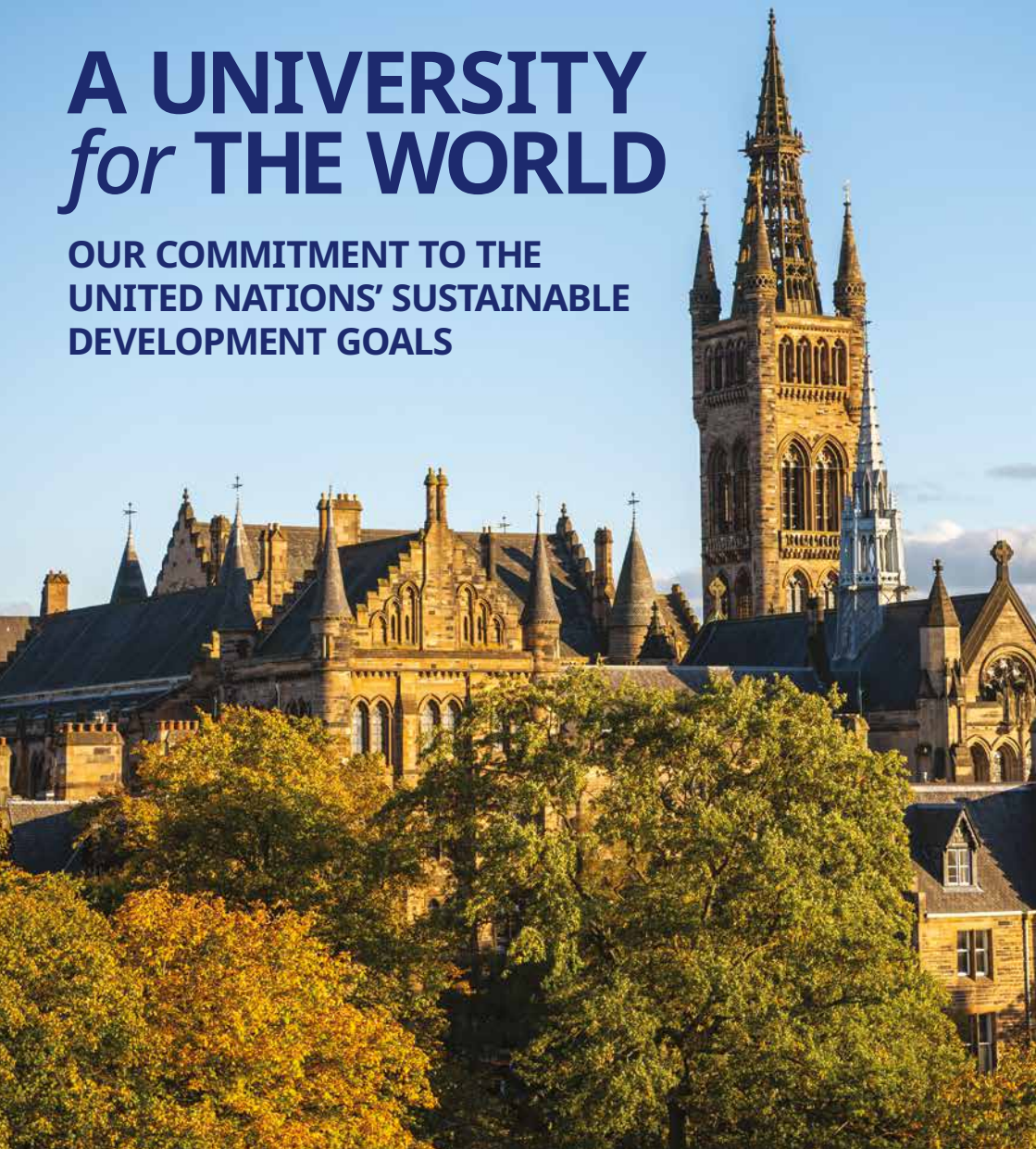
University of Glasgow

FOR THE WORLD SINCE 1451

A UNIVERSITY *for* THE WORLD

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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INTRODUCTION

For 575 years the University of Glasgow has been changing the world and improving lives. From pioneering discoveries and innovations that have transformed society, to educating generations of graduates who have gone on to make a difference in our communities, our history reflects a longstanding commitment to advancing knowledge and improving lives.

Today, we continue that tradition with confidence and purpose. Through our world-leading research, inspiring education and commitment to innovation, we are helping to address some of the most pressing challenges facing society. At the same time, we are investing in our future. The transformation of our estate, including around £1.5 billion of investment in recent years, is creating new opportunities for collaboration, discovery and learning, ensuring we remain a university equipped to meet the needs of future generations.

Education remains one of the most powerful drivers of social mobility and opportunity. Yet we know that tackling inequality requires more than education alone. Deep-rooted challenges such as poor health, socioeconomic disadvantage, discrimination and environmental change demand collective action and sustained commitment. Universities have a unique responsibility not only to generate knowledge but to apply it in ways that improve lives and create long-lasting societal benefit.

Our commitment begins here in Glasgow. As a civic university, we are deeply connected to our city and region, working with partners to support inclusive economic growth, strengthen communities and address enduring inequalities. Through initiatives such as the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District and our extensive research and engagement activities, we are helping to create opportunities that benefit people locally while contributing solutions to global challenges.

But our ambitions extend beyond our city and beyond our borders. The challenges that define our age, from climate change and health inequalities to conflict, food security and technological transformation, require international cooperation and interdisciplinary thinking. The University of Glasgow is proud to be a globally connected institution, working with partners across the world to advance knowledge and deliver meaningful impact.
The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide an important framework for this work. They reflect many of the values that define our University and provide a shared focus for how we use our research, education, innovation and engagement to contribute to a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous future. They remind us that progress depends on collaboration, and that lasting change can only be achieved when institutions, communities and individuals work together.

We are grateful to each and every member of our community who has played their part so far. As we look ahead, we will continue to build new global partnerships, strengthen existing collaborations and use our position as an international research-intensive university to create impact that reaches far beyond our campus.

Together, we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to help shape a better future. This report demonstrates the many ways in which our University community is already doing so, and the further progress we aspire to make in the years ahead.

Professor Andy Schofield
Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Glasgow

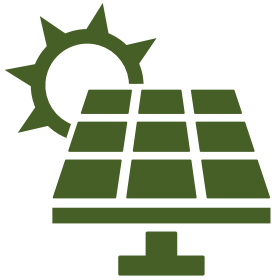
SUSTAINABILITY IN A SNAPSHOT

14th in the world

out of **1,603 universities** in the **2026 THE Impact rankings**

27th in the world

out of **1,994 universities** in the **2026 QS World Sustainability Ranking**



We have **generated enough energy** from our **photovoltaic panels** in the last year **to charge over 60,000 mobile phones** over the course of a year.

3,349

items of clothing swapped and sold via our Eco-Hub in 2025–26 – promoting **affordable sustainable choices** and contributing to the **circular economy**.

£4.4bn

Our economic contribution to the UK economy has been valued at around £4.4 billion.

We are a **proud Accredited Living Wage employer.**



10,000+

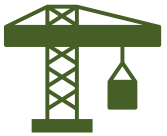
We have **supported** more than **10,000 pupils** through **summer schools** and **widening participation programmes** in **160 secondary schools** across the west of Scotland.



356 Keep Cups sold across catering outlets in 2025–26 – reducing use and reliance on disposable cups.

Our **Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Energy** is focused on **supporting** the **global transition** to **sustainable, low-carbon energy systems through world-leading research.**

Glasgow Changing Futures (GCF) is a University of Glasgow strategic programme of collaborative research, education, innovation and knowledge exchange. To advance systemic change that **benefits the future wellbeing of people and planet**, **GCF focuses on** key thematic areas: **Sustainable Futures, Healthy and Equitable Futures, Collaborative Futures and Architectural Futures.**



Our **Keystone Building** will be our **most sustainable building**, aiming to achieve **'BREEAM Excellent' certification**, along with **ambitious energy use targets**, when it opens in **AY 2028–29**.



Last year we harvested enough rainwater to fill 5.5 Olympic swimming pools.

PURPOSE

Published in the University's 575th anniversary year, our 2026 report marks the sixth edition of this annual publication.

The University of Glasgow has been changing the world since 1451, tackling the world's great challenges through creativity, innovation and partnership.

We have nurtured Nobel laureates and prime ministers, inventors and renowned thinkers, award-winning writers and human rights activists.

Adam Smith laid the foundations of modern economics. James Watt powered up the Industrial Revolution. John Macintyre opened the first hospital x-ray department. Jocelyn Bell Burnell discovered radio pulsars and Ian Donald showed us the first ultrasound.

Across the course of the year, the University has celebrated the world-changing contributions of its staff and students across the previous six centuries, and highlighted our current world changers as they strive to make their own positive impacts on the world.

We are committed to tackling the most pressing global challenges facing humanity and the natural world, delivering against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

In this year's report we continue to look at four areas of activity:

- Research
- Learning and teaching
- University operations
- Civic engagement.

We are immensely proud of the dedication and innovation shown by every part of our community in supporting the aim of the goals. From ensuring our wider local community directly benefits from Glasgow's role as a civic anchor institution with global connections, to championing education as an engine for social progress, the work outlined in this report provides a snapshot of some of the things we do as a university; but the range and breadth of our impact and research activities is much broader.

