



The Open
University

Scotland

STUDENTS FIRST:

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN
SCOTLAND'S OUTCOME
AGREEMENT WITH THE SCOTTISH
FUNDING COUNCIL 2017-2020

Member



Equality Challenge Unit



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY MISSION

Open to people, places,
methods and ideas

OUR VISION

To reach more students with life-changing learning
that meets their needs and enriches society

OBJECTIVES



PEOPLE AND VALUES
Inclusive • Innovative • Responsive



**MORE STUDENTS
QUALIFYING**



**LEADERSHIP
IN DIGITAL
INNOVATION**



**ENHANCED
EMPLOYABILITY AND
CAREER PROGRESSION**



**ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE**



**ADAPTIVE
ORGANISATION
AND CULTURE**



**INCOME
DIVERSIFICATION AND
COST REDUCTION**

The Open University: A unique institution serving the whole of Scotland

Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything The Open University does and widening access to higher education is the ambition on which it was founded. The Open University is committed to extending opportunities for educational success to those who would otherwise be excluded from higher education.

The Open University has always operated an open entry policy; our students can study modules and qualifications at undergraduate level with no requirement for previous qualifications. Over the period of this outcome agreement, The Open University in Scotland intends to work with the Commissioner for Fair Access to Higher Education and play its part in developing a national framework for access.

The flexibility of part-time study allows students to work and learn at the same time with most of our students studying to improve their careers. Of our 15,000 students in Scotland, over 70% are in full or part-time employment. Most of our students are mature learners and the median age of our new undergraduates in Scotland is 27.

Geographical reach

The OU is proud to be the only university that operates across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The teaching of OU students resident in Scotland is funded by the Scottish Funding Council but we are also able to bring to Scotland significant benefits derived from being part of the UK's largest higher education institution. The size and scale of the University allows it to offer a broader curriculum, a more diverse range of staff and students, wider access to educational innovation including our strategic partnership with the BBC, and greater investment in systems and platforms which can improve the student experience and our efficiency.

In Scotland, The Open University reaches across the whole country giving us an unparalleled ability to undertake nationwide developments and support the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives. Our students are not required to attend a campus and can study with us wherever they might live, with access to our world-class online library and support services. This is of particular benefit to the 24% of our students who live in remote and rural towns and areas of Scotland and who would otherwise have limited options to access higher education.

The Open University works closely with partners across the whole of Scotland. We collaborate with employers, trade unions, public sector bodies, institutes, private, third sector and community organisations, universities, colleges and schools. By continuing to develop such strategic partnerships, we will enhance our position as the leading provider of flexible learning and increase the number of students who choose to study with us.

OU students are not just in Scotland; the University has over 174,000 students across the UK and we offer programmes in countries around the world, both taught directly from the OU and delivered through local partners. The Open University also helps to deliver 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, teacher education and English language teaching.

Our curriculum

Our students can study single credit-based modules or towards qualifications that are fully aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. We offer a wide range of qualifications including the uniquely flexible programme of Open qualifications: the Open CertHE, Open DipHE and BA/BSc Open, which allow students to tailor a qualification around their interests and career needs.

The development of our modules is a uniquely collaborative process delivered by multi-disciplinary course teams. These teams include OU academic staff working in partnership with colleagues from other universities; educational technologists and media specialists contributing pedagogic and technical expertise; and external assessors to ensure academic standards are consistent with other universities. This model has helped to build the University's reputation for academic rigour and quality and has since been adopted by distance teaching institutions worldwide.

The Open University is a mass communicator of free, informal learning both nationally and globally through its OpenLearn website, iTunesU, the OU channel on YouTube, the OpenSTEM Labs and FutureLearn, a company wholly owned by The Open University. The OpenLearn website gives the public free access to learning materials from the OU. These materials either come from our modules or are developed to support our BBC television and radio programmes and provide expert comment on topical issues. All OpenLearn courses (over 1,000) are also available on Google Play and Amazon for Kindle to reflect the diversity of the University's curriculum and the strength of the academic brand. [OpenLearn Create](#) is an innovative open educational platform where individuals and organisations can publish their own open content, open courses and resources. It also allows The OU in Scotland to co-create open educational resources with partners, such as the Carers Trust and Parkinsons UK.

The Open University's unique partnership with the BBC continues to flourish and evolve. Between 150 million and 300 million views and listens of OU produced programmes take place each year in the UK. Academic experts from across the University are involved in all OU/BBC productions and inspire people to take their interest further by visiting the OpenLearn website; viewers are encouraged to access videos, interactive games, podcasts as well as articles and booklets.

Our staff

The Open University in Scotland has over 130 academic, academic-related and support staff based in our offices in Edinburgh.

Our students have an associate lecturer to guide, advise and offer comprehensive feedback on their coursework. Some standalone modules have study advisers who are available for students to contact if they have any academic queries. The majority of our undergraduate modules have a tutorial group of twenty students. Associate lecturers can be contacted by phone or online, and lead group tutorials and seminars making use of online teaching technologies to link up student groups across the country. We have approximately 500 associate lecturers living in all parts of Scotland; many of whom also work in business and industry or for other Scottish HEIs or colleges.

SFC Priority 1: Widening access – learning that is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds

Our aim is to reach even more students by offering a wider range of study options and with continued commitment to widen access and success.

The Open University in Scotland's widening access strategy targets those people with no previous experience of study at SCQF level 7 or above, low incomes and those for whom attending a campus would present significant challenges. Our strategy includes outreach activity that is enhanced by working with partners across the country and the provision of supported pathways into degree level study that are appropriate to the individual learner. Our partners include community-based organisations, colleges, trade unions and employers. Much of the work outlined below is facilitated by the Scottish Funding Council's Widening Access & Retention Fund (former Regional Coherence Fund) which enables us support students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

The University's access programme provides three highly supported 30 credit modules at SCQF level 6 that facilitate the transition to HE level study and are designed to maximise student success, retention and progression. Currently these access modules do not receive teaching grant from the Scottish Funding Council but this is something we would like to discuss further in recognition of the bridging these modules provide towards an OU HE level qualification. The number of students on these access modules rose from 110 FTE in 2014/15 to just under 160 FTE in Scotland on 2015/16.

In addition to these access modules, we also use open educational resources to support our widening access work. [Open Pathways to Higher Education](#) is a resource pack that offers various pathways from informal to formal accredited learning. This supports pre-access activity with learners who may be very distant from higher education, allowing them to start learning informally at their preferred level and pace, gradually building confidence and skills for learning. The Open University has also developed a suite of skills-based Badged Open Courses (BOCs) which are available for free on the OpenLearn platform. These include: Taking Your First Steps into Higher Education; Succeed with Learning; Succeed with English; Succeed with Maths and Succeed in the Workplace. Over the period of this outcome agreement we will build on and extend our existing network of over 120 [Open Learning Champions](#); our contacts within various bodies such as community education, libraries, trade unions, third sector organisations and support groups who are interested in exploring the opportunities available through free open learning resources.

