Access
St Andrews
2017
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**Student Ambassadors**

Most of our projects would not be possible without the help of our Student Ambassadors, many of whom have come through an access project themselves. These students come from a wide range of backgrounds and work with members of staff from Admissions and across the University to deliver our range of access projects. In most cases they do so on a voluntary basis, in order to give more pupils the opportunities that St Andrews has offered them.
St Andrews has long been proud of its diverse student body, enjoying a vibrant and hugely international community. However, the University knows that diversity is not just about nationality it is also about diversity of socio-economic experiences and backgrounds. In order to achieve such diversity, we need to understand, reduce and eliminate the barriers that stop people from all such backgrounds coming to a competitive university, like St Andrews.

Attracting the best and the brightest students has always been the ethos of St Andrews, but we cannot do this if we are not accessible to students from all backgrounds. The access projects you will see in this brochure are a major part in ensuring that the University is open to those with the potential to succeed.

Alongside making St Andrews accessible for those from non-traditional backgrounds, our projects aim at closing the attainment gap that is so evident in the more disadvantaged areas of our society. We feel it is essential to raise the aspirations of all those we work with but we must also be instrumental in supporting in their academic preparation for higher education, otherwise their aspirations are fruitless.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners who have made this work possible. Whilst the majority of our access work is funded by the University itself, we could not do many of the projects without the support of our partners including Fife Council, The Robertson Trust, the Scottish Funding Council, the Sutton Trust, as well as a number of generous individual donors.

Mike Johnson,
Director of UK/EU Admissions and Access
First Chances Foundation

First Chances Foundation works with P7, S1 and S2 pupils, encouraging them to develop their skills, motivation and self-esteem in order to achieve their full potential as they progress through their education.

Each year pupils follow a specially-designed programme, culminating in an annual residential summer school at the University.

The programme is delivered through a series of workshops and events both in St Andrews and the local community by schoolteachers and University staff, supported by current University students. Pupils develop their learning in literacy, numeracy, science and technology as well as reflective thinking and critical analysis.

The First Chances Foundation project also encourages pupils to work hard by rewarding success. Pupils gain points as they progress through their school education and over the course of the project which can be converted to vouchers for educational purposes.

Primary 7 – Books and Blogs, Perfect Paragraphs and Posters

The main focus of this unit is to develop literacy skills through a variety of approaches.

Books and Blogs

Pupils are tasked with reading a selection of books, sharing their views and developing their writing skills through ‘blogging’. Books are available to pupils from the University’s mobile library.

Perfect Paragraphs

Through exploring different genres of writing and using complex grammar, punctuation and sentence structures, pupils are tasked with producing their ‘perfect paragraphs’.

Posters

Working with specialised software, pupils look at the purposes of different poster styles and design their own.

S1 – World of Science

World of Science focuses on an interactive learning experience for pupils to increase their understanding of scientific ideas and approaches as well as the impact of new developments in science. Pupils will develop skills in conducting experiments, laboratory work and understanding new technologies.

“These new skills that I have learned will really help me with my future work.”

S1 pupil

S2 – Living Local, Thinking Global

Through Living Local, Thinking Global, pupils explore the value of their local community in a global context by investigating its history, looking at how the past has shaped its current environment and thinking about the future. Pupils focus on enhancing skills in research, conducting surveys and interview techniques.

Progression to First Chances

Pupils who successfully complete First Chances Foundation can progress on to First Chances where they will continue to be supported throughout S3 to S6 and into higher or further education.
First Chances

First Chances aims to equip S3 to S6 pupils with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential and enhance their chances of being offered a place at a competitive university or course of their choice wherever this may be.

Pupils engage in a programme of workshops, tutoring, project work, e-mentoring and summer schools. These are designed to meet their needs at each phase of their education. Flexibility within the programme structure has also been created to support all care experienced young people within the local area.

Pupils are selected at the start of S3 or continue on from First Chances Foundation.

**S3 – Investigation and Presentation**
During the first year of the programme, pupils complete a project based around health or sustainability. They complete a 1,500 word essay, five minute PowerPoint presentation and a research log book. Pupils are supported by a University student mentor throughout the year. Additional support is also provided by their school and University staff.

Progression to the next year of the project is dependent on pupils achieving an overall mark of 50/100.

