



Self-evaluation of Outcome Agreement 2017-18

October 2018

Introduction

1. This report outlines the University of Edinburgh's progress against its 2017-18 Outcome Agreement. Where possible and appropriate, the report also provides a summary of what we have achieved towards meeting our longer-term goals.

Priority: Access to Higher Education

2. In our 2017-18 we set out ambitious targets to enhance widening participation, noting the development of our emerging Widening Participation Strategy, which Court approved in April 2018. Our Widening Participation Strategy 2018-21 outlines our aspiration to be both a world-leading centre of academic excellence and a place of opportunity for a diverse group of students irrespective of background and experience, including those from some of the most deprived communities and under-represented groups in Scotland and the rest of the UK.
3. Our strategy follows four mutually supportive strands of the student lifecycle: enabling access; encouraging engagement; supporting success; and supporting progression. It is never enough to increase access without also supporting our students to succeed in their studies, reach their full potential and to have a chance to participate fully in every aspect of University life. We want to see those same students progressing onto the careers or postgraduate study of their choice that will enable them to become global citizens with the drive and the skills to deliver impact for society.
4. We have continued to work hard to maintain the previous step change in numbers of entrants from SIMD20 and SIMD40 backgrounds entering the University. In 2017/18 we saw a continued increase, with our SIMD20 cohort increasing to 8.2% (in comparison to 6.3% in 2016/17), and our SIMD40 students representing 19.3% of our entrants (compared to 16.9% in 2016/17). For 2018-19, our SIMD20 entrants are 195, an increase of 20% compared to the same point last year. This represents 11% of the full-time Scotland domiciled intake, thus exceeding the 2021-22 target of 10%.
5. We continue to offer a number of ongoing initiatives, as well as developing new or redeveloping existing projects to support our WP applicants and entrants:
 - [LEAPS](#)
 - [LEAPS Summer School](#)
 - [Access to the Professions \(with Reach:Scotland\)](#)
 - [YourEd](#)
6. Other attainment and expectation raising activities within schools include:
 - piloting work with the Brilliant Club, <https://thebrilliantclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Scholar-7-8-Final.pdf>). We will be expanding our work with the Brilliant Club throughout 2018/19 to reach more secondary schools
 - undergraduate and postgraduate students from our Schools of Geosciences and Philosophy, Science & Language Sciences delivering a programme of attainment raising activities based around geosciences and psychology in Craigoyston High School to groups of pupils throughout the school.



- We have also launched a part-time [Access Programme](#), designed for adults who wish to study for a degree in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. This programme forms part of our commitment to widening participation.
7. In order to improve understanding of our Admissions policy, we simplified our contextual admissions processes and developed a pre-application contextual data checker (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/applicants/contextual-checker>) to enable potential applicants to check their status and whether they were likely to be eligible for a contextual offer. In 2017, we also entered Scottish Clearing for the first time, giving applicants from SIMD20 postcodes or with care experience an additional opportunity to apply to the University once they had received their results – this resulted in an extra 15 students being made an unconditional offer.
 8. The University is developing activities to target a wider range of under-represented or vulnerable groups, including:
 - Introducing a refugee advisory service to improve access for prospective students with refugee status
 - Playing an active role in the Hub for Success partnership, working to improve access to further and higher education for those with care experience
 - Undertaking a thematic review across the University to understand the needs of and current support for mature students and those with caring responsibilities
 - Continuing to work in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation to deliver a scholars programme to widen access to postgraduate and undergraduate scholarships to applicants from Sub Saharan Africa, whose personal circumstances would otherwise prevent them from studying at the University.
 - Working with Stand Alone and the Unite Foundation to support estranged students.
 9. In 2017/18, we reviewed our [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#). The Corporate Parenting Group reviewed the University's current support, pre and post entry, and will be publishing a new Corporate Parenting Plan in 2019 in response to this review. Short-term changes have included moving to a wider definition of care experience, bringing us into line with the SAAS definition, and lifting the age limit of 26, enabling us to make contextual offers in 2018/19 for those who have care experience, regardless of their age.
 10. We continue to scope out a programme to widening participation at a postgraduate level, and through the SUALL WP Heads group are convening a cross-sector sub-group to look at definitions and barriers to accessing postgraduate study.
 11. In order to improve engagement with extra-curricular activities and employability, we launched the [Insights programme](#) in 2018. This programme offers students from widening participation backgrounds the opportunity for a short period of supported career and workplace exploration with University alumni. Following the positive feedback and experience of this year's students, we plan to expand the Insights programme in 2018/19.
 12. Throughout 2017/18, we offered HNC/D academic days for students coming to the University from college, working with Edinburgh, Fife and West Lothian Colleges to deliver these days. In addition, we continue to host and work closely with [SWAP](#) to support students coming to the University from Access programmes across Scotland. We also attended multiple HE convention and admissions



focussed events at all the regional and Glasgow-based colleges.

