



University of St Andrews
Scotland's first university – 1413



Access Annual Report

2017

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2015-2016 was truly extraordinary for both our access projects and our lifelong and flexible learning students. This year our projects engaged with around 2,000 participants, SFC funding was extended for our Access for Rural Communities project, we saw the highest number of students coming from our local colleges registered at the University and we saw our first Gateway to Medicine students take their place on our full medical programme.

Within Admissions, our access work is diverse and the projects are many. These are coordinated by a very committed team, many of whom accessed higher education through our own initiatives. The work is also supported by all our Academic Schools and professional service units to whom I am very thankful.

In this report you will find information about our initiatives and their successes, strategic drivers, research and how these come together to inform our use of contextual data in our undergraduate admissions process. It will hopefully show our commitment to widening access and participation here at the University of St Andrews and to breaking down barriers that often impede those with the potential to perform well in higher education. If you wish to find further details on all our projects and initiatives then this can be found on the University's website.



Mike Johnson
Director of Access and UK Admissions

Our partners



What we do

The University is invested in an extensive outreach programme designed to enable learners from underrepresented groups to access and participate in higher education.

Working across a wide range of age groups, we aim to raise aspirations and build confidence in the learners we engage with. These groups have a background of social and/or economic disadvantage, whether this is related to their place of education, family background or residence. This work is driven by the University's commitment to:

- finding and enabling those with the potential to access a world-class education, regardless of socio-economic background
- providing alternative pathways into higher education for those who face barriers to entering into more traditional higher education routes
- providing support in raising attainment and closing the attainment gap
- providing access to higher education for protected categories (age and disability)
- adding value to the student body through diversity and equality.

The total Admissions operational spend across access, outreach and lifelong learning activities for 2015-2016 was approximately £312,000.

Engagement with local and national organisations, teachers, parents and guardians is vital to our work. Our own staff and students strive to provide positive role models for learners beginning their journey to higher education.

Detailed information about our projects can be found in our Access brochure and on our website.



Primary school activities (P6 and P7)

We work closely with primary schools across Fife to deliver a range of projects, introducing the concept of higher education from an early age. Through this early intervention we aim to raise the educational aspirations of young children, some of whom are living in the most deprived areas of Scotland.

Since 2008 our primary school interaction has grown through the development of Space School, Science Camp, Living Local Thinking Global and the increasingly popular Lego Mindstorms loan boxes supporting computer programming in schools. Through this approach, we have engaged with approximately 1,350 pupils across 90 primary schools between August 2015 and September 2016.

In 2017, our primary school offering will develop further as we expand our pilot First Chances Foundation project, which was launched in September 2016 to include 27 primary and 4 secondary schools in Fife supporting pupils in P7, S1 and S2. The project will focus on literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills to support the transition of learners from primary into secondary school. Many of our existing activities will be consolidated into our First Chances Foundation programme.

“Our school highly values the partnership that exists with St Andrews, and parents of the children who take part in initiatives like Space School are appreciative of the fabulous opportunity that these offer their children. These initiatives give the children an insight into learning at a high level and promote confidence making them more effective in their learning and successful in their studies under the tutelage of a highly respected academic institution.”

Allison Wright, Headteacher



Secondary school activities (S3 to S6)

A key focus of our work with secondary schools is concentrated on raising aspirations, influencing attainment levels and encouraging informed decision-making about higher and further education options. This is done through a coherent programme of long and short term outreach programmes designed to build pathways for pupils between S3 and S6.

Each of our initiatives focuses on providing knowledge about higher education to help pupils:

- understand different educational pathways and opportunities available in higher or further education
- understand the UCAS application process
- understand the academic, financial and pastoral support available at university, with particular reference to St Andrews
- understand the link between different educational pathways and employment/career opportunities
- increase their subject knowledge
- develop key transferable skills.

During 2015-2016 we were involved in the design and delivery of a wide range of activities and events and worked with a large number of beneficiaries from a variety of different target groups. This has been done in partnership with a number of local and national organisations supporting engagement with approximately 1,100 pupils and over 160 schools through seven distinct initiatives across the UK.

Over the next two years we aim to expand and develop First Chances, increasing engagement to over 500 pupils per year. The opportunities for care experienced pupils and young carers will also be developed.