Students from areas of social deprivation

As a result of targeted marketing and outreach activity, our proportion of new undergraduate students resident in the most deprived quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) rose to 17% in 2015/16. 38% of our new undergraduate students were resident in the two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40) in 2015/16. These proportions are based on SIMD 2012 data.

Over the three-year period of this outcome agreement we will continue to target our marketing and outreach activity to promote access to higher education to learners

from the most deprived backgrounds however it is important to recognise that there are people experiencing significant hardship in geographical areas that are deemed to be less deprived than SIMD20 and equally that not everyone in a deprived area is individually deprived. The majority of our students are on low incomes. The Scottish Government's Part-time Fee Grant has increased the number of people on low incomes coming to study with The Open University. In 2015/16, 60% of our new undergraduate students had an individual income below £25,000 and were in receipt of the Part-time Fee Grant.

The Open University will work closely with the newly appointed Commissioner for Fair Access to look at SIMD as one of a basket of measures of deprivation rather than the sole measure. We will also urge the Commissioner to consider all learners in their work beyond a narrow focus on school-leavers, in particular part-time and mature students.

Progression from college

The Open University in Scotland offers all students with Higher National Certificates and then Higher National Diplomas the opportunity to build on their college credit and to enhance their skills and qualifications.

The OU in Scotland has active partnerships with all of the Scottish Colleges (other than those within the UHI network), whereby students with an HNC or HND get the appropriate credit transfer into our BA or BSc (Open) with or without honours. We have also developed pathways and credit transfer arrangements for students with relevant HNQs to progress to specified OU named degrees. These partnership agreements are reviewed on an annual basis.

Our students can choose to:

- take time out from study after completing their HN and articulate to the OU when they want professional development or to expand their career opportunities
- register for a wide range of degree options using their HN
- begin their studies with one or more modules
- study on the Open Degree using all their credit from an HN
- study on a named programme where the amount of transferred credit varies depending on the content match between the HN and the degree
- not to use their HN qualification as credit because they want to refresh and update their skills
- study on a degree in a different field from their HN (a significant proportion choose to do this)

Most OU Honours Degrees consist of 360 credits compared to the Scottish norm of 480 credit points. As a result, even where students with an HN are in receipt of a partial credit for their HN or have chosen not to transfer credit, they may still complete an OU Honours degree within the standard Scottish four-year timeframe. Our experience is that part-time students combine work and study in a variety of different ways. Articulating students can complete their degree in as little as two years but most will take a longer and often interrupted learning journey.

The Open University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy offers students more direct entry routes to OU study. This policy has been developed to align with the Scottish RPL framework.

In addition to the articulation and progression agreements we have signed with colleges, we seek to embed the routes available to OU study in college processes

by promoting The OU in Scotland's [College Routes](#) website, developing information sessions with curriculum staff and student groups, inclusion of OU pathways in college promotional material and attendance at college HE progression events.



Josh Malcolm did a BA (Honours) Combined Social Sciences Degree through The Open University in Scotland's campus-based articulation model at Ayrshire College's Kilmarnock campus. He was able to transfer academic credit to his degree course from an earlier HNC in Social Sciences gained at the college. The father of three from Kilwinning, who is in his early 40s, combined his OU studies with a full-time job as an

NHS nursing assistant.

"My course tutor advised that there was something coming up through The Open University where you would get a chance to use your Social Science studies to gain your Honours degree within two years, and in an environment I was familiar with. I was able to pursue my work and my family commitments and after two years I would come out with an Honours degree. That idea was really very appealing for me, because I wouldn't lose anything, I could gain an Honours degree and still work full-time and have my social ties with my family intact.

But The Open University gave me the opportunity to just follow straight on from my HND and this is where I am. It is the greatest experience and best thing that has ever happened to me."

Our campus-based model of partnership is another strand of our articulation activity. We have been working with six colleges in 2016-17. This unique partnership provides students who have completed their HN qualification, the opportunity to continue to use the college as the study base for their OU degree. For many students, being based at their college is the only option available to them to continue studying due to geographical constraints, caring responsibilities, their employment or disability. The college base also represents a 'known' and supportive environment for learning, therefore providing new learning opportunities in familiar spaces and supporting the transition from FE to HE study. Evaluation of the Fife College pilot showed very positive academic results and completion rates. We were delighted to see fourteen students graduate with degrees through this partnership model in 2016. We aim to continue to develop and expand the college campus-based model over the period of this outcome agreement.

We have OU Learning Spaces at Dumfries and Galloway, New College Lanarkshire, Fife, West College Scotland and South Lanarkshire Colleges with the help of SFC capital investment funding in the first four cases. As a result of college mergers, we have been able to extend the facilities to all the main campuses of New College Lanarkshire, West College Scotland and Fife College. Learning Spaces give OU students in the college catchment area access to IT, library, study and other social facilities. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will explore maximising the benefit of these Learning Spaces including as a way of fostering informal peer support networks of learners.

Students from care experienced backgrounds

Since 2013/14, when The Open University first started to ask students to self-declare whether they had a care experience background, 195 students in Scotland have identified themselves as care leavers. Although small numbers, this appears higher than the sector average. The majority of our students of students make no declaration as to whether they have had care experience or not.

The Open University in Scotland was very pleased to be able to accept the offer of Corporate Parent training from Who Cares? Scotland in December 2016. The OU in Scotland is convening a working group on Care Experienced Students to make recommendations on OU-wide policy and actions to widen access for these students and to comply with this legislation. We intend for this group to represent a range of relevant teams across the OU, with input from OU students with care experience, and from external organisations. Its remit will include:

- establishing a baseline of current activity across the university,
- identifying potential barriers for care experienced students,
- reviewing existing policy and processes relating to registration and student support,
- exploring ideas for engaging, identifying and supporting this group of learners,
- making recommendations for the development of an OU-wide policy on care leavers,
- working with Who Cares? Scotland to draft a Corporate Parenting Plan.

Students in secure environments

The Open University has provided modules to students in prison since 1972. Through our partnership with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), we are able to facilitate access to higher education for those prisoners who have not previously had the opportunity to study at this level and who have demonstrated their potential and motivation. In 2015-16 we had 58 students in prisons across Scotland (covering all security categories) and in 2 secure hospital units.

The OU in Scotland is maintaining a dialogue with the Scottish Prison Service and the Scottish Government with the aim of enhancing and increasing the scale of our work with offender learners over the period of this outcome agreement.

The OU in Scotland is a member of the new SPS National Advisory Group on prison education and we are the only Scottish HEI represented on the Higher Education Access Board (HEAB) which coordinates access by offenders to higher education provision.

Students with disabilities and additional needs

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 including course materials in alternative formats and are tested for compatibility with assistive software, special arrangements for tutorials and examinations including home examinations and where appropriate advice about funding.