This report, and our accompanying web pages, exemplifies our commitment to not only being one of the best universities in the world, but the best University for the world.

The report was compiled and produced as a shared endeavour by Planning, Insight & Analytics and External Relations. We want to extend our thanks both to colleagues in these directorates for their help and guidance in producing the report, and to colleagues across the University for their valued input and their continued focus on the UN's SDGs.

#TeamUofG





End poverty in all its forms everywhere



During 2025–26, more than 600 undergraduate Home and RUK students benefited from schemes such as the Undergraduate Talent Scholarship, Travel Bursary and the World Changers RUK Access Bursary. These awards amounted to over £1.4 million of financial aid allocated to support our students with the costs of their studies.

OUR RESEARCH

The Scottish Child Payment (SCP), introduced by the Scottish Government in 2021, provides direct financial support to low-income families with children. A major evaluation led by researchers from the Universities of Glasgow and Manchester examined its effectiveness by comparing outcomes for families in Scotland with those in England, where no equivalent payment exists.

The study found that the SCP has significantly reduced child poverty, food insecurity and material deprivation. Analysis suggested that levels of food insecurity and material deprivation would have been between eight and nine percentage points higher in Scotland had the payment not been introduced. Researchers also found that these indicators improved relative to England following implementation of the scheme.

Interviews with families revealed that the payment often acted as a vital lifeline, helping parents afford essentials such as food, clothing and household necessities. While the findings demonstrate the SCP's positive impact on children's lives, the researchers concluded that additional investment is needed to move families beyond basic survival and enable children to thrive.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's Social & Public Policy programme equips students to understand and address some of society's most pressing challenges including poverty, inequality, housing, health, sustainability and the impact of technology on wellbeing. Drawing on political science, sociology and economics, the degree explores how governments and public institutions design policies that shape people's lives and communities.

Students develop a strong understanding of the history, politics and practice of policymaking, examining issues such as welfare reform, urban deprivation, health inequalities and social justice. In later years, they can specialise in topics including environmental and climate justice, housing policy, inclusive economies, disability, youth welfare and public sector reform.

Currently, the University offers 30 social & public policy programmes across a wide range of single and joint honours programmes.

A distinctive feature of the programme is the opportunity to undertake a work placement with a public or voluntary sector organisation, enabling students to apply their learning in real-world settings. Study-abroad opportunities and optional quantitative methods training further enhance students' analytical and professional skills, preparing graduates for careers in policy development, research and public service.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University offers a wide range of scholarships and bursaries to support students who may face financial challenges in taking up their place with us. These include bursaries to help with commuting costs and funding for students entering specific subject areas, with opportunities available at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

During 2025–26, more than 600 undergraduate Home and RUK students benefited from schemes such as the Undergraduate Talent Scholarship, Travel Bursary and the World Changers RUK Access Bursary. These awards amounted to over £1.4 million of financial aid allocated to support our students with the costs of their studies.

Our Postgraduate Access Scholarships provide essential financial support for students wishing to progress to the next stage of their studies, making postgraduate education accessible to talented individuals who might otherwise be unable to pursue this opportunity. For 2027 entry, we will continue to provide 50 awards, maintaining our support for access to postgraduate study.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Changing Realities, a child poverty action group led by the University, has been named as a Big Issue Changemaker for 2026, under the Politics and Activism category.

Changing Realities is a collaboration of over 200 parents and carers in poverty working in collaboration with researchers at the University and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine to push for change.

Researchers, parents and carers from Changing Realities have been meeting with senior politicians to share their experiences, including then-UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and First Minister of Scotland John Swinney.

The group played a significant part in shaping the UK's Child Poverty Strategy, which was launched by the Government in December 2025. Around 550,000 children will be lifted out of poverty by 2030 – the biggest reduction in a single parliament since records began.

Changing Realities is an online participatory project that works to ensure the real, everyday impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis is heard in the media, in communities, and by government. From zines to podcasts to parliamentary lobby days, they aim to amplify the voices of those living on low incomes in as many ways as possible.



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



The University Catering Service has expanded plant-based and vegetarian menu options, helping students, staff and visitors make more sustainable food choices.

OUR RESEARCH

The United Nations (UN) warns that drought is emerging as the next 'pandemic,' putting millions at risk and undermining progress towards SDG2, Zero hunger, by 2030.

According to new research led by the School of Social & Environmental Sustainability at the University – which informed the UN warning – drought is not solely a natural phenomenon but is increasingly shaped by human responses and unsustainable resource management.

Researchers showed that short-term measures such as expanding irrigation or reforming subsidies can unintentionally worsen long-term food insecurity by depleting water resources and reinforcing cycles of vulnerability. The study noted that drought was responsible for more than 80% of damages in the global food production sector between 2008 and 2018, while climate change is expected to significantly increase population exposure to drought in future decades.

The research advocates a social-ecological systems approach that integrates environmental, agricultural and social policies. By promoting sustainable water management, cross-sector collaboration and long-term resilience planning, the work provides evidence-based solutions to help safeguard food systems, strengthen agricultural sustainability and improve global food security.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The MSc Food Security programme addresses one of the defining global challenges of the 21st century: ensuring sustainable and equitable food production for a growing population. With the world's population projected to rise from 8 to 10 billion by 2060, increasing pressure will be placed on agricultural systems, natural resources and food supply chains.

The programme equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and respond to food security challenges through an interdisciplinary approach. It combines socio-economic, animal and crop perspectives, enabling students to explore the environmental, economic and social factors that influence global food systems.

By developing expertise in sustainable agriculture and food production, graduates are prepared to contribute to research, policy and industry solutions that support resilient food systems. The programme demonstrates the University's commitment to advancing sustainability and helping secure a healthy and sustainable future for communities worldwide.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University of Glasgow Catering Service has embedded sustainability throughout its operations, aligning food provision with the University's wider environmental and social sustainability objectives. Through responsible procurement, sustainable menu development, efficient food production and waste reduction initiatives, the service aims to deliver high-quality, nutritious and affordable food while minimising environmental impact.

A key focus has been improving sustainable sourcing and supporting local and Scottish producers wherever possible. This commitment has been recognised through the retention of Bronze Food for Life Served Here certification and the three-star Food Made Good award, demonstrating excellence in ethical procurement, responsible sourcing and environmental stewardship.

The service has also expanded plant-based and vegetarian menu options, helping students, staff and visitors make more sustainable food choices. Supported by ongoing staff training, supplier collaboration and continuous review, the Catering Service continues to drive improvements in resource efficiency, waste reduction and sustainable procurement, delivering lasting benefits for both the University community and the environment.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Leading chefs, food writers, television broadcasters and cultural figures gathered for *Place at the Table*, celebrating Glasgow's diverse food culture and exploring Scotland's relationship with Commonwealth nations.

Held in Glasgow during the 2026 Commonwealth Games, the programme featured public discussions, cultural events and themed dinners that showcase the diverse influences shaping Scotland's contemporary food culture.

A key objective was to encourage conversation about complex legacies, including trans-Atlantic slavery, imperialism, racism and migration. University researchers emphasise that food offers an accessible way to engage with challenging historical issues while celebrating cultural exchange and diversity. The festival's dinners further explored these themes by examining the influence of Indian, Malaysian, Caribbean and Scottish cuisines on one another.

By combining scholarship, culture and community engagement, Place at the Table demonstrated how food can act as a powerful tool for education, intercultural understanding and inclusive civic dialogue, helping communities reflect on the past while envisioning a more connected future.



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



The Wintering Well initiative works closely with libraries, community practitioners, healthcare providers and local organisations to ensure support reaches communities including those in remote areas experiencing long winters and limited access to mental health services.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University and the Cancer Research UK Scotland Institute have developed an innovative imaging approach that enables scientists to track cancer from the whole-body level down to individual cells for the first time. The approach addresses a longstanding challenge in cancer research: linking the large-scale view provided by medical imaging with the microscopic biological processes that drive tumour growth, spread and treatment response.

This enables scientists to study not only cancer cells themselves but also their interactions with surrounding tissues, immune cells and blood vessels, all of which influence disease progression and treatment outcomes.

Funded by Cancer Research UK and published in Nature Biotechnology, the approach allows researchers to track tagged cancer cells across different imaging systems and investigate why some tumours respond to therapies while others do not. By connecting whole-body imaging with cellular-level analysis, the technology provides a more comprehensive understanding of cancer behaviour and supports the development of more precise and personalised treatments.

The work strengthens Scotland and Glasgow's position as a leader in advanced medical imaging and world-class cancer research, with the potential to accelerate the discovery of more effective therapies and improve future patient outcomes.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Health & Communities theme within Curriculum for Life equips students to address complex health, wellbeing and societal challenges through interdisciplinary learning, real-world problem solving and community engagement.

A range of innovative courses gives students opportunities to tackle contemporary issues from multiple perspectives. Reimagining Global Health: From Local Challenges to Global Solutions develops students' understanding of how policy decisions across sectors influence health outcomes, while building skills in collaboration, critical analysis and professional communication.

Life Lab: The Art and Science of Thriving combines psychology and neuroscience research to help students build resilience, adaptability and wellbeing through practical experimentation, reflection and the design of projects that improve student success and sustainability on campus.

