

Internationally Scottish

Creating global communities

Universities
Scotland





Internationalisation in Scottish universities: Diversity and togetherness bring value

“Internationalisation means many things. A rich, diverse student culture. More rounded graduates who can access better employment opportunities. Stronger global communities.”

I’m thrilled to see universities in Scotland consistently embracing students and staff from all over the world. Our universities have already established wide ranging global partnerships, but as a forward looking higher education sector in the world, we always want to do more.

International students are incredibly important to Scotland. Not only for their massive contribution to the economy – £1.94bn – but also the way they enrich our culture. I’m continually inspired by the integration I see between UK students and their international counterparts. We are proud to represent all students and staff in Scotland’s universities.

Responding to political uncertainties, the global pandemic and sustainability challenges, encouraging effective integration and mutual respect across cultures, ensuring all students have access to the support services they need and providing equal opportunities for mobility experiences – none of these simply happen. But our universities are working hard to put mechanisms in place that can break down barriers and make sure these challenges are overcome.

Diversity and togetherness bring value. Scottish universities can provide a home for all – somewhere to learn together, live together, and build a stronger global community.

This publication is a snapshot of the incredible initiatives and projects happening in our universities. A support network for teenage refugees, student links built from Scotland to China, research teams connected to the other side of the world. And so much more.

These stories demonstrate the incredible impact that our universities can have not only in our local communities, but across the globe. Together, we can harness this internationalisation, boost our economy and make Scotland a greater force for good in the world.

Prof Andrea Nolan
Convener of Universities Scotland
and Principal and Vice-Chancellor
at Edinburgh Napier University





British Council Scotland are delighted to support the development of this publication. As the UK's organisation for international cultural relations, we recognise the critical role higher education plays in building enduring relationships between people of the UK and other countries. This publication celebrates the positive, innovative and varied ways that Scotland's universities are building connections all over the world.

The benefits of a diverse campus are plentiful, but they do not arise naturally in the presence of international students. As the case studies in this publication show, these benefits are only realised with a strategic approach to internationalisation of teaching and learning, and taking care over the experiences of staff and students, both domestic and international.

Scotland's universities play a crucial role in supporting our country's global connections. But they also fuel internationalisation at home, in our cities, communities and student bodies – making Scotland a better place for all.

Lucy Young
Head of Education
British Council Scotland





Why students choose Scotland

Universities as famous as our hospitality

Studying abroad is exciting – but travelling to a new country and adapting to a different way of life can also be scary. A warm welcome is essential. In Scotland, our university campuses are among the most welcoming and culturally diverse in the world.

Each year more than 36,000 international students from 180 countries study alongside over 160,000 Scots, almost 32,000 students from the rest of the UK and more than 21,000 from elsewhere in the European Union.

Over the last five years, our international student population has grown by 25%. Scotland is also the most popular UK study destination among EU students, only second to London.

A world renowned university sector

Aside from the diverse culture, what draws students from all over the world to Scotland? Put simply, we offer a high quality of education. That means flexibility for students to study a range of topics relevant to their interests and graduate with an internationally recognised four-year undergraduate degree, followed by plenty of post-graduate options. It also means the option of certificated exit points below

the full Honours degree and the choice to accelerate or decelerate their studies as needed.

Our world-class education is also reflected in high student satisfaction with the quality of teaching at Scottish universities which is rated at 85%, higher than the UK average.

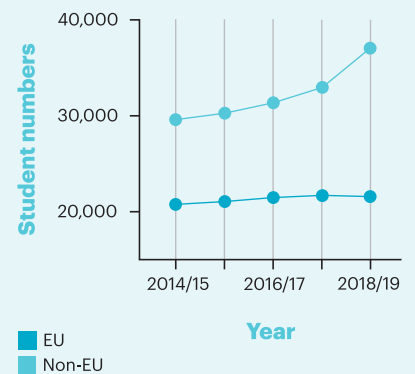
Away from the class

Studies are important, but it's also crucial that students have ways to socialise and meet new people. Scottish institutions have almost 1,000 student societies and 500 sports clubs with thousands of student members. These activities consistently receive a high satisfaction score from international students.

In this section, five students talk about their experience of studying in Scotland, both on and off campus.

Each year more than **58,000** international students from 180 countries study in Scotland.

EU and non-EU student numbers



The Global Room: where cultures meet

University of Dundee

The Global Room

The Global Room provides a relaxed social space where students and staff can feel at home on campus. It's a central hub where everyone is welcome to celebrate diverse cultural events and meet new people from around the world. Staff are available for language support and offer drop-in sessions for Immigration Compliance and the International Advice Service.

For Heather Doughty, a psychology student from Hungary, the Global Room has played a big part in making her feel at home on campus:

"My everyday worries vanish in the Global Room. The environment of acceptance and integration is enhanced by the positive, welcoming attitude of the staff. They always ask how I am, how my studies are going and, most importantly, whether I would like a cup of coffee or tea – sometimes with biscuits! I feel acknowledged and cared for, which is very important for students like myself who are far from home and only see their family members twice a year."

First opened in 2017, the scheme is guided by a steering group of staff and Students' Association representatives. The long-term plan is for this to become an entirely student-led space, making sure it helps international students like Heather to integrate.

"I've made so many friends there, from so many different countries. Sometimes our meetings were mediated by staff. Some were by chance – trying to grab the same coffee mug or realising that the other person is also singing the song that is playing on the radio.

"The Global Room is like my second home. It's easy to get to, but so hard to leave – I love spending time there!"



"I feel acknowledged and cared for, which is very important for students like myself who are far from home..."

Experiences that last a lifetime

Edinburgh Napier University

Transnational Education Exchange with partner in Sri Lanka

Edinburgh Napier University is passionate about building internationalisation partnerships which develop sustainable models of transnational education (TNE) and encourage an international outlook for students and staff.

Ashinsa de Silva Wijeyeratne, a TNE student from the Spectrum Institute of Science and Technology (SIST) in Sri Lanka, received a grant from Edinburgh Napier to visit the University as part of her degree. The visit helped Ashinsa explore her degree subject in a new light:

“Coming from a smaller institute, it was quite lovely to see what a ‘real’ university is like. Meeting the scientists carrying out research that could make a difference was truly inspiring.

