

COHERENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: A REVIEW OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

**The Open University in Scotland
Response to the Scottish Funding
Council report**

1. BACKGROUND

The Open University in Scotland has social justice at the heart of its mission. We are open to everyone, regardless of age, income, geography, and background, and with no requirement for entry qualifications for most of our undergraduate courses. We take a society-wide approach offering high-quality online skills and learning to students, lifelong learners, communities, employees, and businesses. We offer flexible study with over 75% of our 22,000 students working either full-time or part-time.

Many of our students overcome adversity and are empowered through studying with us, regardless of their age, background, or geography. And one quarter of all our students are disabled. As Scotland's national widening access university our quality higher education powered by supported distance learning can play a significant role in helping Scotland not only navigate the crisis brought about by Covid-19, but issues and inequalities present beforehand and exacerbated by the pandemic.

A flexible higher education system supporting skills development will ensure that all of Scotland's citizens are empowered to play a valued and valuable part in Scotland's growth. That spirit is central to the mission of The Open University: to open up education and lifelong learning to all our citizens, and to be a movement for change.

2. TOWARDS A RESPONSIVE, COHERENT EDUCATION AND SKILLS SYSTEM THAT DRIVES ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

Graduate Apprenticeships

This academic year we are pleased to be able to offer graduate apprenticeships with funding from the Scottish Funding Council. We are currently offering three work-based learning programmes:

- [BSc \(Honours\) Cyber Security \(Graduate Apprenticeship\)](#)
- [BSc \(Honours\) IT: Software Development \(Graduate Apprenticeship\)](#)
- [MSc in Cyber Security \(Graduate Apprenticeship\)](#)

Organisations can utilise these new programmes to plug crucial digital skills gaps and ensure you have the talent to manage future technological changes. Through tutor-supported online learning, apprentices can flex learning around their work schedule, reducing time away from the workplace. Skills learnt as they progress through the programme are immediately embedded into the workplace, giving an almost instant return on investment.

Our Graduate Apprenticeships are particularly helping smaller companies to develop digital skills in remote and rural areas. Maria Bell, Managing Director at Shetland based software company Mesomorphic, chose the OU Graduate Apprenticeship because it integrated work-based learning with delivery online. “The whole purpose is to learn on the job,” she said. “That’s really beneficial from our point of view.”

Work, however, still needs to be done to ensure that Graduate Apprenticeships are meeting the needs of employers and prospective students. Funding, for example, is currently allocated for 4-year, 480 credit, full time Apprenticeships only (or 2 year full-time for postgraduate); there is no flexibility for delivery on a part-time or flexible basis.

This prohibits widening access – particularly for those who would require to work part-time or need to flex their apprenticeship, for example due to illness, caring responsibilities or financial reasons. The current structure also means that if someone wants to pause their apprenticeships due to illness, they cannot take a break in learning – they have to leave the programme and re-join at a later date. This is reliant on the provider having bid and secured funding in subsequent funding rounds. It is at odds with the Scottish Government’s Fair Work agenda.

In addition, the current annual bid structure is not conducive to effective planning. It inhibits forward planning and, combined with the small cohorts available and lack of development funding available means it is difficult for institutions to achieve an efficient return on investment.

We also believe there needs to be a broader range of 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.

Building long-term relationships with employers and industry

The coronavirus pandemic has seen a strengthening and deepening of our relationships with employers and industry at what has been a challenging time for everyone. We have worked in an agile way to ensure that we provided targeted skills support where it is needed most. Drawing on our unique distance learning model, we have collaborated with partners to roll out support at scale across Scotland.

Through a number of Scottish Government skills-focussed funding streams we have been able to rapidly respond in supporting businesses, workers, families and communities during the pandemic through our online platforms and flexible learning opportunities. To help support employees who were furloughed and facing redundancy as a result of COVID-19, we offered free places through the Scottish Funding Council Upskilling Fund on a new Coding Skills course to upskill and reskill people for digital roles and careers. We also saw significant demand for the suite of microcredential courses that we were able to offer, thanks to being able to access the Scottish Government’s Flexible Workforce Development Fund which previously had been restricted to colleges only.