The programme also addresses pressing local issues through Making Sense of Problem Substance Use in Scotland, which explores substance use from health, social, legal and cultural perspectives. Students work collaboratively to communicate evidence-based solutions, engage with experts and community initiatives, and consider how their own disciplines can contribute to reducing harm.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University has partnered with Kadans Science Partner and a range of public and private stakeholders to establish the Health Innovation Hub, a flagship life sciences facility designed to accelerate innovation in precision medicine and digital health. Officially opened in March 2026 by the UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the 87,000-sq ft development represents a major investment in Scotland's health innovation ecosystem.

Located beside the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital within the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District, the Hub transforms a former brownfield site into a collaborative centre for research, innovation and economic growth. Supported by £18.8 million from UK Research and Innovation's Strength in Places Fund, the facility enables researchers, clinicians, entrepreneurs and industry partners to work together to translate scientific discoveries into real-world healthcare solutions.

The Hub is home to the University's Living Laboratory for Precision Medicine and the Digital Health Validation Lab, as well as high-growth life sciences companies. By co-locating expertise from academia, the NHS and industry, it creates an environment that accelerates the development, testing and adoption of new healthcare technologies.

The project strengthens Glasgow's position as a global centre for life sciences while supporting inclusive economic growth, regeneration and improved health outcomes for communities across Scotland and beyond.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Wintering Well programme demonstrates how research-driven community engagement can improve mental health and wellbeing during the winter months.

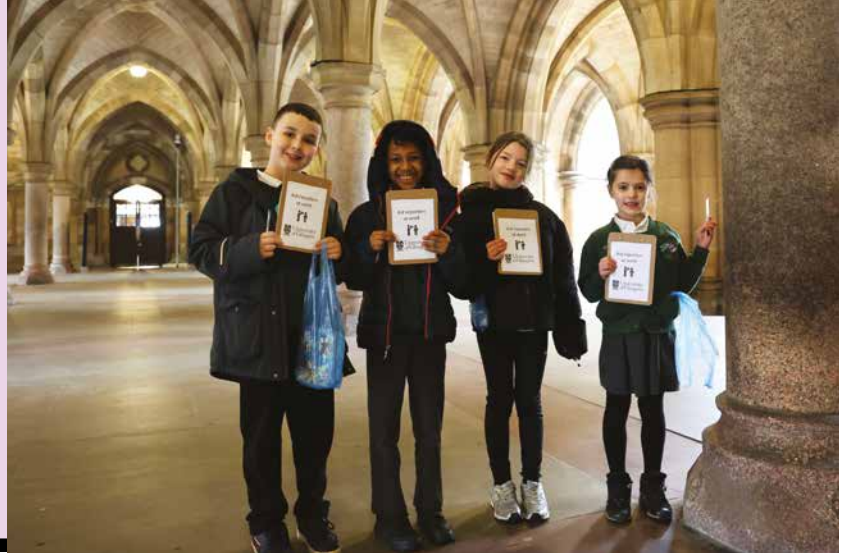
Developed through a partnership between the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and co-designed with people living with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), the initiative provides practical support for individuals affected by low mood, anxiety and depression associated with reduced daylight.

At the heart of the programme are Wintering Well Boxes, which can be borrowed free of charge from local libraries. Each box contains a therapeutic light lamp, self-help resources, guidance on outdoor and indoor wellbeing activities, and access to an online course designed to help people manage the effects of SAD.

Funded through UK Research and Innovation, the programme highlights the role of community partnerships in translating research into accessible wellbeing interventions.



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



The Kid Reporters interviewed 14 academics on campus across a range of disciplines, exploring topics including meteorites, citizen science, archaeology, online safety and community engagement. The project connected school pupils directly with academic expertise.

OUR RESEARCH

The University partnered with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David on the Camau i'r Dyfodol research project, a Welsh Government-funded initiative designed to support educators in implementing the Curriculum for Wales. Working with more than 400 education professionals across the Welsh education system, the project explored how teachers and school leaders can develop practical understandings of curriculum design and learning progression to support effective educational reform.

The project's final report provides evidence-based recommendations to support the coherent and sustainable realisation of the Curriculum for Wales. Researchers found that uncertainty around accountability, the complexity of curriculum documentation and varying interpretations of curriculum design were barriers to consistent implementation. The study also highlighted the need for greater professional learning opportunities and stronger support for educators undertaking curriculum development roles.

The initiative has informed Welsh Government approaches to curriculum realisation and professional learning, demonstrating the value of collaborative research in supporting large-scale educational change.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The Digital Literacy theme delivered as part of the Curriculum for Life equips students with the critical and technical skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape. Designed for students from all disciplines, the programme develops capabilities in data analysis, research, communication and the identification of misinformation, helping learners become informed citizens and adaptable professionals.

A key offering, They Don't Want You to Know This: How to Respond to Conspiracy Theories and Disinformation, explores the growing societal impact of conspiracy theories and disinformation. Students learn to identify recurring patterns in misleading narratives, analyse manipulative communication techniques and develop evidence-based strategies for challenging false information. The Applied Data Skills course focuses on transforming raw data into meaningful insights.

Students learn to use the programming language R to process data, create visualisations, generate professional reports and apply generative AI responsibly. Real-world examples from health, education, public policy and the social sciences demonstrate the value of data literacy across sectors.

Together, these courses develop analytical thinking, evidence evaluation and digital competence, preparing students to engage critically with information, make informed decisions and contribute effectively in data-driven societies and workplaces.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University of Glasgow's partnership with IntoUniversity, delivered jointly with the University of Edinburgh, is helping to address educational inequality and expand opportunities for young people from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Over the past five years more than 8,000 young people have engaged with IntoUniversity centres in Govan, Maryhill and Craigmillar, benefiting from a wide range of support including academic tutoring, mentoring, careers guidance, university visits and work experience opportunities. Through sustained engagement, the programme helps young people develop confidence, broaden their aspirations and navigate pathways into further and higher education.

The impact of the partnership is significant. Across the first four years of the collaboration between IntoUniversity and the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, 70% of school leavers progressed to higher education, compared with a national average of 27.9% among young people from Scotland's most deprived communities. Since 2021, more than 3,000 students have participated in university experiences delivered through the partnership, supported by over 300 student volunteers.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

An ambitious collaboration between the University and Hillhead Primary gave 90 schoolchildren the opportunity to learn more about the media, digital storytelling and the University's research.

The Kid Reporters project provided young learners with direct access to University researchers, helping them develop communication skills, curiosity and confidence while learning about the role of research in society.

The sessions took place in laboratories, museums, lecture theatres and outdoor learning spaces, giving children hands-on experiences of higher education environments and exposing them to real-world research.

The project was supported by teachers, digital leaders, PhD researchers and Masters students from the School of Education. Drawing on research into children's agency, digital media and place-based learning, the initiative encouraged pupils to shape and share stories in their own voices. The resulting digital content was showcased at public events attended by families, educators and researchers.

The project highlights the value of collaborative partnerships in creating meaningful learning experiences that inspire young people to explore research, develop digital skills and engage confidently with the world around them.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



The LeadHERship Retreat demonstrates the University's commitment to advancing gender equity in leadership by creating opportunities for women to strengthen their leadership potential, expand their influence and contribute to more inclusive and effective organisations.

OUR RESEARCH

In June 2026, the University collaborated with the FTSE Women Leaders Review to launch a landmark report examining how to increase gender-balanced representation in FTSE 350 Chair positions. Led by Professor Irene-Marie Esser, Sir Alexander Stone Chair in Commercial Law, the research explored both the realities and misconceptions surrounding pathways to board chair roles.

The report, Future of FTSE 350 Chairs: Pipelines and Pathways to the Chair Role, combined quantitative and qualitative evidence, drawing on insights from FTSE 350 Chairs and other key stakeholders. It highlighted that women currently hold only 17% of chair positions across FTSE 350 companies and identified structural and cultural barriers limiting progress.

Key recommendations included broadening traditional definitions of leadership potential, improving succession planning, increasing opportunities for women to gain executive and profit-and-loss experience, and making better use of existing corporate governance frameworks. The report advocates a shift from compliance-driven approaches towards more thoughtful, principles-based governance that actively develops diverse leadership pipelines.

By addressing board diversity and leadership development, the initiative demonstrates the University's contribution to evidence-based policy and governance reform.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

LeadHERship Retreat is an executive education initiative designed specifically to support women in developing the skills, confidence and networks needed to thrive in leadership roles. Delivered through a collaboration between leading experts from the University's Business and Law disciplines, the programme provides a tailored environment where women can explore leadership challenges and opportunities while advancing both professional and personal growth.

The retreat focuses on strengthening leadership confidence, strategic clarity and the ability to drive meaningful change within organisations. Participants are encouraged to develop resilient, values-led leadership approaches that enable them to navigate complex business environments and make a lasting impact.

By combining academic expertise with practical leadership development, the programme helps women build the vision, influence and decision-making capabilities required for senior leadership positions.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The Pause Together: Work, Live, Thrive programme demonstrates how evidence-based workplace initiatives can advance gender equality, improve staff wellbeing and influence institutional policy. Developed in response to staff feedback highlighting a need for greater support and open discussion around menopause, the programme was created by Professor Kathleen Riach and Kirsteen Daly to build a supportive community while educating and empowering women navigating menopause.