“I received plenty of support from everyone around me and the design of the course was beneficial as it gave an overview of the many aspects of microbiology and biotechnology. It showed me the vast range these subjects have and helped me understand the areas I might pursue as a career.

“Before continuing my higher studies, I hope to work in Sri Lanka for a few years, preferably in environmental microbiology or a similar field. In two or three years I hope to do a PhD, possibly outwith Sri Lanka. I feel my course will be immensely helpful in gaining experience in laboratory techniques and correct research methodology for future use.

“Scotland exceeded my expectations. I feel as though my story with Scotland has just begun and I know I’ll be back in the future!”

“I feel as though my story with Scotland has just begun and I know I’ll be back in the future!”





A Glasgow welcome

University of Glasgow
International Mentor Scheme

The University of Glasgow's International Mentor Scheme was introduced in 2015. Since then 360 student volunteers in Glasgow have welcomed over 1,100 visiting students from all over the world. The scheme pairs new students with mentors who can help them settle into life in Scotland.

Rhoda von Below, a University of Glasgow student from Germany, has been a mentor in the programme for three years:

"After taking part in the scheme for three years, I can not only rave about the benefits for visiting students but also my own development.

"Initially, I was excited about meeting incoming students and giving them the same warm welcome that I received when I moved to Glasgow. As it turns out, you learn much more about yourself when mentoring than you do about the other person!

"Through meetups, I formed friendships easily which increased my confidence. I've now been Mentor Leader for two years, so I'm fully engaged with incoming students and supporting the mentors. Here I can see the benefits of the scheme even better.

"This truly captures the essence of Glasgow and Scotland – a warm welcome for all strangers."

"Mostly, I see the impact in the socials I organise, where mentors and mentees meet for fun, reflect on their experiences, and form new friendships. This is what I appreciate most about the scheme; seeing people forming friendships with visiting students from all over the world. This truly captures the essence of Glasgow and Scotland – a warm welcome for all strangers."



A global view from the student union

University of the Highlands and Islands
and University of the West of Scotland

Internationalisation led by student unions

An international students' perspective brings a new dimension to every aspect of student life – from seminar discussions to campus socials. And their input is especially welcome in creating a diverse student union.

Andrew Bowie studied at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and is now Vice President for Higher Education with the Highlands and Islands Student's Association (HISA):

"My study time was more enjoyable and rewarding thanks to having so many international students in my lectures, many of whom have become close friends.

"We have been working to lobby UHI on the assurances it can provide our students, as well as producing resources in various languages to advise international students on the help and support they can access."

Franklin Jacob came from India in 2014 to study Applied Bioscience with Forensic Investigations at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS). Here he has found an organisation doing all it can to embrace different cultures:

"In 2015 I became a member of the University's Senate International Advisory Committee. I was elected as the Black Students' Representative at the National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland in 2019. The skills I gained helped me explore my true self and learn more about what I can achieve.

"Scotland opened my eyes to see beyond education. It helped me develop the sense of helping others by getting involved. From being a chair of my union's board, to sitting on UWS' board and nationally representing BAME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students in Scotland – I wouldn't have been able to achieve all this if I hadn't come to Scotland to study."



"I wouldn't have been able to achieve all this if I hadn't come to Scotland to study."





“Our university campuses are among the most welcoming and culturally diverse in the world”



A global staff experience

Bringing international lessons home

It's not just our students who come from all over the world. Scotland's universities are global organisations, full of academic and professional staff from the EU and beyond. Staff from outside the UK make up 22.3% of the workforce in Scotland's universities, which is higher than in universities across the rest of the UK.

These staff bring a fresh perspective to research and teaching, helping to train a future skilled domestic workforce and maintain Scotland's position as a world-leading destination for teaching and research.

And when Scottish universities thrive, it supports the economic, cultural and societal wellbeing of Scotland as a whole.

Growing numbers

Employment of international staff has been increasing significantly in Scottish universities. Over the last five years, EU staff numbers increased by 50%, while non-EU staff numbers went up by 43%.

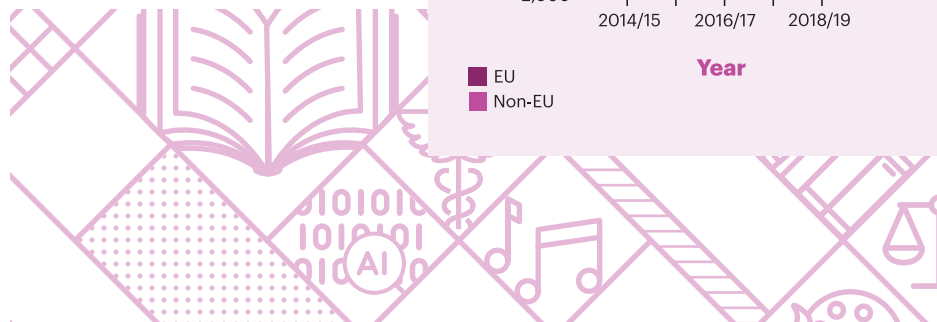
This internationalisation of our workforce brings more skills to our higher education sector and the country as a whole. And as these numbers grow, so does the international reputation of Scottish universities.

Internationalising staff

As well as welcoming staff from other countries, universities are enhancing opportunities for international learning and research practices for both their academic and professional staff. Many are participating in short staff-exchange opportunities or the Erasmus+ international week scheme.

The result: the number of staff taking part in outward mobility increased by 96% over the past five years.

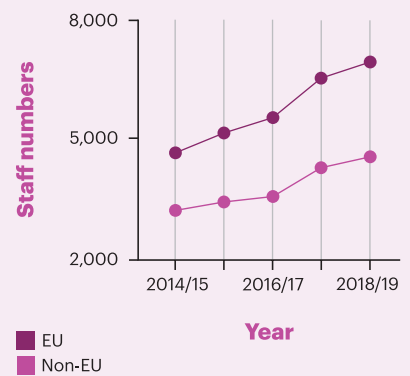
These stories tell how staff members at three Scottish universities benefitted from training, cultural exchange activities and outward mobility.



