Student mobility

Scotland Goes Global

A Scotland Goes Global website [1] providing information on study abroad to students and staff at Scotland’s colleges and universities. It also provides some guidance to students who are considering going abroad, has grown from the Scotland Goes Global project. The Scotland Goes Global project was an internationalisation project which NUS Scotland ran from 2012 to 2015 with funding from the Scottish Government. This grew out of an initiative called Developing Scotland’s Global Citizens.

Developing Scotland’s Global Citizens [1] complemented and enhanced existing work on student outward mobility carried out as part of the Students Without Borders project. The overarching objectives of the project were to increase student outward mobility opportunities and encourage greater uptake of study abroad programmes by Scottish students.

Given greater competition for fewer graduate vacancies, there has been an increased interest in the education sector in the role international experience may play in the enhanced employability of students who undertake such initiatives. This is reflected in the widespread support NUS Scotland received from across the sector (from the British Council, HEA, Universities Scotland, Scotland’s Colleges, sparqs, Scottish Funding Council, QAA, and Young Scot).

The project had four strategic themes:

- raising the profile of European mobility opportunities
- fostering graduate attributes through mobility
- supporting the international learning experience at institutional level
- encouraging a partnership approach across the Scottish educational sector

Together with the Scottish European Educational Trust, NUS Scotland developed an hour long module [2] for teachers to deliver to college and university students on global citizenship and study abroad opportunities. The module worked from the basis of students’ experience of their institution or course and local area. It then took them on a journey to understand why they should consider going global. This was achieved either:

- Locally by opening up their minds to people in their community who might be from other cultures or online opportunities
- Or, how they might go about trying to set themselves apart from the crowd by studying abroad as part of their future college or university choices

[1] Scotland Goes Global website
[2] Module for teachers to deliver to college and university students on global citizenship and study abroad opportunities.
**Erasmus+**

The Erasmus+ Programme's (2014-2020) higher education opportunities are administered in the UK by the [British Council](#). Opportunities for students to learn abroad include:

- Studies, including at Master's level
- Traineeships in businesses
- Erasmus+ Master loans

Between 2014-16 Erasmus+ awarded [€25 million](#) to Scottish higher education projects promoting mobility.

### Saltire Scholarships - funding for outward mobility initiatives

The first government funded projects giving Scottish students overseas study opportunities were announced in November 2012. The projects are designed to give students the chance to live and learn overseas as part of their studies and include opportunities in India, China, Canada, the United States and Europe. [Saltire Scholarships](#) for Outward Mobility are funded through a competitive process. They are open to Scotland's universities, colleges and their student associations. A total of £130,000 was available in 2014.

The aim is to increase the number of students undertaking study or training overseas by funding:

- Mobility for individual students (to be described as Saltire Scholars)
- Structures within institutions and student associations to support outwardly mobile students

Examples of projects that received funding in 2014 were:

- Dundee College - £15,900 Computing and Hospitality exchange to North Virginia and Florida, USA
- Edinburgh Napier University - £18,516 for a three-week study trip for 12 Health students in the USA
- Edinburgh Napier University - £12,893 Exchange for 11 Computing students to visit Zhengzhuo University of Light Industry in China for three weeks
- University of Edinburgh - £30,000 Develop the Widening Horizons Programme to involve as many students as possible across different subjects in visits to North America, China and Europe
- Glasgow Caledonian University - £9,000 Ten-day Social Work conference for ten students with partner institutions in Sweden, Scotland, Germany, South Africa and India
- University of Glasgow - £3,025 A five-day exchange for 11 Law students to Mainz, Germany
- University of Stirling - £4,000 Study opportunity in China for four Business students
- University of the West of Scotland - £11,050 A week-long Primary Education exchange scheme for 30 students to Ecole Saint-Joseph Saint Galmier and the Université de Nantes Ecole Supérieure du Professorat et de l’Education (ESPE) in France and Villa de Guadarrama Primary School, Spain
- University of the West of Scotland - £7,170 Criminal Justice exchange for 12 students for one week in Maribor, Slovenia

For 2017/18 90 scholarships have been awarded (as of December 2017). The host countries that groups of students will visit are:

- U.S.A (30 grants awarded)
- India (17 grants awarded)
There are 100 scholarships available at around £4000 each, offered on a matched funding basis with participating universities.

**Study in Europe - SAAS Portability Pilot**

For the first time, as part of a pilot initiative to encourage more Scottish students to study abroad, Scottish domiciled students studying at eligible European universities could apply for the same bursary and loan support as students attending university in Scotland.

The pilot ran over three years, the first intake of students was in academic year 2014-15, with the final intake in academic year 2016-17. Students were supported for the duration of their undergraduate course. The Scottish Government have been evaluating the pilot throughout the three year intake. For the pilot, only students studying at approved universities were eligible to apply for student support from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). When considering which universities could take part, the focus was on publicly funded universities that delivered a wide variety of undergraduate courses that were completely taught in English. The partner universities were:

- Groningen University, Netherlands
- Maastricht University, Netherlands
- Malmo University, Sweden
- Rhine Waal University, Germany
- Southern Denmark University, Denmark

**Academic Staff mobility**

**Erasmus+**

The British Council, as the National Agency in the UK, has managed the Erasmus programme since 2007. From 2014 (until 2020), it is the National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme. Its role is to administer and disburse funds to institutions and promote the programme within the UK.

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for higher education staff to undertake professional development activities, including:

- Training or teaching
- Attending workshops delivered by businesses

The previous Erasmus exchange programme ran from 2007-2013. It allowed for the mobility of academic members of staff and administrative staff to spend a short period of time at a partner university. Staff would undertake either teaching, work shadowing or attending an Erasmus staff training week.

Participation in Erasmus varied across institutions. To take one example, 22 members of staff from Edinburgh Napier University [6] participated in 2010-11 and funding was allocated for a total of 26 staff members in 2011/12 (22 academic and 4 administrative staff). The number of staff from Scottish HEIs participating in Erasmus [7] mobility nearly doubled between 2004-05 and 2010-11.
Research links

Other opportunities for staff mobility in HE arise through Scotland’s research links, including with the USA and China.

USA Plan

The Scottish Government’s Plan for Engagement in the USA [8] was published 4 July 2010, and includes research links. Scottish educational and research institutions already enjoy strong links with the USA; currently around 30% of Scotland’s research collaborations are with the USA.

Scotland has pioneered the development of highly successful research collaborations between Scottish universities. These pan-Scotland ‘research pools’ provide easy and attractive opportunities for international research collaboration.

As an example the Universities of Strathclyde, St Andrews, Heriot-Watt and Glasgow, together with Stanford University and the California Institute of Technology, are collaborating in a project. This is supported by a £16 million grant from Research Councils UK, £99,000 from the Scottish Funding Council and £250,000 from Scottish Enterprise. The partnership is designed to capitalise on leading research in the photonics sector, in fields including life sciences and renewable energy, and the commercial opportunities this research offers.

In 2012 nine new researcher visits were funded through the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) international exchange programme [9]. These involve researchers from the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde, Abertay, St Andrews and Dundee.

China Strategy

The Government published its five-year China Strategy [10] in December 2012. The strategy identifies four key priority areas to focus its activities and resources. In addition to trade opportunities and cultural and sporting links, the China strategy aims to:

- Expand and deepen Scotland’s education links with China
- Increase collaboration in research and development between China and Scotland

A specific target in the Strategy is to ‘Encourage participation in initiatives which target mobility and internationalisation of students, staff and researchers’.