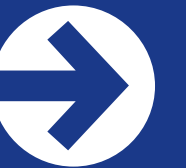


Universities
Scotland



ACCESS ALL AREAS

- 1 NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL
- 2 SECONDARY SCHOOL
- 4 SENIOR PHASE
- 6 COLLEGES & ARTICULATION
- 8 MATURE LEARNERS



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ACCESS ALL AREAS CONTENTS PAGE

A note about the structure of this report

This report demonstrates the range of widening access initiatives delivered by Scotland's higher education institutions (HEIs)¹. To our knowledge, this is not available in one place anywhere else. Even running to 70 pages of examples of widening access programmes and projects this report does not capture everything that Scotland's universities are doing. There is much more we simply did not have the space to capture.

This report has been structured according to the journey a learner might take en route to university, starting with nursery and primary school, through secondary school, and potentially through college and the world of work. No two learners are the same and there are many possible paths through life and learning as there are many different routes into university. Universities take a holistic approach, running initiatives to widen access and to support people into higher education whatever an individual's stage of life, from five years of age to eighty-five, and whatever a person's circumstances.

For the purposes of this report widening access initiatives are grouped together according to stages along the learner journey. There is a section focussed on projects that work with nursery and primary school age pupils and a separate section for initiatives aimed at secondary school pupils or

college leavers and so on. Deprivation is a proven barrier to higher education and, as you would expect, many of the projects to widen access are focussed according to various measures of deprivation. However, universities go beyond this, looking to other under-represented groups and those with »protected characteristics«² whether it is creating opportunities for mature students, providing additional support for care leavers, looking to balance the gender profile studying certain subjects and widening access in remote and rural areas of Scotland.

Widening access is a complex task and requires a joined-up approach across many partners including schools, colleges, universities, parents and Government. It is part of a broader effort across Scotland to address social and economic inequalities. Universities are an important actor in this mix and they are committed and passionate about the agenda, but they are only one of the actors.

To widen access to university successfully it is necessary to raise aspirations, to raise attainment, to offer support and guidance, to create alternative routes in, to create second chances, to be highly targeted in approach and to be inclusive. You will find examples of all of the above, often working in partnership with others, in these pages.

01) The terms "university and "universities" may be used as short-hand throughout the report. It should be understood to mean university and higher education institution.

02) Equality Act 2010

ACCESS ALL AREAS FOREWORD



Professor Pete Downes OBE
Convener, Universities Scotland

I am enormously proud to present ‘Access All Areas’, a sample of the action which the university sector is taking to promote wide access to higher education, and to ensure that learners from all backgrounds are supported to succeed in their studies.

I have a strong personal commitment to promoting wide access to higher education. Like many of my fellow Principals, I have personal experience of the transformative power of higher education to open up possibilities which are beyond the imagining of our parents’ generation.

As the first in my family to progress to higher education, I feel humbled by the wealth of opportunity which this has given me to work at the leading edge of science and to build bridges between university and industry for the promotion of health. I know that my fellow university leaders all share a keen personal understanding of the power of higher education to transform lives, and to unlock individuals’ potential to offer the full benefit of their talents to society. That is why each of us is firmly committed to ensuring that our institutions are accessible simply on the basis of talent, regardless of students’ backgrounds. ➔

It takes a great deal of evidence-based and innovative work to ensure that we are promoting aspiration among learners who have the talent to succeed in higher education, but whose circumstances render them less well-qualified or less likely to apply for a place at university. We can only set out a sample of this work in *'Access All Areas'*, but I am excited to see so much going on. The university sector's action starts right from the earliest years, with children from pre-school age onwards. We're deeply engaged with schools and colleges to promote aspiration and pathways to university, and we are collaborating to ensure that we have effective ways of recognising and nurturing talent, for instance through summer schools and 'contextual' admissions policies which recognise the challenging backgrounds which some learners are progressing from. We're working hard to ensure that the retention in higher education of learners from challenged backgrounds is at least equal to that of their more privileged peers, and we're ensuring that our doors are open to lifelong learners as they learn and

re-skill for the new challenges and opportunities which they face. The university sector cannot on its own address the deep social, economic and cultural challenges which still hold back too many of our people from realising their full potential. That is a task which will take concerted action by every enterprise and agency which can promote our nation's wellbeing. It is a long-term task whose success will be seen in the transformation of the opportunities enjoyed by successive generations. But we in the university sector are committed to doing everything we can to enable individuals from all backgrounds to realise the opportunities which higher education offers to transform the possibilities which are open to them. Our nation and our people deserves this.



Professor Pete Downes OBE, Convener, Universities Scotland

ACCESS ALL AREAS INTRODUCTION

Every one of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions is committed to widening access³ to higher education.

Creating opportunities is central to the mission of our universities. Many of the Principals currently serving in Scotland are themselves the first in their family to benefit from a higher education so this is an agenda with which they can identify both personally and professionally. To reinforce that commitment and signal their intent to work to deliver a greater pace of change, every HEI in Scotland signed up to the following commitment in the autumn of 2012:»University should be equally open to any learner with the appropriate academic potential to benefit, regardless of their social or economic circumstances. It is of equal importance that those learners are properly supported to complete their studies successfully and fulfil their potential.«

»Each university is able to point to its own distinctive and considerable achievements already made in widening access and retention and each is committed to delivering further progress. Principals share the determination that universities should play the fullest role possible in the pursuit of these goals, working in partnership with schools, colleges and others.«

Though this collective statement may be relatively new, every institution in Scotland has a longstanding commitment to widening access. Some of the initiatives run by universities, and highlighted in these pages, have been running successfully for 20 years or more. Other initiatives showcased in Access All Areas are new to the current academic year as institutions look to step up their efforts, address new challenges, or pilot a new and innovative approach.

Progress has been made

Progress has been made to widen access to higher education in Scotland at an institutional and sector level. More students are entering university from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds and through non-traditional entry routes now than ever before.

Over the last seven years there has been an 11 per cent increase in the number of students at university who are drawn from areas identified as being in the most deprived neighbourhoods according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD – 20⁴). That is more than two thousand additional students from SIMD20 backgrounds compared to 2004/05.

Such progress comes before, and in addition to, the hundreds of additional students from SIMD20 and SIMD40 backgrounds who will take up places at universities across Scotland from academic year 2013/14 due to the increase in places specifically created and ring-fenced for them. Significant progress has also been made in increasing the number of non-traditional entry routes into university, including articulation from college straight into the second or third year of university, and the number of students who use those routes. More than 16,000 students have used this alternative route into higher education over the last five years. Again, we can expect to see a greater rate of progress

from 2015 onwards as students taking up additional articulation places start moving from college into university.

Institutions are also seeing progress with new initiatives they have just launched as part of their individual strategies to widen access. The University of Glasgow has recently seen the number of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds accepted on medical degrees almost double over the last year. There have also been increases in applicants from SIMD40 neighbourhoods to the University's law and veterinary medicine programmes. This is due to the University's participation in REACH, a national programme focussed on widening access to the professions.

Glasgow Caledonian University has also seen a significant rise in the number of students it admits from disadvantaged backgrounds; progress which it attribute entirely to a new approach to working with senior pupils in partner secondary schools. Such close engagement has been possible because the University recently put a new Schools and Colleges Engagement and Transition Team in place. Similar success stories, both new and longstanding, can be found across the entire sector. ➔

04) SIMD 20 and 40 are terms used by the Scottish Government's SIMD and refer to neighbourhoods in the most deprived two quintiles in Scotland.

🔗 Building up the evidence base

Understanding what works in widening access is a difficult task. It can be very difficult to establish causality between an initiative and an outcome:

»An important recurring theme in the literature is the difficulty of disentangling the impacts of individual interventions, given that multiple factors and activities are influencing students' choices and success«. ⁵

»Individual young people, regardless of their postcodes, make individual decisions which may reflect aspects of their lives which have nothing to do with widening access initiatives, and even when they do decide to enter university, we can never be sure which element of their preparation programme – the lectures, the visits, the preparation in interview techniques, the student mentor, talking with their parents, or even peer pressure from colleagues on the programme – contributed to that decision«. ⁶

However the evidence base is growing. Two recent developments have enhanced the evidence base available to managers and practitioners in the sector. Universities Scotland recently commissioned a research project into what works with a view to producing a set of recommendations which universities can act upon. This is being overseen by a short-life working group of people drawn from the higher education sector who are united by a shared interest in widening access including representation from NUS Scotland. This work is still in progress but it is the intention to produce the recommendations before the end of the calendar year.

Another helpful development in this area has been the publication in summer 2013 of a literature review into widening participation, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Office for Fair Access (OFFA). ⁷

Both sources should help inform the approach that universities, and others, take in further developing an effective and evidence-based set of widening access interventions. This report has also drawn on them. Extracts from the evidence base are referred to where relevant in each section.

05) Riddell, S. et al (2013) *Widening Access to Higher Education. Does Anyone Know What Works*, p.41

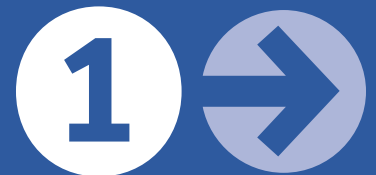
06) Riddell, S. et al (2013), p.47

07) HEFCE and OFFA (2013) *Arc Network Literature Review of research into widening participation to higher education*.

»Liam was selected to narrate part
of the story and was so proud ...

... HE NOW PUTS HIMSELF FORWARD
MUCH MORE FOR READING OR
ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN CLASS.«⁸

ACCESS INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON YOUNG CHILDREN
NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE



THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR FOCUSING ON **YOUNG CHILDREN**

- »It is generally accepted that approaches to widening participation need to **START EARLY** in a student's educational life to be effective, and **ENGAGE** young people at different stages of their educational journey.«⁹
- »**STARTING YOUNG:** laying the foundations ... initiatives which do not expect instant results in terms of meeting targets for widening participation, but which **LAY FOUNDATIONS** for the future.«¹⁰

08) Alan Digweed, teacher at Haghill Park Primary quoted in Inspiring Ambition: Caledonian Club. Glasgow Caledonian University.

09) HEFCE (2013) Literature review of research into widening participation to higher education, p.30

10) Riddell, S. et al (2013) Widening Access to Higher Education. Does Anyone Know What Works?, p.42 – 43

Glasgow Caledonian University – Caledonian Club

An expansive model of engagement

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY

➔ The *Caledonian Club* was established in 2008 to work with young people and families in **deprived areas** of Glasgow to **raise educational** aspirations and to open the University to the community. It works in five communities in Glasgow and is more expansive than traditional secondary school initiatives in that **engagement commences at pre-school age in nursery school and continuing through to school leaving age**. The focus on early years is in line with the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation to the Scottish Government to invest in early years and education to improve health and wellbeing. Activities at nursery and primary school are focussed on topics linked to the Curriculum of Excellence and are tailored to individual schools. The Club does not solely focus on progression to higher education but is concerned with **promoting positive post-school destinations** for all pupils and in particular lifelong learning.



Subject shadowing in S6, alongside mentoring for pupils applying to Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), helps with recruitment of the MD20 group and with future retention of that group when they are studying in GCU. Most recently, the Caledonian Club was **extended to the new London campus of Glasgow Caledonian**. So far the *Caledonian Club* has engaged with over seven thousand pupil mem-

bers, over two thousand parents, and recruited over four hundred student mentors. The Club has a longitudinal evaluation component, tracking the journey of its young people through the *Caledonian Club* to 2030; **evaluating their numeracy, literacy and communication skills** as well as levels of **self-confidence and self-esteem**. Although the numbers are small at the current time,

intermediate indicators suggest not only are young people more likely to go on to higher education having been in the Club, they are more likely to stay on their course. In 2010, the Club was recognised as **a national example of best practice**, winning the Times Higher Education UK Widening Participation Initiative of the Year and the Herald Scottish Education Initiative of the Year.

Children's University at the University of Strathclyde

Inspiring a new generation

UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE will award certificates to pupils as **young as seven** as it launches Scotland's first *Children's University* in partnership with Glasgow City Council. In a first for Scotland, Strathclyde will provide a new and innovative way for children aged seven to 14 to make the most of their abilities and interests and to experience further and higher education.

Children who volunteer for the scheme will be given **access to special lectures and conducted visits** to the University, galleries and museums outside normal school hours. The children will gain stamps in their Passport to Learning and collect credits which are converted into awards at bronze, silver and gold levels.

The University of Strathclyde's Barony Hall will host an official graduation ceremony in February next year to celebrate the achievements of the first set of pupils to pass through the *Children's University*. Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Principal of the University of Strathclyde and Chancellor of the *Children's University* for Scotland, said: »We are committed to providing access to education for all people, irrespective of their background and this scheme is a tremendous way to **throw open the doors of learning** and help to inspire a new generation – we look forward to welcoming them to Strathclyde.«

St Mungo's Academy is the first Glasgow school to join the programme with **over 40 enthusiastic first year**

pupils collecting credits for taking part in a wide range of out-of-school-hours learning activities. In addition to the activities at Strathclyde, a number of city venues will be validated as public learning destinations with Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum the first to join the *Children's University*.


The ScottishPower Foundation is supporting the development and expansion of the *Children's University* programme across Scotland. Queen Margaret University Edinburgh is also set to run the *Children's University* in the East of Scotland.



