



**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND'S
OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH
THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL
2022-2023**

The Scottish Funding Council's key priorities for Academic Year (AY) 2022-23 are:

- Fair access and transitions including ensuring the delivery of the Commission on Widening Access (COWA) 2026 and 2030 sector target and engagement with the SFC funded National Schools Programmes
- Quality learning and teaching
- Learning with impact – students are equipped and ready to take up appropriate employment in the future
- Student participation and engagement in their educational experience
- Coherent Learning Provision – how institutions are using data and intelligence and engaging with stakeholders to adapt, develop and align provision to meet the needs of business, industry and stakeholders
- Fair Work – what institutions are doing to deliver Fair Work practices for their employees and through their procurement
- Equalities and inclusion
- High-quality research and innovation

Fair access and transitions

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

Supporting the sector's delivery of the Commission on Widening Access (COWA) targets

1. Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything The Open University does. The Open University (OU) has always offered an open entry policy whereby our students can study with us at undergraduate level with no requirement for previous qualifications.
2. We saw growth in the proportion of our undergraduate entrants living in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation most deprived quintile (SIMD20) and two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40) to 18.9% and 40.6% respectively in AY 2021-22.
3. As in the past three years, we continue to attract more entrants in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) terms from the most deprived quintile than the least deprived.
4. We are working towards a target of 20% of our undergraduate entrants living in the most deprived quintile (SIMD20) in AY 2022-23.

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

5. We exceeded our 2021/22 ambition for the proportion of entrants declaring care experience, with 77 undergraduate entrants with care experience registering last year. This has followed significant improvements to our data collection processes and we are projecting a further increase to this proportion in AY 2022-23.
6. Undergraduate entrants who declare care experience are consistently more likely than average to live in the most deprived quintile (SIMD20).
7. Unlike other Scottish universities, OU care experienced students are not eligible for the care experience bursary because they study part-time.
8. The Open University in Scotland's [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) is published on our website.

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

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

Transitions and pathways for students are supported and signposted.

10. We continue to focus on articulation, supporting learners progressing from Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) courses at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 7 and 8 into university undergraduate programmes. Our articulation routes are available nationwide, unrestricted by the geographical location of the student or their college.
11. Building directly on the HN study the student has undertaken, we offer routes to a range of degree programmes in specific subjects. Current named qualifications available as articulation routes include Social Science; Natural Sciences; Social Work; Health and Social Care; Healthcare Practice; Adult Nursing; Mental Health Nursing; Childhood and Youth Studies; Business Management (including Accounting, Marketing and Economics pathways); Sport, Fitness and Coaching; Engineering; and Computing and IT.
12. In addition to these named qualifications, the University's unique Open Degree is available to all HN students, regardless of the HN subject they studied at college. This allows the student to gain credit for previous study, whilst building a degree programme tailored to their own pathway development needs or to the needs of their employer.
13. The Open University in Scotland works closely with partner colleges to review and maintain articulation agreements and direct college learners to opportunities for articulation with the OU.
14. Despite growth in absolute numbers, we saw a drop in the proportion of undergraduate entrants coming to the OU with an HN qualification in AY 2020-21. The proportion recovered somewhat in AY 2021-22 but remained below pre-pandemic levels. We project that this proportion is likely to drop again in AY 2022-23.
15. Having seen a fall in both numbers and proportion of HN entrants who transferred credit from their HN qualification in 2020/21, the proportion began to recover in AY2021-22, and we project that this recovery will continue in AY 2022-23.
16. In addition to our SCQF level 6 access modules, we use Open Educational Resources (OERs) to support learners into higher education. This allows them to start learning informally at their preferred level and pace, gradually building confidence and skills for learning. Our free learning platform, OpenLearn, also offers Badged Open Courses (BOCs) over a wide range of core subjects and professional competencies essential for the workplace.