Over the last five years, EU and non-EU staff numbers increased by

47% in Scottish universities.

EU and non-EU staff numbers





From Aberdeen to Qatar: an international university

University of Aberdeen

University of Aberdeen Qatar Campus

The University of Aberdeen is proud to be the first UK university to operate a dedicated campus in Qatar. A partnership between Al Faleh Group for Educational and Academic Services (AFG) and the University, the Qatar campus opened to 120 students in September 2017.

Since then, the campus has attracted more than 400 students to study a range of business programmes. It has also welcomed a number of staff from Aberdeen. Lindsay Tibbetts, a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Business School, has found her time on campus to be beneficial for all parties:

“Working alongside colleagues in Qatar has been enormously rewarding. I’ve been immersed in a new culture and gained an international perspective, while giving students in Qatar the same quality education delivered in Aberdeen.

“We’ve created a strong community that not only benefits the students, but also our staff. Cross-departmental challenges are now seen as opportunities to learn rather than barriers to overcome.

“The Qatar campus has made significant contributions to the University strategy, providing mechanisms and support for more staff and students to have international experiences and intercultural exchange.”

Local students receive a valuable exchange of international context and values that help prepare them to enter a global workforce. One crucial example is the language used in the classroom:

“In the UK we tend to avoid direct commands with students, but in other cultures this can cause confusion. Understanding this has helped us to communicate better with our international students, both in Qatar and back in Scotland.”

“We’ve created a strong community that not only benefits the students, but also our staff...”





A global research community

Heriot-Watt University

Heriot-Watt University Malaysia Campus

Heriot-Watt University's Dubai and Malaysia campuses – established in 2005 and 2012 respectively – expand the global reach of the university and tap into an ever-growing community of international researchers. Lynne B Jack, an academic and researcher with over twenty years' experience, moved from Heriot-Watt's Edinburgh campus to become Director of Research for the Malaysia campus:

"When the opportunity for a long-term secondment arose, my curiosity was piqued. My children had recently left home to pursue their own degree qualifications, and it seemed like the perfect chance to expand my professional, vocational and cultural horizons.

"Almost two and a half years later, I am delighted that I made this decision. As part of the Senior Leadership team, I now have responsibility for developing and embedding research and business engagement on the Malaysia campus."

Since 2017, research in Malaysia has grown exponentially. New projects are being funded on a regular basis, many of which are undertaken jointly between academics in the UK and key partners and stakeholders in South-East Asia:

"Seeing our community grow in this way, I feel incredibly proud of what we've achieved. Support from the Edinburgh campus has been integral to this success. For example, we've made a contribution to development of the University's 2025 strategy that we believe will benefit Malaysia and UK colleagues in the coming years, to build meaningful collaborations and better internationalise the overall impact of our research."

"Seeing our community grow in this way, I feel incredibly proud of what we've achieved..."

International Staff Week: insight and inspiration

University of Strathclyde International Staff Week

International Staff Week is a scheme, supported by Erasmus+, which brings professional or academic staff from participating higher education institutions or partner countries together to learn from each other and explore new approaches to internationalisation.

Gordana Nesterovic, University of Strathclyde Recruitment Coordinator, attended two of these events – one in Dresden, Germany in 2017, and a second in Lisbon, Portugal in 2019. And Gordana feels that she's benefitted personally and professionally from collaborating with international colleagues:

"I find it inspiring to exchange ideas through activities and workshops with colleagues from all over the world. It's comforting to realise that, despite our differences, we all face similar challenges and can collaborate to overcome them together. Internationalisation offers a chance to gain fresh perspectives on team structures and strategies that can transform the way we work."

Following her International Week at the Technical University of Dresden, Gordana used the knowledge she gained to help organise the University of Strathclyde's Agents Conference:

"Participating in a five-day event gave me valuable experience when it came to thinking about how we best showcase University of Strathclyde to our agents, who come from all over the world.



"It's comforting to realise that despite our differences, we all face similar challenges and can collaborate to overcome them together..."

"I feel fortunate to have been able to make the most of this programme. I've made many friends that I still keep in touch with through email and social media. I'm eager to share the knowledge and experience I've gained with colleagues in my institution and beyond."



A curriculum for global skills

Preparing students for the world of work

In a competitive global environment, employers are looking for graduates with a range of intercultural competences and global skills. Global citizenship was identified by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland as a key graduate attribute for the 21st century.

Scottish universities are helping students to develop these desirable attributes and prepare them for global employment. In fact, 78% of Scotland's employers who had recruited a Scottish university leaver found them well prepared for work. This journey starts with an inclusive and globally relevant curricula.

International partners

Scotland's higher education institutions currently have exchange partnerships in over 100 countries, delivering courses to over 42,000 students outside the UK.

These partnerships involve a wide range of teaching and learning activities that aim to bring global and intercultural perspectives to universities. They improve interdisciplinary learning, build on working abilities in multicultural teams and deliver the opportunity to study or work abroad.

Language learning is a cornerstone of internationalisation. Our universities are starting to offer students more options to develop language skills as part of their degree, both as combined subjects and as extra-curricular courses. The Open University in Scotland has also partnered with Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) to offer short modules to help primary school teachers enhance their skills in language learning.

These stories show how student and staff learning has been improved through internationalised curricula in Scottish HEIs.

Exchange partnerships in over
100
countries, delivering courses to over
42,000
students outside the UK.





Developing a dream career

Abertay University

Abertay's partnership with Perfect World

Abertay University runs a strategic 10-year partnership with Chinese entertainment giant Perfect World. The programme welcomes 100 China-based students to Abertay every year, and aims to encourage further business, academic and research connections between Scotland and Asia – both in new academic programmes and computer games research.

The experience helps students nurture global skills through access to Abertay's international expertise; the university is often cited as the best computer games degree in Europe, while Dundee has become a global hub for the industry.

It was through this programme that Lili Liu graduated with an MProf in Games Development and fulfilled a long-held dream: "I'm from Dalian, a coastal city in China, and I'd always wanted to study abroad. Abertay's partnership with Perfect World allowed me to do that.