Designed as a needs-led intervention, the programme has helped transform workplace culture within the Adam Smith Business School by normalising conversations about menopause and reducing stigma. Through educational resources, peer support and community-building activities, participants gained greater confidence and awareness in managing menopause-related challenges in professional settings. The initiative also contributed directly to the development of the University's menopause policy, with its accompanying toolkit recognised as an example of best practice.

The impact has been significant. Post-programme surveys recorded a 60% increase in staff feeling supported and a 50% rise in open discussions about menopause, while participants reported a stronger sense of empowerment and control. Beyond the University, Professor Riach's research has influenced NHS Scotland policy, extending the programme's reach and societal impact.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Ada Scotland Festival champions gender balance in tech and computing, providing inspiration for our young people and to build a stronger, fairer, more diverse workforce of the future.

In Scotland, building a diverse talent pipeline is critical as female learners are underrepresented in computing science education at all levels, with only 19% of Scottish Higher and 22% of Nat 5 entrants being female in 2023; with four young men for every young woman studying computing degrees in the UK in 2024.

Now in its seventh year, the Ada Scotland Festival continues to unite partners across Scotland, from the Borders to the Highlands, working together to promote gender diversity in computing science and technology.

New additions for 2026 include a launch event for high schools hosted in Glasgow, mid-careers roundtable lunch, teachers' evening forum and a Dundee hackathon and closing ceremony.

The festival is led by staff from the School of Computing Science and delivered with partners from across Scotland. The 2026 Festival is sponsored by Lloyds, SP Energy Networks and Royal London.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



The rain gardens below St Mungo Square are designed to catch and attenuate surface water runoff. The planting includes species capable of cleaning surface water runoff, eg reeds, rushes and marginals.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University's School of Chemistry are developing an innovative technology that uses sound waves to remove harmful pollutants from drinking water. Their spinout project, Lunasonic, received £100,000 in funding after being selected as a finalist in Ofwat's national Water Discovery Challenge, which supports pioneering solutions to the water sector's most pressing environmental challenges.

Founded by Shaun Fletcher and Dr Lukman Yusuf from Professor Mark Symes' research group, Lunasonic is advancing the field of sonochemistry, which uses focused ultrasound beams to drive chemical reactions.

The new funding will enable the team to test the technology in conditions that more closely resemble real-world water treatment systems. Researchers will assess its ability to treat larger volumes of moving water containing multiple contaminants, helping to demonstrate its commercial and operational viability. The project will also benefit from seven months of specialist mentoring and support from water industry partners to accelerate commercialisation.

By providing a potentially lower-cost, more environmentally sustainable method of eliminating persistent pollutants and 'forever chemicals' such as PFAS, Lunasonic has the potential to transform water treatment practices. The initiative demonstrates the University's commitment to translating cutting-edge scientific research into practical solutions that protect public health, support environmental sustainability and address global water security challenges.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's Environmental Geoscience BSc equips students with the knowledge and practical skills needed to address global water challenges and support the achievement of SDG 6. The programme explores how geological and human processes influence water resources, water security, pollution and environmental change, helping students understand the complex relationship between people and the Earth system.

Students develop expertise in areas directly relevant to sustainable water management, including hydrogeology, environmental aqueous geochemistry, climate change and contaminated land management. Through fieldwork, laboratory investigations and independent research projects, they learn how to monitor water quality, assess groundwater resources and develop evidence-based solutions to environmental challenges.

By combining scientific understanding with practical problem-solving, the programme prepares graduates for careers in water management, geo-environmental consultancy and environmental protection. These skills contribute to safeguarding water resources, improving environmental resilience and supporting sustainable access to clean water for communities now and in the future.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The rain gardens on University Place, planting beds in St Mungo Square and the main rain gardens below the Square are designed to catch and attenuate surface water runoff (carrying pollutants such as salt, hydrocarbons from asphalt and any spilt materials). The planting includes species capable of cleaning surface water runoff (eg reeds, rushes and marginals) and the check dams within the rain gardens slow the rate at which surface water passes through the planting, enabling the settlement of pollutants and silt within the beds.

We have also promoted water consciousness through the installation of 50 sustainable water fountains on campus. The fountains are not chilled and are run on the domestic water supply, while de-incentivising the purchase of single-use plastic bottles and cups by providing ample access to water on campus.

Installed in convenient locations in Gilmorehill and Garscube, these fountains make it easy for colleagues and students to refill their reusable water bottles, providing an alternative to single-use plastic water bottles across campus.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

University of Glasgow researchers organised a water treatment activity at the Glasgow Science Festival 2025. Over two days at the Kibble Palace in the Glasgow Botanic Gardens, they ran activities related to drinking water treatment, with the aim of giving families and school groups a fun, hands-on way to learn about how water is treated.

The event featured a variety of activities, including a sand filtration system where visitors could see how water is cleaned, and a microscope station where they could look at microorganisms in water. The goal was to make the science behind water treatment more understandable and to show the important role science plays in making sure our drinking water is safe.

The event was a success, with lots of families and schools attending. There was plenty of interest and many great questions, especially about how Glasgow's drinking water is treated. It was a great way to raise awareness about the importance of water treatment and to inspire future interest in environmental science.



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



Alongside a programme of live music from grassroots artists, the Dear Green Music Scene festival created opportunities for dialogue between researchers and the public on topics related to clean energy and sustainable development.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University have helped develop a landmark international roadmap demonstrating how superconducting technologies could transform transport and significantly reduce global carbon emissions. Led by Dr Wenjuan Song of the James Watt School of Engineering and developed through collaboration with more than 60 researchers and engineers from over 40 organisations worldwide, the study explores how superconductors could accelerate the transition to cleaner, electrified transport systems.

The roadmap highlights how superconducting motors, cables and power systems could dramatically improve performance while reducing energy consumption and emissions.

Aviation is identified as a major opportunity, with superconducting motors offering power-to-weight ratios capable of overcoming one of the biggest barriers to electric flight. The technology could also support zero-emission shipping through highly efficient propulsion systems and enhance rail networks with lighter, more efficient transformers and power infrastructure. Real-world demonstrations are already under way, including superconducting aircraft powertrains, ship propulsion systems and high-speed rail applications.

The roadmap estimates that if superconducting technologies were adopted across 50% of the transport sector, they could help avoid around 23 gigatonnes of carbon emissions over 25 years. While challenges remain around cost, cooling systems and large-scale deployment, the research provides a clear agenda for future innovation and commercial adoption.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

In 2026, the University was selected to lead the Skills Centre for Advancing Nuclear Systems (SCANS), a major doctoral training initiative designed to address critical skills shortages in the UK nuclear sector. Supported through the UK Government's Doctoral Focal Awards programme, SCANS forms part of a national effort to expand the pipeline of highly skilled researchers and engineers needed to support the UK's clean energy, economic growth, national security and net-zero ambitions.

SCANS brings together the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, SUERC: Centre for the Isotope Sciences, and 25 industry and national partners. Operating across integrated hubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the centre combines expertise in chemistry, radiochemistry, engineering, physics, mathematics, environmental science and data science.

Over seven years, more than 120 supervisors will support over 60 doctoral researchers through a cohort-based training model. Students will benefit from access to leading research facilities, industry placements, specialist training and collaborative research projects co-created with sector partners.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Energy (GCSE) marked its second anniversary in 2025. Established in December 2023, the centre brings together expertise from across the University's four colleges to address the complex technical, environmental and societal challenges of the global energy transition.

Since its launch, the centre has expanded rapidly, representing more than 370 researchers, including over 100 early-career researchers, and engaging with more than 450 external collaborators from industry, government and the third sector. Led by Professor Gioia Falcone, the centre promotes a vision of sustainable energy futures that deliver inclusive development while avoiding unintended environmental and social consequences.

The centre's collaborative approach has generated significant impact. Researchers associated with GCSE secured more than £19 million in research funding over the previous year, supporting projects across sustainable energy, decarbonisation and climate resilience.

By connecting disciplines, sectors and stakeholders, the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Energy demonstrates the University's commitment to accelerating innovation, supporting net-zero ambitions, and delivering practical solutions for a sustainable energy future.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University's Dear Green Music Scene Festival 2026 demonstrates how universities can combine culture, research and public engagement to promote sustainability and climate action. Hosted at the Advanced Research Centre (ARC) and St Mungo Square, the festival brought together researchers, community partners, musicians and the public to explore the opportunities and challenges of the clean energy transition in an accessible and inclusive way.

The event was delivered through a collaboration involving the ARC, the College of Arts and Humanities Sustainability Forum, GALLANT, Glasgow Science Festival, Music in the University, and WestFest. A key feature of the festival was its commitment to sustainability, with performances taking place across two stages powered by hydrogen and solar energy.

Alongside a programme of live music from grassroots artists, the festival created opportunities for dialogue between researchers and the public on topics related to clean energy and sustainable development. The festival received funding as part of the University's EPSRC and AHRC Impact Acceleration Accounts.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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



The University offers a wide range of on-campus employment opportunities, including student ambassador, content creator, internship and peer support roles.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University have developed evidence-based recommendations to improve financial security and working conditions for freelancers in the UK's film and television industries. The Make Freelancing Pay study, led by Professor Doris Ruth Eikhof in partnership with the Fraser of Allander Institute, examined how innovative tax and social security policies could help address growing financial insecurity among creative workers and stem the loss of skilled talent from the sector.