We worked in partnership with Michelin when its Dundee factory was facing closure to support the workers, their families, and the local community to upskill. We worked closely with the senior management team, workers and associated government support agencies such as the unions and [Partnership Action for Continued Employment \(PACE\)](#) to ensure the employability package aligned with the overall redundancy strategy of supporting workers during this difficult time, utilising the National Transition Training Fund.

We have also worked with PACE to offer support to retail workers facing redundancy including, Debenhams, Topshop, and the Arcadia Group. In addition, we have developed a new national partnership with Department for Work and Pensions training work coaches in 71 Job Centres across Scotland.

A traditional approach to education and skills will not therefore meet the challenges that lie ahead for a post-pandemic economy. The ability to upskill and reskill for a changing economy through part-time and modular learning will be key to an inclusive economic recovery. It is our belief that only by funding at scale will the challenge of ensuring everyone can make the most of their skills and talents regardless of their background be met.



Learning Throughout Life: Qualifications and targets

There should be a move away from the current default position of viewing higher education as the transition of 17 and 18-year olds from school into full-time university and adopt a wider view of the diversity of learners and their needs in Scotland. The reality is that many students do not follow a single linear journey. Immediately after school is not always the right time in a person's life to choose to pursue higher education. Many students will go on to college first or choose to come back to education later in life. This will be even more applicable in the post-pandemic environment and as the need to upskill and reskill to support new careers and to support Scotland's productivity intensifies.

We therefore welcome the recognition from the SFC that "Learning throughout life will become increasingly important and the pace of change in the jobs market will require more frequent reskilling or upskilling...". Putting this into practice will mean a move away from a default position of favouring the full-time degree both in terms of funding and measures. In the post-pandemic environment there needs to be more agile provision and the ability to fund small, 'bite-sized' modules and microcredentials.

The opportunity exists to consider the potential of credit-based funding/funding by SCQF level as a way of truly supporting lifelong learning. In the post-pandemic environment, the sector needs to be able to support people with the appropriate learning at the appropriate time and to be able to facilitate smooth transitions between institutions.

Lifelong Learning Through Community Learning and Development

We have a Scotland-wide network of Open Learning Champions, drawn from community and third sector organisations, who have undertaken a workshop with us to develop the skills and confidence to support people to access online learning, with a particular focus on non-accredited learning on OpenLearn and other free OU platforms.

At the outset of the pandemic The Open University in Scotland moved quickly to support colleagues in Community Learning and Development (CLD). We delivered training to ensure that CLD workers could confidently take their provision online.

We have been able to make funded places available on our microcredentials in 2020/21 with support from the Scottish Funding Council's Upskilling Fund. These include courses particularly relevant to adult learning:

- [Online Teaching: Accessibility and Inclusive Learning](#)
- [Online Teaching: Creating Courses for Adult Learners](#)
- [Online Teaching: Embedding Social, Race and Gender-Related Equity](#)
- [Online Teaching: Evaluating and Improving Courses](#)

Having successfully delivered sessions on Online Teaching to CLD workers we are now in discussions to deliver Online Community Learning sessions after positive feedback from participants. This is one aspect that could easily be scaled up if there was funding available.

We are members of the Adult Learning Forum and submitted a response to the recent consultation on Draft Adult Learner Strategy. We firmly believe that with investment we can scale up aspects of our local delivery to a national scale. We are currently working with the Scottish Government to scope out a proposal to develop a learning resource for CLD practitioners.

The importance of place

With over 22,000 students studying across every parliamentary region and constituency in the country we are the fourth largest university in Scotland. We are unique in Scotland as the only university without a physical campus; we have a virtual presence as a member of the Crichton Campus Partnership in Dumfries.

Yet we absolutely understand the importance of place. Our supported distance learning model is a proven way of delivering at a national level yet sustaining local needs; 85% of our graduates remain in the location where their study was undertaken, retaining their talent and skills in those, often rural and remote, communities.

