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Foreword

At the University of Edinburgh, we are deeply committed to using our knowledge and resources to address the most pressing challenges facing our world today. Sustainable development and social responsibility are a key part of the University's mission and our Strategy 2030. In recent years universities have assumed a critical role in progressing sustainable development. Through innovation, interdisciplinary research, and partnerships, higher education institutions such as Edinburgh are uniquely positioned to drive progress towards achieving the SDGs.

In our Strategy 2030, we reiterate our commitment to the SDGs – we address social and global challenges including the SDGs via our research; our social and civic mission commits us to making a global difference across the range of SDGs, from water safety to global justice; and we map our Key Performance Indicators to each of the SDGs. The recent Times Higher Education Impact Rankings table indicates the extent of our contributions.

I am proud to introduce the **SDGs: Stories of Impact**, which highlights and celebrates our ongoing commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all that we do. I invite you to explore these stories of impact as a snapshot of the talent and influence within our University.

By considering SDGs and the way they interact with our core activities, we can not only celebrate our collective efforts and showcase the remarkable initiatives led by our students, staff, researchers and partners, but also capture how we create meaningful impact in communities locally, nationally and globally. The initiatives range from groundbreaking research in renewable energy and public health to community-driven projects that enhance social equity and wellbeing.

I am particularly proud of the collaborative spirit that underscores our efforts to make the world a better place. The achievements documented here reflect the strength of our partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, industry leaders, and local communities.

We are proud of our global reputation for our research activity, industry collaborations, and social and civic responsibility initiatives. Yet we also recognise that as a university stretching across five campuses, our operational carbon footprint is one of largest in the UK HEI sector. Reducing this continues to be a priority for us, and we have put in place strategies such as our Community Plan; our Research and Innovation Strategy and our Procurement Strategy to help us mitigate this. Most recently, a replacement to our 2016 Climate Strategy was approved by our University Executive and the University Court, which raises the ambition and reach of our work.



As Principal of the University of Edinburgh, I am continually inspired by the dedication and passion of our community, and I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone involved in these projects. Your contributions are invaluable, and your work is testament to the power of education and research in creating a better world. Let this document serve as both a record of our achievements and a call to action for continued engagement with the SDGs.

Professor Sir Peter Mathieson Principal and Vice-Chancellor The University of Edinburgh



Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a call to action for developed and developing countries to address climate change by tackling tackle poverty, inequality, improving education and health, while preserving oceans, waterways and land and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. They were developed and adopted in 2015 at the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit as part of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

The SDGs provide a framework for governments and policymakers to use worldwide. Their application to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has increased over the past two decades, highlighting their role in achieving SDG objectives through curriculum development and teaching, research, operations and partnerships. The importance of SDGs to HEIs is underscored by their inclusion in global rankings like the QS Sustainability Rankings and Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, highlighting the appetite from a new generation of students for HEIs to contribute to sustainability.

The **SDGs: Stories of Impact** is an exploratory publication which looks at the ways SDGs intersect with the University of Edinburgh's Strategy 2030 and other governing strategies and policies. It celebrates impactful activities at the University which make a positive contribution to the SDGs, while acknowledging where progress is needed. The University signed the SDGs Accord in 2018, designed for advancing SDGs in HEIs, and this publication reflects the commitment to "inspire, celebrate and advance the critical role that education has in delivering the SDGs and the value it brings to governments, business and wider society" (SDG Accord).

Structure and framework

This publication highlights impactful stories from the University of Edinburgh (UoE) covering a period between 2019 – April 2025. It is organised around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as defined by United Nations (UN).

Each SDG is divided into five key categories: operations, community, teaching and learning, partnerships, and research.

- The operations category includes the University's strategies, policies, services, operations and management of buildings and finances.
- Community covers initiatives which benefit the community and are delivered within the UoE community or to local community.
- Teaching and learning considers approaches, Schools and units delivering learning and teaching excellence, degree programmes, entrepreneurship pathways, technology development and implementation.
- The partnerships category focuses on partnerships for sustainable development and includes collaborations within the University, across institutions, global partnerships, and partnerships with charities, civil and community institutions.
- The research category highlights relevant innovative research to progress development and implementation of policies, technology, and AI, among others.
- Feature stories are more in-depth stories that capture impact across the categories.

By aligning the categories with the overarching aims of the University of Edinburgh's Strategy 2030, the publication connects the University's key thematic and work areas to the SDG framework. Impact is defined in the publication as a change that makes a positive difference to people's lives on an institutional, local, national or global level. Use the hyperlinks and locations of each story to find out more and explore who delivers impact at the University.

The project employs a storytelling approach to effectively communicate the impact of University activities. By structuring stories around SDGs, it represents diverse disciplines, providing an equal platform for STEM, Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences alike. The variety of stories is presented by a combination of storytelling, data visuals, illustrations and photos. This narrative method emphasises the qualitative impact of the University's contributions, focusing on real-world benefits rather than quantitative measurements alone. As such, the publication is a communications tool that aims to celebrate the impact the University delivers and inspire future collaborations.

▼ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ▼ SDG Accord

To find out more about sustainability at the University of Edinburgh, please visit:

www.sustainability.ed.ac.uk



End poverty in all its forms everywhere



The Social Investment Fund

Traditional investment typically prioritises profit before societal impact. Social investment prioritises social benefit alongside a traditional financial return.

The University of Edinburgh has invested £8 million through a dedicated Social Investment Fund to support organisations addressing environmental and social challenges. Through social investment, visionary entrepreneurs are driving meaningful change across Scotland, the UK and internationally.

For example, Simon Community Scotland purchased 15 properties across Edinburgh, providing affordable accommodation for up to 30 vulnerable adults at risk of becoming unhoused. This has been life-changing for Greig:



Having a new home has changed my life in so much of a great way. I've got so much freedom to go out walking, to do my artwork and I feel it's helping with my mental health as well."

Greig

Socially positive investments

COMMUNITY

Community Grants

The University's community grant scheme supports local community organisations to deliver projects driven by them. This supports the notion that people embedded in their communities are the best people to identify and lead what residents need and want.

Grant infrastructure also supports the development of mutually beneficial relationships with the University. The initial funding often enables grantees to leverage further support from elsewhere.

Bridgend Crises Response was one of the projects that received funding from the University's Community Grant Scheme in 2023/2024. The project carried out research to tackle poverty in the local area and supported links between schools, community workers and local organisations with those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

The scheme was created in 2017 and has since made a positive contribution to the local community in the City of Edinburgh, East and West Lothian, Scottish Borders and Fife, particularly in areas with high societal inequalities.

- Community Grants Scheme
- **▼** Community Grant Scheme Impact Report (2017-2023) [PDF]
- Edinburgh Local

Directly benefiting local people



projects awarded (up until end of 2024)

organisations involved

organisations received repeated support

Addressing multiple SDGs

Mostly benefitting children and young people, BAME or non-English speakers, people with disabilities and the elderly

Students as Change Agents

As part of the University's Students as Change Agents challenge programme students collaborated with an external partner organisation, Rowan Alba, to come up with fresh thinking to tackle the challenge "How can we make rough sleeping a thing of the past?". Rowan Alba is a charity which provides long-term supported accommodation and community outreach to those affected by homelessness, addiction, and social isolation.

Working in collaborative and multidisciplinary teams, the student 'Change Agents' developed key skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving.

Challenge themes aligned with Research & Innovation Strategy 2030

organisations involved

Top five SDGs addressed in the programme











of students satisfied with the programme

would recommend to others

students have participated in the programme

By delivering solutions to real-world problems, such as ending homelessness, students become agents of change, realising the potential of their impact on society's endemic challenges.

- K Students as Change Agents
- Careers Service



Data for Children Collaborative

Children who grow up in poverty face significant challenges no matter where they are. They endure poor living standards, develop fewer skills for the workforce, and often earn lower wages as adults. Understanding and addressing child poverty requires a multifaceted approach, and data is a powerful tool to drive meaningful interventions.

The Data for Children Collaborative, hosted by the Edinburgh Futures Institute, is dedicated to leveraging data to tackle these issues. The Collaborative builds innovative ways to enable impactful cross-sector collaborations and to deliver data-driven projects responsibly. Projects have focused on tackling issues such as child poverty, access to services, and public health responses in Scotland and far-reaching regions like Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Nata for Children Collaborative: poverty projects
- Edinburgh Futures Institute
- **WUNICEF**; Scottish Government



Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health

The Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health (CHIH) addresses a pressing public health issue: homelessness. Collaborating with public and third sector partners across Scotland, CHIH focuses on populations poorly served by mainstream healthcare and on tackling the health inequalities faced by these groups, including those experiencing homelessness, involved in sex work, vulnerable migrants, and individuals in the criminal justice system.

In 2024, CHIH partnered with Heriot-Watt University's renowned research centre I-SPHERE to host a monthly seminar series. This initiative created a supportive platform for researchers and practitioners to explore developments in housing and health. By combining their expertise, CHIH and partners strengthen education, research, and community engagement efforts, influencing policy changes and improving the lives of marginalised populations throughout Scotland.

- Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health
- School of Health in Social Science



FEATURE STORY BioQuarter Community Project

Edinburgh BioQuarter is a leading hub of healthcare delivery, medical research and innovation, nestled in the heart of South Edinburgh. Recognising the socioeconomic challenges of its neighbouring communities – some of the most deprived in Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – BioQuarter has committed to fostering inclusive growth and empowering local residents. Residents from areas of higher deprivation are less represented in STEM careers, higher education and accessing opportunities that lead to better employment and outcomes. These challenges are compounded by broader social issues such as poverty, health inequalities, and food insecurity. Without intervention, these barriers could perpetuate cycles of poverty, limiting opportunities for children and families to improve their socio-economic status.

In response to these challenges, the BioQuarter Education and Community team has launched a comprehensive community engagement programme guided by principles of co-development, partnership, and evidence-based action. A cornerstone of this effort is the Superlab at Castlebrae Community Campus – a collaborative space fostering science education and community activities. This 60-seater facility hosts hands-on learning experiences, inspiring a passion for science across age groups.



Thistle young people programme visit Institute for Regeneration and Repair to explore the labs and the outdoor space on adapted bikes

The Science Mentors, a mentoring programme designed for S4-6 pupils in Castlebrae Community Campus, and Science Buddies, which pairs STEM professionals and scientists with local primary schools, further bridge the gap, connecting local young people with BioQuarter staff and students for mentorship and workshops. These relationships have increased students' confidence and aspirations in STEM subjects. In 2023/24, over 1,060 pupils and 500 community members engaged with these programs, reporting higher academic performance and aspirations.

Tackling health inequalities, the HPV vaccination workshops reached around 1,000 secondary school students by 2024/2025 and by providing crucial health education, the vaccination teams reported greater confidence in uptake of vaccines in the young people attending the workshops. This initiative is set to expand to three more schools, demonstrating a scalable multistakeholder model for tackling aspects of health inequalities. Addressing food insecurity, BioQuarter supports the City of Edinburgh Council's Discover! Programme by providing STEM activities. The school holiday programme offers free meals and activities to families who are in attendance by referral. This helps to mitigate social isolation and food poverty, while engaging families in educational activities.

Edinburgh BioQuarter illustrates how working as a partnership can drive meaningful societal change with tangible impact. Partnership is found internally between BioQuarter's partner organisations, and externally with the many community organisations with which BioQuarter collaborates. By taking socially responsible actions and actively engaging with the community that surrounds the University, the team have built a foundation of relationships that help tackle poverty by bridging gaps in education, health, and opportunity and envision a brighter future.

