



UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

OUTCOME AGREEMENT

2022-2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the University of Aberdeen's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2022-23. It sets out the University's commitments to delivering outcomes prioritised by the Scottish Government via the SFC, relating to Students, Research, and to Economic Recovery and Social Renewal. This is the University's first Outcome and Impact Framework since Covid-19 rules and restrictions were lifted in Scotland. It comes at a time when the University, as with the wider sector, focuses not just on its post-pandemic recovery, but on mitigating a growing cost-of-living crisis which has arisen as a consequence of various national and international events, including Brexit and Putin's war in Ukraine. This document therefore outlines key measures taken by the University in response to these challenging environmental factors across the areas identified by the SFC; focusing not least on supporting the health, safety, and wellbeing of the University community.

This ethos is underpinned by the University's [Aberdeen 2040 strategy](#), launched in February 2020, just prior to the onset of Covid-19 in the UK. With its focus on Education and Research, and the four strategic themes of Inclusive, Interdisciplinary, International and Sustainable, it sets out 20, high-level commitments to be delivered over the coming years; providing a framework to the University for its longer-term contributions to recovery from the pandemic and to society more broadly, as every effort is made to collectively navigate these challenging times. In this regard, the University is pleased to note that despite the challenges faced in recent years, its ability to work towards its strategic commitments has remained undimmed; reflected in key measures like the National Student Survey (NSS) where it now ranks 4th in the UK and 2nd in Scotland, and across different league tables, where it now ranks inside the UK top 20 in two of the three primary domestic measures.

Taking account of this wider context, this Agreement focuses on how the University will continue to address the key areas and priority outcomes identified by the Scottish Government via the SFC, in line with its own strategic priorities. It covers the following areas:

- **Outcomes for Students**
 - Fair Access and Transitions
 - High Quality Learning, Teaching and Support
 - Partnership, Participation and Student Experience
 - Learning with Impact
 - Equalities and Inclusion
- **Outcomes for Research**
 - Research Excellence
 - Research Sustainability, incorporating collaboration
- **Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal**
 - Responsive Institutions
 - Confident and Highly Capable – Work Ready Graduates
 - Knowledge Exchange and Innovation
 - Collaboration
 - Climate Emergency

It should be noted at the outset that while this document focuses primarily on the Scottish context, the strategies, actions, standards, and services taken forward and provided by the University to staff and students, are also applied to staff and students studying as part of the University's provision in Qatar, and other TNE initiatives such as the University's partnership with South China Normal University (SCNU), where applicable.

The Table of Measures provided by the SFC at the start of the exercise is attached as **Appendix 1**. This provides up-to-date data against each measure included by the SFC this year, with projections made against each for 2022/23. The University's Self-Evaluation for the 2021-22 Outcome and Impact Framework document, is attached as **Appendix 2**. The University's Innovation Fund (UIF) report is also attached as required as **Appendix 3**. Any queries in relation to this Outcome Agreement or the affiliated documentation should be directed to the University's Director of Planning or the Head of Strategic Planning in the first instance, via planning@abdn.ac.uk.

2. POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

“We recognise that colleges and universities are operating in a challenging environment, working towards recovery following the pandemic period, and that institutions are continuing to deliver a responsive learning approach, ensuring the well-being of students and staff, and delivering an education-led economic recovery for Scotland.”

As the sector and society more broadly continues its post-pandemic recovery, the University remains focused on delivering a responsive and flexible learning approach, which underpins an education-led economic recovery in Scotland and within the wider UK. In parallel, the University retains its focus on ensuring the well-being of its staff and students, reflecting the first Commitment made under the Inclusive theme of its Aberdeen 2040 strategy, referenced above. The range of measures and initiatives undertaken by the University across each of these areas are outlined in relative depth throughout this document, where relevant.

Moreover, the following examples of support services or functions specific to Covid-19 that remain in place should be noted; they are designed to provide up-to-date information to the University community on Covid where applicable, and to ensure rapid response to potential threats relating to Covid, in the event that they emerge.

- A continued dedicated webpage for Covid-19 allowing for the publication of up-to-date information and access to support services for students and staff;
- Guidance specific to Covid-19 also remains in place online for specific student cohorts, including the international student-base;
- Provision has been made in relation to promotions to accommodate for people whose work was affected by Covid-19;
- The University’s Covid-19 Campus Planning Group (CPG) continues to operate; this has become a standing group, which meets if or when issues or risks arise that require discussion;
- Excellent links with NHS Grampian specific to Covid-19 and other issues remain in place and will be maintained;
- Work is ongoing to enhance wellbeing support, and to implement a wellbeing strategy for staff post pandemic, recognising that there have been challenges for some in the return to campus;
- Ongoing fortnightly meetings with Trade Unions to discuss any matters arising.

3. OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

3.1. FAIR ACCESS AND TRANSITIONS

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

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

The University continues to offer a range of programmes that provide pre-entry support for students from all widening access (WA) backgrounds. This includes ensuring that prospective students are aware of the varied opportunities available to facilitate access to Higher Education, of the support arrangements the University has in place, and of the experience had by other students from different widening access backgrounds. Specific examples of the suite of support available and being implemented are as follows:

- Continued development and deployment of contextualised admissions and advanced standing articulation routes to enhance access to university study;
- Implementation of enhanced Bridging Programmes to support [access](#) and transition to HE, across a wider range of discipline areas, including Biology, Physics for Engineering and a combined Arts course, all at SCQF Level 7;
- In partnership with others, drawing together Access to High Demand Professions (AHDP) (REACH); Schools Higher Education Programme (SHEP) (AspireNorth); and ACES to Creative Education in Scotland (led by RGU) under the umbrella of SFC’s National Schools Engagement Programme;
- Providing scholarships and other means of support to students for whom tuition fees and other costs relating to study may be a barrier to entry, progression, and success. This includes the continuation of free accommodation for first year UG SIMD20 students with any remaining spaces allocated to Free School Meals applicants, upskilling support for study, and regional PGT Scholarships.

As UCAS has now included a WA metrics table, the University is developing its digital systems to ensure appropriate data capture, with particular focus on the Free School Meals (FSM) data. Following the capture of FSM as a WA metric, the University will be adapting promotional materials and activities to reflect this recognition.

3.1.2. Care-experienced people have fair access and are supported to succeed

As a corporate parent the University of Aberdeen is fully committed to supporting care-experienced people.

The University is proud to have achieved the Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care Leavers in recognition of its commitment in this space. The University has a range of support mechanisms and provides a number of services which can be tailored to meet the needs of care-experienced people. These include:

- **Pre-entry Support:** Applicants with experience of care are eligible for support through [Access Aberdeen](#) and [Reach](#). This includes providing tailored support and guidance where possible; for example, with advice on entry pathways and requirements for funding, and accommodation;
- **Admissions:** The University provides a guaranteed offer of admission to care-experienced applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements, or a guaranteed interview for applicable candidates. Applicants with experience of care will be considered under the University’s Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy;
- **Accommodation:** The University offers year-round accommodation to students who are care experienced. Care-experienced students can also apply for the University’s [Rental](#) Guarantor Scheme should they wish to rent from a private landlord;
- **Financial assistance:** Care-experienced students are eligible to apply for a range of scholarship opportunities via the University’s internal WA scholarship programme;

- **Transition Support:** Access to a bespoke online transition courses developed to help boost confidence when starting at the University;
- **Advice and Support Office:** Like all students, those with care-experience have access to the University's Support and Advice Office, offering impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including finance, disability support and more.

3.1.3. The University's outline of how it supports the sector's delivery of the COWA targets

The University continues in its efforts to meet the sector-wide recruitment target of 10% for Scottish-domiciled entrants from the 20% most deprived areas in the country. In 2021-22 provisional data indicates that the University matched its performance of 7.9% from the previous year. While this means the University remains short of the overarching SFC target, it is nonetheless considered a positive outcome, taking account of context. In particular, while the proportion of students recruited from these areas has stagnated, the headcount rose year-on-year from 116 in 2020/21, to 151 in 2021/22. And while worth noting that this area was impacted by the pandemic, and an inability to conduct outreach and engagement activities in person, of greater significance, the stagnation in percentage terms reflects changes arising as a consequence of Brexit, with the University significantly increasing its intake of Scottish domiciled students, to offset the drop in EU student numbers. This has put additional pressure on the University's ability to maintain or increase its recruitment under this measure in proportional terms, in particular given the relatively low numbers of eligible students in the local region, when compared to other areas nationwide. On this point, the Commissioner for Widening Access has acknowledged that the current SIMD20 metrics applied across Scotland do not meet the needs of the local Aberdeen City and Shire catchment, and therefore may be subject to review at government level. Notwithstanding these points, the University continues to work with the SFC to best support the widening access agenda, both locally and nationally, by continuing to enhance entry routes into higher education. Already highlighted in this document are numerous policies to support fair access and transitions, which also directly support the delivery of the COWA targets. These include:

- Continued free accommodation to first year students;
- Continued promotion of the Eligibility for Free School Meals alongside SIMD20 as a key widening access measure;
- Contextualised admissions, with applicants meeting widening access criteria guaranteed an adjusted offer;
- Targeted Scholarships;
- Ongoing partnerships and collaborations that work with target learners at schools and colleges through University-funded initiatives.