We would like to see a review of support for part-time study to ensure that it is treated on an equitable basis with full-time and that barriers to study such as maintenance support are given urgent consideration. Evidence indicates the most deprived and rural areas will be hardest hit economically by the pandemic¹ and in turn that will have a disproportionate impact on those with protected characteristics such as age, race, gender and disability. The OU in Scotland has almost 40% of our undergraduates from the two most deprived quintiles, 23% living in rural areas and 23% declaring a disability. We want to work with SFC and relevant agencies to mitigate the potential impacts on these groups and ensure an inclusive approach to recovery.

National Micro-Credential Framework and Delivery Plan for Scotland

Open University in Scotland has welcomed the opportunity to have access to the Flexible Workforce Development Fund this academic year and despite the challenges of engagement with SMEs during the pandemic, we have shown there is significant and growing demand for short, skills-focused courses. Our microcredential curriculum is growing rapidly to meet demand and we are keen to work with the SFC in ensuring we can support learners throughout life.

We note the recommendation to pilot a National Micro-Credential Framework and Delivery Plan for Scotland. We do have significant concerns about potential duplication between a new Scottish framework for microcredentials and the internationally recognised Common Microcredential Framework agreed by the European MOOC Consortium. A Scotland-only framework could lead to Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) losing out to their international competitors. We would prefer instead that all HEIs are advised to follow the European definition.

¹ Skills Development Scotland COVID-19 Labour Market Insights

The level at which Microcredentials are defined does have implications for their future funding. Should they be defined as being 10/15/20 credit qualifications at SCQF Level 7 and above then the Scottish Government might seek to fund this activity from core funding, with teaching grant attached, rather than from the current Upskilling Fund and National Transition Training Fund funding streams. As it currently stands the Part-Time Fee Grant would not apply for Microcredentials if so defined as it only covers learning at a 30 credit minimum. We believe there is scope for a wider discussion about the funding models applied by the SFC and SAAS.

3. PROTECTING AND PROMOTING STUDENTS' INTERESTS

We particularly welcome the emphasis on understanding the student experience within the report. Ensuring the student voice is heard at all levels and helps to inform our decision making has been central to our planning, never more so than in this last year with the Student and Staff Engagement Group Scotland a key part of our consultative structure. Our Corporate Parenting Steering Group is hugely enhanced by the experiences of students with lived experience contributing to decision making. In 2020, we secured a Think Positive Small Grant to pilot a series of themed student engagement events, the Big Blethers, in collaboration with the OU Students Association.

Schools and tertiary education – supporting transitions, overcoming disadvantage in the Learner Journey

We note the commitment to introduce a National Schools Programme for Tertiary Education in Scotland to develop existing projects acting as a bridge between senior phase and tertiary education. We are proud to see our Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) recognised for its contribution to widening access in the Report.

Despite the extraordinary challenges faced by schools during the pandemic, YASS has continued to meet a clear academic need for pupils in their final year. We saw the highest level of participation ever with 1,232 students participating in AY2019/20 across all 32 local authorities and we were very pleased to see these numbers hold up again at similar levels in AY2020/21. YASS not only prepares pupils for independent learning but also provides a curriculum broader than they have access to in schools.

We remain grateful for the SFC's support of YASS with the funding now being mainstreamed into our main grant. We are keen to use our long experience of providing Scotland's only national bridging programme supporting school pupils with the skills they require for tertiary education in the development of the National Schools Programme.

Fair Access and Transitions: student-focused, with many pathways

We are committed to making higher education accessible to everyone across Scotland. A key focus of our work is ensuring that people from Scotland's most disadvantaged groups and communities can all access higher education at any stage of their lives to help improve their work and life opportunities. We work in partnership with many third sector organisations to reach people from the most deprived areas, people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, carers, ethnic minority groups, and people with care experience.

Our commitment to student carers across the whole of the OU was recognised in 2020 when we received the 'Going Higher for Student Carers Award' from the Carers Trust Scotland. We also joined forces with Carers Trust Scotland to help improve support to thousands of student carers in Scotland, who are studying alongside providing unpaid care for a family member or friend. The Carer Aware module helps university staff to better understand the challenges faced by many student carers.

There is already growing evidence that the pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged people in Scotland. It is vital that there remains a strong commitment to widening access to higher education in ensuring inequalities in society are not worsened.

