OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2021-22

November 2021

Annexes:

Annex A: University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Annex B: University Innovation Fund 2021-22

Annex C: Self-evaluation report for 2020-21

Approved by Court 24 November 2021

A: INTRODUCTION

This outcome agreement for 2021-22 sets out the ways in which Abertay University will continue to contribute to the national aims and priorities for higher education in Scotland during this academic year. It builds on our previous outcome agreements, and our Strategic Plan and associated operational plans. The structure reflects the revised guidance issued by SFC and sets out outcomes for students (section B), for research (section C), and for economic recovery and social renewal (section D)

This outcome agreement builds on our existing strengths. We would like to highlight in particular:

- Our continued commitment to, and strong performance in, widening access to higher education. 29% of our 2021-22 Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants came from SIMD20 postcode areas, or experienced educational disadvantage (as recognised by our contextual admissions policy) prior to coming to Abertay – an increase from 2020-21.

- The continued high levels of articulation with full credit into our undergraduate programmes, with 25% of our Scottish-domiciled entrants articulating with full credit onto years 2 or 3 of an Abertay degree in 2021-22.

- Our continued commitment to equality and diversity: we were the first, and to date the only University in Scotland in Scotland to achieve the Race Equality Charter Mark bronze award in 2017 and re-awarded in 2021.

- Our focus in 2021-22 on improving student engagement and retention.

In developing this outcome agreement we have consulted with the Students' Association and with our trade unions. This document was considered and approved by our Court at its meeting on 24 November 2021.

Fair access and transitions

Improving access to higher education and continuing to ensure that we recruit students from a diverse range of backgrounds remain priorities for Abertay. Our approach to access to education reflects the strong sense of social mission felt by the Abertay community and the focus on social mobility in our Strategic Plan, which emphasises our commitment to offering transformational opportunities to those who have the ability to benefit from Abertay's approach to education, by providing a range of routes to an Abertay degree and by supporting students and graduates to reach their full potential.

Deprivation and educational disadvantage

In 2020-21, 16% of our Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants came from the 20% most deprived postcode areas and the provisional figure for 2021-22 indicates an increase to 19%. Our contextual admissions policy, introduced in 2014-15, is well embedded and allows us to capture a wider range of disadvantage than relying solely on the postcode of applicants. Students who meet the criteria[1] are eligible for a contextual offer at our minimum access threshold level. We actively promote this policy and the associated access thresholds through local educational networks and via our prospectus and website. All of our course information on our website encourages applicants who expect to pass three Highers to submit an application, and our prospectus lists the minimum grade requirements for each course.

In both 2020-21 and 2021-22, 20% of our entrants met the criteria to be eligible for a contextual offer, with only around 40% (43% in 2021-22) of this group coming from SIMD20 postcodes. In 2020-21, 20 entrants had care experience and 19 (1.7% of intake) in 2021-22.

Taken together, **contextual entrants and SIMD20 entrants accounted for 27% of our Scottish-domiciled undergraduate intake in 2020-21 and 29% in 2021-22**.

National measure	2019-20 baseline	2020-21 actual	2021-22 provisional
CoWA measure: proportion of **full-time first degree** SDUEs from SIMD20 postcodes	16.3%	16.3%	18.7%

Articulation & pathways

In 2021-22, as with previous years, around a third (34% in 2021-22) of our Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants joined Abertay in year 2, 3 or 4 of their degree programme. This reflects our commitment to articulation and to offering a range of routes to an Abertay degree. It also reflects the model of progression we operate with our partner colleges (Dundee and Angus College, Fife College and Al-Maktoum College), with the expectation that there are clear articulation routes and automatic progression with no additional grade requirements to Abertay degrees for students passing their

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[1] The criteria we take into consideration include participating in a recognised higher education widening access programme; spending time in care; or a combination of other criteria including: attending a low progression school, living in an SIMD40 area, having parents or guardians who have not participated in HE, or having experienced serious disruption to formal education.

HNDs at partner colleges. Working in partnership with Dundee & Angus College, we have also mapped progression routes for Foundation Apprenticeships.

As well as our local partner colleges, we also work with colleges across Scotland to support articulation. We offer a wide range of articulation routes across our degree programmes to support transition through the learner journey. The full range of articulation routes is publicised on our [website](#).

Our data for 2020-21 shows that 23% (271) of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants articulated with full credit and a further 9% (104) with partial credit. This has remained at similar levels in 2021-22, 25% (284) of entrants articulating with full credit, and a further 9% (96) with partial credit. In relation to the National Measure, the proportion of HN entrants articulating with advanced standing dipped to 48% in 2020-21, reflecting the impact of the pandemic on student choices, but has returned to previous levels in 2021-22, with 58% of HN entrants articulating with advanced standing.

National measure	2019-20 baseline	2020-21 actual	2021-22 provisional
Proportion of Scotland-domiciled HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing	56.6%	47.5%	58.4%

Our 2020-25 strategic plan reaffirms our commitment to offering a range of routes to an Abertay degree, and to continuing to work with our college partners to ensure a smooth and successful transition to Abertay.

High quality, learning, teaching and support

Abertay University is deeply embedded in our regional economy. The 'localness' of our student demographic and our long history of delivering learning and research which is applied by business and industry locally, as well as nationally and internationally, means that we are in regular contact with our local Chamber of Commerce and the four local authorities which make up the Tay Cities Region (Dundee City, Angus, Fife and Perth & Kinross).