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

17. The Open University in Scotland's [Young Applicants in Schools Scheme](#) (YASS) allows students in the final year of secondary school to experience higher education level study in school alongside their other subjects. Students can choose from a range of high-quality modules at SCQF Level 7, which give them access to subjects which may not be available in their school. YASS outcomes are included in Insight, the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for the senior phase.
18. From AY 2020–21, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) embedded the strategic funding for YASS within The Open University in Scotland's main teaching grant. SFC provide an additional 103 funded places to The OU in Scotland, on condition that the University continues to run YASS. Student number registrations and participation by SIMD is monitored through the outcome agreement and the self-evaluation process. The headcount number of YASS entrants grew to an all-time high of 1,272 students in 2021/22 despite the impact of COVID on schools, with 22.7% of YASS entrants coming from the two most deprived SIMD quintiles.
19. We are seeing challenges to our engagement with schools due to changes in school personnel, industrial action and long-term fatigue post-pandemic so we do expect a small decline in the number of entrants participating in YASS in AY 2022–23.
20. We are keen to share our experience of providing YASS across Scotland in the development of the National Schools Programme.

Quality learning, teaching and support

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

23. The Open University in Scotland was delighted to have achieved 90% for overall student satisfaction, ranking joint first in Scotland, in the National Student Survey 2022. Office for Students have proposed changes to the survey in 2023 which may impact our ability to capture satisfaction data in Scotland and report on this within the outcome agreement process.
24. We have reported in our Self-evaluation Report on AY 2021-22 that there was an unprecedented increase in the completion rate of both our continuing undergraduates and entrants in 2019/20 due to mid-year changes to assessment and changes in student behaviour linked to the pandemic. 2020/21 completion rates for both groups have fallen back to a point mid-way between the 2019/20 and pre-pandemic levels.
25. Early data for 2021/22 suggests that completion rates for undergraduate entrants for the October 2021 presentation have fallen again due to an increase in students withdrawing from their studies before module end, from across nearly all demographic groups. Factors such as the cost-of-living crisis are impacting student behaviours and student time availability and will continue to have an impact going forward.
26. In response to these declines and to consolidate work already in flow across the four nations, the University has developed a Student Outcomes Continuous Improvement Portfolio to improve student outcomes. Some of the key pillar activities being undertaken this year include the scaling up of the use of predictive analytics by tutors to identify students who may need additional support, development of a consistent approach to induction, use of exit milestone qualifications to recognise success of all our students, and pilots within the readiness to study space to support students in beginning their studies on the right level for them. There is a lag between action on retention and impact showing in our data.
27. The Open University in Scotland has been working on a Personal Learning Adviser retention pilot project focused on students from the most deprived quintile, and we are scoping further work to enhance frontline support for students.
28. Unlike other Higher Education Institution (HEI's), The Open University in Scotland is funded by Scottish Funding Council on student numbers at completion. As a result, all teaching grant received from SFC is directly linked to number of students successfully completing OU modules, across the student population.

Students are supported in their mental health and wellbeing.

29. Using the funding from Scottish Funding Council for mental health counselling, we offer a virtual therapy service to our students in Scotland. Students are referred by our Educational Advisors for an initial clinical assessment followed by access to one-to-one counselling sessions. We also have been able to employ a Mental Health Advisor (Casework) in Scotland as part of a team providing a specialist, one-to-one support service for students needing guidance on managing complex mental health difficulties or severe emotional distress alongside their studies.
30. The Open University works with mental health support partners such as the text service Shout 85258 and TalkCampus to provide help to our students. We also offer an OU Wellbeing app to suggest positive habits to help maintain good wellbeing.
31. The Open University introduced the Report + Support system in 2022, to provide an easy and confidential way to report incidences of bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct or hate crime.
32. The Open University is committed to supporting the well-being of its students and staff. We recognise that a positive and collaborative approach to the management of physical and mental health difficulties is crucial to the success of our students and the optimal performance of our staff. The Open University's [Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) was developed in line with the Universities UK #stepchange framework for mental health in higher education, and is available on The OU in Scotland website.
33. The Open University in Scotland launched its [Student Mental Health Agreement \(SMHA\)](#) in 2021 in partnership with the OU Students Association and with support from the National Union of Students Scotland's Think Positive project. This agreement aligns with the University's Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, setting out our joint commitment to work together to promote the mental wellbeing of our students.