Many learners instead choose to go to college first or pursue higher education at a later stage, perhaps due to work or family commitments, or financial reasons. This will be even more applicable in the post-pandemic environment as people return to study to gain new skills and improve eligibility for new employment opportunities, and in supporting the future economy.

Our routes for college students to enter into advanced level of OU study are available nationwide, unrestricted by the geographical location of the student or their college. Advanced entry onto The Open University's unique

Open Degree is available to all HN students, regardless of the subject they studied at college. This allows the student to gain credit for previous study, whilst building a degree programme tailored to their own development needs or to the needs of their employer. Accessible, clear and simple pathways for learners are becoming increasingly even more important as demand for different opportunities gets stronger.

We have formal partnerships with the 15 regional colleges across Scotland that promote progression routes and credit transfer opportunities for students who wish to get advanced entry into OU programmes.

We have a number of other models with colleges. The OU Choices programme with Dundee and Angus College uses a blended approach to integrate online OU access modules into a wider programme of study skills for school children, enabling them to get a guaranteed interview with the college or onto OU programmes.

Securing quality in learning and teaching for students

We would echo the comments of Universities Scotland in relation to quality framework. We do not believe that a single quality assurance and enhancement framework for tertiary education would bring the gains envisaged in the report. We believe the opportunity exists to share best practice and work in partnership so that colleges are able to benefit from an enhancement-led approach. There is a real risk that in introducing a single framework our internationally recognised current enhancement-led reputation is damaged.

Online learning and digital infrastructure

We welcome the commitment to ensure students receive high quality online and blended learning. Again, we are keen to work with the SFC and JISC on this recommendation and to offer our years of experience of providing online and blended learning. We see our recent success in the National Student Survey 2021 where The OU in Scotland achieved 92% for overall student satisfaction as testament to the positive experience online learning can deliver where students are supported in their studies. We do have some concerns about developing separate standards which might be at odds with existing models and potentially carry a risk of restricting our global accessibility.

Student Support

In respect of wider student support, we embed support into our curriculum design and delivery at every stage of the student's learning journey, including mental health support. We work in partnership with TogetherAll, an online mental health and well-being resource available free to students, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Using additional funding from Scottish Funding Council, we have extended this partnership to be able to 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 up to six counselling sessions.

Our commitment to student carers across the whole of the OU was recognised in 2020 when we received the 'Going Higher for Student Carers Award' from the Carers Trust Scotland. We also joined forces with Carers Trust Scotland to help improve support to thousands of student carers in Scotland, who are studying alongside providing unpaid care for a family member or friend. The Carer Aware module helps university staff to better understand the challenges faced by many student carers.

The OU in Scotland welcomes the stated intention in the report to explore further elements of student support relating to economic recovery with the Scottish Government and the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). We believe that financial barriers should not prevent people from studying part-time. Indeed, if the Fair Work agenda is to be successful then we should be encouraging people to undertake part-time study to upskill and/or reskill while in work. There are however a range of anomalies in the support offered to part-time learners.

Part-time students are often lower paid and juggling work, caring and other commitments and we see evidence that these pressures have been even greater during the Covid pandemic yet they do not receive maintenance support. The OU in Scotland has recently received enquiries from students looking for greater support after changes in their circumstances due to the pandemic.

There also needs to be greater flexibility concerning the income and credit threshold for the Part-time Fee Grant – currently set at annual income of £25,000 or below and 30 credits – to support shorter, more skills-focused courses to be studied, to allow people to reskill, upskill and return to the workplace. The threshold has not changed since 2015. An inflationary increase to the Part-time Fee Grant income threshold should be introduced.

Our open access policy enables care-experienced learners with low previous education qualifications to study with us. Data on our care-experienced students suggests that they may begin their learning journey later, with a higher average age than our non-care experienced students. Yet the system is predicated upon supporting those who go directly to university from care, are under **twenty-five years of age** and **studying full time**.

Another anomaly is that full-time students can apply for council tax reduction whilst it is much harder to do so as a part-time student; despite their commitment to education, often while having family and / or caring commitments and working part-time. When the Scottish Government takes forward its consultation on post-graduate learning we would like to see this widened out to include all part-time learning.