Our Learning Enhancement Strategy commits us to ensuring that all programmes have work-related learning opportunities built into the curriculum at appropriate stages, such that students not only learn new knowledge, but are able to apply their learning in practical situations. Our programme teams work closely with partners in the public and private sectors to ensure that appropriate opportunities are available to students.

In line with our Learning Enhancement Strategy, we were already moving towards a more blended learning model pre-pandemic. Our experience since March 2020 has enabled us to accelerate and during 2021-22 we will develop, in consultation with staff and students, the principles of our new pedagogical approach with the intention of implementing this for delivery in September 2022.

UK University of the Year for Teaching Quality

In September 2020, Abertay was named UK University of the Year for Teaching Quality by The Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2021. The 2020 National Student Survey (NSS) scores were a significant factor in the decision to award us this title. We were in the top 10 universities in the UK, top 3 in Scotland, with an overall satisfaction score in excess of 89%. While our score dropped to 79% in 2021, reflecting in part students' experience during the pandemic, it remains above benchmark, 37th in the UK and above the sector average.

Arrangements to support learning and teaching during the public health emergency

Arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement, particularly in response to the pandemic, are set out in more detail in our 'Annual statement on institution-led review and enhancement activities 2020-21' submitted to SFC in September 2021.

We introduced a Fair Assessment policy in April 2020 to mitigate against the impact of the pandemic and to provide a safety net for students. This has remained in place in 2020-21 and 2021-22 to ensure consistency for students while the pandemic continues.

Supporting students in their transition to Abertay

For the start of academic year 2021-22 we introduced a suite of credit-bearing microcredentials (MySuccess at Abertay modules) for all first-year programmes which are intended to support transition to the University and to identify areas for academic and personal development. They aim to enable students to develop the foundations for building a successful Abertay academic and social career. This is of increasing importance given the fact that student arrive from a pandemic influenced school and college scenario which has seen hugely disrupted journeys. One of the new microcredentials (ABE101), focuses on diagnostic testing and is used to inform students of their strengths and weakness across a range of areas: academic skills, numeracy, digital skills and wellbeing. Abertay is leading a QAA Collaborative Cluster project looking at this issue with six partners. From 2022-23 the microcredential and diagnostic approach will be expanded to direct entry students in later years.

From September 2021, we have also appointed three student success officers (SSO), who are 2021 Abertay Graduates, and report to the School Academic Advisor in each School. The SSO role is focussed on supporting student engagement, starting, before the formal start of term, with engagement with the new microcredentials and ensuring students are supported in their first weeks at Abertay. The SSOs provide a proactive role to engage with students who are showing a lack of participation. They will continue to provide support throughout the academic year and are expected to work closely with Academic Advisors to support students in danger of dropping out.

The impact of these initiatives is already apparent, and they will continue to be developed and enhanced over the coming year.

Retention

Improving retention remains a priority for Abertay and we recognise that the outcomes for students remain lower than we would expect. Provisional data for retention of 2020-21 entrants into 2021-22 shows a drop with 83% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) returning compared to 86% the previous year. Retention of SIMD20 entrants remains lower than overall SDUE retention, at 76% and retention of mature entrants agreed over 21 years, most of whom are articulating students, was lower than the overall position at 79%. This reflects, at least in part, the challenges faced by students as a result of the pandemic.

Understanding the retention challenges and how we can address these has been a priority for us over the last year. This had led to a focus in 2021-22 on improving student engagement, particularly on supporting those who may struggle in their first weeks at Abertay, and on working with partner colleges to ensure that we improve the transition for articulating students and keep the curriculum under review to facilitate this.

The Student Success Officers referred to above will contribute to this, but there is a wider focus on developing a sense of belonging amongst students (and new students in particular), on continuing to improve the way in which we welcome students to the University, and on ensuring that our approach

to learning and teaching encourages engagement and supports students who may have a variety of personal circumstances.

Partnership, participation and student experience

The Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) agreed in 2020-21 recognised the need to ensure there is an effective student representation system. The Students' Association and the University are committed to working together to produce a new longer-term SPA and this will be developed during this academic year.

For the start of the 2021-22 academic year, we established an agreed a set of expectations for staff and students. These are in response to feedback received through the NSS and the JISC Digital Experience Survey. These define the baseline learning experience for students that staff have been asked to adhere to, in order to provide students with a consistent learning experience, and separately, outline what students can expect from us, as well as what we expect from them.   We believe this is another key aspect of our efforts to improve engagement and retention.

During 2021-22 we hope to continue to work closely with the Students' Association. We are committed to regular monthly meetings between the Students' Association and Executive members as well as including student representation on all relevant committees. The Students' Association have been part of the Coronavirus management team since the start of the pandemic and have therefore had a voice in decisions over this period.

We are working closely with the Students' Association to engage students as partners in their learning. The focus being to encouraging students not to be passive consumers of their learning but to engage in a collaborative approach to the design and co-creation of learning materials, creating spaces for staff and students to work together on shared goals and projects to help shape the learning experience. This is a joint Students' Association / Abertay initiative

As part of the new first year microcredential initiative described earlier, the Students' Association is delivering a new microcredential, named 'Welcome to the CommuniTAY', the purpose of which is 'to showcase to students what Abertay has to offer and inform students how they can get involved' with a learning outcome that will enable students to 'clearly identify the different ways to make the most of the Abertay community and Student Experience'.

