



University for the Common Good

**Interim Outcome Agreement
with Scottish Funding Council
2020-21**



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Preface

This Interim Outcome Agreement Update for 2020-21 has been produced in line with the guidance provided by the SFC. It reconfirms our key commitments whilst providing updates or addressing new SFC requirements where appropriate. The Outcome Agreement has been produced following consultation with a wide range of colleagues, with trades union representatives, and with the Students' Association.

From March 2020, the University has dedicated significant focus and resource to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, based on our values and mission for the Common Good, and a prudent and risk-based approach. The student voice has been central and essential to our approach, with Student Association representation at our Covid response and planning groups, including our Executive Board. Our support for our students has been considered, extensive and positively received, including teaching and learning support for online and blended learning, adapting transitions support and outreach, changes to assessment policies, investment in digital infrastructure, rent waivers, food and wider support for isolating students, and mental health support. Engagement with, and the contribution of, our campus trades union has also been extremely positive. We continue to adapt to changing circumstances and guidelines, to learn from our experiences, and to respond to the needs of our staff and students. Our commitments in the Outcome Agreement and National Measures are made at a time before the outcomes and full effects of the pandemic on University applicants, students, staff, and activities are known, and indeed the impact of the UK's departure from the EU, particularly on student recruitment and mobility, remains an uncertainty.

The University launched its new [Strategy 2030](#) in January 2021, with an ambitious vision to be world leading for social innovation. Our commitment to social innovation and social impact is demonstrated through our outstanding results in the 2020 Impact Rankings. We believe our Strategy 2030, with its foundations firmly embedded in our mission *For the Common Good* and our values-led approach to all that we do, is even more critical as we move into a new way of working as a Civic University.

Professor Pamela Gillies, CBE FRSE
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Susan Docherty
Student President

1. OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

1.1 Fair access and transitions

Our approach

The University takes a lifecycle approach to widening participation through a model of partnership working, engagement and support at multiple points throughout the learner journey and into employment. We view widening participation as informing, recruiting and supporting those whose circumstances may increase the barriers to entering into, and challenges to progressing through, higher education. The changes to transition into the University, engagement, teaching and learning as a result of the pandemic have been challenging for both school leavers and mature entrants, and particularly so for those who are experiencing digital poverty, loss of part-time work, financial hardship, those who are care-experienced or estranged students, those who are carers, and those with disabilities or mental health challenges. As a University with a high proportion of students from under-represented backgrounds the impact on our students has been significant. Our actions to support students are addressed throughout this Outcome Agreement.

Key figures

SIMD profile	22% of Scottish domiciled full-time undergraduate entrants resided in the 20% most deprived areas in 2019-20
Articulation	Approximately 1000 students per year enter into Levels 2 and 3 with full advanced standing, representing over a quarter of our Scottish undergraduate entrants each year
State schools or colleges	97% of young full time undergraduate entrants to GCU students come from a state school or college, compared to the Scottish sector average of 87%
First in family	46% of undergraduate students were the first in their families to enter higher education
Mature students	43% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants at GCU were aged 21 or over in 2019-20
Disability	12% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants at GCU had a declared disability in 2019-20
BAME	11% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants were BAME in 2019-20
Care experienced	61 Scottish-domiciled care-experienced entrants in 2019-20
Retention	90% of Scottish full-time first degree entrants from SIMD20 areas continued into second year, compared to a Scottish sector average of 87%, in 2018-19
Non-continuation	GCU's non-continuation rate is 8.3% , compared to the Scottish sector average of 7.3%
Degree completion	81% of GCU students were projected to gain a degree, compared to the Scottish sector average of 80%
Employment of graduates	91% of GCU 2016-17 graduates were in employment or further study after fifteen months, above the sector rate of 89%, and the highly skilled employment rate was 77% for those leaving undergraduate programmes, above the sector rate of 73%

Sources: HESA (2019, 2020), SFC (2020) and internal data

SIMD 20 and CoWA

GCU makes an important contribution to Scottish Government's widening access aims for the sector and will continue to do so in line with the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) targets on SIMD20 and articulation. Delivering on widening participation is a core activity for GCU for which the key financial underpinning derives from non-core funding in the form of the Widening Access and Retention Fund.

Our ambition is to maintain a balanced SIMD profile across our Scottish undergraduate entrants. We consistently achieve at least the 20% target for SIMD20 intake, exceeding the 2021 CoWA sector target. GCU developed minimum entry requirements for 2020-21 entry for each programme and expanded eligibility to all applicants from SIMD20 areas, as well as care-experienced students, young carers, and refugees and asylum seekers. Care-experienced applicants have been offered places at the minimum entry requirement since 2019-20.

The most recent published figures (SFC, 2019) on Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) concern 2018-19 and show that:

- **21.6% (1020)** of all SDUE at GCU were from SIMD 20 areas compared to a sector average of 14.8%.
- **23.5% (825)** of all Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants at GCU were from SIMD 20 areas compared to a sector average of 15.6%.
- GCU accounts for **c17%** of all SIMD 20 entrants to Scottish universities on a yearly basis.
- **c40%** of our SDUE per year are from SIMD 40 areas (compared to 31.5% for the sector).
- GCU recruits a high percentage of mature students at **40%** of SDUE compared to 29% for the sector, including **35.4%** of mature entrants being from SIMD 20 areas, compared to the sector average of 25.1%.
- **21.6% (725)** of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers and **22.4% (520)** of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers were from SIMD 20 areas, compared to sector rates of 18.5% and 13.9% respectively.

Care-experienced students

The University had 61 Scottish-domiciled care-experienced entrants in 2019-20, and 100% retention to year 2 in 2018-19 (latest SFC data). We offer a wide range of support to those who declare a care-experienced background before and during their University experience, including free 365-day accommodation, targeted travel and financial support. In addition to our Corporate Parenting Plan, we are actively engaged with the Care-experienced, Estranged and Carers West Forum and the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership Corporate Parenting Network. GCU is a member of the Scottish Care Leavers' Covenant. The Students' Association Care-Experienced Student' Officer and Representation Group was implemented in 2019-20. We introduced staff training sessions on Care Day and have expanded our staff-student mentoring initiative. During 2019-20, GCU worked with partners including the SFC to develop a national module to train HE staff on Corporate Parenting, facilitated by the Open University Scotland. This is being rolled out to all staff in 2020-21.

Articulation

GCU is strongly committed to articulation, and makes a major contribution to sector level targets. Through our College Connect team and our strategic partnerships with colleges across Scotland, we have developed an effective infrastructure for articulation, which includes joint planning on curriculum design, admission, transition, and CPD for staff. SFC funding contributes to the resource required to develop, review, and refresh articulation pathways through close partnership working with colleges; inform and recruit students in colleges; and support the transition of articulating students from pre-entry, then throughout their studies at university, including through mentoring. Delivery of these elements is intense for GCU, due to our very high numbers of articulation pathways and of articulating entrants.

- GCU has **235** articulation pathways (and 46 progression routes available to students entering through SWAP) with full curriculum mapping which we maintain, develop, refresh and strengthen, offering a breadth of choice and opportunity that is not available in most universities.
- Around **1000** articulating students enter GCU each year, and c900 of these enter directly from college into Level 2 or 3 (others enter through the additional articulation scheme).
- Over **65%** of students with HNs enter with Advanced Standing (SFC, 2020).
- GCU recruits **19%** of all entrants in Scotland with an HN and almost a quarter (**23%**) of all entrants with advanced standing (SFC, 2020).

- 29% of GCU's articulating students are from SIMD20 areas and 49% from MD40 areas (internal data).
- 56% (550) of articulating entrants are male and 44% (430) female in 2019-20 (internal data).

Transitions

Recognising the interruption to study experienced by college students and school pupils due to the pandemic, we enhanced the transition support available to engage students in the approach to online learning they would experience when they joined their programme at GCU; to develop their understanding and confidence to work within the virtual learning environment; and to make social as well as academic connections. From March 2020, we made available online transition activities that included the SWAP study skills day, the Get Ahead Programme and the College Connect Transition Programme. We took a similar approach with articulating students, but expanded this to also include additional discipline specific transition support using online lectures, webinars, question and answer sessions and informal get-togethers; and moving transition programmes such as the Maths Summer School online. There are continued restrictions within the HE and College sector for staff to engage with students on campuses, so we are taking creative approaches to how we build important relationships with potential applicants in an online capacity. The Students' Association is represented on the College Connect Advisory Group, participates in the College Connect induction programmes and through the College Connect membership, students are members of the Students' Association.