Edinburgh BioQuarter



Pipetting workshop, City of Edinburgh Council led Discover programme



£35,000

equipment to local schools

University

University students involved

Usher Building used for community

outreach activities

8 summer interns with over

50 staff members involved

Highly commended

by Green Gown Awards 2024 -**Benefitting Society**



Data up to 2024/2025 academic year



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Strengthened livestock partnership with ILRI

As part of this publication, the area of operational impacts to address zero hunger was identified as a gap. Instead, we recognise the University's contribution towards SDG 2 through the breadth of research and partnerships, particularly in Africa and the Global South.

Livestock needs sustainable growth and practices to continue supporting millions of livelihoods in the Global South. The University of Edinburgh and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the partnership. Announced in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2023, this alliance aims to transform food systems and enhance sustainable livestock production by focusing research on food systems transformation, infectious diseases, and genetic improvement.

For instance, researchers in the Roslin Institute have identified local breeds of cows that emit less greenhouse gasses and are more resilient to heat stress. Additionally, the partnership prioritises talent development, offering studentships and exchange visits as well as knowledge exchange.

- National Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
- The Roslin Institute; Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies



Sustainable farming in Kenya and Ghana

In Kenya and Ghana, two agricultural consultancies developed by our graduates, Arigrow and FarmAsyst, addressed the challenge of improving sustainable farming practices and climate resilience. Isaac Ongoma, founder of Arigrow, empowered more than 500 Kenyan farmers through innovative direct sales platforms and sustainable agricultural techniques.

In Ghana, Hafiz Musah, co-founder of FarmAsyst, launched the SWAP Project (Sustainability for Women in Agricultural Production) in Northern Ghana, supporting 1,150 farmers – primarily women – in adapting to climate change and accessing markets.

Collectively, these initiatives advanced sustainable farming practices and continue to bolster the resilience and economic stability of communities in Ghana and Kenya.



Fishers at Lake Turkana in Kenya (Credit: Samual Derbyshire)



Advancing global food security

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies offers a variety of degrees that tackle SDG 2 by addressing food security, nutrition and safety, sustainable food production systems, and its relationship to humans and their environment.

With topics ranging from Food Safety to Global Food Security and Nutrition, many online postgraduate taught programmes within the School can be taken as entire degrees or individual modules, with the opportunity to accumulate modules towards a larger qualification. Massive Open Online Courses within the School also offer study free of charge in subjects including Sustainable Global Food Systems.

Boasting an award-winning curriculum and interdisciplinary approaches, the School impacts scientific advances across the globe.

- Education at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies
- Sustainable Global Food Systems Open.Ed



PARTNERSHIPS

Jameel Observatory

Drylands, which are often remote and difficult to access, make up two thirds of Africa's landscape and sustain the livelihoods of a quarter of a billion people who use the lands as pastures for animal grazing. These regions are particularly vulnerable to natural shocks, such as droughts.

Tackling food insecurity and enhancing resilience to environmental shocks in low- and middle-income countries in East Africa, the Jameel Observatory is a partnership between the University of Edinburgh, the International Livestock Research Institute, Save the Children, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and Community Jameel.

A key focus for the Observatory is food security early action, to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters in the region. The Observatory manages a portfolio of research aimed at improving Early Warning Systems in the Horn of Africa to increase the resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities.

- ▼ Jameel Observatory
- Tackling drought and food security



Shamsa Kosar, a beneficiary of Takaful insurance in Wajir, northern Kenya (Credit: ILRI/Riccardo Gangale)

RESEARCH

Food security research

Global Agriculture and Food Systems division is an interdisciplinary hub which strives for healthy people and a healthy planet through research into regenerative and ethical food and land use systems.

A study into low-income agricultural households in Burkina Faso, India, Malawi and Tanzania found that the more involved women were in decision-making around food production, the more nutrient-dense, varied and plentiful their food crops. Ongoing work aims to determine if agroecological programmes that empower women farmers can have similar benefits for food and nutrition security.

Food Researchers in Edinburgh (FRIED) is an active, interdisciplinary research group with a strong presence on campus through a podcast, seminar series and an annual conference. Focusing on the social science of food and eating, their impact is both local and global: the group contributed to development of the Good Food Nation bill in Scotland, and their research addresses global issues, such as food access inequalities, food production and governance, trade and policy.

- **№** BLOOM
- Notinal research article
- **FRIED**
- O Division of Global Agriculture and Food Systems



Lindsay and Bharath Yandrapu Kumar discussing organic farming and nutrition with a women's self-help group in Andhra Pradesh



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Services for better health and wellbeing

and students' physical and mental wellbeing. The Estates department has been providing free period products across the campus since 2018, while the Student Wellbeing Service, Student Counselling Service and the Advice Place – part of the Edinburgh University Students' Association - provide free mental health support, impartial advice and

The University provides a variety of services to support staff

Staff can access free time-limited counselling sessions through the Employee Assistance Programme, and support and advice on safe working and potential workplace adjustments from the Occupational Health Service.

- Student health and wellbeing
- **▼** Staff counselling

consultancy to students.

Noccupational Health Service



Firbush Outdoor Centre

COMMUNITY

Firbush Outdoor Centre



Core values



Accessibility

Excellence

Innovation

Accessible to staff, students and community members

Promoting wellbeing by spending time and connecting to nature

- Firbush Outdoor Centre
- Sport and Exercise

Prescribe Culture

As part of the response to an increased demand on Counselling Services in 2018, University of Edinburgh Museums developed a heritage-based, social prescribing programme for students. Co-designed by students with a lived experience of mental health challenges and loneliness, the programme utilises heritage collections, museums and University stories to address anxiety, depressive symptoms, stress, and isolation in the Edinburgh community.

The Prescribe Culture programme encourages individuals to take ownership of their health and wellbeing in a holistic way. Ruthanne Baxter, the Civic Engagement Officer in the Heritage Collections team, comments on the benefits and impact of the programme:

Prescribe Culture members have expressed how our Programme 6 offer provides a novel, non-clinical health support that can be a useful addition to medication and/or an alternative to talking therapy, for those who are not quite ready to access that level of formal support.

There are multiple successful physical exercise and green prescribing programmes available across the city but many Prescribe Culture members were less attracted to those programmes."

- Prescribe Culture
- Heritage Collections, Main Library

Outdoor and nature-based learning

"

When we learn in the outdoors we're engaging not just our brains, but also our bodies, our emotions, our spirits."

Claire Cullen MSc Environmental and Sustainability Education

The climate crisis presents an opportunity to inspire and embrace new ways of thinking, learning and teaching. Integrating outdoor and nature-based learning into the University curriculum is central to the Learning in the Outdoors Project based at the Edinburgh Earth Initiative. This approach encourages an interdisciplinary exploration of personal development, climate solutions and environmental stewardship. By fostering connection and engagement with people and the environment, outdoor learning cultivates a deeper emotional bond amongst learners.

Dr Beth Christie and Professor Robbie Nicol created a useful resource for educators to find outdoor spaces to enhance students' learning. 'Keeping the Door Open' is a living database and map.

- Learning in the Outdoors Short Film
- ▼ Sites for outdoor learning
- Edinburgh Earth Initiative



Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative

Faced with the issue of under-acknowledged contributions and inequalities in midwifery and nursing professions, the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative aims to empower nurses and midwives as leaders and innovators in healthcare worldwide. Its mission is to maximise their impact. particularly in low and middle-income countries facing global injustices, disease outbreaks and social crises.

Through strategic partnerships with diverse communities and institutions, as well as consultancy and collaborations, research and public engagement, the Initiative elevates the profile of these professions and increases nurses' involvement in policymaking and leadership roles. Positioned at the intersection of the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage, the initiative highlights the vital role of these professions in improving the population's health outcomes and wellbeing.

- Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative
- School of Health in Social Science
- SGlobal Health Academy; Nursing Studies



Improving bystander CPR rates in Scotland

The University's Resuscitation Research Group (RRG) led by Dr Gareth Clegg (Usher Institute) has been researching out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) bystander CPR rates since 2009. The research underpinned Scotland's national OHCA strategy, which achieved a 24% increase in people experiencing OHCA receiving bystander CPR.

In partnership with Education Scotland, RRG has facilitated the development of bespoke training tools to deliver CPR training in Scottish schools. RRG's Resuscitation Rapid Response Units (3RU) model has been adopted as a national programme by the Scottish Ambulance Service and informed the international programme of the European Resuscitation Academy. RRG's efforts continue to get closer to equipping a million people with lifesaving CPR skills and improving survival rates in Scotland.

- Save a Life for Scotland
- Centre for Population Health Sciences, Usher Institute



Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with a dummy (Credit: Sam Sills)



FEATURE STORY The Abundant Academy

In recent years, society has witnessed not just a global pandemic's aftermath, but also a cultural crisis of overwhelm, according to University Chaplain Revd **Dr Harriet Harris.** In today's society, which often idolises busyness, many students and staff find themselves on the brink of burnout due to limited time for rest and the normalisation of exhaustion. In the post-pandemic world, the society is facing global challenges and an environmental crisis that require creativity, strength and resilience.



Revd Dr Harriet Harris, creator of Slow University and The Abundant Academy

The Abundant Academy, a personal and leadership development programme created and led by the University's Chaplain Revd Dr Harriet Harris, was designed to transform a culture of depletion into one of vitality, belonging and community support. Harriet draws on 25 years of experience supporting staff and students at the universities of Oxford and Edinburgh, and is an experienced lecturer, researcher, academic writer and Chaplain. She is the creator of programmes 'What's the University for?' and 'Slow University'. These initiatives take a holistic approach to education that supports mental wellbeing, focuses on compassion and finding a sense of belonging within the community.

Harriet describes the meaning of abundance as a

"mindset and an experience that trusts that we will have what we need for what we are called to do. This involves emotional, spiritual, social and bodily intelligence. Abundance has an affinity with compassion, in that it shifts us from defensiveness, reactivity, and playing a zero-sum game of winners and losers, to an expansive way of responding, and seeing that in all situations we can find solutions that work for the good of all."

Data gathered from participants in the 2020-2021 cohort highlights the programme's valuable impact. At the start of the programme, 77% of attendees reported feeling overwhelmed, 73% felt exhausted and 64% experiences anxiety. By the end of the programme, 50% felt they were flourishing or in control, 60% felt abundant and energized, and an impressive 90% reported feeling calmer.

The Abundant Academy offers more than professional development. It equips individuals with the skills to lead with purpose, in both their personal and professional lives. Participants realise that slowing down allows them to be more productive, they develop habits to counter burnout, uncover hidden time and space, and nurture a deeper sense of purpose.

It's been fantastic to step out of the day to day and have time to reflect, and the tools to reflect with, that other similar programmes don't give in quite the same way. The approach of the programme has given me a strong foundation for ongoing reflection over time. There is so much that I will keep using, and I now have different lenses to help me see things in a different way.

The group has been such a safe and compassionate space to share insights and reflect together on the programme. It's been a great experience, I'm so glad I signed up!"

Professor in the Edinburgh Clinical Medical School

- Abundant Academy
- Multi-Faith and Belief Chaplaincy, for all Faiths and None



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

OPERATIONS

Gender inequality in senior academic positions

The University is committed to ensuring our pay structures and reward processes are free from bias, and we continue to address pay gap challenges across our institution.

The Advance HE's leadership development initiative, Aurora, is designed to address underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions by equipping women with leadership skills earlier in their career.

The Edinburgh Research Office delivered the Edinburgh Climate Research Leaders programme in collaboration with the 64 Million Artists social enterprise in 2023-24 to develop the leadership skills of mid-career women. The 20 programme participants, both researchers and research support professionals, reported significant improvements in negotiation, big-picture thinking, influencing, listening and coaching.