Public health emergency

Throughout the pandemic, our Coronavirus Management Team has taken the lead in developing appropriate policy and guidance as well as the practical implementation of this. We continue to work closely with the NHS Tayside Public Health Team, with the City Council and with the other educational institutions in the City.

Support continues to be provided to our students on-campus and remotely, including 24-hour telephone and video counselling and mental health support; welfare advice and support including the provision of food vouchers for self-isolating students; financial hardship payments (including to alleviate digital poverty); study skills support; and general information and advice from our Support Enquiry Zone. In light of the increased demand for mental health support seen during the pandemic, a counsellor and/or a student advisor is on site each working day to be on hand for any student mental health or welfare crisis should a short face-to-face intervention be required.

Remote and flexible working

As restrictions eased in summer 2021, we developed a new policy for remote working, taking the opportunity to incorporate some of the benefits of our experience to date into how we will work in future. This provides guidance for staff and managers in 2021-22 and will continue to evolve.

People Strategy

During 2021-22, we will develop a People Strategy 2022-27 that sets out the priorities for people and organisational development for the University to support achievement of our strategic objectives. This will be developed in consultation with staff and will include discussion of the core University ethos/values for Abertay staff which will underpin the strategy.

Equalities and inclusion

For Abertay equality and diversity is recognising and valuing that everyone is different and respecting and appreciating those differences to enable people to reach their full potential, and also to bring about improvements for organisational and societal benefit. This underpins our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at Abertay as we aim to work together as a community, tapping into the talent and drive of colleagues who are passionate about EDI, and value the sense of shared endeavour that our approach brings.

The IDEA ('Inclusion, diversity and equality at Abertay) Management Group, leads EDI for the University, and links senior management to groups that are key to driving improvement, including, for example, the Lead Voices Forum, Race Equality Charter (REC) and Athena Swan teams, Trade Unions and staff involved in EDI across the University.

Since 2017-18, we have operated our successful 'Lead Voices at Abertay' initiative. Volunteer staff members and students act as general 'advocates' or 'lead voices' for particular protected characteristics; connecting management with the wider student and staff community, but - crucially - acting in a peer-to-peer way and thus helping to articulate various staff and student views and share these with management, especially with respect to equality impact assessment of University policies and decisions. This is intended to provide a clear, structured approach to EDI engagement with more visible routes for input; named volunteers who will actively promote engagement across all protected characteristics; and increased visibility of EDI activities and best practice guidance across the staff and student population.

In 2020-21 we held our first ever 'Diversity Fest', a week-long festival of events designed to explore and celebrate equality, inclusion and diversity at the University.   We also created The Abertay Citizen Code, an agreement between us as an institution and our student community to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities in creating an inclusive and welcoming University, that treats everyone equitably, fairly, and with respect.

The University is committed to tackling gender-based violence and since 2019, has established a reporting and support system provided training to staff facilitated by Rape Crisis Scotland on how to support those reporting rape and sexual abuse; changed the process for non-academic student misconduct to align with sector guidance; rolled out of online student and staff awareness and training modules; and a 'tell us' campaign to raise awareness among student and staff of how to report GBV and access support.

Our Mainstreaming Report (April 2021) provides more information on the range of activities taking place across the University and our priorities.

C: OUTCOMES FOR RESEARCH

Abertay is a compact and focused university with an established reputation for working well across traditional research boundaries, as well as within new and emerging disciplines and sectors. Our strategic plan confirms our ongoing commitment to high quality research and innovation that addresses real-world challenges and delivers real impact for society and the economy, aligned with national and local priorities[2].

Building on our significant successes and responding to external opportunities and challenges, our new Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2020-25, R-LINCS2, is set to produce a step-change in our research capacity and excellence, and our generation of collaborative research and interdisciplinary innovation with impact. Strategic RKE activity will be focused within and across Challenge Spaces addressing key local, national and international priorities that our research base best positions us to respond to. To address these Challenge Spaces we will draw on our research expertise that is encapsulated in our Pooled Excellence, which represent cross-institutional ways of working, and our academic units. Through investment in and delivery of our new RKE Strategy, Abertay will support areas of existing and emerging research excellence across the University and grow the value of our research to make a major contribution to economic prosperity, social and cultural impact, sustainable development and inclusive growth. Our ambition is supported by significant investment in academic staff with strong research records, our Postgraduate Research Student community and the Graduate School.

An implementation plan to support our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy was developed and agreed in 2020-21, with additional investment in academic staff and PhD studentships agreed in our planning process for 2021 onwards.

2020-21 also saw our submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the UK-wide mechanism for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. Reflecting our ambitions to grow the research community and expand into new areas, we have taken an inclusive approach to REF2021, submitting more staff (117 rather than 72) and to more subject areas (8 rather than 7) than for REF2014. We have made progress in expanding opportunities for academic staff to engage in research, with a notable increase in the proportion of female staff submitted since REF2014 (39% of the total, up from 28%).

Research Excellence Grant

Introduction

Our Research Excellence Grant (REG) allocation helps support research, knowledge exchange and innovation (RKEI) excellence through pan-University leadership, and intra- and inter-theme support and initiatives, to drive discipline strengths and interdisciplinary research, within a resilient and sustainable research environment. Abertay recognise and reward excellent research and the effective translation of research, including effective business support.

