish Informatics and Computer Science Alliance, and the Energy Technology Partnership. The university has also joined the Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA), an important development for Life Sciences research at the university and providing the university's expertise in cyanobacteria and their toxins to SULSA. Additionally, there is an extensive and significant engagement with Scotland's Innovation Centre Programme, this is detailed further in section four of this Outcome Agreement.

Furthermore, in the current academic session, the university is receiving £60,250 from the SFC's Global Challenges Research Fund to support overseas development funding for 2018/19. The university's strategy will address the five interlinked priority areas identified by the United Nations: People; Planet; Prosperity; Peace; and Partnership. The university is focusing on a subset of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and this will be reviewed on an annual basis and modified as appropriate. The university's partner countries include the Republic of North Macedonia, India, Mexico, St Lucia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The expectation is that the projects will lead to the development of longer-term funded collaborations.



Driving public and cultural engagement, contributing to public policy

In line with the university's commitment to supporting the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research, the university's Professor David Gray, another recipient of a research sabbatical, has followed up on an earlier community-based project 'Keep Fife Moving', aimed at addressing the issue of access to public transport and employment in rural areas. The team is evaluating two new transport initiatives in Fife, designed to assist people from the region's most disadvantaged communities in finding and retaining employment.

The project, Keep Fife Moving (stage two), has been financed by the Scottish Government and European Social Fund, under the Social Innovation Fund. The research team from the university's School of Creative and Cultural Business, is working in partnership with West Fife

Enterprise and the Fife Employability and Training Consortium. The programme will help to empower and upskill the Fife workforce as well as promote social mobility by enabling unemployed people to gain confidence, develop new skills, travel to work, or take up a new career.

The first initiative consists of a driver training facility based at the West Fife Enterprise Learning Centre in Newmills, where people engaged in a wide range of employability training courses, all designed to enhance confidence and life skills, will now be able to access free driving lessons, and support and assistance from a qualified driving instructor. This will give participants important technical skills and ultimately, a driving license to assist them into, or back into work. The second initiative involves ambitious plans to revitalise previously established lift sharing schemes within Fife Council and NHS Fife, as well as an innovative plan to create a new lift sharing scheme for Fife-based staff at Edinburgh Airport.



Knowledge Exchange and Innovation

This year has seen the launch of a new programme of support to develop entrepreneurial activity amongst staff, students and recent graduates. This activity will see a wide range of innovation and start-up support and the launch of the new RGU Accelerator which will be co-located with Opportunity North East's Digital Entrepreneurship Hub at the university's Schoolhill building in the centre of Aberdeen.



**'THE UNIVERSITY'S
START-UP ACCELERATOR
IS THE FIRST FUNDED
PROGRAMME IN
NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND,
DESIGNED TO SUPPORT
THE REGION'S
ENTREPRENEURS
AND INNOVATORS'**

The university has traditionally had a strong focus on industry engagement regionally particularly through the regional strengths in oil and gas production, and internationally as well. The university has structured its business development activities around sector portfolios with a business development manager heading each one up. This approach is one which is unique in Scotland and will see the university lead in the development of a sector approach to skills gap analysis and demand-led interventions to address these. This approach is further detailed in the university's University Innovation Fund annual plan for 2019/20.

Growing the entrepreneurial culture in Scotland

Stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship is one of the university's key strategic commitments. This has seen the university take a step change in its approach to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, with the creation of the university's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group (EIG). This approach is focused on creating a practical, mentor-led innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, supporting individuals as

they adapt to the needs of the fourth industrial revolution. This centralised hub ensures that the university's approach to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship is targeted and solutions-driven.

Initiatives have seen a phased roll out, the first wave was initiated in 2018/19 and these activities will be built upon in 2019/20. To drive entrepreneurship and start-up activities, the university launched a start-up accelerator programme in September 2018. It is aimed at students, staff, and recent graduates of the university and NESCol with early stage business ideas. The first programme saw 165 applications submitted and then considered by a panel of 40 international judges. The 28 successful teams that made it through the judging, will begin their entrepreneurial journey with the university in January 2019 and receive up to £10,000 funding each.

These teams will be housed in a new Digital Entrepreneurship Hub being created by Opportunity North East (ONE) in partnership with the university and Codebase. This partnership aims to support company creation and growth and create a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. The university's Schoolhill campus building is currently being refurbished to create this Hub, which is part of a longer-term strategy to develop an Innovation District in Aberdeen City. Furthermore, to support start-ups and innovation on campus, a space has been created called the Innovation Station and acts as a combined co-working and learning space.

CASE STUDY NINE

Supporting business creation in the region

The university's commitment to stimulating the economic development of the nation has seen the roll-out of a comprehensive programme of support, aiming to develop entrepreneurial activities amongst staff, students and alumni. This has led to the launch of the first funded start-up accelerator programme in north-east Scotland, designed to support the region's entrepreneurs and innovators.

The start-up accelerator programme supports teams of students, staff and recent alumni from the university and North East Scotland College (NESCol). The programme is another example of the ongoing strong relationship between the university and NESCol, providing additional career pathways for students. They are provided with an intensive mentor-led accelerator process lasting for six months that is designed to help them develop their value proposition, leading to the establishment of new businesses which helps to diversify

the regional economy. It is the only programme in the north-east of Scotland, and one of a few accelerators nationally, to provide significant seed funding, a benefit that is extremely necessary to helping these early business achieve success. All teams are initially given £10,000 and they also have the chance to secure a further £15,000 at the end of the programme.

In 2018/19, 165 teams applied and 28 were selected for cohort one; selection was made by a panel of 40 international judges. These businesses cover a range of industries, including the creative industries, food and drink, healthcare, digital, education, and technology. Fifteen countries are represented in this cohort, and notably 39% of teams have at least one female founder. It is anticipated that 28-30 more teams will participate in 2019/20 and this number will continue to grow, leading to the yearly creation of new businesses.

Other activities in the first phase include the launch of the Innovation Skills and Tools practical workshops and the Innovation Masterclass lecture series. The second wave of initiatives aims to take the university beyond its peers in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship activities. This includes the launch of a new programme called Innovation Works which will support innovation in Scottish industry, offering bespoke ideation, innovation acceleration, and intellectual property commercialisation programmes to companies. It will provide practitioner taught and orientated initiatives in key areas to support an innovation economy for the north east, and Scotland as a whole, across a range of industries including energy, tourism, food and beverage. A number of discussions are already ongoing with potential companies to leverage this new system.

Another core element of the second wave is the development of the Aberdeen Innovation Mentors (AIM) group, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation activities in the university and region. The university sees the development of a robust mentor network as key to the delivery of a vibrant and successful entrepreneurial ecosystem and core to the support provided to the start-up accelerator teams.

Throughout this work, the university continues to be an active member of the SFC University Innovation Fund (UIF) Entrepreneurship working group, supporting the development of the national entrepreneurship ecosystem, including contribution to Scotland Can Do and other national strategies. This saw the university participate in a learning visit to MIT in November 2018, organised by SE, HIE and SFC to help Scotland's

HEIs enhance and develop strategies to deliver entrepreneurial education to ambitious scale-up entrepreneurs. This will see the university work collaboratively to ensure that potential high growth businesses have access to focused and relevant information, mentoring and support, drawing upon internationally recognised best practice. The university also continues to collaborate with educational institutions to increase the visibility of Scotland-wide initiatives such as the Converge Challenge, Scottish Edge, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Enterprise Fellowships.

Being active in Scotland's innovation landscape

With a strong reputation for business engagement, the university aims to simplify access to knowledge exchange by proactively collaborating with Innovation Centres and Interface. This will support the Scottish Government's innovation action plan and help to deliver societal and economic growth.

The university is growing its collaboration with Innovation Centres and in 2017/18 submitted 21 Innovation Centre proposals worth over £1.5million. Ten of these projects, worth £0.8million were awarded; this is 44% of the total number of bids submitted and 53% of the value. Furthermore, in 2018/19, the university aims to increase this conversion to 50% by enhancing the quality of the submissions. This target will continue to steadily grow with the target for 2019/20 calling for the submission of 25 proposals with a success rate of 50%. Notably, the university was the first in Scotland to achieve accreditation from the Scottish Innovative Student Award Scheme (SISA). Created by the Scottish Institute for



Enterprise (SIE), SISA allows universities to deliver additional courses that equips students with a forward-thinking and enterprising business skillset. The scheme has been designed in collaboration with three of Scotland's Innovation Centres; DataLab, Digital Health and Care Institute, and CENSIS, and will run in tandem with the students' regular courses.

