

**Universities
Scotland**



Widening access to Scottish higher education institutions

Alastair Sim
Director, Universities Scotland

www.universities-scotland.ac.uk

Twitter: [@uni_scot](https://twitter.com/uni_scot)



Overview

- Current action: 'life cycle' approach
- Progress so far
- Measurement issues
- What we're asking for
- What we're offering



The sector's commitment

“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.”

Action on access, Universities Scotland (2012)

How we deliver this commitment

A 'life cycle' approach:

Getting ready → Getting in → Staying in → Getting on

Access all areas (2012) has many examples (but this doesn't include everything)

Holistic and creative in developing opportunities for individuals
- diverse institutions have different contributions to make

Working in partnership with schools, colleges, funders and others to achieve collective goals



Life cycle approach

Universities Scotland's *Access All Areas* report demonstrates the broad range of widening access programmes in Scotland's higher education institutions.

www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/uploads/ACCESS%20ALL%20AREAS%20final.pdf



Life cycle approach: getting ready



Caledonian Club, Glasgow
Caledonian University.

Established in 2008, the *Caledonian Club* works with young people and families in deprived areas of Glasgow to raise education aspirations. Engagement commences at pre-school age in nursery school through to school leaving age.

Life cycle approach: getting ready

- Children's University. Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh & University of Strathclyde.
Children aged seven to 14 are helped to make the most of their abilities and interests and to experience further and higher education. The children gain stamps in their Passport to Learning as they take part in activities at school, university and in their communities.



Life cycle approach: getting ready

- Tayside Space School, Abertay University.
Up to 80 primary school pupils have the opportunity to study various aspects of space travel and exploration in a highly interactive programme delivered by University staff, which raises awareness of science and technology.
- Aspire, University of St Andrews.
The Aspire Programme works with pupils in primary schools throughout Fife, focussing on areas of social and economic disadvantage. Activities include a two-day residential Science Camp at the University, and student ambassadors provide activities for schools and help to staff and pupils in the use of Robotic Kits.

Life cycle approach: getting in

- Educated Pass, University of Edinburgh.
Educated Pass addresses the academic underachievement of 13–16 year old males from low participation neighbourhoods. It works with around 150 boys annually with a suite of activities and classes delivered by the University and its project partners, Edinburgh College and West Lothian College.



Life cycle approach: getting in

- Top Up Programme, University of Glasgow.
Top-Up has been working with schools in the West of Scotland since 1999 and is now an element of the FOCUS West Programme. Top-Up is a rigorous, academic programme that introduces S5 and S6 pupils to new learning methods and environments, as well as equipping them with the key critical skills they will need at university.



Life cycle approach: getting in

Contextual Admissions

Almost every university in Scotland has adopted contextual admissions, which puts someone's qualifications in context of the circumstances in which they were achieved and which can go some way to levelling out what is otherwise a very uneven playing field for applicants.

This is important in relation to the attainment gap as across Scotland, school pupils from the wealthiest 20 per cent of postcode areas are three times more likely to get three or four Highers at any grade as their peers from the poorest 20 per cent of postcodes.

Life cycle approach: staying in



Prato Retention Project, Glasgow
School of Art.

GSA students participating in the programme are young, first year undergraduates from low progression schools across the West of Scotland whose experience of foreign travel and cultural visits is often limited. This international widening access programme improves student confidence and retention as they participate in a course at Monash University's Prato Centre in Tuscany.

Life cycle approach: staying in

- Student Learning Advisers, Edinburgh Napier University. Student learning advisers were recruited in 2013, with SFC funding support, to focus on providing support to all students, but particularly those from widening access backgrounds, with key academic skills including academic reading and writing, sourcing, oral presentation, and numeracy and data handling.

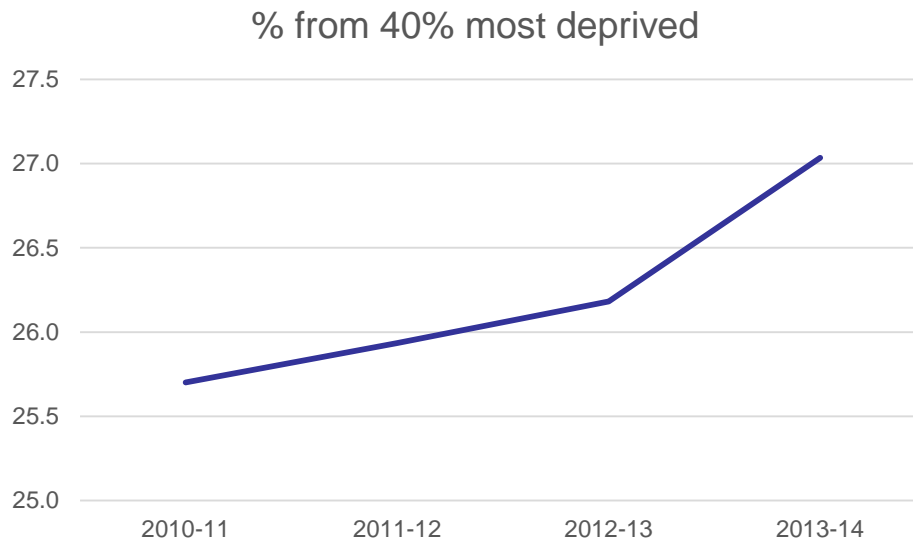


Life cycle approach: staying in

- Students 4 Students (S4S), University of Aberdeen.
S4S is a student-led peer mentoring scheme which provides transitional mentoring for first year undergraduates as they begin their higher education studies. Mentors are provided with over 10 hours of intensive training. Support is delivered in small groups to encourage full participation.
- Back on course Scotland, Open University in Scotland.
Funded by the SFC, this three-year pilot launched in 2013 involving seven institutions is a free, impartial information, advice and guidance service for early leavers from higher education. It provides further support once a student has left and provide feedback to enhance retention strategies of the participating universities.