REG funding has allowed Abertay to provide fully-funded (42-month RCUK-level stipend, fees, plus travel/consumables/equipment budgets) R-LINCS PhD studentships (32 awarded; 10 externally co-funded during the REF 2021 period) have supported the research of 60 academics, and Abertay Futures Scholarships (launched 2018) have provided 7 fee-waivers to excellent PGRS in priority areas. By integrating discipline-specific research under the remit of themed, competitive internal funding schemes, we have enhanced the Postgraduate Research Student community and research

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[2] An overview of research at Abertay is available at https://www.abertay.ac.uk/research-overview/

environment to facilitate the RKEI pipeline and ecosystem functioning. For example, 80% of R-LINCS supervisors have subsequently secured external RKE income and collaborative projects with UKRI, EU, business and charities in areas which are key priorities for the UK and Scottish Government.

Some case studies demonstrating how Abertay's use of the REG has helped leverage in funding from other sources whilst supporting excellent RKEI:

(1) The UK Creative Cluster For Computer Games

Overview
The most recent Making Games in the UK report (TIGA 2020) reported that Scotland had 1,803 permanent and full-time equivalent creative staff working on games development in 96 companies, up from 1,537 staff at 84 companies in November 2018. Scotland is home to 7.3 per cent of the UK's total games companies but 10.7 per cent of its developer headcount, due in large part to the Scottish studio of a single major employer, Rockstar North. Scotland's games development sector supports an additional 3,296 indirect jobs. Based on headcount, Scotland remains the 4th largest games development region in the UK behind the North West, London and the South East.

The Creative Industries sector in Dundee form a larger percentage of the local economy than any other UK city of comparable size. The Dundee creative industries cluster is dominated by an established computer games development sector, recognized in the Bazalgette report for its dynamism. Dundee offers a paradigmatic model of high intensity activity in a medium-sized UK city. The Think Global, Create Local report (Ukie 2020[3]) places Dundee in the top towns/cities with the largest GVA in the UK (£30.9M), with 33 Game companies and 306 full-time employees. Graduates from local universities anchor a growing number of digital agencies and applications developers resulting in a total of 3,571 jobs in digital tech Industries.

REG contribution
Two R-LINCS studentships, Mavridou (2014-17) and Bozdog (2015-19; SGSAH ARCS co-funded studentship), developed understanding of how users interacted with computer games and digital media. This work informed the research and knowledge exchange described below. A third R-LINCS studentship on computer games, which will study how production methods for multi-media content will develop post COVID, is in train.

Outcomes and Impacts
Our research on computer games has been used by end users including games companies, museums and cultural organisations to increase their income and public engagement. Most significantly this expertise contributed to the creation of the £11.5m InGAME R&D centre; which delivers innovative research and R&D support to games companies in the city of Dundee and beyond. In addition, R-LINCS research led to the award of a £58k AHRC grant for collaborative research with Chinese academics and businesses. This grant will facilitate increased interaction between the UK and Chinese game industries, with the games market in the latter country being a major export target for the Scottish government. As of September 2021, InGAME has funded 107 collaborative R&D projects with industry, leveraged £6.9M co-investment (including pledged, accompanying, aligned and follow-on), and won the TIGA Excellence in Games Research 2021 award.

(2) Sustainable Alcohol Production for Scotland (SAPS)

Overview
The beverage alcohol industry has enormous economic benefits for Scotland. Scotch whisky alone generates more than £5bn annually in export revenues, representing around 25% of all UK food and

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[3] https://ukie.org.uk/regional-economic-report

drink exports. Scotland also produces around 80% of UK gin. The Scottish brewing industry has undergone a renaissance in recent years with 115 breweries now in operation, a dramatic 230% increase since 2010, with the growth overwhelmingly concentrated in the innovative micro-breweries sector. These successes reflect a growing consumer desire nationally and globally for Scottish beverages rooted in the nation's centuries-old brewing and distilling heritage. Scotland now has a worldwide reputation as one of the most creative and innovative countries for a wide range of quality beverages - not only whisky.

REG contribution
A R-LINCS studentship, Black (2014-21; JHI co-funded studentship), developed understanding of the use of legumes in brewing.

Outcomes and Impacts
This research has been essential to our support for sustainable industrial processes for alcohol production. This has included improved bioprocess productivity leading to commercialisation of new quality products, including beer, spirits, and wine. For example, our research has resulted in a completely new range of faba bean based beers and the world's first *Climate Positive* pea-based gin being introduced to the marketplace by Scottish breweries and distilleries. Significant environmental benefits have been made possible by innovative Abertay-led research that exploits legume starches for beverages and legume co-product protein for animal feed production. Compared to the use of conventional cereal crops our industry-facing research helps achieve substantial global mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and nutrient leakages to the environment. Our research into transition paths to legume-supported food and feed chains have been presented to and supported by The Scottish Parliament and the European Commission.

(3) Changing Teachers' Training and Practice

Overview
The Scottish Government's October 2021 *Education Recovery: Key Actions and Next Steps* plan sets a goal that "every child and young person in Scotland will have the opportunity to fulfil their potential as they progress through the education system and on to positive destinations." The plan refers to improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy as a key element in the Government's educational strategy. To address this, teachers need to develop skills that allow them to maximise children's learning.