In 2015-16, 16% of new undergraduates in Scotland identified themselves as having a disability, including physical and mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. A significant proportion of our disabled students have problems with mobility. Numbers have almost doubled over the last five years, and we now have over 2,700 students with a declared disability.

Transgender students

In November 2016 The Open University created a transgender support steering

group to review its transgender support policy and also the guidance and procedures for staff and students and this review is expected to be concluded in 2017. The University's current policy can be accessed via this link: ['Transgender Students: Policy and Guidance'](#) Initial training was completed by 'Named Contacts' in March 2017 and that further briefing and training will be put in place for all front line staff in relation to this area in due course.

The OU does not intend to introduce monitoring for gender identity. We have a legal duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. The University's approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on qualitative information derived from engagement and research. During 2017 we expect to be introducing an "Mx" category alongside Mr, Miss, Mrs and Ms in our monitoring to assist those who identify as non-binary for gender purposes. To better capture gender fluidity, the OU's Transgender Students: Policy and Guidance will during the course of 2017, be re-framed as the Gender Identity policy.

Working with schools

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 and enhance their career prospects. Students can choose from a range of high quality modules at SCQF Level 7 and give them access to a subject which may not be available in their school. YASS is included on Insight (the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for the senior phase).

Experience of independent study at degree level and access to all OU student facilities helps to prepare pupils for the transition to university or college. We have been in discussions with UCAS and anticipate that tariff points for YASS modules will be awarded from 2017-18. Pupils can also use the credit they gain towards a qualification with The Open University.

Since its introduction in Scotland as a pilot with Highland Council in 2007/08, YASS has grown considerable year on year so that over 100 schools throughout Scotland and over 1,000 pupils participated in 2015/16. YASS has proved to be a very attractive addition to many schools, particularly smaller ones, those in remote areas and with limited numbers staying on to S6, that encounter difficulties in providing breadth of choice for their pupils. To date 31 SHEP schools (those identified as having low participation in higher education) have participated in YASS.

The OU in Scotland has been grateful to the Scottish Funding Council for strategic funding to enable school pupils to receive fee waivers for their OU modules as YASS students are not eligible for the Part-time Fee Grant. We ask that the Scottish Funding Council continues to support access to fee waivers to YASS students on a recurrent basis in line with its commitment to widening access and the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access. With a sustainable funding arrangement, The OU in Scotland will work towards increasing the proportion of individual pupils from the 40% most deprived backgrounds and increasing the number of SHEP schools participating in YASS. We will also monitor the impact of YASS and take an evidence-based approach to developing the scheme going forward over the next three years. We will also explore further opportunities to build on our presence in schools to promote learning in the wider community via the parents and carers of pupils; stimulating learning cultures and supporting wider access.

Gender balance

In 2015/16 59% of our new undergraduates were female; over 40% of new undergraduates taking STEM courses are female.

The OU's Department of Engineering and Innovation ran a 'Celebrating Women in Engineering' event in June 2016 to celebrate National Women in Engineering Day. Students heard inspiring stories from an OU graduate who had set up her own engineering business, a young structural engineer, and representatives from professional engineering institutions. Women represent approximately 10% of our students across the UK on engineering qualifications and the event gave them the opportunity to meet each other and start a network which we hope will strengthen and grow in the future. The Department is planning to run a similar event in June 2017 to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day with the theme 'Creating Supportive Environments'. Our STEM faculty is currently developing the Gateway to Coding project - an initiative to develop pathway for women into programming.

As we develop our institutional gender plan by July 2017, we will analyse the recruitment by sex within individual subjects and monitor trends at a subject level. Where we identify subjects with an imbalance of more than 75:25, we will work with colleagues in faculties and our Equality & Diversity team to outline what actions can be undertaken to achieve a greater balance. We will also work to improve gender balance at a sectoral level with organisations such as the Equality Challenge Unit and the Higher Education Academy in Scotland.

Students and staff who are carers

We have put particular emphasis on working with carers in Scotland over the past couple of years as part of our widening access activity; it augments our work in SIMD40, articulation, partnerships and work-based learning. The Open University's model of supported open learning is particularly suitable for carers who can study from home and fit their learning around their caring commitments. We also can make special exam arrangements for those students who would find difficulty in attending an exam centre.

3% of our new undergraduates in Scotland declared themselves to be carers in 2015/16. However most new students do not provide any information about their carer status so the number of new students with caring roles is likely to be far greater than the data suggests. The University aims to improve student declaration of caring and dependency status across the UK to 15% by 2018 and to 20% by 2020.

Through our work with carers we continue to develop significant partnerships with organisations such as the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance (SYCSA), Carers Trust Scotland and local Carers Centres. These collaborations have resulted in the development of the two free online resources: *Caring Counts*: a self-reflection and planning course for carers and *Caring Counts in the Workplace*: a version for managers of employees with caring roles. The content of *Caring Counts* was co-created with carers and practitioners from the Carers Centre in Dumfries, Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. Both courses provide learners with the opportunity of gaining a digital badge to recognise their learning.

We also support the Going Higher campaign to encourage young adult carers to access higher education, and have delivered a workshop to young adult carer support workers on informal and formal study options with the OU. A recent partnership with Voice of Carers across Lothian (Vocal) and Carer Positive works with employers in Edinburgh to support carers in the workplace.

In 2015, The Open University was awarded the Carer Positive (Engaged) status; an award operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. We are now working towards gaining the Carer Positive (Established) status by June 2017.

The University has also established an institutional Care and Caring Network.

British Sign Language

The OU in Scotland is committed to supporting the implementation of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and will be developing an institutional BSL plan by October 2018, engaging our students in the process. We are grateful for the support and training provided by the Deaf Sector Partnership both in thinking about how can make our services more accessible for deaf and deafblind users and also in preparing our BSL plan.

The Crichton Campus

The Crichton Campus is a unique and inspiring learning environment, located in Dumfries. The Campus provides the option of university learning within a region where choice has previously been extremely limited and provides opportunities for people to access further and higher education in a range of ways that meet their needs. The academic partners of the Crichton Campus are the University of Glasgow, the University of the West of Scotland, The Open University in Scotland, Scotland's Rural College and Dumfries & Galloway College. Over the previous outcome agreement period, The OU in Scotland has continued to upscale its contribution at the Crichton Campus and more generally across Dumfries and Galloway, and laid the foundation for further developments over the next three years:

The OU in Scotland does not receive any specific funding to support its partnership work with the Crichton Campus. In order to expand our work further, we would require funding to support a post physically located in the region.