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

The University continues to support, promote and enhance opportunities for learners to progress from further education to study at Aberdeen. This is reflected via the most recently available data in key areas like articulation; where 46.7% of those eligible articulated with advanced standing, an 8% increase from 38.4% the prior year. The University's performance in this space is underpinned by [Articulate Aberdeen](#), which recognises a range of types of prior learning (certificated and experiential) through the [University's Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy](#).

In addition, work is ongoing to support all colleges and offer articulation advice to college students across Scotland, with staff are attending as many in-person sessions as possible across the country, prioritising partner institutions. Information is also provided to school pupils regarding access to university via college, working with Access Aberdeen to facilitate this.

To further enhance the articulation provision, the University is also engaged with the SQA on their "Next Generation HN" Project to look at expanding entry routes by mapping new qualifications. Feedback is also being gathered from students who chose not to enter University with advanced standing to help inform strategies and support moving forward.

Additionally, a third year of [Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme](#) (LTEP) funding has been secured, and this is being utilised to enhance resilience of Advanced Entry (AE) students, building on previous LTEP awards. The intention is to run a workshop for University of Aberdeen staff (academic and professional services) and other individuals involved in supporting AE students across the sector (2) evaluating a toolkit with resources for AE students.

3.1.5. Transitions and pathways for students are supported and signposted

A comprehensive 'Transitions' strategy for students that aims to support and prepare students at different stages of their student journey (e.g. from school into university, from 3rd year into 4th year) and for different needs (e.g. widening participation, students as carers) has been implemented.

The long established S4S "Students for Students" mentoring scheme has now introduced shared experience matching with students being supported by other students coming from similar backgrounds to their own.

Careers Advisers are professionally trained through postgraduate qualifications, to provide high quality careers education, information and guidance to support the careers and employability development of students and graduates and to understand the specific needs of students from widening participation backgrounds. Careers Advisers work with specific schools within the University to provide up to date knowledge of career options and labour market information to students from those schools.

3.1.6. Institutions work with schools, SFC funded programmes and local communities to support successful pathways and effective transitions for students

Demonstrated throughout the Outcome of "Fair Access and Transitions" section of this document, the University works with a variety of programmes and providers both locally and nationally to support successful pathways and effective transitions for students. The Access and Articulation Team works with prospective students on key projects such as Access Aberdeen, Articulate Aberdeen, Reach, and the National Schools Programme, to further develop bridging programmes to enhance access and transition to HE.

3.2 HIGH QUALITY, LEARNING, TEACHING AND SUPPORT

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

3.2.1. The student experience of learning, teaching and support is protected

The University is strategically focused on caring for the wellbeing, health and safety of its people – staff and students – and on providing development support to help people achieve their full potential. The University's ongoing success relating to the Student Experience can be evidenced with the most recent National Student Survey (NSS) where it now ranks 4th in the UK and 2nd in Scotland. This is further illustrated via [Commitment 1](#) in Aberdeen 2040 under its Inclusive theme. The Inclusive theme underpins the University's Education agenda and that of the wider student experience. Examples of initiatives in place include:

- The University has a [Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2025](#), which is underpinned by a [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) policy.
- Online and on campus [Student Support Services](#) responsive to students' needs.
- Administration of SAAS hardship and additional funds raised through our Development Trust.
- Our [Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework](#).
- Our work towards [Decolonising the Curriculum](#).
- Utilising the best of new practices developed in Education during the Covid-19 pandemic, with Inclusion as one of the [Principles for the Delivery of Education AY 22/23](#).
- Implementation of a suite of inclusion policies, notably the overarching Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and new policies / drafts regarding neurodiversity and carers.

- Implementation of institutional and School action plans to address continuation and degree awarding gaps.
- The Student Support and Experience Committee remit ensures that issues for our students are identified, solutions developed, and good practice shared.
- Feedback from the University's Inform system, class reps and Staff/Student Liaison Committees, National Student Survey and Aberdeen Student Experience Survey are analysed and inform actions to address areas for improvement.
- An updated [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(non-academic\)](#) and an online reporting tool for harassment.
- Specific training to enhance the culture, our awareness of and actions to address gender-based violence and race equality.
- A pastoral support system for students at all levels is in place.
- A monitoring, absence and engagement system identifies students 'at risk' leading to support.
- Student peer support is offered including the option to match those with shared experiences.

BeWell and Inclusion Week raises awareness of the importance of wellbeing and inclusion and promotes open debate and conversations regarding future action.

3.2.2. There is rigour and quality in learning and teaching processes

The University's [Quality Assurance Committee](#) (QAC) has overall responsibility for Quality Assurance and reports into the University Senate. The Committee discusses and approves any regulatory or policy changes and all decisions are recorded and monitored through the QAC. Section 3.2.3, below, refers to the quality assurance procedures that are in place. The University Education Committee (UEC) has overall responsibility for the strategic development of Education. Each School also has an Education Committee that is responsible for ensuring that institutional policy and procedures are implemented and monitored, ultimately ensuring rigour and quality in the delivery of Education across all areas.

Beyond this, it should also be noted that since returning to on-campus teaching following Covid-19, the University has undertaken an [evaluation of blended learning](#) to inform and further develop its approaches to the delivery of Education, in a way that maintains rigour and maximises quality.

The University's last [Enhancement-led Institutional Review](#) was conducted in 2018 and since then the University has worked to take forward actions in response to the recommendations set out in the report. The University's [Follow Up Report](#) from March 2020 detailed the progress with this work. In line with the interim arrangements in place pending the introduction of the new tertiary arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement being led by SFC, the University underwent a Quality Enhancement and Standards Review in February 2023. The University is expecting to receive the draft report from QESR for comment in early March with a view to its publication in April 2023. The University will work to develop an action plan based on recommendations arising from the Report. An Institutional Liaison Meeting is scheduled for January 2024.

3.2.3. Arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement support to the standards expected by students

As described in last year's [Outcome Agreement in Section 3.2.3](#), QA processes are in place to ensure that the quality of education delivered is maintained and enhanced, and that the student experience is optimised, irrespective of where a student is based (i.e., on-campus in Aberdeen, Qatar or online). These policies are mapped to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) own policies and processes, under their [Quality Code](#). The Code defines a set of standards and expectations for the sector. It should also be noted that the University's policy documents are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.

The University is also committed to ensuring the QA of its Transnational Education (TNE) and is a member of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) [TNE Quality Evaluation and Enhancement Scheme](#)

thereby investing in the quality of the University's academic and student experience, while demonstrating its commitment to the advancement of UK higher education delivered overseas.

3.2.4. Enhancement and improvement of learning, teaching and support is informed by data and evidence – including the outcomes of quality assurance

As referenced in the 2021/22 Outcome Agreement, in section 3.2.4, the use of data and evidence remains central to University decision-making for learning, teaching and support for students.

Additionally, the University has a monitoring process in place which enables identification of a lack of engagement with learning and triggers a process by which academic and pastoral support is provided proactively. A review of the approach to monitoring student engagement is currently in progress, alongside an ongoing Pastoral Support Review which aims to further enhance the personal tutor role for all students.

3.2.5. Learning and teaching strategies are adapting to include approaches for digital and blended learning

As part of its Covid-19 Education response, the University undertook an evaluation of its blended learning provision, taking account of sector-wide practice. The final report from this is [available here](#). Examples of work in this area include:

- The development of [5 Principles for the Delivery of Education](#). Approaches and examples are provided to inspire, encourage, and support staff to further enhance their Education delivery.
- Work is ongoing to expand the provision of digitally-enhanced teaching spaces to support hybrid learning where this is the most appropriate approach.
- Development of teaching spaces to support Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) as part of an overall ambition to enhance international learning opportunities for all students.
- A pilot to implement an adapted TESTA (Transforming the experience of students through assessment) in the digital age.
- The development of Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills over this academic year, to further support a focus on digital developments for students as learners and for their employability.

3.2.6. Staff have the skills and support to deliver a high-quality learning, teaching and support experience for students

Whilst delivering a high quality and supportive student experience is at the core of the University, ensuring staff have the skills and support to fulfil those principles are vital. These are detailed in the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#), section 3.2.6. The University continues efforts to ensure that staff are appropriately developed and supported to deliver high-quality learning, teaching and support for students.

In addition, all academic development opportunities for staff (and PhD students) who teach and support learning will align with the five Principles for the Delivery of Education, beginning with the 4-week online [Micro-credential short course: Enhancing your teaching for 2022-23](#).

3.2.7. Students have good experiences of transitions into and through tertiary level learning

The University continues to deliver and enhance its "Welcome and Orientation" activities (online and on campus) and support for new and returning students at all levels. In addition to the policies highlighted in the 2021/22 Outcome Agreement, additional examples include:

- Key orientation information is shared with students at key moments throughout the year, with students reminded of the support available to them. This covers the University's expectations and the support it offers on academic and pastoral matters.
- For widening access and articulating students transitioning to University for the first time, there is a dedicated event each year, held on campus to assist with integration into life at the University.

In 2023, this will be supplemented with a Toolkit for Articulating Students, currently under development; this will be designed as a further support mechanism for those coming from college.