CREDIT: Children's University

Aspire at the University of St Andrews

Creating positive experiences

ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY  takes the view that **aspirations are borne out of positive experiences**. The *Aspire Programme* works with pupils in primary schools throughout Fife specifically focussing on areas of **social and economic disadvantage**. The programme delivers positive experiences involving visits to the University and also school activities that will raise their aspirations and cause them to **think about university**.

A number of activities are delivered as part of the *Aspire programme* including a Science Camp, a two-day residential for P6 and P7 pupils which involves **an overnight stay in University accommodation** and requires pupils to undertake a series of scientific activities. St Andrews' student ambassador team provides Lego Mindstorm loan boxes to primary schools.

The students create activities for the school and help staff and pupils in the use of the Robotic Kits. This activity can be used in either classroom lessons or afterschool clubs in schools which would not have access to such equipment. The University's Living Local, Thinking Global initiative is a year-round 'Global Citizenship' project. The target group is upper primary and lower secondary pupils and again, the project looks to use **student helpers as role models for school children**. The programme centers on the theme of Enterprise and Culture & Diversity and includes activities such as a cultural exchange day, a global experience day and a university challenge spread throughout the year.



The programme delivers **positive experiences** involving visits to the University and also school activities that will **raise their aspirations** and cause them to **think about university**.



Heriot-Watt University – Robokids

Stimulating interest, hands-on activities

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY ↻

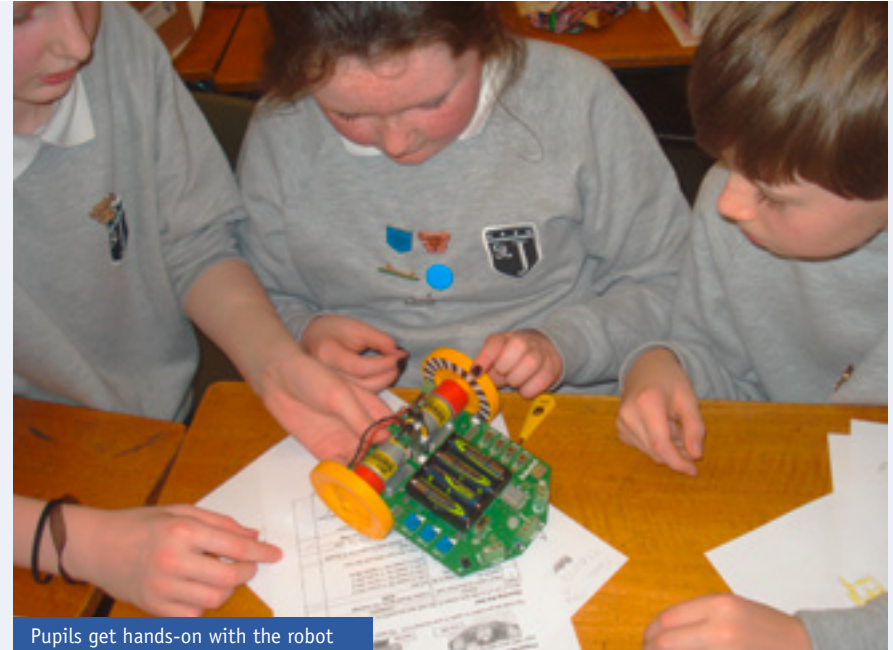
Robokids first started in 2007 and was the inspiration of Dr Jim Herd within the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering at Heriot-Watt University.

Dr Herd developed a **teacher-friendly, technology project** involving robots for P6 and P7 pupils at Scottish primary schools. The project provides a fully working electronic robot kit to groups of three school pupils with all the consumables needed for a four to eight week classroom project.

The goal is to **stimulate primary school children's interest in science and technology** through hands-on activities. The kit is compatible with

Curriculum for Excellence and the classroom project covers technology, science, maths as well as art and language. Working together in small teams also helps to encourage cooperation and team building skills.

In the seven years the project has been running **over 150 schools throughout Scotland** have received robot kits with **over 15,000 pupils participating**. The project was made possible due to funding support from the UK Science Research Council and help from company, Freescale Semiconductor.



Robokid
PLUGGED INTO TECHNOLOGY

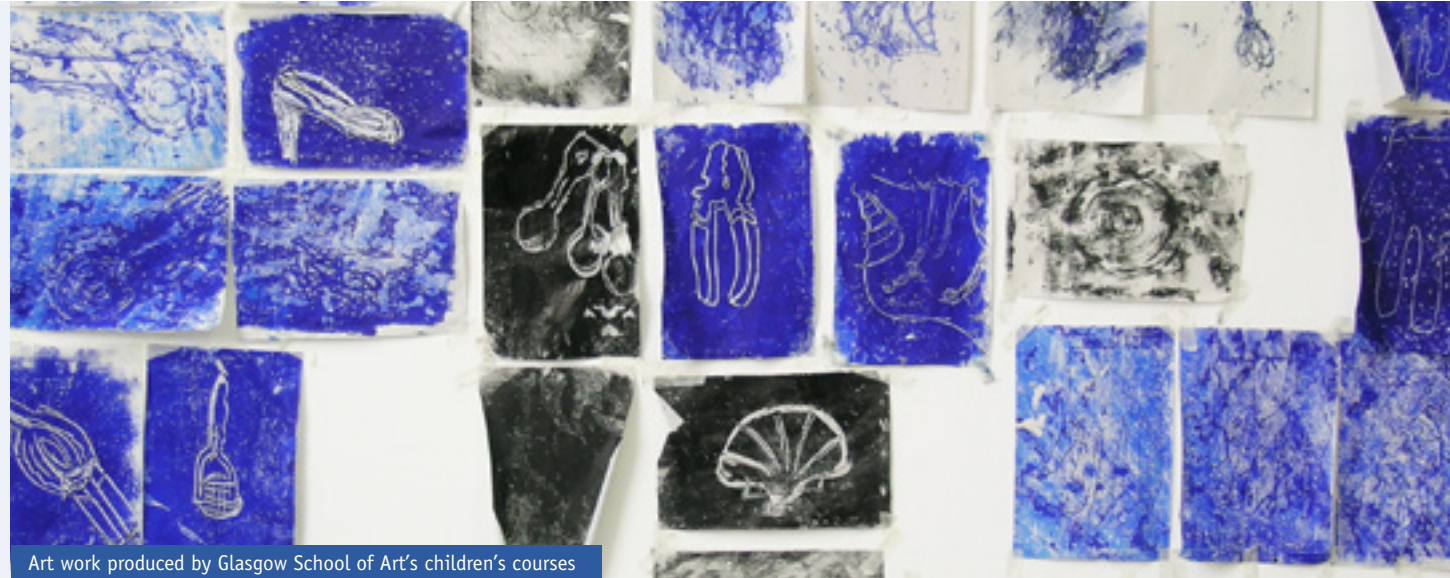
Glasgow School of Art – Children’s Courses

A relaxed and supportive environment

GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART ➔ Glasgow School of Art’s Continuing Education Department offers a wide range of courses for children **aged seven to 11 years of age** on Saturday mornings and afternoons as week-long courses during the summer.

Courses in drawing and painting, sculpture, photography and textiles are based around **hands on learning** with activities designed to stimulate creativity, **lateral thinking and experimentation** with materials in a relaxed and supportive environment. Courses are open to everyone and as part of GSA’s strategy to encourage participation, a system of bursary support is available in the form of a fee waiver for the different programmes.

The courses take place on the GSA’s Garnethill campus which **introduces young students to the idea of studying in a studio, darkroom or workshop** depending on their choice of course.



Being in such a creative environment may encourage the young student to return on an annual basis, developing a skill base for the future and potentially **going on to study full time on a degree course**.

A recent graduate of the Glasgow School of Art first started the drawing and painting class when she **was ten years old**, returning annually to participate on the Saturday programme. She then went on to attend the 5th and 6th Year Life Drawing course

and then onto a Portfolio Evening course. She is now pursuing a career as an artist having graduated with a 2:1 degree in Fine Art Painting and Printmaking from the Glasgow School of Art.

University of Abertay Dundee – Tayside Space School

Interactive and demanding events

ABERTAY UNIVERSITY DUNDEE

The Tayside Space School organised by the University of Abertay represents an excellent opportunity for up to **80 primary school pupils** to study various aspects of **space travel and exploration** and the science that underpins this extraordinary field.

Two sister events operate in Dundee and Perth with each hosting 40 P6 and P7 school pupils selected from across the various primary schools in each of the two educational department regions.

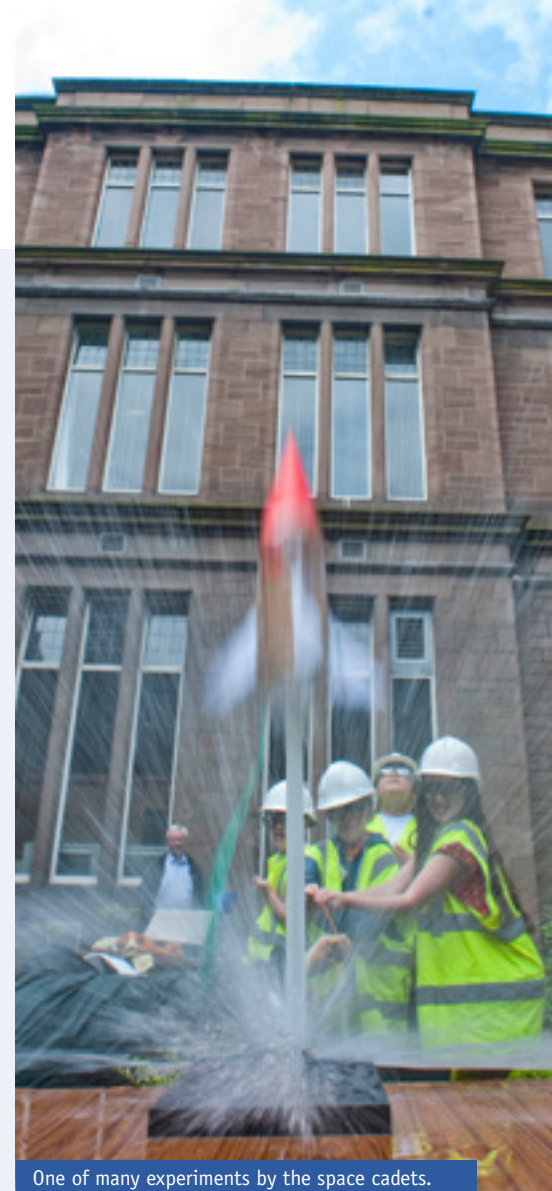
A series of events take place once a month on Saturdays between March and June culminating with a **full week-long programme** in early July, which is attended by an astronaut and space educator from **NASA**. The first monthly event in Dundee is hosted at the Dundee Science Centre and Discovery Point and is followed by three monthly sessions held

at Abertay. **University staff deliver sessions** to pupils and there is additional support from teachers from the local Education Department. The sessions are largely hands-on experiences for the pupils and cover varied topics such as **astronaut fitness and physiology, the physics of space travel** and exploration, the psychology of living in an environment like the International Space Station and using computer simulators to learn how to fly the Space Shuttle as well as space food.

The final week-long course is **highly interactive** and demanding, requiring teams to design mission patches, manage a press conference, make and launch their own water-powered rockets, build and test a Mars Rover and design their own space suits having taken on board the information gleaned from the sessions delivered by the astronaut or by Patricia Tribe the

NASA educator. The week culminates with a **graduation ceremony for the ‘space cadets’** where they receive prizes for their team’s efforts throughout the week as well as a certificate and medal to mark their participation.

The event has been a major success over the last seven years and has been supported by funding from local education departments and Dundee businessman Bill Sword. The event is managed by Gillian Bell in the School of Science, Engineering and Technology at the University. It is delivered entirely by the efforts and support of teachers and staff from all the partners who do so in their free time to provide the pupils with a unique insight into space travel and exploration, but also to encourage them to be aware of the importance of science and technology in our everyday lives.



One of many experiments by the space cadets.

»THE UNIVERSITY PROCESS WAS A
COMPLETE MYSTERY ...

*... if it weren't for Pathways I would not have
known where to start let alone where to finish.«*

OUTREACH AND PROGRESSION WITH
SECONDARY SCHOOLS



THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR OUTREACH AND PROGRESSION

OUTREACH is defined as: »any activity that reaches out beyond higher education providers to engage with wider communities in order to raise higher education awareness and aspirations.«

PROGRESSION is defined as: »targeted approaches with the specific objective of supporting underrepresented young people (and others) take up opportunities for study at a higher level.«

»The multi-faceted nature of most programmes (...) means that it is impossible to establish with certainty which element works best, in terms of influencing positively the behaviour and decision-making of participants. Published evaluations of outreach interventions with school pupils, raising their aspirations and awareness of higher education opportunities, are generally positive (...) The evidence (...) suggests that SUMMER SCHOOLS, CAMPUS VISITS and contact, including MENTORING, with current students are particularly highly valued, and statistics of progression to higher education demonstrate that participation in outreach will generally have a positive impact on a school's progression rate.«¹¹

11) Riddell, S. et al (2013) Widening Access to Higher Education. Does Anyone Know What Works?, p.57

Edinburgh Napier University – Build a Business in a Day

Insight into entrepreneurship and teamwork

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY ↻

52 pupils from ten schools across Fife, the Lothians and Borders took part in a *Build a Business in a Day* initiative run by Edinburgh Napier University. Pupils worked in teams to **come up with an idea** for their own business, product or service.