Outreach

Face-to-face activity has always been important within outreach as it enables a rapport to be built with individuals and their families, particularly those in hard to reach groups who may also lack the confidence or resources to engage fully online. To mitigate the impact of loss of face-to-face activities we have accelerated work already in progress to digitise resources and adapt the ways we would have delivered to learners.

- **Advanced Higher Hub** - Delivery swiftly moved to an online environment with limited socially distanced on-campus teaching when appropriate. Using the University's Virtual Learning Environment, induction, pastoral care and learning and teaching has been delivered to pupils. In 2019-20, the Hub achieved an overall pass rate of 99%. Effectiveness of the new model will be assessed throughout this session. Building on the adaption to online delivery in spring 2020, the Hub has expanded its scope through a new partnership with e-Sgoil, with the Hub offering national Advanced Higher study support in five subjects.
- **Caledonian Club and School Connect** - Engagement figures for the Caledonian Club are lower than in previous years due to the loss of school and campus visit activities. Initiatives have, however, been delivered at primary, BGE and senior phase. Between the Caledonian Club and School Connect programmes in Greater Glasgow and Clyde, North and South Lanarkshire, we engage with 17 school partners. As a consequence of Covid, we have had an increase in registration for Caledonian Club UCAS Mentoring programme.

1.2 Quality, learning, teaching and participation

Quality learning

In November 2020, the University achieved the highest rating of Effective in the ELIR. GCU was commended for its impactful strategic commitment to enhancing the student experience and that the University and Students' Association have a longstanding, embedded, and collaborative relationship which is based on genuine and effective partnership working across all aspects of university life.

Staff are central to delivering excellence and high quality in the teaching and learning experience. In 2019-20, 357 academic staff members were registered as active members of the Higher Education Academy, the UK body which accredits higher education learning and teaching, an increase of 11% on 2018-19. Our quality teaching was recognised nationally in 2020 with two prestigious teaching excellence awards from Advance HE for GCU staff members: a National Teaching Fellowship, and a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE). Since March 2020, there has been a huge effort by academic staff to deliver and develop online and

blended learning, supported by the continuous development at pace of resources, training and support activities. Student support has been adapted and enhanced and this remains a critical area of work in 2020-21. The University and Students' Association moved to a fully on-line student induction and Freshers Week for September 2020 and a Peer Mentoring scheme was introduced for all new students for 2020-21.

The University's new Going Digital Framework is driving policy and practice as we moved to a high quality baseline for online teaching from Trimester A 2020-21. The framework will form a key part of the University's new 2030 Strategy for Learning. The framework has been developed with staff, Students' Association, students and key stakeholders. Our Learning Development Centres have created a wealth of resources to support students in getting the most from blended and online learning. To support out-of-hours provision, the University piloted the *Smarthinking* service to Level 1 students during 2020-21. As part of the implementation of Going Digital a comprehensive and ongoing range of support and resources has been provided for staff. A continuous evaluation is ongoing to capture student and staff experience, respond to challenges and learn from success.

Retention and completion

The University has a strong record in retention and completion, evidenced by our performance data:

- GCU's retention rate to year two (2017-18 entrants continuing into 2018-19) for those from SIMD 20 areas (89.6%) was ahead of the sector rate (86.8%) and ahead of all modern universities. There was a 100% retention rate for care-experienced students (SFC, 2020).
- 2020 HESA PIs show that projected degree completion at GCU is 80.7%. For drop-out, the University improved to 7.8% and GCU is ahead of the Scottish sector average of 10.4%. Non-continuation is at 8.3% for all students. The level of non-continuation of articulating students can be noticeably different, usually higher, than those who start their studies at a university. The data show that GCU effectively supports the retention of mature and articulating students - amongst mature entrants, the non-continuation rate improved by 1pp, to 8.6%, and GCU outperforms the Scottish sector average (11.2%).

We recognise the impact that changed teaching and learning approaches, and the limits to face-to-face interaction, may have on student experience and progression. We have carried out student surveys to inform our understanding of the student experience and identify areas of success and for improvement. In 2019-20 all students who raised lack of IT or internet as an issue were provided with equipment to improve Wi-Fi access. Additional funds were allocated from the University and through the support of donors who agreed to repurpose their donations to support digital poverty. Equipment is being distributed to more students in 2020-21 through the SFC funding provided. We created Covid-secure study and exam space provision for those without appropriate home study space. A wide range of additional support was provided for care-experienced students, and for those applicants for 2020-21 entry, including weekly phone calls, check-in messages and newsletters; additional engagement with students known to be vulnerable; a Youtube channel to respond to the interest of some students in learning to cook.

The PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) Scheme, through which all new students had the opportunity to connect to their classmates and to link with students at other levels, was implemented at the start of term. All undergraduate programmes are included and this support is also available for Trimester B entrants. It has been hugely popular, with over 2,600 students having joined for Trimester A. These activities are designed to build a sense of learner identity alongside helping students develop key peer support networks and social groups.

An important issue in terms of progression and completion relates to our health and social work students. The University educates nurses and allied health professionals at scale, performing an essential role in Scotland for training of large numbers of the healthcare workforce. We achieved high Scottish Government intake targets into Nursing in 2019-20 and 2020-21, with unusually high conversion of applications in some fields in 2020-21 resulting in a larger than expected intake. The size of these cohorts creates a number of challenges for student

experience and resourcing; and in Nursing and all our allied health profession programmes, the loss of placement opportunities had a significant impact in 2019-20 and into 2020-21 and this will continue to have a multi-year impact on student experience, progression and completion. We are working hard to develop creative solutions in mitigating the impact and we are providing significant additional support to our students, while working collectively across the sector and with government and professional bodies to find solutions.

Learning with impact – employability, skills and work based education

The University has a focus on enhancing employability by ensuring students are equipped with the skills to succeed as global citizens through core and co-curricular activities such as volunteering, internships, and projects and for such activity to count towards a degree award. Industry links and collaboration with employers to inform the curriculum is managed through a combination of structured programme-specific advisory boards, dialogue with subject matter experts and business development outreach and engagement. In addition, many programmes have Industrial Advisory Groups which provide guidance on careers, as well as offering guest lectures. The ongoing development of our portfolio is also informed by professional accrediting bodies and, where appropriate, Scottish Government workforce planning objectives. A total of 79% of undergraduate programmes and 52% of postgraduate programmes offer professional accreditation.

Placement opportunities are an important aspect of our provision: 81% of undergraduate degree programmes and 25% of taught postgraduate programmes offer placement opportunities. However, Covid restrictions have created real challenges in placement provision, as noted above in the context of Nursing and AHPs. We have adapted curricula and teaching approaches in some subject areas to respond to changing employer/industry needs. Our campus is geared towards providing students with real-life practical experience through facilities such as the Vision Centre, Virtual Hospital, and Broadcasting Suite. Our specialist spaces - such as laboratories, simulation suites, skills classes and workshops - have been equipped and the layout amended to enable safe on-campus working, but the extent of their use has inevitably been much more limited in 2020-21.

Our School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment provides part-time study opportunities which offer an attractive opportunity for employers and employees. Part-time students make an important contribution to the learning environment of the full-time students as they often bring real world examples of academic principles and current issues into the classroom. 2020-21 has however been a challenging environment for the release of employed students to part-time study, and our intake numbers have reduced.

A fund to support STEM projects and scholarships was established in November 2019, with an initial donation from Liberty Industries Group. In 2020, new scholarships have been supported by donors. International fashion brand Oh Polly is supporting new creative talent through six scholarships for BAME students and beneficiaries will also gain a paid work placement. The John Mather Trust and the Incorporation of Hammermen are both supporting scholarships for students who entered GCU via a University outreach initiative.

We support and provide opportunities for the development of meta skills and attributes. For example:

- All GCU students have the opportunity to develop the Common Good attributes through the formal taught curriculum. For example, modules and programmes include the 'Triple E' spine (Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship) in the Glasgow School for Business and Society. In the School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment, Integrated Engineering Studies is taught in all years and includes skills relevant to commercial engineering projects.
- GCU has a commitment to meaningful education around the SDGs (SDG Target 4.7) to ensure that students are educated on sustainable development and the associated SDGs, through our active participation in the United Nations PRME initiative, and early adoption and promotion worldwide of three SDG-related open access platforms: the sustainability literacy test; Aim2Flourish and Wikirate. Each year, over 400 GCU students take the Sustainability literacy test, with further roll out planned.