- Extended year-round widening access bridging programmes, referenced in 3.1.1 of this document, which are open to all and will be of particular value to those who may have been away from study over a period, or who have lower levels of familiarity with the University experience.
- The University Student Experience Team works closely with Schools to enhance the School information webpages to help prepare students and to begin to foster a sense of belonging. Schools also deliver transition sessions to assist students in the move to honours-level study (at UG level).
- Continued promotion of new student Facebook groups which support students to engage in dialogue and to begin forming friendships. This includes students based in University Halls of Residence.
- Student Residence Assistants provide on-site support to students in Halls and Student Ambassadors and Student Support colleagues welcome students, focussing on those who arrive on their own;
- The University works closely with AUSA to support students in their academic and personal transition and achievements;
- Work is ongoing continuously with student content creators to develop a suite of content to support transition, providing an insight into University life through the eyes of students from diverse backgrounds, including refugees.

3.2.8. Students are supported in their mental health and wellbeing

Supporting mental health is a key aspect of the University's Wellbeing Strategy and the University has developed the Student Mental Health Agreement in partnership with AUSA. The Agreement has five working areas, which are:

- Raising awareness of support available;
- Ensuring that support services are available and accessible to all;
- Encouraging, promoting, and facilitating student self-care;
- Continued development of staff support, resources, and training;
- Supporting Schools to provide a more consistent approach to study-related support.

To support these, various support mechanisms are in place (in addition to the information provided in the [2021/22 Agreement](#) under section 3.2.8;

- Bespoke training on numerous topics including suicide preventions, GBV, Mental Health interventions and crisis management for our support teams and HR staff.
- Appointment of a new Student Support Adviser (Complex Cases) to provide more focus on complex case management and the support of students in crisis, or with longer term needs together with GBV.
- Creation of a new post of Mental Wellbeing Policy Advisor.
- Further enhancement of the range of support offered by a trained counselling team (including supporting staff who support students), reviewing it in line with trauma informed approaches and specific student needs amongst other areas.
- A structured programme of events is provided by the Wellbeing Team in Student Experience at key pressure points (including BeWell week) and provides online resources, including the [Wellbeing Toolkit and the BeWell podcast series](#).
- Additionally, a list of several support resources can be found on the [Your Wellbeing](#) webpages.

3.3. PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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

3.3.1. Effective partnership arrangements between institutional leadership teams and student bodies

The University is focused on ensuring that students are aware of the various ways that they can provide feedback on the educational experience and their wider student experience, considering this key to ensuring effective partnerships are in place between student bodies and institutional leadership. A number of processes are in place to this end; please refer to section 3.3.1 of the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#) for further information. Examples of areas where the University continues to work in partnership with students are:

- Students are a core part of the team that is taking forward the Institutional decolonising the curriculum work and they participate in all the associated working groups. In addition, student interns have been appointed to each of the disciplines within the School of Social Science as partners in the School-based work that is ongoing.
- Currently a student is the Institutional theme lead for the current Enhancement Theme and they are embedded within all the decision-making around the work, including in the planning for the annual symposium and in decision-making on funding for projects for the Theme.
- Students are members of the National Student Survey steering committee where they work with the University to identify Institutional themes for the NSS and ensure that the University is appropriately raising the profile of the NSS, to ensure meaningful student feedback is received to analyse and determine actions.

3.3.2. Student partnership is valued across the institution and plays a key role in enhancing the student experience

The University and the Aberdeen University Student Association (AUSA) have a [Student Partnership Agreement](#) (SPA) in place, based on a set of core themes. The SPA is designed to support both AUSA and UOA strategies and organisational objectives, continuity and also annual updates in line with Sabbatical priorities. Since the inception of the SPA, the University, AUSA and the wider student body have benefitted from increased collaboration and coordination of projects to support the student experience; for example, this has included the [Student Mental Health Agreement](#) (2021). The University and AUSA have established a joint working group to review the SPA in light of a range of institutional working groups that focus on the key issues within the existing SPA. The group will be undertaking a staff and student consultation, in addition to benchmarking research, with a view to potentially adjusting the existing model to create maximum impact.

3.4 LEARNING WITH IMPACT

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

3.4.1. Students are supported to successfully complete their courses

The actions listed in this area in the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#) under section 3.4.1 broadly remain in place and have been adjusted as the external context has changed. Examples include:

- The University’s “Principles for the Delivery of Education” (see 3.2.1) that built on the [“Principles for Blended Learning”](#);
- Training and support for staff to deliver high quality education and support students’ success.
- Communication approaches that aim to provide relevant information and support in a timely way, so students have the information they need;
- A focus on the enhancement of assessment and feedback; for example, authentic assessment or assessment integrity;
- Ongoing development of facilities to support active learning in the classroom;
- A focus on the cost-of-living crisis, with several approaches in place to support all students, and to target students who have particular needs, including a dedicated [Cost Of Living](#) webpage containing tips, advice and information alongside direction to advice services.
- The offer of free [“Brainy Breakfasts”](#) twice a week to students set them up for the day.
- A review of campus locations to ensure that there are warm spaces available 24 hours per day and throughout the year (including the winter closure period).

And as referenced in the introduction to this document, the University now ranks 4th out of 124 HEIs across the UK in the NSS, one place higher than in 2021; indicating that the support it provides students, as part of the wider student experience, has been of the highest quality.

3.4.2. Students are supported to progress to positive destinations

The University continues to progress actions listed in section 3.4.2 of the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#), continuing to support students in their progression to positive destinations. These activities include:

- The Careers and Employability Service supports students to progress to positive next destinations through providing a comprehensive range of services and opportunities summarised in the *Vision and Mission* of the University's Careers and Employability Service.
- All students are introduced to the importance of career and skills planning via a prescribed online 0-credit course, enabling students to make informed career and skills development plans during their studies. 82% of undergraduate students and 85% of taught postgraduate students completed the course in 2022/23.
- Over 7,000 employer opportunities were advertised in 2021-2022 (7319, increased from 4396 in 2020-2021). These include part-time jobs, volunteering, internship, and placement opportunities, and opportunities for graduate positions. 369 employer and employability events and workshops were advertised in 2021-2022 with 1,006 places booked by students (noting some events do not require bookings so the actual number will be higher).
- As part of Aberdeen 2040, two strategic workstreams are progressing. One workstream is to develop a set of graduate attributes and skills that will enhance employability. The second is seeking to develop our vision and menu for work-based learning (WBL) provision at scale. A project to develop the systems to support delivery of WBL is also progressing.

Additionally, the University continues to monitor its Graduate Outcome survey results and use these to inform future plans to enhance employability. The University was pleased to see an increase in rank to 55th in the UK, an improvement of 41 places, and an increase to 93.8.% for those in Employment and/or Further Study within 15 months of graduating. It is also worth noting that the University is now using a newly created set of data dashboards via PowerBI to better monitor performance under the Graduate Outcomes survey.

3.4.3. Institutions implement appropriate support arrangements for graduating cohorts who will experience a challenging labour market in coming months/years

Given the challenging labour-market, the University remains committed to ensuring there are appropriate support arrangements in place for graduating cohorts. The actions listed at section 3.4.3 of the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#) remain relevant, with some updated examples given below:

- The [ABDN Grad Challenge](#) programme, launched in 2021, giving graduating students the opportunity to work in teams in a virtual professional environment to solve employer-led challenges. It gives them an opportunity to develop professional skills and prepare for workplace settings.
- The [ABDNConnect Experience Programme](#) has replaced the previous ABDNCommunity Volunteering Programme and ABDNConnect Internships to provide a single point for students to reflect on their skills development while undertaking an activity such as part-time or paid internships, or volunteering.
- The University is also part of [Graduate Career Advantage Scotland](#) (GCAS) – this initiative won an Excellence Award from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) for Supporting Student and Graduate Employability Award in 2022 – which offers dedicated resource to ensure opportunities and graduates in the north region are supported.

3.4.4. Institutions ensure their curriculum and pedagogical offer remains fit for purpose and is responsive to changed need and demand

The University ensures that its curriculum and pedagogical offer remains fit for purpose, and that it evolves to changing demands and expectations. This is done via a number of groups, including a Programme Advisory Board, an Employer Liaison Committee, and an overarching Institutional Employer Board. Different Schools have taken different approaches based upon their requirements. These groups are subgroups of the overall Institutional Employer Board and are available [online](#). These groups are regularly reviewed to ensure maximum effectiveness within and external to the University.

One example of how these Boards have enhanced, and informed curriculum is within the Business School. The School established an advisory board to inform the strategic direction of the School supporting both research and teaching. Subgroups covering employability, entrepreneurship, internationalisation, and energy transition have been established to inform aspects of the School such as programme or degree structures. There is an institutional focus on enhancing graduate outcomes for students with a number of University-level workstreams in place. Their collective focus includes further developing placement and work-based learning provision; the development of a Skills Recognition Framework; and the further development of partnerships with regional employers.

3.4.5. There is a good understanding of the needs of business and industry; and Scotland's economic needs

The University continues to be involved in a wide range of regional groups that provide insights into business and industry needs; these include the Northeast Regional Economic Strategy Group, the Opportunity Northeast (ONE) Board, and the Northeast Committee of the Scottish Council for Development & Industry. These groups also provide a platform to extend the reach of the University regionally and nationally to influence both policy matters and economic growth. Given the particular importance of energy transition to the economic future of the region the University is working closely with partners as part of the National Energy Skills Accelerator to understand employers' future workforce skills requirements.

3.4.6. There is a pipeline of appropriately skilled people for the labour market

Employer opportunities continue to grow each year. The Careers and Employability Service advertised 7,605 opportunities in 2021-22, comprising 5,343 graduate jobs/internships, 1,807 work placements and internships and 455 other types, including part-time work. It is also notable that the number of employer opportunities is growing with the figures for 2021-22 set against 4,337 in 2019-20 and 5,687 in 2020-21. Furthermore, around 200 events were advertised in 2021-22, and over 2,000 places booked by students; noting some events do not require bookings so the actual number will be higher.