- We will continue to play a full and active role in supporting the Crichton Campus, through the Joint Academic Strategy Group. We believe The Open University makes a valuable contribution in expanding the curriculum offer in the region, opportunities for college articulation, and strengthens the capacity of the sector to contribute to widening access across the region.
- We will continue to explore how the OU can make a distinct offer to employers in the region to help them upskill their workforce and to contribute to the local economy. We are establishing links with a number of umbrella organisations in the locality, building on the strong networks established by the Crichton Campus Leadership Group and the Crichton Campus Development Manager.
- We continue to surface opportunities to widen access to higher education and work to support specific needs of particular groups of students. We plan to build on our collaboration with the Dumfries Carers Centre and extend our outreach via third sector organisations, Community Learning and Development, and other key local stakeholders.
- We will continue to run a wide range of knowledge exchange and public engagement events on the campus. In 2016, we ran successful events for those working in education and in the health and social care field. Where appropriate, we will work in collaboration with Crichton Campus partners in these events.
- The Crichton Care Campus: a multi-institutional research and development group coordinated and led by The Open University, has been established to develop this concept. The group involves representatives from all the academic partners.

- We intend to further strengthen our use of the Learning Space for OU students hosted in Dumfries and Galloway College. We will also work in collaboration with local students to explore ways of strengthening peer support and a sense of OU student community.

SFC Priority 2: High quality learning and teaching – an outstanding system of learning that is accessible and diverse where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference

Our aim is to support students more effectively throughout their learner journey so that more students achieve positive personal and career development outcomes.

National Student Survey

In 2016, 91% of Open University students in Scotland declared themselves satisfied with the quality of their study experience in the National Student Survey; this placed the OU joint second in Scotland for overall satisfaction. We aim to maintain a rating of 90% or more over the period of this outcome agreement as we have done in every year since the survey started in its current form in 2007, the only higher education institution in Scotland to do so.

Retention

The Open University in Scotland offers a unique level of flexibility to students in that they can choose to study single credit-based modules or towards qualifications. However retention is a complex issue since part-time learner journeys are often non-linear and cannot be measured or monitored in the same way as full-time campus-based study. For many OU students, success is measured by progression to other higher education providers or because their professional development requirements are met by the successful completion of an individual module.

We have undertaken significant statistical modelling work in order to understand better the impact of a range of student characteristics and behaviours on students' likely completion and progression rates. This work has demonstrated the negative impact on module completion for new undergraduates of: low previous educational qualifications; unemployment; low income (i.e. being on benefits and in receipt of a fee waiver when studying a longer module); overlap of study with holiday periods; and age (i.e. being in the youngest or oldest age groups). By contrast, students with credit transfer and those sponsored by their employers are more likely to be retained at the module level.

A key issue for us is the high volumes of students on low income taking OU modules. Over the past five years, students on low incomes have grown considerably as a proportion of our intake. With significantly lower completion rates, this group places a downward pressure on our overall rate and presents an increasing challenge for teaching and support staff. The OU in Scotland's Retention Action Group has worked with some of the University's world-leading experts in Learning Analytics, to develop a predicative model and design interventions tailored to meet the needs of students in Scotland. We are pleased that there has been an improvement in the proportion of both new and continuing students who completed a module presentation at the first opportunity.

At an institutional level, the University aims to improve the completion rate on modules undertaken by both new and continuing students. The OU in Scotland continues to monitor the progression and completion rates of our students by age, SIMD, disability, part-time fee grant, level of study, remoteness, ethnicity and gender

and other appropriate protected characteristics. Analysis of this information helps us to evaluate the impact of our retention work and to implement appropriate actions. The completion rate for those undergraduate entrants in the most deprived quintile (SIMD20) increased in 2014/15.

We note the request of the Scottish Funding Council to use the Widening Access & Retention Fund to target male retention rates for improvement and we will include actions to do so in our institutional gender action plan by July 2017.

The Open University, as a whole, has prioritised the provision of its qualification framework, primarily due to the significant changes to funding arrangements across the nations of the United Kingdom but also with the aim of improving the proportion of students completing their qualification. Completion rates have previously been presented at modular level only; work on data to indicate overall completion rates at qualification level started in 2014.

The sector-wide progression metric introduced by the SFC for reporting cycles 2014/15 - 2016/17 relates to full-time students only. The OU in Scotland negotiated an equivalent metric which was used for the reporting cycle 2015/16. The headcount progression rate for first degree entrants has increased year-on-year since 2011/12.

Quality

Within Scotland, our engagement with the Enhancement Theme acts as a catalyst for the development of evidence-based practice, including development of learning and teaching pedagogy and practice, and enhanced approaches to student support. During the current Theme of student transitions, we have focused on: supported pathways into higher education; understanding student transitions for the part-time, distance learner; open educational practice; and learning and teaching partnerships in higher education.

Specific enhancement projects have included a broader piloting of the student community hubs model as an approach to supporting the development of communities of learners on a discipline basis, seen as a mechanism for supporting students to progress through Open University studies. This approach has been piloted within psychology, social sciences and arts in specific localities and we have also run a pilot within West of Scotland College, attended by both social sciences students of the college and OU students, as a way of exploring support mechanisms for transitions into HE. It is our intention to expand this activity in 2017/18.

The Open University Business School in the top 1% of global business schools who are triple accredited by AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA.

back on course Scotland

The back on course Scotland project is delivered by The Open University in Scotland, with funding from the Scottish Funding Council on behalf of the higher education sector in Scotland.

The project provides a free, impartial advice and guidance service for full-time undergraduate students who have withdrawn from higher education before completing their studies. Whatever their circumstances, early leavers are offered the opportunity to reflect and focus on their next steps either back into university or other positive outcomes such as college, training or employment.

The OU in Scotland delivers this project in collaborations with HEIs across Scotland, with the aim of developing and sharing good practice around the early leaver experience and the role of the HEI in providing support during this hitherto neglected transition.

Through presentations at sector events, published reports and a forthcoming Open Access Toolkit, the important learning from this project, based on detailed analysis of data provided by institutions and individual students, is being shared with the sector to improve practice in this strategically important area.

Psychology Community Hubs: supporting informal, informative and inspirational communities of OU learners

Though they are studying part-time and at a distance, we know that many of our students place a great deal of value in face-to-face interactions with their peers. Our Psychology Community Hubs have piloted a model of locally-based, subject-focused learning events which have been developed in the north-east of Scotland, to successfully address this issue.

These sessions offered our learners a space where subject knowledge, self-confidence, sense of belonging, and career ambitions can be fostered and developed through staff-directed and peer-to-peer engagement activities. They provided a dynamic, and engaging forum for sharing of experience and learning from others negotiating their way through OU psychology modules and qualifications, thereby enhancing the students' experience of transitions into, through and out of study. Moreover, placing these events at the heart of communities, whether in large population centres like Aberdeen or in rural locations like Bucksburn, allowed us to continue the important OU in Scotland tradition of taking learning to the learner.

The timing turned out to be ideal for me as meeting up with others, who as OU psychology students share a common experience, provided a welcome break in the middle of my rather intensive study phase. I noticed today how last night's meeting has somehow brought the studies [to be] more [a] part of the outside world with people, instead of just being something I do on my own with my laptop and books.
(OU Psychology student in Portlethen)

The Hubs brought together local students and exposed them to the work of subject experts operating in a variety of professional contexts, facilitated peer-support and community building interactions, and provided a forum for career development activities, all with a focus on the specific needs of psychology students. Invited facilitators included a psychotherapist, a psychologist, a community psychiatric nurse, an academic researcher, and an OU psychology graduate. Ongoing evaluation of this pilot suggests a range of positive effects, including on key indicators such as retention and progression, which we are working to measure across different groups and contexts.