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<th>% of Final Mark</th>
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**Senior phase S4, to S6**
From S4 to S6, First Chances provides a variety of workshops and resources focused on supporting pupils in their academic studies. These include:

- **Tutoring** – group sessions designed to suit all levels of study (National 4 or 5, Higher, Advanced Higher).
- **Revision camps** – an opportunity for pupils to develop specific skills, talk to tutors and access a quiet space for study.
- **Residential summer schools** – an opportunity for pupils to sample university life and expand their network of contacts.
- **Confidence and teamwork building workshops.**
- **Monthly tasks based on numeracy and literacy skills.**
- **Access to a secure online mentoring platform.**
- **Access to study resources** – including revision guides and past papers designed to suit all levels of study (National 4 or 5, Higher, Advanced Higher).

Targeted workshops designed to focus support to pupils relevant to their year of study are also provided (page 4).

Progression to subsequent years of the programme is subject to the pupils completing all requisite parts of the course.

“First Chances helps pupils realise that things are not handed to you on a plate, you have to work hard but when you do, you get rewards.”

Lynsey Jack, First Chances coordinator, Viewforth High School
S4 – Developing Skills in the Senior Phase
Emphasis is placed on supporting pupils develop the necessary skills needed to succeed in their S4 exams. Each pupil is provided with a National 5 English and Maths revision guide to use in their own time throughout the year. Pupils are also required to attend workshops which focus on critical analysis and formulating well-reasoned arguments whilst further developing their presentation skills.

“First Chances has given me more confidence not only in school but out in the real world too. It’s given me a taste of university life and helped me with future decisions.”

S4 pupil

S5 – Developing Knowledge and Exploring Future Career Paths
The S5 programmes focuses on developing pupils’ knowledge and awareness of different career paths as well as raising their aspirations and confidence to reach these goals. Pupils are also required to attend workshops which help pupils identify where they may need to develop their skills or experience further to reach their positive destination. Support focused on interview skills and CV building is also provided.

“First Chances has opened my eyes to a world of opportunities at university and after. It has been a huge confidence boost and a very enjoyable experience.”

S5 pupil

S6 – Making a Competitive Application
The First Chances coordinator provides individual support for pupils and parents as they navigate through the UCAS application process and the transition to university. Sessions cover financial support (including scholarships and bursaries), accommodation, academic and pastoral support.

Pupils who graduate from this part of the programme and who study at St Andrews will continue to receive support from the University and the Robertson Trust, including access to a range of scholarships and bursaries, a graduate network and first year mentoring.
In Care Flexibility
Care experienced young people have the opportunity to access the programme at any stage and are offered a flexible structure allowing them to attend workshops and events based on their availability. Transport can be provided if pupils have difficulties accessing these opportunities.

Additional sessions are also incorporated into the programme for young people aimed at building confidence and expanding peer and support networks.

Teachers and Parents
The following events provide additional support to pupils whilst they are on the programme.

Teacher liaison
This provides a platform for school co-ordinators to receive updates and discuss project developments they feel would benefit pupils.

Parent and carer information sessions
These are held at the start of every academic year to provide project information relevant to them. Parents and carers are encouraged to engage with the project through meetings like these as well as contacting staff.

“The First Chances Project gave me confidence and help throughout exam periods with knowing how to deal with stress. It provided many opportunities to meet new people and learn new things.”

First Chances (in care flexible) alumni

“First Chances has given my daughter a positive insight into university life and what is expected of students. The help and support with study sessions has helped her gain excellent exam results.”

Parent

“First Chances gave me the boost I needed to get into and succeed at university. I’m lucky enough to now be supporting the pupils in the place that I used to be, so that they can achieve anything. Having support from parents/carers, schools and the university is hugely important, especially at the age where children are transitioning from primary school and preparing for the later years of secondary school.”

First Chances alumni

“By working with the University of St Andrews and First Chances Foundation our children are being exposed to opportunities they otherwise would not have had. The commitment and professionalism from the University staff and students has allowed for motivating and inspiring shared activities. I look forward to further developing this partnership.”

Lorna Robertson, Headteacher at Pitteuchar West Primary School and Chair of the Auchmuty cluster group
Reach Scotland

Reach aims to increase and diversify access to some of the most high-demand university courses, and those going onto highly competitive professions. Run by a consortium of universities across Scotland, St Andrews helps pupils in Fife. Selection is related to the University’s use of contextual data in applications (see page 12). We also work closely with Reach projects at other universities to ensure that pupils get the best advice based on their location and subject interests.

At St Andrews, Reach works with pupils in Fife looking to study a subject in four of the University’s most competitive academic Schools: Economics & Finance, Management, Medicine, or Psychology & Neuroscience. We also help Fife pupils looking to apply for other subjects which St Andrews does not offer, such as dentistry and veterinary medicine.