REG contribution
A R-LINCS studentship, Ahmed (2018-21), developed understanding of 'self-referencing' (linking materials with the self) in education and how it enhances engagement and learning in classroom activities.

Outcomes and Impacts
This work contributed to the award of a £484k ESRC grant for research on how improved understanding of self-referencing can be used by teachers to maximise children's learning. This learning has been disseminated to teachers through Continuing Professional Development and training. Although disrupted and delayed by COVID restrictions, CPD training has been delivered to approximately 80 teachers responsible for the education of over 1,500 children, in schools across three different local authorities in Scotland. Responses from attendees showed that 100% of them changed their practice to include self-referencing in class.

(4) Smart Technology to Support COP26 Goals

Overview
Soil composition is an essential element of any ecosystem and can have a profound impact, for example on flooding risk. Soil composition will also influence for example farming yield and carbon sequestration; and therefore impacts on Scotland's ability to meet CoP26 goals.

REG contribution
Two R-LINCS studentships, Casas (2017-18) and Khan (2021-on going), studied soil composition and its measurement. These studentships were funded jointly by R-LINCS and the Norman Fraser Design Trust.

Outcomes and Impacts
As part of the dissemination of this research, Abertay is working with JHI and industry to develop a free and user-friendly mobile phone app suitable for farmers to assess productivity of their agricultural products after application of basic silicate rock and report projected CO_2 sequestration capacity. This technology, when rolled out, will provide a cheap and easy way to assess soil composition and the effectiveness of CO_2 sequestration methods.

Plan for 2021-22

We will continue to support development of excellent and impactful RKEI through delivery of our R-LINCS2 (2020-25) strategy which will accelerate impact through an integrated strategy at individual, School and University levels. Strategically, RKE is focused within and across **Challenge Spaces** addressing key local, national and international priorities that our research base best positions us to respond to (Figure 1). Challenges are addressed by drawing on our **Pooled Excellence** research expertise, which represent cross-institutional ways of working. Researchers are able to align with one or more areas to encourage collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas.
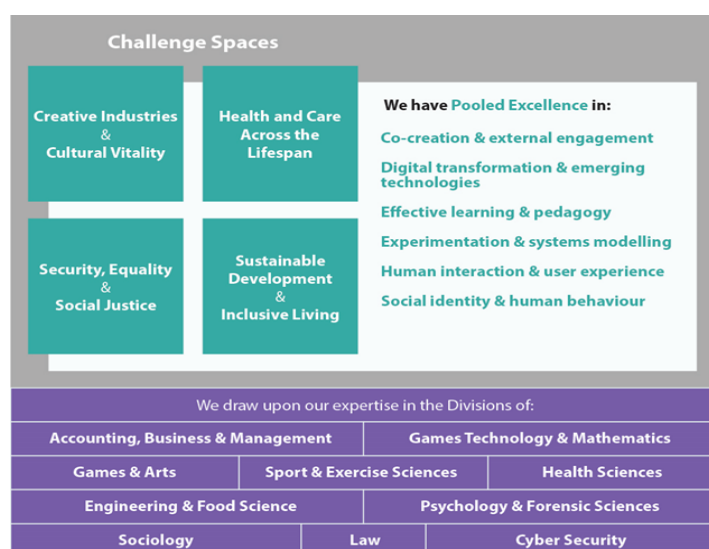

Figure 1. R-LINCS2 (2020-25).

Use of additional research funding from SFC

As redevelopment of teaching materials and modes of delivery has had to be prioritised during the COVID pandemic, the impact on research and knowledge exchange activity has been substantial as the majority of our academic staff have combined teaching and research roles. We have therefore used our allocation of this funding to mitigate against some of the additional burden caused by Covid pandemic disruption, including through the purchase of additional part-time lecturer hours to backfill and mitigate against the impact on research due to the increased teaching and supervision load felt by our academic staff. The aim is that researchers are freed up to continue research activity, development and manuscript preparation. Our Postgraduate Research Degree Students have been supported throughout the COVID pandemic and have been able to seek financial support for Research Degree extensions and stipends through a fair and transparent application process and allocation of this fund.

D: OUTCOMES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

Supporting the recovery - Reskilling and upskilling

During 2020-21, almost 1000 learners registered for upskilling microcredentials supported by funding from SFC and the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF). These focussed primarily on digital skills for business in marketing, with some additional courses offering support for counselling and caring professions.

In 2021-22, we will continue to offer the digital skills for business and marketing, in light of the demand we have seen, and will also expand the range of microcredentials in line with labour market demand and local and national priorities. This will include moving into the field of sustainability and green recovery for SMEs, including a suite of microcredentials around how businesses can achieve NetZero, challenges and opportunities in renewable energy, an introductory micro credential in sustainability, and an option for a specialist microcredential in carbon accounting to increase employability for those at risk of unemployment in financial services. We have a further set of microcredentials in the pipeline and will introduce these in 2021-22 and 2022-23 following a reassessment of labour market conditions, availability of funding and staff capacity.

cyberQuarter

In June 2021, Abertay's funding of £11.7m over 15 years under the Tay Cities Deal was confirmed, to invest in our new cyberQuarter research and development hub. Designed to attract new and existing cybersecurity firms to the region, the cyberQuarter will also support the creation of new companies, boost the security and resilience of the Scottish business community and facilitate the creation of new products and services through innovation-led research. It will be hosted on the Abertay campus, by extensively renovating unused space, providing office, events and collaboration/experimentation space, alongside secure cloud-computing infrastructure to enable online teaching, R&D and knowledge-exchange activities. The launch is expected in March 2022.