The research focused on the screen industries, which contribute more than £124 billion to the UK economy but rely heavily on a workforce of freelancers and project-based workers. Many face unstable incomes, limited employment protections and challenging working conditions, issues that have been intensified by the pandemic, industry disruptions and the cost-of-living crisis.

By analysing policy approaches used in six other countries, the study identified practical reforms that could significantly improve freelancers' disposable income and resilience. Findings suggested that measures such as a screen-sector basic income, targeted housing support, unemployment assistance and support with social insurance contributions could provide meaningful financial stability, particularly for low-income workers, younger workers and disabled freelancers.

The project offers policymakers a framework for creating more inclusive labour markets while supporting the sustainability of a key creative industry.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

In January 2026, the Financial Regulation Innovation Lab (FRIL), supported by the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde, launched the FRIL Skills Academy, an innovative education platform designed to address emerging skills gaps across the financial services, professional services and fintech sectors. The initiative responds to rapid technological change, increasing regulatory complexity, and growing demand for expertise in areas such as artificial intelligence, data quality and regulatory compliance.

The Academy was developed following industry research undertaken by FRIL which identified significant workforce shortages that risk constraining innovation, productivity and competitiveness. By providing accessible, industry-informed training and professional development opportunities, the programme aims to equip current and future professionals with the knowledge and skills required to succeed in a rapidly evolving sector.

A distinctive feature of the Academy is its collaborative approach. Designed with direct input from industry partners and delivered through academic expertise, the programme combines practical learning with challenge-led education that addresses real-world business needs. This ensures that training remains relevant to employers while supporting career development for learners.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University has invested more than £1 million annually in student wages and paid internships for the second consecutive year, with spending projected to reach £1.5 million during the 2025–26 academic year. The initiative reflects growing demand for flexible, paid work opportunities that help students gain professional experience while completing their studies.

The University offers a wide range of on-campus employment opportunities, including student ambassador, content creator, internship and peer support roles. These positions enable students to build workplace skills, professional networks and confidence while balancing academic commitments.

A flagship programme, Find A Solution, funds paid internships with third-sector organisations across Scotland. In 2025–26, the programme provided 48 internships, each offering 160 hours of paid work experience while supporting organisations to address operational and social challenges.

The investment forms part of a broader employability strategy that connects students with opportunities across Glasgow's economy, including the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District. The impact is reflected in graduate outcomes, with 94.8% of University of Glasgow graduates progressing to a positive destination within 15 months of graduation.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The UK's leading universities are major forces for economic growth, and their reach is both national and global. A report shows the research and commercialisation activities of the Russell Group institutions – of which the University of Glasgow is a member – equated to £37.6 billion in 2021–22.

In Scotland, the economic impact is put at more than £2.3 billion, supporting 21,630 jobs, according to London Economics, that assessed what the group's 27 research-intensive universities mean to the UK economy. For every £1 of public funds invested in research at these institutions, more than £8.50 is generated for the UK economy.

On the back of the report, the Russell Group is urging the Government to maximise the economic potential of the UK's research-intensive universities by ensuring at least 3% of GDP is invested into R&D by 2030.



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



The mission of RISE@UofG is to harness the expertise of successful University entrepreneurs to strengthen and promote entrepreneurship across campus.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers from the University and Florida State University have developed an innovative enhancement to artificial intelligence that improves how machine learning models analyse location-based data. The project focused on TabPFN, a foundation model designed to make predictions from tabular datasets such as spreadsheets and databases. While effective in many applications, the model struggled to interpret the spatial relationships that are essential in geospatial data.

To address this challenge, the team created Geospatial Sparse Attention (GSA), a framework that enables the model to prioritise geographically relevant information and better understand how nearby locations influence each other. The resulting open-source tool, TabPFN-GSA, enhances prediction accuracy while improving performance on much larger datasets.

The researchers evaluated the model using 30 synthetic datasets and four real-world case studies, including air pollution monitoring, US election results, housing prices, and poverty data. The enhanced model consistently delivered more reliable predictions and successfully processed datasets that the original version could not handle.

The innovation has broad applications across academia, government and industry, supporting evidence-based decision-making on issues such as public health, climate change, housing and public services.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's Curriculum for Life Creativity & Innovation theme equips students with the skills, mindsets and confidence needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Through a range of interdisciplinary courses, including Languages, Utopia and the Construction of Knowledge; Our University: Past, Present, World-Changing Future; Playing the World; Screen Futures: Working in the Global Screen Industries; and Intercultural Literacies, students are encouraged to think creatively, communicate effectively and develop innovative responses to complex challenges.

The theme places a strong emphasis on collaboration, imagination and global awareness, helping students build transferable skills such as problem-solving, adaptability, critical thinking and intercultural competence. These capabilities are increasingly valued by employers and are essential for addressing contemporary social, cultural and economic challenges.

By integrating creativity and innovation into the student experience, the University aims to develop future-ready graduates who can understand the world from different perspectives and contribute positively to society.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

RISE@UofG was established by the University to support researchers seeking to transform research-driven innovations into commercial ventures. Recognising that the journey from research to market can be complex and challenging, the initiative provides a community where academic founders can access peer support, entrepreneurial expertise and practical guidance throughout the commercialisation process.

Researchers pursuing commercial opportunities often face unfamiliar challenges, including product development, manufacturing, securing translational funding, engaging with investors and developing entrepreneurial skills. RISE@UofG was created to address these barriers by connecting founders with experienced entrepreneurs from across the University community who can share knowledge, insights and mentorship.

RISE@UofG also hosts regular events that provide opportunities for learning, collaboration and engagement with investors and industry partners.

Through its combination of mentorship, networking opportunities, policy engagement and founder support, RISE@UofG helps create an environment where innovative research can achieve real-world impact.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University's Summer Startup Programme is helping students, graduates and aspiring entrepreneurs transform innovative ideas into viable businesses through a comprehensive programme of enterprise support and skills development. Delivered by the University's Student & Graduate Enterprise team, the initiative keeps entrepreneurial activity thriving on campus throughout the summer months, creating opportunities for participants to develop practical business knowledge and commercial confidence.

Running across June, July and August, the programme offers expert-led workshops covering every stage of the startup journey. Participants benefit from guidance from business consultants, entrepreneurs, legal specialists and industry leaders.

In 2026, the programme attracted 87 participants, with women representing 55% of attendees. Through partnerships such as the Innovation3 Exchange, the initiative also supports collaboration across institutions. By fostering entrepreneurial skills, innovation and enterprise, the Summer Startup Programme contributes to economic development while empowering students and graduates to create positive social and commercial impact.



Reduce inequality within and among countries



New research is highlighting the scale of the social housing challenge, noting that Scotland requires at least 15,693 affordable homes annually to begin reducing housing need. It also draws attention to the social consequences of underinvestment in housing, including rising homelessness and more than 10,000 children living in temporary accommodation.

OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University's UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence have produced influential research highlighting the need for large-scale delivery of social housing to address Scotland's growing housing and homelessness crisis. Commissioned by Shelter Scotland, the report examines the role of the proposed More Homes Scotland agency and how it can help remove barriers to housing delivery while increasing the supply of affordable homes.

The research identifies a critical policy challenge: whether the agency's primary purpose should be to increase overall housing supply or specifically reduce unmet affordable housing need. The authors argue that tackling affordable housing shortages must be the central priority if Scotland is to effectively address homelessness and housing insecurity.

Researchers emphasise that achieving meaningful progress will require strong partnerships between government, local authorities and the housing sector, alongside action to address barriers related to land, infrastructure, planning and investment.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's Curriculum for Life Power & Justice theme equips students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand and challenge inequalities in society. Through an interdisciplinary suite of courses, the programme explores how power is distributed, who has access to justice, and how individuals and communities can contribute to creating fairer and more sustainable futures.

Courses such as Leading Change: Policy in Action, Not Just Politics as Usual, Justice and the Restitution of Cultural Heritage, Transforming our Futures, and Does Scotland Need Human Rights? provide students with opportunities to engage with real-world issues including poverty, inequality, human rights, governance, cultural justice and sustainable development. Students work alongside academics, policymakers, civil society organisations and practitioners to explore practical approaches to social change.

The programme emphasises collaboration, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, communication and leadership. Through activities such as policy design, campaigning, cultural heritage case studies, public engagement projects and human rights advocacy, students develop the ability to analyse complex societal challenges from multiple perspectives and propose evidence-based solutions.

The initiative supports the University's commitment to advancing equality, social responsibility, human rights and sustainable development while empowering students to contribute meaningfully to positive social transformation.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The James McCune Smith (JMS) PhD Scholarship Programme and annual JMS Conference are initiatives designed to increase opportunities, representation and leadership development for Black scholars in higher education. The programme was launched in 2021 to address barriers to postgraduate research participation and to support Black UK students in pursuing doctoral study and academic careers.

Named after James McCune Smith, the first African American to receive a medical degree, awarded by the University in 1837, the programme honours his legacy as a pioneering physician, intellectual and abolitionist. Through funded PhD opportunities, external mentoring, leadership development, placements and community-building activities, the initiative empowers a new generation of researchers to make impactful contributions across a wide range of disciplines.