In order to help raise attainment and aspirations of the pupils involved, the project runs a number of activities based at St Andrews, in Fife schools and in the wider community. These activities include student shadowing days and subject taster sessions at the University, UKCAT and interview preparation days as well as workshops on making a UCAS application and personal statement advice.

Reach also offers the parents and guardians of those on the project support and advice to enable them to help their children through the process of applying to university.

“Reach provided me the opportunity to shadow students and participate in a range of other workshops and experiences that allowed me to be sure Medicine was the right course for me. I would encourage everyone to join Reach and to make the most of the fantastic opportunities and support it offers.”

Robbie
Access for Rural Communities (ARC)

Access for Rural Communities is a pioneering project that aims to ensure those in rural areas of Scotland have the same access to higher education as other pupils.

Funded in partnership with the Scottish Funding Council, we focus on pupils in S4 to S6 in Argyll and Bute, Highlands, Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Shetland and Orkney. The project offers pupils tools, information and support throughout their journey to university, including sessions in their local community, online and at St Andrews.

Each year our staff visit schools and communities in the ARC areas, offering tailored advice during the UCAS application process and pupils are encouraged to visit St Andrews by taking part in residential summer schools, academic workshops and student shadowing days.

We also work with schools and communities to provide a comprehensive list of resources that can be used to enhance pupils’ learning in the latter part of their high school education.

The ARC project is further supported by exploratory research (Access to Higher Education for Rural Communities. An exploratory analysis. Published by the University) which examines some of the unique issues pupils living in rural communities in Scotland face in accessing higher education.

“Most students take for granted that prior to applying to university they will attend numerous open days and get a feel for university life. Coming from a remote rural community this isn’t necessarily the case. The logistics and costs involved can be extremely prohibitive. Through the ARC project I was given the opportunity to attend a residential summer school and a shadowing day. These experiences, and the continuous support I have received from the university have been invaluable.”

Myles

More information about the ARC research can be found online at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/go/arc

Sources: Contains National Records of Scotland (NRS) data © Crown copyright and database right 2014, Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2014.
One of our primary UK-wide access partners is the Sutton Trust, with whom we have been running summer schools since 2002. Open to S5 and Year 12 pupils across the UK, this week-long summer school aims to demystify what life is like at a competitive university.

Many of the pupils taking part will be the first generation in their family to go on to higher education. We offer a varied programme of academic and social activities designed to give insight into what studying at university would be like. Students live in one of our halls of residence and attend academic sessions in two subject areas of their choice. Sessions are also held on the UCAS application process, personal statements and student finance to ensure advice and guidance are given on all aspects of their journey to higher education.

The Sutton Trust Summer School is free to attend, with accommodation, transport, meals and activities all included.

“As a whole, I feel like this week was an incredible experience for anyone who is thinking about going to university as it gives you an opportunity to experience university first hand and meet a lot of like-minded people who can become really good friends. I would definitely encourage anyone who is thinking about applying to the Sutton Trust to go for it, it is truly an experience of a lifetime.”

Caitlin
Gateway to Medicine
The Gateway to Medicine provides the opportunity for students who have completed S5 and just missed out on the grades required for a Medical degree. It is an alternative to S6. During this year, students build on their educational knowledge by studying first-year modules in biology and chemistry, with the aim of entering into a Medicine degree after their Gateway year. These students get to adapt to life at university, but with the extra support from an Adviser of Studies, previous Gateway students and University staff, including support through the UKCAT and interview preparation. Subject tutoring is also provided.

Gateway to Physics and Astronomy
The Gateway to Physics and Astronomy programme offers students a first-year university education in physics, mathematics and transferable skills. After students successfully complete this first year they are then able to progress on to the second year of a full BSc or MPhys degree programme, such as theoretical or applied physics.

Gateway to Computer Science
On the Gateway to Computer Science programme students take a combination of first-year Computer Science and Gateway-only modules. They study alongside other first year students whilst also focusing on crucial aspects of computer science and mathematics as well as gaining transferable skills. Those who successfully complete this year progress on to the second year of a full BSc or MSci Computer Science degree programme.

“Gateway to Medicine has had a tremendous impact, not only my academic life but also on me as a person. It allowed me to pursue my dream field of studies as well as providing me with valuable life experience of independence and a solid basis in the sciences creating an incredible base I plan to build my medical career on. None of this would be possible without the Gateway to Medicine programme for which I will be eternally grateful.”