As well as attending specialist lectures on **Entrepreneurship**, Marketing and Finance, pupils had the support of their school teachers, **Edinburgh Napier Student Ambassadors** and young Scottish businessman Fraser Doherty, now 24, who set up his own SuperJam business aged 14.

Tasking pupils to generate their own ideas within a specific framework gave them **an idea of the learning style** they would experience at university, as well as **a taster of some of the many different courses** available. The day was rounded up with an evening

celebration event, allowing pupils to return to the University with **their parents / carers** and other family members. Edinburgh Napier provided a short presentation on the journey to higher education and what was on offer at the University, as well as announcing the *Build a Business* winner. All pupils and teachers receive a medal **and a certificate to mark their participation**.

The *Build a Business* school engagement programme was offered to schools in three areas but **priority was given to schools with the highest percentage of pupils in the MD20/40**. One teacher commented: »This was a great experience, allowing pupils to put theory into practice and learn to work together as part of a team in a university setting.«



Build a Business in a Day with young entrepreneur Fraser Doherty.

Transitions 20/40 at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

108 places to develop potential across dance, drama, music, production and screen

THE ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND'S *Transitions 20/40* widening participation programme seeks out and develops potential performing and production arts talent from the most deprived Scottish post-code areas. The programme started in academic year 2013/14 with 40 talented students drawn from across all of Scotland. *Transitions 20/40* offers tuition fee and travel support to take part in **workshops, classes and short courses** run by the Conservatoire to help with preparation for auditions or interview at a higher education level.

Jade, 24, was one of the first-pre-higher education students to access *Transitions 20/40*. Jade had always aspired to study theatre and dramatic arts, however she felt there were too many barriers preventing her from applying to drama school. Living in Dundee with her partner and child, the financial and emotional challenges of moving to another city to follow

her aspirations were too great. Jade also lacked confidence in her abilities and this prevented her from applying to study drama full-time. »The thought of competing with other students who had more experience and no financial considerations made applying to drama schools a daunting prospect.«

However, in summer 2013 Jade applied to *Transitions 20/40* programme to help develop her confidence and as a platform to prepare for further study. After a successful audition to the programme, Jade started a **fully-funded, five-week credit-rated module called Introduction to Actor Training**. She studied alongside students from all over the UK and with the teaching team from the Conservatoire's BA Acting programme and had **support from a mentor** to work on a personal learning plan to think about next steps in higher education. The project was also able to support

Jade to live in Glasgow for the five-week programme.

After five weeks' full-time vocational acting training, Jade left the Royal Conservatoire with 20 SCQF credits having passed every assessment and with a transformed out-look on her possible future:

»Thanks to *Transitions 20/40* I no longer see my age, finances or the fact that I have a young son as obstacles to achieving the career I want. The support and advice from my mentor at the Royal Conservatoire was motivational and inspired me to move forward and make positive changes in my life to help achieve my goals.«

Following the programme's early success, Transitions 20/40 has been expanded for the next academic year with places available for 108 students across dance, drama, music, production and screen.



Participants in the first year of Transitions 20/40.

University of Edinburgh's work with primary and secondary schools

Escaping narrow confines and growing aspirations

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ↻

Research shows **that young learners acquire expectations** that are adjusted to what is acceptable for 'people like us'. Those from low socio-economic backgrounds may not have the cultural capital of their families to draw from that their middle class counterparts do. The University of Edinburgh engages with pupils from P6 through their transition to S1 to provide in-sight, support and guidance with the aim of growing aspirations and self-efficacy.

The programme works with a selection of secondary schools and their feeder primaries, **reaching 400 pupils each year**. In P6 and P7 structures, nomenclature and experiences of higher and further education are normalised for the pupils who work with **university staff and role model students**. Classes take place in both the school and university environment, following a dedicated course workbook. As one head teacher

noted: »This project is a tremendous opportunity for our pupils to expand their horizons and their aspirations. Many of our children live in the very narrow confines of the Calders, their parents trapped by poverty, drug addiction and low expectations. By widening experiences and showing them the possibilities that higher education can offer we do raise their expectations and we hope that more will aim to continue into tertiary education.«

Once the pupils are in the first year of their secondary education they take part in a ten-week, one-day-a-week outreach programme. They work with University of Edinburgh staff and students and partner professional institutions throughout the city to **contextualise** their **school based learning** and begin to understand its connectivity to the employment world. Their experiences are captured in two events for parents and staff, at




CREDIT: Chris Park

school and on campus. The projects are supported by the Henry Drucker Memorial Fund and the Lloyds Scholars Scheme.

Taster Weeks at the University of Glasgow

An important introduction

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY  *Taster Weeks* are a spin-off from the University of Glasgow's **long-running Summer School**. Three such weeks are held in June or July every year; two for Glasgow City Council (GCC) schools and a residential week for Dumfries & Galloway schools. **Up to 200 pupils participate** in *Taster Weeks* each year. Some will come from schools with a low progression rate to higher education others will live in the **40 per cent most disadvantaged areas** according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The pupils taking part in *Taster Weeks* usually **have no previous knowledge or family history of university** and therefore it is an important introduction to student life and academic study.

The GCC programmes for S5 and S6 pupils includes around 15 different academic subjects from a wide range of areas including Engineering, Chemistry, English Literature, Sociology, German and Economic and Social History. Lectures are delivered by current academic members of staff and postgraduate students alongside information sessions and **workshops on applying to university, careers, study skills, finance and student support**.

The third *Taster Week* involves students at the end of S5 from Dumfries & Galloway schools staying in a hall of residence and attending similar lectures and workshops from across the university. As a residential university experience, students also have social events in the evenings

with meals provided in student unions and activities such as quiz nights and outings to explore Glasgow.

Pupils can progress from *Taster Weeks* to participate in other Glasgow University **pre-entry programmes, including Summer School**. Early indications are that *Taster Weeks* have a positive impact with around one-third of participants progressing to study at the University of Glasgow. In 2013, 84 per cent of *Taster Week* students said that they were **more likely to apply to university following their experience** with some commenting that the experience should be more widely available, possibly at an earlier stage to assist in their subject choices at school.



University of St Andrews – Sutton Trust Summer School

Ensuring there are no limits on aspirations



ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY ↻

The University has been **running the Sutton Trust summer school** since 2002. It has grown from 50 to 130 pupils participating each year. Pupils who are considered for the summer school are from backgrounds of **socio-economic and educational**

disadvantage. The aim of the summer school is to get pupils to focus on applying for competitive courses and universities **rather than 'just settling'** for the nearest or easiest option. Pupils live in a hall of residence for a week and attend lectures, laboratories and tutorials

in two subject areas of their choice. **Sessions are held on the UCAS application process, student finance, student life and teamwork.** Students who attend the summer school have a great deal of follow-up support whilst going through the UCAS application process. They will be

invited back for one of the University's **Shadowing Day experiences** and they will receive advice that will enable them to navigate the transition from school to university. Those who attend the University for their degree studies will be **supported on arrival** and, if required, given a student mentor.

University of the West of Scotland

Step Up to University

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST SCOTLAND

↻ Since 2006, the University of the West of Scotland's Lifelong Learning Academy has delivered the *Step Up to University* module to **sixth year pupils across the south west of Scotland**.

Unique and insightful, the module is designed to help and encourage pupils make the transition from secondary school into higher education, exploring the variety of learning skills on offer within higher education.

Step Up to University is a SCQF Level 7 module delivered within schools on an **outreach** basis with classroom teaching and assessments undertaken by experienced University teaching staff. During the 12-week module, school pupils produce a **personal statement reflective of their existing skills, abilities, qualities and experience** – relevant to study in higher education. Actively exploring a variety of learning styles, pupils

are offered first-hand experience in e-learning as well as group presentations. The module also explores ways in which **transferable skills** relate to further studies and graduate employability. Through taking part in lectures and workshops, individual and group assessments and the use of e-learning, students experience the range of learning styles on offer at university.

Andrew took part in the *Step Up to University* module in 2012 and is now studying for the BEng Motorsport Design Engineering at UWS Hamilton campus. Andrew said: »I thought this programme was really helpful as it introduces you to many things about university life, such as what it's like to be in a lecture and the pace you have to work at to keep up. *Step Up to University* was very helpful in setting me up for university life.«

Robert Gordon University

Access RGU – Subject focussed programmes

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ↻

Access RGU is Robert Gordon University's **widening participation programme**, coordinated by the wider access Team within the Study Skills and Access Unit. The team coordinates the *Access RGU* school engagement and subject focussed programmes. The *Access RGU* school engagement programme is delivered via a tiered approach that **prioritises low attainment schools in the local area**, while also responding to engagement requests from the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) schools across Scotland.

The subject focused programme was developed following the successful delivery of the Access to Creative Education Scotland (ACES) pilot project in 2012/13, funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). ACES is a national programme that aims to encourage applications from pupils who are often under-represented in art, design and architecture

courses at university. Pupils participated in a **year-long programme** to encourage and support them to progress into higher education, culminating in a successful ACES Exhibition showcase event.

Programme participants are drawn from S5 and S6 in target schools, via **close consultation with guidance teacher staff** and engage in a number of on-campus events including practical, subject-based and study skills workshops, portfolio surgeries, campus tours and lectures and seminars. Participants also benefit from **direct time with tutors, current students and recent graduates** and have access to the university library and on-line resources via the University's associate student scheme.

RGU has since secured additional SFC funding to expand the subject focussed programme **to new course areas in 2013/14**, including Communication and Media, Computing and Engineering, enabling up to 100 pupils.

Pathways to the Professions at the University of Edinburgh

Opening doors

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ↻

»Pathways to the Professions was invaluable in helping me fulfil my dream of becoming a doctor. Coming from a family where no one else has been to university, the university process was a complete mystery and if it weren't for Pathways I wouldn't have known where to start let alone where to finish. Pathways offers much more than practical events. There was always someone at the end of the phone or email for information. It can be quite daunting for a 17 year old to understand the system; but you get the chance to speak to admissions staff, current medical students to find out what it is like to be a student, go into theatre, get scrubbed up, speak to doctors and patients. Having that experience also really helped in making my personal statement stand out when applying through UCAS.«

So says Mark Tait, now a final year medicine student and one of **over 3,000 students** who have engaged

with the University of Edinburgh's Pathways to the Professions project. Pathways works with students from 46 local schools **and their families** to give insights into courses and careers in **highly selective courses: Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Law and Architecture**. The project is not just about raising aspirations, it is about **opening the doors** to the University of Edinburgh or to higher education in general. 96 per cent of Pathways Plus pupils who applied for a Pathways subject in 2012 entered university with 72 per cent entering one of the professional courses. A key feature is the **involvement and support of the professional bodies** as well as a range of practising professionals who offer work experience insights. Mentoring is provided to students in school and continued in first year at university **supporting them in the transition to higher education**. Pathways Access Bursaries are also available.



Pathways to a career in law.

University of Abertay Dundee – Supporting Able Pupils

Encouraging responsibility for learning

UNIVERSITY ABERTAY DUNDEE & BRAEVIEW ACADEMY

The University of Abertay Dundee has partnered with Braeview Academy since 2007 to ensure that its school pupils at the highest levels of attainment have the right opportunities to develop the **academic skills needed to fulfil their potential.**

The project gives school **children a taste of what life is like at university** by encouraging them to develop independent research, study and team-working skills, with every participant **carrying out a research project on a subject of their own choice.** Each pupil is allocated a student mentor, currently at Abertay, who volunteers to help guide them through the process of completing their project.

Mentors are matched to pupils on the basis of the research project they want to undertake. The school pupils have the opportunity to meet with their student mentors **four or five**



times at monthly intervals in order to help develop pupils' research skills, to offer advice and to assist with use of the library and internet as a research tool. Mentors are encouraged to keep in touch using text to offer support and **maintain their enthusiasm.** The project culminates in every pupil giving a five minute presentation at

the University before an audience of peers and adults. Mr Graeme Wallace, Principal Teacher of Guidance at Braeview Academy, said: »Being able to go to Abertay, meet students, and carry out their own independent research projects is a really valuable experience for our pupils, as the transition from school to university

can be daunting. The 'Supporting Able Pupils' project gives them the chance to develop new skills and experience what it's like being responsible for their own learning, which will stand them in good stead if they choose to go on and further their studies at university.«

University of Dundee's DUAL Summer School

Giving people a chance to prove themselves

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE ↻ The *DUAL Summer School* at the University of Dundee has been **running for 21 years**. In 2013 it 'graduated' **more students than ever before** into University study.

Additional funded numbers for access from the Scottish Funding Council enabled a **record number** of potential students to start *DUAL* in 2013. 129 of the 132 who started the **face-to-face** element of *DUAL* finished it in July and 118 are now undergraduates at the University of Dundee.

Students on the Summer School programme have **six weeks of intensive tuition**. It gives them room to prove they can take a place at University, and **helps acclimatise them** to the demands they will face. The initiative attracts a mix of school leavers and more mature students, **who fall just short of the entry tariff** but are identified as having the **potential to succeed**.

John Blicharski, Access and Participation Manager at Dundee, said, «All *DUAL* students are required to complete a compulsory Academic Skills module and three degree-specific subject modules, making the challenge both significant and authentic.»

Steve Brown came to the Summer School in 2013 after a long period of unemployment. He has now taken a place in Accountancy and is **thrilled to be back in education**, not least as he sees the course as a chance to create a better future for his family, particularly his baby daughter, who is his key motivation for success.