Priority: High quality, efficient and effective learning

Student satisfaction

13. We continue to treat student satisfaction as an unambiguous priority and are working to ensure that student satisfaction is embedded in all that we do – explicitly recognising that the National Student Survey results should be higher.
14. The 2018 institution National Student Survey results saw a decline of c. 5 percentage points in overall satisfaction. While the University is confident that the work it is already undertaking will enhance the student experience, in the light of these disappointing NSS results (as well as disappointing 2018 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results) the University is in the process of developing a new action plan to enhance the student experience. We anticipate that this will include plans for a major review of arrangements for advice and support for students, as well as further work to strengthen management data regarding the student experience (building on the new Student Data Dashboards and Course Enhancement Questionnaires), and, potentially, longer-term work on curriculum reform.
15. During 2017-18, we have worked with our Students' Association to strengthen the opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experiences, for example by introducing the University's first Student Partnership Agreement, streamlining and enhancing the class representation system, and introducing mid-course feedback arrangements for all undergraduate courses. We have also continued with programmes of action to enhance aspects of the student experience, for example feedback and assessment, and have continued to review and enhance the effectiveness of the Personal Tutor system, with our network of School Senior Tutors providing an effective forum for sharing good practices and exploring new approaches to academic and pastoral support.
16. In recent years, we have taken various steps to ensure that excellence in learning and teaching as an unambiguous priority in all our staffing processes (for example, for academic staff recruitment and promotion). During 2017-18 we initiated a major project on Teaching and Academic Careers to assist us to make further progress in this area; we aim to complete this project by the end of 2018-19.
17. The University's Service Excellence Programme is intended to improve administrative processes for student administrative and support, and will create opportunities to remove administrative work from academic staff to allow them to commit more of their time to teaching.

Quality

18. The University is taking forward the areas for development identified in the 2015 ELIR, including: the personal tutoring system; aspects of student representation; assessment and feedback; and the postgraduate research student experience, and in 2017 provided a 'year-on' report to the Quality Assurance Agency on its progress. Throughout 2017/18 updates on progress were provided to Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
19. In 2015-16 the University undertook a review of its quality framework, with the aim of streamlining processes whilst deriving maximum benefit from quality activity. As a result of the review, in 2016-17 the University implemented a range of changes to the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes for the forthcoming academic year, resulting in a shorter cycle that aligns with School and College annual planning. During 2017-18, the University undertook an evaluation of the



first year of operation of the new processes – in general, feedback was positive, although we identified some minor enhancements to arrangements.

20. We continue to focus on the quality of our student support services. In 2017-18, we managed the implementation of recommendations from our 2016-17 thematic review of support for disabled students, and undertook a thematic review of the support requirements for mature students, student parents and carers. We have also continued to implement our Student Mental Health Strategy, including delivering training to academic and support staff in key roles (in particular, Personal Tutors).
21. Our programmes continue to be accredited by a wide range of Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs). In 2017/18, there were 64 PSRBs accrediting the University's programmes

Priority: Right learning, right place

22. We have reinvigorated conversations with all our regional colleges, exploring new ways to work in partnership to offer access and articulation opportunities from the colleges to the University. These conversations include strengthening existing articulation pathways, while developing new opportunities, including those linking to the Data Driven Innovation strand of the City Region Deal. One exciting learning pathway is the partnership with Fife College and NHS Lothian, offering a part-time articulated route from HND to third year of an Institute of Biomedical Scientist programme for current employees of the NHS. The first cohort of students from this programme will enter the University in 2018/19.

Priority: A developed workforce

23. Based on our data for our 2016/17 graduates in positive destinations (based on HESA DLHE data released during 2017-18), 95.1% of our students were in positive destinations (94.8% of undergraduates, 95.4% of our taught postgraduates and 96.2% of our research post graduates).
24. We repeated our analysis of graduate destinations for different characteristics to inform our support for student's cohorts. Our findings mirrored those reported across the sector, including:
 - **Gender:** Lower salary levels for female students; they progress into employment at similar numbers to male counterparts but enter more highly skilled employment – however this difference is small and disappears when subject of studies is considered.
 - **Disability:** disabled student enter employment and highly skilled employment at lower levels than non-disabled students; the picture is complex – the nature of the disability and the subject of study impacting on outcomes. Disabled students access support from careers service at higher rates than non-disabled students, and initiatives such as early entry to careers fairs aim to improve access to the labour market for this group.
 - **Social Mobility:** students from WP back grounds access the labour market at similar levels to their counterparts, although they access high skilled employment at lower levels overall this tends to be more connected to subject of study. WP students remain in Scotland at slightly higher levels than their counterparts.