The university increased its number of Innovation Vouchers (IV) from zero in 2015/16 to seven in 2017/18. This was the result of being more responsive to Interface opportunities. The focus for 2018/19 is to increase this further to 12 IVs with one follow-on IV, while the target for 2019/20 is 16. The university now has ten industry-facing, sector-focused Business

and Economic Development staff, part of whose role is to facilitate discussions with companies and provide access to the wider university, supporting the realisation of these targets.

The university will also continue to proactively engage with all Innovation Centres, working most closely with the Oil and Gas Innovation Centre (OGIC), Datalab, and Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) due to its portfolio and regional priorities. Notably, the university's commitment to the OGIC is further emphasised by the chairman being a member of university staff. In 2019/20, the university aims to increase this more active engagement from three Innovation Centres to five.

CASE STUDY TEN

Innovation in predictive corrosion management

Supporting organisations to be more successful is a key part of the university's commitment to stimulating economic development. This involves partnering with organisations and industry to enhance skills and develop new products and services. The university's commitment to this is demonstrated by its success in the Innovate UK Innovation Vouchers scheme. In 2017, the university partnered with CorrosionRADAR Ltd, a company developing Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT) solutions for predictive corrosion management. It is estimated that the global cost of corrosion is £2 trillion, making it a significant challenge to many industries.

CorrosionRADAR (CR) are specialists in the automated detection and prediction of corrosion in harsh and inaccessible environments, such as corrosion under insulation monitoring also known as CUI Monitoring. They have developed a patented sensor that is permanently

embedded within any structure, providing detailed information on the location and degree of corrosion. The Innovation Voucher partnership with the university investigated how their technology could be used effectively by sectors outside of the oil and gas industry. This focused on monitoring the sensor's behaviour under different operating environments and conditions, particularly the splash zone of offshore structures, such as offshore wind monopoles and offshore rigs, where the sensor would be subjected to cyclical wet and dry conditions. The CR monitoring technology will help towards industrial digitisation, also known as the fourth industrial revolution, minimise uncertainty in maintenance decision making, and contribute towards reducing offshore footprints and carbon footprints. CR chose to collaborate with the university due to its specialism in the design of experimental tests and corrosion monitoring using a variety of innovative techniques.

Representatives from both Interface and Datalab are also hosted at the university, helping to raise the profile of, and aid communication with, the Centres and thereby business. The university will also continue to host and work with the North of Scotland Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) office to promote KTPs across Scotland. This promotion is based on successful university KTP projects, the promotion of Horizon 2020 funding opportunities, and engagement with the university's alumni network to raise its regional and global profile. The university will also continue to host visiting international delegations from governments and industry, working with SDI. In addition, the university will continue to be visible at major international and national conferences and seminars, including SPE Offshore Europe and Subsea UK.

Supporting sustained economic development in the local community

The university has continued to build on its published reports "Regenerating Aberdeen" and "Creating a New North" by becoming a founding partner, and an active stakeholder in, the Aberdeen City Region Deal. This sees the university actively engaging in the region's cultural heritage, provenance, and identity to meet the demands of industry and support societal and economic growth through job creation and innovation. The university is integral to the implementation of the Deal, taking a leading role in the innovation section and the oil and gas and big data elements, and partnering with the University of Aberdeen in the bio-pharmaceuticals and food and drink themes.

Working alongside the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC), a body the university was instrumental in founding, and other stakeholders, the university is leading the establishment of a National Subsea Centre. This Centre will offer an internationally-leading, well-resourced environment dedicated to driving demand-led and transformative technology research in Scotland relating to subsea. The university will use £100k of the additional UIF funding received to support the collaborative efforts in the planning, implementation, and realisation of this Centre.

UIF funding will also be used in the establishment of the Digital Entrepreneurship Hub being created by ONE, in partnership with the university and Codebase, further information on this hub can be found earlier in this section.

The university is also involved in the development of the £40m Bio-therapeutics for Innovation Hub which aims to double the number of life sciences companies in the North-East of Scotland. This will make Aberdeen one of the most dynamic environments to create and grow life sciences businesses.

It supports the goals of regional economic diversification, and national ambitions to collaborate, innovate and commercialise the next generation of therapies and healthcare solutions. This is being partially-funded by the Aberdeen City Region Deal and the development is being led by ONE, in partnership with the university, the ONE Life Sciences sector board, the University of Aberdeen, NHS Grampian, and Scottish Enterprise.

Delivering the Enterprise and Skills review actions on internationalisation

The university has led on a number of key strategic international initiatives to address national and global skills challenges, particularly in the energy sector.

For the last two years, the university has been working with the UK Government in Mexico to provide advice on skills needs, and capacity and capability development for the hydrocarbon sector. This included the creation of a Skills Development Framework, and development and delivery of a pilot Sector Leadership programme, and numerous meetings and presentations with key stakeholders from ministry, regulators, and industry. Furthermore, in 2018 following the university's successful delivery of a Prosperity Funded Skills Development Framework for the Hydrocarbon Sector, the university was selected by SENER as one of the four European partners to strategically support skills development and research in support of Mexico's Energy Reform. This has resulted in a partnership with three Mexican institutions to deliver three dual award programmes, and to set up a consortium-delivered research centre for Smart Data for Energy. This will be a four-year commitment starting in 2019.

The university has continued to support key partners in Japan to address their Prime Minister's target of securing 10,000 offshore engineers by 2030 through the provision of summer schools and other initiatives. These will be developed further and built upon throughout 2019/20.

In Algeria, the university has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sonotrach to deliver two MSc programmes: drilling and well engineering, and solar energy. The university has long-standing links with Algeria and the work here is similar to the work in Mexico as it is focused on addressing skills needs in the country's energy sector.

Furthermore, the university was one of eight organisations, and the only university, to be nominated for a UK Board of Trade Award in Scotland. This was in recognition of the university's skills development activity in Colombia. A commitment to internationalisation has also seen the university successful in securing Global Challenges Research Funding, further information on this can be found in section three of this Outcome Agreement.

In 2019/20, the university's approach will be to consolidate activity in key countries, building relationships and identifying new opportunities for strategic partnerships, to the benefit of both organisations and addressing the agenda of both countries.

Maintaining and sustaining the activities put in place as response to the Innovation Scotland Forum action plan

The university is committed to being a key driver of the innovation landscape in Scotland, with strategic activities focusing on supporting the delivery of the Innovation Scotland Forum action plan.

The university is working collaboratively with other Scottish universities to bring together existing high growth initiatives

into a collaborative SCALE UP programme for Scotland for the delivery of a pilot in 2019/20. The focus is on creating an integrated and cohesive approach whilst streamlining existing activities across higher education institutions, agencies and the private sector. An example of this is the launch of the university's Fit4Energy programme. This provides energy companies with access to new thinking, strategic change and sector expertise to support their ability to scale, innovate and internationalise. It is a specialist continued professional development programme designed to help businesses plan and deliver growth by equipping them with sector specific skills and knowledge. The programme has been developed by the university in close collaboration with Opportunity North East (ONE), Energy Industries Council (EIC) as well as top tier industry partners who hold invaluable sector insight to enrich the programme. It also provides a collaborative, integrated community of support to businesses.

In 2019/20, the university also aims to increase year-on-year the number of applications and finalists to national and international challenges and competitions, whilst equipping entrepreneurial talent with the tools and skills needed to innovate and grow sustainable companies. Key attributes of this include the university's annual start-up accelerator programme and innovation skills workshops, further information can be found earlier in section four of this Outcome Agreement. This will create the pipeline for the Converge Challenge, Scottish Edge, Scottish Institute for Enterprise Fresh Ideas and Scottish Enterprise High Growth programme, as well as international competitions. Additionally, the university

is stimulating and fostering business innovation through its partnership with ONE and Codebase to create a new Digital Entrepreneurship Hub in the centre of Aberdeen City to drive digital innovation and business growth in the region. It is central to the development of a regional Innovation District in the heart of Aberdeen to create sustainable, high-value and highly skilled jobs.