Funding for back on course Scotland will come to an end in July 2017 and the final report will share the project's findings with the higher education sector in Scotland with a view to supporting the development of robust and practical retention strategies.

STEM courses

The number of STEM enrolments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects have grown considerably over the past five years and in 2015/16, STEM students accounted for over 37% of all new undergraduates.

Languages

As the provision of foreign languages at HE level decreases across Scotland, The Open University has seen a growing demand for our modules in French, German, Spanish, Welsh and Mandarin from 208 FTE in 2013/14 to 233 FTE in 2015/16. There has also been an increase in the number of S6 pupils on our Young Applicants in Schools Scheme studying language modules from 3 FTE in 2013/14 to 22 FTE in 2015/16.

The Open University welcomes the Scottish Funding Council's encouragement of institutions to increase the number of students with practical skills in languages. Learning from our collaborative project with Glasgow Caledonian University where The OU in Scotland provided OU language modules for GCU postgraduate students and staff to enhance their qualification and professional development respectively, we have included the development of language skills in our discussions with our college partners.

The OU in Scotland is working with Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) to develop short modules for primary school teachers to enhance their ability to deliver language learning.

The Open University in Scotland is also currently working with [Lingo Flamingo](#); a Scotland-wide social enterprise to provide tailored foreign language workshops to older adults in care homes. This project is being evaluated by the University of Edinburgh to measure the cognitive impact of language learning for people living with dementia.

The Open University does not offer Gaelic language provision but in reference to the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) 2012-17, we developed [Gaelic in modern Scotland](#): a free online learning resource in both English and Gaelic to raise awareness of Gaelic and to encourage interest in learning the language.

A collaborative project, led by The Open University in Scotland, is currently developing an open educational resource for learning facilitators to enhance the understanding and awareness of Scots language, literature and culture and contribute to widening the relevance of and access to Scots to as broad an audience as possible.

Open Educational Resources and practice

The Open University is a world leader in the development of open educational resources (OERs). Building on this expertise in the wider university, we are working with partners across Scotland to use OERs effectively in different contexts such as workplace and community settings, and to explore new ways, such as co-creation and customisation, to provide the right learning in the right place.

The Open University in Scotland is the lead institution of the [Opening Educational Practices in Scotland](#) project to facilitate best practice in open education through

the development of a peer support network, an online hub and awareness raising activities. It is supported by a formal steering group consisting of the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde and the Highlands & Islands. This three-year project is due to complete at the end of July 2017 but will leave however the project is intended to be of benefit for the whole of the tertiary education sector in Scotland and aims to engage with a broad range of stakeholders across the country.

Employability

The Open University sets out its approach to student employability in its [Student Employability Policy Statement](#). It defines student employability as 'A set of capabilities and achievements that support students in developing their careers, raising their aspirations and enhancing their contribution to society'. We recognise the diversity of our student body and its distinctiveness within the Scottish sector. In particular, our approach to employability has a unique focus on supporting the 'employability of the employed', enhancing opportunities for students to develop and apply their skills and learning to develop within their current careers, to change career, or to return to the labour market. Figures from a University-wide student profile analysis on career motivation indicate that 47% of respondents thought their OU study would help them to change to a new career area; 43% thought it would help them to develop or progress in their current career and, reflecting the fact that the majority of OU students are already in employment, 5% thought it would help them to move into employment for the first time.

Over the period of this outcome agreement, The Open University aims to increase the number of students achieving positive personal and career development outcomes by:

- Systematically track what each student is seeking to achieve through study and how well we are helping achieve that throughout their journey with us.
- Embedding employability skills even more explicitly in the curriculum.
- Maximising the distinctive benefits that derive from students combining OU study with their own world of work.
- Investing in and expanding the careers service to enable more personalised support according to the career goals of the student (to start develop, or change their career).
- Bringing the employer perspective more directly into the University.

Employability statements are now built into the course information provided to students and prospective students, and consideration of career pathways, employability and skills development is built into the module and qualification development process. Investment has been made in a three year university-wide Careers and Employability Project to design a high quality extended Careers Advisory Service and to embed Personal Development Planning in the student learning experience.

The OU offers a free employability badged online course [Succeed in the Workplace](#) on its OpenLearn platform. The OU in Scotland and the OU's Careers Service will work with a range of partners to promote this course and to enhance employability skills in students.

SFC Priority 3: World-leading research – world-leading universities, nationally and internationally connected with a global reputation for their research

We aim to maximise public awareness of OU research & scholarship within Scotland.

In the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014), The Open University was ranked 54th for the quality of its research in The Times Higher Education's rankings. We have improved the quality of our research with 72% scored as 3 star or 4 star– the highest available, indicating that the research is world- leading or internationally excellent in terms of quality, impact and environment. More details can be found here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/main/about/ref>

Income from research grants and contracts amounted to £15.3 million in 2015/16. The majority of The Open University's research funding is from HEFCE, with the SFC allocating University Innovation funding to The Open University in Scotland.

The Open University has two collaborative research centres in Scotland with the University of Edinburgh (Innogen) and the University of Stirling (the Institute for Social Marketing). It also has over 35 research partnerships with other Scottish universities. In 2016 The Open University in Scotland joined the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR); a strategic collaboration between 13 of Scotland's universities and the Scottish police service.

The Open University has four priority research areas aimed at addressing 21st century global challenges and promoting social justice:

- Citizenship and Governance
- Space
- International Development
- Technology Enhanced Learning

To promote these priority research areas, The Open University in Scotland held a two day public engagement event on space at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh In August 2016, and hosted a seminar "The Sustainable Development Goals and Scotland: responding to a universal agenda" held in Edinburgh in October 2016, in partnership with NIDOS and SCVO. We will continue to raise the profile of the University's research over the period of this outcome agreement, 2017-20 and communicate the benefits it brings to Scotland.

The Open University offers research degrees on a full-time and part-time basis. Students can study a PhD, MPhil Master of Research (MRes) full-time or part-time; the Doctorate in Education (EdD) is a part-time degree. Our research students are also supported through the University's Virtual Research Environment.

Open Research Online (ORO) is The Open University's repository of over 30,000 research publications and other research outputs. It is an Open Access resource that can be searched and browsed freely by members of the public. The University has also recently introduced the Scholarship Platform for internal staff to share learning and teaching research and scholarship activity.

The University has introduced the status of Honorary Associate which enables OU Associate Lecturers, who wish to undertake research in collaboration with the OU, to apply to a faculty or institute, similar to Visiting Academic status. This scheme allows the research of associate lecturers in Scotland to be recognised and will strengthen our academic community.