As highlighted above (see 3.4.4), the University has embarked on a workstream of activity to develop a Skills Recognition Framework that will allow students to demonstrate and reflect upon the skills they have acquired throughout their programme of study alongside their co-curricular and extra-curricular activity. This will allow enhanced flexibility for students to create their own skills pathway to match their career aspirations at the same time as being supported by the University Careers Office. Furthermore, the Skills Recognition Framework will allow students to highlight their skills to employers both during and after their studies.

3.5 EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION

“Every student has their individual needs recognised in terms of protected characteristics; and everyone is treated fairly and with respect”

The University has an overarching Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) [Policy](#) which is enacted through a range of policies and processes. A particular focus in 2021/22 has been on race equality, with the approval of the University's [Antiracism Strategy](#) in June 2022. The Strategy will be taken forward through an extensive action plan (building on existing action plans for race equality) and progress is being made across a range of areas.

The University has recently refreshed its Equality Impact Assessment template to incorporate a broader set of inclusion areas. This supports policy owners to think about the impact of their policy on students and to incorporate mitigating actions where appropriate. An example of the effectiveness of this

approach was during the Covid pandemic, where regular equality impact assessments were carried out on the blended learning approach to ensure that students had appropriate access to their learning. These assessments were undertaken in consultation with the staff and student equality networks, incorporating the learning from lived experience, and reviewed by the EDI Committee.

4. OUTCOMES FOR RESEARCH

4.1 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

4.1.1 Institutions produce excellent research outputs

The University's research quality and capacity, and the way in which it supports excellence are under ongoing review as part of institutional strategic planning arrangements. Research and interdisciplinarity are a particular focus of Aberdeen 2040 implementation, now informed by lessons learnt from the REF2021 exercise. In previous Outcome Agreements, the need to increase research capacity and how the University planned to invest in additional researchers was covered; investment in research capacity and work on improving research support and research culture were ongoing before the REF2021 submission. However, the results of REF2021 and the associated funding outcome both amplified the need for investment, whilst at the same time, presented a challenge in terms of the available resource to support the improvements the University is planning for. To this end, the University plans to supplement Research Excellence Grant (REG) funding with institutional funds to enable the programme of measures set out below.

- Leadership for the five [interdisciplinary challenges](#), including appointment of 20 interdisciplinary research fellows to support the interdisciplinary challenges;
- Continued growth of researcher numbers to strengthen Interdisciplinary Research (IDR) themes in selected strategic areas;
- To increase the number of REF eligible staff, which has already grown by 4.5% since census date;
- Continued pump prime funding focusing on high quality research, interdisciplinary research, international partnerships, engagement and impact;
- Enhanced support for development of large bids for external research grant funding;
- Enhanced conference funds for academic staff to present and shape emerging innovative research.

4.1.2 The research impact reaches beyond academia

Demonstrating the University's excellent research outputs, and contributions to impact reaching beyond academia are **two case studies** attached as **Appendices 4 and 5**. These case studies provide examples of the importance of the Research Excellence Grant to underpin the dual funding system for research, ensuring the long-term support required to demonstrate impact and noting it takes time to secure 4* outputs with further time to demonstrate the full impact of research. These are only a few examples of the University's far reaching excellent [research outputs](#). A further six case studies will be submitted to the SFC by March 2023.

The two studies submitted with this document are:

- "Soil science excellence leading to global impact"
- "Affordable school uniforms: safeguarding Scottish Children's rights to education"

In addition to the case studies attached in Appendices 4 and 5 the University continues to deliver research outputs which have long-term impact reach. To support this in a sustainable way, the following priority actions are underway:

- Enhanced focus on engagement with stakeholders and co-creation of research in response to societal challenges;

- Supporting regional collaboration – for example with NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Council towards capacity building in public health and research capabilities within the local authority;
- Supporting industrial diversification, through our engagement and contribution towards development of the next Regional Economic Strategy, including projects relating to Regional Energy Transition;
- Enhanced training for academic staff to deliver impactful research;
- Review and enhance support structures for increased stakeholder engagement, translational research and delivery of impact.

4.1.3 The research environment supports excellence and impact

Ensuring the University has a positive research culture is key to an environment that supports excellence and impact. Following REF 2021, the implementation of a major review of research culture and the wider research environment was undertaken by a Research Culture Task and Finish Group. The Research Culture Task and Finish Group was set up early with a wide-ranging brief to identify policies and procedures in place that benefit the University's research culture, and to identify gaps and to make recommendations on how these can be addressed. Following postponement of its work in 2020 due to Covid, the group consulted widely among academic and professional services colleagues and produced several recommendations around the development of research careers and improving the experience of those working in research. All recommendations made were designed to support an inclusive, respectful and enabling environment. It reported in Autumn 2021 and the University is working on implementing proposals made, in tandem with work on meeting its commitments under the Concordat to Support Career Development of Researchers.

4.2 RESEARCH SUSTAINABILITY

“Institutions ensure that their world class research programmes are on a sustainable footing, particularly amidst the uncertainty surrounding the UK's future relationship with Horizon Europe.”

4.2.1 The research environment support excellence and impact

To enable ongoing research sustainability, the University acknowledges how crucial it is to maintain an environment that supports excellence and impact. In addition to section 4.1.3, to specifically maintain sustainability the University undertakes the following:

- Training and staff development with a particular focus on research excellence and impact, open access, research integrity and ethics, implementation of Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA);
- Implementation of the outcomes of a REF lessons learnt exercise and plan to strengthen existing support and develop additional support to significantly improve the quality of research;
- Review and strengthen academic mentoring at all career stages;
- Review and strengthen research leave. This already enables researchers to take research leave to support a wide range of activities, including engagement and impact. The University will offer a funded institutional research leave scheme;
- Introduction of a funded visiting scholar scheme to enhance networking and collaboration, supporting excellence in research and impact;
- Additional support for conference and stakeholder meeting attendance, again supporting networking and collaboration;
- All awards under the proposed research leave and visiting scholar schemes will be competitive, and outcomes monitored carefully;
- International collaborations – enhanced collaborations with Curtin and Calgary Universities and fostering new relationships with Augusta University, Georgia, USA;
- Continued collaboration with our NHS partners – regional and national;
- Continued collaboration with our regional industrial partners, particularly around Energy Transition, Food, Drink and Agriculture (SeedPod), LifeSciences (launch of the BioHub) and Digital Technology and entrepreneurship (working with Techscaler).

4.2.2 Institutions implement the Research Integrity and Researcher Development concordats

Evidence of implementation of the Research Integrity and Researcher Development concordats include:

- Implementation of recommendations of Research Culture Task and Finish Group which includes implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, encouraging excellent research and impact as well as rewarding collegiality and behaviours the support integrity and inclusion;
- Postgraduate Task and Finish Group to deliver recommendations and plan for their implementation to support PGR Growth and future employability;
- Ongoing work to support the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Concordat on Open Research, Concordat on Openness in Animal Research, Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research, the Concordat on Knowledge Exchange and San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA);
- Support for research integrity and ethics – introduction of a new on-line platform for processing non-clinical applications for ethical approval, development of an institutional framework that enhances consistency and transparency across the six participating ethics boards;
- Support for open access – introducing a new Rights Retention Policy which will be implemented early next year;
- Re-launch of Aberdeen University Press as an open access publisher.

4.2.3 Support for PhD students, who are the pipeline of talent for future research and who have adversely affected by the instability created by the pandemic and the economic climate

Underpinning the future of research, the University sees support for PhD students as pivotal to enabling research sustainability and long-term growth. Overseen by the Graduate School, there is an ongoing implementation of recommendations from the Postgraduate Task and Finish Group to deliver the innovative acquisition of employability skills, relevant to and applicable across employment sectors, particularly in light of the instability created by the pandemic and current economic climate. These include:

- Launch of the new interdisciplinary PhD programme aligned to the IDR priorities;
- Continue to review and support (case by case) PhD projects which have been significantly and insurmountably impacted by Covid-19;
- Development of Guiding Principles for inclusive PGR recruitment that recognises non-traditional routes into PhD study;
- Recruitment of a cohort of challenge based interdisciplinary PhD students embedded within the Interdisciplinary Research Centres and underpinned by a development programme to ensure students to emerge from the PhD with significant skills in engaging with researchers beyond their discipline.

5. OUTCOMES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

5.1. RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

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

5.1.1. Institutions make use of labour market intelligence and employer / industry engagement to align provision

The University builds and uses labour market intelligence at multiple levels, utilising nationally available data insights via Skills Development Scotland, alongside insights captured via sources such as our discipline-specific Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalents) that inform curriculum provision. Other sources include data insights such as Institute of Student Employers, Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Scotland (AGCAS), Skills Development Scotland, alongside insights captured via sources like programme advisory boards, and our wider employer engagement activities. These data insights are utilised to inform degree programme development and to identify careers and employability needs across the Institution and for specific programmes, such as a careers week held in the Business School.