Business Development

A new Business Development Unit was established in 2020-21 to facilitate the development of market-facing activities that exploit the University's academic expertise, and to help the University to generate income to support its academic activities.

Confident and highly capable - work-ready - graduates

One of the core themes of our strategic plan is 'to prepare students for the world of work and a life of learning' and our Learning Enhancement Strategy and our Employability Strategy set out the guiding principles, goals and indicators which we use to support us in achieving this.

Our Learning Enhancement Strategy commits us to ensuring that all programmes have work-related learning opportunities built into the curriculum at appropriate stages, such that students not only learn new knowledge, but are able to apply their learning in practical situations. These are linked to the Abertay Attributes. All relevant programmes are expected to have professional body accreditation.

Student Enterprise

Bell Street Ventures (BSV), Abertay's student enterprise programme, has been in operation since March 2019 and moved online in March 2020. BSV provides a range of services to support staff, students and recent graduates with their enterprise ideas – hot desking and collaboration space, practical workshop sessions, access to advice and networking with more experienced entrepreneurs. A key element of BSV is its connectedness with the entrepreneurial support

ecosystem in the area and across the country. We focus not only on company creation, but on supporting students and graduates with the journey into self-employment, freelancing and consultancy, since a large proportion of our graduates will work in the digital creative industries and sport – both industries where models of good work are rapidly evolving.

Collaboration

As outlined above, we work closely with our partner colleges to support articulation pathways for students and during 2021-22 we will explore how we can continue to improve students' experience of the transition from college to Abertay. We work closely with Dundee and Angus College to support the students on the 'Additional Funded Places Scheme'.

Climate emergency

The University has commenced the development of a new environmental sustainability strategy that is centred on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Working with support from the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges and in consultation with students and staff, we are developing a holistic approach to sustainability that will continue our work on existing priorities, such as carbon reduction and embedding sustainability within the curriculum, but will also broaden the scope of our activity to look at the wider range of goals articulated in the UNSDG. Our new environmental sustainability strategy will be finalised during 2021-22 and is also closely linked to the development of the new Estates Strategy.

We continue to take advantage of any opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint of our facilities. This is built into the current programme of building work on campus, along with future development of estates strategy

University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Measure		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Interim OA	2020-21 Final	2020-21 Update May2022	2021-22 Final	2021-22 Update May2022
A	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	889	1,012	976	1,142	1,273	1,069	1,175	1,175	1,175	1,111	1,114
B	Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes	422	481	444	530	509	435	463	463	463	486	476
	Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	273	334	315	342	323	289	287	287	285	284	270
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	64.7%	69.4%	70.9%	64.5%	63.5%	66.4%	62.0%	62.0%	61.6%	58.4%	56.7%
C	COWA measure:Total number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants	878	1,006	960	1,138	1,255	1,066	1,173	1,142	1,142	1,111	1,114
	COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	137	168	145	217	190	174	191	197	197	208	205
	COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	15.6%	16.7%	15.1%	19.1%	15.1%	16.3%	16.3%	16.8%	16.8%	18.7%	18.4%
D	Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	2	4	2	6	10	0	20	19	19	19	19
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	0.0%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%
E	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants	951	867	1,002	953	1,137	1,256	1,046	1,064	1,064	1,099	1,099
	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	859	771	862	838	992	1,070	899	954	954	941	922
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	90.3%	88.9%	86.0%	87.9%	87.2%	85.2%	85.9%	89.7%	89.7%	85.6%	83.9%
F	The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey	1.0	3.0	1.0	-4.0	4.4	6.8	6.0	4.7	4.7	6.0	6.0
G1	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	371	381	396	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination	N/A	N/A	N/A	348	355	363	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination	N/A	N/A	N/A	93.8%	93.2%	91.7%	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
G2	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	299	286	272	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	147	156	149	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	49.2%	54.5%	54.8%	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
H	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers	967	853	782	771	757	743	880	880	880	NYA	NYA

Please note that 2018-19 and 2019-20 figures for measure G2, 2019-20 figures for measures F and H and all 2020-21 figures are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be directly comparable to other years

Abertay is well placed to contribute to Scotland's priority economic sectors and the national programme (innovation improvement agenda) of structural change, process improvement and or university cultural change which have been framed for the period 2017-21.

Our 2021/22 plan is continued proactive engagement with the UIF agenda and should be read with our comprehensive plans for previous years (available as appendices to our previous Outcome Agreements) as a logical development of our services in the spirit of continuous improvement, enhancement, and collaboration.

We have built upon our strengths and given the funding framework, have focused our engagement with some, rather than all of the outcomes. Abertay match funds the UIF Platform Grant from the Scottish Funding Council to maintain its core knowledge exchange and innovation support services and activities. For example, UIF supported infrastructure had been essential in helping to secure our Tay City Deal (the *cyberQuarter*). We continue to support the Sustainable Development Goals and National Outcomes identified in relation to the Outcome Grant. We work collaboratively across the sector, sharing our experiences and learning from other institutions. A key element in our strategy going forward is support for the net zero economy, which algins strongly with several of our areas of research expertise. For example, the recently awarded initiative *Transform Net-Zero*, funded by Scottish Enterprise, brings together academics from across the University to stimulate and improve SME innovation to help reduce carbon emissions in the Scottish food and drink industry, and to prepare for new market opportunities arising from the climate emergency. The Low Carbon Challenge fund has been matched by Abertay University to give Scottish Food SMEs free support over the next 2 years.

