

## **Edinburgh Napier University**

### **Community Engagement Strategy**

#### **University Strategy**

Edinburgh Napier University states in its Strategy that it seeks to be a good neighbour and to engage with the communities in which we work and to cooperate with them for mutual benefit.

#### **Purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy**

The community engagement strategy expands the high level statement by delineating the scope of the University's engagement with its communities.

#### **Audience**

The Community Engagement Strategy is written to inform the University and its partners and stakeholders and to provide a context and framework to support mutually beneficial community engagement.

#### **The University's engagement in its communities**

- Through providing higher education and developing confident and employable skilled graduates and through its research, knowledge transfer, consultancy and continuing professional development, the University can offer direct benefits to the community. The University's Academic Strategy and Research & Knowledge Transfer Strategy provide the framework for our development and the means by which the needs and demands of, and opportunities in, the community can be translated into the priorities of the University.
- The University is a significant business and major employer in many of its communities. Its students are major contributors to the vibrancy of the local community and economy, through their presence and residence, and through their engagement in placements, volunteering and employment and through sport and other leisure activities.
- The University welcomes visitors to its campuses and will always look for opportunities for members of the local community to participate in activities on campus.
- The University is committed to managing its impact on the local environment. Visually and aesthetically it seeks to develop and

maintain attractive campuses. It seeks to promote sustainable travel by its staff and students. It is committed to reducing its carbon emissions as a key measure of the effectiveness of its Environment Strategy.

- The University seeks actively and consciously to build strong relationships with the key stakeholders in each of its communities. There is evident mutual benefit through sharing aspirations, achievements and plans. The University is committed to developing long-term deep collaborations with partners.
- Through good relationships within the community, opportunities will arise to work in partnership in areas of shared interest and mutual benefit and these will be actively sought and developed.

### **Communities and stakeholder groups**

The Community Engagement Strategy in the section above gives a statement of the natural domain of a university in respect of the benefits to society and the economy of its core purpose of providing higher education and thereby developing graduates who take their place in their communities as citizens, entrepreneurs, employees and employers. Further the University's research, knowledge transfer, commercialisation and CPD directly benefit the economy and society and are in that wide sense part of the University's community engagement.

### **Scope of the Community Engagement Strategy**

The Community Engagement Strategy seeks to guide and focus those other aspects of the University's community engagement that are not captured in the Academic Strategy; Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, and Research, Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation Strategy; and other strategies and statements already published such as the Student Charter and the University's Admissions Policy.

The scope thus relates particularly to:

- Communities in Edinburgh, around the University's three main campuses
- Widening access to higher education
- Corporate responsibility as an employer and business with a significant physical presence
- Corporate social responsibility opportunities for our staff and students
- Equivalent community engagement associated with the University's 'fourth campus', explained below.

The University is based in Edinburgh, moving towards three main campuses, one of which has been explicitly developed to signal the University's commitment to the development of an area of relative disadvantage in the city

and as tangible evidence of the University's commitment to wider access to higher education.

Thus key communities that the University seeks to engage with are those in Edinburgh and particularly those close to its campuses. Through the University's membership of the Edinburgh Partnership Board, leading community planning in the city, and through particular links to certain partners such as NHS Lothian, the University seeks to identify and engage in relevant community developments in the city, in partnership and where we can add value.

Certain of these developments in the city and beyond have and will continue to have a particular focus on supporting wider access to higher education, working in partnership with the South East Forum and LEAPS, and leading and supporting the ELRAH partnership. The SFC's Access and Inclusion Committee signals a focus on redressing imbalances, for example in respect of socio-economic disadvantage. Further though it stresses the importance of supporting transitions; this aligns with the University's considerable work on supporting transition into HE and increasingly, through for example the Big Lottery funded Confident Futures development, transition into employment.

Community engagement activity will follow from the opportunities provided by the University's Sighthill campus, with work already underway in respect of community sport development, in partnership with sports and community groups in the city. Developments in health associated with provision at Sighthill are also foreseen. Partnership working will be the defining characteristic throughout, seeking to add value.

More generally the University is a major employer and a significant land and property owner in the city. The University's impact on the environment, traffic and the local economy are significant and it has HR, Environment, Equality & Diversity and Health & Safety strategies and policies that guide its activities. In respect of community engagement the particular focus is as a responsible corporate body, taking an active and leading role in the various communities through gaining external recognition such as ROSPA, IIP, Green Gown and other awards and through sharing good practice.

Just as the University corporate seeks to be a responsible citizen, active in its communities, these are values evident in the University's staff and ones it seeks to develop in its students. A Corporate Social Responsibility group has been formed to channel and support staff activities for charity. Partnership with Volunteer Development Scotland and engagement with the Scottish Government Social Enterprise pilot are current developments in a wider expectation of engagement with stakeholders and communities through student volunteering and placements.