« I feel *DUAL* prepares you for the standards and techniques of learning at university that otherwise might be quite overwhelming,« said Steve. «I'm excited to be getting started on my studies and look forward to juggling this with quality time with my daughter. «



Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – Entry to the Creative Industries

Standing up to the competition

THE ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND runs *Entry to the Creative Industries* (Production and Performance) on behalf of FOCUS West and offers **tailored support to S5 and S6 pupils** who are interested in progressing in the performing or production arts at any one of the 37 schools that participate in the FOCUS West initiative, all of which have **significantly below average progression** rates to higher education.

Kieran Fitzpatrick came to Entry to the Creative Industries in 2010 as an S5 pupil from St Andrew's Secondary School in Carntyne. Kieran took part in a theatre production open day, a theatre production interview preparation course and individual mentoring. As the application process for the Conservatoire is **highly competitive**, with only one in ten applicants getting a place the tutor on the Entry to the Creative Industries programme also discussed alternative options with him. Kieran said: »I found the interview



Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

preparation course very helpful leading up to my interview process as I was able to meet the staff that are on my course and it also allowed me to ask them questions about specific things that I was interested in. I also participated in an Open Day which led to me having a basic knowledge of what actually happened at the

Conservatoire. I also got the chance to see some of the productions which made me want to get on the course even more.«

Kieran was **offered a place** on the BA Production Technology and Management course at the Royal Conservatoire in 2010 after participating in his second ETTCI interview

preparation course. He is now coming to the end of his first year of studies and is **looking forward to completing his degree**: »My studies at the Conservatoire have been amazing so far. I have loved every minute of it. I have met some very amazing people.«

»MY LEAPS EXPERIENCE WAS

AMAZING ... *Don't get me wrong it was hard work at times, and I got stressed to the max! At the end of it, when you're walking to the stage and handed that certificate, you know it was worth it.«*

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON
SECONDARY SCHOOLS



THE EVIDENCE BASE SUPPORTING THE VALUE OF COLLABORATION

»The literature stresses the key role of PARTNERSHIPS – cross-sector and inter-sector – in maximising resources, ensuring impartiality and smoothing out inconsistencies in relation to the equitable distribution of higher education outreach and progression opportunities.«¹²

»Murphy and Fleming also focus on the success universities can achieve if they invest in INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS and work together with schools and other providers in the local community in order to target groups with the aim to REDUCE their SOCIAL EXCLUSION.«¹³

There is a strong and well established track record of collaboration amongst Scotland's universities and other partners when it comes to widening access. SHEP represents the coming together of four REGIONAL INITIATIVES, under one banner in 2010. Some of the regional collaborations have been running for close to two decades.


The four regional partnerships are:

- ④ Lothians and Edinburgh Access Programme for Schools – LEAPS
- ④ Focus on College and University – Focus West
- ④ Lift Off
- ④ Aspire North

12) HEFCE (2013) IBID, p.6

13) Riddell, S et al, p.33

Focus West

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  *Focus West* works in 37 secondary schools located in 11 local authority areas, all of which have a **progression rate to higher education of 22 per cent or less**. The west of Scotland is home to 41 per cent of Scotland's population but has **nearly 70 per cent of Scotland's 15 per cent most deprived** areas. What this means for *Focus West* is that a large share of its communities **lack information, knowledge and social networks that facilitate access to higher education**. Since its inception in 2008 *Focus West* has worked with **nearly 22,000 pupils**. It has contributed to an average increase in progression to higher education across its core schools by almost seven per cent; a significant rise given that many secondary schools involved in the programme started with an average progression rate of under 10 per cent.

Focus West delivers a continuum of **activities from S3 through to S6**, with a Focus on work that improves

both knowledge of higher education and educational attainment. Student mentors and tutors deliver many of the *Focus West* activities and this is connected to a **systematic plan of visits** for S3 and S4 pupils to university and college campuses. At the senior school stage, a programme is offered for pupils who are more likely to progress to higher education in college called 'Routes for All' and another programme, 'Top-Up', is offered for those intending to progress directly to a degree at university.

A further key strand of work is with **parents and families**, to support their understanding of higher education. *Focus West*, like its partner organisations in SHEP, works on behalf of all universities and colleges in its region, which means that it has a neutrality and an overview of all suitable courses for pupils, **not just those that are offered by one particular institution**. In order to reach out to more pupils this year, and to gain an opportunity



to achieve greater impact, it is currently developing an Online Access Academy, so that it can **address the needs of pupils at a younger stage of school**, from S1 to S3.

14) This figure is correct for 2013.

The Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS)

LEAPS was conceived in 1996 by a partnership of universities and a Local Council. The programme has developed and now works in **59 schools across Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Borders**, and in four schools in Forth Valley. The partnership has since grown to include additional local councils, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. *LEAPS* covers three main areas:

I. **Outreach activities** whereby volunteers and *LEAPS* staff work with pupils aged 13 and over in schools and on campuses to **promote higher education options**. This takes place during school term times and includes student role models working with groups of school pupils to deliver on-campus events and in-school workshops;

II. more **specialised programmes**, such as the residential **High Flyers** aimed at pupils who attend schools with very low rates of progression to higher education, and 'Creative Extras'

to deliver series of Master Classes by *LEAPS* partners; and

III. senior engagement – the **most intensive section** of the *LEAPS* programme. *LEAPS* works with universities and colleges on issues of access, including **pre-application interviews** and brokering and the *LEAPS* Summer School, which is a seven week programme of intensive pre-university study attended by 150–170 pupils who have just left school.

Paige Umpherston, now studying for a BSc in Occupational Therapy at Glasgow Caledonian University was a pupil at Hawick High School in the Scottish Borders when she took part in *LEAPS*.

She says: »My *LEAPS* experience was amazing. Don't get me wrong it was hard work at times, and I got stressed to the max! At the end of it, when you're walking to the stage and handed that certificate, you know it was worth it.«



A conference for S6 pupils run by LEAPS

Lift Off

LIFT OFF ↻ delivers SHEP in Fife and Tayside. There are 13 schools in the region that meet the criteria of having low progression rates to higher education. These schools have an average progression rate of 17 per cent and also have a **significant proportion of pupils from the two lowest quintile areas** of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Lift Off currently works with all young people in S3 in the region, which extends to approximately 2,500 pupils, raising awareness of the programme itself and **post-school opportunities**. As pupils enter the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, a more targeted programme is introduced, and *Lift Off* currently works with over 400 pupils who meet the SHEP criteria. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities including **campus events**,

residential summer weeks and certificated learning skills alongside individual guidance meetings to support application and transition to higher education. The *Lift Off* team of development workers is enhanced by a **trained team** of student volunteers and postgraduate tutors who provide real insights into higher education.

On average over the last three years, 39 per cent of pupils who have received support from *Lift Off* have progressed to higher education, compared with an average of 17 per cent across the 13 schools *Lift Off* works with. Whilst this clearly demonstrates the **impact that the programme is having**, equally important is the unquantifiable **increased confidence** and preparedness for higher education that pupils and schools report.



Lift Off works to raise aspiration and awareness in Fife and Tayside.

Aspire North

ASPIRE NORTH offers a range of activities for pupils in S3-S6 designed to help them think about the possibility of higher education. For **younger participants** in S3 and S4 this includes days out of school for campus visits to the north of Scotland institutions, where pupils can feel what is like to be a university student, challenge away days, study skills, action planning workshops and workshops on planning ahead. The programme also offers **multi-day residential activities** at institutions and information, advice and guidance about subject choices and exam results.

For older participants in S5-S6, **UCAS application clinics are available**, opportunities to explore virtual and open learning, workshops and **one-to-one advice** about interview techniques, advice about student funding, and opportunities to further develop study skills. The team at *Aspire North* works closely with partner schools to ensure that the activities on offer can support the entitlements of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence, and some of the work is aimed at providing **information and guidance to parents and guardians**.



The programme also offers **multi-day residential activities at institutions** and information, advice and guidance about subject choices and exam results.



Reach Scotland

REACH SCOTLAND is a **national project** which aims to increase access to high demand professional areas, such as **medicine, veterinary medicine, law, economics and architecture**. It is a collaborative project managed by the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow and the University of St Andrews.

Secondary pupils aged S4 to S6 from **non-traditional backgrounds** and with an interest in the relevant subjects can access reach and have an opportunity to **gain insight and experience focussed** on their preferred degrees. This includes taster sessions with degree-specific practical activities and student experience days, which often includes the chance to talk to current students. *Reach* participants can also receive support in preparing their UCAS applications, with preparation for national tests such as the UK Clinical Aptitude Test for applicants to undergraduate

medicine, and in obtaining work experience or shadowing.


Reach is all about giving pupils **the tools, know-how and confidence to stretch themselves** and succeed in higher education. It also helps to give parents the tools and knowledge to support their children through the higher education application process, and it helps to support schools in giving their pupils the best opportunities.

The *Reach* programme is aimed at raising aspirations and achievement amongst pupils from non-traditional backgrounds which can be defined as being the first in their family to go to higher education, as being in receipt of the educational maintenance allowance, looked after children or **children that have spent time in care** and pupils that are from low participation schools.



REACH offers hands-on practical experience for applicants to medical degrees.

Access to Creative Education in Scotland – ACES

ACCESS TO CREATIVE EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND (ACES)  is a project which provides encouragement and advice to secondary pupils (S4-S6) with an interest in studying art and design-based courses (including architecture) at a Scottish higher education institution. The project is delivered by the University of Dundee, the University of Edinburgh, the Glasgow School of Art and the Robert Gordon University, and is aimed at people who may be **under-represented** in the undergraduate student population.

ACES provides an insight into studying art and design or architecture at a higher education institution, and an insight into the careers this can lead to. The institutions offer support with the application process, including

advice and activities about building portfolios (which is an important part of the application process for many creative subjects).

Pupils can get **practical tasters** of art and design and architecture disciplines, school-based workshops, online learning activities and one-to-one information, advice and guidance. Institutions also provide practical workshops **demonstrating processes and techniques**, portfolio guidance workshops, projects for developing portfolios, and information days for teachers and careers advisers.



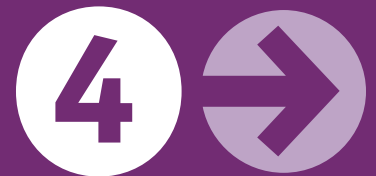
Words cannot explain how **ACES helped me!** I've managed to get offers from all the universities I applied for.

Nathalie,
St John's High School.



»WE DIDN'T EXPECT TO GO TO UNI
IN S6 ... *but here we are.*«

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE
SENIOR PHASE



THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITIONS

»Key transition points require particular attention. Transition activities should be seen as part of a continuum that includes **PRE-ENTRY ACTIVITIES** and **FIRST YEAR ENGAGEMENT**.

Generic features of successful pre-entry interventions include: providing information; informing expectations; developing academic skills; building social capital; and nurturing a **SENSE OF BELONGING**.«¹⁵

Glasgow Caledonian University – Advanced Highers Hub

Offering more, providing equity

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY

➔ Working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, and with funding from the Scottish Funding Council, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) has created an *Advanced Higher Hub*

based on campus at GCU to **deliver a selection of Advanced Higher courses** for pupils in S6 in targeted Glasgow schools. In **collaboration with partner schools**, the GCU Hub will enhance provision for between 120–200

learners a year, providing them with **equity of access to education**. Many schools in the Glasgow area struggle to offer a broad range of Advanced Higher courses, which can lead to S6 pupils repeating Highers or selecting subjects or curricular areas for study in S6 that are not directly related to their preferred post school course choices. Currently **only around ten per cent of young people in Glasgow stay on** to do Advanced Highers which has led to this initiative being described as a »generous and pioneering commitment to widening access on the part of GCU.«

Pupils can study for one, two or three Advanced Highers **dependent on their needs** and career aspirations. The Advanced Higher subjects offered include English, Mathematics,

Chemistry, Biology, Business Management, Modern Studies and History. The *Advanced Higher Hub* will also enable some pupils to gain the qualifications necessary to enter higher education with advanced standing. The Hub Team consists of part time teachers appointed to work in collaboration with the Head of Hub, supported by an Administration Officer. GCU has **dedicated classrooms, offices and social areas for pupils** and staff on campus. Pupils will matriculate and have access to all GCU facilities, providing an **authentic student experience**. This mode of learning provides pupils with an intermediary step towards studies in HE and tackles inequality in the education system at an earlier stage.



University of Aberdeen – S6@Uni

Broad opportunities, valuable insights

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ↻

The *S6@Uni* (Science) programme was launched by the University of Aberdeen in 2009/10 in response to changes and challenges arising from move to Curriculum for Excellence in the senior phase of secondary education.

S6@Uni aims to work in partnership with secondary schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to provide **as broad a range** of opportunities for pupils in S6 as possible, and to enable them to fully benefit from the »Individual Learner Journey« approach.

The programme is ideal for S6 pupils from all backgrounds looking for further **academic challenges**. The courses can complement existing Advanced Highers or, where no Advanced Higher is offered, replace this provision with study at the same SCQF level, gaining UCAS accreditation recognised by all UK universities. Pupils gain a **valuable insight** into

university life and study whilst benefitting from both the support of their school and the University. Pupils can combine these courses with their Advanced Highers to gain advanced entry into the second year of a degree programme.