Learning with impact

34. With three-quarters of our students in work while they study with us, and well over half of all part-time learners in Scotland, The Open University in Scotland is uniquely placed to support the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of Scotland's workforce across the length and breadth of the country. The OU's expertise in accessible, flexible, modular distance learning means that employers and learners can be offered high quality, adaptable, work-based learning solutions that meet the workforce development needs of employers and the

skills aspirations of individuals, regardless of where the workplace is based in Scotland.

35. The University takes advantage of its size and reach to develop vocational and work-based curriculum in partnership with organisations across a number of sectors; these are appropriate to the learning needs of the organisation and the individual. From bite-sized Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops to the shaping of specific qualifications, we work with employers to understand their work-based learning needs and to ensure that our students can make a meaningful impact on the Scottish economy and society.
36. The increasing use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) in the workplace has allowed experimentation using that methodology to support learning and we are working with employers to develop OERs as part of bespoke learning packages for their workforce, particularly for employees who require an introduction to or reacquainting with formal learning.
37. In 2022-23, we will maintain our strategic partnership with the STUC and Scottish Union Learning; building on our community outreach model to offer higher education to groups in the workplace. Typically, the participants are non-traditional learners.
38. We have developed a dedicated suite of free Employability badged courses on the OpenLearn website to help those facing new career choices.
39. Our Employability of Qualifiers Survey 2022, which aims to gather insight into the impact of OU study and the careers and employability success of OU students, was sent to students who completed a qualification in 2018/19. The survey results were as follows:
 - 88% of respondents in Scotland agreed that OU study has/will help them achieve their career goals.
 - 90% of respondents agreed that OU study has/will help them achieve their personal goals.

Student participation and engagement in their educational experience

40. The Open University's [Student Charter](#), which was developed in partnership with the Students Association, sets out our aims for working together as a learning community, illustrates our shared values and what we can expect from each other.

41. The Open University in Scotland is passionate about ensuring the student voice is heard at all levels and helps inform our decision making. This is a core aspect of all teams' activities, with development being led by our Access, Participation and Success team. The OU in Scotland actively participates in the OU's Student Voice week each year with a Student Twitter Takeover and facilitating a 'Big Blether' focusing on study confidence and wellbeing.
42. The Open University in Scotland strongly believes that the student body is a key stakeholder in the development of policy and that its views and concerns should be acknowledged. Engagement is facilitated through The Open University in Scotland's Student and Staff Engagement Group, which meets twice a year, and includes representation from students, Associate Lecturers, faculty staff, academic-related and support staff.

Coherent learning provision

43. The OU's expertise and unique access, accessibility and delivery model give us a key role in supporting government ambitions in relation to economic recovery and social renewal. The OU is well placed to support the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the workforce through our work-based and work-related learning routes and experience in short course, modular delivery, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), microcredentials, open educational resources and lifelong learning. We believe that part-time study and flexible work-based education initiatives can play an important role in supporting the economic recovery.
44. The Open University presents microcredentials, qualifications and short courses on the FutureLearn platform. The OU sold its stakes in FutureLearn in November 2022 to Global University Systems (GUS). This provides welcome stability and continuity for the millions of learners globally that use the FutureLearn platform and secures the future of FutureLearn independently of OU ownership and funding. The OU will remain a partner of FutureLearn which means we will continue to present our existing paid course offer with no disruption to the learner experience.
45. We welcome the changes to the delivery of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund in AY 2022-23 that will increase the potential for eligible employers to access upskilling and retraining opportunities.
46. We will continue to fully utilise the SFC Upskilling Fund to develop, test and roll-out flexible skills-focused learning solutions, utilising our expertise in this area and working with partners and employers to ensure our provision is

employer-led and meets the needs of the Scottish economy and employers' skills gaps.