The university continues to make its expertise accessible to industry by working alongside Interface, the SFC Innovation Centres, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International, the Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and the university's Oil and Gas Institute which provides industry with clear front-door access to its oil and gas expertise. Additionally, the university has committed to increasing the conversion of its academic research and knowledge into business start-up and growth. Further information on the university's collaboration with Innovation Centres, and its intellectual property policy can be found in section four of this Outcome Agreement.

Growing commercialisation outcomes

A key element of the impact of university innovation on society is the identification, protection, and licensing of intellectual property. So, to grow commercialisation outcomes a revised Intellectual Property Commercialisation policy, which follows international best practice, has been launched. The primary goal of this new intellectual property framework and policy is to support the development of an entrepreneurial culture and ensure a simple, easy-to-understand, and transparent framework to incentivise staff

to engage in the identification of potential intellectual property.

The objectives of the intellectual property strategy are to: increase the number of invention disclosures of intellectual property from the university's staff; create a new repository of intellectual property for licensing; ensure the terms of licensing are fair, transparent, and incentivise start-up activity; create a small but sustainable revenue stream for the university over time; support the economic development of the region; and support the branding and positioning of the university as an 'innovation university'. These objectives will support the achievement of the university's targets in this area.

The new intellectual property policy framework will stimulate invention disclosures and provide opportunities and pathways for academic researchers to exchange knowledge with industry. This will support an entrepreneurial culture where spinout or licensing to a third party is the objective. This policy also helps to clarify the guidance on university spin-outs which is particularly important as it is anticipated that a number of the new start-up accelerator businesses may come out of the university's intellectual property; this is likely to be from research activity but it may also come from teaching and learning innovation or new ideas from non-academic staff.

Contributing to the University Innovation Fund (UIF) outcomes

The revised University Innovation Fund (UIF) plan reflects the university's step change in its approach to supporting economic growth through its

collaboration with industry and public organisations. Also by providing an innovation landscape for students, staff and members of the public to engage, and develop their ideas for growth or new businesses. This approach fully aligns with the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy priorities and Scotland Can Do Innovation Action Plan and addresses both the university's own initiatives and its co-working with other Scottish universities.

Ensuring research and innovation activity is state-aid compliant

To ensure compliance, the university follows good practice: any state aid that passes through the university to a company must be recorded and the company must be made aware of the state aid regulations attached to the funding, plus any state aid the university claims must fall within the regulations.

As a public body, the university understands the needs to be particularly vigilant when dealing with matched funding. The university uses guidance documents provided by the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) when assessing state aid. When facing complex scenarios, the university seeks advice from funders and, when appropriate, the university engages with the State Aid Team within BEIS for specific expertise and advice.



'A KEY ELEMENT OF THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY INNOVATION ON SOCIETY IS THE IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTION, AND LICENSING OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.'



Sustainable Institutions

The university is a well-governed institution which is compliant with the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance and is currently progressing the necessary changes to its statutory instrument and other governance documents. The oversight and challenge afforded by the Board as a critical friend enables the university to develop its financial resilience and commitment to sustainability.





Obligations under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

The university is committed to meeting its obligations in relation to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and contributing to national carbon reduction targets. Actively promoting sustainability is an essential factor, ensuring targets for reducing the institution's carbon footprint are achieved.

This involves the development and implementation of appropriate environmental programmes to minimise waste and maximise recycling to deliver an environmentally sustainable campus. A Sustainability Advisory Group is in place to support the implementation of carbon management plans and to monitor policy and activities, and report on carbon management and green initiatives. [A link to the university's climate change report has been provided.](#)

Proactive steps towards delivering a reduction in the university's carbon emissions are being taken, supported by funds secured in 2017 from the SFC's University Carbon Reduction Fund (UCRF); a total of £394k was granted to allow four projects, with an estimated annual carbon reduction of 190 tonnes, to be carried out. These include: converting car park lighting to LED; upgrading the air handling units in the Aberdeen Business School; and installing variable speed drives to pumps in RGU Sport and also the Ishbel Gordon Building. Furthermore, the university is progressing towards the Scottish Government target to reduce CO2 emissions by 42% by 2019/2020. This work includes: progressing plans for a combined heat and power plant at the university's Garthdee campus, implementation is planned for 2020; investment in energy efficient parts for heating and ventilation systems; plus a review of current and future climate risks as part of a new Climate Change Action Plan. Identified risks will be incorporated into the university's business continuity plans.

CASE STUDY ELEVEN

Annual carbon reduction of 190 tonnes

The university is focused on fulfilling its responsibility to reduce the environmental impact of its operations. To support this ambition, it has begun a comprehensive programme of work which, when completed, carries an estimated annual carbon reduction of 190 tonnes – this is the equivalent of the annual emissions from 80 average households.

Funds from the SFC's University Carbon Reduction Fund, a total of £394k, were granted to allow key projects to be carried out. Plans to upgrade car park lighting to LED have been completed; LED lights carry a lower wattage so this will result in less power being used. The air handling units in the Aberdeen Business School are being upgraded to prolong their operational life, preventing the need for disposal. These units are essential to controlling the levels of carbon dioxide in rooms. Variable speed drives are being installed to the pumps that supply hot water in RGU Sport and the Ishbel Gordon Building. This will help to regulate the pumps, ensuring they are only used when needed.



The university is also rolling out work to support the Scottish Government target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 42% by 2019/20. A core part of this is progressing the installation of a combined heat and power plant at the university's Garthdee campus, allowing for the generation of electricity and reducing reliance on the grid. The work will also see the investment of energy efficient parts for heating and ventilation systems, and a review of current and future climate risks as part of a new Climate Change Action Plan.



Aligning with the provisions of the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016

Aligning with the provisions of the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, the university is committed to demonstrating excellence in governance and working to continually improve its governance arrangements.

The Board of Governors has established the Working Group on Governance, which is assisting with changes to both the Order of Council and Organisational Regulations. This has determined that a management group should be established to develop the necessary

changes to these regulations. This management group meets regularly and reports to the Working Group of Governance and to the Board. The necessary changes will be implemented within the required timeframe.

To ensure compliance with the Act, the university is examining the process for the election of the Chair of the Board, and changes to the Board's membership to include two trade union nominated governors. Changes to the membership of the Academic Council have been implemented.

The University is also reviewing its Order of Council which governs the powers and objects of the University and the

Board. Proposed changes to the Order of Council and the Organisational Regulations were approved by the Board during 2017/18. Currently, the university is engaging with the Scottish Government to ensure Scottish Ministers and Privy Council approval of the Order of Council. It is anticipated that the Order of Council will be approved during 2019 with election of the first Chair taking place in autumn 2019, with a view to their appointment commencing January 2020.

Proactively promoting gender balance on the board of management and at senior management levels

The Board held a joint briefing session with the Court of the University of Aberdeen and the Board of Management of NESCol on equality and diversity duties in the last academic session. This was led by Advance HE. This briefing highlights to Governors the university's legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and discusses the importance and value of diversity on the Board.

Achieving a broad gender-balance is a commitment and recent appointments will further increase the number of female members on the Board. To continue to support the aim of gender balance, adverts for Board members are worded to specifically encourage candidates from the widest range of backgrounds. The Board's criteria for membership now explicitly refers to the diversity of the Board being a consideration in the appointments process and members of the Board (along with members of the Executive) have received training in unconscious bias. The Board undertakes

an anonymous equality and diversity monitoring exercise which is reported as part of the university's annual report on equality and diversity.

Eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations

To build an inclusive working and learning environment, the university has developed five **Equality Outcomes**:

- Our university: actively embrace diversity and equality through the student and staff experience.
- Breaking down barriers: increase access for learners traditionally facing greater barriers to higher education.
- Achieving graduate employability: shape creative, professional and engaged individuals.
- Supporting student success: support learners through each step of their educational pathways.
- Enriching the student experience: unleashing individual potential through a complete RGU experience.

These aim to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and build good relations between different individuals and groups. They were published in April 2017 and progress against these will be reported in April 2019.

The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) monitors the progress and implementation of these outcomes, among other equality related tasks.



'TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE WORKING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, THE UNIVERSITY HAS DEVELOPED FIVE EQUALITY OUTCOMES.'



Membership of EDAG is diverse across staff and students and includes a range of individuals who champion various protected characteristics across the university.