The 12-week courses follow the programme undertaken by full-time undergraduate science students. Lectures are recorded and made available through the internet, allowing pupils to review them at **a time and place which suits them**. Other course materials are available through the course website. In addition to online support, there are **practical laboratory weekends** held in Aberdeen. Courses are assessed through marked assignments, laboratory reports and an end of course exam.

From an initial small start, the programme has now been **rolled out across all Aberdeen City and**



Aberdeenshire schools. Enquiries have been received from Moray and Angus schools for the 2013/14 academic year. Pilot work is being under-

taken by the University, encouraging S6 students to engage with other topics at university level such as Social Sciences, Law and Psychology.

Queen Margaret University Edinburgh's Academy model

Innovative approach creating real opportunities

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY EDINBURGH ➔ Pushing the boundaries of traditional education, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh, Edinburgh College and four local authorities have developed a pioneering model which is **inspiring young people** and supporting the development of Scotland's key growth industries.

The new *Academy model* is offering both **real job and educational opportunities** for senior school pupils in Edinburgh, East and Mid Lothian, and the Scottish Borders and is smoothing the transition between school, college, university and work.

Pupils take classes at school, college and university during their senior years and must be committed to the Academy over and above the demands of their normal school curriculum. After only one year in operation, the

first cohort of the Hospitality and Tourism Academy's 16 – 18 year olds are **reaping the rewards**; some progressed to a guaranteed place in a related subject at Edinburgh College while others have gone on to complete the full two year Academy programme and transfer directly into the second year of the BA (Hons) International Hospitality and Management at Queen Margaret University.

The model has now been **expanded into different specialisms** focussed on an increased range of industry sectors. There are now four Academies including Food Science and Nutrition, Health and Social Care and the Creative Industries in addition to the original Hospitality and Tourism Academy. Professor Alan Gilloran, Deputy Principal of Queen Margaret University, explained: »At the core of this ground-breaking model is the

total buy-in from industry partners. By working with industry experts, for example hotel groups such as Novotel, The Point Hotel and the Marriott, we are creating a dynamic young workforce which is fit for purpose – a ready-made source of young talent equipped with the right skills and knowledge to hit the ground running when entering the industry. With employers providing work placement opportunities and industry overviews, we are hoping to inspire youngsters to be the next generation of skilled individuals who are helping Scotland remain as world leaders in food and drink, raise standards in healthcare and the hospitality sector, or contribute to Scotland's growing creative industries.«



A student at the Hospitality and Tourism Academy.

University of the Highlands and Islands – Opportunities in Argyll

Online learning at a time and a pace to suit the individual

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS has **partnered** with Argyll and Bute Council to provide online degree modules which senior secondary school pupils can study at their own pace to help **prepare them for university**. Eoghan Anderson from Lochgilphead High School was the first pupil to complete one of the new modules. He chose to study a module in sustainable development.

Reflecting on his experience, Eoghan said: »The course suited my learning style as I was able to complete the work in my evenings and in free periods at school. It gave me more flexibility and freedom as to how and when I studied.« The development has been welcomed by schools in the area and by Council officials.

Morag McGinlay, Student Adviser with Argyll and Bute Council said: »The course enables senior pupils to further their education at the highest level possible and eases the transition between schools and college or university.«

Following Eoghan's **successful experience**, the University of the Highlands and Islands has expanded the initiative to include more schools. In academic year 2013/14 thirteen pupils from four schools in Campbeltown, Islay, Lochgilphead and Tarbet are taking a total of eight different degree modules and one Higher National unit with the University of Highlands and Islands.



The course enables senior pupils to **further their education** at the **highest level** possible and **eases the transition** between schools and college or university.



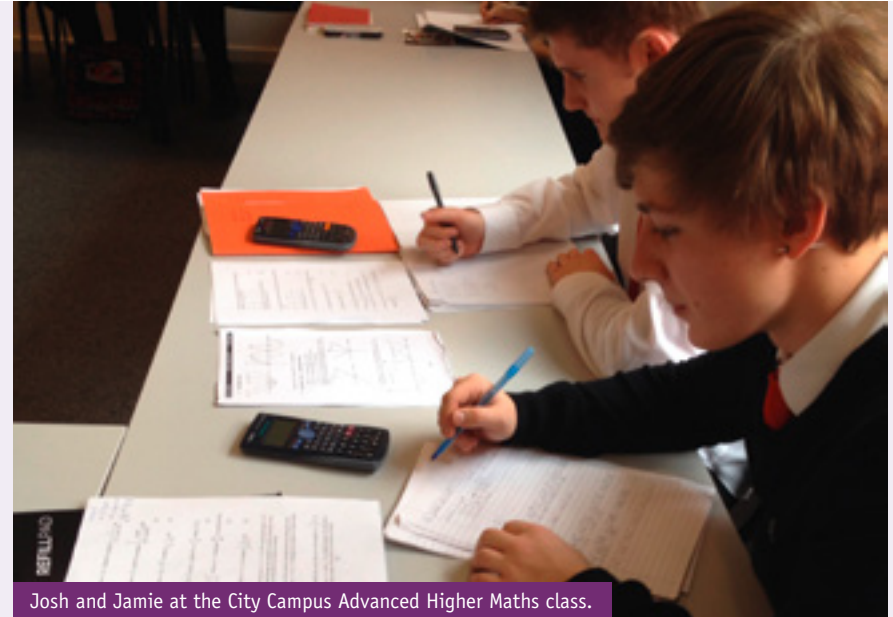
Morag McGinlay,
Student Adviser

University of Dundee – Dundee City Campus Project

Ensuring local pupils don't miss out

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE ↻ The *Dundee City Campus Project* is an example of how a university can help local pupils **maximise their potential** in a city coping with profound multiple disadvantage. Reflecting decades of partnership and close professional ties between the City Council and University, when Dundee Council faced a potential reduction in the range of Advanced Highers it could offer due to falling demand for some subjects in individual schools, the University of Dundee stepped in to offer free teaching accommodation. This allows pupils from several schools to **come together** and be taught on a **bustling modern campus**, with all the additional benefits that brings. The Advanced Higher subjects offered within the Campus model would be considered by many as core, including English and Mathematics, so their

loss from school timetables would have compounded the low levels of opportunity these pupils already faced. Instead, secondary school teachers were made associate university staff to enable them to harness the best university class-room facilities pre-booked for them, together with some of the best IT and Library systems available in Scotland. For many pupils *City Campus* may be their **first encounter** with higher education, so it is hoped that many will aspire to continue their studies. Around a fifth of Dundee City's S6 roll engage with the scheme at any one time, noting that some schools have as few as 30 pupils staying on until S6, so the project is modest if proudly championed. Whilst simple in many ways, it shows what can be achieved when **sectors work together** and put pupils at the centre of learning.



Josh and Jamie at the City Campus Advanced Higher Maths class.

Josh and Jamie are typical of the S6 pupils taking part: »We didn't expect to go to Uni in S6 but here we are! It's a new term, a new place and a new way to study.«

The project hopes to continue to expand whilst recognising that even traveling a short distance across a small city to meet new classmates can be daunting, despite the benefits.

SCHOLAR by Heriot-Watt University

e-learning for a broad curriculum choice

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

is engaging with the schools sector on the implementation of the **senior phase** strategy in a number of diverse ways. The *SCHOLAR* programme has been a beacon amongst this activity for over a decade.

SCHOLAR's programme of e-learning courseware was **started in 1999** with five Advanced Higher STEM subjects: biology, chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics, for students in the final year of school. Over the years, other subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher have been added to *SCHOLAR* with the same pedagogical approach. Today, the **extensive SCHOLAR portfolio** now includes more than 30 science, mathematics, language, and business e-learning courses, authored specifically for the SQA curricula, at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Each course incorporates interactive, engaging online materials containing

animations, simulations, video/audio, social software and underpinning formative assessment within a proprietary learning platform and registration system.

The initial pilot in 2000 involved four of Scotland's 32 Education Authorities. Now every Education Authority in Scotland, as well as the Scottish Council for Independent Schools, subscribes to *SCHOLAR* providing national provision for, and a broad curriculum choice, for the Senior Phase.

As part of its commitment to **continual enhancement**, the *SCHOLAR* portfolio is under revision to accommodate the Scottish Government's new ambitious strategy – Curriculum for Excellence – to reshape the skills of students for the **challenges of the 21st century**. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has recently announced this investment at the 2013 Scottish Learning Festival.



The SCHOLAR bus takes a tour of Scotland.

ENGAGING **PARENTS** AND
WORKING CLOSELY WITH TEACHERS



THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING WORK WITH PARENTS AND TEACHERS

»Parents and families play a **KEY ROLE**; there is **CLEAR ALIGNMENT** between what the parents say they want for the young people and what the young people aspire to themselves. For policy, **SUPPORTING ASPIRATIONS** then means working with parents as well as young people, particularly where parents face disadvantages themselves.«¹⁶

16) Kintrea, K. et al The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations.
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-education-attitudes-full.pdf>

The Open University in Scotland. A focus on parents

Overcoming »it's not for the likes of me«

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND (OU) is working with Glasgow Caledonian University's ground breaking *Caledonian Club* to **target parents as well as children** with the aim of addressing the notion, still held by some parents, that University is »not for the likes of me.«

The *Caledonian Club* allows children as young as three to take classes at the university to nurture their aspirations through a set of linked activities delivered by staff and students (the *Caledonian Club* is featured in section one). Together the OU and GCU have developed an **innovative curriculum** to support and inspire groups of parents from participating schools. This flexible access model draws on **The Reflection Toolkit**, which is an OU **open educational resource**.

A learner centred and multi-exit approach is taken throughout and at the end of the reflection course, »what next?« might mean different things for each individual. Alongside main-stream OU learning and teaching resources, additional wrap-around support is provided by *Caledonian Club* staff, GCU student mentors together with local OU project workers who guide and mentor the students on their learning journey.

From 2013–14 this model will be cascaded to **all five nursery schools** within the *Caledonian Club*. A longitudinal approach is being taken; both in terms of **supporting participating parents** and in terms of mapping and tracking outcomes, including reflection on ways to further develop and improve on this flexible model.



Encouraging parents to be hands-on in a university environment.

Robert Gordon University – Guidance Teachers

Strong links with guidance teachers

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY'S

Study Skills and Access Unit coordinates a number of initiatives to promote the **greater uptake** of higher education among groups that are traditionally underrepresented at university.

Access RGU is Robert Gordon University's widening participation programme, coordinated by the Wider Access Team within the Study Skills and Access Unit. Working in partnership across the university and with external partners, the Team coordinates the **Access RGU school engagement** and subject focussed programmes. The *Access RGU* school engagement programme is delivered via a tiered approach that prioritises low attainment schools in the local area, while also responding to engagement

requests from SHEP schools across Scotland. Locally, the programme benefits from a strategic partnership with the local authority and through the development of strong operational **links with Head Teachers** and Principal Teachers of Guidance. *Access RGU* offers a suite of engagement activities that can **be tailored to school and pupil needs**, from on-campus events to general or subject specific in-school workshops and study skills support.

Guidance teachers are kept informed of developments and new *Access RGU* initiatives via local Guidance Teacher Network Meetings, campus visits and briefings. Their engagement with the subject focussed programme provides them with **regular updates on pupil progress**.



Locally, the programme benefits from a strategic **partnership with the local authority** and through the development of strong operational links with Head Teachers and Principal Teachers of Guidance.



Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) – Guest lecturers

Developing links with schools

SCOTLAND'S RURAL COLLEGE ⇄

SRUC believes that the best way for prospective students to find out about the opportunities on offer is to meet and talk to its staff. SRUC offers guest lectures to schools, which are free-of-charge and are intended to relate to and **enhance schools' delivery** of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher curricula. The Marketing and Student Recruitment team is in **regular contact** with teachers at schools and colleges and Skills Development Scotland to identify and promote opportunities. A range of curriculum-related activities can be delivered which might include **food sensory workshops, laboratory sessions**, hands-on conservation or sports coaching. Two days have been

hosted for schools in the west of Scotland recently with topics relevant to the Higher curriculum for chemistry, physics, geography and environmental sciences have been explored. In addition to providing **action learning** for students, the day helps to identify possible future learning resources for school teachers as well as opportunities for further lecturer input in the classroom. The college also takes an **inclusive approach to parents**, welcoming them to open days and evenings and offering advice and guidance about the applications process, accommodation, study and pastoral support as well as eventual career opportunities for SRUC graduates.



Taking activities into schools

University of Aberdeen – Aim4Uni

Supporting those who support the students

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ↻ *Aim4Uni* supports schools with low rates of participation in higher education, ensuring that pupils in schools with the potential to study at university are encouraged and supported to do so.

As well as work with school pupils and teachers, the *Aim4Uni* project supports parents within target schools by supporting in-school provisions, such as Parents Nights and Careers Events. At these events, University of Aberdeen staff provide prospective students and their parents with information and materials, including Parents Guides, finance planners, **guides to the application process** and other general information as requested.

In addition to in-school events, the University offers numerous **bespoke parents' events** for both **prospective students** and current applicants throughout Scotland and beyond. These events cover a wide

range of topics of interest to parents and students alike. The UCAS process is explained in detail, giving parents key information on deadlines and explaining the **types of offers** universities make. Applying for funding is covered, including up-to-date figures on the level of financial support students can expect to receive from SAAS. A current student gives information on living in halls, student life and student support, including the sporting and cultural facilities available.