47. We have paused recruitment to our Graduate Apprenticeships on Cyber Security and Software Development in AY 2022-23 due to issues of low take up. We will continue to support our Graduate Apprentices from the 2021-22 cohort and the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) -funded Graduate Apprentices from earlier cohorts through to the end of their qualification.
48. We continue to call for the development of a broader range of more flexible Graduate Apprenticeship frameworks that reflect the post-pandemic skills needs, e.g., social work, policing, nursing, and management at postgraduate level. Graduate Apprenticeships need to support the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the public and third sector who cannot best take advantage of the programme as it currently stands.
49. We will continue to engage with SDS, SFC, Universities Scotland and the Strategic Board to ensure that the OU plays a central role in the development of the Future Skills agenda and to support programmes such as The Young Person's Guarantee with flexible and quality skills provision.
50. The Open University in Scotland is actively involved in the South of Scotland Pathfinders work and represented on the Education & Skills Strategic Co-ordination Group. There are challenges for an organisation such as ours with national coverage to support numerous activities at a regional level.

Fair work

51. The Open University is an accredited Living Wage Foundation employer.
52. In August 2022, following extensive negotiations with the University and College Union (UCU), The Open University implemented new permanent contracts for its Associate Lecturers, in what was billed as the biggest decasualisation programme to take place in the higher education sector. While there is still more work to do to operationalise what has been agreed, OU tutors are now benefitting from enhanced financial and job security which includes additional annual leave and staff development allowances.
53. The Open University is proud to be listed as one of the Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers in 2022. This list brings together UK-based organisations that promote inclusion across all protected characteristics and throughout each level of employment within their organisation.
54. Our procurement vision and strategy support the University to achieve its strategic goals through the balanced consideration of quality, financial and

reputational stability, value, social responsibility and risk when acquiring goods and services from outside sources.

Equalities and inclusion

55. The Open University was founded to widen access to higher education, and we place social justice and equality of opportunity at the centre of all we do. The University is committed to extending opportunities for educational success to every potential student who wants to achieve their ambitions.
56. The Open University's [Institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Plan](#) outlines our ambitions and provides support and guidance to drive positive change. It is designed to cover specific issues that impact the OU community so that all staff and students are empowered to promote equity, value diversity and foster an inclusive culture.
57. As required by the Public Sector Equality Duty and the specific requirements for Scotland, The Open University in Scotland published its [Public Sector Duty Report](#) on its website in April 2021.
58. The Open University was re-awarded its Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze status in 2021 and is aiming for an institutional Silver in the next submission.
59. The OU is currently developing a submission for a Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award in 2024.
60. The Open University in Scotland offers a wide range of support services and facilities to enable learners with additional needs to succeed in their studies. These include course materials in alternative formats and are tested for compatibility with assistive software, as well as special arrangements for tutorials and examinations and, where appropriate, advice about funding. The proportion of our undergraduate entrants declaring a disability has grown steadily over time from 18.2% in 2017/18 to 21.1% in 2021/22, and we anticipate a further increase in AY 2022-23.

High quality research and innovation

61. The majority of The Open University's research funding is from UK Research and Innovation, with the SFC allocating a small amount of University Innovation funding to The OU in Scotland. The Research Excellence Framework 2021 recognised the OU's commitment to research and societal impact with 82% of its research impact assessed to be 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*).

62. The OU has published a new [Research Plan for 2022-27](#) which focuses on five activities:

- Open Societal Challenges
- The Next Generation
- Open Research
- Building On Our Strengths
- Improving Our Processes

63. The Open University in Scotland utilises the University Innovation Fund (UIF) Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council to maintain its knowledge exchange and innovation activities. An updated University Innovation Fund plan for AY 2022-23 is submitted alongside this Outcome Agreement.

Responding to the climate emergency

64. The Open University has committed to divestment from fossil fuels by 2023, decarbonising our energy supplies by 2030 and being 'net zero' by 2050 institutionally and across our supply chains. Our [policies, statements, reports and guidance relating to sustainability](#) are available on the OU website.

65. The Open University in Scotland complies with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and submitted its annual Climate Change report for 2020/21 to the Scottish Government in November 2022.