- The School of Health and Life Sciences has mapped the digital capabilities required of its students using JISC's digital capabilities framework. In the School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment all programmes provide an opportunity to develop digital skills through activities embedded in the curriculum as the application of advanced digital skills is core to many of our programmes. In addition, we often use LinkedIn Learning to support generic digital skill development and support the use of e-portfolio tools, such as Mahara. The University also actively engages with the Digital Skills Partnership.
- The Common Good Award is a skills and personal development award which aims to encourage and support our students to develop the skills and attributes needed to make a positive difference to the communities they will serve. It recognises and rewards the informal learning they gained through co- and extra-curricular activities (paid or unpaid), such as volunteering, charity fundraising, being a carer, community activity, student representation, mentoring, ambassadorial work and more. It also helps our students to develop the skills and attributes that employers now increasingly expect in addition to a university degree. Students also gain these skills through participation in the GCU Law Clinic, GCU Cyber Security Clinic; and GCU has teamed up with Police Scotland to allow students to apply for the role of Special Constable and train on campus.
- The Students' Association runs a Student Leaders Programme, a co-curricular work related learning programme developing future leaders and their employability, which has gained Scottish Innovation Student Awards Level 1 Accreditation. The programme is open to any GCU student who volunteers or is a representative at GCU, the Students' Association or within the community. There are many student-led societies within the Students' Association that support the development of learning outwith the curriculum.

GCU has distinctive strengths in work-based education:

- Our Institute for University to Business Education is a dedicated employer facing service specialising in consultation, partnership structuring, forecasting and also recruitment for Graduate Apprenticeships. The focus is on enabling human capital to be more effective, qualified and productive, through the design of flexible industry-focused programmes with particular attention in Scotland to Sector Skills Investment Plans, as well as National Development Plans in an international context. Clusters of activity are in infrastructure, energy, computing and security, business process outsourcing, health and institutional capacity building.
- GCU is a sector leader in Graduate Apprenticeship provision, providing high-quality teaching and industry partnerships for the advancement of employer and skills focused education. The majority of students start in first year but many are experienced upskilling and reskilling candidates benefitting from the University's flexible entry process and recognition of prior learning. In 2020-21, despite the challenging environment for many employers, the University was successful in recruiting to its funded places, and recruiting additional students in response to shortfalls elsewhere.
- We continue to work to address critical skills gaps through work-based programmes designed with a variety of companies and bodies, for example, our partnership with the Institution of Railway Operators.

Mental health and wellbeing

Our vision for mental health and wellbeing is: *"As the University of the Common Good, we are committed to a culture of positive mental health, which enables students and staff to thrive and achieve their full potential. We will proactively support the mental health and wellbeing of our people and promote a healthy learning and working environment."* The delivery of this vision is articulated via two interlinked action plans – a Student Mental Health Action Plan and a Mental Health at Work Action Plan.

At the onset of the pandemic, student services teams moved to provide services online, including a student helpline, and additional targeted support is being provided to students in Halls. Disability mentors retained online mentoring with students and counselling services adapted to meet changing student demand. In

addition, the University has launched TogetherAll a 24/7/365 confidential online service to support staff and students.

The University welcomes the SFC additional counsellor resource which allowed us to increase our counselling staff in 2019-20 and provide further support in 2020-21, reducing waiting times and allowing us to develop the mix of Wellbeing Service offerings. We now offer counselling in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. Alongside structural support services, we undertake projects internally through our Student Mental Health Project Officer, as well as with external partners, to further enhance strategic approaches to support our students and staff¹. GCU is one of three universities selected to pilot a University Mental Health Charter accreditation scheme that will recognise and benchmark best practice in supporting mental health across the country's HEIs. The University is one of eight institutions selected to take part in a government-funded NUS Scotland mental health consultation and we are also leading an Enhancement Themes project exploring links between mental health and inclusive curricula and learning environments. GCU's support for student wellbeing has won accreditation from bodies including the National Union of Students Scotland, the National Autistic Society, and Carers Trust Scotland and we were profiled by SeeMe as an example of good practice.

We have introduced resources and training for staff aimed at enhancing the staff experience and enabling staff to better support the mental health and wellbeing of our students. A programme of training for staff was introduced in partnership with Glasgow City College from January 2020. The University introduced a two-year post of mental health co-ordinator for staff, in partnership with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). This key role will facilitate delivery of targeted mental health training and support the university to promote a fully inclusive, positive and open culture and provide advice and support for the effective delivery of the mental health action plan.

Led by the Students' Association, the University and Students' Association continues to annually work in partnership on the Student Mental Health Agreement, as part of the NUS Scotland Think Positive's project work to provide a more holistic support provision at GCU. The Students' Association Advice Centre and Nightline Service (run in partnership with the University of Strathclyde Students' Association) supports student wellbeing and mental health; the Students' Association has a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer and Group; and annually delivers Mental Health First Aid Training to students. The Students' Association had created a Quiet Room within Students' Association Building and has successfully campaigned to introduce quiet rooms across campus, Postgraduate Learning Space in the library, and Mature Students Room.

In common with other universities, partnership working for mental health continues to be a significant challenge for GCU and relies on building relationships with service providers such as Community Mental Health Teams. The Universities Scotland Mental Health group chaired by GCU's Principal and Vice-Chancellor, as the Lead for Mental Health, raises such issues with the Scottish Government

The University's Gender Based Violence Policy aims to ensure we provide a consistent, caring, and timely response when any member of our University community is affected by such violence. Our #ErasetheGrey campaign, designed by staff and students, continues to challenge myths and stereotypes around gender-based violence. It attracted international acclaim and was adopted by Police Scotland as its national campaign. GCU hosted the launch of Fearless Glasgow, a partnership backed by Police Scotland and the Scottish Government, that will help raise awareness of sexual violence and offer enhanced support to more than 150,000 students².

¹ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/informationaboutourservices/wellbeingprojects/>

² <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/supportingourstudents/genderbasedviolence/>

Student experience and student voice

In the NSS, the University achieved an overall satisfaction score of 85%, a +4pp improvement on the previous year, placing GCU on a par with the Scottish sector rate and exceeding the UK by +2pp. Our scores across all themes improved, most significantly Organisation and Management, Student Voice (both +4pp) and Assessment and Feedback (+3pp). Student satisfaction for “The students’ union (association or guild) effectively represents students’ academic interests” rose by 4pp to 56%, above the Scottish sector average.

The contribution of the Students’ Association and our student body to the response to the pandemic has been immense. The Students’ Association have been fully engaged in the University response, with the Student President attending the Executive Board, Safe Return to Campus Comms Co-ordination Group and Academic Student Support Delivery Continuity Group on a weekly basis and the Vice Presidents and academic reps work with the senior management teams within the academic schools to ensure a high quality online and blending learning experience during the pandemic. Students and the Students’ Association are also key partners within GCU Strategy 2030 and made an important contribution in developing the new Strategy. Strategy 2030 was presented at various stages for discussion at the Students’ Association democratic meetings of Student Voice for input. An outcome of this joint work led to a specific objective about partnership working with the Students’ Association being included within the strategy.

The University, Students’ Association and students created the Student Partnership Agreement called GCU Community: Working Together in Partnership Agreement. GCU views staff, students and Students’ Association working as partners as central to the delivery of excellence in learning and outstanding student experience. The Students’ Association and the University worked together to produce a Guide to Student Representation at GCU. The Academic Rep Structure is managed between the Students’ Association, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and academic schools. The University works with the Students’ Association to recruit student panel members onto Programme Approval and Programme Review events, Enhancement-Led Internal Subject Review and Thematic Reviews. The Students’ Association worked closely with the University for the Enhancement-led Institutional Review, including being members of the ELIR Steering Group, contributing to the Reflective Analysis and Update, seeking student panel members and being interviewed during the review. The Students’ Association also has active membership of the Enhancing the Student Experience Steering Group, Senate and its standing committees and other academic committees. The number of student reps on Senate has been increased from 4 to 6 reps.