Participants reported forming new partnerships and consortia to pursue research and funding opportunities.



" It opened my eyes that I have seen leadership in a far too narrow, prejudiced and traditional frame." Aurora programme participant

- *EDI Data Executive Summary 2024 [PDF]
- Aurora
- Edinburgh Research Office



Career Ready



Mentee, Riham Abdel-Magid (Tynecastle High School) and mentor Ruth Harley (School Operations Administrator, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences)

The University provides staff with the opportunity to participate in the Career Ready programme to champion young talent, improve young people's social mobility, and enhance their employability. The reciprocal nature of the initiative enables staff to deliver local impact by supporting and mentoring High School students in S5 and S6 over an 18-month period.

Mentors guide students and develop their career skills while also gaining valuable experience in mentoring and leadership. Both mentors and mentees describe the experience as highly rewarding, offering its own unique set of challenges and benefits that extend beyond professional development.

"

Be prepared for the level of capability of the Career Ready students - not only are you helping them, but they can definitely help you too!" Staff member and Career Ready participant

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Experiential learning

The growing demand for experiential learning within the University community is driving a renewed commitment to implement this learning experience into the curriculum.

Both staff and students can engage in hands-on, real-world and living labs experiences. This includes opportunities like exploring the vast and unique Heritage Collections at the University, participating in the Students as Change Agents programme offered through the Careers Service, or delivering Living Labs research projects in the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

- Teaching with Heritage Collections
- Students as Change Agents
- Living Labs



Students as Change Agents trip to Rullion Green Wood

Global education through digital education and resources



MOOC certificates issued

11,000+ graduates from online degrees from

different

free open educational resources with over

downloads*

*Data as of March 2025

I think more professionals should get interested in online learning, the reason is that you are able to continue working, offering a service in your community as well as improving your technical capacity. If I was to go to Scotland, to Edinburgh, for the next three years to do a master's course, there is a service which is lost in my community. But as I study, I'm able to put what I'm studying into practice and I stay so the farmers are also able to get to the service [that I provide]."

Salavirius, graduate of MSc in One Health, 2019 cohort

- Nonline learning
- Note: Open Educational Resources
- Educational Design and Engagement, Information Services



Data Education in Schools

Technology plays a vital role in collecting big data, making the ability to understand and interpret data essential for daily life and career success. Data literacy is now a key skill for navigating a data-driven world and improving employability.

The Data Education in Schools programme, based in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region, addresses this need. Starting in early primary, children aged 3 to 18 learn to identify patterns, collect data, and interpret charts.

This eight-year partnership has reached over 40,000 participants in 240 regional schools and 850 globally. Supporting this is the Internet of Things project, which provides schools with environmental data from sensors around classrooms, helping learners engage directly with real-world information.







Education Initiative of the Year **British Data Awards 2024**

- Data Education in Schools
- Note: Data Driven Innovation
- K City Region Deal
- Centre for Research in Digital Education, Moray House School of Education and Sport



Accessible exams for students with additional support needs

Pupils with additional support needs often rely on a scribe or reader during in-person exams. While necessary, this support can be costly and may hinder students' independence. As many already use assistive technology, offering similar tools in exams was a logical progression.

To address this, Paul Nisbet (Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Education, Teaching and Leadership), in collaboration with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, developed Digital Question Papers (DQPs), allowing pupils to complete exams without human assistance.

By 2018, 59% of Scottish secondary schools had adopted DQPs, with digital support requests surpassing those for human aides. The initiative's success influenced assessment formats across the UK. In 2019, CALL Scotland and CereProc introduced computer voices with Scottish accents, enhancing accessibility and earning the Design for Diversity prize.

Moray House School of Education and Sport

Ranked among the

Schools in the world for Education and **Sport-related subjects**

(OS World University Rankings 2024)

Contributing to education and sport research for

Almost



of sport-related research classified as 'world-leading' and 'internationally excellent' (REF 2021)

Ranked 3rd in the UK for breadth and quality of research in education

(Times Higher Education 2024)



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



New menopause policy

The topic of the menopause still carries stigma and misunderstanding, and this is particularly problematic in a workplace setting. To address this, the University introduced a new Menopause Policy in 2024 which will provide extra support to those who are directly or indirectly impacted by menopause, creating a more inclusive work environment for all.

Additionally, the University recognises the shared responsibility of parenthood, and this is reflected in the Shared Parental Leave Policy which allows partners to share up to 52 weeks of leave.

- Menopause Policy [PDF]
- **▼ Shared Parental Leave Policy** [PDF]

Support for gender equality



Equally Safe

A dedicated team to support those impacted by gender-based violence **Gender Equality Action Plan** in place



Sex? On campus!

In 2023, students launched the Sex? On Campus! Campaign, which aims to raise awareness and provide support to survivors of gender-based and sexual violence.

Since launching, the group has made impressive progress. Some of their achievements include:

- leading educational workshops on consent
- organising fundraising events to support the cause
- providing safe spaces and building a supportive community for survivors of sexual violence
- raising awareness of the issue of gender-based violence epidemic on campus





- **K** EUSA's resources on sexual violence and consent
- Sex? On Campus!

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Incorporating gender in the curriculum

Students on degrees across the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences such as Economics and Politics (MA Hons), Politics, Sociology (MA Hons), Film Studies (MSc) or Intermediality: Literature, Film and the Arts in Dialogue (MSc), and multiple MA Hons programmes in the School of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures, can explore gender through a range of perspectives and topics. These include but are not limited to: film studies, culture, education, gender inequalities and development, religion, sexuality, intersectionality, sexual and gender-based violence, gender and justice, environment and climate change.

This interdisciplinary approach across subjects equips students with a nuanced understanding of gender issues, empowering them to critically engage with real-world challenges and advocate for impactful change in diverse fields.

Rowse degree programmes



Dear Diary, Welcome to Being a Woman (Credit: Abby J Hilton, Graphic Design - BA (Hons) School of Design)

PARTNERSHIPS

Gender Equalities at Work Project

Despite it being 50 years since the introduction of the 1970 Equal Pay Act and 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, equal pay and sexual discrimination are still relevant topics today. During this time, significant changes have taken place throughout institutions, government policy, culture and society. A recent interdisciplinary collaboration resulted in the research project 'Gender Equalities at Work' which maps this journey. Drawing from diverse sources through oral history interviews with lawyers and trade unionists, the project is the first comprehensive longitudinal study of its kind across all four UK nations.

The project is part of GENDER.ED, an interdisciplinary hub for gender and sexualities studies. The hub promotes inclusive, intersectional and international research, supports professional development, facilitates knowledge exchange and impact, and identifies gaps in current provision.

- **▼** Gender Equalities at 50
- **▼** GENDER.ED
- **K** Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap at the University
- School of History, Classics and Archaeology; School of Social and Political Science
- University College London; The University of the West of England; Arts and Humanities Research Council





Ethical translation of gender-based violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a global crisis: one in three women are affected according to the United Nations Professor Charlotte Bosseaux's 18-month AHRC funded project Ethical Translation explored the ethical challenges faced by translators of stories by women survivors of GBV and trauma whose first language is not English. Collaborating with the Scottish charity Saheliya, and Screen Language, the project emphasised respectful translation of survivors and proper training for interpreters working with vulnerable individuals.

Charlotte and filmmaker Ling Lee co-created and coproduced a multilingual documentary featuring survivors' and translators' narratives, with translations initiated during filming. Two versions of the documentary were created to evaluate translation techniques for conveying the emotions and orality of the survivors' testimonies, leading to two final versions informed by audience feedback.

The project resulted in practical guidelines for translators, filmmakers, and charities and highlights the necessary resources and support required to appropriately work with survivors of trauma and GBV in translation.

- K Ethical Translation project
- Name of the Professor Charlotte Bosseaux biography
- **▼** Beyond the Book podcast episode
- School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures





'Surviving Translation' interviewees Top: Raquel (Mandarin Chinese and English) Bottom: Anthony (English, Spanish and Edo) Credit: Surviving Translation © University of Edinburgh, 2023





End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

OPERATIONS

Water fountains on campus

Through a partnership between the University and Students' Association, over 230 free water points have been installed across the University campus to encourage the use of reusable water bottles.

Similarly, since 2018 both University-owned and Students' Association-owned cafes introduced a surcharge on singleuse disposable cups which led to a significant decrease of disposable cups usage on campus.

This initiative aims to cut down on plastic waste and help the University reach its ambitious commitment to be netzero emissions by 2040.

- **Tero by 2040**
- **▼** Good Food initiative



Free tap water refills at the Visitor Centre (Credit: Sam Sills)



Water purification in Harare, Zimbabwe

Limited access to drinking water is often closely linked to poverty and environmental degradation. In rural communities in Zimbabwe, water supplies typically come from wells and boreholes which, if untreated, can lead to the outbreak and spread of diseases.

Established seven years ago, The Sustainable Development Hub project has been providing free access to drinking water to rural and urban households. In 2023, an additional 20 households in Harare benefited from accessing clean drinking water.

The project reduced cholera cases by 25% compared to the previous year. This was done using innovative methods such as banana peels and moringa seeds, which help remove heavy metals and bacteria from water at no additional cost.



Changemaker Award 2023/2024



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Applied Environmental Hydrogeology (MSc)

As climate change increasingly impacts weather, precipitation patterns, extreme weather events and water scarcity around the world, hydrogeology has become a key focus area for environment and climate change-related degree programmes.

Students on the Applied Environmental Hydrogeology (MSc) programme learn through a combination of traditional field skills and quantitative skills using state-of-the-art technology. They cover a wide range of critical topics, including groundwater contamination. climate and sustainability economics, and water resources management, equipping students with the skills to tackle pressing global challenges.

The School of Geosciences is the largest Geosciences department in the UK and boasts a range of experts who deliver cutting-edge research-based teaching to students.

- Applied Environmental Hydrogeology (MSc)
- School of Geosciences





PARTNERSHIPS

Towards a socio-technical approach to aquifers

With over two billion people reliant on groundwater, effective groundwater management has become critical. Recognising this, a project in collaboration between the School of Social and Political Sciences, the School of GeoSciences and an Earth Fellow Masood Rehman, aims to redefine aguifers not just as natural resources but as socio-political systems involving diverse stakeholders and technologies.

The project's goal is to develop socio-technical approaches to aquifer management by integrating insights from hydrology, climate policy, anthropology, and geography. This involves understanding how different stakeholders, including water experts, users, and governance institutions, engage with and manage subterranean water.

- **K** Earth Fellows Edit
- Edinburgh Earth Initiative
- School of Social and Political Sciences; School of GeoSciences



Tackling arsenic-contaminated water

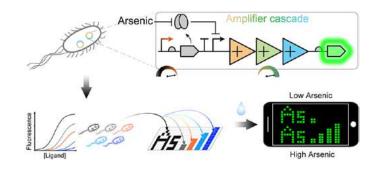
An estimated 20 million people in Bangladesh drink contaminated water, highlighting water contamination as a global environmental public health issue. Edinburgh researchers identified the need for simple and accessible tools to measure the levels of pollution, as conventional tests are often expensive and inaccessible in impoverished areas.

The researchers went on to create a groundbreaking biosensor that attaches to smartphones, detecting unsafe arsenic levels in water. Developed using engineered E. coli, the biosensor emits fluorescent patterns when arsenic is detected, making it visible and straightforward to interpret. With over 140 million people affected globally, this innovation could significantly alleviate the widespread impact of arsenic-contaminated water.