66. The Open University offers both a wide range of modules and qualifications relevant to climate change and sustainability, and careers information. The OU also provides a significant range of free informal learning for resources relevant to climate change on OpenLearn, iTunesU and YouTube. These channels reach millions of people beyond our own students. There are also online citizen science projects such as Treezilla, a project to map all Britain's trees and iSpot, the community website for wildlife identification. The OU's partnership with the BBC has delivered impactful programmes such as Green Planet with David Attenborough in 2022.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND'S OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2022–2023 MEASURES TABLES

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

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

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 1: Total number of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants			
FTE number of UG entrants at start	3,989.6	3,027.6	2900
Headcount number of UG entrants at start	8,094	6,605	6000

The Open University in Scotland saw significant growth in the number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants in 2020-21, reflecting a UK-wide recruitment surge related both to the pandemic and to our specific COVID response in Scotland. AY 2021-22 saw a return to 2019-20 levels of recruitment and early data for AY 2022-23 indicates a continuing small decline.

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 2 Deprivation: The number and proportion of UG entrants resident in Scotland from the 20% most deprived postcodes.			
FTE number of UG entrants resident in the most deprived 2020 SIMD quintile	732.2	570.8	
FTE proportion of UG entrants resident in the most deprived 2020 SIMD quintile	18.4%	18.9%	20.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 3 Care experience: Headcount number of Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience.			
Headcount number of UG entrants who are care leavers	45	77	
Headcount proportion of UG entrants who are care leavers	0.6%	1.2%	1.8%

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: Fair access and transitions			
Measure 4 Articulation: The number and proportion of UG entrants resident in Scotland transferring credits from college to degree level courses.			
FTE number of UG entrants with an HN background	657.4	549.3	
FTE proportion of UG entrants with an HN background	16.5%	18.1%	16.3%
FTE number of HN UG entrants with credit transfer	112.8	103.4	
FTE proportion of HN UG entrants with credit transfer	17.2%	18.8%	20.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 5 Retention: The number and proportion of UG degree entrants resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year			
Headcount number of UG degree entrants	3,572	4,498	
Headcount number of UG degree entrants who were retained	2,341	2,819	
Headcount proportion of UG degree entrants who were retained	65.5%	62.7%	55.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 6 Module completion: The number and proportion of UG entrants and continuing UG resident in Scotland who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity			
FTE number of continuing UGs	5,920.4	6,862.4	
FTE number of UG entrants	3,003.9	3,989.6	
FTE completion rate of continuing UGs	75.3%	72.9%	65.0%
FTE completion rate of UG entrants	66.6%	63.8%	56.0%

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: High quality learning, teaching and support			
Measure 7: The proportion of National Student Survey respondents resident in Scotland reporting satisfaction with the overall quality of their course			
Headcount proportion satisfied	92%	90%	90%

	Actual		Ambition
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Scottish Funding Council priority: Learning with impact			
Measure 8: Graduate Outcomes: The proportion of OU Employability of Qualifiers Survey respondents reporting positive career development outcomes as a result of their OU study			
Headcount proportion of alumni agreeing that OU study had/will help them to achieve their career goals	85%	88%	88%

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND

UNIVERSITY INNOVATION FUND (UIF)

Summary of outcomes in 2021 – 2022 and outline plan for 2022 - 2023

In the last 12 months, The Open University in Scotland utilised the University Innovation Fund (UIF) Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to maintain and develop its knowledge exchange and innovation activities. In 2021–22, we continued to develop activity to support the National Outcomes identified in relation to the Outcome Grant and reflected that in eight overarching priorities that were mapped to the UIF outcomes identified by the SFC.

As The Open University in Scotland receives the base level Platform Grant only, we do not match fund, however we leverage a variety of internal OU wide funding streams to increase our activities and to support our aspirations. For example, we draw on the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), from an OU wide allocation to support our work and other ad hoc funding streams when available. As a four-Nations University, we continued to be able to draw on the extensive capabilities of the University to support our UIF outputs in Scotland.

This is a brief summary review for 2021-22, and also incorporates our proposed outcomes for 2022-23.

For 2022-23 we have drawn directly on the SFC's key themes.

For further information on this summary review and the plan for 2022-23, please contact: Derek Goldman, Senior Knowledge Exchange Manager, The Open University in Scotland.