"Dundee is home to so many video game companies, it feels like a community of developers and creative people.

My Games Development MProf was all about preparation for the world of work – it helped me learn exactly how the industry works, while also improving my skills in a professional environment.

"On top of learning practical programming, communication and design skills, it was about learning to work with other people from a range of backgrounds to produce something special in a workplace-like environment.

"My time in Scotland has been fantastic. I returned home with the skills I needed to work in the industry I love. I've also made memories and friends that will stay with me for life. I found a new city and country that has become part of who I am."

"It was about learning to work with other people from a range of backgrounds to produce something special."



Global skills for students and staff alike

University of Stirling

MSc Media and Communications in Vietnam

The Communications, Media and Culture division at Stirling prides itself on its international outlook, captured in the courses and opportunities it provides to students and staff alike. As part of this commitment, they have partnered with a number of overseas institutions, stretching from Spain to Vietnam, to help students develop global skills through internationalised curricula and studying abroad.

Dr Katherine Champion is Programme Director for the MSc in Media Management in Stirling and also co-ordinates modules on the MSc Media and Communications programme in Vietnam:

“Teaching on the programme... has helped to decolonise some of my curricula both at home and away.”

“Our international curricula are designed to ensure students leave us as highly skilled and employable graduates who possess global skills.

“Both programmes aim to develop students’ understanding of the global media industries, explaining key theoretical frameworks by drawing on examples from a range of cultural contexts. Debates in class focus on students contributing their own cultural and contextual knowledge so they can learn from one another. Students are also encouraged to write about media in their countries of origin.”

Katherine found that shaping curricula for diverse student groups also helped broaden her own skills:

“Teaching on the programme in Stirling, and as a fly-in faculty member in Vietnam, has given me an appreciation of the growing and vibrant media sectors of China and Vietnam. The experience has helped to decolonise some of my curricula both at home and away.”



Ryan's first global assignment

Glasgow Caledonian University BA Multimedia Journalism – International Project

Students on the BA Multimedia Journalism course at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) all take part in a Media Project module in their final year. This encourages students to participate in activities that align to the GCU Strategy for Learning – such as a curriculum that is flexible, inclusive, accessible, engaging and internationalised.

Ryan Bounagui, a Multimedia Journalism student from Glasgow, took part in a project that was as internationalised as they come. He was one of three GCU Multimedia Journalism students the university sent to report on the inaugural European Games, held in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2015. Ryan travelled more than 2,500 miles to report on the multi-sport event, which hosted 5,400 athletes from 49 Olympic nations.

The games offered Ryan first-hand experience of an international sporting event and provided a global perspective on his chosen career:

“It was incredible to be given the opportunity to work on a global event of this magnitude, which was broadcast all over the world. It gave me an amazing first step in my career following graduation.”

Ryan is now a Production Journalist with ITV News, having completed their traineeship scheme. He first came to GCU via the Caledonian Club, one of the University's participation outreach initiatives which encourages young people from areas of multiple deprivation to consider applying for university.



“It was incredible to be given the opportunity to work on a global event of this magnitude.”



The art of internationalisation

Glasgow School of Art

Platform for internationalised curricula in the arts

As Head of International Academic Development at Glasgow School of Art (GSA), Thomas Greenough provides academic leadership for the School's internationalisation strategy.

Through discussions with one of GSA's strategic partners – The Royal Academy of Art in the Hague (KABK) – it became clear that approaches to internationalisation varied greatly among higher art schools that are members of the European League of the Institutes of the Arts (ELIA).

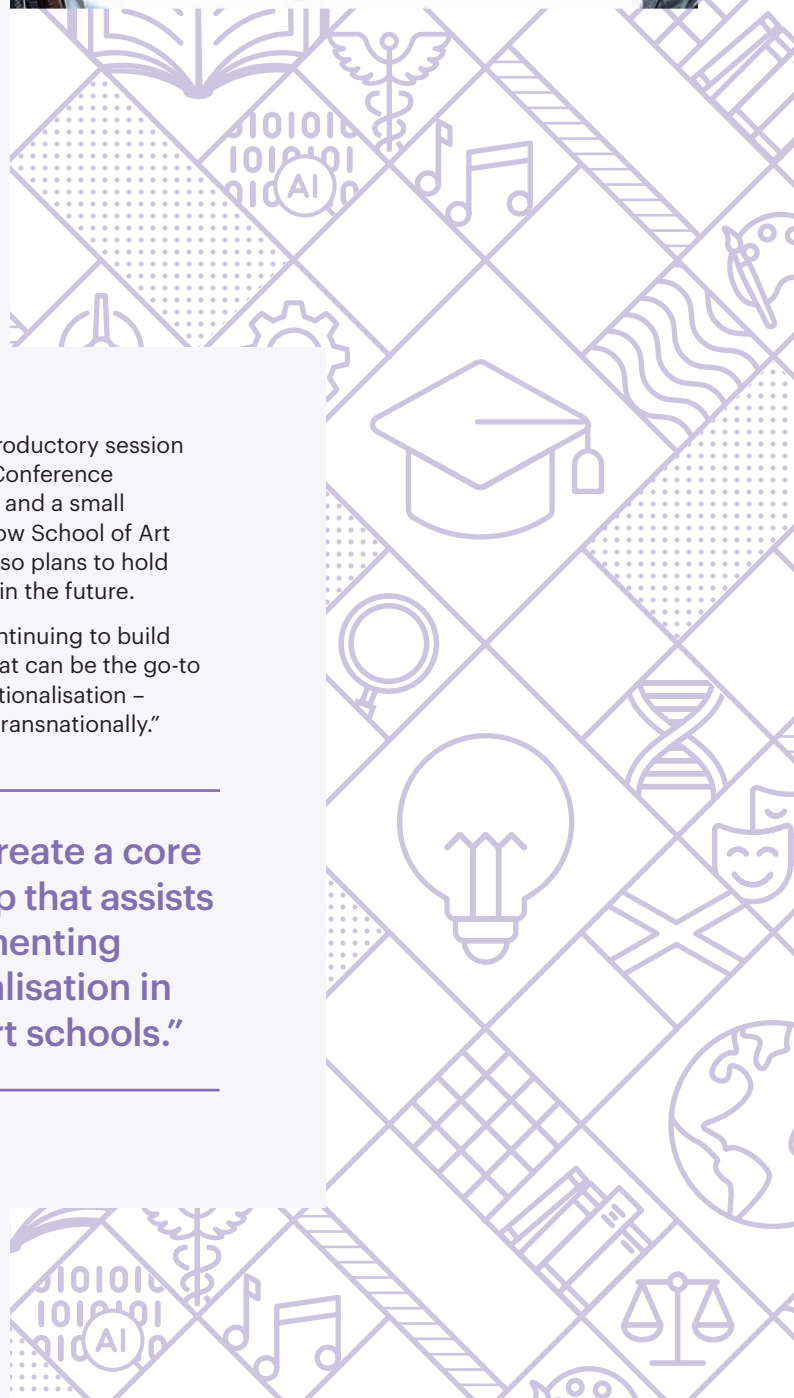
To create some common themes for internationalisation within European Art Schools, GSA and KABK enlisted the support of ELIA in creating a group to share knowledge. Members help each other deal with the challenges of internationalisation in the 21st century and answer questions specific to internationalisation in art education institutions. Thomas explains his aim for the group:

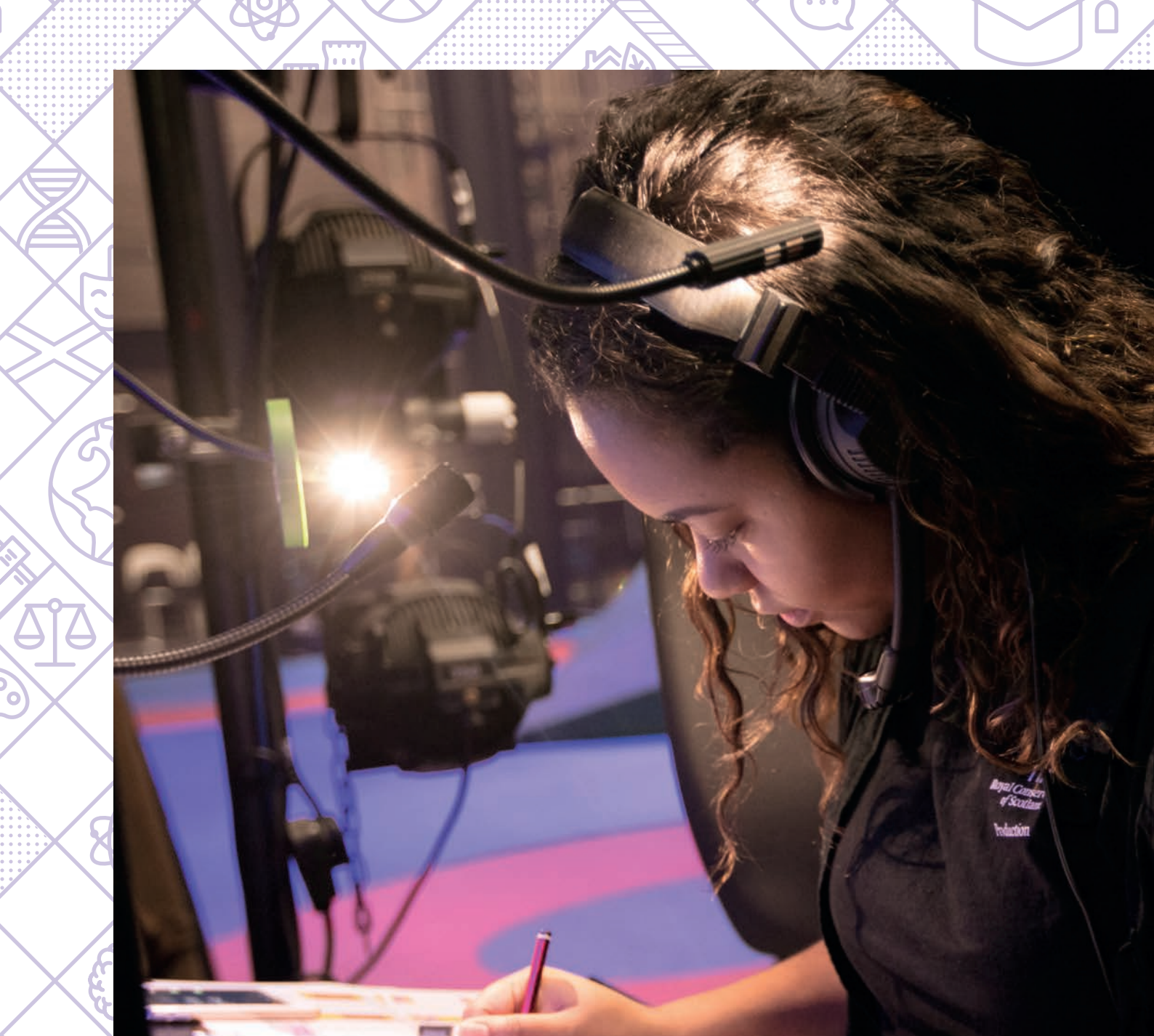
“We want to create a core expert group that assists with implementing internationalisation in European art schools. With this group, we can discover first-hand the common themes of internationalisation that run through European art and design education.”

The group ran an introductory session at the ELIA Biennial Conference in Rotterdam in 2018 and a small conference at Glasgow School of Art in 2019. The group also plans to hold regular conferences in the future.

“I look forward to continuing to build a knowledge base that can be the go-to reference for internationalisation – not only at GSA but transnationally.”

“We aim to create a core expert group that assists with implementing internationalisation in European art schools.”





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Supporting the community

Learning that goes beyond the classroom

The impact of our universities' success is far-reaching. It's not only the universities and students that benefit, the local and global communities are richer and more dynamic for the presence of internationalised students and staff.

Higher education is a key sector of Scotland's economy in its own right. Universities' activities deliver an annual economic impact of over £7.1bn, rising to £11.3bn when the 'graduate premium' is taken into account – multiplying every £1 of public investment into over £11 of economic impact.