Equality and diversity

The Open University is strongly committed to the advancement and promotion of the careers of women in STEM subject areas. The OU's Institutional Athena SWAN bronze award was renewed in April 2016. The Open University was also successful in achieving the Departmental Bronze awards for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, the School of Computing and Communications, the School of Engineering and Innovation and the Department of Life, Health and Chemical Sciences. The School of Physical Sciences has recently been awarded a Departmental Silver Award.

The School of Physical Sciences has also been awarded the JUNO Practitioner status. This award recognises actions that demonstrate commitment to addressing the under-representation of women, specifically in subjects allied to physics.

Learning Development activity

The Open University in Scotland conducts and co-ordinates a broad range of practice based research and scholarship initiatives which impact on pedagogic practice institutionally and across the HE sector. This work leads to the development of innovative and enhanced student support and pedagogic practices, informs staff development, and changes to mainstream practices in learning and teaching. Key thematic areas of focus include: supported pathways into higher education; understanding student transitions for the part-time, distance learner; open educational practice; and learning and teaching partnerships in higher education.

Through the Quality Enhancement Framework the Open University in Scotland engages with the Enhancement Theme, managed by QAA Scotland. The 2014-2017 Enhancement Theme of Student Transitions has been a significant catalyst for learning and teaching research and scholarship linked to institutional enhancement initiatives. We have been committed to developing our understanding of the nature of transitions into, through and out of HE. In particular our Enhancement Theme activities have committed our attention to investigating, evidencing and enhancing our understanding of key transition points in OU learning journeys and the support students require to navigate these junctures, focusing on the particularities of part-time, mature, distance and online learning, and guided by the principle that our students go through 'multiple and concurrent' transitions. Our thematic areas of focus over the three years of the Enhancement Theme are: conceptual understanding of transition; recognising multiple entrance and exit points in higher education; diversity of learners; the transition from informal to formal learning and supporting staff to support students.

Work undertaken in the early part of the Theme has ensured our enhancement activity is rooted in scholarship, which supports the broader evaluation of OU in Scotland activities. We engage with a range of quality enhancement, learning and teaching, and practitioner networks in disseminating our research and scholarship in this area and in the final part of the current Enhancement Theme are focused on a number of outputs, both student facing and to be shared with the sector. In turn this work shapes a culture of learning enhancement within The Open University in Scotland, evident in all-staff seminars, and directly informing teaching staff

professional development. This commitment to ensuring that this evidence feeds through into practice that supports our students in Scotland: particularly students who are new to HE; those moving from informal to formal learning; those studying in the workplace; and students articulating from college to university. This focus on generating evidence and supporting innovation will continue with the new Enhancement Theme.

SFC Priority 4: Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy

We aim to expand The Open University in Scotland's engagement with employers, trades unions and community organisations and in doing so enhance university-industry collaboration.

With over 70% of our students in work while they study with us, The OU in Scotland occupies a unique place in terms of developing the Scottish workforce. The OU's expertise at supporting learners without the need to attend a campus means that employers can be offered high quality, flexible work based learning solutions regardless of where the workplace is located in Scotland.

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, appropriate to the learning needs of the organisation. From bite-sized CPD workshops to the shaping of specific qualifications, we are open and responsive to changing employer needs and ensuring that our students can make a meaningful impact on the Scottish economy and society. Day workshops, with a specific skills focus encouraging reflective practice have become particularly popular as well as a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities that include specific and relevant work related curriculum. The increasing use of open educational resources in the workplace has also allowed experimentation using that methodology to support learning.

In recent years we have been able to expand our repertoire of approaches to work based learning and the sectors that can be supported: this is a core part of our work in Scotland. Over the period of this outcome agreement, we will be taking forward a range of work-based initiatives:

- Collaborating with Skills Development Scotland to explore the potential to contribute to the development of apprenticeship models, looking at flexible pathways to apprenticeships via part-time and distance learning study.
- Developing a relevant curriculum that works: for employees; for employers; for sectors; for Scottish society
- Making experience count i.e. accrediting work-based learning
- Strengthening learning communities and building community capacity and assets
- Skills utilisation and learning transfer
- Developing approaches to partnership and engagement: with colleges; with employers; with unions
- Experiment with pedagogic models to develop innovative approaches around the learning organisation (a systemic approach to organisational learning and development)
- Engaging pro-actively with Scottish Government economic priority sectors in Scotland
- Provide a more integrated and seamless range of support around careers and employability

We will maintain our strategic partnership with the STUC and Scottish Union Learning, The OU in Scotland will continue to build on our community outreach model to offer higher education to groups in the workplace in partnership with unions. Typically the participants are non- traditional learners. We offer short modules, non-accredited workshop-based courses and in a smaller number of instances structured pathways through to degrees or intermediate qualifications. Through this work we are exploring innovative tri-partite models of employer/union/university partnership.

We work in partnership with the Scottish Government to deliver their priorities in health, social care and education. We have a well-developed work based learning curriculum that enables students to access professional programmes in nursing and social work. The flexible nature of the OU offer means that students are often attracted to a distance learning route who would not be able to access a mainstream professional campus based programme. We are currently investigating how The Open University might support the development of the workforce required to deliver Scottish Government's plans to increase Early Learning and Childcare entitlement. We are also working with the Scottish Childminders Association to develop bespoke learning pathways for the sector.

Widening access, partnership and sustainability are additional crosscutting themes, which inform all these activities. Through multiple initiatives across the public and private sectors, we are increasing the range of opportunities for participation in workplace learning and systematically collecting and disseminating evidence of good practice.

Our report [Work-based Learning: A baseline study of work-based learning at undergraduate level in Scotland](#) is available on The OU in Scotland's website. Our online [Work and Learning Evidence Hub](#) is also available for anyone involved managing and developing learning in the workplace. The hub encourages evidence sharing around the themes of work-based learning and enables users to discuss and evaluate ideas, issues and good practice.

Delivering University Innovation Fund (UIF) outcomes

The Open University in Scotland utilises the UIF Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council to maintain its knowledge exchange and innovation activities. In 2017/18, we will continue to support a programme of cultural and public engagement, key sector seminars & lectures, scoping of a number of potential outcomes as well as our continued production of free learning resources through the [OpenLearn](#) website, [iTunesU](#), the [OU channel on YouTube](#), the [OpenScience Laboratory](#) and [FutureLearn](#). We aim to deliver an open educational resource for Scots language for learning facilitators by the end of 2017.

We will engage with and develop activity to support the National Outcomes identified in relation to the Outcome Grant:

Outcome 1: Demand Stimulation

- The Open University is developing training to enhance academic engagement in knowledge exchange
- Further enhancing our outreach work with employers in the Dumfries & Galloway region, with a particular focus on healthcare and the opportunities for innovation presented by research-practice interface developing around the Crichton Care Campus (the OU having the lead institutional role amongst the academic partners) and the OU's own Priority Research Area (PRA): Health & Wellbeing.