- Noriginal research article
- Synthetic Biological Circuit Engineering Lab, **School of Biological Sciences**



Water sampling in Bangladesh



A microbial sensor array displaying an easy-to-read volume bar-like pattern for mobile phone-based field monitoring of arsenic contamination (Credit: Dr Baojun Wang)





Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

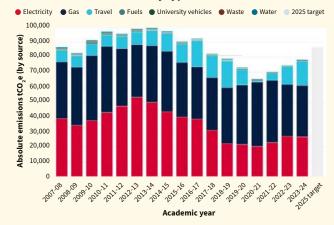
OPERATIONS

Net-zero by 2040

What we are doing well:

Our carbon emissions for 2023-24 are 78,732 tonnes CO₂e, which is below our 2025 target of 86,707 tonnes CO₂e (our 2007-08 baseline). There has been an increase from the previous year.*

Absolute carbon emissions by type



Solar panels across campus generated in 2023/2024

Replacement of the Climate Strategy 2016 on track to be published in

2025/2026 academic year

Installed of solar PV generating of renewable on-site electricity

Where we can improve:



Overall emissions, particularly business travel and electricity and gas use, increased after the Covid-19 pandemic due to return to normal and growth of the University's estate, financial turnover and number of staff and students



Procurement accounts for more than

of the University emissions, making it the most substantial and complex area to tackle

*Reports include Scope 1, Scope 2, and part of Scope 3 emissions

- Sustainability Data Dashboard
- Climate Strategy 2016 [PDF]



Community-owned wind turbine

Relying on external energy sources can place a significant economic and environmental burden on communities. ATTIX Community Interest Company in Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire, aims for energy independence and sustainability without government subsidies through a community-driven project. In 2023, the company secured £5 million to build Scotland's first 100% community-owned, subsidy-free onshore wind turbine. Supported by the University of Edinburgh's Social Growth Fund, managed by Social Investment Scotland, the initiative marks a major shift in Kilbirnie's energy future.

The turbine is expected to generate 7,839 MWh annually - enough to power 2,234 UK homes - and cut carbon emissions by 3,324 tonnes each year. Profits from energy sales will be reinvested in local projects, including sports facilities and refurbishing the historic Knox Institute building.

The project sets a strong example for community-owned renewable energy and supports Scotland's goal of reaching net zero by 2045.

- Socially Positive Investments
- Social Investment Scotland



Powering the future

The global energy crisis highlights the urgent need for clean energy and technologies to transition to renewable systems. The School of Engineering offers postgraduate programmes such as Sustainable Energy Systems (MSc), Electrical Power Engineering (MSc), and Advanced Power Engineering (MSc) to equip students with the skills to help deliver reliable, sustainable, modern energy for all.

Sustainable Energy Systems takes a multidisciplinary approach to both grid and off-grid solutions, focussing on societal and environmental impacts. Students on the Electrical Power Engineering programme benefit from a specialist, hands-on approach and industry-driven curriculum, while the two-year Advanced Power Engineering provides further in-depth training into the latest power engineering technologies, leveraging the world-leading research activity of the School in this field.

The School consistently ranks among the top engineering schools in Scotland, the UK, and Europe in Times Higher Education and QS Sustainability rankings.

- Natitute for Energy Systems
- School of Engineering



Decarbonising the electricity grid

Electricity grids are central to decarbonising economies and addressing climate change. Clean power systems will rely on renewable sources like wind and solar, but energy from these variable resources must be transported efficiently, with real-time balancing of supply and demand. UK and global grids must transform long-standing physical and economic models to support the shift to 100% emissions-free electricity.

To help drive this change, the University of Edinburgh has partnered with the University of Strathclyde and Imperial College London in a research consortium. Working with collaborators in the USA and Australia, they are delivering a five-year project under Electric Power Innovation for a Carbon-free Society (EPICS).

Launched in 2023, the global centre unites experts from academia, policy, and industry to create systems that can manage fluctuating renewable energy. It will develop computing, economic, engineering, and policy tools to support cost-effective, equitable decarbonisation – including through consumer flexibility.

- K Edinburgh Earth Initiative case study
- School of Social and Political Science
- University of Strathclyde; Imperial College London



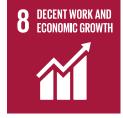
World-leading testing facilities for marine and renewable technology

FastBlade and FloWave are research testing facilities which make new renewable and marine technology production more efficient and cost-effective. FastBlade, built in 2022 in Rosyth, Fife, is the first dedicated full scale tidal turbine blade testing facility in the world. It conducts accelerated lifetime testing of tidal turbine blades and other composite materials. Using unique regenerative hydraulic pump/ motors the impact of natural forces can be reproduced faster, using far less energy. Beyond tidal energy, the testing technology can also aid in the development of aerospace and civil structures such as wings and bridge components.

FloWave is used to simulate ocean waves and tidal generated currents to progress product and ocean technology development, predominately for the offshore renewable energy sector. It has been at the forefront of ocean energy research since its construction in 2013 and it has since explored 50 renewable technologies and collaborated with researchers, designers and engineers from 21 countries.

- **▼** FastBlade
- FloWave
- School of Engineering





Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



New horizons for Responsible Investment

In 2013, the University of Edinburgh was the first higher education institution in Europe to become part of the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and continues to score highly for its annual PRI reporting. Driven by environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, the principles of the Responsible Investment recognise collaboration, socially positive investments and divestment from fossil fuels. To date, the University has invested £5 million in Green Projects, £8 million in socially positive activities, and committed £60 million in renewable and sustainable technology.

The University published a new Responsible Investment Policy in 2025 to enshrine its commitments to low carbon investing and social impact investment.

- Responsible investment
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Our economic impact

Total economic impact

£7.5bn €

Entrepreneurship jobs through start-ups and spin-outs

Tourism impact

Research and knowledge exchange

£180m

COMMUNITY

Modern Apprenticeship Development

The University's Modern Apprenticeships development offering empowers young people to enhance their employability and social mobility. By providing paid employment, the offering emphasizes training opportunities to improve career options.

Modern Apprentices benefit from the University's central development resources, which in the past included group coaching, peer mentoring, and skills development sessions on topics like financial planning, confidence building, time management, and personal development. Both apprentices and their managers have access to tailored online toolkits covering the apprentice lifecycle, maximizing their experience and managers on effective support strategies.

70+ people participated

WAGE

EMPLOYER

Part of **Young Person's Guarantee commitment**

Part of **People Strategy 2030**



apprentices secured further paid employment

- Name of the Name o
- ▼ People Strategy 2030

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Climate Change Risk in Finance

As part of its Executive Education offer, the Business School provides online courses to individuals and organisations. The 'Climate Change Risk in Finance' course was designed to upskill finance professionals on reading climate data, measuring financial risks associated with climate change, and using these insights to make sound financial decisions. The course helped over 250 people to take practical climate action in their work, including representatives from many of the UK's largest finance companies.

Centre for Business, Climate Change, and Sustainability - B-CCaS

Study and Work Away Service

abroad opportunities

including exchanges, creditbearing work or placements and short programmes

overall satisfaction rate from visiting students

exchange and fee-paying study students

of our students recommend

going on exchange

All 3 colleges represented on study exchanges

Data from 2023/2024

- ▼ Study and Work Away Service
- Edinburgh Global

Data for 2021/2022 academic year (London Economics Impact Report)

PARTNERSHIPS

Creative Informatics

The Creative Informatics programme, launched in 2019 with £8 million funding from the UK and Scottish Governments, sought to bridge technology and the creative sectors. With key partners, it supported diverse projects, including Lung Ha Theatre, a company for actors and theatre makers with a learning disability and autism, by funding text-to-speech software. It also supported the Edinburgh Tool Library to develop a system to evidence carbon savings, which has now been adopted by tool libraries internationally.

Edinburgh Napier University played a key role in the project through its applied practice and human-centred approach, which helped create new lab infrastructure and foster an interdisciplinary research culture. Codebase's contribution through Creative Bridge, a pre-accelerator programme, targeted creative practitioners interested in transitioning from service-led to product-led business models, while Creative Edinburgh united the city's creative community by offering support and opportunities for collaboration.

Added

in Gross Value Added (GVA) to Scotland's economy from 2019 to 2023

Expectations to generate

more by 2026

Created or safeguarded

445 jobs

new products, services or experiences

Every £1 invested led to an impact of £18.70 on the local economy GVA

Data-Driven Innovation

Part of Data-Driven Innovation initiative

- Creative Informatics Final Report
- Design Informatics
- Sayes Centre at The University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh Napier University; Creative Edinburgh; Codebase

Data Driven Innovation



Key component of the Edinburgh and **South East Scotland City Region Deal**



Fosters partnerships between researchers, charities, businesses and the public sector



Aims to deliver data-driven growth in the City Region while tackling inequality and deprivation

Delivered across innovation hubs:

- Bayes Centre
- Edinburgh Futures Institute
- Edinburgh International **Data Facility**
- Easter Bush campus
- National Robotarium
- Usher Institute



Extended working life policies and age-inclusive practices research

Recent research highlights a challenge faced by women experiencing menopause symptoms in the workplace. Many organisations uphold the 'ideal worker' stereotype: someone unaffected by personal challenges. This research, based on 80 interviews with women over 50, reveals that a lack of workplace awareness and support often pressures employees to manage menopause-related challenges in silence.

The study suggests that redefining the ideal worker can help women resist ageist and gendered workplace cultures. Menopause symptoms can affect up to onethird of a woman's working life, underscoring the need for integrating health support into workplace policies.

The findings, shared with the UK Department for Work and Pensions, emphasise tailoring workplace responses to different job types and industries. By prioritising structural reviews focused on redefining workplace expectations, organisations can better support mid-life women, enhancing their value and well-being at work.

- Noting the Control of the Control of
- Business School

- Nata Driven Innovation
- **▼ DDI Annual Review 2024** [PDF]
- K Edinburgh and South City Region Deal





Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation





Ranked 1st for SDG 9

(Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024)

Operational savings of:

£2.65m and **4,131 tonnes** CO_{se} per year

projects delivered



Energy and Utilities Masterplan

in place for maintaining affordable, sustainable and resilient low carbon infrastructure

Recycling data centre heat

Data centres can be highly energy-intensive due to the vast amount of data they process. The heat they generate can be captured through a heat recovery pump and redistributed into the local heating network, improving energy efficiency.

To support this energy-efficiency initiative, along with many others, the University has secured funding from the Scottish Government. Part of this will help reduce its operational carbon footprint by recycling heat from the data centres at the King's Buildings campus. Combined with the University's own investment, it will enable the development of solutions to decarbonise buildings and operations, achieving the University's commitment to be net zero by 2040.



COMMUNITY

Six Degrees Edinburgh

The student-led pro bono consultancy and think tank, Six Degrees, was established in Oxford in 2018. Six University of Edinburgh students founded the Edinburgh branch in 2020 and since then, they have engaged with the Scottish Government's Biodiversity Strategy and their consultancy continues to focus on climate solutions, research and innovation

Their work spans across private, public and the third sectors and is founded on the belief that partnerships and consultation are essential for companies striving to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The group draws on sustainability expertise from a diverse team of doctoral, postgraduate and undergraduate students at the University.

Changemaker Award 2024/2025

- ▼ Six Degrees Edinburgh
- **▼ Changemaker Award 2024/2025**



Six Degrees Edinburgh Changemakers at the 2025 Changemaker Awards

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Supporting startup entrepreneurship

Carbon Glance is a startup company founded by the University's alumnus Víctor Pérez. The startup builds digital solutions to help businesses navigate the evolving data demands of carbon pricing mechanisms, such as the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). Carbon Glance has launched tools for importers and exporters to streamline their reporting obligations and manage the financial risks of the mechanism. The company is among the innovative ventures that have participated in the Venture Builder Incubator at the Bayes Centre.