Life cycle approach: getting on

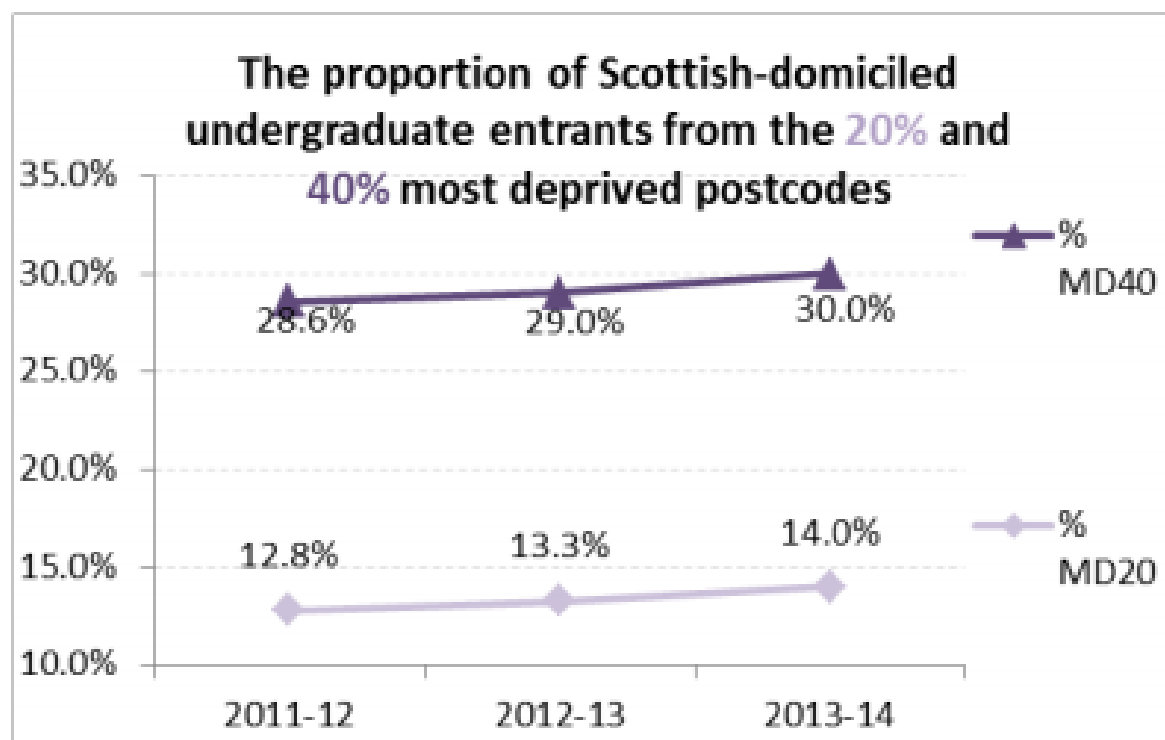
Scottish domiciled qualifiers 2010-11 to 2013-14





Progress: recruitment

Proportion of Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants¹ from the most deprived areas, 2011-12 to 2013-14





Measurement issues: SIMD

- Why SIMD is insufficient:
 - Area based, not individual
 - Around two-thirds of income-deprived people are outside SIMD15 areas
 - Around two-thirds of people in SIMD15 areas are not income-deprived
 - Doesn't capture other indicators of WA status



Measurement issue: SIMD

- How you select the measures impacts on how successful institutions appear. E.g.:
 - St Andrews University – 39% vs. 13.7%
 - University of Edinburgh – 50% vs. 18.1%

Measurement issues: action

- US, SFC and Scottish Government looking at wider Widening Access metrics to include:
 - Low progression/low attainment schools
 - Care leaver status
 - Low household income
- Subject to further development would like to consider
 - Carer status
 - Rural deprivation indicator

What do we want from the Commission?

- adopt an evidence-based approach and recognise the importance of effective performance measures
- recognise that different institutions face different access challenges and address these in different ways – everyone won't widen access to exactly the same people in exactly the same way
- address the school attainment gap – this is a MAJOR challenge in terms of widening access to young people
- but widening access isn't just about young people, so maintain focus on diverse routes into/through HE and lifelong learning (e.g. adult returners, articulation, RPL)



Educational attainment

- By the time university is a consideration the attainment gap between the wealthiest and the poorest presents a major challenge
- Pupils from the 20% least deprived post codes are three times more likely to get three or four Highers as their peers from the 20% most deprived post codes
- Only 4% of SIMD20 pupils achieved three or more 'A' grades at Higher and/or Advanced Higher compared to 26% of SIMD80 pupils
- We need to grow the pool of prospective applicants from deprived areas so that they have a more equal opportunity to access HE

What will universities offer?

- Experience of what works, and commitment to doing more of it
- Learning from the best of what has been done in Scotland and elsewhere in the world
- Commitment to partnership working and engagement with changing school- and college-level provision
- Further enhancing ‘second chance’ opportunities and lifelong learning (e.g. through articulation and RPL).

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Thank you

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