The fourth annual JMS Conference, themed 'Every Story I Create, Creates Me: Learning, Leadership and Legacy,' celebrates the achievements of Black scholars, researchers, artists and changemakers while creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange and professional development. The event showcases innovative research, amplifies diverse perspectives and fosters inclusive networks that support future leaders.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University has launched the Dumfries Civic Fund, a community investment initiative designed to remove barriers to participation, improve inclusion and strengthen opportunities for underserved groups across Dumfries and Galloway. In its inaugural year, the fund awarded £25,000 to seven local projects, supporting activities that promote equality, wellbeing, education, community engagement and social inclusion.

The Dumfries Civic Fund projects address a range of inequalities affecting local communities. Initiatives include educational workshops tackling misogyny and gender-based prejudice in schools, a youth-led wellbeing trail co-designed by marginalised young people, free outdoor learning opportunities for children and families, and support for pupils facing financial barriers to educational visits.

The fund also creates opportunities for collaboration between the University, community organisations, schools and local residents. University students are encouraged to engage through volunteering, research projects and knowledge-sharing activities, helping strengthen relationships between higher education and the wider community.

The programme helps ensure that people of all backgrounds can participate, contribute and benefit from social, educational and community life, advancing the goals of a fairer and more equitable society.



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



New research has found that historic places contribute significantly to residents' quality of life by fostering a sense of belonging and continuity.

OUR RESEARCH

The University has contributed to new research demonstrating how historic places can strengthen wellbeing, community identity and local economic resilience. Conducted in partnership with Historic England, the report highlights the important role that everyday heritage assets such as cinemas, churches, pubs and piers play in creating places where people feel connected, secure and able to thrive.

A public survey revealed that 71% of respondents considered local historic buildings important to their quality of life, while 63% reported that being around historic buildings positively affected their wellbeing. The study also showed that neglected heritage assets can have negative emotional impacts, with many respondents reporting feelings of sadness when viewing historic buildings in disrepair.

Beyond wellbeing benefits, the report highlights the economic value of heritage. Historic places influence decisions about where people choose to live, work, visit and invest, supporting tourism, attracting creative industries and contributing to local economic growth.

The project highlights the importance of integrating cultural heritage into urban planning and place-making strategies to create healthier, stronger and more sustainable communities for future generations.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University has launched two fully funded postgraduate scholarships in planning as part of its commitment to sustainable urban development, skills development and economic growth. Delivered in partnership with the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District (GRID), the initiative addresses a recognised shortage of accredited planning professionals in Scotland, while supporting the development of future leaders in the built environment sector.

The scholarships provide full tuition fees and a £13,000 stipend for students undertaking either the MSc in City Planning or MSc in City Planning & Real Estate. A distinctive feature of the programme is its strong connection to real-world urban challenges. Scholarship recipients undertake GRID-linked dissertation projects focused on issues such as masterplanning, regeneration and community engagement within the innovation district. Students also gain direct experience through engagement with Glasgow City Council's Planning Department and internship opportunities with ScottishPower.

The initiative supports the University's wider vision for the 700-acre Glasgow Riverside Innovation District, where academia, industry, government and communities collaborate to drive innovation and sustainable growth.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The Church Street Development includes a major investment in student accommodation and sustainable urban development, designed to enhance the student experience while delivering benefits for the wider local community. The project will provide 460 student bedrooms in a mix of cluster flats and studio apartments, including fully accessible accommodation, alongside commercial space and improved public areas close to the University campus.

The development aims to make University life more affordable and accessible by enabling students to live within walking distance of teaching, learning and extracurricular facilities.

A key feature of the project is its commitment to community engagement and placemaking. The University is involving students, staff and local residents throughout the development process, ensuring the project complements the surrounding neighbourhood. Designs seek to respect the area's historic tenement character while introducing welcoming public and green spaces that can be enjoyed by both students and the wider community.

In line with the University's sustainability commitments and Glasgow Green Strategy, the project is being designed to promote health and wellbeing and is targeting a BREEAM Excellent environmental performance rating.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Glasgow Riverside Innovation District (GRID) Civic Grant Fund continues to support community-led projects that enhance social wellbeing, inclusion, resilience and local capacity. In 2025, the second round of the fund distributed more than £55,000 to 24 grassroots organisations, bringing total investment to over £125,000 and supporting 50 projects across communities including Govan, Partick and Anderston.

The fund targets local initiatives addressing challenges that affect the sustainability and vibrancy of urban communities, including social isolation, inequality, skills development, community wellbeing and access to opportunities. Supported projects range from community food initiatives and youth skills programmes to arts-based activities that promote health, creativity and social connection.

Examples include the Big STEAM Project, which equips young people from marginalised backgrounds with science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics skills, and Halo Arts' Typically Diverse initiative, which creates an inclusive creative environment for neurodivergent individuals.

By empowering local organisations to design solutions tailored to community needs, the GRID Civic Grant Fund helps create stronger, more inclusive and resilient neighbourhoods.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



A Worthwhile Wardrobe brings together charities, consumers, volunteers and industry to create a sustainable retail model. Donors are invited to share the stories behind their garments, helping create strong connections and encourage continued participation in circular consumption practices.

OUR RESEARCH

The Responsible Electronics and Circular Technologies (REACT) Centre is a pioneering UK research initiative helping transform the electronics sector to support a low-carbon, circular economy. Led by the University of Glasgow in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, and the Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult, REACT is a £6 million+ UKRI-supported Green Economy Centre focused on reducing the environmental impact of electronic technologies.

As digital technologies become increasingly important across sectors such as healthcare, aerospace, communications and advanced manufacturing, the industry faces significant sustainability challenges, including rising volumes of electronic waste, high supply-chain emissions and reliance on scarce critical raw materials. REACT was established to address these issues by supporting the development and adoption of more sustainable technologies and manufacturing practices.

The centre provides businesses and researchers with access to specialist facilities for manufacturing, repair, recycling and material recovery, alongside expert academic support and business engagement. Its work focuses on designing durable, repairable and recyclable products while advancing sustainable manufacturing methods and responsible innovation strategies.

REACT's vision is to establish Scotland as a European centre of excellence for sustainable electronics. By combining cutting-edge research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and industry partnerships, the centre supports the UK's net-zero ambitions, helps reduce e-waste and carbon emissions, and strengthens the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the electronics, semiconductor, photonics and ICT sectors.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Computing Science students at the University have become the first in the UK to have specific material about the environmental impact of digital technologies integrated into their undergraduate curriculum.

Researchers estimate that by 2040, emissions from computing alone could consume more than half of the world's carbon budget available to limit global heating to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels. The energy demands of powering computers and data centres make up around 70% of the computing sector's carbon emissions. BSc students at the School of Computing Science will be regularly taught and assessed about the sustainability implications of their chosen field of study.

The school's updated curriculum aims to help future generations of computing scientists play leading roles in reducing the ecological harms of the digital world. It will focus on understanding and assessing the problem of emissions from computing at a global scale, with a focus on the specific systems that students design and develop.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University of Glasgow Eco-Hub is a social space that promotes sustainability on the campus. It acts as a meeting point for staff, students and the wider community to come together to discuss and build a sustainable world. Services provided help address the cost of living and the climate crisis. It houses a permanent clothes and homeware swap-shop and a collection of educational resources on the environment. The Eco-Hub hosts bike repair sessions and practical workshops such as clothing repair and sustainable crafting.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Researchers from the University's Adam Smith Business School have developed A Worthwhile Wardrobe, an innovative project that promotes circular fashion while supporting charitable fundraising and reducing textile waste. Led by Professor Deirdre Shaw and Dr Katherine Duffy, the initiative was created in partnership with the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice to address the environmental impacts of fast fashion and the declining quality of clothing donations received by charity shops.

The project responds to growing concerns about clothing consumption, with garment production increasing significantly while clothing is worn fewer times before disposal. Traditional charity retail models often struggle because many donated items cannot be resold, creating financial and environmental burdens. To address this challenge, A Worthwhile Wardrobe introduced a circular approach that keeps high-quality occasion wear in use for longer through a 'buy and return' model that encourages repeated reuse and re-donation.

Currently being piloted in-store, the model has attracted interest from charities across the UK. By extending clothing lifespans, reducing waste and generating ongoing income for charitable services, A Worthwhile Wardrobe demonstrates how research-led innovation can support more sustainable consumption and contribute to a circular economy.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



By gathering local perspectives, a project seeks to address gaps in understanding how climate-related events affect different communities, particularly vulnerable populations. A key focus of the research is the relationship between climate change and mental health.

OUR RESEARCH

In August 2026, four University-led projects secured funding through the Scotland Beyond Net Zero (SBNZ) Seed Fund, supporting innovative collaborations to address some of Scotland's most pressing climate and environmental challenges. The initiative brings together researchers, universities, policymakers, communities and industry partners to develop practical solutions that support Scotland's transition to a sustainable net-zero future. The funded projects span three key themes: climate finance, energy and the circular economy. One project, delivered with the University of Strathclyde, explores how Scotland can strengthen green financial markets to attract investment for climate action. A second, involving the University of the West of Scotland, investigates the adoption of low-carbon heating systems in new-build homes and the challenges faced by developers, local authorities and residents.