Equalities and inclusion

Equality and diversity are fundamental to the University’s Mission. Our commitment is reflected in the GCU Values approach which has led to our playing a leading role in the work of the Magna Charta Observatory of Fundamental University Values and Rights to develop their Values assessment instrument. We continue to embed the GCU Values and Behaviours Framework through our Values Forum. Further information on our work on mainstreaming equality and diversity can be found in our Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2019³ and our Equality Outcomes 2017-2021⁴. The new Equality Outcomes will be more explicit in exploring how protected characteristics impact on core measures, and addressing priority inequalities.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion was central to our response to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that no student was disadvantaged. This was clearly demonstrated in activities from communications, to development of accessible online student wellbeing services, and considerations of digital accessibility and inclusion for online learning. Equality impact assessments were built into the wider risk assessment and health safety and wellbeing process for Safe Return to Campus.

Key areas of focus for the University in 2020-21 are:

³ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/equality/equalityanddiversityatgcu/publicsectorequalitydutyreport/>

⁴ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/equality/equalityanddiversityatgcu/equalityoutcomes/>

- **Advancing Race Equality at GCU** - The University is prioritising the advancing of race equality. A short life working group, led by a senior academic and comprising of staff and Students' Association representation, developed recommendations for the University. These recommendations are informed by recent sector specific evidence on the BAME attainment gap (UUK/NUS) and racial harassment in UK universities (EHRC). Furthermore, the University is engaging externally to share good practice with the HE and FE sector through the Scottish Race Equality Network and with a wider range of public bodies through the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights. The Students' Association previously worked in partnership with the University to introduce a module on Intercultural Skills; leads on the annual Black History Month events and on the Show Racism the Red Card campaign.
- **Advancing Gender Equality at GCU** - through continued participation in Advance HE's Aurora programme for women who aspire to take leadership roles, implementation of Athena SWAN commitments at University and School level and reduction of our overall gender pay gap. GCU's commitment to promoting gender equality was recognised by the International Women's Day 2019 Best Practice Competition.
- **Disability Equality for Staff** - The University is directly addressing the recommendations from a research report on GCU staff with disabilities. The key recommendations are around accessibility of support, training, awareness, reasonable adjustments and disclosure and actions support the University's commitment to the Disability Confident scheme.
- **Staff Carers** - As part of our commitment to staff wellbeing and the wider equality and diversity agenda, the University is actively working on developing the visibility and support for staff who are carers. GCU was awarded Carer Positive 'Engaged' status by Carers Scotland to recognise our commitment to supporting staff with caring responsibilities.

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Research excellence and sustainability

GCU's Research Strategy employs the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations as a framework for both discipline-led and inter-disciplinary research within and across all academic units. We seek to address the goals via three societal challenges: Inclusive Societies, Healthy Lives and Sustainable Environments. The SDG framework aligns directly with Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF). The relevance and importance of the SDGs and the NPF have each been reinforced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Enhancing collaboration and developing research partnerships with public, private and third sector bodies are key priorities. Research income remains highly competitive and difficult to generate as the economies of the UK and EU continue to exhibit slow growth trends. Overall research funding disbursed by UK Government Research Councils, Charities and Industry continues to be cash-flat, representing a reduction in real terms. Our Strategy underpins our focus and preparation for the next Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise in 2021. The University currently has six approved thematic research centres which are designed to promote inter-disciplinary research to address multiple SDGs.

Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health focuses its research on the impact of social business, microfinance and wider Civil Society provision on the health and well-being of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in Scotland, the UK and overseas. The work of the Centre cuts across the three main societal challenges in our Research Strategy. As part of an ongoing £2m MRC-ESRC funded programme, CommonHealth, the Yunus Centre is developing and testing the first comprehensive framework of outcomes and instruments for evaluating social enterprise-based innovation from a health and wellbeing perspective. (See also Section 3)

BEAM (Built Environment & Asset Management) The Centre's research focus is on maximising social, economic and environmental benefit through the effective development, use and revitalisation of the built environment and through engagement with the communities involved. The Centre works in the following

areas: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Construction Project Risk and Value Management, Building Resilience and Environmental Impact. For example, the Centre is working with the Glasgow City Region's Clyde Rebuilt effort to develop overheating prevention policies as part of their climate change adaptation plan.

Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) The Centre brings together research expertise largely drawn from the allied health sciences, social sciences, nursing, epidemiology and population health, and the life sciences along with the co-hosted and Chief Scientist Office funded Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHPRU) and our strategic partnerships with Health Protection Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire. It organises its research around two themes in Public Health and Long Term Conditions, each attracting major research grants, particularly from NIHR and the Chief Scientist Office. For example, a £1.15m 4-year Health Protection Scotland Grant seeks to perform 'analytical research to inform on the effectiveness of services to prevent, diagnose and treat blood borne viruses in Scotland'.

WiSE (Centre for Research on Economic Justice) The Centre takes a multidisciplinary approach to analysis of economic, social and public policy both in Scotland and internationally. The Centre is leading on the publication of a path-breaking new series of open-access books that critically examine the economy and the theory and methodology of economics through the lens of gender. Dr Angela O'Hagan received the Jo Cox Award for Public Service and Active Citizenship for her work to advance gender budgeting. (See also Section 3)

Centre for Climate Justice In association with the Mary Robinson Foundation, the Centre for Climate Justice works in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and other organisations, and takes a major lead in the delivery of high-quality policy-relevant research for development, teaching/learning and broadening knowledge in the area of climate justice. Its aim is to deliver pragmatic and lasting solutions which improve the wellbeing of society, enhance people's rights and promote a climate-just world. (See also section 3)

SMART Technology Centre The Centre explores the design, development and evaluation of largely computer-based systems that are applied to a broad range of commercial and industrial applications, including energy resource management, industrial processes and manufacturing, digital network infrastructures, and serious games. The centre is currently working on the "Three-Lanka" Erasmus+ capacity building project.

Building on our research reputation, the University was well positioned to focus new research on Covid-19 and its impacts nationally and globally, across areas including infection control, epidemiology, virology, physical activity, vision sciences, mental health and resilience, health economics, economic impact, climate justice, gender equality, social psychology⁵. For example:

- Professor Claudia Estcourt has made several important contributions during the Covid-19 crisis, such as in published advice for ensuring access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for people at high risk of HIV; and providing expert opinion to the Scottish Parliament, Public Health England and the HM Government's Chief Scientific Advisor on National Security on contact tracing for Covid-19.
- Led by Professor Sebastien Chastin, leading physical activity researchers, respiratory experts, and sport and exercise psychologists at GCU launched the world's largest study to find out if physical activity can boost COVID-19 immunity.
- In addition, the Scottish Government awarded the University £136,290 to fund three vital research projects to help tackle the coronavirus and its impact. The studies will focus on increasing the understanding of COVID-19, screening potential treatments, and supporting clinical trials.
- Work is ongoing in relation to a major study to investigate the impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on Scotland's mental wellbeing.
- GCU is to lead a £2.7million study into radicalisation and violent extremism across Europe. Researchers from 17 countries will seek to identify trends in radical ideologies, shape policies to improve social inclusion, and forecast the potential impact on society of the widening inequalities created by Covid-19.

⁵ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/covid-19/>

Other examples of impactful and globally engaged research include:

- With the establishment of the Global Challenges and Sustainable Development Unit, several SFC-funded international projects have been successfully implemented, despite the travel restrictions.
- GCU's Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention (SHIP) Research Group launched "Building capacity for healthcare associated infection and antimicrobial resistance surveillance in Cameroon," backed by the University's Global Challenges Research Funding, in collaboration with Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN) and supported by a donation from Gama Healthcare.

2.2 Researcher development and support for research students

GCU continues to engage at a Scottish and UK level in national researcher developments. Our Graduate School is a co-organiser of the Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum under the auspices of the Universities Scotland Research Training and Development Committee. GCU has membership of the Vitae CROS/PIRLS steering group to develop a new UK Researcher Experience Survey. The University's Early Career Researchers (ECR) Group is governed by the Graduate School Director with representation from ECRs in the academic Schools and research centres. The DARE (Developing Academic Researcher Excellence) group was established in 2018 to provide a platform and voice to ECRs at GCU. A model of 'hub and spoke' collaboration has allowed advancement of the ECR agenda and increased visibility of these often hidden researcher groups, while allowing great strides in the developmental opportunities provided.