4. SUSTAINING RESEARCH AND ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Open University in Scotland staff and research students are actively engaged in a varied programme of knowledge exchange and research work, which is of impact and relevance both in Scotland and further afield. We are developing our new strategy which will be focussed on Societal Challenges.

We have noticed an uptick in students wanting to study entrepreneurship, especially during the pandemic. We have a free short online course that has enabled prospective entrepreneurs to consider how they might become a successful entrepreneur and the skills required. Additionally, within the HE sector we're exploring how we might support students with an interest in entrepreneurship in the creative industries (an area where additional skills training has been deemed to be a need). The Open University in Scotland is also a partner in the Innogen Institute – a collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and the OU. In 2021, we had two specific projects related to climate and the environment – one on salmon farming in Scotland, and the other on seaweed. Both of these projects have considerable potential for changes in working practices.

Sustainability is a key priority for The Open University in 2021, amplified by the forthcoming COP, to be held in Glasgow in November. We have considerable expertise in mass scale public engagement, and drawing on our broadcast partnerships with e.g. the BBC through rich content, reaching people throughout the whole of Scotland. Additionally, we have a developing curriculum on sustainability and going forward look to enhance our green skills curriculum. We're also involved in a number of research projects in this area too – with multi-disciplinary expertise in, for example, the sciences, social sciences, arts and in supporting businesses with the challenges of strategies to combat climate change. During COP26 we intend to showcase some of our key strengths and areas of expertise to audiences in Glasgow, both face-to-face and digitally.

Our work on Healthy Ageing in Scotland, for example, saw a series of six online open engagement events developed in partnership with [Voluntary Health Scotland](#). Presented by public health expert Dr Jitka Vseteckova from the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies, participants across Scotland took part in the digital sessions. This was a hugely successful series of events, delivered entirely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Additionally, we have developed a series of policy informed work – using research to influence and inform policy including work related to mental health in older people during the pandemic, through to innovative solutions in relation to combatting climate change.

We partnered with Glasgow based not-for-profit language school [Lingo Flamingo](#) to develop a training course for care workers so that during Covid-19 restrictions language lessons could continue for senior learners. Studies show that learning a second language can help delay the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's and improve brain function and ability. This is a very innovative partnership, drawing on research to influence practice.

5. INTERNATIONAL

OU students are not just in Scotland: we have over 168,000 students across the UK, throughout Europe and worldwide, including those studying with us through our partnerships and accredited institutions. More than 1,200 serving members of the British armed forces and the Merchant Navy are studying with The Open University across the world. Through an agreement between the Ministry of Defence and the OU going back to the early 1970s, a wide range of courses are available, with course materials supplied via the student's BFPO address. Many have studied while on active service, even in conflict situations.

The Open University delivers development programmes in partnership with governments, NGOs, funding institutions and local partners. Our programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia address areas such as front-line health services, teacher education and English language teaching.

The Scottish Government currently funds the Zambian Education School-based Training (ZEST) project, enabling the OU to work with World Vision Zambia to develop and roll out a high quality, school-based,

professional development programme which will reach up to 4,000 primary school teachers and leaders across Zambia's Central Province. The project began in October 2017 and will run to 2022.

The Open University jointly owns the innovative online platform, FutureLearn, with the SEEK Group. FutureLearn provides a diverse selection of short courses in partnership with top international universities and specialist organisations and has attracted over twelve million learners from around the world since it was founded in 2013.

6. SUSTAINABILITY AND COLLABORATION

Collaboration for sustainability and impact

Collaboration with colleges is an important element of widening access to HE in Scotland and increasing students' employability. The Open University is proud to have formal articulation partnerships with all colleges in Scotland other than those within the University of Highlands & Islands network. In addition to a range of degree programmes in specific subjects, the University's unique Open Degree is available to all HN students, regardless of the HN qualification they have studied at college. This allows the student to gain credit for previous study, whilst building a degree programme more tailored to their own pathway development needs, or the needs of their employer. We note higher completion rates amongst those OU students articulating from college.