By fostering interdisciplinary and inter-university collaboration, the SBNZ Seed Fund demonstrates how research can generate actionable insights, influence policy and deliver environmental and community benefits.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

As part of the University's Curriculum for Life programme, Smash the Anthropocene! is an innovative interdisciplinary course designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to respond to the climate crisis. Recognising that effective climate action requires collaboration across disciplines, the course brings together students from humanities, social sciences and scientific backgrounds to explore complex environmental challenges and develop practical solutions.

The course combines climate literacy with real-world engagement. Students explore both scientific and social scientific understandings of climate change, critically examine climate narratives, and interact directly with practitioners and stakeholders involved in shaping societal responses to environmental issues.

A core feature of the course is a collaborative project in which cross-disciplinary teams design and communicate a proposed climate action initiative. Students present their ideas through a simulation of the civil society zone at international climate negotiations, developing skills in teamwork, communication, creativity and problem-solving.

By combining academic learning with practical application, Smash the Anthropocene! demonstrates how universities can prepare students to become informed, engaged and effective contributors to a more sustainable future.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

In 2026, the University successfully launched a Carbon Literacy Training programme as a key step in embedding sustainability across its campuses. Working in partnership with Residential Life, the Sustainability Team recruited and trained 22 volunteers (comprising 16 staff members and six students) who completed accredited Carbon Literacy and Facilitation Skills training.

The programme was designed to build long-term internal capacity by creating a network of trained facilitators able to deliver Carbon Literacy training across the University. Participants were selected from all four colleges and a range of professional services teams, ensuring broad representation and the ability to reach diverse audiences throughout the institution.

Following certification, each facilitator has committed to deliver at least one Carbon Literacy training session, helping to raise awareness of climate change, carbon footprints and practical actions that individuals can take to reduce environmental impact. It is hoped that academic staff can also integrate learning from the programme into their teaching, thus further extending its influence on students and supporting the University's contribution to delivering on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University is leading a community-engaged research project to better understand how climate change affects both physical and mental health in Scottish communities vulnerable to flooding and drought. Led by PhD researcher Rhiannon Hawkins, the initiative focuses on residents in Ayr, Dumfries and Wick, recognising that climate-related events can have significant and lasting impacts on wellbeing, particularly in areas already exposed to environmental risks.

The project places local knowledge at the centre of research and adaptation planning. Community members are invited to share their experiences through surveys, interviews and collaborative activities, helping researchers develop community-sourced flood and drought maps and practical resilience resources. These outputs are intended to support future planning, improve preparedness and strengthen local responses to environmental challenges.

Previous evidence indicates that people affected by flooding are significantly more likely to experience depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Funded by the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences, the research demonstrates how universities can work collaboratively with communities to address emerging environmental and public health challenges.



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



The Clyde in the Classroom project culminates in a release day, where pupils release the young fish to local waterways, providing a direct connection between classroom learning and environmental action.

OUR RESEARCH

In July 2026, researchers from the University published a groundbreaking study in Nature Communications revealing how long-term adaptation to warmer environments can fundamentally alter the biology, behaviour and genetics of fish. By studying threespine sticklebacks living in Iceland's naturally heated geothermal waters, the team gained unique insights into how aquatic species may respond to rising global temperatures.

Using geothermal habitats as a natural model for climate change, researchers compared fish living in unusually warm waters with populations of the same species inhabiting cooler environments. They found that warm-water fish exhibited significant differences, including increased appetite, greater fat accumulation, lower metabolism and obesity-like characteristics. These fish also developed distinct genetic adaptations that enabled survival in higher temperatures.

As water temperatures continue to rise, some species may adapt through substantial physiological and genetic changes, while others may face increased extinction risk. The research offers valuable insight into the mechanisms of climate adaptation and helps improve predictions about the future resilience of wildlife in a warming world.

LEARNING & TEACHING

The University's MSc in Sustainable Water Management contributes to SDG 14: Life Below Water by equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to protect and sustainably manage aquatic environments. The programme provides multidisciplinary training in the science, management, conservation and restoration of water systems, preparing graduates to address some of the most pressing challenges facing freshwater and coastal ecosystems.

Students develop an in-depth understanding of issues such as climate change impacts, land-use pressures, flood and contamination risks, ecosystem health, conservation, restoration and the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services.

A key strength of the programme is its integration of scientific, environmental and management perspectives, enabling students to assess complex water-related challenges from multiple viewpoints. Through advanced study and practical experience, participants develop the expertise required to support evidence-based decision-making and sustainable water stewardship.

The programme prepares graduates for professional careers and research roles in environmental management, water governance, conservation and sustainability.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University's Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) plays a key role in advancing research and education that supports SDG 14: Life Below Water. Located on the shores of Loch Lomond, SCENE provides researchers and students with direct access to diverse freshwater habitats, including lochs, rivers, streams and island ecosystems, creating a unique living laboratory for aquatic science and environmental monitoring.

The centre combines specialist teaching facilities with advanced research infrastructure designed to support the study and conservation of aquatic environments. Researchers have access to field laboratories, genetics laboratories, aquaria supplied by a one-way flow system from Loch Lomond, artificial stream facilities, fish-holding units and research vessels capable of deploying aquatic sampling equipment. SCENE also maintains a comprehensive suite of monitoring tools, including water quality sensors, hydrological equipment, plankton nets, fish sampling equipment and aquatic invertebrate survey resources.

These facilities enable research into freshwater biodiversity, ecosystem health, fish populations, water quality and the impacts of environmental change on aquatic systems. At the same time, SCENE provides hands-on field training for students and researchers, helping develop the next generation of environmental scientists.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Clyde in the Classroom is an environmental education programme delivered by the Clyde River Foundation that uses the life cycle of native Scottish brown trout to engage young people with river ecology, biodiversity and environmental stewardship across the River Clyde catchment. Designed as a hands-on learning experience, the project combines classroom-based activities with outdoor learning and STEM education.

The programme begins with a launch event at the Glasgow Science Centre, where pupils learn about the geography and history of the River Clyde, freshwater ecosystems, fish life cycles and habitat conservation. Participating schools are then provided with a 'classroom hatchery' containing brown trout eggs, allowing pupils to observe the development of fish from egg to fry over several months.

Throughout the programme, Clyde River Foundation staff provide technical support, educational resources and regular school visits.

By linking science education with real-world conservation, the initiative supports Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence while developing scientific understanding, environmental awareness and a sense of social responsibility. The project demonstrates how experiential learning can inspire young people to become active stewards of local ecosystems and natural resources.



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



Central to the Three Words for Forest project was the concept of 'forest citizenship', helping individuals build stronger connections with local environments and better understand the decisions shaping forest futures. (Image: Martin Shields)

OUR RESEARCH

In 2026, University geoscientists played a key role in an international research collaboration that revealed how deep Earth processes have shaped the Tibetan Plateau, often referred to as the 'Roof of the World'. Conducted with partners from China and the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC), the study provided new evidence linking the plateau's surface features to the movement of tectonic plates deep beneath the Earth.

Drawing on fieldwork undertaken between 2017 and 2019, researchers collected geological samples from central and western Tibet and applied advanced geochronological and thermochronology techniques developed at the University and SUERC. The analysis revealed that the western and central regions of the plateau experienced significantly different uplift and erosion histories between 45 and 20 million years ago.

Published in Nature Geoscience, the findings provide the first convincing evidence that subduction of the Indian plate directly influenced the formation of the Tibetan Plateau and explains previously unexplored east-west variations in its topography.

Beyond advancing fundamental geological knowledge, the research improves understanding of mountain-building processes and contributes to wider insights into geological hazards such as earthquakes and tectonic activity.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's MA in Global Sustainable Development, delivered at the Dumfries Campus, supports SDG 15: Life on Land by equipping students with the knowledge and practical skills needed to address environmental challenges, protect ecosystems and promote sustainable land use. The interdisciplinary programme explores the connections between environmental, social and economic systems, preparing graduates to contribute to sustainable development at local and global levels.

A distinctive feature of the degree is its strong emphasis on experiential learning. Throughout their studies, students participate in fieldwork that may include visits to afforestation projects, brownfield regeneration sites and environmental infrastructure developments, enabling them to examine real-world approaches to habitat restoration, land management and sustainable development.

The curriculum covers topics including global environmental issues, sustainability, environmental ethics, politics and the environment, behaviour change and water resource governance. Students also undertake placements, action research projects and field courses that allow them to apply classroom learning to practical environmental challenges. Opportunities include work related to natural capital promotion, community climate action and sustainable resource management.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University's Cochno Farm and Research Centre is a unique teaching and research facility. Since its acquisition in 1954, the estate has expanded from 220 acres to approximately 344 hectares (850 acres), encompassing farmland, woodland and diverse natural habitats that support both agricultural production and environmental research.

Cochno plays a central role in the education of students within the School of Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine. Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Biosciences students receive extensive practical instruction in livestock management, animal welfare, herd and flock health planning, animal handling, reproduction and clinical practice. The facility provides hands-on learning opportunities that prepare graduates to support sustainable food production while safeguarding animal health and welfare.

Beyond teaching, Cochno hosts a wide range of research activities focused on animal health, nutrition, breeding, reproduction, epidemiology and sustainable production systems. The site also functions as a controlled ecosystem for ecological studies, providing access to habitats at varying elevations that support biodiversity and environmental monitoring.