In addition to this programme, the Bayes Centre runs the Al Accelerator, which focuses on upskilling data-driven scaleups that aim to have a positive global impact.

Through these initiatives, the Bayes Centre is accelerating entrepreneurship by equipping both our students, researchers and scaleup companies with the tools and expertise needed to reach their commercial potential.

- Carbon Glance
- Venture Builder Incubator
- Al Accelerator
- Bayes Centre

PARTNERSHIPS



Carbon Glance founder Víctor Pérez



AI Accelerator Cohort (Credit: Stewart Attwood)

Centre for Investing Innovation

With a commitment to delivering societal benefits through the integration of ESG factors, the University has partnered with the global asset management company abrdn to explore and address the challenges facing the investment and asset management sector.

Established in 2022 as a collaboration between academia and the investment industry, the Centre for Investing Innovation benefits from a £7.5 million commitment from abrdn over five years. The Centre's research focuses on three core themes: sustainability, thematic investing, and investment innovation – advancing knowledge and practices that shape the future of responsible and forward-thinking investment.



Part of Data-Driven Innovation initiative

- Centre for Investing Innovation
- Edinburgh Futures Institute
- School of Mathematics; School of Informatics



The Horsfall Group

The UK's automotive sector remains strong, producing one million vehicles annually. However, the rapid rise of electric vehicles (EVs) – projected to make up 90% of all vehicles by 2050 – brings a new challenge: battery recycling. By 2040, one million EVs will reach the end of their lifespan each year, generating vast quantities of lithium-ion batteries that must be recycled to conserve valuable materials such as cobalt and lithium.

The Recycling Lithium-ion Batteries project is tackling the issue by bringing together global experts in AI, robotics, and materials science to develop innovative recycling technologies. This initiative aims to achieve 100% recyclability of these critical materials, reducing environmental impact and ceasing dependence on imports, helping to build a circular economy and a more resource efficient future. Beyond sustainability, the project has the potential to boost the UK economy by creating new industries and reducing material costs.

- The Horsfall Group
- Institute of Quantitative Biology, Biochemistry and Biotechnology; Centre for Engineering Biology; Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions



FEATURE STORY Making ideas work for a better world

The University of Edinburgh is among the world's top universities for contributing to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) reflecting the impact of Edinburgh Innovations, the University's commercialisation service.

By bridging the gap between research and industry, Edinburgh Innovations fosters collaborative partnerships, attracts research funding, and supports startups, helping to transform cutting-edge ideas into real-world solutions that address pressing global challenges.

One such breakthrough came from Dr Adam Robinson of the University's School of Engineering, who developed a "decarbonisation machine" capable of replacing up to 100% of the fossil fuels in high temperature industrial processes. Recognising its potential to revolutionise renewable energy and accelerate progress towards net zero emissions, Dr Robinson and his team sought the right partners to bring this technology to market.



Exergy3 and distillery staff at Annandale Distillery (Credit: Annandale Distillery)

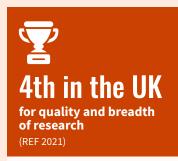
Supported by Edinburgh Innovations' Enterprise team, Dr Adam Robinson and Dr Markus Rondé – formerly Dr Robinson's teaching assistant – established Exergy3 as a spinout in May 2023. Edinburgh Innovations played a crucial role in facilitating partnerships and securing funding, helping Exergy3 bring in £3.6 million in grant funding from the UK's Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.

One of the key industries reliant on high temperature processes is food and drink, including Scotch whisky production, which is carbon-intensive from distillation, through to bottling and packaging. To address this, Exergy3 deployed a demonstration machine at Annandale Distillery in Dumfries and Galloway, showcasing how carbonneutral whisky is possible by replacing traditional fossilfuel-based steam boilers.

Exergy3's thermal storage systems charge exclusively when the electricity from the grid is sourced from renewables. storing energy at temperatures of up to 1200°C with minimal thermal losses.

Following the success of this initial trial, Exergy3 has continued to grow, and has secured a further £1 million preseed funding led by Zero Carbon Capital, with investment from the University's in-house venture investment fund. This funding is pivotal in expanding market research, accelerating commercialisation and scaling Exergy3's technology to drive industrial decarbonisation on a global scale.

Edinburgh Innovations



applications*



£73m in spinouts*

*Power of Innovation Report 23/24





Reduce inequality within and among countries

OPERATIONS

Widening Participation Strategy 2030

The University has a long history of initiatives that aim to make higher education more accessible. In 2018, the University unveiled its Widening Participation Strategy to further build on its work in this area. The strategy is built on principles of transparency, evidence-based decision-making, accessibility and equal opportunity, ensuring support across the students' entire university cycle.

Since its launch, the University has made significant progress, including increasing the number of careexperienced students, the development of funding and scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged students, providing trained staff mentors to care-experienced and estranged students, and establishing new access routes into university. These developments reflect the University's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all.



Sutton Trust Summer School

Launch of Access **Edinburgh Scholarship**

awarded in 2023/24

Launch of Cowrie Foundation Scholarship

Insights Programme to enhance career options

- Nidening Participation Strategy 2030
- Access Awards
- National Insights Programme
- Student Recruitment and Admissions

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on campus

Updated Trans Policy and Trans Hub launched in 2025

Updated British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030 published

Staff Disability Advice Service launched in 2023



EDI-related staff networks, including:

the Staff Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic network, Jewish Staff Network, Staff Pride Network, Disabled Staff Network, and Edinburgh Race **Equality Network (EREN)** among others

- ▶ British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030
- Staff Disability Advice Service
- **EDI** Groups

COMMUNITY

SuperTroop

Children with high support needs often have limited opportunities for independent experiences, but SuperTroop is changing that by providing fun-filled, fully supported residential holidays. Founded by Sue Fletcher-Watson, Professor of Development Psychology and Dean of Equity, Inclusion and Community at the University, Super Troop offers week-long breaks for young people with learning disabilities, ensuring they receive 24/7 care from trained volunteers.

For most participants, this is their first time away from home, helping them build independence and resilience, while giving their families and caregivers some well-deserved respite. The experience is equally valuable for volunteers from Fettes College, who receive specialist training and a chance to develop new skills in teamwork, communication, leadership and supporting individuals with learning disabilities.



Changemaker Award 2023/2024

SuperTroop



Young people with learning disabilities decorate cakes on their SuperTroop holiday.

Scholarships for mobility and uninterrupted learning

In 2024, the University expanded its commitment to supporting students and staff displaced through conflict, persecution or human rights violations. The University introduced the Education Beyond Borders Scholarships, offering up to 30 postgraduate scholarships to those affected by forced displacement.

In addition, the Academics at-risk Fellowships, delivered in partnership with the Council for At-risk Academics (Cara), provide 10 fellowships annually, helping scholars continue their work in a safe and supportive environment. Most recently, the University has extended support to displaced individuals and families from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Palestine, Yemen and Turkey, reinforcing its dedication to global access to education and academic freedom.

K Education Beyond Borders

More scholarships

Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program

offered since 2016

between 2023 and 2030

Thomas and Margaret Roddan Trust

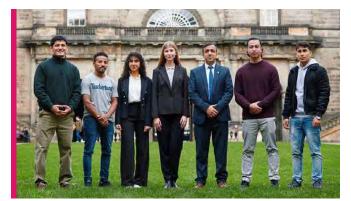
Sutherland Page Trust

Access Edinburgh Scholarship

Andrea Levy Scholarship

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships

Edinburgh Global; Scholarships and Student Funding



Education Beyond Borders Scholars (Credit: Andrew Perry)



IntoUniversity

Driven by the belief in the transformative power of education, in 2021 the University partnered with University of Glasgow and charity IntoUniversity to the launch of three educational centres in Scotland. Originally founded as a homework club in North Kensington in 2002, IntoUniversity has since grown to establish 45 learning centres across the UK, tackling educational inequalities faced by children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Scottish centres, operating in Craigmillar, Govan, and Maryhill, provide local, community-based support for young people aged 7-18, offering mentoring, post-school academic support and career advice to raise aspirations and improve educational outcomes. In 2022, a new mentoring programme was introduced, pairing S5/S6 students with industry professionals to provide guidance, resources for post-education success.

IntoUniversity

SGlasgow University



Fixing the Future

Internet of Things (IoT) devices are physical objects that can connect to the internet and exchange data with other devices or systems, and they are becoming increasingly embedded in everyday life – powering everything from TVs and smart meters to phones – concerns over cyber-security, sustainability, and data management of these devices continue to grow. For lower income households, the inability to replace or repair these devices could deepen inequalities.

The two-year Fixing the Future project researched how to design equitable IoT devices that would enable everyone to actively participate in an increasingly digital world. Drawing on expertise from human-computer interaction, design research, technology law, ethics, and digital humanities, the project examined repairability, sustainability, and the potential for community-based repair centres to improve long-term access to technology.

- Fixing the Future
- Edinburgh Law School





Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Heating homes with waste supercomputer heat

A pioneering project is underway to determine if waste heat from the University of Edinburgh's Advanced Computing Facility (ACF) can be recycled to warm Edinburgh homes.

The Geobattery concept involves capturing heat from the supercomputer cooling process and transferring it into nearby flooded legacy mineworkings, which could then be used to heat homes in nearby communities via heat pumps. If the study is successful, ACF could heat at least 5,000 homes in Edinburgh through the Geobattery. With a quarter of UK homes sitting above former mines, potentially seven million households could have their heating needs met this way.

The Edinburgh Geobattery project unites academia and industry, with partners from Scotland, the US, and Ireland. It aims to provide a model for using old mines as heat storage globally, offering a low-carbon, efficient heating alternative.

- K Edinburgh Geobattery project
- School of Geosciences

COMMUNITY

Community Access to Rooms

Since the launch of a pilot project in 2022, local community groups have been using University rooms in the evenings and weekends when they are not in use for teaching. The project aims to make University buildings more available to the public. This was in response to regular requests from community groups to use University spaces and the realisation that some could be accommodated without affecting core University business. The Community Access to Rooms project provides free access to multiple rooms of various sizes in four buildings across campus for local organisations and groups.

So far, around 150 community groups have benefitted, using rooms for language classes, support groups, rehearsals, events, group meetings and more. By removing financial and access barriers to space in the city, the University reinforces its commitment to social impact, ensuring local communities have welcoming spaces to come together, connect and thrive.



Part of the Community Plan 2020-2025

- ▼ Community Access to Rooms
- Community Plan 2020-2025

Public spaces for communities





St Cecilia's Hall & Music Museum





Cockburn Geological Museum

Anatomical Museum





The Labyrinth in George Square

Main Library Exhibition Gallery



- **Edinburgh Futures Institute**
- Note: Our museums and galleries
- Labyrinth

Centre for Open Learning

The Centre for Open Learning (COL) provides a diverse range of programmes and courses for University staff, students, and the local community. Whether through access programmes for those returning to education, evening language classes, or lifelong learning opportunities in subjects such as Art & Design, Humanities, Social Science, Science and Languages, COL is open to all – regardless of background or stage of life.

By fostering inclusive and accessible education, COL helps individuals expand their knowledge, develop new skills, and pursue their academic and personal aspirations.

