



Universities Scotland's articulation of the sector's principles

Throughout spring/summer 2022, the Scottish Government is consulting on a set of principles for the further and higher education sector, as part of a wider exercise to define the purpose of "tertiary" education.

Universities are driven by strong values and principles. As part of our constructive engagement in that exercise, Scotland's university leaders have come together to articulate the principles that inspire us. They are:

Universities are crucibles for solving 21st century problems

- Universities research, teaching and innovation are at the heart of building a greener, fairer and more prosperous future.
- Universities are core to addressing challenges and opportunities including building a just transition to net zero, developing people with the skills for the future green economy; developing the technologies that will enable us to thrive in a sustainable way; addressing the food challenges facing the world; and developing socially and culturally vibrant communities around universities as 'anchor institutions'.

Universities are forces for economic transformation

- Universities are forces for economic transformation, generating an estimated £11 of economic impact for every £1 of public investment.
- Universities are central to meeting the current and future needs of business for instance through the development of entrepreneurial graduates with a wide range of attributes for success; the translation of research into innovative products and processes; the incubation of new businesses in university facilities; and through developing collaborations with business to develop and implement new ideas.

Universities develop and attract people with the skills and attributes for success

- All university courses develop students' aptitudes and skills for professional success throughout their careers. For many students that is on courses that lead to specific professional accreditation; all students are on courses that develop a wide range of attributes for employability and success throughout their careers.
- Students have a high quality university learning experience, informed by up to date research.
- Learning is for life: higher education must be accessible to people at diverse stages of their lives and careers including school leavers, people progressing from college, and people looking to upskill or re-skill at different stages of their career.

- Universities draw in the talents of over 100,000 students from the rest of the UK, the EU and the wider world.

Universities are forces for social justice

- Universities are forces for good as anchor institutions for their city and regional communities, as well national and international actors. They provide high quality opportunities for a wide range of learners. They provide high-quality employment and support local services. They attract talent and inward investment and develop graduates with skills and enterprise to contribute to the common good.
- Learning is for all: societal inequalities and individual disadvantage must not be a barrier to higher education. Learners have diverse needs and aspirations, and higher education choices must be available to meet this diversity.

Universities' research helps us to understand the world better, and to make the world a better place

University research is valuable in itself for advancing the frontiers of human knowledge; is key to addressing the challenges of how we live well and sustainably on our planet; is the foundation of university teaching; and is a resource to drive business growth and public service improvement.

Universities support Scotland's place in the world

- Scotland's identity as a caring, inclusive, and prosperous nation is supported by universities with a broad range of international relationships. Our attraction of international staff and student talent is a force for cultural and economic growth.
- Universities' international engagement is a force for the common good, including the exchange of talent and ideas between nations, and collective action to achieve the UN sustainability goals.

Ends.

August 2022