University of the West of Scotland

University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is Scotland’s largest modern university but has origins dating back over 100 years. Its programmes have been designed to serve the needs of business, commerce and the public sector, with a broad range of vocational courses developed in conjunction with industry professionals.

The University offers study from degree to postgraduate and PhD levels, as well as providing an extensive range of part-time and continuing professional development options. The wide-ranging portfolio encompasses business, computing, engineering, health, science, sport, creative industries, education and social sciences. UWS also has a well-established track record in applied research and consultancy services to industry, with a particular focus on small-to-medium-sized enterprises.

To provide the best possible learning environments for students, a £200 million investment programme is underway, which has already delivered a stunning new £81 million campus, which opened in Ayr in August 2011. The campus houses performance, broadcasting and editing facilities as well as state-of-the-art nursing skills and training labs.

Key facts

Ongoing £200 million investment programme delivering a new campus in Ayr, new student residences in Paisley and Ayr, and enhanced teaching and learning facilities across all University sites.

Strong vocational focus with close ties to industry and the professions for course development and accreditation.

First UK institution recognised by Macromedia, Microsoft and Cisco and the first CIW (Certified Internet Web Professional) Authorised Academic Partner outside the US.

With campuses across the West of Scotland in Ayr, Dumfries, Hamilton and Paisley, the University occupies an integral position in Scottish higher education and is perceived as a dynamic and innovative institution.
FACULTIES AND FOCUS

University of the West of Scotland’s three faculties are Business & Creative Industries; Education, Health & Social Sciences; and Science & Technology. These are home to eight academic schools: Business; Computing; Creative & Cultural Industries; Education; Engineering; Health, Nursing & Midwifery; Science; and Social Sciences. Establishment of the faculty structure has enabled cross-disciplinary collaboration in teaching and research and provided the structure for niche programme development in a number of disciplines such as health, sport, education and creative industries.

Programmes are offered on a flexible learning basis, with opportunities for full-time, part-time and online study. The University’s recognition of prior learning and experience provides, for many, opportunities for advanced entry to study. Across the faculties, the University’s Entrepreneurs in Residence initiative develops a culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise, with students and staff having access to experienced business professionals.

PARTNERSHIPS

UWS staff are involved in an advisory capacity with a wide selection of companies and professional bodies including the Scottish Government, financial institutions and the Olympics committees. Many of the University’s programmes enjoy accreditation and recognition from relevant organisations:

- In 2010, Skillset, the sector skills council for creative media, accredited UWS with Creative Media Academy status.
- In 2007, the University’s BSc Midwifery programme was joint first in the UK to receive UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation.
- UWS postgraduate computing programmes incorporate materials from sector leaders including SAP and Oracle.

UWS has a growing international community, with around 1,400 international students studying across the University campuses from the US, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, China and many others. The University has also established links with over 100 educational partners worldwide and International Memoranda of Understanding have been signed creating new opportunities for collaboration in teaching and research.

The University offers exchange in the EU through the ERASMUS scheme. A dedicated international advisory team supports all overseas students at the University.

RESEARCH STRENGTHS

Cementing UWS’s reputation for academic achievement, the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise saw the University awarded the highest possible rating of 4* in six areas, and ‘International Excellence’ in a further seven.

Notable research successes include:

- £1 million European Commission-funded project to introduce international accounting standards to Azerbaijan.
- Collaboration by the University’s Schools of Health, Nursing & Midwifery, Social Sciences and Science to study food production and nutrient deficiency in mothers and children in Malawi, under the UK Government’s Joint Environment and Human Health Programme.
- Collaboration by the Thin Film Centre to aid development of an ultra-hard, high-performance coating that can mitigate corrosion and erosion of interior pipe surfaces.
- Collaboration with the Welsh Rugby Union on coaching methods in rugby union, highlighting the need for different position-specific agility and speed training to boost performance.

The University’s Innovation and Research Office develops commercial activity and provides expertise and direct routes to technological collaboration, research expertise and university facilities. UWS is one of the most active institutions in Scotland in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships successfully assisting companies across the West of Scotland in business and product development activities.

EMPLOYABILITY

University of the West of Scotland has a strong focus on vocational education and training and many courses include opportunities for practical work placement and experience in industry. Students’ academic studies are supplemented by input from experts in a wide range of industries, through guest lectures and practical demonstrations. A pan-European network of over 400 companies means UWS students have benefited from working with organisations such as Volkswagen, BBC, Peugeot, British Airways, IBM, Sony, Siemens and GlaxoSmithKline. Together this gives the University’s students an added insight into the world of work and equips them for industry.

www.uws.ac.uk