In terms of supporting research students during the pandemic, the University acted swiftly to introduce online viva examinations, avoiding the need to cancel vivas. We also launched a Covid-19 Related Extension Policy for Research Students, in advance of the later published UKRI Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding Policy. GCU's policy covers similar eligibility criteria and considerations to the UKRI policy and additionally has provision for future disruptions caused by Covid-19. Sessions on creating a research recovery plan for students and supervisors have also been delivered.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

3.1 Responsive institutions

Research and scholarly contribution

Researchers at the University have been addressing the uncertainty around the future of global economy created by the pandemic, through research and thought pieces in areas of expertise including retail, marketing and tourism⁶. For example, GCU's Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism has provided the monthly data source of national accommodation and visitor attraction performance since the advent of Covid-19. Data and related analysis has been supplied to the Scottish Government, Scottish Tourist Alliance, Scottish Tourism Emergency Recovery Group and VisitScotland. The Centre Director is a member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Business Resilience Council working on planning and innovation in the urban recovery of the city.

The University's expertise in health economics provides an important perspective on the pandemic, and the impact on communities and those most vulnerable in society is a key area of concern for GCU. For example:

- A COVID-19 research project has secured £320,000 from the ESRC to be carried out by GCU's Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health. The study will assess the impact social distancing and a move to a cashless society has had on the lives of those without access to credit and other banking services.
- The WiSE Centre for Economic Justice launched a blog series which takes an in-depth look at a multitude of topics relating to Covid-19 including homelessness, working from home, enhancing public engagement,

⁶ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/covid-19/covid-19andtheeconomy/>

addressing inequalities and economic recovery⁷. The Centre's Dr Angela O'Hagan is on the working group of the Scottish Human Rights Commission calling on human rights to be at the heart of budget-setting post Covid-19, and was appointed to the Social Renewal Advisory Board. Director, Professor Sara Cantillon, was appointed to the UN Crisis Bureau Experts Roster for Rapid Responses to mitigating the impacts of the Covid pandemic.

- Our Scottish Poverty Information and Research Unit was commissioned by the Poverty and Inequality Commission to conduct a survey of community organisations across Scotland providing emergency food which informed the Commission's recommendations on food insecurity during the Covid crisis.
- The first Common Good Hub in Europe is to be set up by the University as part of a new family and community centre funded by the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), in Milton, and will provide the chance for students to have first-hand experience of the problems that affect people living in deprived areas and give researchers greater opportunities to expand "place-based" projects.

Training and skills contribution

The University plays a significant role in the development of the health sector workforce across all strands of Nursing and a wide range of AHPs, at UG and PG level and through CPD. New developments in upskilling provision include funding from the Scottish Government to fast track 50 optometrists through the University's Independent Prescribing for Optometrists programme to meet the demand created by Covid. To help meet NHS requirements, we have increased provision of the PgD District Nursing by providing a January intake as well as the September intake; increasing the number of registrants on some of our CPD provision such as the prescribing for healthcare practitioners programme; and Physiotherapy Post Registration Masters programmes will become more accessible for audiences not just in Glasgow but further afield.

Through the SFC's Upskilling Fund, we have initiated a new strategic partnership with the Scottish Tech Army, a not for profit company and a volunteer Covid-19 technical response team that helps the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, and other organisations across the country with rapid technical development projects to address current Covid-19 related challenges, and post pandemic economic recovery. It is our joint aspiration that Scottish Tech Army volunteers will take advantage of GCU provided opportunities in Software Development, to boost their career and employment prospects.

Scottish Government funding was awarded in 2019 to create a GCU-led hub to explore how migrants can use their expertise to shrink the country's skills gap in construction, engineering, health and social care. The project recognises migrants' and refugees' existing skills and qualifications, and is working in partnership with the Bridges Programmes, Skills Development Scotland, Glasgow City Council, SCQF Partnership, Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Scottish Refugee Council and Glasgow Clyde College.

3.2 Work-ready

As noted, our provision is aimed at preparing students for employment. The majority of programmes offer professional accreditation and placement opportunities. Placement provision has however been affected by the pandemic, and we are working hard and committing significant resource to be as creative as possible to continue to provide opportunities and to be responsive to changing circumstances. The first publication of Graduate Outcomes data shows the proportion of graduates in employment or further study was 91%, above the Scottish sector rate of 89%. At postgraduate level, 88% of GCU graduates are in a highly skilled occupation compared to 77% of undergraduates. The Scottish sector rates were 92% and 73% respectively.

⁷ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/covid-19/widersocietalimpacts/>

Careers Service provision includes a two-year extension of service to graduates who can have access to a range of non-curriculum based support. This year in addition students and graduates benefitted from a move to online employer events, a careers week of events in summer called “Your Career 2020 and Beyond”, online and interactive careers activities through our platform Career Success, a BAME careers conference in March 2020, the GCU Internship programme launched in September and concluding in December 2020, a career mentoring scheme offered to all graduates and final year students, career wellbeing checks for all with a professionally qualified adviser and a focus on maintaining and increasing graduate and part time jobs.

Recognising the immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on new graduates, the University launched MINT (Mentoring, Internships, Networking and Talks) in a bid to give 2020 graduates the best chance of securing employment. The scheme has been backed by notable honorary graduates and alumni. Under the mentoring arm of the scheme, new graduates and final year students are paired with an experienced alumni mentor. In the first three months more than 400 new graduates were assigned an industry mentor, with 250 mentor/mentee pairings actively underway. The internship programme offers new graduates the opportunity to gain paid industry experience within an SME, voluntary organisation or a company where GCU alumni are employed. Unlike many other internship programmes, participating graduates receive the living wage. In the first three months over 60 new graduates have benefitted from the Fund with nearly a fifth leading to permanent roles.

Graduates can also join GCU’s online networking platform, GCU Connect, where they can link up with fellow graduates around the world. A series of online talks from captains of industry commencing in September feature insights into the impact of COVID-19 on their specific industry, what they think the future holds and advice for graduates looking to get into employment.

Business development and entrepreneurial support for staff, students and alumni is promoted through Uhatch, GCU’s business incubator. Uhatch has 39 member businesses of whom nine are registered as Private Limited Companies, 3 are Community Interest Companies (CIC), and 27 are currently on the start-up journey. The Uhatch membership currently comprises of 44% female led businesses (of which 71% are BAME-led) and 56% male-led businesses (of which 46% are BAME-led). In the preceding 12 months (November 2019–November 2020), 11 grants totalling £31,000 in seedcorn funding were made to Uhatch start-up companies through the Santander Universities/Uhatch Entrepreneur Enabling Fund.

3.3 Innovation

Please see the appended University Innovation Fund submission.

3.4 Public health emergency

Safe return to campus and support for students

From March 2020, the University has dedicated significant focus and resource to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, based on our values and mission for the Common Good, and a prudent and risk-based approach. The student voice has been central and essential to our approach, with Student Association representation at our Covid response and planning groups, including our Executive Board. Our support for our students has been considered, extensive and positively received, including teaching and learning support for online and blended learning, adapting transitions support and outreach, investment in digital infrastructure, rent waivers, food and wider support for isolating students, and mental health support. We reduced our occupancy at our Caledonian Court residences to 50% in 2020-21. The GCU Foundation redirected £110,000 to support students facing hardship, ensuring those most in need have the technology to continue their studies online and remain connected to family and friends; and to cover essentials like food and rent. We continue to adapt to changing circumstances and guidelines, to learn from our experiences, and to respond to the needs of our staff and

students, and we have engaged closely with the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council in doing so. Guidance is updated and communicated regularly directly with staff and students and through our website⁸.

Backed by Sir Alex Ferguson CBE, we launched the Common Good Campaign to raise vital funds to help ease the added burden on students. All funds raised are directed to where the need is greatest, helping to alleviate financial hardship for those who have lost part-time income and have no family support including care experienced students and those from disadvantaged areas; provide mental health and wellbeing support; and support employability through match-funded internships. The Common Good Campaign has been recognised in Parliament as an exemplary response to the challenges arising from the pandemic for young people.

Our ARC sports centre has been transformed into a Scottish Government community walk-through Covid-19 test centre. A Student Test Centre for asymptomatic cases became operational on campus on 30 November 2020, serving students from GCU, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow Kelvin College and City of Glasgow College.