Centre for Open Learning



Net-zero targets in the Galápagos Islands

Home to 2,900 marine species and a delicate island ecosystem, the Galápagos Islands face unique challenges, from environmental conservation to economic adaptation. As the region seeks to diversify its income beyond tourism, University of Edinburgh's Centre for Future Infrastructure, in collaboration with Universidad San Francisco de Ouito and British Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce, has played a key role in delivering the Galápagos Plan 2030.

The Centre for Future Infrastructure is a multidisciplinary research centre, integrating engineering, business, geoscience, humanities, and social science to explore sustainable infrastructure solutions. Projects within the Galápagos community have included reducing emissions from tourism boats, decarbonising homes, and designing renewable energy systems, all contributing to the region's long-term net zero ambitions.

- Centre for Future Infrastructure
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito : **British Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce**



Scottish Gaelic in the digital age

For many minority languages, the lack of substantial data sets poses a significant risk of digital extinction – the inability to fully participate in digital communication due to insufficient language technology. Addressing the challenge, a recent Al-driven project is developing Gaelic speech recognition system for use in media, education, and research, helping to secure the future of Scottish Gaelic in the digital space.

To develop this technology, the project is using extensive archival resources, including from the School of Scottish Studies Archives at the University of Edinburgh and the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic in Glasgow. As part of the University's broader commitment to Gaelic revitalisation, this initiative aims to strengthen the language's presence within both the Gaelic-speaking and wider Scottish communities.

School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures; **School of Informatics**







Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



IT Reuse Project

Running since 2014, the IT Reuse project employs a circular economy approach to address the issue of waste, as well as digital and financial poverty in local communities. The project refurbishes University-owned and donated laptops and accessories, making them fit for reuse, and has successfully repurposed over 7,000 PCs and 3,000 PC accessories, including keyboards, mice and monitors.

The University has donated refurbished equipment to a range of partners, including its primary partner, the Edinburgh Remakery, a local social enterprise. Other beneficiaries include schools in Midlothian, the charity People Know How, and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, ensuring that valuable technology continues to benefit education and social initiatives.

Social Responsibility and Sustainability



Perth High School pupils given IT boost during school closures

Responsible sourcing

Participated in **Universities and Colleges** Fairtrade Awards for

20 years

and currently accepting:

- Rainforest Alliance
- Fair Wear
- GOTS (organic cotton)
- Fair for Life
- Fairtrade

Sharing knowledge, expertise and experience through the

EAUC and HEPA Responsible **Procurement Group** Refocusing on Responsible **Procurement** as part of the Procurement Strategy 2030

Circular **Economy Training**

available from March 2025

Requiring suppliers to sign up to the **Sustain Supply**

Chain Code of Conduct

- Responsible Procurement Strategy 2030 [PDF]
- K EAUC and HEPA Responsible Procurement Group
- Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct
- Circular Economy Training

COMMUNITY

The Big Sort

At the end of every academic year, as students move out of University-owned accommodation, many leave behind unwanted items or belongings that are difficult things to take home. The Big Sort, led by the Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) team and the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), mobilises volunteers to collect and redistribute these items from 23 accommodation. sites across campus.

Many of the collected goods are donated to charity shops across the city. A portion is set aside for EUSA's Free Shop, an initiative which provides incoming students with free essentials during Welcome Week, such as crockery, stationery, books and utensils, easing their transition to university life while reducing waste.

6,237kg

of clothes, linen. kitchenware, stationery, books, and assorted household items diverted from landfill

of goods have been sent to the Free Shop

*Data from 22/23 academic year

Accommodation, Catering and Events; **Edinburgh University Students' Association**

Edinburgh Futures Institute

The Edinburgh Futures Institute offers interdisciplinary postgraduate programmes that let students pursue their passions while addressing complex global challenges.

Sustainable Lands and Cities (MSc) focuses on building sustainable communities and managing land responsibly in response to climate issues. Circular Economy (MSc) looks at reducing waste and reusing materials, promoting sustainable models through efficient resource use and innovative design.

Future Infrastructure, Sustainability & Climate Change (MSc) and Planetary Health (MSc) examine how climate change intersects with health, the environment, economics, and infrastructure.

These programmes offer fresh perspectives through collaborative, interdisciplinary learning and a diverse student community at various life and career stages.

Edinburgh Futures Institute



Students on the Edinburgh Futures Institute roof terrace (Credit: Sam Ingram-Sills, Whitedog Photography)

PARTNERSHIPS

Landscapes as carbon sinks

In 2019, the Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes launched the 'Landscapes as Carbon Sinks' project to support Scotland's 2045 net-zero carbon goal. It unites research, policy, business, investment, and land management to shift land use from a carbon source to a carbon sink.

The challenge was to find effective ways to change land management practices across Scotland to cut emissions. Despite Covid-19 disruptions, online collaboration led to strong progress. Key outcomes include interactive maps on natural capital and wood construction, and policy analyses for the Scottish Parliament on regional land use.

Online workshops also sparked innovation in the woodbased bioeconomy, promoting sustainable construction alternatives. The project continues to provide actionable insights through reports, maps, and presentations that support Scotland's climate and sustainability goals.

- Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes
- SEdinburgh Climate Change Institute; EIT Climate-KIC

RESEARCH

Efficient recycling with AI

With billions of tonnes of waste produced annually, recycling contamination remains a significant challenge. Two University of Edinburgh-supported startups, Danu Robotics and bennu.ai, are using AI to transform waste sorting and boost recycling efficiency.

Danu Robotics, founded by Edinburgh graduate Xiaoyan Ma, created an Al-powered robotic system that uses visual recognition to separate recyclable from non-recyclable materials, cutting contamination significantly. Bennu.ai, founded by Jonathan Feldstein, developed the SmartBin – an AI bin that auto-sorts waste. Piloted at Edinburgh Airport, it gathers data to refine performance, especially in high-traffic areas.

Both startups have been supported by Edinburgh Innovations, the Summer Startup Accelerator, and the Venture Builder Incubator, showing how AI can advance sustainable waste solutions.

- ▼ Summer Startup Accelerator
- Venture Builder Incubator
- Edinburgh Innovations ; Bayes Centre



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

OPERATIONS

Ambitious leadership

University's most ambitious environmental sustainability strategy yet approved in April 2025

Increase in ambition and urgency across carbon emissions, biodiversity crisis, chemical pollution, water and resource use

Commitments to maximise impacts of learning and teaching, research and innovation, people and culture

Climate Strategy 2016-2026 commits to:



Reducing carbon emissions per £ million turnover by 50% from a 2007/08 baseline

Net-zero carbon by

Bespoke Sustainability Action Plan for Schools and Departments through the **Sustainability Framework**

schools and

departments participated

actions committed

Six key themes:

- Leadership and governance
- Student curriculum and experience
- Research and partnerships
- Operations
- Student and staff engagement
- Community engagement
- Climate Strategy 2016
- Sustainability Framework
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Sustainable transport

Between 2012 and 2019, emissions from international travel increased significantly. In response, the University introduced Climate Conscious Travel, a framework embedded in the Sustainable Travel Policy (2021). This approach asks staff to consider the environmental, social, and economic impacts of travel, and promotes more sustainable alternatives to travel, both of which help to reduce business travel emissions.

Closer to home, the University has launched the Integrated Transport Plan 2023-30, which outlines key actions required in order to reach net zero by 2040. Staff and students benefit from a range of sustainable transport options in the city, including subsidised bus travel, free bike facilities, cycling advice and services, eBike hire schemes, car-sharing schemes, and electric vehicle charging points across campuses.

- Sustainable Travel Policy
- **▼ Integrated Transport Plan 2023-2030** [PDF]
- Transport and Parking; Social Responsibility and Sustainability

COMMUNITY

Sustainability Rewards App

Taking climate action can feel overwhelming without a clear starting point or motivation. To address this, the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability developed the Sustainability Rewards App – a platform that gamifies sustainable behaviours, encouraging staff and students reduce their carbon footprint and celebrate those already making a difference.

The app provides practical tips on topics such as energy saving, waste reduction, and sustainable transport, allowing users to track their actions, earn points, and compete individually or in teams at their own pace. Since launch, 661 users have registered, completing 14,740 sustainable actions.

By making climate action fun and accessible, the app empowers the University community to contribute meaningfully to sustainability efforts.

- Sustainability Rewards App
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability



Climate Springboard

As net zero regulations for businesses become more widespread and customers are increasingly demanding carbon footprint reporting, businesses must adapt to a low-carbon future. To help support this transition, the University's Edinburgh Climate Change Institute developed Climate Springboard – a programme to help businesses prepare for a net zero future.

The free programme is offered to Scotland-based businesses across all sectors, and provides 1-2-1 support, tools to measure and reduce carbon footprints, access to valuable resources and a network of like-minded businesses. So far, over 250 businesses joined the programme, with 100% of participants recommending it to others.

By equipping businesses with the knowledge and tools to take climate action, Climate Springboard is driving a more sustainable future for Scotland's economy.

- **▼** Climate Springboard
- Edinburgh Climate Change Institute



Climate Springboard participant, McLays Foods

PARTNERSHIPS

Sparking climate conversation through art

For nine months in 2025, the Main Library, George Square exhibition space is filled with historic and contemporary multimedia artworks exploring the relationship between environment, ecology, economy and colonialism in relation to the climate crisis.

Showcasing the work of 30 world-renowned artists acquired by the University over the last 350 years, the exhibition, 'Rooting', highlights current University sustainability projects and research by posing them next to these artworks. This dialogue between art and academia provides new ways of thinking and fresh perspectives on the intertangled environmental issues and the climate crisis we face today.

Open to the public, the exhibition invites visitors to reflect, engage, and reimagine our relationship with the planet.

- Exhibitions and Events
- Heritage Collections
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability



Rooting exhibition in the Main Library (Credit: Ian Georgeson)

RESEARCH

Energy planning in Malawi

Malawi is transitioning from wood-based fuel to electrical power to improve energy access, but expanding electricity access must be without exacerbating social and environmental issues. Researchers from the Universities of Edinburgh, St Andrews, Malawi, and Erasmus University Rotterdam used the Energy Justice Framework to explore how reliance on wood fuel impacts the livelihoods of Malawians

Energy access is crucial for the operation of basic services in hydroelectricity-reliant Malawi. Disruptions caused by soil degradation and droughts often force a shift to selfgenerated solar power and wood fuel has adverse effects, on women's health who are often tasked with collecting the wood and cooking.

The goal in Malawi is 30% electricity access by 2030 and to achieve this in an equitable way, researchers argue that energy planning must consider human health and ecosystem functionality. Their approach emphasises a holistic consideration of the diverse sources of energy available in the country to achieve a sustainable transition to electrical power, while mitigating climate change impacts.

- Noriginal research article [PDF]
- School of Geosciences

Improving institutional climate change knowledge

The department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) has been delivering sustainability-related training since 2015, evolving to meet a growing demand for more awareness on climate change, carbon emissions, biodiversity and sustainability. SRS have a dedicated Training Team to deliver the free training in-person and online across the University community.

Alan Peddie, Sustainability Training Manager in SRS, highlighted the programme's impact:

"Our audience has grown significantly, both in size and diversity. Our hugely international audience that also entails participants from a range of academic and professional backgrounds means we have a great diversity of voices. In one Biodiversity Literacy, we asked participants to send us a picture of where they were and we got to see some African Firefinch birds from the Democratic Republic of Congo an incredible moment!"

New staff and students are automatically enrolled on to Introduction to Sustainability, an online course covering climate vocabulary, the University's sustainability work to date and practical steps for action. For deeper engagement with the topic, they can join Carbon Literacy Training, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project, or Biodiversity Literacy Training, both of which are interactive, discussionbased, and focus on real-world applications.