For parents who cannot attend in person, the University also holds **online events** covering the same information at times that parents may find it easier to attend. It is also made clear that prospective students and their parents are welcome to contact the Student Recruitment team with **any queries** they may have throughout the admissions process.



»This course will give me opportunities to become familiar with the University of Stirling, making me better prepared when I eventually make the transition. IT'S AN IDEAL STEPPING STONE.«

COLLEGES AND
ARTICULATION



THE EVIDENCE BASE SUPPORTING **ARTICULATION FROM COLLEGE**

»As workload, delivery modes and assessment regimes vary between further and higher education, it is vital that students who want to make the transition are **WELL PREPARED TO SUCCEED.**«¹⁷

University of Stirling – Together

Engaging in university life in every way possible

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING *Together* are innovative education and skills programmes in applied biological sciences and heritage and conservation that **go beyond traditional 2+2 articulation arrangements** between further education colleges and universities. Both degree programmes are **wholly integrated**; jointly designed, developed and delivered by the college, university and industrial partners. Students are studying on a four year degree programme, therefore there is no need to apply to UCAS for direct entry into third year as is the case for other college to university articulation routes.

Students are **enrolled as college and university students**. Whilst classes are based on the college campus in years one and two, students have undergraduate student ID cards for the University of Stirling and have **full access** to all online and onsite facilities that any other undergraduate

student of the university would have. Throughout the first two years, at college, students are encouraged to **engage with university life in every way possible**; from joining clubs and societies at the University, to signing up as members of the Student Union and sports centre.

Both programmes integrate the development of industry and entrepreneurship awareness, industrial experience and academic excellence to ensure graduates are **work-ready** and meet the critical skills requirements of key sectors in the Scottish economy. The new degree courses were a **popular choice** amongst applicants this year: 41 students have now enrolled on the BSc Applied Biological Sciences degree course and 18 on the BA Heritage and Conservation programme. Classes for both courses started at the beginning of September.

Abbie Grainger (17) from Falkirk has been offered a place on the applied biological science course.

She said: »I think that studying for two years at college, followed by two years at university is a great idea. I personally don't feel that I'm ready to go straight from school to university and think that this course will give me opportunities to become familiar with the University of Stirling, making me better prepared when I eventually make the transition. It's an ideal stepping stone.«

Both institutions are committed to **extending this integrated model** to develop further new programmes over time.



Abbie Grainger – Biological Science Course.

Queen Margaret University Edinburgh – Direct Entrant Induction Week

Targeted and sustained engagement

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

(QMU) works closely with the local colleges throughout the year to provide a comprehensive programme of support for articulating students which can **enter in year two, three or even year four** of an undergraduate degree.

The **engagement begins early** in the year with a series of visits to Higher National (HN) classes in colleges to provide advice on articulation routes and support in preparing a high quality UCAS application. Later in the year, HN classes are invited to take part in subject specific visits to the University where they get in-depth information about their chosen course and have the opportunity to **meet the**

academic staff and current students.

The University also offers academic outreach, with library staff providing workshops on topics such as referencing and essay writing as research has found these areas to be **particularly challenging** for articulating students. The support programme culminates with QMU's new Direct Entrant Induction Week for articulating students. This is a dedicated week-long induction programme, **designed as a response to feedback** from Direct Entrants collected over a number of years. A key feature is that it is co-facilitated by a team of Direct Entrants, who support individuals, groups and deliver sessions. This gives existing

students an **excellent developmental opportunity** as well as providing role model examples for new students. Induction is interactive and participatory, and aims to answer some of the key questions about university and give Direct Entrants the best possible start to their degree study at QMU. The main focus of the week is a Mini Research Activity including a final presentation and submission of a piece of written work which will be informally assessed and feedback provided. **Evaluation from participants has been highly favourable.**



This is a dedicated **week-long induction programme**, designed as a response to feedback from Direct Entrants collected over a number of years.



Strathclyde University's Engineering Academy

A pathway to professional development

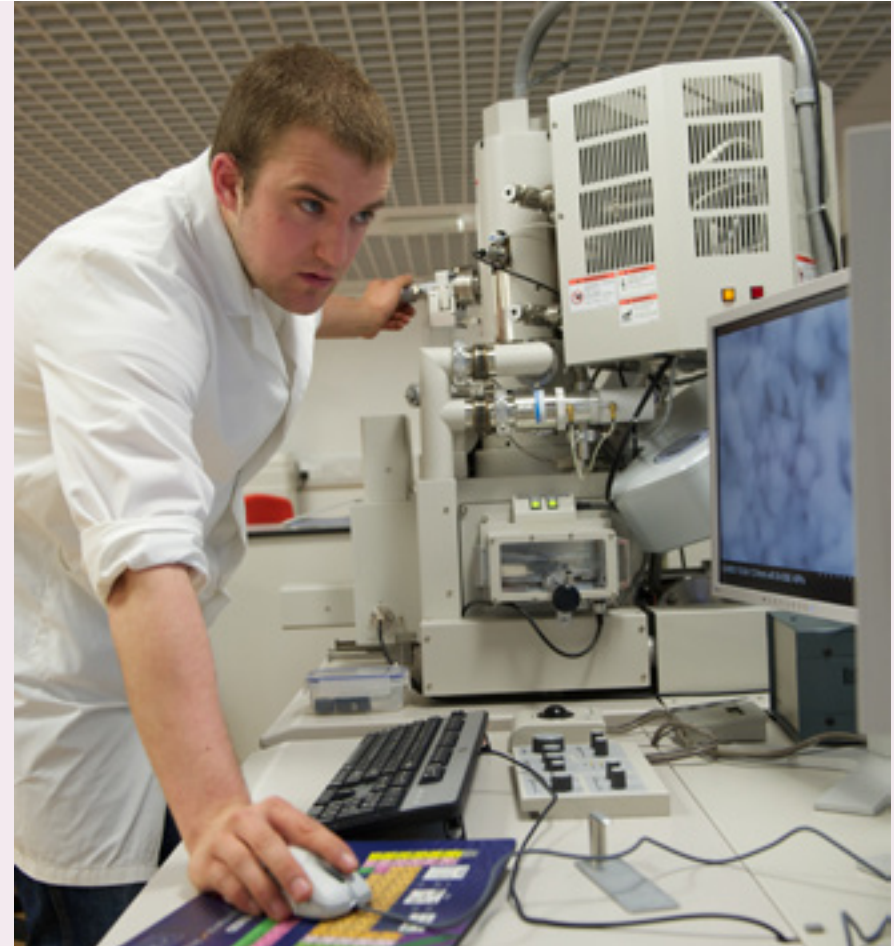
UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE ↻

A partnership enabling students to gain qualifications for Engineering degree courses at the University of Strathclyde has been launched. The *Engineering Academy*, run by the university, industrial partners and colleges, offers a pathway to BEng Honours or MEng-level courses in one of six University departments.

Academy students will initially take an **HNC college course**, during which they will have Associate Student status at Strathclyde. On achieving the required qualification, they will be **guaranteed transfer** to the second year of an undergraduate degree in any of the participating departments: Chemical and Process Engineering; Civil and Environmental Engineering; Design, Manufacture and Engineering Management; Electronic and Electrical Engineering; Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

The students will also benefit from **industry-funded scholarships** and paid summer placements over the course of their undergraduate programme. This will offer them specific mentoring and professional development with the sponsoring company, as well as **enhanced future employment prospects**.

The partnership, which also includes Stow, City of Glasgow, West College Scotland, North Glasgow and Glasgow Clyde Colleges, will teach students the key **practical and vocational skills** required to increase their chances of getting a job in the industry. The new venture will see around 60 extra students go on to study engineering at the University of Strathclyde every year.



Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) – Internal Progression

Structured and intergrated progression

SCOTLAND'S RURAL COLLEGE (SRUC) ↻

At the heart of SRUC's creation has been the desire to bring together the four land-based education institutions of Scotland to create an integrated tertiary education, research and consultancy organisation.

There has always been a history of progression between the four colleges which now make up SRUC. By coming together as one institution, SRUC students are identified and supported towards their future study plans even earlier in their academic careers. This enables pupils to leave school with National 4s and 5s, specialising in a land-based subject at the **earliest opportunity**, and still leave SRUC with an Honours Degree having progressed

through an integrated academic and delivery framework. SRUC's awards' structure has its foundation built upon Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) qualifications including National Certificates and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas. Additional units are studied in the Certificate year to ensure **students are adequately prepared** for the HND and can **progress directly** into the third year of a degree programme upon successful completion. In this way, the HN qualifications form the first and second years of study before progressing on to an Honours Degree which are awarded by the universities of Glasgow or Edinburgh. Staff at the Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge campuses

frequently teach across SQCF levels 6–8 and are available to provide progression support and advice across these critical levels.

To encourage academic progression and recognise achievement, SRUC's Trust has introduced the **Going Further bursary**. A total fund of £10,000 is available for students progressing into, or through, higher education within SRUC. Launched in academic year 2013–14 a total of 10 students reflecting a variety of study pathways will receive a Bursary during the inaugural year.



By coming together as one institution, SRUC students are identified and **supported towards their future study plans** even earlier in their academic careers.



University of St Andrews

Alternative Routes (STAR)

ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY ⇄

The University has always realised the need to ensure that those who could not make the most of their first chances due to socio-economic disadvantage should be supported in later life if they wish **to return to education**. The University aims to help **ease the transition** for students from college to university by giving appropriate advice and guidance, and also by ensuring that there are allocated places for such routes. The University has articulation agreements with local colleges through HNC Applied Sciences and with Perth College a 'Pathway to Medicine' has been developed whereby places are made available to study Medicine at St Andrews for students coming through a specifically designed HNC Applied Sciences programme.

St Andrews is committed to working in partnership with the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) to ensure that all students coming through this route have the information required to make a competitive application to the University. There is a **guaranteed interview for all SWAP East applicants** with dedicated places and bursaries available.

There is also an Evening Degree, which is a specifically designed programme that admits students who may not have engaged with study recently but wish to enter graduate studies. It offers a **supportive environment** in which students from a less traditional university background may find helpful in order for them to fulfil their academic and intellectual potential.

Robert Gordon University

Articulation

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ⇄

RGU is the lead institution within the north-east *Articulation Hub* in conjunction with Aberdeen College and Banff & Buchan College and has **formal agreements in place** with a number of other colleges. Significant developments have been made in relation to joint course planning, leading to enhanced progression and articulation opportunities for learners, **shared approaches to learning and teaching** and improved student support links. Articulating students and wider access applicants also benefit from the University's Associate Student scheme, including access to online and library resources.

Maurice Mitchell, Course Leader BSc (Hons) Computer Network Management and Design said:
»The Degree Prep initiative allowed both myself and the Study Skills and Access Unit to meet with a number of articulating students joining the course in the autumn. I gave a short talk to the students outlining what they would study, along with a general overview of the course. They were very interactive and appreciated the time I spent with them.«

Scotland's articulation hubs

A national approach

SCOTLAND'S ARTICULATION HUBS ⇨

As with initiatives aimed at other groups of potential students, Scotland's universities **work collaboratively** with each other and with college partners to deliver six regional articulation hubs to help support learners moving from college to university and to **expand the number of opportunities** for them to do so.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has funded the six hubs since 2007; five of which are regional and one of which led by the Open University in Scotland with no geographical boundaries. The SFC investment has been focussed in particular on improving articulation from Higher National Qualifications to degree courses, so that students who obtain a Higher National Certificate may be **eligible for advanced entry** to year two of a degree programme, and those who obtain a Higher National Diploma may be eligible for advanced

entry to year three. Since the hubs were introduced, **the number of articulating students has increased by almost 85 per cent.**

Each articulation hub is hosted by a 'lead' institution. The articulation-hubs and their **respective lead institutions are:**

- ④ **North East**
(led by Robert Gordon University)
- ④ **Tayside and Fife**
(led by the University of Abertay, Dundee)
- ④ **Edinburgh and Lothians**
(led by Edinburgh Napier University)
- ④ **Greater Glasgow**
(led by Glasgow Caledonian University)
- ④ **South West**
(led by the University of the West of Scotland)
- ④ **Open University in Scotland**
(which coordinates national part-time articulation activity)

The success of these hubs comes from their contribution to **improving curriculum mapping** through joint course delivery and/or joint design



Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Articulation Hub led by Edinburgh Napier University.

of courses between colleges and universities, to establishing new routes and converting informal ones into formal strategic agreements, **understanding the student experience** and

using this in the design of new routes to improving data capture and institutions' ability to track students. This is on top of coordinating activity to ensure that individual students receive the support they need.

»IF IT WAS NOT FOR EDUCATED PASS,
AND OPENING MY SON'S EYES ...
*... to the opportunities in sport and in
particular sports science at University he
would not have gone on to study this.«*

INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON THOSE WITH
PROTECTED AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS



THE EVIDENCE FOR A FOCUS ON THOSE WITH **PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

»Widening participation students' are not a homogeneous group. They may have a **RANGE OF IDENTITIES**, diverse social characteristics and come from a **VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS.**«¹⁸

»The following characteristics and protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.«¹⁹

»The range of **UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS** is wide (...) It includes: pupils from schools identified as having a record of low progression of its pupils to higher education; students with lower socio-economic status (NS-SEC 4-7); residents in a postcode listed as **SIMD20** or **SIMD40**; students in receipt of **EMA**; those entering from **FE college**; adult returners; care-leavers; people whose education has been disrupted by health problems or a disability; first generation entrants to **HE**; students with refugee or asylum seeker status.«²⁰

18) HEFCE (2013), p.5

19) Equality Act 2010

20) Riddell, S. (2013)

Heriot-Watt University – Dragonfly

Inspirational science

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY *Dragonfly* is an educational **and motivational event** that aims to encourage girls to develop their interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and is part of a wider project called Headstart – run by the **Engineering Development Trust**. Heriot-Watt has hosted the *Dragonfly* event over a number of years to ensure that girls are provided with opportunities to gain insight into what is often perceived as being the **predominately male-oriented** sphere of STEM subjects. The event offers S2 girls, who already show an interest in science at school, the opportunity to gain hands-on experience of science and engineering subjects in a university setting.