Current and future equality and diversity activity includes:

- Continually improving the way equality data is monitored and analysed allowing for increased understanding, supporting EDAG in monitoring the impact and effectiveness of the equality outcomes
- School and departmental reviews of the data that relates to their specific activity, including the course appraisal process
- Celebrating equality through awareness raising campaigns, including activities relating to International Women's Day, Scottish Interfaith Week, and LGBT History Month

- Applying to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and publishing a transgender equality policy, creating a fully supportive environment for members of staff who are trans or gender diverse. Acknowledging the recommendations of TransEDU, a trans and gender diverse policy for students will be developed throughout 2018/19
- Raising awareness of unconscious bias across the university, particularly with staff involved in recruitment
- Reviewing the use of gender neutral language during the recruitment process
- Developing and publishing a British Sign Language action plan to support the Scottish Government's action plan, for BSL users to participate in higher education and fully engage in the learner journey.

The university's [Mainstreaming Report](#) sets out further information on the range of activities undertaken to address discrimination, promote equality, and foster good relationships towards staff, students and external stakeholders.

Securing value for money in the use of public funding

A focus on efficient operations is key to maintaining financial sustainability, ensuring the ongoing and future success of the university. To achieve this, and still provide an excellent learning and teaching environment, the university has embedded a value for money strategy across all of its activities. The responsibility of this lies with all members of staff.

In 2017/18, a number of activities took place to achieve value for money. It was noted by auditors on the audit committee that the range of activities were the broadest they have seen:

- The annual course portfolio analysis ensured new course development and cessation to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of learning and teaching delivery, this saw the cessation of six courses.
- Responsible procurement resulted in savings of £233k during 2016/17 - the university engages fully with Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), during 2016/17 the body reported the institutions total savings at £919k.
- A number of internal audits were carried out, to test for the economy and effectiveness of various processes. These included audits on key

financial controls, estates contracts management, and a review of a school.

- A drive to reduce energy by focusing on using spaces efficiently to avoid carrying out expensive building works.

The university is committed to carrying out procurement in a way to minimise any negative environmental, ethical, economic or social impact and is committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The university is fully compliant with the Scottish Code of Good Governance in relation to the operation of its Remuneration Committee as well as SFC guidance in relation to disclosure of remuneration for senior managers.

The university also publishes in full its senior manager pay policy and benchmarking arrangements. During 2017/18, the university reviewed its





procedures in relation to the employee performance review process and performance related pay arrangements as they relate to senior managers. The revised process ensures full transparency of the process to both reviewers and reviewees.

Showing leadership in Fair Work

The university is focused on building a culture of authenticity, approachability, collaboration, innovation, supportiveness, and respectfulness, where staff are engaged and empowered to contribute to the institution.

Staff are provided an effective voice in the running of the university by a number of elected staff governors (one academic member, one non-academic member, and one elected from the Academic Council). Furthermore, four trade unions are recognised on campus,

and the university holds a number of all staff meetings with the executive team annually. Additionally, the Principal holds regular meetings with all schools and departments, an employee survey is run every two years, and the university's annual appraisal process for staff has been amended to make it easier for individuals to provide upwards feedback. The university is also accredited with Investors in People status.

Recently, progression routes for academic staff were reviewed and a new internal merit-based promotion process is in place. It should be noted that across both academic and non-academic roles there is significant internal promotion of talent. Additionally, a number of professional development programmes, some accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management, and a successful mentoring scheme are in place to enable staff to realise their full potential.

Staff also enjoy security through set working hours, a generous holiday entitlement, the ability to apply for flexible working arrangements (with many departments also operating individual schemes), and flexible retirement options. The university prides itself on issuing clear job descriptions and an employee review process where staff can discuss objectives and development needs. There is also a longstanding policy of using voluntary redundancy/severance schemes in situations where downsizing is required.

Furthermore, since 2012 the university has achieved its aspiration to meet the living wage rate. It has a local agreement with trade unions in respect of the living wage but is not a living wage accredited employer. Signing up to become a living

‘A FOCUS ON EFFICIENT OPERATIONS IS KEY TO MAINTAINING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, ENSURING THE ONGOING AND FUTURE SUCCESS OF THE UNIVERSITY.’

wage accredited employer would mean relinquishing control of a significant aspect of the university's pay bill and long-term could only be affordable by cutting back on the other benefits which staff enjoy such as a defined benefit pension scheme, ten days more annual leave than statutory requirements, and generous family-friendly leave and pay arrangements.

Outcome Agreement

2019 - 20 / 2021 - 22



Appendix C: University Innovation Fund Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22

Introduction

The University has highlighted, through its Outcome Agreement (OA), its commitment to deliver the Scottish Government's strategic priorities set out in its Economic Strategy. The support received through the University Innovation Fund (UIF) has allowed RGU, not only to strengthen its internal and external facing innovation infrastructure, but also to take a novel approach as it engages with industry, community and the public sector. This change has been reflected in RGU's revised strategy, with economic development now featuring as one of its four key priorities.

The multi-investment approach in support of RGU's own funds including: UIF; economic development organisations such as Opportunity North East; City Region Deal; instruments such as Innovate UK; and generating revenue from business activity – along with a change in strategy and approach - has enabled RGU to significantly increase and improve its level of engagement with business, community and the public sector. Going forward to 2019/20 and ahead, it is intended that there will be a major step-change in regards to RGU's approach to economic development which will bring value, not only to the university but also to all the communities it serves. To significantly increase its impact, RGU must also increase the level of investment it secures, so that it can match and exceed its ambition and genuinely deliver in a way that makes a real difference.

To help realise its ambition, RGU in 2018/19 changed its business engagement team structures. It built on its recruitment in early 2018 of a Vice Principal Commercial and Regional Innovation, who brought significant international expertise; developed a new Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group (EIG) to drive entrepreneurship activity; re-scoped the Director of Business Development's role to include Economic Development and restructured the business development, commercial, contracting and post-award teams to become one united Business and Economic Development (BAED) team.

As well as its own focus on innovation, RGU will grow its involvement in Research & Commercialisation Directors' Group (RCDG) activities, working with other universities to implement national initiatives and deliver on commitments in areas such as Innovation Challenge. This partnership approach will be a key element in RGU's drive to create significantly greater impact, as exemplified through the creation of the National Subsea Centre with OGTC and the TechHub with Opportunity North East and CodeBase – both planned for 2019.

In December 2018, the University launched its revised strategy with the mission: 'to transform people and communities by providing demand-led teaching and research to contribute to economic, social and cultural development regionally, nationally and internationally'. The University's clear commitment to economic and societal development is evidenced by one of its four aims being specifically focussed on this area: 'to stimulate economic development and support organisations to be more successful'. This paper sets out RGU's ambition in AY2019-20 in that regard.

Outcome 1 (Demand Stimulation): Working with Enterprise Agencies, Scottish Government and Business Networks, Interface and others helping increase the demand and quality of engagement for business and the public sector for university services.

The university has a strong reputation for business engagement and undertaking industry relevant teaching and research and this is reflected in its employability figures and consistently high performance in rankings that recognise such activity.

In 2018/19 and as part of its revised strategy, RGU further increased its focus on regional and national engagement, working with enterprise agencies and other key organisations to maximise opportunities for local business and public organisations.

As a founding partner of the Aberdeen City Regional Deal, RGU works alongside all partners, including Opportunity North East (ONE) and University of Aberdeen, to meet the demands of industry and address the region's economic development needs through job creation, technology, skills and innovation. The university played a leading role in the oil and gas and big data elements of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, and partnered with the University of Aberdeen in the biopharmaceuticals and the food & drink themes.

The university's key strategic initiative in this regard, and working alongside the Oil and Gas Technology Centre and other stakeholders, will be to establish a world-class National Subsea Centre dedicated to driving industry demand-led transformative technology research in Scotland related to subsea. This is a strategic initiative that will be grown over the next three years.

Regional demand for services will be further stimulated through focussed engagement with other key sectors by the Business Development team and relevant academics. These will mainly be organised in conjunction with the enterprise agencies and relevant trade associations and some activity will be done in partnership with other universities, building momentum through cooperation in RCDG subgroups.