"Students tell us the courses give them practical skills and insights into the sector, far beyond their expectations. For staff, it often opens their eyes into the ways they can contribute in unexpected areas. In one session, an Information Services staff member realised they could update their webpage guidance to be more sustainable, something they hadn't thought of before," notes Alan.

Many participants take their training beyond the classroom, applying sustainability principles in their roles and becoming advocates within the University and their communities. As participation grows each year, the University is strengthening its institutional knowledge of climate change, empowering staff and students to drive real change.



staff and students completed our training in 2023/24

of participants would recommend the training to others

pledges to lower carbon footprints

- National Introduction to Sustainability
- **▼** Carbon Literacy Training
- **▼** Biodiversity Literacy Training
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability



Lucy Patterson, Climate and Sustainability in the Curriculum Coordinator, presenting on Learning for Sustainability

Having completed the Carbon Literacy Training I know want to go back to Malawi and lobby our government on how to be more sustainable.

Certified participant in the Carbon Literacy Training

"

I want set up a business in Nigeria that trains people on Carbon Literacy having completed the training at the University of Edinburgh.

Certified participant in the Carbon Literacy Training



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Sustainable Labs

In the past decade, single-use plastics have often replaced more sustainable reusable items in laboratories. Each singleuse item becomes plastic waste, and at scale, this poses a significant environmental hazard to waterways and oceans. Sustainability initiatives aim to reduce the amount of plastic purchased and wasted in University labs.

A report from a microbiology lab at the Roslin Institute compared plastic use before and after reuse strategies, like switching to wooden sticks, metal loops, and reusing plastic tubes through decontamination and autoclaving. These approaches led to a significant decrease in single-use plastics, reduced biohazard waste, and cost savings.

The report served as a tool to promote sustainable practices in University labs. Current guidance encourages the reuse of plastics, substituting reusable materials, proper waste disposal, reducing lab waste, and redistributing materials and equipment.

- Sustainable labs
- A case report: insights into reducing plastic waste in a microbiology laboratory
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability



COMMUNITY

Ocean conservation conversations accessible to British Sign Language users

Marine species currently lack established British Sign Language (BSL) signs, forcing the deaf community to spell out species names letter by letter when in conversation about marine conservation.

To improve this communication gap and make environmental discussions more accessible, the three-year project, Marine, Underwater, Fish for Inclusion (Muffin), is developing a taxonomy of marine and sea-related signs.

In collaboration with five European countries, the project will develop 100 new BSL signs, helping to remove barriers in marine conservation, science careers and education. Led by the Scottish Sensory Centre who have already developed an online glossary of over 4,000 signs in other STEM subjects, the project will expand this resource to include environmental science terminology.

- Scottish Sensory Centre
- Nour British Sign Language Plan
- Moray House School of Education and Sport



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Edinburgh Ocean Leaders

Since 2020, Edinburgh Ocean Leaders has searched the globe for exceptional individuals making positive change for the ocean. Each year, the programme selects eight mid-career professionals through a global nomination and invitation to apply process.

The programme is offered at no cost as it is based on merit. Participants continue working in their current roles in diverse fields such as law, finance, philanthropy, conservation, policy, media, academia, advocacy, and shipping, while engaging in a year-long suite of bespoke leadership coaching, collaborative problem solving, mentoring, and influencing.

Fellows join a lifelong Ocean Leaders Network, helping to create and sustain ongoing global collaboration to deliver positive change for the ocean across sectors.

of marine areas protected across 28 countries

Driving reduction of marine litter and plastic pollution in 35 countries

- 48 Ocean Leaders from
- 30 countries participated

Influenced sustainable fisheries in 28 countries

70 4 legal and regulatory changes impacted

people in coastal communities positively impacted

- Nocean Leaders
- Programme's Impact Report [PDF]

PARTNERSHIPS

St Abbs Marine Station

St Abbs, a renowned site on the North Sea, is celebrated for its stunning waters and rich marine biodiversity. The mix of warm Gulf Stream waters and cold Arctic currents supports vibrant habitats, including kelp forests, rocky reefs, and diverse species like dolphins, starfish, and seabirds.

However, climate change, pollution, ocean acidification, and overfishing pose significant threats. St Abbs Marine Station partnered with the University of Edinburgh in 2019 for a five-year collaboration to spearhead marine research. The collaboration involved an international team of scientists and students, Changing Oceans Research Group, and focused on renewable energy impacts, climate change effects, aquaculture restoration, education, and conservation.

Initiatives at St Abbs emphasise habitat restoration, public engagement, and a volunteer program, welcoming participants worldwide since 2015. These efforts protect the Berwickshire Marine Reserve's biodiversity and strengthen community ties and economic sustainability through eco-tourism.

- St Abbs Marine Station
- School of Geosciences
- School of Biological Sciences; The Roslin Institute; The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies











Top: St Abbs Marine Station researchers Bottom: St Abbs Marine Station tank (Credit: India Hunkin)



Reducing reliance on fish as a source of omega-3

Omega 3 is essential for both human and animal health, but with 90% of global fish stocks overexploited and a third depleted, finding sustainable alternative sources of Omega-3 is crucial. MiAlgae, a startup company founded in 2017 by then-Masters student Douglas Martin with the support of Edinburgh Innovations, has found a solution that bypasses fish altogether.

Using cutting-edge technology, MiAlgae repurposes the byproduct of whisky distillation to grow nutrient-rich algae that produces plant-based Omega-3 at a competitive market price, reducing our reliance on fish oil and also lowering carbon emissions in the process.

In 2023, MiAlgae was featured in Zero Scotland's Building a Circular Economy for Scottish Business report, for its innovative circular production model, and in 2024 the company was shortlisted for the prestigious Earthshot Prize.

- MiAlgae
- **Building a Circular Economy for Scottish Business** [PDF]
- Edinburgh Innovations





Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

OPERATIONS

Wild Campus

The University shares its extraordinary campus with wildlife, from peregrine falcons, to otters, foxes, badgers and deer. With 86% of students believing that universities should take more action to protect nature on their land, the University's Wild Campus programme seeks to transform our campus into nature-rich spaces where wildlife and communities can thrive side-by-side.

The Estates Landscape team are enhancing wildlife corridors across the campus and wider city. This includes the creation of dead hedges and wildflower meadows, wild corners, grasslands and log piles.

The University's participation in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Programme has laid the foundations for many of these practices, and Gold Accreditation was achieved in 2022. More recently, student volunteers installed 30 wildlife cameras across the Easter Bush estate for the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme in July 2024, helping to capture images of hedgehogs and other campus wildlife.



- Wild Campus
- ▼ Hedgehog Friendly Campus campaign
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability; Estates



Area of biodiversity at Roslin, Easter Bush (Credit: Chris Close)

Biodiversity Plan

Introduced the Plan in

Aim to reach naturepositive university by

Enhance and protect existing biodiversity



Embed biodiversity in planning and building development



Improve health and wellbeing of staff, students and wider community

Riodiversity Plan 2022

COMMUNITY

The Big Dig

Since its launch in 2020, The Big Dig, an initiative by Active Lives at Sport and Exercise, has planted over 2,000 trees on Easter Bush campus, with more than 240 participants. Open to all staff and students, the project benefits from tree donations of a variety of species from the Woodland Trust.

As the trees mature, shields and canes from the initial planting are removed in the Big Dig Clean Up event, an ongoing maintenance programme run throughout the year.

"

Through planting different species, we are increasing biodiversity which is at the forefront of our minds and in turn, we are reducing our carbon footprint. We have received lovely feedback from participants who enjoy being outdoors and connecting with nature, getting their hands dirty, or just getting away from their computers."

Amanda Marshall, Active Lives co-ordinator

The future of the project has been secured with planning permission extended for another three years. The next major goal is to establish a 'picking trail', allowing staff and students to forage while on campus.

Sport and Exercise

Education in environmental protection

There are many ways to look at how to protect wildlife and ecosystems, manage forests and land and increase biodiversity. Students on Environmental Protection and Management (MSc) in the School of Geosciences and Ecology, Evolution and Biodiversity (MSc) in the School of Biological Sciences address conservation through a practical lens by delivering the programme as a partnership with Scotland's Rural College and emphasising fieldwork, statistics and coding respectively.

Online learning programmes such as Applied Conservation Genetics with Wildlife Forensics and International Animal Welfare, Ethics & Law in The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies increase knowledge in environment conservation and provide insight into the international issues arising from the history of animal welfare.

Rowse our degree programmes



Ecometrica

Over the last 10,000 years, the world has lost a third of its forests. Half of this loss has occurred in the past century due to deforestation for agriculture, fuel production, and construction. Forest loss has adverse effects on the environment, releasing carbon dioxide and exacerbating climate change.

Forests 2020 addresses these challenges. The University worked in collaboration with Ecometrica (now EcoOnline) on the project, sponsored by the UK Space Agency. The five-year project used advanced satellite technology for forest monitoring combined with modelling of forest carbon dynamics. Scientific support was provided to agencies in six tropical countries working to protect and restore up to 300 million hectares of tropical forests.

The project produced enhanced tools to determine biomass and carbon stocks in tropical forests. This generated a localised understanding of key ecological processes. The models were used to identify the sequestration potential of tropical trees, and their sensitivity to climate change, aiding policy development and global decision-making for forest management.

- Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscape; **School of GeoSciences**
- SEcometrica (EcoOnline)



RESEARCH

Calculating nutrients loss in Scotland

Scotland's deer populations have been actively managed since 1959 to prevent them from decimating young tree and shrub growth. Annual culling controls the number of deer and carcasses are removed. Recent research at the University of Edinburgh and Yale University suggests this practice might be stripping the landscape of valuable nutrients.

The research group calculated the amount of calcium, nitrogen and phosphorus for the average deer body size and estimated the potential loss of nutrients each year. The study reveals how deer carcasses can benefit soil, woodland restoration and the ecosystem as a whole, by providing food and distraction for predators of groundnesting birds. While the research is preliminary, researchers provide two solutions: leave the carcasses in the landscape or limit the number of culls and prioritise natural death by reintroduction of natural predators.

- Notinal research article
- The Roslin Institute; The Royal (Dick) School of **Veterinary Studies**



Deer in the Scottish Highlands



FEATURE STORY Sowing seeds for net zero

Recognising the need to balance its commitment to international excellence with environmental responsibility, the University launched the Forest and Peatland programme in 2021.

The project is a key component in the University's drive to reach net zero by 2040, which includes a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero.

The University acquired 887 hectares of land across three sites: Rullion Green Wood, Drumbrae, and Barvick Burn Wood. Each location is undergoing transformation to support diverse plant and animal life, benefiting both local communities and the environment. In Rullion Green Wood, a former grazing area is being reimagined as a thriving woodland, enhancing biodiversity and local community engagement. Similarly, Drumbrae will feature new woodlands, offering opportunities for environmental education and local involvement. Barvick Burn Wood, once a grouse moor, is being managed to create woodlands while protecting open habitats.

Since most of the woodland creation and peatland restoration will take place on partnership sites, such as Ardtornish, Strathbran Estate and Kinloch Woodlands among others, the partnerships are a key aspect of the programme. The project's success further relies heavily on collaborations with landowners, community groups, and organisations like NatureScot, Scottish Forestry and Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. For example, through these collaborations, the population of rare plants such as the sticky catchfly has already improved. These aid conservation by contributing to enhancing biodiversity gains in Scotland and promoting sustainable land use practices.