Throughout their day on campus the girls receive **encouragement** from staff and students which it is hoped will help **shape their subject choices** for S3 and inspire them throughout their years at school and beyond.



CREDIT: Engineering Development Trust



CREDIT: Engineering Development Trust

University of Edinburgh – Educated Pass

Making the message relevant

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ⇨

The underachievement of men in education is well documented, but **far from fully understood**. Socio-economic status, however, considerably outweighs gender as a predictor for academic success. *Educated Pass*, an innovative University of Edinburgh widening participation initiative, addresses the academic underachievement of 13–16 year old males from **low participation neighbourhoods**. By delivering the typical education messages bathed in football and sporting metaphor to local boys' youth football teams, the project **harnesses their commitment to sport**. The same skills and dedication they apply to their athletic endeavours can also be applied to fulfil their **educational potential**. The message is delivered in the sanctuary of the club house, the new classroom, with the support of the coach, the new teacher. Immediately the message

has relevance and credibility. One father from Musselburgh noted that: »If it was not for *Educated Pass*, and opening my son's eyes to the opportunities in sport and in particular sports science at University, he would not have gone on to study this. *Educated Pass* should be a programme all youth football clubs are automatically enrolled in.«

Educated Pass works with around **150 boys annually** with a suite of activities and classes delivered by the University and our project partners, Edinburgh College and West Lothian College supported by the University football club. Tracking of the first cohort shows that 51 per cent progressed to higher education compared with the national average of 36 per cent.

Andrew Munro is a current Physics undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh. He was in the first cohort of *Educated Pass* while playing for Seton Boys Club:



»It helps kids to **focus on combining education with sport** instead of honing in on just one of them.«

The Buttle Trust – Support for care leavers

Effective working relationships

THE BUTTLE UK QUALITY MARK ↻

was introduced in 2006 to **provide a framework** within which universities, and now further education colleges, can improve and accredit their support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. In Scotland, **eight universities currently hold the award** with one other currently working towards accreditation as part of their outcome agreements with the Scottish Funding Council.

In order to be awarded the *Buttle UK Quality Mark*, institutions compile a **developmental action plan** which addresses the four key areas of the framework: raising aspirations and pre-entry outreach; application, entry and induction; on-going support and monitoring of the commitment. The Quality Mark is initially awarded for three years and upon renewal, universities are assessed for the level of provision they provide: **minimum standards, developing well or exemplary**. In order to achieve the exemplary

level of the award, institutions must demonstrate a **thorough support system** endorsed by senior management, which encompasses the full student lifecycle. Alongside the support sits a strong analytical approach to develop practice to improve outcomes and to measure impact across all areas of the framework. Universities have established effective working relationships with local authorities and collaboration with schools and colleges to raise aspirations and **to provide smooth transition for new students from a care background**.

Two universities in Scotland currently offer an exemplary level of provision. *Buttle UK's* aim is to encourage all universities in Scotland to achieve the exemplary level of support, and to make this sustainable long-term through the embedding of the support into institutional culture and practice.

Buttle UK is the largest grant-giving

charity in the UK directly supporting children, young people and families. It helps vulnerable and disadvantaged children to have the same opportunities as their peers, providing practical solutions and the opportunity to access education to complete their studies successfully. www.buttleuk.org



BUTTLE UK



My university is committed to **supporting care leavers** and when I was originally deciding which university I was going to go to, the fact that this institution had **been awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark** was a **major factor in my decision** to study here.



Care leaver,
Buttle UK website

University of Dundee – Women in Science Festival

Celebrating and encouraging

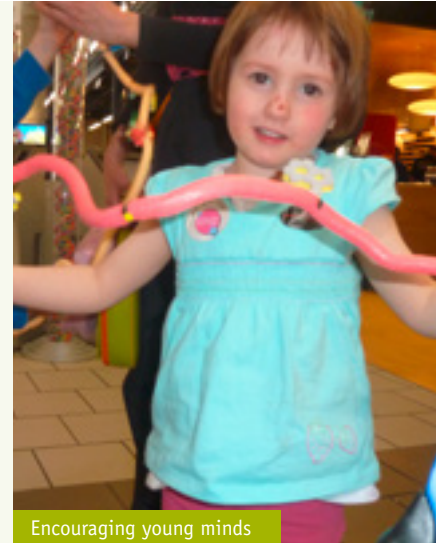
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE ⇄

The *Women in Science Festival* 2013 ran from 8 to 24 March, focussing on events which celebrate and encourage **women in science, technology, engineering and maths** (STEM). By showcasing local talent, **providing role models** and stories of successful women in science, it is hoped that more girls and women of all ages will pursue STEM subjects. Building on the success of the first festival in 2012, this year's programme involved **27 events over two weeks** which ranged from exhibitions, film screenings, lectures and talks, workshops and drop in activity sessions.

Over 2,000 visitors attended events over the two weeks, with an age range between two and 102 and from a **range of backgrounds** including community groups, staff and students working in

science and the general public. Some of the most successful events included a film screening programme showing films with a science theme either made by women, or featuring a female scientist, which were also introduced by a **local female scientist**. Other events including the natural reflection exhibition of portraits of local female scientists produced along with a book and short video highlighted the lack of women in senior leadership positions, showed good role models for successful women in science and inspired younger female students and staff.

The festival is coordinated by collaboration between the University of Dundee, the University of Abertay Dundee, the University of St Andrews, the James Hutton Institute, Dundee Science Centre and the Hannah



Encouraging young minds



Maclure Centre. **Feedback collected showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the events**, and indicated that over 90 per cent of respondents had both enjoyed it and learned something new.

The Festival is thought to be the **only one of its kind in the world** and was a runner-up for the best STEM institution event in the British Science Association's National Science and Engineering Week.

University of Stirling – support for disabilities

Offering academic flexibility

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING Paralympian Scott McCowan was able to study at the University of Stirling as it offered him the support he needed to excel in his sport and his studies. McCowan, who has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, competes in Boccia – the target ball sport similar to French boules. He took up the sport in 2007, first taking part at the Ayrshire Special Games and progressing to selection for Team GB at the London 2012 Paralympics. The 22-year-old from Kilmarnock is also a student of Sports Studies and Psychology.

By going to Stirling, McCowan was able to tap into the fantastic sporting facilities on campus and access vital funding from national sports scholarship programme Winning Students. The Stirling-run Winning Students programme is

now in its sixth year providing **able-bodied and disability student athletes** in colleges and universities across Scotland with access to vital funding. It also provides **academic flexibility**, which proved priceless for McCowan, who was able to defer for a year as he prepared for his Paralympic debut.

He said: »Competing in London was a fantastic experience and the support from Winning Students has helped a lot. It's great to be at a university like Stirling with such a great sporting environment and where they understand what an elite athlete requires.«

Stirling is home to a number of **disability sport programmes, including swimming and tennis**. The campus is home to the National Swimming Academy, providing elite disability swimmers with access to a 50m

training pool and land conditioning. In tennis, governing body Tennis Scotland use the ten indoor and outdoor courts at Stirling as a training base for its wheelchair tennis players, including former Stirling student Gordon Reid, the current British number one Building on this, the University's Tennis Co-ordinator Holly Smith established a disability tennis club, which sees the Stirlingshire community receive tennis coaching and tuition on campus at the Scottish National Tennis Centre.



Paralympian Scott McGowan at the University of Stirling

University of the Highlands and Islands – A Land and Sea Based Strategy

A regional, accessible and integrated approach

UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

Reflecting its purpose as an institution that will: »have a **transformational impact on the development and prospects of the region**, its people and its communities« the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) has a particular focus on **attracting students from the local area** and on producing skills that are relevant to employers in the region. Whilst not a protected characteristic as such, providing opportunities that are relevant and accessible to remote and rural communities is an important priority within Scotland particularly where there has been **geographic under-representation** in higher education. Drawing upon the distinctive characteristics of the region and the University of the Highlands and Islands' federal and distributed

structure, with many partner colleges also offering FE level courses, allows UHI to make tertiary level learning opportunities widely accessible across the region. Over the past six months a **land and sea based strategy** has been developed to provide an innovative curriculum appropriate to the needs of the land and sea based sector in the region, to **facilitate access to training locally**, to recognise the need for flexibility in entry and exit points along the student journey, facilitating seamless articulations from SCQF 4 to 12, and to collaborate within the University and with other providers. This makes **extensive use of recognition of prior learning** and recognition of experiential learning to facilitate non-traditional learner journeys. As part of its approach, the University is identifying and reinforcing articulation routes and will create



bridging solutions where there are gaps in progression opportunities. This approach will allow us to develop seamless articulation pathways and flexible entry and exit routes for

*» I wasn't very good at school,
failing all my Highers ...*

**... THE SUMMER SCHOOL WAS THE
BEST OPPORTUNITY I HAVE EVER
BEEN GIVEN.«**

SUPPORT FOR
MATURE LEARNERS



THE EVIDENCE BASE BEHIND ACCESS FOR MATURE LEARNERS

»The research showed that **CREATING INTERVENTIONS** in which students from non-traditional backgrounds with non-traditional qualifications **GET THE CHANCE** to participate in higher education is important in valuing and **NURTURING THE POTENTIAL** of these students.«²¹

Open University in Scotland – Openings

A gentle introduction but important cornerstone

OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND (OU) ➔

Open to adults from all educational backgrounds, the OU's *Openings* modules are a **gentle introduction** to further study. *Openings* form the core curriculum for outreach and community development work pursued by the OU in Scotland and more than a **thousand students a year** study a module as a first step into higher education. The focus is on working with individual third sector organisations, **community learning networks**, trades unions, and local colleges in a partnership approach using a programme of modules to present a flexible and sustainable model for access to higher education.

Each module lasts a maximum of 20 weeks. There are **no exams** for *Openings* modules, but successful completion earns 15 credits at SCQF level 7. In the past year this model has developed to include use of new open educational resources, including

the **Reflection Toolkit**, which helps to provide a **joined up approach**, providing pathways from informal to formal learning. The Toolkit is a five-hour unit which is freely available for use and re-use. The aim is to get the user started on thinking about themselves, who they are, what they want to do in their present situation, and how they can work towards doing what it is they want. **Lack of confidence is one of the key barriers** to progression for 'non-traditional' students new to higher education and reflection is one of the cornerstone skills for successful higher level study. The Toolkit also uses case studies to highlight a **range of personal journeys** and to explore the circumstances and issues that have affected real life choices. The resource can be used as a **bridging step**, on its own or alongside an *Openings* access module for learners thinking about studying at higher education level.



Katrina MacLeod and Lesley Bryce take part in Openings.

University of Strathclyde – Age-Friendly University

Greater engagement across the generations

THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE ⇨

is in the vanguard of an international movement to establish 'Age-Friendly' universities. Launched by Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Dublin City University President Brian MacCraith, the global initiative is being supported by Strathclyde.

Strathclyde's Learning in Later Life Programme **started in 1987 and is now one of the largest programmes of its kind in the world.** Classes are open to all older people, regardless of previous educational experience, and reflect the University's commitment to **sharing its expertise within the surrounding community.** Classes are offered during the day and are aimed at older adults, who bring with them a broad range of interests and experience. Classes cover subjects and topics of particular interest to mature people, including art, computer studies, current affairs, health, languages, literature and social studies.

Speaking last November, after the Taoiseach's announcement, Strathclyde Principal Professor Sir Jim McDonald said: »Our Learning in Later Life programme, which celebrates its silver jubilee this year, has established itself as one of Scotland's most successful routes to education for older people. And, through our Centre for Lifelong Learning, we have been one of the foremost providers of education to people in later life for some four decades. The University is particularly proud of its record in attracting mature students, with some of our students graduating in their seventies.«

Sir Jim said Strathclyde recognised that learning is more effective when students are drawn from diverse backgrounds. He added: »For most of civilisation, learning has taken place in environments where younger and older people are working together in the pursuit of knowledge. Strathclyde



creates just that type of environment, and by supporting this initiative we are sending out a clear signal that we want to encourage greater engagement across the generations.«

University of the West of Scotland

Making Experience Count

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND ↻ *Making experience count* is an SCQF Level 7 credit-rated module delivered through the Lifelong Learning Academy the University of the West of Scotland (UWS). It is used as a vehicle for the **recognition of prior learning to provide a 'bridge'** into full or part-time study at an advanced level for mature students with significant expertise and experience in the Occupational Health, Childhood Practice and Nursing.