In order to maximise opportunities for the region as well as the University, in February 2019 the Director of Business Development's role was widened in scope to include Economic Development and the Business Development, Commercial, Contracting and Post-Award teams combined to form one department – Business and Economic Development (BAED). This internal development will help maximise opportunities and improve services to make it easier for businesses to work with the University. In May 2019, the business development team was further restructured to take a market-orientated sectoral focus and a more consultative sales approach. These combined initiatives will support RGU's full UIF plan and in particular increase regional impact and engagement with business and stakeholder organisations.

To further increase the quality of engagement with companies, relevant academics and all BAED staff will undertake workshops with key development organisations. This was initiated in April 19 with a KTP workshop for academic and professional staff, delivered in collaboration with the North of Scotland KTP Centre. The event was filmed for future staff induction and training purposes. This model will be replicated in 2019/20 with other Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer organisations and for other topics.

RGU will also increase the quality and reach of engagement with businesses through its Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) focus, particularly as it recruits 180 GAs for September 19. This builds on the 143 Graduate Apprentices from 67 companies recruited in 2018/19. RGU will

work closely with all these companies to deepen its level of engagement and the meeting of their needs, aside from that provided through the graduate apprenticeships themselves.

In 2019/20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Secure collaboration agreements with a further 50 companies through the graduate apprenticeships programme;
- Run three development workshops for Business and Economic Development staff and relevant academics in priority areas of knowledge transfer;
- Run four sector specific workshops with businesses to develop a demand profile for university services for each of these sectors; and
- Launch the National Subsea Centre with the OGTC, gain a minimum of two anchor partners, two research partners and four project partners for the Centre, within the year.

Outcome 2 (Simplification/Commercialisation): In partnership with Enterprise Agencies, and Interface and others demonstrably simplify business access to knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities.

The university simplifies access to knowledge and expertise by working through key national initiatives and in the way it conducts business directly with industry.

In order to improve business accessibility, RGU will take a more consultative approach with companies and will engage on a sectoral basis. This approach will be undertaken in consultation with trade associations, Enterprise Agencies, NESCoL and other universities, as appropriate. The University will also simplify access through an improved business web presence (to be launched summer 19).

RGU will continue to engage with all Innovation Centres, particularly building on its significant success working with the Oil and Gas Innovation Centre, Datalab and Construction Scotland Innovation Centre.

The University will continue to host representatives from both Interface and Datalab, helping to raise the profile of, and aid communication with, the Centres and thereby with business. The North of Scotland KTP Centre will continue to be located at the university as it has been for over ten years. Both the KTP Centre and the Interface representative are now based within the University Business and Economic Development Hub, which provides the ideal ecosystem for co-working between the teams and with academics and providing a one-stop-shop for business. Building on RGU's existing relationship with Interface, a staff member from the Business and Economic Development Team was seconded to Interface for 12 months as a Business Engagement Executive, further strengthening RGU's links with Interface. The experience gained by the individual through the secondment will benefit the BAED team as well as the individual to maximise opportunities for Knowledge Transfer.

The University will seek to significantly increase the number of businesses accessing its knowledge and expertise as evidenced through metrics attached to Innovation Vouchers, KTP partnerships, Innovation Centres and Graduate Apprenticeships. This will be actively supported by the appointment of a Knowledge Transfer Industry Engagement Manager who will work with the Business Development team, thereby stimulating demand and simplifying access for businesses.

This approach to increasing engagement with companies and partner organisations will be demonstrably assisted through the new role of Director of Economic and Business Development and the fact that the university now has 15 central industry-facing staff, whose roles include the facilitation of discussions with companies and a simplified approach for their access to the wider university. This is aided by the fact that many of these individuals originally came from industry.

RGU's Oil & Gas Institute has provided a gateway for industry to access RGU expertise and facilities, including the University's world-class drilling simulation suite. This gateway has been promoted through events and significant media engagement by Institute staff, as they share their expertise. The Institute has also led on seminal industry reviews such as the UKCS Workforce Dynamics launched May 19. This model will now be reviewed to consider how it could be replicated for other sectors, again making services more accessible to industry.

The university has adopted the standard contracts and guidance for Scottish Funding Council's Innovation Vouchers Programme and continues to work with the relevant RCDG Contracts sub-group to further develop simplified contracting arrangements and to refresh templates. In addition, RGU works closely with Interface and the North of Scotland KTP Centre on the implementation of a Post Referral Protocol to ensure both continuity of support with businesses and selection of the most appropriate academic partners.

In 2019/20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Increase total revenue from knowledge transfer activity to £1 million. Activity should include:
 - 16 active KTP Programmes
 - 16 SFC Innovation Vouchers
 - Innovation centre funding (while being mindful that much of 2018/19 £500k funding was through OGIC which will not receive stage 2 funding;
- Build on RGU's strong media relations and profile in energy and roll this approach out with two other sectors;
- Work even more closely with enterprise organisations such as Scottish Enterprise and Opportunity North East, as well as trade organisations and NESCol, to increase business access to university services; and
- Secure relationships and collaborations agreements with an additional 50 companies through the use of the Graduate Apprenticeship scheme.

Outcome 3 (simplification/greater innovation): In partnership with Enterprise Agencies and Interface at a national level make use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM)

The university is committed to partnering with other universities and enterprise agencies to promote greater innovation and enhance enterprise in the Economy.

RGU undertakes focussed research in several of Scotland's key economic sectors, including Energy, Subsea, Smart Data, Health & Wellbeing and the Creative Industries. Together with Opportunity North East (ONE), the University of Aberdeen and other key players, RGU will shape and support the development of the Aberdeen City Region Deal and its 10-year

investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity and infrastructure across the region.

Key infrastructure initiatives for 2019/20 will include the launch of the National Subsea Centre, in partnership with the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) and the opening of the TechHub in RGU's city centre building, in partnership with ONE and Codebase. The Centre will host the RGU accelerator programme for up to thirty start-up companies, a mentors group and other key innovation developments.

In 2018/19, RGU worked with Datalab to promote innovation in data science both through a video and at the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston. In 2019/20, RGU will seek to undertake similar activity with other partners.

RGU will also build its influence on innovation from a national perspective through the North of Scotland KTP Centre hosting the UK National KTP conference in November 19 and through the Centre Manager being UK national chair for the year.

In 2019/20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Launch the National Subsea Centre with OGTC and work with them to stimulate industry use of the world-leading facility;
- Launch the TechHub maximising its external influence as well as achieving innovation excellence within the Hub itself;
- Create further opportunities with the Wood Foundation and Opportunity North East on the back of the success of projects such as RGU Accelerator and skills programmes;
- Support the influence of the KTP programme with the North of Scotland Centre and in particular maximise the value of hosting the UK National KTP Conference in November 19;
- Continue to serve on the boards and committees of national enterprise organisations such as Opportunity North East to promote greater innovation in the economy; and
- Work in collaboration with Interface and other HEIs, through RCDG, to support the development of a Scottish Training Programme for staff working at the academic / business interface.

Outcome 4 (entrepreneurialism): Sector will have made significant positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, staff and businesses

Since being formed in August 2018, RGU's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group (EIG) has led the drive to foster an entrepreneurial community throughout the university. This has included the development of a number of key initiatives which will be built on in 2019/20:

The first RGU Startup Accelerator program, supported by the Wood Foundation, opened for applications in September 2018. 160 teams applied by November 18 and the first cohort of 25 startup teams, made-up of RGU and North East Scotland College (NESCol) staff, students and alumni, commenced the programme in January 19. The programme culminated in a showcase event in May 19. Over 4,500 students attended an 'Introduction to Entrepreneurship' in Autumn 18 which included a 'call to arms' to apply to the accelerator program. 8 out of the 11 RGU

Academic Schools have teams in the accelerator program illustrating the success of the campaign to promote entrepreneurship to all. 40% of the teams have one or more female founders.

In addition, a number of new initiatives have been successfully launched with the aim of creating a vibrant entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem in the University. Highlights have included:

- 26 Innovation Skills workshops delivered to 572 participants;
- 10 Innovation Masterclasses delivered to 578 attendees by industry leaders;
- Set up of Aberdeen Innovation Mentors, now with 36 members;
- Bespoke 4-week Entrepreneurship Advancement Programme (EAP) to support ambitions to create a business, delivered to 55 student, graduate and staff entrepreneurs;
- The launch of a revised RGU Intellectual Property policy, which favours the development of start-ups, in October 18. This significantly supported the start-up Accelerator programme and will be further communicated within the University in 2019/20.