Jakub
Alternative Routes

Lifelong & Flexible Learning
We appreciate that some students may not come to the University through a traditional route. At St Andrews there are a range of flexible study options to help you balance your other commitments whilst studying for a degree. This is an ideal opportunity if you are looking to return to education after a break, from college courses or employment. It can also be for those with family or caring responsibilities or who may have health conditions which stopped you previously from attending university.

Our flexible study options include a specially designed part-time evening course, or full-time or part-time study during the day. We also offer a dedicated entry route from further education colleges to support you through the transition into higher education.

Partnerships with local colleges
We are committed to working with local colleges and education authorities to create and enhance flexible learner journeys which maximise students’ chances of success.

We work closely with the local colleges in Fife, Angus and Perthshire offering tailored advice and guidance to students coming through this route. Activities include:

- Talks and presentations to local college students
- Attendance at college careers events
- Guidance sessions on applying to university
- Student shadowing invitations

SWAP
The University of St Andrews is a long standing member of the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) and aims to deliver the best opportunities for those wishing to make the transition from college to university. We aim to ensure all students coming through this route have the information required to make a competitive application to the University of St Andrews.

For more information about SWAP courses please visit: www.scottishwideraccess.org

“Being my first journey into education for some 31 years, I was unsure if I would be able to cope with this advanced level of learning or even if I could combine studying with the demands of a full-time career. I needn’t have worried, the support and instruction from the Lifelong Learning Team, the academic staff and fellow students is exceptional and my confidence in my own abilities has never been higher. Not only have I exceeded my own expectations but am wondering why I didn’t apply to the University years ago.”

Paul
Teachers Together

Teachers play a vital role in inspiring pupils to reach their potential, which is why we work in partnership with schools and teachers across the UK. Through two-way engagement with teachers we aim to help them give their pupils relevant, accurate and timely guidance about applying and preparing to study at university.

All our Teachers Together events have resources built in to ensure that financial and geographical concerns should not be seen as a barrier to attending.

**Teachers Together Conference**

The Teachers Together Conference encourages links between state schools across the UK, education authorities and the University to support pupils who are looking to go on to university. It also helps our own staff better understand developments in subjects and policy which may have an effect on future attainment levels.

Designed to suit a variety of needs, the conference is built around speakers, presentations and visits to University departments. This allows delegates to learn about areas best suited to them, such as subject-specific knowledge, how best to support pupils applying to university, or experience what it is like to attend our summer schools.

Departmental visits and sessions are also offered in a wide range of subjects with many offering relevant resources and ideas for delegates to take back to their own schools.

**Teachers Together on the road**

As it is not always possible for teachers to attend the conference in St Andrews we also take parts of the conference on the road. In previous years this has involved holding one-day events in both Argyll and Bute and in the Highlands.

Information about upcoming Teachers Together events will be published online in early 2017 at:

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access
Admissions and Continued Support

**Contextual admissions**
All our access projects aim to raise aspirations and attainment. Where they require selection criteria, this is based on the contextual data that the University considers in the undergraduate application process. At St Andrews we have been careful that we do not just focus on educational opportunities, but also the personal circumstances of all applicants.

You can read the University’s full policy on the use of contextual data online at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/policy/contextual-data

**Care leavers and young carers**
The University offers additional support to care leavers or young carers, both during the application process and as a student at St Andrews. This can include financial support and guidance, help finding year-round accommodation and a dedicated support coordinator.

More information is available online at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access

**Scholarships**
No student can achieve their true potential if they spend their time worrying about their bank balance instead of focusing on their studies. We understand the financial cost of going to university and the bearing this can have on a pupil’s likelihood of going to university, which is why we offer a number of scholarships and bursaries each year.

In 2016-2017 scholarships are being awarded for a number of different areas, including accommodation and living costs. The University is also currently offering the Entrant Bursary of £1,500 per annum, guaranteed to all UK-domiciled students with a household income of £34,000 or less.

A full list of available scholarships can be found online at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/ug/fees-and-funding
## Access Activities

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“Our relationship with the University of St Andrews is built on a shared belief that a young person’s journey to success should be determined by talent as opposed to financial constraints or non-academic factors.”

Kenneth Ferguson
Director, The Robertson Trust

www.st-andrews.ac.uk

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Curriculum Development
As a research intensive institution, the University ensures that its teaching references the research interests of its staff, which may change from time to time. As a result, programmes are regularly reviewed with the aim of enhancing students’ learning experience. Our approach to course revision is described at:

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/course-revision-protocol.pdf

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