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The Open
University

Summary of key outcomes from 2021-22

Theme 1: Covid-19 recovery

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

- We continued to evolve new partnerships, particularly in response to the challenges presented by Covid-19 and worked with a range of organisations in their recovery efforts. Specifically, we worked with the Crichton Trust on a psychology at work hub involving small and medium enterprises. We also carried out a piece of research across the HE sector focused on the challenges related to pivoting to online teaching.
- During 2021–22 we continued to work with Scottish Union Learning (SUL), particularly in relation to developing skills across the workforce. We also continued to promote the green skills agenda with SUL and environmental education more generally.
- We very successfully promoted our free to access OpenLearn courses during 2021-22, ensuring our learning resources were universally available. Additionally, we targeted skills focused microcredentials as a response to developing skills - especially in relation to economic recovery post the pandemic.
- Where possible we made our expertise in online pedagogy available to the wider education sector, including Colleges, working with them to develop agile and hybrid delivery models.

Theme 2: Crichton Campus - Dumfries and Galloway

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

- We identified the Crichton Campus in Dumfries and Galloway as a priority theme in 2021 – 22, in part to amplify our efforts to contribute to developments in the South of Scotland. We worked extensively with the Crichton Trust in the last year on a variety of projects and programmes. They included public engagement events in relation to COP26 including a prominent international Arts project, a heritage project related to the Crichton arts collection and various other projects that we identified as being mutually important for the OU and the Crichton e.g., in sustainability/climate change and ageing well.
- Where appropriate, we've explored opportunities to partner and support other academic institutions and external organisations on the Crichton Campus (third, public and private sectors) with plans to progress joint programmes in 2022-23.
- We continued to expand our reach to more remote and rural areas in the South of Scotland, sharing our expertise and knowledge to the benefit of organisations and communities across the region. We intend to work on a major series of public events with the Crawick Multiverse in Sanquhar in the summer of 2023.
- We continued to work with the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency to help them deliver on their aspirations for the region.

Theme 3: Engaged research and influencing policy

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

- In 2021–22, we strengthened our partnerships with the third sector in knowledge exchange activities – including working with the sector to help inform their work, and to provide expertise where possible.
- We continued to work with Innogen (a collaboration with the University of Edinburgh), on a range of research activities aligned to Scottish Government priorities. We also increased the number of OU academics involved directly with Innogen.
- During 2021 – 22, the OU has focused its research efforts through a new research plan based on key societal challenges, including climate change, ageing well, and addressing inequalities. We have identified clear opportunities in Scotland to be taken forward in 2023, to contribute to this plan.
- We will continue to develop a range of policy related projects in response to opportunities and needs in Scotland, including the development of a new OU initiative PolicyWISE – a 4 Nations comparative policy think tank.
- We continued to work closely with the OU Business School, promoting entrepreneurship as a potential career option, as well as contributing alongside the wider HE community on providing educational resources for entrepreneurs.

Theme 4: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Addressing UIF outcome: 7 - equality and diversity

- In 2021-22, we continued to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion were front and centre in all our endeavours in the knowledge exchange, research and innovation areas.
- As part of our wider social mission, in the past year, we reached a broad demographic audience at our public events (and more face to face than in recent years).
- Our events programme was conceived through an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion lens from the inception of ideas through to their delivery.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion were prioritised by the OU throughout all of its activities in 2021-22 to ensure that it was enshrined throughout the OU's strategy including additional training for all staff.

Theme 5: Entrepreneurship

Addressing UIF outcome: 4 - *entrepreneurialism*

- We worked closely with the OU Business School, to support SMEs and micro businesses to support entrepreneurial education in Scotland.
- We identified green entrepreneurship as a potential area for development and engaged with various organisations to assess what the skills development needs are to move to a low carbon economy.
- We continued to support the Scotland Can Do Scale programme and provided a bespoke case study and associated teaching resources available across the sector.
- We fully engaged with the ongoing sectoral discussions about the implementation of the Entrepreneurial Campus model and will continue to do that in 2023.