This Review provides SFC with the opportunity to consider whether the 'one size fits all' approach to delivering articulation is an effective use of funds. Just as WARF recognises the additional costs of recruiting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, so there should be recognition of the additional costs beyond the funding of places for articulation activity.

Partnership with employers and organisations will become increasingly important in the post-pandemic environment. Funding streams such as the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF) and the Upskilling Fund will be vital in supporting universities to meet the economic and cultural needs of society going forward. The OU in Scotland in collaboration with the Faculty of Business and Law, led interactive online design thinking workshops with staff from the Crichton Trust and partners in Dumfries and Galloway to uncover user needs for a hub for regional entrepreneurs. This was an excellent example of knowledge exchange and working effectively with external partners. The project has been supported within the OU by leveraging the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

Multi-college regions

Once again, we would echo the comments of Universities Scotland in relation to regional collaboration. We would wish to see a scenario where the diverse strengths (and missions) of partners are brought to the table to mutual benefit rather than a simplistic approach to regional planning of provision. Opportunities could be lost by the latter approach particularly for an institution such as The OU in Scotland where we have students studying across the country without a physical presence in their region to be considered as part of the regional provision.

7. AMBITION AND FRAMEWORKS FOR THE FUTURE

Funding

Teaching grant received by The Open University in Scotland is based on our funded student numbers at completion rather than, as other HEIs are, at registration. As a result, the teaching grant received from SFC is directly linked to the number of students successfully completing OU modules up to the number of funded places allocated. Since the introduction of the Part-time Fee Grant, The Open University in Scotland has seen increasing student registrations year on year, and improved completion rates.

The Open University in Scotland has been pleased to have had the opportunity to engage with the Review throughout and have consistently encouraged the SFC to be ambitious and bold in its approach. We understand the current financial pressures and welcome the commitment to continue reviewing existing funding models but we are disappointed there seems to be no progress on the level of funded places allocated to The Open University in Scotland.

We have seen a 23% increase of student FTEs in 2020/21 from 2019/20 and we are forecasting further growth again for AY2021-22, much of which is coming from students affected by the pandemic. We have recruited 40 new frontline staff to support this growth and we are now the fourth largest university in Scotland on student

numbers. However, we cannot sustain this growth or provide the support our students need to succeed and the reskilling the Scottish economy requires without the appropriate level of funding.

Widening Access and Retention Fund

The OU in Scotland has responded to consultations on the future of the Widening Access and Retention Fund (WARF) before and would be pleased to be involved further. WARF makes a critical difference to our ability to be able to reach out and support those who from disadvantaged groups and backgrounds. We recognise that not all HEIs are in receipt of WARF and that institutions operate in the different contexts. However, without WARF, our ability to provide outreach into communities and workplaces, build learner confidence and provide supported pathways to successful outcomes for learners with low previous educational qualifications, would be adversely impacted.

As we prepare the data for our self-evaluation report on our outcome agreement for AY 2020-21, we are delighted to note a significant improvement of both our progression and completion rates.

National Impact Framework

The Review recommends the development of a new overarching National Impact Framework for the sector more aligned to Scotland's National Performance Framework and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This would provide the overarching context for a more targeted Outcome Agreement negotiation between SFC and institutions, mirroring the consultation on the regulatory burden in England.

8. ABOUT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND

The Open University (OU) in Scotland is the country's leading provider of part-time higher and flexible education – with over 75% of our students combining work and study (2019/20). Social justice is at our core and we are committed to ensuring high quality education is accessible to all, regardless of age, income, qualifications, or geography.

Our open admissions policy means no formal entry requirements are needed for most undergraduate qualifications or modules, and many of our new undergraduates join us without standard university entrance level qualifications.

Working with our partners, from employers and trade unions, to schools and voluntary sector groups, we are at the forefront of using innovative distance education to deliver supported open learning to a wide range of people, at every stage of their lives and regardless of their background. Students can choose to study for a degree, diploma, or certificate, or take a stand-alone module, course or microcredential.

Over 7,500 young people across Scotland have participated in the OU's innovative Young Applicants in Schools Scheme. The scheme offers an online national bridging qualification for S6 pupils that introduces them to university level study alongside their normal classroom study. Schools in all 32 Scottish education areas take part.