International

25. We are working to deliver a new Learning Abroad plan that will prioritise greater access and inclusion for students to gain a work/study opportunity internationally and extending our virtual



mobility opportunities for those students who are unable to leave Edinburgh for any period due to commitments beyond the University. The plan will target support and funding for less well represented students and extend the range of opportunities for students.

26. We are using IT to provide greater access and inclusivity for students to enhance their learning and resulting employability prospects. We are leading an EU funded project in association with 7 European universities to enhance students' intercultural competencies and entrepreneurship skills by applying their skillset in transnational teams to work together to address global and societal challenges. Following the pilot phase in 2018/19, this virtual exchange will be available to all students, with particular focus on students who cannot engage in an international experience <https://www.nice-eu.org>

Priority: Internationally competitive research base

27. The University of Edinburgh is the 7th largest recipient of Research Council funding at £55.8m (fiscal year 2016/17), just £6m behind the University of Cambridge, with a success rate of 32% (THE, October 2017). We were the leading University in Scotland, taking in over a third of all UKRI grants to Scottish Universities. For total number of applications submitted, we were fifth in the UK.
28. The award value for 2017/18 was £390m, a 7% increase what was the University's best ever performance in 2016/17 (1280 awards received). UK charity awards increased by 54% on 2016/17 to £98m, accounting for 25% of total awards. We also increased our industry funding by over 50% to around £22m. Our award value from EU Government (Horizon 2020) has remained relatively stable (£35m) which is encouraging given the ongoing Brexit challenge.
29. We carried out a Mock REF exercise in summer 2018 to assess our preparedness for REF2021. This built on the review of staff data, to ensure we understand our staff eligibility for REF, and on our excellent open access compliance statistics. Since April 2016, 90% of our published journal articles and conference proceedings have been made available in open access.
30. We continue to invest in the training and mentoring of our current and future research leaders. We run a Research Leader Programme which focuses on the challenges faced by research leaders as they establish themselves as PIs and group leaders. Topics include building your research profile, developing and supporting a research group, and understanding the internal and external research and higher education environment. In Academic Year 2017-18, 46 participants participated in the course, across the three Colleges.
31. Information on how we are using REG to support research excellence is provided at Annex A.

Priority: Greater innovation in the economy

32. The University remains fully committed to and is investing toward delivery against the University Innovation Fund Priority Outcomes. As well as generating more sustained relationships with Scottish business and public sector, effort is being targeted on internationalisation of academic output. Contributing towards inward investment, the University is developing its numerous touchpoints with global companies, its continuing investment in Global academies and the new "City Regions Programme" to encourage new business relationships and investment to Scotland using the University's academic capability, facilities and estate in a cohesive offering to key clients.



33. The University is committed to the Innovation Centres and will continue to host Data Lab and also Interface. Each affords opportunities to share touchpoints with especially the SME sector which has attracted over £22 million from over 1000 SME relationships in all modes of University-SME business engagement.
34. The University has deepened its engagement with the network of Innovation Centres, primarily through the Data Lab which now operates in new space within our Bayes Centre (giving it proximity to the many academic, industrial and public sector groups within the Centre). As hosts of the Data Lab we are pleased that it has performed excellently in its recent SFC review and has been awarded further, long-term funding to maintain and enlarge its support for Scottish computing and data science.
35. Over the next decade, five data innovation hubs at the University (the Bayes Centre, Edinburgh Futures Institute, Usher Institute, Easter Bush, and, with Heriot Watt University, the National Roboratrium will use high-speed data analytics to meet industry and societal challenges.
36. The University continues to prioritise and to make significant investments in demonstrating impact in the economy across the spectrum of academic capability aligned to key sectors. This emphasis on impact is accentuated through the recently concluded City Region Deal in which the University has accepted challenging targets for *both* skills and innovation growth around the aspiration of consolidating the University's global reputation in data science to enable the City of Edinburgh and the region become the "data capital of Europe."
37. To this end, the University will continue to invest in 5 "Innovation" hubs spanning priority sectors and national priorities interests in data with each hub reporting against common themes defined as "TRADE" - Talent, Research, Adoption, Data Sets and Enterprise each with distinctive KPIs and targets.
38. During 2017-18, the volume and value of business engagement via research has achieved sustained growth of 39% and 27% respectively. Of particular note is the establishment of new company formations and the completion of 14 Venture capital investments.
39. Also of note is the investment in Leadership Education in the 10 priority sectors of the City Deal. Cognisant of the prioritisation of leadership in for example national Manufacturing Action Plan for Scotland, the University is establishing a new operation to match academic capability in education with the leadership requirements from across Government, the public sector and business and industry.
40. Leveraging UK-wide resource for national benefit will continue. The University is investing in dedicated resource towards accessing UK-wide funding for industry engagement and fostering closer engagement with Innovate UK. The Industrial Strategy Challenge fund and other Innovate UK funding streams each have dedicated resource able to support industry partner and academics collaborate on long term programmes. The University is also committing to improved outreach by increasing numbers of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
41. Space and Satellites is one such sector which is of national importance and in which the University is providing access to capability and facilities along with use of its global connections. For example, in July 2018 the SFC Awarded Edinburgh £198,386 to support Scotland's participation in the HEFCE funded SPRINT programme under the Connecting Capability Fund (CCF), and to implement a strategy