Theme 6: Public and Cultural Engagement

Addressing UIF outcome: 1 - *demand stimulation*

- We further developed our existing relationships with various partners, including the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) and their flagship Inspiring Talks programme, and provided dedicated input at 5 talks on energy and climate change. We also partnered with the RSGS on a sectoral event, pre COP27 with industry and sector representatives to share best practice and progress made since COP26.
- We worked with Glasgow Life Museums and Glasgow Science Festival on a range of events related to the environment and climate change, including the production of two short films that were filmed and produced in Glasgow.
- We pro-actively sought out contact with new partners in Scotland in geographic locations that were new to the OU in Scotland, making our research accessible and available.
- We continued to support and work in partnership with a number of cultural organisations in Scotland including a range of literary festivals throughout Scotland, where there were clear reciprocal benefits.

Theme 7: Maximising Resourcing

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

- Where appropriate, we continued to promote Interface to academics in the OU - matching opportunities for innovation and pursued contacts and new contacts with the SFC's Innovation Centres.
- We continued to explore co-funding opportunities e.g., through the Higher Education Innovation Fund where we pooled resources for greater benefit.
- We worked closely with OU faculty colleagues to explore how we can increase our knowledge exchange and research activities in Scotland by increasing capacity. As a direct result, in December 2022 two new research fellow posts (RF) will be created in Scotland.

Theme 8: Sustainability, climate change, and the environment

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

In 2021–22 we continued to focus on sustainability, climate change and the environment as an overarching driving theme in our work

- We promoted our curriculum widely in this area – including short industry-focused microcredentials around climate change and creating sustainable organisations. These were made available to employees throughout Scotland.
- We provided ad hoc support and guidance to organisations when required, including specialist input.
- We worked closely with our Communication colleagues at The OU in Scotland to profile our environmental work widely on The OU in Scotland website and across other media channels where appropriate.



The Open
University

Summary of proposed outcomes for 2022-23

OUTCOME 1. Demand Stimulation

Increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 3 Engagement and 5 Capacity Building.

- We will continue to pro – actively engage with businesses, especially SMEs and the public sector to make new connections, and to add value to these organisations.
- We will work closely with the Innovation Centres to explore possible collaborations for example in biotechnology, where again the OU could make a significant contribution to a thriving sector in Scotland.
- We will look specifically to contribute to some of the major policy agendas in Scotland, including the development of a National Care Service, where we have significant expertise.
- We will look to refresh our general engagement strategy with businesses and the public sector including how we make our services accessible and available.
- We will pro-actively work across sectors including supporting the College Development Network in their aspirations to support research in the college sector.
- Where appropriate, we will continue to look for appropriate opportunities to collaborate widely across the HE sector.
- Through participation in RCDG, we will actively engage in contributing to the SFC's redefined infrastructure investments in Interface and the Innovation Centres.
- We will look to provide additional training and support for key staff on engaging and working with industry to use university services.

OUTCOME 2. Simplification/Commercialisation

Simplify business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 2. Policies and Processes, 5. Capacity Building, and 7. Continuous Improvement

- We will continue to make links with new businesses in Scotland, including further refreshing our communications plan around working with us through web assets, the use of case studies and showcasing examples of where our partnerships have made a difference.
- We will work closely with colleagues across the OU, to explore further opportunities and routes to commercialisation for our products and services whether related to skills development, or potential research related opportunities.
- We will collaborate across the sector, including working with the UIF collaboration manager to share best practice and to capitalise on best practice from colleagues across the HE sector.
- We will support the formation of an IP Peer Network in 2022-23, as a platform to share best practice around business engagement.