Abertay has signed up to the eight guiding principles contained in the UK-wide Knowledge Exchange Concordat which provides a framework for effective knowledge exchange and supports institutions to develop clear and ambitious strategic objectives for their KE activities.

Abertay complete the HESA HE-Business and Community Interaction survey annually and the SFC KE metric return.

In discussion with Scottish Funding Council we have agreed to work at a sector level to deliver the National Outcomes by working together to:
- Analyse current activity and identify best practice.
- On the basis of this, where appropriate, devise and execute a pilot programme.
- If successful, develop/initiate a sector-wide programme.

Through the Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group each institution has agreed to contribute to specific outcomes. Each institution notes and acknowledges the importance of each of the outcomes but for the best use of resource each institution will be involved with a different combination of work. As an institution we have signed up to participate in the groups for outcomes 1 and 4 and will engage with the learning and outputs of the other three groups (outcomes 5-7) going forward.

1.   Demand Stimulation
To help increase the demand and quality of engagement from business and the public sector for university services.

We will continue to focus on:
- Working with key stakeholders in the business/public sector/third sector communities through events, speaker opportunities and company engagement in key sectors. This engagement has been informed by our experience of working with front line services e.g. nursing during lockdown and as a result we are better able to understand the needs of the end users of our research during the recovery.
- Supporting academic colleagues with new course development through identification of sector trends/skills gaps/synergies with industry bodies.
- Supporting financial and business development bids (eg Tay City Deal, UK Government Community Renewal Fund and emerging Shared Prosperity Fund).
- Driving enterprise initiatives to support student employability.

Our drivers are:
- Abertay becoming the first port of call for private, public and third sector partners in key industry areas including sectors identified in the UK Industrial Strategy, Scotland's Economic Strategy and the Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy 2019-2039.
- Our students and graduates being known to possess the right mix of skills, confidence and attributes for their employers, now and in the future.

2.   Simplification / Commercialisation
To simplify business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities.

Our consultancy framework encourages our staff to use their knowledge and expertise to solve real-world problems and to make a positive impact on the world around us. This will support entrepreneurial activity by our staff, and build on our strong track record in this area which is demonstrated by, for example, our success in securing RSE Enterprise Fellowships (four of which have been awarded to Abertay staff).

Our dedicated Business, Facilities and Services webpages aim to support businesses to better understand the innovation opportunities which can be realised in collaboration with Abertay. We have clear information about our services and facilities, single points of contact and examples/case studies in different categories to illustrate what is possible.

The One Stop Shop approach has allowed commercial businesses to engage efficiently and quickly with the University, particularly within restricted timeframes. For example, companies wishing to bid for public sector contracts through the formal procurement process have a simple route to request input and/or expertise, with a single point of contact responsible for routing the request.

3.   Simplification / Greater Innovation
To make strategic use of sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy.

To complement support provided by the Research, Enterprise and Innovation Service at Abertay, the Business Development Unit provide a valuable additional layer of expertise which can be applied to filter ad hoc opportunities or ideas, and support those which progress to the next stage.

The cyberQuarter

cyberQuarter is an academic-industrial partnership designed to establish the Tay Cities region as a centre of best practise in applied research and development and knowledge exchange in cybersecurity. It will exploit Abertay University's distinctive ethical hacking and offensive cybersecurity knowledge in order to enable the region to innovate and internationalise.

cyberQuarter will deliver:
- collaborative research and development with the cybersecurity industry to develop solutions that will improve cybersecurity amongst small and medium sized businesses;
- develop ethical hacking and offensive security activities to upskill workers and tackle local and national skills shortages;
- support businesses to raise awareness of cybersecurity risks and increase the adoption of new products and services to become more cyber resilient; and
- deliver jobs growth in cybersecurity firms, from start-ups to large corporations, as new products and services are developed and commercialised.

The Full Business Case for the project was approved by the Tay Cities Region Deal Joint Committee in June 2021, with additional revenue funding secured from Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government Cyber Resilience to support business development activity for the cyberQuarter.

Construction activity for the physical cyberQuarter hub is now underway, refurbishing Abertay University's Annie Lamont Building. The building has been renamed in honour of Annie Keir Lamont, a Dundee activist and graduate of Abertay's predecessor institution, Dundee Technical Institute, who studied magnetism and electricity, and telegraphy and telephony in 1903/04.

NHS National Services Scotland are confirmed the first tenant for the cyberQuarter, bringing a cyber security operations centre of excellence to the campus. This places Abertay at the heart of securing the health of Scotland's citizens and attracting 30 jobs to the area.

Food and Drink

We will continue to lobby for more flexible Scottish interventions for innovation led growth that don't assume one size fits all, and we will encourage traction in high growth sectors such as Food and Drink, where R&D spend has historically been low but sector growth projections are high.