The initiative creates a unique opportunity for placebased research, teaching, and innovation in fields like climate science, biodiversity, social sciences and arts and humanities. For instance, the University's Airborne Research and Innovation facility, who are using remote sensing technology to capture high resolution (1.25cm) imagery of the three University-owned sites to establish a baseline which will serve as a foundation for future research. This approach offers an innovative and comprehensive approach to collecting ecological and cultural heritage data across all our sites.

Such efforts are enhanced by the University's expertise, with scholars like Dr. Nicholle Bell in the School of Chemistry focusing on impactful peatland restoration monitoring approaches that capture real-time data measurements of the sites, or Dr Zak Cambell-Lochrie who is collecting vegetation samples to better understand fire risk at woodland creation sites in Scotland.

While it will take decades to see woodlands stretching across the sites, the Forest and Peatlands Programme is setting new standards in biodiversity recovery by blending scientific expertise with practical solutions. This approach not only addresses the immediate problem but also paves the way for long-term sustainability, serving as a blueprint for ecological restoration worldwide for the next decades.

- Forest and Peatland Programme
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability



University of Edinburgh staff visiting Rullion Green Wood



Corporate Services Group staff visiting Drumbrae site





Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Modern slavery





- Nodern Slavery Training
- ▶ Procurement Strategy 2030 [PDF]
- **▼ Anti-Slavery Policy** [PDF]
- Latest Modern Slavery Statement

Our governance

The University Court is the main governing body of the University and is responsible for its legal identity. Established by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889, it manages the University's assets and has the power to manage the University's finances, sets staff salaries, and creates committees.

The Court ensures transparent and accountable decisions are made through Ordinance, Resolution, or simple decisions where no formal consultation is needed.

COMMUNITY

Free legal advice clinics

The University of Edinburgh Law School provides free legal advice to members of the local community who cannot afford or access legal advice elsewhere. Student-led, with support from Edinburgh Law School staff and qualified solicitors, the Free Legal Advice Centre has been advising the community since 2007 and specialises in advice on various matters including contracts, disputes, employment, landlord and tenant disputes.

The Scottish Tax Clinic, also led by students and staff at the Law School, with the support of volunteer tax professionals. provides tax advice and helps to resolve individual tax issues to those in the community on lower incomes. The clinic helps clients understand tax returns, tax codes, HMRC letters, and appeals, among other services.

The free advice clinics not only enhance students' skills in legal advice but also provide an essential service to the local community.

- ▼ Free Legal Advice Centre
- Scottish Tax Clinic
- Edinburgh Law School

The Scottish Tax Clinic's achievements since 2021

50 individuals engaged

£50,000 in penalties or overpaid tax appealed or returned





World-leading Law education

The Edinburgh Law School offers a wide range of Law degrees at undergraduate, postgraduate and research level. Established in 1707, it is one of the oldest Law schools in the UK and remains one of 20 highest ranked Law schools in the world, according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject 2025.

Outside of Law, the Moray House School of Education offers a postgraduate online degree in Social Justice and Community Action. Drawing on critical education, politics, social policy and sociology, the programme focuses on social justice issues and grassroots practice in public, private and non-governmental sectors.

Edinburgh Law School; Moray House School of Education



Students sitting on steps outside the Law School in Old College Quad (Credit: Sam Ingram-Sills, Whitedog Photography)

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships for security research, global justice and peace

The University hosts networks and centres dedicated to advancing research, teaching, knowledge exchange, and outreach in global justice, security research and peace. Led by the Edinburgh Law School, the Global Justice Academy is an interdisciplinary network that focuses on issues such as gender, human rights, social justice, as well as conflict and peace. Additionally, the University is a key member of the PeaceRep consortium, led by Professor Christine Bell, which conducts research on peace and transition processes, geopolitics, environment and climate issues in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. In 2023, PeaceRep was awarded warded the Mary Somerville Medal by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to recognise their research effort.

The Centre for Security Research connects researchers across disciplines who are working on security at the University Edinburgh and beyond. The Centre hosts an annual conference as well as book launches and networking events, providing a platform for collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

- ▼ PeaceRep
- The Centre for Security Research
- Edinburgh Law School; School of Social and Political Science
- S Global Justice Academy





Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime

Professors Lesley McAra and Susan McVie are leading on a criminological life-course study of pathways into and out of offending for 4,300 young people in the City of Edinburgh. Tracing their behaviour patterns and circumstances since 1998, the study found that keeping children out of the formal youth justice system and in mainstream education as long as possible decreases reoffending.

The findings of this study have influenced Scottish Government policies, contributing to a 93% fall in youth convictions and a 98% reduction in the imprisonment of young people. The study was also key in raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility in Scotland from 8 to 12 and findings are being used in campaigns to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Northern Ireland, Australia and Chile.



Awarded the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Prize for **Outstanding Public Policy Impact in 2019**

- Notinal research article
- ▼ Professor Lesley McAra biography
- Professor Susan McVie biography
- Edinburgh Law School





Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



A call for greener banking products

In February 2024, the University of Cambridge issued a Request for Proposals to the banking sector, asking for financial services that do not support fossil fuel expansion. Supported by the University of Edinburgh and over 70 UK institutions, the initiative seeks financial products that align with the International Energy Agency's Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario. Banks play a major role in financing fossil fuel expansion by offering loans and bonds to fund new fossil fuel exploration and infrastructure. This group of universities are requesting new banking products, while also meeting their operational needs.

The impact of this effort could be substantial, as it not only pushes banks to innovate and create more environmentally friendly financial products to meet growing demand, but also shifts finance away from risky fossil fuel projects that could lock-in emissions for decades to come.

The University of Edinburgh a signatory of:

- Nature Positive Alliance to halt and reverse nature loss
- Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice - UKRI
- The University of Cambridge Banking **Engagement Forum**
- Business School



Una Europa Alliance

The University is proud to align with European values through its participation in the international alliance, Una Europa.

Comprising 11 European universities, the Una Europa alliance is working towards a European inter-university environment which offers a unique platform for students and staff at its member universities for facilitated research. exchange, and cooperation across Europe.

Una Europa focuses on six key areas to address global challenges through research and exchange activities. Staff members can benefit from seed funding, training, networking and exchanges, while students can participate in summer schools and other mobility activities, all designed to enhance their skills and broaden their academic and leadership experiences.

▼ Una Europa

Number University of Edinburgh

500,000 100,000 staff community across Una Europa member universities

universities

languages

Two joint undergraduate programmes launched across the Una Europa alliance

(BA European Studies & BA Sustainability)



Una Europa General Assembly hosted by the University of Zurich in June 2024, attendees from the University of Edinburgh include the Provost (Credit: Andre Hengst)

Sustainable Development Progress at COP26

The University's engagement and contribution to COP26 in 2021 resulted in advancing SDGs in Scotland and beyond:

- Commitment to sequester emissions through Forest and Peatland programme
- Edinburgh Earth Initiative launch
- Supported the University's Curriculum Transformation Project
- Short online courses on sustainability
- 28 observer passes

International cooperation in Australasia and **Southeast Asia**

It is vital for students to have opportunities to address global challenges through key partnerships and international cooperation. Since 2019, the University has collaborated with the University of Sydney, University of Amsterdam, Nanyang Technological University and others on two-week INCITE Summer Schools. Learning about entrepreneurship, intercultural competence, systems thinking and social innovation, students build practical skills to tackle current challenges in climate action, health and wellbeing, and reflective societies.

In addition, the University has established exchange agreements for medical students and, in 2024, committed to facilitating 50 full-year equivalent exchanges annually in Business, Chemistry, Ecological and Environmental Sciences, and Physics, further expanding global learning opportunities for its students.

- NINCITE Summer School
- Study and Work Away Service, Edinburgh Global



iAtlantic

The iAtlantic project emerged from the EU's Horizon 2020 call to support the Belém Statement, a partnership for Atlantic Ocean research involving the EU, Brazil, South Africa and other partners across the Atlantic. Over nearly five years, this collaborative North-South initiative, coordinated by Prof Murray Roberts in the School of Geosciences, sought to advance our understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and inform sustainable marine resource management.

iAtlantic developed innovative tools like survey technology and data processing techniques. It established infrastructure for data access, encouraging collaboration between 200 researchers from 16 countries. Collaboration was enhanced through events for the UN Ocean Decade.

The project contributed to international policy frameworks, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework and the High Seas Treaty*, and provided critical data for marine protection and fisheries management. The designation of new protected areas and improved international cooperation highlights its success.

50+ early-career researchers trained

peer-reviewed academic publications

geospatial layers in iAtlantic GeoNode portal publicly deliverable reports

- **▼ iAtlantic Research Highlights** [PDF]
- Professor Murray Roberts biography
- School of GeoSciences

*the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) adopted on 19 June 2023



Scotland Beyond Net Zero

A partnership between Heriot-Watt University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Common Weal and low-carbon heat installation businesses, brought together over 70 attendees to advance rural district heating policy in the Scottish Borders in 2025. As a result, the team was invited to create a 5-point plan for the Scottish Government, demonstrating commercially feasible, community-engagement-led approach to policy.

The partnership was supported by Scotland Beyond Net Zero (SBNZ), an initiative supporting Scottish universities to address environmental challenges through research. The University of Edinburgh and University of Glasgow have funded SBNZ for the first three years, demonstrating new ways of leadership and collaboration across the sector. Now, 11 more universities joined the consortium and the priority research themes centre around food, natural systems, finance, built environment, energy and transport.

SBNZ offers a seed fund of up £15,000 to advance climate change and net zero research, co-created with industry, government, business and community partners.

- Scotland Beyond Net Zero
- Edinburgh Earth Initiative

Methodology

Limitations

Despite its strengths, the project team acknowledges several limitations. As a pilot project, the publication aims to cover a range and breadth of UoE activities, however, given the intensity of resource for manual mapping and time and capacity restraints, the team acknowledges that some areas may have been missed or underrepresented. Similarly, the dynamic nature of ongoing changes implies that the publication can quickly become outdated. Despite thorough mapping of the UoE activities onto the SDGs and their targets as defined by the UN, there is potential of misaligning stories with particular SDGs and the possibility of one story being relevant for more than one SDG. As such, the publication aims to provide a flavour of UoE activities within the SDG framework rather than provide a tool for measuring progress.

SDGs were designed for governments and policymakers to drive global change. This makes applying SDGs to HEI institutions challenging, as they are driven by their own strategies. However, SDGs can be a useful tool when adapted to HEI use, as is the case with international impact and sustainability rankings or the EAUC SDG Accord Annual Report. As an exploratory publication, the SDG framing is a useful exercise for assessing how the University might be best positioned to communicate our contribution to SDGs and the value in doing so in the future.

Use of Al

The project piloted the use of Edinburgh Language Model, the University's Al tool, to organise the structure of case studies and streamline content length efficiently. This helped manage the publication's scope and maintain coherence across varied narratives.

Impact and contribution

The publication highlights the University's existing commitments to sustainability and to delivery of positive impact for society. The project reflects the University's dedication to accountability and has the potential to enrich engagement with staff and students, and enhance student recruitment by showcasing contributions to global sustainability.

Acknowledgements

Kat Zabecka led on the project and together with Matthew Lawson from the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) collected case studies from across the University which were subsequently mapped to individual SDGs as closely as possible, with the goal to highlight the positive contributions of the University but also acknowledge gaps and areas of improvement in a transparent way.

The content underwent thorough revisions and proofreading by SRS communications colleagues Eppy Harries-Pugh, Alex Kuklinski and Sarah Ford-Hutchinson. Case study stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback prior to publication, with the SRS Senior Management Team having final approval.

Julie Freeman from Graphic Design Services (Learning, Teaching and Web) designed the publication, and support and final proofreading was provided by Communications and Marketing.

The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment



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