OUTCOME 3. Simplification/Greater Innovation Alignment with KE Concordat Principles:

Make strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 3. Engagement, 5. Capacity Building, and 7. Continuous Improvement

- We will draw on our key strengths and look to support SMEs to become more innovative in their aspirations. Specifically, we will draw on our expertise related to psychology at work and occupational psychology and will provide training and support through the promotion of a newly developed psychology at work resource hub.
- Through more pro-active engagement with the Innovation Centres, we aim to develop new partnership opportunities to support SMEs to improve or resolve some of the barriers that are preventing innovation opportunities. For example, we hope to work much more closely with IBiOC in 2023
- We will also explore other partnership type opportunities with e.g., the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in our endeavours to stimulate Scotland's economy and to promote innovation.
- We support the increased investment from Innovate UK in the KTP programme, and with our wider OU colleagues hope to learn from best practice and stimulate more interest in OU inspired KTPs in Scotland.
- We will continue look to support and contribute to various growth sectors in Scotland e.g., in the scotch whisky industry - where we have considerable expertise related to brand protection.
- In 2022-23, we will continue to engage with other Scottish HEIs on mission-led funding through the UIF Challenge Fund Network

OUTCOME 4. Entrepreneurialism

Make a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 2. Policies and Processes, 5. Capacity Building, and 7. Continuous Improvement

Entrepreneurial education and support has been identified as a key priority for the OU in 2022–23. We will look to develop a suite of support programmes on our OpenLearn platform, offering different levels of support depending on where entrepreneurs are on their journey e.g., from emerging ideas, to developed ideas where the level of support provided will increase. We know from our own insight work, that a considerable number of students study with the OU because of an entrepreneurial motive e.g., to start a business, to develop a business idea and so on. From our pool of students, we know that there is considerable latent potential to support and grow the number of entrepreneurs.

- We will explore how our existing alumni, or current student base who are successful entrepreneurs might be able to support us in our endeavours.
- We will continue to work with colleagues in the OU Business School to engage in conversations related to developing appropriate resources to support entrepreneurs.
- As in recent years, we will continue to work with other HEIs in collaborative efforts where appropriate.
- In 2022-23, we will engage with SFC and the Scottish Government to help deliver an Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy, supported by the UIF Collaboration Manager. We believe that given the OU's unique delivery model, we can make a considerable contribution to this proposal.

OUTCOME 5. International

Pool knowledge and networks and share good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 1. Mission, 3. Engagement, 5. Capacity Building

As a UK wide university, we already have strong international ties and links. We will continue to promote Scotland globally, where appropriate through our existing expansive networks.

- We are active in developing countries and will look to further deepen our relationships there. Opportunities for example exist in relation to supporting aspirations to use renewable energy, and the move to net zero.
- Our partnership with the BBC means that many of our co-productions are available globally, and the key themes are transferable regardless of where you are in the world. This will be the case with a variety of new productions coming on stream in 2023.
- In 2022-23, we will endeavour to engage with the Scottish Government and the enterprise agencies to act on the next stage of the Inward Investment Plan

OUTCOME 6. Inclusive Growth and Social Impact

Scale up support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth.

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 1. Mission, 3. Engagement, 4. Working Transparently and Ethically, 5. Capacity Building

- We will concentrate our efforts around some of the key themes identified by the Scottish Government and that are aligned to our own societal challenges agenda including ageing well, a green recovery in support of Scotland's climate change targets and a just transition to net zero. Tackling inequality has also been identified as a key focus area for the OU in 2023, and we envisage that our work in this area, will also contribute to our social impact.
- We will also as part of our approach to inclusive growth, support developments in rural parts of Scotland, including and building on our successes in Dumfries and Galloway and the South of Scotland.
- We will engage with other HEIs through the UIF Inclusive Growth Group, to share experiences and opportunities.

OUTCOME 7. Equality and Diversity

Ensure positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF

Alignment with KE Concordat Principles: 1. Mission, 4. Working Transparently and Ethically, and 7. Continuous Improvement

- We will continue to provide training for our staff, including access to the OU and Santander programme, Union Black
- We will continue to ensure that EDI is at the heart of our activities, from their inception to their conclusion
- We will pro-actively seek out opportunities to be inclusive, and ensure marginalised groups are included in our plans

Outcome Agreement between The Open University in Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2022-23

On behalf of The Open University in Scotland

Signed:



Print name: Susan Stewart

Position: Director

Date: 25 April 2023

Signed:



Print name: Mr Malcolm Sweeting

Position: Chair

Date: 27/04/2023

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:



Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 26 July 2023