to leverage UK funds from the UK Industrial Strategy.

42. Striving to improve client experience through streamlined communications, the University is investing in a pan-University customer relationship management system. This will be used to manage all communications between the University and industry and from managed campaigns to the management of all business on one system. Growth in each will be sustained by the investment of Impact Accelerator funding specifically aimed at growth in the number of academic and student engagement in and skills development in new business creation and enterprise. Of particular note is an effort to improve academic- industry exchanges through by fostering closer staff contact.

Priority: Sustainable institutions

43. We are committed to responsible investment, incorporating environmental, social and governance factors into investment decisions, to better manage risk and generate sustainable, long-term returns. In 2013, the University of Edinburgh became the first university in Europe to sign the UN Principles of Responsible Investment, and internationally recognised initiative seeking to build a more sustainable financial system. In the UNPRI's 2018 assessment of the University, we scored high for Strategy and Governance (A+), and for general integration of ESG in Listed Equity (A), Fixed Income (A), and Property (B). This reflects the University's holistic approach to responsible investment and recent commitments to avoid investment in fossil fuels, controversial weapons, and tobacco.
44. The University has invested £1m in a new partnership that seeks to dismantle poverty and create opportunity for people and communities across the UK. We will work with big Issue Invest, the social investment arm of The Big Issue Group, one of the world's most recognised social enterprises and home to the award-winning street magazine. The investment which we have made is the largest financial investment in social enterprise ever made by a UK university.

Environmental and social sustainability

45. During 2017-2018 we announced our plans to fully divest from fossil fuels by end 2002, invested £60m in positive and low carbon funds, and announced the first £1.5m of investments in social investment funds with the Big Issue Invest.
46. We have continued to implement our ambitious [Climate Change Strategy](#) from 2016 including our 'Zero by 2040' carbon ambition. Having successfully secured £5.2m funding from the SFC low carbon fund, we are implementing plans for solar PV on roofs, a 2.5 MW solar farm and a solar car park. Using SFC funding, and our £1m per annum sustainable campus fund, we are continuing to implement a wide range of energy efficiency and operational improvement projects to reduce carbon, energy usage, water usage and costs- with projects including lab ventilation, cold storage, water chillers, more efficient lighting and exploration of heat pump use. We are continuing to trial new standards for new building design to go further to lower the carbon and environmental impact of our major capital projects.
47. We have continued to progress programmes for sustainable labs and sustainable IT via cross-University steering groups, and made significant progress in developing our plans for circular economy activities, computer and IT equipment internal re-use and better provision of drinking water points. We recently introduced a 25p levy on single-use coffee cups in our cafes, as well as extensive provision of re-usable coffee cups to students.



48. We have maintained our extensive SRS internal programmes on events, awards, student auditing, peer review, fair-trade, sustainable supply chains and procurement. During 2017-18 and working with partners across Europe, we commenced a major project 'Making IT Fair' examining social responsibility in IT supply chains - a 3m Euro project over 3 years with an Edinburgh-located researcher now in post. Our European Sustainability Student Auditing project was delivered successfully during the year and we plan to learn the lessons from this 3 year EU funded project for future work.
49. We are continuing to improve the sustainability and accessibility of the University's estate. We are integrating sustainability considerations into the building and maintenance programme. The University has committed a budget of £15m over the next 5 years to make accessibility improvements to the estate and teaching spaces, improving the service offered to disabled students.