In terms of programme development, the University has and will continue to use market intelligence to inform degree programme structures and modes of delivery. Examples include:

In [Applied Health Sciences](#) postgraduate work-based learning, [MSc Health Data Science](#) students have responded to the evolving needs of government organisations. Contributing their skills, especially in R and python, to NHS, Public Health Scotland, Food Standards Scotland and Health Data Research UK (HDRUK) workstreams, where upgrade/conversion projects require coding and organisation of data, as well as creation of new databases and resources for data analytics, students have assisted in priority area projects. The University has used [Grampian Data Safe Haven](#) to safely access anonymised NHS data for this purpose and have acquired NHS-modified hardware for student use to ensure governance.

MSc students on the [Global Health and Management](#) and [Master of Public Health](#) (also available fully online) programmes have worked with businesses and NGOs to provide evidence bases for various use cases that support agile product/service development and delivery in a range of areas where existing provision is under pressure, e.g. hoarding disorder mediation, gratitude for wellbeing practices that address mental health management, health technology assessment, youth sport facilitation, drugs education. The [Human](#) and [Clinical](#) Nutrition students have worked with local and global commercial partners to analyse nutritional data and make recommendations for intervention design, for general population, those with specific dietary considerations, and sports professionals to improve health outcomes and advance performance.

Beyond that, students and graduates are also provided with Labour Market Information (LMI) insights through a range of co-curricular programmes, such as mini-careers courses, and live sessions covering regionally important sectors as part of the Pathway to Success Skills Award programme. This is designed to enhance their learning outcomes and their employability prospects on completion of their studies.

5.1.2. Institutions play their part in upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce

The University successfully disbursed its allocations from the SFC Upskilling, National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) and North-East Economic Recovery and Skills funds in academic year 2021-22. In total, £1.1million was spent, largely on fee waivers. This equated to 1,117 funded places in total over the three funds. Two case studies demonstrating the use of the [SFC Upskilling](#) and [NTTF](#) are available for review.

With the discontinuation of the NTTF and NEERSF, the University is well underway with its activity to disburse the £620K it has received as part of the 2022-23 SFC Upskilling Fund. 240 funded places have already been allocated to 27 online short courses commencing in September 2022. A further 250 funded places will be allocated on January 2023 short courses in leadership, management, health and wellbeing, energy transition, digital and data skills and entrepreneurship. These funding opportunities are promoted via social media campaigns, outdoor adverts, business and industry contacts, the University's Civic News ezine and through networks such as Public Affairs, Stakeholder Engagement and Events (PACE) and the Upskilling Leads Network.

A suite of short online courses on Diet and Lifestyle Health were introduced on the FutureLearn platform and can be studied for free. The [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\): Health, Law, and Socio-Cultural Sensitivity](#) course launched on 7 February 2022 to coincide with [international day of zero tolerance for female genital mutilation](#) and finished on International Women's Day. The MOOC on Mindfulness for Teachers is in development and is scheduled to launch in November 2022.

There are now 133 online short courses in the [On-demand Learning site](#) providing growing choice and flexibility for upskillers and reskillers. A 10-credit course in [Data Visualisation with Python](#) was introduced to meet the need for shorter, 'bite sized' offerings.

The [short course route to programme study](#) proved popular in 2021-22. This route allowed 94 students without typical academic entry requirements to take two short courses to demonstrate their capability of attaining at Master's level. After successfully completing 30 credits, these students were transferred to a Master's programme. We expect to see more students avail of this study route in 2022-23 as we see more eligible short course students and more programmes admitting students in this way.

The University also continues to develop professional development courses and programmes in response to industry skills requirements; for example, [the MSc in Energy Transition Systems and Technologies](#).

5.1.3. People have the necessary meta skills and attributes to succeed

The University ensures that students have the necessary meta skills and attributes to be successful via a number of means. Of particular note, the University is continuing to develop the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills Framework that will ensure students are able to develop and reflect upon the skills they are developing throughout the duration of their programme of study as well as through their co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. This approach is being designed to put skills at the forefront for students and ensure they are able to recognise and articulate the skills and qualities needed to succeed during their studies and following graduation. This work has now progressed to a stage where we are identifying the systems that will support this work.

Career registration fully launched in January 2023 and provides full insight into student career readiness across a range of career confidence measures, including understanding of how their skills relate to professional and career development and planning their skills development. These insights will enable targeted communications and embedded support based on student responses.

To ensure the co-curricular programmes are equipping students with the skills they need to succeed, the [Pathway to Success](#) skills development programme was launched in September 2022. This programme enables students to develop their skills in areas which are important to them by attending employer events, skills development workshops and completing online activities and courses. This programme will incorporate the Aberdeen 2040 skills once agreed. In the meantime a set of skills from the Institute of Employers is used to ensure relevance to the graduate recruitment market.

Meanwhile, the current Aberdeen Graduate Attributes continue to be incorporated into the compulsory zero-credit professional development course which is given to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, with training and self-reflection tools linked to equality and diversity; health, safety and wellbeing; cyber security and digital skills; and how to make the most of careers and employability provision. Students completing this course have it recorded on their enhanced transcript, meaning it is formally recognised. The course will be updated to embed the new Aberdeen 2040 attributes and skills framework ahead of AY2023-24.

5.1.4. Institutions help find pathways for people without work to study and move into employment

In addition to the examples detailed in section 5.1.4 of the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement The DFN Project SEARCH University of Aberdeen](#) site launched in September 2013 and is hosted by the University on its King's College campus. The site offers a one-year Internship programme to up to 12 young people aged 16-24 every year who are supported to undertake three work placements within the University and our partner organisations (covering a range of roles including administration, grounds maintenance, IT/media services, childcare, catering and retail experience) whilst studying towards the City & Guilds Certificate in Employability Skills.

The programme operates on a partnership basis involving several organisations, including [Values Into Action Scotland \(VIAS\)](#) (which holds the licence to operate the programme) and [North East Scotland College](#) (where Interns are registered students). Interns also receive support during and after their Project SEARCH year from other partner organisations, including colleagues from Skills Development Scotland, the Department for Work & Pensions and the Aberdeenshire Council Employability team.

Since the launch in September 2013, an average of 68% of our graduates have moved into employment in a variety of organisations across the North-East of Scotland – nearly 10 times above the average employment rate for those with a learning disability who do not enter any type of post-school programme.

In October 2022, the programme received national recognition in being awarded two DFN Project SEARCH Outcomes Awards in recognition of its employment rates for Session 2020/21 being in the top 10% of all the 120 DFN Project SEARCH sites across the UK, Ireland and Iberia.

5.1.5. Fair Work – Institutions advance and promote Fair Work practices as employers

In line with the Inclusive theme in Aberdeen 2040, and the five commitments made, the advancement of fair work practices is a key tenet of University strategy in this area. The University is committed to adopting the Scottish Government's "Fair Work First" policy, with the following areas targeted:

- Ensuring appropriate channels for employees to have a voice;
- Investment in workforce development;
- No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts;
- Actions to tackle the gender pay gap and create diverse and inclusive workplaces;
- Payment of the real Living Wage.

The University has already made changes to working practices to meet these areas including being an accredited Living Wage Employer since 2015. Further actions to support the above key areas include:

- **Ongoing and long-established partnership working with all recognised Campus Trade Unions** – Campus Trade Unions form part of formal University Committees and Working Groups, Trade Union representative meet with Senior Management and HR regularly to ensure that staff opinions and views are heard. Regular open meetings are also held with members of the Senior Management Team where all staff are encouraged to voice their opinions and ask questions.
- **Comprehensive suite of management and skills training** – Training is available to all staff and is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the workforce and the University, demonstrating the University's recognition of the importance in investing in Staff Development.
- **Zero hours contracts** - The University does not use zero hours contracts and the Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group has recently completed a review of the use of Guaranteed Minimum Hours contracts. This review has brought about changes including increasing the minimum default number of hours offered as well ensuring that where members of staff have worked a consistent level of hours they are offered a fractional contract.
- **Gender pay gap and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace** – the University is taking forward actions based on the outcome of its most recent Gender Pay Gap reports, as well as recommendations arising from an Equal Pay Audit undertaken by an external consultancy during 2021. Actions include implementation of a new *Recruitment and Selection Policy*, which includes a number of 'positive action' measures; development of a new *Academic Promotion Policy and Procedure*, which includes specific equality, diversity, and inclusion measures; establishing leadership development programmes targeting underrepresented groups; and assessing disparities in professorial pay in specific areas, informed by data.

In addition to the above, the [University's Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2021](#) should be noted.

5.2. CONFIDENT AND HIGHLY CAPABLE - WORK-READY – GRADUATES

“Work-ready graduates are confident and ready to secure success in their career, meeting employer needs and making a positive contribution to our economy and society: Students are equipped to take up employment and succeed when the job market opens up.”

5.2.1. There is a pipeline of technically skilled people for key industries where skills gaps identified

The University seeks to maintain a pipeline of technically skilled people where gaps are identified in key industries, via a variety of means. These are documented under 3.4.5 and listed in the [2021/2022 Outcome Agreement](#), section 5.2.1.

Additionally, the University works closely with regional partners such as Opportunity North-East (ONE), Energy Transition Zone Ltd. and the Scottish Universities Life Science Alliance (SULSA). These partnerships are focused on the needs of specific sectors, including energy, digital and life sciences,

with emerging initiatives that include [Life Sciences Masterclasses](#) that once run, are then available to download and are open to all.