Specialist facilities, including animal housing, laboratories, livestock handling units and research infrastructure, enable collaboration with researchers, industry partners, veterinary organisations and environmental scientists.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In February 2026, the University launched a suite of educational resources linked to Three Words for Forest, an acclaimed verbatim theatre production exploring how climate change is affecting UK forests and the people who manage them. Drawing on interviews with 30 forestry professionals, the project was designed to help communities better understand the environmental challenges facing forests and the role citizens can play in shaping resilient futures.

Developed through collaboration with partners including Govanhill Baths Community Trust, Green Routes Stirling, Forest Research, the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and Mearns Castle High School, the project produced free resources for schools, community groups and forestry organisations. These include lesson plans, discussion guides, workshop materials and accessible formats of the filmed production, including British Sign Language and audio-described versions.

Part of the AHRC-funded Future of UK Treescapes programme and the interdisciplinary newLEAF research project, the work supports wider efforts to improve forest resilience, increase public awareness and contribute to the UK's long-term net-zero ambitions.



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



To form part of the 2026 UK Youth Poll, students developed survey questions on issues they believe matter most to young people.

OUR RESEARCH

In July 2026, the University's Emma Ritch Law Clinic published Scotland's first trauma-informed guide for victim-survivors involved in High Court sexual offence cases. Developed to address a significant gap in accessible legal information, A Guide for Victim-Survivors of Sexual Crime: When Your Case is Being Heard in the High Court provides clear, practical guidance on every stage of the criminal justice process, helping individuals understand what to expect and reducing uncertainty during what can be a highly challenging experience.

The guide was produced through collaboration between legal professionals, support organisations, justice practitioners, University of Glasgow law students and people with lived experience of the criminal justice system. Alongside the guide, the clinic and Rape Crisis Scotland launched a new Charter of Rights for Victim-Survivors, setting out key rights and entitlements and reinforcing a survivor-centred approach to justice.

The initiative reflects the University's commitment to public legal education and social impact. By improving understanding of legal processes and rights, the project aims to make the justice system more accessible, informed and supportive for victim-survivors. The resource also demonstrates the value of university-community partnerships in addressing real-world challenges and advancing access to justice in Scotland.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The University's John Smith Centre has launched the UK's first academic course dedicated to the science and practice of polling. Designed to give students hands-on experience in public opinion research, the course combines teaching on polling methodology with direct participation in the centre's annual UK Youth Poll.

Honours students at the University were invited to develop survey questions on issues they believe matter most to young people. These questions would then form part of the 2026 UK Youth Poll, with students analysing and presenting the findings when the poll was published. The initiative was created to ensure that research about young people is increasingly shaped by young people themselves.

The programme builds on the success of the inaugural UK Youth Poll in 2025, which was delivered in partnership with polling organisation Focaldata and explored the attitudes and priorities of 16- to 29-year-olds across the UK. Findings on topics such as democracy and social media generated significant public interest.

Through collaboration with Focaldata, guest experts and external sponsors, including Nationwide Building Society, the course provides students with practical research skills while encouraging greater participation in public life and democratic engagement.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

In March 2026, the University and the UK Cabinet Office signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement designed to strengthen collaboration in policy engagement, skills development, research translation and public sector leadership. Building on four years of existing cooperation with the Cabinet Office's Glasgow headquarters, the agreement formalised a long-term relationship aimed at delivering benefits for students, staff, government and the wider Glasgow community.

The partnership supports the UK Government's Places for Growth agenda by increasing connections with local communities, developing leadership talent outside London and attracting diverse future civil servants. Key areas of collaboration include co-designed leadership programmes delivered through the University's Centre for Public Policy, engagement on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum technologies, and careers initiatives that have attracted strong student participation.

The agreement demonstrates how universities and government can work together to address complex societal challenges by combining academic expertise with public sector priorities. It creates opportunities to strengthen policy impact, develop future talent pipelines in Scotland and maximise the value of research and teaching for society. By embedding collaboration across education, innovation and policy, the partnership serves as a model for effective university-government engagement that delivers regional and national benefits.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University's Centre for Public Policy has appointed eight policy professionals who will use the experience to gain insights into policy questions they face in their roles.

After a successful first year, the Centre for Public Policy Practice Fellows programme is running for a second year, funded by the UKRI Economic and Social Research Council's Impact Acceleration Account.

The Fellowship aims to collaboratively generate and share insights between academic and policy colleagues. It provides Fellows with the opportunity to investigate pressing issues and to hone their skills by working with experts from across the University.

The centre has appointed eight Practice Fellows for 2026–27, who work at all levels of government, in public bodies and in the voluntary sector, representing a wide range of policy areas and challenges. They will spend up to 30 hours over the next eight months working with the University.

At the end of their fellowship, each Practice Fellow will produce one output for the centre to share their insights, usually in the form of a blog.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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



A heritage trail enabled visitors to Glasgow Doors Open Day to discover key moments from the University's 575-year history, highlighting the contributions of alumni, staff and students.

OUR RESEARCH

In June 2026, the University hosted the Second Africa–Europe Clusters of Research Excellence Conference, reinforcing its commitment to equitable research partnerships between African and European institutions. The conference brought together researchers and university leaders to advance collaboration on global challenges including climate change, infectious and non-communicable diseases, food systems and genomics.

A key initiative highlighted was the Non-Communicable Diseases and Multimorbidity Cluster, co-led by the University with partners across Africa and Europe. The cluster addresses the growing burden of cardiovascular disease and other chronic illnesses, while tackling the underrepresentation of African populations in global health research. Through joint research, training, mentoring and knowledge exchange, it aims to generate evidence that supports more effective and locally relevant healthcare solutions.

The conference demonstrated how long-term international partnerships can strengthen research capacity, foster innovation and ensure that research agendas and benefits are shared more equitably across continents.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

What if every student at the University had the opportunity to engage in a curriculum that contains opportunity for work-related and experiential learning that explores and addresses societal challenges such as climate action, sustainability and social justice?

Curriculum for Life (C4L) is a futures-oriented suite of courses in which students will engage in solutions-focused education that tackles global challenges in an uncertain world, in particular sustainability; healthy and equitable futures; and technological change. Our teaching will be inspired and informed by our research expertise, so that we are continually pushing boundaries and addressing uncertainty within our programmes, to prepare students for the future world they will face.

Interdisciplinary research projects that involve students in our research will be a key part of this portfolio along with experiential learning opportunities that support application of their research and their learning. We will revise our programmes so that all students are able to access this portfolio as Curriculum for Life becomes integrated into each of our degree programmes.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

The University has been awarded accreditation by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), becoming one of only 25 universities worldwide and eight in the UK to receive this recognition. The accreditation was secured through the University's School of Social & Environmental Sustainability at its Dumfries campus and marks a significant milestone in the institution's environmental leadership and global engagement.

The accreditation places the University within UNEP's Scientific and Technological Community Major Group, enabling researchers to contribute evidence-based expertise directly to international environmental policy discussions. This strengthens opportunities for collaboration with policymakers, scientists and stakeholders worldwide, while creating new pathways for research funding, partnership development and policy impact.

The recognition also enhances learning opportunities for students by connecting them to real-world science-for-policy activities. Existing work already demonstrates this impact, including a University-led project that developed a prioritisation tool to support UNEP's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution.

The accreditation reflects the University's broader commitment to sustainability, building on internationally recognised research spanning areas such as peatland restoration, flood resilience and environmental stewardship, while strengthening its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In 2026, the University marked its 575th anniversary by partnering with Glasgow Building Preservation Trust to deliver a major programme of public engagement as part of the Glasgow Doors Open Days Festival. The initiative welcomed visitors onto campus to explore the University's heritage, research and connections with communities across the city.

Running from 17 to 20 September, the programme featured guided tours, heritage talks, museum exhibitions, family activities and Explorathon, the University's annual research engagement festival.

The Mazumdar-Shaw Advanced Research Centre – the ARC – served as the festival hub for the fifth consecutive year, providing an accessible venue for talks, exhibitions and community events. The partnership demonstrated a shared commitment to making culture, heritage, research and learning accessible to all audiences.

The event showcases how universities can use public events to foster civic pride, encourage lifelong learning and widen access to knowledge and discovery.

LOOKING AHEAD



This report is the sixth comprehensive annual publication by the University of Glasgow assessing our contribution to the delivery of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since our inaugural report in 2021, the SDGs have become an increasingly important part of how we capture the impact of our activities at a local, regional, national and global level and of how we assess new ways of contributing to the goals.

We were delighted to see our institutional commitment to the SDGs reflected in our strong performance in several global sustainability rankings and aim to use this report to highlight the wide-ranging and impactful work of our colleagues.

As we mark 575 years of the University of Glasgow, we build on a long history of world-changing research and innovation, outstanding teaching and partnerships, and a strong commitment from our staff and students to creating positive impact in the world. The SDGs align closely with the ambitions of Strategy 2036, providing a framework through which we can strengthen our contribution to sustainability, inclusion, innovation and partnership. Our approach to sustainability runs through our academic, operational and civic activity. Our quadruple helix approach, bringing together academia, industry, public bodies and our communities is a true partnership towards all our collective goals and we continue to work with these partners for the city of Glasgow and globally, to make a tangible contribution to tackling society's grand challenges.

Uzma Khan
Vice-Principal for Innovation & Economic Development and Chief Operating Officer

We are world-changing Glasgow.

Join us.

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