The University is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and healthy learning and working environment and culture in which all our students and staff can thrive. This is in keeping with the UK Healthy Universities Network's aims to develop more strategic 'whole university' approaches to health, wellbeing and sustainability. The University has successfully retained the NHS Scotland Gold Healthy Working Lives award and is a member of the Healthy Universities network. A Coronavirus Wellbeing Support webpage provides resources to help staff and the University's Occupational Health provider (PAM) has set up a dedicated helpline where staff can access confidential consultations for a range of concerns including advice on maintaining good mental health.

Public health and community contribution

We have contributed to the response to the public health emergency, in our role as educators of health professionals and through the significant expertise of our academic staff. As well as staff and students having joined the frontline in hospitals and communities, we have undertaken research and advisory roles on topics such as infection prevention, effective contact tracing, hand hygiene and nurse resilience and immunity testing⁹.

For example:

- More than 500 student nurses from the University immediately volunteered to join the NHS Scotland's national emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic, which has risen to nearly 2000 student nurses and staff supporting the national efforts. Health and Social care students and staff also joined the frontline and 95 BSc Paramedic Science students also joined the Covid-19 NHS emergency response.
- GCU psychology students are working as trainees with leading Scottish charity SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) to give mental health support to Covid-19 frontline workers.
- The University loaned specialist equipment, and donated PPE, to the NHS.
- GCU's Professor Lesley Price is co-ordinating the Scottish arm of the UK SIREN study, in partnership with Public Health Scotland and working closely with National Research Scotland and the Chief Scientist Office. SIREN is a study testing 100,000 health workers looking at prevalence of and immunity from Covid-19.
- GCU Professors Sharon Hutchinson and David Goldberg have been at the heart of major research which has provided important epidemiological insights on Covid-19 to aid the public health response.
- Professor Claudia Estcourt is providing expert opinion to the Scottish Parliament, Public Health England and the HM Government's Chief Scientific Advisor on National Security on contact tracing for Covid-19.
- GCU's Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention (SHIP) research group has risen to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic by finding new and inventive ways to reach out to our communities.

⁸ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/coronavirusuptodateinformation/safereturntocampus/>

⁹ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/covid-19/healthresearchatthepublichealthforefront/>

- Professor Sebastien Chastin played a key role in developing new World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour launched in November 2020.
- Professor of Ageing and Health Dawn Skelton embarked on a mission to help thousands of vulnerable older people maintain fitness with online movement sessions.
- The University provided additional financial support to foodbanks in our Caledonian Club communities.

3.5 Climate emergency

The SDGs provide the overarching framework for delivery of our Strategy 2030. We are signatories to the [Higher Education Sustainability Initiative for Rio+20](#), [Principles for Responsible Management Education](#) and the [SDG Accord](#), and our commitment to the SDGs is evidenced through our strong performance in the THE Social Impact Rankings 2020, in which the University was ranked 43rd in the world.

The University declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and has since committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2040. Current plans continue to deliver year-on-year reductions, with emissions in 2018-19 being 31% lower than the 2014-15 baseline. Data for 2019-20 is expected to note a positive, if short-term, impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on carbon emissions and environmental sustainability. Historic emissions reports, underlying datasets and supporting reports are available from the reporting and data pages in the sustainability section of the University's website, as is information on waste minimisation and recycling and GCU's Sustainable Food Policy and Sustainable Travel Plan¹⁰. Our commitment to embedding sustainability into its operations is underpinned by an Environmental Management System (EMS), successfully re-certified EcoCampus Platinum (ISO 14001:2015) in March 2020, the only University in Scotland to operate an EMS with this level of certification.

We are engaged with preparations for COP26, now scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November 2021, with the University's contribution being coordinated by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of our Centre for Climate Justice. The Centre takes a major lead in the delivery of policy-relevant research for development, teaching and broadening knowledge in the area of climate justice.

The University's climate research projects include:

- The Centre for Climate Justice is building on research into the experiences of people in Sub-Saharan Africa during the pandemic. The Centre has been awarded £182k by UKRI/Newton Fund for a 10-month project focusing on the experiences of people in Malawi and Rwanda. This comes as it completes a project with the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance to develop recommendations to policy makers on shaping post Covid-19 reconstruction in Africa, as well as inform climate conversations ahead of COP26.
- One Health Breakthrough Partnership, led by NHS Highland, seeks to reduce pharmaceutical pollution in Scotland. As Associate Partner, GCU led on a research project (with partners James Hutton Institute and University of Highlands and Islands) on pharmaceutical concentrations in Scotland. The partnership was a finalist for the VIBES award in the Partnership category and Highly Commended by the BMJ Awards in the category Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action.
- Private Water Supplies and the local economic impacts in Scotland is a study commissioned by Centre for Expertise for Waters on the impact private water supply reliance has on social and economic infrastructure; business development; costs of clean water; land management and stewardship and support needs.
- Enhancing Climate Resilience through Microfinance is a GCU-led research project in partnership with the University of Rwanda for the international microfinance NGO Opportunity International on enhancing climate resilience among smallholders in Rwanda through microfinance.

¹⁰ <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/sustainability/data/>

- In the run up to COP26 GCU is working with Glasgow Science Centre on their Climate Change Education Programme, Our World Our Impact.
- Through a University-wide focus, we develop initiatives and support student projects. One example is the establishment by students on the Environmental Management programme of GCU's Future Urban Orchard. The Students' Association was accredited as Excellent in the 2019-20 NUS Green Impact accreditation.

3.6 Collaboration with other institutions

Despite Brexit, GCU is leading in a number of new major collaborations which all directly or indirectly respond to Covid-19:

- De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate (D.Rad), will seek to identify trends in radical ideologies, help shape policies to improve social inclusion, and forecast the potential impact on society of the widening inequalities created by Covid-19.
- Health-CASCADE is a European Training Network to develop co-creation skills and expertise by training of a new generation of professionals capable of working across disciplines, public and private sectors in four high impact fields - Education, Workplace, Health Care and Community.
- The SEVERE (Social Enterprise through Virtual Environments and Remote Entrepreneurship) Project is addressing the challenges of remote working in the Social Innovation sector as a result of Covid-19.
- A collaboration initiated by Public Health Scotland by the Epidemiology Research Cell brings together academics from GCU, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Strathclyde to support the national response to Covid-19.

The University has also adapted its partnership working and initiated new collaborative activity with other education institutions in the context of the pandemic response as shown through this OA, for example:

- GCU is partnering with E-Sgoil following negotiations with Education Scotland to provide resources for after-school learning in a variety of sixth-form subjects through the Advanced Higher Hub.
- We have adapted our work with school and college partners through the Caledonian Club, School Connect and College Connect programmes.
- New research collaborations include those with Queens University Belfast on the COVID-19 Psychological Wellbeing study and UWS on impact of lockdown on health behaviours and mental health.
- Increased engagement with other programme providers, placement providers, service colleagues, Council of Deans, NES, professional bodies, to address challenges in delivery of health workforce education.
- A programme of training courses for staff to support mental health was introduced in partnership with Glasgow City College from January 2020.
- The Student Test Centre for asymptomatic cases serves students from other local institutions.

Appendix - University Innovation Fund

As the University for the Common Good, we seek to optimise our research outputs to reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals through social innovation. GCU's research strategy addresses three societal challenges (i) Inclusive Societies (ii) Healthy Lives (iii) Sustainable Environments. The broad themes are: Public Health, Long-term Conditions, Social Innovation, Equalities and Justice, Urban Environments, and Efficient Systems.

We match the platform grant with ongoing activities and support to promote and increase the innovative capacity of the University, and to ensure societal and sustainable economic impact from our research. We are achieving this through: applied research and knowledge exchange for key sectors of the Scottish economy, student enterprise, Graduate Apprenticeships, and also by placing a greater emphasis on pathways for social innovation to thrive, through community engagement, and meaningful impact measurement. This is reflected in our continued engagement with the Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group and our active participation in the UIF sector outcome strands, taking on a leading role in areas such as the Social Enterprise Collaborative forum as part of the Entrepreneurialism strand.

The University's activities in innovation and KE, and the key UIF outcomes to which they relate, are summarised below.