Participation 2015-2016

Initiative	Established	Age Range	Area Focus	No. of Pupils
Sutton Trust Summer School	2001	S5/Y12	UK	134
First Chances	2007	S3 – S6	Fife	380
First Chances In Care Flexible	2015	S3 – S6	Fife	16
Reach Scotland	2011	S4 – S6	Fife	317
Access for Rural Communities (ARC)	2013	S4 – S6	Argyll and Bute, Highlands, Western Isles, Orkney & Shetland Islands	88
Guided Access Programme (GAP)	2014	S6	Fife	7
Student Shadowing	2011	S5 – S6	Scotland	40
St Andrews Information Day	2013	S5 – S6	Scotland	113
Total				1,101

“The work of the Widening Participation team at St Andrews is an excellent example of positive and forward-thinking access work. They are committed to improving social mobility and fair access to higher education. The Sutton Trust has for many years worked with St Andrews to run activities for students and teachers. The results have been great and we look forward to continuing our partnership for many years to come.”

Sir Peter Lampl, Sutton Trust

Gateway programmes and pathways

We are committed to ensuring that St Andrews is accessible to all those who have the potential to succeed. Our Gateway programmes enable those whose circumstances make it difficult to achieve our minimum academic requirements with the opportunity to study at St Andrews.

The University offers three Gateway programmes: Physics and Astronomy, Computer Science and Medicine. Physics and Astronomy Gateway and Computer Science Gateway offer an enhanced first year of study, whilst Gateway to Medicine offers a bridge between S5 and entering our medicine degree programme.

In 2015-2016, 41 students were successful in receiving an offer to study at St Andrews through one of these three routes.

Gateway Programme – Applicants, Offers, Acceptances and Entrants

	Applicants	Offers	Acceptance	Entrants
Gateway to Computer Science				
2013-2014	19	17	6	5
2014-2015	16	13	4	2
2015-2016	12	5	5	3
2016-2017	30	14	10	9
Gateway to Physics and Astronomy				
2013-2014	47	23	13	12
2014-2015	40	21	15	13
2015-2016	56	32	20	14
2016-2017	49	23	15	10
Gateway to Medicine				
2015-2016	6	4	4	4*
2016-2017	14	10	10	10

*Two continued to Medicine. Two continued to a BSc in another subject area

"Gateway to Medicine has had a tremendous impact, not only on my academic life but also on me as a person. It allowed me to pursue my dream field of studies as well as providing me with valuable life experience of independence and a solid basis in the sciences creating an incredible base I plan to build my medical career on."

Jakub Sikora

Working with teachers

To further access and support the retention of disadvantaged pupils to the University, we seek to create stronger links between University staff and schoolteachers from secondary schools and colleges across the UK that have a large proportion of pupils from under-represented groups.

Teachers Together combines academic and admissions focused sessions to encourage discussion of curricular and resource matters including subject-related admissions advice and demonstrations of undergraduate programme content.

Through these events we have established contacts with over 130 teachers in 117 Scottish state schools since 2012, showing this is a cumulative project.

In June 2016, 56 delegates attended one of three events representing 43 state schools (20 education authorities) and 3 educational establishments across the UK almost doubling delegate numbers since the project began. This was achieved through a three-day residential programme and two one-day events piloted in Oban and Aviemore.

The average percentage of students going on to a UK HEI for these schools is 34% (from a range of 17% to 61%), with the majority falling below the national average of 36% (38 out of 43).

This year we aim to extend this work further by piloting an event in Glasgow alongside our three day residential programme.



Lifelong and flexible learning

The University is committed to providing alternative study routes for those who may have experienced some form of disadvantage during their education. Working closely with our local further education colleges and community groups we offer designated routes, both full and part time, which ensure that flexible study options are available to this group of potential students.

The University has 20 full-time undergraduate places available each year to those coming through alternative routes, such as HNC, HND and Swap Access courses. These students are admitted to an MA or BSc General degree pathway. This three-year degree programme allows students to aim for entry to third year of a named Honours course after two years on the General pathway. This group of students are also offered additional support and guidance through the transition from college to university. Since the pilot year in 2012-2013, 51 students have commenced study at St Andrews on the General degree.

In 2015-2016, 40 applicants to the General degree were made offers with 19 of those successfully meeting the conditions set and matriculating into St Andrews.

In the 2016-2017 cycle, 35 applicants were made offers for entry to St Andrews. 19 of those students went on to successfully meet the conditions of entry and matriculate into St Andrews.

Also during the 2016-2017 cycle the Lifelong Learning team engaged with over 150 HNC, HND, SWAP Access and Certificate of Higher Education students at Dundee and Angus College through a series of bespoke study skills workshops and talks as part of their preparation to higher education classes. This resulted in a significant rise in applications from the College for the General degree route for 2017-18 entry. The team aims to extend this into Fife College for the 2017-2018 cycle.