- Continuing discussions with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), in particular with their University Engagement Manager, around supporting sustainable economic development within Highlands and Islands both at an individual institutional level and in collaboration with other HEIs.
- Tendering to increase the number of Scottish Union Learning skills workshops we offer to a range of employers, increasing the demand in business for this university service

Outcome 2: Commercialisation

- We will continue to work with Interface, offering Open University expertise where appropriate
- We will engage with template contracts where commercialisation occurs

Outcome 3: Greater Innovation

- The Open University is developing training to enhance academic engagement in knowledge exchange and improve professional development for Enterprise and Innovation (E&I) officers
- We will re-engage more fully with [University Technology](#) for processes and products developed by OU researchers
- We will work towards a strategic engagement plan for Scotland in our each of our Strategic Research Areas (SRAs):
 - Space
 - Citizenship and governance
 - International development
 - Technology enhanced learning

Outcome 4 – Entrepreneurialism.

- We have augmented our careers service resource in Scotland to include a focus on promoting entrepreneurialism in students, including more systematic engagement with Scottish Institute for Enterprise and the Enterprise Campus
- We will complete the review and collating of our entrepreneurship resources, currently focused on the popular [Rural Entrepreneurship](#) open educational resource, on [OpenLearn](#)

Outcome 5 – Internationalisation

- We will continue to support the development of open educational resources and informal learning activities to have impact at both a national and international level
- Supporting the University's 'Brexit Project' to develop written articles, audio and audio-visual pieces as a prompt to examine Brexit's relationship with the different situations and experiences of the UK and Ireland's nations and regions, industrial sectors and social groups, and to encourage radical speculation on its consequences.

Outcome 6 – Inclusive growth and social impact.

- Continue to develop our relationships with third sector organisations developing capacity, skills and impact via the application of new research and learning from global contexts and in leadership.
- Building on work from 2016/17, continue to develop our work on dementia to help support carers, communities and workplaces better support people who are living with the condition to lead more fulfilled lives.
- Run an extensive range of sector events throughout Scotland, drawing on the national and international expertise of the OU to engage policy makers, employers and the workforce in key issues. We will continue to promote our collaborative model of co-delivered events with e.g. third sector and community organisations.

Outcome 7 – Equality & Diversity

- We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision for an inclusive university community.
- We will ensure our partners have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote and advance equality of opportunity, promote and foster good relations and subscribe to the vision and principles of our [equality scheme](#)

Cultural engagement

As part of its cultural engagement programme, The OU in Scotland supports a number of lectures and events at book festivals, arts festivals and science festivals across Scotland with our 'flagship' event being the Edinburgh International Book Festival where we have developed a strong partnership over a number of years.

Our cultural engagement programme in Scotland complements our ambition of delivering journeys from informal to formal learning as we deliver or support events which are relevant to our curriculum or BBC collaborations and which can provide a pathway to particular modules/qualifications. Over the period of this outcome agreement we will align our cultural engagement programme to our wider outcomes and strategy, ensuring a wide geographical spread and attracting diverse audiences.

Entrepreneurship

The Open University offers a range of taught postgraduate courses and research degrees in entrepreneurship and innovation.

The OU in Scotland's open educational resource: [Rural entrepreneurship in Scotland](#) is freely available for anyone interested in starting their own business in a rural or remote environment. Over the period of this outcome agreement we are looking to build on constructive feedback from users to revise this resource to support the development of broader and more generic entrepreneurial skills.

Undergraduate skills places

As discussed with our Outcome Agreement Manager, The Open University in Scotland has deferred the allocation of these places to 2017/18.

SFC Priority 5: High-performing institutions – a coherent system of high-performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements

We aim to grow income from alternative sources with a focus on value to students and a sustainable financial position. We will ensure compliance with legislation of the Scottish Parliament which relates to higher education.

Good governance

The Council is The Open University's governing body for all its operations across the UK including The Open University in Scotland. It has a membership of 25 which includes a majority of external members co-opted for their experience and expertise in line with the requirements of [Scottish Code of Good HE Governance](#), the Vice-Chancellor, five members of the Senate, the President of the Open University Students Association and one other student, two Associate Lecturers and one member of the non-academic staff. Much of the detailed business of the Council is conducted through its specialist committees, which advise the Council on Audit, Development (fundraising), Estates, Finance, Membership, Remuneration, Staff Strategy, and Strategy, Policy and Resources (joint with the Senate). The Council is chaired by the Pro-Chancellor and has the ultimate authority within the OU but has to respect the views of the Senate in academic matters.

The Senate, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, is the academic authority of the University which, subject to the powers reserved for the Council, is responsible for promoting the academic work of the University in teaching, learning, and research and enterprise. The Senate has an academic majority with fifty-seven representatives of the academic and research staff. It comprises ex-officio members such as the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and some other officers, seven Associate Lecturers, six students and 14 academic-related staff. There are in addition a number of co-opted places, one of which is held by the Director of The OU in Scotland.

The Open University is a unique institution, which delivers teaching in all four nations of the UK and is funded by the governments in Scotland, England and Wales. As such, it has governance structures which recognise and work within the increasingly diverse policy contexts of each nation. The Director of The OU in Scotland acts as the Vice-Chancellor's Delegate in Scotland and is responsible for the provision of services to students based in Scotland.

The Open University in Scotland convenes two committees as part of its consultative structure: the Scottish Committee and the Scottish Working Committee. Both committees include representation from students and academics, as well as non-academic staff representatives. The Scottish Committee meets once a year and the Scottish Working Committee meets twice a year.

Students as stakeholders

The Open University in Scotland strongly believes that the student body, as a key stakeholder, should be represented formally on the University's governing bodies

and that its views and concerns are acknowledged. Our charter states that there must be an organisation of students of the University, and that the President of The Open University Students' Association (OUSA) is an ex officio member of the University's Council. In addition, OUSA elects a further member to Council and appoints six students to Senate. OUSA in Scotland has an Assembly with the power to act autonomously in relation to those issues affecting students in Scotland. OU students in Scotland also elect a member to OUSA's Central Executive Committee to represent the interests of Scottish domiciled students and to participate in institutional decision-making.

The Open University also holds consultative meetings with students across the UK. In Scotland, students, staff and Associate Lecturers are represented on the Scottish Committee and the Scottish Working Committee.

The University's student consultative structure makes use of online forums and meetings to enable consultation with students on a range of topics. It acts alongside the University governance structure, as detailed above. Introduced by the University and the Students Association, the forums enable consultation on OU strategy, policy and other developments to take place virtually as and when necessary rather than be restricted to fixed dates in the year. Their membership consists of a mix of Students Association representatives, individual student volunteers and staff. There is also an online Scottish Consultative Forum in order to consult students in Scotland on a range of issues.

Each student support team (SST) has its own student consultative online forum to consider aspects of provision within its curriculum area, and there are separate forums for international, Open Degree and Postgraduate research students.