Scottish universities also support employability and stimulate spending in their areas. They are often the largest employers in their regional economies and are generating new jobs all the time. In 2017, Scotland was the most successful part of the UK for spin-out creation, with the HE Business and Community Interaction Survey finding that 20% of all active firms were launched out of UK universities.

Priceless community engagement

Beyond the financial, students bring huge benefits to Scottish life. They integrate with local communities and engage in various support activities,

such as volunteering. Our student unions offer connections and opportunities with volunteering organisations and charities in local communities and across Scotland. Overseas students play a huge role in supporting language learning in local communities, teaching Mandarin, Arabic and more.

These kinds of initiatives encourage students and the university to support vulnerable members of society, share their culture with locals and help to enrich our communities.

These stories showcase just a few of the engagements that Scottish universities are undertaking with communities at home and abroad.

Every £1
of public investment
in higher education
yields £11
of economic
impact.



A place to call home

University of Edinburgh The Teenage Syrian Refugee Tutoring Project

The Teenage Syrian Refugee Tutoring Project brings together students and staff from the University of Edinburgh to help teenage refugees settle into their new life in Edinburgh.

Co-founded by Syrian refugee and alumnus of the University of Edinburgh, Dr Amer Masri – alongside English teacher Nadin Akta – the project focuses on exploring ways to help teenage refugees integrate at a new school.

Dr Masri reflects: “When I came to Scotland in 2011, the University helped me a lot. I’ve always felt grateful and I wanted to help other Syrian refugees in Edinburgh. No words are enough to thank the University for supporting me and this initiative.”

The project quickly received an incredible response from tutors keen to offer their time. Thanks to those volunteers, students can access school tuition and language lessons, get help adapting to life in a new country, gain confidence and make new friends in a welcoming environment.

And the learning goes both ways – many of the tutors are Arabic students who are able to practice their Arabic while the teenagers learn English.

For Dr Masri, the scheme is making a big difference in the community: “I feel proud that we have done something that benefits these teenagers. Scotland will be their home country in the future, and they need to be positive individuals in this community. The best way is through education and socialising with the locals.”



“When I came to Scotland in 2011, the University helped me a lot. I’ve always felt grateful and I wanted to help other Syrian refugees in Edinburgh...”

Getting active in the community

Robert Gordon University
Community volunteering
with Streetsport

Elia Martinez Ulles, a Forensic Sciences student from Spain, registered to volunteer in the local community while studying at Robert Gordon University (RGU). Elia helped out at the Denis Law Legacy Trust's Streetsport programme, which delivers free weekly sports and creative activity sessions for young people across Aberdeen.

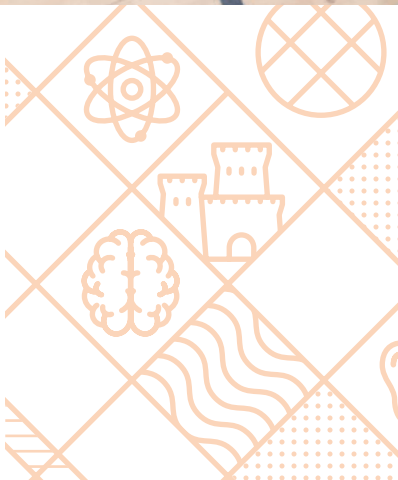
Elia believes the programme allows participants to build better links with the community and gain first-hand experience of other cultures:

"I decided to volunteer for Streetsport because I wanted to give something back to the community during my time at university. This gives me a chance to help others while having a great time. By engaging with the youths who take part in Streetsport, we've all been able to learn about other cultures and see how rich a place the world is.

"I'm still learning about the differences – as well as the similarities – between the people of Scotland and Catalonia. I feel that Streetsport has really helped me to adapt to life here by making me feel like part of the community.

"Volunteering in this programme has helped to build my confidence and enabled me to meet new people, which is an invaluable experience for someone coming to study in a new city far away from home."

"Streetsport has really helped me to adapt to life here by making me feel like part of the community"





Inspiring change

Queen Margaret University STEKAskills

Since 2015, Queen Margaret University students have worked with STEKA, a charity which supports vulnerable children in Malawi. Professor Emma Wood, a Senior Lecturer involved in the project was moved to support the charity's work:

"I was really inspired by the grassroots activist Godknows Maseko, who runs STEKA; a home for young survivors of trafficking and abuse in Malawi while campaigning for children's rights and gender equality, and against early marriage."

"We can campaign together to challenge social norms and change the world..."

STEKA became a client for QMU student projects, and their collaboration proved extremely valuable. The University now hosts three young STEKA residents on degree programmes on a fee waiver basis, and the students have been active in supporting a number of local community initiatives.

The close relationship between QMU and STEKA led to the formation of STEKAskills – a charity which aims to connect communities in Scotland with their Malawian contemporaries to fight poverty and homelessness, and protect vulnerable young people.

Emma has seen the power of this collaboration: "This relationship really has had a profound impact on our students, helping them gain a new understanding of the importance of community and family. Students have described the dialogue groups as 'life changing' as it expands their knowledge on the impact of issues like climate change and gender inequality.

"For me, the most exciting impact is the realisation that we can campaign together to challenge social norms and change the world. I want to live in a country full of global citizens like them."