RGU continues to work alongside other Scottish HEIs to increase the visibility and take-up of Scotland-wide initiatives including the Converge Challenge, Scottish Edge and RSE Enterprise Fellowships. Success in this area is illustrated by 41 applications (18 in 2018/19) being submitted to SIE Fresh Awards by RGU and with two of the companies winning awards. One of RGU's current incubator tenants was awarded a place on OGTC's international TechX Pioneers programme in March 19, one of only 10 selected from 200 applications.

In May 19 RGU launched its first Creative Accelerator programme and a cohort of 12 creative entrepreneurial teams will be supported through 2019.

RGU will launch a new MSc in Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship in 2019/20.

In partnership with Opportunity North East (ONE) and Codebase, RGU will open the TechHub in summer 19, aimed at accelerating the growth of early stage and established digital tech businesses in the region. The development of the Hub will provide a dedicated environment for digital business incubation and growth and enhance the entrepreneurial environment to support scale-up.

In 2019/20, the main entrepreneurial focus for the university will be to:

- Develop the ONE/RGU Techhub as home to the RGU start-up community and Mentors;
- Launch and support the second Startup Accelerator program for up to 30 companies;
- Collaborate with Scottish HEIs and key stakeholders, including SFC, to deliver a pilot 'Scotland Can Do Scale' programme drawing on the expertise residing in our institution;
- Create a suite of self-paced, micro courses relating to innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Grow the programme of Innovation Masterclasses and Innovation Skills;
- Launch team-based innovation and product/service development program for companies;
- Create 'test-bed' opportunities for beta-testing of new products and services; and
- Continue to encourage and promote a vibrant Student Entrepreneurship Society.

Outcome 5 (international): In partnership with SDI, Connected Scotland and others pool knowledge and networks and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally

The university will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, Scottish Development International (SDI), Department for International Trade (DIT), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and others to maximise opportunities for the Scottish economy internationally, thereby supporting the actions set out in the Enterprise and Skills Review actions and addressing the Scottish Government's "Scotland: A Trading Nation". RGU will continue to work with partners to access opportunities in key international regions and support Scotland plc to trade on an international stage.

A key example for RGU has been its work with the UK Government in Mexico over the past two years, providing advice on skills needs and capacity and capability development for the oil and gas sector both nationally and at state level. This included the creation of a Skills Development Framework for the Hydrocarbon Sector for Mexico, development and delivery of a pilot Sector Leadership programme and numerous meetings and presentations with key stakeholders – ministry, regulators and industry. In 2018, RGU was selected by the Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER) as one of four European partners, along with the University of Aberdeen, to strategically grow skills development and research in support of Mexico's Energy Reform. This has resulted in RGU partnering with three Mexican institutions to deliver three dual award programmes and to set up a consortium-delivered research centre for Smart Data for Energy. This will be a four-year commitment starting in 2019. RGU will particularly work with the UoA to pool knowledge and share best practice to maximise impact and deliver efficiencies when working in Mexico.

Aligned to the City Council's Aberdeen-Japan strategy to further develop trade, tourism, academic and sporting links, RGU has continued to develop its relationship with the Nippon Foundation and support them and other key partners to address the Prime Minister's target of securing 10,000 offshore engineers by 2030. In 2018, RGU delivered its 3rd Summer School for the Nippon Foundation and signed a statement of intent with Kobe City Government and a MOU with Kobe University to collaborate on the development of capability and capacity for ocean industries. RGU will build on this momentum in the years ahead.

The World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) AGM will be held in Aberdeen in September 19, involving delegations from over 20 member cities. RGU will play an active role in the week's activities.

In 2019/20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Consolidate activity in two key countries, building relations and identifying new opportunities;
- Address opportunities within one new country market;
- Work with Opportunity NorthEast and the University of Aberdeen to identify how shared activity and pooling of knowledge can increase impact and create efficiencies when working in Mexico and consider how this approach might be rolled out to other areas;
- Continue to work closely with SDI and with other HE institutions and relevant bodies in a structured way to promote and represent Scotland internationally and in organising incoming visits;

- Pro-actively build upon existing European networks with a view to mitigating potentially negative effects from Brexit; and
- Maximise the value of hosting the WECP event.

Outcome 6 (inclusive growth and social impact)

Through its strategic framework, RGU articulates its commitment to 'Prioritise Societal and Economic Impact' and enriching the community and individuals' lives. To do this, RGU has continued to build on its published reports on "Regenerating Aberdeen" and "Creating a New North"; by being an active stakeholder in the Aberdeen City Region Deal; and by actively engaging in supporting the region's cultural heritage, provenance and identity.

The following examples illustrate RGU's work:

Streetsport, funded through the Denis Law Legacy Trust, delivers a range of sports programmes to young people, where there are hotspots of anti-social behaviour or areas of deprivation in Aberdeen. Streetsport, which in 2018 engaged with over 16,000 young people, specialises in supporting young people to be the best they can be by engaging them in sports sessions and then giving them a platform to improve their lives. Participants then progress on to becoming volunteers and joining an employability programme. Streetsport also runs prevention programmes in primary schools, employability programmes, an innovative new programme supporting young people affected by imprisonment and supervises provision on Scotland's 1st Cruyff Court, the Cruyff Court Denis Law. Streetsport have been recognised for their outstanding work in the community via a National Pride of Sport award and RGU, through Streetsport, was the only university to win a Queens Award for Voluntary Services. The focus for 2019/20 is to enhance the development and upskilling of the young people to help them make positive life choices and start on new careers.

Look Again Aberdeen emerged from the 'Creating a New North' report as a public engagement initiative of RGU, to actively support and spotlight the region's culture, heritage and creative identity. Now embedded within Gray's School of Art, it is supported by local and national funders to lead on developing the creative industries in the region through a range of initiatives.

These include the annual Look Again Festival, a celebration of the very best contemporary visual art and design, showcasing local and internationally acclaimed talent in Aberdeen, and inviting residents and visitors to look at the city with fresh eyes. The festival includes high quality internship and volunteer opportunities for students, business opportunities for creatives, specific projects to engage with a range of communities in the city, and also enriches the lives of audiences and participants by providing access to culture.

Across the year, Look Again Aberdeen delivers a programme of sector development events, such as creative PechaKucha nights, and the exhibitions, talks and workshops that take place at the Look Again Project Space. These provide learning tools and skills development for students, and well as high quality public engagement opportunities.

2019 sees the launch of the Creative Accelerator, a partnership with the RGU Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group that is supported by Creative Scotland. It aims to encourage sustainable creative business in the region, with talent retention and economic impact as key drivers.

RGU has been working with other universities to support business and industry and economic and social development in the Highlands and Islands across a range of industry sectors. With HIE, Orkney Islands Council, UHI and Heriot Watt University, RGU has been building engagement in the Orkney Islands and is helping to lay a foundation for additional investment in the region through the islands deal. Following a number of smaller scale interactions, a

cross-university effort has now been launched to use RGU research and services for the direct benefit of the people, society and businesses of Orkney in 2018/19 and 19/20.

The Aberdeen Youth Games was developed in 2013 in partnership between RGU's Sport and Exercise Science team and Sport Aberdeen's Active Schools team and run annually. Aberdeen Active Schools take 35 second year BSc (Hons) Sports and Exercise Science students on a four week placement and they are provided with training to deliver coaching in badminton, tennis and squash, and delivered four weeks of training in 30 primary schools across Aberdeen. At the end of the placement three small festivals are held at different venues celebrating each of the sports. Approximately 4,000 primary school pupils are involved in the activities.

The university regularly hosts events to encourage the local community on to campus. These include professorial lectures covering a wide range of topics and research, encouraging intellectual thinking and discussion and a number of public engagement activities and events through Gray's School of Art. These include the degree show, the fashion show and photography exhibition and a series of short courses. The university also encourages the youngest members of the community to consider STEM subjects by hosting the annual TechFest.

In 2019-20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Support the implementation of City Region Deal, focusing on key themes of innovation and impact;
- Continue to partner with stakeholders to develop city initiatives in support of young people, sport and the creative industries, such as StreetSport, Youth Games and LookAgain;
- Progress work in Orkney to accelerate societal impact; and
- Clearly define social and cultural benefit as part of programme deliverables/impact.