The Open University's Student Charter, www.open.ac.uk/students/charter, was developed by the University and OUSA. It sets out what the responsibilities are and what staff and students can expect of each other. We review this Charter every year to ensure it reflects our current needs and challenges, while continuing to support the key aim of helping all our students to succeed.

Financial sustainability

The Open University has a well-developed financial strategy, reviewed annually by the Finance Committee that specifies parameters for borrowings, net current assets and surpluses. Each year the starting point of the annual budgeting process is the maintenance of the University's financial sustainability over both the short-term and the long-term. The annual recurrent teaching grant from the Scottish Funding Council contributes to the University's overall income and its financial condition.

Further information on The Open University's financial position is available in our audited financial statements which can be found at www.open.ac.uk/foi/main/expenditures.

Philanthropic giving

The OU in Scotland works closely with colleagues from University's Development Office to raise the profile of the University in strategic networks and explore the potential for more philanthropic giving from Scotland for specific projects.

As The Open University approaches its 50th anniversary in 2019, we have

launched a new fundraising campaign to support our founding vision of education being open to all. [Open up the future](#) aims to raise at least £50 million by 2019 for projects grouped under four pillars, which broadly represent the University's mission and strategic priorities:

- Open up minds
- Open up opportunity
- Open up thinking
- Open up lives

Environmental sustainability

The Open University is committed to the principles of sustainability and sustainable development. By its very nature distance learning is inherently more sustainable than residential HE institutions and the University strives to achieve even higher standards.

The Open University in Scotland complied with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and submitted its Climate Change report to the Scottish Government in November 2016. This report is required annually.

The University has undertaken to reduce its carbon emissions by 36% by 2020 against the 2005 baseline. The University has introduced the Go Green programme which aims to contribute a 5% reduction year on year to work towards this target over the next few years.

Go Green is a University wide programme to reduce our impact on the environment. It aims to achieve environmental and financial savings across the University by empowering staff to take action on energy, waste, water and travel. The Go Green programme is intended to be an integral part of staff behaviours in the future to enable the University to manage its energy needs and energy costs.

The Open University is a member of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and liaises in Scotland with EAUC-Scotland.

Equality and diversity requirements

The Open University's Equality Scheme for 2016-20 is available on the OU website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives>. The scheme includes our equality objectives and action plans, our annual report and monitoring statistics.

We are creating an inclusive university community and a society:

- where people are treated with dignity and respect
- where inequalities are challenged and
- where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances

so that everyone can achieve their potential.

The Open University participates in a number of equality charter marks, benchmarking activities and awards to support our agenda with regard to protected equality characteristics including:

- [Athena SWAN Charter](#)
- [Disability Standard](#)
- [Stonewall Workplace Equality Index](#)

In January 2017, it was announced that The Open University had earned a place in the prestigious Stonewall Top 100 Employers for the first time. The OU is now ranked as the 93rd best place to work in Britain - a rise of 37 places on the 2016 Index, and testament to its innovative efforts to create an inclusive workplace.

- [Carer Positive](#)
In 2015, The Open University was awarded the Carer Positive (Engaged) status; an award operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. We are now working towards gaining the Carer Positive (Established) status by June 2017.
- Public Sector Equality Duty – as required by the specific duties for Scotland, The Open University in Scotland published its Public Sector Equality Duty report at the end of April 2017.

An equality impact assessment of this outcome agreement has been undertaken and will be made available on the University's Equality and Diversity website.

Measure of progress	2015-16 Baseline		Milestone	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Target
	Baseline %	Baseline FTE where applicable				
Priority 1: Widening access – learning that is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds						
The proportion of new undergraduates resident in Scotland articulating from college to degree level study with advanced standing	3.4%	76 FTE		3.8%	3.9%	4%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from the 20% most deprived backgrounds (SIMD 2016)	16.4%	366 FTE		16.6	17	18%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from the 40% most deprived backgrounds (SIMD 2016)	36%	805 FTE		36.3	36.8	38%
The number of Schools to Higher Education Programme (SHEP) involved in the OU's Young Applicants in Schools Scheme	20			20	22	25
The proportion of entrants in the OU's Young Applicants in Schools Scheme from the 40% most deprived backgrounds (SIMD 2016)	18%	30 FTE		20%	25%	25%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from different protected characteristic groups:			Institutional gender action plan July 2017.			
Male	41%					
21 and over	85.4%					
Under 21	14.6%					
Disability declared	16%					
BME	5%					
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from care experience backgrounds	0.7%	15 FTE	Institutional Corporate Parenting Plan 2018	0.7%	0.8%	1%

Measure of progress	2015-16 Baseline	Milestone	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Target
Priority 2: High quality learning and teaching – an outstanding system of learning that is accessible and diverse where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference					
The proportion of new undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity	59.5% (2014/15)		59.5%	60%	60%
The proportion of new undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity by SIMD20 (SIMD 2016)	55.4% (2014/15)		TBC	TBC	TBC
The proportion of continuing undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity	67.5% (2014/15)		67.5%	68%	68%
The headcount proportion of new undergraduate degree students resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year.	58.9% (2014/15)		59%	60%	62%
The headcount proportion of new undergraduate degree students resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year by SIMD20	57.5% (2014/15)		TBC	TBC	TBC
The proportion of OU students resident in Scotland satisfied with overall quality of their study experience in the National Student Survey	91%	Annual National Student Survey result	≥ 90%	≥ 90%	≥ 90%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland to STEM modules	37.2% 839 FTE		37%	38%	40%
The proportion of qualified students who report positive career development outcomes through their study with the OU (UK)	79%		80%	83%	85%

Measure of progress	2015-16 Baseline	Milestone	2019-20 Target
Priority 3: World-leading research – world-leading universities, nationally and internationally connected with a global reputation for their research <i>The SFC does not fund The Open University in Scotland for research.</i>			
Priority 4: Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy			
The number of SFC Innovation vouchers (IVs), Follow-on IVs and H2020 IVs	0		0
Individual University Innovation Fund progress measures	See separate report submitted January 2017		
Priority 5: High-performing institutions – a coherent system of high-performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements			
Carbon emissions <i>This target is for the entire Open University body and not just the offices in Scotland.</i>	15378 tCO ₂ e (2005/06)	Annual Public Body Climate Change Report	36% reduction
Ensure compliance with legislation of the Scottish Parliament which relates to higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · OU complies with HE Governance legislation (Ongoing) · Public Sector Equalities Duty, specific reporting duties for Scotland (April 2017) · British Sign Language plan (October 2018) · Care Experienced Students Plan (July 2018) · Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report submitted to Scottish Government (30 Nov 2017) 		



Outcome Agreement between The Open University in Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2017-18

On behalf of The Open University in Scotland:

Signed:

Print name: Susan Stewart

Position: Director

Date: 24/07/17

Signed:

Print name: Professor William Stevely

Position: Chair's Depute in Scotland

Date: 25/07/17

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: John Kemp

Position: Interim Chief Executive

Date: 26 July 2017