The aim of this module is to enable students **to make connections between the learning they have already achieved and its contribution to future learning opportunities.**

Students will gain the skills they need to recognise learning that has taken place in both formal and informal settings, allowing them to make informed decisions about the direction to take in terms of further learning, employment or community activity. The module aims to promote recognition of the value of learning gained through prior informal learning and experience to increase self-confidence and motivation, **provide supported transition** from informal to formal learning where appropriate, help identify possible career or study progression routes, and introduce the concept of personal development planning.

University of Aberdeen – Summer School

Seeking out true potential

THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ↻ runs a *Summer School for Access* each year. The Summer School aims to provide a route into higher education for those whose **current qualifications do not reflect their true potential** for degree level study. It is aimed primarily at students who have experienced **set-backs in their previous education.**

The Summer School provides an opportunity for students to **sample new subjects, experience university life, and gain self-confidence**, and equips them with the skills they need to progress to successful degree study. Each student follows a programme suited to their future degree studies, and participates in the Preparation for Higher Education module, aimed at introducing students to university life. Covering areas as diverse as study techniques, university-level writing and presenting skills, it also includes campus tours and one-to-one advice on degree choices. The Summer School is provided **free to all home fees**

students, with a number of fully-funded accommodation places in student halls, and further bursaries awarded to cover living costs for those in financial need. There are also **dedicated childcare funds** for students with dependent children. Following successful completion of the Summer School, students progress directly into year one of their chosen degree at Aberdeen, or at another university of their choice.

Feedback from previous students includes: »I wasn't very good at school, failing all my Highers. The Summer School was the best opportunity I have ever been given.«

»The notes from the Summer School on structuring my essays, writing footnotes, etc. stood me in good stead. If I had gone straight into university without having done the Summer School I would have been completely lost. The fact that I enjoy my studies so much is partly down to my Summer School experience.«

University of the Highlands and Islands – Access to ...

Connecting the past to future possibilities

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

offers a range of access courses to help people into university study which are designed for those who have been **away from study for a number of years** or lack the usual entry requirements. The range of *Access to...* courses cover degree subjects such as humanities, nursing, science, music and theology with subject-specific content to ensure that learners can study their subject of interest in their access year. The access course, also known as PESS as it **focuses** on developing **personal effectiveness and study skills**, is worth 20 credits at SCQF level seven and runs for 15 weeks. The module is in a fully online format and is studied through a **Virtual Learning Environment** so it has been widely used as an access course for study at home or in a

learning centre. The module's goals are about **developing key skills of relevance** to higher education studies, so it **focuses** upon the analysis of a student's personal strengths and areas for development. It aims to enable them to demonstrate effective written and oral communication of complex information selected from multiple sources. The module also seeks to apply and demonstrate a systematic approach to the development and evaluation of personal learning and study skills, including group work. On completion of the module students should be **equipped with the key skills necessary** to be successful with any ongoing studies at Higher Education level. The course runs twice a year, in September and January, to offer flexibility for potential students.



»I FOUND THAT GOING INTO YEAR TWO FROM COLLEGE THERE WAS A LOT OF WORK I WAS TOTALLY NEW TO ...
... Having this support helped me with the transition.«

ON-COURSE SUPPORT
AND RETENTION



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND WORK TO **SUPPORT RETENTION**

»Social and academic integration was fostered by **STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACHES** and this was seen as a vital aspect of achieving retention ... Examples included: organising induction events, investing in the student experience during the first year, rewarding **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** such as part-time employment and social engagement, reviewing assessment practices, and offering **PERSONAL TUTORING**.«²³

»Fostering a sense of belonging lies at the heart of retention and success ... The evidence suggests that retention and success are best addressed by approaches which seek to develop: supportive **PEER RELATIONS**; **MEANINGFUL INTERACTION** between staff and students; knowledge, confidence and identity as successful higher education learners; and an higher education experience that is relevant to students' interests and future goals. Universal rather than targeted approaches are the preferred model in most retention and success (including attainment) strategies.«²⁴

23) IBID, p.38

24) HEFCE (2013), p.8

Glasgow School of Art – Prato Retention project

Creating confidence

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART (GSA)

➔ has developed one of the **first international widening access programmes** of its kind in higher education, in partnership with Monash University, Australia. GSA was invited to bring a group of students who had participated in the widening access schools programme to Monash University's Prato Centre in Tuscany to join their course on 'The development of Italian Art and Design'.

GSA students participating in the programme are young, first year undergraduates from secondary schools across the West of Scotland **characterised by low progression to higher education** and from low Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). For 10 days they studied alongside Monash University students. Teaching staff from Monash and GSA provide an art history and theory basis for on-site visits to museums, galleries and architectural sites in Prato, which is a leading European

textiles centre, Florence, Pisa, Siena, Venice, and Lucca. The intensity of the experience and the development of a peer support group which can be relied upon on return to GSA helped **improve student confidence and retention.**

GSA developed and maintained this project as part of its retention strategy for under-represented groups whose **experience of foreign travel and cultural visits is often limited.** Scottish students from low SIMD backgrounds can feel isolated, out of place, as not really 'belonging'. **These students do not lack talent or ambition. What they lack is confidence.** The Prato experience, which was a brief but intense interlude in four years of undergraduate study, has demonstrated that there are effective ways to build confidence in such students in art schools. The success of the project demonstrates that high impact, imaginative and collaborative interventions can be effective.



University of Glasgow – Local Student Orientation Event

Responding to student feedback

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW ↻ A new orientation event was held at the University of Glasgow this September geared towards **supporting local and mature students**, those commuting to campus and those who have taken part in a Widening Participation programme. Historically this group has been more likely to drop out during their first year so the aim of the orientation event, which took place before Freshers' Week got underway, was to help **improve retention and continuation**.

The new initiative was based on research findings that this group of students are more likely to leave the University and their studies early. **Student feedback on their induction needs** from questionnaires and focus groups showed that the same group of

students are less likely to get involved in the social and academic induction activities during Freshers' Week and beyond as they spend less time on campus.

Four-hundred new students took part in the first orientation event with existing undergraduate students and postgraduate tutors helping out, welcoming new students, showing them around campus and passing on expert knowledge and experience from their first year at Glasgow. In order to start the students off with **access to peer group support**, the Students' Representative Council and Freshers' helpers came to promote the benefits of Freshers' Week to build interest and encourage attendance, lunch was hosted in the Student Union to give further

opportunities to make connections and there was a specific session for mature entrants which was attended by the University's Mature Student Association.

Staff working in widening participation and student retention led the activities with expert help and support from the Student Learning Service and Academic Writing Programme, academics and academic Advisers all talking to students and answering questions.

The event was oversubscribed which indicates the level of demand and appeal that exists for this kind of service amongst new non-traditional students. The University now intends to embed it as part of its **on-going widening participation and retention activity**.



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Edinburgh Napier University – Student Learning Advisers

One-to-one support

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY ⇄

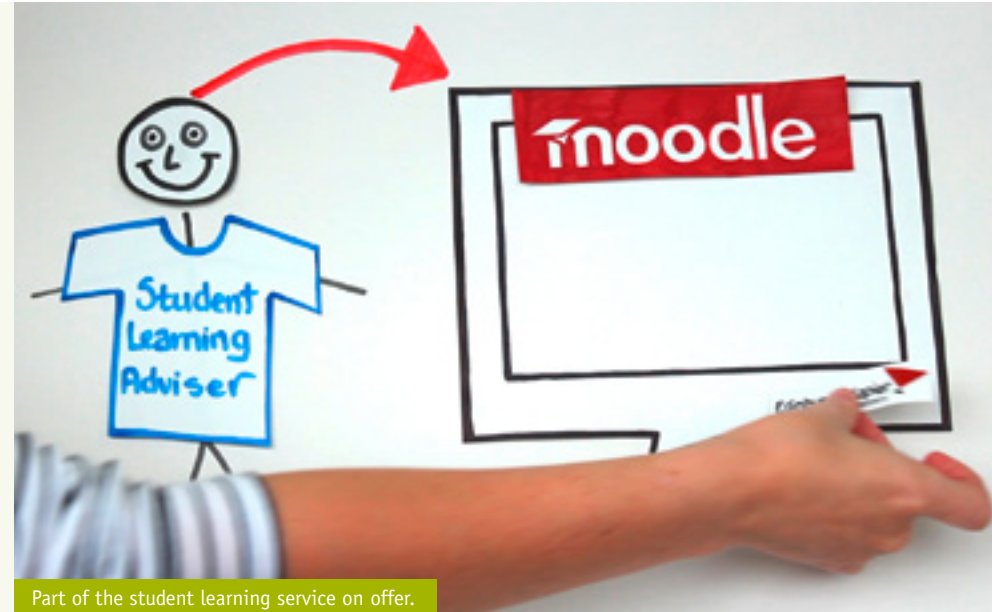
In 2013 Edinburgh Napier University expanded its academic skills support provided by the *Student Learning* team thanks to funding support from the Scottish Funding Council. This included the **recruitment of student learning advisers** who are able to focus on providing support with key academic skills such as including academic reading and writing, sourcing, using and citing information, critical thinking and writing, written and oral presentation skills, numeracy and data handling, dissertation management, and improving exam technique.

This service is available to any student however the team ensure that **students from a widening access background are made especially aware of this additional support**, via promotion by letter, email and transition workshops specifically for Care Leavers,

articulating students and mature students. So far the service has been used by students with a wide range of current academic skills; from those who are new to university level studying and those feeling unconfident about their existing skills, to successful students who want to aim higher and achieve the best they can.

One-to-one support is available or students can either be seen as small groups sharing a similar development need. Evaluation of the first full year suggests it has proved successful. In 2012/13 over 2,200 attendees registered for workshops and more than two-hundred students took advantage of the one-to-one service.

Feedback from students suggests that the *Student Learning Adviser* provision has **made a significant difference**, especially for those students entering from non-traditional backgrounds:



Part of the student learning service on offer.

» I just feel they were very helpful when I asked for help and advice. I found that going into year two from college there was a lot of work I was totally new to. Having this support helped me with the transition. «

»As a mature student out of education for a number of years my academic skills were extremely rusty and it was invaluable having input into pulling together essays.«

University of Aberdeen

Students 4 Students

THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ⇨

runs a peer mentoring scheme called Students 4 Students (*S4S*). *S4S* provides transitional mentoring for first year undergraduates as they begin their studies in higher education through help and support from their fellow students.

S4S has been rolled out across the entire University following successful pilot schemes, during which positive feedback was received from both Mentors and first years. *S4S* Mentors are provided with over 10 hours of intensive training by various sections of the University, including Student Support Services, the University Counselling Service and the Aberdeen University Student Association (AUSA) Student Advice Centre.

Peer support is delivered in small groups with each *S4S* Mentor having no more than five first year students in their group. This offers the opportunity for conversation, but at the same time keeps the groups small

enough to facilitate full participation by all those present. *S4S* Mentors also meet with first year students on a one-to-one basis if required, and have the support of a member of staff within their School who acts as the School *S4S* Coordinator. All *S4S* Mentors provide written feedback on a monthly basis to their *S4S* Coordinator and this information is used to tailor training for the subsequent year and to maintain a record of the time *S4S* Mentors are spending in the role. *S4S* is a collaborative venture that links the University of Aberdeen with the Aberdeen University Students Association; as such it is student-led and provides an extra level of support for first years over and above that already provided by the University Advising and Tutoring schemes, and in addition to the pastoral care offered by members of staff.

Back on Course Scotland

Being there for early leavers

OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND ⇨

Back on course Scotland is a free, impartial information, advice and guidance service for early leavers from higher education. It is not intended as a substitute for the retention activities of individual higher education institutions. It provides further support once a student has left and can provide feedback to enhance retention strategies of the participating universities.

back on course was established in response to concern about the number of students leaving higher education before reaching their study goals and the cost of non-completion both financial, and in terms of lost opportunity to the student, the university and wider economy. *back on course* Scotland was launched in January 2013 as a three year pilot run by the Open University in Scotland and initially involving seven Scottish institutions. It is funded by the Scottish Funding Council.

Despite a great deal of research having been conducted on improving retention within HEIs, it has proven problematic to carry out research with students after they leave institutions. In addition, there has been little or no systematic attempt to offer early leavers from Scottish institutions guidance on their future direction.

back on course Scotland aims to address these shortfalls.

Since the scheme was launched in January, 975 early leavers have been referred to *back on course* Scotland. During the next development phase of the project the aim is to increase the number of early leavers reached through the scheme by rolling out *back on course* Scotland services in other Scottish universities.

www.backoncourse.ac.uk/about-back-course-scotland



ACCESS ALL AREAS CONCLUDING REMARKS

This publication has tried to convey a little of the breath of widening access initiatives available in Scotland with a view to supporting those from non-traditional backgrounds into higher education.

It has done so by grouping some activities together and presenting them in a roughly sequential order from activities aimed at very young primary school age children, throughout school, into college and options for those who have been out of formal education for many years. This is helpful in one regard as it highlights the fact that universities are reaching out to all ages, at all stages and through a variety of routes. However, this should not be mistaken for a suggestion that the path to university is a linear one; this is far from the case for many people.

Hopefully the lasting impression readers will take away from this publication is that whatever the age, whatever the personal circumstances, whatever path has been taken up until now, if an individual has the will and the potential to benefit, there is an opportunity available to support them into a higher education in Scotland.

raise **aspirations**,
raise **attainment**,
offer **support & guidance**,
create **alternative routes in**,
create **second chances**,
be **highly targeted in approach**
and be **inclusive ...**

These are the activities necessary to
widen access to university successfully

Universities
Scotland



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