Innovation to save lives

University of Aberdeen

ATMO-Vent

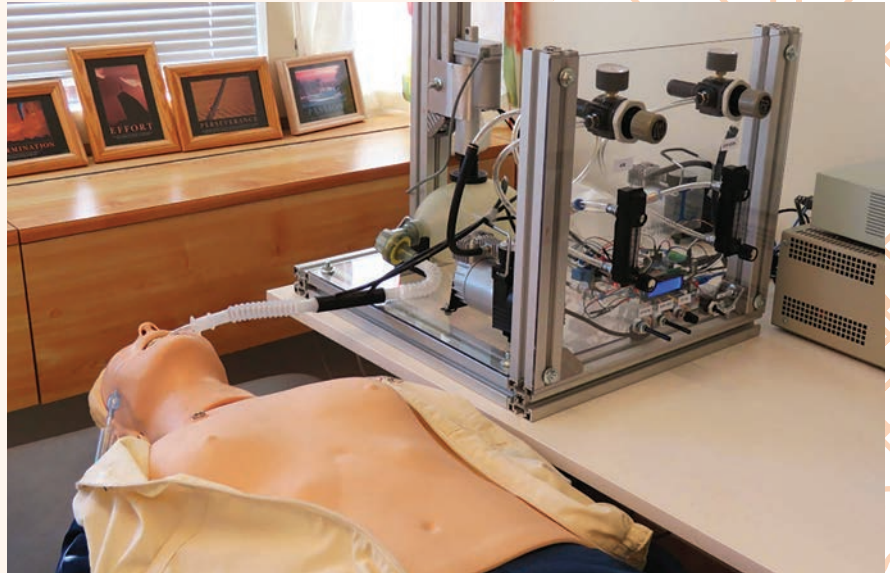
As the impact of COVID-19 started unfolding across the globe, one group of academics from the University of Aberdeen set about trying to help healthcare efforts.

Professor Javier Martín-Torres, originally from Spain, recently joined the University as head of the Planetary Science Group – best known for building instruments for planetary research. He saw an opportunity to use the team's skills to help with the shortage of ventilators needed to treat the virus:

"We have a wealth of experience in building, calibrating and qualifying space instruments using commercial components. We've used this expertise to design and build a fully operating prototype ventilator using widely available parts. This means it is easy to build and ideally suited to rapid, mass deployment in healthcare settings."

The team's quick-thinking innovation has put one of Scotland's leading education institutions at the centre of a global network of academics collaborating to help the world overcome COVID-19. The team are in conversation with the University of Rwanda over plans to help them roll-out the ATMO-Vent at a large scale across Africa, and there has also been interest from India.

Professor Martín-Torres adds: "I chose to conduct this work in Scotland as the research and education programs at Aberdeen closely match my expertise. Personally, the major reward of ATMO-Vent is to help people. If we can save just one person's life or relieve suffering, our efforts will have been worthwhile."



"If we can save just one person's life or relieve suffering, our efforts will have been worthwhile."





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Alumni around the world

Global careers, shaped by Scotland

Scottish universities have talented alumni in almost every corner of the globe and every industry – they are peacebuilders, artists, agriculturists and a great deal more. They are also great ambassadors for our institutions and for Scotland as a whole.

Making sure graduates enjoy their degree and leave university with the skills needed to enter the professional world is key. 84% of recent international graduates from Scottish universities say their degree was worth the investment and 78% of them are satisfied with their career.

A warm welcome, excellent study and work opportunities, and a vibrant student life has led to high levels of satisfaction from alumni. As of 2019, 91% of international graduates said they are satisfied with their learning experience in Scotland.

A long-lasting connection

Alumni are the bridge that links Scotland to the world; presenting our international profile and reputation to the world. Scottish universities seek to maintain a strong and vibrant relationship with

alumni nationally and internationally, using online platforms and alumni networking events around the world.

Alumni seek to do the same with their university and Scotland. 74% of recent international graduates indicate that they are more likely to do business with the UK as a result of studying here.

Here are the stories of three alumni who embraced internationalisation during their time at university. What they experienced in Scotland has shaped who they are, and they maintain a connection with the country.

91%
of international graduates said they are satisfied with their learning experience in Scotland.



A worldwide support network

University of St Andrews

Noor Huda Ismail graduated from the University of St Andrews in 2006 with an MLitt in International Security Studies. He now works as a peacebuilder, writer and filmmaker specialising in de-radicalisation and counter-terrorism. He's also the founder of the Institute for International Peace Building (IIPB).

Noor believes that his time in Scotland helped him lay the foundations on which he's grown his career back in Indonesia:

"The friendly, supportive and diverse environment at St Andrews expanded my horizons by giving me the opportunity to meet students and scholars from all over the world – many of whom I'm still in touch with today. They provided me with an invaluable sounding board and support network when I returned to Indonesia to set up IIPB in 2008.

"My research at St Andrews set out the premise on which my work today is based. I established the IIPB in response to the threat of terrorism, and it is now focused on developing and deepening our understanding of peace and conflict, political violence, terrorism and other transnational crimes."

Noor's work was recently recognised in the photo exhibition 'Changemakers: 35 Visions of Global Leadership'. The exhibition celebrated 35 leaders who are determined to overcome humanity's most pressing problems, within the context of the international ties forged through the UK Government's Chevening Scholarships programme.

"The friendly, supportive and diverse environment at St Andrews expanded my horizons by giving me the opportunity to meet students and scholars from all over the world..."





A place on the world stage

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Stasi Schaeffer came from the United States to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) in 2009. She obtained an MA in Classical and Contemporary Text (Directing) in 2010, but didn't see her long-term future in Scotland:

"When I first came to study in Scotland, my plan was to stay for the year of my course then return to New York City. However, during my studies, I made numerous industry connections and gained a real understanding of the Scottish theatre scene."

After graduation, Stasi worked with Scottish Opera and at the Royal Opera House in London. She is now self-employed as a freelance stage director in Glasgow, where she's found a vibrant and welcoming creative community:

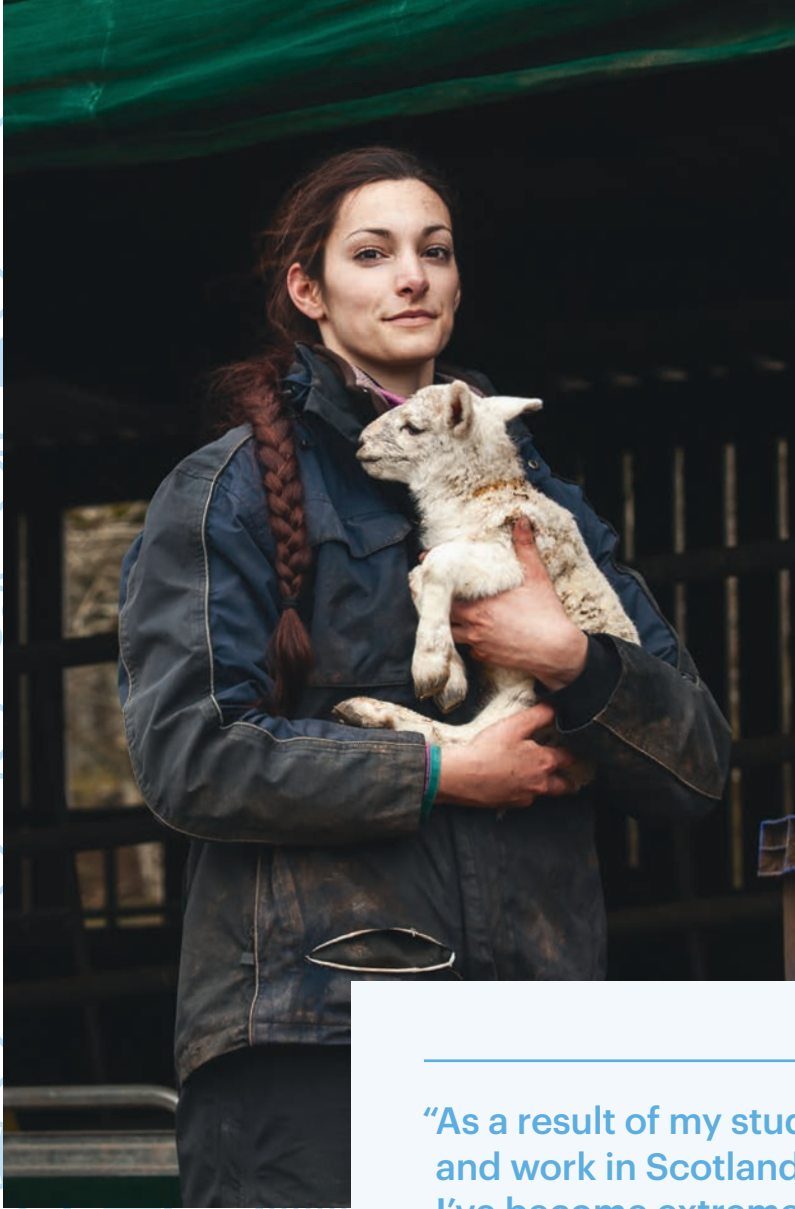
"In Scotland I have directed a wide range of projects, including shows for long-running lunchtime theatre company 'A Play, A Pie and A Pint', several shows at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and productions that have toured large-scale theatres.

"Recently, I worked on a production that was performed in both Scotland and the US. It was great to be able to take a piece of work I made in Scotland back to the US for a homecoming!

"I have found Scotland and its arts community to be open and approachable and I felt like I became a part of it all quickly and easily. My education at the RCS and my life in this country enabled me to achieve a lot of really incredible things and have some truly unforgettable experiences."

"I have found Scotland and its arts community to be open and approachable and I felt like I became a part of it all quickly and easily."





Cultivating global talent

Scotland's Rural College

Growing up in the Swiss countryside, Claire Simonetta always had a love of nature and the outdoors. But she was particularly inspired by the Scottish landscape after visiting on holiday:

"I knew immediately that I wanted to spend more time here to meet people and experience the culture. I was lucky to take part in several work experience placements in agriculture, countryside and conservation management, and the veterinary profession."

Keen to combine her practical knowledge with academic studies of farming, Claire began to study agriculture at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) in Ayr in 2013. The course has shaped her career to this day:

"My time at SRUC was incredibly valuable in boosting my confidence and giving me the theoretical knowledge I needed to progress in my career."

"I now combine my work on my partner's hill farm with my work as an agricultural consultant, and I use my passion and drive to actively engage with the local farming industry."

For Claire, studying in a different country has encouraged her to look even further afield and engage with the global agricultural community:

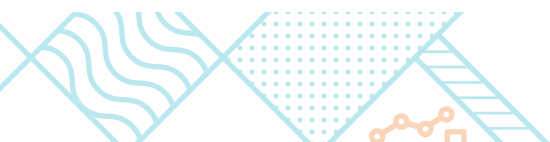
"As a result of my studies and work in Scotland, I've become extremely passionate about getting involved not just here, but also abroad. I'm lucky to have had the opportunity to represent the UK in an EU-China Exchange Programme on how to achieve agricultural sustainability and adequately support the next farming generation."

"As a result of my studies and work in Scotland, I've become extremely passionate about getting involved not just here, but also abroad."



Committed to internationalisation

Reflecting on these projects and initiatives, all of our member universities are keen to continue the excellent progress we have made on internationalisation. To do this, the universities have agreed on a number of commitments that will support our internationalisation ambitions moving forward.





1 Celebrate the diversity of students and staff

We recognise the value that international students and staff bring to university life. And we are keen to continue supporting students, staff and their families, by providing appropriate services to strengthen integration. By placing even greater emphasis on celebrating diversity, we hope to see an increase in numbers of international staff and students over the next five years.

2 Increase outward mobility and widen access

Many Scottish universities have already signed up to the pledge set out in the Universities UK Go International: Stand Out campaign. That pledge aims to double the percentage of UK students studying, working or volunteering abroad as part of their degree to 13% between 2017 and 2020. Along with the campaign, we aim to explore further opportunities for mobility, which give students at least one mobility experience during their degree.

3 Enhance graduates' global skills and readiness for employment

The 'QAA Focus On' projects identified 'Readiness for Employment' and 'Global Perspective' as priority areas for graduate skills. To make sure graduates from across all disciplines have the opportunity to apply their learnings and global skills to the world of work, we're exploring options that guarantee students at least one work placement during their studies. These placements, some of which will be international, give students experience working abroad and also help diversify the Scottish SMEs who welcome international students for placements.

4 Strengthen relationships with alumni

We have excellent relationships with alumni worldwide, and these ambassadorial relationships are hugely important for Scotland's higher education sector. While we develop these as individual universities, we are also working with the Scottish Government Alumni Working Group to enhance collective benefit for the country. Together, we will explore opportunities that are beneficial to alumni by hosting joint high-profile events or potentially establishing a sector-wide global internship programme.