Activity	UIF Outcome
<p>We have established the GCU Knowledge Exchange Group which brings together academic staff, professional support staff and users of research. The Knowledge Exchange Group will ensure that GCU is addressing the opportunities and guidelines set out by the University Innovation Fund and Knowledge Exchange Concordat, chaired by Dean of the School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment and activities managed by GCU's Knowledge Exchange Manager. The main objectives will be to develop a clear Knowledge Exchange Strategy, which aligns with Principle 1 of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat and feeds into Strategy 2030, whilst encompassing the changing external social, economic and policy environment in which GCU operates. The University's support for Research and Innovation has been enlarged and restructured to better reflect the overall innovation of the University, comprising five Units of Activity: Research Excellence, National and Commercial Innovation, Social Innovation, Global Challenges and Sustainable Development, and International Projects. The Units have developed a series of workshops to encourage innovation practice within the University. GCU's dedicated Knowledge Exchange Manager has continued to develop tailored KE funding packages with our academic Schools, with the help of the Impact and Knowledge Exchange Officers and Research Advisors.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>GCU continues to be part of the ISCF Business Development Network, which is designed to increase sector-wide capacity for supporting collaborative UKRI/ISCF activity in Scotland. We will continue to promote the funding opportunities presented by the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The Research and Innovation Office and our School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment are linking activities to potential funding opportunities, including from the Artificial Intelligence Research Lab; Smart Connectivity and Sensing; Nature Based Solutions & Eco Engineering; Engineering Simulation & Advanced Manufacturing; Water; Sustainable Materials & Structures; Power and Renewable Energy Systems; Applied Games and Engaging Technologies; Cyber Security, Networking and Communications; Construction. The last year has seen the establishment of the SMART Technology Centre which explores the design, development and evaluation of intelligent computer-based systems applied in different organizational contexts, such as energy resource management, industrial processes and manufacturing, digital network infrastructures and serious computer games.</p>	<p>Outcome One: Demand stimulation</p> <p>Outcome Three: Simplification/ Greater Innovation</p>
<p>The University's Research and Innovation Office is working with Research Centres and academics to develop long-term Scottish and UK funding solutions through the SFC Innovation Centres and Research Pools:</p>	<p>Outcome One: Demand stimulation</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We play an active role in the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, taking part in the SCDI Industrial Strategy Bid Workshop. Our Built Environment Asset Management Centre (BEAM) Centre and academics will continue work with Scottish Research Partnership in Engineering, forging partnerships in areas such as Advanced Manufacturing, Robotics & Autonomous Systems, Engineering at Life Sciences Interface and Infrastructure & Environment. • Members of BEAM developed an app to reduce injuries and save lives on construction projects. They have also taken a leading role in the investigation of the design, build, commission and maintenance of Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, in relation to infection incidents. • We are strengthening our engagement with the CENSIS Innovation Forum through our School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment, working on projects such as Smart Venturi Wet-Gas Meters to Foster Efficient Gas Production and Digital Transformation. • We aim to build on our current relationship with the oil and gas sector (with companies such as Doble) developing initiatives such as those highlighted at the recent OGIC Oil and Gas Business Development Meeting. • We continue to engage closely with the Digital Health & Care Institute especially in the Healthy Ageing Cluster, reflecting our strengths in falls prevention, gait rehabilitation, strokes and incontinence. • Funding from the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre for a Site Efficiency Study Programme between BEAM and the Stewart Milne Group. • Data Science Research group members took part in the Corona Hack: multi-disciplinary teams competing to contribute their data skills to help to combat Covid-19, and developed an award-winning solution to aid first diagnosis in hospitals based on chest X-Rays and clinical annotations. • Student Rohollah Rostami (Director Studies, Professor Nick Hytiris) was selected as a team member of the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE) Earthquake Engineering Field Investigation Team (EEFIT) who assessed the damage done by the October 2020 earthquake in Turkey. • A student team from the Dept of Applied Computer Games won the Tranzfuser competition, run by the UK Games Fund and secured a prize of £20k to further develop their game, Chimera Tales, a 2D narrative-based adventure game about transgenerational Holocaust trauma. 	<p>Outcome Three: Simplification/Greater Innovation</p>
<p>The University continues to work through the Research and Commercial Director's Group (RCDG) and various working groups, including the SME Demand Stimulation Network. Demand led workshops will focus on SME participation, supply chain development and leveraging the UK and international industry networks of all partners. GCU has key strengths and potential to lead consortia development in areas such as Construction, Health and Smart Technologies. The Knowledge Exchange Manager represents GCU on the Covid-19 economic recovery forum; and has continued to work as the University's Point of Contact for Interface, using the RAG system on the effect of Covid-19 on current SFC Innovation Vouchers and ongoing work.</p>	<p>Outcome One: Demand stimulation</p>
<p>In the last twelve years we received funding for 119 new projects with Scottish SMEs, worth over £1.1m. So far during 2020-2021, GCU have delivered five SFC Innovation Vouchers in partnership with Scottish SMEs in Health, Digital and Energy. We promote the SFC Innovation Centres to staff to deliver a portfolio of Industrial Doctorate Studentships. We secured funding from the ETP studentship scheme and NMIS.</p> <p>The Knowledge Exchange Manager continues to work with staff at the KTP Centre. The current portfolio of KTPs stands at eight, including funding awarded for four to date in 2020-21, including one with Precision Tooling Services Ltd, which followed on from a NMIS Industrial Doctorate Award to increase the company's understanding of electrochemical machining (ECM). GCU were also awarded a KTP with Safehinge Primera to improve care and recovery within Mental Health facilities through design thinking and smart technology. Ongoing work also includes options for projects to be put on hold during the pandemic, and funding support to help key staff continue working when projects are on hold.</p>	<p>Outcome One: Demand stimulation</p>
<p>The National and Commercial Innovation Unit will build and strengthen the commercial pathways and an effective innovation and entrepreneurial culture across the University. GCU staff have switched to a remote service of delivery to manage the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange pipeline. A Pre-Award Management system has been established to facilitate simpler access to opportunities and develop a more robust system for managing information on projects and reviewing collaborations.</p>	<p>Outcome Two: Simplification/Commercialisation</p>

<p>GCU is committed to the development of Research and KE staff, of which 'Enhancing researcher skills for business engagement' is a key focus, and will continue to engage with PraxisAuril and JISC to develop KE and innovation skills. The Knowledge Exchange Manager at GCU was the first KE Professional in Scotland to be awarded the RTTP accreditation (Registered Technology Transfer Professional), an international professional standard for knowledge transfer and commercialisation practitioners. She has continued to promote this exciting new accreditation, presenting at the PraxisAuril KE Scotland event in 2020 to highlight the benefits of undertaking the RTTP Competency Framework review.</p> <p>The Research and Innovation Office at GCU are also currently undertaking an Investors in People Accreditation.</p> <p>We are committed to encouraging mobility of staff between business and universities and the transfer of the knowledge that we produce through our research is linked with the Scottish Government National Priorities in key areas. We will continue to drive interest in the new Management KTP as a way of engaging academics who have not been previously involved in the programme, and have also promoted the KTP Africa scheme to staff.</p>	<p>Outcome Three: Simplification/ Greater Innovation</p>
<p>We will build on our existing strengths in the GCU Graduate School and our HR Excellence in Research Award; and share good practice and explore new mechanisms for opening up training opportunities to partner universities on a reciprocal basis. Our Development of Academic Researchers in Excellence (DARE) programme builds on existing excellence in the support of emerging researchers, including their innovation knowledge and skills.</p> <p>GCU has also taken part in the RSE Scottish Crucible leadership and development programme. Open to ECRs from across the University, this three-day programme includes expert input from leading researchers in our School of Health & Life Sciences, Communications and Public Affairs, Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange, Community and Public Engagement, and culminates in a meeting with policymakers at the Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>Outcome Three: Simplification/ Greater Innovation</p>
<p>UHatch promotes graduate enterprise including international graduates on entrepreneurship visas. Our graduate companies continue to benefit from awards such as RBS Edge Funding, Enterprise Campus, Converge Challenge, Virgin Money (Vroom), Santander Enterprise Universities. UHatch has created pipelines of activity with other areas such as the Student Association Leadership Programme which incorporates streams focused on Social Innovation. UHatch will incorporate a co-working space and seminar facilities to serve a large critical mass of students (when permitted). We will further develop enterprise support for long term users of the UHatch incubator. Despite Covid-19, UHatch has grown significantly over the last 6 months; and has achieved near equality on gender (18 male-led and 15 female-led businesses), with 17 members from BAME backgrounds.</p>	<p>Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism Outcome Seven: Equality and diversity</p>
<p>The UHatch space has reached a strategic partnership with Scotland's Social Enterprise Agency, Firstport. The GCU Social Innovation Manager is a member of the CEIS board and is helping the roll out the Scottish Government funded 'Social Shifters' social enterprise support programme for higher education. As a result of these collaborations GCU is now coordinating the social enterprise forum as part of the UIF Entrepreneurship strand. Although Firstport has not been able to occupy the physical space due to Covid restrictions, the Social Shifters Programme has now been implemented and integrated into a variety of activities at GCU, including the Visa support service, the Students Association, the careers service, the Social Innovation Masters and UHatch workshops.</p>	<p>Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism</p>
<p>The University is establishing Social Innovation Knowledge Exchange Units in Glasgow and Edinburgh (working alongside Social Enterprise partners such as The Melting Pot) as part of a groundbreaking Europe-wide project (https://sike-eu.org/). It will have a prominent and cross-cutting role within the university, supporting not just research, but also curriculum development, business support services and public and community engagement. The Unit has developed a global platform for Social Innovation-HEI engagement as well as supporting social enterprises developed within the UHatch incubator; Bespoke internationalisation is offered through a close partnership with Challenges Worldwide; online e-learning and inspirational content through the Social Shifters Platform. Networking and brokerage is offered through the SIKE online platform, Glocal and through workshops to develop a worldwide network for Universities supporting Social Innovation; integrated with Social Innovation Exchange's Wayfinder 2020 Festival and the Glasgow 2020 Explorathon, and have included participants from around the world.</p>	<p>Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism Outcome Five: International Outcome Six: Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>GCU's international experience in the development of social innovation support, and its unique network within the Social Enterprise community is being further strengthened through new initiatives and opened up to other members of the RCDG Social Enterprise strand. Work is ongoing with Glasgow City</p>	<p>Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism</p>