The focus on Edinburgh and local communities highlights underlying values that the University would also expect to deploy around its 'fourth campus', notably its overseas partnerships and provision. The University is committed

to long-term and deep partnerships and to a quality of experience for all its students wherever located. This implies that the Community Engagement Strategy guides developments furth of Edinburgh as well as within it.

### **Implementation of the strategy**

There will always be University activities that can readily be recognised as community engagement (such as currently: community sport development at Sighthill; our role as an environmentally conscious and health conscious employer; and any work that our staff or students do in community eg complementary therapy or music workshops).

The University has a strategic objective of being a preferred partner and will seek consciously to identify opportunities to work in partnership with relevant community partners or stakeholders to achieve mutually beneficial aims. Funding that to support specific projects or activities will be sourced in collaboration with partners.

The University's planning process ensures that community engagement opportunities and activities are highlighted in and actioned through the plans of faculties and professional services, linking to the University's overall strategic objectives and to the Community Engagement Strategy.

The Vice Principal (AQCS) is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of this strategy.

**Dr J L Rees**  
**Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service)**  
**March 2010**

## Appendix

### Current Community Engagement activities

The **mainstream activities** of the University, guided by its Strategy, its Academic Strategy and its Research & Knowledge Transfer Strategy all **provide direct and distinct benefits to the communities in which we work**, in Edinburgh, Scotland, the UK, Europe and in those parts of the world where we deliver provision or undertake collaborative research, notably **Hong Kong, China and India**. As these are developed, planned and monitored elsewhere, they are not detailed here, but they constitute the University's most significant community impact.

The University's role as a major **employer and contributor to the local economy** wherever it has a physical presence is a recognised contribution to the community. The University, in partnership with NSA, seeks to promote good health and fitness among staff and students, including the promotion of walking, cycling and the use of public transport as means of travel.

### Widening access

We have a long-standing commitment to enabling a wide range of people to access the programmes that we offer. The **Relationship Building with Schools** project ensures that 'wider access' schools (those who have not traditionally sent a high proportion of their pupils on to higher education) receive targeted support to raise aspirations and provide information, advice and guidance to their pupils.

The most significant impact on the social profile of our student body comes from our long-standing partnerships with colleges and the opportunities provided for students to articulate from college to university. Over 20% of our intake, and significantly more for certain programmes, join the University through these routes. The **ELRAH** hub supports developments in the opportunities available.

The University's new campus at Sighthill will enable **Stevenson College** students to access sports facilities, supporting articulation to relevant degrees.

**Community Engagement** within Academic Development provide non-accredited courses in community venues and have approved provider status with Skills Development Scotland allowing courses to be ILA funded. Think Ahead and Think Again programmes are run in partnership with **APEX Scotland**.

Staff from the Ian Tomlin School of **Music** work with pupils at Gracemount High and other schools in Scotland, for example to produce music for the Wee Autumn Festival.

A partnership with the **South East Forum** and **Pentlands Community Learning and Development** supported a week-long programme of university classes for 12-16 year olds.

Students from **Firrhill High School** supported the Business School in assessing the expectations of pupils entering University.

Our **EU partnerships** and **International partnerships** provide opportunity to many, add to the diversity of our student body and extend the impact of our higher education beyond Edinburgh and Scotland.

### **Student community activity**

Student Affairs supports volunteering, having worked in partnership with **Volunteer Development Scotland**.

**Confident Futures** provides opportunities for students to be mentored by employers, often locally based, providing mutual benefit, and supporting students' employability.

Many programmes, notably those in **nursing and midwifery**, involve students in **placements in community settings**. Student projects and dissertations can involve students in fieldwork in the community.

The **Centre for the Recycling and Reuse of Buildings** had a team of students working to a client brief at WHALE arts centre in Wester Hailes.

**Complementary Therapies** students worked as part of the Summer Programme in Oxfgangs and Clovenstone, part of a programme involving also fitness, dance, creative writing and so on.

The University is part of a **Scottish Government Pilot to foster greater engagement and awareness of social enterprise**, among staff and students.

The **Robertson Trust** is funding a **community sports development** post, to be based at **Sighthill**, seeking to support development of sport which could include access to our Sports Centre and opportunities to compete with student clubs arranged by **NSA**.

### **General public**

The University welcomes visitors to its campuses and will always look for opportunities for members of the local community to participate in activities on campus. The programme of **professorial lectures** at Craiglockhart is promoted to those living nearby.

## **Environment**

The University is a partner, with City of Edinburgh Council, in the **Craiglockhart Nature Reserve**, part of which is on our land.

The University has an Environment Strategy and is committed to reducing its carbon emissions.

## **Partnerships**

In addition to those partnerships indicated above, the University is represented on the local **Community Councils** covering its Edinburgh campuses and on the **Edinburgh Partnership Board**.