The General degree is also available part-time either during the day or through a series of bespoke modules delivered exclusively in the evenings. These modules are designed and taught specifically for adult learners who have been out of education for some time. Entry to this pathway requires no formal qualifications. The evening programme has been running since 2000 and has seen over 168 graduates, ranging in age from 22 to 82.

During the year 2016-2017 the evening programme saw a trial of our new Blended Learning facilities, which allow students to join a live class from a remote location. The trial has been well received by staff and students alike and will be made available to a wider range of classes for the academic year 2017-2018.

“Each year a number of our SWAP students are given a place at St Andrews. I’m especially pleased to see the 1:1 support they give to our widening access students once they take up a place at university. The support and guidance that the University of St Andrews staff give, especially in the first year, is crucial, and SWAP is extremely thankful to have such a great supporter in the SWAP partnership.”

Lesley Dunbar, Director, Scottish Wider Access Programme East



Contextual admissions

Ensuring fair access to the University by providing a fair, transparent admissions system that selects students based on academic potential, irrespective of their background, is a key priority for the University.

Our research-based contextual admissions process provides the University with multiple access markers. This enables us to put the achievements of an applicant into the appropriate context and base decisions on the potential shown in the application.

Through using this contextual process, 39% of our Scottish-domiciled entrants were flagged with an access marker in 2016-2017. In the four years following the implementation of this contextual admissions process we have increased the number of SIMD 1 and 2 entrants by 8.5%, rising from 8.6% in 2011-2012 to 17.1% in 2016-2017.

15% of our RUK-domiciled entrants (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) were also flagged with an access marker in 2016-2017. This figure is in decline and will be a focus of ours in future years to ensure we do all we can to support widening participation across the RUK regions.

As a University we remain committed to using contextual admissions in our policies and processes and believe that these multiple measures offer a truer picture of our ambitions and achievements in widening access. We seek to admit at least a third of our undergraduate home-funded entrant cohort with at least one access marker.

Undergraduate entrants with access code (Scottish domiciled only): four-year overview

Access Status	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Access Code	202	231	194	214
No Access Code	320	485	301	341
Total Intake	522	716	495	555
Access Coded	39%	32%	39%	39%

Undergraduate entrants with access code (RUK domiciled only): four-year overview

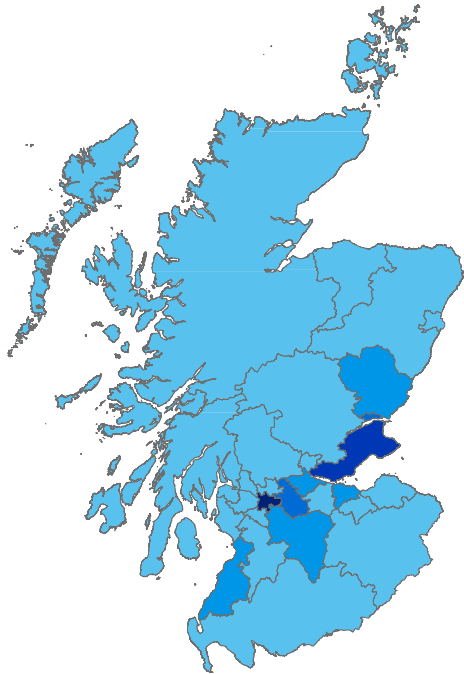
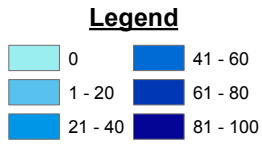
Access Status	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Access Code	119	119	90	93
No Access Code	428	484	448	511
Total Intake	547	603	538	604
Access Coded	22%	20%	17%	15%

Undergraduate entrants by SIMD quintile (Scottish domiciled only): four-year overview

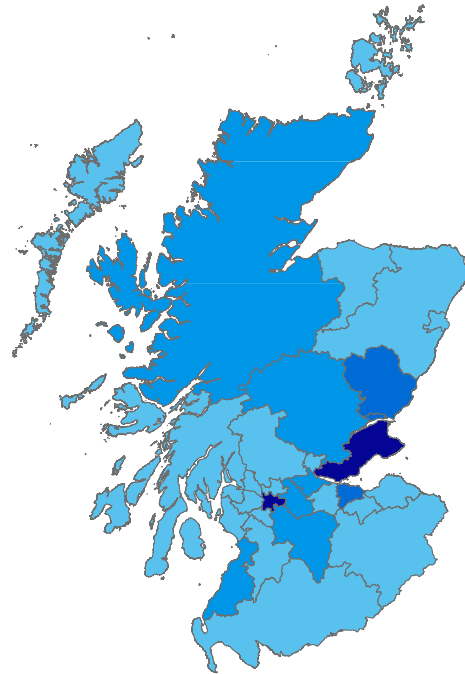
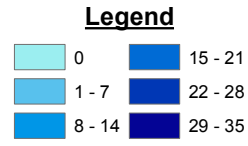
SIMD Quintile	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
1	5.7%	5.0%	5.2%	5.4%
2	7.8%	8.3%	10.9%	11.7%
1+2	13.5%	13.2%	16.1%	17.1%
3	11.8%	15.2%	15.7%	15.3%
4	23.6%	27.0%	24.3%	24.8%
5	50.2%	42.5%	42.7%	42.3%
No Data	1.0%	2.1%	1.2%	0.3%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Breadth of SIMD 20 and 40 admissions 2016-2017