<p>Council to develop a Social Innovation District, to identify new opportunities to address challenges in the city with innovative projects. New international partnerships and projects specifically aim at achieving the UN's 17 SDGs through social innovation, and exploring ways to lend social value to the knowledge produced by GCU. GCU is committed to the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiatives. GCU has accumulated an impressive portfolio of international projects especially under the EU's Capacity Building in Higher Education Programme. The most prominent theme has been the development of units for supporting social innovation: the Southeast Asian Social Innovation Network and the Latin American Social Innovation Network. A network in South Africa has established support for digital storytelling. Over the coming year the networks will be consolidated into a Global Network for University–Social Innovation Interaction. These networks are growing and all Scottish HEIs will be invited to collaborate within them.</p> <p>More Capacity Building projects under the CBHE programme are being implemented: Intercultural Competence within Latin American universities – PROFIC; Female entrepreneurship programme in India – EMPRENDIA; Education, Research and Innovation in GIS, SID and remote sensing in Southeast Asia – NEXUS; Disability support in Indonesian Universities (INDOEDUC4ALL); Entrepreneurship in Central America (FREE-NET). GCU has recently been awarded a new project based in South East Asia called SILKEN based on strengthening Social Innovation Initiatives through training and resources in these countries. The GCU coordinated SEVERE Project is another international partnership looking at specifically addressing the challenges of remote working in supporting Social Innovation.</p>	<p>Outcome Five: International</p> <p>Outcome Six: Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>As part of our institutional support for GCRF we have established a Global Challenges and Sustainable Development Unit. DFID and Innovate UK initiatives are developed through networks which have been nurtured over recent years and through new collaborations, especially with private and third sector partners such as Challenges Worldwide. An internal call for funding offered by the Unit was aimed at supporting academics engaged in ODA compliant activities through Capacity Building, Pump Priming or ECR Fellowships.</p> <p>Our BEAM Centre has won a GCRF grant (NERC funded) to provide climate science services to assist the decision-making on the preparedness and resilience to heat exposure risk during heatwaves in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo for the current and future climates. Partners include University of Reading, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka and the Urban Development Authority of Sri Lanka. Despite Covid-19 GCU has continued to deliver GCRF projects virtually, working with partners on the ground. Through our Centre for Climate Justice, GCU will continue to carry out work in the area of international development through research and partnerships in Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda, Ghana and Nigeria.</p>	<p>Outcome Five: International</p> <p>Outcome Six: Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>GCU is a member of the Board of Glasgow City of Science and Innovation. We promote the iKEN collaboration platform and have contributed to a distinctive and collective science and innovation narrative as part of the city's regional value proposition, and help to feed into the re-invigorated VentureFest.</p>	<p>Outcome Six: Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>GCU's Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health investigates the relationship between social enterprises and third sector organisations and how these might impact indirectly on health through addressing upstream social determinants. Our unique portfolio of social enterprise research and innovation projects at a regional, national, and international level continues to evolve, including initiatives involving partners at other Scottish institutions in providing sustainable and effective support to social entrepreneurs, funded through streams such as European Knowledge Alliances and Scottish Government's Social Innovation Fund. GCU is leading on a series of major EU projects dealing with the social impact of refugees, e.g. SIRIUS and the GCU-led VOLPOWER project. The GCU-led, EU-funded project, Common Good First project focuses on building a network to showcase and connect social innovation projects in South Africa and Europe. A new project, De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate (D.Rad), will seek to identify trends in radical ideologies, help shape policies to improve social inclusion, and forecast the potential impact on society of the widening inequalities created by Covid-19. AI and machine learning will also be used to understand how radicalisation develops over time, using information gleaned from online interactions.</p>	<p>Outcome Six: Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>GCU's Research Centre for Health (ReaCH) has continued to make a direct and significant contribution to the UN's SDG Good Health and Well-being,</p>	<p>Outcome Six:</p>

<p>bringing together research expertise largely drawn from the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) along with the co-hosted and Chief Scientist Office funded Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions Research Unit (NMAHPRU) and our strategic partnerships with Health Protection Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire.</p> <p>During Covid-19, GCU's response has been extensive, including a number of CSO-sponsored projects: Solidarity in a time of crisis: the role of mutual aid to the Covid-19 pandemic, Effective interventions to support the resilience and mental health of frontline health and social care staff during a global health crisis and following de-escalation, the effect of Covid-19 social distancing on the mental health vulnerabilities of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. GCU is also leading physical activity researchers, respiratory experts, and sport and exercise psychologists on the world's largest study to find out if physical activity can boost Covid-19 immunity.</p>	<p>Inclusive growth and social impact</p>
<p>GCU's commitment to build on good practice and positively promote equality and diversity in staff and others who are affected by the use of the UIF has primarily been through the implementation of our Equality Outcomes 2017-2021. The University has engaged with other HEIs through a workshop and subsequent recommendation for joint projects, aimed at embedding equality and diversity within the innovation environment. Our equality outcomes are aligned with our research activities, many of which have the principles of equality and diversity at their heart.</p> <p>GCU's Advancing Gender Equality Group reviews all relevant GCU policies and procedures in relation to equality and in particular to support the University in maintaining Athena SWAN accreditation. The University continues to engage in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's Aurora Programme. Four of our six Research Centres are directed by women.</p>	<p>Outcome Seven: Equality and diversity</p>
<p>GCU is growing its involvement in driving a more equitable and diverse community both within the University and beyond through the WiSE Research Group and its public sector collaboration. The Director of WiSE is a member of the SG Gender Equality Index Working Group; and has been providing advice and guidance on equality impact assessment on the Scottish National Investment Bank and Flexible Workforce Development Fund. WiSE has built on its management of a Scottish Parliament Research Fellowship on employer equality practices and the European Institute for Gender Equality, assessing gender budgeting analysis in relation to European Structural Funds. WiSE will also leverage its activities in the voluntary sector such as STUC Women's Committee, Close the Gap, Engender, Scottish Women's Budget Group, UK Women's Budget Group, and European Gender Budgeting Network. The WiSE Centre has also been part of working group of the Scottish Human Rights Commission Report calling on human rights to be at the heart of government budget-setting post-Covid.</p> <p>A report by GCU into the situation of women being forced to live in severe and constant pain because of transvaginal mesh implants has led to Scottish Government announcing that there would be an investigative review to look into how the mesh review reached its conclusions.</p>	<p>Outcome Seven: Equality and diversity</p>