THRIVE (for the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs in Scotland's Food and Drink Sector)

In the spirit of the Scotland Food and Drink Strategy (2017-30) – Ambition 2030, we will continue to work in collaboration with SRUC and QMU to look at the alignment of resources focused on collaborative academic capacity building. For example, UIF support is being used for development of the THRIVE programme, an intensive enterprise programme which aims to attract and develop new talent and a transitional shift from student to professional practitioner, thus supporting sustainable growth in Scotland's food and drink sector through:
- Business and entrepreneurial skills development
- Market awareness
- Knowledge of the operational business environment in the food and drink industry.

The event targets undergraduates in the later years of their studies and recent graduates (up to 60 places). It will involve industry partners and is being delivered mainly on-line from November 2021. We will further develop this partnership and engagement with the Food and Drink Industry via our joint work with the liaison group.

Food and drink is a key element of our support for net zero (including our Scottish Enterprise funded initiative *Transform Net-Zero*); for example through development of climate positive supply chains for the brewing industry, where our research resulted in the world's first Climate Positive pea-based gin being introduced to the marketplace by Scottish breweries and distilleries.

4. Entrepreneurialism
To make a significant and positive change in the way that entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff and business.

One of the most important contributions that universities can make to Scottish businesses is to refresh the pool of talent by developing business-literate and enterprising graduates and postgraduates with a strong educational grounding. We are proud of our industry focus and links to business. We will encourage the development of enterprise skills and entrepreneurial behaviour among our students through a range of activities across 4 priority themes.

Many of our students will be self-employed, freelance, contractors or take a portfolio approach to work and career. As a city, and as part of the Tay Cities region, Dundee faces major challenges in terms of employment, business start-up and economic growth. With some 75% of our students coming from the local area and so many choosing to stay here after graduation, Abertay can play a major role in developing the right skills to support employability and the creation of high value jobs locally, nationally and globally.

Our enterprise activities span:
- Entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and behaviours.
- Commercial awareness.
- Company creation and business start-up.
- Self-employment options and new ways of working.

Priority 1 - A place for enterprise – we have:
- Established a hub for student enterprise in the heart of the Abertay campus – Bell Street Ventures.
- Provided a mix of dedicated office accommodation for staff, student and graduate entrepreneurs plus hot-desking facilities, meeting space and a collaboration space for team development activities

Priority 2 - Skills and learning for enterprise – we will:
- Engage with our teaching staff to identify opportunities to introduce and embed enterprise skills and expertise to students through a range of activities.
- Curate a year round programme of virtual and in person workshops and drop in sessions for students.
- Host relevant and useful resources for student enterprise.
- Offer enterprise activity as viable student placement and internship opportunities.

Priority 3 - Access to enterprise support
Many organisations and services provide enterprise support. We are improving signposting for students to sources of finance and business support and help them to understand the options available to them.

We will prioritise engagement with high profile national and specialist sector programmes to facilitate the increased visibility of enterprise activity among our students and within the business community. Through our work in this area, we continue to support student applications and success stories for initiatives such as Converge Challenge and RSE Enterprise Fellowships. We will also continue to increase our involvement with Scottish EDGE.

Priority 4 - "Social first" enterprise
We will support Scottish Government's Social Enterprise Strategy by:
- Providing inspiration on campus **-** to stimulate social entrepreneurship through teaching, knowledge transfer and business incubation.
- Working with the Scottish Government backed support programme 'Social Shifters', delivered by CEIS, to promote and support social enterprise in HEIs.

A key component of our relationship with the Santander Universities programme is focused on student enterprise. Abertay start up Konglomerate Games won the Santander X Entrepreneurship Awards in 2020, against competition from across the UK.

We have increased our engagement with student and graduate led start ups through the introduction of microfinance and bursary funding. Using philanthropic funding from Santander Universities and the Northwood Charitable Trust, we support individuals with awards ranging from £500 to £3000.

5.   International
To pool knowledge, networks & shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally.

Abertay and Perfect World Education (a subsidiary of China's leading entertainment and creative enterprise Perfect World Investment & Holding Group) have a strategic partnership to develop and nurture new talent to meet the demands of the international computer games industry and to provide a platform for collaboration and cultural exchange in computer game education. Work with Perfect World has facilitated a £58k AHRC grant for collaborative research with Chinese academics and businesses. China is now the second largest market for UK game exports and as Europe's leading university for computer games education, we are ideally placed to foster university-business links with this important exports market.

6.   Inclusive Growth and Social Impact
Contribute to society through public engagement with a research base with impact beyond pure economic terms.

Our City Deal proposals specifically address the inclusive growth agenda. For example, the cyberQuarter project has a specific focus on upskilling people in the local area, 'unblocking' the pipeline for the low and middle level jobs within the digital economy by offering opportunities to gain a 'cyber premium' in terms of skills, salary and employability prospects, and facilitating new entrants into the industry from disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

7.   Equality and Diversity
Positive promotion in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF.
Our strategic plan confirms our intention to mainstream equality and diversity across all of our activities. Our Equality Action Plan, which contains detailed actions related to student applications, admissions and student achievement, is routinely monitored and updated. We hold an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze award and were the first – and so far only – Scottish university to achieve the Race Equality Charter Mark.

Outcome Agreement between Abertay University and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2021-22

On behalf of Abertay University:

Signed: *EBacon*

Print name: Professor Liz Bacon

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 31 MAY 2022

Signed: *MJWASS*

Print name: MURRAY WILLIAM ANDERSON SHAW

Position: Chair

Date: 30 MAY 2022

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed: *KWatt*

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 28 July 2022