5.2.2. Programmes should equip graduates with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to be successful in their chosen career

In addition to the information in the section 5.2.2 of the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#), to equip graduate with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to be successful in their chosen career, “Career Readiness” has been piloted at the start of AY 2022-23 and will be fully implemented for programmes starting in January. Career Readiness focuses on a series of questions that enable students to rate their career readiness at the start of every year. These questions will be embedded into the registration process, meaning all students will complete the survey, thereby enabling a data-informed approach to career support provision across disciplines and schools.

5.2.3. Effective support should be in place to enable students to understand their careers options, to self-assess and to undertake career planning

The University ensures that effective support mechanisms are in place to enable students to understand their career options, to self-assess and to plan accordingly via a range of services and initiatives. These are included in the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement, section 5.2.3](#).

In addition, the Career Readiness data mentioned above will be used to assess career confidence in students across the institution and will allow for targeted personalised communications throughout the year based on student responses.

Engagement data with the Careers and Employability Service for 2021-22 provides a structured breakdown of engagement of different academic disciplines and a University-wide understanding of the impact the service has among the student population:

- 2,775 booked appointments or interactions;
- 1,962 co-curricular activities recognised on Enhanced Transcript;
- 733 students took part in co-curricular activities led by the Service;
- 287 students completed the Employability Boost Award programme;
- 88% of 1st year undergraduates completed the PD1002* (Getting started at the University of Aberdeen) course;
- 93% of postgraduate taught students complete a course titled “Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen, which is equivalent to a similar course for undergraduates

In addition, students have access to a range of credit bearing employability-related courses from a range of disciplines and the University continues to operate the Aberdeen Intern Plus Programme, offering term-time and part-time internships, and full-time summer internships to current students.

5.2.4. Wherever relevant or beneficial, students should have opportunities to engage in work-informed or work-based learning

Students at Aberdeen are regularly given opportunities to engage in work-informed or work-based learning, with a concerted focus in recent years to increase the number of opportunities available to students across all disciplines. This will continue over the coming years. Many continuing examples are found in the [2021/22 Outcome Agreement](#), section 5.2.4.

The University is undertaking a strategic workstream to further develop the models and opportunities for work-based learning and opportunities for placements as part of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy. This wide-ranging review aims to enhance provision for students by allowing them to have multiple pathways to engage with organisations within their programme of study.

Additionally, the University has now successfully run the ABDN Grad Challenge programme twice following its launch in 2021. This programme gives graduating students the opportunity to work in teams in a virtual professional environment to solve employer-led challenges. The University works with

partner organisations within the region to give students the opportunity to develop professional skills and prepare for workplace settings in interdisciplinary and multi-year teams.

The University is also a Partner with Entrepreneurial Scotland for their Saltire Internships Programme and is a Partner with Bright Network connecting students with a short sector focused experience programme via their virtual platform.

5.3 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND INNOVATION

5.3.1 HEIs are focusing and prioritising their knowledge exchange and innovation activity on the top priorities of a green recovery, a well-being economy and a just transition to a net zero carbon society.

The [five interdisciplinary challenges](#) identified within Aberdeen 2040, provide a focus for knowledge exchange and innovation activity aligned to a green recovery, a well-being economy and a just transition to a net zero carbon society. The themes are Energy Transition, Environment and Biodiversity, Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity, Health, Well-being and Nutrition, and Data and Artificial Intelligence.

The University's priorities for the coming year include:

- Expansion of the pump-priming fund, promoting collaboration with stakeholders and partners.
- In collaboration with the Net Zero Technology Centre, continue the growth and impact of the industrial engagement strategy of the National Decommissioning Centre, deploying projects and resources aimed at decarbonisation of decommissioning, supporting renewable energy developments and deployment of the simulation suite and tools to accelerate design making for renewable energy.
- Expansion of professional services support for business development and innovation to provide a sectoral focus for innovation activity aligned with the priorities of the region.
- Maintain and expand a programme of Entrepreneurs-in-Residence aimed at health and wellbeing, energy transition and data science.
- Work with partners including Scottish Enterprise, Opportunity North-East and the newly appointed TechScaler to enhance entrepreneurship activity in support of the entrepreneurial campus agenda.
- Continue to grow the number and value of new company partnerships, securing funds from schemes aimed at supportive academics.

Further information on knowledge exchange at the University is available via the University Innovation Fund update, attached as Appendix 3.

5.3.2 Institutions are evolving their strategies for knowledge exchange and innovation and working with key stakeholders, for example enterprise agencies to progress the priorities of a green recovery, a well-being economy and transition to a net zero carbon society

Embedded within Aberdeen 2040, there are commitments to grow and deepen the University's relationships with key stakeholders. Relationships with a number of key regional stakeholders have been enhanced during 2021/22, evidenced through the University's collaborative approach and engagement in the refresh of the Regional Economic Strategy, fulfilling a leading role in the development of the North East Scotland Green Freeport innovation strategy, the partnership in the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) and supporting Aberdeen City Council to secure £5m to establish a Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) in partnership with NHS Grampian and RGU, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The latter is the only award to be made in Scotland, enabling local authorities to become more research-active and will focus on determining what can be done to address the wider drivers of population health and health inequalities of groups and areas across the city of Aberdeen.

Additionally, the University continues to work with both local councils in their Just Transition programmes (Aberdeen City Net Zero Delivery Unit and Aberdeenshire Council Climate Ready Aberdeen).

Work has also commenced with Scottish Enterprise in developing a strategy to enhance the infrastructure for knowledge exchange and innovation, complementing the partnerships already in place

with Opportunity North-East for the launch of BioHub and SeedPod and the Energy Transition Zone programmes around innovation and skills.

Priorities for 2022-23 include:

- Enhancing the partnership with Scottish Enterprise and other partners (including the Connected Places Catapult) to develop a place-based framework for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
- Reviewing policies around business engagement, consultancy and exploitation of IP via our newly formed Court Commercialisation Committee and University Enterprise & Innovation Committee to ensure adoption of best practice.
- Working with NESA partners to deliver the Scottish Government Just Transition Fund programme on Skills for Energy Transition.

5.4 COLLABORATION

“There is active collaboration with other SFC funded institutions and across the education and skills system.”

5.4.1. Institutions consider and pursue meaningful opportunities for collaboration which fit with their mission and vision and supports the delivery of coherent, sustainable provision and research

Through the ongoing work of the North-East Tertiary Pathfinder, the University is working with key regional stakeholders including RGU, NESCol, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire local authorities, Opportunity North-East and Skills Development Scotland.

Collaborative priorities for the year ahead include:

- Delivery of a series of Pathfinder Pilot Projects including the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) Energy Transition Skills Interactive Pathway, a project to identify qualifications required for different roles in the energy industry, identify gaps in provision, and to develop an interactive pathway to help learners understand the pathways through education providers in the region. Other Pathfinder pilots will focus on planning and provision of health and social care simulation needs across the region, and creation of a strategic working group to maximise opportunities for the enhancement of the senior phase;
- Commitment to supporting those pooling initiatives where the institution has retained membership (SULSA, MASTS, ScotChem, EastBio);
- Continue to support the Scottish Graduate Schools for Social Science and Arts and Humanities to maximise the collaborative opportunities afforded by the critical mass within the Graduate Schools;
- Various partnerships focusing on marine and fisheries research with the Universities of St Andrews and Stirling, and involving the Sea Mammal Research Unit and Marine Scotland Science;
- Partnership with Environmental Research Institute (ERI) at the University of the Highlands and Islands, funded by Ørsted, the global leader in offshore wind;
- Partnerships with MRPs for the delivery of Scottish Governments RESAS programme of R&D.

5.4.2. Institutions consider collaboration on estates assets that could: improve local coherence and sustainability of provision; reduce carbon emissions and be a part of place-based approach to economic recovery

Strongly linked to the Aberdeen 2040 Sustainable theme, the University continues to actively seek collaboration around estates assets to support this expectation. Examples include:

- The University will continue to engage fully in civic discussion around the development of a city-wide heat network. This will include working bilaterally with Aberdeen Heat & Power (AHP) on projects to link University assets with the AHP network, while simultaneously contributing to the multi-stakeholder dialogue about developing a genuinely city-wide heating network.
- The University will explore the possibility of long-term partnership approaches with private sector entities to support the development and delivery of the net-zero strategy. These will, in the first

instance, be linked to development of a Sustainable Heating Strategy, an integral component of a wider approach to net-zero.

- Existing electric vehicle (EV) charging network will be developed and expanded to enable and accelerate the transition to low emission and electric cars. By making use of technology, the University aims to make the network available to the University community and fleet users during operating hours, expanding that to serve the local community when the University is closed.
- An interest has been expressed in the City Bike scheme being investigated by Aberdeen City Council and the University remains keen to host bikes and related infrastructure on the University campuses, facilitating the uptake of the scheme by University staff and students, as well as by local residents.
- 2023 will see the opening of the new BioHub facility to provide physical infrastructure to grow businesses, nurture new commercialisation opportunities and connect academics and health researchers to industry; it will be the nucleus of the life sciences cluster in the North-East of Scotland.

5.5. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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

5.5.1. **Universities demonstrate innovative approaches in their response to the climate emergency, showing transformative leadership and the empowerment of the sector communities, building capacity in institutional structures across the sectors, developing a placed-based approach to the climate emergency.**

[Sustainable](#) is a key strand of [Aberdeen 2040](#) with the actions listed below aligned to supporting this theme.

The University plans to adopt a ‘Climate & Sustainability Assembly’ model for engaging the community in the discussion of sustainability issues. These assemblies will help to gauge the views of staff and student community on a series of sustainability issues, with the outcomes from those assemblies collated and used to inform decision-making.