Outcome 7 (equality & diversity): Ensure positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of UIF

The university will continue to ensure that its activities in support of UIF outcomes reflect its deep commitment to advancing equality and diversity. The university is committed to building an inclusive working and learning environment and promoting the importance of equality and diversity through all of our activities. The university has an Equality and Diversity Advisory group to advise and make recommendations to the Executive on matters relating to the promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity issues throughout the university, however the university also considers that each staff member has a personal responsibility to positively promote equality and diversity.

The university carries out a range of awareness raising activities on different protected characteristics across the year, including International Women's Day, Scottish Interfaith Week and LGBT history month. Other activities to ensure positive promotion of equality and diversity include undertaking an application to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, to understand how we can best support LGBT+ staff and developing a range of policies to support all of our staff on campus and to ensure that we are able to eliminate harassment and discrimination. The university is a member of the Athena SWAN Charter and is committed to the aims and principles of Athena SWAN in promoting gender equality.

Throughout 2019/20, RGU will continue to consider and prioritise the equality and diversity impact on UIF in our wider outcome agreement and through our institutional approach to equality impact assessments.

The university will continue to ensure that its activities in support of UIF outcomes reflect its deep commitment to advancing equality and diversity. The university is committed to building an inclusive working and learning environment and promoting the importance of equality and diversity through all of our activities. The university has an Equality and Diversity Advisory group to advise and make recommendations to the Executive on matters relating to the promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity issues throughout the university, however the university also considers that each staff member has a personal responsibility to positively promote equality and diversity.

The university carries out a range of awareness raising activities on different protected characteristics across the year, including International Women's Day, Scottish Interfaith Week and LGBT history month. In 2018, the university marked Trans Day of Remembrance for the first time with a guest speaker who reflected upon their own experience of transitioning at work. Other activities include undertaking an application to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, to understand how we can best support LGBT+ staff and developing a range of policies to support all of our staff on campus and to ensure that we are able to eliminate harassment and discrimination. The university is a member of the Athena SWAN Charter and is committed to the aims and principles of Athena SWAN in promoting gender equality.

The university continues to address the gender pay gap through biennial reviews on attraction and retention premiums, addressing historic pay arrangements and including gender neutral language through recruitment processes. It also continues to implement best practice to ensure all staff have the opportunity to progress, regardless of their personal circumstances and in 2019/20 will undertake a review of the university's family friendly provision.

In 2019-20, the main focus for the university will be to:

- Align the University's equality outcomes and activities to the recently approved strategy to ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are embedded throughout our activities;
- Conduct a full review of the induction processes to improve take up of equality and diversity training;
- Review the University's Children on Campus policy to deliver a more inclusive and welcoming environment to student and staff parents;
- Provide unconscious bias training to staff involved in recruitment and selection to deliver a fair and equal recruitment process.

Appendix B: Health Outcomes 2019/20 to 2021/22

Outcome 1: To increase the retention and completion rates in nursing and midwifery

Context: The School continues to focus on continuous monitoring of attrition and implementing a range of actions tailored to enhance retention and completion rates. As part of the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Performance Management Review of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education the School aims as a minimum to maintain targets of no more than 20% attrition at the completion of pre-registration programmes. With overall student numbers increasing in the past three years, the School has within the same period achieved increased retention and completion rates. The course management teams will continue to implement a range of interventions based upon annual course appraisal reporting and quality enhancement plans to ensure the School's level of retention falls within target. Proactive actions to increase the retention and completion rates in pre-registration nursing and midwifery courses are detailed as follows.

SFC Objective	Actions	Baseline	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target	2021/22
To increase the retention and completion rates ¹ in nursing and midwifery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Stage Leaders across all programmes to closely monitor student achievement within specific parts of the programme Course leaders and Stage leaders will continuously monitor student achievement and identify students who appear at risk and where appropriate provide relevant support and referral to university services Continue to support student with additional learning needs through close liaison with Student Life and the disability service Continued efficient management of selection processes to target student midwives and student nurses Enhanced assessment feedback for all students via the implementation of Grademark across all courses Enhancement of assessment periods and preparation for practice within programme calendars to enable students to manage workload more effectively 	The proportion of full-time first year Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) returning to study in year two: 91.2%* [2016/17]	92%	92%	92%	92%

¹ Five year completion rates as calculated by NHS Education Scotland will, by 2021/22, be 85% or above.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of an enhanced model of support for students learning in practice placements • Conitnuous review of a whole systems approach to the standardisation of student guidelines provided in key documents e.g. Module Handbooks • Enhanced personal tutor support and development via the implementation of a key personal tutor within the School 					
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Note: *University Data: BI reports 'Retention example Year into Year+1'/internal data source

Outcome 2: To improve the gender balance across all fields of nursing

Context: Males have for some time and continue to comprise a small percentage of the overall workforce in nursing and midwifery. The School in collaboration with four other Scottish universities is participating in a research project funded by NHS Education Scotland (NES) exploring the influences and causes of the under-representation of men in pre-registration nursing in Scotland. Data collection is now complete and a consensus event has occurred. The findings from this study will be used to contribute to strategies to attract males into nursing and midwifery. The School will continue to work with the Chief Nurse's Office and NHS Grampian to help improve the recruitment of adult nurses in response to an acute skills shortage within the region aiming to encourage applications to nursing, particularly from males. To date the majority of action has been taken forward through the Access and Articulation Team. This has involved a range of activities relating to addressing gender stereotyping of subject and career choices. These include as follows:

SFC Objective	Actions	Baseline	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target	2021/22 target
To improve the gender balance across all fields of nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School continuing to actively recruit school aged males to attend the summer school • Ensuring and proactively developing publicity and marketing material and activities which represent gender balance with males and male role models highly prominent • Continued delivery of specific activities challenging gender stereotyping in schools within Aberdeen – this activity has started with two academies • Continued delivery of specific activities jointly with schools e.g. 	The proportion of SDUE's by gender (male/female %) 6/94**	8/92	9/91	10/90	11/89

	<p>P6/P7 Boys into Nursing day on campus; Academy on campus day with the Schools of Computing and Digital Media and Nursing and Midwifery; and, recognising the importance of positive role models, involvement of Student Ambassadors in the #NaeGenderLimits stand at the Skills Scotland event in Aberdeen.</p>					
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Note: **University Data: BI report 'OA-Protected Characteristics SITS from 2017'/internal source

Outcome 3: To increase regional collaboration between universities across all fields of nursing and midwifery provision

Context: The School is engaged in discussions with University of Highlands and Islands in supporting the development of midwifery education provision in Inverness. This is designed to increase the number of Highlands and Islands resident students undertaking midwifery education across the north region. In addition the School is in discussion with Dundee University and the regional NHS Boards about collaboration in the delivery of advanced nurse practitioner education. The school continues to work closely with North East Scotland College (NESCoL) and Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) in promoting and supporting ENU learning disability students in the North East of Scotland. The school is engaged in discussions with Dundee, ENU, Abertay and Stirling, in exploring a more collaborative approach to the utilisation of practice placements

The School works closely with a number of health boards (NHS Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles). A particular area of current focus is in supporting the development of advanced nurse practitioners – this includes the development of non-medical prescribing and advanced clinical examination courses. In addition, the university has received additional commissions for school nursing, health visiting and district nursing. For 2018/19, the School will:

SFC Objective	Actions	Baseline	2018/19 target
<p>To increase collaboration between universities across all fields of nursing and midwifery provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence collaborative developments across regional institutions • Contribute to the development of a regional north network of nurse education providers • Maximise resource across the network and explore opportunities for resource to be used to support specialised areas of practice • Work with the northern health boards, the universities of the Highlands and Islands, Abertay and Dundee around the development of mental health nurses at advanced practice level 	<p>No formal agreements in place</p>	<p>Establish a joint agreement in relation to advance practice provision in the region.</p>

Outcome 4: To increase collaboration with Scotland's Colleges to strengthen access and articulation into pre-registration programmes