Equality, diversity and governance

50. We promote equality and diversity in all of our operations to help to create a more equal society. We continue to improve the accessibility of the University's estate through continuing to integrate equality considerations into the building and maintenance programme and ensuring timely response to required equality adjustments.
51. We have successfully renewed our Institutional Silver Athena SWAN award and all our Schools currently hold departmental awards.
52. The University has launched its Equality Outcomes Action Plan 2017-21 which sets challenging equality outcomes to further the University's strategic priorities and Equality and Diversity Strategy, and to meet the requirements of the Scottish regulations under the Equality Act 2010.
53. In 2017-18, we maintained our high standards of good governance, continuing to work towards compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 within the transitional period and preparing to implement the revised version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance from 1 August 2018.

Signed:

Professor Peter Mathieson
Principal and Vice Chancellor

7 November, 2018



Annex A

Research Excellence Grant

1. The University of Edinburgh supports 31 disciplines spread over three Colleges, and a large number of crosscutting interdisciplinary themes from energy to One Health. This creates a rich, vibrant and complex research environment with academics undertaking everything from basic to translational research. This importance of this diverse research environment can clearly be evidenced by some key indicators; in 2017/18 we received £390m of new research awards, and currently have a success rate of approximately 40%. This success would not be possible without the considered, strategic internal investment of REG in people, capacity building and research infrastructure at the University.
2. The University allocates its Research Excellence Grant to the areas of the University by which it is earned: those areas which achieved the highest proportions of 4* and 3* research in REF2014; and those areas with the most success in generating research income. This fulfils the dual purposes of the increase in research funding outlined in SFC's announcement: the excellence at the cornerstone of SFC's funding policy, which we aim to maintain and further develop; and the match funding of the research grants and contracts received through the other element of the dual support system.
3. The increased funding received in 2018-19 will continue to follow this model. Even with REG the dual funding mechanism results in a deficit in paying for research activities and in order to retain and invest in a vibrant sustainable research we must therefore cross-subsidise from other activities. The increased funding for 2018-19 is welcome as this will enable a slight reduction in the degree of cross-subsidy required for research from other sources, enabling the university to invest elsewhere. In 2016-17 the deficit on research within the University was £55 million.
4. In recognising excellence where it is found, we expect schools to make judgements about new and emerging areas in which investment is needed as well as to continue to support existing successes.
5. Given the scale of REG, the internal investment is a multifaceted approach, of which the University's deepening approach to development research is an important part, and relates to our use of ODA-related funding.
6. Two examples of this would be the recent creation of the Global Academy for Agriculture and Food Security which was formally launched in March 2018 by Bill Gates and Penny Mordaunt. The Academy's vision is "Sustainable development in global agriculture and rural land-based and aquatic economies" and the research underway is focussed predominantly on the delivery of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals in LMICs.
7. The other example is a significant professional services investment of five new roles in the University's Research Office, reflecting the University's recognition that excellent research must be effectively supported. The new roles focussed specifically on strategic research development, challenge-led funding and data analysis. One of their major ongoing projects has been to ensure the University has the appropriate infrastructure to support GCRF research; it is wide-ranging but has to date included everything from reviewing and enhancing due diligence processes and legal agreements, to building academic capability through a variety of workshops and resources (e.g. developing a theory of change or



building ethical and sustainable partnerships).

8. We have also specifically invested funding in Chancellor's Fellows, highly prestigious 5-year tenure track fellowships, which are intended to support candidates at the start of their independent academic careers. To date we have recruited over 270 fellows and are currently recruiting a further 10, focussed around Data Driven Innovation, aligned to the City Region Deal programme.
9. Our current and previous Chancellors Fellows include:
 - Dr Stephen Brusatte, now Reader on Vertebrate Palaeontology, whose specialism in the anatomy, genealogy, and evolution of dinosaurs and other fossil organisms has led to high profile public engagement with science, including through his role as "resident palaeontologist" and scientific consultant for the BBC's *Walking With Dinosaurs* team.
 - Professor Sue Fletcher-Watson, founder of the DART research group which applies methods from psychology to questions with educational, clinical and societal impact, including work on autism and bilingualism. www.dart.ed.ac.uk
 - Dr. Agomoni Ganguli-Mitra, Chancellor's Fellow in the Legal and Ethical Aspects of Biomedicine, and Co-director of the [JK Mason Institute for Medicine, Life Sciences and the Law](#). She has investigated how women were affected during the Zika outbreak and how recommendations for survival didn't really take into account how people live.
 - Dr Iris Oren, whose lab researches how changes to different brain cell types can alter circuit function in diseases that affect memory, such as Alzheimer's disease, and who has received funding from Alzheimer's Research UK.