Additionally the University will introduce and monitor the implementation of policy recommendations made in 2022 by the [Sustainable Business Travel Working Group](#).

Currently, the University is investigating options for the introduction of sustainability training for staff across the institution. The aim during 2023 is to introduce the first of a range of training opportunities to allow our staff to engage with climate and sustainability literacy training at a level that supports their needs, further aligned with Aberdeen 2040.

Additionally, during 2022/23, the University will bring forward for approval and publication a Net-Zero Strategy that will provide further detail on targets, implementation plans, and indicative projects. This will expand on the headline net-zero commitment.

As part of the University’s continued response to net-zero, the University will embark on the first of a long-term register of necessary campus improvement projects to support the net-zero journey. The projects identified as part of the Net-Zero Project Register will include interventions designed to improve the thermal and energy efficiency of our campus as well as contributing to regional responses to the climate emergency, e.g. heat network developments.

Progress will be made in identifying the full range of Scope 3 emissions, developing mechanisms to help track and report on aspects of emissions the University has not previously been in a position to monitor, e.g. quantifying the emissions impact of students travelling to study with us, and staff & student commuting.

Finally, the University will investigate opportunities to provide more granular data on Scope 3 Procurement emissions to buyers across the University. This is a sector-wide challenge and, where possible, this will be tackled in collaboration with others, e.g. the use of data tools to analyse

procurement spend in ways that give us meaningful emissions feedback to act upon. (Aberdeen 2040:19)

5.5.2. Universities outline how they are engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The University will assess the outcomes of the 2023 edition of the Times Higher Education 'Impact' Ranking (due in early 2023) and develop an action-plan to identify policy gaps and address areas of weaker performance. The University will continue to utilise the Impact Ranking as a self-improvement tool, deepening our engagement with the SDGs and continuing to demonstrate activity across all 17 SDGs.

Work will continue to showcase work on the SDGs through the annual publication of a stand-alone [SDG Report](#) (first published in 2021). The report will detail the breadth and depth of research, teaching, and operational activities that make a positive contribution to the SDGs.

Work to investigate how best to incorporate the SDGs into teaching practices, building upon those courses and programmes where sustainability issues already feature, considering how best to embed sustainability and the SDGs more widely in the curriculum. The University will investigate opportunities to embed sustainability as graduate attribute and how best to recognise this.

SDGs will continue to be embedded in routine activity, e.g. continued mapping of research and related engagement activities against the SDGs, using the SDGs in communication of institutional activity, and working with Academic Schools and Professional Services Directorates to identify where and how to embed the SDGs in local plans.

University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Measure	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Actual				Provisional	Projected	
				2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
A	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	1,523	1,401	1,643	1,307	1,474	1,551	1,571	2,012	1897
B	Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes	0	139	197	211	212	185	137	TBC	208
	Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	0	15	25	37	51	71	64	TBC	34
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing		10.8%	12.7%	17.5%	24.1%	38.4%	46.7%	TBC	16.3%
C	COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived postcodes	77	57	80	72	60	124	116	151	126
	COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived postcodes	5.3%	4.3%	5.1%	6.0%	4.4%	8.6%	7.9%	7.9%	7.0%
D	Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	3	10	22	11	26	20	21	19	20
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	0.2%	0.7%	1.3%	0.8%	1.8%	1.3%	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%
E	Total number of full-time first year SDUE	1,055	1,422	1,317	1,549	1,190	1,410	1,460	1,925	tbc
	Number of full-time first year SDUE retained	981	1,332	1,249	1,473	1,138	1,326	1,423	1,760	tbc
	Proportion of full-time first year SDUE retained	93.0%	93.7%	94.8%	95.1%	95.6%	94.0%	97.5%	91.4%	tbc
F	The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey	0	1	0	1	1.91	2.79	7.51	5.54	tbc
G1	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey				687	726	832	678	tbc	tbc
	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				656	680	799	635	tbc	tbc
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				95.5%	93.7%	96.0%	93.7%	tbc	tbc
G2	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment				506	536	628	510	tbc	tbc
	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey employed at 'Professional' level or above				355	376	431	369	tbc	tbc
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey employed at 'Professional' level or above				70.2%	70.1%	68.6%	72.4%	tbc	tbc
H	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers	1411	1588	1110	1309	1329	1524	1234	1,365	tbc

* The actual data for 2017-18 to 2020-21 is provided by the SFC via HESA.

* The data for 2021-22 is internal data generated by the University where it is available (aside from NSS and Graduate Outcomes data which is provided externally) and is currently classed as provisional. This means the figures here are subject to possible change.

* While acknowledging and striving to meet the 10% target set for the sector for CoWA, the 7.9% target set by the University reflects the particular challenges it faces in this area; given its location in the north-east Scotland, and with its Scottish student population growing as a result of Brexit.

* New data added since the previous submission is highlighted in red. This covers retention, which is based on internal data, and Graduate Outcomes, which is drawn from the latest set of results.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITIES INNOVATION FUND (UIF) PLAN 2022/23

The University of Aberdeen's knowledge exchange and innovation activities continue to be closely aligned to the following commitments from the Aberdeen 2040 strategy:

- Listen to and work with external stakeholders regionally and globally to build partnerships that deliver imaginative solutions to societal and industrial challenges;
- Develop a research portfolio that promotes national and international collaboration with stakeholders, including companies, organisations and governments;
- Excel in research that addresses the climate emergency, enables energy transition and the preservation of biodiversity.

The University of Aberdeen will use its Outcome Grant to deliver a programme of activities to meet the seven agreed UIF Outcomes. The University will continue to work collaboratively with other HEIs, with regional and national partners and with industry to deliver these objectives. The University confirms its ability to utilise and match the Platform Grant.

The University confirms that it will work towards the following objectives:

- Be recovery focussed and evidenced by learning from AY 2021-22 and consultation/collaboration with stakeholders at local and/or national level such as local authorities and Scottish Enterprise.
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to helping Scotland achieve its green recovery ambitions, a well-being economy and just transition to a net-zero carbon society through knowledge exchange, CPD, spin-out and start-up support.

The University of Aberdeen's Vice-Principal for Regional Engagement is responsible for leading the development and implementation of a strategy for the University to make a comprehensive and effective contribution to the economic, social and cultural activity of the region.

The University has enhanced its relationships with key regional stakeholders during 2021/22, through engagement in the refresh of the Regional Engagement Strategy, taking a leading role in the development of the North-East Scotland Green Freeport Innovation Strategy and in our partnership in the National Energy Skills Accelerator. This partnership approach will continue in 2022/23, with the University working with both regional councils in the Just Transition programmes (Aberdeen City Net Zero Delivery Unit and Aberdeenshire Council Climate Ready Aberdeen).

Commitment to Collaboration across the Sector via Universities Scotland RCDG

Aberdeen will continue to work collaboratively with other institutions through the Universities Scotland Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group (RCDG) and with the UIF Collaboration Manager. The University will continue to be an active participant in all of the collaborative clusters and will contribute to workshops and other collaborative activities.

The focus in 2022/23 will be on activities related to the innovation themes of the Aberdeen City Region Deal (ACRD), including Energy, Lifesciences, Food, Drink and Agriculture, Digital and Entrepreneurship and Tourism, which map well on to a number of the Interdisciplinary Challenges identified as a feature of the Aberdeen 2040 strategy. The University's Interdisciplinary Challenges are:

- Energy Transition
- Environment and Biodiversity
- Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing
- Data and Artificial Intelligence
- Social inclusion and cultural diversity

The University will partner with Scottish Enterprise and Opportunity North-East (ONE) in 2022/23 to support initiatives in place for the launch of the BioHub and SeedPod facilities and the Energy Transition Zone programmes around innovation and skills.

Outcome 1 - Demand Stimulation: “Working with enterprise agencies, SG, Business networks, Interface and others... help increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services”.

- As one of the North-East of Scotland’s key anchor institutions and as noted above, the University of Aberdeen is committed to working with regional, national and international stakeholders to build partnerships that deliver imaginative solutions to societal, economic and industrial challenges in Scotland and internationally.
- Collaboration with the Innovation Centres will bring additional benefits for our industry partners and opportunities for researchers to address industry needs.
- The University will continue to work in partnership with the Net Zero Technology Centre in 2022/23, building upon successes in 2021/22 including six new research and development relationships, to meet the needs of industry for innovation for a Just Transition.
- As part of this relationship, the University will continue to add to the industry collaborations secured by the National Decommissioning Centre (NDC), with eight completed projects to date and a further 13 projects or partnerships underway in 2021/22. The University will make available to industry the world class immersive simulation suite.
- In 2021/22, the University of Aberdeen took over as Chair of the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) - a partnership between ETZ Ltd., Skills Development Scotland, RGU, NESCoI and the University of Aberdeen working together to address industry’s skills needs for energy transition. To date NESA has secured three MOUs with industry partners for future skills needs. Work will continue in partnership in 2022/23 to deliver the commitments within the North-East Tertiary Pathfinder *Energy Transition Skills Pathway* project and the newly awarded £1M Just Transition Fund project on *Skills for Energy Transition*.
- The University will continue to engage fully with the Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) and will participate in opportunities for supporting start-up businesses in energy transition technologies.
- Green Freeport: The University led the innovation strand as part of development of the North-East Green Freeport bid, working with partners across the region including RGU, local authorities, enterprise agencies, port authorities and industry.
- Through the road to COP26 programme the University provided a number of events for engagement and supported staff and student attendance at COP26. The University is providing three participants to COP27 in 2022.
- The University of Aberdeen secured support for two Entrepreneurs in Residence funded by the Royal Society during 2022. One is focussed on the School of Engineering and on translating academic innovation in energy transition into industry; the other is focused on student entrepreneurship in Computing Science. Our plan is to extend these into 2023 and to add a third Entrepreneur in Residence, focussing on innovation and translational research in the medical sciences.
- Work will continue with Opportunity North-East to develop and support the ambitions of the BioHub located on the Foresterhill Health Campus. The BioHub will host spin out and start-up companies in the life and data sciences and we expect these companies to make use of specialist research facilities located in the University.
- Research in health and nutrition from our Rowett Institute is an equally important research strength for the University and the new SeedPod facility under development by ONE will provide opportunities for the food and drink industry in Scotland to work with researchers from the Rowett Institute to develop innovative products and services.