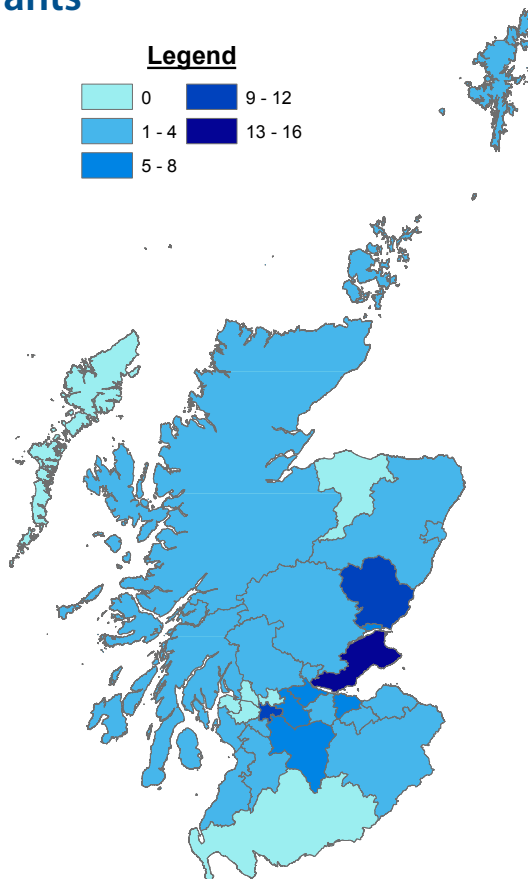
Applicants



Offers



Entrants



Scholarships

Finance should never be a barrier to higher education. The University strives to attract the very best students, regardless of financial circumstances and as such offers a wide range of scholarships based around financial need.

These include a £1,500 per academic year Entrant Scholarship award which is available to any UK student with a household income of less than £34,000 per year. Additionally, we have funds specifically aimed towards the cost of University-managed accommodation and bursaries for part time students. We also offer a wide range of endowed funds generously donated by our alumni and friends of the University, many of which are in the region of £3,000 per academic year.

The total scholarship funds allocated to students in the 2016-2017 academic year was in excess of £2.5 million, comprising over 1,000 awards.

In the academic year 2015-2016 our Student Services Team awarded £295,481 in Discretionary Fund payments to current students in financial need, as well as providing £52,054 in Childcare Fund payments to student parents.

Research

Research at the University of St Andrews is working towards making entry to higher education more transparent, and in that sense fairer. Our aim is to provide simple tools that help:

- **institutions to assess an applicants' potential**
- **policy-makers to rethink some of their guidance with regards to widening access**
- **students make their educational choice.**

Most recently, our research is drawn from the ARC project, the results of which are available online^{1,2}. Some elements of this research have already been published in two academic journals and presented at various conferences and seminars, including the Teachers Together conference and the Learning for all 2016³. It has been further developed in two main directions: the construction of a Scottish state secondary school index capturing education attainment, social inequality and rural/urban deprivation and an online portal allowing Scottish pupils to explore subjects, degree programmes and professions that match their interests and personality at their own pace.

1. Kirby, G, Lasselle, L and Macpherson, RA, 2015, 'Access to higher education for Scottish rural communities: an exploratory analysis' University of St Andrews, 82 pages, open access: <http://hdl.handle.net/10023/7553>
2. Lasselle, L, 2016, 'Barriers to higher education entry – a Scottish rural perspective', *Scottish Educational Review*, 48, 1, 78-88
3. Learning for all 2016 (joint national conference of the Scottish Funding Council and the National Union of Students Scotland on progress in widening access to further and higher education), event for practitioners, Lessons from the Access for Rural Communities project, Perth, March 2016, Mrs G Bisset, Dr L Lasselle and Dr G Kirby.

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