Context: The School continues to collaborate closely with local colleges with representation of FE colleagues on key school committees. The School is fully committed to participation in national work to develop a common articulation framework for nursing and midwifery education in Scotland, building on the existing Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The School has for a number of years worked with local FE partners to enable access to stage 1 (NC) and stage 2 (HNC) of its nursing (adult and mental health) programmes. Opportunities for more flexible access to B Midwifery and B Nursing (Children and Young People's Nursing) will be explored further. The School has evidenced agreement to increase HNC Degree Link numbers with NESCol for entry in 2019. The School has also agreed to consider applications from applicants from Scottish Wider Access Programmes for entry in 2019. For 2018/19, the School will:

SFC Objective	Actions	Baseline	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target	2021/22
To increase collaboration between universities across all fields of nursing and midwifery provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in national work to enhance collaboration with Scotland's colleges to strengthen access and articulation into pre-registration programmes Evidence the achievement enhanced flexibility of entry to pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes Enable access to Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) routes to nursing for support workers, in addition to current Higher National Certificate (HNC) route Work with NESCol to develop an access course to midwifery for students commencing in 2020. 	The proportion of Scottish-domicile HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing: 8.4% [2017/18]	The proportion of Scottish-domicile HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing: 11%	10%	10%	10%
		The proportion of SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes: 7.1% [2017/18]	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%

***University Data: School of Nursing Articulation figures – BI report 'OA-Articulation Scripte SITS'/internal source

***University Data: School of Nursing MD20 figures – 'OA – MD20 and 40 SITS from 2017'/internal source

Impact Assessment Toolkit

Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening

Outcome Agreement

Relevance

1. Is there any evidence that the following groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the proposed policy?

	Yes	No	Unclear
Age	X		
Disability	X		
Gender reassignment	X		
Race	X		
Religion and belief			X
Sexual orientation	X		
Marriage and civil partnership			X
Pregnancy and maternity	X		
Sex	X		

If you have ticked 'Yes' to any of the above, please indicate how this has been addressed in the proposed policy.

<p>The university has undertaken significant work to address under-representation from protected characteristic groups amongst our student population. Furthermore, a full range of activities (detailed below and within the Outcome Agreement) to support, engage with and celebrate our community have been undertaken.</p>
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Impact

2. Please complete the following table identifying whether the policy is likely to have a positive impact on the following groups.

	Yes	No	Unclear	No impact
Age	X			
Disability	X			
Gender reassignment	X			
Race	X			
Religion and belief			X	
Sexual orientation	X			
Marriage and civil partnership			X	
Pregnancy and maternity	X			
Sex	X			

Evidence

3. Please provide a brief statement on what evidence you have used to reach the judgements arrived at in questions 1 and 2.

Through our Equality Outcomes the university will aim to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build good relations for all those with a protected characteristic. Our activities to widen access to higher education and to support students from under-represented groups to succeed will provide a positive impact to those who may traditionally face barriers to entry in to higher education. The university enrolls the highest proportion of students with a disclosed disability of all students in Scotland. We also have one of the highest intakes for BME students. The most recent student retention data demonstrates that through our commitments, all protected characteristic groups out-performed the Scottish retention target and a number of those met or exceeded the university's target.

A range of activity has been undertaken to support mental health and wellbeing at the university, amongst both our staff and students. Furthermore, our efforts to eradicate gender-based violence will provide a positive impact for all students who may be affected by this. Activity to proactively address gender imbalances at subject level will have a positive impact in contributing addressing societal gender imbalances across Scotland, particularly in areas such as engineering, computing, creative arts, nursing and social science. Finally, the development process of the BSL plan has identified a number of activities that we will undertake to provide support for BSL users to ensure they are able to participate fully in the learner journey and more widely in public life in Scotland.

Outcome of Impact Assessment

4. If a positive impact has been identified, please indicate what this is.

Continuing to widen access to higher education and to support students from under-represented groups to succeed.

- 5a. If a negative impact has been identified; please indicate what this is and how you propose the policy is amended.

None

- 5b. If you have identified any residual negative impact please explain why the policy should be implemented despite this negative impact.

None

Person responsible for the assessment.

Name DUNCAN COCKBURN

Job title: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING + POLICY

Signed 

Date 6th August 2019.

Annex A: SFC Outcome Agreement Targets for 2019-20 to 2021-22

- * denotes priority measure
 ** denotes retention figures where the underlying proportion is likely less than 50, meaning projections are subject to greater change

	2017-18 baseline	2019-20 Projection	2020-21 Projection	2021-22 Projection	
Scottish Government strategic priority: Access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds, including implementation of the recommendations of the CoWA and addressing gender balance					
Measure 1: Articulation - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree level courses with advanced standing					
Proportion of Scotland-domiciled HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing	66.0%	73.3%	73.3%	73.3%	*
Measure 2: Deprivation - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes					
2a: Proportion of SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes	6.8%	8.0%	10.0%	10.0%	*
2b: Proportion of SDUEs from 40% most deprived postcode	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	
2c: Additional CoWA target: proportion of full-time first degree SDUEs entrants from the 20% most deprived data zones	6.5%	7.5%	10.0%	10.0%	
Measure 3: SHEP Schools - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the SHEP schools (i.e. schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)					
Proportion of SDUE from SHEP Schools	4.1%	4.4%	4.4%	4.6%	
Measure 4: Protected Characteristics - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants by different protected characteristic groups and care leavers					
Male Proportion	36.9%	39.0%	40.0%	41.0%	
Female Proportion	63.1%	61.0%	60.0%	59.0%	
Under 21 Proportion	64.9%	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%	
21 and over Proportion	35.1%	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%	
Proportion – BME	9.2%	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%	
Proportion – Disability	14.3%	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	
Proportion - Care Experience	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	*
Measure 5: Retention by Protected Characteristics - The proportion of full-time first year Scotland-domiciled entrants from different characteristic groups returning to study in year two					
Proportion MD20 retained	89.2%	93.1%	93.1%	93.1%	*
Proportion MD20/40 retained	90.4%	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%	
Proportion of Males retained	91.7%	93.1%	93.1%	93.1%	
Proportion of Females retained	94.4%	95.2%	95.2%	95.2%	
Proportion of Under 21s retained	93.7%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	
Proportion of 21 and over retained	92.4%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	
Proportion retained – BME	96.6%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	
Proportion retained – Disability	93.1%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	
Proportion retained - Care Experience	100.0%	95.5%	95.7%	95.8%	*

Scottish Government strategic priority: High quality learning in a learning system which is seamlessly connected for the learner, including learning which prepares people well for the world of work, prioritising provision that meets known skills gaps in the economy				
Measure 6: Retention - The proportion of full-time first year Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants returning to study in year two				
Proportion retained	93.4%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%
Measure 7: Satisfaction - students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey				
% Satisfaction	85%	86	87	88
Measure 8: STEM - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants to STEM courses				
Proportion of SDUE to STEM courses	21.7%	22.0%	22.0%	22.0%
Measure 9a: Graduate Destinations - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled graduates entering positive destinations				
Proportion of graduates in positive destinations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Measure 9b: Graduate Destinations - The proportion of Scotland-domiciled full-time first degree respondents entering professional occupations				
Proportion of FT first degree respondents in professional occupations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scottish government priority: internationally competitive and impactful research				
Measure 10: The number of research postgraduate students				
RPG students	171	195	200	205
Measure 11: Total income from the UK Research Councils				
RCUK income	£302,000	£500,000	£550,000	£600,000
Measure 12: Total research income from all sources				
Research income	£2,198,000	£3,500,000	£4,000,000	£4,500,000
Scottish Government priority: effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent collaboration between universities and industry				
Measure 13: IVs - The number of SFC innovation Vouchers (IVs), Follow-on IVs				
Innovation Vouchers (IVs)	12	16	20	25
Follow-on IVs	0	1	2	4
Scottish Government priority: ensuring provision of quality learning in Scottish higher education institutions, i.e. HE strategic futures, Quality Assurance and HE governance				
Measure 14: Carbon - Gross carbon footprint				
Tonnes CO ₂ e	6,515.7	6,117.00	5,812.00	5,521.00

*



Outcome Agreement between Robert Gordon University and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2019-20

On behalf of Robert Gordon University:

Signed:

Print name:

JOHN HARPER

Position:

Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date:

30.7.19

Signed:

Print name:

MIKE FLEMING

Position:

Chair

Date:

7.8.19

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name:

Karen Watt

Position:

Chief Executive

Date:

29 July 2019