Outcome 2 - Simplification / Commercialisation: “In partnership with enterprise agencies and Interface...demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities”

- Aberdeen participates in the UIF Challenge Fund network, organised by the UIF Collaboration Manager which focusses on opportunities for Scottish universities and industry to work collaboratively.
- The University will continue to provide opportunities for partnership working with industry sectors, in particular with the ACRD partners, with an emphasis on developing more strategic relationships with shared goals, and demonstrating to businesses the long term benefits of partnership.

- A programme of training for researchers focused on the collaborative competencies to enhance engagement with businesses and impact from research will continue.
- Aberdeen continues to support the simplification of processes and promoting efficient commercialisation, as demonstrated by our commitment to using standard templates wherever possible and our track record in commercialisation. Aberdeen is a member of the Universities Scotland RCDG Contracts Sub-Group which has already provided a range of commonly used contracts supporting simplification and harmonisation of the process for businesses to access knowledge within all universities. The University will continue to promote good practice within the partnership with the ACRD and other multi party collaborations.
- Key priorities for 2022/23 include reviewing the University's framework and policies for supporting knowledge exchange against best practice in the sector
- The University plans to enhance the team supporting enterprise, innovation and business engagement under the leadership of the Vice-Principal for Regional Engagement
- The University will work in the regional Triple Helix Group with NHS Grampian, RGU and ONE to identify and exploit opportunities for collaborative working.
- The ECITB approved CPD course on Introduction to Offshore Decommissioning was delivered three times in 2021/22 and will be run again in 2022/23. An IChemE approved course on Biological Wastewater Treatment and Anaerobic Digestion is available online on demand. In 2023, the University will co-host the 13th International Gut Microbiome Conference in Aberdeen. Further CPD courses on Energy Transition and CCUS are in development for 2022/23 or 2023/24.

Outcome 3 - Simplification/ Greater Innovation: “In partnership with Enterprise Agencies and Interface... at a national level made use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond STEM)”.

- Aberdeen's focus on the Interdisciplinary Challenges has provided opportunities for showcasing innovation to industry and for engagement with industry.
- Aberdeen has evidenced its commitment to engaging and collaborating with other universities and the enterprise agencies through our partnership approach in ACRD, but also the ongoing commitment to the long-standing partnership of the North of Scotland KTP centre.
- Staff development activities will continue, providing in-house training to staff and extending to externally sourced training and conferences as required.
- The University will continue to work with industry through other routes through the Innovation Centres and Interface and through KTP projects supported by the North of Scotland KTP Centre.
- The University will work with Scottish Enterprise to develop a strategy to enhance the infrastructure for knowledge exchange and innovation, complementing partnerships already in place with ONE for the BioHub and SeedPod, and the future relationship with TechScaler.
- Work with partners within NESAs to deliver the awarded projects under Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund and SFC Pathfinder programme for the development of skills relating to Energy Transition.

Outcome 4 - Entrepreneurialism: “(The) sector will have made significant positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff and businesses”.

- The University of Aberdeen is fully engaged with the Entrepreneurship group established as a subgroup of RCDG and is fully supportive of its work with regard to the plans in the SFC review for the Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy.
- In 2021/22, the University of Aberdeen provided support for 46 student entrepreneurs through support such as space in its ABVenture Zone incubator, through microfinance for start-ups and through one-to-one advice. This support will continue during 2022/23.
- 'Lightbulb', the University's business idea competition in 22/23 will continue to run. Responding to student feedback and engagement, Lightbulb was recast as a monthly competition in 2021/22 and will continue in this format in 2022/23.
- The University will work closely with other regional entrepreneurship support organisations (such as Elevator, ONE, TechX, ETZ, TechScaler Hub).

- Aberdeen will remain an active participant in the Converge Steering Group, Advisory Board and the competitions and has extended its hosting of a Converge Enterprise Executives through to end 2023.
- In 2021/22, the University provided three participants on the MIT Entrepreneurship Development Programme with a further three to participate for 2022/23 and is fully engaged in discussions regarding the potential roll out of key parts of this programme in North-East Scotland.
- Partnering with Scottish Enterprise and others (including the Connected Places Catapult as part of their Innovation Places Leadership Academy) work will continue towards development of a place-based framework for entrepreneurship and innovation.
- The University will seek to engage with Elevator (or another partner) to offer its popular summer accelerator to student entrepreneurs, providing stipends to student participants to encourage inclusivity.
- The University will provide support for a pipeline of spin out companies, including one-to-one support, intellectual property protection and pre-investment incubation assistance.
- In 2022/23, the University will review its Policy on Intellectual Property Exploitation and Revenue Sharing against best practice in the sector.
- The University can continue to support our current Royal Society Entrepreneurs in Residence (EiRs) and will seek to add additional EiRs to support innovation and entrepreneurship across further academic Schools.
- The University will seek support from Scottish Enterprise's High Growth Spin Out Programme with one project funded in 2022/23 and a further three applications in progress.

Outcome 5 - International: "in partnership with SDI, Connected Scotland others...pooled knowledge and networks and shared good practice to promote and engaged Scotland internationally".

- The University of Aberdeen's 2040 Commitments includes Internationalisation with the aim of "harnessing our research expertise to form partnerships and networks around the world to meet the challenges of our age".
- The University will continue to work with SDI, Invest Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council (amongst other local and national organisations) to promote Scotland, in particular the North-East of Scotland, for inward investment opportunities. Involvement in ONE's investment through the ACRD into the life sciences and food and drink sectors (through BioHub and SeedPod, respectively) will also promote inward investment through access to research expertise.
- The long-standing partnership with Curtin University in Australia has recently been expanded to include the University of Calgary in Canada in an enhanced partnership to develop innovative solutions to tackle key global issues, including the need to ensure a just energy transition while tackling climate change and securing a sustainable future. The University will provide targeted support to develop the partnerships.

Outcome 6 - Inclusive Growth and Social Impact: building on current and good practice, Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth.

- Public engagement has remained a priority during AY 2021/22 and will continue to be a priority in 2022/23. Events delivered in 2021/22 were a mixture of online and in-person but in 2022/23 a programme of completely in-person public engagement events are planned.
- Aberdeen led a successful application for funding to deliver the EXPLORATHON public engagement programme in 2022 and 2023 (funded by the EPSRC as part of the UKRI funding guarantee for applications to Horizon Europe) with partners at the Universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and St Andrews.
- In addition to the EXPLORATHON programme, key events in 2020/21 were the Festival of Social Science (FoSS), and British Science Week (BSW). The latter was in-person and included a schools programme and events aimed at general audiences (976 members of the public attended). Plans for 2022/23 include further participation in FoSS and BSW.
- The University will continue to embed Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) into research design and applications for funding having recruited a PPI group that meets quarterly and that has supported 14 projects to date.

- The University participated in online Doors Open days in 2020 and 2021 but returned to an in-person event in September 2022 with six buildings attracting 1138 members of the public, many of whom do not normally participate in university events.
- Training programmes for researchers (including PGRs) will continue to be delivered as part of these initiatives and also from the Grants Academy to support engagement with a broad range of stakeholders including the public and industry, with a focus on evaluation and on engagement as a route to impact from research.
- In 2021/22, a completed pilot Community Wealth Building project assisted a community group local to the campus to consider their route map for Net Zero and resulted in the group securing £250k of grant funding to implement the strategy. Further projects will be supported during 2022/23.

Outcome 7 - Equality and Diversity: building on current and good practice, HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF

- The University will continue to ensure positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of UIF, through our monitoring of projects support and those engaged.
- In 2021/22, the University developed tools for monitoring and reporting on inclusivity of public engagement events which are now being used for events in our 2022/23 programme, and will be used more broadly to monitor equality and diversity.
- Inclusivity is a core element of the University's Aberdeen 2040 commitments and in participation in the HR Excellence in Research strategy which is overseen by the Postdoctoral Research Committee. The achievements through the Athena Swan Charter underpin work in relation to gender equality. The Race Equality Strategy Group oversees, and drives change with regard to tackling racial inequalities in the University.

Outcome Agreement between the University of Aberdeen and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2022-23

On behalf of the University of Aberdeen:

Signed:



Print name: GEORGE BOYNE

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 10.05.2023

Signed:



Print name: Julie Ashworth

Position: Chair

Date: 10.05.2023

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:



Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 26 July 2023